

# STUDIA CERANEA

Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre

*for*

the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area  
and South-East Europe

13, 2023



# STUDIA CERANEA



*13, 2023*

*Herb's*  
- CERANEUM -

# STUDIA CERANEA



Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre

*for*

the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area  
and South-East Europe

*13, 2023*

 **WYDAWNICTWO**  
UNIWERSYTETU  
ŁÓDZKIEGO

 **C O P E**  
Member since 2018  
JM13709

Łódź 2023

**Studia Ceranea**  
**Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture**  
**of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe**

13, 2023

University of Lodz, Poland

**Editorial Board:**

Mirosław J. Leszka (Editor-in-Chief), Georgi Minczew (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Zofia Brzozowska, Paweł Filipczak, Marek Majer, Kiril Marinow, Andrzej Kompa, Agata Kawecka, Ivan N. Petrov, Małgorzata Skowronek, Jolanta Dybala (Secretary)

**Address of the Editorial Board:**

ul. Jana Matejki 32/38, pok. 319  
90-237 Łódź, Polska  
www.ceraneum.uni.lodz.pl  
s.ceranea@uni.lodz.pl

**Editorial Council:**

Hana Gládková (Charles University in Prague), James Douglas Howard-Johnston (Corpus Christi College, Oxford), Ewald Kislinger (University of Vienna), Eliza Małek (University of Lodz), Józef Naumowicz (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw), Szymon Olszaniec (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), Stefano Parenti (Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm, Rome), Mihajlo Popović (Institute for Medieval Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences), Günter Prinzing (Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz), Yuri Stoyanov (University of London)

**Reviewers (vol. 13, 2023):**

Richard Abdy (British Museum, London); Stefan Albrecht (Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie, Mainz); Michael Angold (University of Edinburgh); Ivan Biliarsky (Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia); Jacek Bonarek (Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski); Petros Bouras-Valianatos (University of Athens); Edina Bozoky (University of Poitiers); Irene Calà (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich); Dimo Cheshmedzhiev (Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia); Raffaele D'Amato (University of Ferrara); Mark DelCogliano (University of St. Thomas, St. Paul); Aneta Dimitrova (St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia); Jarosław Dudek (University of Zielona Góra); Stefania Fortuna (Marche Polytechnic University); Simon Franklin (University of Cambridge); Marcello Garzaniti (University of Florence); Ana-Maria Ginsac ("Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași); Antoaneta Granberg (University of Gothenburg); Geoffrey Greatrex (University of Ottawa); Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich); Jasmina Grković-Major (University of Novi Sad); Zaruhi A. Hakobyan (Yerevan State University); John Haldon (Princeton University); Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen (University of Southern Denmark); Brad Hostetler (Kenyon College, Gambier); Kazimierz Ilski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); Mirja Jarak (University of Zagreb); Jaap Kamphuis (Leiden University); Karolina Kočańczyk-Bonińska (University of Warsaw); Maciej Kokoszko (University of Lodz); Bogna Kosmulska (University of Warsaw); Magdalena Koźluk (University of Lodz); Mirosław Kruk (University of Gdańsk); Krystyna Kubina (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna); Andreas Kůlzer (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna); Ruxandra Lambru (University of Bucharest); Marc Lauertermann (Oxford University); Maria Leontini (National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens); Tomaso Maria Lucchelli (Ca' Foscari University of Venice); Andrea Luzzi (The Sapienza University of Rome); Catherine Mary MacRobert (University of Oxford); Przemysław Marciniak (University of Silesia in Katowice); Șerban Marin (National Archives of Romania, Bucharest); Petra Melichar (Masaryk University, Brno); Gerasimos Merianos (National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens); Charis Messis (University of Athens); Ireneusz Milewski (University of Gdańsk); Yavor Miltenov (Institute for Bulgarian Language, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia); Peter Franz Mittag (University of Cologne); Dominic Moreau (University of Lille); Penelope Mougoyianni (Greece); Dimitr Mylona (INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, Pachaia Ammos); Dragoș Gh. Năstăsou (New Europe College, Bucharest); Józef Naumowicz (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw); Bronwen Neil (Macquarie University, Sydney); Mitko B. Panov (St. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje); Aleksander Paroń (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Wrocław); Zdzisław Pentek (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań); Joanna Pietrzak-Thébault (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw); Jean-Paul Pittion (Trinity College, Dublin / University of Tours); Mihajlo Popović (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna); Thomas Pratsch (University of Mainz); Christian Raffensperger (Wittenberg University, Springfield); Mohammed Rihan (University of Balamand); Max Ritter (University of Mainz); Andrew Roach (University of Glasgow); Federica Rotelli (Italian Botanical Society, Florence); Łukasz Różycki (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); Lara Sels (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven); Jonathan Shepard (University of Oxford); Grigori Simeonov (University of Vienna); Sławomir Skrzyński (Jagiellonian University, Cracow); Kostis Smyrlis (National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens); Vlada Stanković (University of Belgrade); Florian Steger (Ulm University); Robert Suski (University of Białystok); Piotr Szczur (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin); Mariusz Szram (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin); Laurence Totelin (Cardiff University); Anna-Maria Totomanova (St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia); Shaun Tougher (Cardiff University); Alain Touwaide (Harvard University); Patricia Varona Codeso (Autonomous University of Madrid); Myrto Veikou (University of Patras); Conor Whately (University of Winnipeg); Chris Wickham (University of Oxford)

**Language editing:**

For English – Marek Majer

**Cover designed by:**

Sebastian Buzar

**Typesetting:**

Tomasz Pietras

**On the cover:**

Wall of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. cross-shaped crypt in the apsis of Theotokos Chalkoprateia church in Istanbul, with visible limestone mortar plaster and a cross in iconoclastic, middle-Byzantine type, painted in red. Present state, after reconstruction of Lala Hayrettin Paşa Camii, erected on spot in 1484 (previous names: Acem Ağa Mescidi, Lala Hayrettin Mescidi). Photo by Andrzej Kompa, August 2023.

Wersja drukowana czasopisma jest jego wersją podstawową (pierwotną) / The printed version of this journal is to be treated as primary

“**Studia Ceranea**” is indexed in Web of Science™ Core Collection (Emerging Sources Citation Index); USA; Scopus; Netherlands; EBSCOhost Research Databases; USA; Google Scholar Bibliographic Database; USA; Publishers International Linking Association Inc. (Crossref); USA; Network of Library Content and Services (WorldCat); USA; Slavic Humanities Index; Canada; European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Norway; Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL); Germany; Information Matrix for the Analysis of Journals (MIAR); Spain; Bibliographic Database of Polish Academic Journals from Humanities and Humanistic Social Studies (BazHum); Poland; Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH); Poland; Index Copernicus Journals Master List (IC); Poland; Polish Scientific and Professional Electronic Journals (ARIANTA); Poland; Scientific Communication Portal (INFONA); Poland; University of Lodz Repository; Poland; Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE); Germany; Polish Scholarly Bibliography and POL-Index (PBN); Poland; Biblioteka Nauki – Centrum Otwartej Nauki (CeON); Poland; Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources (ROAD); ISSN International Centre and Unesco; Public Knowledge Project (PKP Index); Canada; UlrichsWeb; USA; Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek; Germany; Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ); Sweden; Dimensions; Great Britain; JURN; Directory of Research Journal Indexing (DRJI); India; Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers (NSD); Norway; JournalTOCs; Great Britain; Quality Open Access Market (QOAM); Netherlands; Most Wiedzy; Poland; CNKI Scholar (China National Knowledge Infrastructure); China; Korea Open Access Platform for Researchers (KOAR); South Korea; Byzantinische Zeitschrift; Germany; Linguistic Bibliography (Brill); Netherlands; Sherpa/RoMEO; Great Britain

**Zadanie:** Wydanie anglojęzycznych wersji zeszytów rocznika “Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe” finansowane w ramach umowy nr RCN/SP/0024/2021/1 z dn. 02.01.2023 r. ze środków Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego przeznaczonych na działalność upowszechniającą naukę / **Task:** Publication of English-language versions of the volumes of the yearly *Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe* financed through contract no. RCN/SP/0024/2021/1, 02.01.2023 from the funds of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education devoted to the promotion of scholarship.

Lodz University Press

© Copyright by Authors, Łódź 2023

© Copyright for this edition by Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2023

All rights reserved



Ministry of Science  
and Higher Education  
Republic of Poland

ISSN: 2084-140X  
e-ISSN: 2449-8378

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 24<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BYZANTINE STUDIES BYZANTIUM – BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS. VENICE AND PADUA, 22–27 AUGUST 2022. THEMATIC SESSION 61. BROKEN BRIDGE: WAR AND WARFARE DURING THE EARLY AND MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD

- MARCIN BÖHM, *The Role of the Byzantine Navy in the Actions of Emperor Louis II of Italy against Bari in 866–871. Louis II's Letter of 871 to Emperor Basil I (867–886) – as a Source for Marine Military Studies?* ..... 13
- DRAGAN GJALEVSKI, *Strategic Planning in the Middle Byzantine Period: A Limittrophe Policy Reintroduced?* ..... 29
- ŁUKASZ RÓŻYCKI, *Night Combat in Late Antiquity in the Light of Roman Military Treatises* ..... 57
- ARKADIUSZ SIWKO, *Between Rus', Byzantium, and the Nomads. Tmutarakan' in the Narrative of the Russian Primary Chronicle* ..... 75

### FIFTH COLLOQUIA CERANEA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ŁÓDŹ, 11–13 MAY 2023

- PIOTR CZARNECKI, *Authenticity of the Interrogatio Iohannis in the Light of Contemporary Deconstructionist Source Criticism* ..... 99
- VIACHESLAV V. LYTVYNYENKO, *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter (CPG 4612): Transmission and Context of the Slavonic Version in the Late 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries* 125
- MARIYANA TSIBRANSKA-KOSTOVA, *A Contribution to the History of Repentance Prayers in the Slavic South during the 15<sup>th</sup> Century* ..... 137
- JOHN WILKINS, *Food for Life: Galen's On Health (De sanitate tuenda)* ..... 153
- LUCA ZAVAGNO, *"The Navigators". Mediterranean Cities and Urban Spaces in the Passage from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (ca. 600 – ca. 850 CE)* 165

## ARTICLES

- KOSTIANTYN BARDOLA, *The Birth of the Myth About the Byzantine-Bulgarian War of 863* ..... 191
- MARTINA BIAMINO, *Justinian, Pilgrimages and the Theotokos: Imperial Propaganda in De Aedificiis V* ..... 215
- SŁAWOMIR BRALEWSKI, “*Ex Marte se procreatum*” – *Did the Roman Emperor Galerius Make Mars his Personal Protective Deity?* ..... 239
- BŁAŻEJ CECOTA, *The Jewish Theme in Theophanes the Confessor’s Testimony on the Prophet Muḥammad* ..... 255
- FLORIN CURTA, *Garum or Grain? Crimea and the Provisioning of Constantinople (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Centuries)* ..... 271
- ION-MIHAI FELEA, *Translating the Slavonic Present Participles in the Early Romanian Psalters (16<sup>th</sup> Century)* ..... 287
- GIULIA FRENI, *Herbs as pharmaka: between Medicine, Astrology and Magic* 321
- MIROSLAVA GEORGIEVA, *Church Architecture in Southwestern Bulgaria in the Late 9<sup>th</sup> – Early 11<sup>th</sup> Century (Based on Archaeological Data)* ..... 347
- JAMES HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Rus and Khazars* ..... 381
- YANKO M. HRISTOV, DAFINA KOSTADINOVA, *Remarks on Captives and Warriors in an Old Bulgarian Collection of Miracle Stories* ..... 419
- LIVIU MARIUS ILIE, *Nunnery Life in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Wallachia – Muṣa/Magdalena before and after Taking Vows* ..... 443
- AGATA ALEKSANDRA KLUCZEK, *Hadrian, a Numismatic Lapse, and... Janus* 455
- MACIEJ KOKOSZKO, ZOFIA RZEŹNICKA, *How to Glow and Stay Fresh: Some Advice on Deodorants Penned by Aetius of Amida* ..... 477
- MAGDALENA KOŹLUK, *Representing the Phlegm: the Portrait of the Phlegmatic in Cesare Ripa’s Iconology* ..... 491
- ŁUKASZ KUBICKI, *Basil I’s Path to Power according to the Vita Basilii as a Heroic Myth* ..... 507

JASMINKA KUZMANOVSKA, <i>Traces of Pre-Greek Linguistics Substratum in Early Byzantine Toponymy: Lists Related to Macedonia and Thessaly in Procopius' Buildings</i> .....	539
MIROŚŁAW J. LESZKA, <i>Heraclius. A Commander in the Service of Leo I and Zeno</i>	555
MARIOS MARSELOS, ELIAS VALIAKOS, <i>Kidney Diseases in the Treatise Dynameron of Aelius Promotus (2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD). A Comparison with Dioscorides and Nikolaos Myrepsos</i> .....	565
IRENEUSZ MILEWSKI, <i>Bankers and Usurers in the Early Byzantine Hagiographical Texts</i> .....	587
NATIA NATSVLISHVILI, <i>Female Monastic Patronage in Medieval Georgia: Queen Tamar and her Monastery in Tighva</i> .....	599
ANASTASIA NIKOLAOU, <i>The Hymnography in Honour of Saints Constantine and Helena and its Connection with Imperial Ideology</i> .....	619
ZDZISŁAW PENTEK, <i>The Clergy during the Fourth Crusade as Portrayed in Geoffrey de Villehardouin's Chronicle</i> .....	643
ALEXANDAR PORTALSKY, MARIYA BAGASHEVA, <i>The Monastery near Kiyıköy in European Turkey</i> .....	653
ENRIQUE SANTOS MARINAS, <i>The Usage of Scriptural Nativity Motifs in Early Greek and Slavonic Hymnography</i> .....	681
VIKTOR ZHUKOVSKYY, <i>The Unity, Power and Energy of the Holy Trinity in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa</i> .....	695
BARBARA ZIPSER, ANDREW CUNNINGHAM SCOTT, ROBERT ALLKIN, PERETZ GAN, ANDREAS LARDOS, REBECCA LAZAROU, EFRAIM LEV, MARK NESBITT, KRISTINA PATMORE, <i>Pharmaceutical Terminology in Ancient and Medieval Time – andrachne, chrysocolla and Others</i> .....	715

## MISCELLANEA

TIMOTHY GEORGE DAWSON, <i>Notes on a Reconstruction of the Helm from Lucera</i>	739
DICK VAN NIEKERK, <i>Patron of the Study of the Bogomils. Portrait of Sir Dimitri Obolensky</i> .....	745



## BOOK REVIEWS

- DIANA MISHKOVA, *Rival Byzantiums. Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2023, pp. X+357 – IVAN BILIARSKY ..... 761
- ÁGNES KRIZA, *Depicting Orthodoxy in the Russian Middle Ages. The Novgorod Icon of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2022 [= Oxford Studies in Byzantium], pp. 362 – ZOFIA A. BRZOWSKA ..... 766
- DOMINIKA GAPSKA, *Woman. Church. State. Cults of the Female Saints in the Writings of Serbian Orthodox Church*, Scriptum, Cracow 2021, pp. 208 – ZOFIA A. BRZOWSKA ..... 772
- Letopisi, chronographs, paratexts. Some remarks on the Eastern Slavic historical literature in the Middle Ages, on the Margins of the book by Timofei V. Guimon: Historical Writing of Early Rus (c. 1000–c. 1400) in a Comparative Perspective*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2021 [= East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 71], pp. 778 – ZOFIA A. BRZOWSKA ..... 775
- MARCELLO GARZANITI, *Słowianie. Historia, kultury i języki* [*The Slavs. History, Cultures and Languages*], trans. J. GROBLIŃSKA, K. KOWALIK, A. MAKOWSKA-FERENC, ed. Z.A. BRZOWSKA, P. KRĘŻEL, J.M. WOLSKI, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2023, pp. 566 – ZOFIA A. BRZOWSKA, PIOTR KRĘŻEL ..... 784
- Ascetismo y santidad en el Cercano Oriente cristiano (siglos IV–XIII)*, ed. HECTOR FRANCISCO RODRIGO, LAHAM COHEN, PABLO UBIERNA, Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, Buenos Aires 2022, pp. 162 – BŁAŻEJ CECOTA ..... 786
- Cristianos, judíos y gentiles. Reflexiones sobre la construcción de la identidad durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. RODRIGO LAHAM COHEN, ESTEBAN NOCE, Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, Buenos Aires 2021, pp. 146 – BŁAŻEJ CECOTA ..... 790
- Ethno-Cultural Diversity in the Balkans and the Caucasus*, ed. IOANA AMINIAN JAZI, THEDE KAHL, Austrian Academy of Science Press, Vienna 2023 [= Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse, 927], pp. 394 – BŁAŻEJ CECOTA ..... 794

*Migrations of Baroque Ideas in the Lands of the Slavs.* JUSTYNA ROMANOWSKA, *Polsko-ukraińsko-rosyjskie konteksty poezji metafizycznej serbskiego baroku* [Polish-Ukrainian-Russian Contexts of Serbian Baroque Metaphysical Poetry], Wydawnictwo Scriptum, Kraków 2022, pp. 262 – PIOTR KRĘZEL ..... 799

ПРЕДРАГ КОМАТИНА, *Константин Порфирогенит и рана историја јужних Словена*, уредник Љ. МАКСИМОВИЋ [PREDRAG KOMATINA, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the Early History of South Slavs*, ed. L. MAKSIMOVIĆ], Византолошки институт САНУ, Београд 2021 [= Византолошки Институт Српске Академије Наука и Уметности Посебна Издања / Institute for Byzantine Studies Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Monographs, 50], pp. 404 – MIROŚLAW J. LESZKA ..... 803

*Old Church Slavonic Heritage in Slavonic and Other Languages*, ed. ILONA JANÝŠKOVÁ, HELENA KARLIKOVA, VIT BOČEK, Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, Praha 2021 [= *Studia etymologica Brunensia*, 25], pp. 340 – HALYNA NAIENKO 806

RADU G. PĂUN, IVAN BILIARSKY, *Du combat pour la «juste foi» au péché politique. Pour une histoire du Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie*, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 2022 [= *Schriften zur Balkanforschung*, 4], pp. 415 – JAN WOLSKI ..... 814

**ABBREVIATIONS** ..... 817

**GUIDELINES FOR THE AUTHORS** ..... 835




**24<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BYZANTINE STUDIES**  
**BYZANTIUM – BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS**  
**VENICE AND PADUA, 22–27 AUGUST 2022. THEMATIC SESSION 61.**  
**BROKEN BRIDGE: WAR AND WARFARE DURING**  
**THE EARLY AND MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD**





Marcin Böhm (Opole)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5393-3176>

## THE ROLE OF THE BYZANTINE NAVY IN THE ACTIONS OF EMPEROR LOUIS II OF ITALY AGAINST BARI IN 866–871. LOUIS II'S LETTER OF 871 TO EMPEROR BASIL I (867–886) – AS A SOURCE FOR MARINE MILITARY STUDIES?

**Abstract.** The rivalry between the Carolingians and the Byzantines in Italy during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century faced a new threat – the rise of Islam. Despite the need to unite against the common enemy, mutual suspicion between these two centres of imperial power persisted. This is evident in their joint efforts to confront the Muslim outpost in Apulia, the Emirate of Bari. This article aims to examine the role of the Byzantine fleet in the actions of Emperor Louis II (825–875) during the campaign to eliminate the Emirate of Bari – a task in which the Carolingian ruler was successful. The primary source for this investigation is Louis II's letter of 871 to Emperor Basil I (867–886).

In the letter, the author identifies the links between the activities of Muslims in the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Seas and their strongholds in Sicily and Africa. Consequently, the author outlines a logical plan to expel the Saracens from Italy, particularly from Campania (Naples) and Calabria, with a crucial role assigned to the Byzantine fleet. The Franks intended to coordinate land operations with the Byzantines in Sicily, aiming to reclaim Palermo – a city, according to the letter, closely linked to the Muslim piracy. However, this plan was based on wishful thinking, as it failed to consider the dispersion of the Byzantine navy, which was simultaneously engaged in conflicts against the forces of the Abbasids, the emirate of Crete, and the Slavic pirates in the Adriatic Sea. These factors, coupled with a growing aversion between the Franks and the Byzantines, ultimately led to the collapse of the alliance and their plans. Despite later successes, the Byzantine fleet was unable to provide timely aid to Sicily and actively counter the advance of Islam on the island.

**Keywords:** Basil I, Louis II of Italy, the Emirate of Bari, Sicily, Southern Italy, Adriatic Sea

The rivalry between the Carolingians and the Byzantines in Italy in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century was interrupted by the emergence of a new threat, in the form of the Islamic world. Even then, establishing a common front and uniting against an enemy posed a challenge due to the mutual suspicion between these two centres of imperial power. This became especially evident when the time came to move against the Muslim outpost in Apulia, the Emirate of Bari. Therefore, this

article aims to explore the role of the Byzantine fleet in Emperor Louis II's (825–875) activities during the campaign to eliminate the Emirate of Bari, in which task the Carolingian Emperor succeeded. To do this, I will use one of the medieval sources relating to the actions of both sides during this conflict: the letter of Louis II of 871 to Emperor Basil I (867–886). Furthermore, this article will attempt to determine the value of this source material for maritime military studies.

## Introduction

The letter of Emperor Louis II, written probably by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in the spring or early summer of 871, has for many years been a subject of discussion and research into its credibility<sup>1</sup>. It was prepared in response to an earlier letter from Basil I, which unfortunately has not survived<sup>2</sup>. We are also not certain whether the letter of Louis II was even sent to Constantinople at all. It may be only a draft version, which was later incorporated into the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, written in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, where it survived in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript<sup>3</sup>. The first part of this letter is of particular importance. Within, Louis II defends his rights to the imperial title, undermined by Constantinople<sup>4</sup>. The source represents

<sup>1</sup> R. POUPARDIN, *La lettre de Louis II à Basile le Macédonien. À propos d'un livre récent*, MA 16, 1903, p. 185–202; A. KLEINCLAUSZ, *La lettre de Louis II à Basile le Macédonien*, MA 17, 1904, p. 45–53; W. HENZE, *Über den Brief Kaiser Ludwigs II. an den Kaiser Basilius I.*, NAGÄDG 35, 1910, p. 663–676; G. SORANZO, *La concezione dell'autorità imperiale nella lettera di Lodovico II a Basilio I (a. 871)*, [in:] *Atti del II Congresso Nazionale di Studi Romani*, vol. II, Roma 1931, p. 115–124; S. FANNING, *Imperial Diplomacy between Francia and Byzantium: The Letter of Louis II to Basil I in 871*, Cit 34, 1994, p. 3–17; S. KOLDITZ, *Gesandtschaften, Briefe und Konzilien in den Beziehungen Ludwigs II. von Italien zu Byzanz*, [in:] *Von der Ostsee zum Mittelmeer. Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte für Wolfgang Huschner*, ed. S. ROEBERT, Leipzig 2019, p. 289–310; C. GANTNER, *Kaiser Ludwig II. von Italien und Byzanz*, [in:] *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge, Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*, vol. II, *Menschen und Worte*, ed. F. DAIM, C. GASTGEBER, D. HERHER, C. RAPP, Mainz 2018 [= BOO, 9.2], p. 103–112; IDEM, *Ad utriusque imperii unitatem? Anastasius Bibliothecarius as a Broker between Two Cultures and Three Courts in the Ninth Century*, MeW 13, 2021, p. 36–53; J. GAY, *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire Byzantin depuis l'avènement de Basile I<sup>er</sup> jusqu'à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867–1071)*, Paris 1904, p. 84–88; B. KREUTZ, *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, [s.l.] 1996, p. 42–45; G. ARNALDI, *Impero d'occidente e impero d'oriente nella lettera di Ludovico II a Basilio I*, C.RFLS 1, 1963, p. 404–424; T. GRANIER, *La captivité de l'empereur Louis II à Bénévent (13 août – 17 septembre 871) dans les sources des IX<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles: l'écriture de l'histoire, de la fausse nouvelle au récit exemplaire*, [in:] *Faire l'événement au Moyen Âge*, [s.l.] 2007, p. 13–39.

<sup>2</sup> *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches. Von 565–1453*, vol. I.2, *Regesten von 867–1025*, ed. F. DÖLGER, A.E. MÜLLER, München 2003, p. 5, n. 480 and p. 7, n. 487.

<sup>3</sup> For this chronicle and manuscripts, Cf. *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. U. WESTERBERGH, Stockholm 1956 (cetera: *Chronicon Salernitanum*), p. XII–XXX.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 108–115; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, ed. W. HENZE, Berolini 1928 [= MGH.EK V, 7.2] (cetera: *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*), p. 385–392.

the point of view of the court of Louis II, especially on relations with Byzantium, as well as on the maritime activities directed against the South Italian Muslim state, the Emirate of Bari.

The town of Bari was one of the many ports in southern Italy, therefore its possession was of strategic importance for all concerned<sup>5</sup>. The history of the creation of this Emirate, which existed in Italy for several decades, is closely related to the processes that took place in North Africa and Sicily during this period. The Muslims took advantage of the turmoil in Byzantium, stemming from the internal conflicts in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. They directed their ships towards the islands of Crete and Sicily and their armed forces penetrated into the waters of the Adriatic<sup>6</sup>. The most important problem for Byzantium was the gradual loss of control over most of Sicily since 827, which increasingly became a point for further northward expansion of the Muslims. The fall of the Byzantine outposts on this island, including the important fortress of Enna in 859 – which was captured by treason – and the defeat of the Byzantine fleet in Sicily in the spring of 868, were facts that Constantinople was unable to conceal from the rest of Italy<sup>7</sup>. Sicily was key to the safety of Calabria and Apulia. Byzantine weakness on this island allowed the development of Muslim outposts on the Adriatic coast, first in Bari and later in Ragusa<sup>8</sup>.

Muslim forces linked to the North African Muslim dynasty, the Aghlabids, did not immediately establish their emirate in Bari after their first raids on the Italian soil. In the beginning, they occupied that town in 840–841<sup>9</sup>. But a few years

<sup>5</sup> N. LAVERMICOCCA, *Bari bizantina Origine, declino, eredità di una capitale mediterranea*, Bari 2017, p. 12–20.

<sup>6</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I (867–886), the Founder of the Macedonian Dynasty: a Study of the Political and Military History of the Byzantine Empire in the Ninth Century* (Ph.D. Thesis, Rutgers. The State University of New Jersey–New Brunswick 1969), p. 276–277; K.M. SETTON, *On the Raids of the Moslems in the Aegean in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries and their Alleged Occupation of Athens*, *AJA* 58.4, 1954, p. 311–312; T.C. LOUNGHIS, *The Byzantine War Navy and the West, Fifth to Twelfth Centuries*, [in:] *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea. Aspects of War, Diplomacy, and Military Elites*, ed. G. THEOTOKIS, A. YILDIZ, Leiden–Boston 2018, p. 30–31; *The Little History of the Lombards of Benevento by Erchempert. A Critical Edition and Translation of ‘Ystoriola Longobardorum Beneventum degentium*, 11, ed. L.A. BERTO, Routledge 2021 (cetera: ERCHEMPERT), p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> A.A. VASILIEV, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d’Amorium (820–867)*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Brussels 1935 [= CBHB], p. 220–222; IDEM, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II, *Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867–959 (253–348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Brussels 1968 [= CBHB], p. 22; A. METCALFE, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*, Edinburgh 2009 [= NEIS], p. 14; T. WOLIŃSKA, *Próby stworzenia sojuszu antysaraceńskiego na południu Italii (IX – początek X wieku)*, *PH* 97.2, 2006, p. 145–146; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> T. WOLIŃSKA, *Próby...*, p. 146; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 281.

<sup>9</sup> G. MUSCA, *L’emirato di Bari, 847–871*, Bari 1964, p. 18–20.



later, in 847, Bari was conquered by Khalfun and became a point for the further expansion of Islam in this part of the Apennine Peninsula<sup>10</sup>. In recent years scholars have argued that the conquest of Bari by the Muslims took place before 847, and the occupation of 840 was the actual time when Khalfun took over the city<sup>11</sup>. Khalfun was in Italy at the time, working as a mercenary for the Duke of Benevento, Radelchis, and was one of the many Muslims from North Africa and Andalusia whose services were employed in conflicts between the Lombards<sup>12</sup>. This later changed as a result of political and military activities of the Carolingians, in particular of the future ruler of Italy, Louis II, who brought to an end the civil war between the Lombards and subsequently massacred their Muslim mercenaries<sup>13</sup>. Deprived of mercenary employment, the Muslims in Bari turned to looting and acquiring slaves to be sold in the markets of Naples<sup>14</sup>. These factors, along with the rejection of the Aghlabids' suzerainty, led to the creation of an independent state, with Bari as its capital. The emirate had only three rulers in its history, the most important being the last of them, Sawdan (850–871), a native of North Africa<sup>15</sup>. This emir was a significant adversary of the Franks and Lombards, thereby posing a threat to Byzantium's plans for southern Italy. He also aimed his military actions at the Balkans. According to the account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the fleet from Africa, under the command of Soldan (another version of the name for Sawdan), Saba, and Kalphus, arrived in Dalmatia with a force of 36 ships. They captured the cities of Butova, Rossa, and Decatera, while also laying siege to Ragusa for fifteen months<sup>16</sup>. The new independent emirate, living off the slave trade, was therefore a real threat to the interests of the Carolingians and Basil I.

## Study

The main goal of the plan of cooperation between the Franks and Byzantines was to bring mutual benefits to both sides. Basil I seized power in 867, following the murder of Michael III. The new Basileus wanted to form alliances as part of his plan to recapture the lands in southern Italy and to expand Byzantium to the West. To achieve this, he planned to marry his son Constantine to Louis'

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31–33; L.M. BONDIOLI, *Islamic Bari between the Aghlabids and the Two Empires*, [in:] *The Aghlabids and their Neighbors. Art and Material Culture in Ninth-Century North Africa*, ed. G.D. ANDERSON, C. FENWICK, M. ROSSER-OWEN, S. LAMINE, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= HOS. NME, 122], p. 471–476.

<sup>11</sup> L.M. BONDIOLI, *Islamic...*, p. 474.

<sup>12</sup> ERCHPERT, 16–17, p. 139–140; L.M. BONDIOLI, *Islamic...*, p. 476–477.

<sup>13</sup> L.M. BONDIOLI, *Islamic...*, p. 479–480.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 483.

<sup>15</sup> ERCHPERT, 29, p. 146; A. METCALFE, *The Muslims...*, p. 21; G. MUSCA, *L'emirato...*, p. 59–61.

<sup>16</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 29, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, <sup>3</sup>Washington 1993 [= *CFHB*, 1] (cetera: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS), p. 126–127; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 281–282.

daughter, Ermengard<sup>17</sup>. In return, the Italian branch of Carolingians would receive the support of the Byzantine fleet to counter the Muslim presence in the region. The Byzantine fleet appeared to be the force most capable of expelling the Muslims from Bari and the Italian coast<sup>18</sup>. This was to be tested in 869 and 870 when the fleet arrived near the capital of Apulia. As it turned out, not everything had gone according to plan. The Frankish emperor refuted the accusations made in our primary source by Basil I, who claimed that his Greek soldiers had to attack the largest city of Apulia on their own. The Constantinopolitan emperor alleged that this was happening while the Franks had been celebrating and drinking; they watched the actions of the Greeks without coming to their aid. Responding to these accusations Emperor Louis II compared the actions of Basil I's troops at Bari to the attack of locusts (*locustae*). He probably referred to the battles on land, emphasising the cowardice and weakness of those Byzantine formations which escaped from the besieged city, also suggesting that they took with them as prisoners only Christians<sup>19</sup>. Other events are also mentioned in Louis' letter, where he again refutes Basil's remarks, suggesting the following:

Cum enim, diu demorante stolo fraternitatis tue, illius iam minime prestolaremur adventum, et in anno ipso de obsidione Baris nichil omnino fieri putaremus, omnes ad sua redire permiseramus, his solummodo retentis quos ad prohibitionem recipiendorum alimentorum sufficere credebamus; et hoc est, quod stolus insperatus apparens non nisi paucos nostros invenerit. Verum tamen isti ipsi pauci et adhuc pauciores quibusdam horum diverso langore gravatis effecti, antequam Varis caperetur, tres ammiradas, qui totam Calabriam depopulabantur, [et] numerosam multitudinem Saracenorum prostverunt et magnam ve-stratibus salutem divino brachio contulerunt; qua re non solum Calabritanorum Hismahelitum ingens extunc facta est diminucio, set et Barensium potentatus omnimodo dissolutio, hac per id ad capiendum facilis adinvenzione.<sup>20</sup>

Louis II (or should we say Anastasius) explains the reason for the absence of his soldiers at Bari when the Byzantine fleet arrived at this city. He explained that the arrival of the Byzantines was unexpected. As a result, some of his soldiers had been sent home, possibly for the winter. Additionally, a disease struck the Frankish army, spreading among the soldiers. However, Louis II emphasises that despite the weakness of his forces, they bravely resisted the Muslims, managing to destroy three of their units that were plundering Calabria. This contributed to the subsequent conquest of Bari, making it easier.

<sup>17</sup> V.N. VLYSSIDOU, *Contribution à l'étude de la politique étrangère de Basile I<sup>er</sup> au cours de la décennie 867–877*, ΒΣΥΜ 4, 1981, p. 304–306; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 296, 300.

<sup>18</sup> Especially since the Muslims were led by enterprising and dangerous emirs from Bari, who saw Apulia as the direction for their conquest. C. HEATH, *Third/Ninth-Century Violence: 'Saracens' and Sawdān in Erchempert's Historia*, *ALM* 27.1, 2015, p. 24–40; T. WOLIŃSKA, *Próby...*, p. 154–155.

<sup>19</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 115–116; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 391.

<sup>20</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 116; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 391.

Later in that letter other accusations were made, directly and personally aimed at the commander of the Byzantine fleet. The post was held by the patrician and *droungarios* of the *basilikon ploimon* Niketas Ooryphas<sup>21</sup>, who had offended Louis II by addressing him as a king, not as an emperor. The reasons behind the behaviour of the Byzantine commander are not explicitly stated, but it is likely that he assumed Louis II would support his forces with a large army, which did not materialise. Additionally, Niketas was perhaps also meant to escort the daughter of the ruler of the West to Constantinople, which was supposed to take place after the allies conquered Bari<sup>22</sup>. However, when it became evident that the Carolingian emperor did not fulfil his promise, and after Niketas failed to capture the city, the Byzantine admiral simply sailed away. This may be the reason behind the words of Louis II, who asked Basil I that the Byzantine emperor should not hold Niketas responsible for his act. He further focuses the attention on matters relating to this Byzantine commander and his actions at sea:

Et Niceta quidem patricius, Hadriano loci servatore cum classibus destinato, accepta quasi pro huiusmodi re occasione, multas predas ab ipsis Sclavenis abstulit, et quibusdam castris dirructis, eorum homines captivos adduxit<sup>23</sup>.

Louis II and his court presented in this passage an excellent discernment of the activities of the Byzantine fleet. He had known that Niketas Ooryphas was sent with a fleet to defend the Adriatic Sea, which he accomplished by attacking the Slavs, whose castles he destroyed and plundered, additionally taking the defeated into slavery. It also shows that a part of the Byzantine fleet remained in Italy ...*Hadriano loci servatore cum classibus destinato*...<sup>24</sup>. The topic of Slavs also appears later in that source, where the author provides the following information:

Sane spiritalem tuam nolumus ignorare fraternitatem super castra nostra dirructa et tot populis Sclavenie nostre in captivitate sine qualibet paritate subtractis, supra quam dici possit animum nostrum commotum. Non enim congrue gestum est, ut eisdem Sclavenis nostris cum navibus suis apud Barim in procinctu communis utilitatis consistentibus et nichil adversi sibi aliunde imminere putantibus, tam impie domi sua queque diriperentur, sibique contingerent, que si praenoscerent, nequaquam prorsus incurrerent. Qua de re desiderabilem dileccionem tuam hortamur et ammonemus, quod mox id corrigere iubet et ipsos captivos ad propria cum suis reduci precipiat, si caritatis vinculum nunquam inter nos fore cupiat dissolvendum. Nullus enim mortalium hactenus imperium nostrum talia commisisse recolit; ac per hoc nisi correctio iussione tua preveniat, iuste severitatis nostre

<sup>21</sup> PMZ, vol. III, p. 441–442; V.N. VLYSSIDOU, *Réactions à la politique occidentale de Basile I<sup>er</sup> et formation d'un nouveau haut commandement de l'armée*, ΒΣυμ 5, 1983, p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 302–303.

<sup>23</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 117; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 392.

<sup>24</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 305.

proxima ulcio procul dubio subsequetur; nec poterit remanere penitus imputium, quod in contemptum nostrum tanta temeritate constant fuisse patratum.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, there is a piece of information that the Byzantine fleet, under the command of the mentioned above Niketas Ooryphas, arrived in the Adriatic Sea, and its actions brought harm to the Slavs under Louis II. The Frankish emperor even put himself in the role of the defender of the Slavs and tried to force the Byzantines to release the captives with all their property. From the time of the Treaty of Aachen, both empires claimed sovereignty over Dalmatia, where Byzantium, under Basil I, gained the upper hand<sup>26</sup>. Other historical sources add much more information. The main tasks of Niketas Ooryphas in the Adriatic Sea were to repel the Saracen forces from Ragusa (Dubrovnik), and to drive them out of this basin, as well as to curb the independence of the local Slavs<sup>27</sup>. This Byzantine commander included the Slavic inhabitants of southern Dalmatia in his operations against Muslims, and later tried to use their potential to regain Byzantine power in Apulia<sup>28</sup>. However, during the actions against Bari in 870–871, the Croats under the command of Domagoy (864–876) acted as allies of the Carolingians, providing them with their boats, and contributed significantly to the capture of the city<sup>29</sup>. Louis II does

<sup>25</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 117–118; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 392.

<sup>26</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 301–302, 305–307.

<sup>27</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, 29, p. 126–128; *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Liber Quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris Amplectitur*, 53, ed. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin 2011 [= CFHB, 42] (cetera: *Vita Basilii*), p. 190–194; IOANNES ZONARAS, *Epitome historiarum libri XIII–XVIII*, ed. T. BUTTNER-WOBST, Leipzig 1897 [= CSHB, 49], p. 425; IOANNIS SKYLITZAE, *Synopsis Historiarum*, 26, ed. I. THURN, Berlin–New York 1973 [= CFHB, 5], p. 146–147; Đ. JANKOVIĆ, *Crpnsko pomorje od 7. do 10. stoljeća*, Beograd 2007, p. 61; D. DŽINO, *From Justinian to Branimir. The Making of the Middle Ages in Dalmatia*, London–New York 2021 [= SMHC], p. 222; J. PRYOR, E. JEFFREYS, *The Age of the Δρομων. The Byzantine Navy, ca 500–1204*, Brill 2006 [= MMe, 62], p. 49; R. HARRIS, *Dubrovnik. A History*, London 2006, p. 33; I.D. STEVOVIĆ, *Byzantium, Byzantine Italy and Cities on the Eastern Coast of the Adriatic: The Case of Kotor and Dubrovnik*, 3PBI 39, 2001, p. 165; T. WOLIŃSKA, *Próby...*, p. 156; V.N. VLYSSIDOU, *Contribution à...*, p. 303; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 286–287.

<sup>28</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, 29, p. 126–128; *Vita Basilii*, 55, p. 198–200; D. DŽINO, *From Justinian...*, p. 222; J. FINE, *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Michigan 2000, p. 257; F. CURTA, *A Note on Trade and Trade Centers in the Eastern and Northern Adriatic Region Between the Eighth and the Ninth Century*, HAM 16, 2010, p. 267; T. WOLIŃSKA, *Próby...*, p. 156; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 301.

<sup>29</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, 29, p. 128; IOHANNES DIACONUS, *Chronicon Venetum et Gradense usque ad a. 1008*, ed. G.H. PERTZ, Stuttgart 1846 [= MGH.SS, 7], p. 19; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 392; *Vita Basilii*, 55, p. 200; G. MUSCA, *L'emirato...*, p. 73, 96; E. KISLINGER, *Ersster und zweiter Sieger. Zum Byzantinisch-Karolingischen bündnis bezüglich Bari 870–871*, 3PBI 50, 2013, p. 254; D. DŽINO, *From Justynian...*, p. 220; J. PRYOR, E. JEFFREYS, *The Age of...*, p. 49; M. BRKOVIĆ, *Diplomatička analiza papinskih pisama druge polovice IX. stoljeća destinatarima u Hrvatskoj*, RZav 43, 2001, p. 31; T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the Time of Basil I (867–886)*, SSBP 1, 2013, p. 33–53; B. KREUTZ, *Before...*, p. 45.

not mention this in his letter. He does not even describe who led these Slavic warriors or how numerous their fleet was. Furthermore, he did not regard the Slavic fleet as a replacement for the Byzantine naval forces.

In the subsequent fragment of this source the author of the letter again demonstrates an excellent understanding of the maritime affairs related to southern Italy. Moreover, he proposes a strategy to expel Muslims from the Apennine Peninsula, in which the Byzantine fleet should play the central role:

De cetero, frater karissime, noveris cum virtute summi Opificis [nostri] exercitum nostrum, ordine prenotato Bari triumphis nostris summissa, Saracenos Tarenti pariter et Calabrie mox mirabiliter humiliasse simul et comminuisse, hos celerius duce Deo penitus contriturum, si a mari prohibiti fuerint escarum ammictere copias vel etiam classium a Panoramio vel Africa suscipere multitudines. Quapropter specialis frateritas tua, quia per siccam nostrorum cunei populorum in utrisque locis vix aut nunquam deerunt, studeat necesse est sufficientem stolum destinere, qui et illos a recipiendis alimentis a mare coerceat, et si plurimas contingerit, sicuti sepe nunciatur, pessime gentis advenire catervas, facilius illis resistere, divino munito brachio valeat. Nam iste stratigus Georgius, licet sollerter invigilet et strenue pro suo posse decertare, non tamen sufficere obviare, si plures inimicorum naves ex parte qualibet apparuerint, non videlicet nisi pauca prorsus chelandia possidens.<sup>30</sup>

The author had found a solution to the problem of the activities of Muslim forces in Italy. He suggested cutting them off from the sea, from the supplies and the military reinforcements that they were receiving from Palermo and Africa. Here, according to the source, the role of the Byzantine fleet was to be crucial. Basil I should send a sufficiently large fleet to Italy because only a significant force could prevent the Muslims from raiding. The Carolingian and his court also draw attention to the fact that the Byzantine patrician and *strategios* Georgios<sup>31</sup>, who was cooperating with the Franks, despite his good intentions had too few warships under his command to have full control over the coast. The topic of war against the pirates is continued in the next fragment:

Et quia nonnulli Sarracenorum Panormi latrunculi cum sagenis solacio et refugio iam memoratorum Neapolitanorum freti, per Tirrenum mare debachantur, oportet ut et hos capiendos tue fraternitatis stolum sine dilacione mictatur. Isti sunt qui et Calabritanis Saracenis indefesse stipendia prebent, et hiis qui Panormi sunt, auxilia cotidiana ministrant; unde si capiantur, sagenae maxima ex parte Sarracenorum tam Panormi quam Calabrie constringuntur. Nos enim Calabria Deo auctore purgata, Siciliam pristinae disponimus secundum commune placitum restituere libertati; quod tanto erit utrumque facilius, quanto illi, divina dextera captis navibus et latrunculis, fuerint amplius et celerius infirmati. Nulla ergo tarditas, frater karissime, nulla mora in mictendo stolo proveniant, ne vel per escarum

<sup>30</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 119–120; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 393–394.

<sup>31</sup> *Georgios: Georgius. Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit Online [online]*, ed. R.J. LILIE, C. LUDWIG, B. ZIELKE, T. PRATSCH, Berlin–Boston 2013, <https://www.degruyter.com/database/PMBZ/entry/PMBZ24246/html> [31 VII 2023].

a mari receptarum habundanciam vel per adventanicum Agarenorum classium numerositatem horum vires nin infirmentur, set roberentu,r et sic roberentur, ut postea difficilius infirmentur. Set et frustra nostri per siccam indefesse certamen arripiunt, etsi sic ipsi per equora fuerint aliqua stipendia vel copiosam fortitudinem consecuti.<sup>32</sup>

The author of our letter saw the collaboration with the Neapolitans as fundamental to the successes of the Saracens of Palermo on the Tyrrhenian Sea, as the former provided the Saracens with shelter and support. The Byzantine fleet, in his words, should therefore catch and destroy the ships of the Muslims and their supporters because with their help the Saracens deliver supplies to their forces in Calabria and Sicily. The task of depriving the Muslims of the means of transport, which could be done by Basil I's men, would subsequently result in regaining by the Christian side full control over Calabria and Palermo. The Carolingian further announced that once the enemies have been removed from mainland Italy, he would take similar actions in Sicily. The Byzantines, according to Louis, should not delay, but as soon as possible crush the forces of the sons of Hagar at sea, and prevent them from coming to the aid of their brethren fighting on the mainland, as well as to block their supply lines. The vision of regaining control over Sicily and Calabria, as proposed by Louis II, was in conflict with Byzantium's rights to these lands, because from the Byzantine perspective only Constantinople could legitimately claim dominion over Calabria and Sicily, and thus had the power to decide the fate of these provinces. It just so happened that at the time of sending this letter Byzantium was fighting on many fronts against the armies of Islam, which stretched the empire's forces too sparsely and made it impossible for Constantinople to regain control of Sicily on its own, or even to expel the Muslims from their bases in Calabria. Louis II was fully aware of this, which is evident in the tone of his letter. He needed, above all, the support of the Byzantine naval forces in his military operations against Tarentum<sup>33</sup>. After the death of Louis II Bari itself had come under the Byzantine rule, when its inhabitants invited George, the Byzantine commander from Otranto, to protect them from the Saracens<sup>34</sup>.

If we look at the entire operation to take Bari only from the perspective of this letter, one could get the wrong impression that the Byzantines behaved extremely passively and that the whole burden of fighting the Muslims fell on the shoulders of the Carolingians. Louis II in his account gives a lot of significant information subjectively. He does not lie, but he presents certain facts in such a way as to present his actions in the most favourable light. Other Latin sources are silent about the activities of the Byzantine fleet at Bari, while Byzantine sources are only somewhat reliable due to the time separating them from the events (mid-10<sup>th</sup> century). The account of the latter confirms that the fleet of Byzantium and Slavs operated in

<sup>32</sup> *Chronicon Salernitanum*, p. 120; *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, p. 394.

<sup>33</sup> ERCHEMPERT, 38, p. 152; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 311–312.

<sup>34</sup> ERCHEMPERT, 38, p. 152.

the Adriatic, and was able to prevail there over the Muslims. Unfortunately, we can tell much more about the fleet's operations in Dalmatia rather than near Bari. Byzantine rule over this province was therefore of a greater priority for Basil I. That is why it is necessary to look at these events and the participation of the Byzantine naval forces in Apulia, precisely through the prism of the great game which was then taking place in the Adriatic<sup>35</sup>.

## Conclusions

The letter of Louis II to Basil I provides us with valuable information relating to both the Byzantine and the Saracen maritime affairs. Concerning the Byzantine fleet, the Carolingian and his court referred to it as *stolus* or *classis*. The latter term is also used to describe the Hagarene forces at sea. In the case of ships used by the sides of the conflict mentioned in the text, the author uses the term *chelandia* for the Byzantine units, while the vessels belonging to the Slavs are described as *naves*<sup>36</sup>. That name is also used to describe Muslim ships and boats, where the author is adding yet another term – *sagenae* (which may be the same as *naves*). This is clear evidence that the author of the letter delimited the boundaries between the professional Byzantine fleet with real warships, such as *chelandia* galleys, and the irregular, pirate naval forces of enemies, the Slavs, and the Saracens<sup>37</sup>. The enemies of Byzantines as we know, used various types of vessels, because apart from ships, an important element of their equipment were boats, maybe hidden under the term *sagenae*<sup>38</sup>. Lightships and boats of the Arabs and Slavs from the Adriatic, used primarily for piratical activities, did not take require crews as large as those of the classic Byzantine *dromons*. The ships that were part of the Byzantine naval forces in the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries had crews numbering in the order of: *pamphilia* between 110 and 120 people, *chelandion* – 160, and *dromon* up to 300<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 310.

<sup>36</sup> On this type of ship: B. KREUTZ, *Ships, Shipping, and the Implications of Change in the Early Medieval Mediterranean*, V 7, 1976, p. 95; Ch. MAKRYPOULIAS, *The Navy in the Works of Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, GA 6, 1995, p. 162; V. CHRISTIDES, *Military Intelligence in Arabo-Byzantine Naval Warfare*, [in:] *Byzantium at War (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>)*, ed. K. TSIKNAKIS, Athens 1997, p. 276; D. MOUTSOS, *Greek Χελανδιον and Latin Celundria*, B 62, 1992, p. 412–413; E. EICKHOFF, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittelmeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650–1040)*, Berlin 1966, p. 136–137.

<sup>37</sup> B. KREUTZ, *Ships...*, p. 101.

<sup>38</sup> The term *sagenae* can also be used for both boats and ships. E.A. SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Hildesheim–New York 1975, p. 975; B. KREUTZ, *Ships...*, p. 101–103; R. JURIC, *Ranohrvatski brodovi iz Nina*, RZav 37, 1995, p. 77–91; R. JURIC, S. SUTLOVIC, B. VILHAR, *The Early Croatian Boats from Nin*, Diad 18–19, 1997, p. 379–386; Vessels hiding under this name were also used by the inhabitants of Amalfi. *Vita Athanasii episcopi Neapolitani*, ed. G. WAITZ, Hannoverae 1878 [= MGH.SRLI], p. 446: *...venit cum viginti sagenis et tulit inde sanctum virum...*

<sup>39</sup> J. PRYOR, E. JEFFREYS, *The Age of...*, p. 254–262; J. PRYOR, *Types of Ships and their Performance Capabilities*, [in:] *Travel in Byzantine World*, ed. R. MACRIDES, Birmingham 2000, p. 39–41.

Crews of Arab or Slavic vessels however could count from 10 to 120 people, and those vessels were usually smaller than those of the Byzantines<sup>40</sup>. Paradoxically, size was one of their strengths. Smaller ships could move in places inaccessible to the larger ones, where the latter would be in danger of getting stuck. Therefore, they could be used on navigable rivers, shallow bays, or coastal swamps and backwaters. The second element ensuring their effectiveness was their number. Several units could be used for boarding combat in a similar way as the Vikings, Rus, or the Cossacks did contemporaneously. Slow and large enemy galleys made for a particularly easy prey. The final element was the great use of the knowledge of the waters on which the operations were carried out. That was especially important in preparing ambushes or delivering supplies when the enemy loosened the blockade (see Bari, the siege of which lasted for several years, because it was receiving help by sea).

The text also mentions three commanders of the Byzantine fleet, *drungarios* Niketas Ooryphas, and the *strategos* Georgios, and Hadrianos, who must have been known to Emperor Louis II and his courtiers. The shows that they may have met, since Ooryphas managed to offend Louis, and Georgios complained about the weakness of his naval forces and the insufficient number of the *chelandia* warships. Niketas Ooryphas caused a stir during his meeting with the Western emperor, but his competence as *drungarios* of the fleet allowed him to represent the majesty of imperial power, both in diplomacy and in war. Although this commander was not Basil I's favourite at first, he was nonetheless entrusted with missions in the Adriatic as well as, later on, with transporting his future daughter-in-law to Constantinople from Italy. Ooryphas managed to chase away the followers of Islam from Ragusa, thus restoring the credibility of the Byzantine naval forces. It can also be assumed that it was probably on his orders that both Georgios and Hadrianos took part in the blockade of Bari, where they were accompanied by Slavs from Dalmatia, including Croats led by Domagoy.

The examined letter is an interesting source from the point of view of research of the naval history of the Byzantine fleet in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Its author, regardless of whether we recognize here the authorship of Anastasius Bibliothecarius or Louis II, was well-versed in the ills of Byzantium in Italy, especially those related to the naval forces. The author of the words addressed to Basil had realised that the activities of Muslims in the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Seas were linked to their havens in Sicily and Africa. He therefore outlined a logical plan to expel the Saracens from Southern Italy, particularly from Campania (Naples) and Calabria, in which the Byzantine fleet was to play a crucial role. The operation was envisaged by Louis (or Anastasius) to enable the transition to the subsequent joint land operations of the Franks and Greeks in Sicily and the re-capture of Palermo. In this

<sup>40</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, 31, p. 150; J. PRYOR, E. JEFFREYS, *The Age of...*, p. 254–262; J. PRYOR, *Types...*, p. 39–41.



context the letter mentions that town as a place strongly associated with Muslim pirates. However, the plan was wishful, and its author did not take into account the dispersal of the Byzantine navy, which at that time had fought against the forces of the Abbasids, the Aghlabids, the emirate of Crete, and finally the Slavic pirates in the Adriatic Sea. These factors, despite the later successes, effectively prevented the fleet from aiding in the re-conquest of Sicily and halting the progress of Islam on the island. In addition, there was a growing aversion between the Franks and Byzantines, which resulted in the collapse of plans for the alliance. Ultimately, the extinction of the Carolingian Italian line with Louis II, who during his lifetime did not manage to completely remove the Muslims from Italy, put an end to the straightforward plan. Finally, it is worth noting that Louis II was not mistaken about the support at sea from the Byzantine side during the siege of Bari, which was provided to him, albeit not directly. The Byzantines confronted both the Muslim and the Slavic pirates in the Adriatic, employing their considerable naval forces for this purpose. This in turn drew these people away from helping the Emirate of Bari, which ultimately ensured the success of the Western emperor.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. U. WESTERBERGH, Stockholm 1956.
- Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Liber Quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris Amplectitur*, ed. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin 2011 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 42].
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1993 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1].
- IOANNES ZONARAS, *Epitome historiarum libri XIII–XVIII*, ed. T. BUTTNER-WOBST, Leipzig 1897 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*, 49].
- Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. THURN, Berlin–New York 1973 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 5].
- IOHANNES DIACONUS, *Chronicon Venetum et Gradense usque ad a. 1008*, ed. G.H. PERTZ, Stuttgart 1846 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 7].
- The Little History of the Lombards of Benevento by Erchempert. A Critical Edition and Translation of ‘Ystoriola Longobardorum Beneventum degentium*, ed. L.A. BERTO, Routledge 2021.
- Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, ed. W. HENZE, Berolini 1928 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae Karolini aevi V*, 7.2], p. 385–394.
- Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches. Von 565–1453*, vol. I.2, *Regesten von 867–1025*, ed. F. DÖLGER, A.E. MÜLLER, München 2003.
- Vita Athanasii episcopi Neapolitani*, ed. G. WAITZ, Hannoverae 1878 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX*].

## Secondary Literature

- ARNALDI G., *Impero d'occidente e impero d'oriente nella lettera di Ludovico II a Basilio I*, "La Cultura. Rivista di Filosofia, Letteratura e Storia" 1, 1963, p. 404–424.
- BONDIOLI L.M., *Islamic Bari between the Aghlabids and the Two Empires*, [in:] *The Aghlabids and their Neighbors. Art and Material Culture in Ninth-Century North Africa*, ed. G.D. ANDERSON, C. FENWICK, M. ROSSER-OWEN, S. LAMINE, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1, The Near and Middle East, 122], p. 470–490, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356047\\_024](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356047_024)
- BRKOVIĆ M., *Diplomatička analiza papinskih pisama druge polovice IX. stoljeća destinatarima u Hrvatskoj*, "Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru" 43, 2001, p. 29–44.
- CHRISTIDES V., *Military Intelligence in Arabo-Byzantine Naval Warfare*, [in:] *Byzantium at War (9<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup>)*, ed. K. TSIRNAKIS, Athens 1997, p. 269–281.
- CURTA F., *A Note on Trade and Trade Centers in the Eastern and Northern Adriatic Region Between the Eighth and the Ninth Century*, "Hortus artium medievalium" 16, 2010, p. 267–276, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.HAM.3.22>
- DŽINO D., *From Justinian to Branimir. The Making of the Middle Ages in Dalmatia*, London–New York 2021 [= Studies in Medieval History and Culture], <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429299162>
- EICKHOFF E., *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittelmeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie (650–1040)*, Berlin 1966, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110818635>
- FANNING S., *Imperial Diplomacy between Francia and Byzantium: The Letter of Louis II to Basil I in 871*, "Cithara" 34, 1994, p. 3–17.
- FINE J., *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Michigan 2000.
- GANTNER C., *Ad utriusque imperii unitatem? Anastasius Bibliothecarius as a Broker between Two Cultures and Three Courts in the Ninth Century*, "Medieval Worlds" 13, 2021, p. 36–53, [https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds\\_no13\\_2021s36](https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no13_2021s36)
- GANTNER C., *Kaiser Ludwig II. von Italien und Byzanz*, [in:] *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge, Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen*, vol. II, *Menschen und Worte*, ed. F. DAIM, C. GASTGEBER, D. HERHER, C. RAPF, Mainz 2018 [= Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident, 9.2], p. 103–112.
- GAY J., *L'Italie méridionale et l'empire Byzantin depuis l'avènement de Basile I<sup>er</sup> jusqu'à la prise de Bari par les Normands (867–1071)*, Paris 1904.
- Georgios: Georgius. Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit Online [online]*, ed. R.J. LILIE, C. LUDWIG, B. ZIELKE, T. PRATSCH, Berlin–Boston 2013, <https://www.degruyter.com/database/PMBZ/entry/PMBZ24246/html> [31 VII 2023].
- GRANIER T., *La captivité de l'empereur Louis II à Bénévét (13 août – 17 septembre 871) dans les sources des IX<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles: l'écriture de l'histoire, de la fausse nouvelle au récit exemplaire*, [in:] *Faire l'événement au Moyen Âge*, [s.l.] 2007, p. 13–39, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pup.5703>
- HARRIS R., *Dubrovnik. A History*, London 2006.
- HEATH C., *Third/Ninth-Century Violence: 'Saracens' and Sawdān in Erchemper's Historia*, "Al Masaq" 27.1, 2015, p. 24–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09503110.2015.1002231>
- HENZE W., *Über den Brief Kaiser Ludwigs II. an den Kaiser Basilius I.*, "Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde" 35, 1910, p. 663–676.
- JANKOVIĆ Đ., *Srpsko pomorje od 7. do 10. stoleća*, Beograd 2007.

- JURIĆ R., *Ranohrvatski brodovi iz Nina*, “Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru” 37, 1995, p. 77–91.
- JURIĆ R., SUTLOVIĆ S., VILHAR B., *The Early Croatian Boats from Nin*, “Diadora” 18–19, 1997, p. 379–386.
- KISLINGER E., *Erster und zweiter Sieger. Zum Byzantinisch-Karolingischen Bündnis bezüglich Bari 870–871*, “Зборник радова Византолошког института” / “Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta” 50, 2013, p. 245–258, <https://doi.org/10.2298/ZRVI1350245K>
- KLEINCLAUSZ A., *La lettre de Louis II à Basile le Macédonien*, “Le Moyen Âge. Revue trimestrelle d’histoire et de philologie” 17, 1904, p. 45–53.
- KOLDITZ S., *Gesandtschaften, Briefe und Konzilien in den Beziehungen Ludwigs II. von Italien zu Byzanz*, [in:] *Von der Ostsee zum Mittelmeer. Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte für Wolfgang Huschner*, ed. S. ROEBERT, Leipzig 2019, p. 289–310.
- KREUTZ B., *Before the Normans. Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, [s.l.] 1996.
- KREUTZ B., *Ships, Shipping, and the Implications of Change in the Early Medieval Mediterranean*, “Viator” 7, 1976, p. 79–100, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301585>
- LAVERMICOCCA N., *Bari bizantina Origine, declino, eredità di una capitale mediterranea*, Bari 2017.
- LOUNGHIS T.C., *The Byzantine War Navy and the West, Fifth to Twelfth Centuries*, [in:] *A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea. Aspects of War, Diplomacy, and Military Elites*, ed. G. THEOTOKIS, A. YILDIZ, Leiden–Boston 2018, p. 21–43, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004362048\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004362048_003)
- ΜΑΚΡΥΠΟΥΛΙΑΣ Ch., *The Navy in the Works of Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, “Graeco-Arabica” 6, 1995, p. 152–171.
- METCALFE A., *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*, Edinburgh 2009 [= *The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys*], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748629114>
- MOUTSOS D., *Greek Χελωνδιον and Latin Celundria*, “Byzantion” 62, 1992, p. 402–413.
- MUSCA G., *L’emirato di Bari, 847–871*, Bari 1964.
- POUPARDIN R., *La lettre de Louis II à Basile le Macédonien. À propos d’un livre récent*, “Le Moyen Âge. Revue trimestrelle d’histoire et de philologie” 16, 1903, p. 185–202.
- Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. Erste Abteilung (867–1025)*, vol. III, *Leon (#4271) – Placentius (#6265)*, ed. R.-J. LILIE, C. LUDWIG, T. PRATSCH, Berlin–New York 2000.
- PRYOR J., *Types of Ships and their Performance Capabilities*, [in:] *Travel in Byzantine World*, ed. R. MACRIDES, Birmingham 2000, p. 39–41.
- PRYOR J., JEFFREYS E., *The Age of the Δρωμων. The Byzantine Navy, ca 500–1204*, Brill 2006 [= *The Medieval Mediterranean*, 62], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047409939>
- SETTON K.M., *On the Raids of the Moslems in the Aegean in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries and their Alleged Occupation of Athens*, “American Journal of Archaeology” 58.4, 1954, p. 311–319, <https://doi.org/10.2307/500384>
- SOPHOCLES E.A., *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Hildesheim–New York 1975.
- SORANZO G., *La concezione dell’ autorità imperiale nella lettera di Lodovico II a Basilio I (a. 871)*, [in:] *Atti del II Congresso Nazionale di Studi Romani*, vol. II, Roma 1931, p. 115–124.
- STEVOVIĆ I.D., *Byzantium, Byzantine Italy and Cities on the Eastern Coast of the Adriatic: The Case of Kotor and Dubrovnik*, “Зборник радова Византолошког института” / “Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta” 39, 2001, p. 165–182, <https://doi.org/10.2298/ZRVI0239165S>

- TOBIAS N., *Basil I (867–886), the Founder of the Macedonian Dynasty: a Study of the Political and Military History of the Byzantine Empire in the Ninth Century* (Ph.D. Thesis, Rutgers. The State University of New Jersey–New Brunswick 1969).
- VASILIEV A.A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d'Amorium (820–867)*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Brussels 1935 [= *Corpus bruxellense historiae byzantinae*].
- VASILIEV A.A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II, *Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867–959 (253–348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Brussels 1968 [= *Corpus bruxellense historiae byzantinae*].
- VLYSSIDOU V.N., *Contribution à l'étude de la politique étrangère de Basile I<sup>er</sup> au cours de la décennie 867–877*, "Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα / Byzantina Symmeikta" 4, 1981, p. 301–315.
- VLYSSIDOU V.N., *Réactions à la politique occidentale de Basile I<sup>er</sup> et formation d'un nouveau haut commandement de l'armée*, "Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα / Byzantina Symmeikta" 5, 1983, p. 127–141.
- WOLIŃSKA T., *Próby stworzenia sojuszu antysaraceńskiego na południu Italii (IX – początek X wieku)*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 97.2, 2006, p. 145–164.
- ŽIVKOVIĆ T., *On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the Time of Basil I (867–886)*, "Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana" 1, 2013, p. 33–53.


**Marcin Böhm**

University of Opole  
Faculty of Social Studies  
Institute of History  
ul. Strzelców Bytomskich 2  
45-084 Opole, Polska/Poland  
mabohm@wp.pl





Dragan Gjalevski (Skopje)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2245-7920>

## STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE PERIOD: A *LIMITROPHE* POLICY REINTRODUCED?\*

**Abstract.** In order to maintain or improve its political stability and overall might every state conducts certain policies, both domestic and foreign, throughout its history. They are usually a result of a systematic planning, encompassing in the process multiple state sectors. The Byzantine Empire was no exception. Throughout centuries of existence, the imperial government implemented numerous reforms and carried out reorganisation in the military, administrative and fiscal departments, with the intention to improve its governance. Creation of the military commands – *strategides*, *thémata* and *tágmata* corps are only some of the changes, and their implementation certainly required prior planning in accordance with the requirements and capacity of the state. In relation to foreign policy, starting from the mid-ninth century, a formation of a number of client states that were more or less politically dependent on Constantinople can be observed on the Byzantine borders; their existence ended around the mid-eleventh century. This paper aims to examine the process of establishing client states on the Byzantine borders, i.e., whether it was a policy initiated and subsequently applied by the imperial government as a result of some pre-determined planning, or whether it was just an *ad hoc* solution.

**Keywords:** Byzantine Empire, Middle Byzantine period, Byzantine diplomacy, strategic planning, limitrophe policy, Byzantine client states

Every state, throughout its history, undertakes certain policies, both domestic and foreign, with the intention of ensuring its own survival and in order to maintain or improve its overall political and military might. These policies are usually a result of systematic short-term and long-term planning, covering during this complex process one or several state sectors. In that context, polities establish a concept that encompasses ideas, plans, methods, techniques and means, and through the art of governance implement them in its domestic and foreign affairs in accordance with the resources they possess<sup>1</sup>. The Byzantine Empire was

\* This paper was presented on the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Venice and Padua, 22–27 August 2022.

<sup>1</sup> According to A.M. KJÆR, *Governance*, Cambridge 2004, p. 10–11, *governance is the capacity of government to make and implement policy, in other words, to steer society*. About theories of governance,

no exception to this rule. During its millennial existence the imperial government had implemented numerous reforms and carried out reorganisations in the military, administrative and fiscal departments, in order to improve its governance, which helped the Empire to endure many critical moments. Creation of military commands – *strategides*, *thémata*<sup>2</sup> or *tágmata*<sup>3</sup> corps are only a part of these changes and their implementation certainly required prior military, administrative, economic and financial planning in accordance with the requirements and capabilities of the state. In relation to foreign policy during the Middle Byzantine Period, starting from the mid-ninth century, a formation of a ring of client states on the Byzantine borders can be observed. These were politically dependent on Constantinople, and their existence ended around the mid-eleventh century. The paper aims to research the process of the client state formation on the Byzantine borders in this period, whether it was an established policy or just an *ad hoc* solution, and to determine the factors that influenced it. The paper also aims to study the ends (political and military) which were intended to be achieved, the impact the client state formation had on the military capacity, defensive capability and overall security of the Byzantine Empire, and the causes for its disappearance.

There is ample evidence in the sources in relation to the matter of state-level planning in the Byzantine Empire and it can be observed in the domestic policies that were implemented in the administrative, judiciary, economic, financial and military sphere. A clear example of military planning is the preparation process for an upcoming campaign noted in *The Book of Ceremonies* (mobilisation of troops, the financial budget and logistics), for instance, the naval expedition of 911 which was probably aimed against North Syria and was supposed to return via Crete, the Cretan campaign of 949, or the expedition in Langobardia in 935<sup>4</sup>. Another

---

especially *étatist* model of governance, and policy processes see J. PIERRE, B.G. PETERS, *Governing Complex Societies. Trajectories and Scenarios*, Basingstoke–New York 2005, p. 1–48. For the state-centric theory of governance see S. BELL, A. HINDMOOR, *Rethinking Governance. The Centrality of the State in Modern Society*, Cambridge 2009, p. 1–19. For a general overview on theories of governance and policy processes see J. PIERRE, B.G. PETERS, *Governance, Politics and the State*, <sup>2</sup>London 2020; *Handbook on Theories of Governance*, ed. C. ANSELL, J. TORFING, <sup>2</sup>Cheltenham–Northampton 2022. See also, P. KATSAMUNSKA, *The Concept of Governance and Public Governance Theories*, EA1 2, 2016, p. 133–141; G. STOKER, *Governance as Theory: Five Propositions*, ISSJ 50, 1998, p. 17–28; W. WALTERS, *Some Critical Notes on “Governance”*, SPE 73, 2004, p. 27–46.

<sup>2</sup> For *strategides* and *thémata* in J. HALDON, L. BRUBAKER, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850. A History*, Cambridge 2011, p. 726–728, 744–771.

<sup>3</sup> J.F. HALDON, *Byzantine Pretorians. An Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and the Tagmata, c.580–900*, Bonn 1984 [= IIB, 3], p. 228–328; H.-J. KÜHN, *Die Byzantinische Armee im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Organisation der Tagmata*, Wien 1991 [= B.G.E., 2], p. 47–122.

<sup>4</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENNETOS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. A. MOFFATT, M. TALL, Leiden 2012 [= BAus, 18] (cetera: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *The Book of Ceremonies*), p. 651–678. For analysis about the expedition of 911, as well as the sources, origins and purpose of the document

example of military planning can be seen in the accepting of a general strategy for the upcoming campaign, an overall plan for the army march from imperial territory or the forward camp into the land of the enemy, for crossing a narrow mountainous gorge, defile, river or bridge, or tactical deployment of troops on the field prior to an engaging battle: all these are military activities where an advance planning is needed. Evidence of such planning in warfare is plentiful. Maurice’s *Strategikon* points how a *general is wise who before entering into war carefully studies the enemy, and can guard against his strong points and take advantage of his weaknesses*<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, it suggest that military commanders must make *plans to defeat the enemy not only by arms but also through their food and drink, making the water unfit to drink and poisoning the grain*<sup>6</sup>. George of Pisidia notes this type of planning in the Sassanian campaigns of Heraclius (610–641)<sup>7</sup>. The military manual titled as Ἀνονόμου Βιβλίον τακτικόν (Anonymous book on tactics), translated today as “Campaign organisation and tactics”<sup>8</sup>, presents various tactics, as well as other practical advice, for a General of an army that are necessary to plan and successfully lead a military campaign. An example that there was awareness among military officers of the necessity for pre-campaign planning is found in the story in *the History of Leo the Deacon* about John I Tzimiskes’ (969–976) military preparations in 971 against the Rus in Bulgaria where the emperor declared that

I myself am well aware that to go into battle without due deliberation, but in a bold and arrogant manner, is particularly likely to result in danger and ruinous destruction. On the other hand, when the situation is, as it were, on a razor’s edge, and does not give an opportunity to act according to one’s wishes, then I think you too will agree with me that it is necessary to seize first this moment and take good care of our own affairs, since you have acquired great experience of the varying and shifting fortunes of battles. If then you will heed me as I counsel a better course of action, while the Scythians have lapsed into indolence, as yet unaware of our approach, let us seize the opportunity and victory will follow upon our passage through the gorge. For if they should perceive us when we were about to pass through, and should deploy themselves into ranks to oppose us in the narrow defile, the situation would not turn out well for us, but would lead to dire straits and difficulties<sup>9</sup>.

see J.F. HALDON, *Theory and Practice in Tenth-Century Military Administration. Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the Book of Ceremonies*, TM 13, 2000, p. 240–242, 265–268.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, VII, A.25–27, ed. G.T. DENNIS, Wien 1981 [= CFHB, 17] (cetera: *Strategikon*), p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> *Strategikon*, VIII, 2.99, p. 301.

<sup>7</sup> GEORGI PISIDAE, *Expeditio Persica, Bellum Avaricum, Heraclias*, II. 46–48, 179–181, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonnae 1836 [= CSHB], p. 15, 20.

<sup>8</sup> *Campaign Organization and Tactics*, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington D.C. 1985 [= CFHB.SW, 25], p. 246–327.

<sup>9</sup> *The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, trans. A.-M. TALBOT, D.F. SULLIVAN, Washington D.C. 2005 [= DOS, 41] (cetera: LEO THE DEACON), p. 177–179.



However, all of these examples are actually short-term planning. There is also another type of planning that we distinguish today, one that covers the political and military ends of a state and the process of their achievement over a longer period of time, to which we refer today as state, national or grand strategy<sup>10</sup>, a feature of statecraft<sup>11</sup>. The current theory is that this type of planning is not typical for all polities, and, as some scholars are emphasising, its presence can be observed also in the past only in states that have existed for centuries, like the Roman Empire / Byzantine Empire (Christian Roman Empire to be more exact), and had established a pattern of behaviour (grand behaviour)<sup>12</sup>, termed as “operational code”<sup>13</sup>. What differentiates this state-level strategy from the modern state phenomenon that we term today as grand strategy is that is unwittingly formed, shaped and implemented by the leading officials of a particular state (while at the same time they are ignorant of its creation and existence), it lacks contemporary complexity and shares only its elementary features, i.e., a pattern of behaviour. The existence of this “pattern” is predetermined by several general factors: ultimate or penultimate state interests, geopolitical position of the state and the overall resources at its disposal, political ideology (if established), military traditions, and the historical and cultural heritage<sup>14</sup>. In regards to the theory that this pattern of military, political and diplomatic behaviour can be observed in the foreign policy of the Byzantine government, as its *modus operandi* of conducting state affairs, maintaining the Roman imperial status<sup>15</sup> and the prerogatives of the *basileus* as a guardian of

<sup>10</sup> For a comprehensive overview in relation to the research of grand strategy see, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy. Policy, Diplomacy and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, R.H. SINNREICH, J. LACEY, Cambridge 2011; *The Making of a Strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, M. KNOX, A. BERNSTEIN, Cambridge 1994; L. FREEDMAN, *Strategy. A History*, New York 2013.

<sup>11</sup> M.A. KAPLAN, *An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft*, WP 4.4, 1952, p. 548.

<sup>12</sup> N. SILOVE, *Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy’*, SecS 27.1, 2018, p. 43–45.

<sup>13</sup> For the Byzantine “operational code” in regards to military affairs see E.N. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 2009, p. 417. That state-level strategy existed in the period of the Principate and Dominate, and afterwards, see E.L. WHEELER, *Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part I*, JMilH 57.1, 1993, p. 7–41, and IDEM, *Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part II*, JMilH 57.2, 1993, p. 215–240.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of these factors in relation to the Byzantine Empire see D. GJALEVSKI, *Byzantine Military Tradition, Diplomacy and Indication of Strategy of Statecraft (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Глa 65.1–2, 2021, p. 10–15. For a general analysis of the factors that influence and shape the grand strategy see W. MURRAY, *Thoughts on Grand Strategy*, [in:] *The Shaping of Grand Strategy. Policy, Diplomacy and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, R.H. SINNREICH, J. LACEY, Cambridge 2011, p. 9–21; W. MURRAY, M. GRIMSLEY, *Introduction: On Strategy*, [in:] *The Making of a Strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, M. KNOX, A. BERNSTEIN, Cambridge 1994, p. 7–23.

<sup>15</sup> The verbal dispute recorded in *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, trans. P. SQUARTITI, Washington D.C. 2007, p. 270, over the prerogatives of Byzantine reign during his second diplomatic mission to Constantinople, are more than a clear indication of this tendency. D.M. NICOL,

Christians and the one true faith<sup>16</sup>, reintegration of lost imperial territories<sup>17</sup>, waging wars by recruiting allies to change the overall balance of power<sup>18</sup>, the identical political approach with the period of the Principate and Dominate concerning pacification of the steppe peoples<sup>19</sup>, existence of different foreign policy depending on region, i.e., acknowledging a military and political difference between Central

---

*The Byzantine Views of Western Europe*, GRBS 8.4, 1967, p. 316, 321. D.M. NICOL, *Byzantine Political Thought*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. J.H. BURNS, Cambridge 2008, p. 58, 62.

<sup>16</sup> This image of the apostolic role of the *basileus* is observed in imperial biographies, such as *Vita Basilii Imperatoris*, 95.1–5, where the author notes that *the emperor did not show careless or indifferent to this apostolic work*. For the image of the *basileus* as a guardian of Christians see S.A. IVANOV, *Religious Missions*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 315, 320; v. 231–239. For the diplomatic aspects of Byzantine missionary work, see D. GJALEVSKI, *Diplomatskite aspekti na vizantiskoto misionerstvo*, [in:] *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium “Days of Justinian I” Skopje, 11–12 November 2016*, ed. M.B. PANOVA, Skopje 2017, p. 66–81; S.A. IVANOV, ‘With the Emperors Help’: *An Open-handed Mission and Byzantine Diplomacy*, [in:] *Cyril and Methodius. Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> November 2013*, ed. A.E.N. TACHIAOS, Thessaloniki 2015, p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> For the Byzantine policy of reconquering Sicily during the reigns of Michael III and Basil I see A.A. VASILIEV, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d’Amorium (820–867)*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Bruxelles 1935, p. 221; IDEM, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II, *Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867–959 (253–348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Bruxelles 1968, p. 21–22. For the unsuccessful Sicilian campaign of Nikephoros II Phocas see LEO THE DEACON, p. 115–117; JOHN SKYLITZES, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, trans. J. WORTLEY, Cambridge 2010 (cetera: SKYLITZES), p. 256.

<sup>18</sup> Author of *On Strategy*, 6.14–17, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military Treatises...* (cetera: *On Strategy*), p. 23, points out that when the Byzantine Empire was *unable to face [the enemy] on in open battle*, to improve its position the government should *stir up neighboring peoples [to wage war] against them*.

<sup>19</sup> M. MAAS, *How the Steppes became Byzantine. Rome and the Eurasian Nomads in Historical Perspective*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca. 250–750*, ed. N. DI COSMO, M. MASS, Cambridge 2018, p. 19–34, esp. 27–28. Byzantine policy towards the Black Sea region in the period between fifth and seventh century was aimed at gaining allies by giving gold, conferring titles and baptism, as indicated by *The Chronicle of John of Malalas*, trans. E. JEFFREYS, M. JEFFREYS, R. SCOTT, Leiden 2017 [= BAus, 4], p. 233, 247, 250; *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, 10, 3.21–106, ed. et trans. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1985, p. 119–123; and NIKEPHOROS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Short History*, 9.1–9, trans. C. MANGO, Washington D.C. 1990 [= CFHB.SW, 13], p. 49–51. For the Byzantine policy in the steppe region until the seventh century, see E. NECHAEVA, *Patterns of Roman Diplomacy with Iran and the Steppe People*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges...*, p. 358–364. An identical Byzantine policy is noted during the tenth century, but now towards the Magyars, Pechenegs and the Rus, as reported in CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 13.14–28, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= CFHB, 1] (cetera: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*); SKYLITZES, p. 231; *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian text*, ed. et trans. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, Massachusetts 1953 (cetera: *Russian Primary Chronicle*), p. 82, 110–111.

Asia (during sixth and seventh century)<sup>20</sup>, Pontic steppe, Caucasus, Sassanian empire and later the Islamic world, the Balkans and Christian Europe, as well as a different approach to resolving conflicts (whether they are political or military in nature), or imposing Byzantine political supremacy in these same regions, is confirmation not only of this tendency, but also of its presence<sup>21</sup>. The frequent shift between the two aspects of Byzantine “carrot and stick” policy – implementation of the imperial “soft” and “hard” power – towards the polities in Southern Italy and Caucasus<sup>22</sup>, or the military efforts conducted by several emperors to reconquer the islands of Sicily and Crete from the Arabs in the period between mid-ninth and mid-eleventh century as a result of the imperial foreign policy named by the scholars with the term “limited ecumenicity”, a change from the “universal ecumenicity”<sup>23</sup>, are another examples. Signing a treaty with hostile and non-hostile polities, usually for as long a period as possible, mostly on a 30-year basis<sup>24</sup>, with at least a political and military clause in its content, is another sign that the officials in the imperial government were acquainted with the idea of long-term strategic planning in relation to foreign policy which was concerned with the overall stability and security of the state.

In fact, the author of *On Envoys* clearly indicates that the Byzantine government had an awareness regarding the process of planning ahead and simulating hypothetical scenarios and their solutions (regardless of how rudimentary this process

<sup>20</sup> M. WHITTON, *Byzantium’s Eurasian Policy in the Age of the Türk Empire*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges...*, p. 271–286; L. QIANG, S. KORDOSIS, *The Geopolitics on the Silk Road: Resurveying the Relationship of the Western Türks with Byzantium through their Diplomatic Communications*, MeW 8, 2018, p. 109–125.

<sup>21</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Information, Disinformation and Delay in Byzantine Diplomacy*, BF 10, 1985, p. 234, and A. KAZHDAN, *The Notion of Byzantine Diplomacy*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. J. SHEPARD, S. FRANKLIN, Aldershot 1992, p. 3–4.

<sup>22</sup> For the Byzantine policy in Southern Italy see F. MARAZZI, *Byzantines and Lombards*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. S. CONSENTINO, Leiden 2021 [= BCBW, 8], p. 169–194; G.A. LOUD, *Byzantium and Southern Italy (876–1000)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 560–582; V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Reign of Basil II*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Leiden–Boston 2003 [= MMe, 45], p. 135–151. For Caucasus see T.W. GREENWOOD, *Armenian Neighbours (600–1045)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 333–364. For Southern Italy and Caucasus during the tenth century see S. RUNCIMAN, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1929, p. 151–202.

<sup>23</sup> T. LOUNGHIS, *Byzantine Diplomacy*, [in:] S. LAMPAKIS, M. LEONTSINI, T. LOUNGHIS, V. VLYSIDOU, *Byzantine Diplomacy. A Seminar*, trans. N. RUSSELL, Athens 2007, p. 46–50.

<sup>24</sup> The validity of the Great treaty of 562 with the Sasanian empire was fifty years. See D.A. MILLER, *Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-making: 500–1025 AD*, Bsl 32, 1971, p. 59. For the Byzantine-Bulgarian treaty of 816 that was signed for thirty years, see *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati, Nomine Fertur, Libri I–IV*, I, 20.4–5, trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Boston–Berlin 2015 [= CFHB.SBe, 53], p. 51. For the Byzantine-Rus treaty of September 2, 911, in *Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 65–69.

was in relation to modern standards), i.e., of predicting the outcome. This procedure was applied to envoys who were preparing to go on a diplomatic mission abroad<sup>25</sup>. This was well known even by the foreign rulers, for instance the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz (953–975) who stated that *I know that he is an ambassador, who has exact instructions what to tell me, what impression to try to create in my mind and which answers to give on questions which his master possibly foresaw he would be asked*<sup>26</sup>. Similar planning is observed in *The Book of Ceremonies* for the military campaign in Southern Italy during the reign of emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944)<sup>27</sup>. An additional confirmation for the existence of this process of planning ahead is the advice of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (944–959) to his son that the ruler must study what is known about the near and more distant nations, so that he can understand *the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in, and its geographical description and measurement, but also the difference between each of these nations, and how either to treat with and conciliate them, or to make war upon and oppose them*<sup>28</sup>. This information in *De Administrando Imperio* indicates that the Byzantines possessed certain knowledge which made them aware of the necessity to carry out more comprehensive and long-term planning<sup>29</sup> focused not only on containing and resolving immediate political and military threats from the surrounding regions, but also on creating a defensive ring of allies around imperial borders. That this type of knowledge existed amongst members of the Byzantine government is clearly evident from Porphyrogenitus suggestion to improve overall security on the eastern border by annexing the Armenian principalities, or rather several cities around Lake Van, and establishing a direct authority over them<sup>30</sup>, a proposal that was gradually accomplished and finally completed by his successors in the first half of the eleventh century<sup>31</sup>.

From the mid-ninth century, sources inform that a large number of smaller polities emerged on the imperial borders. These at some point in time recognised the political supremacy of the *basileus* and become client states of the Byzantine

<sup>25</sup> *On Strategy*, 43.39–42. For a detailed analysis of this chapter see D. LEE, J. SHEPARD, *A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon*, Bsl 52, 1991, p. 15–29.

<sup>26</sup> S.M. STERN, *An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz*, B 20, 1950, p. 249.

<sup>27</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, p. 660–661.

<sup>28</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, prooimion. 19–22, 25–27, 13.197–200. See also J. SHEPARD, *Information...*, p. 270–271.

<sup>29</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, prooimion. 12–17, refers to the "doctrine" that Porphyrogenitus placed before his son and heir, so that he could understand *in what each nation has power to advantage the Romans, and in what to hurt, and how and by what other nation each severally may be encountered in arms and subdued*. See also D.M. NICOL, *Byzantine Political Thought...*, p. 56–57.

<sup>30</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.125–128. See J. SHEPARD, *Imperial Information and Ignorance: a Discrepancy*, Bsl 56, 1995, p. 110–111.

<sup>31</sup> T.W. GREENWOOD, *Armenian...*, p. 362–363.

Empire<sup>32</sup>. On the eastern border the aforementioned foreign policy was implemented among the Caucasian states, for example Taron<sup>33</sup>, Bagratid Armenia<sup>34</sup>, Iberia<sup>35</sup> and other smaller statelets in this region<sup>36</sup> which were, predominantly, close allies of the Byzantines<sup>37</sup>, although they rejected imperial hegemony whenever it was in their interest and at those times allied themselves with the enemies of the Byzantine Empire<sup>38</sup>. The same pattern can be observed in Southern Italy where the Lombardian duchies of Capua-Benevento and Salerno, when they could no longer resist the Byzantine diplomatic and military pressure, accepted imperial hegemony and become client states of the Byzantine Empire. This had occurred around 880 as a result of the military campaign of *strategós* Nicephorus Phocas in Southern Italy<sup>39</sup>, and Byzantine supremacy was confirmed again in the first years of the tenth century when an imperial aulic title of *patrician* was conferred to the Lombard rulers<sup>40</sup>, as well as in the third decade of eleventh century<sup>41</sup>. In the Balkans, Byzantine foreign policy was focused on the Serbian principalities and on Croatia, which was under the supreme authority of the East Frankish king in the ninth century. Theophanes Continuatus and *De Administrando Imperio* notes that

<sup>32</sup> For a different types of client states see D.A. MILLER, *Studies in Byzantine Diplomacy. Sixth to Tenth Centuries*, Ann Arbor 1983, p. 157–171. That not all of these states were vassal type clients, like for instance some of the Armenian statelets where the imperial agents could interfere into their domestic affairs, see D. GJALEVSKI, *An Outline of Byzantine Diplomacy in the Eastern Adriatic Region (c.867–1000)*, *Исцо* 55.1, 2020, p. 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 43.7–9, 43.153–155.

<sup>34</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.46; *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A.E. DOSTOURIAN, Lanham–London 1993 (cetera: MATTHEW), p. 28, 41.

<sup>35</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 43.36–38, 43.115, 45.35.

<sup>36</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.33, 44.59, 44.63, 44.87, 44.110.

<sup>37</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 43.64–69, 43.183–185, 45.206–7, 46.49–53. This was achieved through the bestowment of money, conferring of imperial titles, and granting of territory, as well as with dynastic marriages which helped to forge personal relationships with leading dignitaries and secure the established connections. SKYLITZES, p. 257, notes the military assistance that the Armenians and Iberians provided during the reign of Nicephorus II Phocas.

<sup>38</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 43.12–20, notes how Krikorikios, *archon* of Taron, *always keep the commander of the faithful informed secretly through his letter of what was going on among us; and while he wished to appear a partisan of the Roman cause, he was found, on the contrary, to prefer and favour the cause of the Saracens*. Unsatisfied by an imperial decision, according to CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 46.130–135, some of these states wrote to the Byzantine emperor that they intended to *put off our servitude to your imperial majesty and make common cause with the Saracens*. T.W. GREENWOOD, *Armenian...*, p. 355, notes that when Saif al-Dawla, the future Hamdanid amir of Aleppo, marched north to Lake Van, several Armenian princes responded to his summons and submitted.

<sup>39</sup> G.A. LOUD, *Byzantium and Southern Italy...*, p. 560–562.

<sup>40</sup> S. RUNCIMAN, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus...*, p. 180–181.

<sup>41</sup> V. VON FALKENHAUSEN, *Between Two Empires...*, p. 148–149.

in the reign of Emperor Basil I (867–886) all of these Slavic polities recognised Byzantine overlordship, except for Pagania<sup>42</sup>, and in case of Croatia this lasted only for couple of years<sup>43</sup>. In the tenth century the Byzantine foreign policy was mainly directed at Serbia (Rascia) and the other Serbian principalities<sup>44</sup>, placing Croatia in the background, but never excluding it totally in the overall process of imposing political hegemony in the Balkans. Indication of the existence of one such policy is the information in the sources that from the time of Držislav the Croatian kings were conferred with the imperial title of *eparch* and *patrician* and were called *kings of Dalmatia and Croatia*<sup>45</sup>. Between mid-tenth and mid-eleventh century this group of Byzantine client states encompassed also the Hamdanids (from eleventh century the Mirdasids) of Aleppo<sup>46</sup> and the Marwanids centred in the city of Amida, whose ruler was honoured with the title of *magister* and *dux* of the East<sup>47</sup>. However, this was not an immutable process. Most of these states rejected Byzantine supremacy at some point in time. One such example is the Lombard duchy of Capua-Benevento<sup>48</sup>, which went back to accepting imperial hegemony once more just a couple of years or decades afterwards, like for instance the Armenian and Serbian principalities, as well as Croatia and Iberia, while other polities were gradually integrated into the Byzantine Empire, which has happened to

<sup>42</sup> *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati, Nomine Fertur, Liber Quo, Vita Basilii Impeatoris Amplectitur*, 54.1–15, trans. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin–Boston 2011 [= *CFHB.SBe*, 42] (cetera: *Vita Basilii*), p. 195; CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 29.70–75.

<sup>43</sup> N. BUDAK, *Croats between Franks and Byzantium*, HAM 3, 1997, p. 17; T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the time of Basil I (867–886)*, SSBP 1, 2013, p. 42; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, New York 1971, p. 100–101.

<sup>44</sup> For the Byzantine–Bulgarian diplomatic conflict regarding Serbia see CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 32.91–126. Zacharias, CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 32.111–114, send to Constantinople the heads of the generals from the defeated Bulgarian army. This suggests that Serbia in his time was a Byzantine ally, a client state.

<sup>45</sup> ARCHDEACON THOMAS OF SPLIT, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, ed. D. KARBIĆ, M.M. SOKOL, J.R. SWEENEY, Budapest 2006, p. 61. This, according to the opinion of N. BUDAK, *Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth century. A Latin Member of the Byzantine Commonwealth*, [in:] *Center, Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos. From De Ceremoniis to De Administrando Imperio*, ed. N. GAUL, V. MENZE, C. BÁLINT, Wiesbaden 2018 [= *MVB*, 15], p. 218, happened probably before 976.

<sup>46</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Equilibrium to Expansion (886–1025)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 520. For the status of Aleppo in Byzantine foreign policy see W. FARAG, *The Aleppo Question: a Byzantine–Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D.*, BMGS 14, 1990, p. 44–60; H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine–Arab Diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic Conquests to the Mid Eleventh Century*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy...*, p. 142–143.

<sup>47</sup> J.-C. CHEYNET, *Basil II and Asia Minor*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Year...*, p. 98; H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine–Arab Diplomacy...*, p. 143.

<sup>48</sup> S. RUNCIMAN, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus...*, p. 191–192.

the emirate of Melitene in 934<sup>49</sup>, or to the Georgian and Armenian principalities in Caucasus in a timespan of around one century<sup>50</sup>.

What is common for the aforementioned polities is that they are all situated on the borders of Byzantine imperial domains. Lombard duchies in Southern Italy were located on the border of *thémata* Longobardia and Calabria, the Slavic principalities in the Balkans were close neighbours of *thémata* Dalmatia and Dyrhachium, Armenian and Iberian principalities were on the eastern border, and the Hamdanids and the Marwanids on the Syriac border. Furthermore, the sources inform that with some of these polities, for example Croatia, or the Serbian principalities of Zachlunia and Terbunia<sup>51</sup>, the Caucasian states of Taron or Iberia<sup>52</sup>, the Hamdanids and Mirdasids of Aleppo, or the Marwanids in Amida, treaties have been signed<sup>53</sup>. In fact, signing a peace treaty, or an alliance, was a normal conclusion of the process of negotiations that the *basileus* conducted with other states and tribes<sup>54</sup>. It was of primary concern to the Byzantine government when it came to regulating formal relations with extremely aggressive and hostile nations, thus allowing a significant reduction of any future threat, as well with neighbours who had friendly intentions. In that context, although it's not explicitly stated in the sources, it can be rightly assumed that the Byzantine Empire had a treaty signed with all the polities with which it had established formal relations. Depending on the level of political and military might that these polities had when the treaty was signed, a different political status in relation to the Byzantine Empire was bestowed on them. According to the protocol for diplomatic correspondence in *The Book of Ceremonies*, polities who had concluded treaties were divided into those who received letters (γράμματα) and others who received orders (κέλευσις) from the Byzantine emperor<sup>55</sup>. This division depended on the very essence of the concluded

<sup>49</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings and the Road to Aleppo*, [in:] *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999*, ed. A. EASTMOND, London–New York 2016, p. 29–30.

<sup>50</sup> According to J. SHEPARD, *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings...*, p. 28–29, 35–37, Byzantine conquest of these states was a consequence of Hamdanid foreign policy in this region.

<sup>51</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 30.123–142. The term πάκτων used by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in *De Administrando Imperio* denoted, in my opinion, an agreement where one or both parties agreed and bound themselves to provide some service or tribute, and were the Byzantine political supremacy remained intact. See also, D. GJALEVSKI, *An Outline...*, p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> For Taron CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.64–69. For Iberia CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.115–117, 45.99–112; SKYLITZES, p. 356–357. See also J. SHEPARD, *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings...*, p. 33.

<sup>53</sup> H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy...*, p. 142–143; J.-C. CHEYNET, *Basil II...*, p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> D.A. MILLER, *Byzantine Treaties...*, p. 56–57.

<sup>55</sup> About the Byzantine protocol for diplomatic correspondence see CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, p. 686–692.

treaty, that is, on the arranged relations and obligations between the Byzantine Empire and the foreign state or tribe. Furthermore, every treaty that was signed had several clauses in it: political, military, legal, economic, diplomatic, religious, etc. What can be concluded from the sources is that there were at least two clauses in each treaty: political and military<sup>56</sup>. It was in accordance with the signed treaty and these two most important clauses that the Slavic principalities joined the Byzantine campaign in Southern Italy or maintained the security of Byzantine Dalmatia<sup>57</sup>; the auxiliary troops were sent to the Byzantines by the Iberians and Armenians, as noted in Skylitzes *Short History*<sup>58</sup>; or political and military intelligence was shared by the Hamdanids and Mirdasids of Aleppo, which was important for shaping the Byzantine eastern foreign policy<sup>59</sup>. However, by the mid-eleventh century all of these client states were either annexed and integrated into the Byzantine Empire, or had rejected imperial supremacy and become independent. Only one or two states remained clients of the *basileus*<sup>60</sup>.

It is necessary to emphasise that this formation of a ring of *limitrophe* client states was not a unique trait of the Byzantine foreign policy from this period. Sources are confirming that the Byzantine Empire used similar, if not identical, policy in the Late Antique period of the sixth and early seventh century. According to them, the imperial government of this period also pacified its neighbours, hostile and friendly alike, on the Byzantine frontiers and allied them as client states that were politically dependent on Constantinople. These were the border polities of the Lazi<sup>61</sup>, the Tzani who in *the reign of the present Emperor Justinian [...] all straightway yielded to him, preferring the toilless servitude to the dangerous liberty [...] giving up all brigandage and always marching with the Romans whenever*

<sup>56</sup> D. A. MILLER, *Byzantine Treaties...*, p. 59–71.

<sup>57</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 29.88–100; *Vita Basilii*, 55.24, p. 201. See D. GJALEVSKI, *An Outline...*, p. 32–35.

<sup>58</sup> SKYLITZES, p. 197, 217, 257.

<sup>59</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Equilibrium to Expansion...*, p. 520; H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy...*, p. 143.

<sup>60</sup> According to H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy...*, p. 143, the Mirdasids of Aleppo in the 1040s were still clients of the Byzantine Empire. In 1041 Thimal b. Salih was bestowed with the title of *magister*, and other members of his family, his wife included, were conferred with the titles of *strategos* and *patrician*.

<sup>61</sup> According to *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, Oxford 1997 (cetera: THEOPHANES), p. 257, *Tzathios came to Justin at Byzantium and urged the emperor to make him a Christian and let him be proclaimed emperor of the Lazi by Justin. The emperor received him with joy, baptized him, and proclaimed him as his son. Tzathios married a Roman wife, a certain Valeriana, the granddaughter of the patrician and former curopalates Nomos, and took her back to his own land after being appointed emperor of the Lazi by Justin.* For the military assistance of the Lazi see PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Gothic Wars. Books VII (continued) and VIII*, VIII.8, trans. H. B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1928 [= LCL, 217] (cetera: PROCOPIUS, *Books VII and VIII*), p. 117–129.



they went against their enemies<sup>62</sup>, also the Abasgi<sup>63</sup>, the Heruli in Pannonia<sup>64</sup>, the Garamantes in southwestern Libya and Maccuritae in Nubia<sup>65</sup>, or the Ghassanid Arabs who were important Byzantine allies in the protracted conflict with the Sassanian empire<sup>66</sup>. The information in the sources notes that all of these polities, same as in the Middle Byzantine period, signed imperial treaties with which they accepted imperial political supremacy<sup>67</sup>, became allies of the *basileus*, were in charge of security of the border regions, like the Lazi, Tzani and Ghassanids for example, and provided military assistance to the Byzantine Empire in the form of auxiliary troops. This *limitrophe* client state policy can be seen again in the period of the Comnenus dynasty, mainly during the reign of emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180). The number of states that this policy encompassed now was much smaller. It was oriented mainly towards Serbia<sup>68</sup>, the kingdom of Hungary<sup>69</sup>, the principality of Antioch<sup>70</sup>, Armenian Cilicia<sup>71</sup> and the Seljuq sultanate of Rum, whose sultan swore to be the empire's military ally (*symmachos*), friend (*phílos*) to the *basileus*, retainer (*oíkēios*) and son<sup>72</sup>. After the death of Manuel this policy

<sup>62</sup> PROCOPIUS, *Buildings. General Index*, III, VI.2–8, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1940 [= LCL, 343], p. 207; PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Persian War. Books I and II*, I.15, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1914 [= LCL, 48], p. 137, notes that the Tzani also abandoned their own religion for a more righteous faith, and all of them became Christians.

<sup>63</sup> PROCOPIUS, *Books VII and VIII*, VIII.3, p. 81.

<sup>64</sup> PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Gothic Wars. Books V and VI*, VI.14, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1919 [= LCL, 107], p. 410–413.

<sup>65</sup> JOHN OF BICLARO, *Chronicle*, 7, 9, 28, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, trans. K.B. WOLF, Liverpool 2011 [= TTH, 9], p. 53, 56, notes that the Garamantes desired to be associated with the peace of the Roman state and Maccuritae placed themselves on friendly terms with the Romans. Both became Christians.

<sup>66</sup> THEOPHANES, p. 223. For a comprehensive overview of the Arab foederati, among them the Ghassanids, and their political relations with the Byzantine Empire in I. SHAHĪD, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I.1, *Political and Military History*, Washington D.C. 1985, *passim*; L.I. CONRAD, *Eastern Neighbours: The Arabs to the Time of the Prophet*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 188–189.

<sup>67</sup> Treaties were signed even with the polities that were not client states. One such example is the treaty (*pacta*) between the Byzantine Empire (at the time of Justinian I) and the Visigoths. See A.D. LEE, *Information and Frontiers. Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 1993, p. 36.

<sup>68</sup> According to *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, by John Kinnamos, III.9, trans. C.M. BRAND, New York 1976 (cetera: KINNAMOS), p. 90, the Serbian župan declared that he will be subject to the Romans and will assist them militarily with armed forces. Cf. *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H.J. MAGOULIAS, Detroit 1984 (cetera: CHONIATĒS), p. 58, 77–78, 90.

<sup>69</sup> KINNAMOS, V.16, p. 186; cf. CHONIATĒS, p. 72, 75. For an overview see, P. STEPHENSON, *Balkan Borderlands (1018–1204)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 683–685.

<sup>70</sup> KINNAMOS, IV.18, p. 139, states that Reginald bound himself with oaths to many things, to wit that he would act according to the emperor's will. Cf. CHONIATĒS, p. 61–62.

<sup>71</sup> KINNAMOS, IV.21.A, p. 142; cf. CHONIATĒS, p. 59.

<sup>72</sup> CHONIATĒS, p. 66–70. See also D.A. KOROBENIKOV, *Raiders and Neighbours: The Turks (1040–1304)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 714.

quickly disintegrated. It should be pointed out that this system of client states can in fact be traced all the way back to the first century A.D. and the first years of the Empire. On the border with Germania, imperial strategy under Claudius (41–54) and Nero (54–68), as under Tiberius (14–37), relied on chain of clients from Lower Germany all the way to the middle Danube. The Frisii, Batavi, Hertzunduri, Alarcomanni, Quadi, and Sarmatian Tazyges all became client tribes<sup>73</sup>. In the East there were also several client states, for instance, Pontus, Cappadocia, the Nabatean kingdom, Sophene, Commagene and others<sup>74</sup>. Similarly, after some period of existence of this system, a process of annexation of these client states next to the imperial border had begun. By the third century this state policy was seen as redundant by the imperial government, though some client or “buffer states” still existed on the border<sup>75</sup>.

What can be concluded from the previously presented information is that the creation of a ring of *limitrophe* client states around the imperial borders from the mid-ninth century was not an *ad hoc* political solution of the current imperial government but, according to the sources, an established state-level policy, its *modus operandi* of conducting state affairs, a clear example of a pattern of behaviour which traces its beginnings all the way back to the first century A.D. and the early years of the Empire. It should be noted that any policy which a state implements as a solution is mainly intended to resolve a current political or military issue, nonetheless with an intent that it would be applicable as long as possible in regards to improving both foreign and domestic affairs. In that context the signed peace treaties on a 30-year basis need to be perceived as a long-term political solution to an existing problem. The confirmation that an idea for long-term planning existed among the members of the Byzantine government is found in the efforts it took to reconquer Sicily during the reigns of Michael III (842–867), Basil I and Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969)<sup>76</sup>, or the island of Crete in the time of Michael II (820–829), Leo VI (886–912) and Roman II (959–963)<sup>77</sup>. However, this aspect of Byzantine foreign policy, *reconquista* of lost imperial territories<sup>78</sup>, was highly

---

<sup>73</sup> E.N. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. From the First Century CE to the Third. Revised and updated edition*, Baltimore 2016, p. 21.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40–41, 126.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 126–132.

<sup>76</sup> See footnote 15.

<sup>77</sup> About the attempts of Michael II to reconquer the island of Crete see SKYLITZES, p. 45–47. For the campaign of Leo VI see CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, p. 651–660.

<sup>78</sup> In regards to the duties of the *basileus* patriarch Photios in the section of Epanagoga (or Eisagoga) titled “Concerning the *Basileus*” in *Collectio Librorum Juris Graeco-Romani Ineditorum: Ecloga Leonis Et Constantini, Epanagoge Basilii Leonis Et Alexandri*, ed. C.E.Z. a LINGENTHAL, Lipsiae 1852, p. 66, states that *aim of the emperor is to guard and secure through his virtue the things which he already possesses; to recover and maintain through sleepless care the things lost; and to acquire, by wisdom and through just victories, the things absent*. For reintegration of former imperial territories

influenced by the idiosyncratic behaviour of the reigning emperor. In addition, the change which occurred in the foreign policy at the beginning of the ninth century with addition of the term τῶν Ῥωμαίων to the title βασιλεύς as a response to Charlemagne's acclamation as an emperor by the pope of Rome, as well as its practical implementation in the centuries that followed, as in the reign of Nicephorus II Phocas<sup>79</sup>, should be observed as an evidence of the adaptation of imperial strategy to which several governments adhered, a creation of a new approach for maintaining an already established ultimate end (in this case the Byzantine imperial status and its Roman heritage) and continuity in Byzantine statecraft, as well as an indication about the awareness for long-term planning that existed among state officials. The same change in foreign policy, but also in strategy, is observed in the reign of the Comnenus dynasty which, in an attempt to maintain imperial interests, altered its attitude and policy towards Western Europe after the difficult period of the late 80s and the early 90s of eleventh century when the Byzantines were left without resources and with a total dissolution of their state in Asia Minor<sup>80</sup>. These are only a few examples of how a great state has the ability to adjust to the reality that its policy (resources and interests) finds itself out of balance and overstretched, taking a different political and/or military approach and shifting the focus to those aspects that could help the polity<sup>81</sup>.

Confirmation that the implementation of the *limitrophe* policy in the analysed period was intentional is in the continuity which can be observed in the sources in relation to the process of imposing political supremacy on the Lombard duchies in Southern Italy, Croatia and Serbian principalities in the Balkans, the Armenian and Georgian principalities in Caucasus, and Aleppo in Syria, by several imperial governments in order to achieve or maintain this end, to which succeeding administrations also adhered. One such example is the position of the Serbian principalities in the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict in the first decades of the tenth century which were shifting its position from a friendly to a hostile stance towards the Empire depending on how strong or frail the Byzantine position was at a given moment<sup>82</sup>. That there was an idea among the members of several Byzantine governments from this period for such long-term policy is seen from the advice that

---

as a responsibility of the Byzantine government see E. CHRYSOS, *Byzantium between East and West: Opponents and Allies*, [in:] *Heaven and Earth, Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, ed. A. DRANDAKI, D.P. BAKIRTZI, A. TOURTA, Athens 2013, p. 282–283; A.E. LAIOU, *On Just War in Byzantium*, [in:] *Byzantium and the Other. Relations and Exchanges*, ed. A.E. LAIOU, C. MORRISON, R. DORIN, London 2012, p. 156–159, 163–164; H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975, p. 42–43.

<sup>79</sup> Liudprand of Cremona..., p. 270.

<sup>80</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 800–1204: Means and Ends*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy...*, p. 56–57.

<sup>81</sup> W. MURRAY, *Thoughts...*, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 32.90–119.

Constantine VII presents in *De Administrando Imperio* in relation to imposing hegemony, even direct subjugation, on Armenian statelets in order to improve security of the imperial domains in Asia Minor, which was finally achieved around the mid-eleventh century<sup>83</sup>. Porphyrogenitus declares that *it is right that you [my son Romanus II] should not be ignorant of the parts towards the rising sun, for what reason they became once more subject to the Romans, after they had first fallen away from their control*<sup>84</sup>. He suggests that *if the emperor holds these three kastra, Chliat, Arzes and Perkri, a Persian army cannot come out against Romania, since they are between Romania and Armenia and serve as a barrier*<sup>85</sup>.

What were the causes that influenced the decision to reintroduce this old policy and to take steps towards its implementation? According to the influencing factors, the causes can be divided into external and internal. Regarding the external causes, the main aspect was the overall political situation in the mid-ninth century which saw a gradual formation of many smaller polities on the imperial borders in the East, the Balkans and Southern Italy, and was a prerequisite for practical implementation of this policy. The second relates to the foreign states themselves and their resilience to withstand the Byzantine diplomatic and military pressure. Regarding the internal causes, it was the process of military and economic revival of the Byzantine Empire which allowed the imperial government to allocate more resources, both financial and human, to achieve its political ends that were set in relation to these border states.

If we look at the political map of the wider Mediterranean region in the mid-ninth century, an increased military and diplomatic activities by several political actors in the central Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea can be noticed, as well as a process of fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate at its edges in Cilicia, Syria and Caucasus, which led to a creation of many small autonomous statelets. In relation to the central Mediterranean, around Italy and the Balkans, the sources tell of intensified Arab naval campaigns, which eventually led to a gradual conquest of Sicily, as well as of cities in Southern Italy, both of them under Byzantine rule<sup>86</sup>. At the same time, as a result of these frequent Arab campaigns, the Frankish emperor and king of Italy Louis II (844–875), apart from waging war against the Muslims, attempted to impose his political influence in the region<sup>87</sup>. As a result of this state of political flux, the Lombard duchies in Southern Italy became a political factor with their own interests to which the Byzantine

<sup>83</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings...*, p. 24–25, 33.

<sup>84</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 43.4–6.

<sup>85</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.125–128.

<sup>86</sup> A. NEF, *Byzantium and Islam in Southern Italy (7<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Century)*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Italy...*, p. 205–210.

<sup>87</sup> M. McCORMICK, *Western Approaches (700–900)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 419.

government had to pay attention in order to secure its possessions in this part of Europe<sup>88</sup>. In the Balkans, by the mid-ninth century, Croatia and the Serbian principalities became powerful enough that they even began to challenge the already weak Byzantine presence in the region. In that context, the author of *De Administrando Imperio* reports that the population of the Dalmatian cities was prevented by the Croats from cultivating the land in the interior of the mainland<sup>89</sup>, which points to the fact that Croatia posed a serious danger for their security. The military victory of the Croatian prince Trpimir that was achieved between 846 and 848 over the Byzantine *patrikios*, probably the first man of these Dalmatian cities<sup>90</sup>, is evidence of how precarious and fragile the Byzantine presence was in this region. A similar situation is observed regarding the Serbian principalities, whose importance was extremely significant during the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict in diverting part of the Bulgarian military pressure to the west, away from the imperial territories in Thrace and Macedonia. On the eastern frontier, a process of formation of autonomous statelets in Cilicia and Syria (the emirates of Tarsus, Melitene or Aleppo), as well in Caucasus (the Armenian and Georgian principalities), which was a result of the political fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate on its periphery, had begun. Even though the Arabs continued to conduct military campaigns deep into Byzantine territory, these were of reduced intensity because they were initiated by the newly formed border emirates<sup>91</sup>. The military initiative gradually shifted to the Byzantine side.

It should be emphasised that no matter how favourable the political situation in the surrounding regions was for the *limitrophe* policy to be implemented, it would have been an impossible undertaking if the internal situation in the Byzantine Empire did not allow it. The period from the ninth to the eleventh century was a time of gradual revival and strengthening of the military and economic might of the state. Formation of *tágmata* units, as well as the increase of the *thémata* armies with an influx of new recruits and mercenaries from abroad, such as the Khurramites<sup>92</sup>, Pharganoi, Khazars<sup>93</sup>, Russians and others, allowed for conducting frequent military campaigns, especially when diplomatic measures did not achieve the desired results, or when warfare was the only solution to an existing issue<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> G. A. LOUD, *Byzantium and Southern Italy*..., p. 560–563.

<sup>89</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 30.123–125.

<sup>90</sup> F. CURTA, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250*, Cambridge 2006 [= CMT], p. 139; T. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Južni Sloveni*..., p. 239–240.

<sup>91</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Equilibrium to Expansion*..., p. 493–499.

<sup>92</sup> W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium and its Army 284–1081*, Stanford 1995, p. 32.

<sup>93</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, p. 693. See also J. SHEPARD, *Equilibrium to Expansion*..., p. 493.

<sup>94</sup> There is ample bibliography regarding Byzantine attitudes to warfare. According to the scholars, its main facet was “avoidance of war” as much as possible. See for example Y. STOURAITIS, *State War Ethic and Popular Views on Warfare*, [in:] *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300–1204*, ed. IDEM, Leiden 2018 [= BCBW, 3], p. 59–91; W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior*,

Already from the mid-ninth century, the size of the imperial army according to the sources amounted to about 120,000 soldiers<sup>95</sup>. It gave the imperial government sufficient flexibility for offensive operations and conducting campaigns deep into enemy territory. Sources report that the military force was often used, especially on the eastern border, to “persuade” the other party to accept this policy and become a Byzantine client state. The Armenian principalities, as well as the emirate of Melitene or the Hamdanids from Aleppo, were repeatedly persuaded in that manner. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the use of military forces for this purpose would have been impossible without the favourable economic situation in the state<sup>96</sup>. The economic revival allowed part of the financial resources from the imperial budget to be used to “persuade” the leaders of foreign countries about the benefits they would have if they accepted a client status, or to finance a military campaign if the “soft” approach was unsuccessful.

What was the political end behind the creation of a ring of *limitrophe* client states on the Byzantine borders? From the treaties that were signed with these polities and the obligations they had according to the agreed clauses, and from other information in the sources, one could in fact conclude that the overall plan behind their establishment was to pacify the hostile neighbours, to create a ring of friendly states around the Empire, a buffer zone in front of the Byzantine frontier aimed at thwarting future enemy incursions with allies that would be responsible for the security of the imperial territories, although this military obligation was agreed also with other states who were not regarded as clients of the *basileus*, like the Kievan Rus<sup>97</sup> or, if one can were to believe the narratives of Skylitzes and Zonaras,

---

[in:] *Noble Ideas and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. CHRISTIE, M. YAZIGI, Leiden 2006, p. 213–216; Y. STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.–11. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2009 [= BG.E, 9], p. 219–231; J. KODER, I. STOURAITIS, *Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries). An Introduction*, [in:] *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011)*, ed. EIDEM, Wien 2012 [= DKAW.PhH, 30], p. 9–16; J.F. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204*, London 1999, p. 13–33. However, from a practical point of view, military campaigns were very costly, especially the overseas ones. The campaigns of 911 and 949, as N. OIKONOMIDES, *The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy*, [in:] *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2022, p. 1015, had noted, costed 234,373 and 127,122 nomismata, respectively.

<sup>95</sup> W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium and its Army...*, p. 65–67; J.F. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society...*, p. 102–103.

<sup>96</sup> M. WHITTOW, *The Middle Byzantine Economy (600–1204)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine...*, p. 473–474. For more detailed analysis of the economic revival in this period see *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2022; A. HARVEY, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900–1200*, Cambridge 1989; M.F. HENDY, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c.300–1450*, Cambridge 1985; A.E. LAIOU, C. MORRISON, *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge 2007 [= CMT].

<sup>97</sup> The author of *Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 76. notes that as part of the signed treaty of 944, regarding the Black Bulgarians, who come and ravage the Kherson district, we [the Byzantines] enjoin the Prince of Rus’ not to allow them to injure that region.

Bulgaria during the reign of Peter<sup>98</sup>. A further goal was to aid the Byzantine Empire with the much-needed auxiliary troops in its military campaigns, like it was requested from the Slavs for the imperial campaign in Southern Italy, or from Iberia and the Armenian principalities for the Byzantine eastern campaigns<sup>99</sup>. Similarly as in the period of the Principate and Dominate, the client states and their armies were not merely additive but complementary to Byzantine military power – that is, they provided a different and synergistic form of power, not just more force<sup>100</sup>. Another end of this policy, that was both political and military in its essence, was to gather intelligence not only of the enemy army movements, but also about the policies of nearby hostile states, like the obligation to which Aleppo has agreed<sup>101</sup>. As a result of these measures, and the treaties that could be signed for a 30-years period, the Byzantine Empire acquired long-term, but not perpetual, stability on its borders, security of its imperial territories, a base of manpower for its army in the form of mercenaries or contingents of auxiliary troops, and a constant flow of intelligence, information related to the activities of the surrounding hostile states and tribes.

However, the client state status was not irreversible. It should be emphasised that client rulers were politically unstable, they were known to be rebellious, and a constant control and surveillance was applied in order for this policy to endure long-term, for instance in Serbia, Capua-Benevento, the Armenian principalities or Aleppo<sup>102</sup>. Their allegiance was maintained or reasserted when needed, mainly through diplomatic measures: bestowing gold as a financial incentive, or as payment for a military service that was agreed through a treaty, granting a personal honour by conferring imperial aulic titles, as well as ceding a territory, in the same way as in the period of the Principate<sup>103</sup>, although, it should be noted, diplomacy itself could occasionally backfire<sup>104</sup>. If diplomacy failed or was insufficient, then it was the role of the army to carry out a “show-of-force” to implement or maintain this policy, a measure that was applied multiple times: in the Adriatic with the fleet

<sup>98</sup> According to SKYLITZES, p. 265, and IOANNIS ZONARAE, *Epitome Historiarum*, vol. IV, ed. L. DINDORFIUS, Leipzig 1871 [= CSHB], p. 87, Nicephorus II Phocas wrote to Peter the ruler of Bulgaria, to prevent the Turks from crossing the Danube to raid Roman land. It is not unthinkable that the treaty signed with Bulgaria in the reign of Peter regulated all relations between the states, where one of the articles in the clauses referred to their mutual border and its security, a policy already implemented in the treaties with Boris and Symeon, but concerning border demarcation.

<sup>99</sup> *Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A. E. DOSTOURIAN, Lanham 1993, p. 28; *The Universal History of Stephenos Tarōnec’ I*, trans. T. GREENWOOD, Oxford 2017, p. 244–245, 286.

<sup>100</sup> E. N. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire...*, p. 29.

<sup>101</sup> SKYLITZES, p. 257; MATTHEW, p. 28. Also, J. SHEPARD, *Equilibrium to Expansion...*, p. 520; H. KENNEDY, *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy...*, p. 143.

<sup>102</sup> W. FARAG, *The Aleppo Question...*, p. 59–60.

<sup>103</sup> E. N. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire...*, p. 33, 35.

<sup>104</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, 44.109–117.

of admiral Nicetas Ooryphas, on the Lombard duchies, or on the eastern border against the Armenian principalities in Caucasus.

After some period of existence of the *limitrophe* policy, a process of annexation of the client states had begun. Around the mid-eleventh century this system had almost disappeared, although some client states still existed on the borders. The reasons for this shift in imperial foreign policy are multifaceted and interrelated. One aspect was the political instability of the client rulers who needed constant surveillance. Emergence of a new political power with its own set of interests in the region was another aspect. Political decision of the emperor who reigned on the throne, his idiosyncratic behaviour, whether it was of state interest to maintain this policy or to seek the overall security with own resources only<sup>105</sup>, also had its influence. And lastly, the inability of the imperial government to intervene militarily or diplomatically as a result of internal financial and military crisis, which was already evident in the reign of Isaac I Comnenus (1057–1059)<sup>106</sup>, or an occurrence of a conflict in another region that required immediate attention<sup>107</sup> should also be noted as contributing causes. That several factors influenced this process of annexation can be seen in the case of Melitene. It was as a result of Byzantine interest (to secure imperial border and acquire the wealth of the enemy), an emergence of a new political power in the region and a foreign occupation of the city, that this client state was conquered in 934<sup>108</sup>. There were three regions where the *limitrophe* policy was implemented in this period: in the East (Syria and Caucasus), in Southern Italy and in the Balkans. The main cause why this policy was seen as redundant on the eastern border was the reasoning by the government that the Byzantine Empire was militarily powerful enough, that it will be more secure and will benefit more if these client states become imperial provinces, and that the overall security of the borders can be achieved by its own forces (who were by some estimated to have been between 150.000 and 250.000 soldiers strong)<sup>109</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> M. ANGOLD, *Belle Époque or Crisis? (1025–1118)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 598.

<sup>106</sup> *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, VII.44.2–3, 64.1–6, ed. D.R. REINSCH, Berlin–Boston 2014 [= *Mil.S.*, 51.1], p. 228, 238, presents an image of the reign of Isaac I Comnenus (1057–1059) as an emperor who intended to stop and reverse the process of deterioration in the military and the imperial finance. That is why *from the very beginning he personally supervised state affairs... [and] he preferred to be ignorant of nothing, even to the smallest details, but because knew that this was impossible, he would have tried to obtain his information by indirect means. He used to send for a wise man and, without questioning him on the subject about which he was ignorant, by clever manoeuvring round it, he would make the other reveal what he himself did not know, in such a way that the expert was apparently explaining something that was common knowledge to both of them alike.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 599–600, 607.

<sup>108</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings...*, p. 30.

<sup>109</sup> For a total number of 150,000 soldiers see J.F. HALDON, *Warfare, State and Society...*, p. 103. For a total number of around 250,000 for the Byzantine armed forces in the mid-eleventh century see W. TREADGOLD, *Byzantium and its Army...*, p. 79–85.



Thus, only Aleppo remained as a client state. In Southern Italy the political interests of the Western Emperor, Arabs, Lombard duchies, the pope Rome and the Normans shaped a new political reality which, along with local revolts in Byzantine Italy, resulted not in a process of annexation of the existing polities who were already clients of the *basileus*, but in shaping of a new militarily powerful state, one that would end the Byzantine presence in this region during the second half of the eleventh century<sup>110</sup>. The internal political strife and instability, conflicts on other frontiers and the civil wars in the Byzantine Empire in this period only facilitated and accelerated this process. In the Balkans, unlike the other two regions, the *limitrophe* policy was maintained all the way to the mid-eleventh century<sup>111</sup>. It was only afterwards, after multiple crises, both foreign and domestic, had emerged and the inability of the imperial government to maintain this policy as a result of other state priorities that the Slavic principalities ceased to be clients of the Byzantine Empire.

What can be concluded is that the *limitrophe* policy in the period from the mid-ninth until the mid-eleventh century was implemented when the political circumstances in the surrounding regions, and the internal conditions within the Byzantine Empire, were favourable. That is, when the other medieval superpowers that existed in this period in the East and West, the Carolingian Empire and the Abbasid Caliphate, either were politically divided or began to fragment on the periphery. The consequence of these processes was that a large number of small polities on the eastern frontier in Cilicia, Syria and Caucasus, as well in the Balkans, had emerged. At the same time, the overall military and financial situation in the Byzantine Empire improved to such an extent that the imperial government started to be diplomatically more proactive and to conduct offensive campaigns deep into the enemy territory without fear for the overall security of the state. As a result of this *limitrophe* policy the Byzantine Empire was able to pacify its hostile neighbours, to acquire long-term, but not perpetual, stability on its borders, security of its imperial territories, a base of manpower for its army, in the form of mercenaries or contingents of auxiliary troops, and a constant flow of intelligence related to the activities of the surrounding hostile states and tribes. The main assets and means that were used to achieve and maintain this policy were diplomatic: bestowing gold as a financial incentive, or as payment for a military service that was agreed through a treaty, granting a personal honour by conferring an imperial aulic title, as well as ceding a territory. Military pressure was applied only when diplomacy had failed. However, this policy was discarded in the first decades of the eleventh century. There were two main factors for this decision. Firstly, this policy was perceived as redundant by the Byzantine government as

<sup>110</sup> A. KALDELLIS, *Streams of Gold rivers of Blood. The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade*, Oxford 2017 [= OSHC], p. 236–238.

<sup>111</sup> P. STEPHENSON, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204*, Cambridge 2004, p. 123–135, 138–141, and IDEM, *Balkan Borderlands...*, p. 668–670.

a result of the current military might and its reasoning that the Empire can maintain security of the imperial provinces only with the use of its own armed forces, which led to a process of annexation of the client states. Secondly, the emergence of multiple crises on not only one, but on several borders simultaneously, aided by the gradual deterioration of the Byzantine military and financial might that became visible in the mid-eleventh century, allowed even those states that were still clients of the *basileus* to reject his hegemony and become independent.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- ARCHDEACON THOMAS OF SPLIT, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, ed. D. KARBIĆ, M.M. SOKOL, J.R. SWEENEY, Budapest 2006.
- Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A.E. DOSTOURIAN, Lanham 1993.
- The Chronicle of John of Malalas*, trans. E. JEFFREYS, M. JEFFREYS, R. SCOTT, Leiden 2017 [= *Byzantina Australiensia*, 4].
- The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A.E. DOSTOURIAN, Lanham–London 1993.
- The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, Oxford 1997.
- Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati, Nomine Fertur, Liber Quo, Vita Basilii Impeatoris Amplectitur*, trans. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin–Boston 2011 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 42].
- Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati, Nomine Fertur, Libri I–IV*, trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Boston–Berlin 2015 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 53].
- Collectio Librorum Juris Graeco-Romani Ineditorum: Ecloga Leonis Et Constantini, Epanagoge Basilii Leonis Et Alexandri*, ed. C.E.Z. a LINGENTHAL, Lipsiae 1852.
- The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, trans. P. SQUARTITI, Washington D.C. 2007.
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1].
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENNETOS, *The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. A. MOFFATT, M. TALL, Leiden 2012 [= *Byzantina Australiensia*, 18].
- Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus, by John Kinnamos*, trans. C.M. BRAND, New York 1976.
- GEORGI PISIDAE, *Expeditio Persica, Bellum Avaricum, Heraclias*, ed. I. BEKKERI, Bonnae 1836 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, trans. A.-M. TALBOT, D.F. SULLIVAN, Washington D.C. 2005 [= *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 41].
- The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. et trans. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1985.
- IOANNIS ZONARAE, *Epitome Historiarum*, vol. IV, ed. L. DINDORFIUS, Leipzig 1871 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112423141>

- JOHN OF BICLARO, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, trans. K.B. WOLF, <sup>2</sup>Liverpool 2011 [= Translated Texts for Historians, 9].
- JOHN SKYLITZES, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, trans. J. WORTLEY, Cambridge 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511779657>
- Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, ed. D.R. REINSCH, Berlin–Boston 2014 [= Millennium-Studien. Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. / Studies in the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E., 51.1].
- NIKEPHOROS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Short History*, trans. C. MANGO, Washington D.C. 1990 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Washingtonensis*, 13].
- O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H.J. MAGOULIAS, Detroit 1984.
- PROCOPIUS, *Buildings. General Index*, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1940 [= Loeb Classical Library, 343], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-buildings.1940>
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Gothic Wars. Books V and VI*, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1919 [= Loeb Classical Library, 107].
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Gothic Wars. Books VII (continued) and VIII*, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1928 [= Loeb Classical Library, 217].
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars. The Persian War. Books I and II*, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1914 [= Loeb Classical Library, 48], [https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-history\\_wars.1914](https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-history_wars.1914)
- The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, ed. et trans. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, Massachusetts 1953.
- Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. G.T. DENNIS, Wien 1981 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 17].
- Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington D.C. 1985 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Washingtonensis*, 25].
- The Universal History of Step'anos Tarōnec'I*, trans. T. GREENWOOD, Oxford 2017.

## Secondary Literature

- AHRWEILER H., *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975.
- ANGOLD M., *Belle Époque or Crisis? (1025–1118)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 583–626, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.023>
- BELL S., HINDMOOR A., *Rethinking Governance. The Centrality of the State in Modern Society*, Cambridge 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511814617>
- BUDAK N., *Croatia and Byzantium in the Tenth century. A Latin Member of the Byzantine Commonwealth*, [in:] *Center, Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos. From De Ceremoniis to De Administrando Imperio*, ed. N. GAUL, V. MENZE, C. BÁLINT, Wiesbaden 2018 [= Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik, 15], p. 211–222, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvckq3hr.21>
- BUDAK N., *Croats between Franks and Byzantium*, “Hortus Artium Medievalium” 3, 1997, p. 15–22, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.HAM.2.305095>
- CHEYNET J.-C., *Basil II and Asia Minor*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Leiden–Boston 2003 [= The Medieval Mediterranean, 45], p. 71–108, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047404095\\_007](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047404095_007)

- CHRYSOS E., *Byzantium between East and West: Opponents and Allies*, [in:] *Heaven and Earth, Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, ed. A. DRANDAKI, D.P. BAKIRTZI, A. TOURTA, Athens 2013, p. 278–288.
- CONRAD L.I., *Eastern Neighbours: The Arabs to the Time of the Prophet*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 173–195, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.009>
- CURTA F., *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250*, Cambridge 2006 [= Cambridge Medieval Textbooks], <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815638>
- The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2022.
- VON FALKENHAUSEN V., *Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Reign of Basil II*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Leiden–Boston 2003 [= The Medieval Mediterranean, 45], p. 135–159, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047404095\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047404095_009)
- FARAG W., *The Aleppo Question: a Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D.*, “Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies” 14, 1990, p. 44–60, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1990.14.1.44>
- FREEDMAN L., *Strategy. A History*, New York 2013.
- GJALEVSKI D., *An Outline of Byzantine Diplomacy in the Eastern Adriatic Region (c.867–1000)*, “Историја / Journal of History” 55.1, 2020, p. 21–45.
- GJALEVSKI D., *Byzantine Military Tradition, Diplomacy and Indication of Strategy of Statecraft (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, “Гласник” / “Glasnik” 65.1–2, 2021, p. 9–25.
- GJALEVSKI D., *Diplomatskrite aspekti na vizantiskoto misionerstvo*, [in:] *Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Symposium “Days of Justinian I” Skopje, 11–12 November 2016*, ed. M.B. PANOVIĆ, Skopje 2017, p. 66–81.
- GREENWOOD T.W., *Armenian Neighbours (600–1045)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 333–364, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.015>
- HALDON J., BRUBAKER L., *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c.680–850. A History*, Cambridge 2011.
- HALDON J.F., *Byzantine Pretorians. An Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and the Tagmata, c.580–900*, Bonn 1984 [= Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά / Poikila Byzantiná, 3].
- HALDON J.F., *Theory and Practice in Tenth-Century Military Administration. Chapters II, 44 and 45 of the Book of Ceremonies*, “Travaux et Mémoires” 13, 2000, p. 201–352.
- HALDON J.F., *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565–1204*, London 1999.
- Handbook on Theories of Governance*, ed. C. ANSELL, J. TORFING, Cheltenham–Northampton 2022, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800371972>
- HARVEY A., *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900–1200*, Cambridge 1989, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511562433>
- HENDY M.F., *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c.300–1450*, Cambridge 1985, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511896750>
- IVANOV S.A., *Religious Missions*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 305–332, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.014>
- IVANOV S.A., ‘With the Emperors Help’: An Open-handed Mission and Byzantine Diplomacy, [in:] *Cyril and Methodius. Byzantium and the World of the Slavs. International Scientific Conference 20<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> November 2013*, ed. A.E.N. TACHIAOS, Thessaloniki 2015, p. 76–80.

- KALDELLIS A., *Streams of Gold rivers of Blood. The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade*, Oxford 2017 [= Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture].
- KAPLAN M.A., *An Introduction to the Strategy of Statecraft*, "World Politics" 4.4, 1952, p. 548–576, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2008966>
- KATSAMUNSKA P., *The Concept of Governance and Public Governance Theories*, "Economic Alternatives" 2, 2016, p. 133–141.
- KAZHDAN A., *The Notion of Byzantine diplomacy*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. J. SHEPARD, S. FRANKLIN, Aldershot 1992, p. 3–24.
- KENNEDY H., *Byzantine-Arab Diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic Conquests to the Mid Eleventh Century*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. J. SHEPARD, S. FRANKLIN, Aldershot 1992, p. 133–144.
- KJÆR A.M., *Governance*, Cambridge 2004.
- KODER J., STOURAITIS I., *Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries). An Introduction*, [in:] *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion. Akten des Internationalen Symposiums (Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011)*, ed. J. KODER, I. STOURATIDIS, Wien 2012 [= Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Classe, 30], p. 9–16.
- KOROBENIKOV D.A., *Raiders and Neighbours: The Turks (1040–1304)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 692–727, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.026>
- KÜHN H.-J., *Die Byzantinische Armee im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Organisation der Tagmata*, Wien 1991 [= Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber. Ergänzungsband, 2].
- LAIYOU A.E., *On Just War in Byzantium*, [in:] *Byzantium and the Other. Relations and Exchanges*, ed. A.E. LAIYOU, C. MORRISSON, R. DORIN, London 2012, p. 153–177, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351219747-5>
- LAIYOU A.E., MORRISSON C., *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge 2007 [= Cambridge Medieval Textbooks], <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816727>
- LEE A.D., *Information and Frontiers. Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 1993, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511470622>
- LEE D., SHEPARD J., *A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon*, "Byzantinoslavica" 52, 1991, p. 15–39.
- LOUD G.A., *Byzantium and Southern Italy (876–1000)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 560–582, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.022>
- LOUNGHIS T., *Byzantine Diplomacy*, [in:] S. LAMPAKIS, M. LEONTSINI, T. LOUNGHIS, V. VLYSIDOU, *Byzantine Diplomacy. A Seminar*, trans. N. RUSSELL, Athens 2007, p. 15–82.
- LUTTWAK E.N., *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 2009, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjhzrf5>
- LUTTWAK E.N., *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire. From the First Century CE to the Third. Revised and updated edition*, Baltimore 2016, <https://doi.org/10.56021/9781421419442>
- MAAS M., *How the Steppes became Byzantine. Rome and the Eurasian Nomads in Historical Perspective*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250–750*, ed. N. DI COSMO, M. MASS, Cambridge 2018, p. 19–34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316146040.004>

- The Making of a Strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, M. KNOX, A. BERNSTEIN, Cambridge 1994.
- MARAZZI F., *Byzantines and Lombards*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. S. CONSENTINO, Leiden 2021 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 8], p. 169–199, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004307704\\_007](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004307704_007)
- MCCORMICK M., *Western Approaches (700–900)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 395–432, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.017>
- MILLER D.A., *Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-making: 500–1025 AD*, “Byzantinoslavica” 32, 1971, p. 56–76.
- MILLER D.A., *Studies in Byzantine Diplomacy. Sixth to Tenth Centuries*, Ann Arbor 1983.
- MURRAY W., *Thoughts on Grand Strategy*, [in:] *The Shaping of Grand Strategy. Policy, Diplomacy and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, R.H. SINNREICH, J. LACEY, Cambridge 2011, p. 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511974182.001>
- MURRAY W., GRIMSLEY M., *Introduction: On Strategy*, [in:] *The Making of a Strategy. Rulers, States and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, M. KNOX, A. BERNSTEIN, Cambridge 1994, p. 1–23.
- NECHAEVA E., *Patterns of Roman Diplomacy with Iran and the Steppe People*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250–750*, ed. N. DI COSMO, M. MASS, Cambridge 2018, p. 357–368, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316146040.026>
- NEF A., *Byzantium and Islam in Southern Italy (7<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Century)*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. S. CONSENTINO, Leiden 2021 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 8], p. 200–224, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004307704\\_008](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004307704_008)
- NICOL D.M., *Byzantine Political Thought*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. J.H. BURNS, Cambridge 2008, p. 51–82.
- NICOL D.M., *The Byzantine Views of Western Europe*, “Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies” 8.4, 1967, p. 315–339.
- OBOLENSKY D., *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, New York 1971.
- OIKONOMIDES N., *The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy*, [in:] *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2022 [= Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 39], p. 973–1058.
- PIERRE J., PETERS B.G., *Governance, Politics and the State*,<sup>2</sup>London 2020.
- PIERRE J., PETERS B.G., *Governing Complex Societies. Trajectories and Scenarios*, Basingstoke–New York 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230512641>
- QIANG L., KORDOSIS S., *The Geopolitics on the Silk Road: Resurveying the Relationship of the Western Türks with Byzantium through their Diplomatic Communications*, “Medieval Worlds” 8, 2018, p. 109–125, [https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds\\_no8\\_2018s109](https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no8_2018s109)
- RUNCIMAN S., *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1929.
- SHAHÎD I., *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. I.1, *Political and Military History*, Washington D.C. 1985.
- The Shaping of Grand Strategy. Policy, Diplomacy and War*, ed. W. MURRAY, R.H. SINNREICH, J. LACEY, Cambridge 2011.
- SHEPARD J., *Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 800–1204: Means and Ends*, [in:] *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, ed. J. SHEPARD, S. FRANKLIN, Aldershot 1992, p. 41–72.

- SHEPARD J., *Constantine VII, Caucasian Openings and the Road to Aleppo*, [in:] *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999*, ed. A. EASTMOND, London–New York 2016, p. 19–40.
- SHEPARD J., *Equilibrium to Expansion (886–1025)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 493–536, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.020>
- SHEPARD J., *Imperial Information and Ignorance: a Discrepancy*, “Byzantinoslavica” 56, 1995, p. 107–116.
- SHEPARD J., *Information, Disinformation and Delay in Byzantine Diplomacy*, “Byzantinische Forschungen” 10, 1985, p. 233–294.
- SILOVE N., *Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy’*, “Security Studies” 27.1, 2018, p. 27–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1360073>
- STEPHENSON P., *Balkan Borderlands (1018–1204)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 664–691, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.025>
- STEPHENSON P., *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204*, Cambridge 2004.
- STERN M.S., *An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu’izz*, “Byzantion” 20, 1950, p. 239–258.
- STOKER G., *Governance as Theory: Five Propositions*, “International Social Science Journal” 50, 1998, p. 17–28, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2451.00106>
- STOURAITIS Y., *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.–11. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2009 [= Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber. Ergänzungsband, 9].
- STOURAITIS Y., *State War Ethic and Popular Views on Warfare*, [in:] *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300–1204*, ed. Y. STOURAITIS, Leiden 2018 [= Brill’s Companions to the Byzantine World, 3], p. 59–91, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004363731\\_004](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004363731_004)
- TREADGOLD W., *Byzantium and its Army 284–1081*, Stanford 1995.
- TREADGOLD W., *Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior*, [in:] *Noble Ideas and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. CHRISTIE, M. YAZIGI, Leiden 2006, p. 209–233, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047409120\\_015](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047409120_015)
- VASILIEV A.A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d’Amorium (820–867)*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Bruxelles 1935.
- VASILIEV A.A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II, *Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne (les empereurs Basile I, Léon le Sage et Constantin VII Porphyrogénète) 867–959 (253–348). Première partie: Les relations politiques de Byzance et des Arabes à l’époque de la dynastie macédonienne. Première période, de 867 à 959*, ed. H. GRÉGOIRE, M. CANARD, Bruxelles 1968.
- WALTERS W., *Some Critical Notes on “Governance”*, “Studies in Political Economy” 73, 2004, p. 27–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19187033.2004.11675150>
- WHEELER E.L., *Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part I*, “Journal of Military History” 57.1, 1993, p. 7–41, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944221>
- WHEELER E.L., *Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy: Part II*, “Journal of Military History” 57.2, 1993, p. 215–240, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944057>

- WHITTOW M., *Byzantium’s Eurasian Policy in the Age of the Türk Empire*, [in:] *Empires and Exchanges in Eurasian Late Antiquity. Rome, China, Iran, and the Steppe, ca.250–750*, ed. N. DI COSMO, M. MASS, Cambridge 2018, p. 271–286, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316146040.021>
- WHITTOW M., *The Middle Byzantine Economy (600–1204)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c.500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 465–492, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.019>
- ŽIVKOVIĆ T., *On the Baptism of the Serbs and Croats in the time of Basil I (867–886)*, “*Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*” 1, 2013, p. 33–53.

**Dragan Gjalevski**


Ss. Cyril and Methodius University  
Institute of National History  
Grigor Prlicev 3  
1000 Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia  
[gjalevsk1.d@gmail.com](mailto:gjalevsk1.d@gmail.com)







Łukasz Różycki (Poznań)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1536-3387>

## NIGHT COMBAT IN LATE ANTIQUITY IN THE LIGHT OF ROMAN MILITARY TREATISES

**Abstract.** The aim of the text entitled: *Night Combat in Late Antiquity in the Light of Roman Military Treatises* is to present the theory and practice of night combat in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Based on source analysis (military treatises – mainly *Strategikon*, and Late Roman and Byzantine historiography), the author presented the theory and practice of night fighting. Apart from classical methods of analysis, the psychology of the battlefield was also used. This gives us a complete picture of how Byzantines use the night as an advantage on the battlefield.

**Keywords:** Night combat, stratagems, Byzantine military manuals, Late Antiquity

*War is akin to a hunt. To overcome a wild animal, one needs to track it, employ snares, lay an ambush, sneak up on it and surround it, and use other stratagems, not brute force. In warfare, you should do the same, regardless if the enemies are many or few. Trying to defeat the enemy in open battle, fighting face to face, even if victory is likely, may result in heavy casualties and prove risky. Apart from a few specific exceptions, it is folly to seek out victory, whose glory rings hollow, in such costly manner<sup>1</sup>.*

The above excerpt of the *Strategikon* is straight out a definition of late Roman military science. Even if a slightly different approach to war could be observed at the strategic or state level<sup>2</sup>, the commander had a specific task ahead of him. A Strategos was supposed to pursue victory at all costs and using every method available. Even if it meant deceiving his own soldiers<sup>3</sup>, ravaging imperial

<sup>1</sup> *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, VIIA, pr. 45–53, ed. et trans. G. T. DENNIS, E. GAMILLSCHEG, Wien 1981 [= *CFHB.SV*, 17] (cetera: *Strategikon*).

<sup>2</sup> On this topic, cf. a short piece by J. KODER, I. STOURAITIS, *Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*. An Introduction, [in:] *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion*, ed. IDEM, Wien 2012, p. 9–16. And an excellent book: G. THEOTOKIS, *Byzantine Military Tactics in Syria and Mesopotamia in the Tenth Century. A Comparative Study*, Edinburgh 2018, p. 26–41.

<sup>3</sup> *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, (B) 72–79, ed. et trans. J. HALDON, Vindobonae 1990.

lands to cause famine<sup>4</sup>, or torturing and murdering captives<sup>5</sup>, it had to be done. As Vegetius put it:

It is the mark of a great leader that they always first strive to – if possible without any losses – destroy, or at least dishearten the enemy by launching raids from a concealed position, rather than seeking an open battle, where both sides are subject to the same threats<sup>6</sup>.

This was a markedly different approach to that of the classical era, when Romans believed that the end did not always justify the means and that the enemy was best met face to face<sup>7</sup>. In late antiquity, when commanders were held accountable by the emperor for their tasks and could lose their position quite quickly<sup>8</sup>, the final outcome was the most important thing. The situation only began to change somewhat in the Middle Byzantine period, when treatise authors began to warn against deliberately spreading pestilence<sup>9</sup> among enemy soldiers<sup>10</sup> and, to some extent, against attacking the enemy at night<sup>11</sup>. Apart from the above, every trick, every deceit and every method to achieve success in war, preferably with the least

<sup>4</sup> *Strategicon*, VIII B, 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, XLIX, 16, 3, 10, ed. Th. MOMMSEN, P. KRUEGER, Berolini 1870 (cetera: *Digesta*).

<sup>6</sup> *Quisquis hos artis bellicae commentarios ex probatissimis auctoribus breuiatos legere dignabitur, quam primum rationem proelii depugnandique cupit audire praecepta. Sed conflictus publicus duarum aut trium horarum certamine definitur, post quem partis eius, quae superata fuerit, spes omnes intercedunt. Ideo omnia ante cogitanda sunt, ante temptanda, ante facienda sunt, quam ad ultimum ueniatur abruptum. Boni enim duces non aperto proelio, in quo est commune periculum, sed ex occulto semper adtemptant, ut integris suis, quantum possunt, hostes interimant uel certe terreant...* PUBLIUS FLAVIUS VEGETIUS RENATUS, *Epitoma rei militaris – Abriß des Militärwesens. Lateinisch und deutsch*, III, 9, ed. et trans. F.L. MÜLLER, Stuttgart 1997 (cetera: VEGETIUS).

<sup>7</sup> This was also the case with night clashes, especially ambushes, which were considered dishonourable. According to Livius, the ancient Romans did not practice war secretly, but openly, without ambushes or night attacks. TITUS LIVIUS, *Römische Geschichte*, XLII, 47, ed. et trans. H.J. HILLEN, J. FEIX, München 1974–2000 (cetera: LIVIUS).

<sup>8</sup> *Digesta*, XLIX, 16, 3, 1. The commander could lose his position just because of a defeat in a pitched battle. *Strategicon*, VIII B, 45. This was a very different approach from that employed in the Republican era, where commanders, because of their background, were not usually punished for their failures, cf.: N.S. ROSENSTEIN, *Imperatores Victi. Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic*, Oxford 1990; J. RICH, *Roman Attitudes to Defeat in Battle under the Republic*, [in:] *Vae Victis! Perdedores en el mundo antiguo*, ed. F. PINA POLO, J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, F. MARCO SIMÓN, Barcelona 2012, p. 83–112.

<sup>9</sup> The opposition against this practice in the Middle Byzantine period was not rooted in Christian charity, but rather in the fear of the plague spreading to the Roman army and the local population.

<sup>10</sup> *Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim 'Inedita Leonis Tactica' Dicebatur*, ed. et trans. A. DAIN, Paris 1938; *A Tenth Century Byzantine Military Manual. The Sylloge Tacticorum*, LIX, 1–2, trans. G. CHATZELIS, J. HARRIS, London–New York 2017 [= BBOS] (cetera: *Sylloge Tacticorum*).

<sup>11</sup> According to the narrative sources at least, in reality no commander was reluctant to attack the enemy at night. G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals as Literary Works and Practical Handbooks. The Case of the Tenth-Century Sylloge Tacticorum*, London–New York 2019, p. 117–119.

possible loss of life, was allowed. Such an opportunistic approach to war was not at all in contrast to the ideological roots of the conflicts<sup>12</sup>, stemming from the Christian doctrine and the Roman understanding of just war, as well as the *modus operandi* of legions developed over the centuries.

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the theoretical military works of late antiquity in search of a possible complete model of the conduct of Roman troops during night fighting. A similar case study, but for a later period, was carried out in an excellent work by Georgios Chatzelis<sup>13</sup>, although it focused on other themes, including the fascinating use of night fights as a literary topos<sup>14</sup>. Building such a model is, of course, impossible without the use of narrative sources that can help verify the information provided by the authors of treatises. The core source base will consist of two treatises written in late antiquity – a work by Vegetius entitled *De Re militari* and an anonymous work written at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the *Strategicon*<sup>15</sup>. These two works of undisputed late antiquity

<sup>12</sup> I. STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz*, Vienna 2009 [= BG.E, 5]; J. HALDON, 'Fighting for Peace': Justifying Warfare and Violence in the Medieval East Roman World, [in:] *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, ed. M.S. GORDON, R.W. KAEUPER, H. ZURNDOERFER, Cambridge 2020, p. 493–494. The text below is not an attempt to systematise the studies on the issue but it may serve as a starting point for discussion. Notably, military treatises as an auxiliary source are largely used by scholars in a discussion on Byzantine war theory. For the preceding period see some general remarks in: V.D. HANSON, *The Roman Way of War*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, ed. G. PARKER, Cambridge 2005, p. 46–60; G. SCHMALZBAUER, *Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz*, [in:] *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposium 40 Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger*, ed. M.A. HÖRANDNER WOLFRAM, J. KODER, Vienna 2004, p. 408–419; H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975; J. KODER, *Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert)*, APHK 137.2, 2002, p. 15–34. Notably, in his studies on the concept of war and its relations with religion, John Haldon clearly indicated an alliance between the state and the Church. In his opinion, in the time following the reign of Constantine the Great, soldiers were completely accepted by the society as defenders of the faith and the Empire. J. HALDON, *Fighting for Peace...*, p. 492–512, especially 496–505, here 497.

<sup>13</sup> The problem of night fighting and the related challenges were presented by G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals...*, p. 77, 113–119. He emphasised the significance of a military camp which gave the soldiers a sense of safety.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*. Georgios Chatzelis also indicated this when he described night attacks which, despite some moral doubts of the author of *Sylloge Tacticorum*, were gladly used by Roman commanders because they resulted in smaller casualties. *Ibidem*, p. 118–119.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that the title itself is an artificial creation, and that the first manuscript, in accordance with Eastern Roman practice, was probably entitled ΤΑΚΤΙΚΑ. S. ΓΥΦΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Historical Information gathered from the Mauricii Strategikon*, ΒΣΜ 23, 2013, p. 55–89 (here 71–74). On the author's sources cf.: Ph. RANCE, *Maurice's Strategikon and 'the Ancients': the Late Antique Reception of Aelian and Arrian*, [in:] *Greek Taktika. Ancient Military Writing and its Heritage. Proceedings*

will be complemented by information from a work on land warfare by Syrianus Magister. Although Syrianus' compendium is increasingly often dated back to the Middle Byzantine period<sup>16</sup>, it is likely that the author drew on works from the late antique period<sup>17</sup>, so much so that Vasilij Kuchma considered the treatise on strategy to be a work written in the circles of Justinian the Great<sup>18</sup>. Syrianus' work is important in regards to night fighting since it contains quite detailed utilitarian information, not available in any other theoretical work. The image created on the basis of theoretical works will be supplemented and confronted with narrative sources, mainly from authors closely associated with late antique Roman army: Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius of Caesarea, and Theophylact Simocatta<sup>19</sup>.

---

of the International Conference on Greek *Taktika* held at the University of Toruń, 7–11 April 2005, ed. Ph. RANCE, N. SEKUNDA, Gdańsk 2017, p. 217–255.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. more at: Ph. RANCE, *The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (formerly the Sixth-Century Anonymus Byzantinus)*, BZ 100.2, 2007, p. 701–737; *Byzantine Military Rhetoric in the Ninth Century. A Translation of the Anonymi Byzantini Rhetorica Militaris*, trans. G. THEOTOKIS, D. SIDIROPOULOS, London–New York 2021 [= RRBS], p. 6–21; S. COSENTINO, *Syrianos' Strategikon – a 9<sup>th</sup>-Century Source?*, Bi 2, 2000, p. 243–280; D.A. LEE, J. SHEPARD, *A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon*, Bsl 52, 1991, p. 28–29; B. BALDWIN, *On the Date of the Anonymous ΠΕΡΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΗΣ*, BZ 81, 1988, p. 290–293 and: L. MECCELLA, *Die Überlieferung der Kestoi des Julius Africanus in den byzantinischen Textsammlungen zur Militärtechnik*, [in:] *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung*, ed. M. WALLRAFF, L. MECCELLA, Berlin 2009 [= TUGAL, 165], p. 85–144, particularly 96–98.

<sup>17</sup> However, this was not a mere compilation in which the author rewrote parts of earlier works. According to research carried out by Philip Rance, the manuscript is free of copyist errors. In that case, if the treatise has been copied since the sixth century, we have an unusual situation in which none of the copyists made the slightest error in their work. In addition, the copy of the compendium included in *Codex Ambrosianus graecus* 139 did not undergo any modification in terms of vocabulary, which may also indicate that it was a fairly new work at the time the codex was written. This does not exclude compilation, but in such a situation we are not dealing with copying the original text or paraphrasing it, but rather with its careful and conscious interpretation, including the adaptation of the professional vocabulary to the author's contemporary Greek. Ph. RANCE, *The Date of the Military Compendium...*, p. 734–737. This means that the author of the treatise was Syrianus, who wrote down his work in the Middle Byzantine period, but the substantive basis of the work may have been earlier treatises that have not survived to our time. The author did not compile fragments of earlier works, but rather used knowledge contained in them and updated the vocabulary and realities.

<sup>18</sup> The latest study by Kuchma still dates the treatise of Syrianus back to the end of the Justinian period. *О стратегии. Византийский военный трактат VI века*, trans. В.В. КУЧМА, Санкт-Петербург 2007, p. 5–51, and for a history of Byzantine warfare: В.В. КУЧМА, *Военная организация Византийской Империи*, Санкт-Петербург 2001, p. 37. Also: F. SHLOSSER, *The Reign of the Emperor Maurikios (582–602). A Reassessment*, Athens 1994, p. 79–88. Another scholar who supports the dating of Syrianus' work to the times of Justinian, but without giving any arguments, is: C. WHATELY, *The Genre and Purpose of Military Manuals in Late Antiquity*, [in:] *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. GREATREX, H. ELTON, London 2015, p. 250; J. HALDON, *Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (ca. A.D. 660–1025)*, [in:] *War and warfare in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. SARANTIS, N. CHRISTIE, Leiden 2013 [= LAA, 8], p. 381.

<sup>19</sup> Although Theophylact's links with the army were the weakest among the above mentioned authors, contemporary historiographical studies by authors such as Terézia Olajos and Michael Whitby

The choice of narrative sources is not random, as Georgios Chatzelis had to cope with literary *topoi*, perfectly demonstrating how night combat was used to build a positive or negative image of the commanders, however, such a situation should not be the case with the above authors<sup>20</sup>.

### Περὶ νυκτοπολέμου

In his *opus magnum*, Vegetius mentions night fighting many times. As befits a theoretician, his mentions do not have much useful value, but are nevertheless worth mentioning. Above all, in Vegetius' work, offensive actions at night are carried out by the enemy, and the Romans must learn how to protect themselves against such threat<sup>21</sup>. The army, in extreme situations, could march at night, but the author also advised against this, especially in winter<sup>22</sup>. Of course this rule did not apply to scouts, who were supposed to operate much more freely at night than during the day<sup>23</sup>. The pieces of advice offered by Vegetius provided basic information without going into detail and, in case of night combat, mainly concerned defence against hostile attacks. This is particularly evident in the paragraphs dealing with the establishment of military camps<sup>24</sup> and deploying guards<sup>25</sup>. Already in the first book, Vegetius, in a moralistic style, lamented the Romans' failure to build marching camps, adding that, as a result, enemy cavalry sometimes surprised

---

show that in his work, Theophylact used sources of information very close to the army. In addition to conversations with those who participated in the events, Theophylact probably had access to the imperial chancellery, where he was able to consult military reports created after military actions in the chancelleries of the various *magistri militum*. For more cf.: T. OLAJOS, *Les sources de Théophylacte Simocatta historien*, Leiden 1988 [= ByzNee, 10], p. 128–149; H.W. HAUSSIG, *Theophylakts Exkurs über die skythischen Völker*, B 23, 1953, p. 275–462 (here: 295–300); O. VEH, *Untersuchungen zu dem byzantinischen Historiker Theophylaktos Simokattes*, Fürth 1957, p. 14–15; M. WHITBY, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988 [= OHM], p. 97–98.

<sup>20</sup> Which is not to say, of course, that Ammianus, or Procopius, were free from operating certain ancient clichés for the purposes of their accounts. Cf., for example: G. KELLY, *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Allusive Historian*, Cambridge–New York 2008 [= CCS]; *The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J.W. DRIJVERS, D. HUNT, London–New York 1999; *Ammianus Marcellinus from Soldier to Author*, ed. M. HANAGHAN, D. WOODS, Leiden 2022 [= HRE, 16]. In the latter especially the chapter *Xenophon and Ammianus: Two Soldier-Historians and their Persian Expeditions* by Guy Williams. On Procopius' sources cf.: with an excellent list of applicable literature. L. MECCELLA, *Procopius' Sources*, [in:] *A Companion to Procopius of Caesarea*, ed. M. MEIER, F. MONTINARO, Leiden 2022 [= BCBW, 11], p. 178–193. For more on literary *topos* with a list of the applicable literature on the subject, cf.: Ph. RANCE, *Wars*, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 108–119.

<sup>21</sup> For example: VEGETIUS, III, 8; III, 10; III, 22.

<sup>22</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 2.

<sup>23</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 6.

<sup>24</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 8.

<sup>25</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 8.

the Romans with night strikes<sup>26</sup>. Enemy attacks at night are mentioned several times throughout the text as a kind of memento for commanders, the exception being paragraph IX of Book III, where the author indicated that the Romans could also use all kinds of war trickery, but without going into any technical details<sup>27</sup>. Despite the numerous references, Vegetius' advice can be summed up in line with the nature of his work: the Roman military faces decline, soldiers stopped building military camps while even barbarians take shelter behind their carts at night<sup>28</sup>, so it is necessary to return to the old military customs. The author of *De Re militari* warned against hostile night attacks, rather than advising this form of warfare to Roman leaders. After nightfall, the Romans could send out scouts or, if need be, move troops to surprise the enemy in the morning. This approach of Vegetius was probably due to the reception of theoretical works of the republican era, which the author was eager to use and compile<sup>29</sup>. As already mentioned in the introduction, the authors of literary sources who wrote in the republican era suggested that Romans considered fighting at night to be dishonourable<sup>30</sup>. It is very possible that Vegetius' apprehension to conducting offensive operations at night was the result of the source material he used, which has not survived to our time.

Similarly to Vegetius, the anonymous author of the *Strategicon* mentioned night-time activities on several occasions. The guidance of the pseudo-Maurice did not differ significantly from that of Vegetius when it came to marching at night to starting positions, using spies and scouts, or securing camps after dark, although it should be noted that the *Strategicon* features much more detailed descriptions. What makes *Strategicon* different from the work of Vegetius is the approach to night attacks carried out by the Romans.

The author of *Strategicon* has left a fairly detailed description of how night battles are fought; this account, supplemented by Syrianus Magister's guidance, will form the basis for further discussion. The author divided offensive operations after dark into three phases that are clearly visible in the text, namely: preparation for operations, approach to the position, and the clash itself. The first phase was presented in *Strategicon* in quite some detail and in this aspect the text definitely stands out from the rest of the sources<sup>31</sup>. The author of the treatise advised to weaken the enemy's vigilance. An attack on the enemy at night could be

<sup>26</sup> VEGETIUS, I, 21.

<sup>27</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 19.

<sup>28</sup> VEGETIUS, III, 10.

<sup>29</sup> For more cf.: S. MORILLO, *Battle Seeking: The Contexts and Limits of Vegetian Strategy*, JMMH 1, 2002, p. 21–42; W. GOFFART, *The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' De Re Militari*, T 33, 1977, p. 69–88; M. CHARLES, *Vegetius in Context Establishing the Date of the Epitoma Rei Militaris*, Stuttgart 2007; Ch. ALLMAND, *The De Re Militari of Vegetius. The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2011.

<sup>30</sup> LIVIUS, XLII, 47.

<sup>31</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2.

successful if the opponent was not expecting it, otherwise, the Roman ruse could have been thwarted. In order to dull the enemy's vigilance, it was necessary to start negotiations with the enemy by sending envoys<sup>32</sup>. The opening of peace negotiations, which were heading in the right direction, was intended to put the enemy off guard; the author of the treatise corroborated this trick with the example of the actions of the Roman leader Lusius in the time of Trajan<sup>33</sup>. Another way to lull hostile vigilance was routine. The author of *Strategicon* advised leading the army out in formation every morning to the field of battle, but then turning back to camp, feigning fear of the enemy. Such actions were intended to assure the enemy of the weak morale and low battle readiness of the Romans. After repeating the manoeuvre for several days and dulling the enemy's vigilance, it was necessary to strike at night against an unsuspecting foe. This method was also illustrated by an example; the author used contemporary events this time when the Avars surprised the Roman cavalry near Heraclea<sup>34</sup>. The final subterfuge involved the use of deserters as carriers of misinformation, although the author did not indicate whether or not they were aware of that. The Roman deserters were supposed to tell the enemy commander about declining Roman morale. At the same time, supposedly upon confirmation of the deserters' information, the Roman *strategos* would have rolled up camp and retreated a short distance<sup>35</sup>. Convinced of a Roman retreat, the barbarians relaxed their discipline and abandoned their guard at night, and that was when the Romans attacked. The above example show how important it was to properly prepare the night attack. The enemy's vigilance had to be properly dulled before striking in order to gain maximum benefit with minimum losses. As mentioned in the introduction, the Romans pursued success at all costs. An interesting addition regarding the preparations for night combat is a text by Syrianus Magister, who also recommended taking care of the morale of the Roman soldiers. According to the author, oaths had to be taken from Romans going into battle that they would fight bravely and choose death rather than flee the battlefield<sup>36</sup>. The *strategos* should also swear that, after the battle, he would reward the fighting soldiers accordingly, and that in the event of the death of any of the Romans, the reward would go to his descendant (here literally the heir – κληρονόμος)<sup>37</sup>. Such oaths and promises were meant to bolster the morale of the soldiers going into battle, taming, at least in part, their fear.

<sup>32</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 1–7.

<sup>33</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 6–7. Probably in 116 AD, near Edessa or Nisibis.

<sup>34</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 11–14. In 592, cf.: *Theophylacti Simocattae historiae*, VI, 5, ed. et trans. C. DE BOOR, P. WIRTH, Stuttgartiae 1972 [= BSGR] (cetera: SIMOCATTA).

<sup>35</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 14–17.

<sup>36</sup> *Strategicon*, XXXIX, 5–12. *The Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy*, XVIII, 112, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. et trans. G. T. DENNIS, Washington 1985 [= DOT, 9] (cetera: SYRIANUS).

<sup>37</sup> *Strategicon*, XXXIX, 11.



Once the enemy's vigilance has been dulled enough, the Roman *strategoi* were to proceed with the second phase of operations, namely to move out into striking positions. It was a complex manoeuvre, requiring good reconnaissance and proper discipline within the ranks of the stratiotes<sup>38</sup>. Much also depended on whether infantry or cavalry was chosen for action. Although the cavalry, thanks to its speed, could do much more damage to the enemy in the last phase, it was definitely easier for the infantry to approach the enemy camp unnoticed. Operations were best conducted during a moonlit night<sup>39</sup>, so that soldiers could see something and not bump into each other while marching<sup>40</sup>. The march had to be planned well in advance, so as to allow the soldiers a moment to rest before the clash. The attack itself should begin just before dawn, when the enemy's alertness was at its lowest and soldiers are plunged into the deepest sleep<sup>41</sup>.

The army should be led to the starting positions by an experienced scout who knew the local terrain very well<sup>42</sup>. Syrianus added that scouts should be properly equipped with large shields, as well as shin guards and well-hobnailed boots to protect against Roman caltrops<sup>43</sup>. During the march noise of any kind was forbidden and the Romans should cease communication. The author of *Strategicon*, demonstrating a great deal of experience, stated that an army marching to its starting positions should do so in a marching column, as soldiers moving into position for a night attack in battle formation, with the front advanced, made too much noise. It was only when they reached their starting positions that the columns had to be expanded into battle formation, which should not be too difficult as the troops should march one behind the other maintaining the depth of the developed formation. In extreme cases, the author advised, commands should be given by means of a whistle or by hitting the shield. That is, in a way that would not necessarily alert the enemy guards.

The transition to the final phase, the clash, was one of the more difficult ones. The *strategos* should deploy his troops around the enemy camp in such a way as to strike from three directions at once, leaving the enemy a way of retreat in accordance

---

<sup>38</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 33–51. The need for good reconnaissance was also mentioned by Syrianus Magister cf.: SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 12–18.

<sup>39</sup> Syrianus, on the contrary, advised operations to be conducted on a moonless night, preferably when the stars are hidden behind the clouds. Instead, the scouts were to carry specially prepared lanterns to illuminate only the marching Romans. SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 19–34.

<sup>40</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 26–30.

<sup>41</sup> For more on the phases of sleep, cf.: I. FEINBERG, *Changes in Sleep Cycle Patterns with Age*, JPsyR 10, 1974, p. 183–306.

<sup>42</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 33–36.

<sup>43</sup> SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 29–33. In addition, Syrianus mentioned that the march leaders should be followed by another small security detachment, whose role was to boost the morale of the scouts and to pose a silent threat in the event that the scouts decided to flee. Syrianus, XXXIX, 33–35.

with the motto *νίκα καὶ μὴ ὑπερνίκα*<sup>44</sup>. The author of the treatise advised against complete encirclement, which could lead to the enemy closing ranks and taking up the fight. The whole attack was calculated to cause panic among the enemy to prevent hostile party from putting up a fight. The troops should attack at the sound of the trumpets, giving the impression of being more numerous than they actually are<sup>45</sup>. During the attack, the enemy camp should be buried with arrows discharged by archers, both on foot and on horseback as well as javelins<sup>46</sup>. Syrianus additionally hinted at the use of saboteurs. Even before the attack, the Romans were to select a few soldiers who spoke the enemy's language and, when the opportune moment arrived, they would infiltrate the enemy ranks and, in the hostile camp, heighten the panic, encouraging them to flee<sup>47</sup>. It was all calculated to create as much panic as possible. However, if the intended effect failed, the Romans should have had adequate reserves that could have been used if the clash turned into a regular night battle or if some Roman units had to retreat under enemy pressure<sup>48</sup>. In this way, the Romans had sufficient support in case of any setback, provided they kept correct battle formation and were ready to receive the enemy.

### Night combat in the light of narrative sources – Ammianus, Procopius, Theophylact

Most of the elements of each phase are confirmed in narrative sources dating back to late antiquity. Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius and Theophylact Simocatta several times mentioned night marches to ensure a better position for the Romans the next morning<sup>49</sup>, but the Romans were also more than once outmanoeuvred by their enemies at night<sup>50</sup>. Night marches mainly served the purpose of taking a better position for the next day's battle or bypassing a strong enemy grouping

<sup>44</sup> Literally: *win but do not overwin*. This is exactly what recommended SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 36–38. For more cf.: Ph. RANCE, “*Win but do not overwin*” – *The History of a Proverb from the Sententiae Menandri, and a Classical Allusion in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Phil 152.2, 2008, p. 191–204.

<sup>45</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 48–51. This trick has been known since ancient times, cf. for example: POLYANOS, *Strategika*, III, 13, 3, ed. et trans. K. BRODERSEN, Berlin 2017.

<sup>46</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 18–23.

<sup>47</sup> SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 43–46.

<sup>48</sup> Syrianus was silent about the need for keeping reserves.

<sup>49</sup> For example: *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, IV, 12, 17–20; VI, 7, 1–4, ed. G. WIRTH, J. HAURY, Leipzig 1962–1964 [= BSGR] (cetera: PROCOPIUS). *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, XVII, 12, 4, ed. W. SEYFARTH, Leipzig 1978 (cetera: AMMIANUS); SIMOCATTA, II, 18. But also by falling into hostile ambushes: SIMOCATTA, III, 7.

<sup>50</sup> The Persians, for example, did so, bypassing the Roman marching camp: AMMIANUS, XII, 8, 2. In 586, the Persian army rushing to the relief of the fortress of Chlomonon bypassed the besieging Roman troops, taking up position which placed them with the fortifications behind. On hearing the news, panic arose in the Roman camp and the army threw itself into a night flight. SIMOCATTA, II, 8–9.

without a clash. Of course, there were also situations when Roman troops took up position for night attacks on a resting enemy. According to the theoretical papers<sup>51</sup>, such manoeuvres were extremely difficult and required a great deal of discipline from the soldiers. The best description of this initial approach is found in the work of Theophylact Simocatta<sup>52</sup> and has already been discussed many times by linguists<sup>53</sup>. However, it is worth noting the technical aspects of said description.

In the year 587, the Avar army invaded Thrace. After dealing with the Roman troops, the nomads proceeded to plunder the province, which the Roman *strategos* Comentiolus intended to exploit. The Roman commander's plan was quite simple, the Roman army would approach close to the poorly secured nomad camp at night and strike the enemy late at night or early in the morning, achieving complete surprise<sup>54</sup>. Theophylact's narrative concentrated on the element in which the Romans failed, but still included a lot of interesting additional information. So, the Romans were to march in a column to the starting position for the attack, soldier after soldier<sup>55</sup>, keeping quiet, and giving commands in whispers one to the other<sup>56</sup>. This was in line with what author of the *Strategicon* recommended. Full success was impeded by communication, as soldiers gave the command one to the other, thus the message was distorted and understood as a retreat order for the whole unit, instead of one soldier whose pack animal's straps had become loose. Despite the retreat of the unit in which the confusion occurred, the night attack was carried out with considerable success by another unit<sup>57</sup>, and the success was so great that even the life of the Khagan was in danger. This means that the Romans, according to the art laid out in the *Strategicon*<sup>58</sup>, headed for their starting positions from at least two directions. The description included in Theophylact's *History* seems to confirm some general principles for carrying out night manoeuvres, also showing their effectiveness.

Under the cover of the night, the Romans were also very eager to get their forces across rivers<sup>59</sup>, and even smashed ice on frozen waters thus preventing barbarians

<sup>51</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 26–33; SYRIANUS, XXXIX, 3–12.

<sup>52</sup> SIMOCATTA, II, 15.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. abundant literature: P. NĂSTUREL, *Torna, torna, fratre. O problemă de istorie și de lingvistică*, SCIV 7, 1956, p. 179–188; B. BALDWIN, 'Torna, torna, phrater': *What Language?*, B 67, 1997, p. 264–268.

<sup>54</sup> SIMOCATTA, II, 15.

<sup>55</sup> SIMOCATTA, II, 15, 6–8.

<sup>56</sup> SIMOCATTA, II, 15, 7–9. Pointing out that the soldiers giving the command one to the other led to its distortion.

<sup>57</sup> SIMOCATTA, II, 15, 11–13.

<sup>58</sup> *Strategicon*, IX, 2, 33–51.

<sup>59</sup> AMMIANUS, XVII, 1, 4; XXIV, 6, 5. It is also worth noting that Illyrian pirates were said to attack during the night. AMMIANUS XIV, 2, 2. Rome's adversaries were also aware of this, sometimes staying up all night to ensure that the legions did not cross the river. AMMIANUS XVIII, 1, 10–12. Also in the work of Simocatta. SIMOCATTA, II, 11; V, 5; V, 8.

from crossing<sup>60</sup>. Night crossings were intended to prevent the enemy from detecting forces crossing the river in time, thus ensuring the safety of the Roman army and the element of surprise<sup>61</sup>. In case of combat, night very often marked the end of the struggle as both sides retreated to their camps<sup>62</sup>. Sometimes night was also a lifesaver for the Romans surprised by the barbarians, as was the case with the unit led by Arbition, which fell into an Alaman ambush. Ammianus pointed out that thanks to the coming of the night some of the soldiers slipped out of the trap and were reunited with their troops the next day<sup>63</sup>. Night was also used by the barbarians as an asset when storming difficult positions, albeit not always successfully<sup>64</sup>.

On the one hand, soldiers camping at night were susceptible to enemy night attacks, hence all the information about the art of setting up camp and night watches<sup>65</sup>. When troops were on the offensive, night attacks were an excellent way of decimating a larger enemy army with relatively few casualties. At times, the Romans managed to surprise barbarians in this way; barbarians, who in regular conditions would not have fought but rather retreated. The best example of this type of attack is a night expedition against Slavs under the command of Ardagast: taken by surprise in their sleep, they were forced to fight on the enemy's terms<sup>66</sup>. This behaviour was in compliance with the general spirit of Roman military treatises, which assumed gaining any advantage by all available means. This procedure is mentioned many times in military treatises, which is a clear indication that it was an important element of a soldier's profession.

Although night battles were rare, they are also mentioned in the analysed narrative sources. An example of these would be the night attack, described by Ammianus, led by the Gallic legions on the Persian camp during the siege of Amida, which, however, ended in defeat. The legionaries successfully defeated the Persian advance guard<sup>67</sup>, but the sounds of battle awoke the resting enemy soldiers who joined the clash, forcing the Romans to retreat<sup>68</sup>. Theophylact also left a brief description of a fratricidal night battle between the Persians, when Baram's rebel troops smashed Chosroes' forces in a night battle<sup>69</sup>. He also described the clash between Persian forces, supplemented by an auxiliary Roman corps and Baram's rebels<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> AMMIANUS, XVII, 2, 3.

<sup>61</sup> AMMIANUS, XIV, 10, 7.

<sup>62</sup> AMMIANUS, XIX, 2, 14; XX, 11, 2; XXV, 3, 12; XXXVII, 7, 8; PROCOPIUS, I, 13, 38; III, 19, 31.

<sup>63</sup> AMMIANUS, XV, 3, 8.

<sup>64</sup> The Romans successfully defended their positions in the mountain passes during the assault by the Avars, and then retreated without problems to the main forces. SIMOCATTA, V, 4–5.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. for example *De Munitionibus Castrorum*; VEGETIUS, III, 2; III, 8; *Strategicon*, V, 4; VIIIB, 9; XIIIB, 22; XIIC.

<sup>66</sup> SIMOCATTA, VI, 7. Truth be told, Ardagast found refuge in a dense forest.

<sup>67</sup> AMMIANUS, XIX, 5, 7–9.

<sup>68</sup> AMMIANUS, XIX, 5, 9–10.

<sup>69</sup> SIMOCATTA, IV, 9.

<sup>70</sup> SIMOCATTA, V, 9.

In the latter case, Baram's troops intended to launch a surprise night attack on the loyalist camp, however Roman guards spotted the approaching army just in time. A regular clash ensued in which Roman discipline triumphed on the battlefield<sup>71</sup>, although Baram's troops avoided total defeat. All source accounts confirm that discipline was extremely important during the night marches and battles. The accounts referred to also confirm that the tricks depicted in the military treatises were indeed used on battlefields in late antiquity.

### Fear of the dark in the Middle Byzantine period

After the source analysis, it is worthwhile to dwell on one more aspect of night fighting and how it affected soldiers<sup>72</sup>. One need only recall Leo VI's opinion of the Arabs, who, in his view, were not fond of confrontations after sunset<sup>73</sup>. Fear of the dark was nothing new and should rather be attributed to every human being: a battle is a traumatic situation and an uncertain event, darkness only intensifies these stressors<sup>74</sup>. Also Ammianus claimed that night increased fear in people<sup>75</sup>. Fear of the dark is an atavistic fear rooted in human nature<sup>76</sup>, magnifying other stressors and made worse by combat. It can be divided into two categories. The first would be the fear of camping in foreign territory so, to a large extent, fear of the unknown. The other category is represented by a fear of fighting at night. Roman commanders and theoreticians used different ways of overcoming night-related fear<sup>77</sup>. Syrianus' work includes information about oaths and significant rewards for the soldiers attacking the enemy at night as a fear-dispelling enticement<sup>78</sup>. A night attack on enemy positions required significant courage and discipline, because it was easier

<sup>71</sup> SIMOCATTA, V, 9, 7–8.

<sup>72</sup> Ł. RÓŻYCKI, *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity. A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treatises*, Leiden 2021, p. 71–73.

<sup>73</sup> *The Taktika of Leon VI. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, XVIII, 112, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington 2010 [= DOT, 12; CFHB.SW, 49] (cetera: *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*).

<sup>74</sup> N.E. LUTTWAK, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Harvard 2009, p. 308.

<sup>75</sup> AMMIANUS, XIV, 2, 9; XI, 8, 18; XVIII, 6, 14.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. for example E. GULLONE, *The Development of Normal Fear: A Century of Research*, CPsyR 20.4, 2000, p. 429–451; Ch. GRILLON, M. PELLOWSKI, K.R. MERIKANGAS, M. DAVIS, *Darkness Facilitates the Acoustic Startle Reflex in Humans*, BPsy 42.6, 1997, p. 453–460. A question arises if it was a fear of the dark or a fear of the night itself. Both fears are atavistic in nature; research indicates that in general, humans are more afraid of the night (i.e. in this case, the night can also be a factor magnifying fear). Cf. L. YADAN et al., *Night or Darkness, which Intensifies the Feeling of Fear?*, IJPsy 97.1, 2015, p. 46–57. Fear itself has also been defined as primal: J. BOURKE, *Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History*, HWJ 55.1, 2003, p. 124.

<sup>77</sup> The problem of night fighting and the related challenges were presented by G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals...*, p. 77, 113–119. He emphasised the significance of a military camp which gave the soldiers a sense of safety.

<sup>78</sup> SYRIANUS, XXXIX.

to make a mistake at night<sup>79</sup>. On the other hand, Polyænus' work includes information that soldiers spending the night on enemy territory would easily panic, and so the commanders had to handle the problem in various ways, the most brutal being an order given by Clearchus to kill every soldier who panicked in the night and rose from his bedding<sup>80</sup>. A fear of the night and enemy attack was replaced by the fear of inevitable punishment. Interestingly, Byzantine historiographers took note of the art of night fighting and used it frequently in constructing their own narratives. In the case of night attack and defeat, very frequently the blame fell on the commander and his lack of experience or downright incompetence<sup>81</sup>.

The authors of *De velitatione bellica*<sup>82</sup> and *Sylloge Tacticorum* recommended taking advantage of the fear of the night spent on enemy territory<sup>83</sup>. The *Sylloge* considered however the attack at night an act of honour, only if the attacking army was weaker than its enemy. Otherwise, when the forces were comparable, it was an act of dishonour<sup>84</sup>. Considering Roman warfare in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, though, this was antiquated thinking and no military commander launching a night attack worried about honour-related aspects<sup>85</sup>. Nikephoros II Phokas serves as an excellent example: heading a strong invading army, he attacked the Arabs on Crete by night and won a spectacular victory, and the praise of Leo the Deacon<sup>86</sup>.

If the enemy set up camp for the night on Roman territory, the attack had to be unexpected, in order to disrupt the enemy's tactical organisation and damage his morale, at the same time leaving open the only safe road into the enemy territory to encourage flight<sup>87</sup>. Launching such an attack was a demanding task for Roman soldiers, but when it did happen, the results could be outstanding. The best example illustrating that is when troops headed by Leo Phocas launched a night attack against some Magyars in the 960s. Although, according to Leo the Deacon, the Roman troops were few and unprepared for fighting, the night attack on a clearly larger force brought about an excellent result with only a handful of Magyars left alive<sup>88</sup>. Awoken from a deep sleep, in which they were trying to rest their bodies and calm their nerves, the enemy soldiers became easy prey for the Romans. Violently roused from their slumber and attacked, they thought only of fleeing

<sup>79</sup> The best example is an attack previously described by Theophylact Simocatta during a night march against the Avars.

<sup>80</sup> POLYÆNUS, *Stratagems of War*, II, 2, 10, vol. I–II, ed. et trans. P. KRENTZ, E. L. WHEELER, Chicago 1994.

<sup>81</sup> G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals...*, p. 115–116.

<sup>82</sup> *De velitatione bellica*, XXIV, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military...* (cetera: *De velitatione bellica*).

<sup>83</sup> *Sylloge Tacticorum*, XLVIII.

<sup>84</sup> *Sylloge Tacticorum*, XLVIII, 7; G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals...*, p. 117–119.

<sup>85</sup> G. CHATZELIS, *Byzantine Military Manuals...*, p. 117–119.

<sup>86</sup> *Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis historiae libri decem et Liber de velitatione bellica Nicephori Augusti*, I, 7, ed. Ch. BENOÎT HASE, Bonn 1828 [= CSHB] (cetera: LEO DIACONUS).

<sup>87</sup> *De velitatione bellica*, XXIV, 14–18.

<sup>88</sup> LEO DIACONUS, II, 2.

for their lives rather than fighting. Interestingly, according to the authors of military treatises, some nations were more susceptible to night attacks. For example, the Arabs' fear of setting up camp for the night in foreign territory was strongly emphasised by the author of *Tactica*<sup>89</sup>, who recommended also other methods of attacking the enemy after nightfall<sup>90</sup>. In each of these works, the authors underlined that at night the enemy sought solace and relaxation. When comfort is replaced by sudden danger<sup>91</sup>, soldiers do not respond by fighting but fleeing.

During the Middle Byzantine period, the approach to night attacks did not undergo profound changes. Though opinion of the author of *Sylloge Tacticorum* regarding an honourable approach to night fighting seems to suggest otherwise, it was an individual opinion, and the overwhelming majority of theorists saw nothing wrong with smashing enemy troops in a night ambush. This is evidence of the continuation of the Roman art of war from the late antique period.

## Conclusions

Fighting at night was an essential part of Roman warfare, as is best evidenced by the detailed descriptions of the ways in which surprise operations were carried out after nightfall in the Roman military treaties. A large number of source references, both in theoretical and narrative works, also confirm that conducting operations at night was nothing dishonourable, and that the Romans and their opponents sought to exploit to the maximum the advantage offered by darkness. The commander's main objective was to achieve victory with as few losses as possible; if this meant operating after dark, such risks had to be taken. Each time, however, it was a pure profit-and-loss calculation. Although the accounts of night fighting in the narrative sources are not very extensive, it does not mean that they are not numerous; they allow us to confirm that the military treaties presented a doctrine for dealing with night fighting. This is one of the few occasions when narrative sources overlap to such an extent with military treatises, while forming a relatively coherent picture of the *modus operandi* of Roman armies over the centuries.

<sup>89</sup> *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, XVIII, 112.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, XVII, 10–16; SYRIANUS, XXXIX; *Strategicon*, IX, 2.

<sup>91</sup> The author of the *Tactica* even recommended simulating readiness for fighting for a few successive days and when the enemy's vigilance was duly relaxed, a night attack should have been launched. *Leonis Imperatoris Tactica*, XVII, 11.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, ed. W. SEYFARTH, Leipzig 1978.
- The Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy*, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington 1985 [= *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 9].
- Byzantine Military Rhetoric in the Ninth Century. A Translation of the Anonymi Byzantini Rhetorica Militaris*, trans. G. THEOTOKIS, D. SIDIROPOULOS, London–New York 2021 [= *Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies*].
- De velitatione bellica*, [in:] *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington 1985 [= *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 9].
- Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, ed. Th. MOMMSEN, P. KRUEGER, Berolini 1870.
- Leonis Diaconi Caloënsis historiae libri decem et Liber de velitatione bellica Nicephori Augusti*, ed. Ch. BENOÎT HASE, Bonn 1828 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- O strategii. Vizantijskij voyennyj traktat VI veka*, trans. V.V. KUCHMA, Sankt-Peterburg 2007.
- POLYAENUS, *Stratagems of War*, vol. I–II, ed. et trans. P. KRENTZ, E.L. WHEELER, Chicago 1994.
- POLYAINOS, *Strategika*, ed. et trans. K. BRODERSEN, Berlin 2017.
- Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, ed. G. WIRTH, J. HAURY, Leipzig 1962–1964 [= *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*].
- PUBLIUS FLAVIUS VEGETIUS RENATUS, *Epitoma rei militaris – Abriß des Militärwesens. Lateinisch und deutsch*, ed. et trans. F.L. MÜLLER, Stuttgart 1997.
- Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, E. GAMILLSCHEG, Wien 1981 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Vindobonensis*, 17].
- Sylloge Tacticorum, quae olim ‘Inedita Leonis Tactica’ Dicebatur*, ed. et trans. A. DAIN, Paris 1938.
- The Taktika of Leon VI. Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. et trans. G.T. DENNIS, Washington 2010 [= *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 12; *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Washingtonensis*, 49].
- A Tenth Century Byzantine Military Manual. The Sylloge Tacticorum*, trans. G. CHATZELIS, J. HARRIS, London–New York 2017 [= *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies*].
- Theophylacti Simocattae historiae*, ed. et trans. C. DE BOOR, P. WIRTH, Stutgardiae 1972 [= *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*].
- Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. et trans. J. HALDON, Vindobonae 1990.
- TITUS LIVIUS, *Römische Geschichte*, ed. et trans. H.J. HILLEN, J. FEIX, München 1974–2000.

### Secondary Literature

- AHRWEILER H., *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975.
- ALLMAND Ch., *The De Re Militari of Vegetius. The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511719929>
- BALDWIN B., *On the Date of the Anonymous ΠΕΡΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΗΣ*, “Byzantinische Zeitschrift” 81, 1988, p. 290–293, <https://doi.org/10.1515/bz-1988-0240>
- BALDWIN B., “Torna, torna, phrater’: What Language?,” “Byzantion” 67, 1997, p. 264–268.
- BOURKE J., *Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History*, “History Workshop Journal” 55.1, 2003, p. 111–133, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/55.1.111>



- CHARLES M., *Vegetius in Context Establishing the Date of the Epitoma Rei Militaris*, Stuttgart 2007.
- CHATZELIS G., *Byzantine Military Manuals as Literary Works and Practical Handbooks. The Case of the Tenth-Century Sylloge Tacticorum*, London–New York 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429488054>
- COSENTINO S., *Syrianos' Strategikon – a 9<sup>th</sup>-Century Source?*, “*Bizantinistica*” 2, 2000, p. 243–280.
- FEINBERG I., *Changes in Sleep Cycle Patterns with Age*, “*Journal of Psychiatric Research*” 10, 1974, p. 183–306, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-3956\(74\)90011-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-3956(74)90011-9)
- GOFFART W., *The Date and Purpose of Vegetius' De Re Militari*, “*Traditio*” 33, 1977, p. 69–88, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0362152900009077>
- GRILLON CH., PELLOWSKI M., MERIKANGAS K.R., DAVIS M., *Darkness Facilitates the Acoustic Startle Reflex in Humans*, “*Biological Psychiatry*” 42.6, 1997, p. 453–460, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0006-3223\(96\)00466-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0006-3223(96)00466-0)
- GULLONE E., *The Development of Normal Fear: A Century of Research*, “*Clinical Psychology Review*” 20.4, 2000, p. 429–451, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358\(99\)00034-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358(99)00034-3)
- GYFTOPOULOU S., *Historical Information gathered from the Mauricii Strategikon*, “*Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα / Byzantina Symmeikta*” 23, 2013, p. 55–89, <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.1052>
- HALDON J., *'Fighting for Peace': Justifying Warfare and Violence in the Medieval East Roman World*, [in:] *The Cambridge World History of Violence*, ed. M.S. GORDON, R.W. KAEUPER, H. ZURNDORFER, Cambridge 2020, p. 492–512, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316661291.025>
- HALDON J., *Information and War: Some Comments on Defensive Strategy and Information in the Middle Byzantine Period (ca. A.D. 660–1025)*, [in:] *War and Warfare in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. SARANTIS, N. CHRISTIE, Leiden 2013 [= *Late Antique Archaeology*, 8], p. 373–396, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134522-90000012a>
- HANSON V.D., *The Roman Way of War*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Warfare*, ed. G. PARKER, Cambridge 2005, p. 46–60.
- HAUSSIG H.W., *Theophylakt's Exkurs über die skythischen Völker*, “*Byzantion*” 23, 1953, p. 275–462.
- KELLY G., *Ammianus Marcellinus. The Allusive Historian*, Cambridge–New York 2008 [= *Cambridge Classical Studies*].
- KODER J., *Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert)*, “*Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*” 137.2, 2002, p. 15–34, [https://doi.org/10.1553/anzeiger137\\_2s15](https://doi.org/10.1553/anzeiger137_2s15)
- KODER J., STOURAITIS I., *Byzantine Approaches to Warfare (6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries). An Introduction*, [in:] *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion*, ed. J. KODER, I. STOURAITIS, Wien 2012, p. 9–16.
- KUCHMA V.V., *Voyennaja organizacija Vizantijskoj Imperii*, Sankt-Peterburg 2001.
- The Late Roman World and its Historian. Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus*, ed. J.W. DRIJVERS, D. HUNT, London–New York 1999.
- LEE D.A., SHEPARD J., *A Double Life: Placing the Peri Presbeon*, “*Byzantinoslavica*” 52, 1991, p. 28–29.
- LUTTWAK N.E., *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*, Harvard 2009.
- MECELLA L., *Die Überlieferung der Kestoi des Julius Africanus in den byzantinischen Textsammlungen zur Militärtechnik*, [in:] *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung*, ed. M. WALLRAFF, L. MECELLA, Berlin 2009 [= *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 165], p. 85–144, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110219593.85>

- MECELLA L., *Procopius' Sources*, [in:] *A Companion to Procopius of Caesarea*, ed. M. MEIER, F. MONTINARO, Leiden 2022 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 11], p. 178–193, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778\\_010](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778_010)
- MORILLO S., *Battle Seeking: The Contexts and Limits of Vegetian Strategy*, "Journal of Medieval Military History" 1, 2002, p. 21–42.
- NĂSTUREL P., *Torna, torna, fratre. O problemă de istorie și de lingvistică*, "Studii și cercetări de istorie veche" 7, 1956, p. 179–188.
- OLAJOS T., *Les sources de Théophylacte Simocatta historien*, Leiden 1988 [= Byzantina Neerlandica, 10].
- RANCE Ph., *Maurice's Strategicon and 'the Ancients': the Late Antique Reception of Aelian and Arrian*, [in:] *Greek Taktika. Ancient Military Writing and its Heritage. Proceedings of the International Conference on Greek Taktika held at the University of Toruń, 7–11 April 2005*, ed. Ph. RANCE, N. SEKUNDA, Gdańsk 2017, p. 217–255.
- RANCE Ph., *The Date of the Military Compendium of Syrianus Magister (formerly the Sixth-Century Anonymus Byzantinus)*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 100.2, 2007, p. 701–737, <https://doi.org/10.1515/BYZS.2008.701>
- RANCE Ph., *Wars*, [in:] *A Companion to Procopius of Caesarea*, ed. M. MEIER, F. MONTINARO, Leiden 2022 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 11], p. 70–120, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778_006)
- RANCE Ph., "Win but do not overwin" – *The History of a Proverb from the Sententiae Menandri, and a Classical Allusion in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, "Philologus. Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption" 152.2, 2008, p. 191–204, <https://doi.org/10.1524/phil.2008.0033>
- RICH J., *Roman Attitudes to Defeat in Battle under the Republic*, [in:] *Vae Victis! Perdedores en el mundo antiguo*, ed. F. PINA POLO, J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, F. MARCO SIMÓN, Barcelona 2012, p. 83–112.
- ROSENSTEIN N.S., *Imperatores Victi. Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic*, Oxford 1990, <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520334014>
- RÓZYCKI Ł., *Battlefield Emotions in Late Antiquity. A Study of Fear and Motivation in Roman Military Treatises*, Leiden 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004462557>
- SCHMALZBAUER G., *Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz*, [in:] *Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik. Beiträge zum Symposium 40 Jahre Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger*, ed. M.A. HÖRANDNER WOLFRAM, J. KODER, Vienna 2004, p. 408–419.
- SHLOSSER F., *The Reign of the Emperor Maurikios (582–602). A Reassessment*, Athens 1994, p. 79–88.
- STOURAITIS I., *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz*, Vienna 2009 [= Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber. Ergänzungsband, 5].
- THEOTOKIS G., *Byzantine Military Tactics in Syria and Mesopotamia in the Tenth Century. A Comparative Study*, Edinburgh 2018.
- VEH O., *Untersuchungen zu dem byzantinischen Historiker Theophylaktos Simokattes*, Fürth 1957.
- WHATELY C., *The Genre and Purpose of Military Manuals in Late Antiquity*, [in:] *Shifting Genres in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. GREATREX, H. ELTON, London 2015, p. 249–263.
- WHITBY M., *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988 [= Oxford Historical Monographs].

WILLIAMS G., *Xenophon and Ammianus: Two Soldier-Historians and their Persian Expeditions*, [in:] *Ammianus Marcellinus from Soldier to Author*, ed. M. HANAGHAN, D. WOODS, Leiden 2022 [= *Historiography of Rome and its Empire*, 16], p. 377–402, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004525351\\_014](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004525351_014)


YADAN L. et al., *Night or Darkness, which Intensifies the Feeling of Fear?*, “*International Journal of Psychophysiology*” 97.1, 2015, p. 46–57, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2015.04.021>

**Łukasz Różycki**

Adam Mickiewicz University  
Faculty of History  
ul. Wieniawskiego 1  
61-712 Poznań, Polska/Poland  
[lukasz.rozycki@amu.edu.pl](mailto:lukasz.rozycki@amu.edu.pl)



Arkadiusz Siwko (Opole)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6118-4806>

## BETWEEN RUS', BYZANTIUM, AND THE NOMADS TMUTARAKAN' IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE RUSIAN *PRIMARY CHRONICLE*\*

**Abstract.** The article is an attempt to provide a source analysis of the mentions of Tmutarakan' contained in the *Primary Chronicle* – the oldest surviving monument of medieval Russian historiography. In the text, particular emphasis is placed on the narrative strategy of the source and the image of the borderlands of Rus' contained therein. The author reflects on the place of information about events in the remote “exclave” of the Rurikids domain in the story about the dynasty and the territorial expansion of its state and formulates hypotheses about their origin. In addition, using the *List of Russian further and closer gods* as a basis, he raises the question of the functioning of Tmutarakan' in minds of the authors and recipients of later texts.

**Keywords:** medieval Rus', Tmutarakan', Byzantine-Russian relations, Rurikids, *Primary Chronicle*, Black Sea basin in the Middle Ages

The borderlands of medieval Rus' are an important topic in medieval studies since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, discussed not only by historians but also by archaeologists and philologists. However, most of the authors dealing with this issue have aimed to reconstruct the history of particular borderland areas or the course of the frontier in a certain period. By contrast, the source-based approach that I prefer, that is, placing the emphasis on the image of the borderlands in the sources rather than on their actual shape, is still rare.

The Rurikids ruled over a territory located at the meeting point of various civilizations. The dynasty controlled the lands bordering on both countries of Latin culture (Poland, Hungary and, in time, the lands of the chivalric orders in the Baltic area) and those inhabited by non-Christian nations (Volga Bulgaria,

---

\* This article is an expanded form of a paper I had the opportunity to present during the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Venice–Padua 2022), as well as during the proceedings of the Department of Source Criticism and Editing of the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. I would like to thank the participants of both meetings for their comments during the interesting discussions.

the Pechenegs, the Polovtsians, the Yotvingians and Lithuania). The Byzantine Empire, although it maintained strong and multifaceted ties with Rus', is relatively rarely included among the neighbours of the Rurikids' domain in a territorial (geographical) sense. Nevertheless, there is a place on the map of early medieval Eastern Europe where the *Rhōmais'* possessions for a time directly encountered the territories under the rule of members of the Russian dynasty. I am referring here to Tmutarakan' – a city with ancient roots, also known by the names Hermonassa, Matarch and Tamatarch<sup>1</sup>. Its ruins are located in the Taman Peninsula, separated from the Crimean Peninsula by the Kerch Strait. In antiquity and the Middle Ages the centre changed its state affiliation several times: in the works of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, it figures as a outpost (*kastron*) of the Khazar Kaganate, previously ruled by the Byzantines to control the trade route leading to Persia and the Caucasus<sup>2</sup>. In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries its population constituted a heterogeneous ethnic mosaic: Greeks, Khazars, Armenians, Jews, relatively few Slavs and representatives of other nations. Undoubtedly, Tmutarakan' can be included in the broadly defined Byzantine *oikouménē*, for example due to its role as the seat of a bishopric<sup>3</sup>. The Rurikids took an interest in this area in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century at the latest. Most probably at the time of Vladimir Sviatoslavovich the Great Tmutarakan', under unclear circumstances, was included in the sphere of influence of Rus' and its dynasty<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Researchers usually associate the Russian name with the earlier Khazar variant “Tumen-tarkhan”, cf. T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Tmutorokań*, [in:] *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. VI, ed. Z. STIEBER, W. KOWALENKO, A. WĘDZKI, G. LABUDA, A. GAŚSIOROWSKI, T. LEHR-SPEŁAWIŃSKI, Wrocław 1961, p. 91–96. In the older historiography, Tmutarakan' was identified with ancient Phanagoria. In fact, the roots of the centre go back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (at that time it was a Scythian centre for the grain trade).

<sup>2</sup> *Древняя Русь в средневековом мире. Энциклопедия*, ed. Е. МЕЛЬНИКОВА, В. ПЕТРУХИН, Москва 2014, p. 815–816; T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Tmutorokań*..., p. 91–96; J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters with the Byzantine World: the Rus at the Straits of Kerch*, [in:] *Pre-Modern Russia and its World. Essays in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, ed. K.L. REYVERSON, T.G. STAYROU, J.D. TRACY, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Tmutorokań*..., p. 91; A. POPPE, *Państwo i Kościół na Rusi w XI wieku*, Warszawa 1968, p. 22, 192–205 (further, mainly older, literature on the ecclesiastical affiliation of Tmutarakan' there); J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters*..., p. 37; C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule in North-Eastern Pontus*, МАИАСТ 22, 2017, p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> The dominant view is that the entry of Tmutarakan' under the rule of the Rurikids occurred between 960 and 980, and the main reason for this was the commercial importance of the centre. There is also a claim, popular especially in the older literature, of their earlier presence on the Taman Peninsula. It was disputed in 1960 by П. КАРЫШКОВСКИЙ, *Лев Диакон о Тмутараканской Руси*, ВВ 17 (42), 1960, p. 39–48, cf. Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество: реальность или историографический миф?*, [in:] *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. 2003 год: Мнимые реальности в античных и средневековых текстах*, ed. Т. ДЖАКСОН, Москва 2005, p. 108–109, 118 (further literature there); C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule*..., p. 316. On the origins of

Issues relating to the history of the city have been repeatedly addressed in the field of Byzantine studies: there is, for example, a quite extensive literature on the references in the treatise *De administrando imperio* by the Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, as well as in the works of John Skylitzes<sup>5</sup>. The situation is a little different when it comes to Russian historiographical sources. Firstly, I have in mind the *Primary Chronicle (Tale of Bygone Years)* – an all-Russian narration about the dynasty and territorial expansion of the state<sup>6</sup>. It was compiled during the first two decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Kyiv, undoubtedly based on older material. Thus, it represents primarily the viewpoint of the main centre of Rus'. The *Chronicle* is not a work of a single author (as Nestor the monk, who is believed to have created

---

the Russian presence in the Taman Peninsula based *inter alia* on the correspondence of Anonymus of Cambridge, *Notitiae Episcopatum* and the works of John Skylitzes cf. T. SKULINA, W. SWOBODA, *Tmutarakan'*..., p. 92; В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)*. *Очерки историко-эпиграфики*, МИАСК 6, 2006, p. 140–142. I have chosen to refrain from deciding this question. Instead, I treat the time of Vladimir the Great as a kind of “starting point” for my deliberations. The reason is simple: in the pages of the *Primary Chronicle*, the beginning of the relationship between Tmutarakan' and Rus' falls precisely on the period of the reign of this prince, regardless of when the Kyivan rulers actually extended their influence on the Taman Peninsula.

<sup>5</sup> It is not my purpose to give an overview here of all the extensive literature on the history of Tmutarakan', its place in the history of Rus' and the relationship of the Rurikids' domain with Byzantium and its neighbours. In recent years, too, a number of works of an evaluative nature have been published on this subject, including the following monograph by В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань: печальный опыт историографии начала XXI века*, Москва 2017, cf. ИДЕМ, *Тмутаракань – владение Древнерусского государства в 80-е гг. X – 90-е гг. XI веков*, ВМГПУ 1(5), 2010, p. 20–37 (there reflections on the ethnic character of the city); ИДЕМ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)*..., p. 139–173 (there a compact overview of the most important topics in the scholarly discussion on Tmutarakan' with an emphasis on Russian-language literature). Among the more recent literature cf. for example: J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters*..., p. 15–77 (author perceives Tmutarakan' as a field for the transmission of Byzantine cultural and political models to Rus').

<sup>6</sup> This is perfectly illustrated by the first sentences of the monument, which reflect the dominant narrative strategy, crucial to my studies: *These are the narratives of bygone years regarding the origin of the land of Rus', the first princes of Kiev, and from what source the land of Rus' had its beginning (Се повѣсти времяньны[хъ] лѣ[тѣ] в[ѣ]стѣ]куду естъ пошла руская земля кто въ киевъ нача первѣе княжи[т]и в[ѣ]стѣ]куду руская земля стала естъ)*, *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, ed. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, Cambridge Massachusetts 1953 (cetera: *The Russian Primary Chronicle*), p. 51; *Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись*, [in:] *Полное собрание русских летописей*, vol. I, Ленинград 1926–1927 (cetera: *Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись*), col. 1; *The Povest' vremennykh let. An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis*, vol. III, ed. D. OSTROWSKI, D.J. BIRNBAUM, H.G. LUNT, Cambridge 2003 [= HLEUL.T, 10.3] (cetera: *The Povest' vremennykh let*), p. 1. All quotations of the *Primary Chronicle* in English are cited exactly after this edition, so that the form of some toponyms differs from the one I use (e.g. Kiev instead of Kyiv etc.). In the case of the fragments of the *Primary Chronicle* discussed in the present article, there are no significant differences between the various manuscripts. For this reason, I have chosen to treat the *Laurentian Codex* from around 1377 as the principal basis for the source. Parallel to the edition within the *Полное собрание русских летописей* series, I used the intertextual edition by D. Ostrowski et al., which includes readings of five primary manuscripts.

the oldest known redaction of the source, is sometimes perceived), but has a comparative character. The source is very specific: it would be incorrect to treat it as a yearbook or chronicle as known from the Latin culture. Chronological issues play a special role in researching it, due to the use of the *Anno Mundi* reckoning and the three styles of marking the beginning of the year: March, September and ultra-March. The March style is predominant in the *Primary Chronicle*, whereby the year is counted from March to February (for example, the year 6569 runs from March 1061 to the end of February 1062). Most of the dates recorded in the *Primary Chronicle* up to 6569 are, moreover, uncertain and should be treated with a great deal of caution, but the references to Tmutarakan' refer mainly to later times (however, it is very important to take this chronological limit into account)<sup>7</sup>.

The main purpose of my paper will be to show what role in the narrative of the *Primary Chronicle* play the ephemeral mentions of Tmutarakan', which I propose to treat not simply as part of Rus', but as a distant, coastal exclave of the wider Rurikids' domain during the period from the late 10<sup>th</sup> to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, when representatives of that dynasty ruled there<sup>8</sup>. However, it is not my intention to discuss the political status of the centre, its exact fate and cultural conditions. In any case, there is an extensive literature on the topic in question<sup>9</sup>.

Tmutarakan' is first mentioned in the *Primary Chronicle* under the year 6496 (c. 988), when reference is made to the sons of the just-baptised Vladimir the Great, who have been given authority over various centres:

Vladimir was enlightened and his sons and his country with him. For he had twelve sons: Vysheslav, Izyaslav, Yaroslav, Svyatopolk, Vsevolod, Svyatoslv, Mstislav, Boris, Gleb, Stanislav, Pozvzd, and Sudislav. He set Vysheslav in Novgorod, Izjaslav in Polotsk, Svyatopolk in Turov, and Yaroslav in Rostov. When Vysheslav, the oldest, died in Novgorod, he set Yaroslav over Novgorod, Boris over Rostov, Gleb over Murom, Svyatoslav over Dereva, Vsevolod over Vladimir, and Mstislav over Tmutorokan. Then Vladimir reflected that it was not good that there were so few towns round about Kiev, so he founded forts on the Destna, the Oster', the Trubezh, the Sula and the Stugna. He gathered together the best man of the Slavs, the Krivichians, the Chuds and the Vyaticians, and peopled these forts with them. For he was at war with Pechenegs and when he fought with them, he often overcame them<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Н. БЕРЕЖКОВ, *Хронология русского летописания*, Москва 1963.

<sup>8</sup> Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 107–108, 118.

<sup>9</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*; С. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*; В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань: печальный опыт...* (the most extensive, but not necessarily complete, overview of the literature on this topic there).

<sup>10</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 119. Володимеръ просвъщенъ имъ и с[ы]н[о]ве ѹго и земля ѹго бѣ бо оу него с[ы]н[о]въ вѣ Въшеславъ Изаславъ Ёрославъ С[ва]тополкъ Всеволодъ С[ва]тославъ Мъстиславъ Борисъ Гльбъ Станиславъ Позвиздъ Судиславъ и посади Въшеслава в Новъгородъ а Изаслава Полотъскъ а С[ва]тополка Туровъ а Ёрослава Ростовъ оумершю же старъишему Въшеславу Новъгородъ посадиша Ёрослава Новъгородъ а Бориса Ростовъ а Гльба Муромъ С[ва]тослава Деревъхъ Всеволода Володимери Мъстива Тмуторокани и реч[ь] Володимеръ се не добро еже малъ городъ вколо Киева и нача ставити городъ

I should note at this point that it was a characteristic of the editor of the *Chronicle* to include within a single annual entry a description of the entire historical process, i.e., events happening over several years or even decades (especially as some of Vladimir's sons already mentioned were born after his conversion)<sup>11</sup>. Such is the situation in this case: the extended story of the baptism of Rus' includes the establishment of a new territorial division, which probably developed gradually. The information is in fact a repeat of an earlier account placed under the year 6488 (ca. 980), which also mentions the granting of towns among sons, although without including Tmutarakan'<sup>12</sup>. It is no coincidence that the creator introduced the name of the city into the narrative precisely when describing the creation of a new Christian state, formed by the prince, and then "sanctified" by the adoption of the true faith. Part of this process, as we read in the same note, is the formation of the borders and defining the extent of the dynasty's power – this is when the former Varangian-Slavic "commonwealth of interest" is, on the ground of the *Primary Chronicle* narrative, transformed into a territorial state<sup>13</sup>.

Thus, the power in Tmutarakan' was taken, by Vladimir's will, by his son Mstislav<sup>14</sup>. This storyline is continued in the next entry, placed under the year 6529

---

по Деснѣ и по Востри и по Трубешеви и по Суль и по Стугнѣ и поча нарубати мужь лучышии w[тѣ] Словень и w[тѣ] Кривичь и w[тѣ] Чюди. и w[тѣ] Вятичь и w[тѣ] сихъ на сели градѣ бѣ бо рать w[тѣ] Печен[н]гъ и бѣ воюася с ними и wдолае имь, *Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись*, col. 121; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 944–950, cf. Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 108–111 (there is an interesting remark that the towns may have received governors – Vladimir's sons – at that time, which was not tantamount to giving them the status of centres of separate principalities).

<sup>11</sup> A. JUSUPOVIĆ, „Червень и иные грады” czy też „гроды Червеньскыя”? *Dzieje ziemi czerwieńskiej w źródłach pisanych (IX–XIII w.)*, [in:] *Od grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona*, vol. I, ed. M. Wołoszyn, Kraków–Leipzig–Rzeszów–Warszawa 2017, p. 74, 76–77.

<sup>12</sup> *Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись*, col. 76.

<sup>13</sup> A. SIWKO, A “Commonwealth of Interest” in the Rus'ian-Byzantine Treaty (ca. 944), *SCer* 11, 2021, p. 405–426. I am aware that the term “territorial state” can be interpreted in different ways. Personally, I understand it as a political commonwealth associated with a defined territory, which is governed using an administrative structure. This territory has relatively stable “borders”, which are maintained by defence systems. Examples of the latter are, in the case of Rus', the area centred on Cherven' (on the frontier with Poland) or the strongholds on the Desna, Oster, Trubezh, Sula and Stugna rivers, used for defence against invasions of nomads, cf.: *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 119; *Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись*, col. 121. Among the authors dealing with this issue in the Russian context, cf. e.g. В. УКОЛОВА, П. ШКАРЕНКОВ, *Формирование ранней российской государственности в контексте средневекового Европейского политогенеза*, НИВ 50.4, 2016, p. 8–17.

<sup>14</sup> А. ГАДЛО, *О начале славяно-русской миграции в Приазовье и Таврику*, СРЭ 1973, p. 87 suspected that another son of Vladimir – Sviatoslav, who died in 1015 – may have reigned in Tmutarakan' before Mstislav. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 30 discusses the question of Mstislav's identity with a certain “Sphenegos”, whose name appears in the chronicle of John Skylitzes. According to the British author, it is the same person: a prince whom Byzantium used to secure its own interests in the region. C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 317–318 disputes this view by pointing to Sven Hakonsson. In his opinion, Mstislav may have settled in Tmutarakan' during the domestic war between Yaroslav the Wise and his brother Sviatopolk.



(c. 1022). The prince had come into conflict with his brother already during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise in Kyiv, but in this case he still acts as governor of the head of the dynasty, and his seat is an integral part of the Russian state:

6529. Yaroslav came to Brest. At this time Mstislav, who was in Tmutorakan', attacked the Kasogians. When Rededya, Prince of the Kasogians, heard the report, he went forth against him, and as both armies stood face to face, Rededya said to Mstislav: «Why do we destroy our forces by mutual warfare? Let us rather fight in single combat ourselves. If you win, you shall receive my property, my wife, and my children, and my land. But if I win, I shall take all your possession.» Then Mstislav assented to his proposal. Rededya thus suggested that they should wrestle instead of fighting with weapons. They straightway began to struggle violently, and when they had wrestled for some time, Mstislav began to tire, for Rededya was large and strong. Then Mstislav exclaimed, «Oh Virgin Mother of God, help me! If I conquer this man, I will build a church in thy name.» Having spoken thus, he threw the Kasogian to the ground, then drew his knife and stabbed Rededya. He then penetrated his territory, seized all his property, his wife, and his children, and imposed tribute upon the Kasogians. When he returned to Tmutorakan', he then founded a church dedicated to the Holy Virgin and built it, as it stands in Tmutorakan' even to the present day<sup>15</sup>.

Within a single entry, therefore, the creator of the *Chronicle* placed two events: the expedition of Yaroslav the Wise to Brest (a centre located in the borderland with Poland) and his brother's conflict with the Caucasian people of the Kasogians (most likely ancestors of the Circassians). Hypothetically, one can assume that in this case we are dealing with one of the few "certain" dates before 6569. The second story is epic and colourful. We are probably communing with a legend that was known to the creator of the Russian annals. The bookmen decided to use the story of the duel to summarise the larger process of the rivalry between the Rurikids and the nations of the Caucasus<sup>16</sup>. In this way, the *Chronicle* presents

<sup>15</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 135. *Приде Ярославъ къ Берестию въ си же времена Мъстиславу сущю Тмутороканю поиде на Касогѣи слышавъ же се князь Касожьскѣи Редедѣ изиде противу тому и ставишема вбѣма полкома противу собѣи и реч[нѣ] Редедѣ къ Мъстиславу что ради губивъ дружину межи собою но съи идевъ сѣ сама боротъ да аще идолюеи тѣи то возмеша имѣнне мое и жену мою и дѣти мотъ и землю мою аще ли азъ идолюю то възму твое все и реч[нѣ] Мъстиславъ тако буди и речъ Редедѣ ко Мъстиславу не вружѣемъ сѣ бѣевъ но борьбою и аста сѣ бороти крѣпко и надолзѣ борющемасѣ има нача изнамагати Мъстиславъ бѣ бо великъ и силенъ Редедѣ и реч[нѣ] Мъстиславъ в пр[и]ч[и]с[нѣ]таѣ Б[огороди]це помози ми аще бо удолюю сему сзижю ц[нѣ]рк[о]въ во има твое и се рекъ оудари имъ в землю и възне ножъ [и] зарѣза Редедю [и] шедъ в землю юго въз все имѣнне юго [и] дѣти юго и дань възложи на Касогѣи и пришедъ Тмутороканю. заложу ц[нѣ]рк[о]въ ст[в]а[т]иже Б[огороди]ца и созда ю аже стоить и до сего дне[и] Тмуторокани, Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись, col. 146–147; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1164–1169.*

<sup>16</sup> Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 111 (author interprets the note as a testimony to the breaking of fief dependence by one of the Circassian tribes reflecting the usual practice of relations between the Russian governor and tribal leaders); J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 34–35 (there the interpretation of this tale as an example of "local folklore" and some interesting remarks on the archi-

a panorama of an area that was subordinate to the power of the Rusian princes, but still ethnically alien, where relations with the surrounding nations were crucial to policy. The fragment ends with a reference to the building of a church bearing the name of the Mother of God, which was to stand in Tmutarakan' "to the present day". The meaning of this phrase is clear at first glance – the temple existed in the times contemporary to the creator of the source. However, this construction, which occurs regularly in the *Chronicle*, may have another function: namely, it serves to emphasise the permanence of the process that took place<sup>17</sup>. For example: under the year 6489 (c. 821) we can read about Vladimir's seizure of *Cherven', Przemysl and other towns, which are under Rus to the present day*. In turn, under the year 6539 (ca. 1031), the *Chronicle* reports on the recapture of this area from Poland by Yaroslav the Wise, who displaced the local population to the Ros river, where these people were to stay *to the present day*. Here, therefore, we are dealing with an emphasis on the permanence of the bond between the Rusian dynasty and Tmutarakan' – a relationship that was most likely something current and obvious to the source's creator (or, alternatively, to the creator of the indirect account used by the 12<sup>th</sup>-century editor). Later in the narrative, in turn, reference is made to Mstislav's unsuccessful attempt to conquer Kyiv with the support of a force composed of Kasogians and Khazars – hence the question of the relationship between the princes ruling over the Kerch Strait and the local ethnos recurs.

As regards the fragments relating to the reign of Mstislav, the following observations are the most significant for the subject under study:

1. The author of the account (not necessarily the creator of the *Primary Chronicle* in the form we know today, but, for example, the individual creating the material he used) was most likely well acquainted with the political conditions prevailing on the Taman Peninsula, which was remote from the point of view of Kyiv. One might even dare to argue that, in the case of some years, his orientation on the situation in Tmutarakan' is equal or even better than on that of the centre of Rus'.
2. The local legend about the duel with the representative of the Kasogians and the foundation of the church must have reached him in some way.
3. The phrase "to the present day" suggests that this part of the narrative was written during a period when the bonds connecting Tmutarakan' and Kyiv

---

tectural parallels between Tmutarakan' and Chernihiv, which the author sees as evidence of Mstislav Vladimirovich's links with Byzantium, maintained even after the prince settled in the city on Desna); В. ПЕТРУХИН, *Никон и Тмуторокань: к проблемам реконструкции начального летописания*, [in:] *Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. XV. Автор и его текст*, Москва 2003, p. 194–198 (once again about the story as an example of "local folklore" and tradition associated with the church).

<sup>17</sup> *Лаврентьевская летопись*, col. 81, 150.

were still perceived as something current. Thus, it did not necessarily have to take place during the period of the editing of the *Primary Chronicle*, which fell at the end of the Russian presence on the Kerch Strait.

Further references to Tmutarakan' are found in entries relating to the 60s, 70s and 80s of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. For this period, the dates used in the *Chronicle* become more certain, which is perhaps a testament to keeping the records up to date. They almost exclusively revolve around a single issue: the rivalry between the princes occupying the main capitals of Rus' (Kyiv, Chernihiv, Pereyaslav) and the members of the dynasty deprived of their own "shares" in the Russian land, which was seen, also in the *Primary Chronicle*, as the collective property of the family. The latter are sometimes referred to as "izgoi"<sup>18</sup>, although today many scholars emphasize their status as "full-fledged Rurikids"<sup>19</sup>. Anyway, here we are dealing with princes who, as we shall see later, used Tmutarakan' as a kind of departure point for further struggle. It is worth noting at this point that the mentions of the city in the *Chronicle* appear in a kind of "sets": information on local events occurs immediately in several successive annual entries. One might even venture to say that in places the narrative is conducted from the perspective of Tmutarakan' or a person based there.

It cannot be ruled out that, as Vladimir Petrukhin once suggested, in addition to the account of Mstislav we are dealing with at least one more "Tmutarakanian story", originally a whole, later incorporated into the *Chronicle* and divided into notes from 6572–6574 (1063/1064 – 1065/1066). It mentions the capture of Tmutarakan' by Rostislav Mstislavovich, who expelled Gleb Sviatoslavovich (son of the then prince of Chernihiv), who ruled there from the city on behalf of his father:

6572. Rostislav, son of Vladimir and grandson of Yaroslav, fled to Tmutarakan', and with him fled Porey and Vyshata, son of Ostromir, the general of Novgorod. Upon his arrival, he expelled Gleb from Tmutarakan and occupied his principate himself<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> А. Слядзь, *Предьистория византийской аннексии Приазовья: князь-изгой Ростислав Тмутараканский*, ПИФК 2, 2015, p. 5–6 (author notes the convenient location of distant, from the point of view of Kyiv, Tmutarakan' and the change in the nomadic "buffer" from the Pechenegs to the stronger and more numerous Polovtsians; I express my gratitude to Alex M. Feldman for drawing my attention to this text).

<sup>19</sup> The Old-Russian word "изгой" means a person who for some reason has left the native community, cf. *Словарь древнерусского языка*, vol. III, Москва 1990, p. 495. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 17–18, 49, 55–56 (author makes a distinction between two types of Russian princes ruling in Tmutarakan': short-term rulers and dynasts who, due to their ties with Byzantium and their understanding of local realities, managed to maintain power over the Kerch Strait for a longer period of time); C. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict, Bargaining, and Kinship Networks in Medieval Eastern Europe*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–London 2018, p. 34–37, 47–48 (author puts all princes outside the "main line" of the Russian dynasty, deprived of the right for succession, into the category of "izgoi" – Tmutarakan' is perceived by him as a field of conflict between these two groups, as well as between the various lines of descendants of Vladimir the Great).

<sup>20</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 144. В лѣт[о] ꙗꙑѣ ѿвѣ Бѣжа Ростислава. къ Тмуторока-ни с[и]нѣ Володимирѣ внукѣ Ярославлѣ и с нимъ бѣжа Порѣи и Вышата с[и]нѣ Сѣстромирѣ

In 6573 Svyatoslav then marched against Rostislav in Tmutorakan, so that the latter withdrew from the city, not because he feared Svyatoslav, but because he was reluctant to take up arms against his uncle. Svyatoslav, upon his entry (164) into Tmutorakan, re-established his son Gleb upon the throne, and returned home. Rostislav returned, however, and expelled Gleb, who re-joined his father, while Rostislav remained in Tmutorakan<sup>21</sup>:

6574. When Rostislav was at Tmutorakan', receiving tribute from the Kasogians and from other regions, the Greeks became afraid of him and sent to him an officer with treacherous intent. When he came before Rostislav and won his confidence, the Prince did him great honour. Then on one occasion while Rostislav was drinking with his retinue, the envoy said, «Oh Prince, I would drink to your health», and Rostislav accepted the compliment. The Greek drank half the goblet, and then offered the other half to the Prince to drink after dipping his finger in the cup, for he had a deadly poison under his fingernail. He thus passed the drink to the Prince, having determined his death for the seventh day thereafter. When the Prince had drunk the draught, the envoy departed to Kherson, where he reported that upon that day Rostislav would die, as did in fact occur. The people of Kherson then slew this officer by stoning him. Rostislav was a man bold in war, fair of stature, and handsome of feature, and he was generous to the poor. His death occurred on February 3, and he was buried there in the Church of the Holy Virgin<sup>22</sup>.

воеводы Новгородского и пришедь выгна Гльба изъ Тмуторокана а самъ съде в него мѣсто, Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись, col. 152; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1296–1297, cf. Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 113; А. РОПРЕ, *Państwo i Kościół...*, p. 192–193 (there a remark on Tmutarakan' as a “hereditary property” of Sviatoslavovich, cf. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 43; А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 14); С. СОРОЧАН, В. ЗУБРАЧ, Л. МАРЧЕНКО, *Жизнь и гибель Херсонеса*, Севастополь 2006, p. 317 (authors formulate a view of Tmutarakan' as a “Chernihiv-Constantinopolitan condominium”).

<sup>21</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 144. В лѣт[о] ꙗѣ ѿбѣ Иде С[вѣ]тославъ на Ростислава къ Тмутороканю Ростиславъ же в[ѣ]стѣ ступи прочь из град[а] не оубоаевься его но не хотѣа противу строеви своему оружьеа взяти С[вѣ]тославъ же пришедь къ Тмутороканю посади с[и] на своего наку Гльба и възвратиса въ своаеи пришедь наку влѣтъ Ростиславъ и выгна Гльба и приде Гльбъ къ в[ѣ]стѣ ступи своему Ростиславъ же пришедь съде въ Тмуторокань/, Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись, col. 153; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1298–1300. The problem of the rule of Rostislav in Tmutarakan' was recently discussed by А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 161–174 (further literature on, *inter alia*, possible earlier domains of Rostislav located in north-eastern and western Rus' there). This author, following in the path of V. Tartishchev, linked the prince's escape to Kerch with the Polovtsian invasion of 1064, and also drew attention to the role of the certain Novgorodians who supported him. The reasons for the Rostislav's decision to seize power exactly in Tmutarakan' were also commented on by: М. ДИМНИК, *The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1054–1146*, Toronto 1994, p. 60–64 (according to this author, the involvement in the conflict between the sons of Yaroslav the Wise and the Polotsk prince Vseslav was favourable for Rostislav – for that reason Sviatoslav was not able to take over Tmutarakan' from his kinsman again); С. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict...*, p. 51–52.

<sup>22</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 145. В лѣт[о] ꙗѣ ѿбѣ /Ростиславу суцю Тмуторокани и емлюцю дань оу Касогъ и оу иньхъ странах[ъ] сего же оубоаевься Гръци послаша с лествю котопана вному же прішедию к Ростиславу и вврившюся ѣму члѣшить и Ростиславъ единою же пьюцю Ростиславу с дружиною своєю реч[ъ] котопанъ княже хочю на тѣа питу вному же рекиси пии ин же испивъ половину а половину дасть князю питу дотиснувься палцемъ в чашиу бѣ бо имъеа под ногтемъ растворенье смртное и вдасть князю оурекъ см[ъ] рть до днѣ семаго вному же испившиу котопанъ же пришедь Корсуню повѣдаше аеко в сии днѣ оумреть Ростиславъ аекоже и бѣс[ъ] сего же котопана побиха каменьемъ Корсуньстии

The narrative is then conducted from the perspective of Rostislav. The author mentions Gleb's two exiles, the effective exercise of sovereignty over the Kasogians (this important theme returns) and, finally, the conspiracy of a Byzantine military governor from nearby Chersonesus, who allegedly succeeded in personally poisoning the prince, which in turn was to lead to his own death at the hands of the Crimean population (here, in turn, is an interesting thread of the relations of the Rurikids of Tmutarakan' with the elite of the Byzantine dominions in the Crimea)<sup>23</sup>. It concludes with an obituary of the ruler, which clearly shows the political orientation of the author of the account, sympathetic to him<sup>24</sup>.

The emergence of references to the history of Tmutarakan' in the 1160s has for more than a century been linked to the existence of the so-called "Nicon's compilation", that was said to be written by the igumen of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves<sup>25</sup>. This monk, according to the *Kyivan Cave Patericon*, was to have stayed at the Kerch Strait after escaping, following his conflict with Prince Izyaslav Yaroslavovich<sup>26</sup>, which resulted in an escape. According to Alexey Shakhmatov, among others, the establishment of a monastic centre in Tmutarakan', which was a branch of the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, can be linked to his stay at the court of Rostislav<sup>27</sup>. In 1073 Nikon was to return to Kyiv and create the above-mentioned

---

людѣ бѣ же Ростиславъ мужь добль ратень возрастомъ же льпѣ и красень лицемъ и м[и]л[о]-ст[и]въ оубогымъ и оумре м[е]с[а]ца феврала въ ѣднь И тамо положень бѣс въ цркви с[в]а[т]ыхъ Б[огороди]ца /, Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись, col. 166; *The Povest' vremennukh let*, p. 1318–1325.

<sup>23</sup> Cf.: J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 20, 51; А. АШИХМИН, *Взаимоотношения Тмутаракани и Восточного Крыма*, ЧО 1, 2016, p. 6–9; С. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 312–314, 327 (there is literature on the circumstances of Rostislav's death and remarks on the Byzantine estate management system centred on Chersonesus); А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 2–3, 12–15 (there a view on the collaboration between Constantine X Doukas and Sviatoslav Yaroslavovich, for whom the Rostislav's presence in Tmutarakan' posed a threat, with emphasis on the international, not just Russian or local, context of the prince's murder), 15–18 (there reflections on the circumstances of the *katapan's* death).

<sup>24</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. М. ДИМНИК, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> А. ШАХМАТОВ, *Разыскания о древнейших русских летописных сводах*, Санкт-Петербург 1908, p. 431sq.

<sup>27</sup> М. ДИМНИК, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 123–125; Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 107–109, 118 (there is an interesting interpretation of a passage in the *Kyivan Cave Patericon* where Tmutarakan' is referred to as an "island" – according to the author, the source's creator had in mind a symbolic "island in a sea of nomads", cf. В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань – владение...*, p. 21–22); А. ПОРРЕ, *Państwo i Kościół...*, p. 195–196 (there is an interesting study of the reference in *Kyivan Cave Patericon* to the [Arch]Bishop of Tmutarakan' Nicholas – according to the Polish author, this is the only identifiable example of the practice of the princes of the Sviatoslavovich line to appoint Russian clergy to the Byzantine [Greek] bishopric in Tmutarakan'); J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 46–47; В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)...*, p. 147–148; ИДЕМ, *Тмутаракань – владение...*, p. 28 (there a literature review on the topic of a Russian monastery at Tmutarakan', the existence of which finds no confirmation in the archaeological material).

compilation which, according to A. Shakhmatov, was to be used by the creator of the *Primary Chronicle*, which should explain the existence of records not only concerning Tmutarakan' but written from the local (not Kyivian) perspective and covering the period up to the death of Rostislav. Although I personally consider the hypothesis of A. Shakhmatov probable, I am not in favour of treating it as a dogma. I consider a critical and flexible approach to the “classical” theory of the Russian researcher to be the most appropriate. For example: Nikon could have been the author of the “Tmutarakanian” passages preserved in the *Primary Chronicle*, but this is not the only possible option – if only because the cornerstone of the hypothesis of A. Shakhmatov is the belief in the reliability of the information contained in the *Kyivan Cave Patericon*<sup>28</sup>. Indeed, as G. Prokhorov rightly pointed out, the contemporary researcher should be aware of the goal of the philologist that guided A. Shakhmatov. His original scientific interests (language reconstruction) and the research workshop he possessed strongly marked his approach to the object of research: the goal of the St. Petersburg scholar was to “reconstruct” the original version of the *Primary Chronicle* and to “reconstruct” the texts used by its author (or authors)<sup>29</sup>. Whenever we are dealing with “reconstructed” texts, and these are the ones that make up the “classical” model mentioned above, it is appropriate to take special caution and be aware that we are operating at the level of hypotheses. A modern researcher who uses the *Primary Chronicle* therefore has at his disposal, in some sense, an older material, but transformed at a specific moment in history, i.e. most likely during the reign of Vladimir Monomakh (1113–1125). “Reconstructing” the original shape of a particular message, as A. Shakhmatov attempted to do, is always a risky exercise (even if, as in the case of Nikon’s biography, many of the facts provided by different sources seem to be very much congruent).

A contemporary Russian researcher Alexei Gippius, author of one of the most interesting revisions of the scheme of A. Shakhmatov, takes a slightly different view of the matter. He concluded that in the 1170s in Kyiv an annalistic compilation was indeed created, but it was based on an earlier one, connected to the circle of Izyaslav Yaroslavovich, not to a person conflicted with him<sup>30</sup>. If one were to adopt this point of view then it would be difficult to link the “Tmutarakanian” information to the bookmen of the aforementioned ruler, whose knowledge of the fate of the remote residence of Rostislav would have to be much scantier.

<sup>28</sup> Nikon’s return to Rus’ is sometimes linked to the mission to Sviatoslav Yaroslavovich, recorded by the *Kyivan Cave Patericon*, entrusted to the *igumen* by the Tmutarakanians. The city’s population was said to wish to put Gleb back in power on the Taman peninsula, cf.: Патерик Киевского Печерского монастыря, ed. Д. АБРАМОВИЧ, Санкт-Петербург 1911, p. 26, 151; М. ДІМНІК, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 64, 124.

<sup>29</sup> Г. ПРОХОРОВ, *Древнерусское летописание...*, p. 250sq.

<sup>30</sup> А. ГИПИУС, *До и после Начального свода...*, p. 60–61.

It is also worth noting the position of the opponents of Alexei Shakhmatov's "classical" theory, who, like e.g. Gelyan Prokhorov, look at Russian annalistic writing as an ongoing process in which individual records were originated continuously<sup>31</sup>.

On this background, the proposal highlighted above for the existence of a separate "Tmutarakian story" seems even more likely. Such an account, not necessarily authored by Nikon or by the author of a compilation created in Izyaslav's circle, may have come directly into the hands of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century editor of the *Primary Chronicle*<sup>32</sup>. The latter used the source in accordance with the narrative strategy he adopted. I also believe that it could have been in written form: there was a bishopric in Tmutarakan' as well as a Russian monastic centre: therefore, all the conditions for the development of a local scripture existed on the Taman Peninsula<sup>33</sup>.

Let me start by quoting a note placed under 6586 (c. 1078/1079):

Oleg, son of Svyatoslav, fled from Vsevolod to Tmutarakan on April 10. In this year, Gleb, the son of Svyatoslav, was killed in Zavaloch'e. Gleb was kindly toward the poor and hospitable to strangers, zealous toward the church, warm in faith, peaceful, and fair in appearance. He was laid to rest in the Church of the Redeemer at Chernigov on July 23<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Г. ПРОХОРОВ, *Древнерусское летописание...*, p. 260, 266–267 (however, G. Prokhorov approves the view of Nikon's involvement in the creation of the *Primary Chronicle*). Among contemporary researchers the theory of A. Shakhmatov is challenged by, i.a., А. ТОЛОЧКО, *Очерки начальной Руси*, Киев–Санкт-Петербург 2015, p. 40.

<sup>32</sup> Such a "living source" may have been another clergyman or lay dignitary. D. Likhachev suggested the figure of Vyshata, whose son John is directly referred to by the author of the Novel. J. Shepard has added, for example, Archbishop Nicholas to this group, stressing that the Tmutarakan' records may have come from several different sources and that the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves may have received regular information about events on the Kerch Strait, cf. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 58 (there also about the relationship of Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavovich and his son Vladimir Monomakh with Byzantium); C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 326); M. DIMNIK, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 124–125. A critic of linking Nikon to the information on Tmutarakan' at the disposal of the *Chronicle's* creator is also В. ПЕТРУХИН, *Никон и Тмуторокань...*, p. 194–198. The Russian scholar has stated, *inter alia*, that the story of Rostislav was not initially broken down over the years. I can agree with his opinion.

<sup>33</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 52 (there some remarks on the possibility creation of the obituary of Rostislav Mstislavovich in the Kyiv Monastery of the Caves, while considering the relationship of the princes ruling in Tmutarakan' with this monastery).

<sup>34</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 165. В лѣтъ[о] ѣсѣ ѿ нѣ Бѣже Гѣлѣгъ [с[и]нѣ] С[вѣ]тославѣ Тмутороконю в[тѣ] Всеволода мѣца. априла [и] В се же лѣто оубыенѣ бѣис[тѣ] Глѣбѣ с[и]нѣ С[вѣ]тославѣ В Заволочии бѣ бо Глѣбѣ м[и]л[о]стивѣ оубогимѣ и страннѣлюбивѣ тицанѣ имѣе к и[нѣ]рквѣмѣ теплѣ на вѣру и кротокѣ взоромѣ красенѣ ѣгоже тѣло положено бѣис[тѣ] Черниговѣ за Спасомѣ м[нѣ]с[а]ца июла кѣ д[нѣ]нѣ Стѣдѣицю С[вѣ]тополку в него мѣсто Новѣ-городѣ с[и]ну Изяславу Еррополку стѣдѣицу Вышегородѣ а Володимѣру стѣдѣицу Смолинскѣ привѣде Гѣлѣгѣ и Борисѣ поганѣе на Рускѣю землю и поидоста на Всеволода с Половци, Лаврѣнтѣевская лѣтопись, col. 200–201; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1606–1610. Gleb's rule in Tmutarakan' is related to the issue of the so-called "Tmutarakan' stone" found in the eastern part of the Crimean Peninsula, which bears an inscription indicating that this prince measured distances, sometimes interpreted as evidence of the extent of his authority, cf. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*,

I mentioned that most of the information on Tmutarakan' is related to the problem of the struggle between the dynasts deprived of their dominions and the rulers of central Rus' headed by the Kyivan princes. This is very clearly manifested in the accounts concerning Oleg Sviatoslavovich. Thus, the function of the distant exclave in the narrative of the *Chronicle* changes: whereas previously it appeared mainly in the context of relations with the Kasogians and Byzantines, from now the key role will be its role in intra-dynastic conflicts. There is also a change of point of view: the local perspective recedes into the Kyivan (all-Russian) one. News about events on the Kerch Strait becomes, despite the view of some scholars, much more general. Oleg himself is not by any means a foreground character: perhaps this is a deliberate effort by the compiler of the *Chronicle*, who worked in the circle of the prince's rivals (Svyatopolk Izyaslavovich and Vladimir Monomakh).

The change in narrative is perfectly illustrated by the obituary of Gleb Sviatoslavovich, brother of Oleg, who twice left Tmutarakan' as a result of the actions of Rostislav Mstislavovich and finally ruled there until at least 1068, before becoming prince of Novgorod<sup>35</sup>. The obituary is placed under the year 6586:

Gleb was kindly toward the poor and hospitable to strangers, zealous toward the church, warm in faith, peaceful, and fair in appearance. He was laid to rest in the Church of the Redeemer at Chernigov on July 23<sup>36</sup>.

Although the records of the 60s suggest that their author was a supporter of Rostislav, in this case we are dealing with an obvious praise of his rival (although the obituaries of Rostislav and Gleb are slightly similar). Therefore, it cannot be entirely ruled out that the information contained in the annual entry of 6586 comes from a source close to the Sviatoslavovichs of Chernihiv. However, let us turn to an earlier note, placed under 6585 (c. 1077/1078):

Izyaslav advanced with Polish support, and Vsevolod went forth against him. Boris settled at Chernigov on May 4; his reign lasted eight days until he fled to join Roman in Tmutarakan. Vsevolod went to Volyn' to attack his brother Izyaslav. Peace was concluded, so that Izyaslav came and settled in Kiev on July 15. Oleg, the son of Svyatoslav, was with Vsevolod at Chernigov<sup>37</sup>.

p. 53; C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 327; В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)...*, p. 145 (there is an overview of the discussion on the monument and the literature). On his weak position in the Taman Peninsula (in contrast to Rostislav, who was said to enjoy local support), writes А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> М. ДИМНИК, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. C. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict...*, p. 74.

<sup>37</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 165. В лѣт[о] ѣѣ фѣ нѣ [6585] Поиде Изаславъ с Ляхы Всеволодъ же поиде противу ѣму Сьде Борисъ Черниговъ м[е]с[я]ца мае ѣ днѣ и бѣс[т]ѣ] княженьа ѣго. и дѣни и бѣжа Тмутараканю к Романови Всевождъ же [иде] противу брату



It contains two important pieces of information:

1. Roman Sviatoslavovich is mentioned as the prince ruling in Tmutarakan. We know nothing about the circumstances under which he took over the Kerch Strait, but it is quite likely that this happened while his father (d. 1076) was still alive.
2. In 1073, after the second restoration of Izyaslav Yaroslavovich in Kyiv, Boris Vyacheslavovich, a grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, deprived of his own dominion arrives to Tmutarakan' – at the court of Roman.

The story is continued in the next entry, which I quoted above. There we can read about Oleg Sviatoslavovich who, on 10 April 1078, left Chernihiv where he was staying under his uncle's supervision, and joined Roman and Boris, who resided in Tmutarakan'. The three princes used the city as a sort of staging base: there they gathered an army, composed mainly of Polovtsians, and set off into Rus' against two surviving sons of Yaroslav the Wise<sup>38</sup>. The story ends with an account on the agreement made between Izyaslav and Vsevolod, a description of the battle in which Izyaslav and Boris were killed, and information about Vsevolod's seizure of the throne in Kyiv. We should note how different here is the image of Tmutarakan': the city functions as a distant point. There is a lack of precise information about events happening on the Taman Peninsula, which contrasts with the picture of Kyiv and the whole of "proper Rus'", for which we can find detailed descriptions, full of onomastic details<sup>39</sup>.

More interesting, however, is the detailed information contained in the entry of 6587:

Roman advanced with Polovcian forces as far as Voin', but Vsevolod remained near Pereyaslavl and made peace with the Polovcians. Roman returned homeward with them, but they killed him on August 2. The bones of Svyatoslav's son and Yaroslav's grandson still lie there even to this day. The Khazars took Oleg prisoner and shipped him overseas to Tsar'grad. Vsevolod appointed Ratibor as his lieutenant in Tmutorakan<sup>40</sup>.

---

*Изяславу на Волгынь и створиста миръ и пришедь Изяславъ съде Къкъвътъ мѣца июула ег'дн[ь]. Гдлезь же с[ы]нъ С[вя]тославль въ оу Всеволода Черниговъ, Лаврѣнтѣевская летопись, col. 199; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1604–1606.*

<sup>38</sup> The participation of the Polovtsians in the armies of Oleg, Roman and Boris is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it continues the plot of the importance of relations with the nomads and other tribes of the region from the point of view of the effective exercise of power over Kerch, cf. A. Слядзь, *Предыстория...*, p. 11 (further literature there). Simultaneously, the bringing of pagan nomads to Rus' functions in the *Chronicle*, edited in the circle of Oleg's opponents, as a kind of "founding sin" of the Chernihiv line of the Rurikids.

<sup>39</sup> A different view of the matter is held amongst others by: J. ШЕРПАРД, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 58; В. ПЕТРУХИН, *Никон и Тмуторокань...*, p. 195.

<sup>40</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 167–168. *В лѣтъ[о] ѿсѣѣ нѣз Приде Романъ с Половци къ Воину Всеволодъ же ста оу Переяславла и створи миръ с Половци и възвратиса Романъ с Половци*

I would first like to draw attention to the circumstances of Roman's death. I see two possibilities for where the murder took place: the steppe which separated Tmutarakan' from "proper Rus'" and Tmutarakan'. I consider the second option more likely. This is evidenced by the word "returned" ("и възвратиса Романъ с Половци възпаль"), implying that Roman had managed to arrive at his residence, as well as the mention of a burial – I find it entirely plausible that the prince was laid to rest in the city<sup>41</sup>.

Even more interesting is the reference to the overthrow of Oleg by the "Khazars" and handing him over to Byzantium as a prisoner<sup>42</sup>. I would like to draw attention to the inconclusive nature of the ethnonym used. On one hand, it may contain one of the ethnic groups inhabiting the heterogeneous, as I pointed out in the introduction, city (perhaps even the dominant group<sup>43</sup>). At the same time, it cannot be ruled out that by "Khazars" the author of the note understood the general population of Tmutarakan', the former Khazar stronghold. In that case, we would be dealing with an emphasis on the foreignness of the centre in relation to Rus'<sup>44</sup>.

---

*въспаль [и] бѣишо юму. оубиша и Половци м[ъ]с[а]ца августа в[ъ] д[е]нь Суть кости юго и досель [лежаще тамо] сн[ы]на С[в]а[т]ослава внука Ерослава а С[в]ла[д]а юмие [Козаре] по-точииша и за море Ц[ъ]с[а]рюграду Всеволодъ же посади посадника Ратибора Тмуторокани, Лаврѣнтьевская летопись, col. 204; The Povest' vremennykh let, p. 1641–1645, cf.: M. DIMNIK, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 155–156; S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*, New York 1996, p. 262–263; C. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict...*, p. 47 (in this context, the author makes an interesting remark according that Tmutarakan' was linked simply to the principality of Chernihiv rather than to a certain line of Rurikids), 60.*

<sup>41</sup> The fact that Roman was laid to rest "somewhere on the Black Sea steppes" is in turn stated by: А. ГАДЛО, *Этническая история Северного Кавказа X–XIII веков*, Санкт-Петербург 1994, p. 98–99; А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> The issue of sending Oleg to Byzantium (to the island of Rhodes), where his presence is also recorded in the *Itinerarium of Ighumen Danill* (*There is also the island of Rhodes, great and full of many riches. And on that island stayed Oleg, the Russian prince, for 2 summers and 2 winters* [Таже Род островъ, велик и богатъ встм велми. И в томъ островъ был Олегъ князь русскый 2 лѣтъ и 2 зимъ], *Хождение игумена Данила*, ed. Г. ПРОХОРОВ, <http://lib.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4934> [24 III 2023]), and his return to Tmutarakan' is a separate subject of interest to researchers. The reason for sending the prince back to the Kerch Strait may have been a change on the imperial throne: Alexius I Comnenus, who had reigned since 1081, most likely trusted Oleg and gave him, as his vassal with the title of *доух*, the task of securing the region. According to some researchers, the marriage of the Russian dynast to Theophano Mouzalon played a not inconsiderable role here (this view was discussed and criticised by В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)...*, p. 152–154). Despite his dependence on the Empire, Oleg later began to use a titulature that somewhat indicated his autonomous status, cf. J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 43–45 (there, *inter alia*, interesting remarks on the seals of Oleg and his wife, as well as the silver coins he issued with Slavic inscriptions), C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 320 (there a broader reflection on Oleg's titles).

<sup>43</sup> M. DIMNIK, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> Personally, I consider the first variant more likely. Above all, however, I regard this information as a procedure with an educational dimension: for the sin of bringing "strangers" (Polovtsians) to his

The events of the settling of the governor Ratibor in Tmutarakan' caused a significant political change on the Kerch Strait. This transition on the pages of the *Chronicle*, edited after all in the circle of Vsevolod's son, functions as a success for the new ruler of Kyiv. Thus, instead of the princes seeking their fortune, control over the Taman Peninsula is assumed by a man from outside the dynasty, a direct representative of the supreme prince<sup>45</sup>. This situation however did not last long, as already under 6589 (1081/1082) we can read about the overthrow of Ratibor by two other princes, David Igorevich and Volodar Rostislavovich, who already "conventionally" decided to use the exclave as a starting point to fight for better domains<sup>46</sup>. It is no coincidence that it is then that the knowledge of the creator of the *Primary Chronicle* about Tmutarakan' for a while becomes a little more precise. The arrival of the representative of the Kyivan prince at Kerch may have resulted in a better understanding of the situation on the ground<sup>47</sup>. This, in turn, meant that more accurate source information was available to the 12<sup>th</sup>-century editor for this period.

For the last time, the name of Tmutarakan' appears in the *Chronicle* under the year 6602 (1094/1095):

Svyatopolk made peace with the Polovcians, and took to wife the daughter of their prince Tugorkan. In this same year, Oleg arrived from Tmutarakan before Chernigov with a force of Polovcians. Vladimir fortified himself in the city. Oleg then approached and burned

---

homeland, Oleg meted out punishment, which he also received at the hands of "strangers" (Khazars), not his "fellow people" (Rusians). On the interpretation of the term "Khazaria" used on the seals of the princes ruling in Tmutarakan, cf.: J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 28, 43 (there about the Khazars as a strong community on the Taman Peninsula, similarly among others: C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 319, 323–326). With this background information, particularly interesting is also the view of А. ЕРЕМЕНКО, *Периодизация Таманской цивилизационной модели развития. Региональная культура*, ДК 17, 2000, p. 47, according to whom in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century there was to be enough conversion of the Tmutarakanian elite to Judaism in order to avoid falling under the supremacy of Byzantium. C. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict...*, p. 79 (*The PVL labels them as Khazars, perhaps to set them apart, perhaps as a comment on religion [the "Jewish Khazars" are one of the groups that visit Volodimer in 986 to discuss conversion], 19 but they could be classed as Russian, as they inhabited a Russian city. It might perhaps be a stretch to do the same thing for the Pechenegs or even the Kasogians, though*).

<sup>45</sup> Ratibor has also attracted the attention of researchers because of seals bearing his name found on the Crimean Peninsula. Some historians take this as an argument for the wide reach of his power. I consider it more appropriate to see them as evidence of the intense contacts maintained by the Russian dignitary with the Byzantine possessions, cf. В. ЯНИН, П. ГАЙДУКОВ, *Актовые печати Древней Руси X–XII вв.*, vol. III, Москва 1998, p. 121; Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 117; J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 55 (there further literature and interesting remarks on the later career of Ratibor who, according to the author, during his stay on the Kerch Strait was to learn the Byzantine "art of governance").

<sup>46</sup> This episode, seen as an example of rivalry between the "izgoi" and the "main line" of the Russian dynasty, as well as a wider outline of David Igorevich's efforts to gain a principality in Rus, has been recently discussed by C. RAFFENSPERGER, *Conflict...*, p. 47–50.

<sup>47</sup> M. DIMNIK, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. 157–158.

the environs, including the monasteries. Vladimir made peace with Oleg, and departed from Chernigov to occupy his father's throne in Pereyaslav', while Oleg took possession of the city that had been his own father's. The Polovtsians committed many depredations in the vicinity of Chernigov, and Oleg made no attempt to restrain them for the reason that he himself had inspired their raids. This was in fact the third time that he had led a force of pagans to attack Rus'<sup>48</sup>.

There is a widespread belief that after Oleg Sviatoslavovich achieved his goal and captured Chernihiv, his fatherland, he relinquished power in Tmutarakan' in favour of the Byzantines. Nevertheless, later Arabic sources mention a local dynasty called "Oloubas", which was said to have consisted of several princes. It is therefore possible that Oleg or his descendants may still have ruled the Kerch Strait for some time, possibly by Byzantine appointment. To some extent, Slavic (Rusian) culture also survived on the Kerch Strait, including the activities of the Rusian monastic centre. Finally, however, the 12<sup>th</sup>-century imperial documents regulating the rules of the Genoese merchants testify to the return of the city to the direct sovereignty of the *Basileus*<sup>49</sup>. Nevertheless, the period of the Rurikids' self-imposed presence on the Taman Peninsula has ended, and the circumstances of this event remain a matter of dispute<sup>50</sup>. From the point of view of my study,

<sup>48</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 179–180. В лѣтъ[о] ѿ хъ в Сотвори миръ С[ва]тополкъ с Половци и поае собѣ жену дщерь Тугорканю кн[а]зѣ Пол[о]вцакаг[о] Том же лѣтъ[ом] Приде Олѣгъ с Половци ис Тѣмуторокона [и] приде Чернигову Володимеръ же затворисѣ в градъ Олѣгъ же приде к граду и пожже вколо града и манастыръ пожже Володимеръ же створи миръ съ Олгомъ и иде из града на столъ итень Переяславию а Олѣгъ вниде в градъ[ъ] в[тѣ]ца своего Половци же начаши воевати вколо Чернигова Олгови не взбранящю бѣ бо самъ повелѣлъ имъ воевати се оуже третѣе наведе поганыѣ на землю Русьскую, Лаврѣнтьевская лѣтопись, col. 227–228; *The Povest' vremennykh let*, p. 1792–1795.

<sup>49</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 61–65; C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 322–323 (there a mention of the possibility of perceiving Tmutarakan' remaining under the rule of the Rusian princes as a city "detached" from the Romeian empire based on the correspondence of Archbishop Theophylact and Gregory Tarontines).

<sup>50</sup> *Древняя Русь в средневековом мире...*, p. 816 (there a suggestion that the reason for the decline in the interest of the Rusian princes in the Black Sea territories was the civil war then taking place in Volhynia, related to the blinding of Prince Vasilko of Trembovla); Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 118; J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 28–30 (there is a thesis on the Byzantine policy of "minimalist administration", i.e. the use of Rusian elites, especially Rostislav Mstislavovich and Oleg Sviatoslavovich, as governors of strategic territories on the northern coast of the Black Sea, which was supposed to be more cost-effective than keeping governors sent from the centre of the Empire. There are also interesting reflections on the titulature of the princes ruling in Tmutarakan', which the author treats as evidence of the penetration of Byzantine political models into Rus' precisely through these dynasts, cf. IDEM, *Mists and Portals: the Black Sea's North Coast*, [in:] *Byzantine Trade, 4<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional, and International Exchange*, ed. M. MANGO, Farnham 2009, p. 429, 438–439; C. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule*, p. 328). Alternative views of either further Rurikids' presence in Tmutarakan' or the city's transition under the power of the Polovtsians were discussed by, for example, В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань (80-е гг. X в. – 90-е гг. XI в.)...*, p. 162–163 (further literature there).

the following question is essential: why was this moment not recorded in the Russian sources? Or should it have been recorded at all?

I have already mentioned that the subject of the *Chronicle's* narrative is the history of the dynasty and the territorial expansion of its state. Several decades ago Mykola Kotlyar considering the question of the political status of Tmutarakan' and following the path set by Aleksandr Gadlo, rightly pointed out that we are not dealing with an integral part of Rus' understood as the territorial state of the Rurikids<sup>51</sup>. For this reason, among others, I prefer to use in this article the term "part of the domain of the Rurikids", which, in my opinion, better illustrates this specific case<sup>52</sup>. Over the past two decades, other researchers (including Jonathan Shepard) have shown that princes such as Mstislav Vladimirovich or Oleg Sviatoslavovich exercised and maintained power over the Kerch Strait due to two factors: the support of the Byzantine emperors and understanding of the local cultural conditions<sup>53</sup>. This was manifested, for example, in the titulature they used on their seals<sup>54</sup>. In research of a strictly source nature, however, the perspective of the modern historian must, to some extent, be discarded in favour of "getting into the mind" of the creator of the source – in this case the editor of the *Chronicle*, who worked in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. For him, Tmutarakan' was uninterruptedly part of the Russian state – even when the princes who ruled there were in conflict with the sovereigns of Kyiv or Chernihiv, they still remained members of the dynasty. Thus, the bookman included the history of Tmutarakan' in the story of the territorial expansion of Rus'. Following from there, we can guess why he did not record the return of the power over the area under the direct sovereignty of the Empire: this fact was not important from his point of view, as it did not fit into the narrative strategy he adopted.

Furthermore, I venture to put forward a thesis that the *Primary Chronicle* cemented in medieval Russian historiography the common image of Tmutarakan' as an integral part of Rus', as evidenced by references to the city present in the later sources. In the scientific literature it is used to refer in this context to the famous

<sup>51</sup> А. ГАДЛО, *Предыстория Приазовской Руси. Очерки истории русского княжения на Северном Кавказе*, Санкт-Петербург 2004 (the author perceived Tmutarakan' as an autonomous unit, where the local population 'elders' had a large share in governance and decided on the occupation of the princely throne); Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 107–118 (the main argument of the Ukrainian scholar is that Tmutarakan', remote and separated by nomadic territories, could not be incorporated into the *tax and administrative system of Rus'*); С. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 318.

<sup>52</sup> В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань – владение...*, p. 31 describes Tmutarakan' as *having been under the protectorate of the former Russian state for more than a century, when Byzantine interests in the region had evidently disappeared and an ephemeral state formation in which a great deal depended on the policy of Byzantium, which saw the city and its appurtenances as its dominion, which for a short time acquired the status of a barbarian archontia*.

<sup>53</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Closer Encounters...*, p. 31–34, 42–43. А. СЛЯДЗЬ, *Предыстория...*, p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> С. ZUCKERMAN, *The End of Byzantine Rule...*, p. 318–323.

*Tale of Igor's Campaign*<sup>55</sup>. For this reason I would like to draw attention to another, less recognisable monument: the anonymous *List of Rusian further and closer gords*, which is a peculiar annalistic record preserved in the several 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts<sup>56</sup>. It consists of around 360 toponyms divided into several categories. This source was probably created in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, however it contains the names of many centres that no longer existed at that time, as they fell during the Mongol invasions in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>57</sup>. The creator must therefore have used older accounts, dating from before the Mongol era. The exact purpose of the note is unclear: it may have served merchants or pilgrims, or it could have been a kind of supplement to the historiographical narrative contained in the same manuscripts. It is significant that among the towns mentioned in the *List* we also find Tmutarakan', where the Rusian princes, as we know, exercised their power until the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century at the latest. Moreover: it appears in a section where almost only the towns in the immediate surroundings of Kyiv are mentioned. In my opinion, the author of the note may simply not have known where exactly Tmutarakan' was located. He may have known the name from the pages of narrative sources, especially the *Primary Chronicle*. Judging by the context in which the town appears in the annalistic narratives, he intuitively placed it alongside the sub-Kyivan centres. Far more importantly, however, the fourteenth-century bookmen still perceived Tmutarakan' as part of the wider Rus' – a place located within its ideal borders, which the *List* was meant to represent.

\* \* \*

Let me highlight a few main conclusions. First, I would like to emphasise that we must distinguish the *Primary Chronicle's* records of Tmutarakan' into those that refer to its fate in the 10<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and those that describe later events. In the first case, the creator of the *Chronicle* was very likely to have used transmissions from Tmutarakan', including those written in the entourage of Rostislav Mstislavovich, which he then incorporated into the narrative which he was compiling (as for the previously occurring fragments relating to the reign of Mstislav Vladimirovich in Tmutarakan', we can assume that the compiler of the source was also in possession of material created on the Kerch Strait). Perhaps, as

<sup>55</sup> E.g.: Н. КОТЛЯР, *Тмутараканское княжество...*, p. 108, 116–117; М. DIMNIK, *The Dynasty of Chernigov...*, p. XV; В. ЧИХАДЗЕ, *Тмутаракань – владение...*, p. 31.

<sup>56</sup> М. ТИХОМИРОВ, *Список русских городов дальних и ближних*, ИЗ 40, 1952, p. 214–259; А. ДЕДУК, «Список русских городов дальних и ближних»: история изучения, [in:] *Русский книжник 2014*, Москва 2015 (further literature there). The purpose of the source is not fully known. Personally, I favour the idea that we have to do with a compilation “descriptive map” of the Rus' – a kind of “scholarly aid”, complementing the narration contained in the annalistic compilations, which it accompanies within the individual manuscripts.

<sup>57</sup> А. ПОПЕ, *Gród Wolyń*, SW 4, 1958, p. 256.

suggested by A. Shakhmatov, this information came from Nikon's hand, but this is not the only possible option. Tmutarakan' was probably a centre of Rusian culture, and the presence of Rusian clergy (especially if we accept as credible the references to the existence of a Slavic monastery there) created suitable conditions for the development of local scripture. Thus, one cannot use the "Tmutarakan' argument" against the propositions of researchers who either revise A. Shakhmatov's theories (A. Gippius) or completely reject them (G. Prokhorov).

Further notes are primarily concerned with the rivalry between Oleg Sviatoslavovich as well as other princes residing in Tmutarakan' and the older Rurikids (Izyaslav and Vsevolod Yaroslavovichi supported by their sons). At that time, the narrative is conducted from the Kyivan perspective, which results in less precise information on the distant exclave. It can be assumed that for this period the author of the *Chronicle* had at his disposal mainly Kyivan accounts related to Oleg's political opponents. For this reason, the narrative refers to the struggle between the older princes against Oleg, rather than the struggle conducted by Oleg himself.

The conclusions based on the analysis of the accounts I have discussed have most often been treated separately – usually simply as a "reservoir" of knowledge on the fate of certain territory in the 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries, or alternatively as supplementary information concerning the political relations in the Rurikids' domain. We should place them in a broader, source-focused context – by which I mean the *Primary Chronicle's* narrative strategy. Indeed, the creator of the source had at his disposal material from different eras but used it in an authorial manner to create a new synthesis of domestic history. Thus, information about Tmutarakan' figures very concretely in the dynastic tale. The main aim of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century erudite was to fit the history of the city into the story of the territorial expansion of the Rusian state. This is why the name of the city appears for the first time in the entry of 6496, which describes the organisation of the new Christian territorial state. For the same reason we do not find any information in the *Chronicle* about the return of the city to the rule of Constantinople: its inclusion would have been pointless from the point of view of the employed narrative strategy. At the same time, the authors of the accounts attached great importance to issues important for the effective exercise of power over the Kerch Strait, such as relations with the Kasogians, the Polovtsians and the Byzantines of Chersonesus. Finally, it should be emphasised that the creator of the *Chronicle* achieved his goal: in the minds of his successors who wrote in the following centuries, Tmutarakan' functioned simply as an integral part of the Rusian "oecumene", regardless of its actual, complicated political status in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Hoždenie igumena Danila*, ed. G. ПРОНОРОВ, <http://lib.pushkinskijdom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4934> [24 III 2023].
- Lavrent'evskaja letopis'*, [in:] *Pólnoe sobránie rýsskikh létopisej*, vol. I, Leningrad 1926–1927.
- Paterik Kievskogo Pečerskogo monastyrá*, ed. D. АБРАМОВИЧ, Sankt-Peterburg 1911.
- The Povest' vremennykh let. An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis*, vol. III, ed. D. OSTROWSKI, D.J. BIRNBAUM, H.G. LUNT, Cambridge 2003 [= Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature. Texts, 10.3].
- The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, ed. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, Cambridge Massachusetts 1953.
- ТИХОМИРОВ М., *Spisok russkikh gorodov dal'nih i bližnih*, “Исторические записки” / “Istoričeske zapiski” 40, 1952, p. 214–259.

### Secondary Literature

- ÂNIN V., GAJDUKOV P., *Aktovye pečati Drevnej Rusi X–XII vv.*, vol. III, Moskva 1998.
- ASHIMIN A., *Vzaimootnošeniâ Tmutarakani i Vostočnogokryma*, “Человек и общество” / “Čelovek i obšestvo” 1, 2016, p. 6–9.
- BEREKOV N., *Hronologiâ russkogo letopisaniâ*, Moskva 1963.
- ČIHADZE V., *Tmutarakan' – vladenie Drevnerusskogo gosudarstvav 80-e gg. X – 90-e gg. XI vekov*, “Вестник Московского городского педагогического университета” / “Vestnik Moskovskogo gorodskogo pedagogičeskogo universiteta” 1(5), 2010, p. 20–37.
- ČIHADZE V., *Tmutarakan' (80-e gg. X v. – 90-e gg. XI v.)*. *Očerki istoriografii*, “Материалы и исследования по археологии Северного Кавказа” / “Materialy i issledovaniâ po arheologii Severnogo Kavkaza” 6, 2006, p. 139–174.
- ČIHADZE V., *Tmutarakan': pečal'nyj opyt istoriografii načala XXI veka*, Moskva 2017.
- DEDUK A., «*Spisok russkikh gorodov dal'nikh i bližnikh*»: *istorija izuchenija*, [in:] *Russkij knižnik 2014*, Moskva 2015.
- DIMNIK M., *The Dynasty of Chernigov, 1054–1146*, Toronto 1994.
- Drevnââ Рус' v srednevekovom mire. Ėnciklopediâ*, ed. E. MEL'NIKOVA, B. PETRUHIN, Moskva 2014.
- EREMENKO A., *Periodizaciâ Tamanskoj civilizacionnoj modeli razvitiâ. Regional'naâ kul'tura*, “Древности Кубани” / “Drevnosti Kubani” 17, 2000.
- FRANKLIN S., SHEPARD J., *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*, New York 1996.
- GADLO A., *Ėtničeskaâ istoriâ Severnogo Kavkaza X–XIII vekov*, Sankt-Peterburg 1994.
- GADLO A., *O načale slavâno-russkojmigracii v Priazov'e i Tavriku*, “Славяно-русская этнография” / “Slavâno-russkaâ Ėtnografiâ” 1973, p. 73–89.
- GADLO A., *Predystoriâ Priazovskoj Rusi. Očerki istorii russkogo knâženiâ na Severnom Kavkaze*, Sankt-Peterburg 2004.
- GIPPIUS A., *Do i posle Načal'nogo svoda: rannââ letopisnaâ Istorîâ Rusi kak ob'ekt tekstologičeskoj rekonstrukci*, [in:] *Rus' v IX–X vekah: arheologičeskaâ panorama*, Moskva–Vologda 2012, p. 37–63.



- JUSUPOVIĆ A., „Червень и ины грады” czy też „гроды Червеньскыя”? *Dzieje ziemi czerwieńskiej w źródłach pisanych (IX–XIII w.)*, [in:] *Od grodów Czerwieńskich do linii Curzona*, vol. I, ed. M. WOŁOSZYN, Kraków–Leipzig–Rzeszów–Warszawa 2017, p. 31–106.
- KARYŠKOVSKIJ P., *Lev Diakon o Tmutarakanskoj Rusi*, “Византийский временник” / “Vizantijskiy vremennik” 17 (42), 1960, p. 39–48.
- KOTLIAR N., *Tmutarakanskoe knâzestvo: real’nost’ ili istoriografičeskij mif?*, [in:] *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy. 2003 god: Mnimye real’nosti v antičnyh i srednevekovyh tekstah*, ed. T. DZAKSON, Moskva 2005, p. 107–118.
- PETRUHIN V., *Nikon i Tmutorokan’: k problemam rekonstrukcii načal’nogo letopisanія*, [in:] *Vostočnaja Evropa v drevnostii srednevekov’e. XV. Avtor i ego tekst*, Moskva 2003, p. 194–198.
- POPPE A., *Gród Wołyń*, “Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne” 4, 1958, p. 227–300.
- POPPE A., *Państwo i Kościół na Rusi w XI wieku*, Warszawa 1968.
- PROHOROV G., *Drevnerusskoe letopisanie: Vzgląd v nepovtorimoe*, Sankt-Peterburg 2014.
- RAFFENSPERGER C., *Conflict, Bargaining, and Kinship Networks in Medieval Eastern Europe*, Lanham–Boulder–New York–London 2018.
- ŠAHMATOV A., *Razyskaniâ po drevnejših russkih letopisnyh svodah*, Sankt-Peterburg 1908.
- SHEPARD J., *Closer Encounters with the Byzantine World: the Rus at the Straits of Kerch*, [in:] *Pre-Modern Russia and its World. Essays in Honor of Thomas S. Noonan*, ed. K.L. REYVERSON, T.G. STAYROU, J.D. TRACY, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 15–77.
- SHEPARD J., *Mists and Portals: the Black Sea’s North Coast*, [in:] *Byzantine Trade, 4<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional, and International Exchange*, ed. M. MANGO, Farnham 2009, p. 421–442.
- SIWKO A., A “Commonwealth of Interest” in the Rus’ian-Byzantine Treaty (ca. 944), “Studia Ceranea” 11, 2021, p. 405–426, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.11.20>
- SKULINA T., SWOBODA W., *Tmutorokań*, [in:] *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. VI, ed. Z. STIEBER, W. KOWALENKO, G. LABUDA, A. GAŚSIOROWSKI, T. LEHR-SPEŁAWIŃSKI, A. WĘDZKI, Wrocław 1961, p. 91–96.
- SLÄDZ A., *Predystoriâ vizantijskoj anneksii Priazov’â: knâz’-izgoj Rostislav Tmutarakanskij*, “Проблемы истории, филологии, культуры” / “Problemy istorii, filologii, kul’tury” 2, 2015, p. 161–174.
- Slovar’ drevnerusskogo âzyka*, vol. III, Moskva 1990.
- SOROČAN S., ZUBRAČ’ V., MARČENKO L., *Žizn’ i gibel’ Hersonesa*, Sevastopol’ 2006.
- TOŁOČKO A., *Očerki načal’noj Rusi*, Kiev–Sankt-Peterburg 2015.
- UKOLOVA V., ŠKARENKOV P., *Formirovanie rannej rossijskoj gosudarstvennosti v kontekste srednevekovogo Evropejskogo politogeneza*, “Новый исторический Ветсник” / “Novyj istoričeskij Vetsnik” 50.4, 2016, p. 8–17.
- ZUCKERMAN C., *The End of Byzantine Rule in North-Eastern Pontus*, “Материалы по археологии, истории и этнографии Таврии” / “Materialy po arheologii, istorii i étnografii Tavrii” 22, 2017, p. 311–336.

**Arkadiusz Siwko**


University of Opole  
pl. Kopernika 11a  
45-040 Opole, Polska/Poland  
asiwy2@tlen.pl

**FIFTH COLLOQUIA CERANEA**  
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ŁÓDŹ, 11-13 MAY 2023**





Piotr Czarnecki (Kraków)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4155-4918>

## AUTHENTICITY OF THE *INTERROGATIO IOHANNIS* IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY DECONSTRUCTIONIST SOURCE CRITICISM

**Abstract.** Scholars of Catharism representing the deconstructionist current in the recent years continue their struggle with the traditional interpretation of this heresy which underlines its dualistic character and strong connections with Eastern dualisms – especially with Bogomilism. Their tactics is focused primarily on questioning the authenticity of the sources confirming Cathar dualism and its Eastern roots. Such sources are presented as forgeries invented by the Catholics trying to discredit the “dissidents”. This tactic is directed primarily against the sources of heretical provenience, which are the strongest arguments against the deconstructionist interpretation. Previously, the deconstructionist scholars questioned the acts of the Cathar council in Saint-Felix-De-Caraman, and the so-called “Manichaean treatise” – a Cathar theological work aimed at proving ontological dualism based on the specific interpretation of numerous biblical passages. Currently the deconstructionists speak about the need for verification of another Cathar dualistic treatise – *Liber De Duobus pricipiis*. Considering this we may expect that soon also the *Interrogatio Iohannis* will be questioned, as it is a crucial source confirming both the dualism of the Cathars and their dependence on the Bogomils. Before it happens I decided to take a closer look at this apocryphal text. Through the analysis of its doctrine in the light of the Eastern sources concerning the Bogomils I am going to answer the question of whether this work, known only from the Latin manuscripts, indeed could have been created by the Bogomils and if it is possible to question its authenticity using the patterns used by the deconstructionist scholars.

**Keywords:** *Interrogatio Iohannis*, Bogomilism, Catharism, dualist doctrine

If we take a look at the recent publications concerning Catharism we will see that the deconstructionist scholars promote their hypothesis assuming that Catharism as a dualistic heresy never existed. The most radical advocates of the “new paradigm” – Middle Ages without Catharism, such as M.G. Pegg or J. Biget – try to impose it on other scholars, presenting it almost as a dogma beyond any discussion, and discrediting their adversaries, who in their opinion ignore new research or reject in because of the “ideological blockade”<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians’ Illusions*, [in:] *Cathars in Question*, ed. A. SENNIS, York 2016 [= HIMA], p. 21–52. On negative opinions about the adherents of the

But is this confidence of the deconstructionists a consequence of the fact, that their revolutionary hypothesis has ultimately been proven? Certainly not. Traditional interpretation has been constructed over the years, based on the analysis of the vast source material and on the discoveries of the new sources (as it was in the case of A. Dondaine), whereas the deconstructionist revolution is not founded on new ground-breaking discoveries, but on the radical change in the approach to the sources, started in 1998 by Monique Zerner and her collaborators, such as Michel Lauwers, Jean-Louis Biget or Guy Lobrechon<sup>2</sup>. In this new methodology deconstruction of the sources is an imperative (as Julien Thery put it), because of the assumption that Catharism was constructed by the Catholic clergymen who tried to present dissidence in the worst possible light to justify its persecution and to eliminate its adherents<sup>3</sup>. What needs to be emphasised, such a claim is nothing more than a mere hypothesis, and not a particularly likely one at that, as it in fact implies that the Catholic clergymen intentionally misguided other Catholic clergymen in their anti-heretical treatises. Because this hypothesis is treated by the deconstructionists as a dogma, it has serious consequences for their research. It allows them to ignore the sources which do not fit their theory as unreliable and not even deserving discussion.

Deconstructionist scholars try to impose their approach to the uncomfortable sources on their adversaries (exactly as in the case of the “new paradigm”), claiming that their reliability was indisputably challenged. Pegg, criticising Hamilton, who had proposed to rely on the sources of Cathar provenience as the most reliable, claimed peremptorily that no source written by the Cathars survived until the present day, apart from those saved in the Dominican polemics or unclear texts from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although he did not specify which sources he had in mind, and what exactly led him to such a radical opinion, which is in opposition to our knowledge about the Cathar sources<sup>4</sup>. A similar opinion was also expressed by J.L. Biget, who claimed that the only sources written by the “good men” are the Provençal New Testament and the Gloss on the Lord’s Prayer. He also rejected *Sermones contra catharos* of Eckbert of Schönau – the first account confirming Cathar dualism, and the acts of Saint-Felix-De-Caraman council, claiming that they could not be treated as reliable<sup>5</sup>.

---

traditional understanding of Catharism see especially p. 21; IDEM, *Le catharisme en questions: falsifiabilité, vérité historique et une nouvelle histoire du christianisme medieval*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 331–372; J.L. BIGET, *L’histoire du « catharisme » occitan: un nœud de questions*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 13–34. On Biget’s criticism of the opponents see esp. p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Crucial for the new methodology was the work edited by Zerner: *Inventer l’hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l’Inquisition*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 1998.

<sup>3</sup> J. THÉRY, *L’hérésie des bons hommes. Comment nommer la dissidence religieuse non vaudoise ni béguine en Languedoc (XII<sup>e</sup> – début XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)?*, *Heresis* 36–37, 2002, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 350.

<sup>5</sup> J.L. BIGET, *L’histoire...*, p. 16–17; IDEM, *Retour sur le « concile de Sant-Félix »*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 83.

As we can see neither Pegg nor Biget mention *Interrogatio Iohannis* among the Cathar sources. Does it mean that its credibility, and the credibility of all the above-mentioned sources have indeed been so unambiguously undermined that one can ignore them without any discussion and formulate hypotheses as if they never existed? At this point it seems reasonable to take a look at the most notable examples of questioning of the sources by the deconstructionist scholars to explore their methods and check if they convincingly managed to question the reliability of these sources. The next step will be the analysis of the criticism of *Interrogatio Iohannis* in this context.

The object of especially fierce criticism of the deconstructionist scholars were, in the first place, the sources denying their vision of Catharism as an unorganised movement without any connections to dualism or Eastern heresies. Therefore for the first target they chose the acts of the Cathar council of Saint-Felix-De-Caraman from 1167, which attested the visit of the Bogomil bishop of Constantinople – Nicetas, who ordained Cathar bishops there. The basis of criticism was the fact that this source did not survive in the original manuscript but only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century copy made by the French historian Guillaume Besse, who published it in his work: *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*<sup>6</sup>. The lack of the original was not the ultimate argument however, because the content of this source, especially the people mentioned in it, such as Nicetas or the Cathar bishops from France and Italy were corroborated by the Italian anti-heretical polemics and the inquisitorial French sources, which also corroborated the borders of the Cathar dioceses, precisely described in the acts<sup>7</sup>. This fact did not discourage the deconstructionist scholars from questioning the reliability of this source. According to the hypothesis proposed by Zerner, the acts of Saint-Felix were modern forgery made by Besse, who in his work dedicated to the archbishop of Narbonne tried to prove that the title of the count of Narbonne shared by the counts of Toulouse and archbishops of Narbonne belongs only to the archbishops<sup>8</sup>. This hypothesis was questioned by the formal analysis of the source prepared by the experts from the *Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes* – Jacques Dalarun and Denis Muzerelle, who argued that the source was written at the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup>. Zerner's hypothesis was soon criticised by other scholars as well, such as

<sup>6</sup> G. BESSE, *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*, Paris 1660, p. 483–486.

<sup>7</sup> On the Italian sources confirming the figure of Nicetas, see: *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 19, 1949 (cetera: *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*), p. 309.

<sup>8</sup> M. ZERNER, *La charte de Niquinta, l'hérésie et l'érudition des années 1650–1660*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. IDEM, Nice 2001 [= CEMN, 3], p. 203–248; *Compte rendu des interventions de M. Zerner, J.-L. Biget et J. Chiffolleau*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 39–40. The hypothesis assuming that the acts of St-Felix council were forged by Besse was proposed earlier by L. de Lacger, and then by Y. Dossat, see: L. DE LACGER, *L'albigeois pendant la crise de l'albigéisme*, RHE 29, 1933, p. 314–315; Y. DOSSAT, *A propos du concile de Saint-Félix: Les Milingues*, CFan 3, 1968, p. 207–208.

<sup>9</sup> J. DALARUN, A. DUFOUR, A. GRONDEUX, D. MUZERELLE, F. ZINELLI, *La 'charte de Niquinta', analyse formelle*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 135–199.

J. Roche, D. Zbiral or T. Drakopoulos, who highlighted (as earlier did B. Hamilton) that Besse, who confused Cathars and Waldensians, simply couldn't have had such a deep knowledge of Catharism to forge a document containing names of the real Cathar bishops and the exact course of the borders of their dioceses<sup>10</sup>. An alternative hypothesis was proposed by Biget, who tried to prove that the source was forged in the Middle Ages by the Catholics who tried to present the dissidence as centralised, international movement, and a serious threat to the Catholic church. In his opinion this document was intended as an incentive (*excitatorium*) to the crusade<sup>11</sup>. Biget's hypothesis was also promptly criticised by the scholars, who pointed out that the acts of Saint-Felix council could not have played the role of the *excitatorium* to the crusade because they were not mentioned by any other source, and were completely unknown at that time. David Zbiral also underlined the fact that the image of Catharism contained in this source cannot be described as an image of a centralised heretical counter-church<sup>12</sup>.

Biget, apparently not discouraged by this criticism, returned to the issue of the acts of Saint-Felix almost two decades later and proposed a new hypothesis, assuming a modern forgery. This time the forgers were to have been Pierre de Caseneuve (the canon of the Cathedral in Toulouse who gave the document to Besse), and Besse himself. The two are presented by Biget as eminent erudites able to construct such a complicated document, full of names and geographical data. The motives of the forgers were different than in case of Zerner's hypothesis. Following the rule of context above content, Biget focuses on the context of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, arguing that Caseneuve forged the acts of Saint-Felix to justify the then French claims to Catalonia (Cathar dioceses described in the acts of Saint-Felix reached beyond the

<sup>10</sup> J. ROCHE, *Enjeux et embûches de la recherche actuelle sur le catharisme: l'exemple de la charte de Nicetas*, [in:] *Autour de Montailou, un village occitan. Histoire et religiosité d'une communauté villageoise au Moyen Age. Actes du colloque de Montailou, 25–26–27 août 2000*, ed. A. BRENON, Ch. DIEULAFAIT, E. LE ROY LADURIE, Castelnau-la-Chapelle 2001, p. 261–262; D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte de Niquinta et le rassemblement de Saint-Félix: État de la question*, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010, p. 33–35; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité de Bogomilo-Catharisme d'après quatre textes latins analysés à la lumière des sources byzantines*, Geneve 2010, p. 123, 139, 144, 156; B. HAMILTON, *The Cathar Council of Saint-Felix Reconsidered*, AFP 48, 1978, p. 25; Hamilton's opinion is shared also by P. Jiménez, see: P. JIMÉNEZ, *Relire la charte de Niquinta I: Etude et portée de la charte*, Here 22, 1994, p. 10–12.

<sup>11</sup> J.L. BIGET, *Un faux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle? Examen d'une hypothèse*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion...*, p. 124–133. M.G. Pegg also believes that the acts of Saint-Felix council were forged, but in his opinion the forgers were the Cathars themselves, see: M.G. PEGG, *The Paradigm...*, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> J. ROCHE, *Une Église cathare. L'évêché du Carcassès, Carcassonne-Béziers-Narbonne*, Cahors 2005, p. 87; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 126, 143–144; D. ZBIRAL, *La Charte...*, p. 31–36. The image of the Cathar heresy contained in the acts of Saint-Felix council surely does not resemble a well organised counter-church, especially considering the fact that Nicetas in his sermon encouraged Cathars to establish independent bishoprics with strictly defined borders, see: *Charte de Niquinta, antipape des hérétiques surnommés d'Albigéois*, ed. D. ZBIRAL, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010, p. 47.

Pyrenees), while Besse, who published this forged document, tried to discredit the lobby of the protestants (who a century earlier perceived the Cathars as their forerunners) headed by a certain Galland – a royal official whose aim was to introduce in Occitania the king’s ordinance from 1629, ordering the confiscation of the allodia of the owners who were unable to prove their ownership<sup>13</sup>. Constructing this hypothesis (which assumed the existence of an elaborate intrigue of the 17<sup>th</sup> century French erudites), Biget did not refer to the sources in which the figures mentioned in the acts of Saint-Felix (such as Nicetas for example) appear, nor to the Eastern sources.

As we can see, the reliability of the acts of Saint-Felix council was not refuted and therefore there is no reason to ignore this source in the research on Catharism.

The situation looks similar in case of the *Sermones contra catharos* written by Eckbert of Schönau in 1163 – the first source confirming the dualist doctrine of the Cathars, which was questioned by Uwe Brunn in his work *Des contestataires aux “Cathares”* in 2006. Brunn concluded that the German Benedictine monk arbitrarily constructed the image of the dualist Cathar heresy on the basis of the anti-Manichaean writings of St. Augustine and imposed it on the evangelical dissidents who advocated the return to the early Christianity. He did it to justify their persecution, because in the centralising Church of the Gregorian reform there was no place for them anymore. This idea of a well-organized dualist heresy was later accepted by other Church authors, who used it as a tool to eliminate the enemies of the Church. The foundation of Brunn’s criticism was the fact that Eckbert, at the end of his work, added passages of St. Augustine’s *De haeresibus* directed against the Manichaeans, and as the first author used the name *cathari*, which also appeared in the work of the bishop of Hippo<sup>14</sup>. Brunn did not consider the possibility that Eckbert could have simply believed that the heretics he knew were the descendants of the Manichaeans, which would not be surprising considering their dualistic doctrine. Brunn also omitted the fact that Eckbert in his description of the Cathar doctrines says clearly that some of them cannot be found among the errors of the Manichaeans. In consequence, he did not explain the differences between the Cathar doctrine and the Manichaean one, on which it was allegedly based<sup>15</sup>. He also did not explain convincingly why the German Benedictine

<sup>13</sup> J.L. BIGET, *Retour sur le « concile de Sant-Félix »...*, p. 81–110.

<sup>14</sup> U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires aux “Cathares”: discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l’Inquisition*, Paris 2006, p. 160, 238–274, 316–348; IDEM, *Cathari, catharistae et cataphrygae. Ancêtres des cathares du XII siècle*, Here 36–37, 2002, p. 184–185.

<sup>15</sup> On the differences between the Cathar and the Manichaean doctrine see: ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *Sermones contra catharos*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CXCIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, Paris 1855, col. 16: *Sciendum vero est, et non celandum ab auribus vulgi, quoniam indubitanter secta eorum, de quibus agimus, originem accepit a Manichaeo haeresiarcha, cujus doctrina maledicta erat et tota venenosa, et radicata est in populo isto perverso. Multa tamen permista habent doctrinae magistri sui, quae inter haereses illius non inveniuntur.*



monk, who allegedly tried to identify the Cathars with the ancient Manichaeans, used the name Cathars (*cathari*), which in St. Augustine's work was reserved for the Novatians instead of *catharistae*, which was the name of one of the branches of the Manichaeans<sup>16</sup>. In the light of such doubts it would be difficult to accept that the construction of the Cathar doctrine by Eckbert has been proven, although the deconstructionist scholars seem to believe that it was, and consequently ignore this source in their research.

As we can see, the deconstructionist method of questioning of the sources is built on the formulation of hypotheses (no matter how likely) which assume that the problematic source was forged because the alleged forger may have potentially had motives to do so. Such a hypothesis is treated as the ultimate proof which entitles them to ignore such source in their future research. And it is not only the case with the sources which became the subject of a serious academic debate (as it was in the case of the acts of Saint-Felix council), but with all the sources that do not fit the new paradigm. Pegg and Biget, writing about the sources of Cathar provenience, do not mention the Anonymous Treatise from the 1220s, not because its reliability was successfully challenged, but because it confirms the Cathar dualism, and thus completely destroys their interpretation<sup>17</sup>. The only argument questioning this source was formulated by Biget, who claimed that because it survived only in the polemical work of Durand of Huesca – the *Contra Manicheos* – it was forged by him. Durand – the Waldensian converted to Catholicism – in Biget's opinion forged this work and made it look heretical to legitimise the image of Catharism as a dualistic heresy, a view promoted by the Church<sup>18</sup>. That is the entirety of the proof. The arguments of David Zbiral, who pointed out that the Cathar treatise differs significantly from the rest of Durand's work, and besides it does not contain a systematic presentation of the Cathar doctrine, went unnoticed<sup>19</sup>. Similar "proofs" questioning the second Cathar theological treatise – the *Liber de Duobus Principiis* we should expect soon, because Alessia Trivellone in her article from 2020 openly claimed that this enigmatic work, considered written by the Cathars, will have to be analysed anew<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Brunn claims that Eckbert used the name *cathari* to describe German heretics because of their strict moral rules, especially concerning marriage, similar to those of Novatians. See: U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires...*, p. 187–190.

<sup>17</sup> M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 350; J.L. BIGET, *L'histoire...*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> J.L. BIGET, *Réflexions sur « l'hérésie » dans le Midi de la France au Moyen Âge*, Here 36–37, 2001, p. 40; Biget's opinion is shared also by J. Chiffolleau, see: *Compte rendu des interventions...*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> D. ZBIRAL, *Největší hereze. Dualismus, učenecká vyprávění o katarství a budování křesťanské Evropy*, Brno 2007, p. 67–68.

<sup>20</sup> A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises cathares en Italie? Pour une étude critique des sources italiennes*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 58.

Before that happens, Trivellone decided to start the work of deconstruction of another source crucial for the traditional interpretation – the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, which confirms both the dualist doctrine and the Eastern origins of Catharism.

Before the analysis of Trivellone’s arguments, it may be worth reminding a few facts about this source. According to Edina Bozóky (the author of the newest edition of *Interrogatio Iohannis*), the source survived in three manuscripts and one printed text. The first is the Vienna manuscript, which contains the New Testament and the fragments of the Old Testament. It was written in Italy in the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The *Interrogatio Iohannis* is placed at its end, and it is the second layer of the text from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The second manuscript, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, survived in the city library of Dôle, and according to Bozóky it was probably copied from the original, which was kept in the archives of the Carcassonne inquisition because it also contains other inquisitorial documents. According to Bozóky, the Carcassonne manuscript was also the basis for the copy made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Doat’s commission, and for the first printed edition of this source made by Jean Benoist in 1691. In other words we have two redactions of this text – that of Vienna and that of Carcassonne<sup>21</sup>. The crucial information concerning the provenance of this source is contained in the explicit of the Dôle manuscript, which tells us that we are dealing with the secret book of the Cathars from the Italian church of Concorezzo, brought from Bulgaria by their bishop – Nazarius. It says: *Explicit secretum hereticorum de Concorresio portatum de Bulgaria Nazario suo episcopo*<sup>22</sup>. This information however is not the only argument for the Eastern provenance of this work. It is also confirmed by the independent Italian polemical sources. The inquisitor Rainer Sacchoni, in his summa from 1250, after the description of the heretical doctrine of Nazarius (identical with the one presented in the *Interrogatio*) states that he received these errors from the bishop and *filius maior* of the church of Bulgaria around 60 years earlier<sup>23</sup>. Based on this information we can assume that *Interrogatio Iohannis* was given to Nazarius by the Bogomils from the church of Bulgaria around 1190. *Tractatus de Hereticis*, probably written in the 1270s by another inquisitor – Anselm of Alesandria<sup>24</sup>, states that Nazarius had a certain scripture called *secretum* that was not

<sup>21</sup> *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, ed. et trans. E. BOZÓKY, Paris 2009, p. 18–22; E. BOZÓKY, *Circulation et portée de l’apocryphe Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le « catharisme »...*, p. 65–67.

<sup>22</sup> *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 26; *Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le livre secret des cathares...* (cetera: *Interrogatio Iohannis*), p. 86.

<sup>23</sup> *Summa Fratris Raineri de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, [in:] *Un Traité Neo-Manicheen du 13 siècle, Le Liber de duobus principiis suivi d’un fragment de Rituel Cathare*, ed. A. DONDAINE, Roma 1939, p. 76: *et dixit quod habuit hunc errorem ab episcopo et filio maiore ecclesie Bulgariae iam fere elapsis annis LX*.

<sup>24</sup> More on this source, see: A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II*, AFP 20, 1950, p. 235–239.

accepted by his rival, Desiderius, and his followers<sup>25</sup>. If the author of the *Tractatus de hereticis* knew Rainer's summa and could have made use of it (although what must be noted the term *secretum*, which appears in the manuscript of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, is not mentioned by Rainer), the reliability of Rainer's summa itself cannot be questioned. Rainer was probably the best informed clergyman on the subject, as before his conversion he had been a Cathar perfect in the church of Concorezzo for 17 years<sup>26</sup>. His summa contains the knowledge of an insider, who as a Cathar perfect had access to the secrets of his church and surely knew Nazarius personally.

The figure of Nazarius is also mentioned in the *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* – an anonymous work, which according to its editor A. Dondaine was written at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>27</sup>. At the end the source mentions bishops of the Italian Cathar churches, and among them Nazarius, who at that time was the elder son (*filius maior*) of the bishop of Concorezzo – Garattus<sup>28</sup>. Nazarius is mentioned also by the bull of Innocent IV from 1254 in which the pope orders the destruction of the castle Gattedo, near Milan, belonging to Roberto da Guissano, where Nazarius was buried next to the other heresiarchs<sup>29</sup>.

The next argument for the Eastern, specifically Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* can be found in the sources which attest to intense contacts of the Italian Cathars (especially from the church of Concorezzo) with the Bogomil church of Bulgaria. *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* states that Mark – the first bishop of the Italian Cathars – professed *ordo Bulgariae*, and the first bishop of Concorezzo (after the schism) John the Jew was sent to Bulgaria for ordination<sup>30</sup>. Not only the Italian Cathars had relations with Bulgaria; also many French sources use the word Bulgari to name the Cathars<sup>31</sup>. Another argument for the east-

<sup>25</sup> *Tractatus de Hereticis*, ed. A. DONDAINE, AFP 20, 1950, p. 311: *Item Nazarius tenet quoddam scriptum, quod secretum vocat.*

<sup>26</sup> On Rainer Sacchoni see: A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II...*, p. 262.

<sup>27</sup> A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie I*, AFP 19, 1949, p. 298–304.

<sup>28</sup> *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 312: *Garattus episcopus ordinatus de bulgaria manet concorentii; filius eius maior Nazarius et filius eius minor Gioldus de brixia.*

<sup>29</sup> INNOCENTIUS IV, *Inquisitoribus Lombardiae, ut Roberto haeretico debitam poenam imponant, effodiant e terra haeticorum ossa, eaque, necnon quoddam castrum ac domos exurant*, vol. I, ed. T. RIPPOL, *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, Roma 1729, p. 254: *in Castro suo, quod Gatte vulgariter apellantur [...] per ipsos haeticos construi, eosque habitare permittens, necnon et quamplura haeticorum corpora et specialiter Nazarii eorum episcopi fuissent inibi tumulata [...].* On Nazarius see also: E. BOZOKY, *Circulation et portée...*, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup> *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 306: *Et iste marcus habebat ordinem suum de bulgaria. Adveniens quidem papas nicheta nomine, de constantinopolitanis patibus in lombardiam, cepit causari ordinem bulgarie, quem marcus habebat. Ibidem*, p. 308: *Ipse episcopus [...] misit Johanni iudeo ut iret in bulgariam et completeret que continebantur in sententia, ut esset prelatu in lombardia, omnibus subesse volentibus.*

<sup>31</sup> See for ex.: *Accipite nobis vulpes parvulas, que demoliuntur vineas Domini*, ed. B. DELMAIRE, *Here* 17, 1991, p. 11; *Roberti Autissiodorensis Chronicon*, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, Hannoverae 1882

ern provenance of *Interrogatio*, as it was noted by E. Bozóky, are the miniatures in the Vienna manuscript, which reveal Byzantine features<sup>32</sup>. All these arguments were convincing for many scholars, who beginning with J. Ivanov, through D. Obolensky to E. Bozóky and Y. Stoyanov, did not question Bogomil provenance of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, treating it as a crucial evidence for the Eastern origins of Catharism<sup>33</sup>.

For the deconstructionist scholars this apocryphal book is especially problematic because it contradicts the new paradigm, therefore they prefer not to mention it among the Cathar sources. The first attempt of questioning the authenticity of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* was made in 2020 by Alessia Trivelone, in the article aimed at discrediting the polemical Italian sources which attest to the dualistic character and the Eastern origins of the Italian Catharism<sup>34</sup>. In this work Trivelone tries to deconstruct our whole knowledge about this source. She begins with the person of Nazarius, trying to prove that his existence is not confirmed unambiguously because he is mentioned only by Rainer Sacchoni. *Tractatus de hereticis* is based on Rainer's work, in the same way as the bull of Innocent IV issued at the request of the Lombard inquisitor<sup>35</sup>. Apparently trying to prove that Nazarius was invented by Rainer Sacchoni, Trivelone also brought into question the mention of this Cathar bishop contained in the oldest source – the *De heresi*

[= MGH.SS, 26], p. 260, 271; *La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, vol. I, ed. E. MARTIN-CHABOT, Paris 1931, p. 10; *Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*, ed. P. SCHEFFER-BOICHORST, Hannoverae 1874 [= MGH.SS, 23], p. 944; MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS, *Chronica Maiora*, ed. F. LIEBERMANN, Hannoverae 1888 [= MGH.SS, 28] (cetera: MATTHAEUS PARIENSIS), p. 133; ÉTIENNE DE BOURBON, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues*, ed. A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 300.

<sup>32</sup> E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Un lien entre l'orient et l'Occident*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 200.

<sup>33</sup> See for ex.: J. IVANOV, *Livres et legendes bogomiles. Aux Sources du Catharisme*, Paris 1976, p. 87–90; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Bogomils*, Cambridge 1948, p. 226; E. TURDEANU, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament*, Leiden 1981 [= SVTP, 5], p. 68; A. BORST, *Die Katharer*, Stuttgart 1953, p. 8, 161; J. DUVERNOY, *Catharisme. La religion des cathares*, Toulouse 1979, p. 334, 346; W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, New York–London 1969, p. 448; W. MYZOR, *Średnio-wieczna religijność ludowa. Dualizm w świetle Interrogatio Iohannis*, SRel 41, 2008, p. 12; T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 195; *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 22–32, 97–174; E. BOZOKY, *Le livre secret des cathares. Un lien...*, p. 202–203; Y. STOYANOV, *The Debate on Medieval Western Christian Dualism through the Prism of Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, Scri 14, 2018, p. 336; H. SALDZHIEV, *On the Prehistory of Bogomilism – The Historical and Religious Continuum of the Dualistic Groups in Early Medieval Bulgaria (8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Century)*, SCer 11, 2021, p. 744. All these scholars (and many more) agree on the Bogomil origins of the *Interrogatio*. The differences are on the issue of the language of the original – Bulgarian or Greek.

<sup>34</sup> Previously even the scholars who rejected the Bogomil origins of Catharism did not question the authenticity of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Pilar Jimenez-Sanchez for example explained the fact that the Cathars used Bogomil apocrypha by claiming that although Catharism emerged independently in the West, the Cathars made contacts with the Bogomils in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, see P. JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ, *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XIF–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rennes 2008, p. 345.

<sup>35</sup> A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 49–50.

*catharorum in Lombardia*. To discredit this source she questions the dating proposed by its editor, A. Dondaine, who claimed that it was written at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although it survived in the manuscript from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Dondaine based his conclusion on the careful analysis of the content of this source. He noted that it mentions Petrus Gallus as a major son (*filius maior*) of the bishop Nicola of Vicenza, while in the letter of Ivo of Narbonne from 1214–1215 (quoted by Matthew of Paris in his chronicle) the same Petrus Gallus was already a bishop<sup>36</sup>. To question Dondaine's dating Trivellone relied on the opinions of W.L. Wakefield and J. Duvernoy, who doubted the authenticity of Ivo's letter, and although she does not discuss the arguments proposed by them, she eventually concludes that Dondaine's dating of the *De heresi* cannot be accepted anymore<sup>37</sup>. According to Trivellone, however, not only *De heresi* is unreliable, but all the Italian polemical sources confirming the connections of the Cathars with the Bogomil East as well. The foundation of her criticism lies in the work of Brunn, who in her opinion has shown that Eckbert of Schönau constructed Cathar dualist doctrine based on the patristic works. Because Eckbert gave his summa to Rainald of Dassel – the archbishop of Cologne, who was the Emperor's chancellor in Italy, the latter could have given this writing to the papal curia, and so it could have become the pattern for the Italian authors of the polemics<sup>38</sup>. The increase in the number of anti-heretical works in Italy, according to Trivellone, does not reflect the real growth of Catharism, but rather is the result of the spread of the discourse from Rhineland<sup>39</sup>. What must be emphasised is that the translation of Eckbert's work to Italy by Rainald of Dassel is nothing more than a hypothesis formulated by Brunn, and not confirmed by the sources, nevertheless for Trivellone it is the crucial proof supporting her interpretation. Although Trivellone's interpretation itself is also a hypothesis based on other hypotheses, we can expect that soon the deconstructionist scholars will claim with confidence that reliability of the Italian sources has been indisputably questioned; therefore it will not be possible to use them as arguments in support of the "old paradigm".

Trivellone questioned the Eastern origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* in her article directly, arguing that the above-mentioned explicit of this work, stating that it was brought from Bulgaria by Nazarius, was in fact added by the inquisitors from Languedoc, who relied on the information taken from the manual of Bernard Gui, who in turn relied on the *Tractatus de hereticis*<sup>40</sup>. It seems that this argumentation

<sup>36</sup> A. DONDAINE, *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie I...*, p. 290; *De Heresi Catharorum in Lombardia*, p. 312; *Nicola de vicencia, episcopus de slavia; filius eius maior petrus gallus; minor vocatus prandus*. MATTHAEUS PARISIENSIS, p. 231.

<sup>37</sup> A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 44–46. See also: W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, *Heresies...*, p. 185; J. DUVERNOY, *Le catharisme. L'histoire des cathares*, Toulouse 1979, p. 184–185.

<sup>38</sup> U. BRUNN, *Des contestataires...*, p. 339–342.

<sup>39</sup> A. TRIVELLONE, *Des Églises...*, p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 50.

should lead to a conclusion that in case of *Interrogatio Iohannis* we are dealing with yet another forgery of the Catholics and the person responsible for it was Rainer Sacchoni, on whose account other authors relied. In this revolutionary theory Trivellone does not discuss the Eastern sources, which offer strong arguments for the Eastern provenance of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Since the time of I. Ivanov, scholars emphasised that many doctrinal concepts contained in it were borrowed by the Bogomils from various Bulgarian apocrypha<sup>41</sup>. Because Trivellone does not refer to the apocryphal works or any Eastern sources at all, her hypothesis cannot be the subject of a serious academic debate. As Y. Stoyanov has put it – the analysis of extant doctrinal evidence should precede the formulation of the conceptions concerning the origins of Catharism<sup>42</sup>.

Following this advice I will now take a closer look at the doctrinal content of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* and analyse it in the light of the Eastern sources, which present the Bogomil teachings, to verify the revolutionary hypothesis proposed by Alessia Trivellone. I will focus both on the polemical anti-Bogomil sources and on the Slavonic apocryphal writings, which contain themes characteristic for Bogomils.

The doctrine of *Interrogatio Iohannis* has been the subject of research of many scholars. Edina Bozóky analysed it carefully in comparison with the apocryphal themes and the most detailed account of the Bogomil doctrine contained in the *Panoplia Dogmatica* written by the Byzantine theologian Euthymius Zigabenus in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>. T. Drakopoulos, too, based his comparative analysis primarily on this source, which seems to be the most reliable, because its author received information directly from the leader of the Constantinopolitan Bogomils – Basil<sup>44</sup>. As the anti-Bogomil sources became more and more accessible in the recent years it would be reasonable to also include other sources in the comparative material<sup>45</sup>. Such an analysis can also verify the claims of J.L. Biget, who in his article from 2003 wrote that the *Interrogatio Iohannis* cannot be considered a Bogomil text, because the original of this book did not survive to the present day, and its doctrine is more similar to the Cathar teachings than to that of the Bogomils<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> J. IVANOV, *Livres...*, p. 76–92; Y. STOYANOV, *Medieval Christian Dualist Perceptions and Conceptions of Biblical Paradise*, SCer 3, 2013, p. 155–165; IDEM, *The Debate...*, p. 336–341; *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 97–174.

<sup>42</sup> Y. STOYANOV, *Medieval...*, p. 165–166.

<sup>43</sup> *Le livre secret des cathares...*, p. 97–174; E. BOZOKY, *Circulation et portée...*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 199–251.

<sup>45</sup> In 2015 scholars from Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe of the University of Lodz published a volume with editions and translations of the Slavonic sources concerning dualist heresies in the Balkans, see: *Średnio-wieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= SeCer, 1].

<sup>46</sup> J.L. BIGET, *Les bons hommes sont-ils les fils des bogomiles? Examen critique d'une idée reçue*, SIOc 16, 2003, p. 149–150.

Comparative doctrinal analysis is especially condemned by M.G. Pegg, who says that this method, introduced by the German Religionsgeschichte Schule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, seriously contributed to the false image of Catharism as a dualist heresy rooted in the East. Trying to depreciate it, Pegg claims that it was built on the assumption that *if two ideas look alike to the historian, there must be a link between them*, completely ignoring the fact that such comparisons were made based on the testimonies of the sources that confirmed connections between the religious groups<sup>47</sup>. In the historiography of Catharism such analyses are justified by the sources, which attest to the direct contacts of the Cathars with Bulgaria and Byzantium. In case of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* it is the previously mentioned explicit of this work, corroborated by the summa of Rainer Sacchoni.

The first argument for the Eastern origins of the doctrine contained in the *Interrogatio* is the form of its dualistic theology. It is the moderate dualism, assuming the existence of only one God-Creator that was characteristic for Bogomilism. What should be emphasised, this doctrine, characteristic for the church of Bulgaria, or broadly speaking for the *ordo Bulgariae*, is the only form of dualism directly attested by the Eastern sources. The existence of the radical dualism in Bogomilism can be evidenced (as it was showed by Bernard Hamilton) based on the Western sources describing the doctrines of the Cathars belonging to the Drugunthian order (*ordo Drugunthiae*), however it is not directly attested by the Eastern sources<sup>48</sup>. Moreover, the moderate dualism was very rare in Languedoc; its existence is confirmed in this area only by three polemical sources from the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Other sources, including the Cathar anonymous treatise, describe the radically dualistic doctrine of two principles<sup>49</sup>. Considering this, the hypothesis assuming that *Interrogatio* was fabricated by the Languedocian inquisitors on the basis of other polemical sources seems to be highly improbable.

As was noted by Wincenty Myszor, in case of the *Interrogatio Iohannis* we are dealing with two theological ideas that differ as to the role of Satan<sup>50</sup>. The Vienna manuscript states, that at the beginning Satan was sitting on the throne next to the invisible father and was the ruler of all, while in the Dôle manuscript he was only the steward of the heavenly hosts and it was Christ who was sitting next to

<sup>47</sup> M.G. PEGG, *Le catharisme en questions...*, p. 355.

<sup>48</sup> B. HAMILTON, *The Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia*, ECR 6, 1974, p. 115–124.

<sup>49</sup> *Manifestatio haeresis albigenensium et lugdunensium*, ed. A. CAZENAVE, [in:] *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen. Vorstellungen im XII. u. XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte*, ed. A. ZIMMERMANN, Berlin 1977 [= MMed, 11], p. 386; PETRUS VALLIUM SARNAII MONACHUS, *Hystoria Albigenensis*, vol. I, ed. P. GUEBIN, E. LYON, Paris 1926, p. 11–12; *Summula contra hereticos. Un traite contre les cathares du XIII<sup>eme</sup> siecle*, ed. J. DUVERNOY, <http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/summula.pdf> [3 V 2023], p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> W. MYSZOR, *Średniowieczna religijność...*, p. 14.

the Father<sup>51</sup>. It seems that the two copies of the *Interrogatio* contain two theological concepts typical for the Bogomils. The first, in which Satan is more powerful, is similar to the one described by Euthymius Zigabenus, in *De operationae daemnonum* ascribed to Michael Psellos (11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century), and earlier by the Bulgarian author – John the Exarch, writing in the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century, where Satan is the first born son of God, elder than Christ<sup>52</sup>. *Interrogatio* never states that Satan was the son of God, but in the first version of theology he was the ruler of God's creation, exactly as in the account of Zigabenus. The version contained in the Dôle manuscript, in which Christ was second to the Father, is similar to the doctrine affirmed by the Bulgarian author – Cosmas the Priest, writing in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, who wrote that some heretics considered Satan the younger son of God, identified with the younger son from the parable of the prodigal son, while others believed that he had been a fallen angel. In this doctrine Christ was the elder or the only son of God, and was second to Him<sup>53</sup>.

The motives of Satan's rebellion described in the *Interrogatio* have analogies in other Bogomil sources, as well as in the orthodox doctrine. The source states that Satan rebelled against God driven by pride – he wanted to place his throne above the clouds and become similar to the Almighty<sup>54</sup>. Ascending the subsequent levels of heaven (up to the 5<sup>th</sup> heaven) he tempted the angels to follow him with the words of the unjust steward from the Gospel of St. Luke (Lc 16: 1–8) reducing their debts<sup>55</sup>. This identification of Satan with the unjust steward was characteristic for the Bogomil doctrine, and is attested by Kosmas the Priest and Zigabenus<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Vienna manuscript (VM): *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 44: *Et dixit: In virtutibus celorum et in trono patris invisibilis et ordinator erat omnium. Et sedebam ego apud patrem meum. Ille erat ordinans virtutes celorum et illos qui secuti sunt patrem.* Dôle manuscript (DM): *Et dixit mihi: In talia gloria erat quod ordinabat virtutes celorum. Ego autem sedebam apud patrem meum. Ipse erat ordinans omnium imitatorum patris.*

<sup>52</sup> JAN EGZARCHA, *Heksameron*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...* (cetera: JAN EGZARCHA), p. 63; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, *Panoplia dogmatica*, [in:] PG, vol. CXXX, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1886 (cetera: EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS), col. 1294; MICHAEL PSELLOS, *De daemnonum energia seu operatione*, [in:] PG, vol. CXXII, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1889 (cetera: MICHAEL PSELLOS), col. 823.

<sup>53</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, *The Discours against Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= MMS] (cetera: COSMAS THE PRIEST), p. 128.

<sup>54</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 44 (VM): *Et cogitavit sedem suam ponere super nubes celorum et volebat altissimo similis esse.*

<sup>55</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 48–49 (VM): *Et hoc dixit angelis et ascendebat ad illos celos usque ad tertium celum, subvertens angelos invisibilis patris et dicens singulis eorum: Quantum debe domino tuo? Et primus respondit: C chados olei. Et dixit ei: Accipe cautionem et sede et scribe L. Et alii dicit: Tu vero quantum debes domino tuo? Qui ait: C choros tritici. Et ait illi: Tolle cautionem tuam et sede et scribe cito octuaginta. Et ascendebat ad alios celos ita dicens adscenditque usque ad quintum celum seducens angelos invisibilis patris.*

<sup>56</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1295.



Satan as the unjust steward of the heavenly hosts and first among the angels also appears in the Slavonic apocryphal writings which circulated in Bulgaria and were used by the Bogomils. In *The Sea of Tiberias* – a cosmological legend, which probably appeared between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Satan (who in this text is not a creature of God) was made the steward of the good angels by the creator<sup>57</sup>. The theme of Satan-unjust steward from the Gospel of Saint Luke later also became very popular among the Cathars, where it appears in the communities professing both the moderate and radical dualism, although it did not completely fit with the theology of the two principles<sup>58</sup>. The popularity of this theme in Catharism shows how important a role *Interrogatio Iohannis* played in Cathar communities of various kinds.

According to the *Interrogatio*, when God had learned about the rebellion of Satan and his followers, he ordered their robes, crowns and thrones to be taken from them. Satan was also deprived of his angelic shine, and his face became similar to that of man. Falling down from heaven as an apocalyptic dragon he cast down one third of the angels of God<sup>59</sup>. It is important to take a closer look at this fragment, because it contains many of the themes known from the Eastern sources. The various levels of heaven (Satan tempts the angels up to the 5<sup>th</sup> heaven), heavenly robes, crowns and thrones are the themes borrowed directly from another apocryphal book used by the Bogomils (and later also Cathars), the *Vision of Isaiah*<sup>60</sup>. In this source we can find the idea of seven heavens, and also of crowns and thrones that wait for the just. The only difference is that in the *Interrogatio Iohannis* crowns and thrones belong to the angels<sup>61</sup>. The idea of seven heavens also appears in other apocryphal texts which were known to the Bogomils. In the Slavonic version of the Book of Enoch, which emerged probably around 1000,

<sup>57</sup> O Morzu Tyberiadzkim, ed., trans. A. KAWECKA, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006, p. 5. More on this source see: *ibidem*, p. 3; F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias: Between Apocryphal Literature and Oral Tradition*, [in:] *The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Slavonic Tradition. Continuity and Diversity*, ed. L. DI TOMMASO, Ch. BÖTTRICH, Tübingen 2011, p. 13–23.

<sup>58</sup> This problematic issue of Satan-the unjust steward in the radically dualistic doctrines was noted by Moneta of Cremona in his anti-Cathar work from ca. 1240, see: MONETA DE CREMONA, *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque*, ed. T.A. RICCHINI, Roma 1743, p. 39–44.

<sup>59</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 52 (DM): *Tunc precepit pater angelis suis dicens: Tollite vestimenta eorum. Et tulerunt vestimenta eorum angeli et thronos eorum et coronas eorum omnibus angelis qui eum audierunt. Et interrogavi dominum: Quando Sathanas cecidit, in quo loco habitavit? Et respondit mihi: Pater meus transfiguravit eum propter superbiam suam et ablatum est lumen ab eo et facta est facies < eius > sicut ferrum calefactum fuitque facies < eius > tota sicut hominis, et traxit cum cauda tertiam partem angelorum dei.*

<sup>60</sup> On the Vision of Isaiah and its use by the Cathars, see: A. ACERBI, *La Visione di Isaia nelle vicende dottrinali del catarismo lombardo e provenzale*, CS 1, 1980, p. 75–122.

<sup>61</sup> *The Vision of Isaiah*, [in:] *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, trans. W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, New York–London 1969, p. 449–458.

the prophet was taken by the angels before the throne of God, passing through the seven heavens<sup>62</sup>. The various levels of heaven also appear in another apocryphal work – *The Apocalypse of Baruch*, Slavonic version of which appeared at the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>63</sup>. The theme of Satan's punishment – the loss of the shine of glory, which was a kind of disfiguration, is also attested in the account of Zigabenus, although in this source it was not the consequence of a rebellion<sup>64</sup>.

*Interrogatio's* account on creation of the visible world is typical for the dualistic doctrines. It states that after Satan had fallen onto the yet unformed Earth, he started to ask God for mercy. God gave him 7 days, during which Satan formed the visible world with the help of other fallen angels, as it is described in the book of Genesis<sup>65</sup>. This cosmological idea, assuming that Satan formed the visible world and is its ruler, was probably the most commonly known element of the Bogomil doctrine, because it is confirmed by majority of the sources. We can find it in the works of John the Exarch, Cosmas the Priest, in the letter of patriarch Theophylact Lecapenos to Bulgarian tsar Peter from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, in *Panoplia dogmatica* of Zigabenus, in the account of pseudo-Psellos, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian Synodikon of Tsar Boril and in others<sup>66</sup>. These accounts differ only in details; for example in the 11<sup>th</sup> century account of Euthymius of the Periblepton Satan formed the Earth and the visible heaven, on which he placed the sun, previously stolen from God, while in the *Interrogatio* the light of the sun was made by Satan from the crown of the angel of the air<sup>67</sup>. The Bogomil idea that Satan is the only ruler of the visible world can be found also in the Slavonic apocryphal writings. In *The Life of Adam and Eve*, which appeared around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Satan

<sup>62</sup> *Księga Henocha słowiańska*, [in:] *Apokryfy Starego Testamentu*, ed. R. RUBINKIEWICZ, Warszawa 1999 (cetera: *Księga Henocha słowiańska*), p. 200–203. More on the source, see: *ibidem*, p. 197–198; *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, ed. A.A. ORLOV, G. BOCCACCINI, Leiden–Boston 2012, p. 37–126.

<sup>63</sup> *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha, kiedy to anioł, posłany na świętą górę zwaną Syjonem, płakał nad zniewoleniem Jeruzolimy*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...* (cetera: *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha*), p. 46–48, see also F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 90–91. More on this source and the theme of the tree see S.C. 45, A.A. ORLOV, *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism. Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, Leiden 2007 [= JSJS, 114], p. 63–64, 289–293, 297–302.

<sup>64</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

<sup>65</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 54 (VM): *Et descendens de celo Sathanas in firmamentum hic nullam requiem poterat facere neque hii qui cum eo erant. Rogavitque patrem dicens: Peccavi, patientiam habe in me; omnia reddam tibi. Pater misertus est eius et dedit ei requiem facere quod vult usque ad diem septimum.*

<sup>66</sup> JAN EGZARCHA, p. 63; COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126, 130; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, *To Peter, King of Bulgaria about The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS), p. 100; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril Against The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*), p. 261; MICHAEL PSELLOS, p. 823.

<sup>67</sup> EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, *A letter*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies...* (cetera: EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON), p. 151–152; *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 56 (VM): *Et fuit quando accepit coronam ab angelo qui erat super aerem media fecit tronum suum et medium lumen solis.*

says to Adam openly that the Earth belongs to him, while the God rules in heaven<sup>68</sup>. What is also noteworthy, the characteristic theme of the fish, which in the *Interrogatio* support the yet-unformed Earth (before the rebellion of Satan), has its direct analogies in the Slavonic apocryphal texts, as for example in the above-mentioned Sea of Tiberias, where the Earth is supported by the whales<sup>69</sup>.

Unanimity of the anti-Bogomil sources can be observed in case of the creation of man. All of them attest that according to the heretics Satan formed the body of Adam, but only two of them precisely describe how it happened, and what needs to be emphasised, their accounts differ from *Interrogatio* on the crucial issue of the animation of Adam's body<sup>70</sup>. In *Interrogatio* Satan formed the body of Adam in his own image from clay (*de limo terrae*), and then from Adam's body he made the body of Eve, as it is described in the book of Genesis. After that he animated these bodies, imprisoning in them the angels from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> heaven respectively (or from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> heaven in the alternative version)<sup>71</sup>. What needs to be emphasised, this idea of animation of the first people by imprisoning the angels in their bodies, which became very popular in the Cathar doctrines (especially in radically dualistic versions), is not attested by the anti-Bogomil Eastern sources. In Zigabenus' account Satan received the soul to animate Adam as a consequence of the deal he had made with God (he promised that people will belong to God), and according to Euthymius of the Periblepton Satan animated Adam with the soul he had previously stolen from God<sup>72</sup>. The identification of the spirits of the first people with the angels contained in the *Interrogatio*, according to the hypothesis proposed by T. Drakopoulos, is rooted in the Origen's conception of the pre-existence of souls, and emerged already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> decade of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and therefore after Zigabenus had written his *Panoplia dogmatica*<sup>73</sup>.

As to the fall of the first people, *Interrogatio* states that Satan placed Adam and Eve in paradise, and first forbade them to eat the fruit from the tree, which he had previously planted in its middle, and then in the form of a serpent tempted them

<sup>68</sup> *Słowo o Adamie i Ewie*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...*, p. 41. More on this source, see *ibidem*, p. 30; M. DE JONGE, J. TROMP, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, Sheffield 1997, p. 65–79.

<sup>69</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 47: *Et transcendens invenit universam faciem terre coopertam aquis et transcendens subtus terram invenit duos pisces iacentes super aquas et erant sicut boves iuncti ad arandum tenentes totam terram invisibilis patris precepto ab occasu usque ad solis ortum*. The theme of fish supporting Earth in the Slavonic apocryphal writings is analysed in detail in: F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 33–42.

<sup>70</sup> See for ex.: COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 126; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100.

<sup>71</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 58 (VM): *Et cogitavit facere hominem in servitio sibi et tulit limum de terra et fecit hominem similem sibi. Et precepit angelo secundi celi introire in corpus luti et tulit de eo et fecit alium corpus in forma mulieris precepitque angelo primi celi introire in ilium*.

<sup>72</sup> EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 152; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

<sup>73</sup> T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité...*, p. 250–251.

to do it. The forbidden fruit was in this case carnal desire; first Satan had sexual intercourse with Eve, than Eve with Adam, and so people started to reproduce, thus imprisoning the spiritual angelic element in material bodies for good<sup>74</sup>.

Unfortunately in case of the fall of humans we do not find many analogies in the anti-Bogomil sources. The only detailed account on this issue is the one contained in the work of Zigabenus, which in the crucial aspects overlaps with the one from *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Here, too, the reason for the fall was carnal sin, initiated by Satanael, who after the creation of Eve from Adam's rib started to lust after her and had sex with her in the form of a serpent. In consequence Eve gave birth to Satanael's children – Cain and Calomena. After that she committed carnal sin with Adam, and so Abel and Set were born<sup>75</sup>. The second source, which confirms this characteristic theme contained in the *Interrogatio*, is the Slavonic translation of *Palea Historica* (according to various opinions of the scholars it was written between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century). One of the anathemas contained within condemns those who claim that the "enemy" joined Eve, in consequence of which she gave birth to Cain<sup>76</sup>. The idea that Satan planted in paradise the tree of sinful lust because of which the humans fell can be found in the above-mentioned apocryphal *Apocalypse of Baruch*<sup>77</sup>.

In the doctrine of the *Interrogatio* the Old Testament was perceived negatively. It was brought about by Satan, who tried to convince people that he is the only God and there is none above him. Therefore he took Enoch to his abode in the visible heaven and ordered him to write down everything he saw there<sup>78</sup>. Anti-Bogomil sources confirm the negative attitude of the heretics to the Old Testament, and considering the number of these sources it seems that this element of the Bogomil teachings was known as commonly as their cosmology. We can find it in the works of Cosmas the Priest, Zigabenus, in the letter of Theophylact and in the Synodikon

<sup>74</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 60 (VM): *Diabolus intravit in paradisum et plantavit arundinem in medio paradisi et de sputo suo fecit serpentem et precepit ei in arundine manere et sic diabolus ascondebatur sapientiam sue fraudis ut non viderent deceptionem suam. Et introibat ad eos dicens: De omni fructu comedite qui est in paradiso, de fructu iniquitatis ne comedatis*. Postea malignus diabolus intravit in serpentem malum et decepit angelum qui erat in forma mulieris et effudit super caput eius concupiscentiam peccati; et fuit concupiscentia Eve sicut fornax ardens. Statimque diabolus exiens de arundine in forma serpentis fecit concupiscentiam suam cum Eva cum cauda serpentis. *Ibidem*, p. 62: *Postea diabolus effudit suam concupiscentiam super caput angeli qui erat in Adam, et ambo inventi sunt in concupiscentia luxurie...*

<sup>75</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298.

<sup>76</sup> *Anatemy z Palei historycznej*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...*, p. 131. For more on the source, see *ibidem*, p. 127.

<sup>77</sup> *Słowo o widzeniu Barucha*, p. 48. More on the theme of the forbidden tree in paradise, see F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 92–95.

<sup>78</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 60: (VM): *Et < Sathanas > misit ministrum suum et assumpsit eum supra firmamentum et ostendit illi deitatem suam et precepit illi dari calamum et atramentum; et sedens scripsit septuaginta VI libros. Et precepit ei eos deferri in terram. Detulit autem Enoc libros et tradidit filiis et docuit eos facere formam sacrificiorum et locum sacrificiorum.*

of Tsar Boril<sup>79</sup>. Although the account about Enoch is absent in anti-Bogomil sources, its prototype can be found in the Slavonic version of the apocryphal *Book of Enoch*. It states that the prophet was taken to Heaven and there met God, who revealed to him the mysteries of creation, and then ordered him to write down everything he had learned in heaven. In consequence Enoch wrote 360 books, the aim of which was – according to the words of God – to convince people that there is no other creator but him<sup>80</sup>. As we can see, this characteristic motive, which does not have analogies neither in the western Cathar doctrines nor in the eastern anti-heretical works, was borrowed directly from the Slavonic version of the apocryphal Book of Enoch, which circulated in Bulgaria, and in my opinion this fact is an indisputable argument for the Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*.

The docetic Christology of *Interrogatio Iohannis* is typical for the dualists. According to it Christ did not have a material body and was not born of a woman, because Mary was an angel sent to Earth by God. Christ entered her through the ear and left the same way. The main aim of his mission in this world was not the redemption of sins through the death on the cross, but the revelation of truth about the existence of the Invisible Father<sup>81</sup>. The denial of incarnation, which surely especially offended the clergymen, is attested by many sources, such as the letter of Theophylact, the Synodikon of Tsar Boril, the Bulgarian life of St. Hilarion of Moglena (14<sup>th</sup> century), or Zigabenus<sup>82</sup>. The majority of these sources usually only mention that the Bogomils deny Incarnation, and only Zigabenus has more to say on this issue. In his account Christ also had an apparent body and was born through the ear, Mary however was not an angel, but an ordinary woman<sup>83</sup>. As we can see, the docetic Christology of *Interrogatio* is confirmed by the anti-Bogomil sources well enough.

Another characteristic theme of the doctrine contained in the *Interrogatio Iohannis* is its extremely negative attitude to John the Baptist, who is presented as the Messenger of Satan (identified with the prophet Elijah), who tries to distract people from the baptism with the Holy Spirit (the only true sacrament established by Christ) through his false baptism with water<sup>84</sup>. Although John the Baptist is

<sup>79</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 123, 125; THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1291; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261.

<sup>80</sup> *Księga Henocha słowiańska*, p. 203–205.

<sup>81</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 68 (VM): *Ideo misit me pater meus in mundum istum ut manifestem nomen suum hominibus et ut cognoscant eum et malitiosum diabolum. [...] Quando cogitavit pater meus mittere me in mundum istum, misit ante me angelum suum per spiritum sanctum ut reciperet me qui vocabatur Maria mater mea. Et ego descendens per auditum introivi et exivi.*

<sup>82</sup> THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261; EUTYMIUSZ TYRNOWSKI, *Żywot Świętego Hilariona Megleńskiego*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne...*, p. 201.

<sup>83</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1302.

<sup>84</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 70 (VM): *Et scivit Sathanas princeps huius mundi quod ego veni querere et salvare quod perierat et misit angelum suum Elyam prophetam baptizantem in aqua qui vocatur Iohannes Baptista.*

not mentioned in the anti-Bogomil sources particularly often, this negative attitude towards him is attested by Cosmas the Priest, who stated that the Bogomils call him the herald of the Antichrist, and in the Synodikon of Tsar Boril, which mentions briefly that he comes from Satan<sup>85</sup>. In the case of Zigabenus the situation looks a bit different, and John the Baptist in his account is a kind of intermediary between the Old and the New Testament<sup>86</sup>.

The Eastern sources say much more about the rejection of the sacraments by the Bogomils, and confirm that they accepted only the baptism with the Holy Spirit, established by Christ. As usual the most detailed account is given by Zigabenus, who even describes the ritual of this baptism, which included two ceremonies preceded by two long periods of preparation. The crucial element of this baptism was the placing of St. John's Gospel and the hands of the initiated Bogomils on the head of the adept<sup>87</sup>. The key elements were thus exactly the same as in the case of Cathar *consolamentum*<sup>88</sup>. As we can see, also the sacramentology of *Interrogatio* is confirmed by the independent Eastern sources.

The situation looks similar in case of the prayer used by the Bogomils. *Interrogatio* does not say much about it; it only mentions that the angels before the fall praised the God with the words of Lord's Prayer. Considering this we can suspect that this prayer was particularly appreciated by the Bogomils<sup>89</sup>. And indeed – sources such as Cosmas the Priest, Euthymius of the Periblepton or Euthymius Zigabenus confirm that the Lord's Prayer was the only prayer accepted by the Bogomils, and all the others were rejected<sup>90</sup>.

The ethics contained in the *Interrogatio*, in which chastity was the most appreciated virtue, is also well confirmed in the sources. In the *Interrogatio*, Christ says that the disciples of John (The Baptist) marry and are given in marriage, but his disciples do not marry, and they are like the angels in heaven<sup>91</sup>. This Bogomil aversion to carnality (later shared by the Cathars) is mentioned by Cosmas the Priest, who says that according to the heretics marriage was established by the devil, and in consequence they abhorred children – the fruit of marriage, and even considered

<sup>85</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 123; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 262.

<sup>86</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1324.

<sup>87</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1311.

<sup>88</sup> Two Cathar texts of ritual of *consolamentum* survived until nowadays, the Latin Ritual, see: *Rituel*, ed. Ch. THOUZELLIER, [in:] IDEM, *Rituel cathare*, Paris 1977 [= SC, 236], p. 194–261; and the Provençal ritual, see: *Rituel Provençal*, ed. L. CLEDAT, [in:] IDEM, *Le nouveau testament. Traduit au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en langue provençale suivi d'un rituel cathare*, Geneve 1968, p. IX–XXVI.

<sup>89</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 72: *Et dixit mihi dominus: Antequam cecidisset diabolus cum tota militia angelica patris, angeli patris orantes glorificabantur Patrem meum hanc orationem dicentes: 'Pater noster qui es in celis.'*

<sup>90</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 130–131; EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 151–152; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1314, 1330.

<sup>91</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 74 (VM): *Discipuli Iohanni nubunt et nubentur, discipuli autem mei non nubunt neque nubentur, sed sunt sicut angeli dei in celo in regno celorum.*

it a sin to look at women's faces<sup>92</sup>. The Bogomil rejection of marriage is confirmed also in the letter of Theophylact Lecapenos, Euthymius of the Periblepton, the Synodikon of tsar Boril, and Zigabenus. The latter stated that in their rejection of marriage the Bogomils relied on the words of Christ from the gospel of St. Matthew (Matt 22: 30), which are also the basis of the words of Christ from the *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Zigabenus also shows how grave the carnal sin was according to the heretics: he states that Satanael was punished with the loss of angelic shine and with ugliness not for the rebellion against God, but for the carnal sin that he committed with Eve<sup>93</sup>.

In the anti-Bogomil sources we will not find confirmation of the eschatology contained in the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, which does not particularly differ much from the orthodox version. According to this source, after the end of the seven days (seven ages of the rule over the Earth that were given to Satan) and the number of the righteous will be fulfilled, Christ will come to judge the people. The righteous will be taken to heaven, and the unjust will be eternally punished in the lake of fire with Satan<sup>94</sup>. None of the anti-Bogomil sources make a mention of this doctrinal idea.

The analysis shows clearly that there is no reason to question the authenticity and the Bogomil origins of *Interrogatio Iohannis*. Bulgarian provenance of this work, mentioned in the explicit of the Dôle manuscript is confirmed by the summa of Rainer Sacchoni – a particularly reliable source because written by an insider, a former Cathar perfect of the church of Concorezzo, who had great knowledge about the dualistic communities both in the West and in the East. There is also no reason to question the existence of the Cathar bishop Nazarius, who is attested by the *De heresi catharorum in Lombardia* and the bull of Innocent IV. Another important argument for the Eastern origins of the *Interrogatio* is the fact that this work was brought to Italy by the leader of the Cathar community, which since its beginning had close relations with the Bogomil church of Bulgaria and professed *ordo Bulgariae*.

Comparative doctrinal analysis also confirms the Bogomil origins of *Interrogatio Iohannis*, because it shows that majority of its doctrinal ideas are confirmed by the anti-Bogomil Eastern sources and also have direct analogies in the Slavonic apocryphal writings that were clearly not known to the western inquisitors – who according to Trivellone allegedly forged the document. The deconstructionist interpretation proposed by A. Trivellone is in fact a hypothesis based on weak arguments, which assumes that both the Bulgarian origins of the *Interrogatio*, and the figure of Cathar bishop Nazarius (who brought it to Italy), were invented by

<sup>92</sup> COSMAS THE PRIEST, p. 128–129.

<sup>93</sup> THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, p. 100; EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, p. 159; *The Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 261–262; EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 1298, 1326.

<sup>94</sup> *Interrogatio Iohannis*, p. 76–84.

Rainer Sacchoni. The author of the *Tractatus de hereticis*, using Rainer's information became the source of inspiration for Bernard Gui. The latter in turn inspired the Languedocian inquisitors, who added the explicit about Nazarius and Bulgaria. The author of this hypothesis did not explain however from where have these inquisitors taken the mention about Bulgaria, as it was absent from both the *Tractatus de hereticis* and from the manual of Bernard Gui. She also did not compare the doctrine of the *Interrogatio* with the Eastern anti-Bogomil sources to verify her claims and entirely ignored the fact that the relations between *Interrogatio* and eastern apocryphal works had been emphasised by scholars for a very long time<sup>95</sup>. Florentina Badalanova Geller, who analysed these relations in detail, does not agree with the opinion of the scholars claiming that *Interrogatio Iohannis* did not have an eastern protograph, and was written in the West, highlighting the fact that such an assertion does not rest on any corroborating evidence<sup>96</sup>.

As we can see in case of the deconstructionist interpretation of the *Interrogatio Iohannis*, we are dealing with a hypothesis based on other hypotheses, formulated without any reference to the Eastern sources, which in this case absolutely cannot be ignored. Considering the deconstructionist practice of source criticism, in which formulation of a hypothesis which questions a source is treated as a final proof for its unreliability, we may expect, that the adherents of the "new paradigm" will soon announce that *Interrogatio Iohannis* should not be considered in the research in Catharism, because it was proven to have been another forgery of the Catholics.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Accipite nobis vulpes parvulas, que demoliuntur vineas Domini*, ed. B. DELMAIRE, "Heresis" 17, 1991, p. 10–13.
- Alberici Monachii Trium Fontium Chronicon*, ed. P. SCHEFFER-BOICHORST, Hannoverae 1874 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 23].
- Anatemy z Palei historycznej*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= *Series Ceranea*, 1].
- La chanson de la croisade albigeoise*, vol. I, ed. E. MARTIN-CHABOT, Paris 1931.
- Charte de Niquinta, antipape des heretiques surnommés d'Albigeois*, ed. D. ZBIRAL, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010.

<sup>95</sup> The issue of the correlation between the *Interrogatio*, the Slavonic apocryphal books and the folklore legends was analysed in probably the most well-known work of I. Ivanov, see: J. IVANOV, *Livres...*, p. 175–182, 191, 208, 229–232, 255, 268–271, 281–286.

<sup>96</sup> F. BADALANOVA GELLER, *The Sea of Tiberias...*, p. 37.



- COSMAS THE PRIEST, *The Discours against Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= Manchester Medieval Sources].
- De heresi catharorum in Lombardia*, ed. A. DONDAINE, “Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum” 19, 1949, p. 306–312.
- ECKBERTUS ABBAS SCHONAUGENSIS, *Sermones contra catharos*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina*, vol. CXCIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1855.
- ÉTIENNE DE BOURBON, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues*, ed. A. LECOY DE LA MARCHE, Paris 1877.
- EUTHYMIUS OF THE PERIBLEPTON, *A letter*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= Manchester Medieval Sources].
- EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, *Panoplia dogmatica*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXXX, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1886.
- EUTYMUSZ TYRNOWSKI, *Żywot Świętego Hilariona Megleńskiego*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= Series Ceranea, 1].
- INNOCENTIUS IV, *Inquisitoribus Lombardiae, ut Roberto haeretico debitam poenam imponant, effodiant e terra haereticorum ossa, eaque, necnon quoddam castrum ac domos exurant*, vol. I, ed. T. RIPPOL, *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, Roma 1729.
- Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, ed. et trans. E. BOZOKY, Paris 2009.
- JAN EGZARCHA, *Heksameron*, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= Series Ceranea, 1].
- Księga Henocha słowiańska*, [in:] *Apokryfy Starego Testamentu*, ed. R. RUBINKIEWICZ, Warszawa 1999.
- Manifestatio haeresis albigenisium et lugdunensium*, ed. A. CAZENAVE, [in:] *Die Mächte des Guten und Bösen. Vorstellungen im XII. u. XIII. Jahrhundert über ihr Wirken in der Heilsgeschichte*, ed. A. ZIMMERMANN, Berlin 1977 [= *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 11].
- MATTHAEUS PARISENSIS, *Chronica Maiora*, ed. F. LIEBERMANN, Hannoverae 1888 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 28].
- MICHAEL PSELLOS, *De daemonum energia seu operatione*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXXII, ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris 1889.
- MONETA DE CREMONA, *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses libri quinque*, ed. T.A. RICCHINI, Roma 1743.
- O Morzu Tyberiadzkim*, ed., trans. A. KAWECKA, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006.
- PETRUS VALLIUM SARNAII MONACHUS, *Hystoria Albigenis*, vol. I, ed. P. GUEBIN, E. LYON, Paris 1926.
- Rituel*, ed. Ch. THOUZELLIER, [in:] Ch. THOUZELLIER, *Rituel cathare*, Paris 1977 [= *Sources chrétiennes*, 236].
- Rituel Provençal*, ed. L. CLEDAT, [in:] L. CLEDAT, *Le nouveau testament. Traduit au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en langue provençale suivi d'un rituel cathare*, Geneve 1968.
- Roberti Autissiodorensis Chronicon*, ed. O. HOLDER-EGGER, Hannoverae 1882 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 26].
- Słowo o Adamie i Ewie*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006.

- Summa Fratris Raineri de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, [in:] *Un Traité Neo-Manichéen du 13 siècle, Le Liber de duobus principiis suivi d'un fragment de Rituel Cathare*, ed. A. DONDAINE, Roma 1939.
- Summula contra hereticos. Un traite contre les cathares du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siecle*, ed. J. DUVERNOY, <http://jean.duvernoy.free.fr/text/pdf/summula.pdf> [3 V 2023].
- The Synodikon of Tsar Boril Against The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= Manchester Medieval Sources].
- THEOPHYLACT LECAPENUS, *To Peter, King of Bulgaria about The Bogomils*, [in:] *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650–c.1450*, trans. J. HAMILTON, B. HAMILTON, Manchester–New York 2013 [= Manchester Medieval Sources].
- Tractatus de Hereticis*, ed. A. DONDAINE, “Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum” 20, 1950, p. 308–324.
- The Vision of Isaiah*, [in:] *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, trans. W.L. WAKEFIELD, A.P. EVANS, New York–London 1969.

## Secondary Literature

- ACERBI A., *La Visione di Isaia nelle vicende dottrinali del catarismo lombardo e provenzale*, “Cristianesimo nella storia” 1, 1980, p. 75–122.
- BADALANOVA GELLER F., *The Sea of Tiberias: Between Apocryphal Literature and Oral Tradition*, [in:] *The Old Testament Apocrypha in the Slavonic Tradition. Continuity and Diversity*, ed. L. DI TOMMASO, Ch. BÖTTRICH, Tübingen 2011, p. 13–23.
- BESSE G., *Histoire de ducs, marquis et comtes de Narbonne*, Paris 1660.
- BIGET J.L., *L'histoire du « catharisme » occitan: un nœud de questions*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 13–34, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cafan.2020.2422>
- BIGET J.L., *Les bons hommes sont-ils les fils des bogomiles? Examen critique d'une idée reçue*, “Slavica Occitania” 16, 2003, p. 133–188.
- BIGET J.L., *Réflexions sur « l'hérésie » dans le Midi de la France au Moyen Âge*, “Heresis” 36–37, 2001, p. 29–74, 294–295.
- BIGET J.L., *Retour sur le « concile de Saint-Félix »*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 81–110, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cafan.2020.2426>
- BIGET J.L., *Un faux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle? Examen d'une hypothèse*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 2001 [= Collection d'études médiévales de Nice, 3], p. 105–133, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.CEM-EB.4.00008>
- BORST A., *Die Katharer*, Stuttgart 1953.
- BOZOKY E., *Circulation et portée de l'apocryphe Interrogatio Iohannis*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 65–80, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cafan.2020.2425>
- BOZOKY E., *Le livre secret des cathares. Un lien entre l'orient et l'Occident*, “Slavica Occitania” 16, 2003, p. 199–205.
- BRUNN U., *Cathari, catharistae et cataphrygae. Ancêtres des cathares du XII siècle*, “Heresis” 36–37, 2002, p. 183–200.
- BRUNN U., *Des contestataires aux “Cathares”: discours de réforme et propagande antihérétique dans les pays du Rhin et de la Meuse avant l'Inquisition*, Paris 2006.

- Compte rendu des interventions de M. Zerner, J.-L. Biget et J. Chiffolleau*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 2001 [= Collection d'études médiévales de Nice, 3], p. 37–56, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.CEM-EB.4.00006>
- DALARUN J., DUFOUR A., GRONDEUX A., MUZERELLE D., ZINELLI F., *La 'charte de Niquinta', analyse formelle*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 2001 [= Collection d'études médiévales de Nice, 3], p. 135–201, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.CEM-EB.4.00009>
- DONDAINE A., *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie I*, "Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum" 19, 1949, p. 280–312.
- DONDAINE A., *La hiérarchie cathare en Italie II*, "Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum" 20, 1950, p. 234–324.
- DOSSAT Y., *A propos du concile de Saint-Félix: Les Milingues*, "Cahiers de Fanjeaux" 3, 1968, p. 201–214, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cafan.1968.945>
- DRAKOPOULOS T., *L'unité de Bogomilo-Catharisme d'après quatre textes latins analysés à la lumière des sources byzantines*, Geneve 2010.
- DUVERNOY J., *Catharisme. La religion des cathares*, Toulouse 1979.
- DUVERNOY J., *Le catharisme. L'histoire des cathares*, Toulouse 1979.
- HAMILTON B., *The Cathar Council of Saint-Felix Reconsidered*, "Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum" 48, 1978, p. 23–53.
- HAMILTON B., *The Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia*, "Eastern Churches Review" 6, 1974, p. 115–124.
- Inventer l'hérésie? Discours polémiques et pouvoirs avant l'Inquisition*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 1998.
- IVANOV J., *Livres et légendes bogomiles. Aux Sources du Catharisme*, Paris 1976.
- JIMÉNEZ P., *Relire la charte de Niquinta I: Etude et portée de la charte*, "Heresis" 22, 1994, p. 1–26.
- JIMÉNEZ-SANCHEZ P., *Les catharismes. Modèles dissidents du christianisme médiéval (XII<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rennes 2008, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.3688>
- DE JONGE M., TROMP J., *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature*, Sheffield 1997.
- DE LACGER L., *L'albigois pendant la crise de l'albigéisme*, "Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique" 29, 1933, p. 272–315, 586–633, 849–904.
- Le livre secret des cathares. Interrogatio Iohannis. Edition critique, traduction commentaire*, ed. et trans. E. BOZOKY, Paris 2009.
- MYSZOR W., *Średniowieczna religijność ludowa. Dualizm w świetle Interrogatio Iohannis*, "Studia Religiosa" 41, 2008, p. 11–19.
- New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, ed. A.A. ORLOV, G. BOCCACCINI, Leiden–Boston 2012.
- OBOLENSKY D., *The Bogomils*, Cambridge 1948.
- ORLOV A.A., *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism. Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, Leiden 2007 [= Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 114], <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004154391.i-488>
- PEGG M.G., *Le catharisme en questions: falsifiabilité, vérité historique et une nouvelle histoire du christianisme médiéval*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 331–371, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cafan.2020.2439>
- PEGG M.G., *The Paradigm of Catharism; or, the Historians' Illusions*, [in:] *Cathars in Question*, ed. A. SENNIS, York 2016 [= Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages], p. 21–52.

- ROCHE J., *Enjeux et embûches de la recherche actuelle sur le catharisme: l'exemple de la charte de Nicéas*, [in:] *Autour de Montailou, un village occitan. Histoire et religiosité d'une communauté villageoise au Moyen Age. Actes du colloque de Montailou, 25–26–27 août 2000*, ed. A. BRENON, Ch. DIEULAFAIT, E. LE ROY LADURIE, Castelnau-la-Chapelle 2001, p. 75–117.
- ROCHE J., *Une Église cathare. L'évêché du Carcassès, Carcassonne-Béziers-Narbonne*, Cahors 2005.
- SALDZHIEV H., *On the Prehistory of Bogomilism – The Historical and Religious Continuum of the Dualistic Groups in Early Medieval Bulgaria (8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Century)*, “Studia Ceranea” 11, 2021, p. 721–761, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.11.38>
- Słowo o widzeniu Barucha, kiedy to anioł, posłany na świętą górę zwaną Syjonem, płakał nad zniewoleniem Jeruzolimy*, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006.
- STOYANOV Y., *Medieval Christian Dualist Perceptions and Conceptions of Biblical Paradise*, “Studia Ceranea” 3, 2013, p. 149–166, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.03.11>
- STOYANOV Y., *The Debate on Medieval Western Christian Dualism through the Prism of Slavonic Pseudepigrapha*, “Scrinium” 14, 2018, p. 334–350, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18177565-00141P23>
- Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= Series Ceranea, 1].
- THÉRY J., *L'hérésie des bons hommes. Comment nommer la dissidence religieuse non vaudoise ni béguine en Languedoc (XII<sup>e</sup> – début XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)?*, “Heresis” 36–37, 2002, p. 297–298.
- TRIVELLONE A., *Des Églises cathares en Italie? Pour une étude critique des sources italiennes*, [in:] *Le « catharisme » en questions*, ed. J.L. BIGET, S. CAUCANAS, M. FOURNIÉ, D. LE BLÉVEC, Fanjeaux 2020, p. 37–63, <https://doi.org/10.3406/caf.2020.2424>
- TURDEANU E., *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament*, Leiden 1981 [= *Studia in veteris testamenti pseudepigrapha*, 5], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004675506>
- WAKEFIELD W.L., EVANS A.P., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, New York–London 1969.
- ZBIRAL D., *La Charte de Niquinta et le rassemblement de Saint-Félix: État de la question*, [in:] *1209–2009 Cathares. Une histoire à pacifier?*, ed. A. BRENON, Loubatieres 2010.
- ZBIRAL D., *Největší hereze. Dualismus, učenecká vyprávění o katarství a budování křesťanské Evropy*, Brno 2007.
- ZERNER M., *La charte de Niquinta, l'hérésie et l'érudition des années 1650–1660*, [in:] *L'Histoire du catharisme en discussion. Le « concile » de Saint-Félix 1167*, ed. M. ZERNER, Nice 2001 [= *Collection d'études médiévales de Nice*, 3], p. 203–248, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.CEM-EB.4.00010>


**Piotr Czarnecki**

Jagiellonian University  
Institute for the Study of Religions  
ul. Grodzka 52  
31-044 Kraków, Polska/Poland  
[piotr.czarnecki@uj.edu.pl](mailto:piotr.czarnecki@uj.edu.pl)





Viacheslav V. Lytvynenko (Prague)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5519-8980>

## ***EPISTLE ON THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER (CPG 4612): TRANSMISSION AND CONTEXT OF THE SLAVONIC VERSION IN THE LATE 15<sup>TH</sup>–16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES\****

**Abstract.** This article examines the Slavonic version of the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* (CPG 4612) by focusing on the issues of transmission and context. It begins with a brief overview of the manuscript tradition and the title of this writing, and then asks what function the epistle carried in medieval Russia where it was copied. The author argues that this function was primarily theological rather than technical (related purely to paschal calculations and calendar). For that purpose, the author does several things. First, he shows that there are good reasons to assume that this epistle was perceived as part of the Athanasian corpus of *Orations against the Arians*, whose copying was occasioned by the rise of the Judaizers – a group of Russian heretics that denied the most fundamental Orthodox doctrines and exploited the eschatological crisis in 1492 to lead the Christians astray. And second, the author explores the evidence from Iosif Volockij and comes to the conclusion that his *Enlightener* contains similar theological concerns about the celebration of Easter as we find in the epistle.

**Keywords:** Easter, transmission, context, medieval Russia, paschal calendar, eschatological crisis, Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians*, Judaizers, Iosif Volockij

While there is little doubt that the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* (CPG 4612) was translated into Slavonic very early in Bulgaria – possibly by Constantine of Preslav in 906/907<sup>1</sup> – all our extant witnesses were made by the Russian

---

\* This article represents research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GAČR 22-08389S “Pseudo-Athanasius of Alexandria, *Oration on the Celebration of Easter*: Critical Edition of the Old Slavonic Version”.

<sup>1</sup> A brief analysis of the Slavonic version was done by Penkova, who also provided an edition of this text from manuscript A (see Table 1 for the list of manuscripts and their siglas): P. PENKOVA, *On the Authorship of ‘Solanije o Prazdnice Paschy’ Attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria*, SeS 6, 2008, p. 279–303. One other edition of this text (from manuscript K) is available in *Die Grossen Lesemeñen des Metropoliten Makarij. Uspenskij spisok*, vol. I, 1–8 Mai, ed. E. WEIHER et al., Freiburg 2007 [= *MLSDV*, 51], p. 303–313.

scribes and most come from the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although this text was never ascribed to Athanasius in the Greek tradition<sup>2</sup>, it was always known as Athanasian to the Slavs and treated as either an epistle (сѣланиѣ), oration (сѣлво), or narrative (сѣказаніе).

Thus, of the twelve manuscripts that are known to me<sup>3</sup> and listed in Table 1, nine (ABCDEFGHK) place it after Athanasius' four *Orations against the Arians* (CPG 2093, 2092), whereas the remaining three (LMN) put it among the different homilies. The first nine manuscripts give this writing the title of an Epistle: either an *Epistle on the Feast* (D and E) or an *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* (FGHK). Of these nine, two witnesses from the fifteenth-century (AB) name it specifically as a *Fifth Oration on the Celebration of Easter*. The last three manuscripts from the sixteenth century (LMN) call this text a *Narrative about Easter*. Thanks to the scribal note<sup>4</sup> in the earliest manuscript from the year 1488/1489 (D), we know that the original title of this writing in the old Bulgarian codex (from which all the Russian copies descend)<sup>5</sup> had a short title: *Epistle on the Feast*. In addition to these twelve manuscripts, we also have a seventeenth-century copy that contains a compilation of fragments from this writing and places it among the texts which discuss the issues of calendar and chronology. Here our text is called *On the Secret of Cycles Pertaining to the True Day of Saving Easter*. In this article, I will use the name that appears in the majority of manuscripts – the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter*.

<sup>2</sup> In the Greek tradition, the *Oration on the Celebration of Easter* is treated as a pseudo-Chrysostomic text (*In sanctum pascha sermo* 7; CPG 4612) in the series of homilies known as Ἐπι τὰ σαλπύγια. Those who do not accept the authorship of John Chrysostom believe that it was composed by an anonymous author in Asia Minor. Cf. *Homélies pascales III. Une homélie anatolienne sur la date de Pâques en l'an 387*, ed. et trans. F. FLOËRI, P. NAUTIN, Paris 1957 [= SC, 48] (cetera: *Homélies pascales*), p. 11–17; cf. J. DANÉLOU, *Bulletin d'histoire des origines chrétiennes*, RSRe 55, 1967, p. 151. For the Greek edition (which shows no awareness of the Slavonic version), cf. *Homélies pascales*, p. 110–173. The discussion of authorship, place of composition, and dating is on p. 18–105.

<sup>3</sup> To the nine manuscripts that have been known to us, I have added three more witnesses: LMN (see Table 1). For the description of the first nine manuscripts, cf. ATHANASIOS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Oratio II contra Arianos. Old Slavonic Version and English Translation*, ed. et trans. V.V. LITVYNENKO, Turnhout 2019 [= PO, 248 (56.3)] (cetera: *Oratio II contra Arianos*), p. 371–381. For the other three manuscripts, cf. В.М. Ундольский, *Каталог славяно-русских рукописей*, Москва 1870, p. 419 (L); Иосиф (иером.), *Опись рукописей, перенесенных из библиотеки Иосифова монастыря в библиотеку Московской духовной академии*, vol. I, Москва 1882, p. 62 (M); И.В. Левочкин, Т.В. Анисимова, РГБ. *Собрание рукописных книг Е.Е. Егорова. Описание*, vol. I, pars I, Москва 2014, p. 174 (N). For the copy that contains the fragments (O), cf. А.А. Романова, 'Учение отроком, хотящим учиться ведению ключа границы азбучные', – сочинение 1496 г. по расчётной хронологии, ТОДЛ 52, 2001 (cetera: *Учение отроком*), p. 574. These fragments were published in *Святцы*, Москва 1646, ff. 377r–397r, where they have the same name as in the manuscript but with the running title *Narrative*.

<sup>4</sup> This scribal note reads: *In old Athanasius, it was written this way: By the same Athanasius, the bishop, Epistle on the Feast* [в старѣ ѡфанасіи писано такъ тогоже ѡфанѡа епіпа посланіе о праніцѣ].

<sup>5</sup> This claim is based on my textual work with this writing that is forthcoming.

Table 1

A	St. Petersburg, RNB Pog. 968, year 1489, f. 209r: <i>тогоже свѣтааго афанаса александръскааго епискоупа. съланиѣ о праздѣницѣ пасхы.</i> [In the colophon, the scribe adds: <i>ѣ. словѣ о празнициѣ пасхы.</i> ]
B	Moscow, RGB Овч. F. 209, 791, 15 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 291v: <i>сѣтѣ афанасіа александръскааго. епѣпа. съланиѣ ѡ празѣнициѣ пасхы. слово патое.</i>
C	Moscow, RGB Nikif. F. 199, 59, late 15 <sup>th</sup> and early 16 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 277v: <i>тогоѣ сланиѣ о празѣнициѣ пасхы.</i>
D	Moscow, RGB Vol. F. 113, 437, year 1488, f. 219r: <i>тогоже сѣтааго афанасіа александръскааго епѣпа сланиѣ о празѣнициѣ пасхи. в старѣ афанасіи писано так [then written in vyaz] тогоже афанаса епѣпа посланиѣ о прѣниѣцѣ.</i>
E	Moscow, GIM Sin. 20, between the late 1480s and early 1490s, f. 213r: <i>тогоже афаса епѣпа. сланиѣ ѡ празѣнициѣ.</i>
F	St. Petersburg, RNB Sol. 63, 16 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 305 r: <i>Тогоѣ афанасіа епѣпа александръскааго. сланиѣ ѡ прѣдѣнициѣ пасхы.</i>
G	St. Petersburg, RNB Sof. VMČ 1321, no later than 1541, f. 143об: <i>тогоѣ афанаса епѣпа сланиѣ ѡ прѣниѣцѣ пахы.</i>
H	Moscow, GIM Sin. Tsa. VMČ 180, no later than 1554, f. 303v: <i>тогоѣ сѣтѣ афанаса епѣпа александръскааго сланиѣ ѡ празѣнициѣ пасхы.</i>
K	Moscow, GIM Sin. Usp. VMČ 994, no later than 1552, f. 152r: <i>тогоѣ сѣтѣ афанасіа архіеѣпа александръскааго сланиѣ ѡ празѣнициѣ пахы.</i>
L	Moscow, RGB Und. F. 310, 561, miscellanea, 16 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 305v: <i>Иже въ сѣтѣ ѡца нашего афанасіа александръскааго. сказаниѣ ѡ пасцѣ.</i>
M	Moscow, RGB Vol. F. 113, 432, poučeniija svjatyč otcov, early 16 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 83r: <i>иже въ сѣтѣ ѡца наше афанаса. епѣпа александръскааго. скѣниѣ ѡ пасцѣ.</i>
N	Moscow, RGB Egor. F. 98, 72, Toržestvennik "Flowery Triodion", late 16 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 31v: <i>иже въ сѣтѣ ѡца нашего. афанасіа архіепископа александръскааго. сказаниѣ ѡ пасцѣ.</i>
O	Moscow, RGB Und. F. 310, 443, miscellanea with texts on calendar and chronology, late 17 <sup>th</sup> c., f. 51v: <i>ѡ тайнѣ ѡбхожденіа, спасителнаго дне истиннаго пасхи... избрано ѡ слова великаго афанасіа архіеѣпа александръскааго.</i>



Given that the manuscript tradition of this writing is limited to the area of medieval Russia, a natural question that I would like to explore in this article is what function the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* had. One can assume that due to the significant attention that it gives to the issues of calculating the date of Easter, this epistle had primarily a calendar function. It spends a lot of time discussing the method of determining the date of Easter, which after the Council of Nicaea in 325 was to fall on the first Sunday after the full moon following the spring equinox. Unlike the method proposed at Nicaea, however, the one in our epistle suggests that Easter is to be postponed by a week if the full moon falls on Sunday to avoid the associations between the fourteenth-day moon and the crucifixion that took place on the fourteenth day. Accordingly, there must be at least two days from the day of the full moon to the day of Easter in order to re-create the three-day mystery of the feast on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The epistle proposes various formulas to support this method and insists on taking it as biblical.

Furthermore, the year 1492 in the mind of that society marked the completion of 7000 years from the creation of the world and was believed by many to usher Christ's second coming<sup>6</sup>. This eschatological expectation was further reinforced by the fact that the existing paschal calendars ended in the year 1492. When the expectation for the end of the world did not come true, the religious group known in the church terminology as the Judaizers sought to convert the Orthodox Christians to their beliefs rooted in the Old Testament<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, one could suppose that church leaders copied the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* in response to the Judaizers (more on this later). But was this writing intended primarily to serve as a guide on how to calculate the dates for celebrating Easter? There is at least one factor that we should consider regarding this question.

Before the last century, it was commonly believed that medieval Russia was not able to do complex calculations for determining the dates of Easter and therefore had to rely on Constantinople for the supply of paschal tables. However, more recent research has shown that Russians had all the necessary skills and knowledge to perform complex mathematical calculations<sup>8</sup>. The earliest example that demonstrates this fact is a twelfth-century treatise commonly referred to as the *Teaching*

<sup>6</sup> For details, cf. А.И. АЛЕКСЕЕВ, *Под знаком конца времён. Очерки русской религиозности XIV – начала XVI вв.*, Санкт-Петербург 2002, esp. p. 45–130.

<sup>7</sup> Our chief source here are two Discourses (8 and 9) in the polemical work called *Prosvetitel'* (*Enlightener* in English), composed by Iosif Volockij (1439–1515). Иосиф Волоцкий, *Просветитель или обличение ереси жидовствующих*, Казань 1896 (cetera: *Enlightener*), p. 333–382. For a good overview of the rise and activity of the Judaizers, cf. А.И. АЛЕКСЕЕВ, *Жидовствующие*, [in:] *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. XIX, Москва 2008, p. 185–194.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. esp. the works by Simonov who made the most significant contribution in this field: Р.А. СИМОНОВ, *Математическая и календарно-астрономическая мысль Древней Руси (по данным средневековой книжной культуры)*, Москва 2007; ИДЕМ, *Естественнонаучная мысль Древней Руси. Избранные труды*, Москва 2001; *Естественнонаучные представления Древней Руси. Сборник статей*, ed. А.Н. БОГОЛЮБОВ, Р.А. СИМОНОВ, Москва 1978.

on Numbers<sup>9</sup> by Kirik the Novgorodian (1110–1156/1158) from the monastery of St. Anthony in Great Novgorod. Among other things, he provides instructions on how to understand the indict, leap years, and different types of cycles (solar, lunar, and others); how to calculate the number of months, weeks, days, and hours within a year; and how to determine the date of Easter, using the old Byzantine-Syrian method<sup>10</sup>. Some later examples include such writings as *Semitysjáčniki* (a variety of treatises on the 7000 years) that appeared in the fifteenth century<sup>11</sup>, *The Teaching to Teenagers* that was composed in 1496 and served as a guide on Easter dating<sup>12</sup>, the *Genuine Account*<sup>13</sup> with paschal tables and calculations from around 1542, and *Paschalias* (such as those composed by Gennadij Novgorodskij and Metropolitan Zosima during the years 1491 and 1492)<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, even if one assumes that the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* could have initially been copied as a guide on Easter dating, one cannot claim that it was perceived as filling in a gap of missing knowledge. In what follows, I would like to suggest that instead of having a purely calendar function, this writing was intended to operate primarily on the theological front. There are two points that lend support to this suggestion. First, given the fact that several manuscripts (AB) treat the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* as an *Oration*, and one of them calls it the *Fifth Oration*, we can reasonably assume that it was perceived as part of the Athanasian corpus of *Orations against the Arians*, which the church leaders almost always copied as one codex<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, one of our witnesses (D) tells us that

<sup>9</sup> The full title is *Učenije imže vedati človeku čisla vsech let*. For an excellent analysis of Kirik's work, cf. В.В. Мильков, Р.А. Симонов, *Кирик Новгородец: ученый и мыслитель*, Москва 2011. The edition of the *Teaching on Numbers* is on p. 312–335.

<sup>10</sup> For a description of this method, cf. Н.П. Иванова, С.В. Цыбь, *Историческая хронология*, Москва 2020, p. 185–187.

<sup>11</sup> А.А. Турилов, *О датировке и месте создания календарно-математических текстов-‘семитысячников’*, [in:] *Естественнонаучные представления Древней Руси. Счисление лет. Символика чисел. ‘Отреченные’ книги. Астрология. Минералогия*, ed. Р.А. Симонов, Москва 1988, p. 27–38.

<sup>12</sup> The full title is *Učenije otrokom, chotjaščim učitisja vedeniju ključa granicy azbučnyje*. For the discussion, cf. *Учение отроком*, p. 567–581.

<sup>13</sup> The full title is *Skazanije izvestno, kako sščitati paschlia naust'*. Cf. *Учение отроком*, p. 574, note 37.

<sup>14</sup> Gennadij Novgorodskij (1410–1505) composed his first *Paschalia* after the September council of 1491 and wrote another one (with the Easter dates for the next 70 years) on December 21, 1492. Metropolitan Zosima (d. 1494) presented his *Paschalia* (with calculations for 20 years) to the next council on November 27, 1492. МАКАРИЙ (ВЕРЕТЕННИКОВ), *Геннадий (Гонзов)*, [in:] *Православная Энциклопедия*, vol. X, Москва 2005, p. 592.

<sup>15</sup> *Oratio II contra Arianos*, p. 371–381. An important witness about the copying of *Orations* in that context may also be deduced from the letter which Gennadij Novgorodskij sent to the former Archbishop of Rostov and Jaroslavl' Ioasaf (died in 1514) in the year 1489. In this letter, he inquires of Ioasaf as to whether he has twelve specific books to counter the teaching of Judaizers and lists "Athanasius of Alexandria", without naming the *Orations* as such. In my edition of Athanasius' *Orations*, I have suggested that Gennadij could have meant the *Orations against the Arians*. For the text of the letter and my points, cf. *Oratio II contra Arianos*, p. 371–381.

Athanasius' *Orations* were copied for a very specific *theological* purpose. Here, we have a colophon made by Veniamin Timofejev, where he explains that the work of copying Athanasius was occasioned by the rise of heresy that attacked the most fundamental Orthodox beliefs, specifically the doctrine of the Trinity:

In that year here in famous Novgorod, many priests and deacons (including those from simple folks) appeared to profane the pure faith. The town was overtaken by great trouble, and so much darkness and suffering befell this place [and] the holy Orthodox faith, which the holy fathers set down at the seven Councils by preaching the Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the one divine inseparable Trinity! However, it did not take long for the the Most Holy Archbishop Gennadij to expose the wickedness of their heretical teaching after he was filled with God's grace of the Holy Spirit<sup>16</sup>.

Second, we have an indirect witness from Iosif Volockij (1439–1515), who composed a work named *Enlightener (Prosvetitel')* to counter all the major aspects of the Judaizers' faith<sup>17</sup>. A careful reading of this work suggests that the Judaizers' rejection of Christian Easter had above all a theological motif, even though there was a major issue concerning the paschal calculations and the end of times in the background of the polemic. In one of the passages where Iosif portrays the Judaizers, he rebukes them for celebrating the Jewish Passover instead of the Christian Easter and puts this on the same list of charges as their denial of the most fundamental Orthodox beliefs, such as the divinity of Christ and Scripture:

Being like mad dogs and poisonous snakes and blood-thirsty beasts, they were all focused on mocking and humiliating the divinity of Christ and his economy in the flesh. Everywhere they met they always did so secretly, *and they offered Jewish sacrifices and celebrated the Jewish Passover together with other Jewish feasts*. They spoke forth numerous blasphemies against our Lord Jesus Christ, and against Most Pure Theotokos, and against great John the Forerunner, as well as against all the holy apostles and revered and righteous martyrs,

<sup>16</sup> Moscow, RGB Vol. F. 113, 437, year 1488, f. 237v: в то лѣто здѣсе въ приемѣннѣиѣ тѣхъ неупо-  
леус<е> мнози сѣенники и дѣакони; и ѿ простѣхъ людѣи дѣаки явилисѣ сквернители на вѣрѣхъ непо-  
рочнѣю велика вѣда постигла грдѣ сѣи и колика тма и тѣга постиже лѣксто се сѣтѣю вѣрѣхъ православїа  
что запечатлѣшѣ сѣтѣи ѿци седмѣхъ съевор; проповѣдїю ѿца и сѣна и сѣтго дѣха въ трѣци едїно бжѣтво  
нераздѣлїно. Нѣтъ въскорѣ исплѣнисѣ о бѣзѣкѣ влѣти; дѣха сѣтаго. пресѣннѣи архїепискоѣ генадїе; вена-  
жилѣ и еретичества злодѣиство.

<sup>17</sup> For a general overview of Iosif's life and work in the context of his fight against the Judaizers, see my brief article V.V. LITVYNENKO, *Joseph von Wolokolamsk*, [in:] *Biographisch-bibliographische Kirchenlexikon*, vol. XL, Nordhausen 2019, p. 3–5. It should be mentioned that Iosif read the *Orations against the Arians* and quoted from this writing, though not from the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter*. For more details, cf. my other study V.V. LITVYNENKO, *Slavonic Quotations from Athanasius' Orations Against the Arians in Joseph Volotsky and Metropolitan Daniil*, *Slov* 2, 2021, p. 76–96.

desecrating and criticizing the churches of God, life-giving crosses and all honored icons... And ever since they denied Christ and until now, they have made every effort and used every endeavor to deceive the Orthodox and lead them into the Jewish beliefs<sup>18</sup>.

Iosif asserts that the Judaizers *offered Jewish sacrifices and celebrated the Jewish Passover together with other Jewish feasts*. In other places, he explains that the Judaizers' rejection of Easter along with other Christian beliefs *had to do with their wrong understanding of sacred Scripture*<sup>19</sup>, and the only time he raises the technical issue of calculating the date of Easter in the entire book is at the end of Discourse 8. In the process, he accuses the Judaizers of dismissing Easter based on their wrong expectation of the end of the world in 1492 and concludes by arguing that according to Scripture, it is not in anyone's power to know the end times: *But why have we discussed all this if not to show that whatever God has not given us to know, cannot be known even if we do our best to try and search and examine; we will only put fire on our own head. For God said that even the angels cannot know this*<sup>20</sup> (cf. Mt 24: 36; Mc 13: 32).

Thus, if we accept the assumption that the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* was intended to refute the Judaizers' teaching, then it had to address the theological concerns that we find in Iosif and demonstrate why one should celebrate Christian Easter rather than the Jewish Passover. This is exactly what we find in this epistle. In fact, the author begins his text by drawing a clear distinction between the Jews and heretics who have failed to grasp the true meaning of Easter on the one side, and the Christians who alone know the mystery behind this feast on the other: *Without understanding the real truth, they depart as heretics while the Jews seek to fulfill the Passover; and only Christians are in possession of this mystery and properly keep it*<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> *Enlightener*, Discourse 15, p. 522–523: Икоже во ѿи вѣснии и зми іадовитїи, и звѣри кровопїавїи, всѣ оустремїшася на порѣганїе и оуничженїе хва бжтвнаго и плотьскаго смотренїа, всегда собирающеса тайно по всѣмъ мѣстехъ, и дѣже кто обрѣташеса, и жертвы жидовскїа жрахъ, и пасхъ жидовскїю, и праздники жидовскыа творяхъ, на нихже и многа хсленїа изрекоша на гда нашего їса хда, и на прѣтїю бцѣ, и на великаго їбання прѣтїю, и на вса стѣла аплы же и мѣнїки, и прѣвныа и праведныа, и много сквернїа и порѣганїа содѣлаша на бжтвеныа цркви, и животворашїа крѣты, и на всечтныа иконы... и ѿнеи же хда ѿвергошася, даже и до ннѣ всако тшанїе и всакъ подвигъ творашѣ, да быша прельстїи православныа и в жидовство ѿвели.

<sup>19</sup> *Enlightener*, Discourse 9, p. 369: еже не правѣ прїимати бжтвѣннаа писанїа. This is the central idea of Discourse 9, and Iosif reiterates it in various ways throughout his entire work.

<sup>20</sup> *Enlightener*, Discourse 8, p. 353: Но что ради сїа вса продохомъ; но тако да покажемъ, тако, еже бгъ не повелѣ вѣдати, сего, аще и тмани трѣдїися ншше і испытающе, не възможемъ оувѣдати, но точїю на свою главѣ огнь събераемъ: тако, бгъ рече нї аггломъ възможно есть вѣдати.

<sup>21</sup> St. Petersburg, RNB Pog. 968, year 1489, f. 209r: и еретици отъскочыше авлажѣть сѧ. и жидове крѣпашѣ сѧ пасхоу творити. крѣстїанъ же тѣчїиъ есть. таина си и сътворенїе.

To unpack this mystery, the author resorts to the typological interpretation<sup>22</sup> of the Easter cycle in the rest of the text, arguing that the Christian feast fulfilled the Old Testament expectation and surpassed it. Thus, he takes the spring equinox as a symbol of “the beginning of time” (the first day and night). Then, he interprets the fourteenth-day moon in the lunar cycle as an image of the sacrifice of a lamb on the fourteenth of Nisan according to the Mosaic law, which was fulfilled in Jesus, the true Lamb of God. And finally, he explains the full moon as a symbol of the darkness between the sixth and eighth hours at the crucifixion of Christ, foretold by the Old Testament prophets Zechariah and Amos.

By putting all these elements together, Christ fulfilled the Old Testament expectations in his own death and gave us the true meaning of Easter: *But when the Son of God gathered the times, when he conformed the entire week to the original creation, and when the equinox, the full moon and Friday met, the day on which he was to suffer and in suffering manifest the renewal, then he gave himself up to bear the passion*<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, he continues later: *We, too, observe all times to show their mystical significance as we keep imitating them*<sup>24</sup>.

All this shows that the *Epistle on the Celebration of Easter* was a perfect text for that context. It carried a specifically theological function, even though a fair bit of this writing has to do with the technical elements of the paschal calendar. In the face of opposition from the Judaizers who questioned the most basic aspects of the Christian faith, this epistle was to tell them about the *right* celebration of Easter rather than just about numbers, figures, and dates, however important the latter were in that polemic.

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the author mentions Philo and Josephus (f. 211v) known for their allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament history. Cf. H.W. BASSER, *Josephus as Exegete*, JAOS 107.1, 1987, p. 21–30; R. WILLIAMSON, *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, vol. I, pars 2, Cambridge 1989 (esp. chapter 3: *Philo's Allegorical Exegesis of Scripture* on p. 144–200).

<sup>23</sup> St. Petersburg, RNB Pog. 968, year 1489, f. 215v: *Ѣгда же събрааѣ единночадын сынъ божии врѣмена егда всѣхъ недѣльжъ въ древнѣе сътворение, и ранины, (!) и пълнаа луна. и паттъкъ, въ нѣ же въ пострадади. и въ стрададани обновенижъ гавити сѧ. сътъбказаштж сѧ. тѣгда въдасть самъ сѧ въ стрададание.*

<sup>24</sup> St. Petersburg, RNB Pog. 968, year 1489: f. 216v: *того дѣла ма и ны събелждаемъ вса врѣмена. на оуказаніе тайны нѣ мыслии. подражаніе дрѣжаште.*

## Abbreviations in the Manuscripts

### Libraries and Archives

GIM	State Historical Museum, Moscow (Государственный исторический музей)
RGB	Russian State Library, Moscow (Российская государственная библиотека)
RNB	Russian National Library, Saint Petersburg (Российская национальная библиотека)

### Manuscript Collections

Egor.	Collection of E.E. Egorov (RGB, Moscow)
Nikif.	Collection of P.N. Nikiforov (RGB, Moscow)
Ovč.	Collection of P.A. Ovčinnikov (RGB, Moscow)
Pog.	Collection of N.P. Pogodin (RNB, Saint-Petersburg)
Sin.	Collection of Sinodal Library (GIM, Moscow)
Sof.	Collection of Sophia Library (RNB, Saint-Petersburg)
Sol.	Collection of Solovetsk Monastery (RNB, Saint-Petersburg)
Tsa.	Collection of Tsar manuscripts (GIM, Moscow)
Und.	Collection of V.M. Undolsky (RGB, Moscow)
Vol.	Collection of Iosifo-Volokolamsk Monastery (RGB, Moscow)

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

ATHANASIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, *Oratio II contra Arianos. Old Slavonic Version and English Translation*, ed. et trans. V.V. LYTUVYENKO, Turnhout 2019 [= *Patrologia Orientalis*, 248 (56.3)].

*Die Grossen Lesemenäen des Metropoliten Makarij. Uspenskij spisok*, vol. I, 1–8 Mai, ed. E. WEIHER et al., Freiburg 2007 [= *Monumenta Linguae Slavicae Dialecti Veteris*, 51].

*Homélie pascales III. Une homélie anatolienne sur la date de Pâques en l'an 387*, ed. et trans. F. FLOËRI, P. NAUTIN, Paris 1957 [= Sources chrétiennes, 48].

IOSIF VOLOCKIJ, *Prosvetitel ili obličenie eresi žydovstvujučich*, Kazan' 1896.

PENKOVA P., *On the Authorship of 'Solanije o Prazdnice Paschy' Attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria*, "Scripta & e-Scripta" 6, 2008, p. 279–303.

*Svjatcy*, Moskva 1646.

## Secondary Literature

ALEKSEJEV A.I., *Pod Znakom konca vremjon. Očerki ruskoj religioznosti konca XIV – načala XVI vv.*, Sankt-Peterburg 2002.

ALEKSEJEV A.I., *Žydovstvujučhie*, [in:] *Pravoslavnaja Enciklopedia*, vol. XIX, Moskva 2008, p. 185–194.

BASSER H.W., *Josephus as Exegete*, "Journal of the American Oriental Society" 107.1, 1987, p. 21–30, <https://doi.org/10.2307/602949>

DANIÉLOU J., *Bulletin d'histoire des origines chrétiennes*, "Recherches de Science Religieuse" 55, 1967, p. 101–169.

*Estestvennonauchnyje predstavlenija Drevnej Rusi. Sbornik statej*, ed. A.N. BOGOLJUBOV, R.A. SIMONOV, Moskva 1978.

IOSIF (IEROMONACH), *Opis' rukopisej, perenesennyh iz biblioteki Iosifova monastyrja v biblioteku Moskovskoj duchovnoj akademii*, vol. I, Moskva 1882.

IVANOVA N.P., CYB S.B., *Istoričeskaja chronologija*, Moskva 2020.

LEVOČKIN I.V., ANISIMOVA T.V., RGB. *Sobranije rukopisnych knig E.E. Egorova. Opisanije*, vol. I, pars 1, Moskva 2014.

LITVYNENKO V.V., *Joseph von Wolokolamsk*, [in:] *Biographisch-bibliographische Kirchenlexikon*, vol. XL, Nordhausen 2019, p. 3–5.

LITVYNENKO V.V., *Slavonic Quotations from Athanasius' Orations Against the Arians in Joseph Volotsky and Metropolitan Daniil*, "Slověne" 2, 2021, p. 76–96, <https://doi.org/10.31168/2305-6754.2021.10.2.4>

MAKARIJ (VERETENNIKOV), *Gennadij (Gonzov)*, [in:] *Pravoslavnaja Enciklopedia*, vol. X, Moskva 2005, p. 588–598.

MIL'KOV V.V., SIMONOV R.A., *Kirik Novgorodec: učjonyj i myslitel'*, Moskva 2011.

ROMANOVA A.A., *'Učenie otrokom, chotjaščim učitisja vedeniju ključa granicy azbučnyje'*, – *sočinenije 1496 g. po rasščjotnoj chronologii*, "Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы" / "Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoj literatury" 52, 2001, p. 567–581.

SIMONOV R.A., *Estestvennonauchnaja mysl' Drevnej Rusi. Izbrannyje Trudy*, Moskva 2001.

SIMONOV R.A., *Matematičeskaja i kalendarno-astronomičeskaja mysl' Drevnej Rusi (po dannym sred-nevekovoj knižnoj kultury)*, Moskva 2007.

TURILOV A.A., *O datirovke i meste sozdanija kalendarno-matematičeskich tekstov- 'Semityjačnikov'*, [in:] *Estestvennonauchnyje predstavlenija Drevnej Rusi. Sčislenije let. Simvolika čisel. 'Otrečennyje' knigi. Astrologija. Mineralogija*, ed. R.A. SIMONOV, Moskva 1988, p. 27–38.

UNDOL'SKIJ V.M., *Katalog slavjano-russkich rukopisej*, Moskva 1870.

WILLIAMSON R., *Jews in the Hellenistic World*, vol. I, pars 2, Cambridge 1989, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511621482>

**Viacheslav V. Lytvynenko**

Charles University

Černá 646/9

115 55 Prague, Czech Republic


[vyacheslav.lytvynenko@gmail.com](mailto:vyacheslav.lytvynenko@gmail.com)







Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova (Sofia)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5699-7503>

## A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF REPENTANCE PRAYERS IN THE SLAVIC SOUTH DURING THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY\*

**Abstract.** The article explores and offers a diplomatic edition of *A Very Useful Confession for Unc-tion for Every Christian, for the Black and White Clergy*. This is an autograph by Vladislav the Gram-marian placed in the Trebnik of Monk David (1480s), manuscript 1/42 in the collection of the Rila Monastery. The analysis is based on the working hypothesis that after the conquest of Constantino-ple by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans was perceived as a God’s punishment for the sins of the Orthodox Christians. This idea became strongly present in a number of texts. Penitential prayer patterns multiply in the literature. The Greek prototype of the text under study has not been identified yet, but features a close relation to the prayers with the so-called *accumu-lation of sins*. It is, in essence, a confession which is performed in connection with the sacrament of the *eleosvet* (anointing of the sick) before receiving communion and the anointing with holy oil. The textual unit was purposefully introduced into Monk David’s Trebnik and reflected topical text-ual additions to the basic composition of the Slavonic Trebnik.

**Keywords:** South Slavonic trebnik in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Vladislav the Grammarian

### Introduction

In the Festive Menaion, published in 1538, Božidar Vuković, a patron of Cyril-lic book printing in Venice, states: *и видѣхъ врѣмѣнна тѣжка соуть, понежѣ врѣмѣнна послѣдна есѣ между ѱѣзѣци многыне рати, и велико погрѣшеніе ѿ ѱсмайл-тентъ на хрѣтіанѣ, заради съгрѣшеніи наші<sup>1</sup>*. These words, providing the preface of the most voluminous and rarest Cyrillic paleotype from the ‘city of books’ with the mark of historical authenticity, are an acknowledgment of a lasting tenden-cy in the South Slavic literary tradition. After the conquest of Constantinople

\* The research was conducted within the National Program “Development and Promotion of Bul-garian Studies Abroad” supported by Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria.

<sup>1</sup> *Празничен миней на Божидар Вукович Подгоричанин от 1538 г.*, ed. М. ПОЛИМИРОВА, Под-горица–София 2021, p. 1: *I saw that times are hard, for many wars have been waged between nations in recent times and there has been great destruction of Christians by Ishmaelites, due to our sins.* Hereinafter, all translations from Old Slavonic (Old Bulgarian) are made by the author.

by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, a number of texts indicate a firmly held notion that the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans was a divine punishment for the sins of Orthodox Christians. Examples of repentance prayers grew in number in the literature. This emblematic date marks the start of a new period in the history of Christian Church communities in the Balkans and marks the beginning of all-round transformations, through which the Byzantine material and spiritual legacy continued to exist under the new conditions even beyond the old boundaries of the Empire. The post-Byzantine age began – the so-called Byzantium after Byzantium<sup>2</sup>, when upholding the confession identity became more necessary than ever. This boundary between two epochs was a time when spiritual values were put to the test. Christian books played the role of a formative factor for the social and cultural development under the new conditions. Literature ensured the consolidation of the faithful through a constant reproduction of the tradition. The personalities and cultural models, which they create or support, replace the established social structure of the Orthodox state and legitimize the values of Orthodoxy.

The above general observations can be illustrated by a concrete example, such as the copying practices of South Slavic scribes in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The main aim of the publication is to popularize a rare prayer genre from one of the most prosperous literary centers in medieval Bulgaria, and thereby to elucidate the oeuvre of its copyist – Vladislav the Grammarian. The diplomatic edition of the text is accompanied by a brief analysis and an investigation into typological similarities in other South Slavonic textual witnesses, in a diachronic perspective. This corresponds to the aims of the program which the article forms a part of and allows for broadening the range of sources for the study of the Slavonic Trebnik.

### The main source

In the present article I will consider a model of prayer that was copied in middle regular calligraphic *poluustav* (semi-uncial script) with Resava orthography and has been identified as the writing of the noted South Slavic writer Vladislav the Grammarian<sup>3</sup>. The text is contained in the Trebnik (Ἱγιασματάριον) of Monk David, dated to the 1480s and preserved in the library of the Rila Monastery, manuscript HMPM 1/42 (Ms. Slav. 1/42)<sup>4</sup>. The name of the hieromonk David,

<sup>2</sup> N. IORGA, *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucarest 1935.

<sup>3</sup> Б. РАЙКОВ, Хр. Кодов, Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Славянски ркописи в Рилския манастир*, vol. I, София 1986, p. 74. For the life and the activity of this prominent man of letters cf. Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Владислав Граматик. Книжовник и писател*, София 1969; Ј. ГРКОВИЋ-МЕЈДОР, *Списи Димитрија Кантакузина и Владислава Граматика*, Београд 1993; Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Опис на рѣкописите на Владислав Граматик*, Велико Търново 1996; А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Владислав Граматик*, [in:] *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. IX, Москва 2005, p. 99–101.

<sup>4</sup> Е. СПРОСТРАНОВ, *Опис на рѣкописите в библиотеката при Рилския манастир*, София 1902, p. 30–31; Б. РАЙКОВ, Хр. Кодов, Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Славянски рѣкописи...*, p. 73–75, where it

the second hegumen of the Rila Monastery after its restoration, is well known: active mainly after 1463, he was the second oldest among Joasaph, David, and Theophanes, sons of Jacob, bishop of Krupnik. The second copyist of Trebnik 1/42 was Vladislav the Grammarian. It is believed that this writer from Novo Brdo, Kosovo, has visited or resided in the Holy Monastery of Rila<sup>5</sup>. His emblematic manuscripts and works, such as the *Rila Miscellany* (the *Rila Panegyric*), compiled in 1479, is a rich collection of vitae, instructive sermons, and lectures, including works by Patriarch Euthymius, Gregory Tsamblak, and Joasaph of Bdin. It is precisely in this manuscript that we find some of the most important copies of his original work: the *Rila Narrative*, or the *Story of the Translation of the Relics of St. John of Rila from Tarnovo to the Rila Monastery*. Assumptions have been made, though not categorically proven, that he spent the last years of his life in the Rila Monastery<sup>6</sup>. Today the works of Vladislav the Grammarian include seven miscellanies (four of which have been precisely dated), preserved in five different book depositories in Europe<sup>7</sup>. The facts reflect the dynamic life story of this man of letters, who passed through different regions of the Balkans, lived in different monastic communities, under various rulers and patrons, while ever working in the service of literature.

The text under study is found on pages 301r–307r and carries the following title: **ИСПОВѢДАНІЕ СЪКЛѢ ПОЛЪСНО, ХОТЕЩОМОУ СЪБѢ МАСЛО СЪБЪТИ ВЪСЪАКОМОУ ХРІСТІАНИНОУ,**

is described under the signature P 35. The Monk David's Trebnik contains the official sacraments of the Orthodox Church, including the appointment of some or the ordination of other ecclesiastical degrees: acolyte (δεποτάτος), reader and singer, subdeacon and deacon, priest, protopresbyter, hegumen, and hieromonk (f. 202–215v). This composition supports the conclusion of its use in the precisely defined monastic community of the Rila Monastery, whose patron St. John of Rila is mentioned among the saints in the intercessions of Epiphany: **ВЪНОСНАГО ѿЦА НАШЕГО ІѦАНА ПОУСТЫНИ ЖИТЕЛА** (f. 138r). At the same time, the manuscript testifies to the presence of the St. Triphon's prayer against pests in fields and vineyards (149r–152v), of a prayer against snake bite, attributed to St. Paul, and other non-canonical prayers. They correspond to the combination of two trends – adherence to the flourishing 14<sup>th</sup> century liturgical tradition, and the dynamic everyday life that hieromonks had to reflect in order to be close to the flock. Cf. М. ШНИТЕР, *Молитва и магия*, София 2001, p. 97–99. The author notes Vladislav the Grammarian's participation in this Trebnik as a proof of the book's value for the monastic brotherhood. Another 'testimony of the times' is worth mentioning, namely the petition to the Holy Cross at Epiphany for deliverance from the Ishmaelites – **ИСМАИЛЬТЪСЬКЫЕ ЛЮДИ ДРЪЖАВНО ПОКАРАЮЩЕ** (f. 140r). This formula is also found in the copyist's notes, a favorite genre in his work. Cf. Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Особености на приписките и бележките в сборниците на Владислав Граматик – извор на сведения за неговите културни интереси и за културата у нас през XV столетие*, [in:] *Българският петнадесети век. Сборник с доклади за българска обща и културна история през XV в.*, ed. Б. ХРИСТОВА, А. МИНЧЕВА, Б. РАЙКОВ, Кл. ИВАНОВА, София 1993, p. 181–187.

<sup>5</sup> Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Владислав Граматик и рилският книжовен център*, [in:] *Рилски манастир. Юбилеен вестник. Специално издание, посветено на научната сесия „Рилският манастир в историята и културата на българския народ“*, София 1981, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Владислав Граматик...*, p. 30, and the relevant bibliography cited by the author.

<sup>7</sup> Exhaustive data base for every one of those manuscripts in Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Опис на ръкописите...*

чрѣнциѡѣ и бѣлциѡѣ, *A Very Useful Confession for Unction for Every Christian, for the Black and White Clergy*. More than 30 years ago, after working *de visu* on the entire manuscript, I published the text according to the editing practice of that time, which is unsatisfactory from today's point of view<sup>8</sup>. In the present article, I would like to re-edit it more adequately, based on its digital reproduction<sup>9</sup>, and to focus on the textual specificity and significance of similar texts in the literature of the Slavic South.

In the scholarly description of the manuscript, the textual unit under study is referred to as 'Instruction for the rite of unction'<sup>10</sup>. In fact, the text is a repentance prayer, complemented with liturgical instructions and formulas, which was to be read on the occasion of the sacrament of unction (τὸ εὐχέλαιον, *unction olei sacrati*)<sup>11</sup>. To be read as well at the end are Ps 16 (marked with the first verse) and readings from the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels. The holy oil (ἅγιον ἔλαιον in Greek, оуби, масло, миро in Slavic) is a sign of the shedding of God's grace on the repentant person. This is indicated by the key words and phrases figuring in the title and in the text (вѣ помазаниѣ моѣ ѡ каанниѣ главьѣ; помазаниѣ; вѣ ѡѣмѣниѣ вѣвшаво ѡ вѣ масла). Clearly, this is an arrangement of the divine office (*posledovanie*, ἀκολουθία)<sup>12</sup>, performed in the presence of seven clergymen, who also perform the rite of anointing with oil.

### Other known sources. Similar texts

The oldest Slavic Euchologion – the Glagolitic *Euchologium Sinaiticum*, originating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, does not contain a developed ceremony of unction. It contains only separate prayers for anointing, which were to be read over the sick and were later preserved in trebniks under the general rubric 'Молитви врачевални', 'healing prayers'<sup>13</sup>. The oldest *posledovanie* for unction translated into Slavic is found in the Cyrillic parchment trebnik from the Gruić collection 3.I.65, dated for the third quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the main part of which is kept

<sup>8</sup> М. ЦИБРАНСКА, *За един молитвен текст автограф на Владислав Граматик*, БЕ 5, 1997–1998, р. 58–63.

<sup>9</sup> Comparing the published text with the original was made possible thanks to the 'Bulgarian Manuscript Book' Archive at the Faculty of Slavic Studies of SU St. Kliment Ohridski. I would like to express my special gratitude to the hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Rila, Archimandrite Evlogiy, and the whole fraternity there for the possibility they afforded me to work with the digital copy of pages 301–307 of manuscript 1/42 from the Monastery's Library.

<sup>10</sup> Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Владислав Граматик...*, р. 7.

<sup>11</sup> А.А. ТКАЧЕНКО, *Елеосвящение*, [in:] *Православная Энциклопедия*, vol. XVIII, Москва 2008, р. 325–337.

<sup>12</sup> М. АРРАНЦ, *Исторические заметки о чинопоследованиях таинств по рукописям Греческого Евхология*, Ленинград 1979, р. 103–124.

<sup>13</sup> R. NANIGAL, *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkvenoslovanski glagolski spomenik*, vol. II, *Tekst s komentarjem*, Ljubljana 1942, р. 58.

in the Belgrade Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Described and studied by P. Simić, it is considered to be the oldest known trebnik found in Serbian repositories<sup>14</sup>. G. Pop-Atanasov and D. Milovska discovered a 20-page addition to this work in the Library of the Faculty of Philology of the University in Skopje; the addition comprises of a prayer for unction for an ailing monk and a rite for a monastic burial<sup>15</sup>. This manuscript, called the *Premka Trebnik*, after the village of Premka, Kichevo district, where it was found, was classified under the Macedonian medieval tradition based on its origin and specific features<sup>16</sup>.

P. Simić considers that this divine office for unction has no precise Greek counterpart<sup>17</sup>. Subsequently, the first edition, with its large hymnographic section covering the ancient liturgical cycle, was abridged; starting from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this ritual form gained ascendancy and can be found in the first printed trebnik books from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries: *ПОСЛЕДОВАНИЕ НА ВЪЩЕЩЕНИЕ МАСЛО*<sup>18</sup>.

Consequently, *A Very Useful Confession for Unction* concerned both the sacraments of repentance and unction. The latter can heal physical and spiritual disabilities and be used for the forgiveness of sins and for giving communion after confession. Two other copies of the same text are known to me thus far. The first, which I have worked with *de visu*, is found on leaves 3b–8b in Trebnik № 194 from the collection of the Church Historical and Archive Institute at the Bulgarian Patriarchate; the book dates likewise from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It entered the collection as a donation from Neophyte, the Metropolitan of Skopje<sup>19</sup>. Although this second copy is severely damaged, it complements the title with valuable indications establishing a close link between confession and the granting of Divine grace through holy oil: *мѣтвѡу до конца волещїи или ѡбкоупъ или мнѡхъ словесныхъ или попъ. аще нѣ словесникъ волещїи да моу чьтетъ дховникъ, а шнь по нимъ да говоритъ да самъ исповѣдоуетъ стьда радї въ мѣтва грѣха своего и тако рекше мѣтвѡу до конца тѣ почнетъ масло крѣтити. мѣтва.* The second copy is known to me only by its bibliographical data. I am referring to M10, a trebnik from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, preserved at the University Library in Skopje; in this book, the *Very Useful Confession for Unction* is found on pages 34v–41r, surrounded by prayers to be read in miscellaneous cases, and the rite of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Data

<sup>14</sup> П. СИМИЋ, *Требник српске редакције XIII в.*, ЗИК 10, 1976, p. 53–87; Р. СТАНКОВА, *Старобългарското книжно наследство в сръбски преписи от XIII и началото на XIV в.*, ECLNet 02 I 2004, № 1.50, <https://litternet.bg/publish4/rtrifonova/stb.htm> [12 I 2023].

<sup>15</sup> Ѓ. ПОП-АТАНАСОВ, Д. МИЛОВСКА, *Нови листови од Премчанскиот требник (пергаментен книжевен споменик од XIII век)*, Кир 1, 2003, p. 135–186.

<sup>16</sup> Л. МАКАРИЈОСКА, Б. ПАВЛЕСКА-ГЕОРГИЈЕВСКА, *Лексиката на средновековните молитвеници*, Скопје 2021, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> П. СИМИЋ, *Требник српске...*, p. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Based on the printed Prayer Book published by Jacob Kraykov in Venice, f. P III. Copy Рц. 1570.16 from the National Library St. St. Cyril and Methodius, Sofia, has been used for this article.

<sup>19</sup> И. ГОШЕВ, *Стари записи и надписи*, ГСУ.БФ 4.1, 1927, p. 353–354.

about this text, excerpts from it, and an analysis of some lexemes can be found in the quoted book by L. Makarijoska and B. Pavleska-Georgievska from 2021. There is only one difference between the two, in the heading: *сѣбѣ мѣсло ꙗ҃кѣти* instead of *сѣѣти*.

It becomes clear from the discussion above that, before being anointed with holy oil, the penitent must confess his/her sins. Thus, a specific particularity of the prayer is that it develops as a formula of repentance by the enumeration of sins, some of which have not necessarily been actually committed but, according to M.V. Korogodina's accurate observation, reflect the gravity and impermissibility of those sins<sup>20</sup>. These formulas offer a verbal summary of human sinfulness. Also typical for this model of prayer is the *I-form*, used for *stronger expressiveness*, whereby every person may personally identify with the state of original sin, typical for man according to the Christian paradigm. Byzantine literature is exceptionally rich in such texts, but so far the precise Greek original of this confession remains unknown. Some previous studies, however, provide a basis for reasoning:

1. A.I. Almazov writes about the spread and growing diversity of repentance models, starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century in South Slavic and East Slavic literature. In his fundamental work on the sacrament of repentance, this great expert in liturgical canon examines cycles of repentance prayers of a subjective kind which are addressed to the person who pronounces them: *чтение которых предполагается по адресу самого совершителя их*<sup>21</sup>. They are not related to the rules of repentance in the specific sense, but rather to contrition, and are thus a preventive measure against sin. The great abundance of such models was determined by the growth of asceticism in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Their form is characterized by a detailed listing of sins, by exclamatory and rhetorical elements, by an enumeration of epithets describing the sinner, and by their abstract vocabulary. The same particularities are found in the prayer in question.
2. Other authors have also contributed to the present topic. E. Koschmieder published a prayer of confession, contained in Codex 1318, Prayer Book, from the City Library of Wrocław; the work is written in Bulgarian uncial script and dates in its greater part to the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century, while the source of the book is most probably from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The author did not discover any Greek parallel to it<sup>22</sup>. Later, R. Katičić discussed this prayer in detail, considering its use

<sup>20</sup> М. КОРОГОДИНА, *Проблемы изучения русских средневековых исповедных текстов как исторического источника*, [in:] *Русский исторический сборник*, vol. II, ed. В.М. ЛАВРОВ, Москва 2010, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> А.И. АЛМАЗОВ, *Тайная исповедь в православной восточной церкви. Опыт внешней истории*, vol. II, *Специальные уставы*, Одесса 1894, p. 293.

<sup>22</sup> E. KOSCHMIEDER, *Grammatischer Prosareim in Kirchenslavischen Beichtgebeten*, BZ 44, 1951, p. 336–339.

of antique stylistic devices, grammatical rhymes, isocolons, and homeoteleutons, which make the abstract vocabulary very recognizable in structure and highly concentrated<sup>23</sup>. The author divides the prayer into parts, each of which begins with an enumeration of sins expressed in words with a similar ending, and concludes with a supplication for God's pardon. The scholar not only emphasizes the frequent recurrence of such patterns starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century but lingers in detail on the Byzantine models containing the so-called 'accumulation of sins' in works of authors such as Simeon Metaphrastes, 10<sup>th</sup> century, and Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos, 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>24</sup>. In the former, we find an accumulation of 24 homeoteleutonic noun accusatives, and in the latter, approximately 112 such examples. The conclusion R. Katičić draws is that the South Slavic translators had creatively reworked these texts without knowing them in detail or without copying the ancient rhetorical technique, but set themselves the same task, *to express the accumulation of sins, from which only God's mercy can save the sinner*<sup>25</sup>. It is precisely in connection with confession that they created specific models of rhetorical prose in the Slavic South. From there, some of these models passed into the Eastern Slavic sphere.

The present copy of Monk David's Trebnik follows immediately after the *Глѡужба свѣго причещенїа*, *Office for the Holy Communion* (ff. 275–307). This fact supports the assumption that, imitating the early Byzantine models, including the listing of names, the enumeration of sins became a model preceding the reception of the Holy Communion and could be combined with the liturgical-canonic elements of other rites, such as unction, burial, etc. At the same time, the universal nature of pure and sincere repentance is precisely what determines the text's mobility and free location. Prayers with a similar structure not exclusively meant for specific rites or sacraments found a place in South Slavic trebniks. We can illustrate this by two of the most interesting South Slavic examples, the copying and printing of which became more common starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century:

1. *МЛѢТВА ИЖЕ ГЛѢТЬ АРХИЕРЕН ЗА ГРѢХЫ ВОЛНІЕ И НЕВОЛНІЕ И ВЪСАКОУ КЛЕТВОУ И ЗАКЛИНАНІЕ* (according to the printed Prayer Book of Jacob Kraykov from Venice, 1570, l. MmVa). Not surprisingly, it is also found in Monk David's Trebnik under the heading *МЛѢТВА ГЛѢМЕЛА ѿ АРХІЕРЕА ИЛИ ІЕРЕА ВЪСАКОМЪ ХОТЕЩОМЪ ПРИЧЕСТИТИ СЕ БЖІТВЕННЪ ТРИНЬ, ПРАЩАЕ ЕМОУ ВЪСА ВОЛНАА И НЕВОЛНАА СЪГРѢШЕНІА И ВЪСАКО ПРОКЛЕТІЕ И КЛЕТВОУ* (216r–218r). In regards to it, A. Almazov points out that, while it did not enter into the Greek printed Euchologion, it was widespread among

<sup>23</sup> R. КАТИЧИЋ, *Σχήματα Γορυγεία и одной staroslavenskoj ispovednoj molitvi*, Slo 6–8, 1957, p. 237–238.

<sup>24</sup> SYMEONIS METAPHRASTAE, *Precationes*, [in:] PG, vol. CXIV, Paris 1857, col. 221; NICEPHORI CALLISTI XANTHOPULI, *Precatio confessoria*, [in:] PG, vol. CXLVII, Paris 1865, col. 591–600; А.И. АЛМАЗОВ, *Тайная исповедь...*, vol. II, p. 299–302.

<sup>25</sup> R. КАТИЧИЋ, *Σχήματα Γορυγεία...*, p. 243.



the Slavs and could perform the role of a permissive prayer at various occasions inasmuch as it did not refer to a concrete category of person praying or time of prayer<sup>26</sup>. It is distinguished by a long list of sins enumerated without precise system or order. Found in collections, trebniks, liturgical books, it is known to be present in all the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian printed trebniks featuring bishop rites. It was even placed in Božidar Vuković's Venetian printed *Octoechos of the Fifth Tome* from 1537, which includes at the end several texts that would be typically found in the Slavonic Trebnik<sup>27</sup>.

2. The second example, already familiar to scholars as soon as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is *Молитва прѣсвѣщеннаго архієпископа Константина града курь Михаила рекомааго Ясхалона*, which also appears under the title *Раздрѣшеніе прѣсвѣщеннаго архієпископа Константина града Михаила рекомааго Ясхалона мѣтва исповѣданію*<sup>28</sup>. This is not the same kind of prayer book as it does not include enumeration of sins, but it is a valuable example of an accumulation of confessional models related to unction. The prayer is already present in the first Slavic trebnik, printed in Cyrillic under the patronage of the Montenegrin ruler Gyurg Crnoević in 1495–1496, a text that has not been preserved with its original features and in full in any known copy. Its contents are still being reconstructed<sup>29</sup>. This prayer book remained a model for the printed trebniks of Božidar Vuković, dating from 1538–1540, and Jacob Kraykov's trebnik published in 1570. They all contain the sacrament of unction, a separate liturgical rite for unction over deceased monks and laypersons, with the permission prayer of Michael Aschalonus added to that rite. Despite V. Mošin's opinion that, in the printed Mileševa trebnik of 1545 (which generally has a different order of the prayers and altered content) the prayer is attached to the rite of unction, detailed analysis shows that it has the usual placement in this product of the local Serbian printing houses in the Balkans<sup>30</sup>. We also find it in the printed Prayer Book from Targovište, 1545, after *Чинъ бѣываемъи на всѣбщеніе масляно оумръштимъ иннокимъ*

<sup>26</sup> А.И. Алмазов, *Тайная исповедь...*, vol. II, p. 225.

<sup>27</sup> Е. НЕМИРОВСКИЙ, *Славянские издания кирилловского (церковнославянского) шрифта 1491–2000. Инвентарь сохранившихся экземпляров и указатель литературы*, vol. I, (1491–1550), Москва 2009, p. 142.

<sup>28</sup> А.И. Алмазов, *Тайная исповедь...*, vol. II, p. 269–271; vol. III, *Приложения*, p. 77. This is precisely under the title of Раздрѣшеніе, Absolution, and referring to курь Михаила Ясхалона that we find it in the Monk David's Trebnik, ff. 159v–160r. Consequently, the composition of the trebnik is distinguished by the most up-to-date repentance models of that time.

<sup>29</sup> *Молитвеник Ђурђа Црнојевића 1495/96. Факсимилно издање*, ed. К. Мано-Зиси, Подгорица–Цетине 1993; Вл. Мошин, *Још о реконструкцији Црнојевићева Требника 1495 године*, Биб 3–4, 1964, p. 199–204.

<sup>30</sup> The most complete copy of this edition in Bulgaria is found in the collection of the Church Historical and Archive Institute of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in Sofia, № 192. It was printed by deacons Damyan and Milan at the order of Hegumen Daniil in the Monastery of Mileševa, where a printing workshop functioned in the 1540s.

и БЕЛЦЕМЬ<sup>31</sup>. It was copied in prayer manuscripts and liturgical books since the 15<sup>th</sup> century and later, surrounded by confessional prayers of pardon or prayers for ‘various purposes’. It is also testified to in the above mentioned trebnik M10, which contains the copy of *A Very Useful Confession for Unction*<sup>32</sup>. All the facts support A. Almazov’s opinion that the prayer represents a charter of indulgence – if not after death, at least before an impending death<sup>33</sup>. Its importance for our topic lies in the fact that it illustrates the development of Slavic repentance models in the age of the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, as well as the impossibility of identifying these models with any precision in relation to the Greek tradition. To this day, it has not been established who the Michael in question was, whose second name is spelled variously as *Aschalon*, *Ascholon*, and even *Chalon*<sup>34</sup>. The assumptions range from this being a fictional character to the name being a sort of pseudo-attribution or an incorrect identification with Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos (1206–1212), who indeed created similar models of prayers<sup>35</sup>.

### Some linguistic peculiarities of the main source

Coming back to *A Very Useful Confession for Unction*, we may point out its following peculiarities:

1. Prayers of confession in general were a sort of manual of Christian morality. It could hardly be said the rhetorical device of using similar endings was systematically applied in this particular prayer. But indisputably the *Very Useful Confession for Unction* is a model of the mentioned accumulation of sins. The connection with the confessional formula is evident most of all in the designations of the carnal sins placed foremost in the enumeration, some of which are precise equivalents of the respective Greek terms in the discipline of repentance: ПРЪЛЮБОДЪВАНІЕ (μοιχεία), БЛЖДЪ (порнеія), МЖЖЕЛОЖІЕ (άρρενοκοιτία), КРЪВОМЪСІЕ (αίμομιξία), СКОТОЛОЖІЕ (κτηνοβατία), РЖКОВЛЖДІЕ (μαλακία). They were influenced by the seminal *Rules of Repentance* by John the Faster, which developed the liturgical and disciplinary-canonical aspect of penitence simultaneously in connection with the imposition of penance<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> I. BIANU, N. HODOȘ, *Bibliografia Românească Veche. 1508–1830*, vol. I, (1508–1716), București 1903, p. 23–29.

<sup>32</sup> Л. МАКАРИЈОСКА, Б. ПАВЛЕСКА-ГЕОРГИЕВСКА, *Лексиката на средновековните...*, p. 102.

<sup>33</sup> А.И. АЛМАЗОВ, *Тайная исповедь...*, vol. II, p. 269.

<sup>34</sup> P.P. PANAITESCU, *Manuscrisele slave din Biblioteca Academiei RPR*, vol. II, București 2006, p. 328, according to 15<sup>th</sup> century Missal № 496, f. 51v.

<sup>35</sup> А.И. АЛМАЗОВ, *Тайная исповедь...*, vol. II, p. 196, 267.

<sup>36</sup> Fr. VAN DE PAVERD, *The Kanonarium by John, Monk and Deacon and Didascalia Patrum*, Rome 2006, p. 77–93.

The positioning of carnal sins in first place suggests a monastic environment, in which such texts were most often disseminated, inasmuch as a monk had to break all ties with the world and to preserve his physical and moral purity. The fasting scheme of John the Faster, exceptionally important, was contained in practically all confessional regulations and compilations of penances known in the Slavic literary tradition.

2. Secondly, we note some *nomina personalia* (common nouns for persons) describing the perpetrators of a certain sin or the carriers of negative qualities. The search for Greek prototypes is a difficult task but the Greek terms in the indicated semantic fields are abundantly present in the mentioned prayers of Simeon Metaphrastes and Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos. We see blocks of similarly ending lexemes: *златолюбвѣць, славолюбвѣць, сребролюбвѣць; грьдѣнини и смѣхочѣтворѣць; самогадѣць* ‘who eats apart from the fraternity’<sup>37</sup>, *скорогадѣць* ‘who is gluttonous and eats quickly’; *братроненавистѣтникъ, клеветѣтникъ, лжкаводобѣтътникъ* ‘who deceives for material benefit’, *подъхубѣтникъ* ‘a flatterer, servile person’, *прѣклетѣвѣтникъ* ‘a person who curses, utters false oaths and curses’, *самохотѣтникъ* ‘a reclusive, selfish person’, *тъщеславѣтникъ* ‘vain, proud person’, *хульѣтникъ* ‘a person who slanders, insults’. The text comports a rich layer of epithets with positive or negative meanings, built upon two of the most frequent Old Bulgarian models for the creation of composite words referring to ethical concepts. Those with first component *вѣсь-* and *прѣ-*, such as *вѣсьсвѣщенъ, вѣсьщедръ, прѣблагъ, прѣпросвѣщенъ, прѣчистъ,* refer to spiritual advisors and clergymen who perform the sacramental rites and grant absolution, while the sinner is qualified as *вѣсьсквернъ* ‘entirely foul, vile, lowly, impure’, *вѣсьслуга диаволоу* ‘a servant of the Devil in all things’, *вѣсьокаанъ* ‘entirely abject’, *трѣокаанъ* ‘thrice abject’, etc. They express the notion of completeness, fullness, a superlative degree of the positive or negative trait they designate.
3. One of the typical stylistic devices used in this type of prayers is the accumulation of stable phrases and biblical idioms that suggest the depth and all-encompassing nature of sin, the chronification of the sinful state. This is achieved through the use of key words referring to time, space and a person’s age in order to define sin as an eternal condition present since the beginning of existence. Examples from other similar prayer patterns: *по всѣ дни и по всѣ ноци и по всѣ часы; от юности до старости, многожды многыхъ, тысяща тысящами, тмы тьмами, нажвѣ и въ смѣ,* and others<sup>38</sup>. From the Vladislav the Grammarian’s copy: *въскѣнь моиѣ ѿтѣво и дшею, еше и тѣломь; ѿ прѣваго възраста*

<sup>37</sup> Л. МАКАРИЈОСКА, Б. ПАВЛЕСКА-ГЕОРГИЕВСКА, *Лексиката на средновековните...*, p. 130, translated as “greedy, selfish”.

<sup>38</sup> E. KOSCHMIEDER, *Grammatischer Prosareim...*, p. 335–356.

моѣго; єдинъ вѣдѣ въсѣхъ зѣмльнѣхъ стъгрѣши люто; не вѣ днѣ и не вѣ нощѣ  
ниже пакы чась, въ нже не ѡврътѣхъ се грѣхѣмъ работая; земля и нѣбо и сѣнце  
и мѣць и звѣзды и море и рѣкы и вѣсны възвѣстѣ на мѣ; тысоуше тысоушамы  
крати себе проклѣнахъ, въ ѣже прѣстѣти ми ѡ лоукавы дѣлы мой, и пакы по  
въсѣ часы прѣстоупникъ клѣтвѣ ѡврътѣхъ се. Stylistic opposition helps to skill-  
fully weave verbal rhetoric, as не тѣкмо нѣ и. Contrasting symbolic opposi-  
tions point out that sin turns man from the Grace of baptism to the lows of evil:  
храмъ бж҃ги — вртѣпъ нечѣсть и сквѣрньнъ развоиникѣ. Among the expressive  
devices of the Confession is found a paraphrase of the famous Old Testament  
biblical simile оумножише се паче власъ главы моеѣ везаконїа моѣ ‘my sins have  
multiplied more than the hairs of my head’ (as in Ps 39: 13, αἱ ἀνομίαι μου, καὶ  
οὐκ ἠδυνήθην τοῦ βλέπειν· ἐπληθύνθησαν ὑπὲρ τὰς τρίχας τῆς κεφαλῆς μου)<sup>39</sup>.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt, that *A Very Useful Confession for Unction for Every Christian, for the Black and White Clergy* was purposefully introduced in the Monk David’s Trebnik and reflects current textual additions to the basic composition of the Slavonic Trebnik. The text supplements the picture of Vladislav the Grammatian’s literary activity, but testifies as well to the important aspects of the medieval mentality. It might be assumed with greater certainty that this was one of the last texts copied by Deacon Vladislav, but to what extent it was in the nature of a personal prayer of repentance can hardly be established. If we are guided by the fact that the anointing of the sick takes place after communion is given, including the last one, that it cures bodily and mental diseases, this question would not be deprived of logic, although it cannot be answered definitively. The currently incomplete source base for the distribution of the prayer exemplar locates its known copies in the Western Bulgarian regions and parts of Northern Macedonia. With these regions the scribe himself is closely connected. Before the identification of the copy in the Monk David’s Trebnik, G. Dančev pointed to the lack of any precise information about the life and the activity of Vladislav the Grammatian after 1480<sup>40</sup>. The text published here is a piece addition to the obscure moments in his biography. Beyond the biographical aspect, the studied text gains importance for several reasons. Firstly, it enriches the understanding of the development trends in the penitential texts of the Slavonic South and their dynamics after the era of the great flowering of liturgical literature in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. South Slavic translations of Greek texts featuring an accumulation of sins, and perhaps also some original Slavic compilations, establish a link with the prevalent

<sup>39</sup> *Septuagint*, Greek-English Old Testament, <http://www.elopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp> [12 XII 2022].

<sup>40</sup> Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Владислав Граматик...*, p. 30.

in East Slavic literature *ponovlenia* (renewals) – preliminary questionnaires with the fullest possible nomenclature of human sins, which the confessant reads aloud if literate, or repeats after the priest if not. Their profiling for different age and social groups, for men and for women, is a further important stage in the development of the pattern of the accumulation of sins in direct relation both to the rite of confession and to the nomocanons. The model of *ponovlenie* was not commonly spread on the Balkan<sup>41</sup>, but the enrichment of the penitential prayer patterns of the Slavic South with the enumeration of sins illustrates the general historical genesis of the confession as a liturgical sacrament and of the penance as its disciplinary form. Secondly, the text under study reveals the rich vocabulary of human sinfulness and the developed stylistics of the rhetorical prose in a Slavic context. Thirdly, it leaves open the question of Greek-Slavic interactions in the liturgical literature, which did not cease to be a major factor in the development of the Slavonic Trebnik after the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when, under Ottoman domination, this liturgical book acquired a more utilitarian character with the expansion of the cycle of prayers ‘for every need’, the inclusion of apocryphal texts, and became closer to the everyday life of the ordinary Christians<sup>42</sup>.

The text under study demonstrates the active *manifestation of the ability of inner self-preservation*<sup>43</sup> in the spiritual traditions of the Southern Slavs during the whole 15<sup>th</sup> century, the guardians of which were monasteries and the literature they produced.

### Appendix. Diplomatic edition of the text as preserved in the source

(Monk David's Trebnik, Ms. Slav. 1/42 from Rila Monastery)

The publishing principles aim to reproduce the graphic characteristics of the text as accurately as possible. The edition does not give the end of the line or the page. The original orthography, text segmentation and superscripts are preserved without keeping neither stylistic allographs of the letters ѿ, ѡ, and ѣ, nor the ligatures.

ИСПОВѢДАНІЕ СЪЛѠ ПОЛЪСНО, ХОТЕЩОМОУ СЪОЕ МАСЛО СЪЫТИ ВЪСАКОМОУ ХРІСТІА-  
НИНОУ, ЧРЪНЦОУ И ВЪЛЦОУ ПРЪЖДЕ ПОМАЗАНІА ГЛАВЪ, СТАВЪ ПОСРЪДЪ, СЕДМЫ СЩЕН-  
НИКЪ. И НАЧВНЕТЪ СЪ ОУМИЛІЕНІЕМЪ И СЪ СТРАХЪМЪ БЖІЕМЪ ВЪКОУПЪКЪ И СЪ СЛЪЗЪМИ  
ИСПОВѢДАЕ СЕ ГЛАТИ СІЦЕ:~

<sup>41</sup> М. КОРОГОДИНА, *Исповедь в России в XIV–XIX вв. Исследование и тексты*, Санкт Петербург 2006, р. 22; ИДЕМ, *Исповедные тексты в Сербии и на Руси (по рукописным материалам, хранящимся на территории России, ЦСту 1, 2004, р. 131–136.*

<sup>42</sup> М. ШНИТЕР, *Молитва и магия...*, р. 14, 69, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Б. ХРИСТОВА, *Българската книжнина и култура през XV в., [in:] Българският петнадесети век. Сборник с доклади за българска обща и културна история през XV в., ed. Б. ХРИСТОВА, А. МИНЧЕВА, Б. РАЙКОВ, Кл. ИВАНОВА, София 1993, р. 117.*

Бжтвенїи ѡцї и вѣкы мой, вѣсєсѣщенїи и прѣпросвѣщенїи, слоугы прѣчїстїи и животворєщїи гѣ бѣ и спса нашего і҃ѣ хѣ тайнѣ. Ѣже азъ вѣсєскверннїи и ѡмраченнїи, и вѣсєслоугѣ лоукавому дїаволоу выхѣ въ хотѣнїе. призвѣвшоу ми вѣсь помолїти вѣсєцєдраго и прѣвѣлаго бѣ нашѣ, о̄ избавленїи вєсчїслннїи и лютїихъ мой съгрѣшенїи. въ помазанїе моеѣ ѡкааннѣе главы. паче же вѣсь сє поврѣзаю прѣ ст҃ыми ѡбразы вашими моле сє и призыває и мїла сє дѣкѣ. хѣѡпѣннаа мїрдїа ваша ст҃аа ѡверѣкте, и вѣлюбивѣе ваше слоухы. и моє морскѣе гл҃ы исповѣданїа вѣноушїтє. прѣвое исповѣданїе мойхъ съдѣанїи, великїи и вєсчїслннїи. вѣсѣхъ прѣвѣзвыдохъ вєзоумнїи съгрѣшенїемъ и нечїстотоу. вѣсѣмъ моимъ итѣво и дшѣю, ещє и тѣломъ трѣѡкааннїи азъ вѣлага ми и прѣвѣлаго вѣкы моего и бѣ вєзаконно прогнѣвахъ. і҃ако ни єдинъ ѡ вѣка съгрѣшїи. нѣ і҃ако вѣласть їмоуше ѡ вєзмѣрнѣе влѣтїи бжїе, понїже оученїци єгѡ єстє, раздрѣшїтє, даръ тѣ їмоуше ѡ ст҃го дхѣ, мноу исповѣданныѣ грѣхы. дадїтє ми прѣщєнїе и ѡставленїе ѡкааннѣе, Ѣже хѣшоу вѣзвѣстїтїи вашєи ст҃їни, лютїи вѣ истїноу и непрѣщєннїи мой вєзаконїи. и сїхъ ст҃ы мїлѣвѣ. сѣщенїчєскоу ю сїю кнїгоу и помазанїе, вѣ ѡсѣнїе вѣвшаго ѡ вѣ мѣсла. оѣтїтє скверннѣаго и нечїстагѣ, и непотрѣбнаго гѣоу и вѣмъ и оученїкѣмъ и равѣмъ єгѡ. и вѣспрїимѣтє мє ѡ храмїны тѣго оудалївша сє. и тѣжда сътворша сє тѣго оучєстца, за вєзбѣожное моє съдѣанїе. нїна бѣ прѣ прѣчїстїи вашими ѡбразы прѣстѣоу, і҃ако на стрѣшнѣмъ и нелицемѣрнѣмъ соудїшїи хѣ бѣ нашего. сїа вѣбѣшоמוу тѣмоу єдиномоу, їже и тайнаа ѡ сїца испїтоуѣ ѡкааннїе ми нечїстѣи дшѣ оѣбогыє моє. Сїє показѣти вѣмъ хѣшоу, ѡ чѣстїнїи ѡцїи съ смѣренїемъ и слѣзѣми мнѣогыми и съкроушенноу дшѣю. азъ ѡкааннїи ѡ прѣваго вѣзрѣста моего сѣмъ сѣбє вєзоумнїи рѣстлїхъ. и скверннѣе и нечїстѣе плѣтїи моєѣ ѡдеждѣоу ѡсквернїихъ. и како храмъ бжїи ст҃ымъ крѣщенїемъ выхъ, и сътворихъ сє врѣтопѣ нечїстѣи и скверннѣе развоїннїкѣ, нїна ст҃їи мой вѣкы и ѡцїи, вѣсѣ гла҃ти не їмамъ за нѣкыи здє равѣно прѣстѣоещїи намъ, да не каѣ наоучїтєлѣ воудѣоу їмъ вєзаконїю великоу. и їны на тѣо ражѣгоу. и вѣмѣстѣо ѡзлѣоленїа понєсоутѣ оумїленїе. єдинъ вѣо паче вѣсѣхъ зѣмльнїи съгрѣшїи люто. нѣ прѣмѣлѣчу и съкрѣю. прѣчаа же злаа исповѣдаю, и вѣпїю дрѣзновѣнно ѡ оученїци и сѣенїци гнїи. не бѣ днѣ и не бѣ нѣщѣ нїже пакы чѣсѣ, вѣ нже не ѡверѣтохъ сє грѣхѣоу равѣотає. а соудѣа вжїа и чѣса съмрѣтнагѣ нїколіже на оумъ не прїєхъ. ѡ юнаго ми вѣзрѣста даже и до нїна оудѣе тѣлєсноє съврѣшаю. когда прѣкѣвѣданїе. ѡвогда влоудѣ. їногда моужелѣжїе и крѣвомѣсїе. нѣкогда скѣтолѣжїе. роуковлоудїе мнѣогажїи мнѣога, и вѣсѣакыє поганїе стрѣ азъ непотрѣбнѣи съдѣахъ. не тѣкѣно ѡтрѣчищє рѣстлїхъ, нѣ и дрѣгаа силнѣїшаа. не тѣкѣно моу дшѣ ѡсквернїи, нѣ и сїхъ стїими злѣбамїи дїаволоу прѣдѣахъ. и мнѣѣкѣ їныхъ дшѣ ѡ бѣ ѡтоуждїи наоученїемъ моимъ лоукавѣи, кѣ грѣхѣоу прївѣдєщє їхъ. по вѣсєгда на дѣланїе злѣбное и волю дїаволоу потыкає їхъ. нїже дшѣгоубїа непрїчєстѣнъ выхъ. и ещє влѣхвоанїа и чарѣдѣанїа и дрѣоугаа кѣ сїмъ вєзмѣстнѣа мнѣогаа оуѣвы мнѣ съдѣває, повѣжїенїю вѣсѣакомоу ѡдѣахъ сє ѡкааннїи азъ. ѡкааннѣе и грѣшнїи вѣ вѣсѣ члѣвѣкѣ. оумножїшє сє паче вѣлѣсѣ главы моєѣ вєзаконїа моє. вѣзвїнгоути

помирачѣннѣи ѿчи мой на нѣса не смѣю, ѿ стоудныѣ и проклѣтыѣ дѣлы мой. коа оубо ѿ злоба, юже азъ не сътвори и не творюу паче и доселѣ днѣ. коѣ ѿ злое же азъ не въобразихъ. и на въсакъ чае же въобразажоу въ ѿкаанноую мою дшѣ. коемоу безаконію и ѿскверненію и нечистотѣ не быхъ азъ оудникъ и наоучитель. и како мооу покаати се ѿ мой дѣлы нечистѣи, и ѿ иныхъ ихже наоучихъ равно дѣлають и тѣи покаанію и исповѣданію неслышавшюу ми, еже съдѣахъ азъ лоукавыи. не тѣкмо съ члѣскыи невои тоужаа боу сътворихъ. нѣ и съ скотоу азъ оуниаи, клеветникъ. азъ лѣжныи съхранитель. азъ хоульникъ и прѣклѣтовникъ. грьдыни и смѣхоутворецъ и дѣлатель. послихавъ пианица, блудникъ. чрѣвоу работае. мнѣго съна трѣвоуе, мръзкъ ненавистникъ. сребролюбъць златолюбъць. и мнѣи мнѣго любви, ꙗко никто же ѿ члѣк: славолубъць тыщеславникъ, хоульникъ, лоукавъ. братоненавистникъ, похъбникъ. самохотникъ, гнѣбави. скории злодѣи, и посоплявни. скорогадыць самогадыць. тать, хъщникъ, неправедникъ. лоуководовытникъ. нѣ на въсе ли страсти хошоу глаати, иже ѿбладаютъ ми ѿкаанною дшѣю и тѣломъ. ѿ моа безаконіа. ѿ моа съдѣаніа лоукаваа, твореннаа мнооу лоукавыи и поганимъ. и помышляю оутраю ли се днѣ оноу и ноци, въ нѣ же съдѣа зла и лоукаваа моа дѣла. нѣ въдѣ извѣстно, и сѣа ме хоте ѿличити. и исповѣде на ме безаконіа моа, иже нѣи не хощешюу ми глаю боу и вашии стѣсти. не оумилчитъ во тогда ни днѣ ни ноць, ниже пакы часъ. въпѣ съ агглатъ егѣ на ме сквернаго. и гдѣ оукръити се илѣ оубѣгнути и мамъ, земля и нѣо и слнце и мѣцъ и звѣзды и море и рѣкы и вѣзныѣ възпыію на ме. и сѣго ради въемъ вѣгодарованныи вѣмъ ѿ ба даръ вѣзати и рѣшити вины члѣскыихъ съгрѣшеней. еже во свѣжете на земли, и на нѣсехъ свѣзано ѿ. и еже разрѣшите на земли, разрѣшено ѿ и на нѣсехъ. и призвѣваше вѣголювѣи ѿ чѣстнѣи ѿци, ꙗко да мѣрдаго и прѣвѣлаго ба помолите ѿ мнѣ ѿкаанноу. и дасте ми разрѣшеніе и прощеніе моимъ грѣхомъ. мнѣго во можеть мѣтва праведнаго. въсѣго бо себѣ непотрѣбна сътворихъ боу и члѣкомъ. въсакъ оудѣ ѿсквернихъ и растлѣи и истѣшихъ. и быхъ дѣлатель въ вѣсемъ дѣавлоу. и вѣщше ихже изглахъ съдѣахъ, непотрѣбныи и нечистѣи и въсѣѿкаанныи азъ. ниже прѣстахъ когда не дѣлае безаконное дѣло съ тоуждѣи ми женами иноозычныи. и съ моужьскыи дѣтѣми. оубѣдающе въ срѣци моѣмъ лоукаваа исплетѣнѣа. непотрѣбнаа и мръскаа съвлажнѣнѣа. тѣло же смрадное моѣ, оукрашаю въсѣю сѣлоу моѣю и пищюу и тоукомъ. и вонями самовонныи въсакыи и мнѣгыи смѣшеныи ароматы. да сѣце привлѣкоу въ тлѣнѣи дшѣ тоуждыихъ. нѣ иже и страха бжѣа никѣлиже прѣ ѿчима моима поставихъ. да въспомѣноу соудѣища бжѣа, и възданіа съдѣаныхъ мой. тысоуше тысоушыми крѣти себѣ проклѣнахъ, въ еже прѣстѣти ми ѿ лоукавыѣ дѣлы мой, и пакы по въсе часы прѣстоупникъ клѣтвѣ върѣтахъ се. и егѣже зрѣхъ творѣща мѣтѣнию. постъ и дѣнѣи, то ѣлико по силѣ моѣи ѿвращѣа ѿ пѣти права, и моѣи погѣности оучахъ и привлѣа ѿсоуждае и нѣхъ, а самъ ѿсоужденъ ѣсмъ. въ вѣсемъ поѣбѣнъ вѣсѣомъ быхъ, и съ вѣсакыи тыщаніемъ самъ себѣ оудалихъ ѿ ба. тѣмъ же гѣсподѣе и вѣкы и слоужителѣе ба вѣшнаго, оуцѣдрите ме смѣреннаго и оуниаго. ꙗкоже хѣ блудницѣ оноу и развѣбника прѣе

мáлaгo рaдн̄ ѡпoвѣдáнїa. сн̄цѣ и вѣ хвѣпѣбнїцн̄ и мѣнѣ прїїмáтѣ и прoстїтѣ. и прївѣдѣтѣ вѣ ѡтрадoу, ѡ ннѣ же ѡзвѣдохъ безoумнїи. и дáроуѣтѣ мнѣ прoщѣнїѣ и ѡстáвлѣнїѣ грѣхoвмъ н̄х же ѡпoвѣдáхъ. и спoбн̄тѣ мѣ стѣмн̄и вáшн̄ми мл̄твáми сѣгo прѣстѣгo мáслa помáзáнїю. и помoлїтѣ вѣсѣблáгo и незлoблївáгo бá и гá нáшeгo їѣ хá дá вѣспрїїмѣтѣ ѡ тoплoтѣ сїѣ покáанїѣ мoѣ прїнoсїмoѣ. и спoбн̄тѣ мѣ прїчѣстнїкa вѣтн̄и стѣхъ єгo и прѣчн̄стѣ и стрáшн̄н̄ и бескрѣвн̄н̄ тáинн̄. дá и áзъ дрoззвoвѣннo стъ вáми вѣспoю и прoслáвлю ѡмѣ ѡцá и снá и стѣгo дхá. нн̄тá и пр̄но и вѣ вѣкн̄и вѣкoвмъ áмн̄н̄.

тáже прїїдѣтѣ поклонїм сѣ цр̄ю нáшeмoу бoу. Г. и ѡсл̄шн̄ гн̄ прáвд̄ш̄ мю: и тáкo по сѣмъ, прo. и ап̄лы. и єв̄лїа, съ мл̄твáми. по рѣдоу:~

## Bibliography

- ALMAZOV A.I., *Tajnaja ispoved' v pravoslavnoj vostočnoj cerkvi. Opyt vnešnej istorii*, vol. II, *Specialnye ustavy*, vol. III, *Priloženija*, Odessa 1894.
- ARRANC M., *Istoričeskie zametki o činoposledovanijah tainstv po rukopisjam Grečeskogo Evhologija*, Leningrad 1979.
- BIANU I., HODOȘ N., *Bibliografia Românească Veche. 1508–1830*, vol. I, (1508–1716), București 1903.
- CHRISTOVA B., *Bălgarskata knižnina i kultura prez XV vek*, [in:] *Bălgarskijat petnadeseti vek. Sbornik s dokladi za bălgarska obšta i kulturna istorija prez XV vek*, ed. B. CHRISTOVA, A. MINČEVA, B. RAJKOV, Kl. IVANOVA, Sofija 1993, p. 117–123.
- CHRISTOVA B., *Opis na rākopisite na Vladislav Gramatik*, Veliko Tārnovo 1996.
- CHRISTOVA B., *Vladislav Gramatik i rilskijat knižoven centār*, [in:] *Rilski manastir. Jubileen vestnik. Specialno izdanie, posveteno na naučnata sesija "Rilskijat manastir v istorijata i kulturata na bălgarskija narod"*, Sofija 1981.
- CIBRANSKA M., *Za edin molitven tekst avtograf na Vladislav Gramatik*, "Български език" / "Bălgarski ezik" 5, 1997–1998, p. 58–63.
- DANČEV G., *Osobenosti na pripiskite i beležkite v sbornicite na Vladislav Gramatik – izvor na svedenija za negovite kulturni interesi i za kulturata u nas prez XV stoletie*, [in:] *Bălgarskijat petnadeseti vek. Sbornik s dokladi za bălgarska obšta i kulturna istorija prez XV vek*, ed. B. CHRISTOVA, A. MINČEVA, B. RAJKOV, Kl. IVANOVA, Sofija 1993, p. 181–187.
- DANČEV G., *Vladislav Gramatik. Knižovnik i pisatel*, Sofija 1969.
- GOŠEV I., *Stari zapisi i nadpisi*, "Годишник на Софийския университет. Богословски факултет" / "Godišnik na Sofijskija universitet. Bogoslovski fakultet" 4.1, 1927, p. 336–378.
- GRKOVIĆ-MEJĐOR J., *Spisi Dimitrija Kantakuzina i Vladislava Gramatika*, Beograd 1993.
- IORGA N., *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucarest 1935.
- KATIČIĆ R., *Σχήματα Γοργεία u jednoj staroslavenskoj ispovednoj molitvi*, "Slovo" 6–8, 1957, p. 236–245.
- KOROGODINA M., *Ispoved' v Rosii v XI–XIX vv. Issledovanie i teksty*, Sankt Peterburg 2006.
- KOROGODINA M., *Ispovednye teksty v Serbii i na Rus (po rukopisnym materialam, chranjaščimsja na territorii Rossii)*, "Црквене студије" / "Crkvene studije" 1, 2004, p. 131–136.




- KOROGODINA M., *Problemy isučeniya russkikh srednevekovykh tekstov kak istoričeskogo istočnika*, [in:] *Russkij istoričeskij sbornik*, vol. II, ed. V.M. LAVROV, Moskva 2010, p. 110–120.
- KOSCHMIEDER E., *Grammatischer Prosareim in Kirchenslavischen Beichtgebeten*, “Byzantinische Zeitschrift” 44, 1951, p. 334–342, <https://doi.org/10.1515/bz-1951-1243>
- MAKARIJOSKA L., PAVLESKA-GEORGIEVSKA B., *Leksikata na srednevekovnite molitvenici*, Skopje 2021.
- Molitvenik Đurđa Crnojevića 1495/96. Faksimilno izdanje*, ed. K. MANO-ZISI, Podgorica–Cetine 1993.
- MOŠIN VI., *Još o rekonstrukciji Crnojeviheva Trebnika 1495 godine*, “Библиотекар” / “Bibliotekar” 3–4, 1964, p. 199–204.
- NAHTIGAL R., *Euchologium Sinaiticum. Starocerkvenoslovanski glagolski spomenik*, vol. II, *Tekst s komentarjem*, Ljubljana 1942.
- NEMIROVSKIJ E., *Slavjanske izdanija kirillovskogo (cerkovnoslavjanskogo) šrifta 1491–2000. Inventar sohranivšichsja eksempljarov i ukazatel' literatury*, vol. I, (1491–1550), Moskva 2009.
- NICEPHORI CALLISTI XANTHOPULI, *Precatio confessoria*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXLVII, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, Paris 1865, col. 591–600.
- PANAITESCU P.P., *Manuscritele slave din Biblioteca Academiei RPR*, vol. II, București 2006.
- POP-ATANASOV G., MILOVSKA D., *Novi listovi od Premčanskiot trebnik (pergamenten kniževen spomenik od XIII vek)*, “Кирилметодиевистика” / “Kirilometodievistika” 1, 2003, p. 135–186.
- Praznichen miney na Božidar Vukovič Podgoričanin ot 1538*, ed. M. POLMIROVA, Podgorica–Sofija 2021.
- RAYKOV B., KODOV Ch., CHRISTOVA B., *Slavjanski rakopisi v Rilskija manastir*, vol. I, Sofija 1986.
- Septuagint*, Greek-English Old Testament, <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp> [12 XII 2022].
- SIMIĆ Pr., *Trebnik srpske redakcije XIII v.*, “Зборник историје књижевности” / “Zbornik istorije književnosti” 10, 1976, p. 53–87.
- SNITTER M., *Molitva i magija*, Sofija 2001.
- SPROSTRANOV E., *Opis na rākopisite v bibliotekata na Rilskija manastir*, Sofija 1902.
- STANKOVA R., *Starobālgarskoto knižovno nasledstvo v srābski prepisi ot XIII i načaloto na XIV v.*, “Електронно списание LiterNet” / “Elektronno spisanie LiterNet”, 02 I 2004, № 1.50, <https://litenet.bg/publish4/rtrifonova/stb.htm> [12 I 2023].
- SYMEONIS METAPHRASTAE, *Precationes*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, Paris 1857, col. 219–224.
- ТКАЧЕНКО А.А., *Eleosvjašenje*, [in:] *Pravoslavnaja Ėnciklopedija*, vol. XVIII, Moskva 2008, p. 325–337.
- ТУРИЛОВ А., *Vladislav Gramatik*, [in:] *Pravoslavnaja ėnciklopedija*, vol. IX, Moskva 2005, p. 99–101.
- VAN DE PAVERD Fr., *The Kanonarion by John, Monk and Deacon and Didascalia Patrum*, Rome 2006.

**Mariyana Tsibranska**

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
Institute for Bulgarian Studies  
Schipchenski prohod 52, bl 17  
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria  
[m.tsibranska@gmail.com](mailto:m.tsibranska@gmail.com)



John Wilkins (Exeter)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4371-2975>

## FOOD FOR LIFE: GALEN'S *ON HEALTH* (*DE SANITATE TUENDA*)

**Abstract.** In Galen's view, health was a natural state and disease unnatural. If a body became unwell, balance was best restored by adjustments to daily life, in particular to the environment, food and drink, exercise, sleep, physiological balance and mental health. If none of these worked, only then should drugs or more drastic treatments be considered. Galen sets out in *On Health* how the natural state is best preserved, starting from birth, through childhood, to adulthood and old age. There are several features to be noted, not least the relentlessly male focus (with childbirth the major area of consideration for women specifically) and the use of the idealised young man as the canon against which to measure all bodies. This latter feature has led commentators to suppose that Galen only has the leisured rich class in mind, wrongly I believe. Two recent translations in the Loeb series (Johnston) and in the CUP Galen series (Singer forthcoming) have made the text readily available to all, and further discussion is timely. In my paper I will focus on Galen's use of diet and massage to keep the body healthy. I shall also consider the unhealthy body which takes up the last three of the six books, as the life span nears later age and greater fragility. Even here, Galen prefers food and gentle remedies to bloodletting and drugs (which are in effect often stronger versions of food plants). Galen claims that this regime has kept him healthy for 50 years, despite his less than perfect constitution and lifestyle. He is thus a doctor who experiments on himself to promote a lifestyle which, he claims, should, after an initial assessment, maintain the patient without need of a doctor for life.

**Keywords:** ancient medicine, Greek medicine, Galen, *De Sanitate Tuenda*, health, disease, food

For the past 150 years, Galen has been on the back foot, rejected by medical science after the discovery of microbiological organisms. He was rejected too in Classics as an extensive writer in the rhetorical style of the second and third centuries AD, which supposedly lacked the ideal canonical qualities of the Classical Period. Furthermore, he was considered a technical writer who belonged to the Medical School rather than the Classics Department.

There are some exceptions to this, most notably the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* (CMG) published by the Berlin Academy for the past 100 years, and more recently the Budé Galen series and the new Cambridge Galen in Translation (first volume 2013), which has just brought out Peter Singer's translation of *Health* (*San. Tu.*).

Things however are changing. Canonical texts have ceded ground to works written in the Greco-Roman period and in later Antiquity. And in medical science, there is more recognition than 60 years ago of the contribution of lifestyle to mortality rates. Medical success in areas of multiple deprivation such as Glasgow in the UK is limited, while depression, diabetes and heart disease are major challenges in all five continents according to the WHO, all caused or exacerbated by the way of life in modern societies. Poorer countries suffer more from the challenges Galen himself faced, neonatal mortality for mother and baby in particular.

In this chapter I want to explore how Galen might contribute to good health in the modern world (along with Ayurvedic and TCM probably). I begin with some basic comments on pharmacology, and then move to deeper reflection of Galen's methods for preserving health, with drug remedies only a final resort. In a final coda I suggest that Galen's approach to balance in medicine and his belief in health as a natural state may contribute something to modern health systems which are overburdened by diseases generated by modern ways of living in more wealthy countries.

### Galen's pharmacology

Galen's understanding of how drugs work is based on 'mixtures' of the 'qualities' heating, cooling, moistening and drying. A world apart from microbiology. But what both drug systems have in common are preparations or isolated products from plants, animals and minerals. Manuela Marai<sup>1</sup> notes that in the period 1981 to 2014, 73% of drug products commercially available were plant-based<sup>2</sup>. A few examples: Yew (*Taxus spp*) was known to Galen as a toxin; it has proved a valuable drug in chemotherapy. *Artemisia spp.* (wormwood and related plants) were known to Galen as a heating and drying plant: it has been found to be efficacious by Chinese doctors in the treatment of malaria. Willow bark, efficacious for Galen, is isolated as a painkiller in the drug aspirin. Finally *Vinca spp* were known to Galen (SMT 12.31): a member of that family, *Vinca rosea* has been found an effective treatment for childhood leukaemia<sup>3</sup>. These are similar plant families used in deeply different medical systems, ancient and modern.

Another approach to understanding ancient drug therapy has recently opened up. Manuela Marai<sup>4</sup> has found that a preparation for healing wounds in Galen's therapeutic work *De methodo medendi* and in his *Compound Medicines according to Place* shows a consistency of approach. A green plaster found in 160 formulations

<sup>1</sup> M. MARAI, *A Green Plaster for Wound Healing. Antimicrobial Formulations and the Use of Plant Resins in Graeco-Roman medicine*, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/publicengagement/impact/material\\_musings/2023/#March](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/publicengagement/impact/material_musings/2023/#March) [31 V 2023].

<sup>2</sup> See also G.E. TREASE, W.C. EVANS, *Pharmacognosy*, London 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 423–424.

<sup>4</sup> M. MARAI, *A Green Plaster for...*

for certain compound drugs has common features, Marai has found. Common elements are a beeswax base, a drying element (often copper compounds) and plant resins. These recipes are used in plasters to restore tissue and heal wounds or ulcers. Marai has followed work by the microbiologist Freya Harrison as applied to some Mediaeval recipes in the UK. Experiments show that the compounds contain microbial properties which act against infection. This constitutes a modern scientific understanding of compounds conceived by Galen in his completely different system. Key features here are consistency across Galen's recipes and a possible measure of efficacy.

A related study by Effie Photos-Jones<sup>5</sup> has shown that Lemnian Earth, as described by Galen and identified at a sanctuary on Lemnos that had exclusive mining rights, might be seen to be effective in modern scientific terms. Galen tells us (SMT 12.169) that when the priestess of Artemis received the clay from the miners, she gave in exchange cereal grains. She then set up the drying and authenticating process, which produced discs of clay with a seal of Artemis stamped in it. Galen describes the clay and the cereal grains very precisely. Microbial action may have resulted from *Penicillium* fungi linked with the rotting cereal grains that had been added to the reserves of Lemnian Earth.

A further project in Prague on the reconstruction of ancient perfume manufacture within a modern scientific framework has shown how the resins mentioned in Marai's ingredients, for example, can be found to be efficacious in certain preparations<sup>6</sup>.

### Galen on preserving good health

These studies all explore how Galen's drugs might in a modern methodology be understood to work. I turn now to the much lower level of proof needed to understand Galen's advice on preventive medicine. This involves ways of life and ways of living, with drugs only called upon in exceptional cases where things have gone wrong. The major feature here is the concept of *συνμετρία* or balance.

In Galen's view, health was a natural state and disease unnatural. If a body became unwell, balance was best restored by adjustments to daily life, in particular to the environment, food and drink, exercise, sleep, physiological balance and mental health. These are the six necessary activities, later known as Galen's six non-naturals. They are activities, *ἐνέργειαι*, in the sense of an action which acts on the body in actuality rather than potentially, for which Galen's word, after Aristotle, is *δύναμις*. If none of these worked, only then should drugs or more

<sup>5</sup> E. PHOTOS-JONES, *Pigments Giving More than Colour: the Case of Lemnian Earth or miltos*, Tech 14, 2023, p. 123–136.

<sup>6</sup> R.J. LITTMAN, J. SILVERSTEIN, D. GOLDSMITH, S. COUGHLIN, H. MASHALY, *Eau de Cleopatra. Mendesian Perfume and Tell Timai*, NEA 84.3, 2021, p. 216–229.

drastic treatments be considered. Galen sets out in *On Health* how the natural state is best preserved, starting from birth, through childhood, to adulthood and old age. There are several features to be noted, not least the relentlessly male focus (with childbirth the major area of consideration for women specifically) and the use of the idealised young man as the canon against which to measure all bodies. This latter feature has led commentators to suppose that Galen only has the leisured rich class in mind, wrongly I believe.

This discussion is timely since two recent translations have appeared, one in the Loeb series, by Ian Johnston<sup>7</sup> and one in the Cambridge Galen in Translation series<sup>8</sup>. These translations have made the text readily available to all, the former using more technical medical vocabulary for the general reader. These translations replace R.M. Green 1951<sup>9</sup>, which in attempting to mediate Galen to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, does not translate technical terms consistently and also introduces some plants not known to the ancient world. The translations benefit from the excellent CMG edition of Helmreich 1923<sup>10</sup>.

Galen's study of preserving health is based on his model of the human body, which sustains itself, as noted above, through 'mixtures' of 'qualities', of which the predominant are heating, cooling, drying and moistening. Deriving ultimately from the four elements earth, air, fire and water, these qualities govern stability and change in the body, each body being different and natural to itself, as Galen sets out in his treatise *Mixtures*, itself recently translated by Peter Singer in the CGT series. Rebalancing the body may require bathing, modifications in diet or drug therapy, depending upon the severity of the disruption to the body's individual natural balance: fevers for example are a major challenge, 'fatigue' to which I return below a moderately serious condition, and the daily restoration of energy to the body taken up in movement of the muscles and maintaining body heat is a routine demand but a matter of restoring the body's substance rather than a change or challenge. In the words of Galen's proemium to SMT, a drug changes the body, whereas a food maintains it. Galen discusses this process of replacing lost energy in the body at the beginning of *San. Tu.* (1.3), and this typifies his approach to physiology in this particular treatise. It is the background nature of the body, on which the natural and necessary activities act. Food and drink are part of the essential maintenance of the body: as Galen says. All animals lose substance<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> GALEN, *Hygiene*, trans. I. JOHNSTON, Cambridge Massachusetts 2018 [= LCL].

<sup>8</sup> GALEN, *Writings on Health. Thrasybulus and Health*, trans. P.N. SINGER, Cambridge 2023 [= CGT].

<sup>9</sup> GALEN, *Hygiene*, trans. R.M. GREEN, Springfield 1951.

<sup>10</sup> *Galen De sanitate tuenda*, ed. G. HELMREICH, Lipsiae 1923 [= CMG, V.4.2].

<sup>11</sup> In this sense human beings like most if not all animals are 'needy', needing this energy replacement as part of being mortal. This divides humans and other animals from gods: in myth, human beings are particularly needy because their babies are helpless and take a long time to grow. In some respects human beings are the most needy of animals, as Protagoras suggests in the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus in Plato's *Protagoras*.

(οὐσία) through the loss of body heat and the effects of breathing and pulsation: such substance when replaced is not identical with what was lost but must be as close as possible (οικεῖος) to the original substance. Bread and cheese have very different substance from blood and bone, and so considerable change is needed in the digestive process, a change which if not perfectly conducted will produce 'residues' which may disrupt body systems. Food intake is one of the necessary activities, to which I now turn.

In this chapter I will focus on two of Galen's necessary activities, his use of diet and massage to keep the body healthy, and his concerns with mental health. I shall also consider the unhealthy body which takes up the last three of the six books. The book follows the life cycle from birth to old age: as the life span nears later age there is greater fragility. Even here, though, the body can be healthy. If other challenges face the body, Galen still prefers food and gentle remedies to bloodletting and drugs (which are often in effect stronger versions of food plants). The main challenge in this volume is 'fatigue', κόπος, arising from unbalanced exercise or inappropriate foods.

Galen claims that this regime has kept him healthy for 50 years, despite his less than perfect constitution and lifestyle (*Health* 5.1, 136.14–35 Helmreich, 6.308–9 K). He is thus a doctor who experiments on himself<sup>12</sup> to promote a lifestyle which, he claims (6.14, 197.15–7 Helmreich, 6.450 K), should, after an initial assessment, maintain the patient for life, without need of a doctor. Unless accidents befall, such as injury, plague, or indeed 'fatigue' from which Galen occasionally suffered<sup>13</sup>, so arduously did he attend to patients and research during the hours of night when he should have been asleep. Galen's best remedies to restore balance in mind and body are simple meals, bathing and massage. It should be noted that activities at the gymnasium and bath complex, most often in the afternoon in Greco-Roman cities, are a great preoccupation in Galen's advice on healthy living. He is building his lifestyle that is nicely balanced around the daily life of many people of all classes in Greco-Roman culture<sup>14</sup>. The bath-house is where moderate exercise could be undertaken and where bathing in waters of different temperature and even more so various kinds of massage could relax or close the pores in the skin and allow the body to retain or lose heat and also retain or lose certain bodily fluids. Particularly important in this regard is the removal of unhealthy fluids which had been created by excessive exercise, anger or imperfect digestion.

Massage is a procedure which dominates in books two and three of *San.Tu*. It is something which huge numbers of the population of cities undertook when they visited the public baths, normally in the afternoon. Wealthy people may have had private facilities in their villas. Galen refers to the well-known series of pools

<sup>12</sup> There are similar examples in *Alim.Fac.* and *SMT*.

<sup>13</sup> 136.27 Helmreich: 'fatigue' combined with fever.

<sup>14</sup> The wealthy, men and women, Imperial slaves, manual workers, to take some examples.

in the baths, ranging from cold to hot and steamy, but the massage is important in our treatise, to the extent that Galen investigates an early (non-medical) study by a trainer called Theon, and then extends his own advice. Massage provides a way of opening or closing the pores, depending on whether it is a dry massage, or the familiar massage with olive oil, and depending too on the vigour or gentleness with which the pressure of the masseur's hand is applied. Galen treats massage extensively also in SMT, in the second book, when he is considering how doctors assess the impact of treatments on the body and evaluate the evidence of certain medical techniques, making the point that drugs are as much a matter of technique and external treatment as internal applications. There too, an earlier study by the otherwise unknown Archidamus had provided misleading guidance in Galen's view, guidance which had been unwisely believed by the influential doctor of the fourth century BC, Diocles of Carystus<sup>15</sup>. Baths and massage are part of the treatment of wounds and ulcers also in *De methodo medendi* (MM). All this makes clear that Galen considers massage part of the doctor's repertoire of non-invasive therapy which can restore any imbalances in the body on a regular and non-invasive basis, just as eating provides regular maintenance of body systems on a daily basis, with no medical intervention needed unless inappropriate foods disrupt the digestive system and produce an imbalance in body heat, for example. Such an imbalance might lead to a fever, and then to a form of 'fatigue', which, again, is treatable within the gentle remedies of *San.Tu*.

The aim of all procedures in *San.Tu* is to maintain *συμμετρία* or balance<sup>16</sup>, and to restore it if it has been disturbed by disease or by an accident. Balance is particular to every body, as is the body's mixture; but for purposes of calibration, Galen develops the concept of the perfect balance of the body which is the standard, or *κάνων* in Greek. Galen derived it from the Canon of Polyclitus, a work based by the sculptor on his *doryphoros* which was cast in bronze in about 440 BC. The statue claimed to have perfect proportion between the parts of the body. Galen took this further and explored the internal proportions (*συμμετρία*) of the human body, that is the proportions between organs, external parts and the connective passages of the body. Singer<sup>17</sup> summaries the discussions of Galen in a number of treatises, to which we should add SMT, which refers to a standard without mentioning the spear-bearer explicitly (11.715 and 725 K)<sup>18</sup>. Such a body in perfect proportion will be trained from birth in the methods of balance, will be a body that does not have to work excessively, and will ideally be the body of a young man

<sup>15</sup> See Ph. VAN DER EIJK 2000.

<sup>16</sup> 1.5, 8.14–14.28 H, 6.13–29 K.

<sup>17</sup> P. SINGER 2018, p. 93.

<sup>18</sup> In SMT, Galen needs a standard body against which two measure drug action and drug intensity. On intensity see G. HÄRIG, *Bestimmung der Intensität im medizinischen System Galens. Ein Beitrag zur theoretischen Pharmakologie, Nosologie und Therapie in der Galenischen Medizin*, Berlin 1974.

who is living in a well-balanced environment. Such a person has a good chance of having a body that is 'well-fleshed' and 'with a good mixture'. Galen however has to modify and calibrate this ideal body in order to deal with the vast majority of human bodies which are sub-optimal. Such a perfect mixture is

the clearest proof that not even these [the single, fully finished mixtures] have absolutely the best mixture, since that state does not remain [long-term]; but we should accept first of all that there is change with age, with no life-stage ever remaining in the same state, but always tending towards a dryer state. Secondly, that there are differences for those asleep and those awake, in rest and in movement, and in the movements themselves. Then difference in the demands of hunger and thirst, or eating and drinking, or being full of food and of drink. And in addition to these, again, bathing, emotions, anxieties, distress, and all such things all but change the mixture at each turn (*San.Tu.* 1.5, 14.11–20 H, 6.28 K).

Galen adds to this modification in 1.6 the idea that different parts of the body have different mixtures: the head may be perfectly constituted, but the thorax, abdomen and genitals have poor mixtures.

Singer<sup>19</sup> adds to this picture the seasons and what we would call the climate and environment. Much of Galen's thought derives from the Hippocratic *Regimen* 3.68, though Galen ignores the 'Hippocratic' link on this occasion since he was doubtful about the authorship of the four Regimen treatises, based as they are on a cosmos composed of two elements only, fire and water. We shall see Galen in very 'Hippocratic' vein at *San.Tu.* 2.7 below. The body is affected by seasonal change and balance in the air and temperature. If we are to have a reasonably proportioned body inside and out we must also have a climate that is in no sense extreme, as, for example, Galen finds the cold of Germany and the heat of Libya to be (1.5). In addition to environmental change, our treatise is structured loosely around the seven ages of man, on which see Singer<sup>20</sup>. Galen broadly follows this structure through books 1–3, then, for later stages of life, the challenges tend to dominate, whether of exercise and fatigue or the body-changes which come with old age. Galen's overall model is the baby at the start of life with a warmer and moister nature, while the aged body is cooler and dryer. He has inherited this from the Hippocratic and other earlier authors.

At the beginning of life, then, babies need the best food, and a sense of rhythm from the earliest age. The best food is breastmilk, since it is closest in nature to the baby's own nature<sup>21</sup>. Galen envisages that either the mother or the wet nurse will feed the baby: this is one of the few occasions in the treatise in which women are mentioned, and it is in the context of reproduction as is often the case

<sup>19</sup> P.N. SINGER, *Time for the Ancients. Measurement, Theory, Experience*, Berlin 2022.

<sup>20</sup> On which see P.N. SINGER, *Time for the Ancients...*, p. 40–52. Singer discusses for example, Aristotle *Politics* 7.17, 1336b40–1337a1, Hippocrates, *De hebdomadibus*, along with *San.Tu.*

<sup>21</sup> Mother's milk is best: 1.7, 17.13–18.11, 6.35–6 K.



in Hippocratic and Galenic medicine. How the female body might be affected by food, employment or environment more widely is not considered.

Moderate movement and careful use of the voice are also desirable for the new baby (1.6, 18.13–4, 6.37 K). Massage should be administered, in a rhythmic form. The young person may need all sorts of other training in rhymes and orderly living, even including songs and ridiculous mimes at precincts of Asclepius. These too help to calm a troubled soul: 20.13–7 H, 6.41 K. At 20.31–21.3 H, 6.30 K, Galen advises further on the baby's mental well-being as follows:

Small children with the best constitution – for it is those that we are talking about – need considerable care to ensure there is no immoderate motion occurring in their souls [minds]. Since they do not yet have the ability to speak, they cry, shout, get angry and move erratically to show their distress. What they need must be provided on each occasion before their discomfort grows and the stronger and erratic movement involves the whole soul and the body.

This holistic view of balancing mind and body by attending closely to needs informs the whole treatise. Singer<sup>22</sup> has studied the many passages in *Health* in which Galen identifies rage, anger, grief and other emotions as a danger too wellbeing and conditions not only of the emotions but of the full body and soul complex of the individual. Singer shows that in this and other treatises Galen sees mental imbalances as a product of the physical body and its complex structures, in contrast with his psychological works<sup>23</sup> in which the soul is the object of investigation.

The nature of the human and animal body is such that exercise and the other non-naturals support and guarantee balance of mind and body:

The limbs at this [young] age reveal the extent to which our nature is suited to exercises. For not even if you locked up children would you be able to stop them running about and frisking like colts and calves. Nature is able to embed appropriate impulses for health and safety in all animals 19.4–9.

At an adolescent age, the young man needs further balancing, in particular at the gym and baths, especially at the right time of year that is best balanced, namely the spring. Galen details what is needed at 2.7: in order to follow the canon of Polyclitus (56.27–8 H, 6.126 K) the young man has the best chance if the location is moderate (56.33 H) as too the climate (56.34–6 H). It should be the middle of spring, preferably at midday, in a well-climatized building: this will ideally allow his body to be at a moderate temperature and in balance before the massage starts. Many more details follow, the intricacy of which is based on Galen's desire to set out what the best possible circumstances for maintaining what a balanced body

<sup>22</sup> P.N. SINGER, *The Essence of Rage: Galen on Emotional Disturbances and their Physical Correlates*, [in:] *Selfhood and the Soul*, ed. R. SEAFORD, J. WILKINS, M. WRIGHT, Cambridge 2017.

<sup>23</sup> GALEN, *Psychological Writings*, trans. P.N. SINGER, Ph. VAN DER EIJK, Cambridge 2013 [= CGT].

and mind need, from which to calibrate what an ordinary body will need with its minor imperfections.

There is less emphasis on age after this, and adverse balances, especially fatigue are addressed. They may be ulcerous, tensive or inflammatory. The first form, ulcerous fatigue, receives most of Galen's attention. There are facilities for people who do not submit willingly to certain procedures such as blood-letting: dietary and other adjustments, and substitutes are provided for those who cannot afford expensive drugs.

Ulcerous fatigue may have many causes, the most likely being poor digestion of food, excessive emotion or excessive exercise. The condition causes acrid fluids to build up in parts of the body, perhaps under the skin, in the joints, or within the muscles and their ligaments. The doctor needs to intervene in such cases and establish what the patient normally does in such circumstances. Has something unusual happened? Does the patient use vomiting or other evacuations to address the problem? Has the patient eaten anything unusual? Or drunk sweet wine rather than the usual wine? Bloodletting may be needed, failing which, massage, purges, fasting, rest and drug treatment should work as an alternative. Various drug recipes are proposed for such ulcerous fatigue: 'Diospolis', honey recipes, and a cat-mint and fir-cone recipe.

Before further corrective treatments are prescribed, Galen returns to the ages of man structure with modified diets suitable for the very old. Such people can maintain a balanced life, though with modifications such as wine to heat the body and massage to address dryness. Doctor Telephus, who is 80, continues to practice: he lives in a well organised house, cool in summer and warm in winter, walks round the city, and eats a diet of lighter foods, especially fish from rocky waters and birds, preferably from wild hills. At 100, the orator Antiochus has a similar routine and diet. He bathes more in summer than winter, eats vegetables and fish, and has bread soaked in wine for supper. Exercise and massage for both men are calibrated for their ages.

## **Coda**

The coda mentions some benefits which might accrue from the adoption of Galen's six non-naturals in 2023, as an analogue to run alongside biomedicine with all its remarkable insights and possibilities. Galen is not a threat or 'wrong' but a potential asset for modern health systems.

Before turning to our own times, I mention an engagement with Galen in Scotland during the First World War in Europe. The Scottish physician Arthur Brock treated victims of shell-shock and other traumas in the trench warfare of Northern France. In these early years of the development of Psychology, he used techniques such as talking therapy, engagement with nature and socialisation in order to restore troubled minds to calm and balance. One of his most influential patients

at the Craiglockart Hospital in Edinburgh was the war poet Wilfred Owen, who returned to the trenches and was killed. Brock's colleague, William Rivers, used slightly different techniques on his patients, among whom was the distinguished war poet Siegfried Sassoon. Rivers had helped to develop the new discipline at Cambridge University, and while interested in Jung and Freud, followed his own specialities of vision and neurosis.

Brock however had two major influences upon him. First the visionary sociologist and town planner, another Scotsman, Patrick Geddes, who believed that the urban poor had as much need of hygienic homes and green spaces, including gardens, as wealthy people, and persuaded the rich inhabitants of the Edinburgh New Town to finance slum-clearance and gardens in the notoriously unhealthy Old Town. Geddes also designed the town of Tel-Aviv and continued his work from Montpellier. Geddes believed in a big, socialised, community-based world within the terrible stresses of urbanisation and industrialisation in the Britain of the early twentieth century, rather like Ebenezer Howard, the designer of the Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn in the South of England. Brock was rather more utopian than Geddes, favouring countryside over town and tradition over modern industry.

His other influence was Galen. He translated *Natural Faculties* into English in the Loeb series in 1916, the only Galen volume in that series in the twentieth century and well into the twenty first. He might well have wished to translate *Health* for Loeb, had the opportunity arisen. He also produced Brock 1929<sup>24</sup>, a translation of selected works of ancient medicine by authors that he thought important. Galen figures extensively. Galen's approach to nature and the 'natural' human body resonated with Brock while he was treating minds shocked by the impact of industrialised warfare in the trenches of France.

Galen provided a way forward for mental health at one of the worst times in twentieth century history. More destruction was to follow of course. I believe that Galen may be able to inspire us in turn, in our own time, as we face the challenges of global warming and the damage done to natural and human systems by over-zealous industrial processes.

Galen's six non-naturals can, I believe, be integrated into life in most countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A survey taken on a non-controlled basis of 900 people in the UK<sup>25</sup> found that of the six non-naturals, the one that respondents found most urgent for them to address comes under the heading of exercise, in particular stress at work, which Galen might call 'fatigue', namely the fallout from actions followed with too much intensity.

<sup>24</sup> A. BROCK, *Greek Medicine. Being Extracts Illustrative of Authors from Hippocrates to Galen*, Dent 1929.

<sup>25</sup> D. MARSDEN, J. WILKINS, C. GILL, P. DIEPPE, *Galen and Wellbeing: Whole Person Care*, IJWPC 1.2, 2014, p. 76–78.

Many people who have heard a description of Galen's programme pronounce that it is 'common sense'. But of course human societies rarely follow common sense, if such a term has any meaning. The World Health Organisation predicts that the main causes of death in 2030 in all five inhabited continents of the world will be diseases caused in part by modern ways of living, namely heart disease, diabetes and depression, together with other mental health conditions.

To people likely to suffer such conditions, whether through their way of life, stress, subjection to advertising, or whatever it might be, Galen offers balance and moderation in all six relevant areas, not least in the unreasonable burdens imposed by employers. Even here, as with the ditch diggers and harvest workers, Galen had moderate measures to rebalance those involved in heavy manual work. As too with imperial slaves subject to an unreasonable emperor, as we have seen.

Furthermore, Galen's system offers integration of physical and mental health systems, which many health services do not offer in the modern world, as is well exemplified by an under-resourced mental health service in the UK. Galen's system was not his own invention, but was inherited from Hippocratic and other predecessors, including those with whom he strongly disagreed, such as Asclepiades of Bithynia and the Methodists. The message about moderation and balance comes from ancient medical thought more widely.

The key feature of Galen's system, along with balance and moderation, is that health is a recognisable state which is 'natural' and achievable for each individual from cradle to grave. The human body is an organic whole and not a machine like a car, to be serviced by a mechanic at regular intervals.

## Bibliography

- BROCK A., *Greek Medicine. Being Extracts Illustrative of Authors from Hippocrates to Galen*, Dent 1929.
- GALEN, *Hygiene*, trans. I. JOHNSTON, Cambridge Massachusetts 2018 [= Loeb Classical Library], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.galen-hygiene.2018>
- GALEN, *Hygiene*, trans. R.M. GREEN, Springfield 1951.
- GALEN, *On the Natural Faculties*, trans. A. BROCK, London–New York 1916 [= Loeb Classical Library, 71], [https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.galen-natural\\_faculties.1916](https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.galen-natural_faculties.1916)
- GALEN, *Psychological Writings*, trans. P.N. SINGER, Ph. VAN DER EIJK, Cambridge 2013 [= Cambridge Galen Translations].
- GALEN, *Works on Human Nature*, vol. I, *Mixtures. (De temperamentis)*, trans. P.N. SINGER, Ph. VAN DER EIJK, P. TASSINARI, Cambridge 2018 [= Cambridge Galen Translations].
- GALEN, *Writings on Health. Thrasybulus and Health*, trans. P.N. SINGER, Cambridge 2023 [= Cambridge Galen Translations].
- Galen De sanitate tuenda*, ed. G. HELMREICH, Lipsiae 1923 [= Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, V.4.2].
- HÄRIG G., *Bestimmung der Intensität im medizinischen System Galens. Ein Beitrag zur theoretischen Pharmakologie, Nosologie und Therapie in der Galenischen Medizin*, Berlin 1974.


- LITTMAN R.J., SILVERSTEIN J., GOLDSMITH D., COUGHLIN S., MASHALY H., *Eau de Cleopatra. Mendesian Perfume and Tell Timai*, “Near Eastern Archaeology” 84.3, 2021, p. 216–229, <https://doi.org/10.1086/715345>
- MARAI M., *A Green Plaster for Wound Healing. Antimicrobial Formulations and the Use of Plant Resins in Graeco-Roman medicine*, [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/publicengagement/impact/material\\_musings/2023/#March](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/research/publicengagement/impact/material_musings/2023/#March) [31 V 2023].
- MARSDEN D., WILKINS J., GILL C., DIEPPE P., *Galen and Wellbeing: Whole Person Care*, “The International Journal of Whole Person Care” 1.2, 2014, p. 76–78, <https://doi.org/10.26443/ijwpc.v1i2.84>
- PHOTOS-JONES E., *Pigments Giving More than Colour: the Case of Lemnian Earth or milto*, “Technai” 14, 2023, p. 123–136.
- SINGER P.N., *The Essence of Rage: Galen on Emotional Disturbances and their Physical Correlates*, [in:] *Selfhood and the Soul*, ed. R. SEAFORD, J. WILKINS, M. WRIGHT, Cambridge 2017, p. 161–196, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198777250.003.0010>
- SINGER P.N., *Time for the Ancients. Measurement, Theory, Experience*, Berlin 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110752397>
- TREASE G.E., EVANS W.C., *Pharmacognosy*, London 2009.

**John Wilkins**

University of Exeter  
Department of Classics and Ancient History  
Room 342, Amory Building  
Rennes Drive  
Streatham Campus Exeter EX4 4RJ, Great Britain  
J.M.Wilkins@exeter.ac.uk



Luca Zavagno (Ankara)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2450-3182>

## “THE NAVIGATORS”. MEDITERRANEAN CITIES AND URBAN SPACES IN THE PASSAGE FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (CA. 600 – CA. 850 CE)\*

**Abstract.** The aim of the paper is to reassess urban trajectories in the Mediterranean during the passage from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. This will be done by focusing on the sites of Amorium, Gortyn, Eleutherna, and Comacchio, places which transcend both the terrestrial and maritime, and the political and military frontiers of the Byzantine empire and the Umayyad Caliphate. Archaeology and material culture will be used – in a comparative perspective – to dissect urban bodies in terms of use of space and function of spatial relationship. This is in order to document the construction of urban models, structures, and infrastructures, which, although often stemming from diverse centralized political and administrative policies, nevertheless accommodated common, cross-cultural developments, including the creation of commercial and artisanal facilities, construction or restoration of religious buildings as foci of settlement, and resilience of local elites as a catalyst of patronage and levels of demand.

Particular attention will be given to the role of public spaces as the frame of reference. Indeed, such spaces will be used to show how artistic and architectural displays operated, cultural assumptions could be (re-) discussed, and different types of buildings coexisted.

In this respect, the paper will also explore the continuous importance of civic infrastructures and religious buildings as pillars of a yet coherent urban fabric, representatives of the power and wealth of local city-oriented elites, and conveyors of political, artistic, and spatial symbolism, as mutually recognized and experienced by the communities frequenting seventh-to-ninth century eastern Mediterranean urban spaces.

**Keywords:** city, Byzantium, urbanism, spatiality, regionalism

**In** this contribution, I propose to examine the unfolding of urban trajectories in the Byzantine Mediterranean during the passage from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. I would like, in fact, to stress that my title takes its cue from

---

\* A shorter draft of this paper was presented at the V Colloquia Ceranea International Conference, May 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> 2023.

a movie directed by Ken Loach in 2001<sup>1</sup>. The movie follows the lives of five English rail workers as they experience the Thatcherian privatization of British Railways, which broke up into separate companies that must tender with the lowest bidder for getting jobs. Indeed, the film takes its name from the navigators (or better, the ‘navvies’), the manual laborers that built Britain’s rail system in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Here, Loach clearly refers to the political and economic building block of post-War English society (the working class), which has to cope with or better “navigate through” the devastating effects of the neo-liberal “age of change”. The former comradeship, political solidarity, and past socio-economic rights gave way to the galloping corporatization of profits as the fierce competition between former friends became the tragic rule of the day (until one of the workers was killed in an accident caused by profit-driven lack of security procedures)<sup>2</sup>.

I decided to adopt Loach’s cinematic metaphor to reassess the transformations experienced by the Byzantine cities – as one of the main political, social, and economic building blocks of the empire – roughly in the centuries spanning between Phocas (602–610) and Basil I (868–886)<sup>3</sup>. This was an age of political, administrative, and cultural change for an empire that would not die<sup>4</sup>. According to recent historiography, this change led to the emergence of Orthodox Byzantium and the creation of a Greek-speaking “Romanland” whose culture was predicated upon a Christian-Roman identity<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, it interspersed with the transformation of the basic pattern of Mediterranean exchange (in particular, after the 500 in its western half and 700 in its eastern one)<sup>6</sup>.

Although this did not entail that a Pirennian divide fell on the Mediterranean, it nevertheless ushered in the establishment of two – rather self-sufficient – complex inter-regional exchange networks, which lasted well into the twelfth century. The larger Caliphal one centered on the southern and eastern coastlines of the Mediterranean, and the less complex Byzantine one, revolved around the Aegean and Thyrrenian basins (with an offshoot in the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean)<sup>7</sup>. Such a systemic change partially stemmed from the demographic consequences of the so-called Justinianic Plague (whose intermittent waves lasted into the eighth century)<sup>8</sup> as well as the existential threats the empire had to

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0279977/> [17 V 2023].

<sup>2</sup> J. HILL, *Ken Loach. The Politics of Film and Television*, London 2019, p. 393–457.

<sup>3</sup> L. ZAVAGNO, *Cities in Transition. Urbanism in Byzantium between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (AD 500–900)*, Oxford 2009 [= BAR, 2023], p. 1–31.

<sup>4</sup> J. HALDON, *The Empire that Would Not Die. The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival 640–740*, Cambridge Massachusetts 2016.

<sup>5</sup> M. WHITTON, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600–1025*, London 1995; A. KALDELLIS, *Romanland. Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, London 2019.

<sup>6</sup> C. WICKHAM, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800*, Oxford 2005, p. 708–774.

<sup>7</sup> IDEM, *The Donkey and the Boat. Reinterpreting the Mediterranean Economy, 950–1180*, Oxford 2023.

<sup>8</sup> P. SARRIS, *Viewpoint New Approaches to the ‘Plague of Justinian’*, PP 254.1, 2022, p. 315–346 with further and detailed bibliography.

face for less than forty years in the first half of the seventh century. First, the “last great war of Antiquity” (with the Persian Sassanid), and the subsequent arrival of the Army of the Caliph (occurring a few decades after the Avar-Slavic invasions in the Balkans). The latter led to catastrophic territorial losses (followed by a forfeiture to two-thirds of the fiscal income)<sup>9</sup> and a military retrenchment behind an Arab-Byzantine frontier that crisscrossed the south-eastern Anatolian plateau<sup>10</sup>. Finally, scholars have also recently started weighing in the environmental, especially climatic, disruptions on a Mediterranean scale and beyond as investigated through palynological, biological, and geological proxy data for the period here under scrutiny<sup>11</sup>.

Often, the abovementioned changes were labeled as a collapse of the imperial edifice; in fact, a historiographic re-assessment of the so-called Byzantine Dark Ages has highlighted that collapse is a rather ambiguous term<sup>12</sup>. It is worthwhile to draw attention to the lack of documentary evidence, but it is critical to stress the growing body of archaeology and material culture, which have shed new light on the economy of the period, the role and transformation of the Byzantine elites, the systems of patronage as well as social life at rural and above all urban level<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, and with regard to urbanism and urban landscape, the Late Roman mosaic of cities that carpeted the floor of the imperial socio-political and economic edifice went through a dramatic transition<sup>14</sup>.

In this sense, the trajectories of urbanism in both Byzantine and Islamic exchange networks have often been characterized by the long debate on the social, political, economic, as well as urbanistic and architectural nature of the passage from Classical polis to Medieval city<sup>15</sup>. For the Islamic world, the argument has concerned the transition from “*polis* to *Madina*” as recently reassessed in terms of a smooth transition largely independent from (and not generated by) the Islamic

<sup>9</sup> A. LAIOU, C. MORRISSON, *The Byzantine Economy*, Oxford 2007 [= CMT], p. 38–42.

<sup>10</sup> H. KENNEDY, J. HALDON, *The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. H. KENNEDY, Burlington 2006, p. 79–116; A. EGER, *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier. Interaction and Exchange among Christian and Muslim Communities*, London 2015; IDEM, *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers: An Introduction*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers. From the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea*, ed. IDEM, Louisville 2019, p. 3–29.

<sup>11</sup> J. HALDON et al., *The Climate and Environment of Byzantine Anatolia: Integrating Science, History, and Archaeology*, *JH* 45.2, 2014, p. 113–161.

<sup>12</sup> It is not by chance that during *Colloquia Ceranea V* John Haldon has advocated for a dismissive use of the term collapse for indeed it misrepresents chronology and complexity to change (as well as the perceptions of changes within the society at large).

<sup>13</sup> M. DECKER, *The Byzantine Dark Ages*, London–New York 2016, p. 187–194.

<sup>14</sup> E. ZANINI, *Coming to the End: Early Byzantine Cities after the mid-6<sup>th</sup> Century*, [in:] *Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, 22–27 August 2016). Plenary Papers*, ed. S. MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ, Belgrade 2016, p. 127–143.

<sup>15</sup> F. CURTA, *Postcards from Maurilia or the Historiography of the Dark-age Cities of Byzantium*, *EJPCA* 6, 2016, p. 89–110.



conquest and not related to the religious change from Christianity to Islam<sup>16</sup>; for Byzantium, the focus has been traditionally on the famous juxtaposition between “continuists” (stressing that cities did survive physically after Late Antiquity) and “discontinuists” arguing for a total collapse of the antique urban organization and of social and economic life in the period under scrutiny<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, this juxtaposition (which I will return to later) must be regarded as simply unproductive to any serious efforts to analyze the causes and effects of the transition of cities in terms of social structures, planning, and urban fabric<sup>18</sup>. After all, as Martínez Jiménez concludes, what we often regard as *the slow decline of Roman towns was a process of transformation away from classical monumentality; so, what truly changed Roman towns into Christian (and Muslim) Medieval ones were [not periods of crisis] but those of stability and urban renewal (like the [...] Umayyad ones)*<sup>19</sup>.

Moreover, as the Byzantine exchange network was regarded as mainly centered around Constantinople, historiographical attention has been drawn to the trajectories of urban sites dotting the so-called Byzantine heartland (the Aegean and the Anatolian peninsula)<sup>20</sup>. In other words, the survival of Byzantine urbanism has often been identified with an evolutionary pattern based – on the one hand – on a sort of creative, cultural, and social imperative of Constantinopolitan life (regarded as the ideal and only City)<sup>21</sup>. In this light, other urban (provincial) sites were examined only as a makeshift reflection of the “City’s” one and revealed themselves in terms of imperial patronage or/and as centers of state administration, military machinery, and ecclesiastical hierarchies with defense as the main consideration in any urban definition<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> G. AVNI, “From Polis to Madina” Revisited – Urban Change in Byzantine and Early Islamic Palestine, *JRAS* 21.3, 2011, p. 301–329. See also A. WALMSLEY, *Early Islamic Syria. An Archaeological Assessment*, London 2007, p. 72–90. Moreover, Fanny Bessard has also recently stressed the importance of imperial elites’ patronage in the changes experienced by the topography and economic functionalities of early Islamic cities for *industries and marketplaces became increasingly significant sources of revenue for the authorities, which no longer derived their wealth solely from landownership* (see F. BESSARD, *Caliphs and Merchants. Cities and Economies of Power in the Near East (700–950)*, Oxford 2020 [= OSB], p. 58–59).

<sup>17</sup> See on this debate L. ZAVAGNO, *The Byzantine City from Heraclius to the Fourth Crusade, 610–1204. Urban Life after Antiquity*, London–New York 2021 [= NABHC], p. 38–81.

<sup>18</sup> H. W. DEX, *The Afterlife of the Roman City. Architecture and Ceremony in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2015.

<sup>19</sup> J. MARTÍNEZ JIMÉNEZ, *Crisis or Crises? The End of Roman Towns in Iberia, between the Late Roman and the Early Umayyad Period*, [in:] *Though Times. The Archeology of Crisis and Recovery. Proceedings of the Graduate Archaeology at Oxford Conferences in 2012 and 2011*, ed. E. M. VAN DER WILT, J. MARTÍNEZ JIMÉNEZ, with help from G. PETRUCCIOLI, Oxford 2013, p. 86.

<sup>20</sup> C. WICKHAM, *Framing...*, p. 29–31.

<sup>21</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Moving beyond the Invisible Cities of Byzantium*, *EJPCA* 10, 2020, p. 330–331.

<sup>22</sup> J. HOWARD JOHNSTON, *Authority and Control in the Interior of Asia Minor, Seventh-Ninth Centuries*, [in:] *Authority and Control in the Countryside. From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (6<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Century)*, ed. A. DELATRE, M. LEGENDRE, P. SJPESTEJIN, Leiden 2019 [= LSIS, 9],

In my opinion, and as partially hinted at already, such an analytical approach is deceptive as it simply accepts that Byzantine urbanism was in a state of constant crisis from the late sixth century onwards<sup>23</sup>; furthermore, it dangerously bows towards the idea that, as Dey remarks: *there existed a single Byzantine paradigm that captured the variety of urban contexts that prevailed across the same geographical sweep in the seven and eighth century [and even beyond]*<sup>24</sup>. This is not to deny the importance of the so-called “thematic capitals” or the impact of the changes at an imperial level in a sort of ideological redefinition of the nature of urbanism post-Late antiquity<sup>25</sup>. Rather I would like to propose a more regionally based approach which should allow us to deal with the manifold realities of Byzantine urbanism on a Mediterranean geographical (and human) scale<sup>26</sup>. As Tsivikis concludes: *[only] in this way, we come face to face with the vast range of issues that the historical and archaeological record presents to the researcher of Byzantine urbanism*<sup>27</sup>.

In this regard, I would like to drive one last preliminary proviso home. Indeed, it seems to me that Byzantine historiography has preferred not to think of urban change and interaction in real terms. For instance, the juxtaposition between “continuists and discontinuists” I have already referred to has been trying to encapsulate urban developments into a single abstract form or model if only partially considering the reality on the ground (the regional and subregional incarnations of the urban) or, even more importantly, the different scales of abstractions<sup>28</sup>. The latter include the individual level (that is, the level of the inhabitants of the single city made visible by an archaeology of the people as opposed to that of monuments)<sup>29</sup>, the particularity of the circumstances (place and time), generalities (some characteristics which urban sites might have in common, like the presence of church buildings), the configuration of the elites (at local, imperial, and ecclesiastical level), and finally, the organization of element of urbanism on a human scale. As Ollman states:

---

p. 128–171; R. OUSTERHOUT, *Eastern Medieval Architecture. The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands*, Oxford 2019 [= OSHC], p. 333–352.

<sup>23</sup> C. BOURAS, *Aspects of the Byzantine City. Eighth to Fifteenth Century*, [in:] *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2002, p. 501.

<sup>24</sup> H. W. DEY, *The Afterlife...*, p. 127. On the definition and urbanism in “thematic capitals” see infra and N. TSIVIKIS, *Byzantine Medieval Cities: Amorion and the Middle Byzantine Provincial Capitals*, Berlin (forthcoming).

<sup>25</sup> R. OUSTERHOUT, *Eastern Medieval Architecture...*, p. 347. See also the all-encompassing and detailed analysis of the evolution of public spaces and infrastructures of the Late Antique city in L. LAVAN, *Public Space in the Late Antique City*, vol. I–II, Leiden 2021 [= LAA, 5].

<sup>26</sup> S. LOSEBY, *Mediterranean Cities*, [in:] *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. P. ROSSEAU, London 2009, p. 139–155.

<sup>27</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Moving beyond...*, p. 332.

<sup>28</sup> B. OLLMAN, *Dance in Dialectic. Steps in Marx’s Method*, Urbana–Chicago 2003, p. 60–63.

<sup>29</sup> E. ZANINI, *Appunti per una “archeologia del pane” nel Mediterraneo tardo antico*, [in:] *La Civiltà del Pane. Storia, tecniche e simboli dal Mediterraneo all’Atlantico Atti del convegno internazionale di studio (Brescia, 1–6 dicembre 2014)*, ed. G. ARCHETTI, Spoleto 2015, p. 373–375.

in these abstractions, certain spatial and temporal boundaries and connections stand out, just as others are obscure and even invisible, making what is in practice inseparable appear separate, and the historically specific features of things disappear behind their more general forms<sup>30</sup>.

There is no space here to fully explore the abovementioned connections and examine how these “real abstractions” posited the creation of ideological ones; nevertheless, upon focusing on a limited number of short key studies (Amorium, Comacchio, Gortyn, and Eleutherna). I will use archaeology and material culture to dissect urban bodies in comparative terms. This is in order to document the construction of urban models, structures, and infrastructures, which stemmed from diverse political and administrative policies. Particular attention will also be given to the role of fortifications as a frame of reference for public political life<sup>31</sup>. Defensive structures were not used not simply to stress the military importance of urban sites but also to show how architectural display operated as cultural assumptions could be (re-) discussed<sup>32</sup>.

In this respect, a view from the so-called insular and coastal “periphery” of the empire will help us to offset the pervasive role played by the thematic capitals of the heartland, allowing us to see how coherent urban fabric could operate, be recognized, and experienced by the communities frequenting the seventh-to-ninth century regional spaces belonging to a Byzantine *koine*<sup>33</sup>. The latter has been defined as encompassing liminal coastal spaces as well as insular communities, promoting social contact and cultural interchange as its archaeology and material indicators (in particular ceramics) suggest a certain common cultural unity, fluid socio-political identities, and peculiar administrative practices<sup>34</sup>. In fact, I will focus not only on a “thematic capital” located in the Anatolian part of the heartland (Amorium, the see of the *strategōs* of the Anatolikon) but also on Comacchio, Gortyn, and Eleutherna, three cities of the abovementioned *koine*.

My choice of sites is first and foremost expedient for at least three of the abovementioned sites we have good archaeology and extensive publication of

<sup>30</sup> B. OLLMAN, *Dance in Dialectic...*, p. 62.

<sup>31</sup> N. BAKIRTZIS, *The Practice, Perception and Experience of Byzantine Fortification*, [in:] *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. STEPHENSON, London–New York 2010, p. 352–376.

<sup>32</sup> IDEM, *The Visual Language of Fortification Façades: the Walls of Thessaloniki*, M&P 9, 2005, p. 15–32.

<sup>33</sup> M. VEIKOU, *Mediterranean Byzantine Ports and Harbors in the Complex Interplay between Environment and Society. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Cultural Considerations Based on Archeological Evidence from Greece, Cyprus and Asia Minor*, [in:] *Harbours and Maritime Networks as Complex Adaptive Systems*, ed. J. PREISER-KAPPELLER, F. DAIM, Mainz 2015, p. 51; P. DELOGU, *Questioni di Mare e di Costa*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro. Luoghi di scambio nell'Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 459–466.

<sup>34</sup> A. VIONIS, *Bridging the Early Medieval ‘Ceramic Gap’ in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> c.): Local and Global Phenomena*, HEROM.JHRMC 9, 2020, p. 291–397.

the material culture yielded over excavation campaigns which have been conducted for several years; this not to imply that other urban and urban-like settlements have not been the focus of detailed investigations (one can think for instance of Corinth and Ephesos as well as Butrint and Syracuse)<sup>35</sup>. However, the current selection of urban centers allows us to bracket off the supposed predominant role of fortifications for it pairs sites where militarization was only one of the characters in the development of the Byzantine urban fabric<sup>36</sup>. In this respect, the four key studies embodies different trajectories of urban resilience: a Late Antique city (without a Classical past) which successfully rippled through the military confrontation between Byzantines and Arabs on the Anatolian plateau (Amorium); a small "new settlement" economically active sprouting at the fringe of the imperial territories (Comacchio); finally, two cities (Gortyn and Eleutherna) whose fate did not hinge on a military confrontation along the maritime frontier but rather stemmed from the reorientation of the urban settlement pattern on one of the most important islands of the empire like Crete. Indeed, since three of my key studies were located on insular (or coastal) spatial nodes of commercial, non-commercial, religious, and cultural interactions, they show how provincial urbanism could navigate through the changes to the Byzantine political and administrative structures in a different way from a "thematic capital"<sup>37</sup>.

As a result, it will also be shown how the cities of the Byzantine *koine* could act as catalysts of socio-cultural, political, and economic interactions across the frontiers of a politically and economically fragmented Mediterranean<sup>38</sup>. Indeed, as will be seen, these urban sites were true "navigators" in an age of change (and crisis), for it was not simply their functional role within the imperial political and military superstructure to determine their fate. In fact, the look from a coastal-insular imperial edge will help us to better grasp the importance of their different geo-strategic positioning across regional and interregional shipping routes. This should help us to countermand the historiographical narrative of the survival of the "urban fittest" and reject a "biological" (and teleological) model of urbanism (birth, growth, and death as reflecting foundation, life, and decline of an urban entity)<sup>39</sup>. Rather, I will propose a view of cities as spaces where various lifecycles alternated as responses to the transformation of geo-political structures

<sup>35</sup> See M. DECKER, *The Byzantine Dark Ages...*, p. 81–122 with further and detailed bibliography.

<sup>36</sup> J. HALDON, *The End of Rome? The Transformation of the Eastern Empire in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries CE*, [in:] *The Roman Empire in Context. Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J.P. ARNASON, K. RAAFLAUB, Oxford 2011, p. 209–210.

<sup>37</sup> On the rather elusive and debated concept of Byzantine thematic capitals see N. TSIVIKIS, *Byzantine Medieval Cities...* (forthcoming).

<sup>38</sup> P. ARTHUR, *From Italy to the Aegean and back – Notes on the Archaeology of Byzantine Maritime Trade*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 337–352.

<sup>39</sup> S. GELICHI, *The Northern Adriatic Area between the Eighth and the Ninth Century. New Landscapes, New Cities*, [in:] *Byzantium, Venice and the Medieval Adriatic. Spheres of Maritime Power and Influence ca. 700–1453*, ed. M. SKOBLAR, Cambridge 2021, p. 117.

of political and military power; such responses had different regional and sub-regional tones and will allow us to fully grasp the change and interaction at the level of real abstractions.

Instead of one unified idea of what should constitute an urban community, diverging strategies can be recognized as [for instance], when rebuilding after a catastrophic event, urban palimpsests could be created from anew or, alternatively, the local population could prefer to retrace the original text<sup>40</sup>.

With all these provisos in mind, I would like to now begin with Amorium. More than forty years of urban archaeology have shown that the city was more than a simple military bulwark. Nor was it where religious and administrative authorities hastily sheltered behind walls in the face of the raids conducted by the Arabs across the Anatolian frontier<sup>41</sup>. One cannot simply assert that Amorium benefited from its position across the main military highway connecting Constantinople to the frontier during its development in the shadow of its own fortified Upper City from the mid-seventh century onwards<sup>42</sup>. In fact, a large bathhouse complex (in use until the late eighth century), the resilience of the Late Antique street grid, artisanal installations (with two different phases of occupation predicated upon the local agricultural surplus), evidence of locally-made pottery, and the presence of at least four churches (one of which was the seat of the local bishop) all point to a rather dense and cohesive urban landscape as the city was continuously frequented until the Arab sack of the city in 838 CE<sup>43</sup>. Urban fabric, city infrastructures, and built environment were encased by the extensive fifth-sixth century Lower City walls as Amorium's double-fortified urban cores could serve as a model for the development of other Byzantine "thematic capitals" like Corinth, Ankara, or Amastris<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> I. JACOBS, *Looking in Two Directions: Urban (Re)building in Sixth-century Asia Minor*, [in:] *Cities as Palimpsests? Responses to Antiquity in Eastern Mediterranean Urbanism*, ed. E. KEY FOWDEN, S. ÇAĞAPTAY, E. ZYCHOWICZ-COGHILL, L. BLANKE, Oxford 2022, p. 261.

<sup>41</sup> Z. DEMIREL-GÖKALP, N. TSIVIKIS, *Understanding Urban Transformation in Amorium from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions. XXIV International Byzantine Congress, Venice-Padua 22-27 August, 2022*, ed. E. FIORI, M. TRIZIO, Venice 2022, p. 325-345; K. BELKE, M. RESTLE, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. IV, *Galatien und Lykaonien*, Wien 1984, p. 71-83.

<sup>42</sup> K. BELKE, *Transport and Communication*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 30-32.

<sup>43</sup> F. CURTA, *Postcards from Maurilia...*, p. 100; C. LIGHTFOOT, M. LIGHTFOOT, *Amorium. An Archaeological Guide*, Istanbul 2007, p. 48-59.

<sup>44</sup> C. LIGHTFOOT, *Amorium*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia...*, p. 333-341; N. TSIVIKIS, *Amorium and the Ever-Changing Urban Space: From Early Byzantine Provincial City to Middle Provincial Capital*, [in:] *Space and Communities in Byzantine Anatolia. Papers from the Fifth International Sevgi Gönül Symposium*, ed. N. KONTOGIANNIS, T. UYAR, Istanbul 2021, p. 200-201.

If it is clear that the army acted as a stimulus for the local economy and it established a secure and fortified presence in the so-called Upper City, it can hardly be stated that the Byzantine high command withdrew from the site completely on the lookout for an unassailable setting uphill<sup>45</sup>. In fact, the Byzantine state also had a central role in planning and executing the complex Lower fortification system (as further restored in the late seventh/early eighth century)<sup>46</sup>. In this light, John Haldon has recently added nuance to the concept of the provincial military (or better thematic) capital after the collapse of the Eastern provinces in the seventh century<sup>47</sup>. So, Amorium should be regarded as an exception to a seventh-to-eighth-century pattern of configuration of urban life in Anatolia, recently described by Philippe Niewöhner as a largely deurbanized plateau<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, on the one hand, Amorium was a relatively minor center in the Hellenistic and Roman times (as nearby Pessinous was way more important well into the sixth century)<sup>49</sup>; on the other hand, the city took off in the seventh century due to its strategic and central (to Anatolian land-routes) position, but also despite the fact that it was not naturally defended, had no man-made water-supply infrastructures, and lacked Late Antique fortifications. More important, its countryside seems to have remained relatively unaffected by the seasonal Arab raids. Archaeology and material culture (as partially mentioned) point to an urban market supplied by local farmers as well as artisanal workshops processing local crops and manufacturing local amphorae for its transportation<sup>50</sup>; last but not least, one should also point to the Amorium's countryside – rich in water sources and host to a variety of (undefended) religious sites like Germia, where a church and a sanctuary dedicated to Saint Michael was uninterruptedly frequented by pilgrims for the entire Dark Ages<sup>51</sup>.

[It was only] after the tragic sack of 838 that the rise of a militarized provincial elite paired with the construction or remodeling of defensive installations around the principle of a central heavily-defended fortress of a more-or-less entirely military nature; a fortress that differed functionally from the upper city of the period before this<sup>52</sup>.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Amorium fulfilled a function as an administrative base behind the frontier for the state and its military apparatus and as integral to

<sup>45</sup> C. LIGHTFOOT, *The Survival of Cities in Byzantine Anatolia. The Case of Amorium*, B 68.1, 1998, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Amorium and the Ever-Changing...*, p. 201.

<sup>47</sup> J. HALDON, *What Was a Provincial Military Capital?*, [in:] *Byzantine Medieval Cities...* (forthcoming).

<sup>48</sup> P. NIEWÖHNER, *Urbanism*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia...*, p. 39–40.

<sup>49</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Amorium and the Ever-Changing...*, p. 192.

<sup>50</sup> C. LIGHTFOOT, *Business as Usual? Archaeological evidence for Byzantine Commercial Enterprise at Amorium in the Seventh to Eleventh Centuries*, [in:] *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, ed. C. MORRISON, Washington D.C. 2012 [= DOBSC], p. 177–191.

<sup>51</sup> P. NIEWÖHNER, *Germia*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia...*, p. 345–346.

<sup>52</sup> J. HALDON, *What Was a Provincial...* (forthcoming).

the Church institution. It is not by chance that the city offers an example of uninterrupted use of religious edifices and buildings as landmarks of resilient urban space<sup>53</sup>. An urban space which could be defined as Byzantine medieval and regarded as a distinctive notional and analytical category, in dialogue but also in occasional opposition with its Greco-Roman past<sup>54</sup>. In fact, if we move away from Anatolia and focus our attention on the so-called northern Adriatic crescent, we are confronted with urban functions and landscapes which did not hinge on the military and administrative reorganization of the Byzantine state<sup>55</sup>.

Built on a set of mounds surrounded by canals and marshes, Comacchio was located at the intersection of the fluvial, lagoon, and maritime routes linking the Po valley with the Adriatic (and the Mediterranean)<sup>56</sup>. Comacchio thrived at the interface between the Carolingian and the Byzantine political spheres of influence (and exchange/shipping networks). The rise of Comacchio mirrored the fall of Ravenna as the capital of the Byzantine exarchate in 751<sup>57</sup>. If Ravenna had maintained its central and ruling position in the Byzantine possessions in Italy, neither Comacchio nor (later) Venice might have existed or survived<sup>58</sup>. Indeed, although *magistri militum* are documented in the settlement (betraying a clear Byzantine political and ideological influence), its ruling class was generically described as *habitatores* in a diplomatic treaty with the Lombards dated to 715 (or 730) and *de facto* legislated their own conduct<sup>59</sup>. In fact, Comacchio developed (at least partially) urban functions framed by a vital economy based upon the trade relationship between the Western and Byzantine worlds<sup>60</sup>. The “Comacchiese” landscape

<sup>53</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Amorium and the Ever-Changing...*, p. 207; see in particular, E. IVISON, *Kirche und Religiöses Leben im Byzantinische Amorium*, [in:] *Byzanz. Das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, vol. II.1, ed. F. DAIM, J. DRAUSCHKE, Mainz 2010 [= MRGZ, 84], p. 309–343; E. IVISON, *Amorium in the Byzantine Dark Ages (Seventh to Ninth Centuries)*, [in:] *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlements in Europe and Byzantium*, vol. II, *Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans*, ed. J. HENNING, Berlin 2007, p. 25–59.

<sup>54</sup> N. TSIVIKIS, *Amorium and the Ever-Changing...*, p. 215.

<sup>55</sup> M. McCORMICK, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce AD 300–900*, Cambridge Massachusetts 2001, p. 361–369.

<sup>56</sup> S. GELICHI et al., *Castrum igne combussit. Comacchio fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, *ArM* 33, 2006, p. 77–80.

<sup>57</sup> J. HERRIN, *Ravenna. Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe*, Princeton 2020, p. 317–341; V. WEST-HARLING, *Rome, Ravenna and Venice, 750–1000. Byzantine Heritage, Imperial Present, and the Construction of City Identity*, Oxford 2020, p. 26–27, 101–102.

<sup>58</sup> C. WICKHAM, *Comacchio and the Central Mediterranean*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 507.

<sup>59</sup> S. GELICHI et al., *Castrum igne combussit...*, p. 75–77 (but he erroneously dates it to 740), and S. GELICHI, *Comacchio: A Liminal Community in a Nodal Point during the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Venice and its Neighbors from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Through Renovation and Continuity*, ed. S. GELICHI, S. GASPARRI, Leiden 2017 [= MMe, 111], p. 142–143. On origins of the treaty (so-called Liutprand's Capitulary) see also S. GELICHI, *Lupicinus presbiter. Una breve nota sulle istituzioni ecclesiastiche comacchiesi delle origini*, [in:] *Ricerca come incontro. Archeologi, paleografi e storici per Paolo Delogu*, ed. G. BARONE, A. ESPOSITO, C. FROVA, Rome 2013, p. 41–60.

<sup>60</sup> R. HODGES, *Adriatic Sea Trade in an European Perspective*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 229.

and socio-political fabric remind us of the so-called north European emporia: a polyfocal (“city of islands”) unfortified settlement accessible mainly by waterways, revolving around wooden structures (docks and quays) and characterized by large quantities of concentrated moveable wealth (with lack of important religious centers), specialized craft production, and above all, as McCormick concludes: *a convergent seasonal ecology of the three activities of salt making, shipping, and selling, [that] imposed a specialization of labor*<sup>61</sup>.

Ceramic evidence points to a good degree of local production as paired with imports like globular amphorae<sup>62</sup>. Indeed, it is not by chance that this typology of vessels has been identified as the main marker of the Byzantine *koine*, for they also paired with painted wares, ovoidal amphorae, and chafing dishes circulating throughout the Mediterranean as produced in various workshops (located in Cyprus as well as Crete, southern Anatolia, Cherson, and southern Italy)<sup>63</sup>. Globular amphorae point to what Vroom describes as *an intra-regional long-distance or cabotage movement [...] as well as an active interregional exchange between shipping zones (with overlapping networks of production and distribution)*<sup>64</sup>. Easy to handle during loading and unloading, often in simply equipped harbors (like the wooden docks of Comacchio), globular amphorae were manufactured between the seventh and the tenth century across the territories of the *koine* (with different types, styles, and morphology) and circulated extensively within the Byzantine exchange network<sup>65</sup>.

So Comacchio shows how a cityscape and built environment similar to those of contemporary northern European *emporion* could function in the Mediterranean, as ceramic evidence shows us that it tapped into the northern Adriatic exchange system, bridging into Lombard and later Carolingian economic spheres<sup>66</sup>.

If we move now to the eastern Mediterranean and to the island of Crete and the transformation of its urban settlement pattern, we are yet confronted by yet an “unreal abstraction”. This has to do with the idea that the seventh and eighth-century Arab raids hitting the Aegean (and Eastern Mediterranean at large) caused an abandonment of coastal sites and a sort of run to the hill on the part of the local inhabitants<sup>67</sup>; the demographic retrenchment has been, in this respect, linked to

<sup>61</sup> M. McCORMICK, *Comparing and Connecting: Comacchio and the Early Medieval Trading Towns*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 501.

<sup>62</sup> S. GELICHI, *Comacchio: A Liminal Community...*, p. 153–159.

<sup>63</sup> J. VROOM, *Ceramics*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia...*, p. 177–186.

<sup>64</sup> IDEM, *From One Coast to Another: Early Medieval Ceramics in the Southern Adriatic Region*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 391.

<sup>65</sup> C. NEGRELLI, *Towards a Definition of Early Medieval Pottery: Amphorae and Other Vessels in the Northern Adriatic between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro...*, p. 207–219.

<sup>66</sup> A. AUGENTI, *Città e Porti dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, Roma 2010, p. 152–157.

<sup>67</sup> C. TSGONAKI, A. SARRIS, *Recapturing the Dynamics of the Early Byzantine Settlements in Crete: Old Problems – New Interpretations through an Interdisciplinary Approach*, Unpublished Conference Paper LAC 2014, p. 1–11, <http://lac2014proceedings.nl/article/view/29/5> [1 V 2023].



the appearance of fortifications as erected in Cretan urban sites like Gortyn (the main political and religious center of the island on the southern-central Mesaoria plain) and Eleutherna (on the central mountain range)<sup>68</sup>.

In the case of Gortyn, one of the better-excavated sites for the period under examination, a portion of the city (the acropolis) was enclosed by a new set of walls; nevertheless, as it will be seen, Gortyn preserved a multifunctional image with different foci of settlement (both inside and outside the wall). A comparison with the but also well-excavated walls of Eleutherna allows us to reassess the impact of the fortifications as they did not simply entail the shrinking of the city and subsequent decline of the urban space, but rather the separation of controlled areas within the city<sup>69</sup>.

Through the study of the fortifications of other coastal sites (like Matala), the issue of the abandonment of the cities of Crete in the seventh century is placed on a new footing [for] strong similarities of the masonry style, building technique and general forms with Gortyn and Eleutherna postpone them to the seventh or beginning of the eighth century<sup>70</sup>.

Here it is also important to stress that – as partially mentioned above – the role and significance of fortifications as part of any urban landscape transcend the rather obvious issues of defense and protection<sup>71</sup>. As Bakirtzis has cogently shown in the case of urban settlements like Serres, Kavala, and above all, Thessaloniki, fortifications as a tool to control and protect strategic urban sites, were experienced on a daily basis and therefore became a vital part of local urban culture for their visual and theoretical image came to denote self-assurance and civic pride<sup>72</sup>. Moreover, their building technique and inclusion of *spolia* did not betray a lack of resources and hasty construction (pragmatism); rather, *spolia* were markers of a deliberate process of dialogue with a city's past (mnemonic), pursued through a careful selection (aesthetic) of those best pieces (antiquarianism) showcased and positioned in a way to exalt particular sections or areas of the city<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> A similar model of urban retrenchment from the coast has been proposed for Cyprus (see L. ZAVAGNO, *Cyprus and its Sisters. Reassessing the Role of Large Islands at the End of the Long Late Antiquity (ca. 600 – ca. 800)*, [in:] *Cyprus in the Long Late Antiquity. History and Archaeology between the Sixth and the Eighth Centuries*, ed. I. JACOBS, P. PANAYDES, Oxford 2023, p. 89–90.

<sup>69</sup> C. TSGONAKI, *Les Villes Crétoises aux VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: l'appart des recherches archéologiques à Eleutherna*, ASAAMIO 85, Serie III, 7, 2007, p. 296–297.

<sup>70</sup> C. TSGONAKI, A. SARRIS, *Recapturing...*, p. 6–7.

<sup>71</sup> C. TSGONAKI, *Crete. A Border at the Sea. Defensive Works and Landscape-Midscape Changes, Seventh–Eighth Centuries A.D.*, [in:] *Change and Resilience. The Occupation of Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. CAU ONTIVEROS, C. MAS FLORIT, Providence 2019, p. 165–168.

<sup>72</sup> N. BAKIRTZIS, *The Practice, Perception...*, p. 368.

<sup>73</sup> On the use and importance of *spolia* with relation to urban space and spatial politics see H. SARADI, *The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence*, *IJCT* 3.4, 1997, p. 395–423; M. VEIKOU, *Spatial Control and Formation of Public Space*, [in:] *Space*

This intertwined with the abovementioned issue of controlling the movement of people as often inscriptions embedded on walls (together with apotropaic crosses and even Christian "icons") indicates important passages (like city gates) to and from certain areas of the city. In other words, one should be careful and avoid equating the erection of fortifications as a sign of demographic decline, shrinking of the urban landscape, and/or abandonment of parts of former urban spaces<sup>74</sup>.

In this sense, the case of Gortyn is exemplary. Indeed, the coronation of the acropolis with a new ring of walls reminds us of the Upper City of Amorium<sup>75</sup>; however, contrary to the Anatolian city and its lack of substantial Greek and Roman urban landscape and fabric, the Gortynian urban space retained large parts of its "Classical" monumentality (for instance, the orthogonal road-network). It coexisted with artisanal workshops and commercial activities (as documented in the so-called Byzantine Houses) encroaching onto the public space and pointing to the considerable social and economic vitality of the ecclesiastical and administrative elites<sup>76</sup>.

Sigillographic evidence points to the presence of fiscal and military officials and possibly a concentration of the administrative and political function on the fortified acropolis in a similar way as in Eleutherna<sup>77</sup>. As Tsigonaki states: *the wall of Eleutherna is an integral part of the district it protected. Archaeological evidence [...] indicates that a monumental church, the buildings around it, and the wall belong to the same building program dated to the seventh century*<sup>78</sup>. However, in Gortyn, lead seals dated to the eighth century also point to the presence of the main ecclesiastical and governmental authorities: in particular, the Cretan *archontes*<sup>79</sup>. *Archontes* (a rather general term, indicating non-thematic military and political leaders in charge of the local government) coexisted with several military officials as found in other areas of the Byzantine *koine* as administering urban sites (like Palermo), archipelagos (like Malta or the Balearics), large islands

---

*and Communities...*, p. 477–499 and I. JEVTIC, S. YALMAN, *Spolia Reincarnated. Afterlives of Objects, Materials, and Spaces in Anatolia from Antiquity to the Ottoman Era*, Istanbul 2021.

<sup>74</sup> C. TSIGONAKI, *Crete. A Border at the Sea...*, p. 180; S. GALLIMORE, *The Transformation of Crete in Late Antiquity. Sixth–Tenth Centuries CE*, [in:] *Archaeology of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. A. CASTRORAO BARBA, D. TANASI, R. MICICCHÈ, Gainesville 2023, p. 55.

<sup>75</sup> R. PERNA, *L'Acropoli di Gortina. La Tavola "A" della carta archeologica delle città di Gortina*, Macerata 2012.

<sup>76</sup> F. CURTA, *Postcards from Maurilia...*, p. 96–98; E. ZANINI, *Macro-Economy, Micro-Ecology, and the Fate of Urbanized Landscape in Late Antique and Early Byzantine Crete*, [in:] *Change and Resilience...*, p. 156–158.

<sup>77</sup> D. TZOUGARAKIS, *Byzantine Lead Seals from Crete*, SBS 2, 1990, p. 137–152.

<sup>78</sup> C. TSIGONAKI, *Crete. A Border at the Sea...*, p. 172–175.

<sup>79</sup> S. COSENTINO, I. BALDINI, E. LIPPOLIS, G. MARSILI, E. SGARZI, *Gortina, Mitropolis e il suo Episcopato nel VII e nell'VIII secolo. Ricerche Preliminari*, ASAAMIO 90, Serie III, 12, 2012, p. 245–246.

(like Cyprus, Sardinia (in the ninth century) and, indeed, Crete) as well as military outposts (like Butrint)<sup>80</sup>.

The presence and importance of the *archontes* and members of the local bureaucratic machinery as well as army officials paired with the ecclesiastical authorities. In this sense, we should be reminded that Gortyn remained an important pilgrimage site as well as the seat of the Cretan archbishopric based in the large basilica of Mitropolis<sup>81</sup>. But Mitropolis was only one of several ecclesiastical *foci* of the city, as shown by the presence of urban monasteries (in the area of the former Praetorium), churches like the Basilica of Mavropapa, and several *diakoniai*<sup>82</sup>. One of these is indeed mentioned in the Life of the Cretan Archbishop Andreas (who lived in the first half of the ninth century)<sup>83</sup>. He seems to have sponsored a large spate of building activity focusing on the systematic restoration or erection of churches, including the construction of a large complex including a hospital and a church dedicated to the *Theotokos Blachernitissa* (possibly the modern church of Ayos Titos) with clear reference to the homonymous church in Constantinople<sup>84</sup>.

Indeed, Gortyn presents us with a polyfocal urban topography and an urban landscape, which seemed to have maintained its coherence in terms of fabric and morphology well into the eighth century<sup>85</sup>. In Gortyn, urban life seems to have “overflowed” the ring of seventh-century walls crowning the acropolis and developed throughout “islands” of socio-political patronage, elite and sub-elite residence, and artisanal and commercial activities which characterized its early medieval phase<sup>86</sup>. My reference to water is deliberate here, for in Gortyn we can document the restoration of the local water system in the sixth century<sup>87</sup>; by following the infrastructures that satisfied one of the most basic needs of the urban population, it is indeed possible to weave its structural elements (mainly aqueducts) into the city regarded as a “complex organism”<sup>88</sup>. The importance of water, and its structures are indicators of population levels, density, and occupation of the urban landscape as well as markers of the political status and power of new

<sup>80</sup> S. COSENTINO, *A Longer Antiquity? Cyprus, Insularity and the Economic Transition*, CCEC 43, 2013, p. 101–103.

<sup>81</sup> S. COSENTINO, I. BALDINI, E. LIPPOLIS, G. MARSILI, E. SGARZI, *Gortina, Mitropolis...*, p. 274.

<sup>82</sup> C. TSGONAKI, *Gortyn, Eleutherna, and their Neighbourhoods. The Politics of Transformation (Fourth to Early Ninth Centuries)*, [in:] *The Byzantine Neighbourhood. Urban Space and Political Action*, ed. F. KONDYLI, B. ANDERSON, London 2022 [= BBOS], p. 183–184.

<sup>83</sup> M.-F. AUZÉPY, *La carrière d'André de Crète*, BZ 88, 1995, p. 1–12.

<sup>84</sup> C. TSGONAKI, *Crete. A Border at the Sea...*, p. 168–174.

<sup>85</sup> S. COSENTINO, *From Gortyn to Heraklion? A Note on Cretan Urbanism during the 8<sup>th</sup> Century*, BΣΥΜ 29, 2019, p. 73–89.

<sup>86</sup> S. COSENTINO, I. BALDINI, E. LIPPOLIS, G. MARSILI, E. SGARZI, *Gortina, Mitropolis...*, p. 290–291.

<sup>87</sup> E. GIORGI, *Archeologia dell'acqua a Gortina di Creta in età protobizantina*, Oxford 2017; C. TSGONAKI, *Gortyn, Eleutherna...*, p. 180–184.

<sup>88</sup> E. GIORGI, *Archeologia...*, p. 7.

“powerful” individuals (*potentiores*); they presided over the management and location of the distributive outlets which in Gortyn also bespoke of a multifocal settlement pattern developing from the seventh century although within an impoverished and scattered urban fabric<sup>89</sup>.

Local, imperial, and ecclesiastical elites presided upon the resilience of the local economy by underpinning levels of demand and supply of local markets. Archaeology has shed light on an artisanal quarter (so-called Byzantine houses, which remained in use until the second half of the seventh century) and a large residential building (whose roof collapsed in the eighth century) whose material culture proved it was inhabited by individuals of high status<sup>90</sup>. Indeed, locally made globular amphorae (manufactured in other coastal sites of the islands like Pseira) and painted wares (and coarse wares) have been yielded in Gortynian production facilities (whereas a local production of amphorae has been documented in some Eleutherna workshops, where also a first attempt was made to manufacture glazed pottery during the early eighth century)<sup>91</sup>. It is also worth noticing that excavations in Gortyn have also yielded eighth-century Constantinopolitan Glazed White Wares as well as Egyptian Red Slip Wares that paired with Levantine ceramics and North African amphorae documented in other areas of Crete. These all point to *connections with regions under Arab control [for] political issues that define Byzantine Arab relations for much of this period did not necessarily stifle economic connectivity*<sup>92</sup>.

If Eleutherna seems to have survived (probably due to the continuous importance of its local bishop), Gortyn faded away as an urban center in the second half of the eighth century<sup>93</sup>. This had little to do with the consequences of the Arab incursions but rather owed to a clear re-orientation of the Cretan settlement pattern. In this respect, the northern coast of the island seems to have gained increased relevance in political, military, and commercial terms. It is not by chance that Heraklion went through a process of important re-functionalization of the urban fabric, demographic strengthening, and institutionalization (in secular and religious terms) starting from the mid-eighth century on<sup>94</sup>. Indeed, as Randazzo summarizes: *the case of redefinition of Cretan urbanism was part of a broader state-sponsored*

<sup>89</sup> E. ZANINI, *Coming to the End...*, p. 130–131.

<sup>90</sup> IDEM, *Macro-Economy...*, p. 157.

<sup>91</sup> N. POULOU, *Production and Consumption in Crete from the mid-7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD: The Archaeological Evidence*, [in:] *Feeding the Byzantine City. The Archaeology of Consumption in the Eastern Mediterranean (ca. 500–1500)*, ed. J. VROOM, Turnhout 2023 [= MPMMA, 5], p. 115; IDEM, *Digging in the Dark: The Islands of the Aegean and Crete from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, Late Sixth through Ninth Centuries CE*, [in:] *Archaeology of the Mediterranean...*, p. 34–39.

<sup>92</sup> S. GALLIMORE, *The Transformation...*, p. 61; J. VROOM, *Production, Exchange and Consumption of Ceramics in the Byzantine Mediterranean (ca. 7<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, [in:] *Feeding the Byzantine City...*, p. 285.

<sup>93</sup> C. TSIGONAKI, *Gortyn, Eleutherna...*, p. 198.

<sup>94</sup> S. COSENTINO, *From Gortyn to Heraklion?...*, p. 81–83.

*process aimed at enhancing the relationships between the northern coast of Crete and [the Aegean exchange network as revolving around] Constantinople*<sup>95</sup>.

To conclude, in this paper, I have tried to outline regional trajectories of urbanism in and beyond the Byzantine Mediterranean. In fact, only one of the sites, Amorium, could be regarded as fully integral to the renewing political, military, and administrative structures characterizing the Byzantine heartland (and Sicily). Instead, Comacchio was a semi-independent commercial hub, while Gortyn (and Eleutherna) remained foreign to the full militarization of Byzantine Anatolia, the Aegean, and Sicily along “thematic” lines (as Crete like other insular and coastal areas of the Byzantine *koine* was ruled by *archontes*). Gortyn, and in particular Comacchio, presided upon zones of economic contact and cultural interaction as part of an insular and coastal Byzantine *koine* (although less archaeologically documented in Crete than in the northern Adriatic). This should allow us to go beyond the historiographical issue of continuity and discontinuity of Byzantine urbanism I have repeatedly referred to. We should rather acknowledge the diverse types of the post-Roman Mediterranean city as diminished in size and population, less aesthetically impressive, and organically planned, but still resilient in terms of urban functions and economies of scale.

Indeed, I have tried to stress the distinctive origins and development of different Byzantine cities: a land-locked (but well-connected) site central to the new configuration of the Byzantine political, military, and territorial structures of governance vis-à-vis some insular and coastal sites differently benefitting from their position along Byzantine Mediterranean borderlands. I have focused first on an Anatolian urban settlement with no Classical past like Amorium, stemming from the administrative reorganization of the empire from the late seventh century onward; second, I have examined a newly founded, doubly liminal site like Comacchio, whose predominant economic function was *de facto* rooted in its strategic position on the cusp of the Carolingian and Byzantine economic systems; and finally, I have presented two insular key-studies like Gortyn, the capital of Byzantine Crete, and Eleutherna, a smaller urban center, and a bishopric, as both experienced a slow loss of political and military importance in the course of the eighth century (to the advantage of the settlements dotting the northern coast of Crete).

On the one hand, Amorium’s urban resilience in demographic, infrastructural, and economic terms exceeded the double-walled core and revealed an unsuspectingly (until a few years ago) dense and vital urban landscape. On the other hand, better archaeology has shed light on a newly built settlement like Comacchio, which should be regarded as a gateway community tapped into the economic

---

<sup>95</sup> M. RANDAZZO, *Knossos and Heraklion in the Byzantine-Islamic Transition (Late 7<sup>th</sup> – mid-10<sup>th</sup> Century). An Archaeological Perspective into Shifting Patterns of Settlement Ruralisation and Urbanisation on Medieval Crete*, JGA 5, 2019, p. 455.

vitality of the Adriatic network of the exchange; it was characterized by an emporia-like urban fabric and highly functional plan (city-of-islands). Lastly, Gortyn has helped us to fully reassess the role of fortifications, not only were they erected in the main religious and administrative center of the island but also in other Cretan urban centers (like Eleutherna). Indeed, contrary to Comacchio and similar to Amorium, Gortyn, and Eleutherna also boasted defensive enceintes that protected and promoted the main administrative and religious urban foci as others nevertheless thrived outside the walled area. The diversity of Amorium, Comacchio, and Gortyn (and Eleutherna) in terms of appearance and built urban landscape encourages us to resist the temptation of identifying a one-size-fits-all model of urbanism and acknowledge and analyze its different, regional, and sub-regional forms of development. As more archaeological light is shed on these cities, one realizes how, contrary to Loach’s “navvies”, Byzantine urban life between the seventh and the ninth century did not simply hinge on an “abstract” and desperate competition for the few resources available; rather, it was the variety of local solutions and the ability to promote adaptive patterns of urban change (as predicated upon the ebbs and flows of Mediterranean politics) which reflected the ‘real’ Byzantine city as diversified in its outlook and planning but nevertheless cohesive, “communal” and coherent in the passage from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.

## Bibliography

- ARTHUR P., *From Italy to the Aegean and back – Notes on the Archaeology of Byzantine Maritime Trade*, [in:] *Da un mare all’altro. Luoghi di scambio nell’Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 337–352, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101098>
- AUGENTI A., *Città e Porti dall’Antichità al Medioevo*, Roma 2010.
- AUZÉPY M.-F., *La carrière d’André de Crète*, “Byzantinische Zeitschrift” 88, 1995, p. 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.1515/byzs.1995.88.1.1>
- AVNI G., “From Polis to Madina” Revisited – Urban Change in Byzantine and Early Islamic Palestine, “Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society” 21.3, 2011, p. 301–329, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186311000022>
- BAKIRTZIS N., *The Practice, Perception and Experience of Byzantine Fortification*, [in:] *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. STEPHENSON, London–New York 2010, p. 352–376.
- BAKIRTZIS N., *The Visual Language of Fortification Façades: the Walls of Thessaloniki*, “Mnhmeio & Periballon (Monument and Environment)” 9, 2005, p. 15–32.
- BELKE K., *Transport and Communication*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 28–38, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190610463.003.0003>
- BELKE K., RESTLE M., *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. IV, *Galatien und Lykaonien*, Wien 1984.

- BESSARD F., *Caliphs and Merchants. Cities and Economies of Power in the Near East (700–950)*, Oxford 2020 [= Oxford Studies in Byzantium], <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198855828.001.0001>
- BOURAS C., *Aspects of the Byzantine City. Eighth to Fifteenth Century*, [in:] *The Economic History of Byzantium. From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. LAIOU, Washington D.C. 2002, p. 483–579.
- COSENTINO S., *A Longer Antiquity? Cyprus, Insularity and the Economic Transition*, “Cahiers du Centre d’Études Chypriotes” 43, 2013, p. 93–102, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cchyp.2013.1056>
- COSENTINO S., *From Gortyn to Heraklion? A Note on Cretan Urbanism during the 8<sup>th</sup> Century*, “Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα / Byzantina Symmeikta” 29, 2019, p. 73–89, <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.19216>
- COSENTINO S., BALDINI I., LIPPOLIS E., MARSILI G., SGARZI E., *Gortina, Mitropolis e il suo Episcopato nel VII e nell’VIII secolo. Ricerche Preliminari*, “Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente” 90, Serie III, 12, 2012, p. 239–310.
- CURTA F., *Postcards from Maurilia or the Historiography of the Dark-age Cities of Byzantium*, “European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies” 6, 2016, p. 89–110.
- DECKER M., *The Byzantine Dark Ages*, London–New York 2016.
- DELOGU P., *Questioni di Mare e di Costa*, [in:] *Da un mare all’altro. Luoghi di scambio nell’Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 459–466, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101103>
- DEMIREL-GÖKALP Z., TSIVIKIS N., *Understanding Urban Transformation in Amorium from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, [in:] *Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions. XXIV International Byzantine Congress, Venice–Padua 22–27 August, 2022*, ed. E. FIORI, M. TRIZIO, Venice 2022, p. 325–345, <https://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-590-2/018>
- DEY H.W., *The Afterlife of the Roman City. Architecture and Ceremony in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107706538>
- EGER A., *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers: An Introduction*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers. From the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea*, ed. A. EGER, Louisville 2019, p. 3–29, <https://doi.org/10.5876/9781607328773.c001>
- EGER A., *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier. Interaction and Exchange among Christian and Muslim Communities*, London 2015, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755693719>
- GALLIMORE S., *The Transformation of Crete in Late Antiquity. Sixth–Tenth Centuries CE*, [in:] *Archaeology of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. A. CASTRORAO BARBA, D. TANASI, R. MICICCHÈ, Gainesville 2023, p. 53–69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv37vwf1q.6>
- GELICHI S., *Comacchio: A Liminal Community in a Nodal Point during the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Venice and its Neighbors from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Through Renovation and Continuity*, ed. S. GELICHI, S. GASPARRI, Leiden 2017 [= *The Medieval Mediterranean*, 111], p. 142–167, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004353619>
- GELICHI S., *Lupicinus presbiter. Una breve nota sulle istituzioni ecclesiastiche comacchiesi delle origini*, [in:] *Ricerca come incontro. Archeologi, paleografi e storici per Paolo Delogu*, ed. G. BARONE, A. ESPOSITO, C. FROVA, Rome 2013, p. 41–60.
- GELICHI S., *The Northern Adriatic Area between the Eighth and the Ninth Century. New Landscapes, New Cities*, [in:] *Byzantium, Venice and the Medieval Adriatic. Spheres of Maritime Power and Influence ca. 700–1453*, ed. M. SKOBLAR, Cambridge 2021, p. 111–132, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108886987.008>

- GELICHI S. et al., *Castrum igne combussit. Comacchio fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, “Archeologia Medievale” 33, 2006, p. 75–105.
- GIORGI E., *Archeologia dell’acqua a Gortina di Creta in età protobizantina*, Oxford 2017, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1zcm15w>
- HALDON J., *The Empire that Would Not Die. The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival 640–740*, Cambridge Massachusetts 2016, <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674969193>
- HALDON J., *The End of Rome? The Transformation of the Eastern Empire in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries CE*, [in:] *The Roman Empire in Context. Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J.P. ARNASON, K. RAAFLAUB, Oxford 2011, p. 199–228, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444390186.ch9>
- HALDON J., *What Was a Provincial Military Capital?*, [in:] *Byzantine Medieval Cities: Amorion and the Middle Byzantine Provincial Capitals*, ed. N. TSIVIKIS, Berlin (forthcoming).
- HALDON J. et al., *The Climate and Environment of Byzantine Anatolia: Integrating Science, History, and Archaeology*, “Journal of Interdisciplinary History” 45.2, 2014, p. 113–161, [https://doi.org/10.1162/JINH\\_a\\_00682](https://doi.org/10.1162/JINH_a_00682)
- HERRIN J., *Ravenna. Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe*, Princeton 2020, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvt9jzk9>
- HILL J., *Ken Loach. The Politics of Film and Television*, London 2019.
- HODGES R., *Adriatic Sea Trade in an European Perspective*, [in:] *Da un mare all’altro. Luoghi di scambio nell’Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 207–230, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101093>
- HOWARD JOHNSTON J., *Authority and Control in the Interior of Asia Minor, Seventh-Ninth Centuries*, [in:] *Authority and Control in the Countryside. From Antiquity to Islam in the Mediterranean and Near East (6<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Century)*, ed. A. DELATTRE, M. LEGENDRE, P. SIJPESTEJIN, Leiden 2019 [= *Leiden Studies in Islam and Society*, 9], p. 128–171, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004386549\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004386549_006)
- IVISON E., *Amorium in the Byzantine Dark Ages (Seventh to Ninth Centuries)*, [in:] *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlements in Europe and Byzantium*, vol. II, *Byzantium, Pliska and the Balkans*, ed. J. HENNING, Berlin 2007, p. 25–59, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110218831.1.25>
- IVISON E., *Kirche und Religiöses Leben im Byzantinische Amorium*, [in:] *Byzanz. Das Römerreich im Mittelalter*, vol. II.1, ed. F. DAIM, J. DRAUSCHKE, Mainz 2010 [= *Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, 84], p. 309–343.
- JACOBS I., *Looking in Two Directions: Urban (Re)building in Sixth-century Asia Minor*, [in:] *Cities as Palimpsests? Responses to Antiquity in Eastern Mediterranean Urbanism*, ed. E. KEY FOWDEN, S. ÇAĞAPTAY, E. ZYCHOWICZ-COGHILL, L. BLANKE, Oxford 2022, p. 247–266, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv25wxc84.18>
- JEVTIC I., YALMAN S., *Spolia Reincarnated. Afterlives of Objects, Materials, and Spaces in Anatolia from Antiquity to the Ottoman Era*, Istanbul 2021.
- KALDELIS A., *Romanland. Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, London 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674239685>
- KENNEDY H., HALDON J., *The Arab-Byzantine Frontier in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries: Military Organisation and Society in the Borderlands*, [in:] *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, ed. H. KENNEDY, Burlington 2006, p. 79–116.
- LAIYOU A., MORRISSON C., *The Byzantine Economy*, Oxford 2007 [= *Cambridge Medieval Textbooks*], <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816727>



- LAVAN L., *Public Space in the Late Antique City*, vol. I–II, Leiden 2021 [= Late Antique Archaeology, 5].
- LIGHTFOOT C., *Amorium*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 333–342, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190610463.003.0032>
- LIGHTFOOT C., *Business as Usual? Archaeological evidence for Byzantine Commercial Enterprise at Amorium in the Seventh to Eleventh Centuries*, [in:] *Trade and Markets in Byzantium*, ed. C. MORRISON, Washington D.C. 2012 [= Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia], p. 177–191.
- LIGHTFOOT C., *The Survival of Cities in Byzantine Anatolia. The Case of Amorium*, “Byzantion” 68.1, 1998, p. 56–71.
- LIGHTFOOT C., LIGHTFOOT M., *Amorium. An Archaeological Guide*, Istanbul 2007.
- LOSEBY S., *Mediterranean Cities*, [in:] *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. P. ROSSEAU, London 2009, p. 139–155, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444306101.ch10>
- MARTINEZ JIMÉNEZ J., *Crisis or Crises? The End of Roman Towns in Iberia, between the Late Roman and the Early Umayyad Period*, [in:] *Though Times. The Archeology of Crisis and Recovery. Proceedings of the Graduate Archaeology at Oxford Conferences in 2012 and 2011*, ed. E.M. VAN DER WILT, J. MARTINEZ JIMÉNEZ, with help from G. PETRUCCIOLI, Oxford 2013, p. 77–90.
- MCCORMICK M., *Comparing and Connecting: Comacchio and the Early Medieval Trading Towns*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro. Luoghi di scambio nell'Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 477–502, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101105>
- MCCORMICK M., *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce AD 300–900*, Cambridge Massachusetts 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107050693>
- NEGRELLI C., *Towards a Definition of Early Medieval Pottery: Amphorae and Other Vessels in the Northern Adriatic between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro. Luoghi di scambio nell'Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 207–234, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101100>
- NIEWHÖHNER P., *Germia*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 342–348, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190610463.003.0033>
- NIEWHÖHNER P., *Urbanism*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 39–59, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190610463.003.0004>
- OLLMAN B., *Dance in Dialectic. Steps in Marx's Method*, Urbana–Chicago 2003.
- OUSTERHOUT R., *Eastern Medieval Architecture. The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands*, Oxford 2019 [= Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture], <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190272739.001.0001>
- PERNA R., *L'Acropoli di Gortina. La Tavola “A” della carta archeologica delle città di Gortina*, Macerata 2012.
- POULOU N., *Digging in the Dark: The Islands of the Aegean and Crete from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, Late Sixth through Ninth Centuries CE*, [in:] *Archaeology of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. A. CASTRORAO BARBA, D. TANASI, R. MICICCHÈ, Gainesville 2023, p. 13–52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv37vwf1q.5>

- POULOU N., *Production and Consumption in Crete from the mid-7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD: The Archaeological Evidence*, [in:] *Feeding the Byzantine City. The Archaeology of Consumption in the Eastern Mediterranean (ca. 500–1500)*, ed. J. VROOM, Turnhout 2023 [= *Medieval and Post-Medieval Mediterranean Archaeology*, 5], p. 113–138, <https://doi.org/10.1484/MPMAS-EB.5.133522>
- RANDAZZO M., *Knossos and Heraklion in the Byzantine-Islamic Transition (Late 7<sup>th</sup> – mid-10<sup>th</sup> Century). An Archaeological Perspective into Shifting Patterns of Settlement Ruralisation and Urbanisation on Medieval Crete*, *Journal of Greek Archaeology* 5, 2019, p. 448–467, <https://doi.org/10.32028/9781789697926-17>
- SARADI H., *The Use of Ancient Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence*, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3.4, 1997, p. 395–423, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12138-997-0008-4>
- SARRIS P., *Viewpoint New Approaches to the ‘Plague of Justinian’*, *Past and Present* 254.1, 2022, p. 315–346, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtab024>
- TSIGONAKI C., *Crete. A Border at the Sea. Defensive Works and Landscape-Midscape Changes, Seventh–Eighth Centuries A.D.*, [in:] *Change and Resilience. The Occupation of Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. CAU ONTIVEROS, C. MAS FLORIT, Providence 2019, p. 163–192, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjsf3rt.14>
- TSIGONAKI C., *Gortyn, Eleutherna, and their Neighbourhoods. The Politics of Transformation (Fourth to Early Ninth Centuries)*, [in:] *The Byzantine Neighbourhood. Urban Space and Political Action*, ed. F. KONDYLI, B. ANDERSON, London 2022 [= *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies*], p. 175–213, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429427770-11>
- TSIGONAKI C., *Les Villes Crétoises aux VII<sup>e</sup> et VIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: l’apport des recherches archéologiques à Eleutherna*, *Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente* 85, Serie III, 7, 2007, p. 263–297.
- TSIGONAKI C., SARRIS, A., *Recapturing the Dynamics of the Early Byzantine Settlements in Crete: Old Problems – New Interpretations through an Interdisciplinary Approach*, Unpublished Conference Paper LAC 2014, p. 1–11, <http://lac2014proceedings.nl/article/view/29/5> [1 V 2023].
- TSIVIKIS N., *Amorium and the Ever-Changing Urban Space: From Early Byzantine Provincial City to Middle Provincial Capital*, [in:] *Space and Communities in Byzantine Anatolia. Papers from the Fifth International Sevgi Gönül Symposium*, ed. N. KONTOGIANNIS, T. UYAR, Istanbul 2021, p. 191–218.
- TSIVIKIS N., *Byzantine Medieval Cities: Amorion and the Middle Byzantine Provincial Capitals*, Berlin (forthcoming).
- TSIVIKIS N., *Moving beyond the Invisible Cities of Byzantium*, *European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies* 10, 2020, p. 325–334.
- TZOUGARAKIS D., *Byzantine Lead Seals from Crete*, *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 2, 1990, p. 137–152.
- VEIKOU M., *Mediterranean Byzantine Ports and Harbors in the Complex Interplay between Environment and Society. Spatial, Socio-Economic and Cultural Considerations Based on Archeological Evidence from Greece, Cyprus and Asia Minor*, [in:] *Harbours and Maritime Networks as Complex Adaptive Systems*, ed. J. PREISER-KAPPELLER, F. DAIM, Mainz 2015, p. 39–60.
- VEIKOU M., *Spatial Control and Formation of Public Space*, [in:] *Space and Communities in Byzantine Anatolia. Papers from the Fifth International Sevgi Gönül Symposium*, ed. N. KONTOGIANNIS, T. UYAR, Istanbul 2021, p. 477–499.

- VIONIS A., *Bridging the Early Medieval 'Ceramic Gap' in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> c.): Local and Global Phenomena*, "HEROM. Journal on Hellenistic and Roman Material Culture" 9, 2020, p. 291–397.
- VROOM J., *Ceramics*, [in:] *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia. From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*, ed. P. NIEWHÖHNER, Oxford 2017, p. 176–193, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190610463.003.0014>
- VROOM J., *From One Coast to Another: Early Medieval Ceramics in the Southern Adriatic Region*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro. Luoghi di scambio nell'Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 353–392, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101099>
- VROOM J., *Production, Exchange and Consumption of Ceramics in the Byzantine Mediterranean (ca. 7<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, [in:] *Feeding the Byzantine City. The Archaeology of Consumption in the Eastern Mediterranean (ca. 500–1500)*, ed. J. VROOM, Turnhout 2023 [= *Medieval and Post-Medieval Mediterranean Archaeology*, 5], p. 283–338, <https://doi.org/10.1484/MPMAS-EB.5.133528>
- WALMSLEY A., *Early Islamic Syria. An Archaeological Assessment*, London 2007.
- WEST-HARLING V., *Rome, Ravenna and Venice, 750–1000. Byzantine Heritage, Imperial Present, and the Construction of City Identity*, Oxford 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198754206.001.0001>
- WHITTOU M., *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600–1025*, London 1995, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24765-3>
- WICKHAM C., *Comacchio and the Central Mediterranean*, [in:] *Da un mare all'altro. Luoghi di scambio nell'Alto Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo Atti del Seminario Internazionale Comacchio, 27–29 marzo 2009*, ed. S. GELICHI, R. HODGES, Turnhout 2012, p. 503–511, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.SCISAM-EB.1.101106>
- WICKHAM C., *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800*, Oxford 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199264490.001.0001>
- WICKHAM C., *The Donkey and the Boat. Reinterpreting the Mediterranean Economy, 950–1180*, Oxford 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198856481.001.0001>
- ZANINI E., *Appunti per una "archeologia del pane" nel Mediterraneo tardo antico*, [in:] *La Civiltà del Pane. Storia, tecniche e simboli dal Mediterraneo all'Atlantico Atti del convegno internazionale di studio (Brescia, 1–6 dicembre 2014)*, ed. G. ARCHETTI, Spoleto 2015, p. 373–394.
- ZANINI E., *Coming to the End: Early Byzantine Cities after the mid-6<sup>th</sup> Century*, [in:] *Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Belgrade, 22–27 August 2016). Plenary Papers*, ed. S. MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ, Belgrade 2016, p. 127–143.
- ZANINI E., *Macro-Economy, Micro-Ecology, and the Fate of Urbanized Landscape in Late Antique and Early Byzantine Crete*, [in:] *Change and Resilience. The Occupation of Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity*, ed. M. CAU ONTIVEROS, C. MAS FLORIT, Providence 2019, p. 139–162, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjsf3rt.13>
- ZAVAGNO L., *Cities in Transition. Urbanism in Byzantium between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (AD 500–900)*, Oxford 2009 [= *British Archaeological Reports. International Series*, 2030], <https://doi.org/10.30861/9781407306070>
- ZAVAGNO L., *Cyprus and its Sisters. Reassessing the Role of Large Islands at the End of the Long Late Antiquity (ca. 600 – ca. 800)*, [in:] *Cyprus in the Long Late Antiquity. History and Archaeology between the Sixth and the Eighth Centuries*, ed. I. JACOBS, P. PANAYDES, Oxford 2023, p. 81–96, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.1791895.9>

---

ZAVAGNO L., *The Byzantine City from Heraclius to the Fourth Crusade, 610–1204. Urban Life after Antiquity*, London–New York 2021 [= *New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture*], <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84307-6>

**Luca Zavagno**

Bilkent University  
Department of History  
Faculty of Economics, Administrative, and Social Sciences /  
Department of Archaeology  
Faculty of Humanities  
Ankara, Turkey  
[luca.zavagno@bilkent.edu.tr](mailto:luca.zavagno@bilkent.edu.tr)




# ARTICLES





Kostiantyn Bardola (Kharkiv)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6617-7963>

## THE BIRTH OF THE MYTH ABOUT THE BYZANTINE-BULGARIAN WAR OF 863

**Abstract.** The Byzantine-Bulgarian relationship from the mid-9<sup>th</sup> to the early 10<sup>th</sup> century has attracted the attention of historians for years. However, this topic is fraught with multiple myths and misconceptions. The Byzantine invasion of Bulgarian territories in 863 is one of these myths. This hypothesis became part of the master narrative of Bulgarian national historiography and significantly impacted the clarification of the actual motivation of all parties in the complex political process. However, an analysis of sources shows that the military raid under Basileus Michael III and Caesar Bardas into Bulgarian territory is nothing more than fiction. According to a new Byzantine propaganda policy, this narrative was created after the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. This research observes how a simple interpolation becomes a historiographical hypothesis and the dominant historiographical narrative. Additionally, a new interpretation of the beginning of Bulgarian Christianization is proposed.

**Keywords:** Byzantine Empire, Khan Boris, Christianization of Bulgaria, Michael III, Bardas

It is widely believed that the Bulgarian Khan Boris Michael (852–889; †907) adopted Christianity under the pressure of the Byzantine troops commanded by Basileus Michael III (842–867) and Caesar Bardas while the Bulgarian population suffered from a famine. Some sources describe this military operation as bloodless and highly successful. Scholars supporting this view date the military raid to the period between the Byzantine victory over the Arabs at the Battle of Lalakaon (September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 863) and Boris's baptism. Therefore, the Byzantine-Bulgarian War, which could be dated 863, seems like a steppingstone to the beginning of Bulgarian Christianization. However, the analysis of the political situation and the sources' reports raises severe doubts about the historical reliability of this event.



## The way how hypothesis transformed into a master historiographical concept

The idea that the Byzantine raid of 863 forced the Bulgarian Prince Boris to make such an important decision was not always dominant. On the contrary, the first generation of researchers cast reasonable doubts on the actual capabilities of the Byzantine government to achieve such a brilliant victory. It was noted that the rapid victory hypothesis contradicted the facts of the previous bitter confrontations, which had shown the Bulgarians to be formidable opponents to the Byzantines. Furthermore, the historians acknowledged that by the mid-9<sup>th</sup> the Bulgarian state became more powerful, and Boris held military and diplomatic initiatives during his reign<sup>1</sup>. For these reasons, the historians initially focused on other possible motivations for the Bulgarian Prince's conversion<sup>2</sup>.

However, at the same time, a version emerged that made historians reconsider the details of Bulgarian Christianization. S. Palauzov linked Boris's decision to adopt Christianity to the consequences of his unsuccessful foreign policy and political pressure from Constantinople, particularly the military campaign of Michael III, played a significant role<sup>3</sup>. His assumption gained popularity with the nationalist awakening processes among Bulgarian political elites towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the idea of a harsh Byzantine-Bulgarian confrontation and the following struggle for the Bulgarian Church's autonomy corresponded to the Bulgarian historians' views in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>4</sup>. Y. Trifonov, for example, initially believed that Boris voluntarily adopted Christianity<sup>5</sup>. Later, in 1927, he changed his mind and published a study supporting S. Palauzov's concept<sup>6</sup>.

However, the decisive contribution to the development and further dissemination of Palauzov's ideas was made by V. Zlatarski. The researcher explained the lack of Bulgarian resistance to the Byzantine invasion. In his opinion, Boris was

<sup>1</sup> К.И. Иречек, *История болгар*, Одесса 1878, р. 188; Е. ГОЛУБИНСКИЙ, *Краткий очерк истории православных церквей Болгарской, Сербской и Румынской или Молдо-Валаишской*, Москва 1871, р. 25; Д. ЦУХЛЕВ, *История на българската църква*, vol. I, София 1911, р. 257; М. СОКОЛОВ, *Из древней истории болгар*, Санкт-Петербург 1879, р. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Ю.И. ВЕНЕЛИН, *Критические исследования об истории Болгар. С прихода Болгар на Фракийский полуостров до 968 года, или покорения Болгарии Великим Князем Русским Святославом*, Москва 1849, р. 35–36; Е. ГОЛУБИНСКИЙ, *Краткий очерк истории...*, р. 25; П.И. ШАФАРИК, *Славянские древности*, vol. II, Москва 1847, р. 290; К.И. Иречек, *История болгар...*, р. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Сп. ПАЛАУЗОВ, *Век болгарского царя Симеона*, Санкт-Петербург 1852, р. 21; the same opinion: А.Ф. ГИЛЬФЕРДИНГ, 1. *История сербов и болгар*. 2. *Кирилл и Мефодий*. 3. *Обзор чешской истории*, vol. I, Санкт-Петербург 1868, р. 52.

<sup>4</sup> М. ДРИНОВ, *Поглед върху произхождението на българския народ и началото на българската история*, [in:] *Съчинения на М.С. Дринова*, vol. I, София 1909, р. 4–6; about genesis of Bulgarian national historiography R. DASKALOV, *Historical Master Narratives and the Master Narrative of the Bulgarian Middle Ages*, SCer 10, 2020, р. 259–280.

<sup>5</sup> Ю. ТРИФОНОВ, *Царуването на Бориса-Михаила*, София 1907, р. 26.

<sup>6</sup> ИДЕМ, *Цар Борис-Михаил. Време, царуване и величие*, София 1927, р. 25.

deeply involved in the Frank-Moravian confrontation. As a result, the Byzantine attack caught the Bulgarian lands off guard, and Boris did not have enough time to move back his troops<sup>7</sup>. Also, V. Zlatarski identified another factor that contributed to the bloodless nature of the War of 863 – namely, the lack of a “real” character to the invasion. He suggested it was more like a demonstration of troops or a kind of military “show” designed to weaken the Frank-Bulgarian alliance<sup>8</sup>. Although such conclusions may seem speculative, they provided a more coherent framework to support S. Palauzov’s concept.

The impact of the new version on historians was profound and universal. The hypothesis gained many supporters and became part of the historical master narrative of the Bulgarian Middle Ages<sup>9</sup>. It formed the basis of the contemporary understanding of the development of the First Bulgarian Kingdom<sup>10</sup>. Some of V. Zlatarsky’s followers have gone even further and developed his idea, proposing the existence in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century of various broad alliances or even political blocs. In their opinion, the first multilateral alliance united the King of Eastern Franks, Louis II, local rulers under his dependence, and the Bulgarian Khan Boris as an ally. The opposite political bloc included the Byzantine emperor, Michael III, his allies among the Serbian and Croatian rulers, Rastislav the Moravian, and occasionally Carloman, Louis II’s son<sup>11</sup>. Although the hypothesis of political-military blocs was popular in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was an unsuccessful attempt at historical modernization. Most historians retained more traditional views and rejected the artificial historical scheme<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> В. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *История на Българската държава през средните векове*, vol. I, pars 2, София 1927 (2007), p. 21–24.

<sup>8</sup> В. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *История на Българската държава...*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> R. DASKALOV, *Historical Master Narratives...*, p. 276–277.

<sup>10</sup> Ф.М. РОССЕЙКИН, *Первое правление Фотия, патриарха Константинопольского*, Сергиев Посад 1915, p. 347; F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata. Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda 1526*, Zagreb 1916; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates*, München 1963, p. 192; P. PETROV, *La politique étrangère de la Bulgarie au milieu du IX siècle et la conversion des Bulgares*, BBg 2, 1966, p. 47; A.P. VLASTO, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom. An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs*, Cambridge 1970, p. 159; G. САНКОВА-РЕТКОВА, *Contribution au sujet de la conversion des Bulgares au christianisme*, BBg 4, 1973, p. 29; S. RUNCIMAN, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, [in:] *Byzantium. An Introduction to East Roman Civilization*, ed. N.H. BAYNES, H.St.L.B. MOSS, Oxford 1948, p. 347; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London 1971; J. HARRIS, *The Lost World of Byzantium*, New Haven 2016, p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> А.П. КАЖДАН, Г.Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Очерки истории Византии и южных славян*, Москва 1958, p. 156; P. PETROV, *La politique étrangère de...*, p. 44; В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, *Княз Борис Първи*, София 1969, p. 66; П. АНГЕЛОВ, *Средновековна България и нейните съседи*, София 2017, p. 112. Й. АНДРЕЕВ, И. ЛАЗАРОВ, Пл. ПАВЛОВ, *Кой кой е в Средновековна България*, София 1999, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> F. DVORNIK was somewhat cautious about the influence of the international situation on the decision to be baptized by Boris: F. DVORNIK, *The Slavs. Their Early History and Civilization*, Boston 1956, p. 86; G. Litavrin, in turn, changed his attitude on this issue in his later works: Г.Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Введение христианства в Болгарии (IX – нач. X)*, [in:] *Принятие христианства народами Центральной*

It should be admitted that S. Palauzov, V. Zlatarski, and the researchers who supported their concept undoubtedly used relied on the sources' information in their conclusions but selectively and sometimes without the necessary critical analysis. In this case, it was the basis for numerous contradictions and ambiguities. Obviously, such a situation requires a systematic review of the texts that dealt with the details of Boris's baptism.

### Back to the sources

The main challenge facing every researcher of the issue is fulfilling a quest the historians have been on for almost two centuries: explaining why the sources paid little attention to Bulgarian Christianization details. It would seem that there was an apparent triumphant victory for Byzantine diplomacy, Church, and ideology, but historiography still cannot definitively determine the place and time of Boris's baptism.

It can be assumed that Latin sources might have considered these events peripheral and didn't pay much attention to them. Besides, the dawn of Bulgarian medieval historiography falls on a later period. However, the Christianization of Bulgaria was so closely linked to the processes of imperial foreign policy that one could expect much more details and emotions from Byzantine authors.

Moreover, chroniclers' first attempts to focus on Boris's conversion came after a long time. As a result, their interpretations were shaped by their ideological preferences and the rapidly changing international landscape. In any case, their narratives need to be re-examined with great care<sup>13</sup>.

The Byzantine texts contain four main narratives of the motivation for Boris's baptism. The first one was dedicated to the famine among Bulgarians, which led Boris to make a great decision. At first sight, there is no doubt that the famine could be a real cause for the severe decision. Almost every Byzantine author who described the beginning of the Bulgarian mass conversion mentioned this factor. Since the Byzantine sources lacked detail about the disaster, researchers tried to find evidence in European chronicles. Due to famine often striking European kingdoms of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the task was not too complicated<sup>14</sup>. However, it should

---

*и Юго-Восточной Европы и крещение Руси*, Москва 1988, p. 44; M. EGGERS, Ch.R. BOWLUS, 863/864 – eine 'internationale Konfrontation in Südosteuropa', SF 59–60, 2000–2001, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> A more or less detailed analysis of the narratives of Bulgarian baptism: A.B. ANGELOV, *Conversion and Empire: Byzantine Missionaries, Foreign Rulers, and Christian Narratives (ca. 300–900)* (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2011); A brief analysis: I. DUJČEV, *Légendes byzantines sur la conversion des Bulgares*, SFFBU 10, 1961, p. 7–17. Unfortunately, there is very little attention to the War of 863 here.

<sup>14</sup> Famine in Europe of 860, 861, 862, 868: *Annales Alamannici*, Hannover 1826 [= MGH.SS, 1]; *Annales Altahenses maiores*, Hannover 1868 [= MGH.SS, 20]; *Annales Sangallenses maiores*, Hannover 1826 [= MGH.SS, 1]; *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, Hannover 1839 [= MGH.SS, 3]. This evidence may be hardly used as proof of the Bulgarian famine of 863.

not be forgotten that the mention of the “famine” first appeared in the Life of Patriarch Ignatius. Such hagiographic texts are complex historical sources usually created with specific intentions. Therefore, Nicetas the Paphlagonian (late 9<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup>) could use one of the rhetorical tricks popular among St. Lives’ authors. They often used the terms “famine” and “blindness” or “sickness” to describe a pagan society in the period before Christianization<sup>15</sup>. It is noteworthy that Patriarch Photius did not mention the “famine” issue and later chroniclers omitted the details typical of this dramatic topic. Finally, even assuming the reports about the famine of 863 are valid, it is not easy to establish a causal link between this cataclysm and the impetus for mass conversion.

Another popular legend among Byzantine authors tells that a certain monk named Methodius, at the request of Boris, painted hunting lodge walls depicting various scenes of the Last Judgment<sup>16</sup>. The unknown author of this narrative reported that it was the emotional effect experienced by the Bulgarian Khan after viewing the painting that pushed him to be baptized. Undoubtedly, this legend was created and subsequently used by chroniclers for rhetorical purposes. It is unlikely that Boris could have decided to order such a painting before his baptism. Furthermore, the image’s emotional impact could have been understood by people already converted Christians. Interestingly, some Byzantine authors excluded this story from their chronicles, probably intending not to overload the main narrative<sup>17</sup>.

The third story has reached us in two versions: a brief and an expanded one. The most comprehensive version can be found in the chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus. Despite some scholars considering this narrative legendary, its details prove otherwise<sup>18</sup>. According to the expanded version, there was an extended correspondence between Empress Theodora (842–856), the mother of the young Byzantine Emperor Michael III, and Bulgarian Khan Boris. According to the text, repeated in later compilations, several stages of negotiations between Boris and Theodora can be identified.

<sup>15</sup> *Vita Ignatii*, [in:] PG, vol. CV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864 (cetera: *Vita Ignatii*), col. 525.

<sup>16</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, *Chronographia*, 4.12, ed. I. БЕККЕР, Berlin 1838 (cetera: THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS), p. 162.

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, this legend became quite popular among Slavonic hagiographers, who added new details: I. DUJČEV, *Légendes byzantines...*, p. 7–17; The value of this legend for understanding the methods of missionary activity: С. ИВАНОВ, *Византийское миссионерство: можно ли сделать из «варвара» христианина?*, Москва 2003, p. 164–165.

<sup>18</sup> В.Н. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *Известия за българите в хрониката на Симеон Метафраст и Логотет*, [in:] *Избрани произведения*, vol. I, ed. П. ПЕТРОВ, София 1972, p. 427; I. Dujčev also claimed this narrative is more legendary than authentic. Unfortunately, he did not explain his conclusion. I. DUJČEV, *Légendes byzantines...*, p. 7; the same opinion: D. ZIEMANN, *Von Wandervolk zur Großmacht. Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.–9. Jh.)*, Cologne–Weimar–Vienna 2007 [= KHA, 43], p. 358.

In her first letter, Theodora used the legendary response of the Amazon queen to the threats of Alexander the Great<sup>19</sup>. It was an obvious hint at the desire to discuss the possibility of a dynastic alliance. Boris became interested in this possibility, and both sides exchanged trusted representatives for further negotiations. Such a dynastic alliance could only be Christian from both sides, which led the Bulgarian Khan to consider the variant of his baptism. Moreover, he possibly even took the initial steps toward it. Based on Theophanes Continuatus' text, the negotiations progressed quite successfully and were approaching the final stage. This narrative deserves independent research, which is beyond the aims of this article. However, it should be noted that these negotiations became a turning point in the Byzantine-Bulgarian relationship for at least several decades.

The fourth narrative related to the reasons for Boris's baptism is the most interesting for our topic. It describes a military campaign led by the Byzantine Emperor Michael III and Caesar Bardas against the Bulgars, forcing Khan Boris to adopt Christianity.

This narrative first appears in the sources of the late 10<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and there are serious grounds to consider that it was made up at the same time with an ideological purpose to diminish the activity of Khan Boris in the process of Bulgarian Christianization and to distort the real motives of the parties involved.

The first thing that stands out is many Byzantine authors did not mention this story. For example, the Patriarch Photius (858–867; 877–886) was a crucial figure in the Bardas's political team and participated in most negotiations. Despite this, he did not mention such successful military incursion, which supposedly was led by Bardas. Delivering his tenth homily to the Basileus Michael and Caesar Bardas in early 864, the Patriarch had a golden opportunity to emphasize the remarkable triumph. However, Photius chose instead to confine himself to obscure remarks about “reconciliation” with “other foreigners”<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, the Patriarch later commented in his Encyclical to the Eastern Patriarchs (867) that Bulgarians' conversion was “unexpected”<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 4.12, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> PHOTIUS, *Homilies*, 10, [in:] PG, vol. CII, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1857, col. 563–573 (Λαβὼν ὑποσπόνδους ἄλλους καὶ ταπεινώσας ὑψηλὸν καὶ γαῦρον καὶ ἀλλόφυλλον φρόνημα, ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν κραταῖάν χεῖρα τοῦ Θεοῦ εὐσεβοφρόνως ἀναφέρων πάντα τὰ σοι καθορθούμενα). After glorifying the basileus for victories and trophies, presumably over the Arabs, Photius also speaks of the reconciliation of Michael III with “other foreigners” who “tamed their pride and arrogance”. He hinted at the Bulgarians, but there is no allusion in the homily about the baptism of Prince Boris. The patriarch was unaware of the significant event or did not want to discuss it. One way or another, “reconciliation” is mentioned beyond the process of baptism, which somewhat contradicts the central hypothesis of V. Zlatarsky and other authors that the last was the main goal of the military campaign of 863: В.В. ВАСИЛИК, *Десятая гомилия патриарха Фотия*, SSBP 1–2, 2009, p. 185–194; R.J.H. JENKINS, C. MANGO, *The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius*, DOP 9–10, 1955–1956; R.J.H. JENKINS, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, London 1970.

<sup>21</sup> In Photius's opinion, the baptism of the Bulgarians took place “contrary to expectations” (παράδοξων). PHOTIUS, *Επιστολαί*, 4, ed. J.N. BALETTA, New York 1978 (cetera: PHOTIUS, *Επιστολαί*), p. 168;

It can be assumed that Photius had a particular attitude toward the Christianization of Bulgaria, and he did not want to discuss this topic in detail. However, Photius's ideological adversary Nicetas the Paphlagonian also underscored a proactive Bulgarian strategy (potentially involving political coercion) regarding Christianization. In his brief note dedicated to Bulgarian conversion, he wrote: *Bulgarians, then guided by God's providence, being violently oppressed by famine and also enticed by gifts from the emperor, laying down their weapons, approached holy baptism*<sup>22</sup>. Notably, two political rivals, who were well-informed about the circumstances surrounding Prince Boris's baptism, did not mention the Byzantine invasion. Unfortunately, Photius and Nicetas the Paphlagonian, only briefly mentioned the baptism of the Bulgarians. The nature of their texts did not involve historical reflections on this matter. In any case, their texts lack enthusiastic emotions regarding this event.

During the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (945–959), some Byzantine chroniclers attempted to assess the issue of Bulgarian Christianization conceptually. For instance, two authors, known in historiography as Genesius and Theophanes Continuatus, provided distinct approaches to address this challenge. Theophanes Continuatus used a conventional method typical of his era, presenting various widespread accounts of Boris's baptism and allowing the reader to choose the most plausible one. In this regard, the author integrated all known stories associated with Boris's baptism into his narrative, aiming to unite them logically. The chronicler started his narration with the diplomatic correspondence between Boris and Empress Theodora. He gave numerous details about the subsequent negotiations, including the exchange of trusted individuals who could represent the interests of both parties. The chronicler also noted that Boris's sister, who had previously been captured by the Byzantines, began instructing the Bulgarian prince in the basics of Christianity. The legend of the painting by Methodius and the famine that impelled the Khan to make the decisive decision were not overlooked<sup>23</sup>. Intriguingly, within the same passage, he incorporated information about the uprising of the Bulgarian nobility, which occurred much later. This multi-step narrative by Theophanes Continuatus reaches its apex when Theodora hands over the Zagora region to Boris's rule, thereby linking the official Bulgarian

S. Ivanov argues that the event became improbable for the Byzantines ("unexpected" or "unlikely"). However, the difference in translation between terms of "improbable" and "contrary to expectation" is significant: S. IVANOV, *Religious Missions*, [in:] *The Cambridge history of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 318.

<sup>22</sup> According to the text, the Bulgarians ceased threatening with weapons and accepted Christianity after getting the "emperor's gifts". Unfortunately, the author's report did not specify what a sort of "gifts" Bulgarians received: *Vita Ignatii*, col. 525. Καὶ Βούλγαροι δὲ τότε προνοίας Θεοῦ, βιαίῳ κατατακέντες λιμῷ, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τοῖς δώροις τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος θεληθέντες, τὰ ὄπλα καταθέμενοι, τῷ ἁγίῳ προσήσαν βαπτίσματι.

<sup>23</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 4.12, p. 162.

baptism process with her reign<sup>24</sup>. Among the diverse accounts used by Theophanes Continuatus to describe Boris's conversion, there was no mention of the War in 863. There can only be one explanation for this omission: the author was unaware of this narrative.

In addition to the complex version of Boris's baptism, Theophanes Continuatus devoted substantial attention to the Arab-Byzantine wars of that period. This information is valuable because it's widely believed that Emperor Michael III's raid on Bulgaria could have only occurred after the victory of the Byzantine general Petronas over the Arabs at Lalakaon in 863. The chronicler recorded that in approximately for 861 campaign Michael III deployed 40,000 soldiers from Thrace and Macedonia against the Arabs, a move possible only if the emperor felt secure against a Bulgarian attack. Moreover, Theophanes Continuatus firmly believed that the Bulgarian contingent actively contributed to the Byzantine victory over Amr's troops in the 862–863 military campaign. Additionally, Theophanes Continuatus mentioned that this collaboration became standard practice following the "reconciliation". Therefore, according to Theophanes Continuatus, in approximately 860–861, a truce had been established between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, and they had even allied.

In contrast to Theophanes Continuatus, another Byzantine author, Genesisius, took a slightly different approach in describing Boris's baptism. Genesisius omitted numerous specific details from other versions to construct a more rhetorical yet coherent narrative. For example, he did not include the legend of the painting of Methodius and significantly condensed the account of Boris's and Theodora's negotiations. Although he mentioned the involvement of contingents from Thrace and Macedonia in the 861 campaigns, he left out many details of the decisive battle at Lalakaon in 863. Thus, Genesisius appeared to downplay the evidence of Byzantine-Bulgarian rapprochement, which likely contradicted his version of Boris's baptism. He highlighted that the victories of Byzantine armies over the Arabs compelled the Bulgarian Khan to abandon his hostile intentions and start seeking a peace agreement. Moreover, Genesisius did not fail to mention the

<sup>24</sup> Pseudo-Symeon pointed out that the baptism of the Bulgarians took place in the fourth year of the reign of Michael, that is, according to his chronology, in 855: PSEUDO-SYMEON, *Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *CSHB*] (cetera: PSEUDO-SYMEON), p. 665; PSEUDO-SYMEONIS, *Chronographia*, praef., trans. et comm. G. SANKOVA-PETKOVA, Serdicae 1964, p. 169–182; PSEUDO-SYMEONIS, *Chronographia*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. V, Sofia 1964, p. 174; also Chernorizets Hrabar noted the time of the Slavic alphabet creation in 6363 or 855 AD: *Черноризец Храбр О писъменах*, [in:] Б. ФЛОЯ, *Сказания о начале славянской письменности*, Москва 1981, p. 131; T. Wasilewski posited that Chernorizets Hrabar's indication pertained not to the year of the origin of writing, but rather to the year of Prince Boris's baptism, which the author possessed greater knowledge of: T. WASILEWSKI, *Bizancjum i Słowianie w IX wieku. Studia z dziejów stosunków politycznych i kulturalnych*, Warszawa 1972, p. 108; Theophylact of Ohrid mentioned that Boris was a teenager (child) (ὁ παῖς) when he made the decision to be baptized: THEOPHYLACTUS BULGARUS, [in:] *PG*, vol. CXXVI, ed. J.-P. MIGNÉ, Paris 1864 (cetera: THEOPHYLACTUS BULGARUS), col. 197.

famine<sup>25</sup>. Thus, despite his effort to emphasize the influence of the Byzantine general Petronas's victory on the initiation of the Bulgarian Christianization process, Genesius acknowledged the Bulgarian pressure in the negotiations but did not mention Michael III's raid in 863.

Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae	Georgius Monachus Continuatus	Pseudo-Symeon
<p>ἐκστρατεύσας δὲ Μιχαὴλ ἄμα Βάρδα Καίσαρι κίνησιν ποιεῖ κατὰ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχοντος Βουλγαρίας διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, μαθὼν τὸ τῶν Βουλγάρων ἔθνος λιμῶ τήκεσθαι. οἱ δὲ Βούλγαροι τοῦτο μαθόντες ὡς ἤχῳ βροντῆς ὑπεκλίθησαν, καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἀγώνων καὶ τῆς μάχης περὶ τῆς νίκης ἀπέγνωσαν, καὶ Χριστιανοὶ γενέσθαι καὶ ὑποτάττεσθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ Ῥωμαίοις ἠτήσαντο. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τὸν ἄρχοντα αὐτὸν βαπτίσας καὶ δεξάμενος ἐπιτέθεικεν αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα, τοὺς δὲ μεγιστάνους αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσαγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν πάντας</p>	<p>Ἐκστρατεύσας δὲ Μιχαὴλ ἄμα Βάρδα Καίσαρι, κίνησιν ποιεῖ κατὰ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχοντος Βουλγαρίας διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης, μαθὼν τὸ τῶν Βουλγάρων ἔθνος λιμῶ τήκεσθαι. Οἱ δὲ Βούλγαροι τοῦτο μαθόντες ὡς ἤχῳ βροντῆς ὑπεκλίθησαν, καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἀγώνων καὶ τῆς μάχης περὶ τῆς νίκης ἀπέγνωσαν (καὶ Χριστιανοὶ γενέσθαι καὶ ὑποτάττεσθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ Ῥωμαίοις ἠτήσαντο). Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τὸν μὲν ἄρχοντα αὐτῶν βαπτίσας καὶ δεξάμενος ἐπέθηκεν αὐτῷ τὸ αὐτοῦ ὄνομα. τοὺς δὲ μεγιστάνους αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν αὐτοὺς, ἔκτοτε γενομένης εἰρήνης βαθείας</p>	<p>Τῷ δ' αὐτοῦ ἔτει ἐκστρατεύει Μιχαὴλ ἄμα Καίσαρι διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης κατὰ Γόβορι ἄρχοντι Βουλγάρων. τοῦτο μαθόντες οἱ Βούλγαροι, ἄμα δὲ καὶ λιμῶ τηκόμενοι, ὡς ἤχῳ βροντῆς ὑπεκλίθησαν καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἀγώνων καὶ τῆς μάχης περὶ τὴν νίκην κατέγνωσαν, Χριστιανοὶ τε γενέσθαι καὶ ὑποτάττεσθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ Ῥωμαίων ἠτήσαντο. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τούτους ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν πάντας καὶ τὸν ἄρχοντα αὐτῶν Μιχαὴλ ἐπωνόμασεν</p>

The earliest known references to the Byzantine-Bulgarian War of 863 date back to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The chronicles of Symeon Logothetes, Georgius Monachus (Amartolos) Continuatus, and the extensive compilation of Pseudo-Symeon all contain nearly identical passages describing this event. According to these texts, Basileus Michael III and Caesar Bardas led troops by land and water in a joint attack against the famine-stricken Bulgarians. The subsequent lines state that the Bulgarians surrendered without resistance, and later their nobles visited Constantinople to be baptized. Finally, Basileus personally became Boris's godfather. And it established a "deep peace"<sup>26</sup>. The authorship and the details of the compilation of the Chronicle of Simeon Logothete still raise questions among

<sup>25</sup> *Iosephi Genesii Regum libri quattuor*, IV, 16, rec. A. LESMUELLER-WERNER, H. THURN, Berolini 1978 [= *CFHB*, 14] (ed. C. LACHMANN, Bonn 1834); or GENESIOS, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, 4.16, trans. A. KALDELLIS, Canberra 1998 [= *BAus*, 11] (cetera: GENESIOS).

<sup>26</sup> *Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, 238.25, rec. S. WAHLGREN, Berolini 2006 [= *CFHB*, 44.1] (cetera: SYMEON LOGOTHETES), p. 243; *Хроника Симеона Магистра и Логофета*, vol. I, ed. А.Ю. Виноградова, Москва 2014; GEORGIUS MONACHUS CONTINUATUS, 110, 1049, 20, [in:] THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, ed I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *CSHB*], p. 733; PSEUDO-SYMEON, p. 665 (ГИБИ, vol. V, p. 174).



researchers.<sup>27</sup> Most of them acknowledge that the author of the chronicle was Symeon Metaphrastes, whose political activity is linked with the reigns of two Byzantine Emperors, John Tzimiskes (969–976) and Basil II (976–1025). As a highly educated and influential official, he held a prominent position at the court. Symeon was deeply involved in diplomatic activities amid the rising tensions between the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarians. Besides, along with his team of assistants, he played a significant role in shaping the ideological policies of the government.

The narrative resembles a classic interpolation, lacking any textual connection to the preceding or subsequent passages. Furthermore, the text is placed before an account of Petronas's victory over the Arabs, which contradicts the chronological and logical sequence. Some researchers believe that Symeon Logothete took the story of Michael III's anti-Bulgarian raid from a source that wasn't used by other compilers<sup>28</sup>. Considering the significance of this raid for the subsequent political events, it seems incredible that this information remained hidden until Symeon's compilation. It appears more likely that Metaphrastes fabricated this story, assembling the text from different excerpts of the chronicle. The narrative's style is entirely consistent with the overall style of the chronicle. For example, the text is stylistically quite close to another excerpt from the same chronicle dedicated to one of the anti-Bulgarian raids of Basileus Constantine V (741–775). The text was relatively brief: *He (Constantine V) set out on a campaign against the Bulgars with a land army and a fleet (πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί), and, driving them into retreat, entered the City (Constantinople) dressed in battle armor and leading the captured Bulgars in triumph*<sup>29</sup>. This passage was easily adaptable as it did not name personalities or toponyms.

Symeon Logothetes' chronicle	
186.20 Ἐστράτευσε δὲ κατὰ Βουλγάρων <b>πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί</b> , καὶ τούτους τροπώσαμενος εἰσῆλθεν ἐν τῇ πόλει, καθωπλισμένους τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ὄπλοις, θριαμβεύων δεδεμένους τοὺς Βουλγάρους.	238.15 ἐκστρατεύσας δὲ Μιχαὴλ ἄμα Βάρδα Καίσαρι κίνησιν ποιεῖ κατὰ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχοντος Βουλγαρίας <b>διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης</b> , ... ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσαγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν πάντας

<sup>27</sup> The complexity of the Chronicle of Symeon Logothetes as a historical source is discussed in many publications: Α.Π. ΚΑΖΔΑΝ, *Χρονικὰ Σιμεὼνα Λογοφῆτα*, ΒΒ 15 (40), 1959, p. 125–143; W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York, 2013, p. 197–224; Α. ΜΑΡΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Sur Les Deux Versions De La Chronographie De Symeon Logothete*, ΒΖ 76.2, 1983, p. 279–284; St. WAHLGREN, *Symeon the Logothete and Theophanes Continuatus*, *JÖB* 69, 2019, p. 323–334.

<sup>28</sup> W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians...*, p. 210.

<sup>29</sup> SYMEON LOGOTHEDES, 186.20.

The substitution of the phrase “by land and sea” (διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης) with “on foot and by ship” (πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί) was no coincidence. Most likely, Metaphrastes was well acquainted with the chronicle of George the Monk (? – 870)<sup>30</sup>. In his descriptions of military campaigns against the Bulgars George used both versions of the phrase. However, it appears Symeon sought to avoid a literal copy of George the Monk’s text by alternating between the similar expressions “πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί” and “διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης”<sup>31</sup>.

Georgius Monachus	Symeon Logothetes
<p>944.16 Ἐστράτευσε δὲ κατὰ Βουλγάρων <b>πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί</b>, (ἐξοπλίσας ἐκ τῶν θεμάτων) χελάνδια χίλια ἑξακόσια,</p> <p>945.32 Ὁ δὲ τύραννος καὶ ἀλάστωρ, ἐξελθὼν μετὰ ταῦτα πάλιν κατὰ Βουλγάρων <b>πλωί τε καὶ πεζῆ</b>, ἐπὶ Ἀγελῶν ἀπέστειλεν. Ἀνέμου δὲ βιαίου πνεύσαντος, τὰ πλοῖα συνετρίβη. Τοῦτο μαθόντες οἱ Βούλγαροι πόλεμον πρὸς αὐτὸν συνάπτουσι.</p>	<p>186.20 Ἐστράτευσε δὲ κατὰ Βουλγάρων <b>πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί</b>, καὶ τούτους τροπώσαμενος εἰσήλθεν ἐν τῇ πόλει, καθωπλισμένος τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ὅπλοις, θριαμβεύων δεδεμένους τοὺς Βουλγάρους.</p>
<p>912.2 Τῶν δὲ Ἀράβων ὀπλιζομένων κατὰ Ῥωμανίας <b>διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης</b>, ἀπηγγέλη τῷ βασιλεῖ κατὰ τῆς πόλεως τούτου παραγίνεσθαι.</p>	<p>238.15 ἐκστρατεύσας δὲ Μιχαὴλ ἅμα Βάρδα Καίσαρι κίνησιν ποιεῖ κατὰ Μιχαὴλ ἄρχοντος Βουλγαρίας <b>διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης</b>,... ἐν τῇ πόλει εἰσαγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν πάντας</p> <p>268.5 Συμεὼν δὲ τὴν κατ’ αὐτοῦ κίνησιν <b>διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης</b> ἰδὼν ἐν φρουρᾷ κατακλείει τὸν κοιὰστωρα ὡς ἐπὶ δόλω ἐλθόντα.</p>

It could be supposed that Symeon took the last phrase of the narrative, “it was established a deep peace”, also from the Chronicle of George the Monk. In similar words, the author described the establishment of peace between Empress Irene and Harun al-Rashid, the son of Caliph Mahdi (775–785)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> W. Treadgold stated that Symeon did not know George’s chronicle: W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians...*, p. 115.

<sup>31</sup> The phrase διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης is quite popular in Byzantine sources, but few authors used διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης and πεζῆ τε καὶ πλωί in the same chronicle. *Georgii Monachi chronicon*, ed. C. DE BOOR, Stuttgartiae 1904 [= BSGR] (cetera: GEORGIUS) p. 944.16, 912, 2; καὶ στρατεύματα πλείστα διά τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης; NIKEPHOROS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Short History / Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Breviarium historicum*, 43, 10, ed. C. MANGO, Washington DC 1990 [= CFHB, 13; DOT, 10].

<sup>32</sup> GEORGIUS, p. 767, 15.

Georgius Monachus	Symeon Logothetes
767.15 καὶ δὴ βαθείας εἰρήνης γενομένης, ἐξήλθεν ὁ βασιλεὺς...	238.20 ἔκτοτε γινομένης εἰρήνης βαθείας τὸν ἄμερ πάλιν ἐξελθόντα κατὰ Ῥωμανίας,

In this case Metaphrastes used the same technique, slightly modifying the text. According to Michael Psellos (1017–1096), he was very good at adjusting the form of expressions, not changing their sense<sup>33</sup>.

The aim of Symeon Metaphrastes was clear. The revised narrative of Boris's baptism could be a crucial propaganda element in the Byzantine government's preparations for another campaign against the Bulgarians<sup>34</sup>. This context likely led the author to develop Genesis's account of the Bulgarians' conversion, manipulating historical facts. Symeon had all the necessary means to carry out such manipulation, which fundamentally altered the concept of Bulgaria's Christianization. He had the motivation and possibly even the task assigned by the emperor. In addition, Metaphrastes had the skills, essential resources, and extensive authority required to accomplish such a non-trivial mission.

The narrative created by Symeon Metaphrastes had relatively limited popularity among later chroniclers. It was only repeated in copies of chronicles or compilations where the chronicle of Simeon Logothetes was a significant part. This was likely due to numerous chronological and logical inconsistencies in the chronicle.

For instance, one of the authors of the Pseudo-Symeon chronicle placed the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict in the 850s, possibly attempting to reconcile this data full version of the narrative about Boris-Theodora negotiations<sup>35</sup>.

In later compilations by John Skylitzes and John Zonaras, the authors preferred to use the text of Theophanes Continuatus, ignoring the narrative about the Byzantine-Bulgarian War of 863<sup>36</sup>. It is worth mentioning separately the version of

<sup>33</sup> MICHAEL PSELLOS, *Encomium in Metaphrastem Dominum Symeonem*, [in:] PG, vol. CXIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864, col. 183–200; МИХАИЛ ПСЕЛЛ, *Похвальное слово Симеону Метафрасту*, [in:] *Воронежские епархиальные ведомости*, Воронеж 1869, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> The identity of the individual who authored this version, whether Symeon Metaphrastes himself or one of his multiple assistants, remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, it is highly probable that the Byzantine emperor Basil II personally oversaw the modification of the narrative. Typically, he was the primary patron of Symeon Metaphrastes' ideological undertakings.

<sup>35</sup> PSEUDO-SYMEON, p. 665; ГИБИ, vol. V, p. 174; Subsequently, this gave rise to some historiographical ambiguity. For instance, a few Bulgarian scholars posited the existence of two analogous military campaigns in 855 and 863. In this case they used same narrative but from different sources Symeon Logothetes and Pseudo-Symeon chronicles: P. ПЕТРОВ, *La politique étrangère de...*, p. 43; В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, *Княз Борис...*, p. 66; И. БОЖИЛОВ, В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, *История на Средновековна България VII–XIV век*, vol. I, Пловдив 1999, p. 170; D. СНЕШМЕДЗИЕВ, *Knyaz Boris-Michael I: the Bulgarians' Conversion to Christianity*, BHR 33.1–2, 2005, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> IOANNIS SCYLITZAE, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. THURN, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 1973 [= CFHB, 5]; GEORGIUS CEDRENUS, *Compendium historiarum*, vol. I–II, ed., trans. I. БЕККЕР, Bonn 1838–1839

the baptism of Boris, which Theophylact of Ohrid (Bulgarian) briefly outlined. Out of all the main narratives, he only reported the “famine” among the Bulgarians and vaguely hinted at a Franco-Bulgarian conflict that allegedly preceded Bulgarian Christianization<sup>37</sup>.

Based on the analysis, we can tentatively conclude that the credibility of sources regarding the Byzantine invasion of Bulgaria in 863 is highly questionable. Therefore, the prevailing understanding of Boris’s motivations for baptism is not convincing<sup>38</sup>. Accordingly, the question arises what were the real motives for the beginning of Christianization? And what was the real attitude of the Empire government toward this process?

### The diversity and volatility of the Byzantine elites

Regrettably, the prevailing historiographical conception simplifies Constantinople’s missionary policy, overlooking the internal and external political complexities<sup>39</sup>. An analysis of information from various sources suggests that the Byzantine political elite was, at the very least, not keen on accelerating the Bulgarian Christianization process, despite the intention of Bulgarian Khan Boris<sup>40</sup>. This

[= CSHB]; JOHN ZONARAS, *Epitome of Histories*, vol. I–III, ed., trans. M. PINDER, Th. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Bonn 1841–1897.

<sup>37</sup> Ῥωμαῖοι δέ, τό μηδέποτε παρά Βουλγάρων ἐλπισύεν αὐτοῖς τό περί τῆς εἰρήνης μήνυμα ἀσμένως δεξάμενοι, πάντα διά τάχους ἐτέλεσαν: THEOPHYLACTUS BULGARUS, col. 197; М.Й. ЛЕШКА, *Борис I-Михаил, владетелят на България в творчеството на Теофилакт, архиепископ Охридски*, [in:] *Българско средновековие. Общество, власт, история. Сборник в чест на проф. д-р Милияна Каймакова*, ed. Г.Н. НИКОЛОВ, София 2013, p. 229–238.

<sup>38</sup> Some researchers have expressed cautious doubts about the accuracy of the evidence on the War of 863: Sh. TOUGHER, *After Iconoclasm (850–886)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History...*, p. 299; J. Haldon did not include this raid in his Byzantine wars list: J.F. HALDON, *Byzantium at War, AD 600–1453*, Oxford 2003; W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians...*, p. 113.

<sup>39</sup> F. DVORNIK, *The Slavs...*, p. 118; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Geschichte...*, p. 181; H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975, p. 37–40; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Byzantine...*, p. 83–84; L. SIMEONOVA, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy 860s–880s*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 78–79; L. OLSON, *The Conversion of the Visigoths and Bulgarians Compared*, [in:] *Religious Change, Conversion and Culture*, Sydney 1996, p. 31; T.E. GREGORY, *A History of Byzantium*, Maldon–Oxford–Carlton 2005, p. 216; D. ZIEMANN, *The Rebellion of the Nobles against the Baptism of Khan Boris (865–866)*, [in:] *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, vol. II, Berlin–New York 2007 [= *Mil.S.*, 5.2], p. 620; D.P. HUPCHICK, *The Bulgarian-Byzantine Wars for Early Medieval Balkan Hegemony. Silver-Lined Skulls and Blinded Armies*, Palgrave 2017, p. 135.

<sup>40</sup> Only a handful of historians have observed substantial disparities between the avowed proclamations of Byzantine authorities and their tangible missionary policy: С. ИВАНОВ, *Византийское миссионерство...*; V. Vachkova has posited a captivating hypothesis that the Byzantine regime may have favored having pagan barbarians rather than Christian ones as their neighbors close to their borders: V. VACHKOVA, *Danube Bulgaria and Khazaria as Parts of the Byzantine Oikoumene*, [in:] *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages. Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*, ed. F. CURTA, R. KOVALEV, Leiden–Boston 2008 [= *ECEEMA*, 2], p. 339–362.

reluctance primarily stemmed from the political intricacies in Constantinople and the diverse interests of different political factions.

To start, it is worth noting that the baptism of a pagan ruler often represented just one component of a more complex political agreement. In many instances, a formal conversion could unlock numerous political opportunities previously inaccessible to princes, khans, mercenaries, and ambitious individuals on the political periphery. Thus, Byzantine elites were acutely aware of such events' political risks. The common notion among researchers that Christianizing the Bulgarians brought them into the Byzantine sphere, thereby reducing conflict risks, could be viewed as "retroactive history" from a long-term perspective. Every actor in the agreement had their intentions, but none had foreknowledge. Conversely, it could be argued that Boris's Christianization brought Constantinople within the ambit of Bulgarian ambitions, leading to significant political turbulence both in Constantinople and Pliska<sup>41</sup>.

A striking example of the influence of conflicting interests among different political factions in Constantinople on foreign policy is the history of Boris's relations with Emperor Michael III's family. As per Theophanes Continuatus, the mother of young Emperor Michael III sent a somewhat ambiguous letter to the Bulgarian Khan, initiating lengthy negotiations. The message's content and other evidence hint at the beginning of discussing a diplomatic marriage between the two parties. This was likely when Boris first showed interest in the possibility of his baptism. Theophanes Continuatus reports that the parties exchanged trusted individuals, and one of them, the sister of the Bulgarian Khan, began preparing him for baptism. It is plausible that Boris even secretly underwent preliminary baptismal procedures<sup>42</sup>. Empress Theodora's political maneuver can be explained by the complexity of the political situation in which she found herself; she was gradually losing her influence over her son, Michael, and by extension, the political elite in Constantinople.

On the other hand, Michael III's uncle and regent, Bardas, was getting more and more political influence, prompting his sister to seek additional political support. Another member of the regency council, logothete Theoktistos, who served as an advisor to Theodora and was practically the head of the government at that time, orchestrated the plan for the political deal between Theodora and Boris.

<sup>41</sup> The popular statement that Symeon's strategy was just an exception or "apostasy" contradicts facts. V. STANKOVIĆ, *A Ninth Century Turnaround in Southeast Europe: Christianization of Bulgaria and Constantinople's Embracing of the Slavs*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in Memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, ed. I. BILIARSK, Sofia 2018, p. 256. The confrontation between the two states started when Boris was alive and active. It had been going on for decades; at that moment, none of the political groups could forecast how it must have been finished.

<sup>42</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 4.15.

Theoktistos, having experienced several military failures, was in search of allies<sup>43</sup>. However, Bardas was likely aware of the Theodora's correspondence, and he convinced the emperor that his mother was preparing a dynastic marriage and plotting his abdication<sup>44</sup>. He might have hinted to Michael III about the similar actions of Empress Irene (797–802)<sup>45</sup>. This led the young Basileus to sanction the conspiracy, which Bardas organized and executed. As a result, on November 20, 855, Theoktistos was assassinated, and the co-conspirators ousted Theodora from power and eventually exiled her<sup>46</sup>. The political situation in Constantinople could change rapidly, along with the official stance on the possibility of Boris's baptism.

But perhaps the most illustrative example of Byzantine politics' volatility is the history of the relationship between Khan Boris and Bardas. Just a few years after the assassination of Theoktistos, Bardas began facing similar problems that Theodora encountered towards the end of her reign. Although Bardas had virtually total control over the Empire's political processes following Theoktistos's murder, his position at court was far from stable. The ongoing church crisis, coupled with continual failures in battles against the Arabs, hindered Bardas from achieving his ambition of becoming a Caesar under the childless Emperor. As he gradually lost Michael III's favor, he desperately needed a significant military victory and sought allies abroad. Khan Boris of Bulgaria seemed a fitting candidate to help. However, aware of Boris's political ambitions, Bardas only sought his support as a last resort. The unsuccessful embassy to the Khazars and the sudden Rus attack likely prompted the Byzantine government to initiate (or agree to) negotiations with the Bulgarians<sup>47</sup>. The parties likely reached a preliminary agreement (reconciliation) between 860–861. In the spring of 860, a Bulgarian embassy visited Constantinople<sup>48</sup>. By 861, the Byzantine generals had managed to withdraw troops from Thrace and Macedonia, redirecting them to the east for military operations against the Arabs. Furthermore, Theophanes Continuatus reported that a Bulgarian contingent participated in the decisive Battle of Lalakaon (3<sup>rd</sup> September 863), led by Bardas's brother, Petronas, against the armies of Amr<sup>49</sup>.

---

<sup>43</sup> А. ВАСИЛЬЕВ, *Византия и арабы. Политические отношения Византии и арабов за время Аморийской династии*, Санкт-Петербург 1900, p. 174.

<sup>44</sup> The fact that Theophanes Continuatus describes the correspondence between Theodora and Boris in some detail suggests that at least part of it became public knowledge.

<sup>45</sup> Analogous scenarios were not unprecedented in the annals of Byzantine history. For instance, Empress Irene (780–803) had engaged in comparable diplomatic talks, resulting in a conspiracy by the Constantinople aristocracy: THEOPHANES, *Chronographia*, AM 6294–6295, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae, 1883, p. 478–479.

<sup>46</sup> GENESIOS, 4.9.

<sup>47</sup> The goals and details of the mission of Cyril and Methodius require further revision, considering the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations. However, their mission to the Khazars can hardly be called successful.

<sup>48</sup> А. ВАСИЛЬЕВ, *Византия и арабы...*, p. 187.

<sup>49</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 4.25, p. 181.

Through bilateral agreements, the Byzantine government simultaneously solved two problems: securing the Danube border and achieving victory over the Arab forces<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, participants in this agreement received personal political benefits. For instance, Bardas was granted the title of Caesar, Petron ascended to fame as a general, the Bulgarians became allies of them, and Patriarch Photios received credit for baptizing the previously considered “barbaric and Christ-hating people”<sup>51</sup>. Such impressive results of the alliance raise the question of what Khan Boris and his entourage received per the agreement terms. To the Bulgarian nobility, Boris’s baptism, and acceptance of the ‘godson’ status to the Byzantine Emperor could only be perceived as a concession, not compensation, for such significant support. It’s plausible that Boris reverted to conditions previously discussed with Empress Theodora during negotiations. These conditions likely included the potential for a dynastic marriage with a member of the imperial family, and the follow acquisition of the title of Caesar, and thus the opportunity for further political prospects for the Khan and the nobility. In this scenario, the Bulgarian nobles might have supported the Khan’s innovations and even selectively embraced the new religion.

Some details of the agreement, particularly those pertaining to the situation in case of possible Michael III’s death, may have been privately discussed between Bardas and Boris. As a result, Boris and some of his nobility converted to Christianity between 864 and 865. Concurrently, Patriarch Photios wrote him a letter offering guidelines on governing a Christian state<sup>52</sup>.

The primary purpose of these examples is to illustrate that the Byzantine elites’ attitude towards Bulgarian Christianization largely depended on the short-term interests of various political actors. Under such circumstances, the tactics of a particular political group or clan could supersede the Empire’s long-term strategy. Moreover, the political preferences of a specific court faction could fluctuate depending on the situation’s dynamics. Thus, as many Byzantine authors have noted, by the early 860s, the situation in Constantinople had evolved such that the agreement with Khan Boris, which included his baptism, seemed more imposed on the Byzantine government than desired or planned.

<sup>50</sup> The similar aims Byzantines had in 927, having an agreement with the Symeon’s son, Peter: *Only the sons of Hagar mourn and shall mourn, who are bereft of heart at the mere echo of our concord: Ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει*, 18, [in:] I. Дујчев, *On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians*, DOP 32, 1978, p. 254–288.

<sup>51</sup> The legend of the wrestling competition between a Bulgarian and the future emperor Basil likely is related to the period after 860–861. The text of Theophanes Continuatus reports that the Bulgarians, referred to as “friends” (allies) of the Caesar (Bardas) (Βουλγαρίας φίλους), were in Constantinople “as usual” and felt quite comfortable and were actually arrogant: THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, 5.12; ΡΗΟΤΙΟΥΣ, *Επιστολαί*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> ΡΗΟΤΙΟΥΣ, *Επιστολαί*, 1, p. 3–39.

## The International Context Before Boris's Conversion

V. Zlatarski based his theory on the Byzantine-Bulgarian War of 863 on two main premises. First, he suggested that the political alliance between Bulgarian Khan Boris and King Louis II drove the Byzantine Emperor to act preventively. Second, he postulated that Bulgarian troops were drawn into the conflict between Louis II and Rastislav (846–870), leading to Boris's surrender without resistance. However, despite scholarly consensus, the degree of Boris's involvement in European conflicts appears exaggerated. At the onset of his reign, Boris pursued an aggressive foreign policy against the Franks, Croats, Serbs, and Byzantines, but these raids likely ceased before the mid-850s<sup>53</sup>. Subsequently, Boris sought peaceful relations with most of his neighbors, maintaining political control over the situation. He signed a peace treaty with the Croats and possibly reached an agreement with one of the Serbian rulers, Mutimir (850–891), allowing him to influence the local political landscape for a prolonged period. Boris also adopted a neutral and cautious approach to the escalating conflict between King Louis II (843–876) and the Moravian ruler Rastislav. Despite formally supporting Louis II, no sources report any direct military clash between the Bulgarians and Moravians.

One might speculate that negotiations with Theodora and Boris's political ambitions led the Bulgarian Khan to preserve his military forces, refraining from significant warfare until the 'reconciliation' with Byzantium in 860–861. In this case, the Bulgarian Khan remained a constant threat to Constantinople, preventing Byzantine commanders from focusing their forces on pressing issues on the eastern front. The Bulgarians' support for Louis II was limited by military demonstrations along the Moravian frontier in 863. Additionally, there is no evidence of any political or military agreement between Louis II and Boris. For instance, in 864, the ruler of the Eastern Franks still sought to establish lasting peace with

<sup>53</sup> Although dating Boris's Croatian and Serbian campaigns poses particular difficulties, a more precise timeline would place them in the 850s: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1993 [= *CFHB*, 1], p. 31–32; В. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *История на България...*, p. 9–11; Т. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Sloveni i Romeji. Slavizacija na prostoru Srbije od VII do XI veka*, Beograd 2000, p. 100; N. KLAJČ, *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb 1975, p. 227–229; Д.Е. АЛИМОВ, *Этногенез хорватов формирование хорватской этнополитической общности в VII–IX вв.*, Санкт-Петербург 2016, p. 204; С. БИРКОВИЋ, *Срби у средњем веку*, Београд 1998, p. 16; An alternate, albeit later, the date is conceivable, but it would necessarily fall after the date of baptism: F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Povijest Hrvata...*, p. 106, 337; S. RUNCIMAN, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, London 1930, p. 92, 110; Љ. МАКСИМОВИЋ, *О времени похода бугарского князя Бориса на Србију*, ЗФФ.Б 14.1, 1979, p. 69–76; М. БЛАГОЈЕВИЋ, *Немањини и Лазаревини и српска средњовековна државност*, Београд 2004, p. 7; F. CURTA, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250*, Cambridge 2006 [= *СМТ*], p. 146; ПЛ. ПАВЛОВ, *Сърбите в политиката на княз Борис Михаил и цар Симеон Велики*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Българското Средновековие. Познато и непознато*, Велико Търново 2008, p. 51.



the Bulgarians<sup>54</sup>. This underscores the political distance between Bulgarian Khan Boris and Louis II. Therefore, it seems highly doubtful that the usually well-informed Byzantine government was excessively concerned about the relationship between the Franks and Bulgarians<sup>55</sup>.

Finally, there are doubts about whether Michael III could have operated such a surprising attack. Historical sources do not provide precise details about the number of Bulgarian troops deployed to the Moravian border in 863 or whether Boris was present as a commander. Anyway, the Bulgarian people had considerable experience in countering unexpected Byzantine attacks. Therefore, it is indisputable that in 863, the Bulgarian military forces could have resisted a Byzantine invasion, regardless of any surprise element.

Thus, the purported Byzantine invasion of 863 and the subsequent Bulgarian surrender contradict the logic of the international context. Byzantine military plans were focused on the East, and Emperor Michael III was not overly anxious about the situation in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Bulgarian Khan maintained sufficient military strength and political influence to exert pressure on the Byzantine government. Despite his lofty ambitions, Boris understood that the goal could only be achieved incrementally through diplomacy and with the support of at least some of the Byzantine elites. This understanding shaped his foreign policy actions. Boris maneuvered and waited until Bulgarian troops became necessary, perhaps even critical, to the Byzantine government. This situation arose in 860–861 when the Bulgarians likely allied with the Byzantines against the Arabs. Given these circumstances, a Byzantine invasion of 863 against their newfound allies seems illogical, difficult to justify, and highly unlikely.

Analyzing the political situation in the Byzantine Empire and beyond its borders leading up to Boris's baptism, compelling evidence suggests that the imperial government had no reason to conduct a military operation against the Bulgarians in 863. Moreover, available sources indicate that the Byzantine elites were concerned about the Byzantine-Bulgarian agreement, part of which was Boris's baptism. However, the interests of Bardas's political group caused restarting negotiations that initially began under Empress Theodora. The negotiations concluded, presumably in 860–861, with the signing of a peace agreement. Under the terms of this agreement, the Bulgarians became allies of the Byzantines. Khan Boris and

---

<sup>54</sup> Some historians try to explain Boris's weak support for Louis II through his military failures against the Serbians and Byzantines. In this case, the "magic circle" exists in the assumptions. On the one hand, Boris got the war and surrendered because of the close ties and support of the Franks. On the other hand, the weak support for Louis II because of the Byzantine invasion: M. EGGERS, Ch.R. BOWLUS, *863/864 – eine 'internationale...*, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> In 866, Boris drastically shifted away from Constantinople towards Rome and the Franks church. However, this change did not compel the emperor to resort to military intervention.

some of his nobilities were baptized to fulfill the agreement's stipulations – likely involving a dynastic marriage and the integration of some Bulgarian elites into the Empire's ruling class. Since this agreement was negotiated under duress and posed substantial political risks to imperial stability, Byzantine authors wisely omitted the specifics of Boris's baptism until at least the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. However, after nearly a century of often tense and protracted relations between Bulgarian rulers and Byzantine emperors, this historical reality no longer suited imperial ideologues, leading to a reinterpretation of past events.

The first version, which downplayed the Bulgarian role in the Christianization process, appears in the chronicle of Genesis. However, its author merely omitted some details and emphasized the points that were necessary to him. Later, during a period of deteriorating Byzantine-Bulgarian relations, Symeon Metaphrastes fabricated the story of Michael III's successful invasion of Bulgarian lands. This invasion according to his narrative led to Boris's capitulation and initiated the Christianization process. Given the appeal of his chronicle to numerous copyists and compilers, the replicated passages gave the illusion of plentiful evidence from a variety of sources. Consequently, the myth of the Byzantine-Bulgarian War of 863 was born. This narrative aligned with the ideological biases of Bulgarian historians at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who posited that the War of 863 was the primary catalyst for Boris's conversion to Christianity. The narrative gained popularity and eventually became a part of the dominant narrative in the history of the Bulgarian Middle Ages.

Revisiting the prevailing historiographical interpretations and conducting a new analysis of the sources might help clarify the motivations of political actors during the process of Bulgaria's Christianization. It might also illuminate many obscure aspects of Bulgarian-Byzantine relations in the following decades.

## Appendix 1

### Byzantine authors about the motivation of Khan Boris to change his religion

Author	Year	Causes			
Photius	864–867	“Contrary to expectations”			
Nicetas the Paphlagonian	907 (?)	Famine	The emperor’s bribing Bulgarians		
Joseph Genesius	945–959 (?)	Famine	The effect of the Byzantines triumph over Arabs	The Boris-Theodora negotiations (the short version)	
Theophanes Continuatus	945–959 (?)	Famine		The Boris-Theodora negotiations (the full version)	The Methodius painting impact
Symeon the Logothete / Leo Grammaticus / Theodosius of Melitene / Georgius Monachus Continuatus	After 963 (?)	Famine	The military expedition “by land and water”		
Pseudo-Symeon	After 978 (?)	Famine	The military expedition “by land and water”	The Boris-Theodora negotiations (the full version)	The Methodius painting impact
Ioannes Scyllitzes / Georgius Cedrenus	After 1057	Famine		The Boris-Theodora negotiations (the full version)	The Methodius painting impact
Theophylact of Ochrid	1081–1118	Famine	The Franco-Byzantine War’s consequences		
Joannes Zonaras	After 1118	Famine		The Boris-Theodora negotiations (the full version)	

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Annales Alamannici*, Hannover 1826 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum*, 1].
- Annales Altahenses maiores*, Hannover 1868 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum*, 20].
- Annales Quedlinburgenses*, Hannover 1839 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum*, 3].
- Annales Sangallenses maiores*, Hannover 1826 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum*, 1].

- Chernorizets Khrabr O pis'menakh*, [in:] B. FLORYA, *Skazaniya o nachale slavyanskoy pis'mennosti*, Moskva 1981.
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1993 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1].
- Epi tē tōn Boulgarōn symvasei*, [in:] I. DUJČEV, *On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 32, 1978, p. 254–288, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291425>
- GENESIOS, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. A. KALDELLIS, Canberra 1998 [= *Byzantina Australiensia*, 11].
- Georgii Monachi chronicon*, ed. C. DE BOOR, Stutgardiae 1904 [= *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*].
- GEORGIUS CEDRENIUS, *Compendium historiarum*, vol. I–II, ed., trans. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838–1839 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- GEORGIUS MONACHUS CONTINUATUS, [in:] THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, ed I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- IOANNIS SCYLITZAE, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. THURN, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 1973 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 5].
- Iosephi Genesis Regum libri quattuor*, rec. A. LESMUELLER-WERNER, H. THURN, Berolini 1978 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 14] (ed. C. LACHMANN, Bonn 1834).
- JOHN ZONARAS, *Epitome of Histories*, vol. I–III, ed., trans. M. PINDER, Th. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Bonn 1841–1897.
- Khronika Simeona Magistra i Logofeta*, vol. I, ed. A.Yu. VINOGRADOVA, Moskva 2014.
- MICHAEL PSELLOS, *Encomium in Metaphrastem Dominum Symeonem*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXIV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864, col. 183–200.
- MIKHAIL PSELL, *Pokhval'noe slovo Simeonu Metafrastu*, [in:] *Voronezhskie eparkhial'nye vedomosti*, Voronezh 1869.
- NIKEPHOROS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Short History / Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Breviarium historicum*, ed. C. MANGO, Washington DC 1990 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 13; *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 10].
- PHOTIUS, *Epistolai*, ed. J.N. BALETTA, New York 1978.
- PHOTIUS, *Homilies*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CII, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1857, col. 563–573.
- PSEUDO-SYMEON, *Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- PSEUDO-SYMEONIS, *Chronographia*, [in:] *Fontes graeci historiae bulgaricae*, vol. V, Sofija 1964, p. 169–182.
- PSEUDO-SYMEONIS, *Chronographia*, praef., trans. et comm. G. CANKOVA-PETKOVA, Serdicae 1964.
- Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, rec. S. WAHLGREN, Berolini 2006 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 44.1].
- THEOPHANES, *Chronographia*, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883.
- THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, *Chronographia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- THEOPHYLACTUS BULGARUS, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CXXVI, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864.
- Vita Ignatii*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. CV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864.

## Secondary Literature

- AHRWEILER H., *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975.
- ALIMOV D.E., *Etnogenez khorvatov formirovanie khorvatskoy etnopoliticheskoy obshchnosti v VII–IX vv*, Sankt-Peterburg 2016.
- ANDREEV Y., LAZAROV I., PAVLOV PL., *Koy koy e v Srednovekovna Băgarija*, Sofija 1999.
- ANGELOV A.B., *Conversion and Empire: Byzantine Missionaries, Foreign Rulers, and Christian Narratives (ca. 300–900)* (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2011), <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/89651> [31 V 2023].
- ANGELOV P., *Srednovekovna Băgarija i neynite sāsedi*, Sofija 2017.
- BLAGOJEVIĆ M., *Nemanjići i Lazarevići i srpska srednjovekovna državnost*, Beograd 2004.
- BOZHILOV I., GYUZELEV V., *Istorija na Srednovekovna Băgarija VII–XIV v.*, vol. I, Plovdiv 1999.
- CANKOVA-PETKOVA G., *Contribution au sujet de la conversion des Bulgares au christianisme*, “Byzantinobulgarica” 4, 1973, p. 21–40.
- CHESHMEDZIEV D., *Knyaz Boris-Michael I: the Bulgarians' Conversion to Christianity*, “Bulgarian Historical Review” 33.1–2, 2005, p. 6–18.
- ĆIRKOVIĆ S., *Srbi u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1998.
- CURTA F., *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250*, Cambridge 2006 [= Cambridge Medieval Textbooks], <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815638>
- DASKALOV R., *Historical Master Narratives and the Master Narrative of the Bulgarian Middle Ages*, “Studia Ceranea” 10, 2020, p. 259–280, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.10.12>
- DRINOV M., *Pogled vārhu proizhohzdenieto na bālgarskija narod i nachaloto na bālgarskata istorija*, [in:] *Sāchinenija na M.S. Drinova*, vol. I, Sofija 1909.
- DUJČEV I., *Légendes byzantines sur la conversion des Bulgares*, “Sbornik prací filosofické fakulty brněnské university” 10, 1961, p. 7–17.
- DVORNIK F., *The Slavs. Their Early History and Civilization*, Boston 1956.
- EGGERS M., BOWLUS Ch.R., 863/864 – eine ‘internationale Konfrontation in Südosteuropa’, “Südost-Forschungen” 59–60, 2000–2001, p. 14–33.
- GIL'FERDING A.F., 1. *Istorija serbov i bolgar*. 2. *Kirill i Mefodij*. 3. *Obzor cheshskoy istorii*, vol. I, Sankt-Peterburg 1868.
- GOLUBINSKIY E., *Kratkiy ocherk istorii pravoslavnykh tserkvey Bolgarskoy, Serbskoy i Rumynskoy ili Moldo-Valashskoy*, Moskva 1871.
- GREGORY T.E., *A History of Byzantium*, Maldon–Oxford–Carlton 2005.
- GYUZELEV V., *Knyaz Boris Pārvi*, Sofija 1969.
- HALDON J.F., *Byzantium at War, AD 600–1453*, Oxford 2003, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203494622>
- HARRIS J., *The Lost World of Byzantium*, New Haven 2016, <https://doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300178579.001.0001>
- HUPCHICK D.P., *The Bulgarian-Byzantine Wars for Early Medieval Balkan Hegemony. Silver-Lined Skulls and Blinded Armies*, Palgrave 2017.
- IRECHEK K.I., *Istorija bolgar*, Odessa 1878.
- IVANOV S., *Religious Missions*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 305–332, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.014>
- IVANOV S., *Vizantiyskoe missionerstvo: možno li sdelat' iz – «varvara» khristianina?*, Moskva 2003.

- JENKINS R.J.H., *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, London 1970.
- JENKINS R.J.H., MANGO C., *The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 9–10, 1955–1956, p. 123–140, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291094>
- KAZHDAN A.P., *Khronika Simeona Logofeta*, "Византийский временник" / "Vizantiyskiy Vremennik" 15 (40), 1959, p. 125–143.
- KAZHDAN A.P., LITAVRIN G.G., *Ocherki istorii Vizantii i yuzhnykh slavyan*, Moskva 1958.
- KLAIĆ N., *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku*, Zagreb 1975.
- LESHKA M.Y., *Boris I-Mikhail, vladetelyat na Bălgariya v tvorchestvoto na Teofilakt, arkhiepiskop Okhridski*, [in:] *Bălgarsko srednovekovie. Obshchestvo, vlast, istorija. Sbornik v chest na prof. d-r Miliana Kaymakamova*, ed. G.N. NIKOLOV, Sofija 2013, p. 229–238.
- LITAVRIN G.G., *Vvedenie khristianstva v Bolgarii (IX – nach. X)*, [in:] *Prinyatie khristianstva narodami Tsentral'noy i Yugo-Vostochnoy Evropy i kreshchenie Rusi*, Moskva 1988.
- МАКСИМОВИЋ Lj., *O vremenu pohoda bugarskogo kneza Borisa na Srbiju*, "Зборник Филозофског факултета (Београд)" / "Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta (Beograd)" 14.1, 1979, p. 69–76.
- MARKOPOULOS A., *Sur Les Deux Versions De La Chronographie De Symeon Logothete*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 76.2, 1983, p. 279–284, <https://doi.org/10.1515/byzs.1983.76.2.279>
- OBOLENSKY D., *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London 1971.
- OLSON L., *The Conversion of the Visigoths and Bulgarians Compared*, [in:] *Religious Change, Conversion and Culture*, Sydney 1996, p. 22–33.
- OSTROGORSKY G., *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates*, München 1963.
- PALAUZOV Sp., *Vek bolgarskogo tsarya Simeona*, Sankt-Peterburg 1852.
- PAVLOV Pl., *Sărbite v politikata na knyaz Boris Mikhail i tsar Simeon Veliki*, [in:] Pl. PAVLOV, *Bălgarskoto Srednovekovie. Poznato i nepoznato*, Veliko Tărnovo 2008, p. 51–65.
- PETROV P., *La politique étrangère de la Bulgarie au milieu du IX siècle et la conversion des Bulgares*, "Byzantinobulgarica" 2, 1966, p. 41–52.
- ROSSEYKIN F.M., *Pervoe pravlenie Fotiya, patriarkha Konstantinopol'skogo*, Sergiev Posad 1915.
- RUNCIMAN S., *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, London 1930.
- RUNCIMAN S., *Byzantium and the Slavs*, [in:] *Byzantium. An Introduction to East Roman Civilization*, ed. N.H. BAYNES, H.St.L.B. Moss, Oxford 1948, p. 338–368.
- SHAFARIK P.I., *Slavyanskiye drevnosti*, vol. II, Moskva 1847.
- SIMEONOVA L., *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy 860s–880s*, Amsterdam 1998.
- ŠIŠIĆ F., *Povijest Hrvata. Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda 600–1526*, Zagreb 1916 (Split 2004).
- SOKOLOV M., *Iz drevney istorii bolgar*, Sankt-Peterburg 1879.
- STANKOVIĆ V., *A Ninth Century Turnaround in Southeast Europe: Christianization of Bulgaria and Constantinople's Embracing of the Slavs*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in Memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, ed. I. BILIARSK, Sofia 2018, p. 253–259.
- TOUGHER S., *After Iconoclasm (850–886)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2008, p. 292–304, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521832311.013>
- TREADGOLD W., *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137280862>
- TRIFONOV Y., *Tsar Boris-Mikhail. Vreme, tsaruvane i velichie*, Sofija 1927.


- TRIFONOV Y., *Tsaruvaneto na Borisa-Mikhayla*, Sofija 1907.
- TSUKHLEV D., *Istoriya na bälgarskata tsärkva*, vol. I, Sofija 1911.
- VACHKOVA V., *Danube Bulgaria and Khazaria as Parts of the Byzantine Oikoumene*, [in:] *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages. Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans*, ed. F. CURTA, R. KOVALEV, Leiden–Boston 2008 [= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 2], p. 339–362, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004163898.i-492.84>
- VASILIK V.V., *Desyataya gomiliya patriarkha Fotiya*, “*Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*” 1–2, 2009, p. 185–194.
- VASILYEV A., *Vizantiya i araby. Politicheskie otnosheniya Vizantii i arabov za vremya Amoriyskoy dinastii*, Sankt-Peterburg 1900.
- VENELIN Y.I., *Kriticheskie issledovaniya ob istorii Bolgar. S prikhoda Bolgar na Frakiyskiy poluostrov do 968 goda, ili pokoreniya Bolgarii Velikim Knyazem Russkim Svyatoslavom*, Moskva 1849.
- VLASTO A.P., *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom. An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs*, Cambridge 1970, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511583759>
- WAHLGREN St., *Symeon the Logothete and Theophanes Continuatus*, “*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*” 69, 2019, p. 323–334, <https://doi.org/10.1553/joeb69s323>
- WASILEWSKI T., *Bizancjum i Słowianie w IX wieku. Studia z dziejów stosunków politycznych i kulturalnych*, Warszawa 1972.
- ZIEMANN D., *The Rebellion of the Nobles against the Baptism of Khan Boris (865–866)*, [in:] *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium*, vol. II, Berlin–New York 2007 [= *Millennium-Studien*, 5.2], p. 613–624, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110218831.3.613>
- ZIEMANN D., *Von Wandervolk zur Großmacht. Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.–9. Jh.)*, Cologne–Weimar–Vienna 2007 [= *Kölner Historische Abhandlungen*, 43].
- ŽIVKOVIĆ T., *Sloveni i Romeji. Slavizacija na prostoru Srbije od VII do XI veka*, Beograd 2000.
- ZLATARSKI V.N., *Istoriya na Bälgarskata derzhava prez srednite vekove*, vol. I, pars 2, Sofija 1927 (2007).
- ZLATARSKI V.N., *Izvestija za bälgarite v khronikata na Simeon Metafrast i Logotet*, [in:] *Izbrani proizvedeniya*, vol. I, ed. P. PETROV, Sofija 1972.

**Kostiantyn Bardola**

kostiantyn.bardola@gmail.com



Martina Biamino (Genoa)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4673-0773>

## JUSTINIAN, PILGRIMAGES AND THE *THEOTOKOS*: IMPERIAL PROPAGANDA IN *DE AEDIFICIIS V*\*

**Abstract.** This article analyses Book V of *De Aedificiis*, specifically focusing on *Aed. V*, 6–9. Building on previous studies that demonstrate Procopius’ journey within this book along an ancient road traditionally used by pilgrims, it is noted how, in what can be considered the second part of the book, the historian focuses on the churches built by Justinian for the *Theotokos*, all situated on high points in Palestine. Based on this, the article seeks to explain how this insistence on the churches of the Virgin on hillsides, combined with the theme of pilgrimage, serves court propaganda, which may have promoted a de-Judaization and a de-Nestorianization of Palestine. Additionally, it is hypothesized that Procopius may have drawn inspiration, given the subject matter, from a genre closely related to pilgrimage, such as that of *itineraria*.

**Keywords:** pilgrimage, Procopius of Caesarea, *De Aedificiis*, Byzantine churches, Jerusalem, *Nea Ekklesia*

### Introduction

Procopius’ *De Aedificiis*, his final and controversial work, can be divided not only into books but also into thematic sections. The first book focuses solely on Constantinople, while books II–IV cover military constructions and fortifications, and books V–VI deal with religious and civil buildings<sup>1</sup>. This reflects the actions of Justinian during his reign, encompassing wars, religion, and the care for the empire.

---

\* A concise version of the present article was submitted for presentation at the IV Colloquia Ceranea International Conference held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May. I express my gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Professor Pia Carolla, for her invaluable guidance, and to the two anonymous reviewers whose constructive feedback substantially enhanced the quality of my research.

<sup>1</sup> P. CESARETTI, M.L. FOBELLI, *Procopio di Cesarea. Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli. Un tempio di luce (De Aedificiis, I 1, 1–78)*, Milano 2011, p. 10. Cf. G. CASTIGLIA, *Procopio tra città e territorio: riflessioni a margine su una possibile valenza topografica del “De Aedificiis”*, [in:] *Procopio di Cesarea. Gli Edifici*, ed. C. DELL’OSSO, Città del Vaticano 2018, p. 43–52.



Scholars have attempted to analyse the work as a whole, resulting in various interpretations of its meaning<sup>2</sup> and completeness<sup>3</sup>: this highlights the complexity of the *De Aedificiis* and the possibility to read it from different perspectives based on the individual books analysed<sup>4</sup>.

In this paper we are going to focus on Book V solely: here we find churches, monasteries, bridges, road reconstructions, and hospices; all these buildings are aligned with the work's proem, which details Justinian's expansion of the empire, establishment of proper orthodoxy, and care for all aspects of his reign<sup>5</sup>. The topic of religion, therefore, could not be missing in such panegyric work: orthodoxy was not only a matter of the Church, but also a political and imperial issue during the Byzantine Empire<sup>6</sup>.

The significance of religion in Byzantine culture and politics led to the emergence of the earliest pilgrimages. To the best of our knowledge, these journeys commenced in the fourth century and gained momentum in the fifth century. Wealthy individuals, including two empresses<sup>7</sup>, embarked on these expeditions,

<sup>2</sup> Here we will briefly present the most famous interpretations of Procopius' work: A. CAMERON, *Procopius and the Sixth century*, New York 1985 [= TCH, 10], p. 112: within this work one can see the real Procopius, the result of his century; H.G. BECK, *Lo storico e la sua vittima. Teodora e Procopio*, trans. N. ANTONACCI, Roma-Bari 1988: it is a work composed on commission saying nothing about the real Procopius; P. ROUSSEAU, *Procopius' Buildings and Justinian's Pride*, B 68.1, 1998, p. 121–138: the work combine together two levels of language: one is mysterious while the other is arrogant; A. KALDELLIS, *Procopius of Caesarea. Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*, Philadelphia 2004: the *De Aedificiis* is studded with ironic and antiphrastic allusions in line with the author's anti-tyrannical and pagan positions, pretending to adhere to Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> About the completeness of the work cf. B. RUBIN, *Prokopios von Kaisarea*, Stuttgart 1954, p. 299: the omission of Italy would be in response to an attempt to not overshadow Belisarius; A. CAMERON, *Procopius...*, p. 84–85: the *De Aedificiis* lacks of a final revision and, due to this fact, Italy was omitted.

<sup>4</sup> About the interpretation of a precise section of the *De Aedificiis* see the monography P. CESARETTI, M.L. FOPELLI, *Procopio di Cesarea...*

<sup>5</sup> *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. IV, *De Aedificiis Libri VI*, I, 1, 6–10, ed. J. HAVRY, rec. G. WIRTH, Leipzig 1964 [= BSGR] (cetera: PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. J.C. SKEDOS, "You Cannot Have a Church without an Empire": *Political Orthodoxy in Byzantium*, [in:] *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*, ed. G.E. DEMACOPOULOS, A. PAPANICOLAOU, New York 2017, p. 219–231, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1gn6b41.14> [5 IX 2022].

<sup>7</sup> The first was Helena, mother of Constantine: EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *Vita Constantini*, III, 43, [in:] *Eusebius Werke*, vol. I, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, T. 1, ed. F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1975 [= GCS]. There is no consensus among scholars on the date of her journey to Jerusalem: some date it between 324–325 AD; cf. S. BORGEHAMMAR, *How the Holy Cross Was Found. From Event to Mediaeval Legend*, Uppsala 1991, p. 137–140; others date it in the spring of 327 AD. Cf. E.D. HUNT, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–360*, Oxford 1984, p. 28–49; J.W. DRIJVER, *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden–New York–København–Köln 1992 [= BSIH, 27], p. 55–72, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004246768>; cf. I.L. NAVARRO, *Helena Augusta. Una biografía histórica*, Zaragoza 2013. The second was Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II: L.L. GIERLACH-WALKER, *Empress Eudocia: a Mole Enters the Theodosian Household*, Str 59, 2017, p. 84–103: she began a pilgrimage that led her to Jerusalem

which were conducted via land or sea. However, the maritime route was primarily limited to the summer months and often considered obligatory to minimize travel time<sup>8</sup>, while the land route used the same roads as those employed for trade<sup>9</sup>.

Valuable insights into the routes taken by pilgrims can be gained from the *Itineraria* written by them, in which the various paths to reach important Christian sites are shown. The Roman routes radiating from Ephesos, the capital of the province of Asia<sup>10</sup>, formed the basic structure of communications in the eastern Byzantine empire, including the main Pilgrim's Road that was travelled by the Anonymous of Bordeaux, the first western pilgrim to leave a written record.

The emperor Justinian improved the road system, as noted by Procopius in the *De Aedificiis*, and Belke<sup>11</sup> showed that the majority of locations in Book V are on the Pilgrim's Road, with detours to places of imperial significance, such as Pythia.

The road repairs described by Procopius, although intended to improve journeys for the state and imperial family, also served other segments of the population, including clergy, monks, pilgrims, and merchants<sup>12</sup>. This emphasis on roads, if viewed in the context of pilgrimage, makes sense as a pilgrimage centre requires a connection to a regional and trans-regional communication system. Furthermore, analysing the *De Aedificiis* in conjunction with other sources, such as pilgrims' *Itineraria* and maps of the period, can provide a clearer understanding of Procopius' choice of places and their perception. I argue that the journey of Procopius in Book V of *De Aedificiis*, which showcases various buildings commissioned by Justinian, can be divided into two distinct parts. In the first section, Procopius mostly follows the Pilgrim's Road and travels through Anatolia to the city of Tarsus, while in the second, he departs from a specific path and instead focuses on the centre of pilgrimage par excellence, Jerusalem (*Aed.* V, 6), and later the Gerizim (*Aed.* V, 7) and Sinai (*Aed.* V, 8).

The present contribution aims to complement Belke's analysis with a focus on the second part of Book V: the areas outside Anatolia. This article will provide an overview of Procopius' journey and offer a possible other interpretation of the book. Considerable attention will be given to the focus on the figure of the

---

where she settled between 443 and 460 AD; she built monasteries, pilgrim lodgings, churches for the Virgin and the Basilica of St. Stephen, which remained one of the largest Christian buildings of worship for a century.

<sup>8</sup> J.H. PRYOR, *Geography, Technology, and War. Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571*, Cambridge 1988, p. 87; cf. S.D. GOITEIN, *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vol. I, *Economic Foundations*, Los Angeles–Berkeley–London 1967, p. 316.

<sup>9</sup> G. PERTA, *I porti di pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta (sec. IV–X)*, [in:] *Studi in onore di Guglielmo de' Giovanni-Centelles*, ed. E. CUOZZO, Salerno 2010, p. 251–266.

<sup>10</sup> K. BELKE, *Communications. Roads and Bridges*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. JEFFREYS, J. HALDON, R. CORMACK, Oxford 2008, p. 298.

<sup>11</sup> K. BELKE, *Prokops De Aedificiis, Buch V, zu Kleinasien*, *ATA* 8, 2000, p. 115–125.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*; cf. also IDEM, *Communications...*, p. 301–302.

*Theotokos* in the second part of the book; the massive presence of the God-bearer from chapter 6 onward has received little attention so far, as well as the theme of the height of the Palestinian mountains. Additionally, a comparison with other genres, such as travel itineraries, will be explored.

### Why pilgrimages in Book V?

The motivations behind pilgrimage need to be investigated. While faith in God was a strong driving factor, it is well documented that pilgrims also travelled long distances in search of localities known for healing properties or miracles<sup>13</sup>. Thus, it is not surprising that many of the cities mentioned in Book V were also famous for hosting healing centres<sup>14</sup>. The proem of the book states that Justinian was dedicated to remedying all urban afflictions<sup>15</sup>, which, in a medical context, can be linked to both the pilgrimage theme and the facilities intended for pilgrims, while also considering structures of civic importance. The *ἰάομαι παθήματα* nexus ('to cure the affections' *Aed.* V, 1, 3) clearly implies a medical metaphor<sup>16</sup>, indicating that the emperor took care of every problem that could affect the cities. This nuance is useful in explaining both the routes taken by Procopius and some of the constructions he describes, including churches, monasteries, hospices for travellers, the needy, and the sick. The distinction between these buildings was not clear-cut in the fifth century; the term *xenon* or *xenodochion*<sup>17</sup> simply indicated a structure that could be used by travellers or the needy<sup>18</sup>, and the term 'πτωχείον' referred specifically to facilities for the needy in the novels of Justinian<sup>19</sup>. Procopius' use of 'πτωχεῖα' and 'ξενῶνα' in Book V indicates an awareness of the differences between these structures and the development of a lexicon related to pilgrimage<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> C. Foss, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor*, DOP 56, 2002, p. 142.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*: These centres are of course Ephesos, but also Nicaea, Nikomedia, Pythia with its springs, Caesarea of Cappadocia, and Tarsus.

<sup>15</sup> PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*, V, 1, 3: ἐν δὲ γε τῷ παρόντι καὶ ὅσα κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην Ἀσίαν καὶ Λιβύην αὐτῷ εἴργασται ἢ [...] πόλεων ἰωμένων παθήματα πάντα.

<sup>16</sup> For the thematic of Justinian as a physician thaumaturg cf. G. DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des Patria*, Paris 1984 [= BBE, 8], p. 289.

<sup>17</sup> The council of Nicaea referred to *xenodochia* and *hospitia* as well-established fact, buildings created for pilgrims, sick or poor people; M. VOLTAGGIO, 'Xenodochia' and 'Hospitia' in *Sixth-Century Jerusalem: Indicators for the Byzantine Pilgrimage to the Holy Places*, ZDPV 127, 2011, p. 198, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41304101> [8 X 2022]. PGL, s.v. ξενοδοχεῖον: there is no a specific meaning for this term.

<sup>18</sup> ANTONINUS PLACENTINUS, *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini*, 23, [in:] *Itinera Hierosolomytana speculi IIII–VII*, ed. P. GEYER, Vindobonae 1898 [= CSEL, 39] (cetera: ANTONINUS).

<sup>19</sup> Novella CXXXIII, 6: *Novellae*, [in:] *Corpus Iuris Civilis. Iustiniani Novellae recognovit Rudolf Schoell*, vol. III, ed. R. SCHÖLL, W. KROLL, Cambridge 2014 [= CCS], <https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Corpus/Novellae.htm> [28 XII 2022] (cetera: ed. SCHÖLL & KROLL 1993).

<sup>20</sup> E.g. PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*, V, 9, 4: ξενῶνα ἐν Ἱερὶχῶ and *De Aedificiis*, V, 9, 35: τὸ πτωχεῖον τοῦ ἁγίου Κόνωνος.

The theme of religious buildings connected to pilgrimage and structures for travellers, the sick, and the needy may reflect the challenges of a historical period marked by epidemics and famine. The *De Aedificiis* is dated after the summer of 553<sup>21</sup> and the sixth century was characterized by several plagues, including the most notable one in 542, and other epidemics, as well as a three-month bread shortage and widespread riots in May 556<sup>22</sup>. Meier, citing Kitzinger<sup>23</sup>, highlights two phases of Justinian's reign: during the first, the emperor aimed to create a synthesis of classical and Christian ideals, whereas during the second phase, rigid religious expressions of Christianity became prominent<sup>24</sup>. According to the dating of Procopius' work, namely after the summer of 553, the *De Aedificiis* is positioned in the second phase of Justinian's reign. In this celebratory work, the control over the classical concept of *pax deorum* can be seen, but now reinterpreted in a Christian context. Regardless of the period, it was the emperor's responsibility to maintain religious respect for the stability of the empire.

During this historical period, the *Theotokos* became a symbol, serving as a mediator between humanity and God. Her cult grew in popularity after the plague, and Justinian not only established the liturgical feast of the Annunciation, but also

<sup>21</sup> For the datation of the work, the mention in *De Aedificiis*, V, 3 of the construction of a bridge over the Sagari river is crucial. Procopius tells us that the bridge was under construction: Theophanes, however, reports that in *Annus Mundi* 6052 Justinian had begun this project – the year would therefore be between 559 and 560. G. DOWNEY, *The Composition of Procopius, De Aedificiis*, TPAPA 78, 1947, p. 181: more likely the spring of 560. M. WHITBY, *Justinian's Bridge over the Sangarius and the Date of Procopius' De Aedificiis*, JHS 105, 1985, p. 131: basing on the dating provided by Theophanes, asserts that *De Aedificiis* must have been written from that year. G. GREATREX, *The Dates of Procopius' Work*, BMGS 18, 1994, p. 101–115 (cf. also IDEM, *The Date of Procopius' Buildings in the Light of Recent Scholarship*, EsBiz 1, 2013, p. 13–29) points out a strange inconsistency: if this were so, Procopius would pass over the collapse of the dome of Hagia Sophia in 558 and its reconstruction by Justinian. According to Whitby Procopius decided not to pay attention to the new dome as it was not yet decorated. Greatrex, however, does not see how the work could have been completed in such a short amount of time and, furthermore, it is not explained why the author defines the assault in 540 as "recent". Therefore Greatrex proposes, with regard to the bridge over the Sagari, that the work was begun around 554 – after the earthquake, therefore after 550 – and was later left suspended and then completed around 560. F. MONTINARO, *Byzantium and the Slavs in the Reign of Justinian: Comparing the Two Recensions of Procopius' Buildings*, [in:] *The Pontic-Danubian Realm in the Period of the Great Migration*, ed. V. IVANIŠEVIĆ, M. KAZANSKI, Paris 2011, p. 89–114: he believes that the *De Aedificiis*, particularly in the form of the short redaction, was conceived as an appendix to the first instalment of the *Bella* in 550–551: the eight-book edition of 553–557 prompted Procopius to expand and update the work.

<sup>22</sup> F.P. RETIEF, L. CILLIERS, *The Epidemic of Justinian (AD 542): a Prelude to the Middle Ages*, AThe 26.2, 2006, p. 126, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v26i2.52567> [2 X 2022]: only the plague of 558 was as devastating as the one in 542.

<sup>23</sup> E. KITZINGER, *Byzantinische Kunst im Werden. Stilentwicklungen in der Mittelmeerkunst vom 3. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert*, Cologne 1984.

<sup>24</sup> M. MEIER, *The "Justinianic Plague": An "Inconsequential Pandemic"? A Reply*, MJou 55.2, 2020, p. 191.

showed his support for the increasing devotion to the Virgin Mary by requesting Procopius to detail the numerous churches dedicated to her that he had built<sup>25</sup>.

Given the growing focus on the Virgin Mary, it is not surprising that the churches dedicated to the *Theotokos* by Justinian are the main focus in the second part of Book V. Procopius' attention to Mary and the theme of pilgrimage may also explain the list found in the final chapter of the book.

The discussion of the Virgin Mary and *De Aedificiis* would be incomplete without mentioning one of the major constructions dedicated to her, the *Nea Ekklesia*. This building holds significant meaning and significance as a symbol of the God-bearer.

### **The *Nea Ekklesia*: the imperial power over Jerusalem**

The Holy City appears in the fifth book of Procopius' work through the description of the new church for the *Theotokos*, the *Nea Ekklesia*. This inaugurates the second part of the book, which is entirely dedicated to Mary<sup>26</sup>. The next chapters (*Aed.* V, 6–8) describe three churches built for the God-bearer on hillsides in Palestine.

Trampedach<sup>27</sup> argues that Justinian's interest in Jerusalem was due to the role it played in the emperor's ecclesiastical politics and its association with the Chalcedonian credo and Roques suggests that the construction of the *Nea Ekklesia* aimed to counteract the influence of the Monophysites, who were strongly anti-Chalcedonian<sup>28</sup>. To the hypotheses of the two scholars, it is necessary to add a third point, which will be discussed later, namely Justinian's desire to combat Judaism in the Palestinian region. This intention, therefore, dear to the emperor, would find its place within the celebratory *De Aedificiis*. If pagans were recognized as followers of an erroneous religion and if heretics constituted a problem for the official religion, Jews and Samaritans, also 'people of the book', were an inconvenient presence that hindered Chalcedonian orthodoxy: this is why Shahîd speaks of a de-Judaization of Palestine, claiming that the *Nea Ekklesia* was part of this project<sup>29</sup>.

In fact, it is important to consider that the *Theotokos* embodies the Chalcedonian orthodoxy defended by the emperor as the God-bearer and proof of the

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 190.

<sup>26</sup> From a research on the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* the term *Theotokos* occurs nineteen times in the *De Aedificiis*, ten of them from Book V onwards: *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu> [5 X 2022]. Here it is considered also the Book VI.

<sup>27</sup> K. TRAMPEDACH, *Ein neuer Tempel Salomons in Jerusalem? Der Bau der Nea-Kirche (531–543) durch Kaiser Justinian*, *Mil* 12.1, 2015, p. 155–178.

<sup>28</sup> *Procopé de Césarée. Constructions de Justinien I<sup>er</sup>*, vol. V, ed. et trans. D. ROQUES, Alessandria 2011, p. 382.

<sup>29</sup> I. SHAÎD, *Justinian and the Cristianization of Palestine. The Nea Ekklesia in Jerusalem*, [in:] *Κλητόριον εις μνήμην Νίκου Οικονομίδη*, ed. Φ. ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΑΤΟΥ-ΝΟΤΑΡΑ, Τ. ΜΑΝΙΑΘ-ΚΟΚΚΙΝΗ, Αθήνα 2005, p. 373–385.

Incarnation. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Justinian, who aimed to restore the *pax Dei*, sought to establish his own presence in the most important Biblical locations, and that Jerusalem, as the ultimate religious centre, was crucial for an emperor committed to religious aspects. Moreover, a church built in Jerusalem, a prime destination for pilgrimage, would have ensured that it was not only seen by the local population but also by people from other regions or even foreigners, spreading Justinian's message.

I argue that Procopius, therefore, deliberately and precisely chooses the *Theotokos* as a symbol of Justinian's politics in Palestine and starts with the *Nea Ekklesia*. This was one of the largest constructions of the period, along with the church of St. John in Ephesus<sup>30</sup> and the church of the Holy Apostles. It was dedicated on the 20 November 543, the day before the celebration of the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple<sup>31</sup>, which recalls the tradition of the *Proto-Evangelium* of James<sup>32</sup>. The church was discovered in 1970 by Avigad<sup>33</sup> in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City and its position matches the description of the historian of the *De Aedificiis*<sup>34</sup>. Scholars agree that the church was intended to be a renowned pilgrimage destination in the sixth century, given the considerable amount of money invested by the emperor<sup>35</sup>.

However, the *Nea Ekklesia* was unique in that it was not built on a renowned sacred site<sup>36</sup>. Trampedach emphasizes the location of the church to explain its significance. The hill chosen by the emperor creates an ideal triangle with the ancient Temple of Solomon and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher built by Constantine the Great<sup>37</sup>. The connection between the *Nea Ekklesia* and the *Anastasis* is also noted by Amitzur: for him the extension of the *cardo* was meant to link the two churches, especially in the occasion of a procession: therefore, the *Nea Ekklesia* is the 'new' church of the *Anastasis*, which in the previous times replaced the Jewish Temple<sup>38</sup>. The church's location has also drawn Shahid's attention<sup>39</sup>, another time in connection to the ancient Temple of Solomon: the Church of Justinian would be built in a position that overlooks the Temple ruins, thereby demonstrating

<sup>30</sup> It is worth mentioning that, after the proem, the church of St. John the Theologian is the first building encountered in Book V (*Aed.*, V, 1, 5).

<sup>31</sup> M. BARKER, *Justinian's 'New Church' and the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple*, S.JOLT 103, 2005, p. 5, <http://www.margaretbarker.com/Papers/default.htm> [25 II 2023].

<sup>32</sup> S. VAHILÉ, *La dédicace de Saint-Maria-la-Neuve*, RAUG 2, 1903, p. 137.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. for more N. AVIGAD, *Discovering Jerusalem*, Nashville-Camden-New York 1980, p. 229-246.

<sup>34</sup> Y. TSAFRIR, *Procopius and the Nea Church in Jerusalem*, ATa 8, 2000, p. 154.

<sup>35</sup> M. VOLTAGGIO, 'Xenodochia' and 'Hospitia'..., p. 199.

<sup>36</sup> K. TRAMPEDACH, *Ein neuer Tempel Salomons...*, p. 155-178.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> H. AMITZUR, *Justinian's Solomon Temple in Jerusalem*, [in:] *The Centrality of Jerusalem. Historical Perspectives*, ed. M. POORTHUIS, C. SAFRAI, Kampen 1996, p. 168-171.

<sup>39</sup> I. SHAÏD, *Justinian and the Cristianization...*, p. 377.

Christianity's superiority over Judaism, but also the emperor as better than Solomon. Analyzing the *Nea Ekklesia* in parallel with Procopius' description, scholars have noted how the historian presents it as a new Temple of Solomon. Summarizing the various interpretations concerning their similarity, Amitzur<sup>40</sup> notes that both the Temple and the *Nea Ekklesia* used cedars, which, although costly, were necessary to establish a correlation between Justinian's church and Solomon's Temple. The measurements of the *Nea Ekklesia* also do not seem to have been left to chance by the emperor: the building measures 200 x 100 cubits, the exact measurements that the future Temple would have had according to the prophecy of Ezekiel<sup>41</sup>. Furthermore, Shahîd claims that the columns of the *Nea Ekklesia*, coloured like flames of fire, recalled those of the *Portico* of the Temple that lay in ruins on the Temple hill<sup>42</sup>. This brief and partial exposition of the similarities between the *Nea Ekklesia* and the Temple of Solomon could possibly be supplemented with another minor detail. Procopius, in regards to the church, mentions the existence of internal doors that prepared the viewer for what he was about to encounter<sup>43</sup>. It is possible that the historian is referring here to a decoration that somehow foreshadows what the visitors are about to see beyond. Procopius, although is often dry in his descriptions in Book V, specifies this detail, which perhaps is intended as a reference to the Temple, as we read in 1Reg 6: 1–38 that the interior of that building was richly decorated.

Having analysed these interpretations, it is also interesting to note that the description of the church outlined by Procopius places a particular emphasis on its height: the tallest hill, which towers over is chosen, and the church reaches upwards; therefore, one may suggest a simpler explanation: the location was chosen also for its association with the 'high places' in the Old Testament (*Septuaginta*: τὰ ὑψηλὰ)<sup>44</sup>. In the Bible, these places were associated with Jewish kings and religious aspects of royal power, as demonstrated by the associations of *bamoth* (the Hebrew word for 'high places') with religious aspects of royal power. Peatfield<sup>45</sup> writes regarding this topic that

topographically Jerusalem is set within the hills that separate the fertile coastal lands of Israel from the deserts of the interior. The site identified as the original city of David is set on the slopes of Mount Moriah overlooking the Kidron Valley. The expansion of the city to include the summit of the mountain (called Zion), *i.e.* what became the Temple Mount, can plausibly be interpreted as royal monopolisation of religious power represented and expressed through the symbol of the mountain, the ultimate high place.

<sup>40</sup> H. AMITZUR, *Justinian's Solomon Temple...*, p. 163–166.

<sup>41</sup> Ez 40.

<sup>42</sup> I. SHAÎD, *Justinian and the Cristianization...*, p. 381.

<sup>43</sup> PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*, V, 6, 24.

<sup>44</sup> L.S. FRIED, *The High Places (Bāmôt) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation*, JAOS 122.3, 2002, p. 437–465.

<sup>45</sup> A. PEATFIELD, *High Places and Royal Shrines*, [in:] *Tara. From the Past to the Future. Towards a New Research Agenda*, ed. O. SULLIVAN, M. SCARRE, M. DOYLE, Dublin 2013, p. 480–481.

Of course in Antiquity, mountains are places where men can connect with God. In the Bible, for example, God speaks to Noah on Ararat in Gn 8, descends on Sinai to meet Moses in Ex 24: 16, and is described as 'the holy God who dwells in the heights' (ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν ὑψηλοῖς, ἐνεπλήσθη Σιων κρίσεως καὶ δικαιοσύνης)<sup>46</sup> in Is 33: 5. Procopius similarly underscores the holiness of summits in *Aed.* V, 8, 7, when discussing Mount Sinai. He claims that it is impossible for a man to spend the night there because of the divine phenomena that could overwhelm the human mind. The fact that all the churches described in the following chapters are built on high places may be a reference to the Old Testament and the Byzantines' view of themselves as the new chosen people<sup>47</sup>. Furthermore, this would align well with Shadhīd's studies regarding a de-Judaization of Palestine: Procopius ensures that Christianity appropriates symbols typical of Jewish royal power.

The *Nea Ekklesia* is located on the 'highest hill' of Jerusalem, specifically on one of the altitudes of Mount Zion<sup>48</sup>, the only available site for the new construction. It is dedicated to the most significant figure in the saintly realm who serves as an intermediary between men's prayers and God, the Virgin Mary. During a historical period characterized by insecurity, the emperor's generosity gifts the people with a sanctuary devoted to the Mother of all mothers who, like Justinian, can heal her faithful, this time in a tangible way. Thus, in addition to the emphasis on its height, the author also focuses on the two hospices located near the church, which are described towards the end of the description of the sacred building's spaces:

προϊόντι δὲ πρόσω ἡμίκυκλα δύο, ἀλλήλοις ἀντιπρόσωπα ἐκατέρωθεν τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν ὁδοῦ ἑστᾶσι· ξενῶνες δὲ τῆς ἐτέρας ἐφ' ἑκάτερα δύο, Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλέως ἔργον· ἄτερος μὲν ξένοις ἐνδημοῦσι καταλυτήριον, ὁ δὲ δὴ ἕτερος ἀναπαυστήριον νοσοῦσι πτωχοῖς<sup>49</sup>.

Then as one advances there are two semi-circles (*hemikykla*) which stand facing each other on one side of the road which leads to the church, while facing each other on the other side are two hospices, built by the Emperor Justinian. One of these is destined for the shelter of visiting strangers, while the other is an infirmary for poor persons suffering from diseases<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes, duo volumina in uno*, ed. A. RAHLFS, Stuttgart 1979, <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/read-the-bible-text/> [10 XII 2022].

<sup>47</sup> M. GALLINA, *Incoronati da Dio. Per una storia del pensiero politico bizantino*, Viella 2016, p. 1–59.

<sup>48</sup> M. VOLTAGGIO, 'Xenodochia' and 'Hospitia'..., p. 199. Cf. *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982*, vol. V, *The Cardo (Area X) and the Nea Church (Areas D and T). Final Report*, ed. O. GUTFELD, Jerusalem 2012.

<sup>49</sup> PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*, V, 6, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Trans. H.B. DEWING: PROCOPIUS, vol. VII, *On Buildings*, V, 6, 25, ed. et trans. H.B. DEWING, G. DOWNEY, Cambridge, Massachusetts–London 1940 [= LCL, 343], p. 349.



The figure of the Virgin Mary was associated with healing shrines located in or near the capital city, and under Justinian, she became the embodiment of imperial victory and the defender of the Chalcedonian faith. These values are evident in Procopius' *De Aedificiis*: with the mention of the hospice for sick, the author is likely providing (also and not only) evidence of Mary's healing powers in the passage above, while in another (*Aed.* VI, 2, 19) he writes about two cities, both named Augila, that were converted to Christianity by Justinian and where he built churches dedicated to the *Theotokos* as a protector of the cities and of the truth of the faith. A church was also built in Theopolis-Antioch<sup>51</sup> during the city's reconstruction by Justinian. The Virgin was seen as a guarantor of the safety of the empire, encompassing the healing power, protection of cities, and defence of the faith in her figure as the *Theotokos*. This explains her prominence in the second part of Book V and the attention paid by Procopius to the ξενῶνες, or hospices, for travellers, the needy, and the ill.

The term καταλύτηριον, which is present in other passages of the *De Aedificiis* and refers to hospices for magistrates or generic travellers, is used in this case to refer specifically to pilgrims. Antoninus Placentinus, whose pilgrimage was around 570 AD<sup>52</sup>, visited the *Nea Ekklesia* and wrote about two hospices for pilgrims<sup>53</sup>.

The focus on illness in these hospices can be explained by both the healing powers of Mary and the unique position of the church, which lacks a link to a biblical event, as noted by Trampedach. In this sense, pilgrims, after a period fraught with difficulties, were drawn by the possibility of receiving care from the Virgin, while those in need experienced imperial philanthropy, but also all the visitors eventually come in contact with the Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Moreover Horden-Purcell<sup>54</sup> have noted that pilgrimage tends towards places that are easily accessible and also have an established tradition as pilgrimage destination. Such places necessitated adequate infrastructure, including urban transit stations for the exchange of information and supplies, well-maintained roads, lodging, potable water, and food. These amenities were essential for facilitating travel and supporting the needs of pilgrims<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Procopius' use of the new name of Antioch is interesting, as the *De Aedificiis* is the only work of the author in which the city appears mentioned as Theopolis, with the evident celebratory intent of Justinian (cf. IOANNIS MALALAE, *Chronographia*, XVIII, 29, ed. I. THURN, Berlin 2000 [= *CFHB. SBe*, 35]: Malalas explains that Justinian changed its name to Theopolis, but later continues to refer to the city by its old name).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. C. MILANI, *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini. Un viaggio in Terrasanta del 560–570 d.C.*, Milano 1977.

<sup>53</sup> ANTONINUS, 23: *De Sion vero in basilicam sanctae Mariae, ubi est congregatio nimia monachorum, ubi sunt et xenodochia virorum ac mulierum, susceptio peregrinorum, mensae innumerabiles, lecta aegrotorum amplius tria milia.*

<sup>54</sup> P. HORDEN, N. PURCELL, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford 2000, p. 446.

<sup>55</sup> M. RITTER, *Beherbergung von Pilgern. Zwischen Glaube und Geld: Zur Ökonomie des byzantinischen Pilgerwesens (4.–12. Jh.)*, Heidelberg 2020 [= *BOO*, 14], p. 56.

Anyway, it is important to note that Procopius does not mention the specific name of the mountain in the passage, as opposed to chapters 7 and 8, where Gerizim and Sinai are clearly named. The focus is solely on the height and location of the church, which was chosen by the emperor himself. However, it cannot be assumed that the emperor's personal preference was the sole reason for the placement of the church at this particular location. For the general public, particularly pilgrims, there must have been a more profound reason for its construction in this specific spot.

It can be argued, thus, that there were two main reasons for the construction of the *Nea Ekklesia* at this specific location: a) Justinian's desire to demonstrate his political and religious power over Jerusalem, and b) the growing belief, which may begin to spread in this century, of a connection between Mount Zion and the Virgin. I would like to add a further point to the current discussion, namely that the church, dedicated to the *Theotokos*, simultaneously served the function of combating the last vestiges of Nestorianism present in Palestine.

If the issue addressed in point a) has previously been argued, we will now proceed to discuss the imperial intention of subjugating the Samaritans and Jews, referred to as 'people of the book'. In regards to the latter, it is widely recognized that the publication of Novel 146 *De Hebraeis*<sup>56</sup> in 553 was intended to encourage the Jews to embrace the truth of the scriptures through the use of alternative languages for reading them<sup>57</sup>. The establishment of a church dedicated to the *Theotokos*, in conjunction with such incentives, would have played a crucial role in promoting Chalcedonian orthodoxy<sup>58</sup> in a city that was abundant with Jewish places of worship. The name of the *Theotokos*, the God-bearer, embodies everything that was opposed by the Jewish religion, and the choice to dedicate the church to Her was particularly significant considering its position – namely a building which overlooks the Temple<sup>59</sup>. Moreover, this specific definition of the Virgin would have reached out to the Monophysites, who emphasized the divine nature of Christ more than the human one. Naming in this way the church built

---

<sup>56</sup> A. LINDER, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, Detroit 1987, p. 408; Novella CXLVI, ed. SCHÖLL & KROLL 1993, <https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Corpus/Novellae.htm> [28 XII 2022].

<sup>57</sup> C. BREWER, *The Status of the Jews in Roman Legislation: the Reign of Justinian 527–565 CE*, EurJ 38.2, 2005, p. 134.

<sup>58</sup> It must be noted that Procopius generally portrays Christians positively: he employs the term Χριστιανοί to refer to the orthodox. Not only the Christian people arouse the author's interest, but also, as we see in the analysed Book V and, in general, in *De Aedificiis*, the Christian buildings. Because of these reasons, Stickler claims that Procopius is Christian. Despite this article is not the venue to discuss this aspect regarding the historian, this point can help the reader to better understand the discussion presented in this article. For more about the topic, cf. T. STICKLER, *Procopius and Christian Historical Thought*, [in:] *A Companion to Procopius of Caesarea*, ed. M. MEIER, F. MONTINARO, Leiden–Boston 2022 [= BCBW, 11], p. 214–215.

<sup>59</sup> I. SHADHID, *Justinian and the Cristianization...*, p. 378.

in the most sacred city could have been Justinian's way of reconciling with the Monophysites, bringing an end to the schism of the sixth century<sup>60</sup>.

Before addressing point b), I would like to focus on what has been said above, namely the possibility that, alongside the de-Judaization of Palestine, the *Nea Ekklesia* also sought to extinguish Nestorianism. The term *Theotokos* clearly opposes that of *Christotokos*, the emblem of the Nestorian faction, which attributed to the Virgin the maternity of Christ as a man and not as God. Although Nestorianism had been condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431, we see how Justinian, ten years after the inauguration of the *Nea Ekklesia*, would have condemned the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibla of Edessa, and Theodoretus of Cyrrhus as Nestorian, leading to the schism of the Three Chapters<sup>61</sup>. Justinian thus seeks to preserve the *pax Dei* of the empire by aligning himself against those segments of the population that were viewed more negatively in religious terms: Jews, Samaritans, and Nestorians, who were also detested by Monophysites, as well as by Chalcedonian believers.

Regarding point b), the presence of the Virgin Mary in Jerusalem is supported by apocryphal literature that became widespread in Syria and Palestine between the fifth and the sixth centuries. While a comprehensive examination of the vast and complex apocryphal material is beyond the scope of this discussion, it is crucial to acknowledge its circulation and influence, also among powerful individuals, as exemplified by Romanos the Melode, a poet in close contact with the imperial court. Cunningham<sup>62</sup> highlights Mary's intercessory role as the link between Christians and the Son. As she notes, Romanos portrays this role in a dramatic and engaging manner, using his interpretation of biblical and apocryphal narratives to dynamically connect with his listeners. Georgia Frank's studies<sup>63</sup> also demonstrate that Romanos explores the thoughts and reactions of numerous biblical and apocryphal characters to bring their stories to life for the sixth century congregations. Romanos' ultimate goal was to convey the paradoxical doctrine of Chalcedonian Christianity<sup>64</sup>: for him Mary indeed represents an effective intercessor<sup>65</sup>. Another example of the circulation of the apocryphal tradition can be seen in the account of the Piacenza pilgrim, who, following the apocryphal tradition of the Dormition,

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, n. 18, p. 378.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. L. PERRONE, *La Chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal Concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo Concilio di Costantinopoli (553)*, Bologna 1980.

<sup>62</sup> T. ARENTZEN, *Virginity Recast. Romanos and the Mother of God* (publ. PhD thesis, Lund University 2014), p. 21–22; M.B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Virgin Mary in Byzantium, c. 400–1000 CE. Hymns, Homilies and Hagiography*, Cambridge 2022, p. 58–59.

<sup>63</sup> G. FRANK, *Dialogue and Deliberation: The Sensory Self in the Hymns of Romanos the Melodist*, [in:] *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, ed. D. BRAKKE, M.L. SATLOW, S. WEITZMAN, Bloomington–Indianapolis 2005, p. 163–179.

<sup>64</sup> M.B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Virgin...*, p. 65.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13.

wrote about the tomb in the Getsemani, describing it as *et in ipsa valle est basilica sanctae Mariae, quam dicunt domum eius fuisse, in qua de corpore sublatum fuisse*<sup>66</sup>.

The examples of Romanos and Antoninus serve to illustrate that the presence of apocryphal works could be found both in high-brow literature, such as that of Romanos the Melode, and in travelogues, such as Antoninus of Piacenza's. Although this is currently speculative, it cannot be disregarded that the tradition linking Mount Zion to the life of Mary may have been widespread in the mid sixth century. This is evidenced by the fact that the church is dedicated to the *Theotokos* and one of the passages read during the inauguration of the *Nea Ekklesia*, such as Psalm 131: 8<sup>67</sup>, would later be connected to Mary's Dormition<sup>68</sup> in the seventh century. Apocryphal narratives from the late fifth and early sixth century, such as the *Liber Requiei*, suggest that Mary's death occurred in the vicinity of Mount Zion<sup>69</sup>. The complex tradition of texts referred to as the *Palm of the Tree of Life*, which served as the basis for John of Thessalonica's homily for the Dormition in the early seventh century, states that Mary resided in the *highest* and oldest part of Jerusalem<sup>70</sup>.

In the context under consideration, it is necessary to examine the role played by Procopius' *De Aedificiis*. As a historian, he was obliged to chronicle and praise the emperor, but his work also served to convey a message. It can be surmised that, in addition to his classical education, Procopius may have been influenced by the pilgrim itineraries. The adoption of this model, at least for this work, would permit him to not only present the various buildings and to concentrate on the most significant ones, but also to extol them, by presenting a pilgrimage route for the faithful to follow. Consequently, it cannot be dismissed that the author, through his treatment of the theme of pilgrimage, also draws on the genre commonly associated with it.

<sup>66</sup> ANTONINUS, 17 (CSEL 29, 170 = CCL 175, 137, p. 137–138).

<sup>67</sup> K. TRAMPEDACH, *Ein neuer Tempel Salomons...*, cit. 52 p. 172.

<sup>68</sup> S.J. SHOEMAKER, *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*, Oxford 2003, p. 127.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 128 et ss. *Liber Requiei* 70 (41 Eth, 27 Lat): *De transitu Mariae Apocrypha Aethiopice*, vol. I–II, ed. V. ARRAS, Louvain 1973 [= CSCO, 342; 351], i. 1–84 (Eth.) and 1–54 (Lat.). M. VAN ES-BROECK, *Les Textes littéraires sur l'assomption avant le X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres*, ed. F. BOVON, Geneva 1981, p. 280. A. WEGNER, *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1955 [= AOC, 5], p. 232–233.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 33–35 and M.B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Virgin...*, p. 122: *Most of the Byzantine preachers believed, according to the Palm of the Tree of Life version of the legend, that Mary was living in the highest (and most ancient) part of the city of Jerusalem, known as Mount Zion, at the time when their story began. She occupied the house that included an upper room where Jesus had presided over the last supper with his disciples (Mt 26: 17–30; Mk 14: 12–25; Lk 22: 7–38; Jn 13: 1–17: 26) and appeared to his disciples at the time when Thomas doubted his resurrection (Jn 20: 26–29).*

### Pilgrimage itineraries: a potential inspiration for Book V of *De Aedificiis*?

In his work, Procopius guides readers through the path of the Chalcedonian creed, selecting locations that best demonstrate it, like a pilgrim itinerary. If one considers pilgrimage as a potential central theme of the book, the insistence on roads is entirely sensible. Külzer<sup>71</sup> asserts that

a functional connection with a local and interregional communication system is indispensable for any pilgrimage center. A well-built road facilitates travelers' access, ensures a continuous supply of food, goods, and construction materials for permanent development, and supports the area's residents.

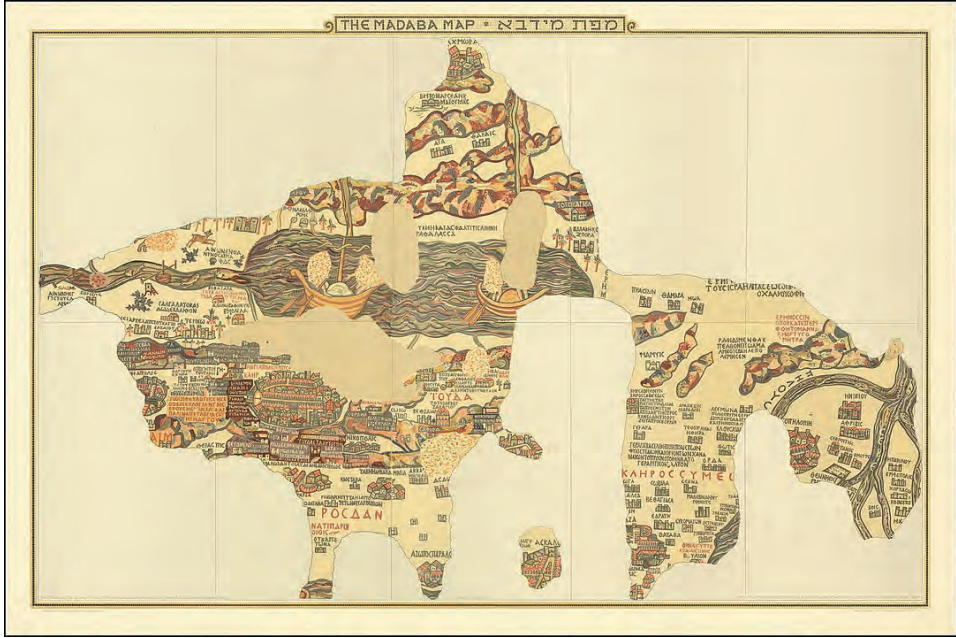
The focus on roads is notable and warrants examination in the context of other sources, such as various pilgrim *Itineraria* and maps from the period, particularly Madaba's (Fig. 1). By doing so, the path taken by the historian in relation to the locations of major importance and their perception would become clearer.

As previously mentioned, it is plausible that the historian was influenced by pilgrimage itineraries written by the faithful. There are several hallmarks of an itinerary present in the fifth book of *De Aedificiis* that we are going to sort by relevance: a) the final list in *Aed.* V, 9, which succinctly summarizes the most significant pilgrimage sites, mentioned without any detail since they are not the focus of the author; b) the straightforward descriptions of the sites throughout the book; c) the references to streets and distances; and d) the emphasis on the Holy City, which serves as both a final destination and a starting point for further journeys. These typical features benefit Procopius, who can glorify the emperor through his buildings and infrastructure, while also promoting themes of importance to the imperial household. The historian, following the Pilgrim's Road for the first part of Book V (*Aed.* V, 1–5), highlights the road repairs and new branches implemented by the emperor, while in the second part (*Aed.* V, 6–9), he focuses on the figure of Mary Theotokos, starting with Jerusalem, a central destination for pilgrims.

The *De situ Terrae Sanctae* written by Theodosius between 518–530 A.D. bears a resemblance to Procopius' work, as the first section of Theodosius' itinerarium contains five journeys from Jerusalem to other holy sites in the Holy Land, possibly influenced by the Madab Map as suggested by Tsafirir<sup>72</sup>. Similarly, Antoninus

<sup>71</sup> A. KÜLZER, *Pilgrims on their Way in the Holy Land: Roads and Routes According to Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Travel Accounts*, [in:] *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Journeys, Destinations, Experiences across Times and Cultures. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Jerusalem, 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017*, ed. F. DAIM, J. PAHLJTZSCH, J. PATRICH, C. RAPP, J. SELIGMAN, Mainz 2020, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> Y. TSAFRIR, *The Maps Used by Theodosius: On the Pilgrim Maps of the Holy Land and Jerusalem in the Sixth century C.E.*, DOP 40, 1986, p. 139.



**Fig. 1.** The Madaba Map. In the rectangle, it can be seen the city of Jerusalem (reproduction of the drawing of the Madaba map created by Paul Palmer, architect in Jerusalem, in 1901, published in 1906 in “Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins”; Wikipedia, Public Domain, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madaba\\_Map#/media/File:Palmer\\_&\\_Guthe\\_image\\_of\\_the\\_Medaba\\_map.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madaba_Map#/media/File:Palmer_&_Guthe_image_of_the_Medaba_map.jpg) [7 III 2023]).

of Piacenza, the pilgrim mentioned above, visited the same localities as Procopius<sup>73</sup>, but after reaching Jerusalem, he travelled to nearby areas. It is possible that Procopius had a similar idea, as he visited Neapolis, Gerizim, and the Sinai after his path through Anatolia, with Jerusalem serving as the central point of both arrival and departure. This idea is also present in the *Anonymous Burdigalense*, a travel account written during the age of Constantine, between 333–334 AD<sup>74</sup>,

<sup>73</sup> Here I am referring to the localities in the *Aed.* V, 9, e.g. Bethlehem (ANTONINUS, 29), Eleuthero- polis (ANTONINUS, 32).

<sup>74</sup> More precisely, the year 333 is that of the outward journey and 334 that of the return. It is thus possible to know the chronological arc in greater detail thanks to the fact that the two consuls of Constantinople are cited (*Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 571, 6 – *Itineraria Antonini Augusti et Burdigalense*, [in:] *Itineraria romana*, vol. I, ed. O. CUNTZ in aedibus B.G. TEUBNERI, Lipsiae 1929 (cetera: *Itinerarium Burdigalense*). Cf. digilibLT, Biblioteca digitale di testi latini tardoantichi, <https://digilibLT.uniupo.it> [17 IX 2022]); G. UGGERI, *Itinerarium Burdigalense. Il primo pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta*, [in:] *I pellegrinaggi nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Atti del convegno, Ferentino, 6–8 dicembre 1999*, Ferentino 2005, p. 161–178.

twenty years after the Edict of Toleration that allowed freedom of worship. The text shows that the faithful undertook pilgrimages to various holy places in the empire, and the *Anonymus*<sup>75</sup> chose an overland route, traveling from Bithynia<sup>76</sup>, Galatia<sup>77</sup>, Cappadocia, Cilicia<sup>78</sup>, and then on to Antioch and finally to Palestine<sup>79</sup> (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** The path followed by the Anonymous of Bordeaux, 333–334 AD (the image, modified, is taken from A. Trono, L. Oliva, *Innovations in a Traditional Landscape of Pilgrimage: The Via Francigena del Sud towards Rome and Other Apulian Pilgrim's Routes*, "Religions" 12, 2021, fig. 5 <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/12/1065>) [6 III 2023].

<sup>75</sup> G. UGGERI, *Itinerarium...*, p. 162.

<sup>76</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 571, 9–10: [9] *A Constantinopoli transis Pontum, venis Calcedoniam*, [10] *ambulus provinciam Bithyniam*.

<sup>77</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 574, 3: [3] *fines Bithyniae et Galatiae*.

<sup>78</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 579, 1: [1] *fines Cappadociae et Ciliciae*.

<sup>79</sup> M. TANGHERONI, *Itinerari marittimi a Gerusalemme*, [in:] *Il mondo dei pellegrinaggi*. Roma, Santiago e Gerusalemme, ed. P.C. VON SAUCKEN, Milano 2018, p. 213.

If we examine the sequence of localities named by Procopius, it becomes apparent that the historian covers the same territories as the *Anonymous Burdigalense*, and in the same order. Some of the localities, such as Nicomedia<sup>80</sup>, Iuliopolis<sup>81</sup>, Tarsus<sup>82</sup>, Adana<sup>83</sup>, Jerusalem<sup>84</sup> and Mount Garizim<sup>85</sup>, Mount Sinai<sup>86</sup> and Jericho<sup>87</sup> are identical. The *Anonymous Burdigalense* provides a succinct account of the journey, with only the section on the Holy Land being more elaborately described, likely reflecting the traveller's interests. Additionally, the Pilgrim's Road, which is followed by the Anonymous and partially by Procopius, suggests that the Byzantine historian was tracing a well-established traditional pilgrimage route that would have been recognizable to his readers. Procopius frequently mentions 'for those who proceed by this route'<sup>88</sup> without further elaboration, as it would have been a familiar concept to the masses, given that pilgrimage routes were often the same as trade routes.

The second part of Procopius' work, which focuses on the Holy Land, appears to be of greatest interest to the historian: this can be observed through a peculiar characteristic in that the second part, being the only one in Book V, comprises one construction per city/mount, while in the first part multiple elements, such as road repairs, churches, monasteries, and watercourse diversions are included in the account of each single area. It can be inferred that Procopius deliberately chose to focus on the three mounts of Zion, Gerizim, and Sinai and on the figure of the *Theotokos* to serve imperial propaganda effectively. Thus, the historian would promote the religious imperial appropriation of Palestine, which appears, in his work, free from Judaism and Nestorianism. This deliberate interest of Procopius is further reinforced by the final list in *Aed. V*, 9, where he explicitly informs the readers that he will simply enumerate the remaining imperial works. As a result, Cesaretti notes that the material is presented according to the author's intentions<sup>89</sup>. This makes sense when considering the fact that Procopius deliberately chose to focus exclusively on the major churches dedicated to the *Theotokos* in Palestine. By including the list, the historian conveys to his audience that there are other significant constructions in the Palestinian region, of which he is well aware, yet by excluding them, he demonstrates a restricted interest in the figure

<sup>80</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 572, 7–8: [7] *civitas Nicomedia mil. VIII* [8] *fit a Constantinopoli Nicomedia usque mil. LVIII*.

<sup>81</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 574, 8: [8] *civitas Iuliopolis mil. VIII*.

<sup>82</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 579, 3: [3] *civitas Tarso mil. XII*.

<sup>83</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 580, 3: [3] *civitas Adana mil. XIII*.

<sup>84</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 589, 7 – 596, 4.

<sup>85</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 587, 2–3: [2] *civitas Neapoli mil. XV* [3] *Ibi est mons Agazaren*.

<sup>86</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 586, 1–2: [1] *mons Syna, ubi fons est, in quem* [2] *mulier si laverit, gravaida fit*.

<sup>87</sup> *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, 597, 2: [2] *Ibi fuit civitas Hiericho*.

<sup>88</sup> For example, PROCOPIUS, *De Aedificiis*, V, 3, 1.

<sup>89</sup> P. CESARETTI, M.L. FOBELLI, *Procopio di Cesarea...*, p. 12.



of the *Theotokos*. Regarding the omission of certain buildings, Cameron contends that Procopius likely included and described only those structures that were most familiar to him<sup>90</sup>. Nevertheless, building upon Cameron's scholarship, we can adopt a more comprehensive perspective. Specifically, as previously indicated, Procopius primarily concentrates on those buildings that served his particular panegyric purposes. The first building of the second part (*Aed.* V, 6), the *Nea Ekklesia*, marks the beginning of a new era in both the Marian cult, which would witness the establishment of the Feast of the Dormition<sup>91</sup> less than fifty years later, and in Justinian's government, which increased its focus on religious policies, as reflected in this book. Furthermore, Procopius' description of *Nea Ekklesia* has the capacity to appeal to the eyes of pilgrims by highlighting the two hospices. After the plague, a healing centre of this magnitude<sup>92</sup> would have been attractive to the faithful and this could also be seen as a strategy to conceal the lack of a traditional biblical reference to the site. Another type of consideration for pilgrims could be represented by the mention of cisterns and wells within the work and particularly in the final list. These were not part of public architecture but of private one, and in fact, the Second Sophistic praised temples, baths, and walls when extolling a city<sup>93</sup>.

The historian, therefore, based on the devotion to the *Theotokos*, presents the power of the emperor over the Holy City and the remaining Palestinian localities. Firstly, he focuses on the city itself, and then he highlights the emperor's control over Mount Gerizim, which was previously under the heretic Samaritans, and finally, over Mount Sinai, where God appeared to Moses in the form of the Burning Bush<sup>94</sup>. Like a traveller's account, Procopius carefully selects the focal points of his work and the *Nea Ekklesia*, located in a period between the plague and religious reforms, was undoubtedly the first appropriate destination after the Anatolian peninsula, but it was also a symbol of the Chalcedonian dogma.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, Book V may be divided into two parts. The first part, from the beginning to the fifth chapter, focuses on the Anatolian peninsula and follows the Pilgrim's Road, while the second, from the sixth chapter onwards, is centred on the most important mounts in the Holy Land, where churches dedicated to the *Theotokos* are located. This interest of the historian reflects the increase in Marian

<sup>90</sup> A. CAMERON, *Procopius...*, p. 83–112.

<sup>91</sup> The feast was institutionalised by the emperor Maurice (582–602): S.J. SHOEMAKER, *Ancient Traditions...*, p. 73.

<sup>92</sup> The number of beds for the sick was substantial; ANTONINUS, 23: *lecta aegrotorum amplius tria milia*.

<sup>93</sup> J. PICKETT, *Water and Empire in the De Aedificiis of Procopius*, DOP 71, 2017, p. 119–121.

<sup>94</sup> These two mounts, the Gerizim and the Sinai, will be subjects of future articles.

devotion following the plague and Justinian's attention to religion to restore the Christian *pax Dei*. Unsurprisingly, the first building mentioned in the second part is the *Nea Ekklesia*, which allows us to understand how the figure of the Virgin was used by the historian to convey religious and political messages on behalf of the emperor, namely de-Judaization of Palestine, maybe alongside de-Nestorianization.

The emphasis on the height of the *Nea Ekklesia* and the hospices is meant, respectively, to demonstrate the triumph of Chalcedonian orthodoxy and to attract pilgrims. Additionally, the position of the church may be evidence of a shift in the Marian cult, which would justify the choice of Mount Zion.

What is fascinating is the way Procopius promotes all these messages to his readers at the same time. By using the theme of pilgrimage, the historian creates an ideal path to follow and by doing so, he shows similarities with actual pilgrims' itineraries. This could explain the presence of the list in *Aed.* V, 9, where Procopius, like a pilgrim, solely mentions all the buildings in the Holy Land that do not serve his purpose, that is, their lack of functionality in conveying the messages advocated by the emperor. The focus on the pilgrims, who were the 'spectators' of Justinian's religious buildings, can be seen through the mentions of structures meant for them, the emphasis on roads and bridges, which ensured safe passage for travellers, and the mentions of cisterns and wells, which were necessary for water supply, as described by Antoninus<sup>95</sup>.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- ANTONINUS PLACENTINUS, *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini*, [in:] *Itinera Hierosolomytana speculi IIII–VII*, ed. P. GEYER, Vindobonae 1898 [= *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 39].
- Corpus Iuris Civilis. Iustiniani Novellae recognovit Rudolf Schoell*, vol. III, ed. R. SCHÖLL, W. KROLL, Cambridge 2014 [= Cambridge Classical Studies].
- De transitu Mariae Apocrypha Aethiopice*, vol. I–II, ed. V. ARRAS, Louvain 1973 [= *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*, 342; 351].
- Eusebius Werke*, vol. I, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, T. 1, ed. F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1975 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112490068>
- IOANNIS MALALAE, *Chronographia*, ed. I. THURN, Berlin 2000 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 35], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110876017>
- Itineraria Antonini Augusti et Burdigalense*, [in:] *Itineraria romana*, vol. I, ed. O. CUNTZ in aedibus B.G. TEUBNERI, Lipsiae 1929.

<sup>95</sup> ANTONINUS, 36.

- Procopé de Césarée. Constructions de Justinien I<sup>er</sup>*, vol. V, ed. et trans. D. ROQUES, Alessandria 2011.
- Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. IV, *De Aedificiis Libri VI*, ed. J. HAVRY, rec. G. WIRTH, Leipzig 1964 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- PROCOPIUS, vol. VII, *On Buildings*, ed. et trans. H.B. DEWING, G. DOWNEY, Cambridge, Massachusetts–London 1940 [= Loeb Classical Library, 343], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-buildings.1940>
- Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graecae iuxta LXX interpretes, duo volumina in uno*, ed. A. RAHLFS, Stuttgart 1979, <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/read-the-bible-text/> [10 XII 2022].
- VAN ESBROECK M., *Les Textes littéraires sur l'assomption avant le X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *Les Actes apocryphes des apôtres*, ed. F. BOVON, Geneva 1981.

### Secondary Literature

- AMITZUR H., *Justinian's Solomon Temple in Jerusalem*, [in:] *The Centrality of Jerusalem. Historical Perspectives*, ed. M. POORTHUIS, C. SAFRAI, Kampen 1996, p. 160–175.
- ARENTZEN T., *Virginity Recast. Romanos and the Mother of God* (publ. PhD thesis, Lund University 2014).
- AVIGAD N., *Discovering Jerusalem*, Nashville–Camden–New York 1980.
- BARKER M., *Justinian's 'New Church' and the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple*, “Sourozh” 103, 2005, p. 15–33.
- BECK H.G., *Lo storico e la sua vittima. Teodora e Procopio*, trans. N. ANTONACCI, Roma–Bari 1988.
- BELKE K., *Communications. Roads and Bridges*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. E. JEFFREYS, J. HALDON, R. CORMACK, Oxford 2008, p. 295–308.
- BELKE K., *Prokops De Aedificiis, Buch V, zu Kleinasien*, “Antiquité Tardive” 8, 2000, p. 115–125, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.AT.2.300690>
- BORGEHAMMAR S., *How the Holy Cross Was Found. From Event to Mediaeval Legend*, Uppsala 1991.
- BREWER C., *The Status of the Jews in Roman Legislation: the Reign of Justinian 527–565 CE*, “European Judaism. A Journal for the New Europe” 38.2, 2005, p. 127–139, <https://doi.org/10.3167/001430005781203826>
- CAMERON A., *Procopius and the Sixth century*, New York 1985 [= Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 10].
- CASTIGLIA G., *Procopio tra città e territorio: riflessioni a margine su una possibile valenza topografica del “De Aedificiis”*, [in:] *Procopio di Cesarea. Gli Edifici*, ed. C. DELL’OSSO, Città del Vaticano 2018, p. 43–52.
- CESARETTI P., FOBELLI M.L., *Procopio di Cesarea. Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli. Un tempio di luce (De Aedificiis, I 1, 1–78)*, Milano 2011.
- CUNNINGHAM M.B., *The Virgin Mary in Byzantium, c. 400–1000 CE. Hymns, Homilies and Hagiography*, Cambridge 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108990530>
- DAGRON G., *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des Patria*, Paris 1984 [= Bibliothèque Byzantine. Études, 8], <https://doi.org/10.3917/puf.dagro.1984.02>
- DOWNEY G., *The Composition of Procopius, De Aedificiis*, “Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association” 78, 1947, p. 171–183, <https://doi.org/10.2307/283492>

- DRIJVERS J.W., *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross*, Leiden–New York–København–Köln 1992 [= Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 27], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004246768>
- FOSS C., *Pilgrimage in Medieval Asia Minor*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 56, 2002, p. 129–151, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291859>
- FRANK G., *Dialogue and Deliberation: The Sensory Self in the Hymns of Romanos the Melodist*, [in:] *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, ed. D. BRAKKE, M.L. SATLOW, S. WEITZMAN, Bloomington–Indianapolis 2005, p. 163–179.
- FRIED L.S., *The High Places (Bāmôt) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation*, "Journal of the American Oriental Society" 122.3, 2002, p. 437–465, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3087515>
- GALLINA M., *Incoronati da Dio. Per una storia del pensiero politico bizantino*, Viella 2016.
- GIERLACH-WALKER L.L., *Empress Eudocia: a Mole Enters the Theodosian Household*, "Stromata" 59, 2017, p. 84–103.
- GOITEIN S.D., *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vol. I, *Economic Foundations*, Los Angeles–Berkeley–London 1967.
- GREATREX G., *The Date of Procopius' Buildings in the Light of Recent Scholarship*, "Estudios Bizantinos" 1, 2013, p. 13–29.
- GREATREX G., *The Dates of Procopius' Work*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 18, 1994, p. 101–115, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1994.18.1.101>
- HORDEN P., PURCELL N., *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford 2000.
- HUNT E.D., *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312–360*, Oxford 1984.
- Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982*, vol. V, *The Cardo (Area X) and the Nea Church (Areas D and T). Final Report*, ed. O. GUTFELD, Jerusalem 2012.
- KALDELIS A., *Procopius of Caesarea. Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity*, Philadelphia 2004, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812202410>
- KITZINGER E., *Byzantinische Kunst im Werden. Stilentwicklungen in der Mittelmeerkunst vom 3. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert*, Cologne 1984.
- KÜLZER A., *Pilgrims on their Way in the Holy Land: Roads and Routes According to Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Travel Accounts*, [in:] *Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Journeys, Destinations, Experiences across Times and Cultures. Proceedings of the Conference Held in Jerusalem, 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017*, ed. F. DAIM, J. PAHLJTZSCH, J. PATRICH, C. RAPP, J. SELIGMAN, Mainz 2020, p. 11–22.
- LINDER A., *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, Detroit 1987.
- MEIER M., *The "Justinianic Plague": An "Inconsequential Pandemic"? A Reply*, "Medizinhistorisches Journal" 55.2, 2020, p. 172–199, <https://doi.org/10.25162/mhj-2020-0006>
- MILANI C., *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini. Un viaggio in Terrasanta del 560–570 d.C.*, Milano 1977.
- MONTINARO F., *Byzantium and the Slavs in the Reign of Justinian: Comparing the Two Recensions of Procopius' Buildings*, [in:] *The Pontic-Danubian Realm in the Period of the Great Migration*, ed. V. IVANIŠEVIĆ, M. KAZANSKI, Paris 2011, p. 89–114.
- NAVARRO I.L., *Helena Augusta. Una biografía histórica*, Zaragoza 2013.

- PEATFIELD A., *High Places and Royal Shrines*, [in:] *Tara. From the Past to the Future. Towards a New Research Agenda*, ed. O. SULLIVAN, M. SCARRE, M. DOYLE, Dublin 2013, p. 475–483.
- PERRONE L., *La Chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal Concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo Concilio di Costantinopoli (553)*, Bologna 1980.
- PERTA G., *I porti di pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta (sec. IV–X)*, [in:] *Studi in onore di Guglielmo de' Giovanni-Centelles*, ed. E. CUOZZO, Salerno 2010, p. 251–266.
- PICKETT J., *Water and Empire in the De Aedificiis of Procopius*, “Dumbarton Oaks Papers” 71, 2017, p. 95–126.
- PRYOR J.H., *Geography, Technology, and War. Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649–1571*, Cambridge 1988, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511562501>
- RETIEF F.P., CILLIERS L., *The Epidemic of Justinian (AD 542): a Prelude to the Middle Ages*, “Acta Theologica” 26.2, 2006, p. 115–127, <https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v26i2.52567>
- RITTER M., *Beherbergung von Pilgern. Zwischen Glaube und Geld: Zur Ökonomie des byzantinischen Pilgerwesens (4.–12. Jh.)*, Heidelberg 2020 [= *Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident*, 14].
- ROUSSEAU P., *Procopius' Buildings and Justinian's Pride*, “Byzantion” 68.1, 1998, p. 121–138.
- RUBIN B., *Prokopios von Kaisarea*, Struttgart 1954.
- SHAHĪD I., *Justinian and the Cristianization of Palestine. The Nea Ekklesia in Jerusalem*, [in:] *Klētōrion eis mnēmēn Nīkou Oikonomidē*, ed. F. EUAGGEAATOU-NOTARA, T. MANIATĒ-KOKKINĒ, Athēna 2005, p. 373–385.
- SHOEMAKER S.J., *Ancient Traditions of the Virgin Mary's Dormition and Assumption*, Oxford 2003, <https://doi.org/10.1093/0199250758.001.0001>
- SKEDOS J.C., “You Cannot Have a Church without an Empire”: *Political Orthodoxy in Byzantium*, [in:] *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*, ed. G.E. DEMACOPOULOS, A. PAPANIKOLAU, New York 2017, p. 219–231, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823274222-012>
- STICKLER T., *Procopius and Christian Historical Thought*, [in:] *A Companion to Procopius of Caesarea*, ed. M. MEIER, F. MONTINARO, Leiden–Boston 2022 [= *Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World*, 11], p. 212–230, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778\\_012](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498778_012)
- TANGHERONI M., *Itinerari marittimi a Gerusalemme*, [in:] *Il mondo dei pellegrinaggi. Roma, Santiago e Gerusalemme*, ed. P.C. VON SAUCKEN, Milano 2018, p. 213–256.
- TRAMPEDACH K., *Ein neuer Tempel Salomons in Jerusalem? Der Bau der Nea-Kirche (531–543) durch Kaiser Justinian*, “Millennium” 12.1, 2015, p. 155–178, <https://doi.org/10.1515/mill-2015-0107>
- TSAFRIR Y., *Procopius and the Nea Church in Jerusalem*, “Antiquité Tardive” 8, 2000, p. 149–164, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.AT.2.300693>
- TSAFRIR Y., *The Maps Used by Theodosius: On the Pilgrim Maps of the Holy Land and Jerusalem in the Sixth century C.E.*, “Dumbarton Oaks Papers” 40, 1986, p. 129–145, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291534>
- UGGERI G., *Itinerarium Burdigalense. Il primo pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta*, [in:] *I pellegrinaggi nell'età tardoantica e medievale. Atti del convegno, Ferentino, 6–8 dicembre 1999*, Ferentino 2005, p. 161–178.

- VAIHLÉ S., *La dédicace de Saint-Maria-la-Neuve*, "Révue Augustinienne" 2, 1903, p. 136–140.
- VOLTAGGIO M., 'Xenodochia' and 'Hospitia' in Sixth-Century Jerusalem: Indicators for the Byzantine Pilgrimage to the Holy Places, "Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins" 127, 2011, p. 197–210.
- WEGNER A., *L'Assomption de la T.S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1955 [= Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 5].
- WHITBY M., *Justinian's Bridge over the Sangarius and the Date of Procopius' De Aedificiis*, "Journal of Hellenic Studies" 105, 1985, p. 129–148, <https://doi.org/10.2307/631526>


**Martina Biamino**

University of Genoa – DIRAAS  
Balbi 4 street  
Genoa 16126, Italy  
[martibiami97@gmail.com](mailto:martibiami97@gmail.com)





Sławomir Bralewski (Łódź)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4708-0103>

## “EX MARTE SE PROCREATUM” – DID THE ROMAN EMPEROR GALERIUS MAKE MARS HIS PERSONAL PROTECTIVE DEITY?

**Abstract.** Lactantius referred in his work *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* (*De mortibus persecutorum*) to a great victory which Caesar Galerius won over the Persians. From then on, he demanded for himself the title of Augustus and, we are made to believe, insisted upon being called a son of Mars as second Romulus. Did he thus deviate from the truth? Or, on the contrary, did Galerius render Mars his divine patron and does Lactantius’ account remain in agreement with other sources and reflect the true course of events. The aim in this article is to resolve this issue.

It thus seems that as a result of the triumph over the Persians, which he was believed to owe to Mars, Galerius gained a new position already under the first tetrarchy, which Lactantius testifies to in his work *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*. It is thus clear that Lactantius’s testimony according to which Galerius recognized Mars as his divine patron is credible and remains in agreement both with a number of other sources and with the true course of events.

**Keywords:** Galerius, Lactantius, Mars, Tetrarchy

Lactantius, a rhetor who taught in Nicomedia and became a Christian apologist, referred in his work *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* (*De mortibus persecutorum*) to a great victory which Caesar Galerius won over the Persians while resisting the invasion of *Imperium Romanum* by the Persian king Narses. Lactantius recounts that Galerius easily crushed his enemies in Armenia and, swelling with pride, returned with huge spoils and many captives. From then on, he demanded for himself the title of Augustus and, we are made to believe, insisted upon being called a son of Mars as second Romulus. In Lactantius’ account Galerius: *insolentissime agere coepit, ut ex Marte se procreatum et videri et dici vellet tamquam alterum Romulum*. According to some scholars, these suggestions should not be given too much weight. Lactantius, so goes their argument, was ill-disposed towards the emperors who persecuted Christians and, consequently, tended to depict them



in a caricatured manner<sup>1</sup>. Did he thus deviate from the truth? Or, on the contrary, did Galerius render Mars his divine patron and does Lactantius' account remain in agreement with other sources and reflect the true course of events. My aim in this article is to resolve this issue.

Choosing divine patrons was the typical way in which Roman leaders sought supernatural protection. Great military leaders were viewed as God's chosen already in the times of the Republic. Their victories, and later the victories of Caesars, were attributed in polytheistic Rome to various gods<sup>2</sup>. The latter were seen as emperors' companions (*comites*), defenders (*conservatores*) or assistants (*auxiliatores*). The search for divine protection stemmed from Romans' unshakable conviction of God's power to ensure Roman *civitas'* good fortune<sup>3</sup>.

Diocletian's tetrarchy system (the rule of the four: two Augustuses – Diocletian and Maximian, and two Caesars – Constantius and Galerius), was based on the religious conception according to which rulers were believed to be born of gods, Jupiter<sup>4</sup> and Hercules, and were considered to be members of a divine family. Diocletian assumed the nickname of Jovius, while the second Augustus, Maksymian, began to be referred to as Herculus<sup>5</sup>. Under tetrarchy, emperors' special worship

<sup>1</sup> LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, ed. J. MOREAU, Paris 1954 [= SC, 39] (cetera: LACTANTIUS), p. 262; O.P. NICHOLSON, *The Wild Man of the Tetrarchy: a Divine Companion for the Emperor Galerius*, B 54, 1984, p. 253–275 (who suggests that it was Dionizos-Liber); this opinion is followed by B. LEADBETTER, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*, London–New York 2009 [= RIM], p. 105, footnote 72. Cf. also R. SUSKI, *Galeriusz. Cesarz, wódz i prześladowca*, Kraków 2016, p. 187–188.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. M. JACZYŃSKA, *Religie świata rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1987, *passim*; M. BEARD, J. NORTH, S. PRICE, *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge 1998, *passim*; G.H. HALSBERGHE, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, Leiden 1972 [= EPOLR, 23]; S. BERRENS, *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I (193–337 n. Chr.)*, Stuttgart 2004, p. 89–97; J. BARDILL, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, Cambridge 2011, p. 42–63.

<sup>3</sup> The Romans believed that it was their piety that led the gods to allow them to build a great empire, and that made them superior to all the other nations. Cf. H. WAGENVOORT, *Pietas*, [in:] *Pietas. Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, ed. IDEM, Leiden 1980 [= SGRR, 1], p. 1–20; J. CHAMPEAUX, “*Pietas*”. *Piété personnelle et piété collective à Rome*, BAGB 3, 1989, p. 263–279. In pagan Rome *Pietas* was not only considered to be among the essential moral virtues, which later became the emperors' cardinal virtue, but was also one of the most important ideas of the state. The gods were believed to lavishly reward the Romans for their *pietas*, bestowing them with *felicitas*; cf. M.P. CHARLESWORTH, *The Virtues of Roman Emperor and the Creation of the Belief*, PBA 23, 1937, p. 105–133; J.R. FEARS, *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*, [in:] ANRW, vol. II, 17.2, ed. W. HAASE, New York–Berlin 1981, p. 864–870; A. WALLACE-HADRILL, *The Emperor and his Virtues*, *Hi* 30.3, 1981, p. 298–323.

<sup>4</sup> Already in the times of the Republic, military leaders sought protection from Jupiter the Best and the Greatest, a god worshiped on Capitol, with whom the triumph ceremony was bound up. Cf. H.S. VERSNEL, *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development, and Meaning of the Roman Triumph*, Leiden 1970, p. 66–93; K. BALBUZA, *Triumfator. Triumf i ideologia zwycięstwa w starożytnym Rzymie epoki Cesarstwa*, Poznań 2005, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> As Jupiter's chosen, the senior Augustus assumed the nickname of Jovius and became an intermediary between the people and the highest god of the Roman pantheon. The junior Augustus, bearing the nickname of Herculus, acted as an intermediary between the people and Hercules. H. MATTINGLY,

was also given to Mars and Apollo. Religion played a very important role in the system, as was clearly shown by the practice of entrusting the state and its tetrarchs to divine patrons' protection, which is hardly surprising in view of the revival of traditional cults in the third century.

Given the above, it must have been natural for Galerius to link his military victories to the gods' intervention. Galerius came from Dacia Ripensis (Dacia Nova)<sup>6</sup>. Nothing is known of his early life except for his mother's name, Romula<sup>7</sup>. His rise to power in *Imperium Romanum* took place within the system of the tetrarchy established by Diocletian who elevated him to the position of Caesar, hoping to benefit from his military experience<sup>8</sup>. This appointment is likely to have taken place on 1, March 293<sup>9</sup>, that is, in the month dedicated to Mars. According to Timothy D. Barnes Galerius was at that time holding the office of the Praetorian Prefect<sup>10</sup>. Before his elevation to Caesar, he was called Maximinus, but Diocletian ordered him to change his *nomen gentile* to Maximianus<sup>11</sup>. In 296, when the Persians ruled by Narses<sup>12</sup>, the son of Shapur I, launched an invasion of the Empire, Diocletian entrusted Galerius with the task of defending its eastern border. The defeats suffered by the Romans over the past few decades and the fact that the Persians as the invading force were certainly ready for war must have made Galerius's task look extremely difficult. In the years 232–233, in the struggle against the Sassanid

---

*Jovius and Hercules*, HTR 45.2, 1952, p. 131–134; J. BARDILL, *Constantine...*, p. 28–125; According to Frank KOLB (*Ideal późnoantycznego władcy. Ideologia i autoprezentacja*, trans. A. GIERLIŃSKA, Poznań 2008, p. 29) Diocletian created the most perfect conception of the theocratic legitimization of power.

<sup>6</sup> LACTANTIUS, IX, 2; EUTROPIUS, *Breviarium ab urbe condita*, IX, 2, trans., comm. H.W. BIRD, Liverpool 1993 [= TTH, 14] (cetera: EUTROPIUS).

<sup>7</sup> R. SUSKI, *Galeriusz...*, p. 102–107.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107–109.

<sup>9</sup> LACTANTIUS, XXXV, 4; *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. Panegirici Latini*, VIII(V), 3, 1, ed. R.A.B. MYNORS, C.E.V. NIXON, B.S. RODGERS, Berkeley–Los Angeles–Oxford 1994 [= TCH, 21]. In his chronology of the first tetrarchy, Frank KOLB (*Chronologie und Ideologie der Tetrarchie*, ATa 3, 1995, p. 22) points to 1 March as the day on which Constantius and Galerius were elevated to Caesars. However, in his commentaries he considers it likely that only Constantius became Caesar on 1 March, while Galerius was bestowed the honour a little bit later, that is, on 21 May of the same year (according to the author of *Chronicon Paschale* the elevation of both of them took place on 21, May – *Chronicon Paschale*, vol. I, rec. L. DINDORF, Bonn 1832 [= CSHB], p. 512), and in his opinion it is impossible to determine which of the two dates is correct. According to Robert SUSKI (*Galeriusz...*, p. 114–115) they were both appointed to the position of Caesars on 1 March, 293.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. T.D. BARNES, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 1982, p. 136; B. LEADBETTER, *Galerius...*, p. 61.

<sup>11</sup> Although LACTANTIUS (XVIII, 13) is the only author who conveys this information, it seems reliable, since Diocletian, too, changed his name from Diocles to Diocletian. Cf. T.D. BARNES, *New Empire...*, p. 38; F. KOLB, *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie. Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?*, Berlin 1987 [= ULG, 27], p. 16; R. SUSKI, *Galeriusz...*, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> C. ZUCKERMAN, *Les campagnes des tétrarques, 296–298. Notes de chronologie*, ATa 2, 1994, p. 68.

Persia, a defeat was inflicted on Alexander Severus<sup>13</sup>. Emperor Gordian III who reigned in 238–244 was killed during his expedition against the Persians. Consequently, the Empire lost Armenia<sup>14</sup>. Military campaigns conducted during the reign of Valerian (253–260) ended all in complete failure. During the last of those campaigns, Valerian, suffering defeat near Edessa, was taken into captivity where he was humiliated and eventually killed. The victorious Persians plundered Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia. When it seemed that this streak of defeats had eventually been reversed by Emperor Carus's successful campaign at the turn of 282/283, (Carus managed to take Seleucia and Ctesiphon), the victorious ruler was unexpectedly killed, probably struck by thunder. His son and successor, Emperor Numerian, died on his way back in mysterious circumstances, most likely falling victim to a plot. The defeats suffered in wars against the Persian Empire seemed to be something of a curse and must have aroused negative emotions. One was thus led to raise questions about the gods' support, especially as military victories achieved thanks to the Roman *virtus* seemed to be of no avail, a fact to which the Carus case clearly bore witness.

All of this must have been all too clear to Emperor Diocletian who took part in Carus's Persian expedition and who, after Numerian's death, was elevated to the position of Augustus. However, at the moment of Narses's invasion, the situation looked somewhat better. During his first years in power, Diocletian, convinced of the gravity of the existing threat, attempted to strengthen the Empire's eastern border by erecting a line of defence consisting of a number of fortresses and cavalry camps. The line ran from Sura on the Euphrates river, across the Syrian Desert, and through Palmira to Damascus. Carus's previous successes, in which Diocletian had a part, gave the Romans hope to win.

Little is known about the war's initial phase except for the fact that the clash between the Persians and the Romans took place in northern Mesopotamia and that the former emerged from it victorious. In the spring of 297, Galerius, we are made to believe, was dealt a heavy defeat between Carrhae and Callinicum, probably as a result of the enemy's significant advantage in numbers<sup>15</sup>. Galerius' failure must have caused disappointment in him as a leader, bringing back past

<sup>13</sup> R. SUSKI, *Wyprawa Aleksandra Sewera przeciwko Persom w świetle późnorzymskiej i bizantyjskiej historiografii*, [in:] *Armia, systemy obronne i ideologiczno-religijne aspekty wojny w imperium rzymskim*, ed. H. KOWALSKI, P. MADEJSKI, Lublin 2015, p. 195–214.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. D. MACDONALD, *The Death of Gordian III, Another Tradition*, *Hi* 30, 1981, p. 502–508.

<sup>15</sup> *The Breviarium of Festus*, 25, ed., comm. J.W. EADIE, London 1967 (cetera: FESTUS); EUTROPIUS, IX, 24; AURELIUS VICTOR, *Liber de caesaribus*, XXXIX, 33–34, [in:] AURELIUS VICTOR, *Liber de Caesaribus Sexti Aurelii Victoris (Sextus Aurelius Victor). Praecedunt Origo gentis Romanae et liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae. Subs. epitome de Caesaribus*, ed. F. PICHLMAYR, R. GRÜNDEL, Leipzig 1966 [= BSGR] (cetera: AURELIUS VICTOR); OROSIUS, *Historiae adversus paganos*, VII, 25, 9, vol. I–III, ed. M.-P. ARNAUD-LINDET, Paris 1990–1991 (cetera: OROSIUS). Cf. T.D. BARNES, *New Empire...*, p. 63; B. DIGNAS, E. WINTER, *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity. Neighbours and Rivals*, Cambridge–New York 2007, p. 28.

nightmares and arousing fears for the Empire's future fate. The fears are clearly reflected in Lactantius' remarks regarding Diocletian who is reported to have decided to send Galerius against the Persians in order to avoid sharing Valerian's fate in the event of defeat<sup>16</sup>. Even if what Lactantius, a Christian, wrote was affected by his dislike of Diocletian, who persecuted Christ's followers, it still seems to mirror Roman concerns for the final outcome of the conflict with Persia. Failures in the war against Rome's 'eternal' enemy in the east threatened to undermine Diocletian's efforts to reform *Imperium Romanum*. In line with Roman mentality, Diocletian believed that in order to win the war with Persia, it was necessary to secure the support of *numen caeleste*. That Galerius was devoid of it was made clear by his defeat. It can thus be assumed that Diocletian's frustration, to which there are references in a number of sources, was actually a fact. We are told that it led to Galerius's humiliation. Diocletian is reported to have ordered him to run in purple robes alongside his chariot. This story can be found in Festus<sup>17</sup>, Eutropius<sup>18</sup>, Orosius<sup>19</sup>, Hieronymus<sup>20</sup> or Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>21</sup>. Other authors such as Aurelius Victor<sup>22</sup>, Lactantius<sup>23</sup> or Eusebius of Caesarea<sup>24</sup> remained silent about it. There has been an ongoing scholarly debate surrounding this issue<sup>25</sup>. After weighing all the arguments hitherto advanced, it seems that the information provided by the sources in question should not be rejected as completely untrue<sup>26</sup>. One can agree with Robert Suski that it would have been irrational for Diocletian to behave in such a way as described above, but human reactions are often driven by emotions that have nothing to do with any kind of rationality. Bearing that in mind,

<sup>16</sup> LACTANTIUS, IX, 6.

<sup>17</sup> FESTUS, 25.

<sup>18</sup> EUTROPIUS, IX, 24.

<sup>19</sup> OROSIUS, VII, 25, 9.

<sup>20</sup> HIERONYMUS, *Chronicon*, 270, ed. R. HELM, Berlin 1956 [= GCS, 7].

<sup>21</sup> AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, *Res Gestae libri qui supersunt*, XIV, 11, 10, vol. I–II, ed. C.V. CLARK, Berlin 1910–1915 (cetera: AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS).

<sup>22</sup> AURELIUS VICTOR (XXXIX, 34) mentioned only that before defeating the Persians Galerius had been harassed by them.

<sup>23</sup> LACTANTIUS (IX, 7) omitted information about Galerius's initial defeat, and wrote only about his easy and sneaky victory over the Persians.

<sup>24</sup> In his *Church History* Eusebius makes no reference to any of the wars between the Romans and the Persians, and his first mention of Galerius's name comes in his citation of the toleration edict issued by the ruler in 311. The reference regarding Galerius's humiliation can admittedly be found in Hieronymus's translation of Eusebius's chronicle, but it is most likely an interpolation, for it is absent from the Armenian version of the chronicle. On the chronicle's different versions cf.: A. KOTŁOWSKA, *Obraz dziejów w Chronici Canones Euzebiusza z Cezarei*, Poznań 2009, p. 18–42.

<sup>25</sup> It is also discussed by Robert Suski in the article *Upokorzenie Galeriusza przez Dioklecjana. Prawda czy mit*, [in:] *Chrześcijaństwo u schyłku starożytności. Studia źródłoznawcze*, vol. II, ed. T. DERDA, E. WIPSYCKA, Kraków 1999, p. 153–182.

<sup>26</sup> It has been rejected, among others, by William SESTON (*L'«humiliation» de Galère*, REA 42, 1940, p. 515–519), and Robert SUSKI (*Upokorzenie...*, p. 136–140; IDEM, *Galeriusz...*, p. 134–150).

we should regard the relevant information as testifying both to a crisis that afflicted the eastern part of the tetrarchy, and to a significant weakening of Galerius's position in the system of power established by Diocletian. This hypothesis is made even more probable by the fact that Diocletian had been a Caesar for less than four years and his prestige as a ruler had not yet been established. He may even have intended to remove Galerius from the front line, which seems to be indicated by sending the latter to the Balkans immediately after the defeat. However, the situation soon became even more complicated because of the necessity for Diocletian to intervene in Egypt where, in the August of 297, L. Domitius Domitianus usurped power<sup>27</sup>. If his plans were to take upon himself the task of continuing the war with the Persians, he had now been forced to change them. Fortresses that formed part of the defence line prepared in Syria allowed for a possibility of resisting the Persians for some time, while the consequences to be suffered by the Empire if the situation in Egypt got out of control might be catastrophic<sup>28</sup>. It seems that Diocletian arrived at the conclusion that Domitianus's usurpation presented a more immediate threat than the Persians and, consequently, decided to personally pacify the Egyptian province, especially as he may have lost his confidence in Galerius's military skills and the gods' support for him. Besides, it seems that Galerius was already in the Balkans. The developments in Egypt kept Diocletian busy until September the next year. The first Augustus may thus have been forced to give Galerius one more chance and to allow him to conduct another campaign against the Persians using the forces raised in the Balkans. However, it cannot be excluded that Galerius acted on his own initiative, taking advantage of the fact that Diocletian had to turn his attention to Egypt. Signs of disagreement between Augustus and his Caesar can be discerned in Aurelius Victor's account according to which after his impressive victories Galerius was prevented by Diocletian from continuing his conquests. Victor Aurelius was not able to explain what determined Diocletian's conduct: *incertum qua causa abnuisset*<sup>29</sup>.

We know for a fact that Galerius was acting in haste, which can be explained both by the Persian threat, significantly heightened after the Romans' defeat to

<sup>27</sup> Scholars differ in dating the rebellion. Among those who argue that it took place in 296/297 are W. SESTON, *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie. Guerres et réformes (284–300)*, Paris 1946, p. 137–183 and, among others, F. KOLB, *Die Datierung des ägyptischen Aufstands unter L. Domitius Domitianus und Aurelius Achilleus*, E 76, 1988, p. 325–343. However, most date it to 297/298, cf. A.K. BOWMAN, *The Military Occupation of Upper Egypt in the Reign of Diocletian*, BASP 15.1/2, 1978, p. 27; T.D. BARNES, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 1981, p. 11–12; C. ZUCKERMAN, *Les campagnes...*, p. 68–69; B. LEADBETTER, *Galerius...*, p. 91; R. SUSKI, *Galeriusz...*, p. 139, n. 92.

<sup>28</sup> Even if Narseus's invasion of Syria of which ZONARAS gave an account (*Ioannis Zonarae Epitome historiarum libri XIII–XVIII*, XII, 31, rec. T. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Bonnæ 1897 [= CSHB]) actually took place at the time, the fact that Diocletian was absent from the front line proves that the situation was under control and did not require his presence.

<sup>29</sup> AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXIX, 36. However, Aurelius stresses that in conducting the campaign against the Persians, Galerius was following orders from Diocletian.

which I have referred above, and also by Galerius's precarious position. While in the Balkans, Galerius was supposed to mobilise new troops, made up both of veterans and of new recruits<sup>30</sup>. Rufus Festus estimated the troops at 25 000 soldiers<sup>31</sup>. If Galerius suffered a defeat between Carrhae and Callinicum in the Spring of 297 and, relying on the newly raised and reinforced troops, resumed the fighting as early as the turn of 297/298, then he must have been extremely motivated<sup>32</sup>.

Galerius entered Armenia from Cappadocia<sup>33</sup>, where he won a great victory at the Battle of Satala<sup>34</sup>, thus named after the location of the Roman camp. The Caesar managed to take the Persians by surprise, destroy their army and capture their camp in Osxay, along with the royal harem and its treasures<sup>35</sup>. Following his success, he crossed the uplands of Armenia and Media to reach Nisibis which he captured after laying siege to it. He continued through Mesopotamia, along the Euphrates river, to finally get to the Roman border. Some scholars have presumed that he also took Ctesiphon<sup>36</sup>. According to Peter the Patrician, Diocletian arrived at the captured Nisibis where he met with Galerius<sup>37</sup>. The rulers decided to start peace negotiations with the Persians<sup>38</sup>, sending Sicorius Probus as an envoy to Narses<sup>39</sup>. It was at that point that Diocletian must have restrained Galerius's desire to continue the fighting, a fact reported by Aurelius Victor who, as has already

<sup>30</sup> FESTUS, 25; EUTROPIUS, IX, 25; AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXIX, 34; OROSIUS, VII, 25, 10.

<sup>31</sup> FESTUS, 25.

<sup>32</sup> Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite (*The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, 7, trans., praef. F.R. TROMBLEY, J.W. WATT, Liverpool 2000 [= TTH, 32]) suggests that the Romans captured Nisibis in 609 of the Seleucid era, that is, between 30 September 297 and 30 September 298. The time that passed from the defeat to the victory and the capture of the fortress was maximum one year and a half.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXIX, 34.

<sup>34</sup> A laconic account of it is offered by Faustus of Byzantium (P'AWSTOS BUZAND's, *History of the Armenians*, III, 21, trans. R. BEDROSIAN, New York 1985).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. FESTUS, 25; EUTROPIUS, IX, 25; AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXIX, 34–35; OROSIUS, VII, 25, 10–11. Cf. T.D. BARNES, *Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311*, Phoe 30, 1976, p. 182–186; M.H. DODGEON, S.N.C. LIEU, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. A.D. 226–363*, London 1991, p. 124–132; B. DIGNAS, E. WINTER, *Rome and Persia...*, p. 84–88.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. W. SESTON, *Dioclétien...*, p. 172; T.D. BARNES, *Imperial Campaigns...*, p. 184; B. LEADBETTER, *Galerius...*, p. 109. Others held a different opinion, cf. A.H.M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, Oxford 1964, p. 38; C. ZUCKERMAN, *Les campagnes...*, p. 70. The discussion of Galerius's possible capture of Ctesiphon has been presented by Robert SUSKI (*Zwycięska kampania Galeriusza w wojnie z Persami 298–299*, [in:] *Chrześcijaństwo u schyłku starożytności...*, p. 162–171; IDEM, *Galeriusz...*, p. 166–181).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Petri Patricii Excerpta de legationibus Romanorum ad gentes*, 14, [in:] *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, vol. IV, ed. K. MÜLLER, Parisiis 1851 (cetera: *Petri Patricii Excerpta*), p. 189.

<sup>38</sup> On the peace negotiations cf. T.M. BANCHICH, *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician. An Account of Rome's Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*, London–New York 2015 [= RCT], p. 136–140. On the peace treaty concluded between the Persians and the Romans cf. R. BLOCKLEY, *The Romano-Persian Peace Treaties of A.D. 299 and 363*, F 6, 1984, p. 28–49; B. DIGNAS, E. WINTER, *Rome and Persia...*, p. 122–130, 195–207.

<sup>39</sup> *Petri Patricii Excerpta*, 14, p. 189.

been pointed out, was not able to understand the ruler's motives<sup>40</sup>. An explanation of this question seems to be provided by Amianus Marcellinus, according to whom Galerius behaved very boldly, as though forgetting that *he was prophesied to die after entering foreign territories*<sup>41</sup>. This prophesy may have worried Diocletian who participated in Carus's expedition which, although victorious, ended in the emperor's death. A skill in conducting military operations and the bravery of army commanders and their soldiers were considered by the Romans to be no guarantee of a final success if unaccompanied by the gods' support. This way of thinking, which can be assumed to have also been part of Diocletian's outlook, must have affected the way in which he viewed the existing situation. Bearing witness to this is the preamble to the edict on the prices of goods in which the ruler indicated that the Empire's prosperity, understood as a common good, depended on the gods' support which was believed to ensure the Romans' military victories<sup>42</sup>. Similar suggestions can be found in the preamble to the edict regarding marriage and incest<sup>43</sup>. Diocletian thus had reasons to make a quick peace with the Persians, and to content himself with territorial gains which, after all, were not insignificant.

Following his victory over the Persians, Galerius, based on what we know from Lactantius, put much pressure on Diocletian, demanding for himself the title of Augustus<sup>44</sup>. Diocletian eventually succumbed to the pressure and abdicated on 1 May 305, encouraging Maximian to do the same. Peter the Patrician made a reference to some apparition that, we are told, forced Diocletian to renounce power<sup>45</sup>. New Caesars, under what is known as the second tetrarchy, were appointed at Diocletian's instigation: Severus<sup>46</sup>, a military commander from Pannonia remaining on friendly terms with Diocletian, in the West, and Maximin Daia<sup>47</sup>, Galerius's nephew, in the East. It is thus clear that Galerius obtained a dominant position in Roman politics, even though it was Constantius<sup>48</sup>, Constantine's father<sup>49</sup>, who

<sup>40</sup> AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXIX, 36.

<sup>41</sup> AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, XXIII, 5, 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Edictum Diocletiani de nuptiis et incestiis, praeambula*, 5, [in:] *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio*, ed. M. HYAMSON, Oxford 1913 (cetera: *Edictum Diocletiani*).

<sup>43</sup> *Edictum Diocletiani, praeambula*.

<sup>44</sup> LACTANTIUS, XVIII.

<sup>45</sup> *Petri Patricii Excerpta*, 13, 6, p. 198.

<sup>46</sup> An anonymous author of *Origo Constantini* (*Origo Constantini. Anonymus Valesianus*, IV, ed. I. KÖNIG, Trier 1987; cetera: *Origo Constantini*) wrote about Galerius's friendship with Severus: *ebrosius et hoc Galerio amicus*; according to LACTANTIUS (XVIII, 11–12) Severus belonged to Galerius's close circle. Cf. T.D. BARNES, *New Empire...*, p. 38–39.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. T.D. BARNES, *New Empire...*, p. 39.

<sup>48</sup> It could only be the result of Constantius's older age. Cf. R. SUSKI, *Galeriusz...*, p. 115.

<sup>49</sup> It seems that Constantine took part in the victorious war against the Persians and was witness to the great victory which Galerius won over them. Cf. *Origo Constantini*, II, 2; CONSTANTINUS IMPERATOR, *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum Constantini imperatoris oratio ad coetum sanctorum*, XVI, 2, [in:] EUSEBIUS, *Werke*, vol. I, ed. J.A. HEIKEL, Leipzig 1902 [= GCS, 23].

was formally the first Augustus. It is quite remarkable that both Constantius, who earlier seemed to be getting groomed to rule<sup>50</sup>, and Maxentius<sup>51</sup>, Maximian's son, who even got engaged in 293 and was for a few years married (298–300) to Galerius's daughter, Valeria Maximilla<sup>52</sup>, were excluded from the political reshuffle. The fact that their fathers, Maximian, Augustus under the first tetrarchy and Constantius, a Caesar, accepted the choice without protest shows that they not only were aware of Galerius's position but also agreed to it.

Granting the title of Augustus to Galerius and that of Caesars to dignitaries linked to him testifies to his rise to a dominant position in the *Imperium Romanum*. Information provided by Lactantius clearly indicates that it was Galerius himself who demanded to be put in charge of a high office guaranteeing a wide range of power. It is reported that in pursuing his goals, Galerius went so far as to use the threat of a civil war<sup>53</sup>. The threat must have been quite serious, if ailing Diocletian yielded to the pressure to which he was subjected. It seems that he was afraid not only of the military force Galerius had at his disposal, but also of the celestial powers that supported him. Diocletian may also have hoped that by designating Galerius, he would ensure the Empire's good fortune.

Lactantius's account regarding the demands Galerius made to Diocletian seems, at least in its general outline, quite probable. The victories he won may have convinced him of the support of the gods. In the toleration edict issued at the end of his life, he did not confine himself to mentioning his ordinary titles. He also pointed to his numerous victories, introducing himself as a victor over the Germans, the Egyptians, the Armenians, a five-time victor over the Sarmatians, a two-time victor over the Persians, and a six-time victor over the Carpi<sup>54</sup>. He may thus be considered to have had a litany of triumphs to his credit, even if he did not win all of them personally. Tetrarchs were in the habit of ascribing to themselves victories won by their co-rulers, regardless of the inflation of such titles.

Sure of his ground and convinced of the gods' protection, Galerius could now set tough conditions, especially as not so long ago, at the outset of the conflict with the Persians, the situation on the military front was not good for him, and his initial failures had a harmful effect upon his relations with Diocletian who, as is indicated by primary sources, did not hesitate to humiliate him. Galerius's attitude may thus have arisen partly as a reaction to his previous unpleasant experiences.

<sup>50</sup> He stayed in Diocletian's court in Nicomedia.

<sup>51</sup> Timothy BARNES (*Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, Oxford 2011, p. 57) presumes that Galerius, as a fanatical advocate of traditional cults, rejected the candidatures of Constantine and Maxentius for religious reasons, because of their sympathy for Christianity.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Origo Constantini*, III, 7; AURELIUS VICTOR, XXXX, 14; LACTANTIUS, XVIII, 9. Cf. also R. DONCIU, *L'empereur Maxence*, Bari 2012, p. 48; T.D. BARNES, *Constantine. Dynasty...*, p. 48.

<sup>53</sup> LACTANTIUS, XVIII.

<sup>54</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, VIII, 17, 3, ed. H. PIETRAS, Kraków 2013 [= ŻMT, 70].



Why did Galerius ascribe his victory over the Persians to Mars? It seems that he aimed to emphasise his uniqueness. His decision may also have been affected by the fact that he was elevated to Caesar on 1 March, 293, and was thus made to start participating in the exercise of power at the beginning of the month dedicated to Mars. Not without significance, it seems, was his mother's name, Romula, which was bound up with Mars. Lactantius's testimony is not the only one indicating that Galerius ascribed the victory to Mars when, in a state of euphoria after the triumph in question, he recognized him as his parent and himself as second Romulus<sup>55</sup>. Bearing witness to this are the surviving reliefs that adorn the base of the columns which were erected in *Forum Romanum* in Caesars' honour on the occasion of their *decennalia*<sup>56</sup>. The scene of making an offering contains not only a young Mars wearing a helmet but also Mars's bearded priest wearing a characteristic head covering. On the opposite side of the relief, from behind the sitting goddess, Roma, who personifies Rome, there emerges the head of the god of sun (Sol Invictus) adorned with sun rays<sup>57</sup>. The juxtaposition of a solar deity with Roma may suggest that the deity served as a divine patron of Constantius who ruled in the West, while Mars played a similar role for Galerius.

Mars also appears on the preserved decoration of Galerius' arch in Thessalonica<sup>58</sup>, on which the ruler as *novus Alexander* is depicted as the conqueror of the Persians. On the northern side of the southern pillar, third strip from the top, the Augustuses are presented as *principes mundi*, surrounded not only by Caesars but also by the gods – both of the West and of the East. Among them, on the right-hand side, there is Mars holding *tropaeum*, a sign of victory, and on the left-hand side, there is Mars's counterpart, *Virtus*<sup>59</sup>. On the southern side of the southern pillar, in the scene showing an altar over which there is a round votive shield, surrounded by two Victorias, one finds Mars, on one side, and *Virtus*, on the other, grabbing

<sup>55</sup> LACTANTIUS, IX, 9. Cf. P. BRUGGISSER, *Constantin aux rostres*, [in:] *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Perusinum*, ed. G. BONAMENTE, F. PASCHOUD, Bari 2002, p. 84, footnote 39.

<sup>56</sup> On the front wall of the base, on the round shield supported by two Victorias, there is an inscription CAESARVM DECENNALIA FELICITER. The base is associated with the column of Constantius. Cf. J.A. OSTROWSKI, *Starożytny Rzym. Polityka i sztuka*, Warszawa 1999, p. 425.

<sup>57</sup> H. KÄHLER, *Das Fünfsäulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum*, Köln 1964 [= MARO, 3], p. 8; J.A. OSTROWSKI, *Starożytny Rzym...*, p. 422–425; P. BRUGGISSER, *Constantin aux rostres...*, p. 78.

<sup>58</sup> The arch is believed to have been erected in 303, on the occasion of Galerius's *decennalia*, which were also celebrated by Caesar Constantius. Diocletian and Maximin in turn celebrated at the time the twentieth anniversary of their rule. H.P. LAUBSCHER, *Die Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, Berlin 1975, p. 107–108; J.A. OSTROWSKI, *Starożytny Rzym...*, p. 415.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. H.P. LAUBSCHER, *Die Reliefschmuck...*, p. 73; F. KOLB, *Ideal...*, p. 171. Some scholars claim that the relief does not show Mars, but Honos. Cf. M.S. POND ROTHMAN, *The Panel of the Emperors Enthroned on the Arch of Galerius*, *ByzS* 2, 1975, p. 24; J.A. OSTROWSKI, *Starożytny Rzym...*, p. 417; M.S. POND ROTHMAN, *The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius*, *AJA* 81, 1977, p. 444.

the hair of some barbarians. On the edge on both sides, there are trophies<sup>60</sup>. Thus, Galerius's main gratitude for his victory over the Persians was directed to Mars and to Virtus, that is, the personification of bravery closely connected with Mars. The fact that Mars served as Galerius's protective deity is attested to by one of the three inscriptions which survive in Thamugadi and which were part of the altar erected by the governor of Numidia in the honour of the tetrarchs' protective deities<sup>61</sup>. References to Mars (rare)<sup>62</sup> and to a nearly identical goddess, *Virtus*<sup>63</sup>, (more frequent) are also found on Galerius's coins, both in their legends and in their iconography<sup>64</sup>. One should also mention here a new legion, which was established by Galerius. Based in the East, it bore the name of *Martia*<sup>65</sup>.

It thus seems that as a result of the triumph over the Persians, which he was believed to owe to Mars, Galerius gained a new position already under the first tetrarchy, which Lactantius<sup>66</sup>, who had taught in the imperial town of Nicomedia at least by the outbreak of the anti-Christian persecutions, testifies to in his work *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*. The fact that Lactantius's account is pro-Christian and partial does not change anything. The chronicler was as critical of Diocletian as he was of Galerius. He seems to have had no reason to misrepresent the relations, certainly known in the imperial court, between Galerius and Diocletian. The information he provided on Galerius's dominant position seems to be credible, all the more so as it is confirmed by the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian

<sup>60</sup> H.P. LAUBSCHER, *Die Reliefschmuck...*, p. 89; M.S. POND ROTHMAN, *The Thematic Organization...*, p. 447.

<sup>61</sup> *CIL*, VIII, 2345; *ILS*, 633; Cf. T.D. BARNES, *Constantine. Dynasty...*, p. 57.

<sup>62</sup> According to Erika MANDERS (*Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193–284*, Leiden–Boston 2012 [= IE,15], p. 118) the reason why the references to Mars on the coins of the first tetrarchy were rather rare was because the preferences were given to Jupiter and Hercules. As a result, the latter gods were omnipresent on the coins of the time.

<sup>63</sup> On the coins minted in the latter half of the third century, Mars is usually linked to *virtus Augusti*; cf. *ibidem*, p. 120.

<sup>64</sup> References to Mars appear on Galerius's coins minted in Sisak in 295–296, with a legend MARTI PROPVGNATORI (C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. VI, *From Diocletian's Reform (A.D. 294) to the Death of Maximinus (A.D. 313)*, ed. IDEM, R.A.G. CARSON, [s.l.] 1967 (cetera: *RIC VI*), p. 457, no 17b) and MARTI VICTORI (*RIC VI*, Sisak, no 27b); minted in Trier in 295–305 with a legend MARTI PROPVGNATORI (*RIC VI*, Trier, no 62, 63); and a wide range of coins with legends containing references to *Virtus*: VIRTVS MILITVM minted in Sicilia (*RIC VI*, no 44b, 45, 47b, 48, 53, 61, 62, 67b, 71b), in Thesalonica (*RIC VI*, no 12b, 14b, 16b, 18), in Trevir (*RIC VI*, no 103b, 110b, 111b, 117b, 121, 124b, 133); in Alexandria (*RIC VI*, no 75), with a legend VIRTVS EXERCITVS or VIRTVTI EXERCITVS, in Antioch (*RIC VI*, no 85), in Cyzikus (*RIC VI*, no 47, 52, 59, 72), in Heraclea (*RIC VI*, no 51), in Nicomedia (*RIC VI*, no 59), in Serdyce (*RIC VI*, no 44).

<sup>65</sup> According to LEADBETTER (*Galerius...*, p. 105, footnote 72) the suggestion that the Legion's name reflects Galerius's link with Mars is tempting but needs to be rejected, since it is impossible to prove that the god served as Galerius's protective deity.

<sup>66</sup> LACTANTIUS, IX–XIV, XVIII–XXI. Cf. also T.D. BARNES, *Constantine. Dynasty...*, p. 56.

(despite the latter's protests), which benefited Galerius, and by the appointment of new Caesars who had close links to Galerius and who were appointed to the exclusion of Constantine and Maxentius, that is, the sons of the previous tetrarchs, Constantius and Maximian. Their willingness to accept the nominations without protest is additional proof that they were not only aware of Galerius's position, but also agreed to it. It is thus clear that Lactantius's testimony according to which Galerius recognized Mars as his divine patron is credible and remains in agreement both with a number of other sources and with the true course of events.

*Translated by Artur Mękowski*

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, *Rerum gestarum libri qui supersunt*, vol. I–II, ed. C.V. CLARK, Berlin 1910–1915.
- AURELIUS VICTOR, *Liber de Caesaribus Sexti Aurelii Victoris (Sextus Aurelius Victor). Praecedunt Origo gentis Romanae et liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae. Subs. epitome de Caesaribus*, ed. F. PICHLMAYR, R. GRÜNDEL, Leipzig 1966 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- The Breviarium of Festus*, ed., comm. J.W. EADIE, London 1967.
- The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, trans., praef. F.R. TROMBLEY, J.W. WATT, Liverpool 2000 [= Translated Texts for Historians, 32].
- Chronicon Paschale*, vol. I–II, rec. L. DINDORF, Bonn 1832 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- CONSTANTINUS IMPERATOR, *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum Constantini imperatoris oratio ad coetum sanctorum*, [in:] EUSEBIUS, *Werke*, vol. I, ed. J.A. HEIKEL, Leipzig 1902 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*, 23], p. 149–192.
- Corpus inscriptionum latinarum*, Berlin 1862–.
- Edictum Diocletiani de nuptiis et incestiis*, [in:] *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio*, ed. M. HYAMSON, Oxford 1913.
- EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. H. PIETRAS, Kraków 2013 [= *Źródła Myśli Teologicznej*, 70].
- EUTROPIUS, *Breviarium ab urbe condita*, trans., comm. H.W. BIRD, Liverpool 1993 [= Translated Texts for Historians, 14].
- HIERONYMUS, *Chronicon*, ed. R. HELM, Berlin 1956 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*, 7].
- In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. Panegirici Latini*, ed. R.A.B. MYNORS, C.E.V. NIXON, B.S. RODGERS, Berkeley–Los Angeles–Oxford 1994 [= *Transformation of the Classical Heritage*, 21].
- Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, ed. H. DESSAU, Berlin 1892–1916.
- Ioannis Zonarae Epitome historiarum libri XIII–XVIII*, rec. T. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Bonnae 1897 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].

- LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, ed. J. MOREAU, Paris 1954 [= Sources chrétiennes, 39].
- Origo Constantini. Anonymus Valesianus*, ed. I. KÖNIG, Trier 1987.
- OROSIUS, *Historiae adversus paganos*, vol. I–III, ed. M.-P. ARNAUD-LINDET, Paris 1990–1991.
- P’AWSTOS BUZAND’S, *History of the Armenians*, trans. R. BEDROSIAN, New York 1985.
- Petri Patricii Excerpta de legationibus Romanorum ad gentes*, [in:] *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, vol. IV, ed. K. MÜLLER, Parisiis 1851.
- SUTHERLAND C.H.V., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. VI, *From Diocletian’s Reform (A.D. 294) to the Death of Maximinus (A.D. 313)*, ed. C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, R.A.G. CARSON, [s.l.] 1967.

## Secondary Literature

- BALBUZA K., *Triumfator. Triumf i ideologia zwycięstwa w starożytnym Rzymie epoki Cesarstwa*, Poznań 2005.
- BANCHICH T.M., *The Lost History of Peter the Patrician. An Account of Rome’s Imperial Past from the Age of Justinian*, London–New York 2015 [= Routledge Classical Translations].
- BARDILL J., *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, Cambridge 2011.
- BARNES T.D., *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 1981.
- BARNES T.D., *Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire*, Oxford 2011.
- BARNES T.D., *Imperial Campaigns, A.D. 285–311*, “Phoenix” 30, 1976, p. 174–193, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1087091>
- BARNES T.D., *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge Massachusetts–London 1982, <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674280670>
- BEARD M., NORTH J., PRICE S., *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge 1998.
- BERRENS S., *Sonnenkult und Kaisertum von den Severern bis zu Constantin I (193–337 n. Chr.)*, Stuttgart 2004.
- BLOCKLEY R., *The Romano-Persian Peace Treaties of A.D. 299 and 363*, “Florilegium” 6, 1984, p. 28–49, <https://doi.org/10.3138/flor.6.002>
- BOWMAN A.K., *The Military Occupation of Upper Egypt in the Reign of Diocletian*, “Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists” 15.1/2, 1978, p. 25–38.
- BRUGGISSER P., *Constantin aux rostres*, [in:] *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Perusinum*, ed. G. BONAMENTE, F. PASCHOUD, Bari 2002, p. 73–91.
- CHAMPEAUX J., “*Pietas*”. *Piété personnelle et piété collective à Rome*, “Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé” 3, 1989, p. 263–279, <https://doi.org/10.3406/bude.1989.1405>
- CHARLESWORTH M.P., *The Virtues of Roman Emperor and the Creation of the Belief*, “Proceedings of the British Academy” 23, 1937, p. 105–133.
- DIGNAS B., WINTER E., *Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity. Neighbours and Rivals*, Cambridge–New York 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511619182>
- DODGEON M.H., LIEU S.N.C., *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars. A.D. 226–363*, London 1991.
- DONCIU R., *L’empereur Maxence*, Bari 2012.
- FEARS J.R., *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*, [in:] *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, vol. II, 17.2, ed. W. HAASE, New York–Berlin 1981, p. 864–870, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110850680-007>

- HALSBERGHE G.H., *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, Leiden 1972 [= Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain, 23], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004296251>
- JACZYŃSKA M., *Religie świata rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1987.
- JONES A.H.M., *The Later Roman Empire 284–602. A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey*, Oxford 1964.
- KÄHLER H., *Das Fünfsäulendenkmal für die Tetrarchen auf dem Forum Romanum*, Köln 1964 [= Monumenta artis romanae, 3].
- KOLB F., *Chronologie und Ideologie der Tetrarchie*, "Antiquité Tardive" 3, 1995, p. 21–31, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.AT.2.301085>
- KOLB F., *Die Datierung des ägyptischen Aufstands unter L. Domitius Domitianus und Aurelius Achilleus*, "Eos" 76, 1988, p. 325–343.
- KOLB F., *Diocletian und die Erste Tetrarchie. Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?*, Berlin 1987 [= Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte, 27], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110846508>
- KOLB F., *Ideal późnoantycznego władcy. Ideologia i autoprezentacja*, trans. A. GIERLIŃSKA, Poznań 2008.
- KOTŁOWSKA A., *Obraz dziejów w Chronici Canones Euzebiusza z Cezarei*, Poznań 2009.
- LAUBSCHER H.P., *Die Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki*, Berlin 1975.
- LEADBETTER B., *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian*, London–New York 2009 [= Roman Imperial Biographies], <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869284>
- MACDONALD D., *The Death of Gordian III, Another Tradition*, "Historia" 30, 1981, p. 502–508.
- MANDERS E., *Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193–284*, Leiden–Boston 2012 [= Impact of Empire, 15], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004224001>
- MATTINGLY H., *Jovius and Hercules*, "Harvard Theological Review" 45.2, 1952, p. 131–134, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000020770>
- NICHOLSON O.P., *The Wild Man of the Tetrarchy: a Divine Companion for the Emperor Galerius*, "Byzantion" 54, 1984, p. 253–275.
- OSTROWSKI J.A., *Starożytny Rzym. Polityka i sztuka*, Warszawa 1999.
- POND ROTHMAN M.S., *The Panel of the Emperors Enthroned on the Arch of Galerius*, "Byzantine Studies / Études byzantines" 2, 1975, p. 19–41.
- POND ROTHMAN M.S., *The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius*, "American Journal of Archaeology" 81, 1977, p. 427–454, <https://doi.org/10.2307/503277>
- SESTON W., *Dioclétien et la tétrarchie. Guerres et réformes (284–300)*, Paris 1946.
- SESTON W., *L'«humiliation» de Galère*, "Revue des Études Anciennes" 42, 1940, p. 515–519, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rea.1940.3134>
- SUSKI R., *Galeriusz. Cesarz, wódz i prześladowca*, Kraków 2016.
- SUSKI R., *Upokorzenie Galeriusza przez Dioklecjana. Prawda czy mit*, [in:] *Chrześcijaństwo u schyłku starożytności. Studia źródłoznawcze*, vol. II, ed. T. DERDA, E. WIPSYZKA, Kraków 1999, p. 153–182.
- SUSKI R., *Wyprawa Aleksandra Sewera przeciwko Persom w świetle późnorzymskiej i bizantyjskiej historiografii*, [in:] *Armia, systemy obronne i ideologiczno-religijne aspekty wojny w imperium rzymskim*, ed. H. KOWALSKI, P. MADEJSKI, Lublin 2015, p. 195–214.

- SUSKI R., *Zwycięska kampania Galeriusza w wojnie z Persami 298–299*, [in:] *Chrześcijaństwo u schyłku starożytności. Studia źródłoznawcze*, vol. II, ed. T. DERDA, E. WIPSZYCKA, Kraków 1999, p. 162–171.
- VERSNEL H.S., *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development, and Meaning of the Roman Triumph*, Leiden 1970, p. 66–93, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004674738>
- WAGENVOORT H., *Pietas*, [in:] *Pietas. Selected Studies in Roman Religion*, ed. H. WAGENVOORT, Leiden 1980 [= *Studies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 1], p. 1–20, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004296688\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004296688_002)
- WALLACE-HADRILL A., *The Emperor and his Virtues*, “*Historia*” 30.3, 1981, p. 298–323.
- ZUCKERMAN C., *Les campagnes des tétrarques, 296–298. Notes de chronologie*, “*Antiquité Tardive*” 2, 1994, p. 65–70, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.AT.2.301153>


**Sławomir Bralewski**

University of Lodz  
Faculty of Philosophy and History  
Institute of History  
Department of Byzantine Studies  
ul. Kamińskiego 27a  
90-219 Łódź, Polska/Poland  
slawomir.bralewski@uni.lodz.pl





Błażej Cecota (Piotrków Trybunalski)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4746-0325>

## THE JEWISH THEME IN THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR'S TESTIMONY ON THE PROPHET MUḤAMMAD

**Abstract.** Theophanes' account regarding the rise of Islam and the history of the Prophet Muḥammad appears to be the most detailed and precise one that can be found in Byzantine historiography. The Confessor's aim was to reproduce as many details about Muḥammad's life as possible. Since his focus was not on religious ideas, but on key events surrounding the rise of the new religion, his account is not predominantly concerned with discussing Islam's ideology. However, this does not allow us to regard it as in any way objective. Some of the views it contains were included with the clear goal of discrediting Islam as a religion that rivalled Christianity. This, for example, can be said of Theophanes' remarks about the relationship between Muḥammad and the Jews. In this article, I focus on this aspect of Theophanes' account, discussing it in the context of the long-running (the last several decades) scholarly debates regarding Jewish-Muslim relations.

**Keywords:** Theophanes the Confessor, Byzantine historiography, Christian-Muslim relations, Muḥammad, Islam's Prophet

Theophanes's work provides a great deal of information about the Prophet Muḥammad<sup>1</sup>. The Byzantine chronicler, who can be considered to have obtained detailed knowledge of Muḥammad's life, lived in a country (150 years after the Prophet's death) that maintained constant relations with the Caliphate, both in war and on peaceful terms. It was thus impossible for Islam's founder to remain an unknown figure in the Empire<sup>2</sup>. The reason why the information about

<sup>1</sup> Some of the issues dealt with in this article I have also discussed in B. CECOTA, *Islam, the Arabs and Umayyad Rulers according to Theophanes the Confessor's Chronography*, SCer 2, 2012, p. 97–111. For detailed discussion of Muḥammad as presented in Theophanes the Confessor's Chronography cf. IDEM, *Islam, Arabowie i wizerunek kalifów w przekazach Chronografii Teofanesa Wyznawcy*, Łódź 2022 [= BL, 43], p. 51–73.

<sup>2</sup> The knowledge of Islam and the Prophet in the early period of the Arab invasion of Syria and Egypt was scarce, if there was any awareness at all that Islam was a new religion (it was difficult to become aware of the fact not only because of the lack of reliable information, but because chaos and anarchy arose during these events and the level of understanding of Islam's principles among Arab



him seems so precise may lie in the fact that Theophanes strove to give an account not only of Muḥammad's ideas, but also of Muḥammad's life, focusing on details that went unnoticed by other chroniclers, whether the Byzantine ones or the ones coming from countries that remained under Arab occupation. However, one may be puzzled by the fact that the fullest account of the Prophet's life given from the Byzantine perspective comes from as late as the beginning of the eleventh century<sup>3</sup>.

Regardless of these biographical details, Theophanes never lost sight of the fact that his main goal was to point out the falseness of the Islamic doctrine. One cannot agree with the view that he aimed to offer an objective description of the Muslims' religion<sup>4</sup>, although his account is actually calm and balanced, as was rightly stressed by Teresa Wolińska<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, however, one should bear in mind the opinion expressed by Sidney H. Griffith, according to whom Christian apologists (including Theophanes) drew on details of Muḥammad's life in order to show that he was not a prophet in a biblical sense of the word, and that what he was after was mainly power. There was then no doubt that he was not called by God, but by people who gave him some notion of Christian and Jewish doctrines. The apparent interest in details of his life may thus have stemmed from the intention of discrediting him and his ideas<sup>6</sup>.

The pejorative attitude towards the Prophet is attested to in three fragments of Theophanes' account. The first concerns the Jews and their reaction to Muḥammad's teachings, while the remaining two pertain to his supposed illness and women's role in the spread of the new doctrine. This article discusses only the first of those fragments. Theophanes employed a clever strategy of making the Jews seem to be casting something of a 'double' doubt on Islam. They are reported to have at first recognised the doctrine, a fact sufficient for a Christian to deny

---

warriors was low); J. FLORI, *L'islam et la fin des Temps. L'interprétation prophétique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*, Paris 2007, p. 114–122; J.V. TOLAN, *Réactions chrétiennes aux conquêtes musulmanes. Etude comparée des auteurs chrétiens de Syrie et d'Espagne*, CCM 44, 2001, p. 350–352. However, in the years that followed the awareness of Islam's distinctiveness spread not only among Byzantium's lay and clerical elites, but also among its lower strata, for example, among soldiers from the themes of Asia Minor. According to David TURNER, the theme Anatolikon's cry regarding the faith in the Holy Trinity, reported from the reign of Constantine IV (668–685), can be interpreted as aimed at stressing the importance of the Christian religion as opposed to strictly monotheistic Islam: *The Trouble with the Trinity: The Context of a Slogan during the Reign of Constantine IV (668–685)*, BMGS 27, 2003, p. 118–119.

<sup>3</sup> For similar conclusions cf.: L. BORAS, *A Prophet has appeared coming with the Saracens. The Non-Islamic Testimonies on the Prophet and the Islamic Conquest of Egypt in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries* (MA Thesis, Radboud University, Nijmegen 2017), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> In this way: Ю. МАКСИМОВ, *Прп. Феофан Исповедник Сигрианский об исламе*, БВе 4, 2004, p. 312–335.

<sup>5</sup> T. WOLIŃSKA, *Elity chrześcijańskie wobec islamu (VII–X wiek)*, VP 35, 2015, p. 558–559.

<sup>6</sup> S.H. GRIFFITH, *The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message, according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the first Abbasid Century*, [in:] IDEM, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine*, Aldershot 2003, p. 132.

its authenticity<sup>7</sup>. We are explicitly informed of the conversion of some members of Jewish communities to Islam: ὡς καὶ τινὰς τῶν προυχόντων αὐτῶν προσελθεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ δέξασθαι τὴν αὐτοῦ θρησκείαν. Theophanes accuses them of disowning Moses, while at the same time confirming the credibility of his mission: καὶ ἀφήσαι τὴν τοῦ θεόπτου Μωσέως. He then goes on to state that those Jews who converted to Islam soon found the religion false. They took note of the fact that Muḥammad's habit of eating some foods ran counter to the principles of Judaism (the ban on eating camel's meat): θεωρήσαντες δὲ αὐτὸν ἐσθίοντα ἀπὸ καμήλου ἔγνωσαν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτός, ὃν ἐνόμισαν. However, acting out of fear, they stayed with the Prophet and, it is emphasized, affected his mission in such a way that it became directed mainly against the Christians: καὶ ἠπόρουσαν τί πράξει, καὶ ἀφήσαι αὐτοῦ τὴν θρησκείαν δειλιῶντες οἱ τάλανες ἐδίδασκον αὐτὸν ἀθέμιτα καθ' ἡμῶν τῶν Χριστιανῶν. The chronicler thus seems to suggest that Islam's hypocrisy was so dreadful that even the Jews, themselves guilty of blasphemy, realised that it was not a true religion<sup>8</sup>.

Given the above, it seems that the range of arguments on which Christian apologists drew in dealing with Islam involved accusing it of ties to Judaism<sup>9</sup>. It holds especially true for the circles that remained under Islam's direct influence – the Christians of Syria, both the Monophysites and Nestorians. The latter included so distinguished an apologist as Timothy I (almost the peer of Theophanes the Confessor), Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 780–823<sup>10</sup>. In one of the surviving letters, addressed to Sergius, Elam's future Metropolitan (the end of the eighth century), Timothy referred to the Muslims as the 'new Jews', regarding polemical engagements with them as a direct continuation of the early Christians' disputes with Jewish communities in Palestine<sup>11</sup>. Similar references appeared in the

<sup>7</sup> The whole of this complicated description is found between the lines: *Theophanis Chronographia*, AM 6122, ed. C.G. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883 (cetera: THEOPHANES), p. 333.4–9.

<sup>8</sup> THEOPHANES, AM 6122, p. 333.9–13.

<sup>9</sup> It is still open to debate to what extent Christian works from the seventh century engaged in polemics with Judaism were directed only against the Jews and to what extent they referred to the new variant of Moses' religion – that is, Islam. It is worth noting here that this polemic always pertained to similar elements: The Holy Trinity, Incarnation, Crucifixion etc. There is a vast body of literature on the topic. Cf.: Sh. O'SULLIVAN, *Anti-Jewish Polemic and Early Islam*, [in:] *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. D. THOMAS, Leiden–Boston 2007 [= HCh-MR, 6], p. 49–68; V. DÉROCHE, *Polémique anti-juidaïque et émergence de l'Islam (7<sup>e</sup>–8<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, REB 57, 1999, p. 141–161; A. CAMERON, *Byzantines and Jews: Some Recent Work on Early Byzantium*, BMGS 20, 1996, p. 249–274; G. DAGRON, V. DÉROCHE, *Juifs et chrétiens dans l'Orient du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, TM 11, 1991, p. 17–273.

<sup>10</sup> For more on this distinguished Christian philosopher known for translating Greek treatises into Syriac and Arabic and for playing an important role as an organizer of the Church of the East in the new conditions that arose under the Caliphate authority cf.: D.D. BUNDY, *Timotheos I* (the bibliographical notes therein), [in:] *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage: Electronic Edition*, ed. S.P. BROCK, A.M. BUTTS, G.A. KIRAZ, L. VAN ROMPAY, <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Timotheos-I> [10 IV 2023].

<sup>11</sup> T.R. HURST, *Letter 40 of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (727–823). A Edition and Translation* (MA Thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington 1981), p. 48.

record of a supposed debate (there is still no agreement among scholars about its authenticity<sup>12</sup>) between the patriarch and representatives of Caliph al-Mahdī in 782. Syrian and Arab sources that record the supposed debate contain a fragment in which Caliph and his representatives point to their kinship with the Jews and Moses' mission, trying to infer from the Book of Deuteronomy 18.18 (*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kindred, and will put my words into the mouth of the prophet; the prophet shall tell them all that I command*) a herald of Muḥammad's advent. The patriarch questions this assertion by indicating that ancient peoples, such as the Edomites, the Ammonites, or the Moabites, were more closely related to the Israelites than the Ishmaelites<sup>13</sup>. Another Theophanes's 'peer'<sup>14</sup>, Theodore Bar Koni, also representing the Church of the East<sup>15</sup>, wrote in his *Ktābā d-'eskoliyon*, in the part presenting arguments against Islam, that Muslims *believe in the same way as Jews*<sup>16</sup>. Among those who claimed that the latter paved the way for regarding the crucified Christ as a human being was Abū Rā'īta l-Takrītī<sup>17</sup>, a representative of the Syrian Monophysite Church. However, he drew no distinction between Muslims and members of Christian denominations holding such a view of Christ<sup>18</sup>. The charge of the Jewish origin of Islamic dogmas

<sup>12</sup> Conclusions regarding this debate continue to appear in academic discourse, including that produced by authors from Muslim academic centres: H.A. HARMAKAPUTRA, *Muslim-Christian Debates in the Early 'Abbasid Period. The Cases of Timothy I and Theodore Abu Qurra*, MIQOT 38, 2014, p. 435–445.

<sup>13</sup> C. HACKENBURG, *An Arabic-to-English Translation of the Religious Debate between the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I and the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi* (MA Thesis, The Ohio State University 2009), p. 126–129.

<sup>14</sup> Older historiography associated Theodore Bar Koni with bishop Beth Germai, Patriarch Johann IV's nephew who lived in the tenth century: W.A. WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1894, p. 222. However, this view was refuted already in the first half of the twentieth century by Jean-Baptiste CHABOT – *Littérature syriaque*, Paris 1934, p. 107–108. Theodore is usually considered to have lived in the times of Patriarch Timothy: W. BAUM, D.W. WINKLER, *The Church of the East. A Concise History*, London–New York 2003, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> For more on Theodore's life (along with secondary literature) cf.: A.M. BUTTS, *Theodoros bar Koni*, [in:] *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. S.P. BROCK, A.M. BUTTS, G.A. KIRAZ, L. VAN ROMPAY, Piscataway, New Jersey 2011, p. 405–406.

<sup>16</sup> *Theodorus Bar Koni Liber Scholiorum*, ed. A. SCHER, Paris 1910, p. 69. For discussion of this fragment cf.: S.H. GRIFFITH, *Chapter Ten of the Scholion: Theodore Bar Koni's Apology for Christianity*, OCP 47, 1981, p. 158–188.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Takrītī was also Theophanes the Confessor's 'peer'. He died in around 830 in Tikrit (northern Iraq): *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. I, (600–900), ed. D. THOMAS, B. ROGGEEMA, Leiden–Boston 2009, p. 567–580. On his activity as a theologian and apologist cf.: S.T. KEATING, *Defending the 'People of Truth' in the Early Islamic Period. The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'itah*, Leiden–Boston 2006 [= HCh-MR, 4], p. 24–55; S.H. GRIFFITH, *Habib ibn Hidmah Abu Ra'itah, a Christian mutakallim of the First Abbasid Century*, OCh 64, 1980, p. 168–169.

<sup>18</sup> *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Habib Ibn Hidma Abu Ra'ita*, ed. G. GRAF, Louvain 1951, vol. CXXX, p. 83; vol. CXXXI, p. 10.

appeared in the Apology of Al-Kindi<sup>19</sup>, a work dating from the ninth or tenth century, depending on which modern interpretation we accept<sup>20</sup>. The Apology also contains a suggestion, according to which the idea of establishing a new religion came from two Jewish scholars, (actually against Muḥammad's will)<sup>21</sup>, one of whom is known in the Muslim tradition as a companion of two just Caliphs – 'Umar and 'Uthmān<sup>22</sup>. In accordance with the later Islamic traditions, a famous monk, Bahīrā<sup>23</sup>, reported to have prophesied Muḥammad's future greatness as a prophet, was in fact a rabbi<sup>24</sup>. To the above, one might add the account by the Armenian historian Sebeos who claimed that the Arab invasion was inspired by the Jews who

<sup>19</sup> *Apology of Al Kindy Written at the Court of Al Mamun in Defence of Christianity against Islam*, trans. et ed. W. MUIR, London 1882, p. 3. Other modern translations: AL-KINDI, *Apologia del cristianesimo*, trans. L. BOTTINI, Milano 1998; *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue. A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632–900 A.D.)*, trans. N.A. NEWMAN, Hatfield 1993, p. 355–546 (text p. 381–402 and 411–516); G. PASTEUR TARTAR, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien sous le calife al-Mamun (813–834). Les épîtres d'al-Hashimi et d'al-Kindi*, Paris 1985.

<sup>20</sup> For discussion of the Apology – its authorship, dating and surviving manuscripts, especially later Arab versions (seventeenth century!), cf.: P.S. VAN KONINGSVELD, *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, [in:] *Religious Polemics in Context. Papers presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR) Held at Leiden, 27–28 April 2000*, ed. T. HETTEMA, Ch. KOOI, R. VAN GORCUM, Assen 2004, p. 69–92.

<sup>21</sup> *Apology of Al Kindy*..., p. 23–24.

<sup>22</sup> M. PERLMANN, *A Legendary Story of Kalb al-Ahbar's Conversion to Islam*, [in:] *Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, New York 1953, p. 85–99; IDEM, *Another Ka'b al-Ahbar Story*, JQR 45, 1954, p. 48–58.

<sup>23</sup> On the rise of the Monk Bahīrā's legend: K. SZILÁGYI, *Muhammad and the Monk: The Making of the Christian Bahīrā Legend*, JSAI 34, 2008, p. 169–214. Both culturally and linguistically different versions of the myth are discussed in A. BAKHOU, *The Monk Encounters the Prophet – the Story of the Encounter between Monk Bahīrā and Muhammad as it is Recorded in the Syriac Manuscript of Mardin 259/2*, CRS 3, 2015, p. 349–357 (an extended version can be found in: IDEM, *The Christian Legend of Monk Bahīrā. The Syriac Manuscript of Mardain 259/2: Study and English Translation*, June 2006, [http://www.baylorisr.org/wp-content/uploads/bahkou\\_monk.pdf](http://www.baylorisr.org/wp-content/uploads/bahkou_monk.pdf) [10 IV 2023]); S.H. GRIFFITH, *Muhammad and the Monk Bahīrā: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times*, Och 79, 1995, p. 146–174; R.W. THOMPSON, *Armenian Variations on the Bahira Legend*, HUS 3/4, 1979/1980 [also as: *Eucharisterion: Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students (1979–1980)*], p. 884–895. Bahīrā was not always presented as a heretic responsible for leading Muḥammad into doctrinal errors. Particularly interesting in this context is the version created by William of Tripoli who, exceptionally for Latin circles, built an image of Bahīrā as a faithful and saintly Christian attached to Muḥammad throughout his life and serving as his mentor in respect of the basic elements of the Christian doctrine: J.D. PEARSON, *The Islamic World and the Latin East. William of Tripoli and his Syrian Context* (PhD Thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2018), p. 36100.

<sup>24</sup> B. ROGGEMA, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira. Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam*, Leiden 2009 [= HCh-MR, 9], p. 44. On the other hand, however, there is also the version suggesting that Bahīrā came from the Arab tribe of Qays: B. DE VRIES, *On the Way to Bosra. Arab Settlement in South Syria before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulysse a fait un beau voyage. Movements of People in Time and Space*, ed. IDEM, N. NAGUIB, Bergen 2010, p. 72.

had fled Edessa for fear of Byzantine persecution<sup>25</sup>. In the High Middle Ages, the charges and suggestions that Muḥammad had ties to the Jews spread as far as the circle of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. We find them, explicitly offensive in form, in the Palea from the fourteenth century, where the Prophet is referred to as a Jewish slave<sup>26</sup>.

This brief review of the attitudes of Christian apologists who, coming from different circles and belonging to warring Christian denominations, wrote about Islam in the early stages of its development allows us to conclude that the 'Jewish issue' was exploited to a significant extent<sup>27</sup>. There was thus nothing surprising about the fact that Theophanes decided to refer to it in his own work. It is interesting to note that by drawing so extensively on anti-Jewish themes, Christian apologists may have brought about their increased occurrence in Muslim literature<sup>28</sup>. Particularly interesting in this context is the figure of 'Abdallāh ibn Saba', one of the first infidels and heretics of the early Islam, who was accused of the Jewish origin<sup>29</sup>. Those involved in the ongoing political struggle did not flinch from

<sup>25</sup> Cf. R. HOYLAND, *Seeing Islam as Other Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton–New Jersey 1997, p. 124–132. Considering the fact that Sebeos described the rise of Islam (or at least the invasion of Christian lands) as a Jewish intrigue, it is worth noting that the tendency to regard the Jews as conspirators who spread subversive ideas undermining social order can also be found in Muslim literature: B. LEWIS, *Jews of Islam*, Westport, Connecticut 2002, p. 103.

<sup>26</sup> Z.A. BRZOWSKA, *Jeden z herezjarchów? Przedstawienia ikonograficzne Mahometa w rękopisie PHB, F.IV.151 w kontekście staroruskich narracji na jego temat*, VP 38, 2018, p. 464.

<sup>27</sup> For a multifaceted discussion of the anti-Jewish rhetoric used by Christian apologists writing about Islam cf. S.H. GRIFFITH, *Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth century*, JH 3, 1988, p. 65–94. It is worth noting that the Arabs were accused of having ties to the Jews already in pre-Islamic era. It suffices to mention here Hermias Sozomenos who noted that in following some habits and rituals such as circumcision or the ban on eating pork, the Arabs were similar to the believers of Judaism. Sozomenos even suggested that the Arabs had initially been, and some still continued to be, of Jewish faith (SOZOMENUS, *Kirchengeschichte*, VI, 38.10–13, ed. J. BIDEZ, G.Ch. HANSEN, Berlin 1995 [= *GCS.NF*, 4], p. 299). According to Greg FISHER, these insinuations aimed to denounce the Arabs as having ties to the Jews. – *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011 [= *OCM*], p. 166–167. However, one should keep in mind here the essay by Elizabeth Jeffreys. Although she described her text as only an introduction to a wider discussion worthy of a whole book, she began it by comparing references to the Arabs from the pre-Islamic era to those found in Theophanes and Patriarch Nikephoros. Thus, references to the Jews, rather than being Chronographer's original idea, may have been part of the specific tradition of describing this desert tribe: E. JEFFREYS, *The Image of the Arabs in Byzantine Literature*, [in:] *The 17<sup>th</sup> International Byzantine Congress at Dumbarton Oaks, Major Papers*, New York 1986, p. 305–323.

<sup>28</sup> A. TEIPEN, *Jews in Early Biographies of Muhammad. A Case Study in Shifting Muslim Understandings of Judaism*, JAAR 88, 2020, p. 543–568. The complex nature of anti-Jewish arguments that began to be used in Christian literature in connection both with Islam's appearance, including in the context of iconoclastic debates held in the eighth century, and with different religious communities' adherence to the idea of the covenant with God, has been dealt with by V. DÉROCHE in *Polémique...*, p. 141–161.

<sup>29</sup> S.W. ANTHONY, *The Caliph and the Heretic. Ibn Saba' and the Origins of Shi'ism*, Leiden–Boston 2012 [= *IHC*, 91], p. 313–317. Jewishness was only one element of 'Abdallāh ibn Saba' negative leg-

making similar accusations against members of the ruling family – the Umayyads – in some traditions Muḥammad is reported to have called ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Abī Mu‘ayt, Umayyah great-grandson (a representative of one line of the family, the other lines were led by ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān, Mu‘āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān and Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam) a Jew<sup>30</sup>.

Interestingly, Theophanes' remarks, which are unique in their account of the Jews' hesitation in deciding whether or not to accept Muḥammad's doctrine, partly reflect today's view of the problem. As long as a quarter-century ago, Steven M. Wasserstrom argued in the work devoted to the early Jewish-Islamic relations that Muḥammad proclaimed himself the last prophet and not a Messiah. The acceptance of this 'human' function, and the rejection of any claims to 'divine' messianism<sup>31</sup>, must have been disorienting to Jews and the Christians alike, producing different, not always negative, attitudes towards the new religion. This state of unclearly defined positions and the problem of how to understand Muḥammad's message is rightly reflected in the *Chronography*<sup>32</sup>. In the context of the Jewish roots of Islam, one cannot omit to mention here the theory put forward ten years ago by Fred M. Donner, according to whom the Muslim religion originated in a monotheistic reform movement, which included both Jews and Christians. Donner claims that it emerged from the movement only several decades after the Prophet's death<sup>33</sup>. However, based on his research into the writings of John of Damascus, Peter Schandler has noted that even if Donner's theory is generally acceptable, it certainly is not so with regard to the lifespan of the great philosopher and theologian whose works are indicative of the fully shaped doctrine of the new religion, and

---

end. The others included black mother or the late conversion to Islam. Cf.: E.R. FIĞLALI, *The "Problem" of Abd-Allah Ibn-Saba*, IIED 5, 1982, p. 379–390.

<sup>30</sup> Significantly, there are some genealogical and historical reasons to suggest that these allegations were not without foundation: S. WARD, *Muḥammad Said: "You Are Only a Jew from the Jews of Sephoris": Allegations of the Jewish Ancestry of Some Umayyads*, JNES 60, 2001, p. 31–42.

<sup>31</sup> One should keep in mind here a theory (P. CRONE, M. COOK, *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977), according to which Muslims' interest in these themes dates back to the beginning of their religion, and the second Caliph, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, referred to in the Islamic tradition by the nickname *Al-Fārūq*, a word derived from the Syriac 'saviour', may have been regarded by them as their Messiah. Following the review of Quranic testimonies and the re-examination of the sources on which the two authors mentioned above drew, Fred DONNER rejected this hypothesis, claiming that the hard evidence that can be adduced to prove the existence of messianic themes in Islam comes from after the first century of the Hijra: *La question du messianisme dans l'islam primitif*, RMMM 91/94, 2000, p. 17–28.

<sup>32</sup> For more on this problem, dealt with in the context of the Jewish polemical engagements with Islam, cf.: S.M. WASSERSTROM, *Between Muslim and Jew. The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam*, Princeton 1995, p. 47–90.

<sup>33</sup> F.M. DONNER, *Muḥammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2010, p. 194–224. Donner is not of course the only scholar who has raised the issue of some vagueness of the early monotheism adhered to by future Muslims: M. GRODZKI, *Yehuda D. Nevo – A Comprehensive Skeptical Theory on the Genesis of Islam*, ROR 71, 2018, p. 55–95.

not of any kind of Christian or Judaic heresy<sup>34</sup>. If the son of Caliph 'Abd al-Malik's treasurer Sargūn ibn Manṣūr stressed that Muḥammad had become acquainted with the books of the Old and New Testament before embarking on his teaching mission, as is indicated by Diego Sarrió Cucarella in his polemic with Peter Schandler<sup>35</sup>, this can hardly be taken to mean that the Prophet was either a member or an organizer of any Christian or Jewish community.

It should be kept in mind that the Muslims' leader was not considered to act, in line with the idea of supersessionism<sup>36</sup>, as a continuator of the previous revelations, at least in the sense of nullifying all other revealed beliefs and replacing them with Islam as their natural fulfilment. Contrary to the suggestions that can be encountered in historical studies, Quranic texts and traditions, especially Hadiths, indicate that Muḥammad put forward the entirely new, if not systematically developed, revelation theology, which was not a simple reformulation of the older Judaic and Christian beliefs. For this reason, Islam's possible link with supersessionism can be conceived of only in connection with the *tahrif* – an idea which, while it was fully articulated in the eleventh century by Ibn Ḥazm<sup>37</sup> (that is, long after Muḥammad's death) and served as an inspiration to Theophanes's work, can also be found in Islam's theologically primary texts – Quran and Sunna. According to this idea, both Jews and Christians, acting independently of the Lord, introduced many changes to the message of the revelation, and only Muḥammad managed to rectify these mistakes. Consequently, Islam cannot be regarded as a continuation, but rather as a negation of these two religions. While the latter distorted God's revelation, Islam's view of it was purified and flawless<sup>38</sup>.

In view of the above, Theophanes's remarks regarding the Jewish attitudes toward Islam take on an interesting meaning. They can be considered to confirm the suggestion that Muḥammad established an entirely new religion, which thus was not a continuation of either Judaism or Christianity. It seems paradoxical that the supposed ties between Islam and Judaism, to which Christian apologists paid special attention in the early Middle Ages, are today part of the reflection of ecumenically inclined theologians. One may mention here the recently late Hans

<sup>34</sup> P. SCHANDLER, *John of Damascus and Islam. Christian Heresiology and the Intellectual Background to Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations*, Leiden 2018 [= HCh-MR, 34], p. 32.

<sup>35</sup> D.S. CUCARELLA, *Schadler, Peter, John of Damascus and Islam: Christian Heresiology and the Intellectual Background to Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations [review]*, MIDÉO 34, 2019, p. 390–394.

<sup>36</sup> For brief discussion of the Christian version of supersessionism cf.: D. PLISZKA, *Wypełnienie bez zastępstwa: Matthew Levering o relacji Kościół–Izrael*, BST 3, 2017, p. 42–54.

<sup>37</sup> A. LJAMAI, *Ibn Hazm et la polémique islamo-chrétienne dans l'histoire de l'Islam*, Leiden 2003 [= MEMIW, 17]; C. ADANG, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden 1996 [= IPTS.TS, 22].

<sup>38</sup> On the idea of the *tahrif* considered in the context outlined above cf.: S.T. KEATING, *Revisiting the Charge of Tahrif. The Question of Supersessionism in Early Islam and the Qur'an*, [in:] *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam. Polemic and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. I.Ch. LEVY, R. GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ, D. DUCLOW, Leiden–Boston 2014 [= SMRT, 183], p. 202–217.

Kung who argued for recognizing Islam as revealed religion based on its similarity to the Jewish forms of the early Christian communities<sup>39</sup>. Some also call for such arguments, which arise from the past coexistence of the two religions, to be used in today's politics<sup>40</sup>. However, it does not mean that nowadays no one is willing to support the view<sup>41</sup> that our efforts to understand the origins of Islam should take into account its similarities to Judaism, an approach which was suggested even by Theophanes. The first to be mentioned among today's advocates of the view are the scholars (Patricia Crone, Michael Cook and Martina Hids)<sup>42</sup> who, half a century ago, put forward a theory of Hagarism, drawing not only on literally understood accounts of such authors as Sebeos<sup>43</sup>, but also on the suggestion that Muḥammad had ties to the Jewish apocalyptic traditions<sup>44</sup>.

One should note in conclusion that it is impossible to absolutely rule out the possibility that Theophanes could have referred in his enigmatic remarks to some complex historical relationship between Muḥammad and local Jewish tribes. A good example of this is provided by the tradition recounting Banu Qurayza's tragic fate<sup>45</sup>, especially as it is known to us from Ibn Hišām's account (indebted to Ibn Ishāq), which was, as is sometimes suggested in scholarly literature, used by the group involved in preparing the *Chronography*. However, it seems that had it actually been the case, the Confessor would not have missed a chance of emphasising

<sup>39</sup> Similar analyses can be found in D. MARSHALL, *Muhammad in Contemporary Christian Theological Reflection*, ICMR 24, 2013, p. 161–172.

<sup>40</sup> M. PYTLIK, *Jews and Muslims in Cooperation – Lunch and Learn* (paper presented to the “Jews and Muslims. A Forgotten History of Coexistence” forum, Oakland University, 12 March 2015), <https://www.oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/religiousstudies/files-and-documents/faculty-research/Pytluk,%20Michael%20%20Jews%20&%20Muslims,%20A%20Forgotten%20History%20of%20Coexistence.pdf> [10 IV 2023].

<sup>41</sup> As A.P. PIERZYŃSKI wrote in *Christians and Jews: Historical and Theological Perspectives of their Relationship*, SOec 19, 2019, p. 331: *The study of the Church Fathers in order to understand their relationship with the Judaism of Eretz Israel and the diaspora (as expressed in particular in the Talmud) has not yet been completed. Herein, the study of the heresies of the first centuries, especially in Asia and the East, and their relationship with the Jewish thought, would be valuable to understand the origins of Islam.*

<sup>42</sup> P. CRONE, M. COOK, *Hagarism. The Making of...*; P. CRONE, *Slaves on Horses. The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge 1980; EADEM, M. HINDS, *God's Caliph. Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge 1986; P. CRONE, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Princeton 1987.

<sup>43</sup> EADEM, M. COOK, *Hagarism. The Making of...*, p. 77–79. The efforts to explain the origins of Islam by means, among others, of its ties to Judaism are excellently discussed in M. GRODZKI, *Panteon sceptyków. Przegląd współczesnych teorii naukowych poświęconych genezie islamu*, Warszawa 2017, p. 165–212.

<sup>44</sup> M. COOK, *Mahomet*, trans. B.R. ZAGÓRSKI, Warszawa 1999, p. 113–114.

<sup>45</sup> On Banu Qurayza cf.: W. MONTGOMERY WATT, *The Condemnation of the Jews of Banū Qurayza. A Study of the Sources of the Sira*, [in:] IDEM, *Early Islam. Collected Articles*, Edinburgh 1990, p. 1–12; M.J. KISTER, *The Massacre of the Banū Qurayza: A Re-Examination of a Tradition*, JSAI 8, 1986, p. 61–96; W.N. ARAFAT, *New Light on the Story of Banū Qurayza and the Jews of Medina*, JRAS 108.2, 1976, p. 100–107.



the fact that Muḥammad, in accordance with the account mentioned above, carried out the execution of almost genocidal proportions.

Also interesting in this context are references pertaining to Moses. As is known from Muḥammad's first *sīrat's*, the motive of comparing the Prophet with Israel's Patriarch became part of the Jewish-Muslim polemics already at the dawn of Islam. As Shari L. Lowin reminds us, modern scholarship has found these references unreliable because they come from late Muslim sources. However, the tradition of drawing comparisons between Moses and Muḥammad (favourably to the former) can also be found in the surviving Jewish apologetic literature, which, argues Lowin, prevents us from excluding the possibility that such comparisons could have been a constant part of the polemics under discussion, although such an exclusion is inherent in the Prophet's various biographies. It seems that the remarks about Moses found in *Chronography* can be regarded as a contribution to discussions concerning the comparisons in question. However, they can also be treated as part of the anti-Jewish rhetoric regarding the believers of Judaism who abandoned their own (and the Christian) Patriarch's teachings in favour of those of the Messenger. Thus, the Confessor could be considered to have attempted to simultaneously undermine the message of both Islam and Judaism.

To sum up, the above introduction to the topic is hoped to give an idea of how many issues regarding Muḥammad's relationship with the Jews can be touched upon based on a brief passage, only a few lines long, from Theophanes' chronicle. In writing it, Theophanes certainly aimed to discredit the Prophet. However, he also included in it details that, when interpreted by comparison with other scholars' findings that are based on other sources (including Jewish ones) pertaining to the history of Islam, may help us ask new questions and draw interesting conclusions regarding Theophanes' view of Muslims.

*Translated by Artur Mękowski*

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- AL-KINDI, *Apologia del cristianesimo*, trans. L. BOTTINI, Milano 1998.
- Apology of Al Kindy Written at the Court of Al Mamun in Defence of Christianity against Islam*, trans. et ed. W. MUIR, London 1882.
- The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue. A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632–900 A.D.)*, trans. N.A. NEWMAN, Hatfield 1993.
- HACKENBURG C., *An Arabic-to-English Translation of the Religious Debate between the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I and the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi* (MA Thesis, The Ohio State University 2009).
- HOYLAND R., *Seeing Islam as Other Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton–New Jersey 1997.
- Die Schriften des Jacobiten Habib Ibn Hidma Abu Ra'ita*, ed. G. GRAF, Louvain 1951.
- SOZOMENUS, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. J. BIDEZ, G.Ch. HANSEN, Berlin 1995 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte. Neue Folge*, 4].
- Theodorus Bar Koni Liber Scholiorum*, ed. A. SCHER, Paris 1910.
- Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C.G. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883.

### Secondary Literature

- ADANG C., *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden 1996 [= *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies*, 22], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004451216>
- ANTHONY S.W., *The Caliph and the Heretic. Ibn Saba' and the Origins of Shi'ism*, Leiden–Boston 2012 [= *Islamic History and Civilization*, 91], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004216068>
- ARAFAT W.N., *New Light on the Story of Banū Qurayza and the Jews of Medina*, "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" 108.2, 1976, p. 100–107, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0035869X00133349>
- BAKHOU A., *The Christian Legend of Monk Bahirā. The Syriac Manuscript of Mardain 259/2: Study and English Translation*, June 2006, [http://www.baylorisr.org/wp-content/uploads/bahkou\\_monk.pdf](http://www.baylorisr.org/wp-content/uploads/bahkou_monk.pdf) [10 IV 2023].
- BAKHOU A., *The Monk Encounters the Prophet – the Story of the Encounter between Monk Bahirā and Muhammad as it is Recorded in the Syriac Manuscript of Mardin 259/2*, "Cultural and Religious Studies" 3, 2015, p. 349–357, <https://doi.org/10.17265/2328-2177/2015.06.006>
- BAUM W., WINKLER D.W., *The Church of the East. A Concise History*, London–New York 2003, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203423097>
- BORAS L., *A Prophet has appeared coming with the Saracens. The Non-Islamic Testimonies on the Prophet and the Islamic Conquest of Egypt in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries* (MA Thesis, Radboud University, Nijmegen 2017).
- BRZOZOWSKA Z.A., *Jeden z herezjarchów? Przedstawienia ikonograficzne Mahometa w rękopisie PHB, F.IV.151 w kontekście staroruskich narracji na jego temat*, "Vox Patrum" 38, 2018, p. 449–469, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.3216>

- BUNDY D.D., *Timotheos I*, [in:] *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage: Electronic Edition*, ed. S.P. BROCK, A.M. BUTTS, G.A. KIRAZ, L. VAN ROMPAY, <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Timotheos-I> [10 IV 2023].
- BUTTS A.M., *Theodoros bar Koni*, [in:] *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. S.P. BROCK, A.M. BUTTS, G.A. KIRAZ, L. VAN ROMPAY, Piscataway, New Jersey 2011, p. 405–406.
- CAMERON A., *Byzantines and Jews: Some Recent Work on Early Byzantium*, “Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies” 20, 1996, p. 249–274, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1996.20.1.249>
- CECOTA B., *Islam, Arabowie i wizerunek kalifów w przekazach Chronografii Teofanesa Wyznawcy*, Łódź 2022 [= Byzantina Lodziensia, 43].
- CECOTA B., *Islam, the Arabs and Umayyad Rulers according to Theophanes the Confessor’s Chronography*, “Studia Ceranea” 2, 2012, p. 97–111, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.02.09>
- CHABOT J.-B., *Littérature syriaque*, Paris 1934.
- Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. I, (600–900), ed. D. THOMAS, B. ROGGEMA, Leiden–Boston 2009.
- COOK M., *Mahomet*, trans. B.R. ZAGÓRSKI, Warszawa 1999.
- CRONE P., *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Princeton 1987.
- CRONE P., *Slaves on Horses. The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge 1980, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511563508>
- CRONE P., COOK M., *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977.
- CRONE P., HINDS M., *God’s Caliph. Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge 1986.
- CUCARELLA D.S., *Schadler, Peter, John of Damascus and Islam: Christian Heresiology and the Intellectual Background to Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations [review]*, “MIDÉO. Mélanges de l’Institut dominicain d’études orientales” 34, 2019, p. 390–394.
- DAGRON G., DÉROCHE V., *Juifs et chrétiens dans l’Orient du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, “Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherches d’histoire et civilisation byzantines” 11, 1991, p. 17–273.
- DÉROCHE V., *Polémique anti-judaïque et émergence de l’Islam (7<sup>e</sup>–8<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, “Revue des études byzantines” 57, 1999, p. 141–161, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rebyz.1999.1969>
- DONNER F.M., *La question du messianisme dans l’islam primitif*, “Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée” 91/94, 2000, p. 17–28, <https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.246>
- DONNER F.M., *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2010.
- FIĞLALI E.R., *The “Problem” of Abd-Allah Ibn-Saba*, “İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi” 5, 1982, p. 379–390.
- FISHER G., *Between Empires. Arabs, Romans and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2011 [= Oxford Classical Monographs].
- FLORI J., *L’islam et la fin des Temps. L’interprétation prophétique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*, Paris 2007.
- GRIFFITH S.H., *Chapter Ten of the Scholion: Theodore Bar Koni’s Apology for Christianity*, “Orientalia Christiana Periodica” 47, 1981, p. 158–188.
- GRIFFITH S.H., *Habib ibn Hidmah Abu Ra’itah, a Christian mutakallim of the First Abbasid Century*, “Oriens Christianus. Heft für die Kunde des christlichen Orients” 64, 1980, p. 161–201.
- GRIFFITH S.H., *Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth century*, “Jewish History” 3, 1988, p. 65–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01667349>

- GRIFFITH S.H., *Muhammad and the Monk Bahîrâ: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times*, "Oriens Christianus. Hefte für die Kunde des christlichen Orients" 79, 1995, p. 146–174.
- GRIFFITH S.H., *The Prophet Muhammad, his Scripture and his Message, according to the Christian Apologies in Arabic and Syriac from the first Abbasid Century*, [in:] S.H. GRIFFITH, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine*, Aldershot 2003, p. 99–146.
- GRODZKI M., *Panteon sceptyków. Przegląd współczesnych teorii naukowych poświęconych genezie islamu*, Warszawa 2017.
- GRODZKI M., *Yehuda D. Nevo – A Comprehensive Skeptical Theory on the Genesis of Islam*, "Rocznik Orientalistyczny" 71, 2018, p. 55–95.
- HARMAKAPUTRA H.A., *Muslim-Christian Debates in the Early 'Abbasid Period. The Cases of Timothy I and Theodore Abu Qurra*, "MIQOT. Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman" 38, 2014, p. 435–445, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v38i2.102>
- HURST T.R., *Letter 40 of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (727–823). A Edition and Translation* (MA Thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington 1981).
- JEFFREYS E., *The Image of the Arabs in Byzantine Literature*, [in:] *The 17<sup>th</sup> International Byzantine Congress at Dumbarton Oaks, Major Papers*, New York 1986, p. 305–323.
- KEATING S.T., *Defending the 'People of Truth' in the Early Islamic Period. The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'itah*, Leiden–Boston 2006 [= History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 4], <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004148017.i-378>
- KEATING S.T., *Revisiting the Charge of Tahrif. The Question of Supersessionism in Early Islam and the Qur'an*, [in:] *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam. Polemic and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. I.Ch. LEVY, R. GEORGE-TVRTKOVIĆ, D. DUCLOW, Leiden–Boston 2014 [= Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 183], p. 202–217.
- KISTER M.J., *The Massacre of the Banū Qurayza: A Re-Examination of a Tradition*, "Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam" 8, 1986, p. 61–96.
- KONINGSVELD VAN P.S., *The Apology of Al-Kindi*, [in:] *Religious Polemics in Context. Papers presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (LISOR) Held at Leiden, 27–28 April 2000*, ed. T. HETTEMA, Ch. KOOI, R. VAN GORCUM, Assen 2004, p. 69–92, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004495302\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004495302_009)
- LEWIS B., *Jews of Islam*, Westport, Connecticut 2002.
- LJAMAI A., *Ibn Hazm et la polémique islamo-chrétienne dans l'histoire de l'Islam*, Leiden 2003 [= Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World, 17], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004453579>
- LOWIN Sh.L., "A Prophet Like Moses"? *What Can We Know about the Early Jewish Responses to Muḥammad's Claims of Mosesness?*, "Hebrew Union College Annual" 90, 2019, p. 227–255, <https://doi.org/10.15650/hebruniocollannu.90.2019.0227>
- МАКСИМОВ Ю., *Prp. Feofan Ispovednik Sigrianskij ob islame*, "Богословский Вестник" / "Bogoslovskij Vestnik" 4, 2004, p. 312–335.
- MARSHALL D., *Muhammad in Contemporary Christian Theological Reflection*, "Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations" 24, 2013, p. 161–172, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2012.761405>
- MONTGOMERY WATT W., *The Condemnation of the Jews of Banū Qurayza. A Study of the Sources of the Sīra*, [in:] W. MONTGOMERY WATT, *Early Islam. Collected Articles*, Edinburgh 1990, p. 1–12.
- O'SULLIVAN Sh., *Anti-Jewish Polemic and Early Islam*, [in:] *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. D. THOMAS, Leiden–Boston 2007 [= History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 6], p. 49–68, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004155589.i-421.14>

- PASTEUR TARTAR G., *Dialogue islamo-chrétien sous le calife al-Mamun (813–834). Les épîtres d'al-Hashimi et d'al-Kindi*, Paris 1985.
- PEARSON J.D., *The Islamic World and the Latin East. William of Tripoli and his Syrian Context* (PhD Thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2018).
- PERLMANN M., *A Legendary Story of Kalb al-Ahbar's Conversion to Islam*, [in:] *Joshua Starr Memorial Volume*, New York 1953, p. 85–99.
- PERLMANN M., *Another Ka'b al-Ahbar Story*, "The Jewish Quarterly Review" 45, 1954, p. 48–58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1453146>
- PIERZYŃSKI A.P., *Christians and Jews: Historical and Theological Perspectives of their Relationship*, "Studia Oecumenica" 19, 2019, p. 329–348, <https://doi.org/10.25167/so.1087>
- PLISZKA D., *Wypełnienie bez zastępstwa: Matthew Levering o relacji Kościół–Izrael*, "Bieleńskie Studia Teologiczne" 3, 2017, p. 42–54.
- PYTLIK M., *Jews and Muslims in Cooperation – Lunch and Learn* (paper presented to the "Jews and Muslims. A Forgotten History of Coexistence" forum, Oakland University, 12 March 2015), <https://www.oakland.edu/Assets/Oakland/religiousstudies/files-and-documents/faculty-research/Pytlak,%20Michael%20-%20Jews%20&%20Muslims,%20A%20Forgotten%20History%20of%20Coexistence.pdf> [10 IV 2023].
- ROGGEMA B., *The Legend of Sergius Bahira. Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam*, Leiden 2009 [= History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 9], <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004167308.i-580>
- SCHANDLER P., *John of Damascus and Islam. Christian Heresiology and the Intellectual Background to Earliest Christian-Muslim Relations*, Leiden 2018 [= History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 34], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356054>
- SZILÁGYI K., *Muhammad and the Monk: The Making of the Christian Bahirā Legend*, "Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam" 34, 2008, p. 169–214.
- TEIPEN A., *Jews in Early Biographies of Muhammad. A Case Study in Shifting Muslim Understandings of Judaism*, "Journal of the American Academy of Religion" 88, 2020, p. 543–568, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfaa019>
- THOMSON R.W., *Armenian Variations on the Bahira Legend*, "Harvard Ukrainian Studies" 3/4, 1979/1980, p. 884–895.
- TOLAN J.V., *Réactions chrétiennes aux conquêtes musulmanes. Etude comparée des auteurs chrétiens de Syrie et d'Espagne*, "Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, X<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles" 44, 2001, p. 349–367, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cmmed.2001.2810>
- TURNER D., *The Trouble with the Trinity: The Context of a Slogan during the Reign of Constantine IV (668–685)*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 27, 2003, p. 68–119, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.2003.27.1.68>
- VRIES DE B., *On the Way to Bosra. Arab Settlement in South Syria before Islam – the Evidence from Written Sources*, [in:] *Hereux qui comme Ulysses a fait un beau voyage. Movements of People in Time and Space*, ed. B. DE VRIES, N. NAGUIB, Bergen 2010, p. 69–92.
- WARD S., *Muhammad Said: "You Are Only a Jew from the Jews of Sepphoris": Allegations of the Jewish Ancestry of Some Umayyads*, "Journal of Near Eastern Studies" 60, 2001, p. 31–42, <https://doi.org/10.1086/468884>
- WASSERSTROM S.M., *Between Muslim and Jew. The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam*, Princeton 1995, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400864133>

WOLIŃSKA T., *Elity chrześcijańskie wobec islamu (VII–X wiek)*, “Vox Patrum” 35, 2015, p. 530–567,  
<https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.3730>

WRIGHT W.A., *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1894.


**Błażej Cecota**

Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski  
ul. J. Słowackiego 114/118  
97-300 Piotrków Trybunalski, Polska/Poland  
[blazejcecota@wp.pl](mailto:blazejcecota@wp.pl)





Florin Curta (Gainesville)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9938-9703>

## GARUM OR GRAIN? CRIMEA AND THE PROVISIONING OF CONSTANTINOPLE (7<sup>TH</sup> TO 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

**Abstract.** Historians have relied for too long on written sources (the letters that Pope Martin I wrote from Cherson, as well as *De Administrando Imperio*) to assess the economic situation in the Crimea, especially in Cherson, during the so-called Dark Ages (7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries). Many still believe that that city could not have survived without shipments of grain from the outside, particularly from the lands along the southern coast of the Black Sea. Seals of Byzantine officials found in Cherson tell a different story, as they indicate commercial exchanges between the Crimea and Constantinople. If the peninsula participated in trade, something must have been offered in exchange for the goods coming from the Capital. The archaeological evidence strongly suggests that during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the hinterland of Cherson, as well as the Kerch Peninsula (eastern Crimea) witnessed rapid economic development, largely based on the cultivation of crops. Silos found on several settlement sites, both open and fortified, suggest a surplus, which was most likely commercialized. If so, the closest markets were across the Black Sea, to the south, primarily in Constantinople. Other commodities, such as wine transported in amphorae, traveled in the opposite direction, across the Sea of Azov and into the interior of Khazaria. In exchange, the peninsula received shipments of grain from the Capital, Cherson and the rest of the Crimean Peninsula in fact supplied Constantinople with food. Numerous vats for the production of fish sauce have been found in Cherson, and many were in operation before 900. A good deal of the garum served at tables in Constantinople between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century must have come from Cherson. The archaeological evidence therefore calls for a re-assessment of the economic situation in the Crimean Peninsula during the “Dark Ages”.

**Keywords:** Crimea, lead seals, crop cultivation, silos, cereal seeds, agricultural implements, amphorae, fishing industry

*And so God knows that, except from the boats which arrive from the lands of Romania – as those who live here call them, while referring to the lands of the Greeks as the Pontic parts – not once was I able to buy grain from that region, even for one third of a gold coin. So wrote Pope Martin I (649–655) in a letter sent in 655*



from Cherson in the Crimea<sup>1</sup>. The Russian historian Oleg Borodin has convincingly demonstrated that to the addressee of Pope Martin's fourth letter, the "lands of Romania" were those around Constantinople<sup>2</sup>. Many have interpreted the information in Pope Martin's letter as an indication that Cherson relied on imports, and not on its hinterland for agricultural supplies. Far from supplying Constantinople with food, Byzantine Crimea relied in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century on shipments of grain from the Capital, for *Cherson was the center of a grain deficit area on the north shore of the Black Sea*<sup>3</sup>. Historians rushed to point out that Pope Martin's report is supposedly confirmed three centuries later by that in *De Administrando Imperio*, according to which *if grain does not pass from Aminos and from Paphlagonia and the Boukellarioi and the flanks of the Armeniakoi, the Chersonites cannot live*<sup>4</sup>. Bracketed by those two sources, the economic situation of Cherson during the Dark Ages is hastily labeled as one of utter decline. Extrapolating back in time from the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, some have concluded that at any point between Pope Martin I and Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Amisos (modern-day Samsun, in Turkey) in Paphlagonia, the Boukellarioi region, as well as the theme of Armeniakon supplied Cherson with grain, without which the city could not exist<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, *there is no reason to doubt that such grain could also be slipped*

<sup>1</sup> Slightly adapted version of the translation of the *Fourth letter of Martin*, in *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs. The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, ed. et trans. B. NEIL, Turnhout 2006 [= SAA, 2], p. 225, 227. The letter survives in a 9<sup>th</sup>-century Latin translation from Greek by the papal librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius. According to B. NEIL, *From tristitia to gaudia. The Exile and Martyrdom of Pope Martin I*, [in:] *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity. Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*, ed. J. LEEMANS, Leuven–Paris–Walpole 2010, p. 184, Martin's complaints cannot be taken at face value, for they are mere variations on the literary *topos* of physical hardship most typical for the consolation genre going back to Ovid.

<sup>2</sup> О.Р. БОРОДИН, *Римский папа Мартин и его письма из Крыма (статья, перевод, комментарий)*, [in:] *Причерноморье в средние века. К XVIII Международному конгрессу византинистов*, ed. С.П. КАРПОВ, Москва 1991, p. 188. Borodin is right: according to the Greek *vita* of Pope Martin written at some point after 726 but surviving in a 10<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript from Patmos, he wrote to a friend in Constantinople ("Byzantion") to ask for a few things, such as grain, as nothing could be found in Cherson. Cf. S. ALBRECHT, *Quellen zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Krim*, Mainz 2012 [= MRGZ, 101], p. 153–154.

<sup>3</sup> J.L. TEALL, *The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330–1025*, DOP 13, 1959, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, 53, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= CFHB, 1; DOT, 1], p. 286–287. In case of rebellion in Cherson, imperial agents are to be sent to Paphlagonia *and the coast of the province of Boukellarioi* to prevent local merchants to cross the sea with cargoes of *grain or wine or any other needful commodity or merchandise*.

<sup>5</sup> L. ZAVAGNO, *The Byzantine City from Heraclius to the Fourth Crusade, 610–1204. Urban Life after Antiquity*, Cham 2021, p. 97 believes that a seal of a *dioiketes* of Amastris is an indication of *shipping of crops between Amastris and Crimea*. However, a *dioiketes* was a fiscal officer (and tax collector), who had nothing to do with shipment of any commodity, much less of crops.

to the capital<sup>6</sup>. Cherson could not have possibly offered anything valuable to that capital, for it supposedly *exported its salt fish and amphoras to the north, and the Crimean wine to Dalmatia and southwest Asia Minor*<sup>7</sup>.

Meanwhile, however, the material evidence tells a different story. Coins were struck in Cherson during the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, no doubt in response to the needs of cash on the local market<sup>8</sup>. Seals of *kommerkiarioi* are known from Cherson<sup>9</sup>. Those were state officials in charge with controlling and most likely taxing the trade, a clear indication that there was an interest in Constantinople in the trade going in the Crimea, if not also in the commodities involved in that trade. Two identical, 9<sup>th</sup>-century seals of a "count of Hieron" named Cosmas have been found in Cherson. He was in charge with the control of goods coming to the Straits from the Black Sea or returning to the Black Sea from Constantinople<sup>10</sup>. In other words, the seals were attached to some official documents issued by Cosmas to a merchant (or merchants) sailing to Cherson<sup>11</sup>. The seal of Paul, count of Abydos, which is also dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, may be interpreted in the same way<sup>12</sup>. The sigillographic evidence strongly suggests therefore the existence of commercial relations between the Crimea, particularly Cherson, and Constantinople<sup>13</sup>. However, that evidence cannot answers questions pertaining to the nature

<sup>6</sup> L. BRUBAKER, J. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850)*, Cambridge–New York 2011, p. 507.

<sup>7</sup> A.E. LAIOU, C. MORRISON, *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge–New York 2007, p. 84. There is no evidence of salted fish being exported anywhere north of Cherson, much less of Crimean wine in Dalmatia.

<sup>8</sup> М.М. ЧОРЕФ, *Монетное дело Херсона в первой половине VIII в.*, МАИАСК 2, 2010, p. 192–197; ИДЕМ, *К вопросу об атрибуции монограмм на гемисфолисах Херсона первой половине IX в.*, П.ИПК 3, 2010, p. 121–125.

<sup>9</sup> Н.П. ЛИХАЧЕВ, *Датированные византийские печати*, ИРАИМК 3, 1924, p. 175–176 and pl. X/8; И.В. СОКОЛОВА, *Византийские печати VI-первой половины IX в. из Херсонеса*, ВВ 52, 1991, p. 205–206; Н.А. АЛЕКСЕЕНКО, *Чиновники Балкано-малоазийского региона на моливдовулах Херсонского архива*, [in:] *Нумизматични и сфрагистични приноси към историята на западното Черноморие. Международна конференция, Варна, 12–15 септември 2001 г.*, ed. В. ЙОТОВ, И. ЛАЗАРЕНКО, Варна 2004 [= AMV, 2], p. 265–275. For 9<sup>th</sup>-century seals of *kommerkiarioi*, cf. N.A. ALEKSEENKO, *L'administration byzantine de Cherson. Catalogue des sceaux*, Paris 2012 [= OccM, 4], p. 51–53, 181–200.

<sup>10</sup> N.A. ALEKSEENKO, *Les relations entre Cherson et l'empire, d'après le témoignage des sceaux des archives de Cherson*, SBS 8, 2003, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup> Н.А. АЛЕКСЕЕНКО, *Моливдовулы адресантов Херсона VII–IX вв. (новые находки)*, ДХиае 1996, p. 124 fig. 4, 127–128; N.A. ALEKSEENKO, *Sfragistyka bizantyńska. Molibdobule Chersonu*, Poznań 2015, p. 93–94 and fig. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Н.А. АЛЕКСЕЕНКО, *Моливдовулы...*, p. 128–129; 124 fig. 5. By contrast, the seal of Niketas, imperial *spatharios* and *dioiketes* of Amastris (now Amasra, in Turkey) in Paphlagonia cannot be dated before the 10<sup>th</sup> century (N.A. ALEKSEENKO, *Sfragistyka...*, p. 96 and fig. 69).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. С.Б. СОРОЧАН, *О торгово-экономической политике Византии в Таврике VII–IX вв.*, [in:] *Проблемы археологии древнего и средневекового Крыма. Сборник научных трудов*,

of those commercial exchanges, especially what exactly was sent from Cherson to Constantinople. Could the ships entering the Straits from the north have transported Crimean grain for the provisioning of the capital?

I have recently suggested that after the fall of Egypt to the Arabs (642), Crimea became, together with Sicily, a new granary of the empire. The change is reflected in the shift of activity in the harbors of Constantinople. The Theodosian harbor of Yenikapı was abandoned, with new harbors gaining significance, such as Pro-sphorion and Neorion in the Golden Horn Bay, which opens towards the Black Sea<sup>14</sup>. While next to nothing is known about agriculture in 7<sup>th</sup>-century Crimea, the archaeological evidence for the following two centuries suggests both intensification and diversification. Particularly relevant is the situation in the Kerch Peninsula, where many rural settlements were reoccupied in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, with even more, new sites dated to the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. Typical for those settlements are silos, each of about 660 gallons (2.5 kl), located next to dwellings<sup>16</sup>. A very large silo – 3.7 m deep and 3.5 m in diameter – was found at Tiritake, on the southern side of modern Kerch<sup>17</sup>. That such silos were for storing grain results from the seeds of barley, rye and wheat found on another settlement site farther to the south, at Geroevs'ke<sup>18</sup>. That the crops in question were locally produced, and not brought from elsewhere results from the find of a hoe on that same site, a tool dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup>. It is possible that the grain produced in eastern

---

ed. Ю.М. МОГАРИЧЕВ, И.Н. ХРАПУНОВ, Симферополь 1995, p. 114–122.

<sup>14</sup> G. CSIKY, *Sinope in the Early Medieval Economy of the Black Sea Region (Questions and Problems)*, *Ats* 33, 2015, p. 330; F. CURTA, *The Long Sixth century in Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2021 [= ECEEMA, 72], p. 93 with n. 59.

<sup>15</sup> A.V. SAZANOV, *La campagne et les villages en Crimée à l'époque protobyzantine: chronologie et évolution*, [in:] *XX<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des études byzantines, Collège de France-Sorbonne, 19–25 août 2001. Pré-actes*, Paris 2001, p. 222.

<sup>16</sup> Л.Ю. ПОНОМАРЕВ, *Салтово-маяцкие поселения керченского полуострова (краткий обзор по археологическим данным)*, *Ха* 12, 2014, p. 145. For the 8<sup>th</sup>- to 9<sup>th</sup>-century settlements in the Kerch Peninsula, cf. ИДЕМ, *Хозяйственная деятельность населения салтовской культуры Керченского полуострова (краткий обзор археологических источников)*, *СМАК* 2, 2012, p. 67–79.

<sup>17</sup> В.Ф. ГАЙДУКЕВИЧ, *Раскопки Тиритаки в 1935–1940 гг.*, [in:] *Боспорские города*, ed. ИДЕМ, М.И. МАКСИМОВА, Москва 1952 [= МИА, 25], p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> А.В. ГАДЛО, *Раннесредневековое селище на берегу Керченского пролива (по материалам раскопок 1963 г.)*, *КСИА* 113, 1968, p. 83; Л.Ю. ПОНОМАРЕВ, *Салтово-маяцкие поселения...*, p. 147; А.И. АЙБАБИН, *На границе Византийской империи и Хазарского каганата. Конец VII–IX в.*, [in:] *История Крыма*, vol. I, ed. А.В. ЮРАСОВ, Москва 2019, p. 243.

<sup>19</sup> А.В. ГАДЛО, *Раскопки раннесредневекового селища у деревни Героевка*, *САрх* 1, 1969, p. 164 fig. 4/2. For silos in Geroevka 3, cf. В.Н. ЗИНЬКО, *Новые раннесредневековые памятники Восточного Крыма*, [in:] *Международная конференция “Византия и Крым”, Севастополь, 6–11 июня 1997 г. Тезисы докладов*, Симферополь 1997, p. 40–41; Л.Ю. ПОНОМАРЕВ, *Салтово-маяцкое поселение Героевка-3 на Керченском полуострове (по материалам раскопок А.В. Гадло 1963 г.)*, *ИАК* 1, 2014, p. 387–388 and 398 fig. 13/1. Most settlement features discovered between 2011 and 2015 across the Kerch Strait, in Gora Chirkova near Vinogradnyi, on the southeastern coast of the Taman' Peninsula, are also silos. Cf. А.А. СУПРЕНКОВ, В.Е. НАУМЕНКО, Л.Ю. ПОНОМАРЕВ, *Поселе-*

Crimea was shipped to Cherson, but if so, there is no way to find out whether it was shipped farther to Constantinople or, perhaps, retained for local consumption. Moreover, the archive of over 400 seals found in the harbor of Sugdaia (now Sudak), on the southeastern coast of the Peninsula shows that beginning with the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the town became a major trade center of eastern Crimea<sup>20</sup>. In other words, if it was at all transported to Constantinople, the grain from eastern Crimea may have been shipped from Sugdaia, not from Cherson.

However, there is good evidence of agricultural production in the hinterland of Cherson as well. Seeds of rye and soft wheat have been found on the 8<sup>th</sup>- to 9<sup>th</sup>-century settlement sites in Honcharne and Novobobrivs'ke, both to the east from Cherson, as well as at Rodinkove near Simferopol<sup>21</sup>. Wheat seeds are known from three different settlement features from the stronghold at Bakla (near Skalyste, in the district of Bakhchesarai), as well as from open settlements at Pampuk Kaia (near Holubinka, 6 miles east of Sevastopil') and Bazman (near Bakhchesarai)<sup>22</sup>. The wheat from Bakla has been identified as of three kinds – durum, common, and club wheat<sup>23</sup>. Both Bakla and Pampuk Kaia have produced evidence of rye and barley production, while at Kordon-Oba (near Kurortnoe) and Sudak, on the southeastern coast only millet was found<sup>24</sup>. The local production of those cereals is attested by such finds as the plowshare discovered in 1929 at Bakla and the sickles from Gornyi Kliuch (near Povorotne, less than 4 miles north of Sevastopil'), Honcharne, Peredove (north of the Chornorichyns'ke reservoir, southeast of Sevastopil'), and Tau Kipchak (now under the Balanovskoe reservoir, east of Simferopol)<sup>25</sup>.

---

ние VIII–X вв. Гора Чиркова 1 на Таманском полуострове: хозяйственные комплексы группы 2 (по материалам раскопок 2015 г.), ИАК 12, 2020, p. 223–231.

<sup>20</sup> Т.И. МАКАРОВА, А.И. АЙБАБИН, *Крым в VIII–IX веках. Хазарское господство*, [in:] *Крым, северо-восточное Причерноморье и Закавказье в эпоху средневековья. IV–XIII века*, ed. Т.И. МАКАРОВА, С.А. ПЛЕТНЕВА, Москва 2003, p. 58–59. For the seal archive discovered in Sudak, cf. Е.В. СТЕПАНОВА, *Судацкий архив печатей: предварительные выводы*, АДСВ 32, 2001, p. 97–108; ЕАДЕМ, *Новые находки из Судацкого архива печатей*, [in:] *Сурож, Сугдея, Солдая в истории и культуре Руси-Украины. Материалы научной конференции (16–22 сентября 2002 г.)*, ed. Н.М. КУКОВАЛЬСКАЯ, А.М. ФАРБЕЙ, В.И. ЗУБАР, Г.И. ИВАКИН, И.Е. МАРГОЛИНА, О.П. МОЦЯ, М.В. ПАНЧЕНКО, Киев–Судак 2002, p. 231–233; Е.В. СТЕПАНОВА, В.С. ШАНДРОВСКАЯ, *Еще раз о Судацком архиве печатей*, АДСВ 35, 2004, p. 295–297.

<sup>21</sup> С.Б. СОРОЧАН, *Византийский Херсон (вторая половина VI – первая половина X вв.)*. Очерки истории культуры, Москва 2013, p. 402.

<sup>22</sup> At Pampuk Kaia, the wheat was mixed with rye. А.Л. ЯКОВСОН, *Раннесредневековые сельские поселения Юго-Западной Таврики*, Ленинград 1970, p. 149.

<sup>23</sup> И.А. БАРАНОВ, *Таврика в эпоху раннего средневековья (салтово-маяцкая культура)*, Киев 1990, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*; А.И. АЙБАБИН, *На границе...*, p. 243.

<sup>25</sup> А.Л. ЯКОВСОН, *Раннесредневековые сельские поселения...*, p. 89 and 90 fig. 51/2; А.И. РОМАНЧУК, Л.А. ОМЕЛЬКОВА, *Средневековое поселение на левом берегу реки Бельбек*, АДСВ 16, 1979, p. 101 fig. 5/7; И.А. БАРАНОВ, *Таврика...*, p. 71 and 70 fig. 24/1. Sickles have also been found on sites on the southeastern coast of the peninsula, at Kordon Oba, Kastel' (near Alushta), and Tepsen' (near Koktebel).

Most other tools known from 8<sup>th</sup>- to 9<sup>th</sup>-century sites in the Crimea are mattocks and hoes<sup>26</sup>.

Three strongholds in the hinterland of Cherson – Eski Kermen (5.6 miles to the east from Sevastopol'), Kach Kal'on (7.4 miles to the east-north-east from Sevastopol'), and Bakla have produced abundant evidence of silos. Unlike silos in the open settlements of eastern Crimea, those discovered in the strongholds cluster in specific areas, many of them away from any dwellings. Carved into the rock, some of those silos have openings of 36 to 40 cm in diameter and were likely covered with lids. The body of each silo is quite large, between 340 and 430 gallons (1.3 to 1.6 kl)<sup>27</sup>. Some 200 silos have been found at Bakla, while in both Kach Kal'on and Eski Kermen there are fewer, but larger silos (with openings of 55 cm on average)<sup>28</sup>. Assuming that all silos were in use at the same time, up to 100 tons of grain, or more could be stored in any of those three strongholds in the hinterland of Cherson<sup>29</sup>. It is unlikely that this large quantity of grain was meant for local consumption alone. If the grain was produced locally, as it seems likely, then its storage may have been only temporary, until shipped to the market in nearby Cherson<sup>30</sup>. How much grain could produce an early medieval rural community in the Crimea? Based on archival materials pertaining to the agricultural production at Tau Kipchak in 1872 (when there were 18 households with 87 people, who cultivated 1,318 acres of land), the Crimean archaeologist Igor Baranov (1946–2001) has estimated an annual production in the early Middle Ages of about 6 tons per family. With yields no larger than 1 to 4.5, a rural settlement like Tau Kipchak could produce over 100 tons annually, a production that was most likely meant for the Byzantine market<sup>31</sup>. Based on such estimates, the rural settlements in southwestern and southern Crimea may have been able to produce 6,000 tons of grain annually by the late 7<sup>th</sup> century. A century later, however, the agricultural production of the peninsula doubled<sup>32</sup>. Even if the city of Cherson with an estimated population of no more than 10,000 absorbed half of that quantity of grain, there still was a substantial surplus, which must have been shipped to other markets, primarily that of Constantinople.

<sup>26</sup> А.Л. ЯКОБСОН, *Раннесредневековые сельские поселения*, p. 149 and 150 fig. 98/1; И.А. БАРАНОВ, *Таврика...*, p. 70 fig. 24/4–9.

<sup>27</sup> А. ГУСЬКОВ, *Атлас пещерных городов Крыма. Путешествие к строителям и обитателям пещер*, Харків 2007, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22, 32, 112.

<sup>29</sup> А.И. АЙВАНИН, *On Byzantium's Northern Border. The Rural Population of the Mountainous Crimea in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries*, [in:] *Les villages dans l'Empire byzantin, IV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. J. LEFORT, C. MORRISON, J.-P. SODINI, Paris 2005 [= RByz, 11], p. 420 and fig. 5; 421 fig. 6.

<sup>30</sup> С.Б. СОРОЧАН, *Византийский Херсон...*, p. 403–404.

<sup>31</sup> И.А. БАРАНОВ, *Таврика...*, p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> С.Б. СОРОЧАН, В.М. ЗУВАРЬ, Л.В. МАРЧЕНКО, *Жизнь и гибель Херсонеса*, Севастополь 2006, p. 215.

At Tau Kipchak, the intensive agriculture practiced from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards on the slopes towards the river Zui led to erosion and the change of the river's bed<sup>33</sup>. Some have therefore insisted upon the fact that the soil and climate conditions in the valleys of southwestern Crimea were not conducive for large-scale agriculture, being more appropriate for vineyards. Indeed, wine presses and vats multiplied in the region after ca. 700. There is evidence of wine production on most 8<sup>th</sup>- to 9<sup>th</sup>-century settlement sites in the valley of the river Bel'bek, immediately to the east from Cherson<sup>34</sup>. The wine industry stimulated the pottery production, particularly of transportation jars. As a matter of fact, most centers of pottery production in 8<sup>th</sup>- to 10<sup>th</sup>-century Crimea produced amphorae and no other types of vessels<sup>35</sup>. The conspicuous standardization of production was clearly designed to meet the demands of the growing production of wine<sup>36</sup>. Wine in large quantities was brought to Cherson, and then sold on the markets on the southern coast of the Black Sea, in exchange for grain<sup>37</sup>. However, judging from finds of amphorae, in which the Crimean wine was transported, large shipments moved in the opposite direction, across the Sea of Azov and beyond it, deep into Khazaria. That much results from the episode of the late 830s, when the spatharocandidate Petronas Kamateros, who was sent by Emperor Theophilus to Khazaria together with a team of Byzantine engineers, to build the fortress of Sarkel. According to Theophanes Continuatus, *once arrived at Cherson, Petronas brought up the long ships and left them on land; and embarking his forces on round boats, he crossed over to the Tanais, where he was to build the city for them*<sup>38</sup>. The “round boats” with which the Byzantines reached the delta of the river Don were most likely commercial ships that frequently moved between Cherson and Tanais, which was located in Khazar territory. To be sure, Crimean amphorae have been found at Tanais,

<sup>33</sup> И.А. БАРАНОВ, *Таврика...*, p. 73.

<sup>34</sup> A.I. ROMANČUK, *Chersonesos und sein ländliches Territorium im 8./9. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in Byzanz*, ed. H. KÖPSTEIN, F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1983 [= BBA, 51], p. 43. For wine production in the close environs of Cherson, cf. also А.Ю. АРЖАНОВ, *Виноделие в ближней округе раннесредневекового Херсона*, ХС 21, 2020, p. 108–133.

<sup>35</sup> For the Crimean Globular amphorae of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, cf. А.В. САЗАНОВ, *Глобулярные амфоры причерноморского типа (Crimean Globular Amphorae) и проблемы хронологии комплексов VIII–IX вв.*, [in:] *Труды VI (XXII) Всероссийского археологического съезда в Самаре*, vol. II, ed. А.П. ДУРУВЯНКО, Н.А. МАКАРОВ, О.Д. МОЧАЛОВ, Самара 2020, p. 266–268.

<sup>36</sup> A.I. ROMANČUK, *Studien zur Geschichte und Archäologie des byzantinischen Cherson*, Leiden–Boston 2005 [= CollP, 11], p. 115–118.

<sup>37</sup> А.И. РОМАНЧУК, *Город и деревня юго-западного Крыма в 8–9 вв.*, [in:] *XVI. internationaler Byzantinistenkongress. Akten. II*, vol. III, ed. W. HÖRANDNER, C. CUPANE, E. KISLINGER, Wien 1982 (= JÖB 32.3), p. 554.

<sup>38</sup> *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV*, III, 28, ed. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= CFHB.SBe, 53], p. 177. For the interpretation of the “round boats” as commercial ships, cf. S. ALBRECHT, *Quellen...*, p. 46.

as well as at Krymskii, 55 miles farther to the east-north-east<sup>39</sup>. They also appear elsewhere in the steppe to the east and southeast from the Tanais, in present-day Kalmykia and Adygia<sup>40</sup>. However, Crimean amphorae have been found much farther afield, in the forest-steppe region along the Middle Volga to the northeast, as well as the Middle Dnieper to the northwest<sup>41</sup>. The presence of those amphorae on settlement sites in the forest steppe belt is particularly important, because that was the main granary of Khazaria<sup>42</sup>. In other words, it is likely that at least part of the shipments of wine in amphorae that reached the Khazar lands was exchanged for the grain produced in the rural settlements of the forest-steppe region. If so, then a quantity of grain must have been available on the market of Cherson that was even greater than needed for local consumption. The surplus was probably re-exported to Constantinople.

Far from being “a center of a grain deficit area”, relying on shipments from the capital of the empire, early medieval Cherson may have well been a key supplier of Constantinople. However, the main city in the Crimea had a lot more to offer to the capital than just grain. In Late Antiquity, Chersonesus was a major center for the commercialization of salted fish and fish sauce (*garum*). Both were products of the fishing industry, which was likely responsible for the prosperity of the

<sup>39</sup> Л.Ю. НИДЗЕЛЬНИЦКАЯ, С.М. ИЛЬЯШЕНКО, *Раннесредневековые поселения на территории Танаиса*, [in:] *Средневековые древности Дона*, ed. Ю.К. ГУГУЕВ, Москва–Jerusalem 2007 [= МИАД, 2], p. 193–214; И.А. СКОРИКОВ, *Керамический комплекс Крымского городища на амфорном материале 2011 года*, [in:] *IX Международная археологическая конференция студентов и аспирантов “Проблемы археологии Восточной Европы” (материалы конференции)*, ed. Е.В. ВДОВЧЕНКО, Ростов-на-Дону 2014, p. 85–88. According to M. ŠEŠNOVÁ, *Silk on the Northern Border of Byzantium: Intentions, Possibilities, Findings*, Bsl 80.1–2, 2022, p. 101, finds of 9<sup>th</sup>-century Crimean pottery and amphorae in the lands to the east from the Sea of Azov indicate a segment of the Silk Road reaching Crimea. However, it remains unclear how ceramic finds can tell anything about the silk trade.

<sup>40</sup> А.В. ТАРАБАНОВ, *Поселения болгар на правом берегу Кубани*, [in:] *Древности Кубани и Черноморья*, ed. А.В. ПЬЯНКОВ, Н.Ф. ШЕВЧЕНКО, Краснодар 1993 [= StPC, 1], p. 115–122, 205–213; М.А. ОЧИР-ГОРЯЕВА, А.Г. СИТДИКОВ, Я.А. КИЯШКО, Т. НАГА, *К изучению памятника эпохи раннего средневековья Башанта-II*, ПАрх 4, 2016, p. 23–36. For the presence of Crimean amphorae in the steppe lands north of the Sea of Azov, cf. В.К. ГРИБ, *Доброе Поле – памятник раннесредневекового времени в северо-восточной части Донецкого края*, ДАЗ 18–19, 2014–2015, p. 286–300.

<sup>41</sup> Ю.В. БОЛТРИК, О.В. КОМАР, *Хазарский курган на правом берегу р. Молочной*, [in:] *Днепр-донское междуречье в эпоху раннего средневековья (сборник статей)*, ed. А.З. ВИННИКОВ, Воронеж 2005, p. 82–93; Н.А. ЛИФАНОВ, “Княжеский” курган на Самарской Луке: вопросы культурно-хронологической атрибуции, Э 25.1, 2017, p. 92–119; О.В. ПЕТРАУСКАС, *Волинцевский комплекс ранньослов’янського поселення Обухів 2*, Арх 1, 2019, p. 67–82.

<sup>42</sup> V.V. KOLODA, S.A. GORBANENKO, *Agriculture in the Forest-Steppe Region of Khazaria*, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= ECEEMA, 66]. For other Crimean imports in Khazaria, cf. also В.С. АКСЕНОВ, В.К. МИХЕЕВ, *Крымский импорт и хронология некоторых салтовских памятников верховий Северского Донца*, [in:] *Культуры евразийских степей второй половины тысячелетия н.э. (вопросы хронологии). Материалы II Международной археологической конференции 17–20 ноября 1997 г.*, ed. Д.А. СТАШЕНКОВ, А.Ф. КОЧКИНА, Л.В. КУЗНЕЦОВА, Самара 1998, p. 344–357.

city reflected in the building boom of the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>. The annual production of *garum*, which according to some calculations was worth about 7,000 gold coins, was geared towards the market in Constantinople and beyond<sup>44</sup>. There are no signs that the trade that boomed around 600 slowed down a century later. Nonetheless, because the word *garon* may be found only in lexica and in medical and similarly scientific texts, the Austrian historian Johannes Koder believed that between the early Byzantine period and the 11<sup>th</sup> century, *garum* was neither common, nor popular<sup>45</sup>. But the archaeological evidence sharply contradicts that conclusion. The flourishing fishing industry of late antique Chersonesus relied primarily on the biannual migration of large shoals of anchovies to the shallow coastal area in the north Black Sea region, as well as the Sea of Azov, into which the rivers Dnieper and Don pour fresh water. The production of fish sauce (*garum*) had two annual cycles, which depended upon the fishing seasons. During the 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> century, the fish-salting vats in Chersonesus were deep installations (as deep as 3 meters), but of relatively small capacity (between 157 and 189 barrels each). That those installations served for the production of *garum* (as opposed to salted fish) results from the bones of anchovies found on the bottom of many vats<sup>46</sup>. To fill a vat completely, one needed the catch of about 30 boats, each manned by two or three persons. Moreover, a single person needed 80 to 90 days of labor to fill a vat<sup>47</sup>. The distribution of vats in the city suggests that the fishing and fish salting industry was a family business. After a while, vats were backfilled to make room for new houses, but new vats were built elsewhere. In fact, fish-salting cisterns continued to be built in Cherson through the 10<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of careful stratigraphic observations, particularly of coins and artifacts in the filling of abandoned vats, it has been possible to sort out cisterns chronologically. For example, vat 91 was built anew in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and remained in operation for another century<sup>48</sup>. A little less than a quarter of all 101 vats known so far must have been in operation before 900<sup>49</sup>. However, it is important to remember that only about a third of ancient city of Chersonesus has been excavated; the number of vats in existence at any given moment may have

<sup>43</sup> F. CURTA, *The Long Sixth century...*, p. 82.

<sup>44</sup> С.Б. СОРОЧАН, *Византийский Херсон...*, p. 207.

<sup>45</sup> J. KODER, *Stew and Salted Meat – Opulent Normality in the Diet of the Every Day?*, [in:] *Eat, Drink and be Merry (Luke 12:19). Food and Wine in Byzantium. Papers of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies in Honour of Professor A.A.M. Bryer*, ed. L. BRUBAKER, K. LINARDOU, Aldershot–Burlington 2007, p. 59–72.

<sup>46</sup> F. CURTA, *The Long Sixth century...*, p. 82–83.

<sup>47</sup> А.И. РОМАНЧУК, *Studien...*, p. 106.

<sup>48</sup> А.И. РОМАНЧУК, *Новые материалы о времени строительства рыбозасолочных цистерн в Херсонесе*, АДСВ 9, 1973, p. 46.

<sup>49</sup> ИДЕМ, *План рыбозасолочных цистерн Херсонеса*, АДСВ 14, 1977, p. 20–26. For a larger percentage of early medieval vats (about a third of all 102 vats known so far), cf. А.И. РОМАНЧУК, *Studien...*, p. 109.



therefore been considerably larger. About six vats worked until the 8<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, while another seven were in use until the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>50</sup>. Several early medieval vats cluster in the immediate vicinity of the harbor, with others in the eastern part of the city. Throughout the early Middle Ages, Cherson was the center of the fishing industry, as no evidence exists that any fish-salting cisterns continued to be used in eastern Crimea, either at Kerch or at Tiritake<sup>51</sup>. A good deal of the *garum* served at tables in Constantinople between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century must therefore have been produced in Cherson<sup>52</sup>.

The northern region of the Black Sea is poorly represented in recent studies of the early medieval economy, as *wheat was massively bought in the Crimea* only in the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>53</sup>. The importance of archaeology for studying and reconstructing the economic life needs little emphasis in a region like the northern periphery of Byzantium, for which the written information is scarce and has led to wrong interpretations. The relations between the capital and Cherson have not yet received

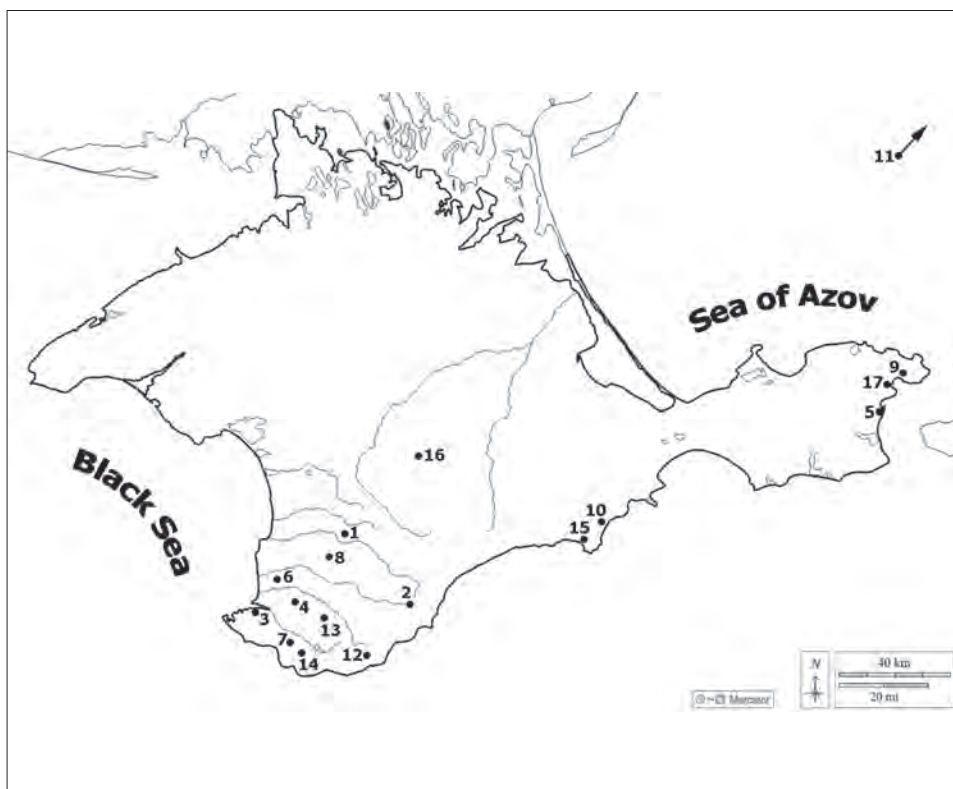
<sup>50</sup> M. ČECHOVÁ, *Fish Products and their Trade in Tauric Chersonesos/Byzantine Cherson. The Development of a Traditional Craft from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, [in:] *Detlefsen zum 100. Todestag. Ein Colloquium der Detlefsen-Gesellschaft Glückstadt*, ed. Chr. BOLDT, K.-J. LORENZEN-SCHMIDT, Borsfleth 2014, p. 231. С.Б. СОРОЧАН, *Византийский Херсон...*, p. 401 counts 10 vats for the 8<sup>th</sup> century. For 8<sup>th</sup>- to 9<sup>th</sup>-century vats, cf. also А.И. РОМАНЧУК, А.В. САЗАНОВ, Л.В. СЕДИКОВА, *Амфоры из комплексов византийского Херсона*, Екатеринбург 1995, p. 47; А.В. САЗАНОВ, *Города и поселения Северного Причерноморья ранневизантийского времени* (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Moscow, Moscow 1999), p. 20 with table II.

<sup>51</sup> S. ALBRECHT, *Cherson als Zentralort auf der südwestlichen Krim (6.–10. Jahrhundert)*, [in:] *Grenz Übergänge. Spätromisch, frühchristlich, frühbyzantinisch als Kategorien der historisch-archäologischen Forschung an der mittleren Donau. Akten des 27. internationalen Symposiums der Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im mittleren Donaauraum, Ruma, 4.–7.11.2015*, ed. I. BUGARSKI, O. HEINRICH-TAMÁSKA, V. IVANIŠEVIĆ, D. SYRBE, Remshalden 2016 [= FSM, 4], p. 355–362. For 6<sup>th</sup>- to 7<sup>th</sup>-century vats in Kerch and Tiritake, cf. В.Ю. МАРТИ, *Рыбозасолочные ванны Тиритаки*, [in:] *Археологические памятники Боспора и Херсонеса*, ed. С.А. ЖЕБЕЛЕВ, В.Ф. ГАЙДУКЕВИЧ, Москва–Ленинград 1941, p. 93–95; А.В. ЗИНЬКО, В.Н. ЗИНЬКО, *Вопросы топографии города Боспора в ранневизантийское время*, [in:] *Византия в контексте мировой культуры. Материалы конференции посвящённой памяти Алисы Владимировны Банк, 1906–1984*, ed. В.Н. ЗАЛЕСКАЯ, Е.В. СТЕПАНОВА, А.А. ЙЕРУСАЛИМСКАЯ, Ю.А. ПЯТНИЦКИЙ, В.С. ШАНДРОВСКАЯ, Санкт-Петербург 2017 [= ТГЭ, 89], p. 164–176; А.И. АЙБАБИН, *Усадьба рыбака в ранневизантийском Боспоре*, [in:] *Проблемы истории и археологии средневекового Крыма. Материалы международной научной конференции посвящённой 70-летию Александра Ильича Айбабина. Симферополь, 10–11 января 2019 г.*, ed. Е.А. ХАЙРЕДИНОВА, Симферополь 2019, p. 7–17.

<sup>52</sup> G. CSIKY, *Sinope...*, p. 326 mentions the production of fish sauce in Sinope during Late Antiquity, but provides no archaeological evidence.

<sup>53</sup> А.Е. LAIOU, С. MORRISON, *The Byzantine Economy...*, p. 204. There is no mention of Crimea in M.J. DECKER, *The Byzantine Dark Ages*, London–New York 2016. Nor does С. WICKHAM, *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800*, Oxford 2005 know anything about Cherson, while to M. MCCORMICK, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900*, Cambridge 2001, p. 507 only knows that the city is the terminal of the northern extension of sea lanes in the Mediterranean.

sufficient attention from archaeologists, except in one direction, from Constantinople to the Crimea<sup>54</sup>. The accumulation of numismatic and sigillographic evidence over the last few decades has considerably broadened the gamut of historical interpretation. Time is ripe to re-evaluate the contribution of the Crimean Peninsula to the economic history of the empire between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The center of a periphery without “Dark Ages”, Cherson was most likely one of the *bases from which the medieval economy would launch its progressive recovery in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century*<sup>55</sup>.



**Fig. 1.** The main sites mentioned in the text: 1 – Bakla; 2 – Bazman; 3 – Cherson; 4 – Eski Kermen; 5 – Geroevs’ke; 6 – Gornyi Kliuch; 7 – Honcharne; 8 – Kach Kal’on; 9 – Kerch; 10 – Kordon Oba; 11 – Krymskii; 12 – Novobobrivs’ke; 13 – Pampuk kaia; 14 – Rodinkove; 15 – Sudak; 16 – Tau Kipchak; 17 – Tiritake.

<sup>54</sup> According to L. ZAVAGNO, *The Byzantine City...*, p. 148, the economic vitality of Cherson during the 8<sup>th</sup> and early 9<sup>th</sup> century was geared toward the Khazars to the north [more] than to the Byzantines in the south.

<sup>55</sup> A.E. LAIOU, C. MORRISSON, *The Byzantine Economy...*, p. 42. The phrase “periphery without ‘Dark Ages’” as applied to Crimea, is from F. CURTA, *The Long Sixth century...*, p. 81–93.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV*, ed. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 53].
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1; *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 1].
- Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs. The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, ed. et trans. B. NEIL, Turnhout 2006 [= *Studia Antiqua Australiensia*, 2].

### Secondary Literature

- AIBABIN A.I., *On Byzantium's Northern Border. The Rural Population of the Mountainous Crimea in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries*, [in:] *Les villages dans l'Empire byzantin, IV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. J. LEFORT, C. MORRISSON, J.-P. SODINI, Paris 2005 [= *Réalités Byzantines*, 11], p. 415–424.
- AJBABIN A.I., *Na granice Vizantijskoj imperii i Chazarskogo kaganata. Konec VII–IX v.*, [in:] *Istoriia Kryma*, vol. I, ed. A.V. IURASOV, Moskva 2019, p. 236–265.
- AJBABIN A.I., *Usađba rybaka v rannevizantijskom Bospore*, [in:] *Problemy istorii i archeologii srednevekovogo Kryma. Materialy meždunarodnoj naučnoj konferencii posviaščennoj 70-letiiu Aleksandra Il'iča Ajbabina. Simferopol', 10–11 ianvaria 2019 g.*, ed. E.A. CHAJREDINOVA, Simferopol' 2019, p. 7–17.
- AKSENOV V.S., MICHEEV V.K., *Krymskij import i chronologija nekotorych saltovskich pamiatnikov verchovij Severskogo Donca*, [in:] *Kul'tury evrazijskich stepej vtoroj poloviny I tysiačletija n.e. (voprosy chronologij). Materialy II Meždunarodnoj arkheologičeskoj konferencii, 17–20 nojabrja 1997 g.*, ed. D.A. STAŠENKOV, A.F. KOČKINA, L.V. KUZNECOVA, Samara 1998, p. 344–357.
- ALBRECHT S., *Cherson als Zentralort auf der südwestlichen Krim (6.–10. Jahrhundert)*, [in:] *Grenz Übergänge. Spätromisch, frühchristlich, frühbyzantinisch als Kategorien der historisch-archäologischen Forschung an der mittleren Donau. Akten des 27. internationalen Symposiums der Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im mittleren Donaunraum, Ruma, 4.–7.11.2015*, ed. I. BUGARSKI, O. HEINRICH-TAMÁSKA, V. IVANIŠEVIĆ, D. SYRBE, Remshalden 2016 [= *Forschungen zu Spätantike und Mittelalter*, 4], p. 355–384.
- ALBRECHT S., *Quellen zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Krim*, Mainz 2012 [= *Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, 101].
- ALEKSEENKO N.A., *Činovniki Balkano-maloazijskogo regiona na molivdovolach Chersonskogo archiva*, [in:] *Numizmatični i sfragistični prinosi kām istoriati na zapadnoto Černomorie. Meždunarodna konferencija, Varna, 12–15 septemvri 2001 g.*, ed. V. JOTOV, I. LAZARENKO, Varna 2004 [= *Acta Musei Varnensis*, 2], p. 265–275.
- ALEKSEENKO N.A., *L'administration byzantine de Cherson. Catalogue des sceaux*, Paris 2012 [= *Occasional Monographs*, 4].
- ALEKSEENKO N.A., *Les relations entre Cherson et l'empire, d'après le témoignage des sceaux des archives de Cherson*, "Studies in Byzantine Sigillography" 8, 2003, p. 75–83, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110960082.75>

- ALEKSEENKO N.A., *Molivdovuly adressantov Chersona VII–IX vv. (novye nachodki)*, "Древности" / "Drevnosti" 1996, p. 122–133.
- ALEKSEENKO N.A., *Sfragistyka bizantyńska. Molibdobule Chersonu*, Poznań 2015.
- ARŽANOV A.Iu., *Vinodelie v bližnej okruge rannesrednekovogo Chersona*, "Херсонесский сборник" / "Chersonesskij sbornik" 21, 2020, p. 108–133.
- BARANOV I.A., *Tavrika v epochu rannego srednekov'ia (saltovo-maiackaja kul'tura)*, Kiev 1990.
- BOLTRIK Iu.V., KOMAR O.V., *Chazarskij kurgan na pravom beregu r. Moločnoj*, [in:] *Dnepro-donskoe meždureč'e v epochu rannego srednekov'ia (sbornik statej)*, ed. A.Z. VINNIKOV, Voronež 2005, p. 82–93.
- BORODIN O.R., *Rimskii papa Martin I i ego pisma iz Kryma (stat'ia, perevod, kommentarij)*, [in:] *Pričernomor'e v srednie veka. K XVIII Meždunarodnomu kongressu vizantinistov*, ed. S.P. KARPOV, Moskva 1991, p. 173–190.
- BRUBAKER L., HALDON J., *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850)*, Cambridge–New York 2011.
- ČESNOVÁ M., *Fish Products and their Trade in Tauric Chersonesos/Byzantine Cherson. The Development of a Traditional Craft from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, [in:] *Detlefsen zum 100. Todestag. Ein Colloquium der Detlefsen-Gesellschaft Glückstadt*, ed. Chr. BOLDT, K.-J. LORENZEN-SCHMIDT, Borsfleth 2014, p. 229–236.
- ČESNOVÁ M., *Silk on the Northern Border of Byzantium: Intentions, Possibilities, Findings*, "Byzantinoslavica" 80.1–2, 2022, p. 88–107.
- СНОРЕФ М.М., *К вопросу об атрибуции монограмм на гемифолисах Чersona первой половины IX в.*, "Причерноморье. История, политика, культура" / "Pričernomor'e. Istoriiia, politika, kul'tura" 3, 2010, p. 121–125.
- СНОРЕФ М.М., *Monetnoe delo Khersona v pervoj polovine VIII v.*, "Материалы по археологии и истории античного и средневекового Крыма" / "Materialy po arkheologii i istorii antičnogo i srednekovnogo Kryma" 2, 2010, p. 192–197.
- СІКІУ G., *Sinope in the Early Medieval Economy of the Black Sea Region (Questions and Problems)*, "Antaeus" 33, 2015, p. 315–345.
- CURTA F., *The Long Sixth century in Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2021 [= East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 72], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004456983>
- DECKER M.J., *The Byzantine Dark Ages*, London–New York 2016.
- GADLO A.V., *Rannesrednekovoe selišče na beregu Kerčenskogo proliva (po materialam raskopok 1963 g.)*, "Краткие сообщения Института Археологии Академии наук СССР" / "Kratkie soobščeniia Instituta Archeologij Akademii Nauk SSSR" 113, 1968, p. 78–84.
- GADLO A.V., *Raskopki rannesrednekovogo selišča u derevni Geroevka*, "Советская археология" / "Sovetskaja Archeologija" 1, 1969, p. 160–168.
- ГАЙДУКЕВИЧ V.F., *Raskopki Tiritaki v 1935–1940 gg.*, [in:] *Bosporskije goroda*, ed. V.F. ГАЙДУКЕВИЧ, М.И. МАКСИМОВА, Moskva 1952 [= Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР / Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR, 25], p. 15–134.
- ГРИВ V.K., *Dobroe Pole – pamiatnik rannesrednekovogo vremeni v severo-vostočnoj časti Doneckogo krjaža*, "Донецкий археологичний збірник" / "Doneckij archeologichnji zbirnyk" 18–19, 2014–2015, p. 286–300.
- GUS'KOV A., *Atlas peščernych gorodov Kryma. Putešestvie k stroiteliam i obitateliam peščer*, Char'kiv 2007.
- ЯКОВСОН A.L., *Rannesrednekovyye sel'skie poselenija Iugo-Zapadnoi Tavriki*, Leningrad 1970.

- KODER J., *Stew and Salted Meat – Opulent Normality in the Diet of the Every Day?*, [in:] *Eat, Drink and be Merry (Luke 12:19). Food and Wine in Byzantium. Papers of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies in Honour of Professor A.A.M. Bryer*, ed. L. BRUBAKER, K. LINARDOU, Aldershot–Burlington 2007, p. 59–72.
- KOLODA V.V., GORBANENKO S.A., *Agriculture in the Forest-Steppe Region of Khazaria*, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 66], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004429574>
- LAIUO A.E., MORRISSON C., *The Byzantine Economy*, Cambridge–New York 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511816727>
- ЛИНАЧЕВ N.P., *Datirovannye vizantijskie pečati*, “Известия Российской Академии истории материальной культуры” / “Izvestija Rossijskoj Akademii istorii material’noi kul’tury” 3, 1924, p. 153–224.
- LIFANOV N.A., “Knjažeskij” kurgan na Samarskoj Luke: voprosy kul’turno-chronologičeskoj atribucii, “Эпохи” / “Epokhi” 25.1, 2017, p. 92–119.
- МАКАРОВА Т.И., АЖБАВИН А.И., *Крым в VIII–IX веках. Чазарское господство*, [in:] *Крым, северо-восточное Причерноморье и Закавказье в эпоху средневековья, IV–XIII века*, ed. Т.И. МАКАРОВА, С.А. ПЛЕТНЕВА, Москва 2003, p. 53–67.
- MARTI V.IU., *Rybozasoločnye vannы Tiritaki*, [in:] *Archeologičeskie pamiatniki Bospora i Chersonesa*, ed. S.A. ŽEBELEV, V.F. GAJDUKEVIČ, Moskva–Leningrad 1941, p. 93–95.
- MCCORMICK M., *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900*, Cambridge 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107050693>
- NEIL B., *From tristia to gaudia. The Exile and Martyrdom of Pope Martin I*, [in:] *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity. Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*, ed. J. LEEMANS, Leuven–Paris–Walpole 2010, p. 179–194.
- NIDZEL’NICKAJA L.IU., IL’JASHENKO S.M., *Rannesrednevekovye poselenie na territorij Tanaisa*, [in:] *Srednevekovye drevnosti Dona*, ed. Iu.K. GUGUEV, Moskva–Jerusalem 2007 [= *Материалы и исследования по археологии Дона / Materialy i issledovanija po archeologij Dona*, 2], p. 193–214.
- OČIR-GORIAEVA M.A., SITDIKOV A.G., КИЯШКО Ja.A., NAGA T., *K izučeniju pamiatnika epochi ranego srednevekov’ia Bašanta-II*, “Поволжская археология” / “Povolžskaja archeologija” 4, 2016, p. 23–36.
- PETRAUSKAS A.V., *Volyncevs’kij kompleks rann’oslov’jans’kogo poselenija Obukhiv 2*, “Археология” / “Archeologija” 1, 2019, p. 67–82.
- PONOMAREV L.IU., *Choziajstvennaia deiatel’nost’ naselenija saltovskoj kul’tury Kerčenskogo poluostrova (kratkij obzor archeologičeskich istočnikov)*, “Салтово-маяцька археологічна культура: проблеми та дослідження” / “Saltovo-maiac’ka archeologična kul’tura: problemy ta doslidžennia” 2, 2012, p. 67–79.
- PONOMAREV L.IU., *Saltovo-maiackie poselenija kerčenskogo poluostrova (kratkij obzor po archeologičeskim dannym)*, “Хазарский альманах” / “Chazarskij al’manach” 12, 2014, p. 135–159.
- PONOMAREV L.IU., *Saltovo-maiackoe poselenie Geroevka-3 na Kerčenskom poluostrove (po materialam raskopok A.V. Gadlo 1963 g.)*, “История и археология Крыма” / “Istorija i archeologija Kryma” 1, 2014, p. 376–399.
- ROMANČUK A.I., *Chersonesos und sein ländliches Territorium im 8./9. Jahrhundert*, [in:] *Studien zum 8. und 9. Jahrhundert in Byzanz*, ed. H. KÖPSTEIN, F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1983 [= *Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten*, 51], p. 35–45, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112651421-004>

- ROMANČUK A.I., *Gorod i derevnia iugo-zapadnogo Kryma v 8–9 vv.*, [in:] XVI. internationaler Byzantinistenkongress. Akten. II, vol. III, ed. W. HÖRANDNER, C. CUPANE, E. KISLINGER, Wien 1982 (= “Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik” 32.3), p. 549–559.
- ROMANČUK A.I., *Novye materialy o vremeni stroitel'stva rybozasoločnykh cistern v Chersonese*, “Античная древность и средние века” / “Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka” 9, 1973, p. 45–53.
- ROMANČUK A.I., *Plan rybozasoločnykh cistern Chersonesa*, “Античная древность и средние века” / “Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka” 14, 1977, p. 18–26.
- ROMANČUK A.I., *Studien zur Geschichte und Archäologie des byzantinischen Cherson*, Leiden–Boston 2005 [= Colloquia Pontica, 11], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047404682>
- ROMANČUK A.I., OMEĽKOVA L.A., *Srednevekovoe poselenie na levom beregu reki Bel'bek*, “Античная древность и средние века” / “Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka” 16, 1979, p. 94–104.
- ROMANČUK A.I., SAZANOV A.V., SEDIKOVA L.V., *Amfory iz kompleksov vizantijskogo Chersona*, Ekaterinburg 1995.
- SAZANOV A.V., *Globuliarnye amfory pričernomorskogo tipa (Crimean Globular Amphorae) i problemu chronologij kompleksov VIII–IX vv.*, [in:] Trudy VI (XXII) Vserossijskogo archeologičeskogo s'ezda v Samare, vol. II, ed. A.P. DEREVIANKO, N.A. MALAROV, O.D. MOČALOV, Samara 2020, p. 266–268.
- SAZANOV A.V., *Goroda i poselenija Severnogo Pričernomor'ja rannevizantijskogo vremeni* (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Moscow, Moscow 1999).
- SAZANOV A.V., *La campagne et les villages en Crimée à l'époque protobyzantine: chronologie et évolution*, [in:] XX<sup>e</sup> Congrès international des études byzantines, Collège de France-Sorbonne, 19–25 août 2001. Pré-actes, Paris 2001, p. 222.
- SKORIKOV I.A., *Keramičeskij kompleks Krymskogo gorodišča na amfornom materiale 2011 goda*, [in:] IX Meždunarodnaja archeologičeskaja konferencija studentov i aspirantov “Problemy archeologii Vostočnoj Evropy” (materialy konferencii), ed. E.V. VDOVČENKOV, Rostov-na-Donu 2014, p. 85–88.
- SOKOLOVA I.V., *Vizantijskie pečati VI-pervoj poloviny IX v. iz Chersonesa*, “Византийский временник” / “Vizantijskij Vremennik” 52, 1991, p. 201–213.
- SOROČAN S.B., *O torгово-ekonomičeskoj politike Vizantij v Tavrike VII–IX vv.*, [in:] Problemy archeologii drevnego i srednevekovogo Kryma. Sbornik naučnykh trudov, ed. Iu.M. MOGARČEV, I.N. KHRAPUNOV, Simferopol' 1995, p. 114–122.
- SOROČAN S.B., *Vizantijskij Cherson (vtoraja polovina VI-pervaja polovina X vv.)*. Očerki istorii i kul'tury, Moskva 2013.
- SOROČAN S.B., ZUBAR' V.M., MARČENKO L.V., *Žizn' i gibel' Chersonesa*, Sevastopol' 2006.
- STEPANOVA E.V., *Novye nachodki iz Sudakskogo archiva pečatej*, [in:] Surož, Sugdeja, Soldajja v istorii i kul'ture Rusi-Ukrainy. Materialy naučnoj konferencii (16–22 sentiabrja 2002 g.), ed. N.M. KUKOVAĽSKAJA, A.M. FARBEJ, V.I. ZUBAR', G.Iu. IVAKIN, I.E. MARGOLINA, O.P. MOTŠIA, M.V. PANČENKO, Kiev–Sudak 2002, p. 231–233.
- STEPANOVA E.V., *Sudakskij archiv pečatej: predvaritel'nye vyvody*, “Античная древность и средние века” / “Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka” 32, 2001, p. 97–108.
- STEPANOVA E.V., ŠANDROVSKAJA V.S., *Esšče raz o Sudakskom archive pečatej*, “Античная древность и средние века” / “Antičnaja drevnost' i srednie veka” 35, 2004, p. 295–297.
- SUPRENKOV A.A., NAUMENKO V.E., PONOMAREV L.Iu., *Poselenie VIII–X vv. Gora Ćirkova 1 na Tamanskom poluostrove: choziajstvennye komplekсы группы 2 (po materialam raskopok 2015 g.)*, “История и археология Крыма” / “Istorija i archeologija Kryma” 12, 2020, p. 221–268.


- TARABANOV A.V., *Poselenija bolgar na pravoberežje Kubani*, [in:] *Drevnosti Kubani i Černomor'ja*, ed. A.V. P'IANKOV, N.F. ŠEVČENKO, Krasnodar 1993 [= *Studia Pontocausica*, 1], p. 115–122.
- TEALL J.L., *The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330–1025*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 13, 1959, p. 87–139, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291130>
- WICKHAM C., *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800*, Oxford 2005, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199264490.001.0001>
- ZAVAGNO L., *The Byzantine City from Heraclius to the Fourth Crusade, 610–1204. Urban Life after Antiquity*, Cham 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84307-6>
- ZIN'KO V.N., *Novye rannesrednekovye pamiatniki Vostočnogo Kryma*, [in:] *Meždunarodnaja konferencija "Vizantija i Krym"*, Sevastopol', 6–11 iunja 1997 g. *Tezisy dokladov*, Simferopol' 1997, p. 40–41.
- ZIN'KO A.V., ZIN'KO V.N., *Voprosy topografii goroda Bospora v rannevizantijskoe vremja*, [in:] *Vizantija v kontekste mirovoj kul'tury. Materialy konferencii, posviaščennoj pamiaty Alisy Vladimirovny Bank, 1906–1984*, ed. V.N. ZALESSKAJA, E.V. STEPANOVA, A.A. JERUSALIMSKAJA, Ju.A. P'JATNICKIJ, V.S. ŠANDROVSKAJA, Sankt-Peterburg 2017 [= *Труды Государственного Эрмитажа / Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*, 89], p. 164–176.

**Florin Curta**

University of Florida  
Department of History  
202 Flint Hall, P.O. Box 117320  
Gainesville, FL 32611-7320  
The United States of America  
[fcurta@ufl.edu](mailto:fcurta@ufl.edu)



Ion-Mihai Felea (Iași)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3223-8446>

## TRANSLATING THE SLAVONIC PRESENT PARTICIPLES IN THE EARLY ROMANIAN PSALTERS (16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)\*

**Abstract.** It is often said that early Romanian biblical translations from Church Slavonic follow the source texts slavishly. This is believed to be especially true about the 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian Psalters, a group of seven texts (both printed and hand-copied) descending from a single translation. Indeed, these texts stay close to their Church Slavonic originals in topic, lexical content, and orthographical rules. However, we aim to describe how the 16<sup>th</sup> century translators and redactors dealt with Church Slavonic structures that could not be easily adapted into Romanian by means of formal equivalence. The Slavonic present participle, which appears plenty in the Slavonic Psalter, was chosen as litmus test. While theoretically having a formal correspondent in Old Romanian (the gerund), the Slavonic present participle has a range of uses and meanings that the Old Romanian gerund lacks. Thus, Romanian scribes must depart from the comfort of formal equivalence that calques and loans provide and choose the translation that convey meaning. The dynamic equivalence is obtained by selecting different solutions: gerunds, adjectives, objects and, most often, clauses, especially relative ones. Rendering participles with clauses (i.e. adjectives with verbs) forces the translator to make decisions going beyond the Slavonic participle itself. The analysis shows a tension between betraying the Slavonic text as little as possible and rendering it to the best of the redactor's ability.

**Keywords:** Psalter, Present Participle, Church Slavonic, Old Romanian, 16<sup>th</sup> century, translation

### 1. Introduction

Our study focuses on the translation of Slavonic present participles in the early Romanian versions of the Psalter: the “Hurmuzaki” Psalter (c. 1500)<sup>1</sup>,

\* This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS/CCCDI – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-2939 (*Re-evaluating the Sixteenth Century Romanian Psalters. Aligned Corpus and Comparative Studies*), within PNCDI III. We would also like to express our gratitude to Vladislav Knoll and to reviewers for carefully reading the article and for their most useful input.

<sup>1</sup> “*Hurmuzaki*” Psalter, Library of the Romanian Academy, București (cetera: BAR), Ms. Rom. 3077, [in:] *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki. Studiu filologic, studiu lingvistic* [Hurmuzaki Psalter. Philological Study, Linguistic Study], vol. I, ed. I. GHEȚIE, M. TEODORESCU, București 2005, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-rom-3077> [14 IV 2023] (cetera: PH). Al. MAREȘ, *Considerații pe marginea*



the Psalter from Voroneț (c. 1551–1558)<sup>2</sup>, “Scheian” Psalter (c. 1573–1578)<sup>3</sup>, the Slavonic-Romanian Psalter from 1577<sup>4</sup>, Șerban Coresi’s Slavonic-Romanian Psalter (c. 1589)<sup>5</sup>; of these, the first three are manuscripts, and the last two are printed<sup>6</sup>. The PC and Ps70 Psalters were not included in the study since their text is too close to Ps77 (see note 4). For comparison, we have also included the corresponding passages from the Old Testament translated from Church Slavonic<sup>7</sup> by (presumably) Daniil Panoneanul<sup>8</sup> in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*datării Psaltirii Hurmuzaki* [Considerations on Dating the Hurmuzaki Psalter], LR 4–6, 2000, p. 682–683, based on more extensive research in Venetian archives, considers that the text could have been written between 1491 and 1516. Other authors propose similar dates (P.P. PANAITESCU, *Începuturile și biruința scrisului în limba română* [Beginnings and Triumph of the Romanian Writing], București 1965, p. 75) or avoid expressing an opinion in this respect, hoping that future research will establish the exact year when the Hurmuzaki Psalter was copied (*Psaltirea Hurmuzaki. Studiu filologic...*, p. 19).

<sup>2</sup> *Psaltirea Voronețeană*, BAR, Ms. Rom. 693, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrise/item/ms-rom-693> [14 IV 2023] (cetera: PV). For the dating, cf. AL. MAREȘ, *Datarea Psaltirilor Scheiană și Voronețeană* [Dating the Scheian and Voroneț Psalters], LR 33.3, 1984, p. 198; I. GHEȚIE, AL. MAREȘ, *De când se scrie românește* [The Beginnings of the Romanian Writing], București 2001, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Psaltirea Scheiană*, BAR, Ms. Rom. 449, [in:] *Psaltirea Scheiană (1482)*, Ms. 449 BAR, vol. I, *Textul în facsimile și transcriere, cu variante din Coresi (1577)* [Scheian Psalter. Ms. 449 BAR, vol. I, Facsimiles and Transcription, with Variants from Coresi (1577)], ed. I. BIANU, București 1889, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrise/item/ms-rom-44> [14 IV 2023] (cetera: PS). For the dating, cf. AL. MAREȘ, *Datarea Psaltirilor...*, p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> *Psaltirea slavo-română de la 1577*, BAR, I–630858 (cetera: Ps77), printed by deacon Coresi (in: *Coresi. Psaltirea slavo-română (1577) în comparație cu psaltirile coresiene din 1570 și 1589* [Coresi. The Slavonic-Romanian Psalter (1577) Compared to the Coresi’s Psalters from 1570 and 1589], ed. S. ТОМА, București 1976). The Romanian text is almost identical to that of the *Romanian Psalter* of 1570, BAR, I–630855 (cetera: Ps70), as shown in AL. MAREȘ, *Filiația psaltirilor românești din secolul al XVI-lea* [The Filiation of Romanian Psalters in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century], [in:] *Cele mai vechi texte românești. Contribuții filologice și lingvistice*, ed. I. GHEȚIE, București 1982, p. 209; it was copied in Moldavia in a manuscript called the “*Ciobanu*” Psalter, BAR, Ms. Rom. 3465, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrise/item/ms-rom-3465> [14 IV 2023] (cetera: PC), dated between 1573 and 1585; cf. AL. MAREȘ, *O nouă psaltire slavo-română manuscrisă din secolul al XVI-lea* [A New Slavonic-Romanian Handwritten Psalter from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century], [in:] *Studii de limbă literară și filologie*, vol. II, București 1972, p. 267–268.

<sup>5</sup> *Psaltirea slavo română de la 1589*, BAR, II–630844 (cetera: Ps89), printed by deacon Coresi’s son, it is based on Ps77, yet it contains numerous changes in both the Slavonic and Romanian texts, cf. AL. MAREȘ, *Filiația...*, p. 209.

<sup>6</sup> In analyzing the Romanian material, we benefited greatly from the transcriptions provided by the *Re-evaluating the Sixteenth Century Romanian Psalters. Aligned Corpus and Comparative Studies* Project, funded under PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-2939 | UEFISCD (cetera: roPsalt). roPsalt is an ongoing project aiming to create a digital corpus of the early Romanian Psalters and study them in a systematic manner in regard to their content, sources, interaction and context of appearance. The corpus will be ready for public access in January 2024 on the following internet address: <https://scriptadacoromanica.ro/bin/view/roPsalt/> [26 VII 2023]. Other results of the project (articles, conferences) can be found there as well.

<sup>7</sup> Namely after the *Ostrog Bible* of 1581–1582, [in:] *Острозька Библия*, ed. P. ТУРКОНЯК, Львів 2006 (cetera: Ost).

<sup>8</sup> N.A. URSU, *Activitatea literară necunoscută a lui Daniil Andrean Panoneanul, traducătorul “Îndreptării Legii” (Târgoviște, 1652)*. V [Unknown Literary Activity of Daniil Andrean Panoneanul,

Contemporary researchers tend to believe that all the 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian versions of the Psalter derive from a single translation made from Slavonic at an unknown date<sup>9</sup>. PH, the earliest of these, contains numerous readings pointing to pre-athonite redactions of the Slavonic Psalter<sup>10</sup>, especially to the *Belgrade Psalter*<sup>11</sup>. It is not clear whether the PH is a modified version of the original Romanian translation or its direct descendant<sup>12</sup>. A thorough revision at a yet unknown date<sup>13</sup> removed many of the features of the pre-athonite version, using as source text one or more Slavonic Psalters from the Athonite redaction, i.e. texts whose content had undergone rigorous correction in the 14<sup>th</sup> century according to the Greek version. One of the Athonite Slavonic Psalters used in the revision was a manuscript related to the *Oxford Psalter*<sup>14</sup>. Ps89, the last surviving 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian Psalter, was subsequently further revised according to texts not yet precisely identified<sup>15</sup>.

---

the Translator of “Îndreptarea Legii” (Târgoviște, 1652). V], SCL 54.1–2, 2003, p. 189 points out that numerous linguistic features common to *Îndreptarea Legii* (a collection of laws) and the Old Testament in Ms. 4389 constitute indubitable evidence that the translation of the Old Testament was done by Daniil Panoneanul. The Old Testament he refers to is contained in the Ms. Rom. 4389, BAR (cetera: Pan), <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrise/item/biblia> [14 IV 2023].

<sup>9</sup> Al. MAREȘ, *Filiația...*, p. 240–241.

<sup>10</sup> On the classification of the Slavonic Psalters, cf. C.M. MACROBERT, *The Textual Tradition of the Church Slavonic Psalter up to the Fifteenth Century*, [in:] *Interpretation of the Bible. The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed. J. KRAŠOVEC, Ljubljana–Sheffield 1998, p. 928.

<sup>11</sup> Manuscript from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, a collated version (cetera: Bel) provided by the roPsalt project was used; its fragments are preserved in various locations (C.M. MACROBERT, *The Problems in the Study of the ‘Athonite’ Redaction of the Psalter in South Slavonic Manuscripts*, [in:] *Studies of Medieval South Slavic Manuscripts. Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Hilandar Conference held from March 28 to 30 1989*, ed. P. Ivić, Belgrade 1995, p. 197). C.M. MACROBERT, *The Problems...*, the Belgrade Psalter belongs to the second redaction of the Slavonic Psalter. On the relationship of the Romanian Psalters to Bel, cf. I. CAMARĂ, *Cele mai vechi psaltiri românești și redacțiile psaltirii slavone* [The Oldest Romanian Psalters and the Redactions of the Slavonic Psalter], [in:] *Caietele “Sextil Pușcariu”. Actele Conferinței Internaționale Zilele “Sextil Pușcariu”, Cluj-Napoca, September 9–10 2021*, ed. E. PAVEL et al., Cluj-Napoca 2021, p. 72–81.

<sup>12</sup> Al. MAREȘ, *Filiația...*, p. 259 points out that the PH version is a massive and rather free processing of the old translations and may ultimately constitute a new translation of the canonical psalms. I. CAMARĂ, *Cele mai vechi...*, p. 79 believes that PH does not represent a free processing, as has been thought, but, on the contrary, it best preserves the intermediate A or perhaps even the primitive translation.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the dates advanced by Al. MAREȘ, *Datarea Psaltirilor...*, p. 198 for PV, the *terminus ante quem* would be 1558.

<sup>14</sup> The *Oxford Psalter*, Bodleian Library, Ms. e Mus 184 (cetera: Ox), 14<sup>th</sup> century. On specific Ox readings reflected in the Romanian versions, cf.: I. CAMARĂ, *New Information on the Slavonic Sources of the Oldest Romanian Psalters*, Pbg 66, 2022, p. 81–94; A.-M. GÎNSAC, *Gr. ἀπό βάρων ἐλεφαντίνων în vechile versiuni românești ale Psaltirii* [Gr. ἀπό βάρων ἐλεφαντίνων in the Old Romanian Versions of the Psalter], PhJass 18.2, 2022, p. 75–82.

<sup>15</sup> Any typical Athonite Slavonic Psalter could have served as a model, the one in the interweaved text included. The PH version has also been proposed as a source: *the compilers of the edition of the Psalter dating from around 1588–1589 worked on a version of the psalms related to the ‘Hurmuzaki’ Psalter* (I. GHEȚIE, *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki și filiația psaltirilor românești din secolul al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea* [Hurmuzaki Psalter and the Filiation of Romanian Psalters in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries],

Speaking of the literalness of translations in the early phase of Romanian writing, I. Bărbulescu states that one could speak of two Romanian “schools of translation” in the 16<sup>th</sup> century – one of translations “faithful to the meaning”, characterized by clarity on the one hand, and, on the other hand, of “word for word” translations<sup>16</sup>. According to the distinction E. Nida makes between “formal” and “dynamic equivalence”<sup>17</sup>, it can be said that Romanian translators and redactors<sup>18</sup> adopted either the strategy of “dynamic equivalence”, by which the meaning is prioritized, or that of “formal equivalence”, i.e., literal translation, used mainly by translating religious texts from Slavonic. This particular perspective encourages views according to which, as times goes by, *the extreme literalism of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is attenuated, admitting some deviations from the letter in favour of the meaning*<sup>19</sup>. From our point of view, for the editors of the first Romanian Psalters the formal equivalence between Slavonic and Romanian terms was not an indispensable principle, at least not one that took precedence over the imperative of translating the meaning<sup>20</sup>. In selecting the Slavonic participle as the topic of our research,

---

LR 27.1, 1978, p. 55). Readings such as съставиѣ праздниѣ оукрашениѣ (Ps 117:27) suggest that a text related to Ost might have also contributed to the final stage of the revision. It is also almost certain that the redactors of Ps89 used the interweaved Slavonic text for certain emendations, cf. errors like љзики ѣхъ въкоупѣ ‘their tongues together’ for жзики ѣхъ въкоупѣ ‘their relatives together’ reflected in the Romanian text: *limbile lor depreună* (Ps 73:8).

<sup>16</sup> I. BĂRBULESCU, *Curente literare la români în perioada slavonismului cultural* [Literary Currents of Romanians in the Era of Cultural Slavonism], București 1928, p. 375–376.

<sup>17</sup> E. NIDA, C.R. TABER, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Leiden 1982, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> None of the early Romanian Psalters is believed to be the original translation, however, the Hurmuzaki Psalter might be closer to it and Ms. 4389 (Pan) is the autograph of its translator. Hence, we used the formula “translators and redactors”, the former being rather applicable to PH (although PH is not the original translation) and Pan, while the latter – to PS, PV, Ps77, Ps89, PC, i.e. texts derived from the original translation through revision.

<sup>19</sup> I. MOLDOVANU, *Structura lingvistică a Bibliei de la București și problema contribuției sale la dezvoltarea limbii române literare* [The Linguistic Structure of the 1688 Bible and the Issue of its Contribution to the Development of Literary Romanian], ALIL 39–41, 1999–2001, p. 67.

<sup>20</sup> This holds true for at least some early Romanian translations, cf. M. UNGUREANU, I.-M. FELEA, *Creative Calques in the Early Romanian Translations of the Psalter. Translatological and Philological Approaches*, [in:] *Translation Automatism in the Vernacular Texts of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. V. AGRIGORAEI, I. SASU, Turnhout 2023 [= Bver, 1], p. 239–243. Nonetheless, the translator of Pan was aware that some calques from Slavonic are not the best translations possible, noting, for example, twice on the same page that the meaning of *mai pre deasupra* (Ps 103:5 and 103:13), calque after the Slavonic прѣвыспрѣнька, is ‘cerdac’ (Eng. ‘veranda’). In this case, it was easier to choose dynamic equivalence over formal equivalence since the author could consult a Romanian translation of another language – Greek; the marginalia mentioned above are taken from the Romanian translation of the Septuagint made by Nicolae Milescu Spătarul around same period from Greek (*Old Testament of Nicolae Milescu Spătarul*, Library of the Romanian Academy, Cluj branch, Ms. Rom. 45, 17<sup>th</sup> century); cf. *Vechiul Testament – Septuaginta. Versiunea lui Nicolae Spătarul Milescu (Ms. 45 de la Biblioteca Filialei din Cluj a Academiei Române)* [Old Testament – Septuagint. Nicolae Milescu Spătaru’s Version (Ms. Rom. 45, Library of the Romanian Academy – Cluj Branch)], ed. E. MUNTEANU, A.-M. GÎNSAC, L.-G. MUNTEANU, M. UNGUREANU, Iași 2017.

we wanted to describe how texts traditionally seen as typical examples of formal-equivalence-translations deal with structures that are difficult to render literally.

## 2. The Slavonic participle and its equivalence in the early Romanian Psalters

### 2.1. The Slavonic participle

The Slavonic participle enters three types of oppositions: past – present, active – passive and short – long<sup>21</sup>. Present participles are formed with the thematic root of the present, whereas past participles are formed with the aorist root. From a grammatical standpoint, Slavonic participles behave as adjectives (*o-stem* or *jo-stem*), i.e. they can occur in any gender, number and case, although they have a pronounced verbal character and express actions governed by other actions governed by finite verbs, thus functioning as subordinatess<sup>22</sup>. Pronominal (long) forms have an anaphoric function, indicating that the object introduced into the discourse is known, and are grammatically the closest equivalent of the definite article, which Slavonic lacks. Short past passive participle forms can be the source of numerous verbal nouns. In addition to the six categories listed above (present active or passive and nominal or pronominal participle, past active or passive and nominal or pronominal participle), standard Slavonic also employs a second type of short active past participle (*L-Participle*), used exclusively in verbal constructions (perfect, past perfect, conditional).

### 2.2. The Romanian participle

Slavonic biblical translations prove that the plethora of Greek participial forms could be faithfully rendered either through a process of enrichment of Slavonic grammar or by using the existing grammatical material. However, throughout the history of the written Romanian language, the Romanian participles have never displayed the versatility of the Slavonic ones. At the time of the first Romanian translations, participles and gerunds were used in basically the same manner they are used today, with only a few variations regarding etymological forms or forms analogically recreated at a later stage (*făcut vs fapt, învis vs înviat*, etc.)<sup>23</sup>. The main functions of the past participle in the Old Romanian language were: 1) as formant of the compound and over-compound tenses, of the passive and of the aspect; 2) adjectival<sup>24</sup>, usually having a past tense value and occurring quite rarely with

<sup>21</sup> The information on Slavonic participles is provided according to H.G. LUNT, *Old Church Slavonic Grammar*, 7Berlin–New York 2001, p. 54, 99, 108, 153 and G. NANDRIȘ, *The Handbook of Old Slavonic*, London 1969, p. 113–120, 128, 149–154.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. H.G. LUNT, *Old Church Slavonic...*, p. 157.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. C. FRÂNCU, *Gramatica limbii române vechi (1521–1780)* [Grammar of Old Romanian (1521–1780)], Iași 2009, p. 129–132.

<sup>24</sup> *The Syntax of Old Romanian*, ed. G. PANĂ-DINDELEGAN, Oxford 2016, p. 260.

a non-temporal nature<sup>25</sup>. In contemporary Romanian, participles tend to oscillate, as is the case with the Slavonic participles, between a verbal and an adjectival nature<sup>26</sup>, but, although they do not enter temporal or aspect oppositions in an explicit manner, they intrinsically contain past and perfective values<sup>27</sup>. These temporal and aspect-related features are often lost once the adjectival value is emphasized (*președintele ales mâine* ‘president elected tomorrow’), whereas certain transitive verbs form participles that carry both active and passive values (*om băut* vs. *vin băut* ‘drunk man’ vs. ‘drunk wine’). Moreover, the verbal or adjectival qualities depend on the nature of the verb from which they derive; agent participles retain their verbal nature to a greater extent<sup>28</sup>.

In the Old Romanian, the gerund could occupy additional syntactic positions compared to contemporary Romanian and it could also be part of a larger variety of verbal periphrases, although its functions and typology were not very different from those of the contemporary gerund<sup>29</sup>. Unlike modern Romanian, the old gerund had more pronounced verbal properties and occurred more often as the predicate of a subordinate clause<sup>30</sup>. In most examples from Old Romanian texts, the gerund expresses the imperfective aspect<sup>31</sup>. For these reasons, we can assimilate the Romanian gerund to the present or active participle<sup>32</sup> and the Romanian participle to the past or passive participle<sup>33</sup>. This overlap is reinforced by two other observations: first, gerund forms built on the model of the present participle from other European languages have survived as relics<sup>34</sup>, and secondly, some Romanian grammars refer to the gerund as present participle<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 267.

<sup>26</sup> *Gramatica limbii române* [Grammar of Romanian Language], vol. I–II, coord. V. GUȚU-ROMALO, București 2008 (cetera: GALR), p. 509.

<sup>27</sup> GALR, p. 508. The patterns in which the Romanian modern participle occurs are briefly described in Al. NICOLAE, *Omonimia sintactică a participiilor românești* [Syntactic Homonymy of Romanian Participles], [in:] *Studii de gramatică. Omagiu Doamnei Profesoare Valeria Guțu-Romalo*, ed. R. ZAFIU, A.-M. MIHAIL, B. CROITOR, București 2009, p. 193.

<sup>28</sup> GALR, p. 509.

<sup>29</sup> *The Syntax...*, p. 271.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 287.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 273.

<sup>32</sup> Although the contemporary gerund does not lack passive values; cf. GALR, p. 538. At an earlier stage, the past gerund in forms such as *fiind fost*, *având aflat* also occurred in Romanian; cf. M. AVRAM, *Există un gerunziu trecut în limba română?* [Is there a Past Gerund in Romanian?], SCL 37.2, 1986, p. 155.

<sup>33</sup> The Romanian supine and participle express, with few exceptions, a single temporal value – i.e., the perfect; cf. G. PANĂ-DINDELEGAN, *Din nou despre participiu și supin. Câteva precizări* [Again about the Participle and the Supine. Several Notes], SCL 58.1, 2007, p. 165.

<sup>34</sup> *Enciclopedia limbii române* [The Encyclopedia of the Romanian Language], ed. M. SALA, M. AVRAM, J. BALACCIU-MATEI, I. FISCHER, I. GHEȚIE, București 2006, p. 240 with examples such as *mâncare aburindă*, *tensiune crescândă* ‘steaming food’, ‘rising tension’.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 419.

### 2.3. Equivalence of the Slavonic present participle in Romanian

Even with nomenclature stretched and polyvalences ignored, the Old Romanian participles do not correspond exactly to the classes of Slavonic participles, and consequently the Romanian translators and redactors were unable to apply the method of formal equivalence, as was done when translating Slavonic texts from Greek. This is why the translators and redactors of early Romanian biblical texts had to aim for dynamic equivalence while not losing sight of the Slavonic text. The way Slavonic participles were translated in the early Romanian texts was studied before, though less systematically<sup>36</sup> and never focused on the Psalter. We have extracted all the Slavonic participles from Psalms 78 to 110<sup>37</sup> in PV along with their corresponding translation paragraphs in the aforementioned Romanian Psalters. The psalm references followed the division of verses in the edition of the *Psalterium Bononiense*<sup>38</sup>. The Slavonic text in PV belongs to the Athonite redaction<sup>39</sup> and therefore it does not constitute the primary source for any Romanian version. From our diagnostics, we have excluded both Ps70 and PC, since these texts are too close to Ps77 to be useful. The Slavonic text was diplomatically transcribed from PV. The Slavonic participles in the present tense, together with the context in which they occur, have been recorded in Table 1. In the last column we have abbreviated the grammatical description of the participle, by noting the category of participle: Tr (past), Pr (present), Ac (active), Pa (passive), then the type of the participle, using a colon (':') for the long participle and a dot ('.') for the short participle; furthermore we indicated the case, number and gender,

<sup>36</sup> Cf. P. CANCEL, *Studiul verbului slav* [A Study of the Slavic Verb], București 1938; M. RĂDULESCU, *Formele perifrastice "a fi" + gerunziul în textele românești traduse din secolul al XVI-lea* [Periphrastic Forms of "a fi" + Gerund in Translated Romanian Texts of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century], SCL 11.3, 1960, p. 691–698; C. FRÂNCU, *Geneza și evoluția formelor verbale supracompuse în limba română* [Genesis and Evolution of Multi-compound Verbal Forms in Romanian], ALIL 29, 1983–1984, p. 23–62; A. DRAGOMIRESCU, *The Past Participle and the Participial Clause...*; D. NICULESCU, *The Gerund and the Gerundial Construction in The Syntax...*, p. 259–270, 271–323. For an analysis of the infinitive in early Romanian Psalters, cf. C. BURLACU, *The Rendering of Infinitival Constructions in the Psalter Text: Greek to Slavonic, and Slavonic to Romanian*, Pbg 45.1, 2021, p. 37–56.

<sup>37</sup> We have selected this interval since PV is preserved only from Ps77 to the end, with numerous lacunae.

<sup>38</sup> *Psalterium Bononiense*, Bologna University Library, Ms. Slv. 2499, [in:] *Psalterium Bononiense, interpretationem veterem Slavicam cum aliis codicibus collatam, adnotationibus ornatam, appendicibus auctam* (cetera: Bon), with readings from *Sofia Psalter*, *Bucharest Psalter* (cetera: Buc), *Sinaitic Psalter* (cetera: Sin), vol. I–II, ed. V. JAGIĆ, Vindobonae 1907. We have used the same edition for the passages where the text from PV was not preserved. In rendering the examples, we have opted for references to the verse, not to the page number.

<sup>39</sup> We took into account that the Romanian translations follow different sources, for example: PH *se pierdzu* translates Bel да потреблю, cf. Ps77 *să se cure* translating потребвити from the Athonite redaction (Ps 100:8); PH *și ce se lăuda*, translating Bel хвалеше се, as opposed to Ps77 *ce lăuda-mă*, translating хвалиши мѧ in the Athonite redaction (Ps 101:9).

as follows: No (nominative), Acc (accusative), Gn (genitive), Da (dative), Vo (vocative), Lo (locative), In (instrumental), Sg (singular), Pl (plural), Ma (masculine), Fe (feminine). Where there is no mention of gender, masculine or neuter is implied (the forms often coincide in Slavonic); where two forms occur with the same grammatical paradigm, we have avoided redundancy by using the notation 'x2'. The Slavonic participles are underlined, and the Romanian rendition is marked in italics.

Table 1

## Slavonic participles in the present tense

Verse <sup>40</sup>	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
78:3	и не бѣ <u>погрѣваѣи</u>	PH: și nu fu <i>de-a-i îngruparea</i> PV: și nu era <i>îngrupătoriu</i> PS: și nu era <i>îngrupătoriu</i> Ps77: și nu era <i>îngrupătoriu</i> Ps89: și nu era <i>îngrupătoriu</i> lor Pan: și n-au fost <i>cine să-i îngroape</i>	PrAc:NoSg
78:4	пожганіе <u>сжщій</u> окрыть на	PH: baterea-gioc <i>a cei de pregiur noi</i> PV: imputare <i>ce era dimpregiurul nostru</i> PS: imputare <i>ce era dimpregiurul nostru</i> Ps77: imputare <i>ce era demprejurul nostru</i> Ps89: imputare <i>celor demprejurul nostru</i> Pan: badjocorire <i>celor ce sânt imprejurul nostru</i>	PrAc:DaPl
78:6	на жзыки не <u>знаѣ-</u> щѣд тебе	PH: pre păgânri <i>ce nu știi tinre</i> PV: spre limbi <i>ce nu știi tire</i> PS: spre limbi <i>ce nu știi tire</i> Ps77: spre limbi <i>ce nu știi tine</i> Ps89: spre limbile <i>ce nu știi tine</i> Pan: pre limbile <i>cealea ce nu te știi</i>	PrAc:AccPl
82:3	и <u>ненавидѣши</u> тебе	PH: și <i>cei ce gîlăluia tinre</i> PV: și <i>cei ce urrîia tire</i> PS: și <i>cei cei uria tire</i> Ps77: și <i>cine urîia tine</i> Ps89: și <i>cei ce te urâră</i> pre tine Pan: și <i>ceia ce te urăsc</i>	PrAc:NoPl

<sup>40</sup> Given according to the numbering in *Psalterium Bononiense*, for the same reasons as Altbauer's: since Vatroslav Jagić's edition of the Bolognese Psalter is the basis for all subsequent comparative studies of Slavonic psalters, *An Early Slavonic Psalter from Rus'*, ed. M. ALTBAUER, Harvard 1978, p. IX.

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
82:8	сѣ живѣщїиѣи въ тѣрѣ	PH: cu <i>cei ce viia</i> în Tir PV: cu <i>cei ce viu</i> întru Tiru PS: cu <i>cei ce viu</i> în Tiru Ps77: cu <i>cei ce viu</i> în Tir Ps89: cu <i>cei ce viu</i> în Tir Pan: cu <i>ceia ce lăcuiesc</i> în Tir	PrAc:InPl
83:12	гѣ не лишїѣ блга хѣдѣщїѣ незлѣбѣж	PH: Domnul nu părăsește de la bunrătate <i>carii împlă</i> fără de rreu PV: Domnul nu lasă burul <i>împlindu</i> fără rrau PS: Domnul nu lăsă de bine <i>împlătorul</i> fără rău Ps77: Domnul nu lăsă de bine <i>împlătorul</i> fără rău Ps89: Domnul nu lasă pre <i>cine</i> bine <i>împlă</i> și nu cu rău Pan: Nu va lipsi Domnul de bunătăți pre <i>ceia</i> <i>ce umblă</i> cu nerăotate	PrAc:Gn-AccPl
84:9	и на ѡбращѣщїѣхѣ сѣца къ немѣ	PH: pre <i>cei ce-și întorcu</i> înrîma cătră-nsul PV: și spre <i>ceia ce întorcu</i> înrîma cătr-însu PS: și spre <i>cei ce întorcu</i> înrema sa cătră-nsu Ps77: și spre <i>ceia ce întorc</i> inema sa cătr-îns Ps89: și spre <i>ceia ce-ș întorc</i> inema sa cătră-ns Pan: și pre <i>ceia ce-și vor întoarce</i> inima cătră dânsul	PrAc:AccPlMa
84:10	ѡбаче близѣ бѡжїи сѣ егѡ	PH: Însă e aproape <de> <i>cei ce se tem</i> PV: Mai virtos aproape e de <i>temuții</i> lui PS: E, însă, aproape de <i>fricoși</i> lui Ps77: Însă aproape de <i>fricoșii</i> lui Ps89: Însă aproape e de <i>fricoșii</i> săi Pan: Însă aproape-i mântuirea lui de <i>cei</i> <i>ce se tem</i> de dânsul	PrAc:DaPl <sup>41</sup>
85:2	спси раба твоѣгѡ бѣ моѡ ѡповѣщѣгѡ на тѣ	PH: scoate șerbul tău, Dzeul meu, <i>cela ce</i> <i>nedejdît</i> pre Tinre PV: mântuiaște șerbul Tău, Domnul meu, <i>nedejduii</i> spre tire PS: spăsește șerbul tău, Dzeul meu, că <i>upuvăi</i> în tire Ps77: spăsește șărbul tău, Doamne, că <i>upovăi</i> în tine Ps89: spăsește șărbul tău, Doamne, <i>care</i> <i>upovăi</i> în tine Pan: mântuiaște pre robul tău <i>cela ce se</i> <i>nădăjduiește</i> pre tine, Dumnezeul meu	PrAc:AccSg

<sup>41</sup> Although близѣ normally requires the genitive.



Table 1 (cont.)

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
85:5	мноꙗѣ милостивъ въ сѣбѣ призываетъ тѣ	PH: multu milostiv tuturor <i>cinre te cheamă</i> PV: multu milostiv tuturor <i>cei ce te mărescu</i> PS: multu milostiv tuturor <i>ce cheamă-te</i> Ps77: mult milostiv tuturor <i>ce cheamă-te</i> Ps89: mult milostiv tuturor <i>ce cheamă-ta</i> <sup>42</sup> Pan: mult milostiv tuturor <i>celor ce te chiiamă</i>	PrAc:DaPl
85:10	іако велии еси ты • Romanian translation • и творѣи чюдеса <sup>43</sup>	PH: că mai mare ești tu <i>cinre face ciude</i> PV: că mare ești tu și <i>ce face mirure</i> PS: că mare ești tu și <i>ce faci ciudele</i> Ps77: că mare ești tu și <i>ce faci ciudele</i> Ps89: că mare ești tu și <i>ce faci ciudele</i> Pan: Că tu ești cel mare și tu însuși ești Dum- nezeu, <i>cela ce faci minuni</i>	PrAc:NoSgMa
90:1	Живѣи въ помѡщи вѣшнѣго	PH: <i>care vie</i> în ajutoriu Cella-de-Sus PV: <i>viu</i> ajutoriul Celuia-de-Sus PS: <i>viu</i> în ajutoriul Susului Ps77: <i>viu</i> întru ajutoriul Susului Ps89: <i>viețuitoriu</i> întru ajutoriul Susului Pan: <i>cela ce viețuieaște</i> în ajutoriul Celui-de-Sus	PrAc:NoSg
90:5	ѡ стрѣлы летѣщѣѡ въ днѣ	PH: de săgeatele <i>ce zboară dzua</i> PV: de săgeate <i>ce zboră dzua</i> PS: de săgeate <i>ce zboară dzua</i> Ps77: de săgeate <i>ce zboară zioa</i> Ps89: de săgeate <i>ce zboară zioa</i> Pan: de săgeata <i>carea zboară zioa</i>	PrAc:GnPlFe
90:6	ѡ вещи въ тѣмѣ прѣхѡдѣщѣѡ	PH: și firile întru întunarecu <i>ce trecu</i> PV: de lucrure <i>ce</i> întru întunarecu <i>trecu</i> PS: de lucrure <i>ce</i> întru întunarecu <i>trecu</i> Ps77: de lucrure <i>ce</i> întru untunarec <i>trec</i> Ps89: den firi <sup>44</sup> <i>ce</i> întru utunarec <i>trec</i> Pan: De lucrul <i>care treace</i> în tunearec	PrAc:GnPlFe
91:8	и никошѡ въ сѣи дѣлащенъ безаконїе	PH: și izbucniră toți cei <i>ce facu</i> fărădelege PV: și crescú toți <i>ce facu</i> fărăleage PS: și crescú toți <i>ce facu</i> fărăleage Ps77: și crescú toți <i>ce fac</i> fărăleage Ps89: și răsăriră toți <i>făcătorii</i> fărădelege Pan: și crescură toți <i>ceia ce fac</i> fărădelegiuire	PrAc:NoPlMa

<sup>42</sup> Pronominal relic from the Slavonic version.<sup>43</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Slavonic-Romanian versions of the Psalter, short sequences of Slavonic text alternate with their corresponding Romanian translation.<sup>44</sup> Written *фыри*.

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
91:10	РАЗЫДѢ СѦ ВЪСІ ДѢЛАЖЩЕИ ВЪЗАКОНІЕ	PH: se vor rrăsvira toți <i>ce deregu</i> fărădeleagea PV: spargu-se toți <i>cei ce facu</i> fărăleage PS: spargu-se toți <i>ce facu</i> fărăleage Ps77: spargu-se toți <i>ce fac</i> fărăleage Ps89: răsipi-se-vor toți <i>ce fac</i> fărăleage Pan: și se vor răsipi toți <i>ceia ce fac</i> fărădele- giuire	PrAc:NoPIMa
91:12	И НА ВЪСТАЖЩЕА НА МА ДЪКАВНОУЖЩЕА ОУСЛЫШИ ОУХО МОЕ	PH: și pre <i>carii se scoală</i> pre menre <i>hi- cleni</i> < <i>n</i> > <i>du</i> audzi-va u<re>chea mea PV: și <i>ceia ce se sculară</i> spre mire <i>hecleanii</i> , audzi-va ureachea mea PS: și <i>cei ce sculară-se</i> spre mere <i>hitleanii</i> , audzi-va urechea mea Ps77: și <i>ce sculară-se</i> spre mine, <i>hitleanii</i> , auzi-va ureachea mea Ps89: și spre <i>cei ce scula-se-vor</i> spre mine <i>hitlenind</i> , auzi-va ureachea mea Pan: și va auzi ureachiia mea pre <i>ceia ce se scoală</i> asupra mea, <i>carii hiclenesc</i>	PrAc:AccPIMa
96:7	ДА ПОСТЫДАТ СѦ ВЪСИ БЛАНЪЖЩЕИ СѦ ИСТОУКАННЫ, ХВАДЪ- ЩЕИ СѦ О ИДОЛѢ	PH: — PV: se se rușireadze toți <i>cei ce se închiră</i> idolilor, <i>ce se laudă</i> de idolii săi PS: se rușiredze-se toți <i>ce închiră-se</i> bolvani- lor și <i>ceia ce laudă-se</i> de idolii săi Ps77: să se rușineaze toți <i>ce închină-se</i> idolilor și <i>laudă-se</i> de idolii săi Ps89: să se rușineaze toți <i>cei ce închină-se</i> istucanilor, <i>laudându-se</i> de idolii săi Pan: Să se rușineaze <i>ceia ce se închină</i> celor ciopliți, <i>ceia ce se laudă</i> de idolii lor	PrAc:NoPIMa
96:10	ЛЮБѢЩЕИ ГѦ	PH: <i>iubitori</i> Domnului PV: <i>cire iubeaște</i> Dzăul PS: <i>cire iubiți</i> Dzeul Ps77: <i>cine iubiți</i> Zeul Ps89: <i>cine iubiți</i> Zeul Pan: <i>Ceia ce iubiți</i> pre Domnul	PrAc:No(Vo) PIMa
97:8	ВЪСѢЛЕНА И ВЪСІ ЖИВЕЖЩЕИ НА НЕИ	PH: lumea și toți <i>câți viu</i> pre-nsa PV: toată lumea și toți <i>ce viu</i> spre însu PS: toată lumea și toți <i>ce viu</i> spre insa Ps77: toată lumea și toți <i>ce viu</i> spre-ns Ps89: lumea și toți <i>ce viu</i> într-însă Pan: lumea și toți <i>ceia ce viețuiesc</i> într-însa	PrAc:AccPIMa

Table 1 (cont.)

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
98:1	О҃ґДѦИ ꙗ҃ херо- у҃вѣи҃Ѣ да подвиж- нит сѧ з҃емлѧ	PH: <i>cinre șede</i> pre heruvimi, se scuture pământul PV: <i>ședzu</i> spre herovimi, se se rrădice pământul PS: <i>ce șeade</i> în heruvimi, se rădice-se pământul Ps77: <i>ce șezu</i> în heruvimi, să se rădice pământul Ps89: <i>cel ce șade</i> spre heruvimi, să se pleace pământul Pan: <i>cela ce șade</i> pre heruvimi; să se clătească pământul	PrAc.NoSgMa
98:6	В ПРІЗЫВАЮЩІИ ІМѦ Е҃ГО	PH: <i>acei ce chema</i> numele lui PV: <i>ce chemă</i> numele lui PS: în <i>ce chiiamă</i> numele lui Ps77: în <i>ce chemă</i> numele lui Ps89: întru <i>cei ce cheamă</i> numele său Pan: întru <i>ceia ce chiiamă</i> numele lui	PrAc.LoPl
98:8	И ꙗ҃ЩѦѢ НА ВЪСЪКЪЖ НАЧИНАНІѦ И	PH: și <i>pădzește</i> la toate începuturile lor PV: și <i>izbândii</i> ai spre tote începutele lor PS: și <i>izbândii</i> ai în toate începutele lor Ps77: și <i>izbândit-ai</i> în toate începuturile lor Ps89: și <i>izbândii</i> ai în toate începutele lor Pan: și <i>izbândind</i> pre toate tocmealele lor	PrAc.NoSgMa
100:3	ТВОРИЩѦ ПРѢСТѢ- ПЛЕНІЕ ВЪЗНЕВИДИШѢ	PH: <i>cei ce facu</i> călcare, gilăliuu PV: <i>ce feaceră</i> treacere, urrâre PS: <i>ce feacere</i> treacere, uriu Ps77: <i>ce feaceră</i> treacere urâiu Ps89: pre <i>cei ce feaceră</i> călcare, urâiu Pan: urât-am pre <i>ceia ce fac</i> călcare	PrAc.AccPlMa
100:4	О҃ґКЛАНѢЮЩАГО СѦ Ѡ МЕНЕ	PH: <i>a se rrădzima</i> de menre PV: <i>ce feri-se</i> de mere PS: <i>ce feri-se</i> de mere Ps77: <i>ce feri-se</i> de mine Ps89: <i>cel ce se feri</i> de mine Pan: pre hicleanul <sup>45</sup> <i>care se-au abătut</i> de la mine	PrAc.Gn-Acc SgMa

<sup>45</sup> The translation follows the redaction from Ost.

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
100:5	<p>ѠКЛЕВЕТАЖЩАГО ТАИ ИСКРЪНЪГО СВОЕГО [СЕГО] ИЗГОИЧАХЪ</p>	<p>PH: <i>clevetoriulu</i> furiş vecenrul său, acela scoş PV: <i>ce clevetiia</i> întru ascunsu soţul său, acesta-i goniia PS: <i>ce cleveti</i> în ascunsu soţul său, acesta măraiu Ps77: <i>ce cleveti</i> în ascuns soţul său, acesta mânai Ps89: <i>cel ce clevetiia</i> în ascuns aproapele său, acesta gonii Pan: <i>Cela ce mozavireaşte</i> pre vecinul său în taină, pre acesta l-am gonit</p>	PrAc:Gn-Acc SgMa
100:6	<p>ХѠДѠИ ПО ПЪТИ НЕПОРОЧНОУ</p>	<p>PH: <i>a îmbla</i> pre cale nevinovatului PV: <i>cei ce îmbla</i> pre cale nevinovată PS: <i>cei ce îmbla</i> pre cale nevinovată Ps77: <i>ce îmbla</i> pre cale nevinovată Ps89: <i>cei ce îmbla</i> pre cale nevinovată Pan: <i>cela ce umblă</i> pre calea cea nevinovată</p>	PrAc:NoSgMa
100:7	<p>НЕ ЖИВЕШЕ ПОСРЪК ДОМОУ МОЕГО ТВОРАДИ ГРЪДЫНА • Romanian translation • ГЛАДИ НЕПРАВЕДА НЕСПРАВАША ПРЪК ОЧИМА МОИНА</p>	<p>PH: şi nu via în mijloc de casa mea <i>cinre</i> <i>face</i> trufăşia şi <i>grăiia</i> nedreptate, nu isprăvia înaintea ochilor miei PV: nu viia pri mijloc de casa mea <i>ce făcea</i> trufă, <i>ce grăiia</i> nedreptate, nu dereage între ochii miei. PS: nu via pre mijloc de casa mea <i>ce făcea</i> trufă, <i>ce grăiia</i> nedreptate nu dereage între ochii miei Ps77: nu viia pre mijloc de casa mea <i>ce făcea</i> trufă; <i>ce grăiia</i> nedreptate nu dereagea între ochii miei Ps89: nu viia pre mijloc de casa mea <i>ceia ce</i> <i>făcea</i> trufă; <i>cei ce grăiia</i> nedreptate nu ispră- viia înaintea ochilor miei Pan: N-au lăcuit pre mijlocul casii mele <i>cela</i> <i>ce face</i> trufie; <i>cela ce au grăit</i> ceale nedireapte nu se-au îndireptat înaintea ochilor miei</p>	PrAc:NoSgMa x2
100:8	<p>ПОТРЕБИТИ Ѡ ГРАДА ГНЪК ВЪСА ТВОРАД- ЩЕА БЕЗАКОНІЕ</p>	<p>PH: se pierdu den ce&lt;ta&gt;tea lui Dumned- zeu toţi <i>făcătorii</i> fărădelege PV: se piară de cetatea Domnului toţi <i>ce facu</i> fărăleage</p>	PrAc:AccPlMa

Table 1 (cont.)

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
100:8		PS: se curu de cetatea Domnului toți <i>ce facu</i> fărăleage Ps77: să se cure de cetatea Domnului toți <i>ce fac</i> fărăleage Ps89: a cura de în cetatea Domnului toți <i>carii fac</i> fărăleage Pan: ca să pierz den cetatea Domnului pre toți <i>ceia ce fac</i> fărădelegiuire	
101:8	іако птица <u>о̀совѡщїа</u> сѡ на зѣдѣ	PH: ca paserea <i>ce se usebeaște</i> în zidu PV: ca pasărea <i>însângură-se</i> spre zidul PS: ca pasărea <i>ce însingură-se</i> în zid Ps77: ca pasărea <i>ce însingură-se</i> în zid Ps89: ca pasărea <i>ce se usebeaște</i> la zid Pan: ca o pasăre <i>carea se osibeaște</i> la zid	PrAc:NoSgFe
101:9	и хвалѡщен мѡ мноꙗ клѣнѣахъ сѡ	PH: și <i>ce se lăuda</i> , cu menre blăstema-se PV: și <i>cei ce lăuda-mă</i> , cu mere giura-se PS: și <i>ce lăuda-me</i> , cu mere giura-se Ps77: și <i>ce lăuda-mă</i> , cu mine jura-se Ps89: și <i>cei ce lăuda-mă</i> , cu mine jura-se Pan: și <i>ceia ce mă lăuda</i> se jura cu mine	PrAc:NoPlMa
101:19	и людіе <u>снѣжени</u> въсхвалѡѣ га	PH: și oameri <i>tămăduiți</i> lăuda-vor Domnulu PV: și omerii <i>ce se dzidescu</i> laudă-i Domnul PS: și oamerii <i>ce zidescu-se</i> laudă Domnul Ps77: și oamenii <i>ce se zidesc</i> laudă Domnul Ps89: și oamenii <i>zidiți</i> să laude Domnul Pan: nărodul cela <i>ce se zideaște</i> va lăuda pre Domnul	PrPa:NoSgMa
103:2–5	<u>Одѣ́а сѡ свѣтѡ іако</u> <u>ризож...</u> <u>пропинаж</u> <u>нѣо іако кѡжж...</u> <u>покрывѡж</u> водани <u>прѣвѣспрѣнѣа іго...</u> <u>полагѡж</u> ѡбѡлѡкы <на> въсхожѣнїе своѡ... <u>ходѡи</u> на крилѡ вѣтрѡнїю... <u>творѡди</u> аргѡлы своѡ <u>дѡхы</u> , и слѡгы своѡ <u>огнь</u> <u>падѡшь...</u> <u>оснываж</u> и зѡмѡлѡ на тврѡди своѡи	PH: <i>îmbracași-te</i> cu luminra ca cu cămeașe, <i>întinseși</i> ceriu ca o pele, <i>acoperiși</i> cu apă pre mai susu lui, <i>puseși</i> nuorii în ieșitul tău, <i>îmblași</i> pre arepile vântului; <i>făceai</i> îngerii săi de duh și slugile sale ca focul <i>ardzându; urdzi</i> ai pământul pre tăriia sa PV: <i>Învești-te</i> cu lumea ca cu cămeașe, <i>tinseși</i> ceriul ca o piale, <i>coperiși</i> cu apă pre mai susul lui, <i>Puse</i> nuorii în suirea sa, <i>îmblă</i> spre arepile vîntul[u]i, <i>feace</i> îngerii săi duhure și slugile sale focu <i>aprinșu; urrdzi</i> pămîntul spre învărtoșearea sa	Present participles that will be explained separately.

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
103:2–5		<p>PS: <i>învești-te</i> cu lumiră ca în cămașe, <i>întinseși</i> ceriul ca o piale, <i>coperiși</i> cu apă mai susul lui, <i>puse</i> nuorii suirea sa, <i>îmblă</i> spre arepile vântului; <i>feace</i> îngerii săi duhure și slugile sale foc <i>aprinso</i>; <i>urdzi</i> pământul în vârtutea sa</p> <p>Ps77: <i>înveștitu-te-ai</i> cu lumină în cămașe, <i>întinseși</i> ceriul ca piialea, <i>coperiși</i> ca apa mai susul lui, <i>puse</i> nuorii suirea sa, <i>îmblă</i> spre arepile vântului, <i>feace</i> îngerii săi duhure și slugile sale foc <i>aprinso</i>; <i>urzi</i> pământul în vârtutea sa</p> <p>Ps89: <i>înveștitu-te-ai</i> cu lumină ca în cămașe, <i>întinseși</i> ceriul ca piialea, <i>coperiși</i> cu apa mai pre desupra sa, <i>puseși</i> nuorii suirea sa, <i>care îmblași</i> spre arepile vântului, <i>ce feceși</i> îngerii săi duhure și slugile sale foc <i>aprinso</i>; <i>urziș</i> pământul în vârtosul său</p> <p>Pan: <i>cela ce te îmbraci</i> cu lumină ca cu o dulamă, <i>cela ce întinzi</i> ceriul ca o piiale, <i>cela ce acoperi</i> cu ape ceale mai pre de supra ale lui, <i>cela ce pui</i> nori spre suirea ta, <i>cela ce umbli</i> pre aripile vântului, <i>cela ce faci</i> îngerii tăi duhuri și slugile tale foc arzător, <i>cela ce ai întemeiat</i> pământul pre întăriturile lui</p>	
103:10	посылаѣи ѿсточ- ники въ дѣбѣ	<p>PH: <i>tremeși</i> izvoarele în tăure</p> <p>PV: <i>tremeseși</i> izvoară în balte<sup>46</sup></p> <p>PS: <i>tremeseși</i> izvoare în balte</p> <p>Ps77: <i>tremeseși</i> izvoare în iazere</p> <p>Ps89: <i>tremeseși</i> izvoare în iazere</p> <p>Pan: <i>cela ce trimeși</i> izvoarele în lunci</p>	PrAc.NoSgMa
103:13	напаѣ гóры ѿ прѣ- выспрѣннй свой	<p>PH: <i>adăpi</i> codri de pre mai de susul tău</p> <p>PV: <i>adapă</i> codrii de pre asupra sa</p> <p>PS: <i>adapă</i> codrii de pre susul său</p> <p>Ps77: <i>adapă</i> codrii de spre susul său</p> <p>Ps89: <i>adapă</i> codrii de spre mai susul său</p> <p>Pan: <i>Cela ce adapă</i> munții den ceale de mai pre de supra ale sale</p>	PrAc.NoSgMa

<sup>46</sup> Written ФИБЛАТЕ. PV inaccurately follows a reading similar to PS in balte.

Table 1 (cont.)

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
103:14	прѣсѣбѣжѣ пажѣ скотѣ	PH: <i>rrăsări</i> pajiște viteei PV: <i>ce rrăsăriși</i> pajiște vitelor PS: <i>ce răsăriși</i> pajiște vitelor Ps77: <i>ce răsăriși</i> pajiște vitelor Ps89: <i>crescuși</i> pajiște vitelor Pan: <i>Cela ce răsari</i> iarbă dobitoacelor	PrAc:NoSgMa
106:9	и душѣ личѣщѣ испльни блѣ	PH: <și sufletul> <i>flămânzîților</i> împlu de bunrătate PV: și sufletul <i>flămându</i> împlu-l de dulceață PS: și sufletul <i>flămându</i> împlu de dulceață Ps77: și sufletul <i>flemând</i> împlu de de dulceață Ps89: și sufletul <i>flămând</i> împlu de dulceață Pan: și sufletul <i>cel flămînd</i> l-au umplut de bunătăți	PrAc:AccSgFe
106:10	сѣдѣщѣ въ тѣлѣ	PH: <i>cei ce șed</i> în tunrearecu PV: <i>cei ce ședzură</i> întru înturearecu PS: <i>ce ședzură</i> întru înturearecu Ps77: <i>ce șezură</i> întru untunearec Ps89: <i>cei ce ședea</i> întru untunearec Pan: <i>pre ceia ce șădea</i> în tunearec	PrAc:AccPlMa
106:12	и не бѣ помагѣ и	PH: și nu fu <i>cinre de agiutoriu</i> PV: și nu era lor <i>agiutoriu</i> PS: și nu era <i>agiutoriu</i> Ps77: și nu era <i>ajutoriu</i> Ps89: și nu era <i>ajutoriu</i> Pan: și nu fu <i>cin</i> e să le ajute	PrAc:NoSgMa
106:23	низсѣдѣщѣ въ морѣ въ ко<ра>блѣ .. творѣщѣ дѣланіа въ водѣ многѣ	PH: <i>afundă-se</i> în mare în corabie, <i>făcându</i> lucru întru apă multă PV: <i>giosu mergea</i> în mare în corabie <i>ce făcea</i> faceri în ape multe PS: <i>gios mergea</i> în mare în corabie <i>ce făcea</i> faceri în ape multe Ps77: <i>jos mergea</i> în mare în corabie <i>ce făcea</i> faceri în ape multe Ps89: <i>jos mergând</i> în mare în corabii <i>ce făcea</i> faceri în ape multe Pan: <i>ceia ce se pogoară</i> în mare în corăbii, <i>ceia ce fac lucrure</i> în apele ceale multe	PrAc:NoPlMa x2

Verse	PV: Slavonic text	Romanian translations	Form
106:34	ѿ злѡбѣ живѣщихъ на ней	PH: de rreul <i>celor ce lăcuiesc</i> pre-nsul PV: de rreale <i>ce viia</i> spre însu PS: de reale <i>ce viia</i> spre insu Ps77: de reale <i>ce viia</i> spre-nsu Ps89: de reale <i>celor ce viia</i> spre-nsu Pan: pentru răotatea <i>celor ce lăcuiesc</i> pre dânsul	PrAc:GnPlMa
106:36	и вѣсѣли тоу дчд- щѣд	PH: și mută acie <i>flămânzii</i> PV: și sălășlui acie <i>flămânzii</i> PS: și băgă acie <i>flămânzii</i> Ps77: și băgă acia <i>flămânzii</i> Ps89: și sălășlui acia <i>flămânzii</i> Pan: Și sălășlui acolo pre cei <i>flămânzi</i>	PrAc:AccPlMa
110:10	разоу же елѣ вѣсѣ творѣщѣи и	PH: e înțeleptu bunr tuturor <i>cinre o va face</i> PV: e înțelepciure bură tuturor <i>ce o facu</i> PS: e înțelepciure bură tuturor <i>ce facu-o</i> Ps77: înțelepciune bună tuturor <i>ce fac</i> Ps89: înțelepciune bună tuturor <i>ce o fac</i> Pan: și înțeleagere bună tuturor <i>celor ce o fac</i>	PrAc:DaPlMa

The Slavonic present participle is almost exclusively represented in Table 1 by the “active” category, since in addition to its function as an auxiliary of the passive voice, the present passive participle has a pronounced adjectival value. We have not included in our diagnosis any examples with adjectives derived from the participle, which, in context, retain little of their verbal value. An example in this respect is the adjective *лакомъ* ‘greedy’, originally the present passive participle of the verb *лакъати* ‘to starve’, borrowed into Romanian also as an adjective. Such participle-adjectives were naturally translated by Romanian adjectives. We have identified only one example of a present passive participle, in Ps 101:9, where *зидѣи* preserves some of the predicative value of the verb *зѣдати* ‘to build, to form’; some Romanian redactors recognize this verbal value and attempt to reproduce it. Thus, PH and Ps89 resort to adjectives derived from participles (pl. *tămăduiți* ‘healed’, respectively pl. *zidiți* ‘built’); in the other Psalters, the translation resorts to subordinate sentences introduced by relative pronoun (*ce se dzidescu* ‘which are built’).

In Table 2 we have statistically indicated (horizontally) the translational solution (by means of: clause, object, present participle – “gerunziu” [gerund] in Romanian, infinitive and adjective) employed in each text (vertically). The last row contains



the number of solutions shared by all the texts (for example, “1” in the cell at the intersection of “Shared” row and “Object column” means that in one verse all Psalters used an object to render the Slavonic participle, in this case Ps 106:36).

Table 2

### Translation solutions for rendering the Slavonic participle into Romanian

Psalter/ Solution	Clause (dependent or independent)	Object (noun, pronoun)	Present participle (gerund)	Infinitive (short/ long)	Adjective	Total
PH	14	6	3	3	1	52
PV	21	5	1	0	2	54
PS	21	6	0	0	2	54
Ps77	21	6	0	0	2	54
Ps89	17	6	3	0	3	54
Pan	26	0	1	0	2	54
Shared	24	1	0	0	0	25

#### 2.3.1. Equivalence by periphrasis

Our selection revealed 52 Slavonic participles translated in all the Romanian texts. We notice that the 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian translators and redactors are reluctant to the constraints of a word-for-word translation – through noun, gerund or adjective – and adopt such solutions rarely (PH, PV, PS, Ps77, Ps89) or almost never (Pan). The favorite translation solution for the Slavonic present participle seems to be by far a subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun<sup>47</sup>. PH, which is considered the oldest of these texts, shows the highest degree of variation. PV, PS and Ps77 have not only the same solutions in the same places<sup>48</sup>, but also extremely

<sup>47</sup> Vis-à-vis the fact that the periphrastic translation best renders the meaning of the Slavonic active present participle in Romanian, P. CANCEL (*Studiul...*, p. 42), points out that: *having no other choice, we opted for cel ce seamănă 'he who resembles'*; [i.e., to translate the Slavonic събвирани – I.-M.F.] *yet we had to use more words, we were forced to make a whole sentence in Romanian, and to resort to the present indicative, which is so far from the determined present participle in the Old Slavonic. However, by this periphrastic translation, we have succeeded in rendering the original meaning as closely as possible...*

<sup>48</sup> With a single exception, in PV, where the redactor interprets Ps 83:12 differently from other translations.

close solutions, which indicates that they belong (alongside Ps70 and PC) to the same group, which we shall refer to as the “Oxford” Group (cetera: OxG)<sup>49</sup>. On certain occasions, Ps89 foregoes the solution provided by the OxG, whereas Pan almost exclusively prefers the periphrastic translation.

In PH we often detect a degree of uncertainty in translating the Slavonic participle. The most frequent solution seems to be the subordinate periphrasis introduced by a relative pronoun – *ce, care, cine* ‘that, which, who’<sup>50</sup> – meaning in most cases ‘the one who’, occasionally *câți* ‘how many’ (Ps 97:8 *lumea și toți câți viu pre-nsa* ‘the world and all who live in it’). The relative pronoun can be doubled by the semi-independent pronoun – *(a)cel(a) ce/care* ‘he who/the one who’. There are, however, many exceptions. In addition to subordination by relative pronoun, PH also uses the short infinitive<sup>51</sup>, the gerund (see 2.3.2.), the noun<sup>52</sup>, the predicative verb (Ps 98:8 *și pădzește*<sup>53</sup> *la toate începăturile lor* ‘and guard to all their inceptions’). In one case, for translating *погрѣбѣжи* (Ps 78:3), PH probably uses the structure *de + a + long infinitive*, which does not occur often in Old Romanian texts<sup>54</sup>. There are three occurrences in PH where this structure renders adjectives

<sup>49</sup> Although a revision of the Romanian text according to a text related to Ox can be mentioned with certainty only as far as PS and Ps77 are concerned, together with the related Psalters (Ps70 and PC), the translation of the participles enables us, at least from this perspective, to include PV in the OxG.

<sup>50</sup> In Ps 85:10, the relative pronoun *cine* ‘who’ is used as subject of an attributive clause (*mare ești tu cinre face ciude* ‘great are you, who does wonders’), that is not allowed in modern Romanian and, as far as we can tell, was not used in other Romanian Psalters. PH does make use of these kind of attributives; cf., for example, Ps 21:7 *toți cinre mă vădzu* ‘all who saw me’, but *toți ce...* ‘all who...’ in all other Psalters, where we find the same meaning, but a different form of the relative pronoun. The pronoun is also used by PH in Ps 98:1 *cine șade pre heruvimi* ‘who sits on cherubs’.

<sup>51</sup> E.g., Ps 100:4 *a se rrădzima de menre* ‘to prop against me’; Ps 100:6 *a îmbla pre cale* ‘to walk on the path’, but (*cei*) *ce îmbla* ‘(those) who walked’ etc. in subsequent Psalters.

<sup>52</sup> E.g., Ps 96:10 *iubitori Domnului* ‘devotees to God’, a solution replaced by relative clause in subsequent translations: PV *cinre iubeaște Dzăul* ‘who loves God’; PS, Ps77, Ps89 *cine iubiți Zeul*; Ps 100:5 *clevetoriul* ‘the slanderer’, replaced by an antecedent direct object clause in all other translations: *ce clevetii...* *acesta-i mânaiu* etc. ‘who slandered... that one I drove’; Ps 100:8 *făcătorii* ‘doers’; Ps 106:9 *flămândașilor* ‘of hungered (ones)’, replaced by an adjective in all other translations: *sufletul flămând* ‘hungry soul’; Ps 106:36 *mută acie flămânzii* ‘moved here the hungered’.

<sup>53</sup> Translates the Slavonic participle *мъщѣж* (*Old Church Slavonic Dictionary*, [in:] Gorazd. *The Old Church Slavonic Digital Hub*, ed. Š. PÍLÁT, Prague 2016–2020, <http://gorazd.org/gulliver/> [14 IV 2023], s.v. *мъщѣж* ‘1. to revenge, to punish; 2. to defend, to vindicate’, which renders the Greek *ἐκδικῶν* with the same two meanings, cf. *LSJ*, s.v. ~). There is no such polysemous verb in Romanian; consequently, the translator, who must opt for one of the meanings, chooses the second, following the context and the coordinating preposition *и* = Rom. *și* ‘and’: *tu milostiv era lor și pădzește la toate începăturile lor* ‘You were merciful towards them and guarded all their inceptions’. The reviewers of subsequent Psalters opt for the first meaning; cf. *Dicționarul Tezaur al Limbii Române* [Thesaurus Dictionary of the Romanian Language], București 2010, <https://dlri.ro/> [14 IV 2023], s.v. *izbândi*.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. I. DIACONESCU, *Infinitivul lung în secolul al XVI-lea* [The Long Infinitive in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century], SCL 18.4, 1967, p. 442: *the construction of the type ‘preposition de + a + long infinitive’ has a restricted circulation, occurring in most instances, only in syntactic situations, as an element aimed to complete*

and deverbal nouns in genitive<sup>55</sup>, while in two other occurrences (Ps 78:3 and 93:1) is attached to a copulative verb<sup>56</sup>. Since the Slavonic syntagm *градъ обитєлныи* is not translated homogenously in PH (Ps 106:4 *cetației de mânrecare*, Ps 106:6 *cetate de-a mânecarea*, Ps 106:36 *cețăi de agonisită*) we can assume that the prepositional structure (*de + a + long infinitive*) is not limited to translating a Slavonic genitive attribute and could have been used for rendering a participle with pronounced nominal value.

Some of the non-clause translation in PH are rendered in subsequent texts by subordinates or regent clauses, yet in some instances the PH translations are either retained, as in Ps 106:36 *flămândzii* ‘hungered (ones)’, or modified in reverse: turning the relative clause into a noun/substantive adjective, as in Ps 90:1 *viu agiutoriu*, PV, PS *viu în agiutoriu*, Ps77 *viu întru ajutoriu*, Ps89 *viețuitoriu întru ajutoriu*, all meaning ‘alive (in) the help’, as opposed to PH *care vie în agiutoriu* and Pan *cela ce viețuiaște în ajutoriu*, both translatable as ‘the one who lives in the help’. In respect to PH, we can say that the redactors of the later Romanian Psalters (starting with PV and ending with Pan) do not leave intact any of the translations of the Slavonic participles, either using a dependent clause instead of a non-periphrastic solution, meddling with tense and number of the verb, changing the topic, adding prepositions, using synonyms etc. Ps89 and Pan seem to favour certain readings in PH over those in the other Psalters.

One of the common features of the OxG is the rendering of the active present participle by a subordinate clause whose core is a verb in the past tense, usually in the imperfect. More rarely, translations in this group transform the participle into a main clause. Some imperfect forms could indicate the intention to harmonize the subordinate with an imperfect in the main clause or in the clause coordinated with the one in which the participle is translated: Ps 98:8 (PV, PS, Ps89) Ps 98:8 (PV, PS, Ps89) *milositiv erai lor și izbândiiai* ‘you were merciful to them and avenged’; Ps 100:5 (PV) *ce clevetiia... acesta-i goniia* ‘who spoke ill... this one

---

*the meaning of certain verbs or verbal phrases.* A. DRAGOMIRESCU, *Particularități sintactice ale limbii române în context romanic. Supinul* [Syntactic Features of Romanian in Romance Context. The Supine], București 2013, p. 140–144 shows that the infinitive is gradually replaced by the supine. We say that the construction is only probable in PH because the manuscript reads *дѣи агрѣнарѣк* and the particle *a* is restored by specialists’ transcriptions such as *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki. Studiu filologic...*, p. 154.

<sup>55</sup> E.g., Ps 54:24 *în puțulu de-a putredirea* ‘in the well of rotting’, *Вон въ студенѣцѣхъ истлѣнниа* (Gen sg., cf. Gr. διαφθοράς); Ps 93:1 *Dumnezeu e de-a fălosirea* ‘God is of pride’, *Бѣ льстѣи* (Gen pl., cf. Gr. ἐκδικήσεων), Ps 106:7 *to <i>ntra în cetate de-a mâ<nre>carea* ‘go in a citadel of habitation’, *Вѣ въиити въ градъ ѡбитѣлныи* (Acc, vs. Gr. Gen κατοικητηρίου); Ps 107:11 *Cine mă va duce în cetate de-a chinuirea* ‘Who will guide me in a citadel of torment’, *Вон кѣто вѣдетѣ ма въ градъ ѡбстоианиа* (Gen, cf. Gr. περιοχῆς). It is unclear whether the translations *fălosirea* and *chinuirea* are interpretive, originate from an unknown Slavonic redaction or represent errors.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. A. DRAGOMIRESCU, *Particularități sintactice...*, p. 144; I. DIACONESCU, *Infinitivul lung...*, p. 442. The verb *a fi* ‘to be’ in the Romanian translation of Ps 93:1 has no support in the source texts; *e* represents in fact not a verbal form, but the participle used in Old Romanian to translate the Slavonic participle *же*. However, we have not identified a Slavonic text with the reading *бѣ же льстѣни*.

drove them out'; Ps 100:6 *ce îmbla... acesta-mi/aceia-mi slujii* 'who walked... this one/these served me' (in all translations, except for Pan, which restores the participle to the present tense and translates the verb using past perfect: *cela ce umblă... acela au slujit* 'the one who walks... that one served'); Ps 100:7 (Ps77, Ps89) *nu viia... ce făcea trufă, ce grăia... nu deregea/isprăvia* 'dwelt not... who made (i.e. displayed) pride, who spoke... did not conduct'.

In certain instances, the participle is translated in the present tense even when the main verb remains in the past tense: Ps 100:7 PH *nu viia<sup>IMP</sup>... cinre face* 'did not dwell... who does' și Pan *n-au lăcuit<sup>PERF</sup>... cela ce face*, both opting however for the past tense in the case of the second Slavonic participle in the verse: PH *grăia nedreptate, nu isprăvia* 'spoke injustice, did not conduct' and Pan *cela ce au grăit ceale nedreapte nu se-au îndireptat* 'the one who spoke those unfair, did not correct'.

In some cases, all translations resort to the same solutions, even if they change the word order or use different lexical material. In Ps 100:9, all the Psalters translate the participle using a subjective clause, with the verb in imperfect, in agreement with the Slavonic imperfect in the main clause: *și cei ce se lăuda cu menre/lăuda-mă blăstăma-se/giura-se* 'and those who boasted with me/praised (me), cursed (me)/swore' (the 16<sup>th</sup> century Psalters), whereas Pan: *și ceia ce mă lăuda se jura cu mine* 'and those who praised me, swore with me' changes the word order to render the message more clearly, emphasizing the fact that the prepositional object is related to the verb *jura* 'swore', rather than to *lăuda* 'praise'.

In some cases, the Romanian Psalters translate the participle using imperfect tense verbs in correlation with another past tense verb in the context:

- 1) analytic past perfect: Ps 106:34 PV, PS *pus-au<sup>PERF</sup> riure... de reale ce viia<sup>IMPERF</sup>* '(he) put rivers... from the evils of (those) who lived';
- 2) aorist: Ps 82:3 PH *cei ce gilăluia<sup>IMP</sup>... ridicară<sup>AOR</sup>*, the OxG *cei ce ur(r)ia<sup>IMP</sup>... ridicară<sup>AOR</sup>* 'those who detested... lifted', but Ps89 *cei ce te urâră<sup>AOR</sup>*, Pan *ceia ce te urăsc<sup>PRES</sup>, rădicară*, switching to either present, or aorist for the participle **НЕНАВИДЦЕН**; Ps 100:3 PV, PS, Ps77, Ps89 *ce feaceră<sup>AOR</sup> treacere/călcare, urăiu/urrăre* 'who made transgression, (I) hated<sup>AOR</sup>'; Ps 106:23 the OxG *gios mergea<sup>IMP</sup>... ce făcea<sup>IMP</sup>... acei vădzură<sup>AOR</sup>* 'down went... who did... those saw'; In Ps 100:4, PS, PV, Ps77 and Ps89 translate the participle by an attributive clause with the verb in the aorist, in agreement with the regime of the verb in the subordinating clause: *(cel) ce feri-se<sup>AOR</sup> de mine, răul, nu cunoscuu<sup>AOR</sup>* 'who turned aside from me, the evil one, I did not know'; in contrast, Pan renders both verbs in the simple past tense, also changing the word order for more clarity: *pre hicleanul ce se-au abătut de la mine nu l-am cunoscut* 'the evil one who deviated from me I did not know'.

A closer examination of Ps 100 shows that the translators or redactors are not always consistent, even in verses occurring in proximity. In Ps 100:4, where the Slavonic text following the paragraph described above is identical, with the participle denoting persons with reprehensible behavior and verbs in the past tense<sup>57</sup> indicating punitive measures, the Romanian translations oscillate between aorist (PS, Ps77 *ce cleveti... acesta mânaiu*) and imperfect (PV *ce clevetiia... acesta-i goniia*) or both (Ps89 *cel ce clevetiia... acesta gonii*)<sup>58</sup>. In the same psalm present participle  $\text{ТВОРАЩА}$  occurs twice '(the ones) doing' (Ps 100:3, 8), yet the translation is not identical. PH translates the first participle by the direct object clause placed before it, with the verb in the present tense, whereas the second participle is rendered by a noun (Ps 100:3 *cei ce facu călcare, gîlăluuu* 'the ones who do transgression I detested'; Ps 100:8 *se pierdzu... toți făcătorii* 'to destroy... all doers'). The reviewers of the following Romanian versions translate the first participle using the aorist, in agreement with the Slavonic aorist (PS, Ps77, Ps89 <pre> *ce feaceră treacere/călcare, ur<ă>iu* 'those who did transgression (I) hated'<sup>59</sup>), whereas the second is rendered in the present tense, in agreement with the Slavonic infinitive in the context, translated by either the subjunctive or infinitive (*să piară*<sup>SUBJ</sup>/*să se cure*<sup>SUBJ</sup>/*a cura*<sup>NF</sup>... *toți ce/carii facu* 'to die/clear away... all who do'). In both cases, Pan chooses the standard solution of the relative clause with a present tense verb. In each case the translator chose the solution that best fits the context, even if the results are not necessarily similar.

In Ps 103:10, OxG uses the aorist to translate the Slavonic participle: *tremeseși izvoare în tăure/în balte/în balte/în iazere* '(you) sent springs in valleys/in lakes/in ponds'. The tense of the verb is preserved from one version to another, yet consistent efforts are directed into rendering the Slavonic term  $\text{ДЪБРЪ}$  'valley', for which we find not only different translations, but also a marginal note in Pan. PH and Pan render the verb in the present tense: *cela ce trimeși/tremeși* 'you who sends'. A similar pattern can be identified in several instances in Ps 106, where PV, PS, Ps77 and Ps89 translate the Slavonic active present participle by aorist (Ps 106:10) or imperfect (Ps 106:23, 34), as opposed to PH, which always uses the present tense: *cei ce șed* 'those who sit', *afundă-se* 'let them submerge', *celor ce lăcuiesc* 'to those who dwell'.

<sup>57</sup> Some Slavonic Psalters use imperfects ( $\text{ВОНЪЗНАХЪ}$ ,  $\text{ИЗГОНЯХЪ}$ ) to translate Greek imperfects (Gr. ἐγίνωσκον, ἐξεδίωκον), while others employ perfective verbs, thus aorists, in one or even both places (Sin,  $\text{ВУСЪПОЗНАХЪ}$ ,  $\text{ВЫГОНЯХЪ}$ ). It is for this reason that Romanian Psalters fluctuate between the two past tenses, and it becomes more apparent that PV was the first step in the Athonite revision of the Romanian texts.

<sup>58</sup> Pan once again takes distance from the Slavonic text, using present and perfect tenses in translation: *cela ce mozavireaste... pre acesta l-am gonit* 'the one who slanders... this one I cast out'.

<sup>59</sup> PV *urrâre* 'disdain', perhaps an erroneous reading.

In other instances, the OxG translates homogeneously in the present tense, whereas the other translations opt for the past tense Ps 91:8 *și crescū toți* ‘and all grow’<sup>60</sup>, as opposed to *izbucniră* ‘(they) broke out’ (PH), *rășăriră* ‘(they) arose/sprung’ (Ps89) and *crescură* ‘(they) grew’ (Pan). There are also exceptions within the group; in Ps 96:7, the text Ps77 does not use the present tense as the other translations and goes for *închinară-se* and *lăudă-se* ‘(they) worshiped, (he) boasted’. In Ps 98:1, the translations are challenged by the absence of both an expressed subject and an obvious subordinating relation, as well as by the lack of a predicative verb: *СѢДАНІ НА ХЕРОУВІМѢ ДА ПОДВИЖНИТ СѦ ЗЕМЛА* ‘(The one who is) sitting upon the cherubs, let the earth be shaken’. PH, PS and Ps89 resort to relative clauses with the verb in the present tense<sup>61</sup>, while Ps77 opts for either a past tense form or perhaps an unclear present tense (*ce șezu...* ‘who sat/sit...’)<sup>62</sup>; PV even omits the relative pronoun altogether (*șezu spre herovimi* ‘sat upon the cherubs’)<sup>63</sup>.

The semi-independent demonstrative<sup>64</sup>, used to introduce the subordinate relative clause<sup>65</sup>, is frequently omitted in OxG and we are not sure whether this is due to a language peculiarity specific to the area where the revision was done or the redactors aimed for a “more minimalist” translation, one closer to the Slavonic text. This decision becomes the source of some ambiguities, as in Ps 106:23, for instance, where the OxG proposes *giosu mergea în mare în corabie ce făcea faceri* ‘down went in the sea, in the ship who/that did doings’, and the reader might understand that the one *doing the doings* would be the *ship*. Pan solves this ambiguity by translating *ceia ce se pogoară în mare în corăbii, cea ce fac lucrure* ‘those who go down in the sea in ships, those who do things’. The lack of prepositional regime of direct objects or direct object clauses seems to contribute to this ambiguity, which is perceived by the modern reader, but may not have been as strange in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This feature is not necessarily characteristic to the popular language, but was rather common in translated texts<sup>66</sup>, due to pressure of the Slavonic model. However,

<sup>60</sup> In this instance, a confusion regarding the number that would result in a 3<sup>rd</sup> person aorist, (*el*) *crescu* (*pe*) *toți* ‘(he) raised (them) all’, is possible, but quite improbable.

<sup>61</sup> All equivalent to ‘the one who sits’ in Old Romanian.

<sup>62</sup> Although Romanian can use accent to differentiate between present (rhizotonic) and past tense, the accent notation in the early Romanian texts is not reliable enough.

<sup>63</sup> The translation in PV is either an attempt to slavishly follow the Slavonic, or a copying mistake.

<sup>64</sup> GALR, I, p. 246 uses the term “semi-independent pronoun” for the apheresis forms of demonstratives, explaining that in the old language this type of demonstrative was also used without apheresis.

<sup>65</sup> GALR, I, p. 282–283 shows that the two components of a syntagm of the type *cel ce* ‘that which’ have an autonomous morphosyntactic behaviour and the following decomposition is required: semi-independent demonstrative pronoun, followed by a subordinate introduced by a relative pronoun. The GALR authors speak about a “compound pronoun” only when referring to *ceea ce* (cf. GALR, II, p. 214).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. C. FRÂNCU, *Gramatica...*, p. 173: *usually, the direct object in the accusative without preposition reproduces non-prepositional constructions from foreign originals.*

it is certain that both types of relative subordinates, with or without demonstrative pronoun, can be identified in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian texts<sup>67</sup>. PS, PV, Ps77 and Ps89 have an almost categorical preference for the relative pronoun, using only the form *ce*, while *care* occurs only sporadically in PH (Ps 83:12 *carii împlă*) and Pan (Ps 90:6 *carii împlă*, 101:8 *pasăre carea...*)<sup>68</sup>.

Paraphrasing the verse Ps 43:14 in 78:4 allows us to check whether the Romanian translators and redactors had a unified approach in translating the same participle. The Slavonic text reads (Bon):

Ps 43:14 Положилъ ны еси поношению съсѣдомъ нашимъ. Подръжаніе и порджаніе същииимъ окрътъ насъ  
 ‘You put us (for) scorn to our neighbours. Ridicule and derision (to those) being around us’

Ps 78:4 Быхомъ поношению съсѣдомъ нашихъ. Подръжаніе и порджаніе същииимъ окрътъ насъ  
 ‘(We) were scorn to our neighbours. Ridicule and derision (to those) being around us’

In the first case, PH translates the first occurrence of the participle *същииимъ* by a pronominal object in the dative (or by a relative clause with the verb *a fi* ‘to be’ omitted in the first case): *batugiocură celor de pregiur de noi* ‘scorn to those around us’, while the second occurrence is translated by an analytic dative composed of the preposition *a* + relative pronoun in the accusative, omitting the verb in both cases<sup>69</sup>. The meaning of the analytic structure is clear, and the variation of synthetic dative *vs.* analytic dative could be explained by the existence of two distinct layers of language. PS and Ps77<sup>70</sup> translate in both cases by relative with the verb in the present tense (Ps 43 *ce-su*, *ce sânt* ‘who are’) or with the verb in the past continuous/imperfect (Ps 78 *ce era* ‘who were’). Ps89 *ce era* changes the present to imperfect and omits the verb in the second example, leaving only the relative pronoun<sup>71</sup>. Identical sentences with participial centers placed in similar contexts (main clause with the verb in the past tense) do not yield identical outcomes. Nevertheless,

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 64, 211–215.

<sup>68</sup> A phenomenon also pointed out in *ibidem*, p. 66. The relative pronoun *care* is missing from PV, PS and Ps77, but is not entirely absent from Ps89; cf. Ps 100:8 *toți carii fac fărăleage* ‘all who do unlawfulness’.

<sup>69</sup> This example of the analytic dative is not singular in PH (cf. Ps 143:3 *Omula a deșertu asemănă-se* ‘Man was likened to vanity’) and occurs sporadically in early Romanian texts; for further details and examples cf. Ș. GĂITĂNARU, *Cazul dativ în limba veche* [Dative in Old Romanian], AUAIC.L 61, 2015, p. 118, <https://www.diacronia.ro/ro/indexing/details/A24853/pdf> [14 IV 2023].

<sup>70</sup> PV does not preserve this fragment.

<sup>71</sup> Ps89 also replaces *batjocură* ‘scorn’ through *împuțaciune* ‘accusation’, which can be roughly regarded as synonyms, and uses a prepositional direct object: *pre noi* (Acc) instead of *noi* (N). This is not surprising, the revision of Ps89 was thorough, although not particularly courageous, and affected almost every verse.

in general, the selection of verbal forms is not random<sup>72</sup>. A homogenous approach will be reached by Pan – both participles translated by means of relative clauses in the present – in a more crystallized stage of literary Romanian.

Ps 103:2–5 captures all the stages of the translation of the Slavonic present participle in Romanian texts. All the Slavonic participles in the three verses of the beginning of the psalm are present active participles. All except *палашь* (AccSgMa adjective) are in NoSgMa. In PV, the first participle is copied erroneously, resulting in a form that could be mistaken for the aorist of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person (but, as we said, it has not been convincingly proved that the intercalated Slavonic text participated in the revision). Pan translates almost all Slavonic participles by an enumeration of relative clauses with the verb in the present tense introduced by a semi-independent pronoun: *cela ce te îmbraci...*, *cela ce întinzi...*, *cela ce acoperi* ‘the one who...’ etc. The Romanian Psalters oscillate between aorist and imperfect and between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. PH proposes verbs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person aorist, then the imperfect, in all cases: *Îmbrăcași*<sup>AOR</sup>... *întinseși*<sup>AOR</sup>... *acoperiși*<sup>AOR</sup>... *îmblășii*<sup>IMP</sup>... *făceai*<sup>IMP</sup>... *urdziai*<sup>IMP</sup> ‘(you) dressed... stretched... covered... were doing... were weaving’. The OxG translates the first three verbs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person aorist<sup>73</sup>,

<sup>72</sup> G. CHIVU, *Limba română de la primele texte până la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea. Variante stilistice* [The Romanian Language from the Oldest Texts to the End of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century], București 2000, p. 37 holds a different view in noting *attention must be paid, first and foremost, to the absence of any restriction in the selection of persons, modes, tenses, or voices. The transition from one verbal form to another is made, even in restrained contexts, regardless of the objective or subjective character, of the narrative or rhetorical structure of the text*, providing several examples, the first of which is taken from the *Coresi's Apostle*, Brașov, 1563–1566, [in:] *Codicele Bratul. Ediție de text* [Bratul Codex. Critical Edition], ed. et trans. A. GAFTON, Iași 2003: *Mirară-se toți și nu se dumirea, unul cătră alalt grăia ce amu să fie aceasta, e alții batjocorea, grăia că de must împluți sănt* ‘all were wondering<sup>AOR</sup> and did not understand<sup>IMP</sup>’, were speaking<sup>IMP</sup> one to another: “now what would that be<sup>SUBJ</sup>”, but others were scoffing<sup>IMP</sup>, spoke that they are full of must<sup>PASSVOICE</sup>’. However, comparing this sequence with the Athonite Slavonic version of *Mărășescu's Apostle* (BAR, Ms. Slav. 93, c. 1500, available online at: <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-sl-93> [14 IV 2023]), we notice that all the Romanian verbal forms follow the Slavonic ones, except for the first one: *диваѣхъже са* ‘they were wondering’, (imperfect, 6<sup>th</sup> person) *въси недомышлѣахъ* ‘they did not understand’ (imperfect, 6<sup>th</sup> person) *единъ къ другомоу глѣаще* ‘saying’ (pres. act. part.) *что оубо хощеть се быти* ‘want to be’ (present + infinitive, structure that can be confused with the analytic future) *ини же роуугащсе са* ‘mocking’ (reflexive present participle with active value) *глѣахъ* ‘they said’ (imperfect 6<sup>th</sup> pers.) *пакъ мьстомя исплѣнени сят* ‘are full, (passive voice). The Romanian translation expresses present participles through the imperfect, in agreement with the basic tense of the narrative. The translation of the first verb into aorist is due to the original translation since it is also found in the *Bratul Codex*, “Dosoftei” Memorial House in Iași, Ms. Rom. 14, c. 1550, [in:] *Codicele Bratul...* Otherwise, the persons, voices, modes, and tenses are those of the Slavonic text, which the translator transfers to the verbs he uses to translate the participles. The only difference from *Codicele Bratul...* is the notation of the verb in a subjunctive structure *va să fie*.

<sup>73</sup> Except for Ps77 *îneștitu-te-ai*, which is translated by past perfect. PV seems to use an aorist *înești-te*, but we consider the reading a haplogly resulted from the erroneous copying of the *инвештитѣ* sequence.



and the others in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person aorist, e.g.: PS *încești-te... întinseși... coperiși... puse... îmblă... feace... urdzi*<sup>74</sup>. PH (the text believed to be the oldest) identifies the 2<sup>nd</sup> person (Г҃Ъ Б҃Е МОИ В҃ЪЗВЕЛИЧИЛ СЯ ЕСИ С҃ВѢЛО, PH *Doamne, Domnul meu, măritute-ai vârtos* ‘O Lord, my God, you have magnified yourself greatly’) and the past tense context of the previous verse (В҃Ъ ВЕЛЛЕКОПѢ ОБЛЕЧЕ СЯ, PH *întru mare frum-seațe învâscuși-Te*<sup>75</sup> ‘as in great beauty You clothed yourself’). The participles are then translated by predicates, the translator choosing the past tense form regarded as most appropriate, first by the aorist, then by the imperfect, while the adjectival participle is rendered by an adjective in the gerund (*focul arzându* ‘burning fire’). Subsequently as the OxG reviewers were not satisfied with the original solution, they must have consulted other versions in the attempt to find a better translation. Lexically, PV replaces *luminra* with *lumea* ‘light’ vs ‘world’, *tăria* with *învârtoșarea* ‘solidity’ and *focul arzându* with *focu aprinsu* ‘lit fire’ (participle instead of gerund), to eventually restore the last four verbs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The reasons for the substitution of person are unclear. The most parsimonious explanation would be that the reviewers of the OxG noted the shift from nominal/short Slavonic participles to pronominal/long participles and reacted accordingly<sup>76</sup>. PS and Ps77 correct the semantic confusion arising from the double meaning of СВѢТЪ, namely ‘light’ and ‘world’, change one preposition (from *ca cu cămeașe* in *ca în cămeașe*) and eliminate another (*puse nuorii [în] suirea sa*), adjust the translation *învârtoșarea* replacing it by *vârtutea* and change the first aorist into a perfect tense, preserving the number regime of the verbs. Ps89 adjusts the translation of *vârtute* once more, opting for *vârtosul*, then inserts two relative pronouns before the verbs translating participles: *care îmblăși... ce feceși*. The insertion of the relative pronoun usually occurs earlier in the process of emending the text of the Psalm and is frequently recorded in the OxG in relation to PH, but the lack of a subordinating element explains the reluctance of older texts to resort to relative pronouns. The process will be completed by Pan, where the participles in Ost are translated in Romanian by subordinates introduced by the relative pronoun (*cela ce* ‘that who’) in the present tense, except for the latter, where the past tense is preferred for obvious reasons – the earth has already been created and translating the utterance in the present tense would make no sense.

<sup>74</sup> Except for the readings described in the previous note, the verbs coincide in the OxG.

<sup>75</sup> The separation of verses in *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki. Studiu filologic...*, p. 172 is erroneous. The verb *învâscuși-te* is part of the previous verse; cf. also the sequencing in Ps89 *ши ѱ море фрѣлицѣ фвещитѣ*; moreover, the PH manuscript clearly marks the ending of the sentence with a period.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Ох о дѣлю се... пропинаю... покрываю... полагаю... ходи... твори... осниваю* (emphasis added). Nor can we exclude the influence of another language, cf. *Psalterium Romanum*, [in:] *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*, ed. D.R. WEBBER, Vatican 1953, where the transition from the 2<sup>nd</sup> person (*qui tegis*) to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (*qui ponit, qui ambulat, qui facit, qui fundavit*) is made in the same place, yet in this case we consider that the Slavonic text has sufficient explanatory force.

### 2.3.2. Equivalence by gerund

The gerund is rarely used in translating the Slavonic active present participle. In the analyzed interval, the gerund is used in two situations:

a) when two Slavonic participles have the same referent, for instance in Ps 106:23 *низсходѡщи... творѡщи* ‘the ones descending... the ones doing’, translated in PH by a verbal center determined by an adverbial gerund (*afundă-se... făcând* ‘(they) descend... doing’), and by Ps89, conversely, by a gerund that anticipates the verbal center (*jos-mergând ... ce făcea* ‘descending... (those) who did’). The OXG turns the first participle into a main clause and the second into a subject clause (*gios mergea... ce făcea* ‘went down... [those] that did’), while Pan resorts to the simple and clear solution of enumeration, logically linking the subordinate clauses to the following sentence: *ceia ce se pogoară... cea ce fac... aceia vădzură* ‘the ones that descend... the ones that do... those saw’. The same happens Ps 91:12, where the translator must render two Slavonic participles, one of which is appositional (*на вѣстаѡщѡхъ на мѧ лѣкавноуѡщѡхъ* ‘upon the ones rising up against me, the ones acting wickedly’). PH translates the first with a direct object clause and uses an adverbial gerund for the second (*carii se scoală... hicleinindu* ‘the ones who rise... acting wickedly’). The OXG uses the aorist for the first participle and a noun for the second (*se sculară ... hitleanii* ‘(who) rose... the wicked’), and Ps89 reverts to the PH solution, but substitutes aorist for future tense (*cei ce scula-se-vor ... hitlenind* ‘the ones that will rise... acting wickedly’). Pan rephrases and disambiguates (*ceia ce se scoală..., carii hiclesesc* ‘the ones who rise..., who act wickedly’). In Ps 96:7, only Ps89 turns the second participle in *кланѣщи сѧ истоукающихъ, хвалѡщи сѧ о идолахъ* into an adverbial gerund ‘(the ones) venerating the statues, (the ones) boasting with the idols’ – *cei ce închină-se istucanilor, lăudându-se de idoli* ‘the ones who venerate the statues, boasting the idols’.

b) when the participle is interpreted as an action which is concomitant with another action. In Ps 83:12, PV uses a gerund where other Psalters (PH, Ps89, Pan) use a direct object clause (*carii îmblă fără rău* ‘who walk without evil’) or a compound object (*îmblătoriul fără rău* ‘the walker without evil’ in PS, Ps77). In Ps 98:8, Pan uses the gerund *izbândind* ‘revenging’ in Old Romanian, to express an action secondary to that which the agent (the Lord) is performing (*ai fost loru milostiv* ‘You have been merciful towards them’). At the same time, Pan ignores the Slavonic imperfect *вываши* and translates the action by an aorist. The other Romanian translations render the Slavonic imperfect and, except for PH, which translates the participle with present tense (*pădzeaște* ‘guards’), transform the participle into the core of an independent sentence with the verb in the past continuous (PV, PS, Ps89 *și izbândii*) or past simple (Ps77 *și izbândit-ai*).

Although Table 2 might suggest the opposite, gerunds are not avoided at all costs in the O<sub>x</sub>G or in Pan. Thus, PS and Ps77 resort to the gerund even in instances where a periphrasis would have been at least as fitting: Ps 5:12 **И ПОХВАЛАТЪ СЯ ТОВОЖ ЛЮБАЩЕ(И) ИМА ТВОЕ**, with the participle translated by gerund in PS *și se laud cu tire iubindu numele tău* ‘and (they) boast with you loving your name’, as opposed to PH *carii iubescu numele tău* and Ps89 *ceia ce iubăscu numele tău* both ‘(the ones) who love your name’; Ps 9:17 **ЗНАЕМЪ ЕСТЬ ГЪ СЪДЪБЫ ТВОРА**, where the underlined participle is translated with a gerund in PS, Ps77, Ps89 *județ făcând* ‘judgement doing’ (with slight variation), while PH and Pan opt for a predicate: *giudecari face* ‘does judgements’ and *cela ce face judecățile* ‘the one doing the judgements’. Naturally, the Slavonic past participle is translated with predictable past participles in all Romanian texts (*știut, cunoscut*)<sup>77</sup>. A similar pattern can be seen in Ps 13:4 **СЪНЪДАЩЕН ЛЮДИ МОИ ВЪ ХЛЪБА МЪСТО**, translated with a present participle (gerund) in PS, Ps77 and Ps89 *mâncând oamenii mei în loc de pâine* ‘eating my people instead of bread’, while PH and Pan use a relative clause, although in different tenses.

Participles expressing actions that are concomitant with those of the subordinating verb are occasionally translated by gerunds<sup>78</sup>, with some obvious exceptions<sup>79</sup>.

In Ps 106:36, all Romanian translations use the noun *flămân(d)zii* ‘(the) hungry (ones)’ (or a compound prepositional object such as in Pan *pre cei flămânzi*), yet the gerundial or gerundive nature of the adjective *flămând* is debatable.

<sup>77</sup> Slavonic passive participles are fewer and do not pose any problems of transposition into Romanian; the solution provided by the first translation being repeated basically unchanged in all subsequent Psalters. The same can be said of the passive voice and the past tense, forms which are easily rendered in. Occasional mistakes do happen; for example, PV uses passive voice instead of past perfect in Ps 106:9 *că săturatu iaste sufletul desert* ‘as satiated is the hollow soul’ for Slavonic **ИКО НАСИТИЛЪ ИЕ ДШОУ ТЪШОУ** (Bel). Other Psalters have accurate, albeit slightly varying, translations.

<sup>78</sup> Ps 125:5–6 **СЪЖЩЕН СЪВЗАМИ ВЪ РАДОСТИ ПОЖЪНЖТ. ХЪДАЩЕН ХЪЖДААХЖ И ПЛАКААХЖ СЯ МЕТАЖЩЕ СЪМЕНА СВОА. ГРАДЖЩЕ ЖЕ ПРІИДЖТЬ РАДОСТІЖ ВЪЗЕМЛАЩЕ РЖКОЖТИ СВОЖ**. For brevity’s sake, we will only give the corresponding Romanian translations for the underlined Slavonic verbs and participles: PH *Sămănătoriu, sămănând seacera. Cei îmblători îmblară și plânseră, aruncând. Vinidu, venri-vor, luându*, PV, PS *Ce samărară, secera-vor. Îmblîndu, îmbla și plîngea lepădîndu, viindu, viru, luîndu*, Ps77 *Ce seamenă, secera-vor. Îmblînd, îmbla și plîngea, lepădînd; viind, vin, luînd*, Ps89 *Cine seamănă, secera-vor. Îmblînd, îmblară și plîngea aruncînd; viind, veni-vor, luîndu-ș*, Pan *Ceia ce seamănă, vor secera. Umblînd, mergea și arunca plîngînd, viind, vor veni, rădicînd*. The pattern is quite clear; PH oscillates between nouns and present participles and no translation shies away from the present participle/gerund.

<sup>79</sup> Ps77:9 **СЪНОВЕ ЕФРЕМОВИ НАЛАЩАЩЕ И СТРЕЛЪЖЩЕ ЛЖКЫ**, translated using gerunds in PH *întinzându și săgetându* ‘stretching and shooting’, while all the other texts use relative clauses.

### 3. Conclusions

Our analysis allowed us not only to understand the rendition of Slavonic participles in the early Romanian Psalters and describe the employed strategies in detail, but also to cast further light on the relationship between the Psalters themselves. The analysis of these texts indicates that PS, Ps77 and PV contain the same translation/revision. The strategies adopted in PV are fairly identical to those in PS and Ps77. The status of intermediate text between the stage represented by PH and that represented by PS and Ps77 is proven not only by the dating of PV, but also by the principles of *lectio difficilior* and *lectio brevior*.

Regarding the translation strategies, it can be safely said that, even though some of the editors seem to have been guided by a series of basic principles, the translation of Slavonic participles into Romanian is not an automatic process. Countless identical Slavonic readings, placed in contexts with a similar meaning, generate inconsistent translations of the Romanian text from one redaction stage to another. Since the principle of literality was not always followed for the translation of frequently used Slavonic words with a clear meaning, one cannot expect formal equivalence in the case of complex structures such as participles. The general conclusion is that translators and redactors of Romanian Psalters were all aware of the fact that they could not translate Slavonic participles literally and consequently attempted to render their meaning by resorting most often to a solution that implied turning participles into predicates. This solution will be adopted almost universally a century later, in the translation of the *Old Testament* attributed to Daniil Panoneanul. The transformation of an adjective into a verb brings obvious challenges, since, to ensure the accuracy and uniformity of the message, the Romanian translator has to decide on the grammatical framing of the verb. The significant variations in terms of number, gender and tense indicate that the task was far from easy. The translator had to make use of the copied or translated text, of his own comprehension, of the tradition of other Romanian or Slavonic texts, or perhaps even of texts in other languages and aimed to provide a contextual and, dare we say, clearer translation<sup>80</sup>. The challenge is real, since the redactor is forced by the very nature of the Romanian language to resort to a predicate that must be placed in a grammatical configuration organically dependent on the context.

---

<sup>80</sup> However, dividing the language of the early Romanian Psalters into “difficult” and “easy to understand” by the standards of the 16<sup>th</sup> century reader is a complicated task. A. Gafton expresses a similar idea in his preface to the edition of *Bratul Codex*, when stating that the punctuation marks have been placed according to the current norm, yet without attempting to modernize and modify the text or to clarify aspects about which one cannot say for sure how were actually understood by the scribe (*Codicele Bratul...*, p. VI).

The general tendency of the OxG (PV, PS, Ps77, Ps89) is to render Slavonic present participles by predicates, using verbs that are appropriate for the logic of the narrative. Other types of translation are sporadically added to this basic strategy: by present or past participle, noun or adjective, predicative, long or short infinitive. Given the nature of the text, which often describes the relationship between man and God in terms of interactions that already took place, the logical tense of the narrative is often the past. If the Slavonic participle is rendered by a subordinate, the verb tense is borrowed from the verb of the subordinating clause. Although there is an obvious tendency to use the imperfect or aorist, there is no uniform principle. On the contrary, the translator or reviser tries to decide in each particular case which tense would be more appropriate and whether the reading needs revision. The cases in which one reading is prevalent in this group of four texts are quite numerous, but variation does exist. The present tense is used less often than in PH or Pan. This permanent uncertainty regarding the way Slavonic present participles should be rendered is clearly illustrated in the first verses of Psalm 103.

The study of Slavonic participles from the perspective of their translation into Romanian enables us to conclude that the editors of the first Romanian Psalters walk a very fine line between fidelity towards the Slavonic text and fidelity to its meaning, or, in Eugene Nida's terms, between formal and dynamic equivalence. The Romanian translator tries to identify the solution that comes closest to the meaning, while remaining least removed from the form. While calque remains the most successful solution, as the transfer of form into the target language entails at least some transfer of meaning, the participles, however, highlight the tension inherent in a situation where meaning cannot always enter the target language along with the form. PH witnesses a stage in which scholars decide on the meaning and look for the form that is least remote from the Slavonic text. We should keep in mind that "least remote" does not equal "closest". In PS and in Coresi's texts, some solutions begin to gain ground, while solutions regarded as unsatisfactory are gradually eliminated. These texts generally prefer turning participles into predicates, a solution which best translates the meaning, although the outcome is rather rigid in terms of form (especially in the case of relative clauses introduced by the same relative pronoun with no inflected forms *ce*), slightly artificial and generating ambiguities. This might be a concession to the compact form of the Slavonic participle.

In the following century, the focus turns steadily towards meaning. Pan, the *Old Testament* translation, is quite predictable in rendering Slavonic participles, almost always opting for dynamic equivalence and changing the word order whenever necessary. By comparison, in terms of vocabulary, form seems to be more resistant over meaning. The translator of Pan often inserts marginal notes pointing to the tension between form and meaning. As far as the translation of the Slavonic present participle is concerned, the history of the translation of Psalms into Romanian

represents neither the transition from formal to dynamic equivalence – in PH, the efforts to translate meaning at the expense of form are obvious – nor the history of two mutually contradictory schools – the translation in Coresi's Psalters is more formal, yet more accurate – but one in which the two approaches coexist. In time, the redactors of the early Romanian Psalters came to understand that *прѣложити оубо же мало прѣдати мѣного тлѣкоуѣ*<sup>81</sup>.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Bratul Codex*, “Dosoței” Memorial House in Jași, Ms. Rom. 14, c. 1550, [in:] *Codicele Bratul. Ediție de text*, ed. et trans. A. GAFTON, Jași 2003.
- “*Ciobanu*” *Psalter*, Library of the Romanian Academy, Ms. Rom. 3465, 16<sup>th</sup> century, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-rom-3465> [14 IV 2023].
- Coresi's Apostle*, Brașov, 1563–1566, [in:] *Codicele Bratul. Ediție de text*, ed. et trans. A. GAFTON, Jași 2003.
- “*Hurmuzaki*” *Psalter*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Rom. 3077, 16<sup>th</sup> century, [in:] *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki. Studiu filologic, studiu lingvistic*, vol. I, ed. I. GHETIÈ, M. TEODORESCU, București 2005, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-rom-3077> [14 IV 2023].
- Mărășescu's Apostle*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Slv. 93, c. 1500, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-sl-93> [14 IV 2023].
- Old Testament*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Rom. 4389, 17<sup>th</sup> century, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/biblia> [14 IV 2023].
- Old Testament of Nicolae Milescu Spătarul*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Rom. 45, 17<sup>th</sup> century, [in:] *Vechiul Testament – Septuaginta. Versiunea lui Nicolae Spătarul Milescu (Ms. 45 de la Biblioteca Filialei din Cluj a Academiei Române)*, ed. E. MUNTEANU, A.-M. GÎNSAC, L.-G. MUNTEANU, M. UNGUREANU, Iași 2017.
- Ostrog Bible*, 1581–1582, [in:] *Ostroz'ka Biblija*, ed. R. TURKONJAK, Lviv 2006.
- Oxford Psalter*, Bodleian Library, Ms. e Mus 184, 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- Psalter from Voroneț*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Rom. 693, 16<sup>th</sup> century, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrite/item/ms-rom-693> [14 IV 2023].
- Psalterium Bononiense*, Bologna University Library, Ms. Slv. 2499, [in:] *Psalterium Bononiense, interpretationem veterem Slavicam cum aliis codicibus collatam, adnotationibus ornatam, appendicibus auctam*, with readings from *Sofia Psalter*, *Bucharest Psalter* (= *Buc*), *Sinaitic Psalter* (= *Sim*), vol. I–II, ed. V. JAGIĆ, Vindobonae 1907.
- Psalterium Romanum*, [in:] *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*, ed. D.R. WEBBER, Vatican 1953.
- Romanian Psalter*, Brașov, 1570, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, I–630855, [in:] *Coresi. Psaltirea slavo-română (1577) în comparație cu psaltrile coresiene din 1570 și 1589*, ed. S. TOMA, București 1976.

<sup>81</sup> “Translating is betraying a little while interpreting a lot”.

- Scheian Psalter*, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, Ms. Rom. 449, 16<sup>th</sup> century, [in:] *Psaltirea Scheiană (1482)*, Ms. 449 BAR, vol. I, *Textul în facsimile și transcriere, cu variante din Coresi (1577)*, ed. I. BIANU, București 1889, <https://medievalia.com.ro/manuscrise/item/ms-rom-449> [14 IV 2023].
- Slavonic-Romanian Psalter*, Brașov, 1577, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, I–630858, [in:] *Coresi. Psaltirea slavo-română (1577) în comparație cu psaltirile coresiene din 1570 și 1589*, ed. S. TOMA, București 1976.
- Slavonic-Romanian Psalter*, Brașov, 1589, Library of the Romanian Academy, București, II–630844, [in:] *Coresi. Psaltirea slavo-română (1577) în comparație cu psaltirile coresiene din 1570 și 1589*, ed. S. TOMA, București 1976.

## Secondary Literature

- AVRAM M., *Există un gerunziu trecut în limba română?*, “Studii și cercetări lingvistice” 37.2, 1986, p. 153–157.
- BĂRBULESCU I., *Curențe literare la români în perioada slavonismului cultural*, București 1928.
- BURLACU C., *The Rendering of Infinitival Constructions in the Psalter Text: Greek to Slavonic, and Slavonic to Romanian*, “Palaeobulgarica” 45.1, 2021, p. 37–56.
- CAMARĂ I., *Cele mai vechi psaltiri românești și redacțiile psaltirii slavone*, [in:] *Caietele “Sextil Pușcariu”. Actele Conferinței Internaționale Zilele “Sextil Pușcariu”, Cluj-Napoca, September 9–10 2021*, ed. E. PAVEL et al., Cluj-Napoca 2021, p. 72–81, <https://doi.org/10.33993/csp.2021.5.69.78>
- CAMARĂ I., *New Information on the Slavonic Sources of the Oldest Romanian Psalters*, “Palaeobulgarica” 66, 2022, p. 81–94.
- CANCEL P., *Studiul verbului slav*, București 1938.
- CHIVU G., *Limba română de la primele texte până la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea. Variante stilistice*, București 2000.
- DIACONESCU I., *Infinitivul lung în secolul al XVI-lea*, “Studii și cercetări lingvistice” 18.4, 1967, p. 435–446.
- Dicționarul tezaur al limbii române*, vol. I–XIX, București 2010, <https://dlri.ro/> [14 IV 2023].
- DRAGOMIRESCU A., *Particularități sintactice ale limbii române în context romanic. Supinul*, București 2013.
- An Early Slavonic Psalter from Rus'*, ed. M. ALTBAUER, Harvard 1978.
- Enciclopedia limbii române*, ed. M. SALA, M. AVRAM, J. BALACCIU-MATEI, I. FISCHER, I. GHEȚIE, București 2006.
- FRÂNCU C., *Geneza și evoluția formelor verbale supracompuse în limba română*, “Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară” 29, 1983–1984, p. 23–62.
- FRÂNCU C., *Gramatica limbii române vechi (1521–1780)*, Iași 2009.
- GĂITĂNARU Ș., *Cazul dativ în limba veche*, “Analele Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iași. Lingvistică” 61, 2015, p. 109–129.
- GHEȚIE I., *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki și filiația psaltirilor românești din secolul al XVI-lea și al XVII-lea*, “Limba română” 27.1, 1978, p. 51–57.
- GHEȚIE I., MAREȘ AL., *De când se scrie românește*, București 2001.
- GÎNSAC A.-M., *Gr. ἀπό βάρων ἐλεφαντίνων în vechile versiuni românești ale Psaltirii*, “Philologica Jassyensia” 18.2, 2022, p. 75–82.
- Gramatica limbii române*, vol. I–II, coord. V. GUȚU-ROMALO, București 2008.
- LIDDELL H.G., SCOTT R., JONES H.S. et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996.

- LUNT H.G., *Old Church Slavonic Grammar*, <sup>7</sup>Berlin–New York 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110876888>
- MACROBERT C.M., *The Problems in the Study of the 'Athonite' Redaction of the Psalter in South Slavonic Manuscripts*, [in:] *Studies of Medieval South Slavic Manuscripts. Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Hilandar Conference held from March 28 to 30 1989*, ed. P. Ivić, Belgrade 1995, p. 195–212.
- MACROBERT C.M., *The Textual Tradition of the Church Slavonic Psalter up to the Fifteenth Century*, [in:] *Interpretation of the Bible. The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed. J. KRAŠOVEC, Ljubljana–Sheffield 1998, p. 921–942.
- MAREȘ AL., *Considerații pe marginea datării Psaltirii Hurmuzaki*, “Limba română” 4–6, 2000, p. 675–683.
- MAREȘ AL., *Datarea Psaltirilor Scheiană și Voronețeană*, “Limba română” 33.3, 1984, p. 191–198.
- MAREȘ AL., *Filiația psaltirilor românești din secolul al XVI-lea*, [in:] *Cele mai vechi texte românești. Contribuții filologice și lingvistice*, ed. I. GHEȚIE, București 1982, p. 207–261.
- MAREȘ AL., *O nouă psaltire slavo-română manuscrisă din secolul al XVI-lea*, [in:] *Studii de limbă literară și filologie*, vol. II, București 1972, p. 259–268.
- MOLDOVANU I., *Structura lingvistică a Bibliei de la București și problema contribuției sale la dezvoltarea limbii române literare*, “Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară” 39–41, 1999–2001, p. 65–100.
- NANDRIȘ G., *The Handbook of Old Slavonic*, London 1969.
- NICOLAE AL., *Omonimia sintactică a participiilor românești*, [in:] *Studii de gramatică. Omagiu Doamnei Profesoare Valeria Guțu-Romalo*, ed. R. ZAFIU, A.-M. MIHAIL, B. CROITOR, București 2009, p. 193–205.
- NIDA E., TABER C.R., *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Leiden 1982.
- Old Church Slavonic Dictionary*, [in:] *Gorazd. The Old Church Slavonic Digital Hub*, ed. Ș. PILĂT, Prague 2016–2020, <http://gorazd.org/gulliver/> [14 IV 2023].
- PANĂ-DINDELEGAN G., *Din nou despre participiu și supin. Câteva precizări*, “Studii și cercetări lingvistice” 58.1, 2007, p. 163–173.
- PANAITEȘCU P.P., *Începuturile și biruința scrisului în limba română*, București 1965.
- RĂDULESCU M., *Formele perifrastice “a fi” + gerunziul în textele românești traduse din secolul al XVI-lea*, “Studii și cercetări lingvistice” 11.3, 1960, p. 691–698.
- The Syntax of Old Romanian*, ed. G. PANĂ-DINDELEGAN, Oxford 2016.
- UNGUREANU M., FELEA I.-M., *Creative Calques in the Early Romanian Translations of the Psalter. Translatological and Philological Approaches*, [in:] *Translation Automatism in the Vernacular Texts of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. V. AGRIGOROAIE, I. SASU, Turnhout 2023 [= *Biblia Vernacula*, 1], p. 239–243.
- URSU N.A., *Activitatea literară necunoscută a lui Daniil Andrean Panoneanu, traducătorul “Îndreptării Legii” (Târgoviște, 1652)*, V, “Studii și cercetări lingvistice” 54.1–2, 2003, p. 189–201.

**Ion-Mihai Felea**


Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași  
 roPsalt Project, The Institute of Interdisciplinary Research  
 Alexandru Lăpușneanu street nr. 26  
 700057 Iași, Romania  
 imfelea@gmail.com







Giulia Freni (Potenza)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8500-6863>

## HERBS AS *PHARMAKA*: BETWEEN MEDICINE, ASTROLOGY AND MAGIC\*

**Abstract.** In the ancient and Byzantine world, natural elements were used to cure a certain disease, as attested by traditional medical sources such as Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Galen. However, the therapeutic properties of these substances are also described in some compilations that transmit another type of knowledge: the *Cyranides*, a hermetic work that illustrates the usages of vegetable, animal and mineral species for different purposes; Cassianus Bassus' *Geoponica*, an important source of the ancient agronomic-botanical tradition; the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, a hermetic and esoteric treatise dedicated to planetary divination, which also illustrates the correspondences between plants, planets and zodiac signs. The herbs described in these compilations are suggested as *φάρμακα* for the treatment of diseases, but also for other purposes such as warding off demons or having luck (e.g. in *Monacensis gr.* 70, which transmits *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, Jupiter's plant is *χρυσάγκαθον*, capable of causing extraordinary healings). This denotes the development of a parallel medicine, connected with magic and astrology, and in some cases the practices discussed still have folkloric implications today. Therefore, this contribution intends to analyse these three magico-medical works, highlighting the similarities and differences from traditional medical sources as well as the link between medicine, magic and astrology.

**Keywords:** plants, *pharmaka*, *Cyranides*, *Geoponica*, *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, medicine, astrology, magic, folklore

Many ancient and Byzantine traditional medical sources, such as works of Hippocrates, Dioscorides or Galen, recommend the use of natural elements to heal certain diseases of the human body, contributing to the development of a scientific and rational medicine. However, even popular beliefs influenced the medical methodology, as it emerges from the preparation of *φάρμακα* with the herbs collected by *ρίζοτόμοι* (“root cutters”), the activity of the *φαρμακοπώλαι* (“druggists”), the divine invocations, the incubatory medicine and, in general,

---

\* A draft of this paper was presented at the IV Colloquia Ceranea International Conference, Łódź, 12–14 May 2022. I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions.

the usages of herbs in magical rituals for therapeutic purposes<sup>1</sup>. This suggests the existence of a parallel path that sometimes intersects folk and traditional medicine, and in this regard the definition of ‘popular medicine’ provided by William H. Harris is remarkable:

those practices aimed at averting or remedying illness that are followed by people who do not claim expertise in learned medicine (Gr. *iatrike*) and do not surrender their entire physical health to professional physicians (Gr. *iatroi*)<sup>2</sup>.

As W.H. Harris noted, popular and folk medicine are problematic categories<sup>3</sup>, and it is especially clear from some compilations related to ‘occult sciences’<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> I. ANDORLINI, A. MARCONE, *Medicina, medico e società nel mondo antico*, Firenze 2004, p. 10–12. Cf. also L. TOTELIN, *Pharmakopôlai: A Re-Evaluation of the Sources*, [in:] *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Explorations*, ed. W.H. HARRIS, Leiden–Boston 2016 [= CSCT, 42], p. 65–85. The therapeutic use of herbs and plants already emerges in the Homeric poems: in the *Odyssey* Helen demonstrates to know an Egyptian φάρμακον able to calm pain and anger, as well as Circe is defined πολυφάρμακος for her knowledge of herbs and the use of these substances for magical purposes; cf. OMERO, *Odissea*, IV, 219–232; X, 276, ed. et trans. V. DI BENEDETTO, Milano 2010, p. 290–293, 568–569. Another personality generally known for her ability with herbs is Medea; cf. EURIPIDES, *Medea*, 285, 385, 409, ed. D.L. PAGE, <sup>2</sup>Oxford 2001, p. 15, 19–20; APOLLONIUS RHODIUS, *Argonautica*, IV, 20–53, [in:] APOLLONIO RODIO, *Le argonautiche*, ed. et trans. G. PADUANO, <sup>4</sup>Milano 2016, p. 540–545. Also Theophrastus in his *Historia Plantarum* explains that he has taken into account the popular knowledge on herbs, which was elementary but reliable due to the experience in the use of these substances; THEOPHRASTUS, *Historia plantarum*, IX, 17, [in:] THEOPHRASTUS, *Enquiry into Plants. And Minor Works on Odours and Weather Signs*, vol. II, ed. et trans. A. HORT, London–New York 1916 [= LCL], p. 304–309. Finally, we can recall Plato’s *Theaetetus*’ passage on Socrates’ mother and the midwife: here the midwife is considered as an expert in drugs and spells, so that she can control pain, facilitate childbirth or cause abortion; cf. PLATO, *Theaetetus*, 149 c-d, ed. et trans. F. FERRARI, Milano 2011, p. 234–235.

<sup>2</sup> W.H. HARRIS, *Preface*, [in:] *Popular Medicine...*, p. VII. The concept of popular medicine traces back to Laurent Joubert (1529–1583), who wrote *Erreurs populaires au fait de la médecine et régime de santé* (1578): its main concept is the fact that people of the countryside employed remedies; cf. W.H. HARRIS, *Popular Medicine in the Classical World*, [in:] *Popular Medicine...*, p. 5, 37–40.

<sup>3</sup> W.H. HARRIS, *Popular Medicine...*, p. 2. Such scholars as Arthur Kleinman considered separately popular and folk medicine, representing the first the methods transmitted by non-professionals and the second one those put into practice by healers not approved; cf. A. KLEINMAN, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture. An Exploration of the Borderland Between Anthropology, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, Berkeley 1980 [= CSHSMC, 5], p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Occult sciences required specific methods and techniques, consequently we can talk about “learned practitioners”; however, occult sciences were not the learned – and the non-superstitious – side of magic, but there was difference also in terms of matter, since occult practitioners based their considerations on natural science. Cf. P. MAGDALINO, M. MAVROUDI, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. EIDEM, Geneve 2006, p. 11–15. M. PAPATHANASSIOU, *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= BCBW, 6], p. 464–495. For the connection between medicine and botany in Byzantium, cf. J. SCARBOROUGH, *Herbs of the Field and Herbs of the Garden in Byzantine Medicinal Pharmacy*,

the *Cyranides*, Cassianus Bassus’ *Geoponica* and the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, which transmit a knowledge different from that of traditional medicine. Therefore, the aim of this contribution is to analyse these magico-medical works and their relationship with traditional medical sources. The intent is also to emphasize the link between medicine, magic and astrology and, as far as possible, the implications of the use of herbs as φάρμακα in Italian folkloric evidence. This would indicate a certain continuity of ancient practices in modern beliefs, as it emerges from such folkloric repertoires as the one by Emanuele Lelli or folkloric works like those of Italian folklorists of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century. Since some of the species discussed are attested both by *Cyranides* and *Geoponica*, the first part of this contribution will be devoted to these two works, whereas the last one will examine the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*.

### 1. The *Cyranides* and Cassianus Bassus’ *Geoponica*

The first work we can consider for the analysis of herbs as φάρμακα in non-traditional medicine is the *Cyranides*, a collection of quasi-magical cures to use the words of W.H. Harris<sup>5</sup>. It is at the same time a bestiary, a *herbarium* and a lapidary, since it shows the characteristics, the properties and the employments of animals, plants and minerals, listed in alphabetical order. It is composed of four books, the first defined as βίβλος θεραπευτική (therapeutic book) in the prologue, even if it is not purely a medical treatise, rather a magico-medical work on the usage of natural substances for therapeutic purposes<sup>6</sup>. The next three books are devoted to birds, terrestrial animals and fish, but some manuscripts include even a fifth book on plants and a sixth one on the power of stones and colours<sup>7</sup>.

Concerning the fifth book, it describes the physical characteristics and the therapeutic uses of 24 plants, one for each alphabetical letter. Some of the species discussed permit to make some comparisons not only with traditional medical sources, but also with folkloric evidence. For example, the θρίδαξ (“lettuce”) is suggested as a φάρμακον to heal different diseases:

[in:] *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. A. LITTLEWOOD, H. MAGUIRE, J. WOLSCHKE-BULMAHN, Washington D.C. 2002, p. 177–188.

<sup>5</sup> W.H. HARRIS, *Popular Medicine...*, p. 2 note 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Cyranides*’ prologue is composed by three different prologues, giving a kind of external frame in which a Byzantine editor explains that he collected two ancient works (the Kyranos’ and the Harpocraton’ books) and then he quotes their prologues. M. ZAGO, *Mixis ed enantiosis. L’uso metaforico delle sostanze rituali nelle Ciranidi e oltre*, [in:] *Ermetismo ed esoterismi. Mondo antico e riflessi contemporanei*, ed. P. SCARPI, M. ZAGO, Padova 2013, p. 71–75.

<sup>7</sup> The fifth and sixth book were included by Dimitris Kaimakis in his edition of this work for philological reasons: *Cyranides*, V–VI, [in:] *Die Kyraniden*, ed. D. KAIMAKIS, Meisenheim am Glan 1976 [= BKP, 76] (cetera: *Cyranides*), p. 300–310.

Θρίδαξ ὑγρὸν καὶ ψυχρὸν ἐστὶ λάχανον, ἐδώδιμον καὶ πᾶσι γνωστόν, ὃ καὶ μαϊοῦλι λέγεται παρὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς. αὕτη στόμαχον ἀνακτάται. μετὰ ὀξύγαρου δὲ καὶ λάσαρος ἐσθιομένη ὄρεξιν κινεῖ, καὶ τὴν γαστέρα μαλάσσει ἐπὶ πλείον ἐσθιομένη. ἐὰν δ' ἐπ' ὀλίγον τὴν γαστέρα ἐπέχει, καὶ χολέρας διαλύει ὀχλησιν. ἐν ὀξυμέλιτι δὲ ἐσθιομένη κοιλιακοῦς ὠφελεῖ, <καὶ> ὕπνον παρασκευάζει. τὸ σπέρμα δ' αὐτῆς τῷ μετώπῳ καταπλασσομένον κεφαλαλγίας πυρῶδεις ἀποκρούει.

Lettuce is a humid and cold vegetable, eatable and known to all, which most define *maioúli*. It recovers the stomach. Eaten with *oxýgaron*<sup>8</sup> and silphium's juice<sup>9</sup>, it stimulates the appetite; eaten further, it softens the belly. If lettuce touches the belly for a short time, it extinguishes the nuisance of *cholera*. Eaten in oxymel<sup>10</sup>, it is useful for the bowels and provides sleep. Its seed applied as a poultice in the forehead drives away fiery headaches<sup>11</sup>.

Here lettuce's characteristics and therapeutic *δυνάμεις* are described, recognizing the plant's suitability for the belly, the stomach, the bowel or for headache. To heal these ailments, lettuce is recommended with several substances, for example ὀξύγαρον and silphium's juice, denoting the importance of combination with other elements to be more effective.

Likewise, this plant appears in Cassianus Bassus' *Geoponica*, defined by Emanuele Lelli as a companion of the ancient agronomic-botanical tradition<sup>12</sup>. Composed of 20 books, this work is a collection of *excerpta* on the agricultural world. Its primary sources are Vindanius Anatolius and Didimus, but other authors such as Diophanes, Pamphilus or Zoroaster were also excerpted<sup>13</sup>. *Geoponica* can be

<sup>8</sup> That is a sauce made of vinegar and γάρου; H. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, H.S. JONES, *A Greek-English lexicon*, s.v. ὀξύγαρον, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#context=lsj&eid=76614> [15 III 2023].

<sup>9</sup> E. ΚΡΙΑΡΑΣ, *Λεξικό της Μεσαιωνικής Ελληνικής Δημόδου Γραμματείας*, 1100–1669, vol. IX, Θεσσαλονίκη 1985, s.v. λάσαρον, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> That is a mixture of vinegar and honey; H. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, H.S. JONES, *A Greek-English lexicon*, s.v. ὀξυμελικρατον, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#context=lsj&eid=76697> [15 III 2023].

<sup>11</sup> *Cyranides*, V, 8, p. 303. The English translation of the text, as well as the other ones quoted in this contribution, is mine.

<sup>12</sup> E. LELLI in *L'agricoltura antica. I Geoponica di Cassiano Basso*, vol. I, ed. et trans. IDEM, Soveria Mannelli 2010, p. XXVI. The attribution to Cassianus Bassus (ca. 6<sup>th</sup> century) is based on the subscription transmitted by *Marcianus gr. Z 524* at the beginning of the first book of *Geoponica*; E. LELLI in *L'agricoltura antica...*, vol. I, p. XXIX–XXX.

<sup>13</sup> E. LELLI in *L'agricoltura antica...*, vol. I, p. XLVII–XLIX, LXVIII–LXXI. Eugen Oder hypothesised that originally the quotations in *Geoponica* were authentic, but the attributions of the different chapters could not be reliable. Christophe Guignard, considering also the Syriac and Arabic version of the text, suggested that a pre-Constantinian editor used a source table for the attribution of the *excerpta*: this attribution was made due to the knowledge of a tradition which associates a certain element to a certain author. Cf. E. ODER, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Landwirtschaft bei den Griechen I*, RMP 45, 1890, p. 62–66; C. GUIGNARD, *Sources et constitution des Géoponiques à la lumière des versions orientales d'Anatolie de Béryte et de Cassianus Bassus*, [in:] *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung*, ed. M. WALLRAFF, L. MECCELLA, Berlin–New York 2009 [= TUGAL, 165], p. 244, 286–302, 330–335. In general, cf. also C. SCARDINO, *Edition antiker landwirtschaftlicher Werke in arabischer Sprache*, vol. I, *Prolegomena*, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= SGA, 16.1], p. 23–29.

considered the first western agricultural almanac, since it gives some advice on agriculture and shows popular beliefs, highlighting the folkloric element. In the 12<sup>th</sup> book, devoted to vegetables, there is lettuce, discussed in an *excerptum* from Florentinus<sup>14</sup>. It is defined as a humid and cold vegetable, with the same words that we find in *Cyranides* (Θρίδαξ ὑγρὸν καὶ ψυχρὸν ἐστὶ λάχανον), but more medical usages are mentioned here. It is a thirst-quenching, soporific and galactogenic food, so it stimulates the secretion of milk. If lettuce is cooked, it becomes more nutritious and discourages sexual intercourse, and for this reason the Pythagoreans called it eunuch, whereas women defined it as an anti-aphrodisiac. Moreover, *Geoponica* gives some advice to have a good-looking lettuce, suggesting to bind its leaves two days before the harvest: Εἰ δὲ βούλει καὶ εὐειδεῖς ἔχειν τὰς θριδικίνας, πρὸ δύο ἡμέρων τοῦ μέλλειν ἀφαιρεῖσθαι αὐτάς, τὰς κόμας αὐτῶν, τουτέστι τὸ ἄνωθεν μέρος, δῆσον. οὕτω γὰρ λευκαὶ καὶ εὐειδεῖς ἔσσονται (‘If you want a good-looking lettuce, two days before the harvest, bind its leaves, that is the upper part. In this way they become white and good looking’)<sup>15</sup>. Similarly as in the *Cyranides*, this plant is said to stimulate the appetite, but it even dissolves mucus and curbs sexual drive if taken with sweet wine and vinegar. If it is cooked in rose essence, it heals *cholera*. Its juice reduces lungs’ swelling, whereas a spread of lettuce with mother’s milk is excellent for erysipelas. The crushed seeds, if drunk, are a remedy for scorpion bites and help those with chest pains: Τὸ σπέρμα αὐτῆς τριφθὲν καὶ ποθὲν σκορπιόδηκτους ἰᾶται θώρακα πεπονθότα ὠφελεῖ (‘Its seed, crushed and then drunk, heals scorpion bites and is suitable for chest pains’)<sup>16</sup>. If somebody eats this plant constantly, he will cure the weakness of vision, making the eyesight sharp. Finally, eating lettuce causes sleep for both the healthy and the sick: if five or six leaves are secretly placed under the pillow, they will provide sleep for those who have difficulty in falling asleep<sup>17</sup>.

As it emerges from Florentinus’ *excerptum*, *Cyranides* and *Geoponica* share some of lettuce’s therapeutic δυνάμεις, even if the second work is more precise and adds some further advice. This permits to have a broader view of the medical use of lettuce, also in regard to agricultural and peasant knowledge<sup>18</sup>. At the same time, both these compilations allow to make a comparison with traditional medical authors and the folkloric evidence. For example, in Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* there is a distinction between the cultivated and wild lettuce, whose

<sup>14</sup> Author of *Georgics*, Florentinus was one of the most important authors of agronomy and zootechnology in the first centuries of the Roman Empire. E. LELLI in *L’agricoltura antica...*, vol. I, p. LII–LV.

<sup>15</sup> CASSIANUS BASSUS, *Geoponica*, XII, 13, 3, [in:] *L’agricoltura antica...* (cetera: CASSIANUS BASSUS), vol. II, p. 691.

<sup>16</sup> CASSIANUS BASSUS, XII, 13, 6, vol. II, p. 692.

<sup>17</sup> CASSIANUS BASSUS, XII, 13, vol. II, p. 691–692.

<sup>18</sup> As E. Lelli noted, *Geoponica* intends to express the general, folkloric and popular sense of the agricultural world, referring to its beliefs and millennial practices. E. LELLI in *L’agricoltura antica...*, vol. I, p. LXXVII.

properties are similar to those exposed in *Cyranides* and *Geoponica*. Concerning the cultivated lettuce, Dioscorides provides this description:

θρίδαξ ἡμερος εὐστόμαχος, ὑποψύχουσα, ὕπνωτική, κοιλίας μαλακτική, γάλακτος κατασπαστική· ἐψηθεῖσα δὲ γίνεται τροφιμωτέρα, ἄπλυτος δὲ ἐσθιομένη στομαχικοῖς ἀρμόζει. τὸ δὲ σπέρμα αὐτῆς πινόμενον τοῖς συνεχῶς ὄνειρώττουσι βοηθεῖ καὶ συνουσίαν ἀποστρέφει. αὐταὶ δὲ συνεχῶς ἐσθιόμενα ἀμβλυωπίας εἰσὶ ποιητικά.

The cultivated lettuce is good for the stomach, refreshing, soporific, it softens the bowel and draws down milk. It becomes more nutritive if boiled; instead, if it is eaten unwashed, it is good for those with stomach ailments. Its seed, if drunk, helps those who frequently emit their semen during their sleep and discourages sexual intercourse. Eating constantly lettuce causes fainting<sup>19</sup>.

The properties of cultivated lettuce are more or less the same we find in *Cyranides* and *Geoponica*: it is considered beneficial for the stomach, soporific and anti-aphrodisiac. On the other hand, the wild lettuce (ἀγρία θρίδαξ) is defined as soporific and analgesic, being also a good φάρμακον for misty eyes and scorpion bites; last but not least, if the seed is drunk, it prevents the emission of semen, just like it happens for the cultivated lettuce<sup>20</sup>. Hence, the anti-aphrodisiac property of lettuce appears in both the cultivated and the wild kind. This results even in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*: several varieties of lettuce basing on their stem or their colour are distinguished, mentioning in particular a *lactuca* called *astytis* or *eunuchion* for its anti-aphrodisiac characteristic: *quoniam haec maxime refragetur veneri* (because it greatly dampens the sexual urge)<sup>21</sup>. Lettuce was still used in Byzantium and, just like other vegetables, its consumption was also regulated by medical considerations<sup>22</sup>: for example, Nikolaos Myrepsos describes a recipe

<sup>19</sup> *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De Materia Medica*, II, 136, 1, vol. I, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1907–1914 (cetera: DIOSCORIDES), p. 207–208. Also Galen distinguishes a wild and a cultivated lettuce; cf. GALENUS, *De compositione medicamentorum per genera libri VII*, I, 316, [in:] *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, vol. XIII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1821–1833, p. 387.

<sup>20</sup> DIOSCORIDES, II, 136, 3, vol. I, p. 208. Wild lettuce may correspond to *Lactuca virosa*, generally known as opium lettuce and whose milky juice has a soporific effect; cf. J.H. CLARKE, *Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica*, vol. II, New Delhi 1995, p. 235.

<sup>21</sup> GAIUS PLINIO SECONDO, *Storia naturale*, XIX, 38, vol. III.1, ed. et trans. G.B. CONTE, Torino 1982–1988 (cetera: GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS), p. 932. Cf. also GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XX, 24, vol. III.2, p. 38. The same property emerges in a fragment of Lycus quoted in *Athenaei Naucratis Dipnosophistarum Libri XV*, II, 79, vol. I, ed. G. KAIBEL, Leipzig 1887 [= BSGR] (cetera: ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae*), p. 162. This source is Pythagorean, and in fact lettuce was important for the Pythagoreans because it was refreshing and considered able to dominate erotic impulses; ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae*, II, 80, vol. I, p. 162–164.

<sup>22</sup> For the consumption of lettuce and other vegetables, cf. J. KODER, *Gemüse in Byzanz. Die Frischgemüseversorgung Konstantinopels im Lichte der Geoponika*, Wien 1993; IDEM, *Fresh Vegetables for*

in which lettuce' seed was drank with water to prevent dreams and diminish sexual drive<sup>23</sup>. Finally, we can recall Pietro Andrea Mattioli's *Discorsi*, i.e. the Italian translation and commentary of Dioscorides' *De materia medica*: in the edition of 1568 Mattioli explains that in the ancient world people used to eat cultivated lettuce after dinner because they believed that it could make you have a peaceful sleep<sup>24</sup>.

In addition to these medical sources, the properties of lettuce are connected to popular beliefs and traditions, some of which are still alive today. As E. Lelli noticed, the anti-aphrodisiac characteristic of lettuce can relate to the Greek myth of Adonis, Aphrodite's lover, who took refuge or hid himself in a bed of lettuce, where he was killed<sup>25</sup>. Even if the relationship between the myth and the anti-aphrodisiac property of the plant is not clear, it is remarkable to consider the folkloric implication of this myth. In fact, during the *Adonia* – the feast for Adonis – there was a celebration in which women prepared a garden with various plants, including lettuce, and exposed them to the sun: consequently, the plants germinated in a few days, but at the same time they immediately died just like Adonis. This would suggest the relationship between lettuce and impotence, which for Adonis coincides with death<sup>26</sup>. This perception of lettuce as anti-aphrodisiac is still alive nowadays in Abruzzo, as E. Lelli noted after interviewing people from this Italian region<sup>27</sup>. At the same time, other usages of this plant already emerged in *Cyranides*

---

*the Capital*, [in:] *Constantinople and its Hinterland. Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, ed. C. MANGO, G. DAGRON, London 1995, p. 49–56; A. TOUWAIDE, *Botany*, [in:] *A Companion...*, p. 302–353; IDEM, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, [in:] *A Companion...*, p. 354–403.

<sup>23</sup> Nikolaos Myrepsos' *Dynameron*, Πέσσοι, ρκδ', ed. I. VALIAKOS, Heidelberg 2020 (cetera: NIKOLAOS MYREPSOS), p. 959.

<sup>24</sup> PIETRO ANDREA MATTIOLI, *Discorsi*, II, 126, [in:] *I discorsi di M. Pietro Andrea Matthioli sanese, medico cesareo, et del serenissimo principe Ferdinando archiduca d'Austria etc. nelli sei libri di Pedacio Discoride Anazarbeo della materia Medicinale*, Venezia 1568 (cetera: PIETRO ANDREA MATTIOLI), p. 549–553. This ancient belief emerges also from an epigram by Martialis, in which we can read: *Cludere quae cenas lactuca solebat avorum, / dic mihi, cur nostras inchoat illa dapes?* (“The lettuce with which our ancestors used to close dinners: / tell me why is it now an appetizer?”). MARZIALE, *Epigrammi*, XIII, 14, ed. et trans. M. SCÀNDOLA, <sup>4</sup>Milano 2015, p. 1042–1043.

<sup>25</sup> CALLIMACHUS, fr. 478 Pf, vol. I, ed. R. PFEIFFER, Oxford 1959, p. 359. NICANDER, fr. 120 G, [in:] *Theriaca et Alexipharmaca*, ed. O. SCHNEIDER, Lipsiae 1856, p. 203–204. Callimachus and Nicander are mentioned in ATHENAEUS, *Deipnosophistae*, II, 80, vol. I, p. 163. At the same Athenaeus quotes Eubulus and Amphis, two Athenian comic poets who ironized the anti-aphrodisiac property of lettuce in their works: EUBULUS, fr. 13 K.-A., [in:] *Poetae Comici Graeci*, vol. V, ed. R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, Berlin–New York 1986, p. 197; AMPHIS, fr. 20 K.-A., [in:] R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, *Poetae Comici...*, vol. II, p. 222.

<sup>26</sup> J.P. VERNANT, *Introduction*, [in:] M. DETIENNE, *The Gardens of Adonis. Spices in Greek Mythology*, <sup>2</sup>Princeton 1994, p. XII; M. DETIENNE, *The Gardens...*, p. 68, 115. In general cf. A. DE GUBERNATIS, *La mythologie des plantes*, vol. II, Paris 1882, p. 187–188.

<sup>27</sup> E. LELLI, *Folklore antico e moderno*, Roma 2012, p. 286.



and *Geoponica* also appear in modern folklore, which implies a continuity from the ancient world. Giuseppe Pitrè (1841–1916) in his volume *Medicina popolare siciliana (Popular Sicilian Medicine)* explained that lettuce, especially if cooked, could increase mother and nurse's milk if they had little; furthermore this plant, after being boiled, was recommended to wash eyes. Eventually, the Sicilian folklore recommends lettuce as a good φάρμακον to heal bowel ailments, just like fennel and cabbage<sup>28</sup>. The tradition of using lettuce to cure eye-diseases is also attested in the Sorrentine Peninsula, as we can read in the volume *Tradizioni ed usi della penisola sorrentina (Traditions and uses of the Sorrentine Peninsula)*<sup>29</sup> by Gaetano Amalfi (1855–1928). Using lettuce to help with breastfeeding is registered in the repertory on beliefs of Abruzzo by Gennaro Finamore (1836–1923): for this purpose, lettuce was cooked in broth with fennel and whisked eggs<sup>30</sup>. An article on Barletta's folklore in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Salvatore Santeramo (1880–1969) shows that mothers employed *u popagne* and *u lattuchiedde* (poppy and lettuce) to make children fall asleep, but this practice already appears in ancient sources<sup>31</sup>. Finally, the use of lettuce for belly pains results from the traditions of Rome catalogued by Giggi Zanazzo (1860–1911), in particular from a remedy *Pe' ffa' ppassà' li dolor de la panza a le creature* ('to get rid of children's stomach-aches'): it consisted of giving two or three spoons of boiled water with two leaves of lettuce<sup>32</sup>.

In *Geoponica* there are certain properties of lettuce not included in *Cyranides*, but some 'fixed characteristics' appear in all the works we have mentioned: the anti-aphrodisiac properties, the usage for increasing milk or for healing eyes, the benefit for belly pains. As the folkloric evidence reveals, all these δυνάμεις are still alive today in different parts of Italy, especially in the south, where the influence of the Greek world is remarkable. The fact that certain properties of this plant (the same goes for other species) are recorded in folkloric works and repertories implies a continuity of ancient beliefs in the modern world. It may be that even today the oldest people living in the small villages in the south of Italy use these popular remedies to heal a disease<sup>33</sup>. However, before moving to *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, we may give some other examples of vegetable species attested both in traditional and non-traditional medical sources, as well as in ancient and modern popular beliefs.

<sup>28</sup> G. PITRÈ, *Medicina popolare siciliana*, <sup>2</sup>Firenze 1949, p. 187, 252, 320, 323, 414.

<sup>29</sup> G. AMALFI, *Tradizioni ed usi della penisola sorrentina*, Palermo 1890, p. 60.

<sup>30</sup> G. FINAMORE, *Tradizioni popolari abruzzesi*, Torino–Palermo 1894, p. 162.

<sup>31</sup> S. SANTERAMO, *Folklore barlettano*, *Lar* 2.2, 1931, p. 35. For this property cf. also C. LAPUCCI, A. ANTONI, *La simbologia delle piante. Magia, leggende, araldica e curiosità del mondo vegetale*, Firenze 2016, p. 237.

<sup>32</sup> G. ZANAZZO, *Usi, costumi e pregiudizi del popolo di Roma*, Torino 1908, p. 18.

<sup>33</sup> For example, consider the villages under the Greek influence in Calabria, where ancient beliefs are still alive; cf. F. VIOLI, *Storia della Calabria greca*, Reggio Calabria 2005; E. LELLI, *Calabria antica e moderna*, Athens 2021.

## Parsley

*Cyranides*, V, 15: Ὀριοσέλινον, ἄλλοι δὲ πετροσέλινον, βοτάνη ἐστὶ παραπλησία σελίνῳ τὸ τε εἶδος καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, πλὴν ἰσχυρότερον. αὕτη γαστέρα μαλάσσει καὶ διουρητικὴ ἐστὶν ἐσθιομένη. καὶ ἐφθὴ δὲ πινομένη δυσουρίαν παύει καὶ στραγγουρίαν καὶ νεφρίτιδα θεραπεύει. τὸ δὲ ἀπόζημα ἐσθιόμενόν τε καὶ πινόμενον ψυαλγίαις βοηθεῖ.

*Oriosélinon*, for others *petrosélinon*, is a plant similar to celery in appearance and properties, but stronger. It calms belly pains and, if eaten, it is diuretic. If boiled and drunk, it calms difficult micturition and heals strangury and nephritis. The decoction, if eaten and drunk, is useful for those who have back pains.

*Geoponica*, XII, 23, 3–5: Βρωθὲν δὲ τὸ σέλινον κατωφερεστέρας εἰς τὰ ἀφροδίσια ποιεῖ τὰς γυναῖκας. ὅθεν οὐ δεῖ συγχωρεῖν ταῖς τιθηνούσαις ἐσθίειν τὰ σέλινα, καὶ μάλιστα διὰ τὸ ἐπέχειν τὸ γάλα. τῷ δὲ στόματι εἰς εὐωδίαν συμβάλλεται. διὸ καὶ οἱ δυσώδη τὰ στόματα ἔχοντες, εἰ φάγοιεν, ἀποκρούονται τὴν δυσωδίαν. καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς φασι τοῦτο ἐσθίειν, ὅπως αὐτῶν τὰ στόματα εὐώδη εἶη. Τὰ δὲ σέλινα ἅμα ἄρτω καταπλασσομένα ἐρυσιπέλατα θεραπεύει, καὶ τὸ ζέμα αὐτῶν ἐγκάθισμα γινόμενον, καὶ ὑπαντλούμενον, λίθους ἐκβάλλει, καὶ δυσουρίαν θεραπεύει, καὶ νεφροὺς ἰᾶται.

Parsley, if eaten, makes women more willing to love; for this reason, breastfeeding people should not eat parsley, especially because it holds milk. It smells good in the mouth, so those who have a bad-smelling mouth get rid of the bad smell if they eat parsley. Actors are said to eat it on stage for their mouths to be scented. Parsley spread on bread cures erysipelas; its decoction, taken in a sitz bath or in a bath, eliminates kidney stones, cures difficult micturition and heals kidneys<sup>34</sup>.

Traditional medical sources: Dioscorides distinguishes three kinds of parsley, ὀρεοσέλινον, πετροσέλινον and ἵπποσέλινον. The properties of the first two coincide with *Cyranides* and *Geoponica*'s paragraphs. Concerning the third one, its seed, if drunk with honey and wine, brings on the menstrual period; if drunk, it can warm shiverers; if anointed, it is suitable for curing strangury, and the root has the same properties<sup>35</sup>. The varieties of parsley appear in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*: the *olusatrum*, or *hipposelinum*, which was considered a good remedy for colic and intestinal diseases, and even against rabid dogs' bite; the *oreoselinum*, which provokes urination and menstruation; the *heleoselinum*, beneficial against spiders and for menstruation; the *petroselinum*, growing among the stones and useful for

<sup>34</sup> In the previous part, *Geoponica* gives some advice to make the parsley grow luxuriantly. CASSIANUS BASSUS, XII, 23, 1–2, vol. II, p. 708–709. It is remarkable that in *Geoponica* parsley is defined σέλινον, whereas in *Cyranides* we find ὀριοσέλινον and πετροσέλινον. As E. Lelli noted, the parsley was the celery which grew among the stones; E. LELLI in *L'agricoltura antica...*, vol. II, p. 989.

<sup>35</sup> DIOSCORIDES, III, 65–67, vol. II, p. 76–78. Pietro Andrea Mattioli in his *Discorsi* talks about the so-called *apio* (*apium*), distinguishing between the *apio hortense* (of gardens), the *eleoselino* (that is the *apio palustre*, of swamps), the *oreoselino* (or *apio montano*, of mountains), the *petroselino* and the *hipposelino*; cf. PIETRO ANDREA MATTIOLI, *Discorsi*, III, 69–71, p. 810–816.

abscesses; finally, the *buselinum*, good against snakes<sup>36</sup>. Likewise, these properties are highlighted in Celsus' *De medicina*<sup>37</sup> and in Scribonius Largus' *De compositione medicamentorum*<sup>38</sup>. What is also of note is the brief description of the characteristics of parsley provided by Galen in *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus libri XI*<sup>39</sup>. In Nikolaos Myrepsos' *Dynameron* we find many recipes with ὀρεοσέλινον, ἵπποσέλινον and πετροσέλινον, especially for kidney stones and colic<sup>40</sup>.

**Folkloric evidence:** The continuity of beliefs from ancient to modern times can be also observed in case of parsley and its characteristics. E. Lelli has interviewed people from Calabria who thought that *il prezzemolo faceva male alle donne incinta* ('parsley was dangerous for pregnant women')<sup>41</sup>. The same property is registered by G. Pitrè for the Sicilian folklore, where parsley is included among the galactogen substances, *i.e.* those stimulating the production of milk<sup>42</sup>. In Sicilian popular beliefs parsley is also a remedy for children's intestinal problems and kidney stones<sup>43</sup>. In Friuli Venezia Giulia a decoction of parsley or grape flowers was suggested to make the nurses' milk disappear, but this plant was helpful even for meteorism, colic or strangury<sup>44</sup>. Salerno area's peasants recommended not transplanting parsley plants at home, since they claimed it would cause someone to die within a year, but they advised not eradicating it to keep the devil away from a garden. In the countryside girls would eat a lot of parsley to provoke a miscarriage and during the night of Saint John parsley was employed as a divinatory herb to know if dead people were in Paradise or not. Similar to mandrake or henbane, this plant was mixed with animal fat and soot to create the *unguento del volo magico delle streghe* ('ointment of the magical flight of witches'), that could provoke hallucinations and dizziness<sup>45</sup>. Finally, the use of this plant is also recorded in Asia Minor, where it is considered a galactogen<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XX, 46–47, vol. III.2, p. 68–69. Cf. also GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XIX, 48, vol. III.1, p. 930–935.

<sup>37</sup> CELSUS, *De medicina*, II, 31; II, 33; IV, 21; IV, 27; V, 6; V, 23; V, 25, ed. et trans. W.G. SPENCER, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1960–1961 [= LCL], vol. I, p. 211, 213, 431, 449; vol. II, p. 9, 55, 57, 65.

<sup>38</sup> *Scribonii Largi Compositiones*, 106; 120; 126; 144; 145; 152; 176; 177, ed. S. SCONOCCHIA, Berlin 2020 [= CMLat, 2.1], p. 169, 177, 183, 193, 195, 211.

<sup>39</sup> GALENUS, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus libri XI*, III, 18.6, [in:] *Clau-dii Galeni...*, vol. XII, p. 118–119.

<sup>40</sup> For example, NIKOLAOS MYREPSOS, Ἀντίδοτα, ρϑ'; τμθ', p. 100, 162; Ἐνέματα, κγ'; λδ', p. 564, 568.

<sup>41</sup> E. LELLI, *Folklore antico...*, p. 159.

<sup>42</sup> G. PITRÈ, *Medicina popolare...*, p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 338, 341, 419.

<sup>44</sup> V. OSTERMANN, *La vita in Friuli. Usi, costumi, credenze, pregiudizi e superstizioni popolari*, Udine 1894, p. 378, 415–416, 449.

<sup>45</sup> F.M. MORESE, *L'eredità degli antenati. Il lascito ancestrale di Italici, Romani e Longobardi nel Folklore di Salerno tra religiosità popolare e sopravvivenze pagane*, Cosenza 2019, p. 183–184.

<sup>46</sup> A. CATABIANI, *Florario. Miti, leggende e simboli di fiori e piante*, Milano 1996, p. 247.

## Garlic

*Cyranides*, V, 18: Σκόροδον πικρόν ἐστί καὶ δριμύ. οὔρα δὲ κινεῖ καὶ τὰ σπλάγγνα διακαθαίρει καὶ θερμαίνει ἐφθὸν ἐσθιόμενον. ὠμόν δὲ ἐσθιόμενον, ἄδηκτον ἀπὸ ἐρπετῶν διαφυλάττει καὶ θηριοδῆκτους ὠφελεῖ τῷ δήγματι καταπλασσόμενον. ἔλκη τὰ ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ συμβαίοντα ἐκρίζοι σκόροδον χλωρόν σὺν στέατι χηνεῖω καὶ κολιάνδρω, λείον ἐπιτιθέμενον. σὺν δὲ ἐλαίῳ ὁ χυλὸς αὐτοῦ ἐνσταζόμενος ὠταλγίας παύει. πόνους κροτάφων ἰάται ἐφθὸν τὸ σκόροδον λείον ἐπιτιθέμενον. λειχῆνας δὲ καὶ σπιλώματα ὕψεως ἀφανίζει, λείον ἐπιτιθέμενον. ἀναγκαῖον δὲ καὶ τὰ βλαβερὰ τοῦ σκοροῦδου εἰδέναι δι’ ἀσφάλειαν. ὄρασιν ἀμβλύνει ἐκ πνεύματος, στόμαχον ἀδικεῖ, καὶ δίψαν ἐρεθίζει.

Garlic is sharp and acre. It stimulates urine, purifies inward parts and heats, if eaten boiled. Instead, if eaten raw, it protects against snake bites and it is useful for those bitten by a beast, if it is applied as a poultice in the sting. Unripe garlic removes the wounds in the head, if it is ground and applied with goose fat and coriander. Its juice soaked in oil calms earache. Garlic boiled and applied ground cures temples’ pains. It removes rashes and eye spots, if it is ground and then applied. As a precaution, it is necessary to know the harmfulness of garlic. Due to the wind, it makes vision blurred, damages the stomach and causes thirst.

*Geoponica*, XII, 30, 1–5: Τὰ σκόρδα γίνεταί κάλλιστα ἐν τοῖς λευκογειοῖς. ταῦτα δὲ ἐσθιόμενα ἔλμινθας ἐξάγει, καὶ οὔρα κινεῖ, καὶ ἐχιδοῆκτοις καταπλασσόμενα καὶ τραγόμενα καὶ λυσοδῆκτοις βοηθεῖ. καυθέντα δὲ καὶ φυραθέντα μέλιτι, καὶ καταχρίομενα, ὑπώπια καὶ ἀλωπεκίας ἰάται. ὀδονταλγίας δὲ διακρατούμενα ἐν τῷ στόματι παύει. σὺν ἐλαίῳ δὲ καὶ ἄλατι ἐξανθήματα θεραπεύει καὶ ὑδρωπιῶντας ὀνίνησιν. ἀφίστησι δὲ καὶ φακοὺς καὶ λειχῆνας. Ἐφθὸν δὲ καὶ ὠμόν ἐσθιόμενον βῆχας χρονίας ὠφελεῖ. καὶ ἀρτηρίαν ὠδύνουσανπραῦνει. καὶ φωνῆς λαμπρότητα παρέχει. εἰ δὲ τις προτρώγει τὸ σκόρδον, ἀβλαβῆς ἔκ τε ἐρπετῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δηλητηρίων ἔσται. καὶ πληγέντας δὲ τριφθέντα καὶ ἐπιτεθέντα ἰάται. πάνυ δὲ ὠφελεῖ καὶ μετὰ οἴνου πινόμενα. χρησιμώτερα δὲ καὶ τοῖς πέττειν τροφὰς μὴ δυναμένους. οὔρα ὑπάγει, νεφρίτιν ἰάται, οὐκ ἔξ ὑπὸ φαύλων ὑδάτων βλάπτεσθαι.

Garlic becomes great if it is planted in white soil. This kind of garlic, if eaten, removes tapeworm, stimulates diuresis and, if applied as a poultice and then eaten, it is efficacious for those bitten by a mad dog. If it is burnt and mixed with honey, then spread, it heals black eyes and alopecia. If it is held in the mouth, it calms toothache. With oil and salt, it cures rashes and it is helpful for those who have dropsy. It relieves freckles and impetigo. If garlic is eaten cooked or raw, it is useful against chronic cough and calms arterial pains. It makes the voice clear. If somebody eats garlic, then he will be unhurt by snakes and other poisons. If it is chopped and then applied, it heals those who are injured. It gives benefit if drunk with wine. It is very suitable for those who cannot digest food. It stimulates diuresis, cures nephritis and it prevents from being damaged from non-potable water<sup>47</sup>.

Traditional medical sources<sup>48</sup>: Garlic’s therapeutic properties already appear in *Corpus Hippocraticum*. For example, according to *De diaeta* this plant is warm, excretive, diuretic and purgative, but also good for the body and bad for the eyes;

<sup>47</sup> The description continues in Cassianus Bassus’ *Geoponica*, XII, 30, 6–9 with some advice to make garlic sweeter or odourless. CASSIANUS BASSUS, XII, 30, 6–9, vol. II, p. 716–717.

<sup>48</sup> An important source for the use of garlic in ancient medicine is L. TOTELIN, *When Foods Become Remedies in Ancient Greece: The Curious Case of Garlic and Other Substances*, Jeph 167, 2015, p. 30–37.

moreover, when it is boiled, it is weaker than when it is raw<sup>49</sup>. However, Hippocratic authors had different ideas about the properties of this plant: in *De videndi acie* raw garlic is suggested to heal night blindness, whereas in *Epidemiae* a garlic and barley cake is considered a φάρμακον for eye-diseases; it is mentioned in *De natura muliebri* as a cure for displacement of the womb and in *De mulierum affectibus* as a pregnancy test<sup>50</sup>. The same properties are highlighted in Dioscorides' *De materia medica*, where there is the distinction between a cultivated and a wild variety: here garlic is recommended for those bitten by a mad dog, just like in *Geoponica*, and as a remedy for the bite of the shrewmouse<sup>51</sup>. This property emerges also in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, and in addition we find the δύναις of garlic helping against dropsy, cough, toothache and, when applied with goose fat, being a cure for ear diseases<sup>52</sup>. Finally, this plant appears in several passages of Marcellus Empiricus' *De medicamentis*, referring to the same properties described in other ancient medical works<sup>53</sup>.

Folkloric evidence: The continuity of ancient beliefs about garlic can also be observed in folklore. There is some evidence on its use against bites in Abruzzo, where it was placed under the pillow of a new mother to keep snakes away, as we can read in *Tradizioni popolari abruzzesi (Popular traditions of Abruzzo)* by G. Finamore<sup>54</sup>. There is a similar belief in Salento, where people thought that this plant could cure *le punzecchiature degli scorpioni e delle vipere* ('scorpions' [stings] and vipers' bites'), as attested by Saverio La Sorsa (1877–1970)<sup>55</sup>. The δύναις to heal toothache appears in the Sorrentine Peninsula, where applying chopped garlic with vinegar and milk is suggested<sup>56</sup>. In Sicilian folklore it was employed for eye-diseases, bites (especially of spiders, but in general of poisonous insects) and even for *cholera* epidemics during the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>57</sup>. As it emerges from Theophrastus'

<sup>49</sup> HIPPOCRATES, *De diaeta*, 54, [in:] HIPPOCRATES, *Du régime des maladies aiguës. Appendice. De l'aliment. De l'usage des liquides*, ed. R. JOLY, Paris 1972, p. 51–52.

<sup>50</sup> HIPPOCRATES, *De natura muliebri*, 6, [in:] HIPPOCRATES, *Generation. Nature of the Child. Diseases 4. Nature of Women, Barrenness*, ed. et trans. P. POTTER, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012 [= LCL], p. 201. HIPPOCRATES, *Diseases of Women 1–2*, 214, ed. et trans. P. POTTER, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012 [= LCL], p. 338–340.

<sup>51</sup> DIOSCORIDES, II, 152, vol. I, p. 217–218. Cf. also PIETRO ANDREA MATTIOLI, *Discorsi*, II, 141, p. 587–591, where Mattioli distinguishes the cultivated and wild garlic, defining this last one *serpentino*.

<sup>52</sup> GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XX, 23, vol. III.2, p. 34–39.

<sup>53</sup> *Marcelli De medicamentis liber*, IX, 22; XIV, 29–30; XV, 77 and 87; XVI, 48; XXIII, 39; XXVII, 107; XXVIII, 29, ed. et trans. M. NIEDERMANN, E. LIECHTENHAN, Berlin 1968 [= CMLat, 5], p. 170, 236, 258, 260, 282, 402, 480, 492.

<sup>54</sup> G. FINAMORE, *Tradizioni popolari...*, p. 162.

<sup>55</sup> S. LA SORSA, *Alberi, piante ed erbe medicinali nella tradizione popolare italiana*, Lar 12.2, 1941, p. 116.

<sup>56</sup> G. AMALFI, *Tradizioni ed usi...*, p. 64.

<sup>57</sup> G. PITRÈ, *Medicina popolare...*, p. 253, 276, 351.

*Characters*<sup>58</sup>, since the ancient world garlic was considered a remedy for the evil eye, but this popular belief is still attested in modern folklore: in Greece garlic was used as an amulet against the evil eye or, if it is not at hand, people could exclaim σκόρδο ‘στά μάτια σου’ (‘garlic in your eyes’); likewise, in Calabria, as E. Lelli noted, *si portava addosso uno spicchio d’aglio contro il malocchio* (‘people wore a clove of garlic against the evil eye’), and the same usage is attested in Puglia<sup>59</sup>. Furthermore, it was associated with witches, both in the ancient world and in modern times: Quintus Serenus noticed that the comic playwright Titinius knew that it could be a defence against the black *strix* that attacked *puelli*<sup>60</sup>; similarly, in the contemporary Greek world a wreath of herbs, including garlic, was hung on the door on the first of May to keep evil influence away<sup>61</sup>; we find the same belief in Salerno, where garlic should be carried in the pocket during the night of Saint John to protect against witches and demons<sup>62</sup>.

After examining the use of select herbs in *Cyranides* and *Geoponica*, comparing their properties and employment between traditional medical sources and folkloric evidence, we can proceed with another non-traditional medical work, the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*. We will examine other types of vegetable, considering in this case also the influence of astrology in the practice of medicine and magic.

## 2. The *Hygromanteia Salomonis*

The *Hygromanteia Salomonis* is an astrological-demonological compilation which includes considerations on planets and zodiac signs, and even some exorcisms attributed to king Solomon<sup>63</sup>. The last two blocks of the astrological material discussed in this work are devoted to the associations of zodiac signs and planets with vegetable species; moreover, Solomon explains when and how to harvest

<sup>58</sup> THEOPHRASTUS, *Characters*, XVI, 14, ed. et trans. J. DIGGLE, Cambridge 2004 [= LCL, 225], p. 112–113.

<sup>59</sup> E. LELLI, *Folklore antico...*, p. 52. C. LAPUCCI, A. ANTONI, *La simbologia...*, p. 66. Cf. also S. LA SORSA, *Alberi, piante...*, p. 116 and C. LAPUCCI, *DVP*, 36, [in:] IDEM, *Dizionario dei modi di vivere del passato*, Firenze 1996.

<sup>60</sup> *Quinti Sereni Liber medicinalis*, 58, ed. F. VOLLMER, Leipzig–Berlin 1916 [= CMLat, 2.3]. For this aspect cf. also L. CHERUBINI, *Strix. La strega nella cultura romana*, Torino 2010, p. 23; D. OGDEN, *The Werewolf in the Ancient World*, Oxford 2021, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> W.H.D. ROUSE, *Folklore Firstfruits from Lesbos*, Fol 7.2, 1896, p. 146. Cf. also T. BRACCINI, *Prima di Dracula. Archeologia del vampiro*, Bologna 2011, p. 177, where garlic is even associated with vampires, and in particular it was rubbed on the corpses to keep them from becoming vampires.

<sup>62</sup> F.M. MORESE, *L’eredità degli antenati...*, p. 174–175.

<sup>63</sup> There is a tradition according to which Solomon, builder of the homonym temple, was also an astrologer and exorcist. This emerges in the *Hygromanteia Salomonis* and in the *Testament of Solomon*, cf. P.A. TORIJANO, *Solomon the Esoteric King. From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, Leiden–New York–Köln 2002 [= JSJ.S, 73].

the plants, how to prepare them and what are their ἐνέργειαι (powers). As Pablo Antonio Torijano highlighted, the medical preparations discussed seem to refer to ‘actual practices of medicinal or magical botany’: consequently, this text could be used as a repository of techniques probably carried out by real practitioners, as well as the exorcisms of the *Testament of Solomon*<sup>64</sup>.

The *Hygromanteia Salomonis* describes first the link between zodiac signs and herbs, and then those involving planets, but it is better to start from the latter part for the sake of clarity. Each planet is connected with a certain plant, and this association is explicable by the characteristics of the planet itself according to Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* or Vettius Valens’ *Anthologies*. For example, concerning Jupiter, Ptolemy explains that this planet has a temperate action since its orbit is halfway between Saturn and Mars, the first being cold and the other burning hot. For this reason, it was classified by the ancients as a cold, masculine and diurnal planet and was assigned the signs of Sagittarius and Pisces, in trine with the luminaries (the Sun and the Moon). Ptolemy states that Jupiter presides over the organs of touch, lungs, arteries and sperm. On the other hand, in Vettius Valens’ *Anthologies* Jupiter relates to abundance – thus is associated with pregnancy, generation, prosperity and abundance of gifts and crops – but it also exemplifies desire, friendship with great men, trust and brotherhood. Jupiter presides over thighs and feet, whereas if the internal body parts are concerned, it rules the sperm, the uterus, the liver and in general the right side of the body<sup>65</sup>.

So far we have clarified the characteristics of Jupiter and we can examine the link between this planet and the herb associated with it, χρυσάγκαθον in the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*<sup>66</sup>. For this purpose, we can take into account the text transmitted by *Monacensis gr. 70* (16<sup>th</sup> century), which is the oldest version of *Hygromanteia Salomonis*<sup>67</sup>:

Τὸ βότανον τοῦ Διὸς τὸ χρυσάγκαθον· τοῦτο εὐγαλε εἰς τὴν ὥραν, ἐν ἣ κυριεῦει ὁ Ζεὺς, καὶ ὀνόμαζε τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ εἰπὲ καὶ τὰς προσευχὰς καὶ ἔχει ἰατρείας φρικτὰς καὶ φοβεράς· τὴν ρίζαν ἐὰν δώσεις φαγεῖν πρωΐας ζ', σεληνιαζομένους ἰαθήσεται· εἰ δὲ δαιμονιζομένῳ δώσεις βαστᾶζειν μετὰ λιβάνου τὴν ρίζαν, φυγήσεται τὸ δαιμόνιον· τοὺς πίπτοντας ἐκ τοῦ

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170.

<sup>65</sup> PTOLEMY, *Tetrabiblos*, I, 4–7; 18; III, 13, [in:] CLAUDIO TOLOMEO, *Le previsioni astrologiche*, ed. S. FERABOLI, <sup>4</sup>Milano 1998 (cetera: PTOLEMY), p. 32, 39; 66–69; 246–259. VETTIUS VALENS, *Anthologiae*, I, 1, ed. D. PINGREE, Leipzig 1986, p. 17. The Latin version of *Picatrix*, an Arabic treatise on astrology, only mentions the left ear and the liver; cf. *Picatrix. The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Hakīm*, III, 1, ed. D. PINGREE, London 1986, p. 92.

<sup>66</sup> There are also similar treatises on the connections between planets and plants, transmitted by several manuscripts edited in the *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*. For these connections cf. G. DUCOURTHIAL, *Flore magique et astrologique de l'antiquité*, Paris–Berlin 2003, p. 267–376; G. FRENI, *Piante, pietre e animali tra magia e astrologia*, *Ac 73.2*, 2020, p. 53–70.

<sup>67</sup> P.A. TORIJANO, *Solomon the Esoteric King...*, p. 161–162.

πάθους και ἀφρίζοντας, πότιζε τὴν ρίζαν μετὰ λουλακίου και παραυτικά ιαθήσεται. ἐκ δὲ τῶν φύλλων τρίψας λάβε τὸν ὀπὸν και ἀλειψον τομάς και κρούσματα ξιφῶν και πληγὰς. και διὰ ἡ΄ ὠρῶν θεραπεύσεις, τὴν δὲ κεφαλὴν τοῦ βοτάνου ἐὰν δώσης βαστάσαι, ἀνὴρ οὐ φοβηθήσεται πειραθῆναι ὑπὸ μαγίων. εἰ δὲ ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπος και πάσχει ἐκ φαρμακοποσίῳ, ἐπίδος ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς βοτάνης πίνειν μετὰ ὕδατος και μέλιτος και ιαθήσεται.

The plant of Jupiter is the *chryságkathon*. Pick it up in the hour when Zeus dominates, invoke the angels, recite the prayers and it presents extraordinary and formidable healings. If you make someone eat the root at the seventh hour of the morning, it will cure epilepsys; if you give the root with incense to someone who is possessed by a demon and he carries it, the demon will flee. Make those who fall due to the suffering and those who foam drink the root with *loylákion* and they will heal immediately. Grind the leaves, take the juice and anoint the cuts, the injuries caused by a sword and the wounds and you will cure them in eighteen hours. If you give the extremity of the plant to someone and he carries it, he will not be afraid to be tested by incantations. If someone suffers because of a potion, make him drink immediately the extremity of the plant with water and honey and he will be healed<sup>68</sup>.

As it emerges from this passage, χρυσάγκαθον can have extraordinary and formidable healing properties if picked up in the hour in which Jupiter is dominant and if some invocations and prayers are pronounced. The plant can cure epileptics, those possessed by a demon and those who foam at their mouths, but also heals wounds and injuries; it even protects from incantations and is a remedy for poisoning. However, *Monacensis gr. 70* is not the only manuscript which indicates the connection between planets and herbs. Another remarkable testimony of this section of *Hygromanteia Salomonis* is the so-called *Petropolitanus* of the Palaeographic Museum of Russian Academy of Sciences (17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>69</sup>). This species is defined there as χρυσάκανθος or ἀλχαράνιος, suggesting to collect it when Jupiter dominates, on the seventh day at the first hour, reciting the planet’s prayer. Among the recipes given, there is a remedy for eye-diseases:

τὴν ρίζαν αὐτῆς σμιζον μετὰ χελιδονίου, τρίψον, ἀνάλυσον και βάλε μετὰ ὕδατος νύκτας τρεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀέρα και τότε ἀλειψε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς και ποτε οὐ μὴ τυφλανθοῦν, οἶον ἐξ ἀνθρώπου πληγαίς, και ἰάσει τοῦτον· βλέψει ὥστε θαυμάσεις.

Mix the root of *chrysákanthos* with celandine, then grind, dissolve and leave with water in the open air for three nights and anoint your eyes, they will not be blind; it will cure who is beaten by a man; see and you will be amazed<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> *Hygromanteia Salomonis, excerptum e cod. Monacensi gr. 70*, fol. 252r, [in:] *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. VIII.2, ed. J. HEEG, Bruxelles 1911, p. 162–163.

<sup>69</sup> This manuscript transmits the part of *Hygromanteia Salomonis* related to planetary plants and that of *Testament of Salomon* dedicated to decans; cf. P.A. TORIJANO, *Solomon the Esoteric King...*, p. 159.

<sup>70</sup> The text of the *Petropolitanus* is edited in A. DELATTE, *Le traité des plantes planétaires d’un manuscrit de Léningrad*, [in:] *Mélanges en l’honneur de H. Grégoire*, Bruxelles 1949, p. 167.



Furthermore, χρυσάκανθος is recommended for belly pains or nerve paralysis, but also for non-medical uses such as being successful in embarking on a journey or being invincible in court. Concerning other testimonies, as Iaonnis Marathakis explained, this section of *Hygromanteia Salomonis* is attested in such manuscripts as *Harleianus* 5596 – which mentions only the plants associated with the Sun and Saturn – or the *Gennadianus* 45 of the Gennadius Library of Athens (16<sup>th</sup> century) and the *Bernardaceus* of the private library of the Bernardakedes (19<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>71</sup>. Likewise, there are further works devoted to the relationship between herbs and planets and, according to Armand Delatte, we can distinguish five different treatises, only two of which probably connected with the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*<sup>72</sup>. Finally, we can recall the *Additional manuscript* 17 900 of the British Library in London, which includes a treatise attributed to Alexander the Great: even if this work is not strictly linked with *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, it is useful to understand the circulation of such medical-astrological beliefs in the ancient and Byzantine world. Friedrich Pfister defined this treatise *Alexandertext* and distinguished the version *Peristereontext* from the *Mandragoratext*, depending on the attribution of περιστερεών and μανδραγόρα to Aphrodite/Venus, but also on the distinction between σαγχαρώνιον and ύοσκύαμος as the plants connected with Zeus/Jupiter<sup>73</sup>.

The identification of χρυσάκανθος and άλχαράνιος, which appear in astrological treatises, was discussed for a long time. Scholars have proposed that this species corresponds to *Hyoscyamus* L. and, in particular, it seems that άλχαράνιος is a deformation of σαγχαρώνιον. This hypothesis seems confirmed by two astrological texts, included in *Parisinus* gr. 2256 and *Neapolitanus* II.C. 33. The Jupiter's herbs there are named respectively σαγχαρώνιον and άλχαράνιος, but they have the same properties: the root heals inguinal tumours, the liver and those who suffer from gout; if used as an amulet, the root has an aphrodisiac power<sup>74</sup>. These prescriptions may suggest that both names refer to the same herb. Pseudo Apuleius' *Herbarium* confirms the identification with *Hyoscyamus* L.: when mentioning the *herba simfoniaca*, it is explained that *A Graecis dicitur iosciamum* (Greeks define it *iosciamum*), but according to some manuscripts prophets call it *saccanaron*<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> For the *Gennadianus* cf. A. DELATTE, *Un nouveau témoin de la littérature solomonique, le Codex Gennadianus 45 d'Athènes*, BCLSM 45, 1959, p. 280–321.

<sup>72</sup> I. MARATHAKIS, *The Magical Treatise of Solomon or Hygromanteia also called Apolesmatikē Pragmateia, Epistle to Rehoboam*, Singapore 2011, p. 81–83.

<sup>73</sup> F. PFISTER, *Pflanzenaberglaube*, [in:] *RE*, vol. XIX.2, col. 1446–1456, in particular col. 1450–1451; M.T. SANTAMARÍA HERNÁNDEZ, *Testimonios de una traducción latina antigua del Liber Alexandri Magni de septem herbis septem planetarum en el Herbario de Pseudo Apuleyo*, *Gal* 4, 2010, p. 149–161.

<sup>74</sup> *Excerptum e cod. Parisino* gr. 2256, fol. 582v, [in:] *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. VIII.3, ed. P. BOUDREAUX, Bruxelles 1912, p. 160–161. *Excerptum e cod. Neapolitano* II.C. 33, fol. 387v, [in:] *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. IV, ed. D. BASSI, F. CUMONT, E. MARTINI, A. OLIVIERI, Bruxelles 1903, p. 135–136.

<sup>75</sup> In particular, in *Vratislaviensis bibl. univ.* III F 19 and in *Vindobonensis* 93 we can read *prophetiae saccanaron*. Cf. *Pseudoapulei Herbarius*, IV, ed. E. HOWALD, H.E. SIGERIST, Leipzig–Berlin 1927

As Guy Ducourthial pointed out, *iosciamum* and *saccanaron* could represent the Latinized form for χρυσάκανθος and σαγχαρώνιον<sup>76</sup>. But there is even more evidence to support that claim: ἀλχαράνιος or σαγχαρώνιον seems related to the Arabic term *al-saykarān*, which indicates both henbane and hemlock, whereas *shawkarān* is the name of hemlock, denoting again the difficulty in the identification<sup>77</sup>. Finally, ὕσκάμος, as claimed by Dioscorides’ *De materia medica (recensio vetus)*, was called by some Διὸς κύαμος: this links it with Zeus and, consequently, with the planet Jupiter<sup>78</sup>.

Having verified the identification with the *Hyoscyamus* L., generally known as henbane, we can analyse the ancient medical sources and the folkloric evidence on this plant. There are many varieties of henbane, for example the black (*Hyoscyamus niger* L.), the golden (*Hyoscyamus aureus* L.), the white (*Hyoscyamus albus* L.), the one from Egypt (*Hyoscyamus muticus* L.) and the lattice henbane (*Hyoscyamus reticulatus* L.)<sup>79</sup>. However, already in the ancient world several varieties of this plant were distinguished.

Hippocrates gives some information on the δυνάμεις of henbane, mentioning its employ for uterus diseases, tetanus, fevers or sterility<sup>80</sup>. Dioscorides talks about three species, *i.e.* one with purple flowers and a black seed, another with quince-yellow flowers and yellow seed and the last one with white flowers and seed. It is clarified that the first two cause madness, are soporific and difficult to use, whereas the third one is suitable for treatments. If the white variety is unavailable, the henbane with the yellow seed was preferred over the black seed variety. Its juice has analgesic properties and is beneficial for rheum, earaches, uterus’ ailments, eye-disease, feet and in general for inflammations. The seed can be used for the same purposes, but it is even employed for female flow, gout, swollen testicles and breasts. The leaves are analgesics, especially the fresh ones if applied

[= CMLat, 4], p. 33. Cf. also M.T. SANTAMARÍA HERNÁNDEZ, *Testimonios...*, p. 159–160, where there is a comparison between the *herba simfoniaca* in Pseudo Apuleius’ *Herbarium* and the *excerptum* from *Parisinus gr.* 2256. Other synonyms of this species can be found in B. LANGKAVEL, *Botanik Der Spaeteren Griechen*, Berlin 1866, p. 52.

<sup>76</sup> G. DUCOURTHIAL, *Flore magique...*, p. 328–329.

<sup>77</sup> MARWĀN IBN JANĀH, *On the Nomenclature of Medicinal Drugs (Kitāb al-Talkhīs)*. Edition, Translation and Commentary, with Special Reference to the Ibero-Romance Terminology, vol. I–II, ed. et trans. G. BOS, F. KÄS, M. LÜBKE, G. MENSCHING, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= IHC, 170], p. 309, 816. For the Arabic terms which indicate henbane cf. also F. STEINGASS, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature*, <sup>5</sup>London 1963, p. 716; M. HINDS, E. BADAWI, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, Beirut 1986, p. 419.

<sup>78</sup> DIOSCORIDES, IV, 68, vol. II, p. 224. In general, for the denominations of this plant cf. also F. GAIDE, *La jusquiame dans l’Antiquité romaine. Réflexions méthodologiques sur la lecture et l’appréciation des textes médicaux latins*, [in:] *La transmission des connaissances techniques. Tables rondes Aix-en-Provence, avril 1993-mai 1994*, ed. M.C. AMOURETTI, G. COMET, Aix-en-Provence 1995, p. 115–126.

<sup>79</sup> G. DUCOURTHIAL, *Flore magique...*, p. 329.

<sup>80</sup> *Oeuvres Complètes D’Hippocrates*, ed. E. LITTRÉ, Paris 1839–1861, vol. VII, p. 60, 298, 392; VIII, p. 314, 360, 380, 434.

as a plaster; if three or four of them are drunk with wine, they heal fever; if a bowl of leaves is boiled and eaten, they cause delirium. Finally, the root boiled with vinegar is efficacious for toothache<sup>81</sup>. Pliny generally discusses the same properties, but he talks about four varieties: in addition to the ones found in Dioscorides' *De materia medica*, there is a species whose seed seems that of the *irio*. Concerning the dangerousness of this plant, Pliny mentions a remedy for those who drunk henbane's juice, explaining that the juice itself was a remedy<sup>82</sup>. Galen distinguishes different seeds, recognizing that henbane can provoke madness and including it in the so-called φάρμακα δηλητήρια<sup>83</sup>. Even Oribasius recommends white henbane, noting that the black one can cause madness and admitting the perilousness of the yellow one: for this reason, people should avoid these two varieties, preferring the white henbane<sup>84</sup>. All things considered, these medical sources point out the toxicity of this plant<sup>85</sup>, especially the black variety as we can read in Dioscorides and Oribasius, and there were also some remedies for its dangerousness as Pliny notes in his *Naturalis Historia*<sup>86</sup>. Finally, Alexander of Tralles suggests to unearth henbane when the moon is on the sign of Aquarius or Pisces, before sunset, but without touching the root of the plant; after reciting some formulas, the extremity should be applied to those who suffer<sup>87</sup>.

As Ducourthial stated<sup>88</sup>, henbane still is considered toxic today and there is some folkloric evidence in this regard. The folklorist Anselmo Calvetti (1924–2016) highlighted that this plant is cultivated in Europe and has different effects depending on its doses: in small doses it can cause sleep, but in large doses it is employed in popular medicine against neuralgia; smoked like cigarettes, the leaves can cure asthma and are used in powder form as a hypnotic<sup>89</sup>. As Valentino Oster-

<sup>81</sup> DIOSCORIDES, IV, 68, vol. II, p. 224–227. Cf. also PIETRO ANDREA MATTIOLI, *Discorsi*, IV, 64, p. 1118–1121, where three varieties are distinguished basing on their seed (black, red, white) and the black one is considered poisonous.

<sup>82</sup> GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XXV, 17, vol. III.2, p. 640–643. Concerning the other properties of this plant, cf. GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XXII, 58; XXIII, 49; XXV, 58, 91, 103, 105; XXVI, 15, 58, 64, 66, 90, vol. III.2, p. 332–333; 410–411; 680–681; 698–699; 710–711; 736–737; 768–769; 774–775; 766–767; 800–801.

<sup>83</sup> GALENUS, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus libri XI*, IX, 18 and 20, 4, [in:] *Claudii Galeni...*, vol. XI, p. 596; XII, p. 147–148. For other uses and properties of this plant, cf. *Claudii Galeni...*, vol. X, p. 920; XI, p. 879; XVII A, p. 904; XVII B, p. 331.

<sup>84</sup> *Oribasii Collectionum medicarum reliquiae*, XV, 1, vol. II, ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1929 [= CMG], p. 279.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. A. BARTNIK, *Lulek czarny i jego zastosowanie w starożytnej medycynie i weterynarii*, SAMAI 2, 2017, p. 103–117.

<sup>86</sup> GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XX, 13; XXII, 52, vol. III.2, p. 18–19; 324–325.

<sup>87</sup> ALEXANDER TRALLIANUS, *Libri duodecim De re medicina*, [in:] ALEXANDER VON TRALLES, vol. II, ed. T. PUSCHMANN, Wien 1878–1879 (cetera: ALEXANDER TRALLIANUS), p. 585.

<sup>88</sup> G. DUCOURTHIAL, *Flore magique...*, p. 332.

<sup>89</sup> A. CALVETTI, *Piròn Pirbors Piri Pipeta*, Lar 55.1, 1989, p. 80. Cf. also F. CORTESI, A. BENEDECENTI, *Giusquiamo*, [in:] *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Roma 1933, <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giusquiamo>

-mann (1841–1904) noticed, in Friuli the root, chopped with that of hellebore, was applied on the legs for rheumatic and sciatic pains; its poisonous property is also recognized, noting that the most frequent poisoning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were caused by henbane, atropa belladonna, hemlock etc. and the only remedy was vomiting, drinking water with salt, eating lemons or cedars and drinking decoctions of vincetossico. Henbane was used for toothache and, referring to this prescription, Ostermann names it *erbe di Santa Polonia*<sup>90</sup>. Likewise, in Abruzzo this herb, and especially its oil, was employed in curing rheumatic pains, toothache, carbuncle, boils and sores<sup>91</sup>. In Sicily this species is called *erva grassudda*, suitable for removing lice, curing skin inflammations and decaying teeth<sup>92</sup>.

After examining the association between Jupiter and henbane in *Hygromanteia Salomonis* – and the continuity of henbane’s beliefs – we can describe the herbs of the two zodiac signs associated with this planet<sup>93</sup>. Sagittarius and Pisces were considered windy, fruitful and in trine with the luminaries, so they had a harmonic and beneficial aspect<sup>94</sup>. Concerning Sagittarius, the *Hygromanteia Salomonis* connects the ἀνακάρδιος with this sign, giving some prescriptions for the collection (ταύτην ἔπαρον, ὅταν τὸ ζῳδιὸν ὁ Τοξότης κυριεῦει, ‘pick it up when the sign of Sagittarius is dominant’) and talking about some magico-medical properties of the plant: for example, the leaves can cure itchy inflammations and kidney pain, whereas the root brings luck and happiness<sup>95</sup>. As G. Ducourthial highlighted, it is difficult to identify this species and, consequently, to trace folkloric evidence. Unknown to Theophrastus, Dioscorides and Pliny, the ἀνακάρδιος only appears in certain preparations mentioned by Paul of Aegina and Alexander of Tralles, but

---

amo\_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/#:~:text=GIUSQUIAMO%20(dal%20lat.,Europa%2C%20Asia%20e%20Africa%20settentrionale [15 III 2023]. The hypnotic property already emerges in ancient and Byzantine sources, not only for henbane, but also for other species belonging to *Solanaceae* family like mandragoras, atropa belladonna, opium; cf. I.A. RAMOUTSAKI, H. ASKITOPOULOU, E. KONSOLAKI, *Pain Relief and Sedation in Roman Byzantine Texts: Mandragoras Officinarum, Hyoscyamos Niger and Atropa Belladonna*, [in:] *The History of Anesthesia. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on the History of Anesthesia, Santiago, Spain, 19–23 September 2001*, ed. J.C. DIZ, A. FRANCO, D.R. BACON, J. RUPERTH, J. ALVAREZ, Amsterdam 2002, p. 43–50.

<sup>90</sup> V. OSTERMANN, *La vita in Friuli*..., p. 186, 412, 423, 427.

<sup>91</sup> G. FINAMORE, *Tradizioni popolari*..., p. 121, 127, 130, 154, 191.

<sup>92</sup> G. PITRÈ, *Medicina popolare*..., p. 30, 217, 239. In general cf. also C. LAPUCCI, A. ANTONI, *La simbologia*..., p. 221–223.

<sup>93</sup> In addition to the one in *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, there is another treatise on the connection between plants and Zodiac signs, transmitted by *Parisinus gr.* 2256, fol. 588v–592v; cf. P. BOUDREAU, *Catalogus Codicum*..., vol. VIII.3, p. 139–151. As Marathakis noted, this work is attributed to Harpocratio and has no relation with the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*; a Latin version of this treatise was published in 1528 as an appendix to Pseudo Apuleius’ *Herbarium*; cf. I. MARATHAKIS, *The Magical Treatise*..., p. 80.

<sup>94</sup> PTOLEMY, I, 18, p. 66–69.

<sup>95</sup> *Hygromanteia Salomonis, excerptum e cod. Monacensi gr.* 70, fol. 250v, [in:] J. HEGG, *Catalogus Codicum*..., vol. VIII.2, p. 161.

the plant itself is not described<sup>96</sup>; some late antique glossaries identify it with an Indian species<sup>97</sup>. Finally, the *Cyranides*, when talking about the plant called *μορέα*, explains that *ἀνακάρδιον* refers to the direction of the small branches (*ἀνακάρδιος*, with upward branches; *κατακάρδιον*, with downward branches)<sup>98</sup>.

Instead, the plant associated with *Pisces* in the *Hygromanteia Salomonis* is the *ἀριστολογία*: its fruit, drunk with wine, drives away all diseases; its root, after a fumigation, is successful against demons, diseases and calamities<sup>99</sup>. According to Dioscorides the phytonym comes from the usefulness for women during childbirth (*ὠνόμασται μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ δοκεῖν ἄριστα βοηθεῖν ταῖς λοχοῖς*, ‘it is defined from the belief that is excellent for women during childbirth’). Then three varieties are distinguished: a feminine one, excellent for poisons; however, to treat snake or deadly the masculine variety is preferred, which is also suitable for pregnant women; the third species (*κληματίτις*) has the same properties but is less powerful<sup>100</sup>. Pliny the Elder shows the same etymology for *aristolochia*, connecting it with *ἀρίστη λεχούσαις* (good for pregnant women); however, in *Naturalis Historia* four species are distinguished, the first three yellowish in colour, with a small stem and purple leaves, and the fourth one, which is very thin. Pliny explains that if the second variety (the masculine, which is long), is eaten with beef after conception, it will result in a male child being born; moreover, the fishermen of Campania thought that the one with a round root (the feminine), mixed with lime and thrown into the sea, allowed to fish more easily (*Piscatores Campaniae radicem eam quae rotunda est uenenum terrae uocant coramque nobis contusam mixta calce in mare sparsere. Aduolant pisces cupiditate mira statimque exanimati fluitant*. ‘Fishers from Campania call the round root poison of the earth and, I am a witness, they throw it on the sea, chopped and mixed with lime. Fish come quickly with extraordinary greed and immediately float dead’)<sup>101</sup>. Finally, both the masculine and the feminine varieties are mentioned in Nicander’s *Theriaká*, where *ἀριστολογία* is considered a remedy for the vipers’ venom<sup>102</sup>. However, these different usages

<sup>96</sup> PAULUS AEGINETA, *Libri V–VII*, VII, 11, 38–39, ed. J. HEILBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1924 [= CMG, 9.2], p. 307. ALEXANDER TRALLIANUS, vol. II, p. 283.

<sup>97</sup> For these glossaries cf. for example the one edited by A. DELATTE, *Le lexique du botanique du Parisinus graecus 2419*, Serta Leodiensia ad celebrandam patriae libertatem iam centesimum annum recuperatam composuerunt philologi leodienses, Liège 1930, p. 59–101; in particular cf. p. 70 and 84. In general, G. DUCOURTHIAL, *Flore magique...*, p. 441, p. 577 notes 184–186.

<sup>98</sup> *Cyranides*, I, 12, p. 71.

<sup>99</sup> *Hygromanteia Salomonis, excerptum e cod. Monacensi gr. 70*, fol. 251r, [in:] J. HEGG, *Catalogus Codicum...*, vol. VIII.2, p. 162. The same plant appears in the treatise transmitted by *Parisinus gr. 2256*; cf. P. BOUDREAUX, *Catalogus Codicum...*, vol. VIII.3, p. 149–151.

<sup>100</sup> DIOSCORIDES, III, 4, vol. III, p. 6–8.

<sup>101</sup> GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, XXV, 54, vol. III.2, p. 674–677.

<sup>102</sup> NICANDER, *Theriaká*, 509–519, [in:] NICANDRO, *Theriaká e Alexiphármaka*, ed. et trans. G. SPATAFORA, Roma 2007, p. 70–73.

still emerge in modern folklore, revealing again a continuity of ancient beliefs. For example, the connection to pregnancy has been found by E. Lelli in the Apulian folklore: in fact, an interviewed person from this region affirmed that this plant *serviva come amuleto per le partorienti* (‘it was used as an amulet for pregnant women’). On the other hand, the association with fishing recalls the sign of Pisces itself: it is remarkable that this characteristic appears in the area of former Greek influence, in particular in Calabria, where the belief on the poisonous property is also alive<sup>103</sup>.

Reaching towards conclusions, we can recognize that *Cyranides* and *Geoponica* on the one side, and *Hygromanteia Salomonis* on the other are three works that illustrate the existence of a knowledge different from that of traditional medical sources. These compilations are not strictly devoted to medicine, since they concern distinctive field of knowledge in which medicine is included. Except for the fifth book of *Cyranides*, dedicated to the therapeutic uses of the 24 vegetable species, *Geoponica* and *Hygromanteia Salomonis* are not just meant to examine how to employ herbs as φάρμακα, but also to give prescriptions in different fields of knowledge: *Geoponica* mainly relates to agricultural and peasant wisdom, which involves the practice of collecting and taking advantage of herbs’ characteristics and properties in the medical practice; the *Hygromanteia Salomonis*, however, is an astrological-demonological compilation on astrological questions. Therefore, the therapeutic usage of plants is not the primary aim of these works: nonetheless, it is an important section of all these compilations and, as we have seen, the comparison with traditional medical sources permits to hypothesise the existence of a parallel non-traditional medicine, intersected with the scientific one<sup>104</sup>. The comparison with such authors as Hippocrates, Dioscorides or Galen allows to have a broad view of the properties of certain plants – some of which are common, like the soporific action of lettuce, henbane and hemlock – and to retrace its uses in ancient and modern beliefs. In fact, the species analysed are still attested in several regions of Italy, but also in Greece, for their medical and magical use. Peasant knowledge or astrological principles are still alive today, especially in the countryside, sometimes recorded by our ancestors and handed down from generation to generation. Maybe on a summer evening, when grandparents tell their ancient remedies to children, thinking that one day they will do the same.

<sup>103</sup> E. LELLI, *Folklore antico...*, p. 61–62, 242.

<sup>104</sup> For the perception of science in the ancient and Byzantine world, cf. S. LAZARIS, *Introduction*, [in:] *A Companion...*, p. 1–26.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- L'agricoltura antica. I Geoponica di Cassiano Basso*, ed. et trans. E. LELLI, Soveria Mannelli 2010.
- ALEXANDER VON TRALLES, vol. I–II, ed. T. PUSCHMANN, Wien 1878–1879.
- APOLLONIO RODIO, *Le argonautiche*, ed. et trans. G. PADUANO, <sup>4</sup>Milano 2016.
- Athenaei Naucraticae Dipnosophistarum Libri XV*, ed. G. KAIBEL, Leipzig 1887 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- CALLIMACHUS, ed. R. PFEIFFER, Oxford 1959.
- Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. IV, ed. D. BASSI, F. CUMONT, E. MARTINI, A. OLIVIERI, Bruxelles 1903.
- Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. VIII.2, ed. J. HEEG, Bruxelles 1911.
- Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*, vol. VIII.3, ed. P. BOUDREAUX, Bruxelles 1912.
- CELSUS, *De medicina*, vol. I–III, ed. et trans. W.G. SPENCER, <sup>3</sup>Cambridge, Massachusetts 1960–1961 [= Loeb Classical Library].
- Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1821–1833.
- CLAUDIO TOLOMEO, *Le previsioni astrologiche*, ed. S. FERABOLI, <sup>4</sup>Milano 1998.
- I discorsi di M. Pietro Andrea Matthioli sanese, medico cesareo, et del serenissimo principe Ferdinando archiduca d'Austria etc. nelli sei libri di Pedacio Discoride Anazarbeo della materia Medicinale*, Venezia 1568.
- EURIPIDES, *Medea*, ed. D.L. PAGE, <sup>2</sup>Oxford 2001.
- GAIO PLINIO SECONDO, *Storia naturale*, ed. et trans. G.B. CONTE, Torino 1982–1988.
- HIPPOCRATES, *Diseases of Women 1–2*, ed. et trans. P. POTTER, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012 [= Loeb Classical Library].
- HIPPOCRATES, *Du régime des maladies aiguës. Appendice. De l'aliment. De l'usage des liquides*, ed. R. JOLY, Paris 1972.
- HIPPOCRATES, *Generation. Nature of the Child. Diseases 4. Nature of Women, Barrenness*, ed. et trans. P. POTTER, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012 [= Loeb Classical Library].
- Die Kyraniden*, ed. D. KAIMAKIS, Meisenheim am Glan 1976 [= Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, 76].
- Marcelli De medicamentis liber*, ed. et trans. M. NIEDERMANN, E. LIECHTENHAN, Berlin 1968 [= Corpus Medicorum Latinorum, 5].
- MARZIALE, *Epigrammi*, ed. et trans. M. SCÀNDOLA, <sup>4</sup>Milano 2015.
- NICANDRO, *Theriaká e Alexiphármaka*, ed. et trans. G. SPATAFORA, Roma 2007.
- Nikolaos Myrepsos' Dynameron*, ed. I. VALLAKOS, Heidelberg 2020.
- Oeuvres Completes D'Hippocrates*, ed. E. LITTRÈ, Paris 1839–1861.
- OMERO, *Odissea*, ed. et trans. V. DI BENEDETTO, Milano 2010.
- Oribasii Collectionum medicarum reliquiae*, vol. II, ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1929 [= Corpus Medicorum Graecorum].
- PAULUS AEGINETA, *Libri V–VII*, ed. J. HEILBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1924 [= Corpus Medicorum Graecorum, 9.2].
- Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De Materia Medica*, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1907–1914.

- Picatrix. The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. D. PINGREE, London 1986.
- PLATO, *Theaetetus*, ed. et trans. F. FERRARI, Milano 2011.
- Poetae Comici Graeci*, vol. V, ed. R. KASSEL, C. AUSTIN, Berlin–New York 1986.
- Pseudoapulei Herbarius*, ed. E. HOWALD, H.E. SIGERIST, Leipzig–Berlin 1927 [= *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, 4].
- Quinti Sereni Liber medicinalis*, ed. F. VOLLMER, Leipzig–Berlin 1916 [= *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, 2.3].
- Scribonii Largi Compositiones*, ed. S. SCONOCCHIA, Berlin 2020 [= *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, 2.1].
- THEOPHRASTUS, *Characters*, ed. et trans. J. DIGGLE, Cambridge 2004 [= *Loeb Classical Library*, 225], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.theophrastus-characters.2003>
- THEOPHRASTUS, *Enquiry into Plants. And Minor Works on Odours and Weather Signs*, ed. et trans. A. HORT, London–New York 1916 [= *Loeb Classical Library*], <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.162657>
- Theriaca et Alexipharmaca*, ed. O. SCHNEIDER, Lipsiae 1856.
- VETTIUS VALENS, *Anthologiae*, ed. D. PINGREE, Leipzig 1986.

## Secondary Literature

- AMALFI G., *Tradizioni ed usi della penisola sorrentina*, Palermo 1890.
- ANDORLINI I., MARCONE A., *Medicina, medico e società nel mondo antico*, Firenze 2004.
- BARTNIK A., *Lulek czarny i jego zastosowanie w starożytnej medycynie i weterynarii*, “SAMAI. Studia Antiquitatis et Medii Aevis incohantis” 2, 2017, p. 103–117.
- BRACCINI T., *Prima di Dracula. Archeologia del vampiro*, Bologna 2011.
- CALVETTI A., *Piròn Pirbors Piri Pipeta*, “Lares. Quadrimestrale di studi demoetnoantropologici” 55.1, 1989, p. 73–91.
- CATTABIANI A., *Florario. Miti, leggende e simboli di fiori e piante*, Milano 1996.
- CHERUBINI C., *Strix. La strega nella cultura romana*, Torino 2010.
- CLARKE J.H., *Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica*, vol. II, New Delhi 1995.
- CORTESI F., BENEDICENTI A., *Giusquiamo*, [in:] *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Roma 1933, [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giusquiamo\\_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/#:~:text=GIUSQUIAMO%20\(dal%20lat.,Europa%2C%20Asia%20e%20Africa%20settentrionale](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giusquiamo_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/#:~:text=GIUSQUIAMO%20(dal%20lat.,Europa%2C%20Asia%20e%20Africa%20settentrionale) [15 III 2023].
- DE GUBERNATIS A., *La mythologie des plantes*, vol. II, Paris 1882.
- DELATTE A., *Le lexique du botanique du Parisinus graecus 2419*, Serta Leodiensia ad celebrandam patriae libertatem iam centesimum annum recuperatam composuerunt philologi leodienses, Liège 1930, p. 59–101.
- DELATTE A., *Le traité des plantes planétaires d'un manuscrit de Léningrad*, [in:] *Mélanges en l'honneur de H. Grégoire*, Bruxelles 1949, p. 145–177.
- DELATTE A., *Un nouveau témoin de la littérature solomonique, le Codex Gennadianus 45 d'Athènes*, “Bulletin de la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, Académie royale de Belgique” 45, 1959, p. 280–321.
- DETIENNE M., *The Gardens of Adonis. Spices in Greek Mythology*, <sup>2</sup>Princeton 1994.
- DUCOURTHIAL G., *Flore magique et astrologique de l'antiquité*, Paris–Berlin 2003.
- FINAMORE G., *Tradizioni popolari abruzzesi*, Torino–Palermo 1894.



- FRENI G., *Piante, pietre e animali tra magia e astrologia*, “Acme” 73.2, 2020, p. 53–70.
- GAIDE F., *La jusquiame dans l’Antiquité romaine. Réflexions méthodologiques sur la lecture et l’appréciation des textes médicaux latins*, [in:] *La transmission des connaissances techniques. Tables rondes Aix-en-Provence, avril 1993 – mai 1994*, ed. M.C. AMOURETTI, G. COMET, Aix-en-Provence 1995, p. 115–126.
- GUIGNARD C., *Sources et constitution des Géoponiques à la lumière des versions orientales d’Anatolius de Béryte et de Cassianus Bassus*, [in:] *Die Kestoi des Julius Africanus und ihre Überlieferung*, ed. M. WALLRAFF, L. MECCELLA, Berlin–New York 2009 [= *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 165], p. 243–344, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110219593.243>
- HARRIS W.H., *Popular Medicine in the Classical World*, [in:] *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Explorations*, ed. W.H. HARRIS, Leiden–Boston 2016 [= *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition*, 42], p. 1–64, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004326040\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004326040_002)
- HARRIS W.H., *Preface*, [in:] *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Explorations*, ed. W.H. HARRIS, Leiden–Boston 2016 [= *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition*, 42], p. VII–VIII, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004326040>
- HINDS M., BADAWI E., *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, Beirut 1986.
- KLEINMAN A., *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture. An Exploration of the Borderland Between Anthropology, Medicine, and Psychiatry*, Berkeley 1980 [= *Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care*, 5], <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520340848>
- KODER J., *Fresh Vegetables for the Capital*, [in:] *Constantinople and its Hinterland. Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, ed. C. MANGO, G. DAGRON, London 1995, p. 49–56.
- KODER J., *Gemüse in Byzanz. Die Frischgemüseversorgung Konstantinopels im Lichte der Geoponika*, Vienna 1993.
- KRIARAS E., *Lexikó tēs Mesaionikēs Ellēnikēs Dimōdous Grammateías, 1100–1669*, vol. IX, Thessalonikē 1985.
- LA SORSA S., *Alberi, piante ed erbe medicinali nella tradizione popolare italiana*, “Lares. Quadrimestrale di studi demoetnoantropologici” 12.2, 1941, p. 99–129.
- LANGKAVEL B., *Botanik Der Spaeteren Griechen*, Berlin 1866.
- LAPUCCI C., *Dizionario dei modi di vivere del passato*, Firenze 1996.
- LAPUCCI C., ANTONI A.M., *La simbologia delle piante. Magia, leggende, araldica e curiosità del mondo vegetale*, Firenze 2016.
- LAZARIS S., *Introduction*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= *Brill’s Companions to the Byzantine World*, 6], p. 1–26, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617_002)
- LELLI E., *Calabria antica e moderna*, Athens 2021.
- LELLI E., *Folklore antico e moderno*, Roma 2012.
- LIDDELL H., SCOTT R., JONES H.S., *The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon*, <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid:1=undefined&eid=1> [15 III 2023].
- MAGDALINO P., MAVROUDI M., *Introduction*, [in:] *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, M. MAVROUDI, Geneve 2006, p. 11–37.
- MARATHAKIS I., *The Magical Treatise of Solomon or Hygromanteia also called Apolesmatikē Pragmateia, Epistle to Rehoboam*, Singapore 2011.

- MARWĀN IBN JANĀH, *On the Nomenclature of Medicinal Drugs (Kitāb al-Talkhīṣ)*. Edition, Translation and Commentary, with Special Reference to the Ibero-Romance Terminology, vol. I–II, ed. et trans. G. BOS, F. KĀS, M. LÜBKE, G. MENSCHING, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= Islamic History and Civilization, 170], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004413344>
- MORESE F.M., *L’eredità degli antenati. Il lascito ancestrale di Italici, Romani e Longobardi nel Folklore di Salerno tra religiosità popolare e sopravvivenze pagane*, Cosenza 2019.
- ODER E., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Landwirtschaft bei den Griechen I*, “Rheinisches Museum für Philologie” 45, 1890, p. 58–99.
- OGDEN D., *The Werewolf in the Ancient World*, Oxford 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198854319.001.0001>
- OSTERMANN V., *La vita in Friuli. Usi, costumi, credenze, pregiudizi e superstizioni popolari*, Udine 1894.
- PAPATHANASSIOU M., *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= Brill’s Companions to the Byzantine World, 6], p. 464–495, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617\\_015](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617_015)
- PFISTER F., *Pflanzenaberglaube*, [in:] *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. XIX.2, ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1938, col. 1446–1456.
- PITRÈ G., *Medicina popolare siciliana*, <sup>2</sup>Firenze 1949.
- RAMOUTSAKI I.A., ASKITOPOULOU H., KONSOLAKI E., *Pain Relief and Sedation in Roman Byzantine Texts: Mandragoras Officinatum, Hyoscyamos Niger and Atropa Belladonna*, [in:] *The History of Anesthesia. Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on the History of Anesthesia*, Santiago, Spain, 19–23 September 2001, ed. J.C. DIZ, A. FRANCO, D.R. BACON, J. RUPERTH, J. ALVAREZ, Amsterdam 2002, p. 43–50, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0531-5131\(02\)00699-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0531-5131(02)00699-4)
- ROUSE W.H.D., *Folklore Firstfruits from Lesbos*, “Folklore” 7.2, 1896, p. 142–161, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1896.9720350>
- SANTAMARÍA HERNÁNDEZ M.T., *Testimonios de una traducción latina antigua del Liber Alexandri Magni de septem herbis septem planetarum en el Herbario de Pseudo Apuleyo*, “Galenos” 4, 2010, p. 149–161.
- SANTERAMO S., *Folklore barlettano*, “Lares. Quadrimestrale di studi demoetnoantropologici” 2.2, 1931, p. 34–45.
- SCARBOROUGH J., *Herbs of the Field and Herbs of the Garden in Byzantine Medicinal Pharmacy*, [in:] *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. A. LITTLEWOOD, H. MAGUIRE, J. WOLSCHKE-BULMAHN, Washington D.C. 2002, p. 177–188.
- SCARDINO C., *Edition antiker landwirtschaftlicher Werke in arabischer Sprache*, vol. I, *Prolegomena*, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= Scientia Graeco-Arabica, 16.1], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614517481>
- STEINGASS F., *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature*, <sup>5</sup>London 1963.
- TORIJANO P., *Solomon the Esoteric King. From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, Leiden–New York–Köln 2002 [= Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, 73].
- TOTELIN L., *Pharmakopōlai: A Re-Evaluation of the Sources*, [in:] *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity. Explorations*, ed. W.H. HARRIS, Leiden–Boston 2016 [= Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, 42], p. 65–85, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004326040\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004326040_003)
- TOTELIN L., *When Foods Become Remedies in Ancient Greece: The Curious Case of Garlic and Other Substances*, “Journal of Ethnopharmacology” 167, 2015, p. 30–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2014.08.018>


- TOUWAIDE A., *Botany*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 6], p. 302–353, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617\\_011](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617_011)
- TOUWAIDE A., *Medicine and Pharmacy*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World, 6], p. 354–403, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617\\_012](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617_012)
- VERNANT J.P., *Introduction*, [in:] M. DETIENNE, *The Gardens of Adonis. Spices in Greek Mythology*, <sup>2</sup>Princeton 1994, p. VII–XLI.
- VIOLI F., *Storia della Calabria greca*, Reggio Calabria 2005.
- ZAGO M., *Mixis ed enantiosis. L'uso metaforico delle sostanze rituali nelle Ciranidi e oltre*, [in:] *Ermetismo ed esoterismi. Mondo antico e riflessi contemporanei*, ed. P. SCARPI, M. ZAGO, Padova 2013, p. 67–88.
- ZANAZZO G., *Usi, costumi e pregiudizi del popolo di Roma*, Torino 1908.

**Giulia Freni**

University of Basilicata  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
Via Nazario Sauro, 85  
Potenza, 85100, Italy  
[giulia.freni@unibas.it](mailto:giulia.freni@unibas.it)



Miroslava Georgieva (Blagoevgrad)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3068-9796>

## CHURCH ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA IN THE LATE 9<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (BASED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA)

**Abstract.** This publication is devoted to the church architecture in Southwestern Bulgaria (now Blagoevgrad region) during the First Bulgarian Tsardom, in the period from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. From the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (specifically from 864) the territories of the region under consideration officially entered the borders of the medieval Bulgarian state, which coincided with the conversion to Christianity in Bulgaria (865). The studied region covers the valleys of the rivers of Struma (Middle Struma) and Mesta (Upper and Middle Mesta), which were part of the southwestern borders of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages. At present, three churches can be attributed to this period, all excavated through regular archaeological excavations. These are the Basilica of St. Nicholas in the town of Melnik, the single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko at the town of Bansko and the three-conchal church at the village of Kulata, Petrich municipality. In terms of their functional characteristics, these churches include an episcopal (or parish) church (“St. Nicholas” in Melnik), a cemetery church (the church in the area of Shipotsko near the town of Bansko) and a monastery church (the church at the village of Kulata). Characteristic for the first two is their construction on older cult sites – on an ancient sanctuary and an early Christian church (the church “St. Nicholas” in Melnik) and on an early Christian temple (the church in the area of Shipotsko, at the town of Bansko). The small number of excavated church buildings from the First Bulgarian Tsardom is also typical for the rest of the Bulgarian lands. Although the examples from the region are few, they show that almost all major architectural types are found here.

**Keywords:** church architecture, Southwestern Bulgaria, First Bulgarian Tsardom, cult places, basilicas, single-nave churches, cross-domed churches, three-conchal churches

### Introduction

The historical vicissitudes in the Bulgarian lands impose a two-century “religious hiatus” for Christian civilization – from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century – covering the time between the early Christianity of part of the Balkan provinces of Byzantium and the conversion of the Bulgarians. After the “dark ages” for Christianity in the Bulgarian lands – it returned to its beginnings in

them, but at the same time seeking synchrony with the trends of the new times. In this sense, the question of religious monuments in the Middle Ages cannot be considered separately from the pre-existing, previous state of church construction in the Bulgarian lands from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>1</sup>.

The most widespread architectural type of church building in the early Christian period in the Balkans, including the Bulgarian lands, is the basilica, which is found everywhere in the territory of the Late Roman and Byzantine empires. Single nave churches were built less frequently. During this period, centric cult buildings were also built, originating from Roman funerary and memorial structures<sup>2</sup>. Architectural influences came from both Rome and Constantinople, on the church architecture in the Bulgarian lands during the Late Antiquity (and later), and also from the eastern provinces<sup>3</sup>.

The first cult buildings after the conversion to Christianity in Bulgaria in 865 arose in the political and spiritual centres of the state – Pliska, Preslav, Madara, Ohrid and their vicinity. Many of them were built on the site of old pagan shrines, thus demonstrating the dominance of the new religion and preserving the energetic charge of the site. The rebuilding or construction of new churches on top of early Christian religious buildings is common. This practice is attested everywhere in the Bulgarian lands, including in the southwest. There is no evidence of any deliberate destruction of the churches found in ruins by the newly arrived Slavs and Bulgarians<sup>4</sup>. The preservation of the memory of the holy place, associated with a Christian temple, is also traced during the First Bulgarian Tsardom in another way. On the ruins of early Christian churches after the conversion of the Bulgarians their necropolises appeared. This is the case of the site in the area of Shipotsko in the town of Bansko. In the Middle Ages, a small church was built on the altar part of the existing early Christian church, around which a large necropolis developed, dating back to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Б. НИКОЛОВА, *Православните църкви през Българското средновековие IX–XIV век*, София 2002, р. 11.

<sup>2</sup> К. МАРКОВ, *Духовен живот в българските земи през късната античност (IV–VI в.)*, София 1995, р. 50; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Раннохристиянската архитектура в България IV–VI век*, София 1999, р. 33; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на средновековния християнски и ислямски свят*, София 2007, р. 16, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Архитектурни влияния от Рим и Константинопол върху църковната архитектура по българските земи (IV–X в.)*, Rh 1–2, 2002, р. 149–157.

<sup>4</sup> The opinion of S. Boyadzhiev is different; according to him most of the early Christian religious buildings were destroyed by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century by the invading barbarian tribes from the north. – cf. Ст. БОЯДЖИЕВ, *По въпроса за приемствеността в архитектурата на Първата българска държава*, [in:] *Архитектурата на Първата и Втората българска държава*, ed. Г. КОЖУХАРОВ, София 1975, р. 42–45.

<sup>5</sup> Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Византийската архитектура*, София 1955, р. 17–18; Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата в средновековна България*, София 1965, р. 77–78; М. ХАРБОВА, *Три храма, три религии. Една земя, наричана българска*, София 1999, р. 24; Б. НИКОЛОВА, *Православните*

The subjects of this publication are the monuments of church architecture in Southwestern Bulgaria (now Blagoevgrad region) from the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom. The territorial scope thus outlined covers the valleys of the rivers of Struma (Middle Struma) and Mesta (Upper and Middle Mesta), which were part of the southwestern borders of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages. The lower chronological boundary starts from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (more specifically from 864) – the time when the territories of the region studies officially joined the territory of the medieval Bulgarian state, which coincided with the official conversion to Christianity (865). The upper limit – 1018 is generally valid for the Bulgarian lands – the fall of the Bulgarian state under Byzantine rule. Three churches can be attributed to this period, all of which have been studied during regular excavations. The small number of excavated church buildings from the First Bulgarian Tsardom is also typical for the rest of the Bulgarian lands, with the exception of the capitals of Pliska, Preslav and Ohrid.

Studies on church architecture in the Bulgarian lands from the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom define the following groups of churches – churches with a longitudinal axis (basilicas and single nave churches) and centric churches, represented mainly by cross-domed and three-conchal churches. The largest number of excavated buildings are basilical and cross-domed. Fewer single nave and conchal churches were studied during this period.

## **Basilicas**

In the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Pliska, in Preslav and in the western parts of Bulgaria the construction of monumental churches with basilical layout gained recognition. The situation was exactly the opposite in Byzantium, where already in the time of Emperor Justinian (527–565) basilicas were replaced by domed buildings. This type of basilica was widespread throughout the country, including in the structures of the newly founded monasteries. The preference for the basilica type of church in the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom has been attributed to a number of reasons – the spacious interior of early basilicas gathering large numbers of people, the ease of construction of such building as opposed to elaborate domed structures, the spread of this type during the early Christian period. Not without significance is the fact that in the first years after the conversion Bulgaria was under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, whose church type was

---

*църкви...*, р. 22–25; ЕАДЕМ, *Устройство и управление на Българската православна църква (IX–XIV век)*, София 2017, р. 36; К. МЕЛАМЕД, *Раннохристиянска базилика, средновековно село, църква и некропол в Шипотско, Банско, АОР през 2008 г., 2009*, р. 701–704; Г. ГРОЗДАНОВА, *Селищната система в Тракия през Ранното средновековие: Проблеми на проучванията*, [in:] *Тракия през Средновековието и османската епоха. Характер и динамика на селищния живот (XII–XVIII век)*, Сборник статии от научна конференция, проведена на 27–28 ноември 2014 г. в София, ed. Д. СТОЯНОВА, Ч. КИРИЛОВ, София 2020, р. 37–39.

the monumental basilica. In the first decades after the conversion, about 25 basilicas were built in Bulgaria, varying in size and in their architectural and compositional feature<sup>6</sup>.

In the case of churches with a basilica layout, two groups mainly emerge – large basilicas whose architecture has similar features to Romanesque architecture or to early Christian basilicas and small basilicas influenced by modern architectural forms. Large basilicas have representative functions and are intended for the religious service of noble families and many people at solemn liturgies. In addition, many small basilicas were built in the country to serve the needs of the common population, and were used as settlement and neighbourhood temples. Both types have common features – these are the layouts with a nave and three aisles, ending with a single-partite narthex and a complex altar. The altar space ends with a single apse or with three apses. Most often it is tripartite, consisting of a central part containing the communion table and lateral ones serving as the prothesis and diaconikon. The roofing of basilicas is a wooden roof, a semi-cylindrical vault or a mixed roof. The facades are plain or have a decoration of arched blind niches. The main façade of the basilica is the western one. Its simplest form is a smooth panel, marked in the middle by a large entrance door set in a suitable architectural frame. The main building materials are rough-faced stone and brick, with less frequent use of quadri. In all types of building, white mortar was used as a solder, sometimes also clay mortar. The walls are built on the outside with more carefully selected building material, and the inside is lined or covered with wall paintings. Antique columns and details were used secondarily. Spolia are often in the architectural decoration. Usually the altar partition slabs are reused antique materials. Wood also has wide applicability. The supporting elements and structures for all types of basilicas are the same. They consist of walls, pillars, columns and pilasters, depending on the type of covering and supporting system. Thick walls indicate solid masonry and thin outer walls – a wooden covering<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Византийската...*, София 1955, р. 59–64; Кр. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, р. 79–80; Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Старобългарското изкуство. Изкуството на Първото българско царство*, София 1959, р. 92–103; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Основни направления в развитието на средновековната култова архитектура в България*, [in:] *Българската архитектура през вековете*, ed. А. ОБРЕТЕНОВ, Ив. ИВАНЧЕВ, Р. АНГЕЛОВА, Ст. СТАМОВ, София 1982, р. 52–79; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата българска държава*, София 1984, р. 16–17; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на българските манастири*, София 1989, р. 45; Б. НИКОЛОВА, *Православните църкви...*, р. 60; С. ДОНЧЕВА, *Базиликите от Първото българско царство. Архитектурен облик*, Шумен 2003, р. 7; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на средновековния...*, р. 82–85; С. ДОНЧЕВА, *Кръстокуполните църкви в Първото българско царство. Архитектурен облик*, Велико Търново 2008, р. 20.

<sup>7</sup> Сф. Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Основни направления...*, р. 53–57; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 16–66.

There is a relatively large number of Basilical type churches from the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom on Bulgarian lands. In the region studied a representative of this architectural type is the **basilica “St. Nicholas” in the town of Melnik**. It was built in the Late Antiquity, but rebuilt in the late 9<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup> century. As is well known, Melnik was the main urban centre in the Middle Ages in the Middle Struma valley, which has been relatively well studied<sup>8</sup>. The Basilica “St. Nicholas” is located in the highest part of the eponymous plateau to the south above the town of Melnik. Today it has been fully excavated and partially restored (figs. 1–2). It is the oldest and the largest temple in the town of Melnik, which is a typical example of the common practice of restoring or building new churches on older cult sites, in this case on an ancient sanctuary and an early Christian church. The Basilica of St. Nicholas has six periods of construction, the first dating back to the Early Byzantine period (second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century) and the second to the First Bulgarian State (late 9<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>9</sup>.

The Basilica “St. Nicholas” has attracted the attention of researchers since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1844 the Russian archaeologist V. Grigorovich gave the first information about the Founder of the basilica. The French diplomat and traveller P. Perdrise mentioned the monument; he visited Melnik in 1899 and 1901. He notes that the church was rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that its interior is covered with white paint except for the altar, where there are traces of frescoes. In 1922 the Czech art historian A. Stransky visited Melnik and found the church in ruins. He drew his attention to the frescoes preserved in the altar and appreciated their high artistic value. On the basis of its basilical plan, it connects

<sup>8</sup> Cf. I. ДУЙЧЕВ, *Melnik au Moyen Age*, В 28, 1968, p. 328–412; Th. VLACHOS, *Die Geschichte der Byzantinischen Stad Melnikon*, Thessaloniki 1969; И. ДУЙЧЕВ, *Мелник през средновековието*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Българско средновековие. Проучвания върху политическата и културна история на средновековна България*, София 1972, p. 374–412; С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Средновековният Мелник*, МПЧ 3, 1979, p. 5–9; Z. РЪЖАКОВ, *The City of Melnik*, ВНР 4, 1995, p. 75–90; В. НЕШЕВА, *Етапи в историческото развитие на Мелник до края на XIV в. (по археологически данни)*, [in:] *Acta musei Varnaensis*, vol. III.2, *Българските земи през средновековието (VII–XVIII в.)*. Международна конференция в чест на 70-годишнината на проф. Александър Кузев, Варна 12–14 септември 2002, Варна 2005, p. 307–322; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник. Богозиданият град*, София 2008; M. ROROVIC, *Melnik – Geschichte und Denkmäler einer Stadt an den Ausläufern des Pirin-Gebirges*, ВО 11, 2008, p. 16–18; E. КОСТОВА, *Medieval Melnik. From the End of the Twelfth to the End of the Fourteenth Century. The Historical Vicissitudes of a Small Balkan Town*, Sofia 2013; E. КОСТОВА, *Средновековният Мелник (края на XII – края на XIV в.)*, Пловдив 2020.

<sup>9</sup> The remaining construction periods of the church St. Nicholas in Melnik are beyond the chronological scope of this publication. The third and the fourth construction periods refer to the period of the Second Bulgarian State (the second decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century – the time of Despot Alexius Slav and the late 13<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> century). The fifth building period refers to the Ottoman rule (the end of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries), and the sixth – to the period of the Revival (19<sup>th</sup> century). The church functioned until 1913. – cf. М. ГЕОРГИЕВА, Д. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Манастири от територията на Югозападна България*, МJSEA.В 2020, p. 32–33 and the literature cited therein.



the temple with the Church of Holy Forty Martyrs in Tarnovo. At the beginning of the 1930s N. Mavrodinov included the basilica “St. Nicholas” in his study of the churches and monasteries in Melnik and its surroundings. To him is attributed the promulgation of the plan and the discovery of the clerical inscription on one of the pre-altars pilasters, half-painted with white paint and unknown to science until then. Before the archaeological survey of the church, the eastern half was relatively best preserved, the eastern wall with the three apses rising immediately next to the roof, which is now missing<sup>10</sup>.



**Fig. 1.** The Basilica of St. Nicholas in the town of Melnik after the excavations and restoration, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (after V. NEŠEVA, *Melnik...*, p. 148).

<sup>10</sup> P. PERDRIZET, *Melnic et Rossno*, ВНС 31, 1907, p. 20–37; Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Църкви и манастири в Мелник и Рожен*, ГНМ 5, (1926–1931) 1933, p. 292–300, обр. 168; А. STRANSKY, *Remarques sur la peinture du moyen-âge en Bulgarie, en Grèce et en Albanie*, ИАИ 10, 1936, p. 37–41; С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Археологически проучвания на късносредновековната църква “Св. Никола” в Мелник*, Архе 2, 1974, p. 28–37; В. ГРИГОРОВИЧ, *Очерк за пътешествие по Европейска Турция (1844–1845) с карта на околностите на Охридското и Преспанското езеро*, София 1978; В. НЕШЕВА, *Тракийско светилище под базиликата “Св. Никола” в Мелник*, Архе 1, 2002, p. 50.

The field archaeological studies of the basilica “St. Nicholas” and its surroundings were carried out in the period 1971–1974 and 1983–1989. Initially the archaeological excavations were conducted under the direction of S. Georgieva, and since the 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the leadership was taken over by V. Nesheva. The archaeological excavations have played a significant role in clarifying the construction history and chronology of the monument. The six construction periods identified in its existence show the use of an ancient cult site over a long period. After numerous reconstructions carried out at different times, the Church of St. Nicholas survived until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>.

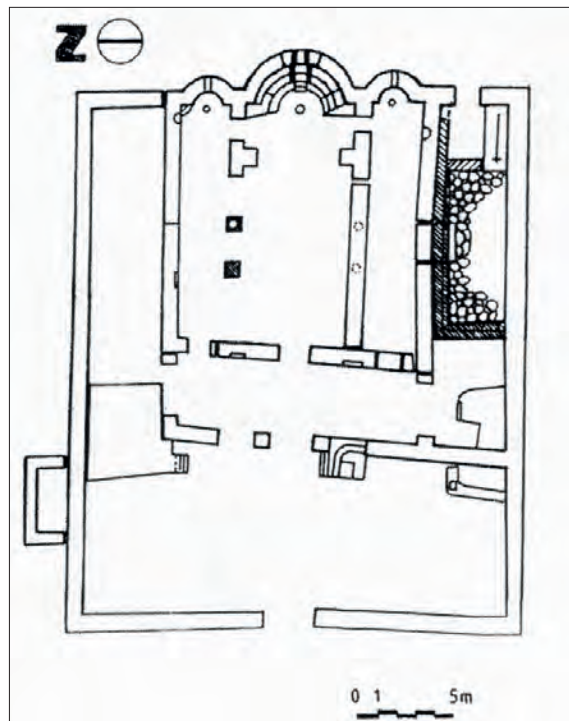


**Fig. 2.** The Basilica of St. Nicholas in the town of Melnik – eastern fasad of the church with the triple window of the central apse (after V. NEŠEVA, *Melnik...*, p. 155).

The general plan of the church established as a result of the archaeological excavations reflects its latest construction period (fig. 3). The church is a three-nave, three-apsed basilica, with an almost square naos, with a pre-apsidal space with three, prominent inside and outside semi-circular apses, the middle of which is very large. The church had this layout during the period of the National Revival. The church also consists of a narthex on the west, side galleries on the north and

<sup>11</sup> С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Археологически проучвания...*, р. 28–37; В. НЕШЕВА, *За култа на Свети Никола в Мелник*, ИРИМР 10, 2006, р. 173.

south, a bell tower, a reservoir and a church dwelling on the west. The naos internal dimensions are on the east–west axis, without apses – 13 m (north), 13.40 m (south), on the north–south axis 13.65 m (east), 13.30 m (west). The thickness of the walls is 0.80–1 m, with 1.10 m of the eastern one. The church is divided into three aisles by two rows of two columns and by dividing walls for the altar on the east, which terminate at their western end in a plan of T-shaped pillars. Between the naves there were arcades with three openings each. The whole church is included in a single volume, rectangular in plan, measuring 30 x 25 m, which also contains the aforementioned residential building (originally a metropolitan, later a monastery one). The church reservoir is located between the north gallery of the church and the residential building, and the bell tower is in the southwest corner of the south gallery. There is a rectangular stone tomb at the south-east end of the south gallery. A small building, an ossuary, is attached to the north wall outside. The listed elements of this complex were not built at the same time, but were added during earlier periods of its history<sup>12</sup>.



**Fig. 3.** The Basilica of St. Nicholas. General plan, S. Georgieva 1974 (after V. NEŠEVA, *Melnik pri car Samuil...*, p. 621, fig. 5).

<sup>12</sup> Кр. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, p. 146, обр. 156, 157; С. Георгиева, *Археологически проучвания...*, p. 29; В. Нешева, *Мелник...*, p. 145–146.

Both chance findings and archaeological excavations show that the church was built on a cult site. First of all, there was a Thracian sanctuary dedicated to Artemis-Bendida, and the Thracian Horseman was also worshipped there<sup>13</sup>. The Thracian sanctuary occupies a significant part of the area of the naos and the southern gallery of the basilica, as well as a few meters of the adjacent space to its east and south. Parts of the foundations of its walls, later incorporated into the church, have been uncovered, outlining a general plan in the shape of a rectangle (close to a square), typical of Thracian sanctuaries<sup>14</sup>. From the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD the sanctuary also functioned as an Augustaeon, where the cult of the emperor was worshipped. A fragment of a marble pedestal with a partially preserved dedicatory inscription (dating from October – November 97) was found as a spolium in the construction of the church. The pedestal is believed to be part of a statue of Emperor Trajan. Probably during the Roman imperial era the sanctuary played a primary role in the religious life of the population of the valley of the river of Middle Struma. The sanctuary itself covers a significant part of the area on which the early Christian basilica was built, as well as the adjacent space to its east and south. Only parts of the foundations of its walls, incorporated into its construction, have been preserved. Numerous architectural details from both the sanctuary and the basilica built on its site in the early Byzantine period have also been preserved<sup>15</sup>.

Towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, with the establishment of Christianity in these lands, the ancient sanctuary was destroyed and burned, but continued to be venerated until the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The holy place of the Thracians – the plateau “St. Nicholas”, in the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century was turned into a fortress, conditioned by the political situation in Byzantium, when the valley of the river of Struma was the central artery of the Balkans, connected with the continuous invasions of Huns, Avars and Slavs. Associated with this fortress is the three-nave basilica built in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century on the site of the destroyed ancient sanctuary. This was a well-known practice in early Byzantine church building, which was used to ensure the continuity of the holy place and at the same time

<sup>13</sup> This can be judged by the votive and tomb reliefs used as spolia in the construction of the church.

<sup>14</sup> The connection established by M. Harbova in relation to the shortened basilicas and pagan cult buildings is interesting, although she refers to the discovered Bulgarian shrines in Pliska. According to her, the basis of the truncated basilica is the magical sign of the shrine, subordinated to the new requirements of the Christian religion. It is for this reason that this form of the “truncated basilica”, close to a square, resembling the pagan temple was used. – М. ХАРБОВА, *Три храма, три религии...*, p. 24.

<sup>15</sup> В. ГЕРАСИМОВА-ТОМОВА, *Каменна пластика*, [in:] *Мелник*, vol. I, ed. С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, В. НЕШЕВА, София 1989, p. 162, № 27; В. НЕШЕВА, *Тракийско светилище...*, p. 50–57, обр. 3–4; С. ПЕТРОВА, *Антични и ранновизантийски архитектурни детайли от базиликата “Св. Никола” в Мелник*, *Архе* 3, 2002, p. 58–63; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник...*, p. 21–24, 26–33, обр. 12 а, б, 323; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник. Богозиданият град. Автореферат на дисертация за присъждане на научната степен “Доктор на историческите науки”*, София 2009, p. 8–9.

to symbolize the victory and triumph of the new Christian religion over paganism. The votive and tomb reliefs with images of Artemis, found on the site, are embedded in the walls of the church as spolia<sup>16</sup>. It is assumed that this representative church was planned and built as an out-of-town residence of the bishopric in the neighbouring city of Particopolis (now Sandanski) in the turbulent times of frequent devastating invasions under Justinian the Great (527–565). Both the fortress and the church existed for a short time. They were destroyed at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, most probably in an earthquake coinciding with the Slavic-Avar invasions along the valley of the river of Struma.

The early Byzantine church consisted only of a naos and a narthex on the south, below the level of the later south gallery. These cover almost the entire area of the ancient sanctuary, the remains of which have been adapted into the new structure. The details of the narthex on the south were promulgated in the publication of the original excavator of the church, Sonya Georgieva, who interpreted it as a south gallery without relating it to the sanctuary, whose existence was then still unclear. The basilica has a tripartite altar with a direct connection between the bema and the parabemas<sup>17</sup> and a low altar partition. The existence of a three-tiered synthronon built of antique brick and stone is assumed. To the north-west of the naos there are the documented remains of a probable baptistery. Originally, V. Nesheva attributed the early Byzantine church to the type of truncated domed basilicas with a tripartite altar, which originated and developed during the early Byzantine period as a transitional type to the cross-domed temple. She corrected this view later in her monographic work on Melnik<sup>18</sup>.

During the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom (from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century), after a long-lasting depopulation, Melnik was revived and grew into a fortress town – the most important settlement, administrative, religious and cultural centre of the Zagoria region. The complex archaeological data in the whole western part of the St. Nicholas plateau show that the main part of the early medieval settlement of Melnik was located there. It was then that the church of St. Nicholas, which occupied a central position in the rebuilt fortress, was restored. It has been reconstructed with the same architectural plan and dimensions of the previous era – three-nave, three-apsed basilica with an almost square naos, with a narthex on the south and a baptistery connected to a reservoir on the west (fig. 4).

<sup>16</sup> It is believed that Saint Nicholas inherited Artemis's functions as the city's goddess-queen. V. Nesheva assumes that the early Byzantine church was dedicated to "St. Nicholas", by analogy with Myra (Lycia), where the cult of Artemis was spread. – cf. В. НЕШЕВА, *За култа на Свети Никола...*, p. 175–176 and the literature cited therein.

<sup>17</sup> Other options are also assumed. – cf. ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник...*, p. 181, обр. 106/1–11, p. 324.

<sup>18</sup> С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Археологически проучвания...*, p. 32–33; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник (Melnik) през античността и ранновизантийската епоха*, [in:] *Римски и ранновизантийски селища в България*, vol. II, ed. Р. ИВАНОВ, София 2003, p. 256; В. НЕШЕВА, *За култа на Свети Никола...*, p. 175–176; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник...*, p. 175–186, обр. 105, p. 324; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник. Богозиданият град...*, p. 10–11.

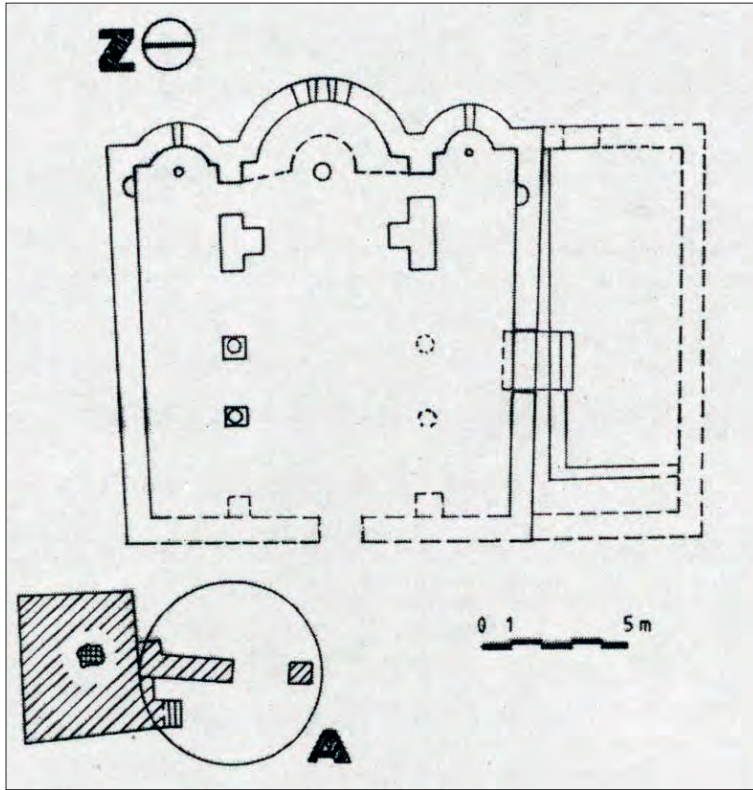


Fig. 4. The Basilica of St. Nicholas. Plan of the second construction period (after V. NEŠEVA, *Melnik pri car Samuil...*, p. 621, fig. 6).

Some changes were probably made to the eastern part of the naos – the construction of the dividing walls between the bema and the parabemas, and of the triumphal arch connecting them<sup>19</sup>. Such an arch is characteristic of early Byzantine basilicas, but can also be found in the Middle Ages. The closest analogy in this respect is the Metropolitan Church of St. Theodore Stratilat and St. Theodore Tiron in Serres and some other monuments in present-day Greece and northern Macedonia. During this construction period, the niches in the side walls of the prothesis and the diaconikon were formed. During the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom, such niches were considered a Western influence in religious construction. The niches, as well as the quarter-spherical vault of the central apse, connect the Melnik basilica with the Pliska and some Preslav basilicas. V. Nesheva suggests that the ruined

<sup>19</sup> One of the options for the reconstruction of the early Byzantine church assumes the construction of the dividing walls between the bema and the parabemas already in the early Byzantine period – cf. ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник...*, p. 101, обр. 106/5.

early Byzantine synthronon (of stone and brick) was rebuilt. In the church a fragment of Old Bulgarian ceramics was found dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries and a fragment found among ceramics from the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries in the basement of the residential (metropolitan) building. Such fragments were found to the northeast outside the basilica, where there are associated buildings with walls of wattle-and-daub plastered with clay, and in greater quantity to the south of it, where residential and farm buildings associated with the service of the church and the garrison fortress were excavated<sup>20</sup>.

This period is backed with arguments by A. Prepis, who carried out a detailed architectural analysis of the church. However, he considers it the first, referring it to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> – the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Neli Chaneva-Dechevska supports the dating of the church by A. Prepis in the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom. Both authors point out as a characteristic for that time the vaulted pre-altar space with the dividing walls with arched entrances in them, connected with their T-shaped western ends by a triumphal arch<sup>21</sup>. This characteristic is also pointed out by Krastyu Miyatev, although he does not refer the church to the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom<sup>22</sup>.

In the earlier studies the construction of the church “St. Nicholas” is referred by most historians, archaeologists, art historians and architects to the late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> century. N. Mavrodinov dates the church in this period, based on its architectural type and especially the style of the frescoes. According to Mavrodinov, the church belongs to the eastern type of basilicas and refers to the Macedonian group – Serres, Arta, Kostur, and Ohrid<sup>23</sup>. The church was dated in the late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> century also by Kr. Miyatev, S. Georgieva, D. Panayotova, B. Tsvetkov. According to T. Vlachos the monument was built within the period 1246–1342<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура в България през XI–XIV век*, София 1988, р. 14; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник при цар Самуил в края на X – началото на XI век (по археологически данни)*, [in:] *Византия – Балканите – Европа. Изследвания в чест на проф. Василка Тъпкова-Заимова*, ed. В. ТЪПКОВА-ЗАИМОВА, В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, А. ГАРАБЕДЖАН, София 2006 (= SB 25), р. 613; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник...*, р. 186, 325–326.

<sup>21</sup> А. ПРЕПИС, *Към проблема за датировката на средновековната катедрала “Св. Никола” в крепостта на Мелник*, [in:] *Първи международен конгрес по българистика*, София, 23 май – 3 юни 1981, Доклади, vol. I, *Българската култура и взаимодействието ѝ със световната култура. Културата на средновековна България*, ed. П. ЗАРЕВ, София 1983, р. 176–193; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 55–58; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник...*, р. 186–187.

<sup>22</sup> Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата...*, р. 146.

<sup>23</sup> N. Mavrodinov distinguishes two periods in the construction of the monument. To the first period he refers the church itself without the narthex and the side galleries, and to the second – the remaining buildings and the changes made to the original building. – Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 292–297.

<sup>24</sup> Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата...*, р. 146; Д. ПАНАЙОТОВА, *Архитектура*, [in:] *История на българското изобразително изкуство*, vol. I, София 1976, р. 179; Th. VLACHOS, *Die Geschichte...*

The Metropolitan Church “St. Theodore Stratilat and St. Theodore Tiron” in Serres, which also originally existed as an early Byzantine basilica, can be pointed as the closest analogy to the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Melnik. The decorative element “wolf’s tooth” is found in both churches. In the Serres church, the prothesis and the deaconry are also formed as separate spaces, but they do not end in apses. This church also had a narthex on the west side, unlike the Melnik church, which had a narthex on the south side. As an analogy, as far as the triple window of the apse is concerned, one can point to the early medieval churches of St. Achilles in Prespa, Our Lady of Vlaherna in Arta and St. Ivan in Nessebar<sup>25</sup>.

The Church “St. Nicholas” in Melnik has in general the main characteristics that apply to the other basilicas in the Bulgarian lands during this period. First of all, it is the three-nave plan and the complex three-piece altar, ending in the east with three apses. The roof of the basilica is mixed – the pre-altar space is vaulted and the rest is covered with a common double-pitched wooden roof. A part of the exterior decoration is represented by a cornice composed of two rows of brick dentils, above which a second cornice, also of dentils, follows in indentation – on the middle apse of the church. A distinctive feature of the Melnik basilica is the absence of a narthex on the west and the presence of an atrium on the south side. This can be explained by the presence of a baptisterium on the west side, which is not structurally connected to the temple, but to a reservoir.

The status of St. Nicholas church in Melnik during the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom (the end of 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c.) is not fully clear yet. It should be noted that during this period the name of the settlement does not appear in any of the known episcopal lists. Originally, it was assumed that the settlement was the centre of a parish, and the church of St. Nicholas was the parish church. No other churches on the territory of Melnik from this time have been found so far. In her most recent research V. Nesheva concludes that the church was rebuilt at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, probably as one of the seven cathedral churches of Knyaz Boris I (852–889) known from written sources, reported by Theophylact of Ohrid. As an argument in support of this she points to its important location at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century – on the border of Bulgaria with Byzantium. The baptistery was probably used both for the conversion of new-borns and for the still unchristianized Slavs in the area<sup>26</sup>.

р. 61–68; Б. ЦВЕТКОВ, *Селищната мрежа в долината на Средна Струма през Средновековието IX–XVII век (по археологически данни)*, София 2002, р. 53–54.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 292–297; А. ПРЕПИС, *Към проблема за...*, р. 176–193; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 55–58; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура в България...*, р. 14; В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник...*, р. 187–188.

<sup>26</sup> В. НЕШЕВА, *Духовният живот в Мелник през XIII–XIV в.*, [in:] *Втори международен конгрес по българистика, София, 23 май – 3 юни 1986*, vol. VI, *Доклади, Българските земи в древността, България през средновековието*, София 1987, р. 503–504; ЕАДЕМ, *Коментар към статията на Ж. Въжарова “Мелник в изследванията на руските археолози през XIX в.”*, [in:] *Мелник,*



According to Theophylact of Ohrid, Knyaz Boris *girdled his entire subject Bulgaria with seven cathedral churches*. One of these churches is considered by many authors to be the famous basilica on the island of St. Achilles on the Prespa Lake, built immediately after the conversion in 865 by Knyaz Boris I. Presumably, the number 7 is biblical, so the reference to it may be metaphorical, pointing to the strong religious devotion of the knyaz. According to B. Nikolova, if one proceeds from the rule of the church to find correspondence with the administrative division of the territory over which it receives rights, it should be expected that Bulgaria under Boris (at least after the conversion) had 10 episcopal centres corresponding to the 10 counties<sup>27</sup>. In fact, at this stage, there is insufficient evidence (mostly written) to testify to the existence of Melnik during this period as an episcopal settlement.

Among the considerable number of churches in the suburbs of Melnik that have been studied so far, there is not a single one that dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>28</sup>. Probably the basilica “St. Nicholas” in the fortress was sufficient for the religious needs of the population in the area during this period. The same can be assumed for the period of Byzantine rule.

### Single-nave churches

The single-nave churches are also compositionally organized around the horizontally placed longitudinal axis of the building. They are usually composed of a naos which ends in an apse on the east and a narthex on the west. Sometimes the narthex is missing. In terms of layout and structure, single-nave churches are simple build-

---

vol. II, ed. M. СТАНЧЕВА, Ст. БОЯДЖИЕВ, В. НЕШЕВА, София 1994, p. 123; ЕАДЕМ, *За култа на Свети Никола...*, p. 172–173; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник при цар Самуил...*, p. 613–614; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник...*, p. 188; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник. Богозиданият град...*, p. 25. According to V. Nesheva, the restoration of the church in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century was connected with Clement’s mission in these lands and was under the jurisdiction of the Clement’s bishopric of Velika established by Tsar Simeon in 893. For the time of Samuil it supposedly entered the structure of the Bulgarian Patriarchate centered on Prespa and then Ohrid (probably subordinate to the nearest Metropolitanate of Strumica). V. Nesheva does not exclude the possibility that, given that Melnik emerges as a significant ecclesiastical centre – the centre of religious life in Eastern Macedonia; it was set apart as an independent diocese, which is noted in the missing parts of the inscriptions of the Patriarchal Church of St. Achilles in Prespa. – ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник при цар Самуил...*, p. 614; ЕАДЕМ, *Мелник...*, p. 188, 326.

<sup>27</sup> ТЕОФИЛАКТ, *Климент Охридски*, XXIII, 67, trans. et ed. Ал. МИЛЕВ, София 1955; В. ИВАНОВА, *Стари църкви и манастири в българските земи (IV–XII в.)*, ГНМ 4, (1922–1925) 1926, p. 552; Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата...*, p. 77; А. МИЛЕВ, *Гръцките жития на Климент Охридски*, София 1966, p. 133–135, бел. 155; С. МИХАЙЛОВ, *За седемте съборни храма на княз Борис*, Архе 2, 1992, p. 38–41; В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, *Апология на Средновековието*, София 2004, p. 42; Н. МУЦОПУЛОС, *Базиликата “Св. Ахилий” в Преспа. Един исторически паметник*, Пловдив 2007; Б. НИКОЛОВА, *Устройство и управление на Българската православна църква...*, p. 157–158; Б. ФИЛОВ, *Старобългарското изкуство*, София 2019, p. 28.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. В. НЕШЕВА, *Мелник...*, p. 281.

ings. They are covered with a cylindrical vault or have a wooden covering. The building material of which they are constructed consists mainly of crushed stone, with a mortar of mud. There were single-nave churches in Bulgarian lands as early as the early Christian period and they continued to spread throughout the Middle Ages. Observations on Bulgarian lands during the First Bulgarian Tsardom show that single-nave churches were found all over the country, but mainly in poorer settlements, fortresses, monasteries and necropolises. A number of chapels and baptisteries attached to larger churches also have a single-nave plan<sup>29</sup>.

From the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom single-nave churches have been found in Pliska, Madara, Preslav, Kostur, etc.<sup>30</sup> A representative of this type of church in the region studied is **the church in the area of Shipotsko on the territory belonging to the town of Bansko**<sup>31</sup>, in the valley of Upper Mesta river. The terrain on which the church is built is a terrace, intensively sloping from west to east, with an altitude of almost 1000 m. At first, a Thracian settlement was built on the terrace, which developed to the south of the excavated cult buildings. It is believed that an early Christian church was built by the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The construction is of untreated natural stone, and fine-grained granite and marble without mortar were also used. Yellow clay was used as a solder. The building was covered with locally made teguli and had glass, ornate windows (fragments found). The early Christian church has a strongly elongated naos with an apse on the east. Its dimensions are: 19 x 4.40 m. On the north side, structurally connected to the naos, is a chapel (8.80 x 5 m). The thickness of the walls is 0.80–0.90 m. At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the church was burnt down, and the fire is associated with Slavic raids along the river of Mesta. It is assumed that the local Christian converts were incorporated into the bishopric of Nicopolis ad Nestum<sup>32</sup>.

In the period from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century a medieval village was founded and existed on this site. The building material from the early Christian church was used for the construction of the houses. At the end of the

<sup>29</sup> Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 66–67. It should be noted that there are different opinions in the scientific literature about the planning and design scheme of these churches. For example, N. Mavrodinov distinguishes four variants of the single-nave churches, which he studies in a wide chronological range. To this group he also refers the cross-domed churches – cf. Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Еднокорабната и кръстовидната църква по българските земи до края на XIV в.*, София 1931, р. 4–5.

<sup>30</sup> Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 67–68.

<sup>31</sup> Regular archaeological excavations took place between 1991 and 1997 (with a break in 1995) under the direction of K. Melamed and A. Melamed. In 2008, excavations were resumed to clarify details and prepare the site for exhibiting. – А. МЕЛАМЕД, *Проучвания на раннохристиянската базилика и средновековна църква в местността “Шипотско”, община Банско (1992–1993)*, АОР през 1992–1993 г., 1994, р. 118; ИДЕМ, *Проучвания на средновековната църква и некропол и базилика в м. Шипотско край гр. Банско*, АОР през 1994 г., 1995, р. 152; К. МЕЛАМЕД, *Раннохристиянска базилика...*, р. 701–704.

<sup>32</sup> К. МЕЛАМЕД, *Раннохристиянска базилика...*, р. 701–702.

10<sup>th</sup> century the village was abandoned. A small church was built on top of the altar part of the early Christian church (figs. 5–6). The same rough stones were used, but already with mortar mixed with crushed brick. The great elevation of the site was overcome by steps leading up to the naos. In terms of layout, the church is single-nave, single-apse, with a well-shaped entrance from the west, without a narthex. Its dimensions are 5.60 x 2.90 m, with walls 0.70 m thick. Surrounding the church is a large necropolis, from which 150 graves have been excavated, dating between the late 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. The graves are located on the ruins of the buildings. The explored part of the necropolis was intensively used in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, as evidenced by the discovery of jewellery (bronze bracelets) and coins typical of that time. The burial pits are partially enclosed with stones, which is typical for this area<sup>33</sup>. The burials were carried out according to Christian rites, with heads oriented westward and hands folded on the chest or abdomen. An abundance of charcoal is witnessed around the head or pelvis. Bronze buttons, belt buckles, earrings, rings, bracelets, iron knives, and iron nails have been found in graves. The custom of “Charon’s obol” is encountered. The presence of a large necropolis gives reason to suppose that the church was a cemetery one. Its existence is associated with the necropolis (the late 10<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>34</sup>.

Characteristic of the medieval church in m. Shipotsko at the town of Bansko is that it was also built on an early Byzantine church. These examples show that, as in the rest of Bulgaria, medieval temples were built on other cult sites constructed during the early Christian period, and in the case of the basilica of St. Nicholas in Melnik – as early as Antiquity. In the area of Shipotsko at the town of Bansko the holy place is preserved in another way – the construction of a large necropolis around the newly built in the Middle Ages small church on the ruins of the early Christian temple.

The single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko at the town of Bansko has small dimensions. In terms of planning, it is characterized by the lack of a narthex. The roof was most probably wooden gabled. As already noted, this type of church is found mainly in poorer settlements, in fortresses, in monasteries and in necropolises. In this case, it is a cemetery church serving the large necropolis around it.

<sup>33</sup> M. GEORGIEVA, *Burial Pits Lined with Stone Slabs along the Valley of the River of Mesta in the Roman Age*, [in:] *First international Symposium Ancient Cultures in South-East Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. Megalithic Monuments and Cult Practices*, ed. V. MARKOV, J. GOŠEV, K. POROŽANOV, A. GOSEV, P. MAGLOVA, Blagoevgrad 2012, p. 138–152.

<sup>34</sup> К. МЕЛАМЕД, *Раннохристиянска базилика...*, p. 702–703; З. КОРКУТОВА, *Еднокорабни църкви с двускатно покритие от Югозападна България XII–XIV век (по археологически данни)*, София 2013, p. 167. The church was originally dated to the Second Bulgarian Tsardom. – А. МЕЛАМЕД, *Проучвания на раннохристиянската...*, p. 118. Archaeological observations in the area of the town of Bansko found earlier buildings in the foundations of restored old chapels, which are dated in two periods – the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> – the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. – В. БАЯКОВ, *Свети места около Банско*, [in:] *170 години храм “Света Троица” в гр. Банско*, ed. Л. СТЕФАНОВ, Банско 2005, p. 3.

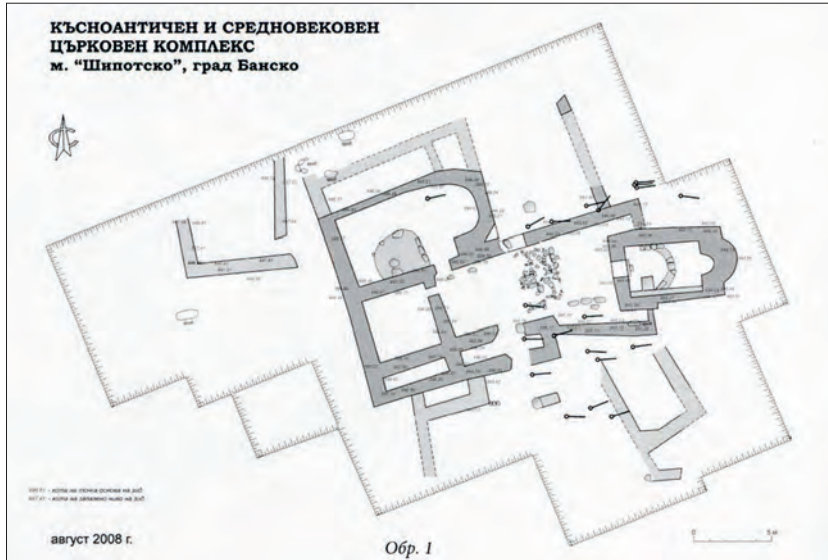


Fig. 5. The single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko near the town of Bansko – general plan (after K. MELAMED, *Rannohristijanska bazilika...*, p. 702, fig. 1).



Fig. 6. The single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko near the town of Bansko during the archaeological excavations (after K. MELAMED, *Rannohristijanska bazilika...*, p. 703, fig. 2).

Given the mention of Razlog in a charter of Basil II from 1019<sup>35</sup> – as one of the settlements dependent on the Bishop of Velbazhd, it can be assumed that the area of Upper Mesta was under the ecclesiastical authority of the Bishop of Velbazhd and was part of his diocese during this period.

### Cross-domed and three-conchal churches

It has been established that centric dome churches replaced the basilica and became the dominant and official church type in the new capital of Veliki Preslav at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c. During the reign of Simeon (893–927), Bulgarian church construction caught up with the leading centres of Byzantine architecture and followed the architectural types of the Byzantine capital. The cross-domed church, which was the official form of the Byzantine church<sup>36</sup>, became the most widely used type of religious building in Bulgarian lands. It can be said that the centric type of churches occupied in Preslav such a place as the basilicas in the first Bulgarian capital of Pliska. The period of the construction of the domed churches coincides in the early medieval Bulgarian state with its greatest social, economic and cultural upsurge. In terms of construction and interior spatial design, the new type was much more sophisticated than the basilica. This temple is no longer intended to gather more people, but to show the hierarchy among worshippers. Moreover, as an architectural type, the centric church is suitable for a palace temple, as well as for a monastery church, even for a chapel and a small tomb temple. During the First Bulgarian Tsardom, cult buildings of the centric type received their widest expression in the development of the cross-domed temple. This type is most common in Veliki Preslav. The churches are characterized by a great variety in terms of their planning and façade design. The Preslav cross-domed churches are divided into several groups: the “Tsarigrad variant” (churches with four free supports and with a separate pre-apse space); the “provincial variant” (churches with two free supports without a separate pre-apse space); churches of small size of the “inscribed-cross” type<sup>37</sup>. In addition to the capital Veliki Preslav, cross-domed churches were gradually built in other places in Bulgaria. In the region

<sup>35</sup> FGHB, vol. VI, София 1965, p. 42; Й. ИВАНОВ, *Български старини из Македония. Фототипно издание*, София 1970, p. 550–555; И. СНЕГАРОВ, *История на Охридската архиепископия*, vol. I, *От основаването ѝ до завладяването на Балканския полуостров от турците*, <sup>2</sup>София 1995, p. 56.

<sup>36</sup> The development of this type of church in Byzantine architecture, cf. G. MILLET, *L'école grecque dans l'architecture byzantine*, Paris 1916, p. 55–92; R. KRAUTHHEIMER, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, New Haven–London 1986; A.K. ORLANDOS, *Byzantine Architecture*, Athens 1998, p. 17–22.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Еднокорабната и кръстовидната църква...*, p. 59–61; ИДЕМ, *Византийската...*, p. 59–64; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Основни направления...*, p. 59, 61–62; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, p. 69–70, 77–126; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на българските...*, p. 46; С. ДОНЧЕВА, *Кръстокуполните църкви...*, p. 21–22.

studied – the river valleys of the Middle Struma and the Upper and Middle Mesta – no cross-domed church building (of the listed hereinabove) of the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom has been found so far.

The three-conchal churches are the other main centric type, which was formed during the period of the First Bulgarian State. Apart from the semicircle of the apse on the east, they have a conch on the north and south. Their architectural type is functionally most suitable for monastic service and singing, which is why they are known as “monastery-type churches”. In the side conchas, where the left and right choirs (the kliros) stand during the service, good acoustics are created for the singers, which is why they are also called “pevniks” or “kliros”. It is believed to be a local type of monastery church, established as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century, in the southwestern parts of the Balkan Peninsula, which later spread throughout the peninsula and became the conceptual basis for the formation of the Athonite type of catholicon. In addition to the monastic type, however, the three-conchal type is also associated with cemetery churches<sup>38</sup>.

It should be noted that in Christian architecture, buildings with a conchal plan were borrowed from Roman civil architecture and appeared as early as Late Antiquity. They became widespread in various periods and territories, including the Balkan Peninsula. In the early Christian period they mainly served as baptisteries, martyriums and funerary chapels, as part of larger complexes or as stand-alone buildings. Conchises also appear as an element in rectangular church buildings, including transept basilicas<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> For these churches cf. М. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Триконхални църкви от Югозападна България (по археологически данни)*, [in:] *Късносредновековните Балкани. Сборник в чест на доц. д-р Снежана Ракова*, ed. Е. АЗМАНОВА-РУДАРСКА, К. ЙОРДАНОВ, София 2022, p. 247 and the literature cited therein.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. А. ДЕРОКО, *Монументална и декоративна архитектура у средновековној Србији*, Београд 1953, p. 49; Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата...*, p. 103; А. ГРАВАР, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte de reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, London 1972, p. 102–112; R. КРАУТНЕЙМЕР, *Early Christian...*, p. 62, 267; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на средновековния...*, p. 31–35; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Раннохристиянската архитектура...*, p. 46–49, 91; P. VEŽIĆ, *Dalmatinski trikonhosi*, AAd 1, 2011, p. 30–44; П. КУЗМАН, *Археолошки сведоштва за дејноста на Свети Климент Охридски во Охридскиот регион*, Slov 2, 2016, p. 173; S. ČURČIĆ, *Architecture in the Balkans. From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, New Haven–London 2010, p. 153–155, 157–159, 238–243, 322–325; А. ТАНТЗИС, *The So-called “Athonite” Type of Church and Two Shrines of the Theotokos in Constantinople*, Зог 34, 2010, p. 3–11; Е. ИВАНОВ, *Християнска археология и изкуство*, vol. I, *Раннохристиянско и средновековно изкуство от Албания*, София 2013, p. 34–35; L.G. КИРУШКОВА, *The Bishop’s Basilica (Uvarov’s) of Chersonesos in the Crimea. The Modern View after a Century and a Half of Study*, ABu 21.2, 2017, p. 27–78; С.В. МАЛЬЦЕВА, *Триконхи в архитектурите Балкан IV–XII веков*, ВПСТГУ.ВИТХИ 32, 2018, p. 34–58. According to A. Jacobson, the three-conchal plan in church buildings originated in Armenian architecture by adding a conch to the longitudinal nave of the domed basilica (А.Л. ЯКОБСОН, *Очерк истории зодчества Армении V–XVII веков*, Москва 1950, p. 48). The origin of this type is to be sought in Armenia, and according to J. Strzygowski. He also sees the influence of Armenian and Georgian

The authority of St. Clement of Ohrid is stated as a reason for the proliferation of the three-conchal churches in Western Macedonia in the Middle Ages. It is known from Theophylact's life that he built two churches in Ohrid at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, which were smaller than the cathedral church but more beautiful than it with their oval and rounded shape. One of them, dedicated to "St. Panteleimon", was discovered and excavated under the Imaret Mosque and appears to have a three-conchal layout plan. It probably served as a model for the church of St. Archangels in "St. Naum" Monastery on the southern shore of Ohrid Lake, built in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. From the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century other three-conchal churches are known in the area. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the western regions of the Balkans became part of the First Bulgarian Tsardom, which explains the common trends in church construction. Byzantine influence in general was also a unifying factor in the cultural development of these territories<sup>40</sup>. There are other monuments of this type on the territory of present day North Macedonia. Such churches were also built in Greece, Serbia and Romania<sup>41</sup>.

architecture in the formation of the Athonite monastic churches (J. STRZYGOWSKI, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, Wien 1918, p. 766–770). Such an influence on the Athonite churches was also found by C. Mango (C. MANGO, *Architettura bizantina*, Milano 1978, p. 321). R. Krautheimer also sees eastern influence on lateral conchs (R. KRAUTHEIMER, *Early Christian...*, p. 374–375). Cf. S. МАМАЛОУКОС, *A Contribution to the Study of the "Athonite" Church Type of Byzantine Architecture*, Зор 35, 2011, p. 39–50.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Д. КОЦО, *Климентовиот манастир "Св. Пантелејмон" и раскопката при "Имарет" во Охрид*, ГЗФФ.С 1, 1948, p. 129–182; ИДЕМ, *Проучавања и археолошки испитувања на црквата на манастирот "Св. Наум"*, ЗАМ.С 1957–1958, p. 56–80; Кр. МИЯТЕВ, *Архитектурата...*, p. 105, обр. 101–103; Dj. STRIČEVIĆ, *Églises triconques médiévales en Serbie et en Macédoine et la tradition de l'architecture paléobyzantine*, [in:] *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'études byzantines Ochride 10–16 septembre 1961*, vol. I, Beograd 1963, p. 224–240; Д. КОЦО, *Триконхалните цркви во Климентовото време*, СП, 1050-godišnjina на Kliment Ohridski, Ohrid 1966, p. 91–100; ИДЕМ, *Нови податоци за историјата на Климентовиот манастир "Св. Пантелејмон" во Охрид*, ГЗФФ.С 19, 1967, p. 245–255; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на българските...*, p. 47–48; R. KOSTOVA, *St. Kliment of Ohrid and his Monastery: Some More Archeology of the Written Evidence*, [in:] *Византия – Балканите – Европа...*, p. 593–605; И. ИЛИЕВ, *Св. Климент Охридски. Живот и дело*, Пловдив 2010, p. 224; Ц. ГРОЗДАНОВ, *Свети Наум Охридски*, Скопје 2015, p. 9–24; П. КУЗМАН, *Археолошки сведоштва...*, p. 136–178; С.В. МАЛЪЦЕВА, *Триконхи в архитектурата...*, p. 39–44. According to Nikola Mavrodinov the church "St. Panteleimon" in Ohrid is more of a five-conch church, as deep, almost circular "small apses" are carved into the eastern walls of the two semicircular conchas (Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Старобългарското...*, p. 175, обр. 183).

<sup>41</sup> G. BALŞ, *L'influence du plan serbe sur le plan des églises roumaines*, [in:] *L'art byzantin chez les Slaves*, vol. I, *Les Balkans*, parts 2, Paris 1930, p. 277–294; Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Еднокорабната и кръстовидната црква...*, София 1931, p. 62–64; Д. БОШКОВИЌ, *Архитектура средњег века*, Београд 1957, p. 130–131; Dj. STRIČEVIĆ, *Églises triconques...*, p. 224–240; Н. МАВРОДИНОВ, *Старобългарското искусство XI–XIII век*, София 1966, p. 8–10; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *По вѣпроса за средновековните триконхални цркви от манастирски тип на Балканите*, МПК 1, 1971, p. 10–15; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, p. 162; Ђ. ЈАНКОВИЌ, *Српско поморје од 7. до 10. Столећа*, Београд 2007, p. 144–146; E. DIMITROVA, *The Church of the Holy Virgin*

Three-conchal cult buildings are also documented in a wide chronological range on the eastern Adriatic coast, in Dalmatia<sup>42</sup>.

With a few exceptions, the majority of the known three-conchal churches in Bulgaria are found in the western parts of the country. The origins and distribution of certain groups of them (as well as parallels of individual monuments) are sought in the penetration of various influences in the field of church construction – Moravian, Caucasian (Armenian and Georgian), and Athonite. The influence of the local architectural tradition is not to be underestimated either, as the individual constituent elements of the three-conchal churches are close to the local forms<sup>43</sup>.

The three-conchal domed churches dating back to the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom follow the architectural trend characteristic of the era Caucasian to create small buildings organized around their vertical axis. Their architecture is subordinated to the dome space, as in all centric buildings. The side conchas of the churches are high, and on the outside they usually have a semi-circular or triangular outline. The nave walls are usually plain, without niches. The altar is mostly single-spaced, with altar apses generally of the same size as the side conchas and of a semi-cylindrical shape. The naoses are covered with cylindrical vaults; no arches are used to reinforce the vault. The upper parts of the facades are finished with triangular frontons. Most often the churches have spacious narthexes on the west. Most of the churches are built of stone and have thick outer walls. Brick was used mainly for decorative purposes. Mixed masonry is rare. In their functional characteristic (as noted), the three-conchal churches were mainly used as monastery temples, as they were best suited for the monastic service and singing. In addition to monastic, however, the three-conchal type is also found in cemetery churches<sup>44</sup>.

---

*Eleoussa at Veljusa. The Most Significant Values of the Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Skopje 2016, p. 11; N. STANKOVIĆ, *An Unusual Triconchal Church in the Vicinity of Svrlijig ("Manastirište Svete Petke Rusalne")*: Original Form, Architectural Analogies, and Potential Date of Construction, [in:] *Niš i Vizantija: Sedamnaesti međunarodni naučni skup, Niš, 3–5 jun 2018. Zbornik radova*, vol. XVII, ed. M. RAKOCIJA, Ниш 2019, p. 215–243.

<sup>42</sup> P. VEŽIĆ, *Dalmatinski...*, p. 27–66. The author traces the development of these cult buildings from Late Antiquity to the Romanesque period (12<sup>th</sup> century), distinguishing five groups based on their form, function and time of origin. The first three proliferated during the Early Christian period; the fourth group is represented by “pre-Romanesque polyconchos”, mainly centric but also longitudinal buildings (8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century); the fifth, “Romanesque trefoils” (12<sup>th</sup> century). However, the three-conchal churches typical of the territory of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia in the Middle Ages are not recorded here.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. M. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Триконхални църкви...*, p. 248–250 and the literature cited therein.

<sup>44</sup> H. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Триконхалните църкви от IX–XIV в. по българските земи*, Архе 4, 1970, p. 8–21; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, p. 160–161.



The three-conchal temples in the region under consideration during the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom are represented by **the church at the village of Kulata, Blagoevgrad region**<sup>45</sup>, in the valley of the Middle Struma river. Probably the temple is named “St. Athanasius”, judging by one of the names of the area. In the past, the place was perceived as a cult place by the local population, known as “church” and “old monastery”. An early Byzantine and later Slavic settlement existed in this area. The church is the only one in Bulgaria – a three-conchal domed church with an inscribed cross built into a rectangular enclosure (fig. 7). The special feature here is that the side conchas remain within the thickness of the walls and do not appear on the facades. The arms of the inscribed cross are terminated to the east and west by deep semi-cylindrical arches and to the north and south by conchas<sup>46</sup>. According to the discoverer of the monument prof. Atanas Milchev, three-conchal church at the village of Kulata was built on the basis of the cross-domed church. According to N. Chaneva-Dechevska in its plan scheme and construction this church represents a transition between the group of the single-nave and the four-pillar church<sup>47</sup>.

Despite the legends about an old monastery, no traces of buildings have been preserved due to the specificity of the terrain – a slope from north to south, which makes the covering of the ruins with alluvial soil quite likely. Around and within the outline of the church, at various depths, graves have been uncovered, mainly from the period of the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The layout plan of the building is clearly delineated at a depth of 1.20–1.40 m from the present day terrain. The cultural layer breaks completely in the northern part of the church at a depth of 1.95 m and at 1.62 m in the southern part<sup>48</sup>.

Nikolay Tuleshkov defines the church at the village of Kulata, region of Blagoevgrad, as a monastery church. He notes that in the monasteries appeared also multi-enthroned churches, in the planning scheme of which the ideas of the early Christian cult construction were no longer used, but the principles of the cross-dome type with rooms in the inter-arm spaces. As the earliest example, he points to the church at village of Kulata, built according to him between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>49</sup>.

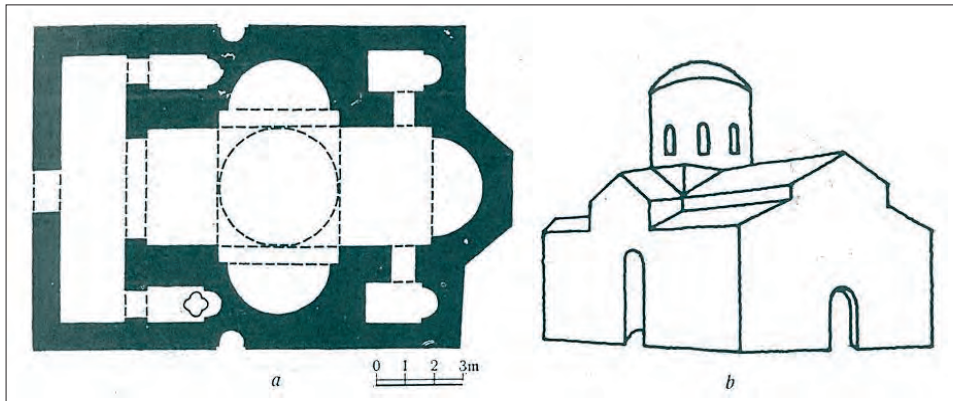
<sup>45</sup> The church was discovered under accidental circumstances, when the construction for a new school in the village began. Archaeological excavations were carried out in 1958. – Ат. Милчев, *Археологически разкопки и проучвания в долината на Средна Струма. Открита кръстовидно-куполна триконхална църква в околностите на с. Кулата*, ГСУ.ФИФ 53 (1959), 1960, р. 402.

<sup>46</sup> М. ГЕОРГИЕВА, Д. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Манастири от...*, р. 37–38.

<sup>47</sup> Ат. Милчев, *Археологически разкопки...*, р. 447; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, р. 152–153, фиг. 103.

<sup>48</sup> Ат. Милчев, *Археологически разкопки...*, р. 404, обр. 21а.

<sup>49</sup> Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на българските...*, р. 63; ИДЕМ, *Архитектура на средновековния...*, р. 88.



**Fig. 7.** The three-conchal church in the village of Kulata – plan and reconstruction (after N. ČANEVA-DEČEVSKA, *Čarkovnata arhitektura na Pärvata...*, p. 153, fig. p. 103a, b).

From the outside the church is a rectangle 16.55 m long with the apse and 11.40 m wide. It is orientated with a slight deviation to the south-east, which makes it possible to establish that the construction of the building was started in the late autumn. The outer outline of the church in the eastern part ends with a deep three-walled apse (3.60 m diameter, 1.95 m deep). The preapse shape forms a rectangle (4.20 x 3.25 m), which is in direct relation to two symmetrical rooms on the north and south, which serve as the prothesis and diaconikon (2.10 x 1.57 m). The inner space forms a square in its centre with 4.20 m sides, the cover of which is probably a dome with a cylindrical tambour, which transfers its weight to the vaults on the east and west and the front arches of the conchas on the north and south by means of pendentives. The covering of the pre-apse space flanking the east side of the cross, and its opposite arm on the west, was probably accomplished by semi-cylindrical vaults<sup>50</sup>.

The church has a narthex on its west side, shaped as a rectangle (9.50 x 2.35 m), the roof of which is also vaulted. Apart from the naos, the narthex has an immediate connection the two symmetrical rooms on the north and south, which are similar in shape and size to the prothesis and deaconry. Particularly striking is the south room with apse (2 x 1.35 m), which contains a four-sided baptismal font (piscina) oriented along the cardinal directions. The font had an initial depth of 1.32 m. Its size and depth make it possible to believe that it was used for baptisms of the elderly, and the room itself is a baptistery of the church. The baptistery and the four-leaved font appear to be an integral part of the general plan of the church. Symmetrical to the baptistery on the north side of the church there is a rectangular room

<sup>50</sup> Ат. Милчев, *Археологически разкопки...*, p. 409, 411.

with an apse (2 m long, 1.35 m wide). Inside the room, at a depth of 1.10 m from the floor, a human skull (probably transported from elsewhere), and a clay bowl with an image of a griffin on the bottom and an iron cross were found. On the basis of the bowl, the burial has been dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which gives the researcher reason to assume that until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this room served as a chapel and then as a tomb. The entrance to the church (1.60 m wide) – from the west – is located along the axis of the building. Only the stone threshold, a large stone block made of coarse-grained marble, remains. The threshold is also a step through which one enters the narthex of the church. The thickness of the outer walls of the church ranges from 0.78 to 0.95 m, reaching up to 1.10 m at the conchas. Greater thickness characterises the arrays occupying the four corners of the square formed in the inner space, reaching up to 1.30 m in places, indicating their structural functions.

The church is built of well-shaped bigor stones, cemented with white mortar. At the south-west corner of the building, quadri of white limestone were used, which were used secondarily. Above the plinth the walls are constructed of well treated travertine stones with infill of small river stones, and bricks were partly used for alignment. The vaults are made exclusively of brick. Marble slabs of different sizes and shapes were used to cover the floor in different parts of the church. Presumably the floor of the narthex was covered with bricks. Basic mortar bedding was found in the narthex, naos, pre-apse and intra-apse spaces and also in the four side rooms. The purpose of the mortar bedding is to isolate moisture from the ground, which is also established for the churches in Preslav. In the south-east corner at the apse, fragments of water pipes were found, indicating the presence of residential quarters around the church. It is likely that they were also connected to the baptistery.

The north and south walls of the church are dissected on the outside by deep niches. It is in this part that the walls are the thinnest. The roof of the church is made of roof tiles. From the preserved fragments it is evident that they were made of fairly well refined clay with even firing, with a red ceramic colour. The preserved fragments are curved, semi-cylindrical in shape and resemble Roman imbrices. Similar roof tiles in form and technique are attested in early Byzantine construction, and also at Pliska, Preslav, Madara<sup>51</sup>.

The exterior walls of the church are not plastered, as the worked bigor stone gives it a smooth surface and good appearance. The interior of the church is covered with one or two layers of plaster. No traces of frescoes are attested on the first layer. The painting was done when the second layer was laid, on which fragments of frescoes were found. The plinth is monochrome with a predominant red-ceramic colour. Most of the fresco fragments are preserved in the inner apsidal and pre-apse space of the church. Based on the preserved frescoes, it is assumed that the frescoed belts were separated by two horizontal lines filled with

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 411–416, 421–424.

rhombuses. The interior of the church above the plinth was probably painted with whole compositions, individual figures and floral motifs. Unfortunately, only individual fragments of these have survived. The extremely fragmentary nature of the frescoes found does not allow the church itself to be dated on the basis of them<sup>52</sup>.

Most of the finds found inside and outside the temple refer to the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church was burnt down and probably destroyed towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Cultural stratum shuffling was found mainly in the places where graves were found, the earliest of which belong to the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the latest to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the graves excavated at different depths, inside and outside the church, burials were made according to the Christian rite, oriented east-west (with the head to the west). On the basis of the finds they have been dated by the researcher into three periods. The first period comprises graves (simple burial pits 1–1.10 m deep, referring to the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when there are no more traces on the surface of the ruined church. They are characterized by a poor funerary inventory, consisting mainly of the personal belongings of the buried persons – rings, buttons, buckles. The ancient custom of “Charon’s obol” is encountered. The second period includes graves built, according to the researcher, around the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They were found inside and outside the church, at a depth of 1.56–1.65 m from the present day ground level. During the excavation of the pits in the embankment, the mortar floor of the church was destroyed in many places. Here the layout of the graves is more complex – after the pits were dug, they were lined by poorly shaped stone slabs (14 graves), but they contained no funerary goods, so their dating is uncertain. In four of the graves (identified as children’s graves), secondary bricks from the ruins of the church were used, indicating that the remains of the church are still visible on the site. The third group of graves (4 ordinary burial pits) were uncovered outside the church. Two of them (graves 2 and 3) contain funerary inventory that dates them to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Grave No. 1 predates the construction of the church and is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and grave No. 4 to the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>53</sup>.

The construction of the church at the village of Kulata is attributed by its explorer to the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>54</sup>, as it existed during the First and Second Bulgarian Tsardoms, after which it was destroyed. Most probably the church was monastic when it was built. On the one hand, this is indicated by its plan-construction scheme (a three-conchal domed church), which is extremely characteristic of monastic temples. On the

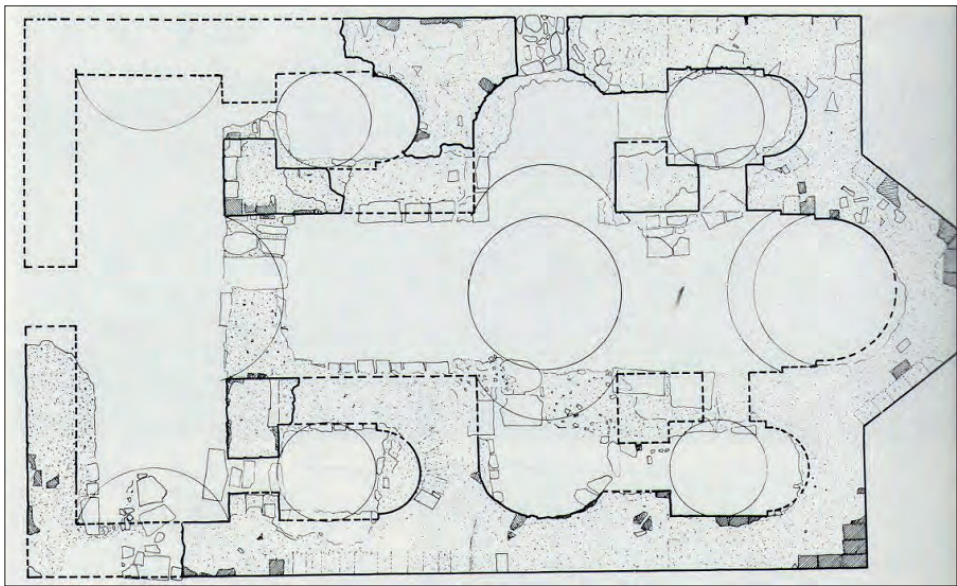
<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 418–419.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 424–425, 440–447.

<sup>54</sup> The construction of the church at the village of Kulata, Blagoevgrad region is referred by researchers in the broad chronological range from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. – cf. Кр. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, p. 196; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, p. 153; Н. ТУЛЕШКОВ, *Архитектура на българските...*, p. 63; Б. ЦВЕТКОВ, *Селищната мрежа...*, p. 81; В. ДИМОВА, *Църквите в България през XIII–IV век*, София 2008, p. 86.

other hand, one of the area names is “the monastery”. There is a belief among the local population that a monastery used to exist on this site, which was burnt down during the Ottoman rule<sup>55</sup>. During the Ottoman rule, the site was turned into a necropolis, which can be judged by the documented graves inside and outside the church. However, it is unclear exactly when this occurred, due to the impossibility of accurately dating the graves without burial inventory. According to Metodi Zlatkov, in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries the road guard tower was built in the area, around which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century settlers settled and carried out their burials in the area of St. Athanasius. According to Zlatkov, these people settled around the tower to seek safety in the turbulent 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>56</sup>.

The church at the village of Kulata is original itself and does not quite find exact parallels. In spite of some constructive differences, it most closely resembles Church No. 1 in the area of Kale at the village of Krupishte (present-day North Macedonia) (fig. 8), dated in the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>57</sup>. On the north and south sides of this church conchas are also formed, inscribed in the rectangular body and in its inter-arm spaces two pairs of symmetrical rooms were found.



**Fig. 8.** Church No. 1 in the area of Kale near the village of Krupishte, in the present day North Macedonia – plan (after B. ALEKSOVA, *Episkopijata na...*, p. 274, fig. 98).

<sup>55</sup> М. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Триконхални църкви...*, p. 252.

<sup>56</sup> М. ЗЛАТКОВ, *Селищната система на Мелнишко през XI–XVII. Автореферат на дисертационен труд за присъждане на образователна и научна степен “доктор”,* София 2021, p. 28–29.

<sup>57</sup> Around the church there is a necropolis from the same time. – Б. АЛЕКSOVA, *Епископията на Брегалница*, Прилеп 1989, p. 81–85, 274, обр. 98, 99, 313; И. МИКУЛЧИК, *Средновековни градови и тврдини во Македонија*, Скопје 1996, p. 346, сл. 172.

The closest parallels of the built-in three-conchal churches can be found on the territory of present-day North Macedonia, Greece and Serbia. Apart from the mentioned church in the area of Kale near the village of Krupishte, such churches are known in the area of Vineni near the Little Prespa Lake and also in the village of Zlesti and the village of Zglavenitsa near Ohrid. In Southern Greece, similar churches are in Aulis, Boeotia, and especially the church of St. Dimitri Varasovas near the village of Vasiliki opposite Patras<sup>58</sup>. A representative of this group from the territory of Serbia is the church of St. Petka Rusalna near the town of Svrlijig in Eastern Serbia<sup>59</sup>.

The three-conchal church at the village of Kulata was built in a period when the valley of the Middle Struma river was officially included in the borders of the Bulgarian state, making it an original monument of medieval Bulgarian culture.

The three-conchal churches from the territory of Southwestern Bulgaria (today's Blagoevgrad region) show a stable presence in the studied area throughout the entire period of the Middle Ages. This is quite natural considering that this area was part of the southwestern Bulgarian lands during the Middle Ages, where the first three-conchal churches were built. With the formation of the great cult centre of Mount Athos, the influence of its architecture especially on the late medieval temples could not be excluded. On the other hand, it should be noted that the so-called "Athonite" type of church (in which the central dome is supported by four columns) is not recorded here, but the simpler variants of the three-conchal temples<sup>60</sup>.

## Conclusion

Three monuments of the church architecture in the studied region belong to the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom – "St. Nicholas" basilica in the town of Melnik, the single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko, at the town of Bansko and the three-conchal church at the village of Kulata. In terms of their functional characteristics, these churches include an episcopal (or parish) church, a cemetery church and a monastery church. Despite the impossibility at this stage to establish with certainty the status of the basilica "St. Nicholas" in Melnik, the church certainly occupied an extremely important place in the Middle Struma valley during

<sup>58</sup> Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Триконхалните църкви...*, p. 14; ЕАДЕМ, *Църковната архитектура на Първата...*, p. 153–155.

<sup>59</sup> Н. СТАНКОВИЋ, *Остаци цркве необичне основе код Сврљига (Манастириште Свете Петке Русалне)*, ГСАД 35, 2019, p. 153–179; N. STANKOVIĆ, *An Unusual Triconchal Church...*, p. 215–243.

<sup>60</sup> There are various hypotheses related to the development of the "Athonite" type of churches, cf. A.K. ORLANDOS, *Byzantine...*, p. 22–24; P. ОУСТЕРХАУТ, *Византийские строители*, Киев–Москва 2005, p. 103–105; S. МАМАЛОУКОС, *A Contribution to the Study...*, p. 39–50; С.В. МАЛЫЦЕВА, *Триконхи в архитектуре...*, p. 44–51; N.N. PATRICIOS, *The Athonite Type of Byzantine Church*, JISA 42, 2022, p. 24–27; Н. ЧАНЕВА-ДЕЧЕВСКА, *Триконхалните църкви...*, p. 8–21.

the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom. It is the oldest temple in the area during this period and is a typical example of the construction of church buildings on older cult sites, in this case on an ancient sanctuary and early Christian church.

The small single-nave church in the area of Shipotsko at town of Bansko, in the valley of Mesta river is also an example of the continuity in the absorption of the sacred cult practices. The medieval church was built on the ruins of an early Christian temple. Also in the Middle Ages a necropolis developed around it, which is also an indication of the absorption of sacred territory.

The church at the village of Kulata was most likely a monastery church. Despite the lack of architectural remains that would prove the existence of a monastery complex in a definite way, the existence of such a monastery in the valley of the Middle Struma certainly cannot be excluded. The spatial layout of the church, its monumentality and representativeness, and last but not least the preserved legends about the existence of a monastery on this site, point to this possibility.

Although the examples from the studied region are few, they show that almost all the main architectural types of church buildings, typical for the rest of the Bulgarian lands and the Balkan Peninsula during this period, are found here.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

*Fontes graeci historiae bulgaricae / Grăcki izvori za bālgarskata istorija*, vol. VI, Sofija 1965.

IVANOV J., *Bālgarski starini iz Makedonija. Fototipno izdanie*, Sofija 1970.

TEOFILAKT, *Kliment Ohridski*, trans. et ed. Al. MILEV, Sofija 1955.

### Secondary Literature

ALEKSOVA B., *Episkopijata na Bregalnica*, Prilep 1989.

BALŞ G., *L'influence du plan serbe sur le plan des églises roumaines*, [in:] *L'art byzantin chez les Slaves*, vol. I, *Les Balkans*, parts 2, Paris 1930, p. 277–294.

BARJAKOV V., *Sveti mesta okolo Bansko*, [in:] *170 godini hram "Sveta Troica" v gr. Bansko*, ed. L. STEFANOV, Bansko 2005, p. 3–4.

BOJADŹHIEV St., *Po vāprosa za priemstvenostta v arhitekturata na Pārvata bālgarska dārzhava*, [in:] *Arhitekturata na Pārvata i Vtorata bālgarska dārzhava*, ed. G. KOŹUHAROV, Sofija 1975, p. 32–77.

BOŠKOVIĆ D., *Arhitektura srednjeg veka*, Beograd 1957.

CVETKOV B., *Selištnata mreža v dolinata na Sredna Struma prez Srednovekovieto IX–XVII vek (po arheoloģičeski dannii)*, Sofija 2002.

ĀANEVA-DEĀEVSKA N., *Arhitekturni vlijanija ot Rim i Konstantinopol vārhu cārkovnata arhitektura po bālgarskite zemi (IV–X v.)*, "Rhodopica" 1–2, 2002, p. 149–157.

ĀANEVA-DEĀEVSKA N., *Cārkovnata arhitektura na Pārvata bālgarska dārzhava*, Sofija 1984.

- ĆANEVA-DEĆEVSKA N., *Ćarkovnata arhitektura v Bălgarija prez XI–IV vek*, Sofija 1988.
- ĆANEVA-DEĆEVSKA N., *Osnovni napravlenija v razvitioto na srednovekovnata kultovna arhitektura v Bălgarija*, [in:] *Bălgarskata arhitektura prez vekovete*, ed. A. OBREtenov, IV. IVANĀEV, R. ANGELOVA, St. STAMOV, Sofija 1982, p. 52–79.
- ĆANEVA-DEĆEVSKA N., *Po văprosa za srednovekovnite trikonhalni Āarkvi ot manastirski tip na Balkanite*, “Музеи и паметници на културата” / “Музеи и паметници на културата” 1, 1971, p. 10–15.
- ĆANEVA-DEĆEVSKA N., *Rannohristijanskata arhitektura v Bălgarija IV–VI vek*, Sofija 1999.
- ĆANEVA-DEĆEVSKA N., *Trikonhalnite Āarkvi ot IX–XIV v. po bălgarskite zemi*, “Археология” / “Археология” 4, 1970, p. 8–21.
- ĆURĀIĆ S., *Architecture in the Balkans. From Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*, New Haven–London 2010.
- DEROKO A., *Monumentalna i dekorativna arhitektura u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd 1953.
- DIMITROVA E., *The Church of the Holy Virgin Eleoussa at Veljusa. The Most Significant Values of the Cultural and Natural Heritage*, Skopje 2016.
- DIMOVA V., *Ćarkvite v Bălgarija prez XIII–IV vek*, Sofija 2008.
- DONĀEVA S., *Bazilikite ot Părvoto bălgarsko carstvo. Arhitekturen oblik*, Ŗumen 2003.
- DONĀEVA S., *Krăstokupolnite Āarkvi v Părvoto bălgarsko carstvo. Arhitekturen oblik*, Veliko Tărnovo 2008.
- DUJĀEV I., *Melnik au Moyen Age*, “Byzantion” 28, 1968, p. 328–412.
- DUJĀEV I., *Melnik prez srednovekovieto*, [in:] I. DUJĀEV, *Bălgarsko srednovekovie. ProuĀvanija vărhu političeskata i kulturna istorija na srednovekovna Bălgarija*, Sofija 1972, p. 374–412.
- FILOV B., *Starobălgarskoto izkustvo*, Sofija 2019.
- GEORGIEVA M., *Burial Pits Lined with Stone Slabs along the Valley of the River of Mesta in the Roman Age*, [in:] *First international Symposium Ancient Cultures in South-East Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. Megalithic Monuments and Cult Practices*, ed. V. MARKOV, J. GOŖEV, K. POROŖANOV, A. GOCEV, P. MAGLOVA, Blagoevgrad 2012, p. 138–152.
- GEORGIEVA M., *Trikonhalni Āarkvi ot Jugozapadna Bălgarija (po arheologiĀeski danni)*, [in:] *Kăsnosrednovekovnite Balkani. Sbornik v Āest na doc. d-r SneŖana Rakova*, ed. E. AZMANOVA-RUDARSKA, K. JORDANOV, Sofija 2022, p. 247–282.
- GEORGIEVA M., GEORGIEVA D., *Manastiri ot teritorijata na Jugozapadna Bălgarija*, “Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Education and Art. Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Branch Blagoevgrad” 2020, p. 19–48, [www.usb-blagoevgrad.swu.bg](http://www.usb-blagoevgrad.swu.bg) [31 VIII 2023].
- GEORGIEVA S., *ArheologiĀeski prouĀvanija na kăsnosrednovekovnata Āarkva “Sv. Nikola” v Melnik*, “Археология” / “Археология” 2, 1974, p. 28–37.
- GEORGIEVA S., *Srednovekovnijat Melnik*, “Музеи и паметници на културата” / “Музеи и паметници на културата” 3, 1979, p. 5–9.
- GERASIMOVA-TOMOVA V., *Kamenna plastika*, [in:] *Melnik*, vol. I, ed. S. GEORGIEVA, V. NEŖEVA, Sofija 1989, p. 160–183.
- GJUZELEV V., *Apologija na Srednovekovieto*, Sofija 2004.
- GRABAR A., *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte de reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, London 1972.
- GRIGOROVĀ V., *OĀerk za păteŖestvie po Evropejska Turcija (1844–1845) s karta na okolnostite na Ohridskoto i Prespanskoto ezero*, Sofija 1978.
- GROZdanov C., *Sveti Naum Ohridski*, Skopje 2015.



- GROZDANOVA G., *Selištnata sistema v Trakija prez Rannoto srednevekovje: Problemi na proučvanijata*, [in:] *Trakija prez Srednevekovieto i osmanskata epoha. Karakter i dinamika na selištnija život (XII–XVIII vek)*, *Sbornik statii ot naučna konferencija, provedena na 27–28 noemvri 2014 g. v Sofija*, ed. D. STOJANOVA, Č. KIRILOV, Sofija 2020, p. 26–48.
- HARBOVA M., *Tri hrama, tri religii. Edna zemja, naričana bālgarska*, Sofija 1999.
- ILIEV I., *Sv. Kliment Ohridski. Zhivot i delo*, Plovdiv 2010.
- IVANOV E., *Hristijanska arheologija i izkustvo*, vol. I, *Rannohristijansko i srednevekovno izkustvo ot Albanija*, Sofija 2013.
- IVANOVA V., *Stari cārki i monastiri v bālgarskite zemi (IV–XII v.)*, “Годишник на Народния музей” / “Godišnik na Narodnija muzej” 4, (1922–1925) 1926, p. 429–582.
- JAKOVSON A.L., *Očerk istorii zodčestva Armenii V–XVII vekov*, Moskva 1950.
- JANKOVIĆ Dj., *Srpsko pomorje od 7. do 10. Stoljeđa*, Beograd 2007.
- KHRUSHKOVA L.G., *The Bishop’s Basilica (Uvarov’s) of Chersonesos in the Crimea. The Modern View after a Century and a Half of Study*, “Archaeologia Bulgarica” 21.2, 2017, p. 27–78.
- KOCO D., *Klimentoviot manastir “Sv. Pantelejmon” i raskopkata pri “Imaret” vo Ohrid*, “Годишен зборник на Филозофскиот факултет (Скопје)” / “Godišen zbornik na Filozofski fakultet (Skopje)” 1, 1948, p. 129–182.
- KOCO D., *Novi podatoci za istorijata na Klimentoviot manastir “Sv. Pantelejmon” vo Ohrid*, “Годишен зборник на Филозофски факултет (Скопје)” / “Godišen zbornik na Filozofski fakultet (Skopje)” 19, 1967, p. 245–255.
- KOCO D., *Proučvanja i arheološki izpitivanja na crkvata na manastirot “Sv. Naum”*, “Зборник на Археолошкиот музеј (Скопје)” / “Zbornik na Arheološkiot muzej (Skopje)” 1957–1958, p. 56–80.
- KOCO D., *Trikonhalnite crkvi vo Klimentovoto vreme*, “Словенска писменост” / “Slovenska pismenost”, 1050-godišnina na Kliment Ohridski, Ohrid 1966, p. 91–100.
- KORKUTOVA Z., *Ednokorabni cārki s dvuskatno pokritie ot Jugozapadna Bālgarija XII–XIV vek (po arheologičeski danni)*, Sofija 2013.
- KOSTOVA E., *Medieval Melnik. From the End of the Twelfth to the End of the Fourteenth Century. The Historical Vicissitudes of a Small Balkan Town*, Sofia 2013.
- KOSTOVA E., *Srednevekovnijat Melnik (kraja na XII – kraja na XIV v.)*, Plovdiv 2020.
- KOSTOVA R., *St. Kliment of Ohrid and his Monastery: Some More Archeology of the Written Evidence*, [in:] *Vizantija – Balkanite – Evropa. Izsledvanija v čest na prof. Vasilka Tāpkova-Zaimova*, ed. V. TĀPKOVA-ZAIMOVA, V. GJUZELEV, A. GARABEDJAN, Sofija 2006 (= “Studia Balcanica” 25), p. 593–605.
- KRAUTHEIMER R., *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, New Haven–London 1986.
- KUZMAN P., *Arheološki svedočstva za dejnosta na Sveti Kliment Ohridski vo Ohridskiот region*, “Slovenē” 2, 2016, p. 136–178, <https://doi.org/10.31168/2305-6754.2016.5.2.4>
- MAL’CEVA C.B., *Trikonhi v arhitekture Balkan IV–XII vekov*, “Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета. Серия V: Вопросы истории и теории христианского искусства” / “Vestnik Pravoslavnogo Sviato-Tikhonovskogo humanitarnogo universiteta. Serija V: Voprosy istorii i teorii khristianskogo iskusstva” 32, 2018, p. 34–58, <https://doi.org/10.15382/sturV201832.34-58>
- ΜΑΜΑΛΟΥΚΟΣ S., *A Contribution to the Study of the “Athonite” Church Type of Byzantine Architecture*, “Зорграф” / “Zograf” 35, 2011, p. 39–50, <https://doi.org/10.2298/ZOG1135039M>

- MANGO C., *Architettura bizantina*, Milano 1978.
- MARKOV K., *Duhoven život v bälgarskite zemi prez käsnata antičnost (IV–VI v.)*, Sofija 1995.
- MAVRODINOV N., *Cärkvi i monastiri v Melnik i Rožen*, “Годишник на Народния музей” / “Годишник на Narodnija muzej” 5, (1926–1931) 1933, p. 285–306.
- MAVRODINOV N., *Ednokorabnata i krästovidnata cärkva po bälgarskite zemi do kraja na XIV v.*, Sofija 1931.
- MAVRODINOV N., *Starobälgarskoto izkustvo XI–XIII vek*, Sofija 1966.
- MAVRODINOV N., *Starobälgarskoto izkustvo. Izkustvoto na Pärvoto bälgarsko carstvo*, Sofija 1959.
- MAVRODINOV N., *Vizantijskata arhitektura*, Sofija 1955.
- MELAMED A., *Proučvanija na rannohristijanskata bazilika i srednovkovna carkva v mestnostta “Šipotsko”, občina Bansko (1992–1993)*, “Археологически открития и разкопки през 1992–1993 г.” / “Arheologičeski otkritija i razkopki prez 1992–1993 g.” 1994, p. 118.
- MELAMED A., *Proučvanija na srednovkovnata cärkva i nekropol i bazilika v m. Šipotsko kraj gr. Bansko*, “Археологически открития и разкопки през 1994 г.” / “Arheologičeski otkritija i razkopki prez 1994 g.” 1995, p. 152.
- MELAMED K., *Rannohristijanska bazilika, srednovkovno selo, cärkva i nekropol v Šipotsko, Bansko*, “Археологически открития и разкопки през 2008 г.” / “Arheologičeski otkritija i razkopki prez 2008 g.” 2009, p. 701–704.
- МИХАЙЛОВ S., *Za sedemte säborni hrama na knjaz Boris*, “Археология” / “Arheologija” 2, 1992, p. 38–41.
- МИЈАТЕВ Кр., *Arhitekturata v srednovkovna Bälgarija*, Sofija 1965.
- МИКУЛЧИК I., *Srednovkovni gradovi i tvrđini vo Makedonija*, Skorpje 1996.
- MILČEV A., *Arheologičeski razkopki i proučvanija v dolinata na Sredna Struma. Otkrita krästovidno-kupolna trikonhalna cärkva v okolnostite na s. Kulata*, “Годишник на Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“. Философско-исторически факултет” / “Godishnik na Sofijskija universitet „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“. Filososfsko-istoričeski fakultet” 53 (1959), 1960, p. 401–449.
- MILEV A., *Gräckite žitija na Kliment Ohridski*, Sofija 1966.
- MILLET G., *L'école grecque dans l'architecture byzantine*, Paris 1916.
- MUCOPULOS N., *Bazilikata “Sv. Ahilij” v Prespa. Edin istoričeski pametnik*, Plovdiv 2007.
- NEŠEVA V., *Duhovnijat život v Melnik prez XIII–XIV v.*, [in:] *Vtori meždunaroden kongres po bälgaristika, Sofija, 23 maj – 3 juni 1986*, vol. VI, *Dokladi, Bälgarskite zemi v drevnostta, Bälgarija prez srednovkovieto*, Sofija 1987, p. 501–514.
- NEŠEVA V., *Etapi v istoričeskoto razvitie na Melnik do kraja na XIV v. (po arheologičeski danni)*, [in:] *Acta musei Varnaensis*, vol. III.2, *Bälgarskite zemi prez srednovkovieto (VII–XVIII v.)*, *Meždunarodna konferencija v čest na 70-godišninata na prof. Aleksandär Kuzev, Varna 12–14 septemvri 2002*, Varna 2005, p. 307–322.
- NEŠEVA V., *Komentar kam statijata na Ž. Vážarova “Melnik v izsledvanijata na ruskite arheolozi prez XIX v.”*, [in:] *Melnik*, vol. II, ed. M. STANČEVA, St. BOJADŽHIEV, V. NEŠEVA, Sofija 1994, p. 122–125.
- NEŠEVA V., *Melnik (Melnik) prez antičnostta i rannovizantijskata epoha*, [in:] *Rimski i rannovizantijski selišta v Bälgarija*, vol. II, ed. R. IVANOV, Sofija 2003, p. 235–263.
- NEŠEVA V., *Melnik pri car Samuil v kraja na X – načaloto na XI vek (po arheologičeski danni)*, [in:] *Vizantija – Balkanite – Evropa. Izsledvanija v čest na prof. Vasilka Täpkova-Zaimova*, ed. V. TÄPKOVA-ZAIMOVA, V. GJUZELEV, A. GARABEDJAN, Sofija 2006 (= “Studia Balcanica” 25), p. 605–622.

- NEŠEVA V., *Melnik. Bogozidaniyat grad*, Sofija 2008.
- NEŠEVA V., *Melnik. Bogozidaniyat grad. Avtoreferat na disertacija za prisžđdane na naučnata stepen "Doktor na istoričeskite nauki"*, Sofija 2009.
- NEŠEVA V., *Trakijsko svetilište pod bazilikata "Sv. Nikola" v Melnik*, "Археология" / "Arheologija" 1, 2002, p. 50–57.
- NEŠEVA V., *Za kulta na Sveti Nikola v Melnik*, "Известия на Регионален исторически музей – Пусе" / "Izvestija na Regionalen istoričeski muzej – Ruse" 10, 2006, p. 172–182.
- NIKOLOVA B., *Pravoslavnite cārki v Bālgarskoto srednovekovie IX–XIV vek*, Sofija 2002.
- NIKOLOVA B., *Ustrojstvo i upravljenje na Bālgarskata pravoslavna cārква (IX–XIV vek)*, Sofija 2017.
- ORLANDOS A.K., *Byzantine Architecture*, Athens 1998.
- OUSTERKHAUT R., *Vizantijskie stroiteli*, Kiyev–Moskva 2005.
- PANAJOOTOVA D., *Arhitektura*, [in:] *Istorija na bālgarskoto izobrazitelno izkustvo*, vol. I, Sofija 1976, p. 174–198.
- PATRICIOS N.N., *The Athonite Type of Byzantine Church*, "Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture" 42, 2022, p. 24–27, [https://www.sacredarchitecture.org/articles/the\\_athonite\\_type\\_of\\_byzantine\\_church\\_nicholas\\_n\\_patricios](https://www.sacredarchitecture.org/articles/the_athonite_type_of_byzantine_church_nicholas_n_patricios) [31 VIII 2023].
- PERDRIZET P., *Melnic et Rossno*, "Bulletin de correspondance hellénique" 31, 1907, p. 20–37, <https://doi.org/10.3406/bch.1907.3247>
- PETROVA S., *Antični i rannovizantijski arhitekturni detalji ot bazilikata "Sv. Nikola" v Melnik*, "Археология" / "Arheologija" 3, 2002, p. 58–63.
- PLJAKOV Z., *The City of Melnik*, "Bulgarian Historical Review" 4, 1995, p. 75–90.
- POPOVIĆ M., *Melnik – Geschichte und Denkmäler einer Stadt an den Ausläufern des Pirin-Gebirges*, "Bulgaren in Österreich" 11, 2008, p. 16–18.
- PREPIS A., *Kām problema za datirovnata na srednovekovnata katedrala "Sv. Nikola" v krepostta na Melnik*, [in:] *Pārvi meždunaroden kongres po bālgaristika*, Sofija, 23 maj – 3 juni 1981, *Dokladi*, vol. I, *Bālgarskata kultura i vzaimodejstvieto j sās svetovnata kultura. Kulturata na srednovekovna Bālgarija*, ed. P. ZAREV, Sofija 1983, p. 176–193.
- SNEGAROV I., *Istorija na Ohridskata arhiepiskopija*, vol. I, *Ot osnovavaneto ù do zavladjavaneto na Balkanskija poluoströv ot turcite*, Sofija 1995.
- STANKOVIĆ N., *An Unusual Triconchal Church in the Vicinity of Svrlijig ("Manastirište Svete Petke Rusalne")*: *Original Form, Architectural Analogies, and Potential Date of Construction*, [in:] *Niš i Vizantija. Sedamnaesti meždunarodni naučni skup*, Niš, 3–5 jun 2018. *Zbornik radova*, vol. XVII, ed. M. RAKOČIJA, Ниш 2019, p. 215–243.
- STANKOVIĆ N., *Ostaci crkve neobichne osnove kod Svrlijiga (Manastirište Svete Petke Rusalne)*, "Гласник Српског археолошког друштва" / "Glasnik Srpskog arheološkog društva" 35, 2019, p. 153–179.
- STRANSKY A., *Remarques sur la peinture du moyen-âge en Bulgarie, en Grèce et en Albanie*, "Известия на Археологическия институт" / "Izvestija na Arheologičeskija institut" 10, 1936, p. 37–41.
- STRIČEVIĆ Dj., *Églises triconques médiévales en Serbie et en Macédoine et la tradition de l'architecture paléobyzantine*, [in:] *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'études byzantines Ochride 10–16 septembre 1961*, vol. I, Beograd 1963, p. 224–240.
- STRZYGOWSKI J., *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, Wien 1918.
- TANTSIS A., *The So-called "Athonite" Type of Church and Two Shrines of the Theotokos in Constantinople*, "Зорграф" / "Zograf" 34, 2010, p. 3–11, <https://doi.org/10.2298/ZOG1034003T>

- TULEŠKOV N., *Arhitektura na bālgarskite manastiri*, Sofija 1989.
- TULEŠKOV N., *Arhitektura na srednovkovnija hristijanski i isljamski svjat*, Sofija 2007.
- VEŽIĆ P., *Dalmatinski trikonhosi*, "Ars Adriatica" 1, 2011, p. 27–66, <https://doi.org/10.15291/ars.428>
- VLACHOS Th., *Die Geschichte der Byzantinischen Stad Melnikon*, Thessaloniki 1969.
- ZLATKOV M., *Selištnata sistema na Melniško prez XI–XVII v.* Avtoreferat na disertacionen trud za prisaiždane na obrazovatelna i naučna stepen "doktor", Sofija 2021.


**Miroslava Georgieva**

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"  
Faculty of Law and History  
Department of History  
66 Ivan Mihaylov Str.  
2700 Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria  
[m\\_georgieva@swu.bg](mailto:m_georgieva@swu.bg)





James Howard-Johnston (Oxford)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3700-4208>

## RUS AND KHAZARS

**Abstract.** The southern thrust of the Rus in the ninth–tenth centuries is to be explained not only by Viking hunger for wealth and glory, but also by the large, rapidly growing market for furs in the Caliphate. In order to reach that market, the Rus had to cross the Khazars’ sphere of influence in the steppes and wooded steppes of the Volga and Don regions. The khaganate was a great power, which presided over many client peoples. It was perhaps awareness of the potential threat posed by the Rus which prompted the Khazars to improve their northern defences in the 830s. There is clear evidence that they then extended their authority over the Rus, their khagan being acknowledged as Rus ruler. The subsequent history of the Rus, up to their successful rebellion in 965, can only be understood if account is taken of Khazar influence and of wider geopolitical circumstances. The following propositions, all to some extent conjectural, are put forward: (1) that the first Rus attack on Constantinople in 860 was a show of force, timed to coincide with several Arab raids on Byzantine territory, and that it was initiated by the Khazars at the urging of the central Abbasid authorities; (2) that Byzantium was seeking a useful ally both against the Balkan Bulgars and against the Sajids of Azerbaijan, when it offered substantial trade concessions to the Rus in 911, that no objection was made by the Khazars, who had recently faced problems from the Oghuz Turks and their Pecheneg clients, and that the treaty resulted in a damaging Rus raid in the Caspian region after 912–913; (3) that there was a serious deterioration in Khazar-Byzantine relations in the 920s; (4) that the second Rus attack on Constantinople in 941 (this time in great force) was instigated by the Khazars, in response to an abortive Rus rebellion; and (5) that the Rus subsequently patched up relations with the Khazars, who allowed them to invade Azerbaijan in 944–945, and made peace with the Byzantines, signing a new trade treaty in 944. Apart from some evidence of assimilation of Khazar customs, it was the division of the Rus into twenty or so distinct principalities which was the principal longterm outcome of Khazar influence.

**Keywords:** Rus, Khazar, Byzantium, history, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century

There is something miraculous about the early history of Russia. Not the sort of bolt from heaven that transformed the Middle East in one generation in the seventh century<sup>1</sup>. The advance of the Scandinavian Rus over tracts of forest and

<sup>1</sup> J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2010, p. 461–510.

marshland to the rivers that run south to great seas could not match that of the Arabs over the Roman and Persian provinces of the Middle East. Movement was more difficult. The heroic ethos of a warlike northern people could not generate the same drive as a new, galvanizing religion. But from small isolated bridgeheads in the north the Rus succeeded in colonizing much of what is now European Russia, Belarus and Ukraine between the middle of the ninth and the end of the tenth century. Not only that – they set in motion a process of economic, social and political development which, over the following century, brought into being a multitude of distinct, cohesive and competitive territorial principalities. They would endure and form the nodes around which the future history of Russia would swirl<sup>2</sup>.

The intervention of an extraneous cultural force acted as a catalyst. It sped up the slow process of evolution of supratribal institutions among the Baltic, Finno-Ugrian and Slav peoples of the deep forest and wooded steppe zones. It triggered a reaction between the extraneous Scandinavian and indigenous cultures which resulted, by the middle of the eleventh century, in a fusion of the two and the knitting together of the colonial centres and their extensive hinterlands. The Rus remained a ruling elite, but could not impose their *mores* and language on the mass of Slavs and others in the territories over which they exercised a light authority. Those territories were so large that the extension and intensification of Rus authority could not proceed without the collective consent of the Slavs and others, and, it turned out, without assimilation of the culture of the elite into that of the population at large<sup>3</sup>.

### The rise of the Rus

There are three elements, then, in the miracle – first, the geographical scale of Rus colonizing, second, a marked increase in the speed of development of the eastern Slavs as compared to the western and southern groupings (roughly one century instead of three), and, third, the crystallization of a distinctive Russian culture and the articulation of a large, inaccessible part of the west Eurasian continent into a set of regional power-blocs which were to be the principal *dramatis personae* in medieval Russian history. It is not my object in this paper to delve deep into likely explanations, but to subject the sparse evidence on Rus-Khazar relation to close scrutiny. Plainly, though, before entering a fraught field of study which has generated much controversy, some suggestions should be made, if the Rus are to be understood rather than simply be viewed as a violent force of nature<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*, London 1996, p. 3–180.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 279–291, 313–319.

<sup>4</sup> I am very grateful to Dr. Mirela Ivanova for reading through and commenting on this paper. She has subjected the arguments propounded to the sort of sceptical scrutiny which any adept of Darwinian scepticism welcomes.

Tangible, material evidence in the form of silver coins, dirhams minted in the Caliphate and especially the eastern lands of Khurasan and Transoxiana, documents the extraordinary extent of Rus outreach in the ninth and tenth centuries. It was the Rus, we know from Arab sources, who sailed down the Volga to Bulgar, capital of the eastern Bulgars, and traded slaves and furs in exchange for dirhams (and, we may presume, goods) from Arab lands. Around 800, it was they who established for the first time good, direct connections (down the Don as well as the Volga) between the active northern market which had been developing gradually over the preceding two centuries in the Baltic and North Seas, on the one hand, and, on the other, the richest economy of contemporary western Eurasia, that of the highly urbanised Caliphate in the south<sup>5</sup>. The rapid growth of exchange attested by dirham finds, reaching an apogee in the first half of the tenth century, is inexplicable in terms of conventional commerce – say that of slaves or amber or honey or wax for southern goods (notably glass beads [documented archaeologically] and cloth). There was more to the phenomenon than the opening of two markets to each other. Something galvanized north-south trade. Something triggered a sudden and growing boom in exchange, and, to judge by the dirham flow north, generated large profits for the northern traders, the Rus. That something was fur.

The south, from the Mediterranean lands to the Middle East, had been averse to fur-wearing in antiquity. The use of raw animal pelts to encase the human body was viewed as a defining characteristic of the uncivilized peoples of the north. This antipathy lasted into the early middle ages, despite the usefulness of fur as clothing and bedding in the coldest months of the year<sup>6</sup>. But attitudes changed in the eighth century – a small, apparently insignificant change, which had ramified historical consequences. Like many other apparent historical mysteries, it originated in the human mind, the ultimate well-spring of new ideas. Identification of fur as a valuable commodity cannot, of course, be compared to a scientific discovery. It was simply a recognition of something obvious and the pushing aside of traditional prejudice. We pick it up first in an incident which took place in the Abbasid court in Baghdad in the late eighth century. It is included in a set of miscellaneous reports at the end of al-Tabari's account of the caliphate of al-Mahdi. A senior figure appeared *clad in furs*. This tells us that the red light barring the entry of furs

<sup>5</sup> J. CALLMER, *From West to East: The Penetration of Scandinavians into Eastern Europe ca. 500–900*, [in:] *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. KAZANSKI, A. NERCESSIAN, C. ZUCKERMAN, Paris 2000, p. 45–94, at 59–74; M. JANKOWIAK, *Dirham Flows into Northern and Eastern Europe, and the Rhythms of the Slave Trade in the Islamic World*, [in:] *Viking-Age Trade. Silver, Slaves and Gotland*, ed. J. GRUSZCZYŃSKI, M. JANKOWIAK, J. SHEPARD, Abingdon 2021, p. 105–131.

<sup>6</sup> J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Trading in Fur from Classical Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Leather and Fur. Aspects of Early Medieval Trade*, ed. E. CAMERON, London 1998, p. 65–79.



into the southern world had turned green<sup>7</sup>. Once it did so there was an *explosion* of demand in what was a rich world. The urban bourgeoisie, headed by merchants and religious scholars, the apparatus of government in the different regions of the caliphate, the courts of regional governors and of the caliph himself, could and apparently did develop, in a short period, a taste for fur-wearing. This demand, more concentrated than for any other natural product (given the hundreds of pelts needed for individual garments), had to be met by an extraordinarily dispersed system of supply, relying on the most primitive form of production, that of the hunter-gatherer, over vast tracts of forest in the north<sup>8</sup>.

Hoards of dirhams document economic activity associated with the fur-trade in the north. There was a huge influx over the course of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century, reaching much of the Baltic and Poland as well as Russia. The larger the quantity of dirhams found in any place, the more important was its role in the commercial network handling furs. The island of Gotland, with much the largest concentration of hoards, can be seen to have been the financial centre. While there is no regular, direct correlation between dirham finds and fur trade routes, they do document some Rus forays away from the main river valleys to outposts where furs were exchanged for southern products. For traces of contact with the wider world in the deep forest where trappers operated, we can turn to occasional finds of beads<sup>9</sup>.

There are enough of these occasional finds of dirhams and beads to show that the Rus were ready to venture out from their colonial centres, as well as settling in their immediate vicinity. This is confirmed by an invaluable Byzantine text, the so-called *De administrando imperio*, put together in its final form in the middle of the tenth century, which reports that the Rus went on winter circuits in the hinterland of Kiev. These circuits took them well away from the main waterways into alien worlds, populated in the main by Slavs. The Slav tribes may have acknowledged Rus authority (they are described as tributaries) but there was no question of the Rus' imposing their authority by force and of extracting furs as tribute. The balance of power, both in terms of numbers and familiarity with the forest environment, lay with the Slavs. Moving in small parties through the forests, the Rus traded on equal terms with Slavs and other tribesmen, as we know from the *De administrando imperio*, which reports that they *bought* the hulls of river boats built by the Slavs in the winter months. The forests of Russia

<sup>7</sup> AL-TABARI, *Ta'rikh*, rec. M.J. DE GOEJE et al., *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1879–1901 (cetera: AL-TABARI), p. 508.5–6, trans. H. KENNEDY, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. XIX, *Al-Mansur and al-Mahdi*, Albany NY 1990, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> M. LOMBARD, *La chasse et les produits de la chasse dans le monde musulman: VIII<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, [in:] IDEM, *Espaces et réseaux du haut moyen âge*, Paris 1972, p. 177–204, at 186–195; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Trading in Fur...*

<sup>9</sup> J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *The Fur Trade in the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Viking-Age Trade...*, p. 57–74.

compelled a militarily superior, intrusive people to consort largely as equals with the indigenous peoples<sup>10</sup>.

It is the scale and ramifications of the fur-trading network which help explain the accelerated development of supratribal institutions among the Slavs of the Volga, Oka, Don and Dniepr river basins. Ideas as well as goods made their way up the waterways, great and small, of Russia into its remote recesses. The symbiosis with Slavs forced on the Rus by brute geographical and demographic facts explains the receptivity of each to the influence of the other, and, in particular, the general acceptance by Slavs of Rus leadership, notwithstanding a few episodes of open conflict in the second half of the tenth century. The coming of Christianity in the late tenth century also helped in the mixing and combining of cultures<sup>11</sup>.

### The Khazar khaganate and the Rus

The Rus probably came to the attention of the Khazars, the hegemonic power of the west Eurasian steppes, once they began pushing inland from the Baltic coast up the valley of the Volkhov river and came within reach of the headwaters of the Don, Oka and Volga – around 800. It was obvious from the first that they posed a potentially serious military threat, since they were formidable warriors and could use the waterways to penetrate deep into the wooded steppe and steppe zones<sup>12</sup>. Before looking at Khazar responses, though, something should be said about the khaganate which they had established, with its heartland in the north Caucasus steppes.

The Khazars had been one of two leading nomad peoples in the western half of the Turk khaganate which had straddled Eurasia in the second half of the sixth and first third of the seventh century. When Turk power imploded as a result of a decisive Tang victory in the east (629), Khazars and Bulgars competed for supremacy in the west. By the 660s the Khazars had prevailed, the Bulgars splitting and withdrawing north to the middle Volga basin and west to the Balkans. Twenty years later the Khazars had consolidated their position north of the Caucasus and were able to launch (in 685) the first of several attacks on Transcaucasia<sup>13</sup>. They

<sup>10</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, c. 9.9–16, 104–113, rec. Gy. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= *CFHB*, 1] (cetera: CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*).

<sup>11</sup> A. POPPE, *The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus': Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986–89*, *DOP* 30, 1976, p. 195–244; D. OBOLENSKY, *Cherson and the Conversion of Rus': An Anti-Revisionist View*, *BMGS* 13, 1989, p. 244–256.

<sup>12</sup> S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 12–27, 33–38, 46–50.

<sup>13</sup> P.B. GOLDEN, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, Wiesbaden 1992 [= *Turc*, 9], p. 232–239; C. ZUCKERMAN, *The Khazars and Byzantium: The First Encounter*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= *HOS.CA*, 17], p. 399–432, at 417–431.

proved dangerous northern antagonists of the Caliphate in the 720s and 730s, and later, despite suffering a serious defeat in 737. The Caliph al-Mansur had to strengthen his northern defences after a successful Khazar invasion in 764, rather than resume fighting on the prime *jihad* front, that facing Byzantium<sup>14</sup>. Just as Byzantium halted the Arabs at the mountain chains of the Taurus and Antitaurus, the Khazars confined the Arabs to the lands south of the Caucasus, and, unlike Byzantium, ceased to be troubled by them in the ninth and tenth centuries<sup>15</sup>.

The Khazar khaganate was a polyethnic state, organized around an inner nomadic core in the Kuban and Terek steppes north of the Caucasus. There were numerous subordinated peoples who acknowledged the suzerainty of the khagan. Ibn Fadlan who served on an embassy to the Volga-Bulgars in 922, put their number at twenty-five<sup>16</sup>. They included sedentary peoples in the north Caucasus (principally Alans), Huns living north of the Caspian Gates (probably semi-sedentarised), Slavs living between the Dniepr and the Don, Alans resettled in the wooded steppe zone of the middle Don, Crimean Goths, and two powerful nomadic peoples, shielding the inner Khazar lands south of the lower courses of the Don and the Volga – Pechenegs to the west and Volga-Bulgars to the north<sup>17</sup>. There were also substantial communities of Christians and Muslims living in the capital, Itil, on the lower Volga, each subjected to their own law and courts. By that stage perhaps a majority of the Khazars had converted to Judaism<sup>18</sup>.

The title *khagan* born by the supreme, sacral ruler, was taken over from the Turks. It encapsulated a claim to universal power, an earthly analogue to the limitless rule of Tängri, the supreme sky-god. There could be no questioning of its legitimacy in the case of the Khazars, any more than in those of the eastern Turks

<sup>14</sup> IBN AL-A'THAM AL-KUFI, *Kitab al-Futuh*, ed. M.J. ABU SA'DAH, Cairo 1987, p. 231.2 – 233.5; *Patmut'iwn Lewondeay metsi vardapeti hayots'i*, ed. I. EZEANTS', St. Petersburg 1897, c. 31, trans. B. MARTIN-HISARD, J.-P. MAHÉ, LEWOND VARDAPET, *Discours historique*, Paris 2015; *Theophanis chronographia*, ed. C. DE BOOR, vol. I, Leipzig 1883–1885, p. 433.26–28 and 435.20–22, trans. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, Oxford 1997.

<sup>15</sup> D.J. WASSERSTEIN, *The Khazars and the World of Islam*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars...*, p. 373–386, at 375–380; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantine Sources for Khazar History*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars...*, p. 163–193, at 163–168.

<sup>16</sup> IBN FADLĀN, *Risalat*, rec. et trans. A. ZEKI VELIDI TOGAN, *Ibn Fadlāns Reisebericht*, Leipzig 1939 (cetera: IBN FADLĀN), p. 44.11–12, trans. P. LUNDE, C. STONE, *Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness. Arab Travellers in the Far North*, London 2012, p. 56.

<sup>17</sup> P.B. GOLDEN, *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, vol. I, Budapest 1980 [= BOH, 25], p. 86–97, 255–263; C.A. ПЛЕТНЕВА, *Очерки хазарской археологии*, Москва 1999, with critique of G.E. АФАНАС'ЕВ, *Where is the Archaeological Evidence of the Existence of a Khazar State?*, *AAE* 57.3, 2018, p.166–189, at 170–173.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Māsūdī and other Arab sources are discussed by D.M. DUNLOP, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton 1954, p. 89–115. Cf. P.B. GOLDEN, *The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars...*, p. 123–126, at 139–157.

who resuscitated a rump eastern khaganate in the late seventh century or their Uyghur and Kirgiz successors<sup>19</sup>. The Khazar khagan was a superordinate ruler, whose superior status was not challenged by other nomad rulers, certainly not by those who acknowledged his suzerainty, nor by the Balkan Bulgars. The only other west Eurasian khagan known to us was the khagan of the Avars, the fugitive remnant of the Rouran in the Carpathian basin, the 'Turks' imperial predecessors on the steppes facing China<sup>20</sup>.

News of the appearance of a new northern people was doubtless picked up by the Volga-Bulgars through their contacts among the peoples living on or close to the watersheds of the great rivers, and passed on to the Khazars. Of the Khazar reaction we have good evidence. They took precautions to secure their position as the great power of the western steppes, instituting programmes of investment in military infrastructure for which they received Byzantine aid and of radical ethnic re-engineering. Their object was to establish firm control of the steppes of Ukraine, from the lower Don to the lower Danube, and thus to prevent the Rus from bypassing the zone on the middle Volga controlled by the Volga-Bulgars. The breakdown and reassembly of ethnic components in new combinations was a fraught process, which seems to have been completed around 830. The programme of fortress-construction took much longer, probably a generation or so, from *ca.* 820 to *ca.* 850.

The process of creating new peoples out of amalgams of old ones and the constitutional arrangements subsequently introduced to ensure that they remained responsive to Khazar management can be observed in greater detail in the cases of two peoples they created, the Hungarians and the Pechenegs, than in any other cases in antiquity and the middle ages before the Mongol era. For this we are indebted to the same tenth-century Byzantine source as reports Rus winter circuits among the Slavs. Seven Finno-Ugrian (Hungarian) tribes were moved from the Volga-Ural steppes and relocated in those of Ukraine on either bank of the Dniepr. Two were singled out and allowed to keep their Finno-Ugrian names, while the other five were given Turkic (Khazar) names. A new tribe (Kavars), itself an amalgam of three clans, was grafted on and given the leading role. The Kavars were *Khazar*, and their ruler was given authority over all eight tribes. The Khazars were thus ensuring effective control of the Hungarians who were responsible for the defence of Ukraine. They designated them Turks (which they were not), perhaps in the hope that over two or three generations the culture of the leading tribe would absorb that of the Finno-Ugrian majority<sup>21</sup>. The Pechenegs took over an

<sup>19</sup> P.B. GOLDEN, *Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst Pre-Čingisid Nomads of Western Eurasia*, AEMA 2, 1982, p. 37–76.

<sup>20</sup> W. POHL, *The Avars. A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822*, Ithaca NY 2018.

<sup>21</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 38.3–55, 39.2–14, 40.3–7. Cf. J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantine Sources for Khazar History...*, p. 186–188, 190–191.

even more important defensive task, that of guarding the eastern Volga frontier of the khaganate which faced onto a turbulent steppe world. This had been the function of the Finno-Ugrian tribes for many generations before they were split up and the majority transferred west. The Pechenegs were given a military structure along with a new name (previously they were called Kangar). They were organized in eight divisions (*tümän*), each given an artificial name, a combination of a rank and horse-colour. The command rotated around an elite kin group in each division, moving from cousin to cousin. No overall commander was designated, that being a function clearly reserved to the central Khazar authority<sup>22</sup>.

The fortification programme produced two defensive lines, designed to deter hostile forces (1) from raiding the rich farmlands of the Donets and middle Don basins (settled by Slavs and Alans) which were overseen from a large fortified settlement near Bititsa<sup>23</sup>, and (2) from advancing against the most vulnerable sector in the approaches to the core territory of the khaganate – namely the large salient which forces the Don east before it reaches the Sea of Azov. Fortresses were built on the lower course of the river, to back up a line of forward defence running west-south-west from the middle Don to the northern end of the Donets range of hills<sup>24</sup>. They included at least one built by a Byzantine military mission at Sarkel on the lower Don. The fortresses were built to *impress*. This was particularly true of Sarkel (built with bricks fired on site). Their purpose was as much psychological as physical, to advertise Khazar power to all who passed by, and, of course, to impose it on the Hungarians guarding the northern approaches to Ukraine. The fortresses were the fixed bases from which the Khazars could project their authority west as well as north. Far to the west another fortress seems to have been built at a strategic junction of river and land routes on the Dniepr, upstream from the rapids which made navigation hazardous to the south. For the site which was to become Kiev in the tenth century seems to have had an earlier Khazar name, Sambat (a combination Turkic *sam* [‘high’] and *bat* [‘strong’]). There is also evidence for the exercise of Khazar authority at Kiev in the 930s, in the form of a round-robin appeal for money to free a Kievan debtor, which reached a Jewish community in Egypt and which was franked by a local Khazar official<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 37.15–33, 68–71, 38.19–31. Cf. J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantine Sources for Khazar History*..., p. 188–190.

<sup>23</sup> V.Ja. PETRUKHIN, *Khazaria and Rus’: An Examination of their Historical Relations*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars*..., p. 245–268, at 247–248, 252–253.

<sup>24</sup> G.E. AFANAS’EV, *Where is the Archaeological Evidence*..., p. 175–183 envisages Slavs rather than Rus as the threat. Two lines of defence created an arena of combat, where the enemy could be attacked from front and rear.

<sup>25</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 9.8–9. *Kievan Letter*, [in:] *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*, ed. N. GOLB, O. PRITSAK, Ithaca NY 1982, p. 10–15, with comments at p. 33–71. C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Kievan Letter from the Genizah of Cairo*, *Ru* 10, 2011, p. 7–56, at 8–14, 19–25 shifts the representative of Khazar authority from Kiev to Sarkel or Itil, and redates the letter to late 961 or early 962.

Let us now return to the Rus who were beginning to venture into the Khazars' sphere of influence in the first half of the ninth century, drawn by the trading opportunities of a large, single market to the south of the khaganate, with a rapidly growing appetite for furs. However strong the drive of a heroic ethos, however highly prized a reputation for martial exploits in southern lands, there was very little prospect of achieving striking successes in an alien environment against nomad horsemen. Independent, non-Russian evidence – Byzantine, Armenian and Arab – suggests, mainly by its silence, that there was little fighting between Rus and Khazars, but that the prime concern of the Rus was to gain southern goods and southern silver in return for northern products, above all for furs. If so, they had to acknowledge Khazar authority to some degree, since there would be no question of the Khazars' allowing them to sail down the Don or the Volga unless they were absolutely assured of their loyalty, as they were of that of the Volga-Bulgars.

It follows then that when a delegation of Rus arrived in Constantinople in 838, it had been authorized to travel there by the Khazars. We hear of it, because it travelled west in 839 – on the pretext that the journey home across the steppes would be dangerous – and was introduced by an accompanying Byzantine embassy to the Emperor Louis the Pious at his court in Ingelheim on the Rhine on 18<sup>th</sup> May. A notice about this in the *Annales Bertiniani* is based on an official record of the time, and is therefore a source of the highest quality. The Rus delegation told Louis that they were Swedes and that they had been sent by the khagan (*capcanus*). Whatever the suspicions about their role as a reconnaissance party, they were eventually released and allowed to go on to Scandinavia<sup>26</sup>.

The khagan must surely be the Khazar khagan. That is the only construction to be put on the mention of *capcanus* without further qualification. The *Annales Bertiniani* thus corroborates the inference that the Rus must have acknowledged the authority of the Khazar khagan to engage in large scale commerce with the southern world. It hardly needs saying that the Scandinavian traders and adventurers who were establishing themselves in the north, mainly in the valley of the Volkhov river between Lakes Ladoga and Il'men, could not conceivably have claimed a title pregnant with the universal claims of a khagan, let alone have been invested with it<sup>27</sup>. The fortified core of their chief centre, Gorodishte (the predecessor of Novgorod), by the mouth of the Volkhov on Lake Il'men, measured no more than six or seven hectares in the middle of the ninth century<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, rec. G. WAITZ, Hanover 1883 [= *MGH.SRG*], p. 19–20, trans. J.L. NELSON, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, Manchester 1991, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. M. WHITTON, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025*, London 1996, p. 250–253. Contra P.B. GOLDEN, *The Question of the Rus' Qaghanate*, АЕМА 2, 1982, p. 77–97; S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 32–38; C. ZUCKERMAN, *Deux étapes de la formation de l'ancien état russe*, [in:] *Les centres proto-urbains...*, p. 95–120; V.Я. ПЕТРУКХИН, *Khazaria and Rus'...*, p. 255.

<sup>28</sup> Е.Н. Носов, *Новгородское (Рюриково) городище*, Ленинград 1990, p. 147–154.

There are only three pieces of evidence which might be construed as supporting the extraordinary notion that there was a Rus khagan. Two, however, date from the eleventh century, postdating the collapse of the Khazar khaganate at the hands of Rus and Oghuz in 965. The title could have been formally appropriated by Svyatoslav, as had been that of the Turkish khagan by the second Tang emperor after his decisive military victory over the Turks in 629. It is more likely, though, that it was used loosely by others to glorify the leading prince of Rus, one being responsible for a graffito saying 'God save our khagan' in St. Sophia, Kiev, the other, Hilarion, future Metropolitan Bishop of Kiev, lauding Vladimir, the first Christian ruler, as an amalgam of Old Testament king, Roman emperor, and 'great khagan of our land'<sup>29</sup>. We are left then with an Arab report, dating from the late ninth century, picked up by Ibn Rusta at the beginning of the tenth century, as the sole text to refer to a Rus khagan during the lifetime of the Khazar khaganate. The Rus centre, Ibn Rusta wrote, 'is an island around which is a lake, and the island in which they dwell is a three days' journey through forest and swamp covered with trees, and it is a damp morass [...]. They have a king who is called Khaqan Rus... they make raids against Saqaliba (Slavs) [...]'<sup>30</sup>. There is nothing wrong with Ibn Rusta's information, but just with his phrasing (or, possibly, his understanding): Gorodishte was embedded in a waterlogged land of shallow lakes and bogs; and the Rus *did* acknowledge the authority of a khagan, but he was the Khazar khagan.

No reputable source of information, apart from Ibn Rusta on a literal reading, can provide any support for the notion, accepted by a majority of historians of Russia, that there was a separate khagan of the Rus. So grand a title in the hand of a distant people, scarcely known to the southern world, would have leapt out before the eyes of the first Arab geographer, the high-ranking Ibn Khurradadhbih who oversaw the post and information service of the Caliphate in the ninth century. He simply classified the Rus as Slavs and reported that Rus merchants travelled south to the 'Roman sea' and the Caspian<sup>31</sup>. Nor is there any hint in the *Golden Meadows* of al-Ma'sūdī, a fine hybrid work of history, geography and curiosities, which includes a section on the Caucasus and northern peoples, including the Rus. Al-Ma'sūdī is a good authority, having visited the Caspian area in the 930s.

Byzantine sources have nothing to say about so extraordinary a phenomenon as a Rus khagan of the Rus. It would have disturbed their whole, ordered world view. For their chancellery, the Rus were headed by an *archon*, a plain ruler or

<sup>29</sup> S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 213–215.

<sup>30</sup> IBN RUSTA, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-naḥḥīya*, rec. M.J. DE GOEJE, Leiden 1892 [= BGA, 7], p. 145.10–14, trans. G. WIET, *Les atours précieux par Ibn Rusteh*, Cairo 1955, p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> IBN KHURRADADHBIH, *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik*, rec. et trans. M.J. DE GOEJE, Leiden 1889 [= BGA, 6], p. 154.9–16 (trans. p. 115–116).

prince, without honorifics<sup>32</sup>. He belonged to the lowest tier of earthly rulers recognized by them. Finally there is an explicit denial that the Rus had a khagan in a somewhat rambling letter, probably drafted by the papal librarian Anastasius for the Emperor Louis II, which was sent to Basil I in 871. The letter, mainly a long disquisition on the history of the distribution of titles indicating superordinate status, was deliberately offensive at a time of heightened tensions between Carolingians and Byzantines. It includes an incidental denial that either the Khazars or the Northmen had a chagan. This should not be taken to represent the considered view of the Carolingian chancellery. It looks like a rhetorical turn from a well-read, wordy scholar, aware perhaps of the notice in the *Annales Bertiniani* and unwilling to credit it. It is not a text that can bear much of the weight of the thesis that the Rus had a chagan<sup>33</sup>.

The Rus, I am confident, joined the variegated company of peoples subordinated to the khagan of the Khazars soon after they impinged on the Khazars' sphere of influence. This assuredly reached far beyond the limits of the steppe zone in western Eurasia, encompassing wooded steppe and forest zones and reaching the watershed of the rivers draining into the Baltic in the north-west and the *taiga* in the far north. It is true that the chief natural enemy of nomad forces was the forest – providing as it did so an infinity of potential ambushing points when trees were in leaf. Nonetheless the Huns, the greatest steppe power known to Europe up to the fifth century AD, were able to extend their authority over outer, northern Europe, and to make a durable impression on the culture and religion of Scandinavia. They were emulated by the Avars who established their hegemony over the Slavs of central Europe and the lower Danube in the 570s, and by the Mongols whose first campaign north in winter 1237–1238 induced enough shock to render the Russians responsive to nomad authority for many years<sup>34</sup>.

A similar effect, submission to the higher-order nomad power, was, I submit, achieved by the Khazars, without a resort to brute force. The adventurous spirit of the Rus brought them into the Khazar sphere, rather than *vice versa*, and

<sup>32</sup> CONSTANTIN VII PORPHYROGÉNÈTE, *Le livre des cérémonies*, ii.48.114–116, vol. III, ed. G. DAGRON, B. FLUSIN, D. FEISSEL, M. STAVROU, Paris 2020 [= *CFHB*, 52] (cetera: CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *Liber de cerimoniis*), p. 372–373.

<sup>33</sup> *Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, rec. W. HENZE, Berlin 1928 [= *MGH.E*, 7], p. 385–394, at 388.15–17. Cf. C. WICKHAM, *Ninth-Century Byzantium through Western Eyes*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Ninth Century. Dead or Alive?*, ed. L. BRUBAKER, Aldershot 1998, p. 245–256, at 253–254.

<sup>34</sup> PRISCUS, fr. 11.2.590–593, rec. et trans. R.C. BLOCKLEY, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Late Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, Liverpool 1981–1983, p. 276–277; L. HEDEAGER, *Iron Age Myth and Materiality. An Archaeology of Scandinavia, AD 400–1000*, London 2011, p. 50–58, 61–80, 177–190, 191–211, 214–228; M. WHITBY, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian. Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988, p. 80–86; J. MARTIN, *North-eastern Russia and the Golden Horde*, [in:] *Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. I, *From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge 2006, p. 127–157, at 127–140.



the lure of wealth kept them there. Khazar creation of defensive shields to west, north and east of their north Caucasus heartland, and their development of an inner zone of hard-point fortresses shifted the balance further in their favour. The Rus were, in effect, mastered, subordinated to a light but persistent authority, which resembled more that exercised over clients (allowed considerable freedom of action) than that over subjects. The Khazars acquired in their new clients a valuable resource, not available from any of their existing clients and subjects – a fleet, manned by Vikings, which would enable them to launch strikes across the Caspian and Black Seas and, possibly, to exercise some influence over Mediterranean affairs.

### **Rus-Khazar relations**

It was perhaps a desire to flaunt this new naval capability which lay behind the Khazar decision to dispatch a Rus mission on a tour of the west in 838, beginning with a visit to Constantinople. It was the first public display to the wider world of the Khazars' ties with the Rus. In future diplomatic calculations Byzantium would have to reckon that the Black Sea was no longer secure and that the Khazars would be able to call up Rus naval forces to back their negotiating position. At a stroke the khaganate ceased to be an important but distant power, and showed that it was of direct concern to governing circles in Constantinople.

At the same time, the Rus were not *subjects* of the Khazars. They could not be used as simple agents in Khazar dealings with their neighbours. Policies would have to be explained. Commands, backed by the threat of force, might be effective, in the short run, but would sour relations in future. Reasoning was necessary. Independent-minded Vikings would have to be persuaded or cajoled into accepting Khazar direction. Inducements might have to be offered, if there were not enough common interests involved. The Rus, for their part, if only by virtue of their remoteness from Khazar power-centres, retained the ability to take initiatives of their own, to pursue policies likely to strengthen their position, political as well as commercial, in the southern world. They would simply have to make sure that they would not harm the interests of the superordinate authority. It was vital for them not to antagonize the Khazars. They might think it prudent, in some cases, to get authorization in advance. In others, they might be confident that there would not be serious repercussions.

It is therefore difficult for the modern historian, looking back across more than a millennium at the early phase of Russian history, to know what to make of the four armed interventions of the Rus in the south between the middle of the ninth and the middle of the tenth century – two direct attacks on Constantinople (860 and 941), and two raids into the Caspian and adjoining coastlands (*ca.* 915 and in 944–945). As the attacks were directed against great power rivals of the Khazars, the driving force might well have been Khazar, the Rus acting on both occasions

as Khazar agents. On the other hand, the Rus could have been pursuing interests of their own, with a necessary minimum of regard for those of the Khazars. Ideally, Rus initiatives should be distinguished from Khazar initiatives, with a further distinction perhaps being drawn between Rus actions which were authorized from above and those which were not.

We are better informed about Rus actions than the thinking behind them. As might be expected, it is from the great powers of the south that we learn about the Rus attacks. Neither Byzantine nor Arab eyewitnesses were in a position to determine what the motives were or what part was played by Khazar higher authority. The texts which capture southerners' observations are of many different sorts – contemporary homilies by Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople in 860, chronicle entries, vivid memories of a diplomatic visitor to Constantinople in 941 (relayed by his stepson, Liudprand Bishop of Cremona), a tenth century Arab intellectual... Most are brief and inclined to play up the savagery of the Rus, who are assumed to be bent on conquest and the acquisition of booty.

For an inside view, we naturally turn to Rus sources, but there is but a single extant narrative of early Rus history preserved in marginally different written versions and it is far from informative about Rus aims or their relations with the Khazars. This text, the *Povest' Vremennykh Let* (*Tale of Bygone Years* or Russian Primary Chronicle – cited henceforth as *PVL*), was put together in stages between the early eleventh and early twelfth century<sup>35</sup>. Rus oral tradition was amplified and given a chronological armature with material taken from a translated Byzantine chronicle. To this basic narrative was added ethnographic and hagiographic material (Byzantine in origin), together with the texts of a grant of privileges and two treaties agreed with Byzantium. The Rus view of the past, in particular the account of Rus ventures overseas, was thus to a considerable extent Byzantine. The most important independent material came from the version of oral tradition current in eleventh-century Kiev, but that did not reach back much more than three generations. It could present the main features of the reigns of Olga (945–962), Svyatoslav (962–972) and Vladimir (978–1015), but what happened previously had mutated into semi-legend, short on detail, merely recalling the northern origins of the Rus, the coming of Rurik to Kiev, and the military successes of his son Oleg. Were it not for the list of privileges and texts of treaties reproduced (with minimal changes) in the text, it would provide no additional insight into Rus-Byzantine relations in the ninth and first half of the tenth century. As for Rus-Arab relations, they were passed over in silence. For the text was narrowly focused on Kiev, neighbouring Rus settlements and the Slav tribes of the Dniepr basin. It was a thoroughly local, myopic history, which passed over the Rus colonization of the upper Volga-Oka

<sup>35</sup> *Повесть временных лет*, гес. Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, Москва–Ленинград 1950 (cetera: *PVL*), trans. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, *The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, Cambridge Massachusetts 1953.

region and Rus commercial activity down the Don and Volga. Hence it can cast no light on the background, or indeed the unfolding of Rus ventures into the Caspian<sup>36</sup>.

It is from Rus actions and Khazar reactions (where reported, as they were for the first Caspian raid) that we must try to determine where lay the impetus for these bold ventures in the south. Careful attention must also be paid to circumstances – for example to recent and contemporaneous events in other diplomatic arenas which may have impinged on the Rus and the Khazars, and to subsequent developments which may have been connected with individual expeditions. Thus it may not be fortuitous that the first major Rus expedition against Constantinople in 860 took place at a time of multiple Arab attacks on Asia Minor, or that an important Byzantine embassy, including a certain Constantine, who would go on to become the apostle of the Slavs, was directed in 861 to the Khazar capital, Itil on the lower Volga. Again, the first Byzantine-Rus treaty negotiated in 911 should be placed in a wide geopolitical context. We need to look out north, north-east and east from Constantinople to understand why the Byzantines sought to engage the Rus in southern affairs at that particular time<sup>37</sup>. It is also important to remember that the Khazars were operating in a small concert of great powers – the khaganate, Byzantium and the Caliphate. The end of large-scale warfare between Khazars and Arabs, marked by an important Arab victory in 737, may have inaugurated an era of peaceful co-existence, but the Khazars were still ready to invade Transcaucasia, if circumstances were propitious – as they were in 764, when the new Abbasid dynasty was consolidating its position, and in 800, when there were political divisions at a high level in the administration of Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>38</sup>. Relations with Byzantium were good while both powers were conscious of the Arab threat. They peaked in 733 when the heir to the throne, Constantine, married a Khazar princess. It was only in the Crimea that intersecting interests might cause tension, as they did in 784–787.

What has been said so far applies to the role of Rus in the ninth and early tenth century. For their campaigns in 941 and 944–945 the Byzantine and Arab

<sup>36</sup> I. SORLIN, *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CMRS 2, 1961, p. 313–360, 447–475; S. FRANKLIN, *Borrowed Time: Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Rus*, [in:] *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, London 1992, p. 157–171, at 157–163; C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor. A Study of the Anonymous Khazar Letter from the Genizah of Cairo*, REB 53, 1995, p. 237–270, at 259–260; A. RUKAVISHNIKOV, *Tale of Bygone Years: The Russian Primary Chronicle as a Family Chronicle*, EME 12, 2003, p. 53–74, at 54–64, 73; S. GRIFFIN, *The Liturgical Past in Byzantium and Early Rus*, Cambridge 2019 [= CSMLT, 4.112], p. 39–55.

<sup>37</sup> See pp. below.

<sup>38</sup> 764: see n. 14 above. 800: AL-TABARI, vol. II.3, p. 648.1–14, trans. C.E. BOSWORTH, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. XXX, *The Abbasid Caliphate in Equilibrium*, Albany NY 1989.

sources can be supplemented from a text written in Hebrew, known as the *Geniza Letter*. Its provenance – the Cairo Geniza – and the hand (eleventh century) leave no doubt about its authenticity. It presents – in highly abbreviated form – the official Khazar view of the two campaigns as stemming from a Rus attack with Byzantine encouragement on Phanagouria (modern Kerch). The Rus leader, Helgo (Oleg), was later acting under duress when he sailed against Constantinople. It appears to be a clear case of the Rus' acting as Khazar agents<sup>39</sup>.

### The first Rus attack on Constantinople

Before turning to the four major naval and military ventures of the Rus in the south between the middle of the ninth and the middle of the tenth century, something should be said about the background to the Khazar embassy to Constantinople in 838. There had, of course, been diplomatic contact since the emergence of the khaganate as a great power, and relations were generally good, with the notable exception of the Crimean crisis in the 780s. So it is no surprise to find that an embassy had arrived a few years earlier, perhaps in 832, with a request for military aid, and that the Byzantines had agreed to provide it<sup>40</sup>. The potential Rus threat to Byzantium as well as the khaganate was doubtless a key Khazar argument. The aid sought was expertise in fortress-construction. In response, a party of military engineers was dispatched to the lower Don, where, as has been noted above, they built the fortress of Sarkel out of bricks made on site. There is evidence of Byzantine influence on construction techniques at several other sites – in the dimensions of bricks and the units of measurement used for cutting limestone blocks and for the lay-out of defences<sup>41</sup>. The impressive appearance of the fortresses and the visible evidence of Byzantine backing added a psychological element to the physical strength of the defences built under the programme. The security of the khaganate would be greatly improved if potential northern adversaries were deterred from attacking and encouraged to engage peacefully with the khaganate. It was the success of this policy which was advertised by the 838 embassy.

<sup>39</sup> *Geniza Letter*, [in:] *Khazarian Hebrew Documents...*, ed. N. GOLB, O. PRITSAK (cetera: *Geniza Letter*), p. 106–121.

<sup>40</sup> *Chronographiae quae Theophanis continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, iii.28.3–20, rec. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Berlin 2015 [= *CFHB*, 53]; CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 42.20–38. Date: J. SIGNES CODOÑER, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842. Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, Farnham 2014, p. 337–343, contra C. ZUCKERMAN, *Two Notes on the Early History of the thema Cherson*, *BMGS* 21, 1997, p. 210–222, at 210–215.

<sup>41</sup> Г.Е. АФАНАСЬЕВ, *Донские аланы*, Москва 1993, p. 134–141, and *О строительном материале и метрологии Хазаро-аланских городищ бассейна Дона*, *ПАРХ* 2, 2012, p. 29–49.

The attack on Constantinople a little over twenty years later caused real shock. A fleet, said to number 200 ships, appeared in the Bosphoros on 18<sup>th</sup> June 860<sup>42</sup>. For the first time since the wide-ranging naval raids of Goths in the third century, the city was directly threatened by formidable fighting-men from the north. It was particularly vulnerable at the time, because the Emperor Michael III and his guards regiments (*tagmata*) were away in Asia Minor. The Patriarch Photios gave vent to the shock in two sermons, the first preached while the Rus were nearby, the second when the danger was just past. So sudden and unexpected an attack was plainly authorized by God, a clear signal that the Byzantines should do penance for their sins. The Rus were appropriate agents of divine wrath. Photios portrayed them as quintessential northern barbarians, insatiable in their desire for booty and captives, merciless in their treatment of living creatures. They are reported to have devastated the Bosphoros region, the suburbs, and the nearby Princes Islands in the Sea of Marmara, but to have made no attempt on the powerful walls of the city. After a week or a little more, they withdrew, loaded with booty, vanishing as suddenly as they had appeared<sup>43</sup>. Nothing more is heard of them, save for one subsidiary operation on the return voyage, when Amastris was raided and an attempt made on the shrine of a local holy man, George, who had died in 806<sup>44</sup>.

This venture of the Rus has the hallmarks of a Viking raid, familiar from those launched against Normandy, East Anglia, the Western Isles and Ireland – a sudden violent assault, bloodlust, the plundering of rich, vulnerable targets, and careful timing, in this case to coincide with the emperor's departure for the eastern frontier<sup>45</sup>. There was also a display of the warlike spirit of the Vikings, when the ships' crews paraded past Constantinople with raised swords<sup>46</sup>. But we should be given pause by the distances involved in this eastern venture. Could the Rus really have received intelligence of what was being planned in the southern world in time to exploit it? Voyages across the North and Irish Seas to attack a weak point were one thing, to make one's way upstream, over portages, downstream hundreds and

<sup>42</sup> *Anecdota Bruxellensia*, vol. I, rec. F. CUMONT, Ghent 1894, p. 33.16–21; *Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon*, 131.29, ed. S. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= CFHB, 44.1] (cetera: SYMEON LOGOTHETE), trans. S. WAHLGREN, *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, Liverpool 2019 [= TTB, 7].

<sup>43</sup> PHOTIOS, *Homilies* 3 & 4, rec. B. LAOURDAS, Thessaloniki 1959 (cetera: PHOTIOS), p. 29–52, trans. C. MANGO, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Cambridge Massachusetts 1958, p. 82–110; THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, iv.33; NICETAS DAVID, *Vita Ignatii Patriarchae*, c. 28.9–19, rec. et trans. A. SMITHIES, with notes by J.M. DUFFY, Washington D.C. 2013 [= CFHB, 51].

<sup>44</sup> *Vita Georgii episcopi Amastridis*, [in:] *Русско-Византийские исследования*, vol. II, rec. В. ВАСИЛЬЕВСКИЙ, Ст.-Петербург 1893, p. 1–73, at 64.3 – 69.17. Cf. A. MARKOPOULOS, *La Vie de Saint Georges d'Amastris et Photius*, JÖB 28, 1979, p. 75–82 dates the raid to 860 but places it before the attack on Constantinople.

<sup>45</sup> E. CHRISTIANSEN, *The Norsemen in the Viking Age*, Oxford 2006, p. 168–188.

<sup>46</sup> PHOTIOS, *Homily* 4, p. 44.2–9 (trans. p. 100–101).

hundreds of kilometres along a great continental river, and then across the Black Sea was more hazardous and much more time-consuming. This would have been a venture into the unknown, fraught with unforeseen dangers.

As it is, surmising as we may with confidence, that the Rus were subordinated to the Khazars and could be deployed as their clients, it is surely more plausible to regard this first major thrust against Byzantium as a *Khazar initiative*. The knowledge of the wider world and intelligence about current events necessary for such a venture were Khazar. Confirmation comes from Byzantium's diplomatic response. This was not to send an embassy into the forests of Russia to some putative organising centre in the far north, but to Itil, capital of the khaganate, on the lower Volga. The Byzantine authorities realized that the Khazars were arbiters of northern affairs, and that the Rus could not have sailed south down the Don – it was presumably the Don route which they used, since it avoided the portage from the Volga and the portages round the rapids on the lower Dniepr. We know a certain amount about the embassy because it forms the background to the central scene in the Life of St. Cyril, future proselytizer in Moravia, namely his long disputation with rabbis at the Khazar court. The attempt to promote the Christian faith failed despite the saint's learning and sagacity, but what were probably the embassy's main aims – to repair relations with the Khazars and to recover Byzantine prisoners-of-war (two hundred) were achieved. There would be no further crisis until the 920s<sup>47</sup>.

But what did the Khazars *gain* from the attack on Constantinople? What interest of theirs was involved? Were they nervous of Byzantine encroachment on their sphere of influence – in the Crimea, in the steppes on either side of the Dniepr, or in the Caucasus region? Was the Rus attack intended to deter them? It is conceivable that they feared a putative expansion of Byzantine influence in the western Caucasus, say the cultivation and winning over the Abasgians. But one of the guiding principles of Byzantine foreign policy in the east was caution, governed by a concern to avoid all provocations to the great powers, Khazar as well as Arab. Another was to concentrate diplomatic and military efforts on a single front. It is therefore doubly improbable that they should have antagonized the Khazars in the 850s when the war with the Arabs was reaching a climax. I infer therefore that the Khazars were *not* reacting to any Byzantine provocation.

Unless the Khazars had become prey to wishful thinking on a gargantuan scale and had entertained hopes of taking Constantinople (where Avars had failed in 626 and Arabs in 654 and 717–718), the incentive for the expedition must have

---

<sup>47</sup> *Vita Constantini*, c. 8–11, [in:] *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes*, rec. F. GRIVEC, F. TOMŠIČ, Zagreb 1960 [= RStI, 4], p. 109–126, trans. M. KANTOR, R.S. WHITE, *The Vita of Constantine and the Vita of Methodius*, Ann Arbor Michigan 1976. Cf. M. IVANOVA, *Inventing Slavonic. Cultures of Writing between Rome and Constantinople*, Oxford 2020 (D.Phil), p. 65–72.

come from elsewhere. It was not Rus nor Khazar. Whence then? There are two clues. First, the short period spent by the Rus in the metropolitan region and their restraint in not making any attempt on the walls of Constantinople. Their expedition looks very much like a *show of force* – hence the parade past the walls and the damage inflicted on the surroundings of the city. If there was an objective apart from the gathering of booty and prisoners, it was to induce the shock which it did and to prompt the emperor to return as quickly as possible (also achieved). Second, the circumstances, the launching of four concerted Arab attacks that summer on Asia Minor, three by land and one by sea. Two out of the three *jihad* bases in the marches fronting Byzantium were involved – Tarsos and Melitene – together with the outpost recently established by Paulicians, dualist heretics, at Tephrike, a small fortified town west of the Euphrates, shielded on all sides by broken, desiccated hills. Whatever plans had been made in Byzantium to co-ordinate their defences and to launch an offensive of their own were nullified, when the high command, exercised that year by the emperor in person, ceased to function, and the metropolitan forces were withdrawn<sup>48</sup>.

The chief beneficiaries of the Rus attack on Constantinople were without doubt *the Arabs*. On the assumption (questionable but plausible) that the Abbasid authorities had a hand in the planning of operations for 860 or, at the very least, were kept informed, it was they who had every incentive to organize a diversionary attack on Constantinople. It was not as if the Arabs' strategic position in the Middle East was improving. Byzantium's military power was growing. It was at peace with the Bulgars. In the immediately preceding years, it had been using its naval striking power to good effect, launching successful attacks on Damietta, the main Arab base in Egypt in 853 and 859. A counterblow was needed, and was indeed struck in 860, along with the three land attacks, when an Arab fleet attacked and captured Attaleia, base of Byzantium's largest provincial fleet. The Arab offensive would be sustained over the following years, culminating in a large-scale invasion in 863.

By a process of elimination, and by taking account of wider circumstances, we are left with only one plausible initiator of the Rus attack of 860 – the *central authorities of the Caliphate*. They had the diplomatic capability to reach out to the Khazars. They had plenty of inducements to offer, above all a guarantee of peace on the Caucasus front and continuing trading opportunities. They would be the principal beneficiaries in the short term, and would gain in the longer term if they were able to entice the great power of the north into a closer alliance, especially as there was now the possibility of opening a naval front in the north. At the very least they would break up the Byzantine-Khazar entente formed in 838.

---

<sup>48</sup> A.A. VASILIEV, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d'Amorium (820–867)*, Brussels 1935, p. 244–247.

### Byzantine-Rus treaty of 911 and its consequences

This putative Arab plan was foiled by the Byzantine embassy to Itil. The balance in the Middle East continued to shift in Byzantium's favour through the 860s and 870s. The Caliphate was beset by troubles: vicious internecine fighting among the elite Turkish units cantoned in Samarra; a secessionist movement in the outer reaches of its territory in south-east Iran; and a rising of African slave labourers on the large estates of lower Iraq<sup>49</sup>. The Arab marches had to fend for themselves, without the prospect of back-up from the centre. After the raiding army of Melitene was trapped and annihilated near the northern edge of the Anatolian plateau in 863 in a well coordinated operation by several provincial armies, Byzantium was able to seize the initiative. The usurper Basil I (867–886), who seized power in a bloody *putsch*, took personal command of a series of campaigns into the frontier zone, making substantial inroads into the Anti-Taurus. He overreached himself with a direct assault on Tarsos in 883, but had been able to take the war to the Arabs in southern Italy in alliance with the Franks and to reduce the Paulicians to impotence after their raiding army was intercepted and defeated<sup>50</sup>.

The pendulum began to swing back in the reign of Leo VI (886–912). While he built on Basil's successes in the eastern borderlands and southern Italy, he overreached himself elsewhere, with serious consequences. In the Balkans he broke the peace with the Bulgars which had lasted thirty years since their conversion to Christianity. He allied with the Hungarians and attacked in 894. The following year an invasion on a grand scale ended in a crushing defeat. Although peace was made (on humiliating terms for the Byzantines), Leo had managed to sour the mind of the new Bulgar khan Symeon. At the same time, in the 890s, he provided strong backing for the aggressive policy of Smbat, the Bagratid prince of princes, in Transcaucasia, thereby antagonizing the powerful Sajid emirs of Azerbaijan<sup>51</sup>. As the tenth century opened, Byzantium was once again on the defensive, in the Balkans, where Symeon was in a commanding position, and in Transcaucasia, where the Sajid emirs were dominant, after containing Smbat's aggression and then setting about the subjugation of the whole of Armenia<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> H. KENNEDY, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh century*, 3 Abingdon 2016, p. 147–155.

<sup>50</sup> M. WHITTOW, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium...*, p. 306–314.

<sup>51</sup> J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine in the 890s*, МАИАСТ 7, 2003, p. 342–356, at 348–355; A.N. TER-GHEVONDYAN, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, Lisbon 1976, p. 60–63, 67.

<sup>52</sup> J. SHEPARD, *Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker*, [in:] IDEM, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, Farnham 2011, no. III, p. 8–18; A. MAHÉ, J.-P. MAHÉ, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à nos jours*, Paris 2012, p. 131–137.



The Khazars went through their own time of troubles in 890s. Their Hungarian clients, we may assume, had long been allowed some licence, like the Rus, to pursue policies of their own, especially in the west, far away from the central lands of the khaganate. There were tempting targets in central and eastern Europe – (1) the eastern lands of the Carolingian empire and its satellite in Moravia, (2) to the south, Bavaria and Carantania, and (3) Bulgaria, close at hand, across the lower Danube. Other interested parties were also keen to involve the Hungarians – Byzantium in 862, when intelligence came of a high-level Frankish-Bulgar meeting (result – a first raid into Frankish territory), Moravia in 881 (another attack on the Franks), Bavaria in 892 (attack on Moravia) and Byzantium in 894 (devastation of the Bulgar heartland south of the Danube, while Byzantine forces made a diversionary feint in Thrace). It was this last venture which seems to have had serious repercussions. The Bulgars were able to make contact with the Pechenegs and to establish a common front against the Hungarians<sup>53</sup>. The Pechenegs may have been receptive because of pressure from the Oghuz, themselves under pressure from the Samanids who, in the 890s, were establishing a powerful emirate, independent of the Caliphate, in Transoxiana and Khurasan<sup>54</sup>.

The outcome was a convulsion in the west Eurasian steppes in the 890s, which left the Khazar khaganate considerably weakened. It is only the westernmost spasm, affecting Europe, that can be observed, as the Hungarians, after a devastating Pecheneg attack timed to coincide with the absence of the main fighting force on a raiding expedition, moved *en bloc* into the Carpathian basin, and then set about raiding far and wide in Europe for half a century<sup>55</sup>. We also know, from the *De administrando imperio*, that the Khazar response to this conflict between subordinated peoples was to cultivate the Oghuz and launch a pincer attack on the Pechenegs from west and east. Defeated, the Pechenegs were relocated in the steppes of Ukraine vacated by the Hungarians, and replaced on the eastern marches of the khaganate by the Oghuz<sup>56</sup>. There was no restructuring of the Oghuz. The eastern shield of the inner lands of the khaganate was therefore less solid than it had been before the 890s. The Pechenegs too, though rendered temporarily docile, could not be relied upon as before.

This *tour d'horizon* has been necessary. It is only by taking account of circumstances in the north and the Middle East that we can make sense of the next development in Rus relations with the wider world. In 911 they managed to extract

<sup>53</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 40.7–22. Cf. J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine...*, p. 348, 355–356.

<sup>54</sup> L. TREADWELL, *The Samanids: The First Islamic Dynasty of Central Asia*, [in:] *Early Islamic Iran*, ed. E. HERZIG, S. STEWART, London 2012 [= *IoI*, 5], p. 3–15.

<sup>55</sup> J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine...*, p. 355–356; K. LEYSER, *The Battle at the Lech*, [in:] *Idem, Medieval Germany and its Neighbours 900–1250*, London 1982, p. 43–67.

<sup>56</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 37.2–14.

important trading concessions from Byzantium. A short document, incorporated in *PVL*, granted Rus merchants the right to stay for six months, with free accommodation in the St. Mamas quarter and free board (bread, wine, meat, fish and fruit). They were to have access to baths and were to be given supplies of food and equipment (anchors, cordage, sails etc.) for the return voyage. They were exempted from payment of trade taxes. The only conditions were that they should bring goods for sale and should not cause trouble *en route*. This grant, probably in the form of a golden bull, was sealed with a formal peace treaty, duly signed by fifteen representatives of Rus prince and dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 911. The treaty document included detailed stipulations for regulating relations between Byzantium and the Rus (criminal punishments, aid for ships forced to shore by bad weather, compensation for lost cargoes, recovery of prisoners-of-war, return of escaped slaves, disposal of property of the deceased, extradition of criminals) and a clause allowing individual Rus to serve as Byzantine mercenaries<sup>57</sup>.

The commercial privileges were clearly of value to the Rus, especially so after a period of difficulty in their trade with the Caliphate signaled by a marked decline in the northward flow of dirhams in the 880s and 890s<sup>58</sup>. Sajid operations in Transcaucasia had disrupted one route south, while the fighting between Khazars, Oghuz and Pechenegs which eventually resulted in the expulsion of the Pechenegs from steppes between the Volga and Ural rivers had impeded commerce with Khwarezm. The Dniepr route to the Black Sea was being opened up. The natural hazards posed by the river (a series of rapids downstream from Kiev) would be outweighed by the prospect of a lucrative market in Constantinople. This was a valuable alternative to routes leading south and south-east to the Caliphate, and would, in the course of the tenth century, grow steadily in importance, as can be seen from the development of a new commercial quarter in the river plain (Podol) at Kiev. Increasing wealth and the prince's role as manager of the trade with Byzantium (in the treaty of 944 this would be made explicit, with a system of formal licences to trade in Constantinople issued by the prince) explain the emergence of Kiev as the chief rival to Novgorod in the south and the preeminent Rus centre west of the Volga<sup>59</sup>.

So far so good. But what did Byzantium gain from the treaty and the grant of privileges? It was not as if Byzantium was eager to buy furs. There is no evidence for anything akin to the explosion of demand in the Arab world or the fur craze which swept over northern Europe in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Nor was there anything more than a moderate appetite for the other exports of the north – slaves, honey,

<sup>57</sup> *PVL*, p. 24–29 (trans. p. 64–68). Cf. I. SORLIN, *Les traités...*, p. 329–360; S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 103–105; M. STEIN-WILESHUIS, *A Viking-age Treaty between Constantinople and Northern Merchants, with its Provisions on Theft and Robbery*, *SSL* 37, 1991, p. 39–47.

<sup>58</sup> M. JANKOWIAK, *Dirham Flows...*, p. 116–117.

<sup>59</sup> S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 91–100, 129–133.

wax, amber. It is hard to see what could have offset the obvious danger of encouraging the Rus to come to Constantinople and to see for themselves the wealth of the southern world, given their known warlike and predatory instincts. For the eleventh and twelfth century compilers of *PVL* there was only one conceivable explanation: the Rus must have launched a second, larger, more successful expedition against Constantinople. A whole fictitious scenario was conjured up: a fleet of 2000 warships, which, with crews of forty per vessel, gave a fighting strength of 80,000; wholesale destruction and slaughter around the city; a mass attack overland on the city, the ships being put on wheels and using their sails for propulsion; terror in Constantinople, as a result of which the Emperors Leo and Alexander sued for peace; Rus demands for a one-off payment for each Rus in the expeditionary force and for the trading privileges detailed in the emperor's grant<sup>60</sup>.

If there is any medieval *non-event* of which we can be certain, it is this Rus expedition against Constantinople, either in 907 (the year to which the attack and grant of privileges are assigned in *PVL*) or in 911 (the date of the treaty document). Suspicion is roused by the obvious element of fantasy (the ships on wheels) and the arbitrary splitting of a single narrative between two entries four years apart. Apart from the *PVL*, there is a deafening silence. No mention of the attack in the *Antapodosis*, Liudprand of Cremona's history of Christendom which is centred on Constantinople<sup>61</sup>. Muslim historians, who never lost interest in the fortunes of Byzantium, wrote nothing about it. Nor was a word of it breathed in any extant contemporary or later Byzantine source, whether saint's life, homily, letter, or history. Whatever the failings of Byzantine sources – and there are terrible *lacunae* – it is inconceivable that so dangerous an assault on the capital would not have been reported.

Why then did Byzantium offer these privileges to the Rus? What did they hope to gain by engaging the Rus more closely in southern affairs? What did they expect in return for the inducements which they offered? If it was not in the expectation of commercial gain, attention should turn to diplomatic benefits which might flow from close, friendly ties with Rus. The crucial question to ask is – what were the interests of Byzantium which the Rus might be able to further at that time? The answer is already plain. There were, as has been noted above, two principal foreign policy concerns in the last years of Leo VI's reign: the possibility that war might break out again in the Balkans, where the Bulgars under Symeon's leadership would be formidable adversaries; and the worsening crisis in Armenia,

<sup>60</sup> *PVL*, p. 23–24 (trans. p. 64).

<sup>61</sup> LIUDPRAND, *Antapodosis*, [in:] *Liudprandi opera*, rec. J. BECKER, Hanover–Leipzig 1915 [= *MGH. SRG*] (cetera: LIUDPRAND, *Antapodosis*), p. 1–158. Cf. K. LEYSER, *Liudprand of Cremona: Preacher and Homilist and Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona*, [in:] IDEM, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, London 1994, p. 111–142, at 120–124, 131–135.

where the Bagratid principality was being battered into submission and where, after the execution of the Bagratid ruler Smbat in 912, Yusuf, the Sajid emir, would turn his attention to the subjection of the other leading principality, that of the Artsrunis in Vaspurakan<sup>62</sup>. The Rus could be viewed and, I suggest, *were* viewed as useful northern allies, both because they were well placed to apply diplomatic pressure on the Pechenegs (to detach them from their old alliance with the Bulgars) and because they could bring the southern and western Caspian coastlands and Azerbaijan within range of Byzantine-sponsored military and naval attack.

Of course, most of the many strands in Byzantine foreign policy are invisible. The unknown looms much larger than the known. This is even more true of Khazar foreign policy. We can only resort to conjecture about what part, if any, the Khazars played in the formation of this Byzantine-Rus entente. But, given Byzantium's generally good relations with the khaganate, with but few exceptions (most recently the 860 attack), it seems to me highly improbable that the Byzantines would not have sought Khazar approval before making their offer to the Rus. It was also needed if ever the Rus were to be deployed in the Caspian against regional Arab powers of north-west Iran and Transcaucasia.

It remains to be seen what, if anything, the Byzantines gained from their cultivation of the Rus. Not much in the Balkans in the crises of 913 and 917, both initiated by Byzantium: we do not know whether the Pechenegs or, conceivably, the Rus themselves were expected to play a part in an attack on Bulgaria planned for 913, because the campaign had to be aborted after an attempted coup d'état by the commanding general, and the Bulgars then exploited the disarray of Byzantine forces to advance to the walls of Constantinople; in 917, by contrast, the Pechenegs did agree to take part in a joint campaign against Bulgaria, and may well have been made amenable to Byzantine diplomatic overtures by pressure from the Rus; but again it came to nothing, when the Pechenegs balked at the last moment and the Byzantine field army suffered a serious defeat at Acheloos<sup>63</sup>.

It was a different story further east. For it so happens that a large Rus raiding fleet attacked the southern and western coasts of the Caspian, pushing inland into Azerbaijan, at a perfect time from the Byzantine point of view – some time after AH 300 (912–913) according to Mas'udi. In his *Meadows of Gold*, an overview of the history and geography of the Caliphate, written in 943, he reproduced what looks like a brief but detailed report about the actions of the Rus and the response of the local authorities, with additional information about the political background. It is embedded in a sometimes confused account of the northern world

<sup>62</sup> A. MAHÉ, J.-P. MAHÉ, *Histoire de l'Arménie...*, p. 137–138.

<sup>63</sup> SYMEON LOGOTHETE, c. 135.14, 18–21. Cf. J. SHEPARD, *Symeon of Bulgaria...*, p. 22–42; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *A Short Piece of Narrative History: War and Diplomacy in the Balkans, Winter 921/2–Spring 924*, [in:] *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization. In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, ed. E.M. JEFFREYS, Cambridge 2006, p. 340–360, at 341–346.

(focused on the Khazars), based on earlier writings<sup>64</sup>. A crucial piece of information is given at the start. The Rus expedition was *authorized* by the Khazars. In exchange they were to receive half the booty<sup>65</sup>. But the prime movers were the Rus. They sailed down the Don and crossed by a portage to the Volga (presumably where their courses come closest to each other), thus bypassing Volga-Bulgar territory<sup>66</sup>. Once in the Caspian they sailed south to raid the coastlands from Gurgan to Shirwan. There was some organized resistance, led by a general from Azerbaijan and the ruler of Shirwan, both of whom are named. Extensive damage was done in what turned out to be several months of raiding, which extended into the interior where it was accessible, as in Transcaucasia<sup>67</sup>. It is tempting to connect this Rus attack with a Byzantine initiative in Armenia – a counterstrike into Armenia in 915 by Ashot, son of the executed Smbat, which was sponsored by Byzantium. Its success – Ashot reached Dvin, administrative centre for the whole of Arab Transcaucasia – may be partly attributable to diversionary action by the Rus<sup>68</sup>.

The expedition ended badly for the Rus. An important component of the Khazar army, Muslim troops recruited from Khwarezm and serving in the al-Arsiyya, was incensed at the news coming from the south and resolved to attack the Rus when they returned. The Khazar authorities could do no more than warn the Rus, who had to fight their way back and suffered heavy losses. This cannot but have strained relations both between Rus and Khazars and between Khazars and those ultimately responsible, the Byzantines<sup>69</sup>.

This second bold southern venture of the Rus is hard to understand as a speculative Viking raid on rich southern targets – the targets were tempting but remote, and there were hazards en route, above all on the Don-Volga portage. Nor can it be taken to have been a deliberate act of aggression on the part of the Khazar kaganate – for it might have provoked the Sajid governor of Azerbaijan into striking north across the Caucasus, and he had a powerful army at his disposal. It should be seen rather as a Byzantine project, devised at a time when the power of the Bagratids, Byzantium's chief clients in Armenia, was on the verge of extinction. The wide field of diplomatic vision, the grasp of geopolitics, and the ability to formulate and execute a grand strategy, evident in this episode, were inherited from the late Roman empire and are attested on other occasions in the middle ages, as for example in the marriage which sealed a Byzantine-Khazar alliance in the eighth century. On this hypothesis, the Rus Caspian raid thus acted as a delayed Byzantine riposte to the Arab-sponsored Rus attack on Constantinople in 860.

<sup>64</sup> AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawhar*, vol. I, rec. C. PELLAT, Beirut 1966 (cetera: AL-MAS'ŪDĪ), p. 447–461, trans. C. PELLAT, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. I, Paris 1962.

<sup>65</sup> AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, p. 218.12 – 219.2.

<sup>66</sup> AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, p. 218.3–4, 219.2–4. He has the Rus sail from the Sea of Azov to the Volga.

<sup>67</sup> AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, p. 219.5 – 220.5.

<sup>68</sup> M. WHITTOW, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium...*, p. 219–220.

<sup>69</sup> AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, p. 220.6 – 221.5.

### Khazars, Byzantines and Rus from *ca.* 920 to *ca.* 950

Tensions in Byzantine-Khazar relations erupted into open conflict in the 920s. Goodwill was superseded by suspicion which lasted into the 950s. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus classified the Khazars as potential adversaries when he was adding the final editorial touches to the *DAI* in 951–952<sup>70</sup>. There were two aggravating factors – Byzantine missionary activity among the Alans of the Caucasus (during the second patriarchate of Nicholas Mystikos [912–925]) and what the Khazars viewed as persecution of Jews by Romanos Lekapenos (around 932)<sup>71</sup>. The information comes from the one trustworthy Khazar source to have survived, a letter drafted by a senior Khazar official in reply to inquiries from a distinguished Jewish scholar-diplomat in Umayyad Spain, Hasdai ibn Shaprut. It survives, along with fragments of four other letters to or from Hasdai, in copies preserved in the Cairo Geniza. The manuscript which preserves it dates from the late eleventh century. The original letter was probably written in the middle or later 940s. There can be no doubting its authenticity<sup>72</sup>. It is not affected by the doubts which hang over the purported reply of King Joseph (the last *beg*), which Firkovitch claimed to have acquired in Egypt in the 1860s<sup>73</sup>.

The letter provides a potted history of the khaganate, focusing on its partial conversion to Judaism in the past, the rise of the khagan's chief officer (the *beg*), and recent bouts of warfare with Byzantium<sup>74</sup>. It amounts to a short intelligence digest, akin to those about Hungarians, Pechenegs and minor Armenian principalities picked up and included in the *De administrando imperio*. Its history of the recent past covers three distinct conflicts. In the first the khaganate was attacked by a grand, anti-Khazar alliance put together by Byzantium around 920, which included Burtas (the As, steppe Alans, traditional Khazar subjects, to be distinguished from the Alans proper, living in the north Caucasus), Pechenegs and Oghuz (Turks) as well as two other peoples<sup>75</sup>. Corroboration of a phase of active Byzantine diplomacy in the north comes from a letter of Nicholas, Patriarch of Constantinople, who threatened the Bulgar khan Symeon with a coalition of peoples. We do not know how long the fighting lasted, only its outcome

<sup>70</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, cc. 10–12 notes that the Oghuz, the Alans and the 'Black Bulgars' (aka Volga-Bulgars) could attack the Khazars.

<sup>71</sup> С.А. ИВАНОВ, *Византийское миссионерство. Можно ли сделать из 'варвара' христианина?*, Москва 2003, p. 178–190; C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 254–255.

<sup>72</sup> N. GOLB, O. PRITSAK, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents...*, p. xiv; C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 237–241.

<sup>73</sup> D.M. DUNLOP, *The History...*, p. 125–155; N. GOLB, O. PRITSAK, *Khazarian Hebrew Documents...*, p. xv; C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 247–250.

<sup>74</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 106–121.

<sup>75</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 112–113, with commentary of C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 254.

– successful Khazar resistance, aided by an Alan counteroffensive<sup>76</sup>. There was a reversal of roles in the second crisis. This time the Alans were Byzantine allies while the Oghuz fought with the Khazars. The Alans were defeated and their king who had been captured was brought back into subjection<sup>77</sup>.

While the position of the Khazars was undoubtedly weakened in the 920s, that of Byzantium was growing stronger. The fighting in the Balkans, which had flared up with yet another grand Byzantine offensive in 917 – that which was meant to involve a Pecheneg attack on Bulgaria from the north and which resulted in the rout of Byzantine forces at Acheloos – and had involved several Bulgar thrusts into the metropolitan region, died down after a compromise agreement was reached at a summit meeting between Symeon and Romanos Lekapenos in November 923. The *de facto* armistice was turned into a durable peace after the death of Symeon in 927 and the marriage of his son Peter to Romanos' granddaughter Maria<sup>78</sup>. In Armenia, Ashot II began the long and slow process of reconstituting the Bagratid principality after the spectacular campaign of 915, eventually challenging the Artsrunis of Vaspurakan who had achieved temporary paramountcy after fending off Sajid attacks in 914–916<sup>79</sup>.

This Christian resurgence in Armenia received a massive boost, once Byzantium was free to concentrate its forces in the east. By the early 930s, the only resistance in the Arab marches came from individual cities and a young commander, the Hamdanid Ali, who was building up a reputation as a frontier commander in the Jazira and Armenia. For the two effective fighting forces available to the central authorities in the Caliphate had disappeared, that of the Sajid emirs of Azerbaijan, destroyed in battle against Qarmat insurgents on the edge of Iraq in 926, and the metropolitan army increasingly impotent after the execution of its commander Munis in 933<sup>80</sup>. In the course of fifteen years (926–940), the Byzantine field army under a fine general of Armenian extraction, John Kourkouas, reduced the emirate of Manzikert to client status, captured Melitene, one of the principal *jihad* bases in the frontier zone, occupied its territory on each bank of the Euphrates, pushed east up the Arsianias valley, taking Asmosaton (Arab Šimšat), gained control of the mountain spine of western Armenia, and was in a position to lay siege to Theodosiopolis for several months in 940 (this second important *jihad* base fell in 949)<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 112–115.

<sup>77</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 114–115, with commentary of C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 254–255.

<sup>78</sup> SYMEON LOGOTHETE, c. 135.18–21, 23, 136.17, 19–20, 23–24, 27, 29–37, 45–51; M. WHITTOW, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium...*, p. 290–292; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *A Short Piece...*, p. 346–355.

<sup>79</sup> A.A. VASILIEV, rev. M. CANARD, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II.1, *La dynastie Macédonienne (867–959)*, Brussels 1968, p. 231–234; A. MAHÉ, J.-P. MAHÉ, *Histoire de l'Arménie...*, p. 137–142.

<sup>80</sup> H. KENNEDY, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates...*, p. 165–168.

<sup>81</sup> SYMEON LOGOTHETE, c. 136.52–53, 80–81; THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, bk. 6, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1828, p. 426.3 – 429.2; CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 44.26–65, 85–112,

A steady expansion of Byzantine influence went hand in hand with this extension of direct authority. It was gradually encroaching on the outer fringes of the Khazar zone of influence in the western Caucasus. Two attempts to suborn Khazar clients in the 920s, first the Burtas, then the Caucasian Alans, had failed. Now Byzantine diplomats concentrated on the Rus. Whatever recriminations may have followed the disastrous end of their Caspian campaign in *ca.* 915, they were once again amenable to suggestions from Byzantium, even if, as in this case, they were being incited to rise up and attack the Khazars. This is reported in the *Geniza Letter* and placed in the context of a pogrom of Christians ordered by the Khazar king in reprisal for Byzantine persecution of Jews; '[the evil o]ne sent great presents to HLGW {Helgo} king of RWSY' {Rus'}, inciting him to (do) his evil; he went against the city of SMKRYYY {Samkarts, ancient Phanagoria, Rus Tmutokan} by night, taking it by stealth [...]'<sup>82</sup>. The Khazar response makes it plain that this was no minor incident but an attempt to cause serious damage to the khaganate. The Rus were *rebellious*. Samkarts was well placed – in a strong position on the eastern of the two peninsulas which nearly close off the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea. It would provide the Rus of Helgo (Oleg in *PVL*) with a secure base from which to send forays into the Khazar heartland.

The Khazar commander-in-chief, Pesah, dealt first with the sponsors of the Rus rising. He invaded the Byzantine sector of the Crimea, captured a range of settlements, large and small, and laid siege to Cherson, the theme capital. When Cherson made terms (payment of an indemnity, return of Khazar prisoners of war, and surrender of the Rus in the city), Pesah turned his attention to Helgo. The fighting went on for four months and ended with the defeat and subjugation of Helgo. The booty taken from Samkarts was recovered. Helgo and his Rus were left alone, on condition that they attack Byzantium<sup>83</sup>.

The Rus, led by Igor (Oleg's successor according to *PVL*) as well as Helgo (aka Oleg)<sup>84</sup>, appeared before Constantinople on 11<sup>th</sup> June 941 – a date given by the only Byzantine history to cover the period, the Logothete's Chronicle, put together a generation or more later out of antecedent written sources, including official reports. The account of the Rus attack, which lasted until September (so three months or so, rather than the four of the *Geniza Letter*), looks like one of those reports, perhaps a news release issued shortly afterwards. The narrative is clear and succinct. There is plenty of detail, all plausible save for the number of Rus boats

45.55–175. Cf. A.A. VASILIEV, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II.1..., p. 257–291, 295–303; J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, *Military and Provincial Reform in the East in the Tenth Century*, TM 21.1, 2017, Mélanges Jean-Claude Cheynet, p. 285–309, at 294–298.

<sup>82</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 114–115, with commentary of C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 256.

<sup>83</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 116–119, with commentary of C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 256–257.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion...*, p. 258–264.



– given as 10,000 (rather than a little over 1000, as reported by an eyewitness). The tone is dispassionate, even when Rus atrocities are described. There is no glorifying of the commander of the naval forces left in Constantinople, the Patrician Theophanes, who destroyed much of the Rus fleet in two actions, apart from a fleeting reference to his ‘most vigilant and noble soul’<sup>85</sup>. It is complemented by eyewitness testimony, written down at one remove in the *Antapodosis*, a contemporary history of Christendom written by Liudprand Bishop of Cremona. Liudprand’s stepfather was in Constantinople on a diplomatic mission when the Rus arrived. Liudprand’s account captured the emotions of the time, gave a figure (15) for the number of old warships which were reconditioned on the emperor’s orders, and homed in on the devastating effect of Greek Fire in the first naval engagement<sup>86</sup>.

The threat was much greater than in 860. This time the Rus came in great force, with the intention of taking the city. Theophanes launched his attack from Hieron, on the Asian side of the Bosporos, when the Rus fleet was arrayed outside the city, close to the Pharos (so probably near the mouth of the Golden Horn). He led the way, on a great fireship, a warship converted to carry numerous projectors of Greek Fire (on the bows, stern and both sides). The impact, physical and psychological, was devastating. Theophanes and the rest of the scratch Byzantine fleet (also equipped with flamethrowers) sank many Rus ships, with many casualties (dead and wounded), took large numbers of prisoners, and cowed the surviving Rus, who were able to escape over shallows and landed on the Asian shore. That was where they committed the atrocities and burned down churches. But their ability to plunder and gather supplies was constrained by the presence of a small army adept at guerrilla tactics. Their position worsened dramatically when the main field army, recalled from the east, arrived and penned them back into their camp by their ships. Finally, in September, short of provisions, they planned to escape by night. But Theophanes was ready and engaged them for the second time, sinking many Rus ships with heavy losses and leaving only a few (according to the official news release) to escape the following night<sup>87</sup>.

There follows a blank period, during which Igor seems to have ousted his co-ruler and long-time regent, Helgo/Oleg<sup>88</sup>. Certainly their paths diverged. It was Igor who negotiated the second Rus-Byzantine treaty in 944, the year when, despite his age, Helgo/Oleg embarked on a bold expedition south, across the Caspian – presumably with Khazar permission<sup>89</sup>. This was a very different venture

<sup>85</sup> SYMEON LOGOTHETE, c. 136.71–75.

<sup>86</sup> LIUDPRAND, *Antapodosis*, v. 15.

<sup>87</sup> The main features of the campaign – raids over Bithynia, atrocities, the return of the field army from the east, and the devastating effect of Greek Fire – are captured in *PVL*, p. 33 (trans. p. 71–72). Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 113–117.

<sup>88</sup> C. ZUCKERMAN, *On the Date of Khazars’ Conversion...*, p. 265.

<sup>89</sup> *Geniza Letter*, p. 118–119.

from the raiding expedition of 915. The Rus were aiming to take control of the Kur river and establish a permanent base at Barda'a, capital of Caucasian Albania (ex-Soviet Azerbaijan), from which to tap the resources of the whole Caspian and Transcaucasian region. They attacked in summer 944, annihilated the small army of regular soldiers and militia assembled by the governor of Barda'a and seized the city. Much was made of Rus atrocities by the regional authorities. Large forces were mobilized, but the Rus proved impossible to dislodge by force of arms. It was disease which did so in the end and the deaths it caused, including, probably, that of Helgo/Oleg. They left the citadel in Barda'a at night, in 945, with a rich haul of booty and slaves, boarded their ships and sailed away<sup>90</sup>.

Igor succeeded in repairing relations with Byzantium. The treaty of 911 was renewed, with a few additional provisions: the system of licensing political emissaries and merchants would be changed – a full list sent by the prince of Kiev, against which individual certificates could be checked, would replace the gold and silver seals previously used to authenticate certificates<sup>91</sup>; a limit of fifty nomismata was put on Rus purchase of silks; there was to be no military action against the Byzantine sector in the Crimea; and the emperor was to have the right to call on the Rus for military assistance<sup>92</sup>. The delegation sent to Constantinople was large and representative of a wide range of interests among the Rus. Twenty-five merchants were balanced by twenty-five political emissaries. Besides Igor himself and three close relatives, twenty princes and the wife of one of them were individually represented<sup>93</sup>. It looks as if the leaders of most, if not all, of the principalities established by the Rus, *i.e.* those in the north and north-east which looked towards the Volga as well as the nascent cities of the Dniepr valley, were being required to assent to the terms of the treaty. Byzantines and Rus were seeking to cement a grand alliance, which would offset the traditional allegiance of the Rus to the Khazars<sup>94</sup>.

Two years later, Igor's successor Olga reaffirmed the alliance when she went to Constantinople and was baptized, Constantine Porphyrogenitus standing as godfather. This greatly enhanced the prestige of Christianity, originally implanted after the 860 attack and now spreading among the Rus. Shared faith would give added tensile strength to the alliance. Olga too sought to involve a wide array of

<sup>90</sup> MISKAWAIH, *The Experience of Nations*, vol. II, ed. D.S. MARGOLIOUTH, Oxford 1921 (cetera: MISKAWAIH), p. 62–67, trans. H.F. AMEDROZ, D.S. MARGOLIOUTH, *The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate. Original Chronicles of the Fourth Islamic Century*, vol. V, Oxford 1920–1921, p. 67–74; MOVSES KALANKATUATS'I, *Patmut'iwn Aluanits'*, iii.21, rec. V. ARAK'ELJAN, Erevan 1983, trans. C.J.F. DOWSETT, *Moses Dasxuranc'i's History of the Caucasian Albanians*, London 1961, p. 224.

<sup>91</sup> PVL, p. 35 (trans. p. 74). Cf. I. SORLIN, *Les traités...*, p. 456–457.

<sup>92</sup> PVL, p. 35–39 (trans. p. 74–77). Cf. I. SORLIN, *Les traités...*, p. 447–465.

<sup>93</sup> PVL, p. 34–35 (trans. p. 73–74).

<sup>94</sup> Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 117–119.

interests. Twenty-two princes were represented on her embassy, which included forty-four merchants. All were there to witness her reception into the Christian church and the strengthening of the Rus-Byzantine entente<sup>95</sup>.

Khazar suspicions of Byzantium can only have been aggravated by the deals struck in 944 and 946. Byzantium was gaining increasing leverage within the kaganate, and there was no reason to suppose that its intentions were benign. The Rus may have been in no position to assert their independence after the debacle of Helgo/Oleg's rebellion, but they were likely to gain power and wealth over the following years, constituting a growing threat.

None of the doubts surrounding the driving forces behind the first two southern ventures of the Rus recur over those of Helgo/Oleg in 941 and 944–945. The *Geniza Letter* makes it clear that the impetus behind the expedition against Constantinople was Khazar, and that the attempt to gain territory in the outer reaches of the Caliphate in Transcaucasia was a Rus initiative. There was nothing unusual about the Caspian venture. Vikings in the west made numerous conquests – in Normandy, East Anglia, the northern and western isles of Scotland, both shores of the Irish Sea, and Iceland. The Rus would make a second attempt in 969, when, after an initial Byzantine-sponsored intervention in Bulgaria, they returned and established a colonial regime on the Danube, an important artery of trade and avenue for the extension of Rus power into central Europe<sup>96</sup>.

As for the Rus who were not involved in Helgo/Oleg's last campaign, the text of the 944 treaty and the official Byzantine account of Olga's visit two years later make it plain that there were numerous, semi-independent princes jostling for influence among the Rus, that the prince of Kiev had to work hard to maintain his pre-eminence among them, and that the managing role accorded to him in the treaty with Byzantium was a more than useful instrument.

### Rus and Khazars: concluding reflections

The various forays made by the Rus into the southern world, the role which they played in international relations involving Khazars, Arabs and Byzantines, indeed the accumulation of wealth through trade which underlay their growing power and drew more and more of them to the colonial centres in Russia and Ukraine

<sup>95</sup> CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *Liber de cerimoniis*, ii.15.557–634, vol. III, p. 142–149 for political representatives and merchants present at banquet on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October; PVL, p. 44–45 (trans. p. 82–83). C. ZUCKERMAN, *Le voyage d'Olga et la première ambassade espagnole à Constantinople en 946*, TM 13, 2000, p. 647–672, at 647–654, 660–669. *Contra* D. OBOLENSKY, *Ol'ga's Conversion: The Evidence Reconsidered*, HUS 12/13, 1988/1989, p. 145–158; J. FEATHERSTONE, *Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople*, HUS 14, 1990, p. 293–312 and *idem*, *Olga's Visit to Constantinople in De Cerimoniis*, REB 61, 2003, p. 241–251.

<sup>96</sup> PVL, p. 50–52 (trans. p. 87–90). Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 145–151.

– these important historical phenomena are hard, if not impossible, to explain, unless we accept the explicit indications of the sources that they were formally subordinated to the Khazars. The khagan who sent Rus envoys to Constantinople in 838 must have been the Khazar khagan, given the claim to limitless rule implicit in the title. The Rus then were one of the twenty-five or so peoples in the belt of satellites around the Khazar heartland in the Kuban and Terek steppes between the Caucasus, lower Don and lower Volga. Their fighting prowess, which had overawed the Arabs sent against them in Azerbaijan in 944–945<sup>97</sup>, made them, along with the Oghuz who, since the 890s, guarded the eastern approaches to the khaganate between the Ural and Volga rivers, the most powerful and dangerous of those satellite peoples<sup>98</sup>.

The events of the 940s – the open challenge to Khazar rule, clear evidence of continuing Byzantine hostility, and the formation of a strong Rus-Byzantine entente – augured badly for the future. The Rus would undoubtedly rebel again, to break free and pursue their own destiny, untrammelled by Khazar overlords. They would have the backing of Byzantium, now that it had shed its old benign attitude to the khaganate. If ever the Rus were to make common cause with one or more of the other subordinated peoples, the khaganate would be in trouble.

The *Geniza Letter* was written soon after the last event mentioned, the departure of Helgo/Oleg for Fars (Persia), so probably in the middle or late 940s. For the next twenty years or so the Rus seem to have accepted their subordinate status, to judge by what is reported of their internal history in the *PVL*. The major rebellion, when it eventually occurred, was not, it seems, sponsored either by Byzantium or by the Samanid emirs of Khurasan and Transoxiana. It is dated to 965 in *PVL* and may have been concerted with an Oghuz attack from the east. The fall of Itil seems to have triggered the collapse of the khaganate<sup>99</sup>.

The first entirely freelance venture of the Rus was the conquest of Balkan Bulgaria in 969, after a first intervention a year earlier at the request of the Emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963–969). Bulgaria could be turned into an advanced southern base from which to put pressure on Byzantium and the nascent states of eastern and south-eastern Europe. When the Byzantine response proved more formidable than that of the provincial authorities in Azerbaijan in 944 – the new emperor John Tzimiskes taking personal command of the main field army, driving the Rus into the fortress of Dristra on the Danube and blockading them there until they agreed to withdraw – the Rus, with a single exception (their third attack

<sup>97</sup> MISKAWAH, p. 53, 65, 66–67 (trans. p. 67, 71, 73–74).

<sup>98</sup> IBN FADLĀN, p. 10.9 – 17.5 (trans. p. 11–21); CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *DAI*, c. 10.3–4, 37.2–8.

<sup>99</sup> *PVL*, p. 47 (trans. p. 84); IBN HAWKAL, *Kitab surat al-ard*, vol. II, rec. J.H. KRAMERS, Leiden 1939, p. 393, trans. J.H. KRAMERS, G. WIET, *Configuration de la terre*, vol. II, Beirut–Paris 1964, p. 384. Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 143–145.

on Constantinople in 1043), concentrated their efforts in the northern lands and set in train centuries of expansion which took them across the Ural mountains in the sixteenth century and ultimately brought them central Asia and Siberia<sup>100</sup>.

The Khazar phase of Rus history left its mark. Not an inclination to autocracy – that surely originated in the Mongol phase, when the forces of resistance were gathering in the northern Rus principalities. While the Khazars could conduct winter sweeps through the wooded steppe and forest zones of Ukraine and Russia, they did not have the resources or the statecraft to coerce peoples living in an inhospitable forested landscape into submission for more than a short time. They had no choice but to adopt a policy of light, relatively benign rule, demanding, for example, no more than one marten pelt per year from each household on Volga-Bulgar territory<sup>101</sup>. In the case of the Rus, there was no exaction of tribute, just the collection of customs dues, a tenth of the value of the merchandise in transit. The individual principalities were otherwise free of burdens and free to pursue their interests within the Khazar sphere of influence. What is striking above all is the number of those principalities, and the failure of the leading prince of Kiev to impose his authority on the others. He was merely *primus inter pares*. This was, I suggest, the result of deliberate Khazar policy, paralleled by that adopted towards the Pechenegs, one of supporting multiple centres of authority under a single overarching monarchical power, that exercised by the *beg* on behalf of the khagan.

We should probably envisage each of those twenty or so princes as similar in appearance to Svyatoslav, prince of Kiev and leader of the 969–971 Bulgaria venture. It was at a summit meeting with John Tzimiskes outside Dristra that he agreed to evacuate Dristra and to return home. The scene is described by the contemporary Byzantine historian, Leo Deacon. Tzimiskes was on land, on horseback on the river bank. Svyatoslav was aboard a small Rus ship in the Danube. Leo describes Svyatoslav: he was wearing a plain white garment and a bejeweled gold ring in one ear; he had a drooping moustache but no beard; his head was shaven except for two long strands of hair<sup>102</sup>. This was a world away from the look of a Viking leader. Svyatoslav had been a Khazar client ruler and *he looked like a Khazar*. He and probably the other Rus princes (and their leading followers?) had been assimilated into the Khazar way of life. It would take time before

<sup>100</sup> LEO DIACONUS, *Historia*, vi.10–13, viii.1–ix.12, rec. C.B. HASE, Bonn 1828 (cetera: LEO DIACONUS), trans. A.-M. TALBOT, D.F. SULLIVAN, *The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, Washington D.C. 2005; IOANNES SCYLITZES, *Synopsis historiarum*, rec. J. THURN, Berlin 1973 [= *CFHB*, 5], p. 287–310, trans. B. FLUSIN with notes by J.-C. CHEYNET, JEAN SKYLITZÈS, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, Paris 2003; *PVL*, p. 47, 50–53 (trans. p. 84–85, 87–90). Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 145–151.

<sup>101</sup> IBN FADLĀN, p. 35.5–9 (trans. p. 44).

<sup>102</sup> LEO DIACONUS, ix.11 (trans. p. 199–200). Cf. S. FRANKLIN, J. SHEPARD, *The Emergence of Rus...*, p. 143.

the influence of Khazar culture would fade away. Indeed two generations passed before the relatively peaceful symbiosis of the individual principalities was broken by the first of a series of escalating internecine conflicts between leading princes.

It was indeed the solidarity of individual principalities, their rivalries and frequent infighting, so characteristic of 11<sup>th</sup>–early 13<sup>th</sup> century Rus history, which constituted the chief long-term legacy of Khazar overlordship. For it was in the Khazar phase that the colonial centres developed their own political individuality, undisturbed by neighbours in what was a single political space. The Rus analogue to the lordships of western Europe was the principality, centred on a colonial town, fortified, with an inner citadel, where the prince resided – but the scale was immeasurably larger. When the Khazar-imposed peace faded away and fighting broke out, it resulted in far more bloodshed and deeper animosities. The history of the Rus during and after the Mongol epoch had been programmed.

Grim though the long-term consequences may have been, at the time Khazar rule was relatively benign. It opened up the greatest market of early medieval western Eurasia to Rus merchants, thereby channeling wealth into northern Russia, Poland and Scandinavia. The rapid growth of Rus numbers on the continent south of the Baltic and the founding of numerous, widely spaced colonial centres was driven by the wealth garnered by the merchants. It was through the Khazars too that the Rus gained knowledge of the different components of the southern world and could begin to dream of southern conquests. It was through the Khazars, albeit at Arab instigation, that the Rus made their first contact with Byzantium, which was to exert the strongest influence on them in the long run.

There was a Khazar yoke but, as the great Russian historian Ključevsky wrote, it was light and relatively benign<sup>103</sup>.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, *Les prairies d'or*, vol. I, trans. C. PELLAT, Paris 1962.

AL-MAS'ŪDĪ, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawhar*, vol. I, rec. C. PELLAT, Beirut 1966.

*Anecdota Bruxellensia*, vol. I, rec. F. CUMONT, Ghent 1894.

*Annales Bertiniani*, rec. G. WAITZ, Hanover 1883 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historicis separatim editi*].

*Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, vol. I–XV, rec. M.J. DE GOEJE et al., Leiden 1879–1901.

*The Annals of St-Bertin*, trans. J.L. NELSON, Manchester 1991.

*Les atours précieux par Ibn Rusteh*, trans. G. WIET, Cairo 1955.

<sup>103</sup> V.O. KLYUCHEVSKY, *History of Russia*, vol. I, New York 1960, p. 50–52.

- The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. S. WAHLGREN, Liverpool 2019 [= *Translated Texts for Byzantinists*, 7].
- The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, Oxford 1997.
- Chronographiae quae Theophanis continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, rec. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODONER, Berlin 2015 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 53].
- CONSTANTIN VII PORPHYROGÉNÈTE, *Le livre des cérémonies*, vol. I–V, rec. et trans. G. DAGRON, B. FLUSIN, D. FEISSEL, M. STAVROU, Paris 2020 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 52].
- CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, rec. Gy. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1].
- The Eclipse of the Abbasid Caliphate. Original Chronicles of the Fourth Islamic Century*, vol. I–VII, trans. H.F. AMEDROZ, D.S. MARGOLIOUTH, Oxford 1920–1921.
- The History of al-Tabari*, vol. XIX, *Al-Mansur and al-Mahdi*, trans. H. KENNEDY, Albany NY 1990.
- The History of al-Tabari*, vol. XXX, *The Abbasid Caliphate in Equilibrium*, trans. C.E. BOSWORTH, Albany NY 1989.
- The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century*, trans. A.-M. TALBOT, D.F. SULLIVAN, Washington D.C. 2005.
- The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, trans. C. MANGO, Cambridge Massachusetts 1958.
- IBN AL-ʿATHAM AL-KUFI, *Kitab al-Futuh*, ed. M.J. ABU SAʿDAH, Cairo 1987.
- Ibn Fadlan and the Land of Darkness. Arab Travellers in the Far North*, trans. P. LUNDE, C. STONE, London 2012, p. 3–58.
- Ibn Fadlāns Reisebericht*, ed. et trans. A. ZEKI VELIDI TOGAN, Leipzig 1939.
- IBN HAWKAL, *Configuration de la terre*, vol. I–II, trans. J.H. KRAMERS, G. WIET, Beirut–Paris 1964.
- IBN HAWKAL, *Kitab surat al-ard*, vol. I–II, rec. J.H. KRAMERS, Leiden 1939.
- IBN KHURRADADHBĪH, *Kitāb al-mālik waʿl-mamālik*, rec. et trans. M.J. DE GOEJE, Leiden 1889 [= *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, 6].
- IBN RUSTA, *Kitāb al-aʿlāq al-nafisa*, rec. M.J. DE GOEJE, Leiden 1892 [= *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, 7].
- IOANNES SCYLITZES, *Synopsis historiarum*, rec. J. THURN, Berlin 1973 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 5].
- JEAN SKYLITZÈS, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, trans. B. FLUSIN with notes by J.-C. CHEYNET, Paris 2003.
- LEO DIACONUS, *Historia*, rec. C.B. HASE, Bonn 1828.
- LIUDPRAND, *Antapodosis*, [in:] *Liudprandi opera*, rec. J. BECKER, Hanover–Leipzig 1915 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historicis separatim editi*], p. 1–158.
- Ludovici II. imperatoris epistola*, rec. W. HENZE, Berlin 1928 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae*, 7], p. 385–394.
- ŁEWOND VARDAPET, *Discours historique*, trans. B. MARTIN-HISARD, J.-P. MAHÉ, Paris 2015.
- MISKAWĪH, *The Experience of Nations*, vol. I–II, ed. D.S. MARGOLIOUTH, Oxford 1921.
- Moses Dasxuranc'i's History of the Caucasian Albanians*, trans. C.J.F. DOWSETT, London 1961.
- MOVSES KAŁANKATUATS'Ī, *Patmut'iwñ Ałuanits'*, rec. V. ARAK'ELJAN, Erevan 1983.

- NICETAS DAVID, *Vita Ignatii Patriarchae*, rec. et trans. A. SMITHIES, with notes by J.M. DUFFY, Washington D.C. 2013 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 51].
- Patmuŭ iwn Lewondeay metsi vardapeti hayots'i*, ed. I. EZEANTS', St. Petersburg 1897.
- PHOTIOS, *Homilies 3 & 4*, rec. B. LAOURDAS, Thessaloniki 1959, p. 29–52.
- Povest' vremennykh let*, rec. D.S. LIKHACHEV, Moscow–Leningrad 1950.
- PRISCUS, rec. et trans. R.C. BLOCKLEY, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Late Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, Liverpool 1981–1983, p. 222–377.
- The Russian Primary Chronicle. Laurentian Text*, trans. S.H. CROSS, O.P. SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR, Cambridge Massachusetts 1953.
- Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon*, ed. S. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 44.1].
- THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, bk. 6, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1828.
- Theophanis chronographia*, vol. I–II, ed. C. DE BOOR, Leipzig 1883–1885.
- Vita Constantini*, [in:] *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes*, rec. F. GRIVEC, F. TOMŠIČ, Zagreb 1960 [= Radovi staroslavenskog instituta, 4].
- Vita Georgii episcopi Amastridis*, [in:] *Russo-Vizantijskije issledovanija*, vol. II, rec. V. VASIL'EVSKIJ, St. Petersburg 1893, p. 1–73.
- The Vita of Constantine and the Vita of Methodius*, trans. M. KANTOR, R.S. WHITE, Ann Arbor Michigan 1976.

## Secondary Literature

- AFANAS'EV G.E., *Donskie Alany*, Moscow 1993.
- AFANAS'EV G.E., *O stroitel'nom materiale i metrologii Khazaro-alanskikh gorodishch bassejna Dona*, "Поволжская археология" / "Povolzhskaja Arkheologija" 2, 2012, p. 29–49.
- AFANAS'EV G.E., *Where is the Archaeological Evidence of the Existence of a Khazar State?*, "Anthropology and Archaeology of Eurasia" 57.3, 2018, p. 166–189, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611959.2018.1513287>
- BLOCKLEY R.C., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Late Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. I–II, Liverpool 1981–1983.
- CALLMER J., *From West to East: The Penetration of Scandinavians into Eastern Europe ca. 500–900*, [in:] *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. KAZANSKI, A. NERCESSIAN, C. ZUCKERMAN, Paris 2000, p. 45–94.
- Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. KAZANSKI, A. NERCESSIAN, C. ZUCKERMAN, Paris 2000.
- CHRISTIANSEN E., *The Norsemen in the Viking Age*, Oxford 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470693483>
- DUNLOP D.M., *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton 1954.
- FEATHERSTONE J., *Olga's Visit to Constantinople*, "Harvard Ukrainian Studies" 14, 1990, p. 293–312.
- FEATHERSTONE J., *Olga's Visit to Constantinople in De Cerimoniis*, "Revue des études byzantines" 61, 2003, p. 241–251, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rebyz.2003.2280>
- FRANKLIN S., *Borrowed Time: Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Rus*, [in:] *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, London 1992, p. 157–171.



- FRANKLIN S., SHEPARD J., *The Emergence of Rus 750–1200*, London 1996.
- GOLB N., PRITSAK O., *Khazarian Hebrew Documents of the Tenth Century*, Ithaca NY 1982.
- GOLDEN P.B., *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East*, Wiesbaden 1992 [= *Turcologica*, 9].
- GOLDEN P.B., *Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst Pre-Čingisid Nomads of Western Eurasia*, “Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi” 2, 1982, p. 37–76.
- GOLDEN P.B., *Khazar Studies. An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, vol. I–II, Budapest 1980 [= *Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica*, 25].
- GOLDEN P.B., *The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= *Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia*, 17], p. 123–162, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004160422.i-460>
- GOLDEN P.B., *The Question of the Rus’ Qağanate*, “Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi” 2, 1982, p. 77–97.
- GRIFFIN S., *The Liturgical Past in Byzantium and Early Rus*, Cambridge 2019 [= *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought*, 4.112], <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316661543>
- HEDEAGER L., *Iron Age Myth and Materiality. An Archaeology of Scandinavia, AD 400–1000*, London 2011, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203829714>
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *A Short Piece of Narrative History: War and Diplomacy in the Balkans, Winter 921/2–Spring 924*, [in:] *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization. In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, ed. E.M. JEFFREYS, Cambridge 2006, p. 340–360.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *Byzantine Sources for Khazar History*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= *Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia*, 17], p. 163–193.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *Byzantium, Bulgaria and the Peoples of Ukraine in the 890s*, “Материалы по археологии, истории и этнографии Таврии” / “Materialy po arkeologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii” 7, 2003, p. 342–356.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *Military and Provincial Reform in the East in the Tenth Century*, “Travaux et mémoires” 21.1, 2017, *Mélanges Jean-Claude Cheynet*, p. 285–309.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *The Fur Trade in the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Viking-Age Trade. Silver, Slaves and Gotland*, ed. J. GRUSZCZYŃSKI, M. JANKOWIAK, J. SHEPARD, Abingdon 2021, p. 57–74, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231808-4>
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *Trading in Fur from Classical Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, [in:] *Leather and Fur. Aspects of Early Medieval Trade*, ed. E. CAMERON, London 1998, p. 65–79.
- HOWARD-JOHNSTON J., *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century*, Oxford 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199208593.001.0001>
- IVANOV S.A., *Vizantijskoe missionerstvo. Možno li sdelat’ iz ‘varvara’ Christianina?*, Moscow 2003.
- IVANOVA M., *Inventing Slavonic. Cultures of Writing between Rome and Constantinople*, Oxford 2020 (D.Phil.).
- JANKOWIAK M., *Dirham Flows into Northern and Eastern Europe, and the Rhythms of the Slave Trade in the Islamic World*, [in:] *Viking-Age Trade. Silver, Slaves and Gotland*, ed. J. GRUSZCZYŃSKI, M. JANKOWIAK, J. SHEPARD, Abingdon 2021, p. 105–131, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231808-6>
- KENNEDY H., *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates. The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh century*,<sup>3</sup> Abingdon 2016, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315673516>
- KLYUCHEVSKY V.O., *History of Russia*, vol. I–V, New York 1960.

- LEYSER K., *Ends and Means in Liudprand of Cremona*, [in:] K. LEYSER, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, London 1994, p. 125–142.
- LEYSER K., *Liudprand of Cremona: Preacher and Homilist*, [in:] K. LEYSER, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe. The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, London 1994, p. 111–124.
- LEYSER K., *The Battle at the Lech*, [in:] K. LEYSER, *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours 900–1250*, London 1982, p. 43–67.
- LOMBARD M., *La chasse et les produits de la chasse dans le monde musulman: VIII<sup>e</sup>–XI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, [in:] M. LOMBARD, *Espaces et réseaux du haut moyen âge*, Paris 1972, p. 177–204, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111535777-009>
- MAHÉ A., MAHÉ J.-P., *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à nos jours*, Paris 2012.
- MARKOPOULOS A., *La Vie de Saint Georges d'Amastris et Photius*, "Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik" 28, 1979, p. 75–82.
- MARTIN J., *North-eastern Russia and the Golden Horde*, [in:] *Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. I, *From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge 2006, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521812276.007>
- NOSOV E.N., *Novgorodskoje (Rjurikovo) gorodishte*, Leningrad 1990.
- OBOLENSKY D., *Cherson and the Conversion of Rus': An Anti-Revisionist View*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 13, 1989, p. 244–256, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1989.13.1.244>
- OBOLENSKY D., *Ol'ga's Conversion: The Evidence Reconsidered*, "Harvard Ukrainian Studies" 12/13, 1988/1989, p. 145–158.
- PETRUHKHIN V.Ja., *Khazaria and Rus': An Examination of their Historical Relations*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia, 17], p. 245–268, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004160422.i-460.38>
- PLETNĚVA S.A., *Ocherki khazarskoj arkheologii*, Moscow 1999.
- POHL W., *The Avars. A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822*, Ithaca NY 2018, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501729409>
- POPPE A., *The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus': Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986–89*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 30, 1976, p. 195–244, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291395>
- RUKAVISHNIKOV A., *Tale of Bygone Years: The Russian Primary Chronicle as a Family Chronicle*, "Early Medieval Europe" 12, 2003, p. 53–74, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-9462.2003.00121.x>
- SHEPARD J., *Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker*, [in:] J. SHEPARD, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, Farnham 2011, no. III, p. 8–18.
- SIGNES CODOÑER J., *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842. Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, Farnham 2014.
- SORLIN I., *Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, "Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique" 2, 1961, p. 313–360, <https://doi.org/10.3406/cmr.1961.1474>
- STEIN-WILESHUIS M., *A Viking-age Treaty between Constantinople and Northern Merchants, with its Provisions on Theft and Robbery*, "Scando-slavica" 37, 1991, p. 39–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00806769108600989>
- TER-GHEVONDYAN A.N., *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, Lisbon 1976.
- TREADWELL L., *The Samanids: The First Islamic Dynasty of Central Asia*, [in:] *Early Islamic Iran*, ed. E. HERZIG, S. STEWART, London 2012 [= Idea of Iran, 5], p. 3–15, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755693498.ch-001>


- VASILIEV A.A., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. I, *La dynastie d' Amorium (820–867)*, Brussels 1935.
- VASILIEV A.A., rev. CANARD M., *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II.1, *La dynastie Macédonienne (867–959)*, Brussels 1968.
- Viking-Age Trade. Silver, Slaves and Gotland*, ed. J. GRUSZCZYŃSKI, M. JANKOWIAK, J. SHEPARD, Abingdon 2021.
- WASSERSTEIN D.J., *The Khazars and the World of Islam*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia, 17], p. 373–386.
- WHITBY M., *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian. Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare*, Oxford 1988.
- WHITTON M., *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600–1025*, London 1996, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24765-3>
- WICKHAM C., *Ninth-Century Byzantium through Western Eyes*, [in:] *Byzantium in the Ninth Century. Dead or Alive?*, ed. L. BRUBAKER, Aldershot 1998, p. 245–256.
- The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia, 17].
- ZUCKERMAN C., *Deux étapes de la formation de l'ancien état russe*, [in:] *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient*, ed. M. KAZANSKI, A. NERCESSIAN, C. ZUCKERMAN, Paris 2000, p. 95–120.
- ZUCKERMAN C., *Le voyage d'Olga et la première ambassade espagnole à Constantinople en 946*, "Travaux et mémoires" 13, 2000, p. 647–672.
- ZUCKERMAN C., *On the Date of the Khazars' Conversion to Judaism and the Chronology of the Kings of the Rus Oleg and Igor. A Study of the Anonymous Khazar Letter from the Genizah of Cairo*, "Revue des études byzantines" 53, 1995, p. 237–270, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rebyz.1995.1906>
- ZUCKERMAN C., *On the Kievan Letter from the Genizah of Cairo*, "Ruthenica" 10, 2011, p. 7–56.
- ZUCKERMAN C., *The Khazars and Byzantium: The First Encounter*, [in:] *The World of the Khazars. New Perspectives*, ed. P.B. GOLDEN, H. BEN-SHAMMAI, A. RÓNA-TAS, Leiden 2007 [= Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia, 17], p. 399–432, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004160422.i-460.70>
- ZUCKERMAN C., *Two Notes on the Early History of the thema Cherson*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 21, 1997, p. 210–222, <https://doi.org/10.1179/byz.1997.21.1.210>

**James Howard-Johnston**


University of Oxford  
 Corpus Christi College  
 Merton St, Oxford OX1 4JF  
 Great Britain  
[james.howard-johnston@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:james.howard-johnston@ccc.ox.ac.uk)



Yanko M. Hristov (Blagoevgrad)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7882-9749>

Dafina Kostadinova (Blagoevgrad)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2466-7980>

## REMARKS ON CAPTIVES AND WARRIORS IN AN OLD BULGARIAN COLLECTION OF MIRACLE STORIES

**Abstract.** When scholars' efforts are focused on the ethnic, religious and social diversity in certain parts of the Byzantine commonwealth during the middle ages, the hagiographic literature stands out as a key primary source. One such source is a voluminous early tenth-century collection of miracle stories titled *A Tale of the Iron Cross*. Its essential role when trying to uncover data, specific information and truths about Bulgaria's medieval past is undeniable. A number of highly informative records have been found and are well-preserved within the covers of this impressive literary work. Many of them have been used repeatedly in various scholars' academic initiatives and undertakings. However, other *Tale's* records, regardless of their unique peculiarities and immeasurable contemporary information, still remain outside of the main research work when it comes to the subject matter of captivity and warfare.

**Keywords:** hagiography, Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories, captives, recruits, warriors, monks and laymen

### Introduction

The interest in medieval hagiographic literature from the Orthodox world definitely cannot be labelled as either new, sporadic or limited in the scholarly circles. It is not surprising given the fact that the popular and numerous hagiographical works are the key source of information, especially regarding the historical past of South-eastern Europe during the period. Hence, the attempt to uncover certain aspects and peculiarities through the prism of the relatively voluminous collection of stories, which include miracles of Saint George compiled at the beginning of the tenth century, and known under the name *A Tale of the Iron Cross* (recently also known as *The Tale of the Monk Christodoulos*), should be considered

logical<sup>1</sup>. At present, the work in question does not seem to have been fully utilised in such research efforts despite the interesting pieces of information that are recorded in each of its sections. For example, in the very first part of the collection of miracle stories, in an unambiguous phrase it is noted that the *wondrous and glorious miracles and healings of the great, marvellous and glorious martyr George* took place across a very wide geographical area of the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>2</sup>.

On the pages of the *Tale*, the tenth-century hagiographer provides us with the descriptions of many peculiarities, travels, miraculous healings and numerous events concerning the spread of the cult of Saint George in the recently Christianised Bulgarian society at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries; and, in addition, he provides a broad perspective of the early tenth-century Bulgarian society.

### Captives and Captivity in *A Tale of the Iron Cross*

The introductory part and the first of the *Tale's* ten miracle stories – the so-called *Miracle with the Priest's Son*, features the well-known popular motif of the saint's intercession on behalf of those in enemy captivity<sup>3</sup>. The Old Bulgarian text exhibits a very close parallel to the Byzantine hagiography of that period. It tells of the miracle of Saint Nicholas freeing a young man from Myra, a captive of the Arabs in Crete (so-called *Thaumata tria* [BHG 1355], published by G. Anrich), and of the miracle of Saint George who freed a captive taken in Mytilene/Lesbos (the ninth

<sup>1</sup> *A Tale of the Iron Cross* is a highly remarkable work in the Old Bulgarian literature from the time of Tsar Symeon I (893–927). Hagiographer's decisions regarding the organization of the text, the characters and the thematic scope do not fully correspond to the main line of development of the Bulgarian hagiography in its initial stages from the end of the ninth to the beginning of the eleventh century. Cf. Ив. Божилов, *Българската агиография и византийската агиография*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Седем етюда по Средновековна история*, София 1995, p. 307–335; *История на българската средновековна литература*, ed. Ан. Милтенова, София 2008, p. 140–141; А. Ангущева, Н. Гагова, Ан. Милтенова, Т. Славова, А. Стойкова, *Книжовността по времето на цар Симеон*, [in:] *Българският Златен век. Сборник в чест на цар Симеон Велики (893–927)*, ed. В. Гюзелев, Ил.Г. Илиев, К. Ненов, Пловдив 2015, p. 242–243. This characteristic is understandable, especially given the issue of the authorship and the recording of the oral narratives of Bulgarian monk(s) in a Greek-speaking milieu. Furthermore, the text was supplemented with Byzantine stories and then subsequently retranslated into Old Bulgarian, ca. 910. The question of the *Tale's* unusual literary history and later additional interventions and abbreviations also should be taken into consideration. Cf. А. Турилов, *Византийский и славянский пласты в „Сказание инока Христодула“*. (К вопросу происхождения памятника), [in:] *Славяне и их соседи. Греческий и славянский мир в средние века и новое время*, vol. VI, Москва 1996, p. 81–99; ИДЕМ, *К изучению Сказания инока Христодула: датировка цикла и имя автора*, [in:] *Florilegium. К 60-летию Б.Н. Флори: Сб. статей*, ed. ИДЕМ, Москва 2000, p. 412–427.

<sup>2</sup> Б. Ангелов, *Сказание за железния кръст*, Сл 1, 1971, p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 137–138. (The authors of the present article translated all the enclosed English fragments of the *Tale*).

miracle story in the collection published by J.B. Aufhausen [BHG 691f.])<sup>4</sup>. A. Kazhdan notes in the commentaries on the two Byzantine texts that, beyond the basic similarity, there are essential distinguishing details which make the works sufficiently distinct. Most probably both texts were composed independently of each other, were not related directly, and relied on the circulating stories of miraculous deliverance told and retold by the general public. It is worth reminding that the aforementioned distinguished scholar, with his particular interest in study of the Byzantine literature, seems to accept a later (and, as it were, a more blurred regarding distinct chronological limits) date of the compilation of the miracle-narratives in question. He notes *...the tenth century seems to be more appropriate date for the completion of the "Cretan legends" than the middle of the ninth century as proposed by Anrich for the Thaumata tria and Methodii Encomium*<sup>5</sup>. If Kazhdan's version of such a later dating of the Byzantine texts is correct, then the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories raises some questions concerning the direction of textual influences and parallels, given its compilation happened ca. 910<sup>6</sup>.

In the aforementioned first miracle (*Miracle with the Priest's Son*) of the *Tale*, along with the tangible clever use of ready-made creative techniques for completing

<sup>4</sup> G. ANRICH, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche. Text und Untersuchungen*, vol. I, Berlin 1913, p. 188–195; J.B. AUFHAUSEN, *Miracula Sancti Georgii*, Leipzig 1913, p. 101–103. Cf. also: St. EFTHYMIADIS, *Greek Byzantine Collections of Miracles. A Chronological and Bibliographical Survey*, SO 74.1, 1999, p. 195–211; IDEM, *Collections of Miracles (Fifth–Fifteenth Centuries)*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II, *Genres and Contexts*, ed. IDEM, Farnham 2014, p. 103–142.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. KAZHDAN, *Hagiographical Notes (5–8)*, B 54, 1984, p. 177–182. At the risk of some speculation and over-interpretation, it may be noted that the circulation of oral accounts at a popular level may also be an understandable, though naïve way of justifying the suspicious, unexpected or inexplicable return of some of the captives. This would be especially likely if it was not in their interest to share details of their captivity, their possible (even if forced) cooperation with the Arabs, renunciation of Christianity while in captivity, or other actions that would expose them to the imperial laws. On the other hand, the idea shared decades ago by Rosemary Morris should not be neglected; namely, even with caution (and perhaps with some bias given the type of texts), in the frequent occurrence of these motifs in hagiographic works, scholars should see an indication that people sought miraculous intervention *because the lay world had failed them: the military had been defeated or shown to be powerless to protect them; their landlords could not or would not provide help, and their own communal solidarities had broken down under the pressure of sudden or unmagable disaster*. Cf. R. MORRIS, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118*, Cambridge 1995, p. 114. For the struggles in the Aegean and the challenges after the conquest of Crete by the Arabs (ca. 824), with due attention to the Byzantine hagiographical works and reliability of their information see: V. CHRISTIDES, *The Raids of the Moslems of Crete in the Aegean Sea: Piracy and Conquest*, B 51.1, 1981, p. 76–111; M. LEONTISI, *The Byzantine and Arab Navies in the South Aegean and Crete: Shipping, Mobility and Transport (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> c.)*, GA 12, 2017, p. 171–233.

<sup>6</sup> А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Византийский и славянский пласты в „Сказание инока Христодула“...*, p. 81–99; IDEM, *К изучению Сказания инока Христодула...*, p. 412–427. Cf. also: I. LUNDE, *Slavic Hagiography*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. I, *Periods and Places*, ed. St. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham 2014, p. 369–383.

a story, a peculiar note of specificity and an overall general verisimilitude can be detected. In fact, the similarities of this “Byzantine stratum” (if we may use Turi-  
lov’s definition) in the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories to other con-  
temporary Byzantine hagiographic works brings additional advantages. For example,  
St. Efhymiadis points out that the motif of miraculous release from captivity is  
chiefly intrinsic to the texts written up to the beginning of the tenth century. As  
a rule, it is about the rescue of a certain person, and not about a mass deliverance  
from the bitter fate of captivity of a group of prisoners. Besides, as far as Asia Minor  
and the Aegean are concerned, the intercession of the saint does not become an  
occasion for organising an attack or counter-offensive activities against the cap-  
tors<sup>7</sup>. Features that are also observed in *Miracle with the Priest’s Son*, supplemented  
by the creative decision to describe the release of a captive through the narrative  
of another former captive. The story of the monk Kosmas “sets” the *Tale* in a recog-  
nizable spatial, temporal and event context<sup>8</sup>. A key moment is the mention of the  
reign of Emperor Basil I (867–886) and the notice of a Byzantine *strategos* who  
went to Cyprus. The text reads as follows:

My brethren, I was still a child when I was captured, and I served my master for a long time.  
And Tsar [Emperor – Y.H., D.K.] Basil appointed my lord to be the *strategos* of a district  
which bordered the Saracens. As we approached Cyprus and they began to tell my master:  
Here, in this place is the Church of Saint George. A priest serves in it, and his son was cap-  
tured by the Saracens...

Язъ, браѣ, егда плѣниша мѧ дѣтська и слѣжи гнѣ мюемѧ много днѣи. И постави и стратига  
црѣ Василии на оукраинѣ ѿ срауинѣ. И придохомъ близъ Кѣпра и науаше повѣдати гнѣ  
мюемѧ: Оѣ мѣсти естъ црѣвъ стѣго Георгия. И попъ оу немѧ, иже слѣжити ен, и сѣд его вѣша  
плѣнили срауинѣ...<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> St. EFTHYMIADIS, *Chrétien et sarrasins en Italie méridionale et en Asie Mineure (IX<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle). Essai d’étude comparée*, [in:] *Histoire et culture dans l’Italie byzantine. Acquis et nouvelles recherches*, ed. G. NOYÉ, J.-M. MARTIN, A. JACOB, Rome 2006, p. 613–614.

<sup>8</sup> For some important details concerning the significance of the collections of miracle stories despite fictional characters in the hagiographical works, see: R. LENNART, *Fiction and Reality in the Hagiographer’s Self-Presentation*, TM 14, 2002, p. 547–552; M. HINTERBERGER, *Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II..., p. 25–60; Ch. MESSIS, *Fiction and/or Novelisation in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II..., p. 313–341; A. ALWIS, *The Hagiographer’s Craft: Narrators and Focalisation in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *The Hagiographical Experiment. Developing Discourses of Sainthood*, ed. Ch. GRAY, J. CORKE-WEBSTER, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= VC.S, 158], p. 300–332; St. EFTHYMIADIS, *Saints and Secondary Heroes in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *Constructing the Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography. Heroes and Heroines in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative*, ed. K. DE MEMMERMAN, J. VAN PELT, K. STAAT, Turnhout 2023, p. 33–56.

<sup>9</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 137.

The devastating attacks of the Arab pirate squadrons on the southern coasts of Asia Minor and on the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean continued beyond the initial years of the rule of the progenitor of the so-called Macedonian dynasty. In addition, Emperor Basil I (867–886) was not the only ruler of Byzantium who tried to deal with this problem, often by organizing large-scale expeditions. However, one of the significant moments in the questionable naval endeavours of the imperial fleet occurred specifically during the 870s, when a temporary restoration of the Byzantine power over Cyprus was achieved and for a period of seven years it was again part of the Empire. According to the information in the treatise *De thematibus*, associated with the name of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), his predecessor, Emperor Basil I (867–886), also took the appropriate steps for the full inclusion of the strategic island in the Byzantine military-administrative system, i.e. by creating the theme of Cyprus. This meant the appointment of a *strategos* as well as recruitment and quartering of his *stratiotai* (and probably also with initial efforts regarding the establishment of a local thematic fleet due to the challenges in the Cyprus' waters). This short-lived direct imperial rule over the island ended as early as the late 870s or the early 880s<sup>10</sup>.

It is also worth noting the way in which the hagiographer delineated two of the most important (from the Byzantine point of view) areas from which the captives came, (which, according to Jeff Fynn-Paul, can also be called *slaving zones*<sup>11</sup>) – the

<sup>10</sup> Although short-lived, Emperor Basil I's success in this part of the Eastern Mediterranean should not be underestimated. Cf. CONSTANTINO PORFIROGENITO, *De thematibus*, ed. A. PERTUSI, Rome–Città del Vaticano 1952, p. 81.20–24. Cf. also the recent English translation with notes and comments: *The De Thematibus ('On the Themes') of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus*, trans., praef. J. HALDON, Liverpool 2021 [= TTB, 11], p. 156.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. FYNN-PAUL, *Empire, Monotheism and Slavery in the Greater Mediterranean Region from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era*, PP 205, 2009, p. 3–40; IDEM, *Introduction. Slaving Zones in Global History: The Evolution of a Concept*, [in:] *Slaving Zones. Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in Evolution of Global Slavery*, ed. J. FYNN-PAUL, D. ALAN PARGAS, Leiden 2018, p. 1–19. For the captives' fate in Byzantium as well as for the Byzantine captives both among the Arabs and among the Balkan rivals of the Empire during the period under consideration see: A. KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, *Some Remarks on the Fate of Prisoners of War in Byzantium (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, [in:] *Atti del Congresso Interdisciplinare di Studi Storici La liberazione dei 'cattivi' tra Cristianità e Islam: Oltre la Crociata e il Ġihād: Tolleranza e servizio umanitario*, ed. G. CIPOLLONE, Città del Vaticano 2000, p. 583–620; Y. ROTMAN, *Byzance face à l'Islam arabe, VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle: D'un droit territorial à l'identité par la foi*, A.H 60.4, 2005, p. 767–788; IDEM, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. J.M. TODD, Cambridge Massachusetts 2009; A. RAMADĀN, *The Treatment of Arab Prisoners of War in Byzantium, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Als 43, 2009, p. 155–194; Y. HRISTOV, *Prisoners of War in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Preliminary Remarks)*, SCer 5, 2015, p. 73–105; M. ΛΥΚΑΚΗ, *Οι αιχμάλωτοι πολέμου στη Βυζαντινή Αυτοκρατορία (6<sup>ος</sup>–11<sup>ος</sup> αι.): Εκκλησία, Κράτος, διπλωματία και κοινωνική διασταση*, Athens–Paris 2016 (unpublished PhD Thesis); S. WIERBIŃSKI, *Prospective Gain or Actual Cost? Arab Civilian and Military Captives in the Light of Byzantine Narrative Sources and Military Manuals from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century*, SCer 8, 2018, p. 253–283; M. ΛΥΚΑΚΙ, *L'économie du pillage et les prisonniers de guerre: Byzance, VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *Pillages, tributs, captifs. Prédation et sociétés de l'antiquité tardive au haut Moyen-Âge*, ed. R. KELLER, L. SARTI, Paris 2018, p. 89–102; Y. HRISTOV, *Written Not with Ink but with Tears:*



Balkans, as well as the Northern Black sea area on the one hand, and the Middle East, Southeast and South Asia Minor, and the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean on the other. It should be pointed out that while the latter is described as active and associated with immediate threats of mutual capture and enslavement by the Byzantines and Arabs, the *Tale's* introduction makes a different impression concerning the part of Balkans which was under Bulgarian rule at that time. It is explicitly stated that the monk Kosmas, who told the story of Saint George's intercession on behalf of the captive youth and his miraculous rescue from Arab slavery, was a former captive from the "northern lands" (сѣвѣрьскія страны)<sup>12</sup>.

The character of Kosmas seems to be more interesting compared to that of the priest's son. Taking into account the *Tale's* peculiarities, it cannot be stated with certainty whether this is entirely the hagiographer's creative approach, or whether the character was based on a real person with whom he was in contact. In both cases, however, given the mid-ninth – early tenth-century geopolitical realities along the Byzantine borders, there are good reasons to assume that the phrase "northern lands" refers to the Bulgarian territories<sup>13</sup>. The information that he had

---

*Byzantine Civilians in Bulgarian Captivity according to the Letters of Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos (901–907, 912–925)*, *Medi* 43, 2022, p. 137–169; G. СИМЕОНОВ, *In Enemy Hands: the Byzantine Experience of Captivity between the Seventh and Tenth Centuries*, *EME* 31.3, 2023, p. 430–458.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. ...a brother, named Kosmas, who was a captive from the northern lands, began to tell... [...брѣ, именеиъ Козма, иже баше плененъ ѿ сѣвѣрьскія страны, науд повѣдати...]. Cf. also ...Three years ago my father sent me to Cyprus and here they captured us all while we were on the ship. And I was a slave to a Saracen for three years... [...Третіиъ лѣте въ Кюпрѣ посла ма ѿць мои и тѣ изымаша ны всѣ, елико бѣ насъ в корабли. И работалъ еси срауинниъ .ї. лѣта]. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст*..., p. 137.

<sup>13</sup> Of course, we should not exclude the possibility that Kosmas could also be a victim of the slave trade in the Eastern Europe, for which, as is well known, Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate were usually the two final destinations at the time. For the sake of completeness, one can note here that Turilov makes an effort to present Kosmas as coming from Caucasian Iberia, although, as the aforementioned distinguished scholar himself noted, such a statement makes it more difficult to explain his captivity in Byzantium at the time of Emperor Basil I (867–886). Cf. А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Мѣдра Пльсковская и Мѣдра Дръсторская – две Мундраги первой болгаро венгерской войны (география чудес Вмч. Георгия в Сказании инока Христодула)*, [in:] *Славяне и их соседи. Славяне и кочевой мир*, vol. X, ed. Б.Н. Флоря et al., Москва 2001, p. 43–44. Spasova on the other hand expresses skepticism towards such an assumption and draws attention to the fact that the proposed hypothesis of a metathesis of сѣвѣрьскъ (Northern) into иверьскъ (Iberian, i.e. Georgian) is unconvincing, especially against the background of the other uses of сѣвѣрьскъ within the framework of the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories which in no way can be associated with Caucasian Iberia. Cf. М. СПАСОВА, *Сказание за железния кръст (превод)*, [in:] *“Сказание за железния кръст” и епохата на цар Симеон*, ed. А. КАЛОЯНОВ, М. СПАСОВА, Т. МОЛЛОВ, Велико Търново 2007, p. 192. It is also significant that in the version of the *Tale* known today the former captive Kosmas in fact is not presented as a traumatized victim. In this sense, his ego/pseudo-ego account is interesting, but it is far from the literature concerning the trauma of captivity. Cf. for example: Ch. MESSIS, *La mémoire de «je» souffrant: Construite et écrire la mémoire personnelle dans les récits de captivité*, [in:] *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes de III<sup>e</sup> colloque international*

served his master for a long time (even since childhood), combined with what we know about the long period of peace between the Empire and Bulgaria, which began after the conversion efforts of Knyaz Boris I (852–889) in the mid-860s, indicates that the beginning of his captivity should be associated with an earlier stage of the Bulgarian-Byzantine relations. These may be the early years of the reign of the aforementioned Knyaz Boris I (852–889). At that time, Empress Theodora (ca. 815 – after 867) was still in charge of the Regency, shortly before her son, Emperor Michael III (ca. 842–867), became a sole ruler, and the Bulgarians tried to take advantage of the situation by raiding and plundering across the Thracian border. The tenth century *Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete* describes the Empress's response to the attacks upon the Byzantine possessions. She reinforced the border units, changing their role from defensive to an offensive one. These troops changed the dynamics of the events and not only met the invaders but attacked the neighbouring Bulgarian territories and despoiled and destroyed settlements and fortifications<sup>14</sup>. We may risk some over-interpretation, but it can be added that when captives were kidnapped from the Bulgarian lands in the 850s, it was not only the young age of Kosmas that was the reason for the long service to his master in Byzantium. During the decade in question, the Bulgarian society was still pagan, and although it was not mentioned in the text of the *Tale*, the tension based on a religion was slight or negligible if the enslaved captive youth was a heathen.

Another brief piece of information concerning Kosmas also seems to be relatively informative. Undoubtedly, the period of his captivity was over when he recounted the miraculous intervention of Saint George and the deliverance of

---

*philologique «EMPHNEIA», Nicosie, 6–7–8 mai 2004 organisé par l'E.H.E.S.S. et l'Université de Chypre*, ed. P. ODORICO et al., Paris 2006, p. 107–146; P. ODORICO, *Les trois vidages de la même violence: Les trois prises de Thessalonique*, [in:] *L'écriture de la mémoire...*, p. 147–179; A.J. GOLDWIN, *Witness Literature in Byzantium. Narrating Slaves, Prisoners, and Refugees*, Cham 2021, p. 71–140.

<sup>14</sup> *Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, ed. St. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= *CFHB*, 44.1], p. 239.148 – 240.153. See the recent English translation *The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. St. WAHLGREN, Liverpool 2019 [= *TTB*, 7], p. 181. The tensions between Bulgaria and Byzantium from the first half of the 850s are presented in a different way by Joseph Genesios, Theophanes Continuatus, and in a text related to the *Chronicle of Symeon the Logothete*, known as *Chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon Magister*, part of which was published by Immanuel Bekker in 1838 under the title *Symeon Magister*. Cf. A. KAZHDAN, Ch. ANGELIDI, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, Athens 2006, p. 162–170; W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York 2013, p. 203–224; L. NEVILLE, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, Cambridge 2018, p. 118–123. These chroniclers do not hide the original hostile intentions but focus on the settlement of relations between the two polities. However, Pseudo-Symeon mentions looting in the themes of Thrace and Macedonia. He also writes about Emperor Michael's march about a decade later, which did not lead to a war because of the decision to impose Christianity in Bulgaria. See *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister [Pseudo-Symeon], Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838 [= *CSHB*, 33], p. 664.5 – 665.2, 665.11 – 666.6. It is less likely that the compiler of the *Tale* pointed to the events of 863–864 as the starting point of Kosmas' captivity, noting that by the early-870s he had already served for many years.

the enslaved priest's son. The mention of him as a monk means that he was no longer in the state of *alieni iuris*. Otherwise, he could not have been admitted to a monastery and taken monastic vows. However, it is worth noting the way in which he became a monk. The entry of former slaves and captives into the ranks of the clergy after their release and manumission by their masters was not unusual in Byzantium<sup>15</sup>. The parts of the *Tale* in question definitely do not fit this pattern. This is especially so if we judge them by the text of the second miracle (*Miracle with the Child*), according to which Kosmas fled from his master in the border region (the Arab border) and returned to his homeland and became a monk<sup>16</sup>. If the highly probable assumption that Kosmas came from the Bulgarian lands is true, his escape in this direction is completely understandable. His monasticism after returning to his homeland is also understandable, insofar as it corresponds to the processes which took place in Bulgaria in the 870s–880s, after the conversion to Christianity in 865. Moreover, for those who had learned the Greek language during captivity the adoption of monasticism was a way to gain position in the newly converted society, not least because the newly established Bulgarian archdiocese certainly experienced a shortage of clergy at the local level. Such an interpretation seems somewhat problematic, because of the apparent contradiction years later after his escape and monasticism, Kosmas was again in the Byzantine territory, and in a completely different role. However, this apparent contradiction is only there at the first glance. The hagiographer specifically notes that Kosmas's audience was made up of people who, at the particular moment, encountered each other during their travels. Besides, the descriptions of monks and clergy (who were of different origins) who travelled across the Bulgarian-Byzantine border from the Balkans to Asia Minor and vice versa is entirely consistent with the other data found within the *Tale*<sup>17</sup>. In the interest of objectivity, given the complex literary history of the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories, another plausible interpretation should not be neglected, either. A later copyist's replacement of *земля сѣа* (this land/country/area, i.e. the monastery area) with the spelling *земля своа* (homeland) may cause a possible mistransmission of this part of the text. To resolve the questions surrounding such a different reading, a look at other copies of *Miracle with the Child* would undoubtedly be helpful. Unfortunately, at this time, they are beyond our

<sup>15</sup> Special attention has recently been paid to a number of details of these occurrences. Cf. with the enclosed bibliography: N. LEIDHOLM, *Parents and Children, Servants and Masters: Slaves, Freedmen, and the Family in Byzantium*, [in:] *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, ed. M.E. STEWART, D.A. PARNELL, C. WHATELY, London–New York 2022, p. 263–281.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. ...I fled from my master and from that border district, and arrived in my homeland. And I became a monk. [...оуди<sup>ѣ</sup> ѿ гнѣ и ѿ краины тоа, и приидохъ въ землю свою. И бы<sup>ѣ</sup> лини<sup>ѣ</sup>]. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> Y. HRISTOV, *Travelling and Travellers: Persons, Reasons, and Destinations according to 'A Tale of the Iron Cross'*, [in:] *Voyages and Travel Accounts in Historiography and Literature*, ed. B. STOJKOVSKI, Budapest 2020, p. 33–54.

reach. It is significant that the version  $\text{ЗЕМЛА ЦІА}$  instead of  $\text{ЗЕМЛА ЧЕОА}$  also does not contradict the general message of the *Tale*. Not only because Kosmas's escape journey would have been shorter and more feasible, but also because it reveals even more direct parallels with the situation in Byzantium. The flight of slaves and dependents to the monasteries and the adoption of monasticism, and even their rise to the upper levels of the clergy, led to a serious tension with the imperial authorities. Even in the early Byzantine era, the emperors decreed under what conditions and terms fugitive slaves who had taken monastic vows could be returned to their masters, and in these cases the vow and the corresponding cessation of the slave status remained in force. It is hardly a coincidence that these provisions were re-updated in the legal regulations of the second half of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century (contemporary with the appearance of the *Tale*), in the so-called *Nomocanon* of Patriarch Photios (858–867, 877–886), in the fourth book of the *Βασιλικά* and in *Novels* 9, 10 and 11 of Emperor Leo VI (886–912)<sup>18</sup>.

In this regard, despite the use of most likely fictional characters, as far as the question of captivity is concerned one can say that the evolution from a young pagan to an elderly monk (in a monastery attracting pilgrims and traveling monks) closely matches the patterns of the integration of barbarians into the Byzantine society, in which slavery often was mainly an intermediate state, and the conversion to Christianity was a prerequisite of prime importance. The latter is valid even if our assumption that the hagiographer meant that Kosmas was taken from the Bulgarian lands in the 850s is incorrect. The mechanism of integration was also applicable to captives and abductees from Eastern Europe and the Northern Black Sea area who were sold as slaves to Byzantium at the time<sup>19</sup>.

It is significant that the hagiographer is very consistent when it comes to the matter of who was liable to be taken captive and enslaved. Within the framework of the *Tale*, there is a description of such relations only between representatives of different religious (and ethnic) groups, but not between co-religionists. The latter applies not only to the former prisoner – the monk Kosmas, or to the

<sup>18</sup> Cf. with the relevant references to *Codex Justinianus* I.3.16 and *Justinian Novel* 5 chapter 2 and *Novel* 123 chapters 4, 17, 35: *Номоканон Константинопольского патриарха Фотия, с толкованием Васальмона*, pars 2, ed. В. НОРБЕКОВ, Казань 1899, p. 422–429; *Basilicorum libri LX*, Series A, vol. I, *Textus lubrorum I–VIII*, ed. H.J. SCHELTEMA, N. VAN DER WAL, Groningen 1955, p. 113; *Les Nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage. Texte et traduction*, ed. P. NOAILLES, A. DAIN, Paris 1944, p. 42–49.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. R. SHUKUROV, *Barbarians, Philanthropy, and Byzantine Missionism*, [in:] *Philanthropy in Anatolia through the Ages: The First International Suna & İnan Kiraç Symposium on Mediterranean Civilizations (March 26–29, 2019, Antalya): Proceedings*, ed. O. TEKIN, Ch.H. ROOSEVELT, E. AKYÜREK, İstanbul 2020, p. 141–152. Cf. also: Y. ROTMAN, *Byzantine Slavery...*; N. LENSKI, *Slavery in the Byzantine Empire*, [in:] *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. II, AD 500–AD 1420, ed. S.L. ENGERMAN, D. RICHARDSON, C. PERRY, Cambridge 2021, p. 453–481; D. PENNA, *The Role of Slaves in the Byzantine Economy, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Legal Aspects*, [in:] *Slavery in the Black Sea Region, c. 900–1900. Forms of Unfreedom at the Intersection between Christianity and Islam*, ed. F. ROŞU, Leiden 2021, p. 63–89.

priest's son, who was in Arab captivity in Jerusalem, but also to the subjects of the Bulgarian ruler Symeon (893–927), kidnapped by the Magyars during the war of 894–896<sup>20</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that the hagiographer provided a glimpse into another model for the integration of captives into a different religious and ethnic environment. The information in the first of the miracle stories in the *Tale* gives a reason to say that the priest's son is presented in Jerusalem, far from his homeland, as a domestic slave. Judging from the information provided, the process of integrating a Byzantine captive into the household of his Arab master was successful and sufficiently advanced. This was the case to the extent that as a boy he was assigned tasks to be performed independently, even outside of the home where he was a servant. The author explicitly noted that after the miraculous deliverance of the young man through the intervention of Saint George, he was unrecognisable in appearance (i.e. he looked foreign) not only to the other members of the Byzantine society, but even to his own father<sup>21</sup>.

## Warriors

When the focus of research efforts is on *A Tale of the Iron Cross*, the theme of war and warriors cannot be avoided. The attempt to glimpse some reminiscences of the military affairs and the network of social relations and dependencies that surrounds warfare in stories devoted to a saint-warrior and a military patron cannot be considered surprising or unexpected. With a view to uncovering a significant deposit of information concerning military affairs in early medieval Bulgaria, it is particularly productive to look both at the well-known *Miracle of Saint George with the Bulgarian Warrior* and at the significantly less studied *Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by Saint George in War* – the two most voluminous texts within the collection of miracle stories that are devoted specifically to the experience of the combatants and their rescue from captivity and/or death. It is very tempting to define the two fragments of the *Tale*, in their original form, as a type of an oral battle narrative, although of a different kind than the one Dragova writes about<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> Something more, the hagiographer deliberately notes that the unrecognisable and unexpected returnee was summoned for interrogation by the authorities. Cf. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 137–138.

<sup>22</sup> Н. ДРАГОВА, *Старобългарско войнско сказание от IX в.*, ПБФ 8, 1991, p. 156–167; ЕАДЕМ, *Войнско сказание в старобългарската литература от Симеоновата епоха (IX–X в.)*, СЛ 25–26, 1991, p. 47–57. Cf. also: S. McGRATH, *Warfare as Literary Narrative*, [in:] *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300–1204*, ed. Y. STOURIATIS, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= BCBW, 3], p. 160–195; P. SOPHOULIS, *War and Identity in Early Medieval Bulgaria*, [in:] *War and Collective Identity in the Middle Ages: East, West, and Beyond*, ed. Y. STOURIATIS, Leeds 2023, p. 87–98.

The information about the development of the Bulgarian-Byzantine war of 894–896 (which after the inclusion of the Magyars on the side of the Empire and the Pechenegs joining as Bulgarian allies grew from a bilateral conflict into a larger-scale clash) is duplicated in both narratives. Nothing is mentioned about the campaign against Byzantium, but details about the initial heavy defeats by the Magyars and the subsequent, far more successful, Bulgarian counter-offensive are provided. Against the background of this general similarity, the two warriors described are quite different from one another. In fact, with a certain dose of caution, but also without hesitation, one can say that this peculiarity in the texts seemingly has not been given due attention by scholars; or, at least, it deserves some additional commentary. For example, one such subject is the upper age limit for mobilisation in the early medieval Bulgarian armies. However, one can discuss such a limitation and identify which conscripts were able to benefit from it and depart from the various types of armed forces due to old age. Generally, finding such details, even when focusing on a specific historical event, such as the clashes with the Magyars described in the mentioned *Tale's* stories, is an exception for medieval Bulgarian history. When it comes to age, dates of birth and other such information, there are rare instances where they can be found even for the ruling family, members of the aristocracy and the clergy, and the situation becomes even more complex when research efforts concern the wider social strata. However, it must be recognized that the *Tale* provides an opportunity to speak about generations. Thanks to a number of passages, both in the mentioned *Miracle of Saint George with the Bulgarian Warrior* and *Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by Saint George in War*, as well as in other fragments of the collection, greater precision can be achieved regarding the age estimates of those described in the hagiographical work under consideration. Attempts in this direction were made relatively long ago. In the 1940s, Duychev made several points in his comments on the *Miracle of Saint George with the Bulgarian Warrior*. He noted that the Bulgarian warrior described in the story must have been about thirty years old during the campaigns against the Magyars. A decade later, while paying attention to an unknown until that moment fourteenth-century copy of *Miracle of Saint George with the Bulgarian Warrior*, Snegarov offered different calculations<sup>23</sup>. The sound reasoning of these scholars needs to be corrected. They relied on the two known chronological landmarks: the conversion of 865 and the war of 894–896. However, both of them had solely the information from the aforementioned miracle story, which is understandable, since their comments were made before it was discovered that the text is part of the Old Bulgarian hagiographical collection, known under the

<sup>23</sup> Ив. Дуйчев, *Из старата българска книжнина*, vol. I, София 1943, p. 210–212; Ив. Снегаров, *Неизвестен досега препис от разказа „Чудо с българина Георги“*, ИИБИ 3–4, 1951, p. 295–296; ИДЕМ, *Старобългарският разказ „Чудо на Свети Георги с българина“ като исторически извор*, ГДА 4(30).2, 1954–1955, p. 217–233.

name *A Tale of the Iron Cross*. In this case, this information is essential, because in another part of the *Tale* – , the hagiographer wrote that the Bulgarian warrior George was already married when he converted to Christianity in the mid-860s<sup>24</sup>.

Taking into consideration this detail, approximate calculations can be made about the age of the warrior. Certainly, it should be taken into account that the exact age at which people entered into a marriage during the pagan period in the early medieval Bulgaria is not known. However, the fact is that the work being examined here was written by a monk or priest. Because of this, we can suppose (although with reservations) that the author of the text would not have had in mind the marital capacity other than the minimum required according to the canonical legal restrictions in the Orthodox world. In other words, the Bulgarian warrior described in the *Tale* was at least about forty-five – fifty years old in the mid-890s during the campaign against the Magyars. Given the demographic processes in Southeastern Europe during the early Middle Ages, this was quite an old age, especially in view of what is known about life expectancy at that time<sup>25</sup>. George's wife must have been of similar age. Again, in view of the demographics of the time, it is very likely for a married couple of a similar age profile to have adult sons and daughters, and even grandchildren. However, there is not even a hint of such details in the *Tale*. Although the narrative in *Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior* and *Miracle with the Woman* (fourth and fifth of the miracle stories in the version of the Old Bulgarian collection under review) does not provide an opportunity for describing heirs, in the details concerning married couple's renunciation of the secular life (in the text of the sixth story, the so-called *Miracle with the Furious Adolescent*), the situation is different. While accepting the monasticism, the settlement of property issues should inevitably include heirs, children and grandchildren, of course if there were any. The idea that the family was deliberately presented as childless arises. This is probably one of the techniques by which the hagiographer additionally aimed at highlighting the sense of difference between the two veterans: George and Clement. The contrast stands out even more when looking at the information in *Miracle with Clement*. He also survived the battles with the Magyars, but it is specifically noted that Clement had many children and relatives who were in his immediate surroundings<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 145.

<sup>25</sup> For women, this age is even 5 to 8 years lower. Cf. for example: Н. КОНДОВА, Сл. ЧОЛАКОВ, П. БОЕВ, *Палеодемографски данни за населението в средновековна България*, ИИАИМ 2, 1978, p. 27–34; Н. КОНДОВА, Сл. ЧОЛАКОВ, *Динамика на демографските процеси в средновековна България*, БЕГ 1(15).5, 1990, p. 25–32; ПДЕМ, *Антропологични данни за физическия тип продължителността на живота и заболяемостта на една средновековна популация от Добруджа*, БЕГ 3(18).3, 1993, p. 45–54.

<sup>26</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 147–151. The reasons for such a lack can be varied, depending on the creative vision of the hagiographer. A wide range of writing solutions are included here. From a narrative saturated with fictional characters, to the realization of the narration

At first glance, the passages discussed above seem to have nothing to do with military conscription in the Bulgarian society in the late ninth – early tenth centuries. However, looking at the data in the *Tale*, a question may now be posed: why the apparently old (by medieval standards) man participated in the war? Addressing this issue will reveal interesting points. As has been mentioned, the *Miracle with Clement*, unlike the *Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior*, has hardly attracted the scholars' attention. This is mainly due to the fact that the specific historical information concerning early medieval Bulgaria's political and church history in the fragment of the *Tale* referring to Clement does not appear to abound in details. However, the connection between the two stories is tangible, especially given their early-tenth-century compilation within a large collection with a complex structure, along with a common chronological and event framework. Such a peculiarity makes the parallel study and comparison of the two texts more than reasonable, and in fact necessary.

Concerning the narrative about Clement, it includes some specific details that shed light on the social background of the army in the late ninth century<sup>27</sup>. In fact, in the studies devoted to military affairs in early medieval Bulgaria sufficient space is given to the comments concerning the presence of unfree and dependent peasants or city dwellers in some detachments. However, given the vague and insufficient information in the majority of available sources, scholars are limited in what they can say with certainty on this subject<sup>28</sup>. It is important to emphasise that the *Tale's* stories are among the narratives which make it possible to overcome, at least partly, the aforementioned uncertainty. Clement's rescue is presented in a rather different context to that of George. While George was rescued after the battle was over, after the surviving participants scattered and fled, Clement, who is said to be fighting around the Bulgarian ruler Symeon (893–927), is described in the midst of the battle at the moment when the Magyars prevailed and he found himself isolated from his unit. The hagiographer pointed out Clement's initial misapprehension: the rescued warrior assumed that his savior was someone from the

---

by building "collective" characters, resting in part or entirely on the personal experiences of people with whom the author was in contact. Cf. Ch. MESSIS, *Fiction and/or Novelisation in Byzantine Hagiography...*, p. 314–315, 326–334. The hagiographer described a childless family, but did not mean the one that lost its heirs in the course of the Magyar raids in 895–896. The latter does not seem likely, since according to the data, the village of the Bulgarian warrior was beyond the reach of Magyar raids. Cf. К. СТАНЕВ, *Влияние на унгарските нашествия от 894–896 г. върху миграционните процеси в българските земи*, Мин 4, 2008, p. 9–24; Я. ХРИСТОВ, *Едно пътуване през Източна Стара планина (по данни от „Сказание за железния кръст“)*, ИРИМГ 2, 2014, p. 70–77.

<sup>27</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 148.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. for example: Ш. АТАНАСОВ et al., *Българското военно изкуство през феодализма*, София 1958, p. 41–52; Д. АНГЕЛОВ, Ст. КАШЕВ, Б. ЧОЛПАНОВ, *Българска военна история. От античността до втората четвърт на X век*, София 1983, p. 136–137; *История на българите*, vol. V, *Военна история на българите от древността до наши дни*, ed. Е. АЛЕКСАНДРОВ, Д. ЗАФИРОВ, София 2007, p. 57–72.



entourage of the boyars he knew. Moreover, the description does not refer to some kind of ordinary camp servants, but to obviously trained bold people who were actively involved in the heat of the battle and took on responsible and dangerous tasks<sup>29</sup>.

The above-mentioned details further deepen the idea of the difference between the two warriors described in the miracle stories. George did have dependent farmhands in his household. According to the information, the warrior did not belong to the aristocracy, but he was a wealthy owner of a relatively large farm with workers and servants. As for the clearer highlighting of the social status and public position of the Bulgarian warrior George, a look at a manuscript (a *Prologue*) kept in the Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – so-called *N 73* (BAS), is particularly productive. The manuscript contains two of the *Tale's* stories – a full (long) redaction of the *Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior* (folia 355b – the first two lines of 358a) as well as the *Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake* (folia 358a – 359b). From line 13 to line 17 of folio 356a a very unambiguous phrase emphasises that George did not have (and did not acquire) a high position in the recently Christianised Bulgarian society and did not belong to the aristocracy or the ruler's milieu. In the record in question it is also specified that the Bulgarian warrior was a member of a conscripted unit of self-armed and self-equipped horsemen:

...Father, I have never ever had a rank at all, any, and I have not lived where the knyaz lived, but outside and with my spear I fought...

...Азъ оуѣ нѣсмь сана ималъ. николиже никоѣгоже. ни ѣсмь жилъ гдѣ и князь живѣше. нѣ вънѣ и своимъ копѣемъ воѣвѣ...

– reads this illustrative passage of the unabridged text<sup>30</sup>.

There is a slight discrepancy in the quoted passage in the publication of the story by Angelov. The text is as follows:

...Father, I have never ever had a rank at all, any, and I have not lived where the knyaz lived, but outside and with my horse I fought...

...Азъ оуѣ нѣсмь сана ималъ николиже никоѣгоже, ни ѣсмь жилъ гдѣ и князь живѣше, нѣ вънѣ, и своимъ конемъ [instead of копѣемъ – Y.H., D.K.] воѣвѣ...<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, р. 148.

<sup>30</sup> ИВ. СНЕГАРОВ, *Старобългарският разказ...*, р. 226.

<sup>31</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Старославянски текстове: 1. Нов препис на старобългарския разказ „Чудото с българина“; 2. Разказ за пастира, ухапан от змия*, ИИБЛ 2, 1955, р. 171–172. Before accusing either scholar of inaccuracy or carelessness in reading the text, or giving too much importance to the

It is significant that in the short edition of the *Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior*, which can be seen within the version of *A Tale of the Iron Cross* known today, this part (just like the passage about Symeon's coup) was abbreviated and contains some gaps. On the pages of the long-awaited modern Bulgarian translation of the hagiographical work, M. Spasova fills in italics the gaps according to the fourteenth-century Russian/East-Slavonic copy from the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergius. However, this copy does not fully correspond to the passage under consideration in the above-cited unabridged version of *The Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior*, preserved in the *Prologue N 73* (BAS). As a result, the translation is undeniably perfect and accurate in every respect, but differs as to the historical information. The text reads:

...Father, I had never had a rank, nor did I live where the knyaz used to live, but outside, among the people...

...Язъ оуѣ, сана нѣсмь личѣлѣ никоигоже, ни нсмь жилѣ, идѣже князь живаше, но внѣ, въ людехъ...<sup>32</sup>

It should be expressly noted that this is by no means a criticism of the discrepancies. Spasova explicitly emphasises that she strives to maintain the greatest proximity to the Old Bulgarian protograph in order to achieve not only credibility, but also stylistic equivalence between the medieval primary source and its modern Bulgarian translation<sup>33</sup>. The clarifications presented in this article regarding this specific passage are due to the fact that in the fourteenth-century Russian copy from the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergius, the adverb “never” (николиже) is missing and the end of the sentence has been changed from “and I fought with my spear/with my horse” (и своимъ копіемъ / коніемъ воужѣ) into “among the people”

\_\_\_\_\_

aforementioned discrepancy, several important details should be pointed out. The relevant section of the manuscript *N 73* (BAS) is, unfortunately, quite damaged in many places. One of the most torn and worn sections is on the folio 356. The damage is not contained only to the edges. Along with the holes and torn parts, a diagonal tear caused particularly severe damage to the text. Beside many other obviously damaged areas, the word in question is also within the affected area. Nevertheless, the letters **ІѢ**, **М** and **Н** are relatively easy to read. The first two signs cause considerable difficulty. It is important to note that the initial **К** in question, halved and almost completely destroyed by the tear and the **О** that followed it, does not affect the different ways to read it. The situation with the third symbol is different. It has two vertical lines and one horizontal. Given the damage and the graphological specifics of the manuscript, the letter can easily be read both as **П** and as **Н**. Cf.: Хр. Кодов, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в библиотеката на Българската академия на науките*, София 1969, p. 143–145.

<sup>32</sup> М. СПАСОВА, *Сказание за железния кръст (превод)*..., p. 198. Cf. also: А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Не где князь живет но вне (Болгарское общество конца IX века «Сказании о железном кресте»)*, Слав 2, 2005, p. 20–27.

<sup>33</sup> М. СПАСОВА, *Езикови особености на “Сказание за железния кръст”*, [in:] А. КАЛОЯНОВ, М. СПАСОВА, Т. МОЛЛОВ, *“Сказание за железния кръст”*..., p. 172.

(ВЪ ЛЮДЕХЪ). At first glance, these details are not significant, but when considering the specific problems concerning the social profile of the combatants from the miracle stories, they are of key importance. Without focusing on the details in question, it would not have stood out that the Bulgarian warrior George completed the military service in person and alone, along with others like him in the conscripted unit. None of his household servants accompanied him either on the first or the second campaign against the Magyars, regardless the fact that given his description he was not young during the war of 894–896.

As for Clement, he is also said to possess servants (perhaps domestic slaves, rather than dependents – Y.H., D.K.)<sup>34</sup>. However, the actions of the two warriors after the first march were different. Miraculously surviving, George returned to his home village. Clement also participated in the first ill-fated bloody battle with the Magyars, but after his deliverance, he headed to the fortress of Mădra Drăstarska, where he continued to live and where in fact Bulgarian ruler Symeon (893–927) initially found refuge after the defeat<sup>35</sup>. The hagiographer gives additional nuances provided by the passages from the texts relating to the military organisation of the units in the early medieval Bulgaria. These lines from the *Tale* have often attracted the attention of scholars. They concern the note that the military squad from George's village numbered 50 men<sup>36</sup>. Undoubtedly, *The Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior* provides grounds for such a statement. In the work, apart from the mention of the first squad, defeated by the Magyars and of which only three men returned to their village, there is also a note of another one. What is more, it was formed by men from the same settlement and it was composed of both veterans of the first campaign and new recruits<sup>37</sup>. It is this fact that arouses interest and is the basis of the claim that the passage has not been fully interpreted. The assumption is that in the eighth–ninth centuries all men from the free peasantry who were fit to bear arms served in the units of the Bulgarian army. However, according to the *Tale*, at least half of George's combat-capable fellow villagers did not participate in the first phase of the war. The enigma that this information poses finds its reasonable solution only if the nature of the recruitment (general and/or territorial) is clarified<sup>38</sup>, and accordingly, what form of it is recorded in the Old Bulgarian

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 147, 149.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Мундрага и Тича-Вичина*, ИНМВ 21(36), 1895, p. 17–23; А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Мъдра Пльсковская и Мъдра Дръсторская...*, p. 40–60.

<sup>36</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 141.

<sup>37</sup> Ив. СНЕГАРОВ, *Старобългарският разказ...*, p. 227; Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, p. 142, 143.

<sup>38</sup> In detail, with a review and comment on the opinions, the problem is presented by Zhivko Zhekov. He emphasises the fact that by the mid- to the second half of the ninth century the decimal organization of the units conscripted on a territorial basis, but with a strong influence of the previous clan-based system, was already established in the Bulgarian state. Cf. Ж. ЖЕКОВ, *България и Византия VII–IX в. Военна администрация*, София 2007, p. 89–97.

collection of miracle stories. In this regard, the data in the *Miracle with the Bulgarian Warrior* and *Miracle with Clement* are particularly informative. The members of the unit in both the stories are presented as associates. In the text about Clement, it is explicitly emphasised that they were not relatives. According to the records about George, as has been pointed out, his only relative was his wife<sup>39</sup>. Given the information, it seems that the idea of the local-territorial principle of recruitment is more easily acceptable. In this case, a serious difficulty arises when searching for an adequate answer to the question of why not all of the military conscripts from the village had taken part in the first march. In view of the small chronological distance between the two phases of the war it is impossible to accept that the greater part of the members of the second squad were age-unfit to join the previous one. Perhaps the explanations (or at least part of them) are related to the entire nature of the Bulgarian-Byzantine conflict at the dawn of Symeon's rule, which changed from a two-sided into a four-sided one. It seems reasonable that the newly ascended ruler did not see the need to harness all the military might of the state for the initial clash with the Empire. Subsequently, pressured by the events, he managed to do so only during the counter-offensive against the Magyars. With such a development, it is understandable why only some of the conscripted villagers were included in the original military actions described in the *Tale*.

Drawing a parallel with the Byzantine military-administrative districts, the so-called themes, is also tempting. In the interest of objectivity, it is necessary to note that the village of George referred to in the hagiographic work may have been a military settlement, whose inhabitants were obliged to equip and maintain a certain detachment with specific numbers and weapons. The aforementioned "outside", when considering the early-ninth – early eleventh-century realities in Bulgaria, refers not to the capital and the surrounding central inner area of the state, but to the so-called comitates (military and administrative districts); this, too, provides reasons for arriving at such a conclusion. However, before seeing some kind of a Bulgarian equivalent of the Byzantine military organization in these arrangements, we should draw attention to some of its other features<sup>40</sup>. The data from the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories do not make a definite connection between land ownership and military conscription, although both warriors were presented as wealthy. Therefore, it can be stated that a stage of advancing social stratification was registered.

With a certain amount of caution it should be noted that, at least as far as the information in the considered primary source is concerned, the obligation to participate in the army was transferred to one part of the population, while the economic efforts in agriculture, animal husbandry and craft production were reserved for another. This idea finds support in the text – the exact number of the unit(s);

<sup>39</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, р. 142.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Ж. ЖЕКОВ, *България и Византия VII–IX в....*, р. 143–321.

the fact that, regardless of manpower losses, the settlement was able to recruit again, and within a short period of time; the fact that dependent farm workers did not participate in the marches; the military unfitness and non-belonging to the military class of some of those described in the *Miracle with Clement*<sup>41</sup>.

## Conclusion

The information discussed above can only be considered definitive within the context of the particular medieval literary Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories. However, the described details are significant enough and definitely cannot and should not be disregarded, especially given the early Old Bulgarian record of some of the inherent motives and creative solutions. In fact, the similarity to the emblematic Byzantine hagiographical works of the era and at the same time the sufficient variety of distinguishing notes that demonstrate the erudition and broad vision of the *Tale's* author are impressive.

It is also notheworthy that within the framework of the *Tale* itself there is not even a hint of military action between Bulgaria and the Empire. The hagiographer found it necessary to describe to the audience only the clashes with the Magyars. The information is presented in the first person, as if by an immediate participant and witness. Such a particular feature of the collection of miracle stories might to a certain extent be explained by the special literary life of the work and the possibility that the original version of the veterans' oral war stories were written by a contemporary clergyman relatively soon after the events in question.

Despite the lack of records concerning clashes on the battlefield between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, the *Tale* provides an opportunity to highlight interesting information about the participants in the war of 894–896. The author explicitly stated that in the Bulgarian armies during the late ninth – early tenth century the conscription was personal, and the conscript could not be replaced. Regardless of social stratification, such an opportunity was denied even to the members of military units who were quite wealthy and had many dependents. The information in the Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories confirms the operational flexibility of the military command at the beginning of Symeon's reign. In accordance with the tactical decisions and strategic directions of the military strike, both full and partial mobilisation could be implemented. Of particular interest and key importance is the fact that for the conscripts from the provinces, dropping out of the army was not associated with old age.

---

<sup>41</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Сказание за железния кръст...*, р. 141–143, 147–151.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- ANGELOV B., *Skazanie za železnija kräst*, “Старобългарска литература” / “Starobälgarska literatura” 1, 1971, p. 121–155 (= *Skazanie za zhelezniya krast*, [in:] *Iz starata balgarska, ruska i srabska literatura*, vol. III, ed. B. ANGELOV, Sofija 1978, p. 61–78).
- ANGELOV B., *Staroslavjanski tekstove: 1. Nov prepis na starobalgarskiya razkaz “Chudoto s balgarina”; 2. Razkaz za pastira, uhanan ot zmiya*, “Известия на института за Българска литература” / “Izvestija na Institutata za Bälgarska literatura” 2, 1955, p. 166–177.
- ANRICH G., *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche. Text und Untersuchungen*, vol. I, Berlin 1913.
- AUFHAUSEN J.B., *Miracula Sancti Georgii*, Leipzig 1913.
- Basilicorum libri LX*, Series A, vol. I, *Textus lubrorum I–VIII*, ed. H.J. SCHELTEMA, N. VAN DER WAL, Groningen 1955.
- The Chronicle of the Logothete*, trans. St. WAHLGREN, Liverpool 2019 [= Translated Texts for Byzantinists, 7].
- CONSTANTINO PORFIROGENITO, *De thematibus*, ed. A. PERTUSI, Rome–Città del Vaticano 1952.
- The De Thematibus (‘On the Themes’) of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus*, trans., praef. J. HALDON, Liverpool 2021 [= Translated Texts for Byzantinists, 11].
- DUYCHEV IV., *Iz starata bälgarska knizhnina*, vol. I, Sofija 1943.
- KODOV Hr., *Opis na slavjanskite räkopisi v bibliotekata na Bälgarskata akademija na naukite*, Sofija 1969.
- Nomokanon Konstantinopol’skogo patriarkha Fotiya, s tolkovaniyem VasaI’ mona*, pars 2, ed. V. NORBEKOV, Kazan’ 1899.
- Les Nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage. Texte et traduction*, ed. P. NOAILLES, A. DAIN, Paris 1944.
- SNEGAROV IV., *Neizvesten do sega prepis ot razkaza „Chudo s balgarina Georgi”*, “Известия на Института за Българска История” / “Izvestija na Institutata za Bälgarska Istorija” 3–4, 1951, p. 295–296.
- SNEGAROV IV., *Starobälgarskijat razkaz „Chudo na Sveti Georgi s bälgarina” kato istoricheski izvor*, “Годишник на Духовната Академия” / “Godishnik na Duhovnata Akademiya” 4(30).2, 1954–1955, p. 217–233.
- Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, ed. St. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 44.1].
- Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister [Pseudo-Symeon], Georgius Monachus*, ed. I. БЕККЕР, Bonn 1838 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*, 33].

### Secondary Literature

- ALWIS A., *The Hagiographer’s Craft: Narrators and Focalisation in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *The Hagiographical Experiment. Developing Discourses of Sainthood*, ed. Ch. GRAY, J. CORKE-WEBSTER, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, 158], p. 300–332, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004421332\\_013](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004421332_013)
- ANGELOV D., KASHEV St., CHOLPANOV B., *Bälgarska voenna istorija. Ot antichnostta do vtorata chetvart na X vek*, Sofija 1983.

- ANGUŠEVA A., GAGOVA N., MILTENOVA AN., SLAVOVA T., STOJKOVA A., *Knjižovnostta po vremeto na car Simeon*, [in:] *Bälgarskijat Zlaten vek. Sbornik v čest na car Simeon Veliki (893–927)*, ed. V. GJUZELEV, IL.G. ILIEV, K. NENOV, Plovdiv 2015, p. 213–276.
- ATANASOV Sht. et al., *Bälgarskoto voenno izkustvo prez feodalizma*, Sofija 1958.
- BOZHILOV IV., *Bälgarskata agiografija i vizantiyskata agiografija*, [in:] IV. BOZHILOV, *Sedem etyuda po Srednevekovna istoriya*, Sofija 1995, p. 307–335.
- CHRISTIDES V., *The Raids of the Moslems of Crete in the Aegean Sea: Piracy and Conquest*, “Byzantion” 51.1, 1981, p. 76–111.
- DRAGOVA N., *Starobälgarsko voynsko skazanie ot IX v.*, “Проблеми на българския фолклор” / “Problemi na bälgarskija folklor” 8, 1991, p. 156–167.
- DRAGOVA N., *Voynsko skazanie v starobälgarskata literatura ot Simeonovata epoha (IX–X v.)*, “Старобългарска литература” / “Starobälgarska literatura” 25–26, 1991, p. 47–57.
- EFTHYMIADIS St., *Chrétien et sarrasins en Italie méridionale et en Asie Mineure (IX<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle). Essai d'étude comparée*, [in:] *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine. Acquis et nouvelles recherches*, ed. G. NOYÉ, J.-M. MARTIN, A. JACOB, Rome 2006, p. 589–618.
- EFTHYMIADIS St., *Collections of Miracles (Fifth–Fifteenth Centuries)*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II, *Genres and Contexts*, ed. St. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham 2014, p. 103–142, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315141909-5>
- EFTHYMIADIS St., *Greek Byzantine Collections of Miracles. A Chronological and Bibliographical Survey*, “Symbolae Osloenses” 74.1, 1999, p. 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679908590963>
- EFTHYMIADIS St., *Saints and Secondary Heroes in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *Constructing the Saints in Greek and Latin Hagiography. Heroes and Heroiness in Late Antique and Medieval Narrative*, ed. K. DE MEMMERMAN, J. VAN PELT, K. STAAT, Turnhout 2023, p. 33–56, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.FABULAE-EB.5.132447>
- FYNN-PAUL J., *Empire, Monotheism and Slavery in the Greater Mediterranean Region from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era*, “Past and Present” 205, 2009, p. 3–40, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtp036>
- FYNN-PAUL J., *Introduction. Slaving Zones in Global History: The Evolution of a Concept*, [in:] *Slaving Zones. Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in Evolution of Global Slavery*, ed. J. FYNN-PAUL, D. ALAN PARGAS, Leiden 2018, p. 1–19, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356481\\_002](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004356481_002)
- GOLDWIN A. J., *Witness Literature in Byzantium. Narrating Slaves, Prisoners, and Refugees*, Cham 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78857-5>
- HINTERBERGER M., *Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II, *Genres and Contexts*, ed. St. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham 2014, p. 25–60, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315141909-3>
- HRISTOV Y., *Edno patuvane prez Iztochna Stara planina (po danni ot „Skazanie za zhelezniya krast“)*, “Известия на Регионалния исторически музей – Габрово” / “Izvestija na Regionalnija istoricheski muzey Gabrovo” 2, 2014, p. 70–77.
- HRISTOV Y., *Prisoners of War in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Preliminary Remarks)*, “Studia Ceranea” 5, 2015, p. 73–105, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.05.03>
- HRISTOV Y., *Travelling and Travellers: Persons, Reasons, and Destinations according to ‘A Tale of the Iron Cross’*, [in:] *Voyages and Travel Accounts in Historiography and Literature*, ed. B. STOJKOVSKI, Budapest 2020, p. 33–54.
- HRISTOV Y., *Written Not with Ink but with Tears: Byzantine Civilians in Bulgarian Captivity according to the Letters of Patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos (901–907, 912–925)*, “Mediaevalia” 43, 2022, p. 137–169, <https://doi.org/10.1353/mdi.0.0005>

- Istorija na bälgarite, vol. V, Voenna istorija na bälgarite ot drevnostta do nashi dni, ed. E. ALEKSANDROV, D. ZAFIROV, Sofija 2007.
- Istorija na bälgarskata srednovekovna literatura, ed. An. MILTENOVA, Sofija 2008.
- KAZHDAN A., *Hagiographical Notes* (5–8), “Byzantion” 54, 1984, p. 176–192.
- KAZHDAN A., ANGELIDI Ch., *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, Athens 2006.
- KOLIA-DERMITZAKI A., *Some Remarks on the Fate of Prisoners of War in Byzantium (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, [in:] *Atti del Congresso Interdisciplinare di Studi Storici La liberazione dei ‘captivi’ tra Cristianità e Islam: Oltre la Crociata e il Ġihād: Tolleranza e servizio umanitario*, ed. G. CIPOLLONE, Città del Vaticano 2000, p. 583–620.
- KONDOVA N., CHOLAKOV Sl., *Antropologichni danni za fizicheskiya tip prodalzhitelnostta na zhivota i zabolevaemostta na edna srednovekovna populatsiya ot Dobrudzha*, “Българска етнография” / “Balgarska etnografiya” 3(18).3, 1993, p. 45–54.
- KONDOVA N., CHOLAKOV Sl., *Dinamika na demografskite protsesi v srednovekovna Balgariya*, “Българска етнография” / “Balgarska etnografija” 1(15).5, 1990, p. 25–32.
- KONDOVA N., CHOLAKOV Sl., BOEV P., *Paleodemografski danni za naselenieto v srednovekovna Balgariya*, “Интердисциплинарни изследвания на Археологическия институт и музей” / “Interdisciplinarni izsledvaniya na Arheologicheski institut i muzej” 2, 1978, p. 27–34.
- LEIDHOLM N., *Parents and Children, Servants and Masters: Slaves, Freedmen, and the Family in Byzantium*, [in:] *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, ed. M.E. STEWART, D.A. PARNELL, C. WHATELY, London–New York 2022, p. 263–281, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429031373-18>
- LENNART R., *Fiction and Reality in the Hagiographer’s Self-Presentation*, “Travaux et mémoires” 14, 2002, p. 547–552.
- LENSKI N., *Slavery in the Byzantine Empire*, [in:] *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. II, AD 500–AD 1420, ed. S.L. ENGERMAN, D. RICHARDSON, C. PERRY, Cambridge 2021, p. 453–481, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139024723.019>
- LEONTISI M., *The Byzantine and Arab Navies in the South Aegean and Crete: Shipping, Mobility and Transport (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> c.)*, “Graeco-Arabica” 12, 2017, p. 171–233.
- LUNDE I., *Slavic Hagiography*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. I, *Periods and Places*, ed. St. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham 2014, p. 369–383.
- LYKAKI M., *L’économie du pillage et les prisonniers de guerre: Byzance, VI<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *Pillages, tributs, captifs. Prédation et sociétés de l’antiquité tardive au haut Moyen-Âge*, ed. R. KELLER, L. SARTI, Paris 2018, p. 89–102, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pSORbonne.39959>
- LYKAKI M., *Oi aichmalōtoi polémou stē Byzantinē Aftokratoría (6<sup>os</sup>–11<sup>os</sup> ai.): Ekklēsia, Krátos, diplōmatia kai koinōnikē diastasē*, Athens–Paris 2016 (unpublished PhD Thesis).
- MCGRATH S., *Warfare as Literary Narrative*, [in:] *A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300–1204*, ed. Y. STOURIATIS, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= Brill’s Companions to the Byzantine World, 3], p. 160–195, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004363731\\_007](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004363731_007)
- MESSIS Ch., *Fiction and/or Novelisation in Byzantine Hagiography*, [in:] *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. II, *Genres and Contexts*, ed. St. EFTHYMIADIS, Farnham 2014, p. 313–341, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315141909-14>
- MESSIS Ch., *La mémoire de «je» souffrant: Construite et écrire la mémoire personnelle dans les récits de captivité*, [in:] *L’écriture de la mémoire. La littérature de l’historiographie. Actes de III<sup>e</sup> colloque international philologique «EMPHNEIA», Nicosie, 6–7–8 mai 2004 organisé par l’E.H.E.S.S. et l’Université de Chypre*, ed. P. ODORICO et al., Paris 2006, p. 107–146.



- MORRIS R., *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118*, Cambridge 1995, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511523076>
- NEVILLE L., *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, Cambridge 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139626880>
- ODORICO P., *Les trois vidages de la même violence: Les trois prises de Thessalonique*, [in:] *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérature de l'historiographie. Actes di IIIe colloque international philologique «EMPHNEIA»*, Nicosie, 6–7–8 mai 2004 organisé par l'E.H.E.S.S. et l'Université de Chypre, ed. P. ODORICO et al., Paris 2006, p. 147–179.
- PENNA D., *The Role of Slaves in the Byzantine Economy, 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Centuries: Legal Aspects*, [in:] *Slavery in the Black Sea Region, c. 900–1900. Forms of Unfreedom at the Intersection between Christianity and Islam*, ed. F. ROŞU, Leiden 2021, p. 63–89, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004470897\\_005](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004470897_005)
- RAMADĀN A., *The Treatment of Arab Prisoners of War in Byzantium, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, “Annales Islamologiques” 43, 2009, p. 155–194.
- ROTMAN Y., *Byzance face à l'Islam arabe, VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècle: D'un droit territorial à l'identité par la foi*, “Annales: histoire, sciences sociales” 60.4, 2005, p. 767–788, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0395264900018667>
- ROTMAN Y., *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. J.M. TODD, Cambridge Massachusetts 2009.
- SHUKUROV R., *Barbarians, Philanthropy, and Byzantine Missionism*, [in:] *Philanthropy in Anatolia through the Ages: The First International Suna & İnan Kiraç Symposium on Mediterranean Civilizations (March 26–29, 2019, Antalya): Proceedings*, ed. O. TEKİN, Ch.H. ROOSEVELT, E. AKYÜREK, İstanbul 2020, p. 141–152.
- SIMEONOV G., *In Enemy Hands: the Byzantine Experience of Captivity between the Seventh and Tenth Centuries*, “Early Medieval Europe” 31.3, 2023, p. 430–458, <https://doi.org/10.1111/emed.12642>
- SOPHOULIS P., *War and Identity in Early Medieval Bulgaria*, [in:] *War and Collective Identity in the Middle Ages: East, West, and Beyond*, ed. Y. STOURIATIS, Leeds 2023, p. 87–98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.3129720.8>
- SPASOVA M., *Ezikovi osobenosti na “Skazanie za železnija krăst”*, [in:] “Skazanie za železnija krăst” i epohata na tsar Simeon, ed. A. KALOJANOV, M. SPASOVA, T. MOLLOV, Veliko Tărnovo 2007, p. 123–171.
- STANEV K., *Vliyanie na ungarskite nashestviya ot 894–896 g. varhu migratsionnite protsesi v balgarskite zemi*, “Минало” / “Minalo” 4, 2008, p. 9–24.
- TREADGOLD W., *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137280862>
- TURILOV A., *K izučeniju Skazaniya inoka Christodula: datirovka cikla i imja avtor*, [in:] *Florilegium. K 60-letiju B.N. Flori: Sb. statej*, ed. A.A. TURILOV, Moskva 2000, p. 412–427.
- TURILOV A., *M'dra P'škovskaja i M'dra Dr'storskaja – dve Mundragi pervoy bolgarno-vengerskoj vojny (geografija čudes vnič. Georgija v Skazanii inoka Christodula)*, [in:] *Slavjane i ich sosedi. Slavjane i kočevoy mir*, vol. X, ed. B.N. FLORJA et al., Moskva 2001, p. 40–58.
- TURILOV A., *Ne gde knjaz' živet no vne (Bolgarskoye obščestvo konca IX veka «Skazanii o železnom kreste»)*, “Славяноведение” / “Slavjanovedeniye” 2, 2005, p. 20–27.
- TURILOV A., *Vizantijskij i slavjanskij plasty v “Skazanie inoka Christodula”*. (K voprosu proischoždenii pamjatnika), [in:] *Slavjane i ich sosedi. Grečeskij i slavjanskij mir v srednie veka i novoe vremja*, vol. VI, Moskva 1996, p. 81–99.

WIERBIŃSKI S., *Prospective Gain or Actual Cost? Arab Civilian and Military Captives in the Light of Byzantine Narrative Sources and Military Manuals from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century*, "Studia Ceranea" 8, 2018, p. 253–283, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.08.14>

ЗНЕКОВ Zh., *Bălgarija i Vizantija VII–IX v. Voenna administratsija*, Sofija 2007.

**Yanko M. Hristov**

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"  
Faculty of Law and History  
Department of History  
66 Ivan Mihaylov Str.  
2700 Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria  
[hristiqnko@gmail.com](mailto:hristiqnko@gmail.com)


**Dafina Kostadinova**

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"  
Faculty of Philology  
Department of Germanic and Romance Studies  
66 Ivan Mihaylov Str.  
2700 Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria  
[dafinakostadinova@yahoo.com](mailto:dafinakostadinova@yahoo.com)





Liviu Marius Ilie (Craiova)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3158-5291>

## NUNNERY LIFE IN 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WALLACHIA – MUȘA/MAGDALINA BEFORE AND AFTER TAKING VOWS

**Abstract.** The Wallachian monasteries are very well documented in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but the life of nuns or monks after joining the monastery is a lesser-known aspect. Various details can be found in the life of a noblewoman (taking the name of Mușă), who decided to become a nun (Magdalina) during the first years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Mușă's life before entering the monastery is not very well known. Although many researchers tried to link her to the Craiovescu family, one of the most influential families in Wallachia at that time, this paper argues against this opinion. The historical sources describe her as a relative of a Wallachian nobleman, Cârjeu, and as the wife of Hamza, another important nobleman from the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Mușă took vows in the monastery, which she built, and even after she became a nun, she preserved some of her former habits. Thus, the nun Magdalina kept in her possession villages and Roma families, which she donated to different monasteries, a widespread situation in the Byzantine monasticism. Although the sources did not describe her everyday life as a nun, they documented her relations with the political and ecclesiastical elites.

**Keywords:** monasticism, Wallachia, 16th century, donation, charter

Leaving the ordinary life and entering a monastery was a common theme in the history of Christianity. Either rich or poor, young or old, men or women, those who decided to take vows had to obey strict rules and abandon their former lifestyle. How did a person behave when facing this change in their personal life? Several documents, most of them from the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia, might offer a possible answer to this question. The charters describe Mușă, a noblewoman who decided to become a nun and consequently changed her name to Magdalina; she inherited various properties which she used during her monastic life to build a monastery and donated goods and slaves to others. Such was also the situation in the Byzantine Empire, after choosing the monastic life, wealthy persons kept at least some of their estates. From this point of view, Magdalina acted according to common practice, since there were several cases of nuns or monks in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia who did the same. The traces of her life can be followed in different Wallachian documents; they describe when

and where she became a nun, how she lived after taking vows, and when she died. The sources which depict her life are mostly charters written in the Wallachian princely chancery; however, the document issued by Magdalina offer a more personal view of herself. Beyond her interesting life, Muşa/Magdalina illustrates the monastic transformation in Wallachian late Middle Ages and early modern era. The relationship with her family was not abandoned after entering the monastery, as she received estates together with her former husband and sons.

### The names

Her name before taking vows was Muşa. A charter issued by Radu the Great (1495–1508)<sup>1</sup> on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1503, was given to ‘Muşa from Corbi’ and attested her possession of villages, gypsies (Roma slaves), and a mill<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, a diptych from the monastery Bistriţa<sup>3</sup> mentioned the name ‘Muşa’<sup>4</sup> with no other references to a family name; as in many other cases in Wallachian history, the diptych recorded only the baptismal names.

Her monastic name, Magdalina, was firstly recorded in another document issued by Radu the Great on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1506<sup>5</sup>. When she entered monasticism, she kept the first letter (‘M’) of her former given name in the monastic one. This was a common practice during the previous centuries in the Byzantine Empire and might have passed to the Byzantine Commonwealth. Alice-Mary Talbot and Stamatina McGrath analysed the practice of *metonomasia* (the change of name) in the Byzantine monasticism and, for the Palaiologan period, they concluded: ‘A change of name is recorded for approximately 210 individuals of whom 188 or ca. 90% took a new monastic name beginning with the same letter as their baptismal name’<sup>6</sup>. In this context, Muşa/Magdalina is an example of this common practice in the Orthodox Church from the end of the medieval period to the modern times.

<sup>1</sup> On the dates of reign of the Wallachian princes from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century, cf. C. REZACHEVICI, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova, a. 1324–1881*, vol. I, (Secolele XIV–XVI), București 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. II, (1501–1525), ed. Ș. ȘTEFĂNESCU, O. DIACONESCU, București 1972 (cetera: DRH, B, II), p. 56. On the history of the Roma people in Romania, cf. V. ACHIM, *The Roma in Romanian History*, Budapest 2004.

<sup>3</sup> *Inscripții din bisericile României*, vol. I, ed. N. IORGA, București 1905, p. 202. Bistrița monastery was founded by the Craiovescu family in Vâlcea county at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (N. STOICESCU, *Bibliografia localităților și monumentelor feudale din România*, vol. I, Țara Românească (Muntenia, Oltenia și Dobrogea), pars 1, (A–L), Craiova 1970, p. 71).

<sup>4</sup> On the origin of the name Muşa, cf. N.A. CONSTANTINESCU, *Dicționar onomastic românesc*, București 1963, p. 329.

<sup>5</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> A.-M. TALBOT, S. MCGRATH, *Monastic Onomastics*, [in:] *Monastères, images, pouvoirs et sociétés à Byzance*, ed. M. KAPLAN, Paris 2006, p. 89–118 (Monastères, images, pouvoirs et société à Byzance – Monastic Onomastics – Éditions de la Sorbonne (openedition.org) [8 IV 2023]).

The sources recorded Mușă/Magdalina with a third name: Cârjeovița<sup>7</sup>, Cârjeoane<sup>8</sup>/Cârjoane<sup>9</sup>, Cârjăoae<sup>10</sup>. These linguistic versions come from the masculine name Cârjeu<sup>11</sup>, who was a relative of Mușă. Even if she did not have a family name, this third version demonstrates that women could have names derived from their male relatives.

### Mușă – the noblewoman

Few sources refer to Mușă's life before entering the monastery. A late document from April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1615, issued by the Wallachian prince Radu Șerban (1601; 1602–1610; 1611)<sup>12</sup>, mentioned 'the nun Magdalina, Cârjeu's noblewoman (jupanița)'<sup>13</sup>. Cârjeu was dead during Vlad the Monk's reign (1481, 1482–1495)<sup>14</sup>; the long period between his death and the document issued by Radu Șerban (1605) prompted some researchers to question the matrimonial relationship between Mușă and Cârjeu; a possible father–daughter kinship was proposed<sup>15</sup>.

A long debate between the owners of the mills on Râul Doamnei (Princess' River) brought to light more details about Mușă. The mills had been possessed by Cârjeu and after his death the land nearby was occupied by the inhabitants of a neighbouring village. They offered the mills to Pârveu Craiovescu, a boyar from the most influential noble family in Wallachia at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>16</sup>. Few years later, Mușă claimed that the land nearby

<sup>7</sup> In a document issued by the Wallachian voivode Neagoe Basarab on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1512 (DRH, B, II, p. 218).

<sup>8</sup> In a document issued by Vlad Vintilă on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1533 (*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. III, (1526–1535), ed. D. MIȚOC et al., București 1975 (cetera: DRH, B, III), p. 238–239).

<sup>9</sup> In a charter issued by Peter the Young on January 8<sup>th</sup>, <1563> (*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. V, (1551–1565), ed. D. MIȚOC, M. ADAM CHIPER, București 1983 (cetera: DRH, B, V), p. 283).

<sup>10</sup> In a charter issued by Mircea the Shepherd (1545–1552; 1553–1554; 1558–1559) on 7058 <September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1549 – August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1550> (*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. IV, (1536–1550), ed. D. MIȚOC et al., București 1981 (cetera: DRH, B, IV), p. 336).

<sup>11</sup> A. BERCARU, *Derivarea numelor feminine în limba română*, RSLa 41, 2006, p. 200–201; for more details on the name Cârjeu, cf. R. LAMBRU, *Nume de persoane la români în secolele XIV–XV (Țara Românească)*, București 2022, p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> On the dates of reign of Radu Șerban, cf. *Istoria românilor*, vol. V, *O epocă de înnoiri în spirit european (1601–1711/1716)*, ed. V. CÂNDEA, C. REZACHEVICI, N. EDROIU, București 2012, p. 1039.

<sup>13</sup> *Documente privind istoria României. B. Țara Românească. Veacul XVII*, vol. II, (1611–1615), ed. I. IONAȘCU et al., București 1951 (cetera: DIR, B, Veac XVII, vol. II), p. 382.

<sup>14</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 240.

<sup>15</sup> D. BARBU, *O mărturie a relațiilor artistice româno-grecești: Corbiile de Piatră (datare și încadrare stilistică)*, CICSEE 4, 1987, p. 119.

<sup>16</sup> About Pârveu Craiovescu, cf. N. STOICESCU, *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV–XVI)*, București 1971, p. 18.

the mills was her inheritance from Cârjeu. The trial was judged by the Wallachian prince Radu the Great and the land was given to Muşa, who did not keep the mills for herself, but gave them to Bistriţa monastery, built and dedicated by Pârveu Craiovescu and his brothers (Barbu, Danciu and Radu)<sup>17</sup>. No details about the kinship between Cârjeu and Muşa is revealed by the charter, but they were obviously her relatives, since Muşa inherited the mills and the land. After donating the mills to the monastery, Muşa's name was written in a diptych of Bistriţa monastery<sup>18</sup>. The document issued on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1533 was very clear when mentioning this situation – immediately after describing the donation to Bistriţa, the scribe added: 'And [her name] was written in the holy diptych'<sup>19</sup>. Without paying too much attention to this text, many Romanian researchers considered that Muşa was a sister of the founders of Bistriţa – the Craiovescu brothers – as her name was written in the diptych of this monastery<sup>20</sup>. They must have confused her origin with the later donation. Moreover, it is very unlikely that she was a member of the Craiovescu family because she was not mentioned when the Wallachian prince Mihnea Turcitul (1577–1583; 1585–1591) strictly analysed the division of the huge domain of this family in a charter issued on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1589<sup>21</sup>; only the four brothers Barbu, Pîrvu, Danciu, and Radu inherited estates from their father<sup>22</sup>. It is obvious that women could receive parts of their family domain, as many women were among the descendants of the four brothers at the trial in 1589. The fact that Muşa entered a monastery did not mean that she lost her fortune; as a nun she donated villages and slaves to different monasteries.

Before taking vows, Muşa was married to Hamza, an influential boyar who was a member of the princely council of Wallachia during the first decades of

<sup>17</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 240; about the foundation of Bistriţa monastery by Pârveu and his brothers, a very important document was issued by Vlad the Monk on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1494, cf. *Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Ţara Românească*, vol. I, (1247–1500), ed. P.P. PANAITESCU, D. MIŢOC, Bucureşti 1966 (cetera: DRH, B, I), p. 401–405.

<sup>18</sup> *Inscripţii din bisericile României...*, p. 202.

<sup>19</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 240.

<sup>20</sup> As this opinion passed from a researcher to the other without a critical analysis of the primary sources, I quote only those who wrote strictly about the Craiovescu family or Muşa: Ş. ŞTEFĂNESCU, *Bănia în Ţara Românească*, Bucureşti 1965 (the genealogical tree of Craiovescu family); N. STOICESCU, *Dicţionar...*, p. 62; R. OPREA, *O călugăriţă din neamul Craioveştilor şi ctiririle sale muscelene*, Arg 14, 2005, p. 356; I. CÎRSTINA, *Neamuri boiereşti şi patrimoniul lor funciar în Ţara Românească (secolul al XVI-lea)*, Târgovişte 2015, p. 155–156, 188 (I. Cîrstina quotes a diptych from Govora monastery, which mentioned the name Muşa; it is very difficult to identify this name from the diptych with Muşa/Magdalena, because the diptych was preserved in a copy from 1777; moreover, its editor noted that it recorded 1272 names of noblemen and noblewomen, probably written in different periods – A. SACERDOŢEANU, *Pomelnicul mănăstirii Govora*, MOLT 13, 1961, p. 789–790).

<sup>21</sup> *Documente privind istoria României. B. Ţara Românească. Veacul XVI*, vol. V, (1591–1590), ed. I. IONAŞCU et al., Bucureşti 1952, p. 402–407.

<sup>22</sup> About the large Craiovescu domain, cf. I. DONAT, *Domeniul domnesc din Ţara Românească (sec. XIV–XVI)*, ed. G. LAZĂR, Bucureşti 1996, p. 153–190.

the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>. Several documents issued by the Wallachian prince Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521) mention the nun Magdalina as the former wife of Hamza. During the first year of his reign, two charters from June 23<sup>rd</sup> and September 29<sup>th</sup> 1512<sup>24</sup> refer to ‘Hamza’s noblewoman (*jupanița*), the nun Magdalina’; on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1519, Neagoe gave a charter to Magdalina, Hamza and ‘their sons’<sup>25</sup>.

### Taking the vows of monasticism

On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1503, Radu the Great confirmed the possession of ‘Muşa from Corbi’ over two villages, Corbii de Piatră (Stone Ravens) and half of Mălureni, as well as over several families of gypsies<sup>26</sup>. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1506, Radu the Great gave another charter to ‘Valea monastery [the Valley], where the nuns live, which was built, refurbished, and fortified by the nun Magdalina’; the monastery received the ‘princely buckets’ from the same two villages mentioned three years earlier (Corbii de Piatră and Mălureni)<sup>27</sup>. Both charters refer to the same person, the wife of Hamza, who was mentioned as Muşa in the first one, and as Magdalina in the second. It is certain that between these two dates – June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1503, and September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1506 – she decided to take vows<sup>28</sup>.

In which monastery Muşa became the nun Magdalina? The answer is found in two charters issued by the Wallachian princes Radu Paisie (1535–1536; 1536–1539; 1539–1544; 1544–1545) and Peter the Young (1559–1568); as the documents preserved only the day and the month in their original versions, their editors proposed two dating solutions – September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1536–1539 for the first one<sup>29</sup> and January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1563 for the second<sup>30</sup>. In the first charter, Radu Paisie ordered the abbot of Argeş monastery to leave three Roma families at Valea monastery, because they were settled there by the nun Magdalina, who ‘received her tonsure there’<sup>31</sup>. After two decades and a half, Peter the Young confirmed, for his part, that five gypsy families should remain at the same Valea monastery, because they were given by Muşa (the document calls her ‘Cârjoane’), who became a nun in

<sup>23</sup> N. STOICESCU, *Dicționar...*, p. 62–63.

<sup>24</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 206, 232.

<sup>25</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 357.

<sup>26</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 57. A recent contribution that analyses the village Corbii de Piatră is R.E. SZILÁGYI, L. NAGY, *Câteva date noi despre genealogia familiilor Olahus, Hunyadi și Dracula (Vlad Țepeș)*, SMIM 40, 2022, p. 141–143.

<sup>27</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 105. The ‘princely bucket’ was a tax collected for the Wallachian voivodes; the prince could give this tax to a monastery, a practice which was widespread in Wallachia at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (DRH, B, II, *passim*).

<sup>28</sup> For a recent scientific contribution to this subject, cf. D. OLTEAN, *Devenir moine à Byzance. Coutumes sociales, règles monastiques et rituels liturgiques*, Leuven 2020 [= BBy, 24].

<sup>29</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 39–40.

<sup>30</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 283–284.

<sup>31</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 39.



the monastery and her monastic name was Magdalina<sup>32</sup>. The word used in the Slavonic documents to designate the entry in the monastery was *postrig*<sup>33</sup>. The word *postrig* passed from Slavonic to Romanian, having the same meaning – ‘the ceremony of becoming a monk or a nun’<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, Magdalina became a nun in Valea monastery, which she founded at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>35</sup>.

### Magdalina – the nun

The earliest document which mentions Magdalina as a nun was issued on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1506<sup>36</sup>. In this Slavonic charter, the words used for the nuns from Valea monastery were *inokine*<sup>37</sup> and *calugeritze*<sup>38</sup>, while Magdalina was *monahia*<sup>39</sup>. According to this charter, Radu the Great renounced his privilege of receiving the ‘princely buckets’ from the villages Corbii de Piatră, and Mălureni<sup>40</sup>; the voivode gave this privilege to Valea monastery. As these two estates were owned by Mușa before entering the monastery, a legitimate question is what happened with these two villages when she took her vows – did she give them to the monastery or keep them for herself? On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1512, the village Corbii de Piatră was ascribed by Neagoe Basarab to the monastery founded by Magdalina; this time the monastery was no longer named Valea, but Corbii de Piatră<sup>41</sup>. As Daniel Barbu noticed, the names Valea and Corbii de Piatră refer to the same monastery built by Magdalina<sup>42</sup>. It is obvious that the village Corbii de Piatră was given to her ecclesiastic

<sup>32</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 284.

<sup>33</sup> On the origin of the monastic tonsure, cf. D. OLTEAN, *Les origines de la tonsure monastique. Les sources grecques*, B 87, 2017, p. 259–298.

<sup>34</sup> *Dexonline. Dicționare explicative*, <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/postrig> [13 IV 2023].

<sup>35</sup> On the Byzantine female monasticism, the works written by A.-M. TALBOT are very useful (*Late Byzantine Nuns. By Choice or Necessity?*, BF 9, 1985, p. 103–117; *An Introduction to Byzantine Monasticism*, ICS 12, 1987, p. 229–241).

<sup>36</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 104–106.

<sup>37</sup> The word *inokina* comes from the Slavonic root *in* (“one”; “alone”; “isolated”) (M. VASMER, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. I, (A–K), Heidelberg 1953, p. 484; I. BILIARSKY, *Word and Power in Mediaeval Bulgaria*, Leiden–Boston 2011 [= ECEEMA, 14], p. 78).

<sup>38</sup> The word is the feminine form of the Slavonic transliteration of καλόγερος (‘a good old man’) (I. BILIARSKY, *Word and Power...*, p. 79). In the document from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1506, the words *inokine* and *calugeritze* are used as synonyms.

<sup>39</sup> The word is the feminine form of the transliteration of μοναχός; μοναχός comes from μόνος (‘alone’) (I. BILIARSKY, *Word and Power...*, p. 93; M. VASMER, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 154).

<sup>40</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 57.

<sup>41</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 206.

<sup>42</sup> D. BARBU, *O mărturie a relațiilor...*, p. 119; cf. E. CINCHEZA-BUCULEI, *Prezentarea monumentului*, [in:] *Corbii de Piatră – studiu interdisciplinar*, ed. D. MOHANU, București 2010, p. 54–55. D. BARBU drew up a rigorous chronology of Magdalina’s life, based mainly on princely charters; in the part dedicated to the art history, he also commented on two articles written by C.L. DUMITRESCU (*Biserica*

foundation, but it is difficult to understand at what point this donation was made – when she took the vows or few years later.

Half of the village Mălureni that was confirmed to Magdalina in 1503, was probably in her possession or in possession of her monastery three years later, in 1506, when Radu the Great renounced his privilege and gave it to Valea. After six years, on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1512, Mălureni was not confirmed to Valea monastery by Neagoie Basarab, as it happened with Corbii de Piatră. An explanation could be found in a charter issued a month later, on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1512<sup>43</sup>; Neagoie confirmed the whole village Mălureni to Bistrița monastery. Mălureni was given to Bistrița monastery by its founder Barbu Craiovescu, who exchanged it for another village with a Wallachian boyar, Oancea. Oancea himself had bought half of the village Mălureni from ‘Magdalina Cârjoia’ for 4,500 *akçes*<sup>44</sup> and vestments from London and Mechelen. The conclusion is that sometimes between 1506 and 1512 the nun Magdalina sold the village Mălureni to a Wallachian nobleman.

Several remarks can be made on this conclusion: after becoming a nun, Magdalina kept at least a property for herself – the village Mălureni (the situation of Corbii de Piatră is not so clear); she received and kept money for the village she sold; as part of the payment for it she received expensive vestments. A study made for the Byzantine Empire reveals a similar situation. Although the monastic ideal involved poverty as a virtue, the nuns and the monks kept different goods for themselves, bought, sold or donated them after entering the monastery<sup>45</sup>. From this point of view, Muşa/Magdalina was not a singular case in the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century Wallachia. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1537, Theodor, the abbot of Nucet monastery and the monks from the same monastery sold a vineyard to another monk, Ephrem<sup>46</sup>.

What else did Magdalina keep after taking vows? In Wallachia, the Roma people were frequently owned as personal slaves both by the nobles and the monasteries. Several Roma families were in Magdalina’s possession on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1503, and some of them were on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1512<sup>47</sup> in the possession of the monastery she had built<sup>48</sup>; those Roma families surely passed from her to the monastery. A very interesting situation is described in a charter issued on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1526<sup>49</sup> by the

---

*rupestră din Corbii de Piatră, cel mai vechi ansamblu de pictură – cunoscut astăzi – din Țara Românească*, SCIA 22, 1975, p. 23–51; *Chronique et monument témoin. Une hypothèse à propos d’une église rupestre à deux absides en Valachie*, BBRF 11 (15), 1984, p. 15–54.

<sup>43</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 218.

<sup>44</sup> The *akçe* or *asper* was a small silver Ottoman coin (Ş. PAMUK, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2003 [= CSIC], p. 34), which was widespread in medieval and early modern Wallachia.

<sup>45</sup> A.-M. TALBOT, *Personal Poverty in Byzantine Monasticism: Ideals and Reality*, TM 16, 2010, p. 829–841.

<sup>46</sup> DRH, B, IV, p. 45–46.

<sup>47</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 232.

<sup>49</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 7–8.

Wallachian voivode Radu of Afumați (1522; 1544; 1524–1529). The prince confirmed the ownership of various gypsy families by the Govora monastery that ‘were given to the holy monastery by Magdalina, for her soul’. The document mentioned another gypsy family that remained in her possession, ‘for her needs’, ‘as long as the nun Magdalina would live’; after her death they were to be taken by Govora. For Magdalina, the slaves were similar to the land. She kept several gypsy families after becoming a nun and many of them were given, along the years, to different monasteries; in 1526, the year of her death, she kept only one family for herself, probably to serve her personal needs. Another nun with the same name, Magdalina, the former wife of Baldovin, a Wallachian nobleman<sup>50</sup>, acted in a similar manner – as a nun, she kept three Roma families for her needs<sup>51</sup>.

Keeping either land or gypsies after entering monastery was common practice in medieval Wallachia and Magdalina made no difference from this point of view. As previously underlined, similar situations were encountered in the Byzantine Empire, where persons who entered monastery partially kept their fortune<sup>52</sup>.

A single document can be personally attributed to Magdalina<sup>53</sup>. Even if it does not have a date, the act might be dated to the end of her life; its editors considered that it was written before July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1526. Magdalina donated a piece of land for building a house to Gânștea the Old; obviously, the donation had pious reasons – ‘for my father’s soul and for my own soul’. Among the witnesses of the documents, Magdalina mentions ‘my nephew, abbot Joseph, and the noblemen around us’. Magdalina and Joseph were blood relatives; the word used for him is *anepsei* (nephew), which has a Greek origin<sup>54</sup>. Joseph was the abbot of Argeș monastery<sup>55</sup> and their kinship was obviously very important, even after both took vows. Magdalina’s document opens with *invocatio verbalis*, a diplomatic formula that was very common in Wallachian private acts issued by different clergymen<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Her lay name was Maria (Ș. ANDREESCU, *Perspective medievale*, București 2002, p. 27).

<sup>51</sup> About Maria/Magdalina, cf. the document issued on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1526 (DRH, B, III, p. 55).

<sup>52</sup> A.-M. TALBOT, *Personal Poverty...*, p. 829–841. The more extensive documentation kept in the monastic world of Byzantium can offer further information on this topic (J. THOMAS, A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. I–V, Washington DC 2000).

<sup>53</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 40.

<sup>54</sup> L. DJAMO-DIACONIȚĂ, *Limba documentelor slavo-române emise în Țara Românească în sec. XIV și XV*, București 1971, p. 354.

<sup>55</sup> He was mentioned as the abbot of Argeș in two documents from January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1519 and July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1519 (DRH, B, II, p. 340, 355).

<sup>56</sup> DRH, B, I, p. 316, 411; DRH, B, III, p. 55–56; DRH, B, IV, p. 45–46; M. LASCARIS, *Influences byzantines dans la diplomatie bulgare, serbe et slavo-roumaine*, Bsl 3, 1931, p. 506–507; L.M. ILIE, *Several Remarks regarding “IO” and Invocatio Verbalis from the Wallachian Documents before 1500*, Eno 18, 2020, p. 73–76, 153–158.

After taking her vows, Magdalina was perceived as a founder of the nunnery in Valea<sup>57</sup>; the charter from 1503 underlines that she ‘built, refurbished, and strengthened’ it. A late document issued by Peter the Young added that ‘she was written in the diptych, because she was the founder’ of the monastery. The charter is also important as it gives the Slavonic name for ‘founder’ (*htitoritza*)<sup>58</sup>. In the summer of 1512, Magdalina conceded her monastery to the Wallachian prince Neagoe Basarab. The explanation given in the charter for this situation was that Magdalina was afraid that the possessions of the monastery might be lost after her death and the princely protection should have prevented this<sup>59</sup>. On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1515<sup>60</sup>, the same voivode mentioned that the monastery of Corbii de Piatră (another name used for Valea<sup>61</sup>) was inhabited by monks. The nuns that were living there three years earlier might have gone to another monastery, Cornet, which is mentioned in the same document<sup>62</sup>. It is very difficult to understand the reason behind this relocation. A possible explanation, or rather speculation, is that Neagoe Basarab perceived the monastery as his own and decided to transform it in an establishment for monks; the harsh conditions and the mountains nearby might have supported this decision. After four more years, on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1519<sup>63</sup>, Magdalina, her former husband, Hamza, and ‘their sons’ received from Neagoe Basarab a piece of land ‘where Magdalina is building a monastery for the nuns’; this land was in the vicinity of Valea monastery. It is very interesting that she received this land, together with her former family – the husband and the sons – a decade after she took her vows. In fact, the documents from 1512 describe her as Hamza’s wife; only afterwards, she was mentioned as a nun – ‘Hamza’s noblewoman (*jupanița*), the nun Magdalina.’ This situation might be explained by the fact that Neagoe had a close relationship with Hamza, who was a member of his princely council.

Even at the end of her life, Magdalina was concerned with her former fortune. A remark on her document, written before July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1526, might be useful to understand this situation. At the end of the act, in *sanctio*, the scribe added a diplomatic formula that is addressed to those who might disrespect Magdalina’s donation; the person whom the wrath of God would be revealed for disobedience was ‘either a boyar or a monk’<sup>64</sup>. Although she had become a nun decades before, Magdalina was aware that her former fortune could be disputed by lay or religious persons after her death.

<sup>57</sup> For a general survey of women as founders in Byzantium and around it, cf. *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. L. THEIS et al., Vienna 2014.

<sup>58</sup> DRH, B, V, p. 283–284.

<sup>59</sup> The Slavonic verb used for this action is *pokloniti* (DRH, B, II, p. 205).

<sup>60</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 231–233.

<sup>61</sup> D. BARBU, *O mărturie a relațiilor...*, p. 119.

<sup>62</sup> R. OPREA, *O călugăriță...*, p. 360.

<sup>63</sup> DRH, B, II, p. 356–358.

<sup>64</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 40.

## Her death

Two different acts – the charter dated March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1526, and Magdalina's own document – underlined that Magdalina made various donations 'for her soul'. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1526<sup>65</sup> she was surely alive, while on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1526, a charter issued by Radu of Afumați referred to a child, who 'remained from Magdalina's gypsies'<sup>66</sup>; this short text might suggest that some gypsies 'remained' in an unclear situation after her death. Magdalina must have died in 1526<sup>67</sup>, since there is no other source mentioning her still alive afterwards; it is not clear which was the monastery where she died. A document from April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1615 specified that Magdalina was buried in the church of Argeș monastery<sup>68</sup>, an account which was not totally accepted by the historians<sup>69</sup>.

The life of the noblewoman (Mușă) that became a nun (Magdalina) at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century offers information about monasticism in Wallachia. Although many sources describe the monasteries, their estates or some of their leaders, few documents depict the way a monk or a nun lived after taking vows. Magdalina built monasteries, partially kept her fortune (land and gypsies), some of which she sold or donated. Unlike her monastic life, her lay life is only partially known. She was a relative of a Wallachian nobleman (Cârjeu) and the wife of another (Hamza); her kinship with the Craiovescu family should not be taken for granted anymore. Magdalina's life is very important because it gives details about the monastic life of Wallachia at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; she might be seen as a paradigmatic example for this period, when the sources do not provide detailed data about Wallachian monasticism.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. I, (1247–1500), ed. P.P. PANAITESCU, D. MIȚOC, București 1966.

*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. II, (1501–1525), ed. Ș. ȘTEFĂNESCU, O. DIACONESCU, București 1972.

*Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. III, (1526–1535), ed. D. MIȚOC et al., București 1975.

<sup>65</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 41–42.

<sup>66</sup> DRH, B, III, p. 52.

<sup>67</sup> For her death in 1526 – D. BARBU, *O mărturie a relațiilor...*, p. 118; R. OPREA, *O călugăriță...*, p. 361.

<sup>68</sup> DIR, B, Veac XVII, vol. II, p. 382.

<sup>69</sup> R. OPREA, *O călugăriță...*, p. 361.

- Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. IV, (1536–1550), ed. D. MIȚOC et al., București 1981.
- Documenta Romaniae Historica. B. Țara Românească*, vol. V, (1551–1565), ed. D. MIȚOC, M. ADAM CHIPER, București 1983.
- Documente privind istoria României. B. Țara Românească. Veacul XVI*, vol. V, (1581–1590), ed. I. IONAȘCU et al., București 1952.
- Documente privind istoria României. B. Țara Românească. Veacul XVII*, vol. II, (1611–1615), ed. I. IONAȘCU et al., București 1951.
- Inscripții din bisericile României*, vol. I, ed. N. IORGA, București 1905.
- SACERDOȚEANU A., *Pomelnicul mănăstirii Govora*, “Mitropolia Olteniei” 13, 1961, p. 789–823.

## Secondary Literature

- ACHIM V., *The Roma in Romanian History*, Budapest 2004.
- ANDREESCU Ș., *Perspective medievale*, București 2002.
- BARBU D., *O mărturie a relațiilor artistice româno-grecești: Corbii de Piatră (datare și încadrare stilistică)*, “Cercetări de Istorie și Civilizație Sud-Est Europeană” 4, 1987, p. 113–123.
- BERCARU A., *Derivarea numelor feminine în limba română*, “Romanoslavica” 41, 2006, p. 175–207.
- BILIARSKY I., *Word and Power in Mediaeval Bulgaria*, Leiden–Boston 2011 [= East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 14], <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004191457.i-582>
- CINCHEZA-BUCULEI E., *Prezentarea monumentului*, [in:] *Corbii de Piatră – studiu interdisciplinar*, ed. D. MOHANU, București 2010, p. 11–56.
- CÎRSTINA I., *Neamuri boierești și patrimoniul lor funciar în Țara Românească (secolul al XVI-lea)*, Târgoviște 2015.
- CONSTANTINESCU N.A., *Dicționar onomastic românesc*, București 1963.
- Dexonline. Dicționare explicative*, <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/postrig> [13 IV 2023].
- DJAMO-DIACONIȚĂ L., *Limba documentelor slavo-române emise în Țara Românească în sec. XIV și XV*, București 1971.
- DONAT I., *Domeniul domnesc din Țara Românească (sec. XIV–XVI)*, ed. G. LAAĂR, București 1996.
- DUMTRESCU C.L., *Biserica rupestră din Corbii de Piatră, cel mai vechi ansamblu de pictură – cunoscut astăzi – din Țara Românească*, “Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei” 22, 1975, p. 23–51.
- DUMITRESCU C.L., *Chronique et monument témoin. Une hypothèse à propos d'une église rupestre à deux absides en Valachie*, “Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg” 11 (15), 1984, p. 15–54.
- Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. L. THEIS et al., Vienna 2014.
- ILIE L.M., *Several Remarks regarding “IO” and Invocatio Verbalis from the Wallachian Documents before 1500*, “Эпохи” / “Epoi” 18, 2020, p. 73–76, 153–158.
- Istoria românilor*, vol. V, *O epocă de înnoiri în spirit european (1601–1711/1716)*, ed. V. CÂNDEA, C. REZACHEVICI, N. EDROIU, București 2012.
- LAMBRU R., *Nume de persoane la români în secolele XIV–XV (Țara Românească)*, București 2022.
- LASCARIS M., *Influences byzantines dans la diplomatie bulgare, serbe et slavo-roumaine*, “Byzantinoslavica” 3, 1931, p. 500–510.
- OLTEAN D., *Les origines de la tonsure monastique. Les sources grecques*, “Byzantion” 87, 2017, p. 259–298.


- OLTEAN D., *Devenir moine à Byzance. Coutumes sociales, règles monastiques et rituels liturgiques*, Leuven 2020 [= Bibliothéque de Byzantion, 24], <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26n1r>
- OPREA R., *O călugăriță din neamul Craioveștilor și ctiroriile sale muscelene*, "Argesis" 14, 2005, p. 355–361.
- PAMUK Ş., *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2003 [= Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization].
- REZACHEVICI C., *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova, a. 1324–1881*, vol. I, (Secolele XIV–XVI), București 2001.
- ȘTEFĂNESCU Ș., *Bănia în Țara Românească*, București 1965.
- STOICESCU N., *Bibliografia localităților și monumentelor feudale din România*, vol. I, *Țara Românească (Muntenia, Oltenia și Dobrogea)*, pars 1, (A–L), Craiova 1970.
- STOICESCU N., *Dicționar al marilor dregători din Țara Românească și Moldova (sec. XIV–XVI)*, București 1971.
- SZILÁGYI R.E., NAGY L., *Câteva date noi despre genealogia familiilor Olahus, Hunyadi și Dracula (Vlad Țepeș)*, "Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie" 40, 2022, p. 125–164.
- TALBOT A.-M., *An Introduction to Byzantine Monasticism*, "Illinois Classical Studies" 12, 1987, p. 229–241.
- TALBOT A.-M., *Late Byzantine Nuns. By Choice or Necessity?*, "Byzantinische Forschungen" 9, 1985, p. 103–117.
- TALBOT A.-M., *Personal Poverty in Byzantine Monasticism: Ideals and Reality*, "Travaux et mémoires" (Mélanges Cécile Morrisson) 16, 2010, p. 829–841.
- TALBOT A.-M., McGRATH S., *Monastic Onomastics*, [in:] *Monastères, images, pouvoirs et sociétés à Byzance*, ed. M. KAPLAN, Paris 2006, p. 89–118 (Monastères, images, pouvoirs et société à Byzance – Monastic Onomastics – Éditions de la Sorbonne (openedition.org) [8 IV 2023]), <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.psorbonne.2088>
- THOMAS J., CONSTANTINIDES HERO A., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. I–V, Washington DC 2000.
- VASMER M., *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. I, (A–K), Heidelberg 1953.

**Liviu Marius Ilie**

University of Craiova  
A.I. Cuza Street, No. 13  
Craiova, Romania  
lvmlie2@gmail.com



Agata A. Kluczek (Katowice)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0852-0572>

## HADRIAN, A NUMISMATIC LAPSE, AND... JANUS\*

**Abstract.** The image of the “founder”, who marks the boundaries of the city with a plough drawn by a pair of animals was one of the obvious themes placed on the reverses of colonial coins. Such a symbolic foundation scene (*araturum* motif) was also one of the leading themes on coins from the colonial mint in Parium in the east of the Roman Empire. During the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–138), this mint issued coins (RPC 3, nos 1539 and 1540), which, apart from the *araturum* motif, have an unobvious legend on their reverses, especially in its connection with the obverse inscription on these coins.

**Keywords:** Roman provincial coins, Parium, founder and the plough, *araturum* motif

During the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian (AD 117–138), the colonial mint in the Mysian Parium in the Hellespont issued bronze coins with interesting reverses. Above the scene of the “ploughman” with a plough drawn by two animals, two oxen, or an ox or a bull and a cow, it reads IANVS AVG, which is supplemented by the notation C G I P<sup>1</sup>. The unusual juxtaposition of such a scene with the indicated legend, known only in Hadrian’s coinage, leads to an analysis of the content of the reverses of these coins.

I begin by commenting on the significance of the scene featuring the “ploughman”, which I situate in the context of the foundational tradition. I compare its numismatic arrangement – more widely known in Roman coinage – with bas-reliefs addressing the same theme<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently, I consider the inscriptions on

\* This paper was prepared as part of the the grant I was awarded by the Lanckoroński Foundation for the investigation of the topic “Faces of the Roman Ruler in the Mirror of Provincial Coinage”. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Foundation for enabling me to conduct research in Rome in 2022. All the illustrations of coins are from [www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com). I thank the Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. for the consent to my using the photographs of the coins free of charge.

<sup>1</sup> M. AMANDRY, A. BURNETT, J. MAIRAT, W. METCALF, L. BRICAULT, M. BLET-LEMARQUAND, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. III, *Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian (AD 96–138)*, London–Paris 2015 (cetera: RPC 3), nos 1539, 1540.

<sup>2</sup> I do not include illustrations of Hadrian’s coins from Parium (cf. <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/1539>; <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/1540>, with the relevant commentary [30 IX 2023]). The originality of these coins pertains to the inscriptions, not the imagery on the reverse.



Hadrianic coins from Parium. There is an error in these inscriptions, which lies in the letters IANVS. The explanation is straightforward, but – for non-specialists – the inscription may be construed as the name Janus (Ianus), one of the Roman gods. In conclusion, this (non)obvious association serves as a pretext for accentuating the characteristics of Janus, the “god of beginnings”. The intermingling of various themes and connotations thus remains the essence of this tripartite composition, and is intended to suggest the diversity – not always valid – of interpretations that a cursory examination of Roman coins may inspire.

### *Vrbem designat aratro*<sup>3</sup>

The reverses of the Hadrianic coins in question depict the ritual of founding a city by marking its territory. The ploughman leads draught animals harnessed to a plough and, symbolically, draws the furrow indicating the boundaries of the city. He repeats an act which according to tradition, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April of the third year of the sixth Olympiad, on the Pales holiday (Palilia/Parilia) was once performed by the founder (*conditor*) of Rome, the son of Mars, Romulus. It was Romulus who equipped a plough (*aratrum*) drawn by a pair of animals, one female and one male, with a ploughshare (*rallum*) and marked out the first furrow (*sulcus primigenius*), thus indicating the boundaries (*pomerium*) of emerging Rome. In the literary tradition, there are many references to this founding act involving the first Roman king, in the mythical year 753 BC<sup>4</sup>. Among these there is Ovid’s poetic description<sup>5</sup>:

<sup>3</sup> VIRGILE, *Enéide*, V, 755, ed. et trans. J. PERRET, Paris 1992–1993 (cetera: VERGILIUS).

<sup>4</sup> For instance: CATON, *Les origines (Fragments)*, frg. 18, ed. et trans. M. CHASSIGNET, Paris 1986 (cetera: CATO); DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS, *Antiquités romaines*, I, 88, vol. I, ed. et trans. V. FROMENTIN, Paris 1998; TACITE, *Annales*, XII, 24, vol. III, ed. et trans. P. WUILLEUMIER, Paris 1994; PLUTARQUE, *Vies*, vol. I, *Thésée – Romulus – Lucurgue – Numa, Romulus*, 11, 3, ed. et trans. R. FLACELIÈRE, É. CHAMBRY, M. JUNEUX, Paris 1993 (cetera: PLUTARCHUS). The sources for the foundation of Rome: *La leggenda di Roma*, vol. I, *Dalla nascita dei gemelli alla fondazione della città*, ed. A. CARANDINI, Milano 2006, p. 183–219. Cf. D. BRIQUEL, *La leggenda di Romolo e il rituale di fondazione delle città*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città*, (Catalogo della Mostra), ed. A. CARANDINI, R. CAPPELLI, Milano 2000, p. 39–44; P. CARAFA, *Il rito dell’aratura e la costruzione delle mure palatine*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo...*, p. 275–276; IDEM, *Commento*, [in:] *La leggenda di Roma...*, p. 410–440; S. SISANI, *Qua aratrum ductum est. La colonizzazione romana come chiave interpretativa della Roma delle origini*, [in:] *Roman Republican Colonization. New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ancient History*, ed. T.D. STEK, J. PELGROM, Rome 2014, p. 357–404. The Etruscan origin of the *aratrum* ritual, cf. VARRON, *De lingua latina. Livre V*, V, 143, ed. et trans. J. COLLART, Paris 1954 (cetera: VARRO); MACROBE, *Les Saturnales*, V, 19, 13, ed. et trans. H. BORNECQUE, F. RICHARD, Paris 1937 (cetera: MACROBIUS); Aeneas’ role in the ritual: VERGILIUS, V, 755–756. In contrast: the *aratrum* ritual in the act of destroying, not erecting the city: *Quinti Horati Flacci Opera omnia*, vol. I, *Carmina et epodon librum continens, Carm. I*, 16, 20–21 (Carthago), ed. O. JUREWICZ, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1986.

<sup>5</sup> *Ovid’s Fasti*, IV, 825–830, trans. J.G. FRAZER, London–Cambridge 1959 [= LCL, 253] (cetera: OVIDIUS).

inde premens stivam designat moenia sulco;  
 alba iugum niveo cum bove vacca tulit.  
 vox fuit haec regis: condenti, Iuppiter, urbem  
 et genitor Mavors Vestaque mater, ades;  
 quosque pium est adhibere deos, advertite cuncti.  
 auspiciibus vobis hoc mihi surgat opus.

Then pressing on the plough-handle he drew a furrow to mark out the line of the walls: the yoke was borne by a white cow and snow-white steer. The king spoke thus: 'O Jupiter, and Father Mavors, and Mother Vesta, stand by me as I found the city! O take heed, all ye gods whom piety bids summon! Under your auspices may this my fabric rise! [...]'<sup>6</sup>.

The Romans repeated this ritual, creating subsequent colonies<sup>7</sup>, since they constituted a miniature image of Rome itself, founded in the likeness of Rome. This ritual was carried out to celebrate the beginning of the colony<sup>8</sup>. Its symbolic images were reflected in the coinage issued by numerous mints in the empire, especially in the colonial coinage, thus indicating the status of a given city and recalling the birth of the colony and its refounding, as well as honoring important events from its history (although these are not always known today). This ritual was preserved in the iconography used in emissions from the forties of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, which brought an end to provincial coinage (fig. 1)<sup>9</sup>. However, the *aratrum* motif is rather rare in imperial coinage<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Trans. by Sir J.G. Frazer.

<sup>7</sup> CICÉRON, *Discours, 19: Philippiques I à IV*, II, 40, 102, ed. et trans. A. BOULANGER, P. WUILLEUMIER, Paris 1959; VARRO, V, 143; and, e.g., *CIL*, X 3825; *CIL*, VI 1233. Cf. A.I. COLES, *Roman Colonies in Republic and Empire*, Leiden 2020 [= BRP], p. 1–119.

<sup>8</sup> A.M. ECKSTEIN, *The Foundation Day of Roman "Coloniae"*, *CSCA* 12, 1979, p. 88–94.

<sup>9</sup> For instance: A. BURNETT, M. AMANDRY, P.P. RIPOLLÈS, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. I, *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)*, London–Paris 1992 (cetera: RPC 1), nos 2268 (Lampsacus, c. 45 BC (?): C G I L / Q L V C R E T I (O) L P O N T I (O) I I V I R M T V R I O L E G), 261 (Lepida-Celsa, s.a.: C (O L) V (I C) I (V L) L (E P) / M F V L C O T A C P R Q V I N); H. VON AULOCK, *Münzen und Städte Pisidiens*, vol. II, Tübingen 1979, p. 143–144, nos 1697–1709 (Cremna, AD 270–275: I M P C S L D O M A V R E L I A N O / D I V O A V G C O L C R E). For an overview of the types and their discussion: E.A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro. Semantica civile*, [in:] *L'agricoltura in età romana*, ed. S. SEGENNI, Milano 2019, p. 212, 232–260; cf. also S. JELLONEK, *Roman Foundation Myths on Colonial Coinage*, *NNum* 13, 2018, p. 104–110.

<sup>10</sup> Octavian/Augustus' coins: C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. I, *From 31 BC to AD 69*, London 1984 (cetera: RIC 1), nos 272 (D, uncertain mint, c. 29–27 BC), 402 (Au, Rome, 13 BC); Vespasian's coins: I.A. CARRADICE, T.V. BUTTREY, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II.1, *From AD 69–96 Vespasian to Domitian*, London 2007, nos 943–945, 951–952 (D, Rome, AD 77–78); Trajan's coins: B. WOYTEK, *Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus (98–117)*, Wien 2010 [= DKAW.PhH, 387], nos 310 (Ses, Rome, AD 107–108), 819 (D rest., Rome, AD 112/113) = H. KOMNICK, *Die Restitutionsmünzen der frühen Kaiserzeit. Aspekte der Kaiserlegitimation*, Berlin–New York 2001, no 20.0; Commodus' coins and medaillons: H. MATTINGLY, E.A. SYDENHAM, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. III, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, London 1930 (repr. 1968) (cetera: RIC 3), nos 247 (Au, Rome, AD 192), 560, 570 (Ses/As, Rome, AD 190), 616, 629 (Ses/ Dp, Rome, AD 192); F. GNECCHI,



**Fig. 1.** Æ, Parium, [AD 138–161]; obv.: ANTONINVS AVG, laureate head of Antoninus Pius, r.; rev.: C G I H P, founder ploughing with two oxen, r.; RPC 4, no 613 temp.; © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Auction 332, Lot 182; <https://cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=265257>.

Numismatic images constitute the basis of the iconographic sources of the foundation scene, or the *aratrum* motif. Other representations are scarce. The monuments of ancient art show various versions of the ploughing scene, with the participation of human and animal figures (ploughman, oxen) and a basic tool (plough), which brings agricultural activities closer to the viewer<sup>11</sup>. However, only two works from the Roman era can be associated with the symbolism of the city's origins.

One can mention the famous relief monument from Aquileia (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia, inv. 49100)<sup>12</sup>, detailed in 1931 by Giovanni Battista

*I medaglioni romani*, vol. II, Milano 1912, p. 54, nos 23–24 (ÆMed, Rome, AD 192), p. 62, no 98 (ÆMed, Rome, AD 187). The Roman foundation myths on Roman imperial coinage: A.A. KLUCZEK, *Primordia Romana. Mityczna przeszłość Rzymu i pamięć o niej w rzymskich numizmatach zakłęta*, Katowice 2019, *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> E. SAGLIO, *Aratrum*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, vol. I.1, ed. Ch.V. DAREMBERG, E. SAGLIO, Paris 1873, p. 353–356; P. CARAFA, *I documenti figurati relativi al rito dell'aratura*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo...*, p. 272–274. For a description of the types of plough in the Roman world and their intended use for farming, cf. G. FORNI, *Semantica degli strumenti rurali in età romana. Il caso dell' aratro: sua matrice ed evoluzione*, [in:] *L'agricoltura...*, p. 181–183.

<sup>12</sup> G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Bassorilievo col tracciato del sulcus primigenius*, NSA 1931, p. 472–475; M. BEARD, J. NORTH, S. PRICE, *Religions of Rome*, vol. II, *A Sourcebook*, Cambridge 1998, p. 244; P. CARAFA, *I documenti...*, p. 272–273; E. DI FILIPPO BALESTRAZZI, *Il rilievo storico*, [in:] *Aquileia dalle origini alla costituzione del Ducato longobardo. Topografia, urbanistica, edilizia pubblica*, ed. G. CUSCITO, M. VERZÁR-BASS, Trieste 2005, p. 94–106; M. VERZÁR BASS, *Il rilievo con scena di*

Brusin, dated to the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century (fig. 2). Aquileia received the rank of colony under the Latin law in 181 BC, and under the reign of Augustus it became Aquileia Colonia Romana<sup>13</sup>. It is difficult to determine which of the two episodes changing the status of Aquileia the bas-relief refers to, but, as is generally assumed, the bas-relief shows the practice of digging the *sulcus primigenius*, the furrow ploughed in the founding ceremony<sup>14</sup>. However, it is likely that it commemorates the expansion of the city in the times of Augustus, symbolically embedding the beginnings of the new *colonia Romana* in the mythical aura characteristic of the Julio-Claudian era, referring to the deeds of the legendary protagonists, including Romulus the *conditor*.

In a long strip (width 0,98 m., height 0,445 m.), a multi-figure, left-oriented scene was developed. It is framed at the bottom with a plinth, while it lacks marked lateral borders, so it may have been continued in non-preserved fragments. The solemn procession of six men in togas is presented. The first man (*victimarius*?) leads a pair of oxen<sup>15</sup>, or perhaps a cow and a bull<sup>16</sup>, wearing a *dorsuale* and a *frontale* between their horns<sup>17</sup>, in the yoke, which pull a plough consisting of a handle (*stiva*) and a plough-tail (*bure*). The plough is supported by a man in a toga draped in the particular ritual fashion of the *cinctus Gabinus*, and with a stick in his right hand, perhaps used to keep the plough in the right direction or to clean the plough-share<sup>18</sup>. It is this *togatus* that seems to be the protagonist of the whole scene. This central group is followed by a procession of four figures in gowns (togas), who may be, as Brusin supposed, new colonists or perhaps a group of senior city magistrates (e.g. *quattuorviri*, which would correspond to the number of these silhouettes).

---

*aratura di Aquileia riconsiderato*, [in:] *Archeologia Classica e Post-classica tra Italia e Mediterraneo. Scritti in ricordo di Maria Pia Rossignani*, ed. S. LUSUARDI SIENA, C. PERASSI, F. SACCHI, M. SANNAZZARO, Milano 2016, p. 265–274; E.A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro...*, p. 240–242; S. STEVENS, *The Emperor and the Plough; (Re)founding the City and Extending the Empire*, BAB 94, 2019, p. 147, 151; Ubi Erat Lupa: <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org> (no 14373) [16 VIII 2022].

<sup>13</sup> U. LAFFI, *L'amministrazione di Aquileia in età romana*, AAlt 30, 1987, p. 39–62; IDEM, *Colonie e municipi dello Stato romano*, Roma 2007, p. 24–25, 41–42, 55–56.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Bassorilievo...*, p. 474: the *sulcus primigenius* ritual; but K. STÄHLER, *Der Herrscher als Pflüger und Säer. Herrschaftsbilder aus der Pflanzenwelt*, Münster 2001, p. 114: the festival celebrated to honour of Ceres. Discussion, cf. M. VERZÁR BASS, *Il rilievo...*, p. 266–270. Original placement of the monument, cf. G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Bassorilievo...*, p. 474: decoration of an arch or gateway; similar scene in the drawing reconstruction of the arch decoration from Aquinum, cf. G. BRANDS, *Der Bogen von Aquinum*, AA 4, 1991, p. 561–609, but the matter is disputable.

<sup>15</sup> G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Bassorilievo...*, p. 474; M. VERZÁR BASS, *Il rilievo...*, p. 264, 266.

<sup>16</sup> E. DI FILIPPO BALESTRAZZI, *Il rilievo...*, p. 95.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. TOUTAIN, *Sacrificium*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romains*, vol. IV.2, ed. Ch.V. DAREMBERG, E. SAGLIO, Paris 1873, p. 975.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. GAJUSZ PLINIUSZ SEKUNDUS, *Historia naturalna*, vol. III, *Botanika, Rolnictwo i Ogrodnictwo*, XVIII, 49, 2, ed., trans. et comm. I. MIKOŁAJCZYK, Toruń 2022: *stimulus cuspidatus rallo*. Cf. E. SAGLIO, *Rallum*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités...*, vol. IV.2, p. 810.



Fig. 2. Relief from Aquileia depicting the *sulcus primigenius*. G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Basorilievo col tracciato del sulcus primigenius*, NSA 1931, p. 473.

The scene on the marble *sella plicatilis* from Fidenae (Museo Nazionale Romano – Terme di Diocleziano, Chiostro piccolo della Certosa, inv. 394442)<sup>19</sup> was arranged in a different manner. It is a fragment of a funeral monument (width 1,17 m., height 0,84 m.) dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, decorated with a large bas-relief. In its lower section, a *sella curulis* and a *capsa*, a box for scrolls, were depicted, which probably referred to the profession of the deceased – he was a senior magistrate with *imperium*. On the other hand, in the upper section, the founding scene is shown; it is directed to the left. In its center there is a ploughman leading two animals that pull a plough, presented in a *toga (cinctus ritu Gabino)*; his head is covered with the hem of the *toga (capite velato)*<sup>20</sup>. Behind him, on the right side,

<sup>19</sup> F. DI GENNARO, *Rilievo con sella curulis*, [in:] *Terme di Diocleziano. Il chiostro piccolo della Certosa di Santa Maria degli Angeli*, ed. R. FRIGGERI, M. MAGNANI CIANETTI, Verona 2014, p. 131; E.A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro...*, p. 241; S. STEVENS, *The Emperor...*, p. 151–152.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. CATO, I, 18a = *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, vol. I, *Aeneidos librorum I–V commentarii*, V, 755, rec. G. THILO, Lipsiae 1881: *Vrbem designat aratro quem Cato in originibus dicit morem fuisse. Conditores enim civitatis taurum in dexteram, vaccam intrinsecus iungebant, et incincti ritu Gabino, id est togae parte caput velati, parte succincti, tenebant stivam incurvam, ut glebae omnes intrinsecus caderent, et ita sulco ducto loca murorum designabant aratrum suspendentes circa loca portarum. Unde et territorium dictum est quasi terrorium tritum bubus et aratro*. The gesture of covering the head in a tradition associated with Aeneas: PLUTARQUE, *Oeuvres morales*, vol. IV, *Conduites méritoires de femmes. Étiologies romaines – étiologies grecques. Paralleles mineurs*, Q.Rom. 10–11, ed. et trans. J. BOULOGNE, Paris 2002 (cetera: PLUTARCHUS); PSEUDO-AURÉLIUS VICTOR, *Les Origines du Peuple Romain*, 12, 2, ed., trans. et comm. J.-Cl. RICHARD, Paris 1983 (cetera: PSEUDO-AURÉLIUS VICTOR); on the covering of the head during the sacrifice: VERGILIUS, III, 405 and 545, also during the foundation rites: VERGILIUS, V, 738–764, VII, 149–179 (Aeneas); OVIDIUS, IV, 807–862; TITE-LIVE, *Histoire romaine*, I, 7, vol. I, ed. J. BAYET, trans. G. BAILLET, app.

two togate men can be seen (originally there might have been more silhouettes – the monument has not been preserved in its entirety). In front of this group, there appear two more men (also *togati*). They are looking towards the walls of the city gate, the view of which closes the bas-relief on the left. This architecture could symbolize the newly emerging city: two chronological plans are juxtaposed in the image, the future is projected from the founding act made in the present.

Representations in Roman coinage – rare in imperial coinage, not very popular in provincial coinage, and numerous in colonial coinage – reduced the image of the founding ritual to a minimum. There are no “spectators” of the ceremony here, and the topographical context is also missing. The “ploughman” (*arator*) – founder (*conditor*)<sup>21</sup> is shown, and there may be two of them<sup>22</sup>. There are also animals shown – usually a pair – pulling a plough<sup>23</sup>. Other elements were rarely added. They could include, for example, legionary signs (*vexilla*)<sup>24</sup> signaling the military origin of the colony, the figure of Victoria crowning a ploughman<sup>25</sup> or a palm branch in his hand<sup>26</sup>. The ceremonial setting was indicated by the attire usually worn by the *arator-conditor*: a gown, the hem of which covered his head (*capite velato*)<sup>27</sup>. Sometimes the ploughman was presented in the everyday clothes he used for work, thus in a short robe<sup>28</sup>, which in turn reduces the ritual overtones of the image, exposing the economic dimension of the depicted activity instead<sup>29</sup>.

---

ed. R. BLOCH, Paris 2012; PLUTARCHUS, *Romulus* 9, 5; cf. VARRO, V, 143 (*Etruscus ritus*). Cf. also: P. CARAFA, *Il costume e l'aratro del fondatore*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo...*, p. 277.

<sup>21</sup> The problem is the identification of this figure: he may be a member of the *triumviri coloniae deducendae* college / an emperor / a priest, cf. G. BRUSIN, *Aquileia. Bassorilievo...*, p. 473–474; A. FILGES, *Münzbild und Gemeinschaft. Die Prägungen der römischen Kolonien in Kleinasien*, Bonn 2015 [= FAS, 29], p. 244. On some reverses of Cremna, an inscription may be a clue, which in the form of the dedication: *Divo Augusti*, indicates the figure of August, the founder of this colony (*colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Cremna*) recalled in this way, e.g., H. VON AULOCK, *Münzen und Städte...*, p. 136, no 1518, p. 143–144, nos 1697–1709; RPC 4, no 7763 temp.; J. MAIRAT, M. SPOERRI BUTCHER, M. AMANDRY, K. BUTCHER, J. NURPETLIAN, U. PETER, comm. E. LEVANTE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. VIII, *Philip (AD 244–249). All provinces except Asia*, online: <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023] (cetera: RPC 8), no 20908 temp.

<sup>22</sup> For instance: RPC 1, nos 2129, 2133, 2140 (Sinope), 1656–1660 (Philippi?).

<sup>23</sup> They look like oxen or bulls, but sometimes they resemble, for example, “zebu”, e.g., RPC 1, no 3538 (Lystra), 3529 (Antioch of Pisidia); A. BURNETT, M. AMANDRY, I. CARRADICE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. II, *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96)*, London–Paris 1999 (cetera: RPC 2), no 1604 (Antioch of Pisidia). Cf. E.A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro...*, p. 259–260.

<sup>24</sup> For instance: RPC 2, no 253 (Patras); RPC 3, nos 272 (Patras), 3968 (Aelia Capitolina); RPC 8, no 20908 temp. (Cremna).

<sup>25</sup> For instance: RPC 3, no 3958 (Caesarea Maritima).

<sup>26</sup> For instance: RPC 2, no 2300 (Caesarea Maritima).

<sup>27</sup> M. VERZÁR BASS, *Il rilievo...*, p. 268.

<sup>28</sup> For instance: RPC 2, no 1107 (Tralles); D. CALOMINO, A. BURNETT, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. VI, *From Elgabalus to Maximinus (AD 218–238)*, <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023], no 3956 temp. (Comama).

<sup>29</sup> E.A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro...*, p. 259.

This distinction is not always clear. Nevertheless, the scene shown on the reverses of the mentioned Hadrian bronzes from Parium, constructed in a minimalist and traditional way with the *togatus* urging on a team of cattle, drawing a plough, probably depicts the *aratrum* motif and commemorate the ancient act of (re)founding the city.

### The Hadrianic coins from Parium and the erroneous reverse legend RPC 3, 1539

During Hadrian's reign, only a few types of coins were minted at the Parium mint on the Hellespont. Coins with portraits of Hadrian and empress Sabina, i.e. the imperial couple<sup>30</sup>, and Sabina and Aelius Caesar<sup>31</sup>, are likely to have been issued in this place. The legends on the reverses of these coins provide the names of the portrayed people, but, unfortunately, they do not indicate the *ethnikon*. The attribution of these coins to the mint in Parium is at best probable<sup>32</sup>.

There are no such doubts in relation to Hadrian's other coins, on which information about the *ethnikon* is introduced in the inscriptions C G I P and C G I H P. In this group of coins, the following iconographic solutions, known in the coinage of Hadrian's predecessors, were used: the foundation type (the scene of designating the *sulcus primigenius*), known here since the decline of the Republic<sup>33</sup> – Parium is considered to be a colony founded by Julius Caesar<sup>34</sup>, and the depiction of a Capricorn is believed to represent Augustus<sup>35</sup>, who may have refounded the colony.

These are the two basic motifs used by this mint, which only slightly expanded the range of themes addressed on its coins in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and then in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In the early period until the time of Hadrian, the set of themes employed here was limited. Until the year 138, each of the two indicated motifs was used in more than 30% of all types and variants of Parium coins. In turn, Hadrian, traveling in the year 124 from Cyzicus to Troy, visited Parium; it is likely that he changed the status of the city, granting it *ius Italicum*<sup>36</sup>. The old

<sup>30</sup> RPC 3, nos 1544 (HADRIANVS AVG P P / HADRIANVS ET SABINA), 1545 (HADRIANVS AVG P P / SABINA HADRIANVS), 6574 ([IMP] CAES TRAI A HADRIAN[ ]V[ / HA]DRIAN [S] ABINA).

<sup>31</sup> RPC 3, no 1546 (HADRIANVS AVG P P / AELIVS ET SABINA).

<sup>32</sup> RPC 3, p. 184–186.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. RPC 1, nos 2253A (c. 45 BC?), 2261, 2262 (27 BC–AD 14); RPC 2, no 889 (81–96); RPC 3, nos 1533 (96–98), 1534–1535 (98–117); cf. E. A. ARSLAN, *L'aratro...*, p. 252.

<sup>34</sup> RPC 1, p. 384. Cf. V. KELEŞ, *Some Observations on the Altar of Hermokreon in Parion*, [in:] *Paros and its Colonies*, ed. D. KATSONOPOULOU, Athens 2018, p. 180: *Parion was colonized [...] firstly during Julius Caesar or Augustus' reign*; cf. also B. LEVICK, *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor*, Oxford 1967, p. 5–6; U. LAFFI, *Colonie e municipi...*, p. 32, 56–57.

<sup>35</sup> RPC 1, nos 2263–2265.

<sup>36</sup> *Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, L, 15, 8, 9, rec. Th. MOMMSEN, Berolini 1870. Cf. B. LEVICK, *Roman Colonies...*, p. 5–6, 84, n. 7; A.-V. PONT, *L'empereur « fondateur » : enquête sur les motifs de la reconnaissance civique*, REG 120, 2007, p. 544.

colony honored Hadrian with the title of *conditor coloniae*, as can be read in the epigraphic material<sup>37</sup>. Michael Zahrnt argues that the naming by no means commemorated Hadrian's re-founding of the Parium colony, but possibly the enlargement of the territory of its area to include some land across the Hellespont<sup>38</sup>. In this way, Parium controlled the crossing in this particular section of the strait, which increased the importance of the center. This was a sufficient argument for the creation of dedicatory inscriptions and for Hadrian the benefactor being honoured as the "founder" (*conditor*)<sup>39</sup>. The emperor's affection towards the city and a subsequent "re-founding" of Parium is also reflected in the coinage. The earlier *ethnikon* Colonia Gemella Iulia Pariana (in the inscriptions on the coins in the form of an abbreviation: C G I P) was supplemented with another epithet and took the form Colonia Gemella Iulia Hadriana Pariana. The *ethnikon* abbreviated to the first letters – C G I H P – was placed on coins with an *araturum* motif on the reverse<sup>40</sup>; the emperor's name was placed on the obverse – HADRIANVS AVG P P – indicating that the coins were struck in the year 128 at the earliest, when Hadrian received the title of Pater Patriae<sup>41</sup>. On the reverses of other bronzes with an *araturum* motif, along with a Capricorn motif, there is an inscription C G I P – which suggests that they were made earlier, before the caesura of the years 124–128<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> *Die Inschriften von Parion*, nos 7, 9, and 8, ed. P. FRISCH, Bonn 1983 = *CIL*, III 374. Cf. A.-V. PONT, *L'empereur...*, p. 544 and n. 91; M.T. BOATWRIGHT, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, Princeton 2000, p. 85–86.

<sup>38</sup> M. ZAHRNT, *Vermeintliche Kolonien des Kaisers Hadrian*, ZPE 71, 1988, p. 238–242. The text of the Parium inscription is echoed on an inscription found at Hexamili on the European coast of the Propontis: AE 1938, 140. Hadrian appears as *conditor* in Avitta Bibba – *CIL*, VIII 799; Althiburos – *CIL*, VIII 27775; Choba – AE 1949, 55; Turris Tamalleni – *CIL*, VIII 83 (*conditor municipii*); in Mursa – *CIL*, III 3279 (*conditori suo*); Samos – *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, IV 986, ed. G. LAFAYE, Paris 1927 (cetera: IGR); Elaea – IGR IV 268; Clazomenae – IGR IV 1551; Traianopolis – IGR IV 623. Cf. B. GALSTERER-KRÖLL, *Untersuchungen zu den Beinamen der Städte des Imperium Romanum*, *EpiS* 9, 1972, p. 78; A.-V. PONT, *L'empereur...*, p. 543–546; M.T. BOATWRIGHT, *Hadrian...*, p. 37, 39, n. 10, 41, n. 20.

<sup>39</sup> Compare the comments on the alternative title *ktistes*, which was given to mythical or historical founders, but also distinguished citizens (then a meaning similar to *euergetes*): A.-V. PONT, *L'empereur...*, esp. p. 528–530; E. MORTENSEN, *Ktistes: Mythical Founder Hero and Honorary Title for New Heroes*, [in:] *Tradition. Transmission of Culture in the Ancient World*, ed. J. FEJFER, M. MOLTESEN, A. RATHJE, Copenhagen 2015, p. 214. Hadrian hailed as *ktistes*, e.g., *SEG*, LXIV 166–167 (Athens); *SEG*, XVII 809 and *SEG*, XVIII 731 (Cyrene); *IG*, VII 70, 72 (Megara); *RPC* 3, nos 338–365, 367–387 (Argos); *RPC* 3, nos 1780–1781, 1783 (Stratonicea Hadrianopolis); *RPC* 3, no 2083 (Tralles).

<sup>40</sup> The honorific name "Hadriana" added to the titles of Parium, cf. M. ZAHRNT, *Vermeintliche Kolonien...*, p. 241; M.T. BOATWRIGHT, *Hadrian...*, p. 105, but here it is indicated that the name appeared on coins struck at the time of Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161).

<sup>41</sup> D. KIENAST, W. ECK, M. HEIL, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 2017, p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> *RPC* 3, nos 1539–1541.



The reverse legends of this earlier phase are wider than just a reference to the *ethnikon*. These longer inscriptions are arranged in the forms: COS III C G I P TRIB P and IANVS AVG / C G I P. Could the name of Janus (Ianus) actually be found in the latter record? A simple explanation is suggested by juxtaposed legends on the obverses and reverses of the Hadrian coins from Parium. Apart from the above-mentioned coins with the names of the dynasty members – Hadrian, Sabina and Aelius Caesar, presented in duos in the inscriptions, which were hypothetically assigned to this mint, the legends of other Hadrian's coins are as follows:

obverse	reverse (iconographic theme)	references
IMP CAES TR HADRIANVS	IANVS AVG / C G I P ( <i>aratum</i> )	RPC 3, 1539
IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADR	IANVS AVG / C G I P ( <i>aratum</i> )	RPC 3, 1540
IMP CAES TRAIAN HADRIAN AVG	COS III C G I P TRIB P (Capricorn)	RPC 3, 1541
HADRIANVS AVG P P	C G I H P ( <i>aratum</i> )	RPC 3, 1542

In the legends there appears the name (*nomina*) of the emperor: Traianus Hadrianus, along with his respective titles, information about the dignities and offices he held: *imperator, caesar, augustus, pater patriae, consul, tribunicia potestas*. In the case of coins created in the later period (RPC 1452), the legends with selected data of this kind were placed only on the obverse. On coins issued earlier (RPC 3, 1539–1541), the titles are slightly more extensive on both the obverse and the reverse. In the Parium mint, including such information on the obverse and the reverse was quite common before – regardless of the length of the legend. Such a practice can be seen, for example, on the coins of Domitian (81–96): on the obverse, the legend DOMIT AVG appears next to the portrait of the emperor, but his victory title Germanicus (written in the abbreviation GERM) was placed on the reverse, where the motif of *aratum* is presented<sup>43</sup>. In turn, on Traianus' coins (98–117), the obverse legend IMP CAES NER TRAIANO AVG GER DA, placed next to the head of the emperor, is extended on the reverse: OPTIMO PRINCIPI C G I P D D, being accompanied here by the image of a reclining Capricorn<sup>44</sup>.

Three forms of the obverse legends were used in the earlier period of the activity of the Parium mint during Hadrian's reign. These legends begin with the standard information IMP CAES/AR, they then specify the ruler in various developments (TR/AIAN HADRI/IAN/VS), but are continued in some elements of the reverse legends. The proper name of the emperor appears on the obverses

<sup>43</sup> RPC 2, no 889.

<sup>44</sup> RPC 3, no 1538.

in full: HADRIANVS or shortened: HADR and HADRIAN. On the other hand, on the reverses there is – apart from the *ethnikon* – information about the dignity of *augustus* (AVG), the consulate (COS III) and the tribunician power (TRIB P). In two cases, the legend of the ending of Hadrian's name was also transferred to the reverses. In the case of RPC 1540 coins, the name of the emperor was divided in such a way that its beginning, written on the obverses with the letters HADR, ends on the reverses, where it reads IANVS, all of which gives the complete name: Hadrianus. A similar procedure was used on the RPC 1539 coins. IANVS was also written on their reverses, but because the obverses gave the name in full: HADRIANVS, some part of the imperial name was doubled. Was it only the result of a mistake committed by a master engraver or the result of the unwitting use of the reverse die RPC 1540 on coins with a different RPC 1539 obverse in the minting process? It is hard to decide one way or the other.

The peculiarity of the reverse variant of the RPC 1539 coins is therefore a defect in the production of these numismatic items. There are not many such coins. The *Roman Provincial Coinage* catalogue lists eight known examples. Even less common are the RPC 1540 coins, of which only four were enumerated. The image of a ploughman with yoke of oxen ceremonially performing the founding act, described by the legend IANVS AVG C G I P, was by no means widely known to the ancient users of coins made in Parium. In the next period of Hadrian's reign, the same image was supplemented on the reverse in the form of a shorter legend, containing only the *ethnikon* inscribed in the abbreviation C G I H P. It was devoid of the element introducing potential ambiguity. There are more of these RPC 1542 than of the RPC 1539–1540 coins<sup>45</sup>.

Nevertheless, one should take into account the association evoked by the unusual composition of the image and the legends of the reverses of the RPC 1539–1540 coins. In Roman coinage, there appeared such combinations of graphic elements and letters that provoked ambiguity – intended or not – and triggered associations other than those literally defined in the inscription or representation. In the discussed case, a numismatic lapse resulting from an error allows us to associate the god Janus with the *aratum* motif (I omit the grammatical and semantic inconsistency of the IANVS AVG inscription).

### **(Non-)obvious associations: Janus**

Janus was not a popular motif in the Roman coinage of the imperial era. In provincial coinage, Janus appeared late and was represented quite rarely, which can be explained by the fact that Janus, the god of the Roman world, had no counterpart in the Greek world<sup>46</sup>. The figure of Janus, recognizable thanks to the two-faced head of

<sup>45</sup> RPC: 16 specimens.

<sup>46</sup> OVIDIUS, I, 91: *nam tibi par nullum Graecia numen habet*. But cf. PLUTARCHUS, *Q.Rom.* 22: Janus was a native Greek of Perrhaebia.

the god, is represented by coins issued at the beginning of the independent reign of Commodus (180–192) in Alexandria *Troas*<sup>47</sup>, a city that he had the opportunity to get to know during his journey to the East along with his father, emperor Marcus Aurelius<sup>48</sup>. It cannot be ruled out that the reminiscences of this trip influenced the thematic revival of the monetary production of this mint. Many types of coins from Alexandria *Troas* addressed the founding motif during the rule of Commodus. Among these coins there were also those with the *aratrum* motif, rarely used at all in this mint<sup>49</sup>. Later, during the rule of Trajan Decius (249–251), the image of Janus appeared in another local mint. When Thessalonica received the status of a colony, a *metropolis*, and a fourth neocorate<sup>50</sup>, those distinctions were honored with exceptional coin emissions, some of which featured the figure of Janus. It is interesting that this motif, known in Thessalonica in the time of the Republic<sup>51</sup>, reappeared, but now it was given a new shape. The figure of Janus was juxtaposed with the figure of Marsyas, a symbol of freedom and one of the numismatic icons of the Roman colonies<sup>52</sup>. On other coins, it was represented – again along with Marsyas – as a statuette held in the hand by Tyche, the tutelary deity of the city<sup>53</sup>.

The Roman emissions that mention Janus' name in legends are also infrequent. Such cases are recorded only by imperial coinage. The name of Janus appears on Pertinax's IANO CONSERVAT denarii (193)<sup>54</sup> and Gallienus' aureus of IANO PATRI type (253–268)<sup>55</sup>, along with a representation of Janus standing. Coins struck under Nero (54–68) included Janus' name in long reverse inscriptions:

<sup>47</sup> V. HEUCHERT, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. IV, *The Antonines (AD 138–192)*, online, with temporary numbers, <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023] (cetera: RPC 4), no 171 temp.

<sup>48</sup> M. CHRISTOL, Th. DREW-BEAR, *Remarques sur le voyage de Marc Aurèle dans les provinces grecques et orientales en 175–176*, [in:] *Les voyages des empereurs dans l'Orient romain. Époques antonine et sévérienne*, ed. A. HOSTEIN, S. LALANNE, Arles 2012, p. 135–153.

<sup>49</sup> The Marsyas theme: RPC 4, nos 168 temp., 169 temp., 170 temp., 188 temp., 1298 temp.; the she-wolf suckling the twins: RPC 4, nos 166 temp., 167 temp., 185 temp., 186 temp., 3170 temp., 3171 temp., 9197 temp., 11291 temp.; and the *aratrum* motif: RPC 4, nos 620 temp.; cf. T.M. LUCHELLI, *Un nuova emissione di Commodo ad Alexandria Troas*, RINSA 118, 2017, p. 55–74.

<sup>50</sup> B. BURRELL, *Neokoroi. Greek Cities and Roman Emperor*, Leiden 2004 [= CiCS, NS 9], p. 199–200.

<sup>51</sup> H. GAEBLER, *Die antiken Munzen von Makedonia und Paionia*, vol. II, Berlin 1935, p. 130, no 67, pl. 23.8.

<sup>52</sup> A. HOSTEIN, J. MAIRAT, comm. E. LEVANTE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. IX, *From Trajan Decius to Uranian Antoninus (AD 249–254)*, London–Paris 2016 (cetera: RPC 9), no 141. Marsyas as a symbol of liberty: Serv. *ad Aen.* 3.20; P. VEYNE, *Le Marsyas “colonial” et l'indépendance des cités romaines*, BSNF 1960, 1962, p. 56–58; N. RUSSO, *Il vero volto del Sireno*, Roma 2018, p. 113–118.

<sup>53</sup> RPC 9, no 176.

<sup>54</sup> H. MATTINGLY, E.A. SYDENHAM, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. IV.1, *Pertinax to Geta*, London 1936 (repr. 1968) (cetera: RIC 4.1), Pert., no 3.

<sup>55</sup> P.H. WEBB, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. V.1, *Valerian to Florian*, London 1927 (repr. 1968) (cetera: RIC 5.1), Gall. SR, no 45 = R. GÖBL, *Die Münzprägung der Kaiser Valerianus I., Gallienus, Saloninus (253/268), Regalianus (260) und Macrianus, Quietus (260/262)*, Wien 2000, no 449.

PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT (S C)<sup>56</sup> and PACE P R VBIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT S C<sup>57</sup>. However, the images on these coins – here the meaning of the reverse is consistent – do not present a figural image of the god, but its “temple” with closed doors, which symbolized the introduction of peace on the borders and emphasized the fact that the empire was not waging any war<sup>58</sup>.

In the provincial coinage of Hadrian’s reign, there is no image of Janus, nor is the name of the god mentioned on the coins issued by this emperor.



**Fig. 3.** Au, Rome, AD 121–123; obv.: IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG, laureate, draped and curiaised bust of Hadrian, r.; rev.: P M TR P COS III, Janus *Bifrons* stg.; RIC 2.3, no 510; © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Triton XIV, Lot 707; <https://cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=175811>.

On the other hand, Janus was depicted in Hadrian’s imperial coinage. He was not named, but his image is unmistakable<sup>59</sup>. It is the first full-figure depiction of this god in Roman coinage. The period of Hadrian’s rule saw a significant change

<sup>56</sup> RIC 1, Ner., nos 50, 58 (Au), 51 (D), 263–271, 323–328, 353–355, 438–439, 510–512, 583–585 (Ses), 283–288, 337–338 (Dp), 300–305, 421, 468–472, 537–539 (As).

<sup>57</sup> RIC 1, Ner., nos 289–291, 339–342, 362 (Dp), 306–311, 347–350, 366–367 (As).

<sup>58</sup> For a description of the “temple” and the meaning of its ceremonial opening/closing, e.g.: VERGILIUS, VII, 607–622; PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars*, I, 25, ed. et trans. H.B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1914 [= LCL]. Cf. OVIDIUS, I, 279–281; PLUTARCHUS, *Numa* 20, 1–3; cf. also VARRO, V, 165 (*porta* “dicta ab Iano”).

<sup>59</sup> A recognizable image, but even the ancients had difficulty in identifying it, cf. PLINE L’ANCIEN, *Histoire Naturelle*, XXXIV, 32, ed. et trans. H. LE BONNIEC, comm. H. GALLET DE SANTERRE, H. LE BONNIEC, Paris 1953 (an account of the two-headed statue of Janus erected by the legendary king Numa Pompilius) and PLINE L’ANCIEN, *Histoire Naturelle*, XXXVI, 28, ed. J. ANDRÉ, trans. R. BLOCH, comm. A. ROUVERET, Paris 1981 (the account of “Ianus pater”, a gold-plated statue brought by Augustus from Egypt – probably a herm of Hermes).

in the way Janus was treated by ancient minters. It is worth mentioning here that he is not represented in this way in the known official monumental sculpture, but he appears in monetary images instead. The emission of P M TR P COS III aureus, with the representation of two-faced Janus (Ianus Bifrons), is dated to 121–123 (fig. 3)<sup>60</sup>. The asses of type COS III S C, date back to the years 124–127. They present Janus with four faces (Ianus Quadrifrons) – three faces are shown, one *en face*, two *en profile*, while the fourth, obviously, remains invisible (fig. 4)<sup>61</sup>. Janus' characteristic long beard can be recognized<sup>62</sup>. On these Hadrianic coins Janus is represented standing in the foreground with the long sceptre or rather the staff (*baculum*) mentioned by Ovid when describing the god's appearance<sup>63</sup>:

tunc sacer ancipiti mirandus imagine Ianus  
 bina repens oculis obtulit ora meis. [...]  
 ille tenens baculum dextra clavemque sinistra

Then of a sudden sacred Janus, in his two-headed shape, offered his double visage to my wondering eyes. [...] He, holding in his right hand his staff and in his left the key [...]<sup>64</sup>.

Janus *Quadrifrons* is a unique version of the representation of Janus; in the light of the known numismatic evidence, it occurs only in Hadrian's coinage. On the other hand, the image of Janus *Bifrons* was used not only in the aforementioned provincial emissions of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and mid-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, but it also appeared in the imperial coinage of several rulers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> R. ABDY, P. MITTAG, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II.3, *From AD 117 to AD 138 – Hadrian*, London 2019 (cetera: RIC 2.3), nos 509–510. Cf. H. MATTINGLY, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. III, *Nerva to Hadrian*, London 1936 (repr. 1966) (cetera: BMCRE 3), p. 254, no 100 (AD 119–122); P.L. STRACK, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, vol. II, *Die Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Hadrian*, Stuttgart 1933, p. 80 and no 91 (122 or 123); Ph.V. HILL, *The Dating and Arrangement of the Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98–148*, London 1970, p. 54, 156, no 178 (AD 121).

<sup>61</sup> RIC 2.3, no 748. Cf. P.L. STRACK, *Untersuchungen...*, p. 80 and no 601 (summer 123); BMCRE 3, p. 437, no 1335–1336 (AD 125–128); Ph.V. HILL, *The Dating...*, p. 60, 160, no 323/4 (AD 126, *decennalia*; cf. D. KIENAST, W. ECK, M. HEIL, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 123: *ludi votivi decennales – 20 X 127*). Harold Mattingly (BMCRE 3, p. clxvii) emphasized the novelty of Janus' depictions in Hadrian's coinage.

<sup>62</sup> OVIDIUS, I, 259.

<sup>63</sup> OVIDIUS, I, 95–96 and 99. Cf. OVIDIUS, I, 177. Janus bears the key too: OVIDIUS, I, 228, 254; MACROBIUS, I, 9, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Trans. by Sir J.G. Frazer.

<sup>65</sup> RIC 3, Ant. P., nos 644 (Ses, 140–144), 693a–b (As, 140–144); RIC 3, Comm., no 141 (Au, 186–187); RIC 3, nos 460 (Ses, 186), 479 (As, 186); F. GNECCHI, *I medaglion...*, p. 62, no 94, pl. 84.5; RIC 4.1, Pert., no 3 (D, 193); RIC 4.1, Geta, no 79 (D, 211); RIC 5.1, Gall. SR, no 45 = R. GÖBL, *Die Münzprägung...*, no 449 (Au); R. ABDY, *A New Coin Type of Gallienus Found in Hertfordshire*,



**Fig. 4.** Æ As, Rome, ca. AD 124–125, obv.: HADRIVS AVGVSTVS, laureate head of Hadrian, r.; rev.: COS III S C, Janus *Quadrifrons* stg.; RIC 2.3, no. 748; © Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Auction 72, Lo: 437; <https://cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=308985>.

The significance of each of these cases in imperial and provincial coinage should be considered separately, in the context of the historical events and ideological circumstances of each reign<sup>66</sup>. At this point, therefore, I only offer a general comment, trying to find in them a connection between the Janus motif and the *aratrum* motif, even despite the lack of such intentions of the producers of the RPC 1539–1540 coins. This is made possible by the polyvalency of Janus himself: the god of peace and war, transition and beginning, chaos and repetition, sunlight and Time, etc.<sup>67</sup>

NC 162, 2002, p. 346–350 (Æ). The bust of Janus was also used in the iconography of the restitution denarii of Trajan (98–117), which resembled the images on earlier coins; the image of Janus familiar from Republican coinage was used; cf. B. WOYTEK, *Die Reichsprägung...*, no 801 = H. KOMNICK, *Die Restitutionsmünzen...*, no 2.0, prototype: M.H. CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge 1974 (cetera: RRC), no 28.3 (225–212 BC). Cf. also RRC, no 378.1 (81 BC) – these coins have the same iconographic scheme (“ploughman with yoke of oxen”), but it is debatable whether they represent the founding ritual. For depictions of Janus, cf. R. PETTAZZONI, *Per l’iconografia di Giano*, SÈt 24, 1955–1956, p. 79–90; J. HAMER, *The Physiognomy and Artistic Representation of Janus with Special Reference to the Coinage in Southern Italy*, [in:] *XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática, Madrid, 2003: actas – proceedings – actes*, vol. I, ed. C. ALFARO, C. MARCOS, P. OTERO, Madrid 2005, p. 619–624.

<sup>66</sup> R. TURCAN, *Janus à l’époque impériale*, [in:] ANRW II, 17.1, 1981, p. 374–402.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. I. KACZOR, *Deus, ritus, cultus. Studium na temat charakteru religii starożytnych Rzymian*, Łódź 2012, p. 255–258.

Let us turn again to Ovid's arguments, which in this case constitute an instructive synthesis of various ideas about Janus circulating in the Roman world at the beginning of the Empire. Among the many associations there is Janus as the mythical king of the land on the Tiber<sup>68</sup>:

arx mea collis erat, quem volgus nomine nostro  
nuncupat, haec aetas Ianiculumque vocat.  
tunc ego regnabam, patiens cum terra deorum  
esset, et humanis numina mixta locis.  
nondum Iustitiam facinus mortale fugarat  
(ultima de superis illa reliquit humum),  
proque metu populum sine vi pudor ipse regebat;  
nullus erat iustis reddere iura labor.

My castle was the hill which common folk call by my name, and which this present age doth dub Janiculum. I reigned in days when earth could bear with gods, and divinities moved freely in the abodes of men. The sin of mortals had not yet put Justice to flight (she was the last of the celestials to forsake the earth): honour's self, not fear, ruled the people without appeal to force: toil there was none to expound the right to righteous men<sup>69</sup>.

Janus is above all the ruler of the primordial land of bliss. It was him – the oldest and, in terms of priority, the most important king of Italy, and at the same time a newcomer from far away – who ruled over the wild and primitive natives, introduced the worship of the gods here and introduced cult rituals<sup>70</sup>. He was accompanied by another newcomer, Saturn, and gave the local people more benefits, such as a sedentary lifestyle, the art of farming, laws, smelt bronze. Thus, the figure of Janus alludes to Roman protohistory and myth, and he himself and his reign – along with Saturn – are responsible for the golden age, *saeculum aureum*, in Latium<sup>71</sup>. This is how Harold Mattingly read some references to Janus in coinage, writing in the relevant volume *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum: Janus [...] seems to be rather the primitive king of Latium than the index of peace and war*<sup>72</sup>. Other researchers follow him in such interpretations of Janus as *l'archétype des souverains italiques, modèle de circonspection politique : d'ou sa gemina facies, croyait-on*<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> OVIDIUS, I, 245–252.

<sup>69</sup> Trans. by Sir J.G. FRAZER.

<sup>70</sup> For instance PSEUDO-AURÉLIUS VICTOR, 3, 1 and 3; PLUTARCHUS, *Q.Rom.* 22 and 41; PLUTARCHUS, *Numa* 19, 9–11.

<sup>71</sup> On this “dyarchy” and on etymological aspects (Janus – Janiculum): P. GRIMAL, *La colline de Janus*, RA 24, 1945, p. 56–87.

<sup>72</sup> H. MATTINGLY, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. IV, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, London 1940 (repr. 1968), p. lxxx.

<sup>73</sup> R. TURCAN, *Janus...*, p. 375.

If such associations of Janus are further combined with another idea characteristic for him, namely the beginning in the temporal sense<sup>74</sup>, then one can seek an explanation for the presence of the figure of Janus on provincial coins – especially those whose image – the *aratrum* motif – symbolized and resembled the beginning of a given colony. At the same time – referring to its place of origin, i.e. Vrbs – they develop a series of associations, including references to the Janiculum and other Roman Hills, Latium, Italy, and Roman Empire, i.e. the whole Roman world with its ideological center: Rome itself. In this way, a capacious circle of associations is closed.

To recapitulate, the originality of the reverse of the coins of RPC 1539–1540 is the result of an (un)intentional mistake, as a result of which the scene of the ritual delimitation of the city borders was commented on by legends containing the form IANVS. In the image of these coins, the figure driving the plough does not have the visual features of the god Janus. Nevertheless, it may trigger associations with the Italian Janus, who – before Rome was established on the Tiber – had been present in Roman history.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

“L’Année Épigraphique”, Paris 1888–

CATON, *Les origines (Fragments)*, ed. et trans. M. CHASSIGNET, Paris 1986.

CICÉRON, *Discours, 19: Philippiques I à IV*, ed. et trans. A. BOULANGER, P. WUILLEUMIER, Paris 1959.

*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. Th. MOMMSEN et al., Paris 1881–

*Digesta Iustiniani Augusti*, rec. Th. MOMMSEN, Berolini 1870.

DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS, *Antiquités romaines*, vol. I, ed. et trans. V. FROMENTIN, Paris 1998.

GAJUSZ PLINIUSZ SEKUNDUS, *Historia naturalna*, vol. III, *Botanika, Rolnictwo i Ogrodnictwo*, ed., trans. et comm. I. MIKOŁAJCZYK, Toruń 2022.

*Die Inschriften von Parion*, ed. F. FRISCH, Bonn 1983.

*Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berolini 1873–

*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, ed. R. CAGNAT et al., Paris 1906–1927.

MACROBE, *Les Saturnales*, ed. et trans. H. BORNECQUE, F. RICHARD, Paris 1937.

*Ovid’s Fasti*, trans. J.G. FRAZER, London–Cambridge 1959 [= Loeb Classical Library, 253].

PLINE L’ANCIEN, *Histoire Naturelle*, ed. et trans. H. LE BONNIEC, comm. H. GALLET DE SANTERRE, H. LE BONNIEC, Paris 1953.

PLINE L’ANCIEN, *Histoire Naturelle*, ed. J. ANDRÉ, trans. R. BLOCH, comm. A. ROUVERET, Paris 1981.

PLUTARQUE, *Oeuvres morales*, vol. IV, *Conduites méritoires de femmes. Étiologies romaines – étiologies grecques. Paralleles mineurs*, ed. et trans. J. BOULOGNE, Paris 2002.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. OVIDIUS, I, 103–114, 125; MACROBIUS, I, 9, 14.



- PLUTARQUE, *Vies*, vol. I, *Thésée – Romulus – Lucurgue – Numa*, ed. et trans. R. FLACELIÈRE, É. CHAMBRY, M. JUNEUX, Paris 1993.
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars*, ed. et trans. H.B. DEWING, London–Cambridge Massachusetts 1914 [= Loeb Classical Library], [https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-history\\_wars.1914](https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-history_wars.1914)
- PSEUDO-AURÉLIUS VICTOR, *Les Origines du Peuple Romain*, ed., trans. et comm. J.-Cl. RICHARD, Paris 1983.
- Quinti Horati Flacci Opera omnia*, vol. I, *Carmina et epodon librum continens*, ed. O. JUREWICZ, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1986.
- Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, vol. I, *Aeneidos librorum I–V commentarii*, rec. G. THILO, Lipsiae 1881.
- Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, ed. P. ROUSSEL et al., Leiden 1923–
- TACITE, *Annales*, vol. III, ed. et trans. P. WUILLEUMIER, Paris 1994.
- TITE-LIVE, *Histoire romaine*, vol. I, ed. J. BAYET, trans. G. BAILLET, app. ed. R. BLOCH, Paris 2012.
- VARRON, *De lingua latina. Livre V*, ed. et trans. J. COLLART, Paris 1954.
- VIRGILE, *Enéide*, ed. et trans. J. PERRET, Paris 1992–1993.

### Secondary Literature

- ABDY R., *A New Coin Type of Gallienus Found in Hertfordshire*, “The Numismatic Chronicle” 162, 2002, p. 346–350.
- ABDY R., MITTAG P., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II.3, *From AD 117 to AD 138 – Hadrian*, London 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10qqzjg>
- AMANDRY M., BURNETT A., MAIRAT J., METCALF W., BRICAULT L., BLET-LEMARQUAND M., *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. III, *Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian (AD 96–138)*, London–Paris 2015.
- ARSLAN E.A., *L’aratro. Semantica civile*, [in:] *L’agricoltura in età romana*, ed. S. SEGENNI, Milano 2019, p. 205–267.
- AULOCK H. VON, *Münzen und Städte Pisiadiens*, vol. II, Tübingen 1979.
- BEARD M., NORTH J., PRICE S., *Religions of Rome*, vol. II, *A Sourcebook*, Cambridge 1998.
- BOATWRIGHT M.T., *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*, Princeton 2000, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691187211>
- BRANDS G., *Der Bogen von Aquinum*, “Archäologischer Anzeiger” 4, 1991, p. 561–609.
- BRIQUEL D., *La leggenda di Romolo e il rituale di fondazione delle città*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città*, (*Catalogo della Mostra*), ed. A. CARANDINI, R. CAPPELLI, Milano 2000, p. 39–44.
- BRUSIN G., *Aquileia. Bassorilievo col tracciato del sulcus primigenius*, “Notizie degli scavi di antichità, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei” 1931, p. 472–475.
- BURNETT A., AMANDRY M., CARRADICE I., *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. II, *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96)*, London–Paris 1999.
- BURNETT A., AMANDRY M., RIPOLLÈS P.P., *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. I, *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)*, London–Paris 1992.
- BURRELL B., *Neokoroi. Greek Cities and Roman Emperor*, Leiden 2004 [= Cincinnati Classical Studies, NS 9], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047401506>
- CALOMINO D., BURNETT A., *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. VI, *From Elgabalus to Maximinus (AD 218–238)*, <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023].

- CARAFÀ P., *Commento*, [in:] *La leggenda di Roma*, vol. I, *Dalla nascita dei gemelli alla fondazione della città*, ed. A. CARANDINI, Milano 2006, p. 340–452.
- CARAFÀ P., *I documenti figurati relativi al rito dell'aratura*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città*, (*Catalogo della Mostra*), ed. A. CARANDINI, R. CAPPELLI, Milano 2000, p. 272–274.
- CARAFÀ P., *Il costume e l'aratro del fondatore*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città*, (*Catalogo della Mostra*), ed. A. CARANDINI, R. CAPPELLI, Milano 2000, p. 277.
- CARAFÀ P., *Il rito dell'aratura e la costruzione delle mure palatine*, [in:] *Roma, Romolo, Remo e la fondazione della città*, (*Catalogo della Mostra*), ed. A. CARANDINI, R. CAPPELLI, Milano 2000, p. 275–276.
- CARRADICE I.A., BUTTREY T.V., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II.1, *From AD 69–96 Vespasian to Domitian*, London 2007.
- CHRISTOL M., DREW-BEAR Th., *Remarques sue le voyage de Marc Aurèle dans les provinces grecques et orientales en 175–176*, [in:] *Les voyages des empereurs dans l'Orient romain. Époques antonine et sévérienne*, ed. A. HOSTEIN, S. LALANNE, Arles 2012, p. 135–153.
- COLES A.I., *Roman Colonies in Republic and Empire*, Leiden 2020 [= Brill Research Perspectives in Ancient History], <https://doi.org/10.1163/25425374-12340007>
- CRAWFORD M.H., *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge 1974.
- DI FILIPPO BALESTRAZZI E., *Il rilievo storico*, [in:] *Aquileia dalle origini alla costituzione del Ducato longobardo. Topografia, urbanistica, edilizia pubblica*, ed. G. CUSCITO, M. VERZAR-BASS, Trieste 2005, p. 93–123.
- DI GENNARO F., *Rilievo con sella curulis*, [in:] *Terme di Diocleziano. Il chiostro piccolo della Certosa di Santa Maria degli Angeli*, ed. R. FRIGGERI, M. MAGNANI CIANETTI, Verona 2014, p. 131.
- ECKSTEIN A.M., *The Foundation Day of Roman "Coloniae"*, "California Studies in Classical Antiquity" 12, 1979, p. 85–97, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25010742>
- FILGES A., *Münzbild und Gemeinschaft. Die Prägungen der römischen Kolonien in Kleinasien*, Bonn 2015 [= Frankfurter archäologische Schriften, 29].
- FORNI G., *Semantica degli strumenti rurali in età romana. Il caso dell' aratro: sua matrice ed evoluzione*, [in:] *L'agricoltura in età romana*, ed. S. SEGENNI, Milano 2019, p. 157–204.
- GAEBLER H., *Die antiken Munzen von Makedonia und Paionia*, vol. II, Berlin 1935.
- GALSTERER-KRÖLL B., *Untersuchungen zu den Beinamen der Stadte des Imperium Romanum*, "Epigraphische Studien" 9, 1972, p. 44–145.
- GNECCHI F., *I medaglioni romani*, vol. II, Milano 1912.
- GÖBL R., *Die Münzprägung der Kaiser Valerianus I., Gallienus, Saloninus (253/268), Regalianus (260) und Macrianus, Quietus (260/262)*, Wien 2000.
- GRIMAL P., *La colline de Janus*, "Revue archéologique" 24, 1945, p. 56–87.
- HAMER J., *The Physiognomy and Artistic Representation of Janus with Special Reference to the Coinage in Southern Italy*, [in:] *XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática, Madrid, 2003: actas – proceedings – actes*, vol. I, ed. C. ALFARO, C. MARCOS, P. OTERO, Madrid 2005, p. 619–624.
- HEUCHERT V., *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. IV, *The Antonines (AD 138–192)*, online, with temporary numbers: <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023].
- HILL Ph.V., *The Dating and Arrangement of the Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98–148*, London 1970.
- HOSTEIN A., MAIRAT J., comm. E. LEVANTE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. IX, *From Trajan Decius to Uranius Antoninus (AD 249–254)*, London–Paris 2016.

- JELLONEK S., *Roman Foundation Myths on Colonial Coinage*, "Notae Numismaticae. Zapiski Numizmatyczne" 13, 2018, p. 101–125.
- KACZOR I., *Deus, ritus, cultus. Studium na temat charakteru religii starożytnych Rzymian*, Łódź 2012.
- KELEŞ V., *Some Observations on the Altar of Hermokreon in Parion*, [in:] *Paros and its Colonies*, ed. D. KATSONOPOULOU, Athens 2018, p. 179–188.
- KIENAST D., ECK W., HEIL M., *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 2017.
- KLUCZEK A.A., *Primordia Romana. Mityczna przeszłość Rzymu i pamięć o niej w rzymskich numizmatach zaklęta*, Katowice 2019.
- KOMNICK H., *Die Restitutionsmünzen der frühen Kaiserzeit. Aspekte der Kaiserlegitimation*, Berlin–New York 2001.
- LAFFI U., *Colonie e municipi dello Stato romano*, Roma 2007.
- LAFFI U., *L'amministrazione di Aquileia in età romana*, "Antichità Altoadriatiche" 30, 1987, p. 39–62.
- La leggenda di Roma*, vol. I, *Dalla nascita dei gemelli alla fondazione della città*, ed. A. CARANDINI, Milano 2006.
- LEVICK B., *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor*, Oxford 1967.
- LUCHELLI T.M., *Un nuova emissione di Commodo ad Alexandria Troas*, "Rivista italiana di numismatica e scienze affini" 118, 2017, p. 55–74.
- MAIRAT J., SPOERRI BUTCHER M., AMANDRY M., BUTCHER K., NURPETLIAN J., PETER U., comm. E. LEVANTE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. VIII, *Philip (AD 244–249). All provinces except Asia*, <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/> [30 IX 2023].
- MATTINGLY H., *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. III, *Nerva to Hadrian*, London 1936 (repr. 1966).
- MATTINGLY H., *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. IV, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, London 1940 (repr. 1968).
- MATTINGLY H., SYDENHAM E.A., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. III, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, London 1930 (repr. 1968).
- MATTINGLY H., SYDENHAM E.A., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. IV.1, *Pertinax to Geta*, London 1936 (repr. 1968).
- MORTENSEN E., *Ktistes: Mythical Founder Hero and Honorary Title for New Heroes*, [in:] *Tradition. Transmission of Culture in the Ancient World*, ed. J. FEJFER, M. MOLTESEN, A. RATHJE, Copenhagen 2015, p. 213–237.
- PETTAZZONI R., *Per l'iconografia di Giano*, "Studi Etruschi" 24, 1955–1956, p. 79–90.
- PONT A.-V., *L'empereur « fondateur » : enquête sur les motifs de la reconnaissance civique*, "Revue des études grecques" 120, 2007, p. 526–552, <https://doi.org/10.3406/reg.2007.7875>
- RUSO N., *Il vero volto del Sireno*, Roma 2018.
- SAGLIO E., *Aratrum*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romains*, vol. I.1, ed. Ch.V. DAREMBERG, E. SAGLIO, Paris 1873, p. 353–356.
- SAGLIO E., *Rallum*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romains*, vol. IV.2, ed. Ch.V. DAREMBERG, E. SAGLIO, Paris 1873, p. 810.
- SISANI S., *Qua aratrum ductum est. La colonizzazione romana come chiave interpretativa della Roma delle origini*, [in:] *Roman Republican Colonization. New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ancient History*, ed. T.D. STEK, J. PELGROM, Rome 2014, p. 357–404.

- STÄHLER K., *Der Herrscher als Pflüger und Säer. Herrschaftsbilder aus der Pflanzenwelt*, Münster 2001.
- STEVENS S., *The Emperor and the Plough; (Re)founding the City and Extending the Empire*, "BABESCH. Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology" 94, 2019, p. 147–160.
- STRACK P.L., *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, vol. II, *Die Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Hadrian*, Stuttgart 1933.
- SUTHERLAND C.H.V., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. I, *From 31 BC to AD 69*, London 1984.
- TOUTAIN J., *Sacrificium*, [in:] *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romains*, vol. IV.2, ed. Ch.V. DAREMBERG, E. SAGLIO, Paris 1873, p. 973–980.
- TURCAN R., *Janus à l'époque impériale*, [in:] *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, T. II, Bd. 17.1, ed. H. TEMPORINI, New York–Berlin 1981, p. 374–402.
- VERZÁR BASS M., *Il rilievo con scena di aratura di Aquileia riconsiderato*, [in:] *Archeologia Classica e Post-classica tra Italia e Mediterraneo. Scritti in ricordo di Maria Pia Rossignani*, ed. S. LUSUARDI SIENA, C. PERASSI, F. SACCHI, M. SANNAZZARO, Milano 2016, p. 265–274.
- VEYNE P., *Le Marsyas "colonial" et l'indépendance des cités romaines*, "Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France" 1960, 1962, p. 56–58, <https://doi.org/10.3406/bsnaf.1962.6301>
- WEBB P.H., *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. V.1, *Valerian to Florian*, London 1927 (repr. 1968).
- WOYTEK B., *Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus (98–117)*, Wien 2010 [= Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Classe, 387], <https://doi.org/10.1553/0x0022e047>
- ZAHRNT M., *Vermeintliche Kolonien des Kaisers Hadrian*, "Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik" 71, 1988, p. 229–249.


**Agata A. Kluczek**

University of Silesia in Katowice  
Faculty of Humanities  
Institute of History  
ul. Bankowa 11, p. 134  
40-007 Katowice, Polska/Poland  
[agata.kluczek@us.edu.pl](mailto:agata.kluczek@us.edu.pl)






Maciej Kokoszko (Łódź)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9563-2902>

Zofia Rzeźnicka (Łódź)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8566-4946>

## HOW TO GLOW AND STAY FRESH: SOME ADVICE ON DEODORANTS PENNED BY AETIUS OF AMIDA

**Abstract.** As far as women's wellbeing is concerned, ancient and Byzantine physicians took great care not only of their patients' health *sensu stricto* but also of their appearance. A testimony of the approach is given, for instance, by Aetius of Amida's (6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD) *Libri medicinales*, where he devotes much attention to cosmetics, including a group of deodorising antiperspirants called *καταψάματα*. In our study we analyse one prescription, taken by Aetius from Criton of Heraclea's (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD) treatise, trying to prove that it is very informative of medical (especially pharmaceutical) theory as well as practice in the social context of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

In order to achieve our goal, first, we analyse ancient and Byzantine *materia medica*, scrutinizing the medical properties ascribed to each component of the cosmetic in the light of the theory in force between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Next, we determine the method of preparation of the antiperspirant, its form, the mode and place of its application. Finally, we proceed to assess its market value as a marker exposing the group of the cosmetic's addressees. As a result, we conclude that the recipe was competently worked out on the basis of a theory commonly accepted by medical authorities, and that the preparation was designed for women (but also for men) of a high social status.

**Keywords:** History of medical literature, history of medicine, history of cosmetology, ancient/ Byzantine cosmetics, antiperspirants, deodorants, aromatics, Aetius of Amida, Criton of Heraclea

Though Graeco-Roman and Byzantine medicine was generally shaped by men<sup>1</sup>, the analysis of extant medical treatises clearly proves that the physicians took great care of women's wellbeing – both their health and appearance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Among medical treatises composed in Antiquity and the Byzantine period, we come across a few works which appear to have been penned by women known by the name of Metrodora, Cleopatra and Aspasia; on the issue, for instance, see R. FLEMMING, *Women, Writing and Medicine in the Classical World*, CQ 57.1, 2007, p. 257–279; L. TOTELIN, *The Third Way. Galen, Pseudo-Galen, Metrodora, Cleopatra and the Gynaecological Pharmacology of Byzantium*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes. Byzantine and*

A fine example of such a holistic approach to women is Aetius of Amida's treatise entitled *Libri medicinales* (6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), which is one of the key medical works from the early Byzantine period. Despite the life and professional career of Aetius himself still requiring further research, scholars agree that he studied medicine in Alexandria and may have worked in Egypt for a period of time<sup>2</sup>. As far as his competence is concerned, the contents of the treatise prove that he was interested in pharmacology, dietetics, surgery, prognostics, general pathology, fever and urine lore, ophthalmology, cosmetology, dentistry, toxicology, gynaecology, and obstetrics. Due to the fact that the doctor extensively discussed the two latter issues<sup>3</sup> (including numerous contraceptive and abortifacient preparations), John Scarborough makes the supposition that Aetius was a court physician of Justinian I, and that he personally attended to empress Theodora's health<sup>4</sup>, thus implying he was a doctor of the rich rather than of the poor. Despite there being no direct evidence confirming Scarborough's premise<sup>5</sup>, the fact that when discussing cosmetics in Book VIII Aetius lists a number of care products<sup>6</sup> based on expensive components<sup>7</sup> at least allows us to suppose that he was professionally active in aristocratic circles. With reference to that suggestion, we will examine a recipe for

---

*Jewish Pharmacology in Dialogue*, ed. L. LEHMHAUS, M. MARTELLI, Boston–Berlin 2017 [= BCCR, 4], p. 103–122; G. STORTI, *Metrodora's Work on the Diseases of Women and their Cures*, EstB 6, 2018, p. 89–110, etc.

<sup>2</sup> On the physician and his output, for instance, see J. SCARBOROUGH, *Aëtius of Amida (500–550 CE)*, [in:] *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. KEYSER, G.L. IRBY-MASSIE, London–New York 2008, p. 38–39; P. BOURAS-VALLIANATOS, *Galen in Late Antique Medical Handbooks*, [in:] *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. IDEM, B. ZIPSER, Leiden–Boston 2019 [= BCCR, 17], p. 41–42.

<sup>3</sup> Both questions were examined by the physician in Book XVI of his treatise, see *Gynaekologie des Aëtios sive sermo sextus decimus et ultimus. Zum erstenmale aus Handschriften veröffentlicht*, ed. S. ZERVOS, Leipzig 1901, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> J. SCARBOROUGH, *Aëtius of Amida (500–550 CE)*..., p. 38; IDEM, *Theodora, Aetius of Amida, and Procopius: Some Possible Connections*, GRBS 53, 2013, p. 742–762.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, see P. BOURAS-VALLIANATOS, *Galen in Late Antique Medical Handbooks*..., p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> On care products in Aetius' treatise, for instance, cf. S. BUZZI, I. CALÀ, *Le ricette cosmetiche nelle enciclopedie mediche tardoantiche*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes*..., p. 128–144; I. CALÀ, *Some Cosmetic Recipes in Medical Texts of Late Antiquity: Treatments for the Face in the Libri medicinales of Aetius Amidenus*, Mer 11, 2020, p. 2–14.

<sup>7</sup> The most representative examples are the prescriptions from Chapters 6 and 7, as many of them require exotic aromatics (e.g. frankincense, myrrh or spikenard) which were imported to Byzantium from distant lands. On cosmetics (from Chapter 6) prepared with the addition of aromatic substances as commodities for the rich, see Z. RZEŹNICKA, M. KOKOSZKO, *On Frankincense-scented Soaps, Peelings and Cleansers or on Cosmetics and Commotics in Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, VP 79, 2021, p. 179–184. On the costliness of selected aromatics listed in Chapter 7, see note 44 of the present study. On Byzantine trade in the vast majority of aromatics specified in both chapters, see F. ROTELLI, *Trade and Exploration*, [in:] *A Cultural History of Plants in the Post-Classical Era*, vol. II, ed. A. TOUWAIDE, London–New York–Oxford–New Delhi–Sydney 2022, p. 63–66.

deodorising antiperspirant, which was taken by the Byzantine physician from the output of Criton of Heraclea (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD)<sup>8</sup>.

In our analysis, we will first and foremost focus on the way the cosmetic was prepared and then used. In order to achieve our goal, we will scrutinise the medical properties ascribed to each component by medical authors of the time. We will also look at the technical aspects of preparing the antiperspirant and seek their rationale. The scope of our interest also includes Aetius' instructions explaining how and where the preparation was applied. Finally, on the basis of this last piece of information, and by examining each of the ingredients in the context of their market value, we will determinate the social and financial status of the cosmetic's users.

Just like other Byzantine medical works, Aetius' treatise was mainly completed on the basis of the writings of preceding generations of physicians. Nevertheless, it was not a mere compilation of ancient texts, since he tended to subject the output of Antiquity to a careful scrutiny, selecting only a fraction of the heritage (and commenting on it) in order to create a body of knowledge adapted to the challenges of his time<sup>9</sup>. The fact that he borrowed an ancient recipe together with instructions on its preparation and applying as specified by Criton, makes us think that the cosmetic was still prepared and used in Aetius' time. This also means that its ingredients were equally available in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. As a result, we can say that the cosmetic itself, the method of its obtaining as well as the mode of its application belong not only to the cosmetology of Antiquity but also to that of early Byzantium.

The fact that the physician of Amida incorporated recipes created by Criton into his book on cosmetics implies that the latter must still have been considered an authority in this field in the Byzantine period. This comes as no surprise, since we have much information that shows Criton's popularity long after his death. For instance, we learn from Galen of Pergamum (2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD) that Criton authored a treatise entitled Κοσμητικά, which turned out to be a considerable success, with many Romans still owning a copy at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> On the physician and his output, for instance, see J. SCARBOROUGH, *Criton, Physician to Trajan: Historian and Pharmacist*, [in:] *The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr*, ed. J.W. EADIE, J. OBER, Lanham Maryland–London 1985, p. 387–405; J. SCARBOROUGH, A. TOWWAIDE, *Kritōn of Hērakleia Salbakē, T. Statilius (80–120 CE)*, [in:] *The Encyclopedia...*, p. 494–495.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, see Ph. VAN DER EIJK, *Principles and Practices of Compilation and Abbreviation in the Medical 'Encyclopaedias' of Late Antiquity*, [in:] *Condensing Texts – Condensed Texts*, ed. M. HORSTER, Ch. REITZ, Stuttgart 2010, p. 195–221; E. GOWLING, *Aëtius' Extraction of Galenic Essence: A Comparison Between Book 1 of Aetius' Libri Medicinales and Galen's On Simple Medicines*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes...*, p. 83–101; A. TOWWAIDE, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= BCBW, 6], p. 364–367.

<sup>10</sup> ἔγραψε γὰρ τέτταρα βιβλία κοσμητικῶν, ἃ πάντες ἔχουσιν, see *Galenus De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, I, 3, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, vol. XII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1826 (cetera: GALENUS, *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*), p. 446.



Even though its complete text has not survived to our times, a large part has been preserved in the Pergamene's output<sup>11</sup> as well as in the works of such Byzantine physicians as Oribasius<sup>12</sup> (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), Aetius<sup>13</sup> and later Paul of Aegina<sup>14</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> cent. AD). It also seems highly likely that they all used his work first hand<sup>15</sup>, which further proves its abiding popularity throughout the ages.

Unfortunately, Criton's prescriptions incorporated into *Libri medicinales* can sometimes be difficult to interpret for modern researchers. For instance, the beginning of Aetius' Chapter 7, Book VIII, (as published by Alexander Olivieri), in which the recipe for the analysed preparation is present, reads Καταπλάσματα θερινὰ εὐωδίαν ποιοῦντα τῷ παντὶ σώματι Κρίτωνος (*Criton's Plasters Providing the Whole Body with a Pleasant Scent in Summer*). Such a title suggests that the chapter concerns cataplasms (καταπλάσματα), i.e., therapeutic plasters or dressings<sup>16</sup>. The term originates from the verb καταπλάσσω, which means 'to put on a plaster/dressing'<sup>17</sup>, however, all detailed prescriptions included in Chapter 7 attributable to Criton<sup>18</sup> refer not to plasters but to powdery substances that were

<sup>11</sup> For instance, see GALENUS, *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, I, 2, vol. XII, p. 401–402 KÜHN (1826); III, 1, vol. XII, p. 659–660 KÜHN (1826); V, 1, vol. XII, p. 817 KÜHN (1826); V, 3, vol. XII, p. 825–826 KÜHN (1826); V, 3, vol. XII, p. 830–831 KÜHN (1826); V, 5, vol. XII, p. 880–881 KÜHN (1826); VI, 6, vol. XII, p. 933–934 KÜHN (1826); VI, 6, vol. XII, p. 934–935 KÜHN (1826); *Galenus De compositione medicamentorum per genera*, II, 11; IV, 6; V, 3, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, vol. XIII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1827, p. 515–517; 708–716; 786–787.

<sup>12</sup> *Oribasii Synopsis ad Eustathium*, III, 24, 2–5 (CMG VI 3: 73, 14–24), [in:] *Oribasii Synopsis ad Eustathium, Libri ad Eunapium*, ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1926 [= CMG, 6.1].

<sup>13</sup> For instance, see *Aetii Amideni Libri medicinales V–VIII*, VI, 55 (CMG VIII 2: 201, 3–8); VI, 64 (CMG VIII 2: 211, 3–7); VIII, 2 (CMG VIII 2: 405, 8–16); VIII, 13 (CMG VIII 2: 418, 28 – 419, 8); VIII, 16 (CMG VIII 2: 422, 12 – 425, 17); VIII, 49 (CMG VIII 2: 475, 4–6), ed. A. OLIVIERI, Berlin 1950 [= CMG, 8.2] (cetera: AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*).

<sup>14</sup> For instance, see *Paulus Aegineta. Libri I–IV*, III, 1, 4 (CMG IX 1: 130, 19–25); IV, 7, 1 (CMG IX 1: 328, 23 – 329, 2), ed. J.L. HEIBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1921 [= CMG, 9.1]; *Paulus Aegineta. Libri V–VII*, VII, 13, 19 (CMG IX 2: 326, 22 – 327, 3), ed. J.L. HEIBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1924 [= CMG, 9.2]. On Criton's output embedded in early Byzantine medical works, for instance, see A. GUARDASOLE, *Galien de Pergame et la transmission des traités anciens de cosmétique*, [in:] *Le teint de Phrynè Thérapeutique et cosmétique dans l'Antiquité*, ed. V. BOUDON-MILLOT, M. PARDON-LABONNELIE, Paris 2018 [= O&M, 27], p. 38–46.

<sup>15</sup> The opinion seems to be shared by Alessia GUARDASOLE (*Galien de Pergame...*, p. 43–46), though she *expressis verbis* attributes the first-hand use of Criton's work to Aetius only, see *ibidem*, p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> However, in the manuscript Vaticanus Palatinus 199 (Px) and Codex Athous Λαύρας 718 Ω 63 (A), the word καταπάσματα is used, see AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7, apparatus criticus to verse 23 (CMG VIII 2: 410).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. LSJ, p. 905 (s.v. καταπλάσσω).

<sup>18</sup> Within Chapter 7, Book VIII, Aetius also made use of Archigenes of Apamea's writings. On the basis of the edition by Alexander Olivieri, to which we refer to in the present article, it is difficult to determine how much of the text in Chapter 7 was actually authored by Archigenes. On this issue, see Z. RZEŹNICKA, *The Use of Myrrh in the Antiperspirants and Deodorants Prepared by Criton of Heraclea – a New Reading*, SAR (forthcoming). Nevertheless, we can be quite sure that the first six

obtained by means of pulverising and sieving multi-ingredient pills (τροχίσκοι). Almost every such powder<sup>19</sup> in the chapter was called καταπαστόν, which is, in fact, telling, since it is an adiectivum verbale not of the verb καταπλάσσω but of καταπάσσω (i.e. of a prefixed variant of the verb πάσσω, meaning ‘to sprinkle/to pour/ to powder with’)<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, in the same chapter, the verb πάσσω appears in its alternative prefixed variants such as διαπάσσω<sup>21</sup> and ἐπιπάσσω<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, a fragment of Antyllus’ (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD) chapter<sup>23</sup> entitled Περί ἐμπασμάτων<sup>24</sup> (*On Dusting Powders*) preserved by Oribasius in his *Collectiones medicae* teaches us that the preparations enumerated in Chapter 7 could also be termed διαπάσματα, as the noun referred to those substances which provided a pleasant smell to the whole body, including the armpits or groin<sup>25</sup>. Bearing in mind the fact that the title of the chapter does not reflect its actual contents, but also that the fragment preserves terminology closely related to the powdery characteristic of the preparations described therein, one should conclude that the chapter heading is erroneous and ought to be restored to the form Καταπάσματα θερινὰ εὐωδιαν ποιοῦντα τῷ παντὶ σώματι Κρίτωνος (*Criton’s Powders Providing the Whole Body with a Pleasant Scent in Summer*)<sup>26</sup>. As terms from πάσσω are preserved both

---

prescriptions for powdery deodorants, which open the discussed chapter (AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 [CMG VIII 2: 411, 4–22]) were taken from Criton’s Κοσμητικά. The opinion is shared by A. GUARDASOLE (*Galien de Pergame...*, p. 40–41).

<sup>19</sup> With the exception of AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 412, 9–14). However, the formula cannot be attributed to Criton’s authorship with certainty.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. LSJ, p. 904 (s.v. καταπάσσω).

<sup>21</sup> AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 8).

<sup>22</sup> AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 26 – 412, 1).

<sup>23</sup> A reference to the writings by Antyllus, see *Oribasii Collectionum medicarum reliquiae, libri IX–XVI*, X, 19 (CMG VI 1, 2: 61, 18–19), ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1929 [= CMG, 6.1.2] (cetera: ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*).

<sup>24</sup> ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*, X, 31, 1–3 (CMG VI 1, 2: 72, 28 – 73, 7).

<sup>25</sup> ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*, X, 31, 1 (CMG VI 1, 2: 72, 32–33). In the said chapter the author also defines the terms ἐμπάσματα and καταπάσματα. He explains that the substances described by the former were used for excessive perspiration, to counteract the symptoms of another type of diaphoresis and in cases of flesh wounds and pruritus, while the latter were administered to treat more serious wounds and ulcerations (ἔλκος), see ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*, X, 31, 1 (CMG VI 1, 2: 72, 29–32). The comparison of the aforementioned information on καταπάσματα and διαπάσματα with the data obtained from the writings by Criton of Heraclea allows us to assume that the nomenclature for cosmetic products was not firmly consolidated at the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, i.e., in the times of professional activity of Criton of Heraclea and Antyllus, and thus it was ambiguous. On καταπάσματα (from Antyllus’ output) used in medicine, see ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*, X, 32, 1–2 (CMG VI 1, 2: 73, 8–15). Examples of substances that Antyllus described as διαπάσματα, see ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones medicae*, X, 33 (CMG VI 1, 2: 73, 16–19). On διαπάσματα, for instance, see R. TOUZÉ, *Les matières parfumées employées dans la confection des huelles, onguents et poudres parfumées en Grèce ancienne*, [in:] *Parfums et odeurs dans l’antiquité*, ed. L. BODIQU, D. FRÈRE, V. MEHL, Rennes 2009 [= MiCL, 67], p. 53.

<sup>26</sup> The same conclusion was proposed by A. GUARDASOLE (*Galien de Pergame...*, p. 41–42).

in the fragments taken from Criton as well as being included in the other part of Chapter 7, one can presume that they were also embedded in the works sourced by Aetius. As a result, we can judge that the modifications to the vocabulary of the fragment in question were introduced posterior to the composition of *Libri medicinales*.

From the contents of the analysed text we learn that Aetius classifies the cosmetics by the strength of their effect. The first category is represented by two prescriptions for the so-called *θερινά* – strong agents, which would be most appropriately used during the hottest season of the year<sup>27</sup>. We might conclude from the fragment on *εὐώδες προσηνές*, i.e. a deodorant of mild action belonging to the other group that, in turn, this class was based on ingredients offering a more delicate effect and, thus, the preparations were intended to be used throughout the year. Consequently, they should be called *προσηνή* ([deodorants] of mild action) as a class.

In the present research we will focus exclusively on the prescription for the deodorant called *εὐώδες θερινόν* (a fragrant [deodorant] appropriate for summer), which reads as follows:

[Take] three ounces of dried roses, cassia-cinnamon, two drachms of black cardamom, costus and spikenard, two ounces of [a styptic agent called] liquid *στυπτηρία*, and mix them with fragrant, long-matured wine, [then] shape into pills and leave to dry in a shaded place. Crush [and] sieve prior to the application, and give to the bathers so that they may sprinkle the thus obtained powder over their bodies, rubbing it in carefully prior to rinsing it with cold water<sup>28</sup>.

The above recipe is the more detailed of the two, and since it is also referred to by the author at the end of the other<sup>29</sup>, it must contain key data concerning the production as well as the application of *θερινά*. As manufacturing details are almost totally absent from Criton's prescriptions for deodorants within the *προσηνή* group (which, apart from their strength of action, did not differ from *θερινά*), it is highly likely that the quoted fragment was intended to provide the general principles of producing and using both types of *καταπάσματα* – which is why it was put at the beginning of the whole chapter on such preparations.

The prescription in question reveals the pattern according to which the cosmetic was prepared. It consisted of carefully selected substances whose characteristics were canonised by a branch of medicine termed *materia medica* (which

<sup>27</sup> AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 4–12).

<sup>28</sup> *ρόδων ξηρῶν κασσίας ἀνά οὐγκίας γ' ἀμώμου κόστου καρδοστάχου ἀνά δραχμάς β' στυπτηρίας ὑγρᾶς οὐγκίαν β', οἶνω παλαιῷ εὐώδει διαλύσας, ἀνάπλασσε τροχίσκους καὶ ξήραινε ἐν σκιᾷ· ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς χρείας κόψας σήσας δίδου διαπάσσεσθαι λουομένους καὶ ἀνατριβέσθωσαν ἐπιμελῶς καὶ τότε ψυχρῷ ὕδατι περιχέισθωσαν*, see AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 5–9).

<sup>29</sup> AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 9–12).

was developed thanks to the competence of such eminent doctors as Dioscurides [1<sup>st</sup> cent. AD]<sup>30</sup>, to name but the most renowned). The formula included ingredients which were described in medical treatises as blocking perspiration and having deodorizing properties. The former included *στυπτηρία* (most probably alum<sup>31</sup>) which, as we ascertain from medical works, had styptic effects<sup>32</sup> (shrinking skin pores), and therefore its use reduced perspiration. Analogous properties were also offered by dried rose flowers, cassia-cinnamon, black cardamom and spikenard. Some of these were also said to have desiccative qualities, which must have been considered to additionally reduce sweating<sup>33</sup>. Due to the fact that all the plant-based ingredients employed in the recipe were renowned for their aromatic properties<sup>34</sup>, they would have been used to cover the unpleasant bodily odour resulting from perspiration.

<sup>30</sup> On Criton's familiarity with Dioscurides' *De materia medica*, see J. SCARBOROUGH, *Criton, Physician to Trajan...*, p. 396; J. SCARBOROUGH, A. TOUWAIDE, *Kritôn of Hērakleia Salbakê...*, p. 494.

<sup>31</sup> Alum was commonly used for medical purposes, for instance, see *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica*, V, 106, 1–3, vol. III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1914, p. 75, v. 18 – p. 76, v. 14 (cetera: DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*). Cf. R. HALLEUX, *L'alun dans la littérature des recettes du I<sup>er</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *L'alun de Méditerranée*, ed. Ph. BORGARD, J.-P. BRUN, M. PICON, Naples 2005 [= CCJB, 23], p. 9–12. The best was mined in Melos (for instance, see A.J. HALL, E. PHOTOS-JONES, *The Nature of Melian Alumen and its Potential for Exploitation in Antiquity*, [in:] *L'alun...*, p. 77–84) and in Egypt (for instance, see M. PICON, M. VICHY, *L'alun des oasis occidentales d'Égypte. Recherches sur le terrain et recherches en laboratoire*, [in:] *L'alun...*, p. 43–58).

<sup>32</sup> DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*, V, 106, 4: 3, 76, 15 WELLMANN (1914). In all probability, that is why he recommended it for unpleasant odours in the armpit and groin areas, see DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*, V, 106, 6: 3, 77, 7–8 WELLMANN (1914). The practice of applying the substance on those places particularly prone to sweating implies that *στυπτηρία* was known for its strong action, which *expressis verbis* is confirmed by Aetius (*Aetii Amideni Libri medicinales I–IV*, II, 74 [CMG VIII 1: 176, 11], ed. A. OLIVIERI, Leipzig–Berlin 1935 [= CMG, 8.1] [cetera: AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*]).

<sup>33</sup> For instance, see *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica*, I, 7, 3, vol. I, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1907, p. 12, v. 11 (the desiccative properties of spikenard); I, 13, 3: 1, 18, 7–8 (the desiccative and styptic properties of cassia-cinnamon); I, 15, 2: 1, 21, 8 (the styptic and desiccative properties of black cardamom); I, 99, 1: 1, 90, 1 (the styptic properties of rose) (cetera: DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*). Analogous data were noted down by AETIUS (*Libri medicinales*, I, 33 [CMG VIII 1: 1, 38, 11] [the desiccative properties of black cardamom]; I, 184 [CMG VIII 1: 83, 3] [the desiccative properties of cassia-cinnamon – third degree]; I, 184 [CMG VIII 1: 83, 5] [the styptic properties of cassia-cinnamon]; I, 289 [CMG VIII 1: 113, 13–14] [the desiccative properties of spikenard – second degree]; I, 344 [CMG VIII 1: 128, 13–14] [the styptic and desiccative properties of rose]).

<sup>34</sup> DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*, I, 7, 1: 1, 11, 12–13 WELLMANN (1907) (the aromatic properties of spikenard); I, 13, 1: 1, 17, 12 WELLMANN (1907); I, 13, 1: 1, 17, 15 WELLMANN (1907) (the aromatic properties of cassia-cinnamon); I, 15, 1: 1, 21, 6 WELLMANN (1907); I, 15, 2: 1, 21, 14–15 WELLMANN (1907) (the aromatic properties of black cardamom); I, 16, 1: 1, 22, 1 WELLMANN (1907) (the aromatic properties of costus); I, 99, 3: 1, 90, 18 – 91, 8 WELLMANN (1907) (the aromatic properties of rose). The aromatic properties of most of the said substances were also mentioned by Aetius, for instance, in the recipe for a medicament which helped make the hair thinner (AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VI, 65 [CMG VIII 2: 211, 22 – 212, 15] [dried roses, spikenard, black cardamom and costus

When it comes to manufacturing the cosmetic, in all likelihood the ingredients were first carefully crushed and then mixed with fragrant wine<sup>35</sup>, the addition of which might have been thought to strengthen the deodorising properties of the preparation. Subsequently, the agent was shaped into τροχίσκοι. Since analogous technological data can also be found in the proceeding chapter devoted to fragrant cleansing preparations<sup>36</sup>, we might conclude that the sphere-like form of the pill was in fact a result of the employment of the solid aromatics in the above preparations. Notably, if they are stored in their powdery form and are not sealed, they lose their qualities over a short time. Moreover, when exposed to humidity in the air, they are prone to forming lumps, and thus require re-pulverisation before using. We might presume that the physicians (in pursuit of the durability of their products) had learnt that pressing the preparation into a semi spherical shape proved to be most effective in preserving the cosmetics' fragrant properties, as only the outer layer of the thus obtained pills was prone to weathering. The doctors' knowledge of the negative impact of atmospheric conditions on such products is also reflected in the recommendation for drying freshly prepared τροχίσκοι in a shaded place<sup>37</sup>. In this way, the preparations were protected from the destructive action of sunlight and high temperature, which could also considerably change the properties of the aromatics. Furthermore, the relatively low temperature maintained in the shade guaranteed slow and equal desiccation of the preparations, which, in consequence, increased their durability, for instance by protecting them against mould-induced deterioration.

From the analysed recipe we learn that the ready-to-use cosmetic was given to "the bathers", which suggests that deodorants were usually applied in a bath house. As the process of bathing was also referred to in the preceding chapter on cleansing

---

– VI, 65 [CMG VIII 2: 212, 9–12]). Though cassia-cinnamon is absent from the latter preparation and Aetius attributes a pleasant aroma to it nowhere in his chapter on its properties, the title of the analysed preparation testifies to the fact that he must have considered the plant to contribute to the cosmetic's deodorant action.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, such a recommendation is found in AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 412, 9–10).

<sup>36</sup> AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 407, 19–20); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 408, 7); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 408, 15–16); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 409, 3); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 410, 5–6); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 410, 10). One should, however, mention that within Chapter 6 we also encounter big and flattened discs called small loaves (ἀπίσκοι) as the final form given to the cosmetics, see AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 408, 23–24); VIII, 6 (CMG VIII 2: 410, 22). Nevertheless, the fact that within the chapter there are six recipes for τροχίσκοι and only two for ἀπίσκοι clearly proves that the former were far more popular than the latter.

<sup>37</sup> Such instructions are given both in the chapter on cleansers (AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 408, 8]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 408, 16]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 408, 24]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 409, 3]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 410, 6]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 410, 10]; VIII, 6 [CMG VIII 2: 410, 22]) as well as in the one on deodorants (AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 [CMG VIII 2: 411, 7]; VIII, 7 [CMG VIII 2: 412, 11]).

preparations, it can be concluded that bathers would first thoroughly clean their bodies from dirt and exfoliate the epidermis. Secondly, having unblocked their skin pores (which, in consequence, increased the absorption of the deodorants), they rubbed the deodorising antiperspirants into the skin in order to minimize perspiration and conceal unwanted odours. Thus, the described mode of application of both kinds of cosmetics is little different from that we know today.

It has been already mentioned that Chapter 7 can also be interpreted in the context of social and economic history. As far as the former aspect is concerned, one should comment on the fact that in the introduction to the fragment on *καταπάσματα*, where Aetius specifies the users of the cosmetics, he mentions women first. The fact that the noun ‘women’ is preceded by the phrase ‘not only’<sup>38</sup>, suggests that deodorants in his times were used more commonly by women than by men. The same order of introducing both sexes is present in Galen’s *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, where he maintains that his practical interest in the issue of beautifying the human body stemmed from the pressure exerted on him by women belonging to the imperial family. The emperors are said to have pressurised him as well but definitely not equally hard<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, no man was mentioned by Dioscurides as having used another form of deodorant, namely *ροδίδες*, which were worn as a necklace<sup>40</sup>. All three testimonies allow us to conclude that women in Graeco-Roman and early Byzantine society were more concerned about their bodies and were more vulnerable to the opinions voiced about them.

Finally, the medical treatises allow us to make some assumptions concerning the social status of the users of said cosmetics, the first of which have already been referred to in the above story given by Galen. Secondly, we note that the preparations were used in bath-houses, which implies that they were mostly produced for those with enough leisure time to treat themselves to such relaxation. Thus, it seems that the beauty products were first and foremost targeted at people whose

<sup>38</sup> [...] οὐ μόνον ἐπὶ τῶν γυναικῶν, see AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 7 (CMG VIII 2: 411, 2–3).

<sup>39</sup> We can read that the pressure went far beyond the medical interventions he approved of and verged on unnaturally beautifying the human body, i.e. on what he termed *commotics*, see GALENUS, *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, I, 2, vol. XII, p. 434–435 KÜHN (1826). On the difference between cosmetics and *commotics*, for instance, see S. BUZZI, I. CALÀ, *Le ricette cosmetiche...*, p. 124–125; Z. RZEŹNICKA, M. KOKOSZKO, *On Frankincense-scented Soaps...*, p. 175–178.

<sup>40</sup> *χρήσις δὲ ἐστὶν αὐτῶν ἐπὶ γυναικῶν περιτιθεμένων τῷ τραχήλῳ ἀντὶ ὀσμῆς ἡδύπνου, ἀμβλυνοῦσῶν τὴν τῶν ἰδρώτων δυσωδίαν. χρῶνται δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ λείους ἐν διαπάσμασι μετὰ τὸ λουτρὸν καὶ συγχρίσμασι καὶ μετὰ τὸ ξηρανθῆναι ἐκλούνται ψυχρῶ ([Ροδίδες] are made use of by women, who put them around their neck instead of sweet smelling wreaths [ὄσμος ἡδύπνοος] so that they muffle the foul odour of perspiration. Pulverised, they are used as aromatic powders [διαπάσματα] sprinkled after bathing, and in ointments, which are left to dry on the surface of the skin to be subsequently rinsed off by cold water), see DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*, I, 99, 3: 1, 91, 7–10 WELLMANN (1907).*

days were not entirely filled with professional duties and who could afford to allocate some time to recreation in the bath-house. As baths were constructed mostly in the cities<sup>41</sup>, we may presume that the *καταπάσματα* recommended in *Libri medicinales* were primarily used by the inhabitants of urban areas. As for εὐὼδες θειρινόν, it is striking that within the plant-based ingredients it was only the rose, with its ubiquity and presumably affordable price, that was easily available to everyone<sup>42</sup>. Other substances were imported from regions located far from the territories of the Greco-Roman civilization<sup>43</sup>, which explains their high prices<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Bath-houses as important public amenities in Byzantine cities, for instance, see W. TREADGOLD, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford California 1997, p. 141, 280, 407; M. ΖΥΤΚΑ, *A Cultural History of Bathing in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, London–New York 2019, p. 51–54.

<sup>42</sup> From Pliny we learn that although roses were commonly available in the ancient Mediterranean, their varieties differed as far as their place of origin, appearance (especially colour) and intensity of scent were concerned, see C. *Plini Secundi Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, XXI, 4 (10), 14–21, vol. III, (*Libri XVI–XXII*), ed. K. MAYHOFF, Leipzig 1892 [= BSGR], p. 385, v. 4 – p. 387, v. 14. One can presume that the classification mentioned by the author had its reflection in the price of the flowers, with some varieties being more expensive than others. It is likely that it was the costlier ones that were depicted on the frescoes found in Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae, see E. DE CAROLIS, A. LAGI, G. DI PASQUALE, A. D'AURIA, C. AVVISALI, *The Ancient Rose of Pompeii*, Roma 2016, p. 62–68; B. BERGMANN, *Frescoes in Roman Gardens*, [in:] *Gardens of the Roman Empire*, ed. W.F. JASHEMSKI, K.L. GLEASON, K.J. HARTSWICK, A.-A. MALEK, Cambridge 2017, p. 290, 292, 310. The overall situation seems not to have changed in the Byzantine period, which appears to be confirmed by the contents of the *Libri medicinales*. On the one hand, the analysed recipe for *κατάπασμα* suggests that some of the flowers were costly because they were considered equally valuable as the exotic ingredients used in the prescription (see note 44). On the other hand, AETIUS' formula for the hair thinning preparation (as roses were listed in the group of fragrant substances preceding those affordable exclusively to the rich [*Libri medicinales*, VI, 65 {CMG VIII 2: 212, 9–11}], implies that some varieties were a commonly accessible aromatic.

<sup>43</sup> See F. ROTELLI, *Trade and Exploration...*, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> Even though we do not possess any precise data on the prices of either cassia-cinnamon, black cardamom, costus nor spikenard in the time of Aetius' professional activity, extant source material provides us with some premises on this subject. As for the second part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, we are informed by Pliny that top-quality cassia-cinnamon cost as much as 50 *denarii* per pound (328.9 grams), while the same amount of a lower-class product sold for 5 *denarii* (C. *Plini Secundi Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, XII, 19 [43], 97, vol. II, (*Libri VII–XV*), ed. K. MAYHOFF, München–Leipzig 2002 [= BSGR] (cetera: PLINIUS, *Naturalis historia*), p. 408, v. 18). The author also mentions a variety of cassia-cinnamon called *Daphnidis* (*Naturalis historia*, XII, 20, 98: 2, 408, 19–20 MAYHOFF [2002]), which cost as much as 300 *denarii* per pound. From Pliny's writings we might assume that the latter was grown not only in exotic lands but also in the northern parts of the Empire (... *in margine imperii, qua Rhenus adluit...*, see *Naturalis historia*, XII, 20, 98: 2, 409, 1–4 MAYHOFF [2002]). Dioscurides' testimony confirms the fact that the ancients knew cassia-cinnamon termed *δαφνίτις* (or *ἄχυν*), which was an exotic substance imported to Rome via Alexandria, see DIOSCURIDES, *De materia medica*, I, 13, 1: 1, 17, 12–14 WELLMANN (1907). On the basis of Dioscurides' information and the fact that the 'Rhenish' *Daphnidis* was evaluated by Pliny as less aromatic than the exotic variety, we may

Obviously, this must have resulted in the costliness of the final cosmetic. And since all Criton's recipes for *καταπάσματα* quoted by Aetius in Chapter 7 consist of prevalingly exotic substances, we may assume that the whole preparation was composed with wealthy recipients in mind.

To conclude, the presented evidence proves that, even though deodorants were used by both women and men, it is likely that it was mainly the fairer sex who inspired and probably urged Aetius to include such prescriptions in his work. One should, however, mention that these preparations were not aimed at the society as a whole but they were rather dedicated to a specific group, i.e. those rich city dwellers who were able to pay for cosmetics whose ingredients comprised of a blend of exotic aromatics. These substances provided the preparation with an exceptional scent, which, must have been an indicator of luxury at that time. The vast majority of the ingredients were not chosen solely due to their beautiful aroma but also because of the antiperspirant properties ascribed to them by experts in *materia medica*. The said body of knowledge is, in turn, evidence of ancient and Byzantine physicians' solid awareness of how various substances impact the human body. As a result, the doctors were able to recommend effective body care preparations to their patients that was adjusted to the financial means of the addressees.

---

conclude that the price found in *Naturalis historia* referred exclusively to the variety mentioned in *De materia medica*. When it comes to black cardamom, from Pliny we learn that a pound of its whole seeds cost 60 *denarii*, while the same amount of pounded ones was sold for 48 *denarii*, see *Naturalis historia*, XII, 13 (28), 49: 2, 393, 6–7 MAYHOFF (2002). In his description of costus, the Roman encyclopaedist writes that its better (white) variety was priced at as much as 5.5 *denarii* per pound, see *Naturalis historia*, XII, 12 (25), 41: 2, 390, 19–20 MAYHOFF (2002). As far as spikenard is concerned, in Pliny's times a pound of its spikes cost 100 *denarii*, while the price of its leaves varied: those called *hadrosphaera* cost 40 *denarii*, *mesosphaera* were sold for 60 *denarii*, while the most valued, *micro-sphaera*, for 75 *denarii* (*Naturalis historia*, XII, 10 [26], 43–44: 2, 391, 11–16 MAYHOFF [2002]). As for the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, AETIUS himself writes that spikenard, black cardamom and costus were classified as ingredients usually included in the medicaments targeted at 'the rich' (οἱ πλούσιοι), see *Libri medicinales*, VI, 65 (CMG VIII 2: 212, 11–12); as for cassia-cinnamon (and spikenard) also cf. AETIUS AMIDENUS, *Libri medicinales*, VIII, 47 (CMG VIII 2: 467, 21 – 469, 7); cassia-cinnamon and nard – VIII, 47 (CMG VIII 2: 468, 7–8). Further evidence on the price of cassia-cinnamon and costus in the Byzantine period, see M. KOKOSZKO, *Anthimus and his Work, or On Aromatics and Wild-fowl in De Observatione Ciborum*, SPPGL 31.2, 2021, p. 65, 67–68. The presented data clearly shows that cassia-cinnamon, black cardamom, costus and spikenard were expensive in the period between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.



## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Aetii Amideni Libri medicinales I–IV*, ed. A. OLIVIERI, Leipzig–Berlin 1935 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 8.1].
- Aetii Amideni Libri medicinales V–VIII*, ed. A. OLIVIERI, Berlin 1950 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 8.2].
- C. Plini Secundi Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, vol. II, (*Libri VII–XV*), ed. K. MAYHOFF, München–Leipzig 2002 [= *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110953084>
- C. Plini Secundi Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, vol. III, (*Libri XVI–XXII*), ed. K. MAYHOFF, Leipzig 1892 [= *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*].
- Galenii De compositione medicamentorum per genera*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, vol. XIII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1827, p. 362–1058.
- Galenii De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, vol. XII, ed. K.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1826, p. 378–1007.
- Gynaekologie des Aëtios sive sermo sextus decimus et ultimus. Zum erstenmale aus Handschriften veröffentlicht*, ed. S. ZERVOS, Leipzig 1901.
- Oribasii Collectionum medicarum reliquiae, libri IX–XVI*, ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1929 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 6.1.2].
- Oribasii Synopsis ad Eustathium*, [in:] *Oribasii Synopsis ad Eustathium, Libri ad Eunapium*, ed. J. RAEDER, Leipzig–Berlin 1926 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 6.3], p. 1–313.
- Paulus Aegineta. Libri I–IV*, ed. J.L. HEIBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1921 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 9.1].
- Paulus Aegineta. Libri V–VII*, ed. J.L. HEIBERG, Leipzig–Berlin 1924 [= *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, 9.2].
- Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica*, vol. I, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1907.
- Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei De materia medica*, vol. III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berlin 1914.

### Secondary Literature

- BERGMANN B., *Frescoes in Roman Gardens*, [in:] *Gardens of the Roman Empire*, ed. W.F. JASHEMSKI, K.L. GLEASON, K.J. HARTSWICK, A.-A. MALEK, Cambridge 2017, p. 278–316, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139033022.012>
- BOURAS-VALLIANATOS P., *Galen in Late Antique Medical Handbooks*, [in:] *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. P. BOURAS-VALLIANATOS, B. ZIPSER, Leiden–Boston 2019 [= *Brill's Companions to Classical Reception*, 17], p. 38–61, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004394353\\_004](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004394353_004)
- BUZZI S., CALÀ I., *Le ricette cosmetiche nelle enciclopedie mediche tardoantiche*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes. Byzantine and Jewish Pharmacology in Dialogue*, ed. L. LEHMHAUS, M. MARTELLI, Boston–Berlin 2017 [= *Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures*, 4], p. 123–146, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501502538-007>
- CALÀ I., *Some Cosmetic Recipes in Medical Texts of Late Antiquity: Treatments for the Face in the Libri medicinales of Aetius Amidenus*, “*Meridies. Estudios de Historia y Patrimonio de la Edad Media*” 11, 2020, p. 2–14, <https://doi.org/10.21071/meridies.vi11.12150>

- DE CAROLIS E., LAGI A., DI PASQUALE G., D'AURIA A., AVVISALI C., *The Ancient Rose of Pompeii*, Roma 2016.
- EIJK VAN DER Ph., *Principles and Practices of Compilation and Abbreviation in the Medical 'Encyclopaedias' of Late Antiquity*, [in:] *Condensing Texts – Condensed Texts*, ed. M. HORSTER, Ch. REITZ, Stuttgart 2010, p. 519–554.
- FLEMMING R., *Women, Writing and Medicine in the Classical World*, “Classical Quarterly” 57.1, 2007, p. 257–279, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838807000225>
- GOWLING E., *Aëtius' Extraction of Galenic Essence: A Comparison Between Book 1 of Aëtius' Libri Medicinales and Galen's On Simple Medicines*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes. Byzantine and Jewish Pharmacology in Dialogue*, ed. L. LEHMHAUS, M. MARTELLI, Boston–Berlin 2017 [= *Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures*, 4], p. 83–101, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501502538-005>
- GUARDASOLE A., *Galien de Pergame et la transmission des traités anciens de cosmétique*, [in:] *Le teint de Phryné Thérapeutique et cosmétique dans l'Antiquité*, ed. V. BOUDON-MILLOT, M. PARDON-LABONNELIE, Paris 2018 [= *Orient & Mediterranee*, 27], p. 31–50.
- HALL A.J., PHOTOS-JONES E., *The Nature of Melian Alumen and its Potential for Exploitation in Antiquity*, [in:] *Lalun de Méditerranée*, ed. Ph. BORGARD, J.-P. BRUN, M. PICON, Naples 2005 [= *Collection du Centre Jean Bérard*, 23], p. 77–84, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pcbj.565>
- HALLEUX R., *Lalun dans la littérature des recettes du I<sup>er</sup> au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, [in:] *Lalun de Méditerranée*, ed. Ph. BORGARD, J.-P. BRUN, M. PICON, Naples 2005 [= *Collection du Centre Jean Bérard*, 23], p. 9–12, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pcbj.551>
- KOKOSZKO M., *Anthimus and his Work, or On Aromatics and Wildfowl in De Observatione Ciborum*, “Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae” 31.2, 2021, p. 59–95, <https://doi.org/10.14746/sppgl.2021.XXXI.2.7>
- LIDDELL H.G., SCOTT R., JONES H.S., MCKENZIE R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*,<sup>9</sup>Oxford 1996.
- PICON M., VICHY M., *Lalun des oasis occidentales d'Égypte. Recherches sur le terrain et recherches en laboratoire*, [in:] *Lalun de Méditerranée*, ed. Ph. BORGARD, J.-P. BRUN, M. PICON, Naples 2005 [= *Collection du Centre Jean Bérard*, 23], p. 43–58, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pcbj.556>
- ROTELLI F., *Trade and Exploration*, [in:] *A Cultural History of Plants in the Post-Classical Era*, vol. II, ed. A. TOUWAIDE, London–New York–Oxford–New Delhi–Sydney 2022, p. 59–77, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350264601.ch-3>
- RZEŹNICKA Z., *The Use of Myrrh in the Antiperspirants and Deodorants Prepared by Criton of Heraclea – a New Reading*, “Sudhoffs Archiv” (forthcoming).
- RZEŹNICKA Z., KOKOSZKO M., *On Frankincense-scented Soaps, Peelings and Cleansers or on Cosmetics and Commotics in Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, “Vox Patrum” 79, 2021, p. 175–199, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.12626>
- SCARBOROUGH J., *Aëtius of Amida (500–550 CE)*, [in:] *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. KEYSER, G.L. IRBY-MASSIE, London–New York 2008, p. 38–39.
- SCARBOROUGH J., *Criton, Physician to Trajan: Historian and Pharmacist*, [in:] *The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr*, ed. J.W. EADIE, J. OBER, Lanham Maryland–London 1985, p. 387–405.
- SCARBOROUGH J., *Theodora, Aetius of Amida, and Procopius: Some Possible Connections*, “Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies” 53, 2013, p. 742–762.
- SCARBOROUGH J., TOUWAIDE A., *Kritōn of Hērakleia Salbakē, T. Statilius (80–120 CE)*, [in:] *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. KEYSER, G.L. IRBY-MASSIE, London–New York 2008, p. 494–495.

- STORTI G., *Metrodora's Work on the Diseases of Women and their Cures*, "Estudios Bizantinos: Revista de la Sociedad Española de Bizantinística" 6, 2018, p. 89–110.
- TOTELIN L., *The Third Way. Galen, Pseudo-Galen, Metrodora, Cleopatra and the Gynaecological Pharmacology of Byzantium*, [in:] *Collecting Recipes. Byzantine and Jewish Pharmacology in Dialogue*, ed. L. LEHMHAUS, M. MARTELLI, Boston–Berlin 2017 [= *Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures*, 4], p. 103–122, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501502538-006>
- TOUWAIDE A., *Medicine and Pharmacy*, [in:] *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. LAZARIS, Leiden–Boston 2020 [= *Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World*, 6], p. 354–403, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617\\_012](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004414617_012)
- TOUZÉ R., *Les matières parfumées employées dans la confection des huelles, onguents et poudres parfumée en Grèce ancienne*, [in:] *Parfums et odeurs dans l'antiquité*, ed. L. BODIQU, D. FRÈRE, V. MEHL, Rennes 2009 [= *Micrologus' Library*, 67], p. 45–59.
- TREADGOLD W., *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, Stanford California 1997, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804779371>
- ZYTKA M., *A Cultural History of Bathing in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium*, London–New York 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351134118>

**Maciej Kokoszko**


University of Lodz  
Faculty of Philosophy and History  
Institute of History  
Department of Byzantine Studies  
ul. Kamińskiego 27a  
90-219 Łódź, Polska/Poland  
[maciej.kokoszko@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:maciej.kokoszko@uni.lodz.pl)

**Zofia Rzeźnicka**

Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture  
of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe, *Ceraneum*  
ul. Matejki 32/38  
90-237 Łódź, Polska/Poland  
[zofia.rzeznicka@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:zofia.rzeznicka@uni.lodz.pl)



Magdalena Koźluk (Łódź)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7775-3594>

## REPRESENTING THE PHLEGM: THE PORTRAIT OF THE PHLEGMATIC IN CESARE RIPA'S *ICONOLOGIA*

**Abstract.** This article is the second in a series of works which aims to contribute to documenting the success of the medical theory of individual complexions, derived from the theory of the four humours, through the major work which constitutes the *Iconologia* of the Italian humanist Cesare Ripa (1555–1622). We analysed here the figure of the phlegmatic and undertook to determine the reasons which governed the choice of the attributes retained by Ripa (portliness, pallor of the skin, coat in badger furs, tilted head and girded with a black headband, turtle) to offer poets, painters and sculptors the archetype of a character dominated by cold and damp phlegm. To this end, we have been interested in the medical and iconographic sources on which the author was able to rely and have tried to identify the attributes which are part of tradition and those which testify to an *inuentio* of the author in the iconographic art.

**Keywords:** Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, humoral theory, humors, phlegmatic, iconographic attributes

This article is a direct follow-up to the article that we devoted, in this same journal, to the representation of the choleric temperament in the work of Ripa<sup>1</sup>. Will follow, we hope, two other publications dealing respectively with the sanguine and the melancholic by the same author. This cycle of articles aims to contribute to documenting the fortune of the medical theory of individual complexions, derived from the theory of the four humours, through the major work that Ripa's *Iconologia* constitutes for the expression of the arts in the modern era. We therefore continue our study here with the pituitous (phlegmatic) temperament, dominated by the phlegm that is said to be cold and humid. In this regard, the reader will find in our first article a brief presentation of the foundations of this quaternary theory as well as the essential bibliography relating to it.

Let us recall some material elements all the same in order to answer the legitimate questions relating to the edition of the *Iconologia* that we have chosen to use.

---

<sup>1</sup> M. KOŹLUK, *Représenter la flaua bilis: le portait du colérique dans l'Iconologia de Cesare Ripa*, SCer 12, 2022, p. 633–650.

The princeps edition of 1593<sup>2</sup>, apart from the fact that it is not illustrated, contains no entry relating to individual moods or complexions<sup>3</sup>. The latter are only introduced in the 1603<sup>4</sup> edition, which is also enriched with 150 woodcuts from drawings by the Cavalier d'Arpin. The temperaments are grouped under the entry *complezioni* and appear in the following order: *Collerico per il fuoco*, *Sanguigno per l'aria*, *Flemmatico per l'acqua*, *Malenconico per la terra*. The *Iconologia* benefited until the 18<sup>th</sup> century from a dozen Italian editions. We use the beautiful Padouan edition of 1625<sup>5</sup> for our work, mainly because of the readability of its layout. It takes up the 1603 text and the new engravings of Cavalier d'Arpin from the 1611 edition. This text also corresponds to the French translation by Jean Baudouin that we have chosen to offer here in addition to the Italian text<sup>6</sup>. Another choice could have been made without consequences on the content of our analyses.

### 1. The phlegmatic in his indolence: portrait and attributes

Before examining Ripa's text, let us first note that the xylography illustrating the *Flemmatico per l'acqua* hardly abounds in iconographic elements<sup>7</sup>. It presents a man seated on an isolated pedestal (to which the designer has added a roll-up backrest), his legs crossed and his hands adjusting the sides of a heavy coat on his chest as if to close it better. In this desert landscape, only a turtle keeps him company (Fig. 1). Following the engraving, as always, the reader will find a description by the author which provides more information on the attitude of the phlegmatic, on his dress, and on the presence of the animal:

<sup>2</sup> C. RIPA, *Iconologia ovvero descrittione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichità et da altri luoghi*, Roma: per gli heredi di Gio. Gigliotti, 1593.

<sup>3</sup> We will indeed find there the allegories of certain passions or certain related states, for example *Ira* (Anger), *Otio* (Idleness), *Pigritia* (Laziness) etc., but the medical, scientific field, to which the four major complexions belong, is absent.

<sup>4</sup> C. RIPA, *Iconologia ovvero descrittione di diverse imagini cavate dall'antichità, e di propria inventio-ne*, Roma: Lepido Facii, 1603.

<sup>5</sup> C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625. Later in the text, we will use the abbreviation C. RIPA (It.) whenever we cite this edition.

<sup>6</sup> C. RIPA, *Iconologie ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures hieroglyphiques*, pars II, Paris: chez Mathieu Guillemot, 1644, p. 52–56. Later in the text, we will use the abbreviation C. RIPA (Fr.) whenever we cite this edition. The first French edition by Jean Baudouin dates from 1636 but it is very incomplete; complexions are not included. For Polish' edition cf. C. RIPA, *Iconologia*, trans. I. KANIA, Kraków 2002.

<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to point out that *from the Middle Ages, the distinctive traits of the melancholic and the phlegmatic tend to merge. They would eventually become interchangeable, so that in 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century illustrations the portraits of the melancholy and the phlegmatic are often interchanged*; L. DEJARDINS, *Le Corps parlant. Savoirs et représentations des passions au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris–Québec 2001, p. 48.

Huomo di corpo grasso, e di color bianco, che stando à sedere sia vestito di pelle di tasso, tenendo ambe le mani in seno, e la testa china, laquale sia cinta d'un panno negro, che li cuopra quasi gli occhi, e to canto vi sia una tartaruca<sup>8</sup>.

We thus learn that the man is plump (*di corpo grasso*), that his skin is characterized by a complexion of great pallor (*di color bianco*), and that he is covered with a fur coat of badger (*vestito di pelle di tasso*). His two hands rest on his chest (*ambe le mani in seno*), his head is bowed (*la testa china*) and girded with a black headband (*cinta d'un panno negro*) almost covering his eyes (*cuopra quasi gli occhi*). Finally, a turtle stands near him (*à canto vi si auna tartaruca*).

## 2. A medical archetype, an allegory of inaction

Each of the four temperaments is defined as the result of the predominance of one of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, black bile). Despite the multiple associative tetrads that have enriched the theory, the influence of these humors remains cardinal. They are the keystone of any discourse on complexions, whether medical or iconological.

### 2.1. Phlegm or pituite

Let us begin with the full character of the phlegmatic and the pallor of his skin. According to the humanist, he is plump and corpulent because of the coldness and dampness (two qualities of phlegm) present in his body<sup>9</sup>. Ripa refers here explicitly to Galen and imports into his allegorical proposal the foundations of the quaternary theory as they are still found formulated in the medical treatises that are contemporary to him. Let us cite, by way of example, a fragment of the *regimen sanitatis* of Nicolas Abraham de la Framboisière (1560–1636), a doctor *whose works constitute a veritable sum of medical knowledge of his time*<sup>10</sup>; according to him, the phlegmatic patient is easy to identify, he has *a white colour, sometimes livid, the face is puffy, and the whole mass of the body is large and fat, flabby, cold to the touch, not at all hairy*<sup>11</sup>. Their strong corpulence can thus be explained by a water retention

<sup>8</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> We read in the comment: *Dipingesi grasso, perche si come la siccità del corpo procede da calidità, così la grassezza deriva da frigidità, e humidità, come dice Galeno nel secondo del temperamento al c. 6*; C. RIPA (It.), p. 88. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 54–55: *Il est gras et replet, pource que de la mesme sorte que la / seicheresse du corps procède de la chaleur, la repletion et la graisse sont causes, selon Galien, d'un excez de froideur et d'humidité*.

<sup>10</sup> S. BAMFORTH, *Médecine et philosophie dans l'œuvre de Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière*, [in:] *Esculape et Dionysos. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean Céard*, ed. J. DUPÈBE, F. GIACONE, E. NAYA, A.-P. POUÉY-MOUNOU, Genève 2008, p. 177: *ses œuvres constituent une véritable somme des connaissances médicales de son époque*.

<sup>11</sup> N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé avec le gouvernement requis en l'usage des eaux Minerales, tant pour la preservation, que pour*

mechanism specific to pituitary but also by the fact that phlegmatics simply like to eat. According to Amboise Paré (1510–1590), a French surgeon and anatomist, phlegmatics *are insatiable, and have a canine appetite*, which, moreover, produces very unfortunate consequences for them:

The predominant pituitary is of the kind called acid, and cook their meats late, from which it follows that they engender a great quantity of cold and pituitous humor, which most often collects in the gut called Colon. Which by this means tense up and make a crawling noise, almost like the cries of frogs, and have great pains, and seem to them that the aching parts pull and come out bandaged, from which follows the colic passion<sup>12</sup>.

Let us add that phlegm was considered to be humid and cold in correspondence with the qualities of water, which therefore became the element associated with phlegmatics. This is why they are known to suffer from night-time nightmares related to water, snow and swimming<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, like the intestinal colic mentioned, the majority of the diseases they suffer from find their cause in the very nature of the phlegm. La Framboisière once again tells us that phlegmatic

blow their nose a lot, and spit a great quantity of saliva, and vomit strongly watery, and are very subject to colds and catarrhs, cruditis of the stomach, colic, dropsies, daily fevers, oedemas, and to many other accidents which are engendered by phlegm<sup>14</sup>.

The general physiognomy of the figure must therefore be understood as the expression of the clinical signs of the predominance of phlegm. The purpose of the remaining elements of description is to paint the moral portrait of the phlegmatic,

---

*la guerison des maladies rebelles*, Paris: Charles Chastellain, 1608, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie*, [in:] *Les Œuvres*, Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1599, p. 14: *Ils on la couleur de la face blanche, et quelquesfois plombine, et livide, ou bouffie, la masse du corps est grasse, et molasse, et froide au toucher.*

<sup>12</sup> A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *ils songent souvent qu'il pleut et neige, et pensent nager et noyer.*

<sup>14</sup> N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement nécessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L'Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *They are subject to diseases made of phlegm, such as oedemas, soft tumors and insensitive to dropsies, daily fevers, alopecia, frequent distillations, and colds, were the trachea artery and lungs [...] they vomit a lot of phlegm and aquosities often spit large quantities of saliva, and throw similar excrement through the nostrils they have a very white and moist tongue.* Note also that the Galenic tetrad designating the correspondence water/phlegm/phlegmatic was imagined in an original way in the emblem of Louis de Caseneuve entitled *Phlegmaticus* (Fig. 3). The phlegmatic is there a nymph staying in a fountain; L. DE CASENEUVE, *Hieroglyphicorum et medicorum emblematum DWDEKAKROUNOS*, [in:] IOAHNES PIERIUS VALERIANUS, *Hieroglyphica*, Lugduni: Paulum Frelon, 1626, p. 70. For details, cf. A. ADAMS, S. RAWELS, A. SAUNDERS, *A Bibliography of French Emblem Books*, vol. II, Genève 2002, p. 519–520 and M. KOŻLUK, *Une imaginotheca curieuse: les emblemata medica de Louis de Caseneuve (A Strange Imagotheca by Louis de Caseneuve)*, HSM 50.3, 2016, p. 277–288.

to give the character traits that make him unique. First of all, he proceeds by means of the posture: the man is seated, huddled up on himself, with his eyes closed or half-closed. Ripa specifies that the phlegmatic is represented seated with an inclined head (*con il capo chino*), which must symbolize his natural laziness (*perche egli è pigro*). This laziness affects not only his body, but also the exercise of his reason (*negligente tardo si nell'operationi dell'intelletto, come in tutte l'altre del corpo*)<sup>15</sup>; this is moreover the whole meaning of the piece of black cloth that Ripa places on the forehead of his face (*si cinge il capo di panno negro*)<sup>16</sup>. Next, he traditionally resorts to an allegorical bestiary; Ripa associates two animals with a phlegmatic complexion: the tortoise (*tartaruca*), placed without artifice alongside the human figure, strolling at his feet, and the badger (*tasso*), present through the coat made of his fur<sup>17</sup>.

## 2.2. The dozing badger

Ripa explains to us that the phlegmatic is dressed *in the fur of a Badger, to show that the Phlegmatic is no less lazy nor less drowsy than this Animal*<sup>18</sup> (*si veste di pelle di tasso, perche si come questo animal è sonnacchioso e pigro*)<sup>19</sup>. By the importance of the attribute, we can argue that the author thus makes laziness the major trait of the character of the phlegmatic, an indolence that he also links to a lack of intelligence (*pochi spiriti*)<sup>20</sup>. The weakness of his mental faculties is explained, once again, by the effects of phlegm and more particularly by the coldness which governs the actions, or rather the inactions, of his body and his mind (*quelli oppressi da molta frigidità, che in esso predomina, onde avviene ch'è anco poco atto agli studi i havendo l'ingegno ottuso, e addormentato*)<sup>21</sup>. The phlegmatic is therefore not able to think, which would nevertheless be of great benefit to him in keeping him away from vile and low things (*non habile a meditare quello che sarebbe cagione di sollevarlo dalle cose vili e basse*)<sup>22</sup>. If we turn again to the medical literature, we unsurprisingly find the characteristics adopted by Ripa. Let us quote, once again, Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière in whom the unattractive external aspect of the phlegmatic is manifested by *the narrow and dark veins and arteries, the small*

<sup>15</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. Note that in the French translation of the *Iconology*, the inclination of the head is not indicated.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55: *qu'il n'a que fort peu d'esprits*.

<sup>21</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. Cf. C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55: *ce qui procède de ce qu'il n'a que fort peu d'esprits, encore sont-ils estouffez par la froideur extraordinaire qui predomine en luy. D'où il arrive que les Phlegmatiques ne sont guère propres à l'estude, à cause qu'ayant l'esprit émoussé, ils ne peuvent comprendre rien de sublime et de grand*.

<sup>22</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112.



and slow pulse, the white hair, the heavy, coarse and stupid spirit<sup>23</sup>. The description of the character of phlegmatics does not contain a single positive assessment. They are, concludes the doctor, cowardly, sluggish, lazy, broody, late in action, fearful, pusillanimous, sleepy<sup>24</sup>.

If phlegmatics present in Ripa distinctive traits identical to those developed in the scholarly medical literature of the time, the adoption of the badger (“taisson”) as an attribute characterizing the pituitous complexion is unexpected. Indeed, the oldest representations of temperaments testify to animal-complexion pairs that are already quite well established<sup>25</sup>. In Guyot de Marchand’s *Calendar of the Shepherds* (1493), for example, the sanguine is accompanied by a falcon and a monkey, the angry by a lion, the melancholic by a pig and the phlegmatic by a lamb, not a badger or a turtle. From antiquity (Dioscorides<sup>26</sup>, Isidore of Seville in his *Etym.*, XII, 2, 40)<sup>27</sup>, naturalists note that the “taisson” is very fat (*animal is ualde pingue*), which is why it is associated with the plump man (*hinc uulgo hominem corpulentum, taxi instar obesum esse dicitur*)<sup>28</sup>, but Ripa was no doubt inspired

<sup>23</sup> N. ABRAHAM DE LA FRAMBOISIÈRE, *Le Gouvernement necessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé...*, p. 156.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*. Cf. A. PARÉ, *L’Introduction à la chirurgie...*, p. 14: *ils ont l’esprit lourd, grossier et stupide: il sont fort paresseux, et dorment profondement* or J. TAXIL, *L’astrologie et physiognomie en leur splendeur*, Tournon: R. Reynaud, 1614, p. 30: *le phlegmatique, lequel ayant le cerveau par trop humide, et les esprits trop grossiers, et mal temperez, il n’est propre à la contemplation d’un affaire important*.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the representation of the phlegmatic in GUYOT DE MARCHAND, *Le Calendrier des bergers* (Angers-BM-SA 3390), [http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/savimage/enlumine/irht1/IRHT\\_042824-p.jpg](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/savimage/enlumine/irht1/IRHT_042824-p.jpg) [27 II 2023]. The phlegmatic is second from the right with the lamb at his feet. The attribution of the lamb to the phlegmatic occurred thanks to the analogy of the characters. Guy de Terrvarent reminds us that according to the laws of astrology, the phlegmatic is of the nature of water and of the nature of a lamb; G. DE TERRVARENT, *Attributs et symboles dans l’art profane. Dictionnaire d’un langage perdu (1450–1600)*, Genève 1997, p. 22. Let us note that in medicine, there was an analogy between the highly humidifying qualities of lamb meat and the properties of pituite (coldness and humidity). Cf. J. DU CHESNE, *Le Pourtraict de la santé où est au vif représentée la Reigle universelle et particuliere, de bien sainement et longuement vivre*, Paris: Claude Morel, 1606, p. 417: *young lamb is a viscous, excremental, and very moist meat or flesh: the ordinary use of it is harmful even to the phlegmatic, and gives them stomach pains*. In the symbolic explanations of Valerian we find the analogy between the character of the lamb (*Those who want to express in hieroglyphic terms the peaceful, simple, good-natured man, without blemish and without acule, open and frank of heart, have been accustomed to painting a Lamb*); J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques*, Lyon: Paul Frellon, 1615, p. 121. Cf. H. KOOLMA, A.M. VAN DREVEN, *Representation of the Impulsive Temperament in Arts, Literature and Science: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, IJLA 9.2, 2021, p. 79–93.

<sup>26</sup> [DIOSCORIDES], *Commentaires de M. Pierre André Matthiolo sur les six livres de Ped. Diosor. Anazarbe de la matière Medicinales*, Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé, 1579, p. 252: *the stud, the short tail, the very sharp claws: they accumulate so much fat in winter that sometimes they are monstrously large*.

<sup>27</sup> L. BODSON, *Les paradoxes du témoignage d’Isidore de Séville sur les chiens (Étymologies, XII, 2, 25–28)*, [in:] *Milieus naturels, espaces sociaux. Études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. F. MORENZONI, É. MORNET, Paris 1997, p. 177–188.

<sup>28</sup> *Conradi Gesneri medici Tiguri Historiæ animalium lib. 1–4: Lib. 1. de quadrupedibus viuiparis. Opus philosophis, medicis, grammaticis, philologis*, Tiguri: apud Christ. Froschouerum 1551, p. 779.

more by what all the authors consider the badger to be the greatest sleeper in the animal kingdom (*haec bestia somniculosa ab omnibus*)<sup>29</sup>; it sleeps during the cold periods of the year (*hyberno tempore*)<sup>30</sup>, especially in winter (*tota hyeme dormit*)<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, in his representation of *Sleep (Sonno)*<sup>32</sup>, Cesare Ripa wanted us to paint a fat, serious man dressed in badger skin. He also had to stand on a poppy bed, another symbol of sleep<sup>33</sup>. The badger certainly reflects the naturalist tradition, but perhaps also a lesser-known allegorical tradition, for in a variant of his *Sleep* figure, Ripa draws on another source: *Il Doni* [Anton Francesco Doni – M.K.] *finse per lo sonno, un'huomo, che dorme tra du Tassi, con alcuni ghiri appresso, i quali sono animali inclinatissimi à dormire*<sup>34</sup>. It is regrettable that this entry has not benefited from any illustration in the various editions of *Iconologia*.

### 2.3. The Tardigrade Tortoise

The turtle (*tartaruca*), the second animal invoked, appears, on the other hand, with more evidence, in the iconographic sense and because of the qualities that are readily attributed to it in this context. First of all, it reinforces the physical weakness of the phlegmatic, his lack of energy, but also his intellectual weakness (*the Tortoise, which only walks heavily and with slow steps*)<sup>35</sup>. It then condenses, according to Ripa, all the features of the phlegmatic elegantly synthesized in the mnemonic verses of the School of Salerno with which he concludes his text (*il che tutto vien ottimamente espresso dalla Scuola Salernitana ne i versi che seguono*):

Phlegma dabit vires modicas, latosque brevesque.  
Phlegma facit pinguet, sanguis reddit mediocres,  
Otia non studio iradunt, sed corpora somno

Cf. ULYSSIS ALDROVANDI, *De quadrupedibus digitatis oviparis libri duo*, Bononiae: sumptibus M. Antonii Berniae, 1637, p. 273.

<sup>29</sup> ULYSSIS ALDROVANDI, *De quadrupedibus digitatis oviparis libri duo*..., p. 268.

<sup>30</sup> *Conradi Gesneri medici Tiguri Historiae animalium*..., p. 779.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> M. Wiedemann has proposed a semiological study of the allegorical bestiary in Ripa and Baudouin in which he classifies and lists the various symbolic units. He notes only one occurrence for the badger (phlegmatic); however, even if its meaning is strictly the same, the fur of the animal appears a second time in the allegory of *Sleep (Sonno)* and a third time in that of the *Seventh Hour of the Night (Hora Settima, C. RIPA (It.), p. 300*). In addition, this article can be used to complete in its detailed table the textual sources relating to the Badger; M. WIEDEMANN, *Les animaux allégoriques de l'Iconologie de César Ripa et Jean Baudouin*, FA.REE 8, 2004 (*Animaux d'artistes*), p. 71–99.

<sup>33</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 623: *Homo corpulento, grave, vestito de pelle di Tasso, stando sopra un letto di papaveri, et una vite carica d'una matura gli fara ombra, et haverà una grotta vicina, ove se veda un zampillo d'aqua.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 55.

Sensus habet, tardos, motus pigritia somnus  
 Hic somnolentus, piger in sputamine, plenus  
 Est huic sensus habet pinguis facie color albus<sup>36</sup>.

Like an imperative, Ripa still and always follows the ancient medical tradition and makes no mystery of the texts he used to compose his figure. His use is otherwise consistent with that we find in Valerian: the animal symbolizes laziness linked to slowness in actions. The heaviness of the step is particularly developed and illustrated by three mentions of authorities (Pacuve, Plautus and Ammian). We read:

Otherwise to mean a lazy and nonchalant; or the languor of something, a tortoise was painted walking; which Pacuve calls with a gallant composition *Tardigrade*<sup>37</sup>, because it moves with such a slow pace that it has become a proverb against lazy people and revelers. For what Plautus said to Aegie, *If I grab a stick, I will hate you for that Tortoise step*. So we read in Ammian a very nice epigram touching this weight of the Tortoise:

*Sooner the Raven will become white,  
 he Tortoise will sooner have the feather in the air stretched out,  
 What to see in Capadocia from a good Rhetor.*

It is even said that the laziness of this animal is so contagious that if you carry your right foot in a ship, you believe that you are retarded, which the Magi have noticed<sup>38</sup>.

The presence of the turtle here seems highly intelligible but, in practice, its use by artists can prove tricky because of the various allegorical traditions it carries<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 112. In the French translation of the School of Salerno we read in Chapter XC, entitled *De la température phlegmatique et pituituse: Le phlegme amoidrit moult la force, et l'homme fait / Estre large de corps, petit et bien refaict, // Le sanguin mediocre, et rend moins studieux / Le phlegmatique aussi hebeté et oyseux. // Endormy, et pesant, rempli de salive, / De gros esprit et lourd, de couleur blanche et vive; Retardement de la mort par bon regime ou conservation de santé, jadis envoyé par l'escolle de Salerne, au Roy d'Angleterre, traduit de Latin en rythme françoise par Geofroy le Tellier advocat, présenté et dedié au Duc de Savoye*, Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1561, f° F2 r°.

<sup>37</sup> Note that this allusion to Pacuve is transmitted at the time by indirect sources, such as for example: *Testudines tardigradae et domiferae [...] Vere e eleganter illas descripsit Pacuuis: quadrupes tardigrada, agrestis, humilis, aspera, capite breue, ceruice anguinea, aspectu truci; Francisci Marii Grapaldi De partibus aedium verborum explicatione [...] uariarum rerum*, Parmae: per [...] Octavianu[m] Saladu[m] et Franciscu[m] Ugoletu[m], 1516, p. 37.

<sup>38</sup> J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 351.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*. We leave out other symbols of the turtle like the “reduce under the dominion of the mightiest”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “contempt of adversities”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “bewareness of women”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 350; the “bulwark or [the] defence”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; the “difficult word”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; the “mud-slinging”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352; “es Peloponesiens”, J.P. VALÉRIAN, *Les Hiéroglyphiques...*, p. 352. Cf. G. Tervarent, *Attributs et symboles...*, p. 443–445.

It can in particular be the symbol of a virtuous prudence, a wise slowness, when it is associated with the sail of a ship or with wings as in the figurative motto of Cosimo I de Medici (*Festina Lente*). It is uncertain whether the tortoise most often appears in the arts to symbolize laziness, let alone phlegmatics. A study would certainly be necessary but it seems above all to respond to Ripa's need to add a sufficiently characterized animal to his figure.

\* \* \*

We have already underlined in the conclusions of our study on *Choleric* Ripa's fidelity to Galenic medicine. It is no different here. Moreover, complexions are valid only from medical sources, which gives them a rather special status within the *Iconologia*, because these figures are not quite allegories. The medical tradition was primarily responsible for producing coherent portraits of temperaments, drawn from observation and scientifically justified. Everything is offered to Ripa, the appearance and colour of their skin, their figure and their natural inclinations, whether vile or virtuous. The work is very different from that required to represent abstract notions such as *Dignity* (*Dignità*)<sup>40</sup>, phenomena such as the *Spring Equinox* (*Equinottio della primavera*)<sup>41</sup> or rivers such as *The Nile* (*Nilo*)<sup>42</sup>. The human figure is already given to him and it is in a second time that he reinforces its features by means of attributes.

We have also previously highlighted the editorial constraints that Ripa faced because of the very objectives of his work. He undertook to compose hundreds of allegories distinct from each other, with a limited number of elements, to submit them to the *inventio* of artists who most often retained only a few of the attributes proposed. This raises the question of the own *inventio* of Ripa and of emblem-makers in general. In this matter, we should not expect great revolutions: the Greek and Latin literatures offer copious common material from which it is difficult to deviate. Originality is expressed by details, substitutions or marginal additions, more or less notable. The semi-lethargy of the badger has acquired a proverbial dimension since antiquity, but the introduction by Ripa of this animal into the pituitous complexion is indeed one of these original details. By proposing the badger in his allegory, Ripa, in our opinion, wanted to highlight the torpor of the phlegmatic. The usual lamb is symbolically the bearer of its adipose corpulence and the passivity of its character, but these traits are already supported by the explicit description of the human silhouette. The badger is certainly considered a fairly fat animal, but above all it allows Ripa to present the phlegmatic as a pathological sleeper. By the use of fur, and not of the animal in the flesh, he even cleverly transforms the man

<sup>40</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 247.

described into a monumental *tasso*, a human badger who only needed fur to disappear all winter long, and singles him out in a way perhaps more effective than the representation of a badger at his feet would allow.

In 1626, the physician Louis de Caseneuve in turn proposed a collection of emblems in which the phlegmatic is surprisingly personified by a nymph lying in the basin of a fountain alongside the torpedo fish (electric ray)<sup>43</sup>.

In his Latin epigram Caseneuve does not hesitate to recall that the nymph has just been bitten by this fish, which also explains her drowsiness. In the commentary, using multiple anecdotes, the doctor describes the paralysing power of the torpedo; we learn among other things that whoever touches it (sometimes it is even enough to inadvertently feel the net with which the fish was caught), inevitably becomes paralysed and, consequently, remains in a state of insensitivity similar to that of the constant numbness of the phlegmatic<sup>44</sup>.

This woman with the torpedo-fish is indeed found in Ripa, but in her figure entitled *Accidia*<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 4), that is to say the biblical laziness which figures among the number of deadly sins and which is expressed by negligence at the regard to God and its own interior life. He proposes an ugly old woman, badly dressed, seated, her head bowed and girded with a black cloth, her cheek resting on the left hand from which hangs a cartouche on which is written *Torpet Iners*; finally, she holds the famous fish in her right hand. A second variant suggests a seated woman holding a rope in her right hand and a snail or tortoise in her left hand. Finally, a third depicts a woman lying on the ground alongside a donkey itself on its side. Ripa also writes of the most ordinary *Pigritia (Sloth)*<sup>46</sup> with a dishevelled

<sup>43</sup> On this genre, see G. MATHIEU-CASTELLANI, *Emblèmes de la mort. Le dialogue de l'image et du texte*, Paris 1988. On the Jesuits and *l'ars emblematica*, cf. *The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18–23 August, 1996*, ed. J. MANNING, M. VAN VAECK, Turnhout 1999; R. DEKONINCK, *Imaginer la science: la culture emblématique jésuite entre Ars rhetorica et Scientia imaginum*, [in:] *Transmigrations. Essays in Honour of Alison Adams and Stephen Rawels*, Glasgow 2011, p. 99–114; G.R. DIMLER, *Jesuits Emblem Books. An Overview*, [in:] *Emblems Studies in Honour of Peter M. Daly*, Baden-Baden 2002 [= SSpI, 41], p. 63–122. On the emblems of Caseneuve see in particular S.L. POZA, *Los emblemas y jeroglíficos médicos de Louis de Caseneuve*, CAI 6.12, 1993, p. 9–21.

<sup>44</sup> M. KOŻLUK, *Une imagotheca curieuse...*, p. 280–281: *Dans son épigramme latine Caseneuve n'hésite pas à rappeler que la nymphe vient d'être mordue par ce poisson, ce qui explique d'ailleurs sa somnolence. Dans le commentaire, à l'aide de multiples anecdotes, le médecin décrit le pouvoir paralysant de la torpille; on y apprend entre autres que celui qui le touche (parfois il suffit même de palper par inadvertance le filet avec lequel le poisson a été pêché), devient immanquablement paralysé et, par conséquent, reste dans un état d'insensibilité semblable à celui de l'engourdissement constant du flegmatique.*

<sup>45</sup> C. RIPA (It.), p. 6: *Donna vecchia, brutta, mal vestita che stia a sedere, e che tenghi la guancia appoggiata sopra alla sinistra mano, dalla quale penda una cartella con un motto, che dichi; Torpet Iners, et il gomito di detta mano sia posato sopra il ginocchio, tenendo il capo chino, e che sia cinto con un panno di color nero, e nella destra mano un pesce detto Torpedine.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 516.

woman dressed in rags, her hands covering her breasts, her feet crossed and near whom is a lying donkey or a tortoise (this donkey could therefore have replaced the tortoise of the phlegmatic). He also qualifies winter laziness because the cold leads to a general slowing down. The literary references are particularly numerous in these cases of *Accidia* and *Pigritia*. The authorities differ from one to the other but the ideas expressed are on the whole identical.

To summarise, Ripa draws his various *Lazinesses* from the classical literary horizon and then reuses for his phlegmatic the expressive elements (the seated body, the legs crossed, the head tilted, the hands brought back to the chest, the black fabric on the forehead, the turtle) which agree with what medicine says. Then he matches the coldness of the phlegm to the torpor of winter, which leads him to import from his *Sonno* the fur of the lethargic badger. Caseneuve prefers, with his nymph, his fountain and his torpedo fish to consider the phlegmatic by the humidity of pituite, by water, and thus produces an emblem even more original and perhaps more striking. Baudouin himself brings a marginal enrichment by placing broken distaffs at the feet of *Sloth* (which corresponds to Ripa's *Accidia* and not *Pigritia*), to show that she naturally abhors Work<sup>47</sup>.

As for the engine of this emblematic *inventio*, it is undoubtedly to be sought in the art of memory as described by Quintilian after Cicero and the anonymous author of the *Ad Herennium*. This art is that of a memory of places and things, which relies on the associative and eidetic faculties of the mind. Quintilian tells us that to memorize speech or knowledge, *therefore, imaginary or real locations are needed, and images or signs, which are always forged*<sup>48</sup>, then he quotes Cicero (*De Orat.*, II, 358): *numerous, clear, distinct places are needed, at moderate intervals; expressive, salient, characteristic images that can come to mind and strike it quickly*<sup>49</sup>. Painters, sculptors and poets also need striking and effective signs to articulate the rhetoric of their compositions, to facilitate understanding and, incidentally, memorization. Quintilian doubts, however, that we can find distinct and eloquent signs for each of the words or each of the ideas of a discourse<sup>50</sup>. Such an inflation even seems counterproductive to him and one can venture to think that he would have been critical of the encyclopedism of the *Iconologia*. We perhaps understand in this way why Jean Baudouin has always delivered only a moralized selection.

<sup>47</sup> C. RIPA (Fr.), p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> QUINTILIEN, *Institution oratoire*, vol. VI (livres X et XI), ed. et trans. J. COUSIN, Paris 1979, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 212.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 213–214.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- CASENEUVE L. DE, *Hieroglyphicorum et medicorum emblematum DWDEKAKROUNOS*, [in:] IOAHNES PIERIUS VALERIANUS, *Hieroglyphica*, Lugduni: Paulum Frellon, 1626.
- Conradi Gesneri medici Tiguri *Historiæ animalium lib. 1–4: Lib. 1. de quadrupedibus viuiparis. Opus philosophis, medicis, grammaticis, philologis*, Tiguri: apud Christ. Froschouerum 1551, <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.68598>
- [DIOSCORIDES], *Commentaires de M. Pierre André Matthiolo sur les six livres de Ped. Dioscor. Anazarbeen de la matière Medicinales*, Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé, 1579.
- DU CHESNE J., *Le Pourtraict de la santé où est au vif représentée la Reigle universelle et particuliere, de bien sainement et longuement vivre*, Paris: Claude Morel, 1606.
- Francisci Marii Grapaldi *De partibus aedium verborum explicacione [...] uariarum rerum*, Parmae: per [...] Octavianu[m] Saladu[m] et Franciscu[m] Ugoletu[m], 1516.
- GUYOT DE MARCHAND, *Le Calendrier des bergers* (Angers-BM-SA 3390), [http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/savimage/enlumine/irht1/IRHT\\_042824-p.jpg](http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Wave/savimage/enlumine/irht1/IRHT_042824-p.jpg) [27 II 2023].
- LA FRAMBOISIÈRE N. ABRAHAM DE, *Le Gouvernement necessaire à chacun pour vivre longuement en santé avec le gouvernement requis en l'usage des eaux Minerales, tant pour la preservation, que pour la guerison des maladies rebelles*, Paris: Charles Chastellain, 1608.
- PARÉ A., *L'Introduction à la chirurgie*, [in:] *Les Œuvres*, Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1599.
- QUINTILIEN, *Institution oratoire*, vol. VI (livres X et XI), ed. et trans. J. COUSIN, Paris 1979.
- Retardement de la mort par bon regime ou conservation de santé, jadis envoyé par l'escolle de Salerne, au Roy d'Angleterre, traduit de Latin en rythme françoise par Geofroy le Tellier advocat, présenté et dedié au Duc de Savoye*, Paris: Martin le Jeune, 1561.
- RIPA C., *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625.
- RIPA C., *Iconologia ovvero descittione dell'imagini universali cavate dall'antichita et da altri luoghi*, Roma: per gli heredi di Gio. Gigliotti, 1593.
- RIPA C., *Iconologia ovvero descrittione di diverse imagini cavate dall'antichità, e di proprria inventione*, Roma: Lepido Facii, 1603.
- RIPA C., *Iconologie ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures hyeroglyphiques*, pars II, Paris: chez Mathieu Guillemot, 1644.
- RIPA C., *Ikonomia*, trans. I. KANIA, Kraków 2002.
- TAXIL J., *L'astrologie et physiognomie en leur splendeur*, Tournon: R. Reynaud, 1614.
- ULYSSIS ALDROVANDI, *De quadrupedibus digitatis oviparis libri duo*, Bononiae: sumptibus M. Antonii Berniae, 1637.
- VALÉRIAN J.P., *Les Hiéroglyphiques*, Lyon: Paul Frellon, 1615.

### Secondary Literature

- ADAMS A., RAWELS S., SAUNDERS A., *A Bibliography of French Emblem Books*, vol. II, Genève 2002.
- BAMFORTH S., *Médecine et philosophie dans l'œuvre de Nicolas Abraham de La Framboisière*, [in:] *Esculape et Dionysos. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean Céard*, ed. J. DUPÈBE, F. GIACONE, E. NAYA, A.-P. POUÉY-MOUNOU, Genève 2008, p. 177–202.

- BODSON L., *Les paradoxes du témoignage d'Isidore de Séville sur les chiens (Étymologies, XII, 2, 25–28)*, [in:] *Milieus naturels, espaces sociaux. Études offertes à Robert Delort*, ed. F. MORENZONI, É. MORNET, Paris 1997, p. 177–188, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pSORbonne.27587>
- DEKONINCK R., *Imaginer la science: la culture emblématique jésuite entre Ars rhetorica et Scientia imaginum*, [in:] *Transmigrations. Essays in Honour of Alison Adams and Stephen Rawels*, Glasgow 2011, p. 99–114.
- DESJARDINS L., *Le Corps parlant. Savoirs et représentations des passions au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris–Québec 2001.
- DIMLER G.R., *Jesuits Emblem Books. An Overview*, [in:] *Emblems Studies in Honour of Peter M. Daly*, Baden-Baden 2002 [= *Saecula spiritalia*, 41], p. 63–122.
- The Jesuits and the Emblem Tradition. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18–23 August, 1996*, ed. J. MANNING, M. VAN VAECK, Turnhout 1999.
- KOOLMA H., DREVEN A.M. VAN, *Representation of the Impulsive Temperament in Arts, Literature and Science: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, "International Journal of Literature and Arts" 9.2, 2021, p. 79–93, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijla.20210902.15>
- KOŻLUK M., *Représenter la flaua bilis: le portait du colérique dans l'Iconologia de Cesare Ripa*, "Studia Ceranea" 12, 2022, p. 633–650, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.12.18>
- KOŻLUK M., *Une imagotheca curieuse: les emblemata medica de Louis de Caseneuve (A Strange Imagotheca by Louis de Caseneuve)*, "Histoire des sciences médicales" 50.3, 2016, p. 277–288.
- MATHIEU-CASTELLANI G., *Emblèmes de la mort. Le dialogue de l'image et du texte*, Paris 1988.
- POZA S.L., *Los emblemas y jeroglíficos médicos de Louis de Caseneuve*, "Cuadernos de Arte e Iconografía" 6.12, 1993, p. 9–21.
- TERVARENT G. DE, *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane. Dictionnaire d'un langage perdu (1450–1600)*, Genève 1997.
- WIEDEMANN M., *Les animaux allégoriques de l'Iconologie de César Ripa et Jean Baudouin*, "Figures de l'Art. Revue d'études esthétiques" 8, 2004 (*Animaux d'artistes*), p. 71–99, <https://doi.org/10.3406/fdart.2004.1335>

**Magdalena Koźluk**

University of Lodz  
Department of Romance Philology  
ul. Pomorska 171/173  
90-236 Łódź, Polska/Poland  
[magdalena.kozluk@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:magdalena.kozluk@uni.lodz.pl)



## ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625, p. 111.



Fig. 2. C. RIPA, *Iconologie ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblèmes, et autres figures hieroglyphiques*, pars II, Paris: chez Mathieu Guillemot, 1644, p. 52.



Fig. 3. L. DE CASENEUVE, *Hieroglyphicorum et medicorum emblematum DWDEKA-KROUNOS*, [in:] IOAHNES PIERIUS VALERIANUS, *Hieroglyphica*, Lugduni: Paulum Frellon, 1626, p. 70: emblema VII Phlegmaticus.




Fig. 4. C. RIPA, *Della novissima iconologia*, Padova: per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1625, p. 6.





Łukasz Kubicki (Warszawa)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6683-6420>

## BASIL I'S PATH TO POWER ACCORDING TO THE *VITA BASILII* AS A HEROIC MYTH

**Abstract.** This paper aims to illustrate how the tradition of Basil I's rise to power in the *Vita Basilii* includes elements typical of heroic myths, according to Joseph Campbell's monomyth scheme. The study presented here will examine how the narrative contains features such as a call to adventure, a series of trials and a motive for return. Moreover, the study seeks to investigate how these universal elements of hero stories have been mythicised by literary devices such as the topoi, text composition, intertextual references or symbolic content coherent with the perception of the ideological role of the Byzantine rulers. Within this framework, the study will aim to explore the morphology of these narratives and reconsider some historical questions with the help of Mircea Eliade's theory of myth. It will focus on the identity and legitimising functions of the story for Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and assess its impact on the position of the Macedonian dynasty in the social order and the sphere of political activity.

**Keywords:** Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Basil I, myth, Joseph Campbell, dynastic identity, *Vita Basilii*, Macedonian dynasty, dynastic ideology

*Vita Basilii*, a panegyric work devoted to Basil I the Macedonian (811–886), is one of the many pieces produced at the court of his grandson, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905–959)<sup>1</sup>. The source, finished around 948 by the emperor and his writers, is the fifth part of an extensive, six-volume collection of biographies compiled at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century into one corpus entitled *Theophanes Continuatus*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*, ed. et trans. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin–Boston 2011 [= *CFHB.SBr*, 42] (cetera: *Vita Basilii*); on the emperor's literary activities cf. for instance: P. LEMERLE, *Le premier humanisme byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1971, p. 267–300; A. TOYNBEE, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, New York–Toronto 1973, p. 575–598; A. KAZHDAN, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, Athens 2006, p. 133–185; O. JUREWICZ, *Historia literatury bizantyńskiej*, Wrocław 2007, p. 151–157.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Vita Basilii*, introduction by C. MANGO, p. 8\*–13\*; W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York 2013, p. 165–180.

According to the introduction, *The Life of Basil* was intended to be a part of a large-scale literary programme that included biographies of all emperors from Constantine the Great to the time of the Macedonian dynasty. However, Porphyrogenitus's weak health made this task impossible, forcing the emperor to focus on just one figure. Therefore, he decided to choose his grandfather Basil.

*Causa scribendi* of the source, according to panegyric genre requirements, was to create a model of virtues (ἀνδριὰς) and a figure worthy of imitation (μιμήσως)<sup>3</sup>, which by his reign (867–886) ended a period of imperial decline in the state<sup>4</sup>. In the light of the *Vita*, Basil was to embody the ideal ruler – a New David, Alexander, Constantine or Justinian<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, the choice of the narrative figure was not accidental since Basil, the hero-founder of the Macedonian dynasty, was important for the identity and legitimacy of his descendants<sup>6</sup>. This issue needs to be explored in more depth so that it will return in the last section of the paper.

One of the points of Constantine VII's narrative was the description of Basil I's rise to power. This illustrates how the protagonist, "step by step" from a poor man, succeeded in becoming a Byzantine emperor<sup>7</sup>. The purpose of this part of the story was to illustrate the protagonist's journey and portray the character's reasons and qualities for becoming ruler of Byzantium. The origins of this pro-Macedonian tradition, in addition to *The Funeral Oration* composed by Leo VI in 888<sup>8</sup>,

<sup>3</sup> *Vita Basilii*, I, 17–18, p. 10; S. TOUGHER, *After Iconoclasm (850–886)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2018, p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Iosephi Genesisii regum libri quattuor*, proem., ed. A. LESMÜLLER-WERNER, I. THUM, Berolini 1978 [= *CFHB*, 14] (cetera: GENESIOS), p. 3; latest translation and commentary: GENESIOS, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, proem., trans. et comm. A. KALDELLIS, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= *BAus*, 11], p. 4; cf. *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV*, proem., ed. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= *CFHB.SBr*, 53] (cetera: *Theophanes Continuatus*), p. 10–13.

<sup>5</sup> H. BUCHTHAL, *The Exaltation of David*, *JWCI* 37, 1974, p. 300–333; A. MARKOPOULOS, *An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I*, *DOP* 46, 1992, p. 225–232; L. BRUBAKER, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 1992, p. 173–193; G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2007, p. 48–51, 192–201; J. SHEPARD, *The Ruler as Instructor, Pastor and Wise: Leo VI of Byzantium and Symeon of Bulgaria*, [in:] *Alfred the Great. Papers from the Eleventh-century Conferences*, ed. T. REUTER, London–New York 2003, p. 343–346; C. RAPP, *Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium*, [in:] *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, R. NELSON, Washington D.C. 2010 [= *DOBSC*, 2], p. 175–198; A. MARKOPOULOS, *Constantine VII and the Macedonian Dynasty in Contemporary Historiography. Appendix: Three Letters from R.J.H. Jenkins to G. Moravcsik*, [in:] *Center, Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos*, ed. N. GAUL, V. MENZE, C. BÁLINT, Weisbaden 2018, p. 159–163; M. RIEDEL, *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity. Writings of an Unexpected Emperor*, Cambridge 2018, p. 154–167.

<sup>6</sup> On contrary: W. TREADGOLD, *The Middle...*, p. 166.

<sup>7</sup> *Vita Basilii*, VIII, 1–3, p. 30: Ἐπει δὲ κυριωτέραν ἔδει τὴν θείαν γενέσθαι βουλὴν καὶ τοῦτον πρὸς ὅπερ ἀφώριστο κατὰ μικρὸν ὁδῶ βαδίζοντα ἀνελθεῖν.

<sup>8</sup> *Oraison funèbre de Basile I<sup>er</sup> par son fils Léon VI le Sage*, ed. et trans. G. VENANCE, A. VOGT, I. HAUSHER, Rome 1932 (cetera: LEO VI).

the lost *Secret History* of the Nicetas the Paphlagonian argued for by W. Treadgold<sup>9</sup>, or a very hypothetical encomium, are almost impossible to grasp since the *Vita* is only the first source we know of that so accurately recounts the subsequent events of Macedonian's life<sup>10</sup>. A clue for understanding this lack of information may be the words of Porphyrogenitus, who complained in his work about the lack of sufficient materials to compose the piece, or by Joseph Genesisos. The second author, working under the patronage of Porphyrogenitus and using the same sources as *Vita*, points to many oral histories illustrating Basil's path to the throne<sup>11</sup>. Some scholars, such as C. Mango, have rejected the possibility of the presence of such a tradition nearly a century after the reign of Basil. In my opinion, its existence should not be denied<sup>12</sup>. These histories did not have to originate exclusively in Basil's time. They could have been formed much later, as collected and transformed by Constantine VII, later by Genesisos, or by hostile towards the Macedonians Simeon the Logothete<sup>13</sup>.

It is also important to note that these stories were not an oral tradition but a semi-oral one. The Byzantine elites in whose circles these stories may have spread did not function in the same way as oral societies. Instead, they were circles in which oral stories circulated. However, their content was still embedded in the intellectual endowment of an elite in which extensive literary education was a fundamental factor<sup>14</sup>. This type of tradition was perceived in terms of socio-cultural

<sup>9</sup> W. TREADGOLD, *The Lost Secret History of Nicetas the Paphlagonian*, [in:] *The Steppe Lands and the World beyond them. Studies in Honor of Victor Spinei on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. F. CURTA, B.-P. MALEON, Iași 2013, p. 645–676.

<sup>10</sup> For comprehensive study on Basil cf.: N. TOBIAS, *Basil I (867–886), the Founder of the Macedonian Dynasty. A Study of the Political and Military History of the Byzantine Empire in the Ninth century* (doctoral thesis, Rutgers University 1969; published: Lewiston 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. for instance GENESIOS, proem., 8–20, p. 3; 4, 28, 47–49, p. 79; cf. *Vita Basilii*, XLVII, 13–17, p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Basilii*, introduction by C. MANGO, p. 10\*.

<sup>13</sup> For complicated discussion on the relationship between *Vita* and Genesisos cf. for instance: *Vita Basilii*, introduction by C. MANGO, p. 8\*–13; GENESIOS, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, introduction by A. KALDELLIS, p. IX–XXIII; P. VARONA CODESO, *Contribución al problema de la cronología y las fuentes de la Vita Basilii*, BZ 102.2, 2009, p. 739–755. In addition to Genesisos, who completed his work probably after the composition of *The Life of Basil*, the existence of the account of Symeon the Logothete is also worth mentioning (*Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, ed. S. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= CFHB, 41], cetera: SYMEON). Due to its panegyric and often unrealistic narrative of the latter is deprived of detail, which can be explained by several arguments. Firstly, the author of his Chronicle was independent of the court of Porphyrogenitus and, therefore, could have used other source material. Secondly, this historian was critical of the Macedonian dynasty, which may have caused the author to omit some of the lineage traditions favourable to the Macedonians. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that the nature of the narrative was determined by genre reasons, which did not allow much space for a close-up of the protagonist's profile.

<sup>14</sup> On the reflection of orality in written texts: C. MESSIS, S. PAPAIOANNOU, *Orality and Textuality (with an Appendix on the Byzantine Conceptions)*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*, ed. S. PAPAIOANNOU, Oxford 2021, p. 247–248.

facts that were organised according to the cultural and literary codes of the group of recipients and the temporal experiences and needs of the societies where the stories functioned<sup>15</sup>.

Due to the narrative's panegyric and often unrealistic nature, Basil's path to power has been repeatedly called myths or legends<sup>16</sup>. For instance, N. Adontz, investigating the chronology of Basil's biography, in his approach rejected the *légendes populaires et d'inventions plus ou moins tendancieuses* and *les éléments décoratifs or toutes sortes de fables complètement inutiles à l'histoire*<sup>17</sup>. Analogous terms for these stories were formulated by G. Moravcsik in his classic work entitled *Sagen und Legenden*<sup>18</sup> or by S. Tougher, who summarised this tradition as 'developed mythology'<sup>19</sup>. Despite these and many similar claims, little space has been devoted to analysing this story with particular reference to the morphology and theory of dynastic myths, *i.e.* stories which explain the beginnings of dynasty rule in the state. This study aims to propose a complement to this problem by offering an interdisciplinary perspective in the analysis. The proposed methodology draws on the comprehensive tradition of studying medieval dynastic traditions through holistic approaches, as exemplified by the works of J. Banaszkiwicz and his followers in Polish historiography<sup>20</sup>.

The paper will illustrate how the dynastic myth of Macedonians adopts selected elements of the universal structure of heroic stories (according to Joseph

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. PLESZCZYŃSKI, J. SOBESIAK, K. SZEJGIEC, M. TOMASZEK, P. TYSZKA, *Historia Communitatem Facit. Struktura narracji tworzących tożsamości grupowe w średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2016, p. 247–248, 255.

<sup>16</sup> On genre patterns in *Vita cf.*: P.J. ALEXANDER, *Secular Biography at Byzantium*, S 15.2, 1940, p. 197–205; R.J.H. JENKINS, *The Classical Background of the Scriptorum Post Theophanem*, DOP 8, 1954, p. 13–30; L. VAN HOOFF, *Among Christian Emperors. The Vita Basilii by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus*, JEaCS 54, 2002, p. 166–179; A. MARKOPOULOS, *From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries*, BZ 102.2, 2005, p. 697–715; P. VARONA CODESO, *In Search of a Byzantine Narrative Canon: the Vita Basilii as an Uncanonical Work*, BMGS 39.2, 2015, p. 173–190.

<sup>17</sup> N. ADONTZ, *L'âge et l'origine de l'empereur Basile I (867–886)*, B 8, 1933, p. 477–486; cf. M. MASTERSON, *Between Byzantine Men. Desire, Homosexuality, and Brotherhood in the Medieval Empire*, London–New York 2022, p. 69: *These early years have fantastical details that build the legend of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.*

<sup>18</sup> G. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I*, DOP 15, 1961, p. 59–126.

<sup>19</sup> S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1997 [= MMe, 15], p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> J. BANASZKIWICZ, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu. Studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi*, Warszawa 2010; for methodology cf. *ibidem*, p. 16–50; A. GRABOWSKI, *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship. Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany*, Amsterdam 2018 (for criticism of this approach cf. reviews: L. ROACH, [rec.:] *Antoni Grabowski, The Construction of Ottonian Kingship...*, S 95.4, 2020, p. 1175–1176; S. GREER, [rec.:] *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship...*, EME 29.2, 2021, p. 268–271); R. KASPERSKI, *Model trójdzielny Dumézila, problem legitymizacji sukcesji oraz Getica Jordanesa*, RAH 11, 2018, p. 159–172.

Campbell's monomyth structure). Moreover, this paper will investigate how this structure of narration has been stereotyped according to narrative solutions specific to the collective imaginations associated with the ideology of power in the Byzantine Empire, *i.e.* a set of beliefs, values, and perspectives on the political, social, and cultural role of the Byzantine emperor<sup>21</sup>. By approaching this story through the lens of myth, it will be possible to draw attention to two historical issues. They will examine how the content of the myth relates to the imperial and dynastic ideology of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and how the story reinforces the emperor's ideological position and that of his lineage<sup>22</sup>.

### Methodological basis

In approaching *Vita* from the perspective of myth, I would like to use M. Eliade's conceptions of this notion. Myths passed down orally or in writing recount events, which establish models to follow and lay at the origin of the functioning of the community (*in illo tempore*)<sup>23</sup>. According to a Romanian scholar, the importance of myths stems from their significance in legitimising the world's existence and elements within it. In the context of medieval dynastic myths, such accounts illustrated the origins of dynasty power in the state. These traditions performed legitimising functions by situating the history of their family's rule within the socio-cultural realities of the state, as well as embedding it in the social hierarchy and sphere of political activity<sup>24</sup>.

Eliade argued that the legitimising function of myths stemmed from the presence of elements of the *sacrum*, which were mixed with the perception of everyday

<sup>21</sup> R. CHARTIER, *Le monde comme représentation*, A.H 44.6, 1989, p. 1505–1520.

<sup>22</sup> Dynastic ideology is a coherent system of worldview of the place of the ruling family in a given social-cultural and political system. The ideology is the core value for dynastic identity, which is manifested through narrative – in this case, through myth. The category of dynastic identity is lacking in research on identities in the Byzantine world. This can be observed in several recent works on the subject: *Identities. Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 15–16 November 2019*, ed. M.B. PANOV, Skopje 2020; *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, ed. M.E. STEWART, D.A. PARNELL, C. WHATELEY, London–New York 2022; *Identities and Ideologies in the Medieval East Roman World*, ed. Y. STOURAITIS, Edinburgh 2022 [= EBS]; on non-emotional understanding of the 'ideology' category: C. GEERTZ, *Interpretacje kultur. Wybrane eseje*, Kraków 2005, p. 259–262.

<sup>23</sup> M. ELIADE, *Sacrum a profanum. O istocie sfery religijnej*, Warszawa 2022, p. 97–98.

<sup>24</sup> R. MICHAŁOWSKI, *Restauratio Poloniae w ideologii dynastycznej Galla Anonima*, PH 76.3, 1985, p. 457–480; G. STEINSLAND, *Introduction. Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, [in:] *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages. Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, ed. IDEM, G. STEINSLAND, J.V. SIGURDSSON, J.E. REKDAL, I.B. BEUERMANN, Leiden–Boston 2011 [= NW, 52], p. 8–9; cf. also: T. BIERNAT, *Mit polityczny*, Warszawa 1989, p. 11, 39–50; J. TOPOLSKI, *Historiografia jako tworzenie mitów i walka z nimi*, [in:] *Ideologie, poglądy mity w dziejach Polski i Europy XIX i XX wieku*, ed. J. TOPOLSKI, W. MOLIK, K. MAKOWSKI, Poznań 1991, p. 240–244.



life (*profanum*)<sup>25</sup>. This has also been decisive in Byzantine culture, where the *sacrum*, constituting the structure of the ideology of Byzantine imperial power, significantly impacted the collective imaginations of Byzantine society, explaining rulers' political, social, and cultural position<sup>26</sup>. Consequently, based on Christian and Greco-Roman literary and cultural traditions, this system of perceptions was projected onto representations of reality in narrations<sup>27</sup>. This was reflected in the dimension of literary conventions, where the narrative form drew on motifs enjoying the cultural credence of the Byzantine intellectual elite. Thus, it organised the whole 'symbolic universe' of narrations of Byzantine historiography<sup>28</sup>. It consisted of many repetitive motifs like views, attitudes, narrative compositions, topoi, symbols, and intertextual references deeply rooted in the intellectual background of the group of source recipients, which authors used to form precise *communicatio* of the work<sup>29</sup>. In Eliade's terms, these phenomena were examples of the mythification/stereotyping of history – a process by which the memory of historical events was stereotyped and inscribed within the framework of narrative solutions specific to members of a given cultural circle<sup>30</sup>.

The basis for further analysis is the scheme of heroic stories proposed by Joseph Campbell<sup>31</sup>. This researcher, by collecting a variety of stories of Indo-European societies, wished to prove that in cultures, irrespective of the place and time of occurrence, there are specific common, metaphorical, symbolic, and archetypal patterns of construction of heroic myths (monomyth)<sup>32</sup>. The American scholar noted that many such stories, stereotyped according to the society's culture, include repetitive patterns. What is worth noting is that Campbell's theory does not assume that all the stages the researcher listed (and there are as many as 17) appear in every myth. Their intensity and sequence can be arbitrary – what remains unchanged is the

<sup>25</sup> M. ELIADE, *Sacrum, mit, historia. Wybór esejów*, Warszawa 1970, p. 89–125; IDEM, *Sacrum a profanum...*, p. 102–107; cf. also Ł. TRZCIŃSKI, *Mit bohaterski w perspektywie antropologii filozoficznej i kulturowej*, Kraków 2006, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J.-P. ROUX, *Król. Mity i symbole*, Warszawa 1998, p. 114–115.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. LE GOFF, *Święty Ludwik*, Kraków 2001, p. 677.

<sup>28</sup> J. HALDON, Y. STOURAITIS, *Introduction. The Ideology of Identities and the Identity of Ideologies*, [in:] *Identities and Ideologies...*, p. 2–13, esp. p. 8–9.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. for instance: T. PEŁECH, *Obraz „obcego” w Aleksjademie Anny Komneny. Przypadek Normanów*, Wrocław 2016; more on the narrative structures in Byzantine historiography: J. LJUBARSKIJ, *SO Debate: Quellenforschung And/Or Literary Criticism. Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings*, SO 73.1, 1998, p. 5–22; cf. also A. PLESZCZYŃSKI, J. SOBESIAK, K. SZEJGIEC, M. TOMASZEK, P. TYSZKA, *Historia...*, p. 7–13.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W. WRZOSEK, *Historia – kultura – metafora. O myśleniu historycznym*, Wrocław 2022, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater o tysiącu twarzy*, Kraków 2013 [first English edition = *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton 1949].

<sup>32</sup> Campbell's approach to explaining myth formation in psychological terms (drawn from the thought of C.G. Jung) was too reductionist. An overview of approaches to understanding mythical thinking in 20<sup>th</sup> century scholarship: E. MIELETINSKI, *Poetyka mitu*, Warszawa 1981; I. STRENSKY, *Four Theories of Myth in Twentieth century History*, Iowa City 1987.

core of these heroic tales, which is based on three fundamental phases: a setting out, a series of trials, and a return.

The first phase of the sequence of events begins with a call to adventure, where a mythical figure from his daily life is called upon to set out. The protagonist initially refuses the challenge but decides to go on the journey with the help of supernatural beings. As a result, he sets out and crosses the first threshold, symbolising the transition from his previous life to a world of new challenges. In the second phase of heroic stories, the protagonist faces a series of challenges that appear on his path – to prove his abilities, he is supposed to overcome them. The task is not simple, but it became possible due to the hero's talents and the help of supernatural beings, friends or mentors. The toughest of these tasks is the last one – persevering through this trial guarantees the protagonist's victory and the achievement of the quest's goal, which ends his journey. In the third and final phase, the victorious protagonist of the tale can return to his previous daily life or choose to stay. The second decision results in a symbolic separation of the protagonist from the world from which he came, which may project a change in his position in the social hierarchy and his relations with the environment.

The above schema projects the further structure of the paper. The following sections will be devoted to the presence above elements in *Vita* and how those parts have been mythicised according to literary devices coherent with the ideology of imperial power in Byzantium. After this part, our attention will return to Eliade's theory of myth to summarise its functions for Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

## Setting out

According to the *Vita*, Basil's departure took place when a boy (παῖς) has been excellent educated<sup>33</sup> and entered adolescence (ἀνδρικοτέρως)<sup>34</sup>. The protagonist, in an unspecified, mythical time, after the death of his father, continued his existence in the ordinary world<sup>35</sup>. He recognised that using his talents (ἀρετῆς) on his

<sup>33</sup> *Vita Basilii*, VI, p. 26–28; according to Xenophon, excellent education, alongside origins, was the reason for the ability to rule over people: XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia*, vol. I, *Books I–IV*, I, 1, 6, trans. W. MILLER, Cambridge–London 1983 [= LCL, 51], p. 8–9.

<sup>34</sup> *Vita Basilii*, VII, 1–4, p. 28; on interpretations of the word ἀνδρικός cf.: *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, vol. I–II, ed. J. DIGGLE, B.L. FRASER, P. JAMES, O.B. SIMKIM, A.A. THOMPSON, S.J. WESTRIPP, Cambridge 2021, p. 118. After education and preparation by his father, the hero gained features worthy of a man. The hero's initiation into the pages of the story was his encounter with the Bulgar khan Omurtag during the war against the Bulgarians (*Vita Basilii*, IV, 29–39, p. 22). It was then that the hero was to be born, who, in accordance with the Campbellian model, faced a mortal threat shortly after his birth. About those events see for instance N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 76–79; G. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen...*, p. 70–86; E. KISLINGER, *Der junge Basileios I. und die Bulgaren*, JÖB 30, 1981, p. 137–150; on universal narrative patterns to describe the hero's youth: J. BANASZKIEWICZ, *Młodzieńcze gesta Bolesława Krzywoustego, czyli jak się zostaje prawdziwym rycerzem i władcą*, [in:] *Takie sobie średnio-wieczne bajeczki*, ed. IDEM, Kraków 2013, p. 563–585.

<sup>35</sup> *Vita Basilii*, VII, 10–15, p. 28; J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 43–50.

parents' farm was a waste of time. This motivated him to travel to Constantinople – the Campbellian “hub of the world”, where he could succeed<sup>36</sup>. However, Basil chose not to embark on the expedition, thus manifesting the classical motive of heroic stories of resistance to the call<sup>37</sup>. The hero abstained from the journey for the sake of his mother. As the ideal protagonist, he could not abandon an elderly widow, which would have been incompatible with his excellent character<sup>38</sup>. At this point, supernatural forces intervened<sup>39</sup>. His refusal to embark on the journey was met with a response from God, who sent two dreams to his mother. In the first of these:

The mother fancied in a dream that a huge plant sprouted forth from her – just as the mother of Cyrus had seen the vine. That plant, then, stood by her house in full bloom and heavy with fruit; the large trunk that rose from the ground was of gold, while its branches and leaves were gold like [...] <sup>40</sup>.

The above vision was taken from the writings of Herodotus and refers to the universal metaphor of the tree of life – a symbol of an eternal monarchy<sup>41</sup>. As Genesios mentions, it foreshadowed a bright future for Basil and his successors, which indicates that this tale may have been created during the reign of Basil's successors<sup>42</sup>. Following this event, the hero's mother was haunted by another vision in which the prophet Elijah foretold her son's future. The saint's presence in the narrative is not accidental, as it has a historical connection to the ideology of emperor Basil. According to research into using Old Testament models in the ruler's ideological policy, the emperor was particularly close to Tishbite. He made him the patron of the dynasty, which was reflected in the visual programme of the family<sup>43</sup>. The intervention of Elijah, representative of the *sacrum*, convinced the mother, and as a result, she prevailed upon her son to set out on the journey. The protagonist, initially reluctant, was now confident, and as a consequence, nothing stood in the way of him setting out for the Byzantine centre of the world – Constantinople<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 35–40.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 50–57.

<sup>38</sup> *Vita Basilii*, VII, 10–11, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 89–92; R.J. LILIE, *Reality and Invention: Reflections on Byzantine Historiography*, DOP 68, 2014, p. 193–197.

<sup>40</sup> All translations by I. Ševčenko, *Vita Basilii*, VIII, 7–10, p. 30.

<sup>41</sup> HERODOTUS, I, 108, ed. et trans. A.D. GODLEY, London–New York 1920 [= LCL, 4], p. 138–140; J.-P. ROUX, *Król...*, p. 43–44; B. SZCZEPANOWICZ, *Święte drzewa w Biblii, kulturze, legendzie i sztuce*, Poznań 2020, p. 8–12.

<sup>42</sup> GENESIOS, 4, 24, 61–85, p. 76–77.

<sup>43</sup> P. MAGDALINO, *Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah*, JÖB 38, 1988, p. 193–196; L. BRUBAKER, *Vision...*, p. 173–193; G. DAGRON, *Emperor...*, p. 193–196; J. CHURCHILL, *Depictions of Power in the Imperial Art of the Early Macedonian Emperors. Basil I, Leo VI and Alexander* (doctoral thesis, University of Sussex 2016), p. 111.

<sup>44</sup> On ideological role of Constantinople cf. for instance: H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1975, p. 65–66; B. FLUSIN, *Construire une Nouvelle Jérusalem: Constantinople et*

Basil went to the Byzantine capital hoping to find Campbell's 'sage' – the person through whom he could cross the first threshold of adventure<sup>45</sup>. As the source indicates: *he wished to approach [someone – Ł.K.] powerful and prominent and to have himself enlisted and appointed as one of his [assistant or servant]*<sup>46</sup>. Subsequently, after entering the Golden Gate, the hero stayed near the monastery of Saint Diomedes, where he intended to rest for the night. There, he waited for an opportunity to cross the threshold that presented itself as a result of divine intervention. It affected the monastery's abbot, who received visions calling him to go beyond the building and summon a man named Basil<sup>47</sup>. Despite his initial opposition, the abbot eventually did what God commanded him to do after receiving a third vision<sup>48</sup>. As a result, the Macedonian was taken inside, where he was cared for. Basil promised to reward this help when he became emperor. As later accounts of Basil's reign show, the hero had ties to the place he restored and endowed with large estates<sup>49</sup>.

After Basil arrived at the monastery, there was a meeting between the hero and the Theophilus Paideuomenos – as Genesios mentions, a person related to the emperor Michael and ceasar Bardas (? – 866)<sup>50</sup>. Theophilus, who assumes the Campbellian function of 'sage', appointed Basil to the position of his *protostrator* (πρωτοστράτωρ) due to his exceptional character and bodily qualities (σωματικὴν ἀλκήν καὶ ψυχικὴν ἀνδρείαν)<sup>51</sup>.

In this way, the first part of Basil's mythical expedition had ended<sup>52</sup>. The hero left his ordinary life on the farm to embark on an adventure that changed his destiny and status. This was emphasised by the descriptions of the Macedonian's appearance. On arriving at the monastery, the protagonist was initially dirty, dishevelled and

---

*les reliques*, [in:] *L'Orient dans l'histoire religieuse de l'Europe. L'invention des origines*, ed. A. MOEZZI, J. SCHEID, Paris 2000, p. 51–70; M. KAPLAN, *Konstantynopol a gospodarka miejska*, [in:] *Świat Bizancjum*, vol. II, *Cesarstwo Bizantyńskie 641–1204*, ed. J.-P. CHEYNET, Kraków 2011, p. 292–293; M.C. CARILE, *The Vision of the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors as a Heavenly Jerusalem*, Spoleto 2012; M. SAVAGE, *Building Heavenly Jerusalem: Thoughts on Imperial and Aristocratic Construction in Constantinople in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries*, [in:] *Byzantium in Dialogue with the Mediterranean. History and Heritage*, ed. D. SLOOTJES, M. VERHOEVEN, Leiden–Boston 2019 [= MMe, 116], p. 67–90; cf. J. BANASZKIEWICZ, *Kolorowe włócznie Wizygotów Euryka (Hydatius c. 243)*, KH 94.2, 1987, p. 5; M. ELIADE, *Sacrum a profanum...*, p. 34–50.

<sup>45</sup> J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 57–74.

<sup>46</sup> *Vita Basilii*, IX, 2–4, p. 34: τῶν δυνατῶν τινὲ καὶ περιφανῶν προσμῖξαι βουλόμενος καὶ εἰς θεραπείαν καὶ δουλείαν αὐτοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἀποτάξαι καὶ καταστήσαι.

<sup>47</sup> At Basil's times, the monastery was a public church administrated by custodian. When *Vita Basilii* and other contemporary sources were created, this monastery's former status was forgotten: SYMEON, 131, 13, 108–117, p. 237; *Vita Basilii*, introduction by C. MANGO, p. 11\*, n. 18.

<sup>48</sup> N. ADONTZ, *L'age...*, p. 486; G. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen...*, p. 94–95.

<sup>49</sup> *Vita Basilii*, LXXIII, p. 250–252.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. also *Vita Basilii*, XII, 9–10, p. 46–48.

<sup>51</sup> GENESIOS, 4, 26, 9–16, p. 77–78.

<sup>52</sup> *Vita Basilii*, IX, 51–53, p. 38; J.B. BURY, *The Imperial Administrative System of the Ninth century – with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos*, Oxford 1911, p. 117–118.

sunburned, but it changed after the entrance to the building<sup>53</sup>. The hero received care from the abbot and later from the Theophilus. By introducing the coming of Paideuomenos, the narrator emphasised his predilection for people endowed with the best virtues of spirit and body – qualities that belonged to the aristocracy – people who were wearing silken (σηρικαῖς) robes. Joining Paideuomenos' entourage, *Basil was enlisted among these*, which indicated his social advancement and virtues, which he owned despite his lack of noble origins<sup>54</sup>.

### The Path of the trials

With the help of God and his envoys, Basil managed to cross the adventure's threshold. The hero now awaited a series of trials to demonstrate his worth and chart a path to promotion to the next court circles and his imperial destiny. In the first challenge, he had to travel with Theophilus to the Peloponnese to carry out unspecified tasks related to public affairs (τινας τοῦ δημοσίου)<sup>55</sup>. Basil *accompanied his master and assisted him in performing the duties assigned to him*<sup>56</sup>. On that narrative background, the travelling pair visited St. Andrew's church at Patras in Achaia. The appearance of the church of this patron saint is no coincidence. Basil had already, during his reign, restored the church of this name in Constantinople and ordered the transfer of the skull of this saint from Constantinople to the church in the Peloponnese<sup>57</sup>.

As the narrator of *Vita* emphasises, Theophilus' entrance into the church evoked no reaction from the monk inside the temple. This behaviour contrasted with his response upon seeing Basil, who recognised the future ruler and welcomed him with an acclamation offered to Byzantine emperors<sup>58</sup>. This information reached the wealthy widow Danielis, who had been living there<sup>59</sup>. She was outraged that the monk saw in an ordinary man a future sovereign, thus undermining her dignity in the area<sup>60</sup>. The monk replied to her that *I both rose and*

<sup>53</sup> *Vita Basilii*, IX, 30–32, p. 36: καὶ ἰδὼν ῥυπῶντά τε καὶ αὐχμῶντα καὶ πολὺν ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου τὸν ἥλιον φέροντα.

<sup>54</sup> *Vita Basilii*, IX, 49–51, p. 38: οὐς εὐθὺς ἦν ὁρᾶν σηρικαῖς τε κοσμουμένους ἐσθῆσι καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ καταστολῇ διαπρέποντας. τούτοις καταλεγέντα τὸν νέμλυν νεανίαν Βασιλεῖον; for the same motive cf. also *Vita Basilii*, III, 1–12, p. 16; on the role of clothing in shaping the social differentiation in the medieval world: J.M.H. SMITH, *Europa po Rzymie. Historia kulturowa lat 500–1000. Nowe ujęcie*, Kraków 2005, p. 111–112.

<sup>55</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 1–4, p. 40; for term δημόσιος cf. *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon...*, p. 338; J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 65–73.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 3–5, p. 40–41.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *Vita Basilii*, LXXXI, p. 268–270.

<sup>58</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 15–17, p. 40.

<sup>59</sup> On Danielis and her possible relations with Basil cf. for instance B. KOUTAVA-DELIVORIA, *Qui était Daniélis?*, B 71.1, 2001, p. 98–109.

<sup>60</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 20–30, p. 42.

acclaimed him because I saw him as a great emperor of the Romans anointed by Christ. Those who are honoured by God ought surely to be by men as well<sup>61</sup>. These words affected the widow. Some time later, when Basil I, due to his illness, stayed in Peloponnesse, Danielis visited him and lavished the Macedonian with gifts like the biblical Queen of Sheba<sup>62</sup>. Basil, therefore, promised the woman that he would make her sovereign of the local areas<sup>63</sup>.

The story, set in the context of a public task involving the hero, illustrates the vital moment for Basil's social position. The hero was initially reluctant to accept presents due to his low status, but after Danielis words, he changed his mind<sup>64</sup>. Consequently, Basil too, became wealthy, both in virtues (ἀρεταῖς) and in the land (κτῆμασι) and money (χρήμασι). In this form, the narration presented further Basil's social advancement – from then on, Macedonian no longer flaunted his humble origins, as he had become wealthy thanks to his gifts. This social and economic advancement was highlighted by his profligacy on his return journey through Macedonia, where the hero had purchased a large amount of land (κτῆματα μεγάλα)<sup>65</sup>.

After returning from a mission in Peloponnesse, Basil faced another Campbellian challenge – a wrestling match. It occurred during a feast organised by the caesar Bardas<sup>66</sup>. Many prominent members of the aristocracy, senators, and Bulgarians attended the meeting<sup>67</sup>. As the feast progressed and the guests became inebriated, the Bulgarian visitors came to the fore:

<sup>61</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 31–33, p. 42.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Kgs 10; A. KALDELLIS, *The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions*, [in:] *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. STEPHENSON, London 2010, p. 61–71.

<sup>63</sup> *Vita Basilii*, LXXIII, p. 250–252.

<sup>64</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 45–54; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 112–114.

<sup>65</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XI, 60–65, p. 46; cf. L. ADONTZ, *L'âge...*, p. 488.

<sup>66</sup> Genesios' account presents a slightly modified version. Genesios uses specialistic terminology for Basil's wrestling hold, he also mentions nothing about the presence of the Bulgarians and presents a different, elaborate version of hero's story after the feast, writing that immediately after the events Basil was spotted by Michael: G. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen...*, p. 96–99.

<sup>67</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 7, p. 46; cf. CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae Libri Duo*, 740, 2–3; 742, 2–3; 743, 2–3, ed. J.J. REISKE, Bonn 1929 [= CSHB], p. 740–743. In *De cerimoniis* Bulgarians invited to feasts are also called 'friends' (φίλοι). I agree with the translational interpretation of *Vita* by I. Ševčenko, who took the word 'friends' in inverted commas, suggesting a pejorative reading of the word used to describe Bardas. Such an interpretation of the word is appropriate given the author's attitude to caesar's character and toward the Bulgarians, who are portrayed as barbarians. It is also worth pointing out that *De cerimoniis*, as a handbook of court ceremonial and court protocol, must have maintained an existing practice according to which personal convictions were irrelevant. On this issue cf. M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek władców bułgarskich u Konstantyna Porfirogenety, Genesiosa i Kontynuatora Teofanesa*, SA 41, 2000, p. 11–12; P. KOMATINA, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio and the Byzantine Historiography of the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century*, 3PBI 56, 2019, p. 40–42.

Since the Bulgarians, who are almost invariably vainglorious braggarts, happened at that time to have with them a Bulgarian who prided himself on the prowess of his body and was an outstanding wrestler (until then, practically no one who had wrestled with him had been able to throw him in a match), they appeared presumptuous past all endurance on account of their man and boasted about him beyond measure<sup>68</sup>.

The Bulgarians were portrayed in the stereotypical, barbaric manner as ‘vain-glorious braggarts’ and ‘presumptuous’ (οἰηματῖαι καὶ καυχηματῖαι)<sup>69</sup>. These characteristics, as opposed to the values God rewards, *i.e.* modesty and temperance, heralded the downfall of self-confident visitors<sup>70</sup>. The reason for their pride was an undefeated wrestler. Theophilus, who represented the pride of Byzantines, could not accept that the Bulgarian was invincible, as it was touching the dignity of the Byzantine state. It caused that he called Basil to the duel, where the honour was at stake<sup>71</sup>.

Placing the story in the specifics of wrestling duel casts light on perceptions of the sport in culture. According to many universal usages of this motive, it is possible to conclude that wrestling was perceived as a competition that allows the hero to show his strength and dominance over the enemy<sup>72</sup>. To these perceptions, the tradition of combat present in accounts of *Genesios* and *Vita* was mythicised<sup>73</sup>. According to the *Porphyrogenitus* account, after dusting the mat with sand, the two wrestlers faced off: *Basil grappled with the Bulgarian; he squeezed him in a stranglehold, lifted him above the table, and threw him down on it with the ease with which one throws a bundle of hay, weightless and inanimate, or a tuft of wool, light and dry*<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 13–18, p. 48.

<sup>69</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 12–13, p. 48; cf. for example C. MESSIS, *Du topos de la barbarie à l'émergence de la curiosité ethnographique: les Bulgares dans les textes byzantins (XI<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, ed. I.A. BILARSKY, Sofia 2018, p. 260–281; methodological remarks on the perception of ‘other’ and stereotypes: T. PELECH, *Obraz „obcego”...*, p. 43–48, 51–53.

<sup>70</sup> The Bible indicates that people who exalt themselves, characterised by arrogance and pride, go against religious morality and therefore face punishment: 1 Sam 16: 5; Isa 13: 11; Mk 7: 20–23; 2 Cor 12: 20; 2 Tim 3: 2.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae*, 4, 5, ed. C.B. HASE, Bonnae 1828, p. 61–62.

<sup>72</sup> B. POLIAKOFF, *Combat Sports in the Ancient World. Competition, Violence, and Culture*, New Haven–London 1987; A. PENJAK, K. HRVOJE, *Sport and Literature: an Overview of the Wrestling Combats in the Early Literary Texts*, *IJHSS* 5.3, 2013, p. 49–55.

<sup>73</sup> Reading this story, it is not difficult to make associations with the biblical scenes of David fighting Goliath (1 Sam 17). Basil, like David, had a humble background, was destined to become a ruler, fought a strong and invincible opponent and together with his enemy were the representatives of his nation: A. MARKOPOULOS, *Constantine VII...*, p. 162–163; G. MORAVCSIK, *Sagen...*, p. 68–70; ruler, even this future one, should dominate his rivals in strength: R.J. LILIE, *Reality and Invention...*, p. 172–174; on *semper victor* cf. J. DUDEK, *Pęknięte zwierciadło – kryzys i odbudowa wizerunku władcy bizantyńskiego od 1056 roku do ok. 1095 roku*, Zielona Góra 2009, p. 13–14.

<sup>74</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 29–34, p. 50.

The referenced passage leaves no doubt about Macedonian's strength at his disposal. This interpretation was inscribed in the reaction of all the present elite, including Bulgarians, who were taken aback when they saw Basil's potency: *The Bulgarians were also awestruck by this superior skill (εὐχερείας) and power (δυνάμειος) and remained dumbfounded*<sup>75</sup>. The future sovereign defeated the opponent, taking after Biblical David, Samson or mythical Heracles<sup>76</sup>. In this way, narration showed that Macedonian and his descendants could defend the honour and safety of his countrymen. In light of this, the legitimising function of this narrative, in the eyes of the audience, was not questionable<sup>77</sup>.

The events surrounding the duel between Basil and the Bulgarian are presented by an outline of the events that determined the protagonist's subsequent promotion to the emperor's entourage. Moreover, this challenge gave the winner great glory throughout the city and made everyone adore him: *Basil's fame began to spread ever wider all over the city, his name was on everyone's lips, and he was the object of everyone's admiring gaze*<sup>78</sup>. The protagonist, who had previously acquired a vast fortune, now gained respect among the city's population and guests at the feast.

The outcome of this duel and the opponent itself is not surprising. As M.J. Leszka pointed out, in the mid of 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Bulgarians were still seen as a threat despite their peaceful relations with Byzantium. The experience of the wars with Simeon and the question of the titularity of the Bulgarian rulers was a blow to the circle of the court elite<sup>79</sup>. In this context, Basil's victory over the Bulgarian suggests the civilisational superiority of the Byzantines over the barbaric neighbours, which is a reference to the Byzantine idea of τάξις denoting a hierarchy of Byzantium over its neighbours<sup>80</sup>. Confirmation of this interpretation of narration can be found

<sup>75</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 35–37, p. 50.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Vita Basilii*, XV, 26, p. 58; cf. C. HEAD, *Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing*, B 50.1, 1980, p. 226–240; M. WHITBY, *George of Pisidia's Presentation of the Emperor Heraclius and his Campaigns*, [in:] *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641). Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. G.J. REININK, B.H. STOLTE, Leuven 2003, p. 157–173; on Heracles in wrestling fight: R. GRAVES, *Mity greckie*, Kraków 2020, p. 454–455.

<sup>77</sup> On the functions of comparisons to Heracles or Alexander the Great in the Byzantine literature cf. for instance: T. PEŁECH, *Kreacja bohatera w Aleksjademie. Zmagania Aleksego I Komnena z żupanem Raszki Wukanem w latach 1093–1094*, PZH 17.2, 2016, p. 59–70.

<sup>78</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XII, 37–39, p. 50; cf. *Vita Basilii*, IV, 31–40, p. 22; T. PEŁECH, *Obraz „obcego”...*, p. 87–95 and n. 380.

<sup>79</sup> M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, M.J. LESZKA, K. MARINOW, *Piotr I Świąty, Car Bułgarski (ok. 912–969). Maria Lekapena, Caryca Bułgarska (ok. 912–963)*, Kraków 2018, p. 238, 243–244; K. MARINOW, *Dziki pęd wszczepiony w piękne drzewo oliwne Nowego Izraela. Bizantyńskie poglądy na miejsce Bułgarów w chrześcijańskiej ekumenie w świetle mowy „Na pokój z Bułgarami”*, [in:] *Bałkany – Bizancjum – Bliższy Wschód. Studia z dziejów kultury wieków średnich*, ed. A. PAROŃ, Wrocław 2022, p. 77–90; for this motive in *Vita* cf. also *Vita Basilii*, IV, 29–34, p. 22.



in a similar narrative by Genesios, who mentioned that Basil, while already a ruler, defeated another representative of the Bulgarians – this time, a direct envoy of the Bulgarian ruler himself<sup>81</sup>. Another addition to this plot interpretation may be the scene in which Basil, being still a child, on his way out of Bulgaria, met the khagan Omurtag, who was delighted with the boy and therefore gave him an apple – a symbol of power over entire *oikumene*<sup>82</sup>. The meaning of this object was explained several centuries earlier by Procopius of Caesarea:

The orb [...] signifies that the whole earth and sea are subject to [emperor], yet he has neither sword nor spear nor any other weapon, but a cross stands upon the globe which he carries, the emblem by which alone he has obtained both his Empire and his victory in war<sup>83</sup>.

Let's return to Basil's adventures in the *Vita* after the wrestling fight. The two subsequent trials were set around similar themes, the background of which is a story about a hunting expedition<sup>84</sup>. In the first of these, the emperor Michael, wanting to kill a hare, which he ultimately failed to do, got off his rebellious and undisciplined horse, which began to run away<sup>85</sup>. A whole crowd of participants pursued the mount but could not do so. It infuriated the *basileus*, who therefore wanted to kill the animal. Basil, who was in the emperor's entourage with his master Theophilus, reacted to Michael's plans. The hero offered to tame this horse, which he finally achieved. In this challenge, Basil, as Genesios explains, was reminiscent of Alexander the Great, who tamed Bucephalus' horse<sup>86</sup>. The protagonist thus again reproduced mythical patterns ingrained in literature and culture, demonstrating important features worthy rulers such as courage (*ἀνδρείας*), cleverness (*εὐφροσύνη*) and wisdom (*σύνεσις*)<sup>87</sup>, for which he received a reward and was promoted to the office of *strator* and later to the office of imperial *protostrator*<sup>88</sup>.

The interpretation of this scene could be linked to the next challenge, which is placed again in the hunting context. In the following chapter, a hunting party

<sup>81</sup> GENESIOS, 4, 40, 3–16, p. 90.

<sup>82</sup> *Vita Basilii*, IV, 29–39, p. 22.

<sup>83</sup> PROCOPIUS, vol. VII, *On Buildings*, 2, 1, 11, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1940 [= LCL, 343], p. 34–35.

<sup>84</sup> In Genesios account author did not mention hunting accidents – he described only accident with horse but presented it in different way: GENESIOS, 4, 26, 24–5, p. 78–79.

<sup>85</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIII, 1–9, p. 50.

<sup>86</sup> *Plutarch's Lives*, Alexander, 6, ed. et trans. B. PERRIN, London–Cambridge 1919 [= LCL, 99], p. 236–239; for radical, possible sexual-meaning interpretation of this narration cf.: C. MESSIS, *Est-elle possible une lecture subversive de la Vie de Basile? Stratégies narratives et objectifs politiques à la cour de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète*, [in:] *Storytelling in Byzantium. Narratological Approaches to Byzantine Texts and Images*, ed. C. MESSIS, M. MULLEN, I. NILSSON, Uppsala 2018, p. 212–215.

<sup>87</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIII, 23–24, p. 52.

<sup>88</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIII, 27–29, p. 52.

occurred during which an enormous wolf jumped out at the participants. According to the literary scheme, the Macedonian was the only person – as befits a great hero – who was not frightened of this animal<sup>89</sup>. Consequently, the protagonist, who was riding his horse ahead of the emperor, using a *bardoukion* – the imperial mace – cut the wolf in half, demonstrating his extraordinary strength<sup>90</sup>. This provoked a lively reaction from his entourage, most notably Bardas, who, seeing Basil as a very ambitious man, received this explanation from the sage Leon: *This one happens to be very man whom I said would become the successor to you all*<sup>91</sup>.

The interpretation of the referenced scenes goes deeper than just a demonstration of strength or cleverness, which indicates the imperial destiny of Basil. Hunting themes were part of the common repertoire of literary treatments in medieval literature, as they were an opportunity to illustrate desirable qualities in military commanders and rulers<sup>92</sup>. This was equally significant in Byzantine culture, where hunting was perceived as similar to war victories and was an essential part of army training<sup>93</sup>. In this context, Macedonian's actions demonstrated his strength as an excellent hunter comparing him biblical Nimrod – legendary hunter and king of Mesopotamia<sup>94</sup>. It also proved that he could lead and defend the state. It was symbolically manifested by his defence of the participants in the hunting party against the wolf. The animal that Basil killed is likewise not coincidental. The wolf in medieval culture was one of the most terrifying creatures, symbolising barbarism, evil, or the devil<sup>95</sup>. The adjective with which the animal is described also acquires additional value – the wolf was described in the superlative form of the adverb “πάμμεγας” as the most “enormous” (πάμμεγεθέστατος<sup>96</sup>). All that helps us to understand also the previous scene in which Michael failed to kill the hare. As A. Kotołowska has shown, in Greek literature, the hare was an animal that often escaped the hunters<sup>97</sup>. Moreover, this hunt outcome is significant in the scene analysed here, showing that Basil could tame and kill animals, including such

<sup>89</sup> Romanus was also described as the only person who was not scared of lion: LIUTPRANDO, *Antapodosis*, 3, 25, 1–47, ed. et trans. P. CHIESA, Milano 2015, p. 196–200; on Romanus Lecapenus and his family reign: S. RUNCIMAN, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1929.

<sup>90</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIV, 8–10, p. 54.

<sup>91</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIV, 22–23, p. 56–57.

<sup>92</sup> J. PYSIAK, *Król i bestia. Cudowne i tajemnicze spotkania królów ze zwierzętami*, PH 91.4, 2000, p. 505–518.

<sup>93</sup> E. PATLAGEAN, *De la Chasse et du Souverain*, DOP 46, 1992, p. 257–263.

<sup>94</sup> Gen. 9: 9–10; *Vita Basilii*, XV, 24–27, p. 58–59.

<sup>95</sup> S. KOBIELUS, *Bestiarium chrześcijańskie. Zwierzęta w symbolice i interpretacji. Starożytność i średniowiecze*, Warszawa 2002, p. 334–339; W. KOPALIŃSKI, *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa 2006, p. 467–470.

<sup>96</sup> A. KOTŁOWSKA, *Zwierzęta w kulturze literackiej Bizantyńczyków – Ἀναβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ...*, Poznań 2013, p. 46–47.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 42–43.

fearsome ones as the giant wolf, symbolising his readiness to save the state from the most challenging threats. In comparison to the backdrop of the Amorian, the Macedonian, by his challenge, displayed radically different features, indicating his vocation as an emperor and consummate commander<sup>98</sup>.

Having been promoted into the circle of the closest imperial entourage, the narrator outlined the character's rapid advancement. Basil was promoted to the office of chamberlain in place of Slav Damianos; he was honoured with the rank of patrician and married *a woman who surpassed almost all the noble ladies in shapeliness of body, beauty, and modesty*<sup>99</sup>. The manuscript, due to a lacuna in the text, did not mention the woman's name. Still, according to the following information and other sources, we can assume it was the "daughter of Inger"<sup>100</sup> – Eudokia Ingerina<sup>101</sup>. This period of Basil's advancement was interspersed with the reprehensible behaviour of Bardas. The caesar, who had given no sign of ill intentions moments earlier, turned into an ambitious man, plotting first against the Damianos to depose him and, following, against Basil and the emperor<sup>102</sup>. This became the catalyst for his assassination, in which, according to *Vita*, Basil played only a secondary role. In Porphyrogenitus' account, his grandfather did participate in the murder of Bardas, but only on Michael's orders.

The *basileus* could not stand caesar's behaviour, who made no secret of his ambitions and was open about his desire to depose the sovereign. As a result, Michael plotted his assassination during preparations for an expedition against the Muslim Crete in 867. The task was assigned to a group led by Symbatios, but the plan could have failed due to their fear. In light of this, Michael gave Basil responsibility for the situation. In the face of anxiety for the emperor's life, the Macedonian carried out the next Campbellian task – he faced and persuaded conspirators to assassinate Bardas<sup>103</sup>. This was the last of a series of challenges the protagonist had to overcome. As a result of manifesting his talents and thanks to God's protection, he had advancement in the position of caesar. Now, a most challenging task awaited him – Basil had made his way to the Campbellian's inner-most cave.

<sup>98</sup> On contrast between Michael and Basil's behaviour later cf. for instance: *Vita Basilii*, XIX, 22–34, p. 76.

<sup>99</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XVI, 23–24, p. 62–63.

<sup>100</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XVI, 25–26, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. LEO VI, 16–21, p. 52; in the Logothete account, Eudokia supposed to be Michael's favourite mistress: SYMEON, 131, 32, 286–292, p. 248. This issue is discussed for instance in: S. TOUGHER, *Leo VI...*, p. 42–67; parts 1–15 in *Vita* have different rhythm of narration than following chapters: T. KAMPIANAKI, *Vita Basilii: The Power of Rhythm in Constructing the Narrative Landscape of Imperial Propaganda*, [in:] *Landscapes of Power. Selected Papers from the XV Oxford University Byzantine Society International Conference*, ed. M. LAU et al., Oxford 2014, p. 182–185.

<sup>102</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XV–XVI, p. 56–62; cf. N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 130–140.

<sup>103</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XVII, p. 62–70.

### Approaching the inner-most cave

The death of Bardas caused a change in the narrative's tone. Since Basil had become the main threat to emperor Michael with his promotion to the office of caesar, the *basileus'* behaviour changed dramatically<sup>104</sup>. Such a narrative turn has an explanation in biblical representations – with the advancement of the Macedonian, the spirit of God left the Byzantine emperor who, like King Saul, immediately started to behave unworthy of the dignity of his office<sup>105</sup>. Further chapters of the text were mainly devoted to the portrait of Michael III, which sidelined the figure of Basil. Such a decision was intended to justify the emperor's death and show that Basil's assumption of the throne resulted from the Will of God<sup>106</sup>.

Basil faced his final challenge in this situation – according to Campbell's scheme – the most difficult one. The hero should put up with Michael's attitude because, according to divine destiny, the Macedonian's patience and humility will ensure that he receives his reward – the imperial crown<sup>107</sup>. The task was not straightforward, as Michael, in the opinion of the narrator of *Vita: dishonoured the gravity of imperial majesty and spent his days in carousing, drinking, wanton lust and shameful tales, and with charioteers, horses and chariots, falling into the madness and frenzy of mind that comes from such pursuits*<sup>108</sup>.

The portrait of the tyrant has been shaped through a series of literary descriptions used to criticise the emperor's actions (*Kaiserkritik*)<sup>109</sup>. The sovereign was portrayed as the antithesis of the benevolent ruler who lost control over the state.

<sup>104</sup> For the long debate over this relation cf.: E. KISLINGER, *Michael III. – Image und Realität*, E 75, 1987, p. 389–400; N.J. LJUBARSKIJ, *Der Kaiser als Mime. Zum Problem der Gestalt des byzantinischen Kaisers Michael III.*, JÖB 37, 1987, p. 39–50; A. KAZHDAN, *A History...*, p. 140–141; S. TOUGHER, *Michael III, and Basil the Macedonian: Just Good Friends?*, [in:] *Desire and Denial in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-first Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997*, ed. L. JAMES, London–New York 2016, p. 149–159; M. GALLINA, *La diffamazione del potere: l'invettiva contro Michele III nella Vita Basilii di Costantino VII*, BISIME 112, 2010, p. 57–90; P. VARONA CODESO, *Miguel III (842–867). Construcción histórica y literaria de un reinado*, Madrid 2010; C. MESSIS, *Est-elle possible une lecture...*; for latest interpretation of Basil's path to power in context of same-sex relations: M. MASTERTON, *Between Byzantine Men...*, p. 67–108; cf. also A. PLESZCZYŃSKI, J. SOBESIAK, K. SZEJGIEC, M. TOMASZEK, P. TYSZKA, *Historia...*, p. 225–228.

<sup>105</sup> 1 Sm 16: 14; cf. *Vita Basilii*, XVIII, 11–15, p. 70; Porphyrogenitus compared Michael III to Saul to emphasise the contrast between the Macedonian and Amorian dynasties: A. MARKOPOULOS, *An Anonymous...*, p. 228.

<sup>106</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XX, p. 80–82; cf. *Theophanes Continuatus*, IV, 30–45, p. 275–300; S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI...*, p. 28–29.

<sup>107</sup> J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 292–296.

<sup>108</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XX, 14–21, p. 80–81.

<sup>109</sup> F. TINNEFELD, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie. Von Prokop bis Niketas Chonates*, Munich 1971; A. CAMERON, *Early Byzantine Kaiserkritik: Two Case Histories*, BMGS 3, 1977, p. 11–17, esp. 15–17; P. MAGDALINO, *Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik*, S 58.2, 1983, p. 326–346.

It corresponds with a view that the head of state's behaviour brings about state decline. This illustrated that the social system had been subverted in favour of a so-called 'carnival order', *i.e.* the condition where social roles and functioning of the community were turned around; in this case, emphasising the tragic and undesirable situation of the state's functioning<sup>110</sup>. As the narrator underlines it: *Michael [...] stray from his duties, so frantically did he indulge in all kinds of lawless deeds, so totally did he debase things divine and so insolently break the laws of both society (πολιτείας) and nature (φύσεως νόμου)*<sup>111</sup>.

Particular attention has been paid to the irreverent attitude of the *basileus* and his entourage towards religion. According to the *Vita*, Michael made a jester named Groullos the new patriarch, equipping him with the garments and insignia of patriarchal authority<sup>112</sup>. The new patriarch's behaviour desecrated the status of the office and thus struck at the dignity of God. An example of this attitude is the scene of the procession that Patriarch Ignatius organised. As we read, the anti-patriarch Groullos led a rival parade and marched on a donkey with his group of people who wore the insignia of metropolitans. The group, equipped with lutes, started to indecently and mockingly sing profane songs. Given this, it is not surprising to see the reaction of Ignatius, who, in response to this provocation, pleaded with God to exact justice on the infidels:

The high priest of God asked who they were and by whom, and what purpose they had been gathered. When he learned the answer, he groaned loudly, mourned for their chief who had been at the root of all this, made a tearful entreaty that God put an end to such blasphemy and outrage and scatter the impious at the grave's mouth, so that things holy not be profaned, nor things secret and revered disparaged<sup>113</sup>.

On another occasion, there was one more provocation in which Groullos impersonated Patriarch Ignatius. The victim of this crime was Emperor Michael's mother, Theodora, who, unaware of anything, had come to receive a blessing as an ideal and pious woman<sup>114</sup>. Mocked, she had discovered the trickery of Michael's entourage and groaned loudly: *Behold evil child (κακὸν τέκνον), God has withdrawn His hand from thee and a reprobate mind was given to thee to do those things which are not convenient*<sup>115</sup>.

Basil attempted to influence the emperor to deal with an issue ruining the sovereign's image and the dignity of religion, but it was pointless. Despite repeated persuasion, the ruler remained unmoved. The head of the state was unconcerned

<sup>110</sup> J. BANASZKIEWICZ, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne Mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wrocław 2002, p. 219–233.

<sup>111</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XX, 11–14, p. 80.

<sup>112</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXI, 15–18, p. 84.

<sup>113</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXII, 16–22, p. 86.

<sup>114</sup> About portrait of an ideal Byzantine woman: T. PEŁECH, *Obraz...*, p. 176–182.

<sup>115</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXIII, 28–30, p. 90; cf. 1 Rom 1: 28.

about the outrage of the people and God himself. The *basileus* demonstrated another trait of the anti-emperor – despite persisting in error, he refused to listen to the good advisers. Michael's insanity led him to attempt to eliminate his sidekick – he had endeavoured to organise an assassination attempt on Basil, but the assassin's horse stumbled<sup>116</sup>. On another occasion, the sovereign, who was compared to Nero (ὥς ὁ Νέρων)<sup>117</sup>, had attempted to replace Basil with a Basilinikos, a brother of eparch Constantine Kapnogenes<sup>118</sup>. Michael put on his new favourite imperial vestments and proclaimed him in Basil's place, but this decision met outrage from the senators<sup>119</sup>.

Michael's drunkenness, sacrilegious attitude, and the associated loss of control over governance in the state caused his death. The carnival order of state's functioning was becoming unbearable *that even David, the meekest of men, would have condoned the drunken conduct of this reprobate. In such circumstances, mercy is not reckoned as long-suffering, but as folly and insensibility*<sup>120</sup>. This situation led to divine punishment and the murder of the emperor *who had lived thus, shamefully and ruinously for himself and affairs of the state, met such an end, worthy of his previous life*<sup>121</sup>. The narrator did not mention the involvement of Basil, demonstrating that the Macedonian family founder gained power without resorting to murdering the Amorian; instead of that, the *Vita* placed the responsibility of assassination on some magistrates and unknown members of the senate<sup>122</sup>.

### Journey's goal and return

Following Michael's death, his immediate successor, Basil, ascended to the throne. This was done legally – power was assumed by the *basileus'* adopted son, whose accession to the throne occurred with the approval of the entire populace<sup>123</sup>. It was the end of the Macedonian's series of trials, and he could now perform the function God called him. Despite Michael's bad behaviour, the story's protagonist did not commit his murder. Instead, he humbly waited for the moment of his exaltation and, in the end, reached a Campbellian journey's goal<sup>124</sup>: *Basil, who up to that*

<sup>116</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXIV, p. 90–96.

<sup>117</sup> On *comparatio* and its functions: T. PEŁECH, *Hannibal ante portas. Interpretacja fabuły z 21 rozdziału II księgi Kroniki polskiej Anonima tzw. Galla*, M.DLK 1.4, 2016, p. 6 and literature therein.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *Theophanes Continuatus*, IV, 44, p. 296–298.

<sup>119</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXV, p. 96–98; R.J.H. JENKINS, *Constantine VII's Portrait of Michael III*, [in:] IDEM, *Studies on Byzantine History of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries*, pars I, London 1970, p. 75; L. JAMES, *Michael III...*, p. 152–153.

<sup>120</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVI, 36–39, p. 102.

<sup>121</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVII, 47–50, p. 108.

<sup>122</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVII, 39–41, p. 108.

<sup>123</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVIII, 1–4, p. 108–110.

<sup>124</sup> J. CAMPBELL, *Bohater...*, p. 126–146.

time had been second in command, was forthwith promoted to supreme rule and was proclaimed sole emperor [...] <sup>125</sup>.

According to Campbell's model, the hero of the mythical journey could return to his previous ordinary life or remain where he had come from. Basil, according to the aim of this part of the narration, devoted to illustrate mainly the hero's path to the throne <sup>126</sup>, remained in the position to which God's Providence had led him <sup>127</sup>. This signals that the hero of the myth has broken with his previous life by rising to the rank of emperor <sup>128</sup>. By becoming a head of the state, Basil separated himself from his last environment; he was now elevated to the heights of the social hierarchy. Despite this change, the new emperor became sensitive to the needs of his humble background, from which he set out on the Campbellian journey. This was emphasised by a narrator who recounted Isaac's prophecy, which heralded Basil's ascension to the throne:

This idea was welcomed by high officials, the entire populace of the capital, the army and by the strategoi, and by all the subjects throughout the entire countryside and in all the cities of the empire. For all wished that the direction of public affairs be entrusted to a man who knew from experience what it meant to occupy a lower station of life; how maltreated the poor were by the rich, how unjustly despoiled by them, and how the lowly were made to "rise up and move" so to speak, and were enslaved by people of their own kin <sup>129</sup>.

## Conclusions – the functions of myth

The above analysis has illustrated that the dynastic myth of the Macedonians, as depicted in the *Vita Basilii*, includes many elements common to the Campbellian universal schema of heroic stories (monomyth). The structure of this tradition was mythicised by the Byzantine system of ideas about imperial power and associated with it narrative solutions derived from the Christian and classical literature. They were used to illustrate Basil's predestination to become emperor and create a model of virtues worthy of following – the New David, Heracles, Alexander or Nimrod. The following pages will focus on functions of the analysed myth for Constantine Porphyrogenitus using selected points of Mircea Eliade's myth theory <sup>130</sup>. Particular attention will be devoted to the role of the *sacrum* and *profanum* factors in narration,

<sup>125</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVIII, 1–2, p. 109.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. P. ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟΣ, *Η εικόνα του αυτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α' στη φιλομακεδονική γραμματεία, 867–959*, ΗΛΛ 40, 1989, p. 309–310.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 126–146, 296–299.

<sup>128</sup> Similar patterns we may find in hagiographical narrations: R. KOSIŃSKI, *Rola czasu w późno-antycznej hagiografii*, [in:] *Człowiek wobec miar i czasu w przeszłości*, ed. P. GUZOWSKI, M. LIEDKE, Kraków 2007, p. 28–31.

<sup>129</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XIX, 40–48, p. 78–79.

<sup>130</sup> M. ELIADE, *Sacrum a profanum...*, p. 97–121.

the myth's function for Macedonian's identity, and its role in explaining Porphyrogenitus's socio-cultural and political position.

The story of Basil's journey to the throne contains many motifs indicating the presence of the *sacrum* in the Macedonian's path to power<sup>131</sup>. This can be summarised by looking at the number of mentions of Divine Providence (πρόνοια) in the analysed material. The narrator mentioned this factor nine times to describe the hero's history before he became ruler<sup>132</sup>. The frequency of the expression in the text is notably lower as it only appears four times, compared to more than twice as many sections that describe Macedonian's reign<sup>133</sup>. This illustrates the belief that divine legitimacy was essential in dynastic myths, thus arguing for the hero's successive extraordinary ascendancy in the social hierarchy and proving exceptional protection from the *sacrum*<sup>134</sup>. This reflects the Byzantine idea that only God's intercession proves the complete legitimacy of the usurpers' assumption of power<sup>135</sup>, who, as emperor, was regarded as his representative on Earth, ruling over a mirror of the Kingdom of Heaven<sup>136</sup>.

The analysed narrative is a coherent heroic myth understood in terms of real events<sup>137</sup>. Their veracity defies the modern concept of 'historical facts' because they are socio-cultural facts constructed by society in its historical and cultural context<sup>138</sup>. Thus, Basil's adventures gained credibility among the audience through the morphology of this "historical narration" (ιστορική δὴγησις)<sup>139</sup>. The aspect

<sup>131</sup> Cf. P. VARONA CODESO, *In Search of...*, p. 183–184.

<sup>132</sup> *Vita Basilii*, II, 30, p. 14; V, 25, p. 24; VII, 10, p. 28; VIII, 30, p. 32; XVI, 16, p. 60; XVIII, 1 and 31, p. 70–72; XXX, 1, p. 116; XXXII, 3, p. 124.

<sup>133</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XLI, 7, p. 148; LXXII, 33 and 53, p. 250; XCIX, 51, p. 324.

<sup>134</sup> For medieval Christians, the miraculous religious world (*sacrum*) and the real world (*profanum*) interpenetrated each other: M. BŁOCH, *Królowie cudotwórcy. Studium na temat nadprzyrodzonego charakteru przypisywanego władzy królewskiej zwłaszcza we Francji i w Anglii*, Warszawa 1998, p. 94; N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 76–77.

<sup>135</sup> J.-P. CHEYNET, *Pouvoirs et Contestations à Byzance, 963–1210*, Paris 1990, p. 177–190; M.J. LESZKA, *Uzurpacje w Cesarstwie Bizantyńskim od połowy IV do XI wieku*, Łódź 1999, p. 17–56.

<sup>136</sup> For this motive in the source cf.: *Vita Basilii*, LXXII, 49–55, p. 250; on the occurrence of these motifs in Byzantium cf. for instance: G. OSTROGORSKY, *The Byzantine Emperor, and Hierarchical World Order*, SEER 35, 1956, p. 1–14; F. DVORNIK, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, vol. I–II, Washington D.C. 1966; A.P. KAZHDAN, "Constantin imaginaire". *Byzantine Legends of the Ninth century about Constantine the Great*, B 57.1, 1987, p. 196–250; S. ESHEL, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= Mme, 113], p. 59–138.

<sup>137</sup> On contrary cf. P. MAGDALINO, *Knowledge in Authority an Authorised History: the Imperial Intellectual Programme of Leo VI and Constantine VII*, [in:] *Authority in Byzantium*, ed. P. ARMSTRONG, New York–London 2013, p. 209: *it was the emperor who decided what was useful and what was true, and he made little real distinction between the documentation and the invention of historical facts.*

<sup>138</sup> Cf. L. VAN HOOFF, *Among Christian Emperors...*, p. 181; G. DAGRON, *Emperor...*, p. 193; P. VARONA CODESO, *In Search of...*, p. 179–180; E. KISLINGER, *Der junge Basileios...*, p. 144.

<sup>139</sup> *Vita Basilii*, titulus, p. 8. For John Skylitzes, for example, all the events presenting Basil's path to power were plausible – this is why he included them in his *Synopsis*: K. BIAŁY, *Krytycyzm literacki Jana Skylitzesa w proimionie do „Zarysu historii”*, PH 106.1, 2015, p. 203–207.



of the convention is also relevant here, as the form of the story determines its truthfulness by legitimising the tale with the tradition established within the genre; to be considered believable by the *Vita* audience, the heroic story had to be stereotyped through literary representations that were rooted in Byzantine culture<sup>140</sup>. These mythical and literary patterns were translated into tradition about Basil. They indicate how the narrative choices, *topoi*, views, and intertextual references embedded in the culture of elites projected the perception of history, including the story of Basil ordered according to the universal principles of heroic stories like setting out, the path of trials or return. The narrations, like, for instance, the challenge of Basil fighting in a wrestling match or taming Michael's horse, were based on classical patterns rooted in the intellectual background of Byzantine elite circles. According to M. Eliade's understanding of myth, it brought mythical moments up to date by signalling that the conduct of contemporary individuals did not deviate from past models. In this way, the legitimising function of these comparisons indicated that contemporary figures behaved similarly to mythical predecessors who were regarded as behaviour models<sup>141</sup>. Evidence of a similar perception of those figures by Porphyrogenitus can be seen in the expression of emperor Michael, who used these words to reassure his mother, Theodora, against losing power to Basil: *You have it all wrong, mother; this man is a artless simpleton; all he has is valour, as did Samson of old, and he is nothing more than some Enoch or Nimrod who has reappeared (ἀναφανείς) in our own day*<sup>142</sup>.

Finally, the analysed myth depicts events that occurred at the start of the Macedonian dynasty (*in illo tempore*). The story – part of a tradition common to the Macedonian's circle – is the subject of a set of beliefs that justify the existence and activity of lineage in power. In the medieval world, histories of this type were created, transformed and cultivated by dynastic circles according to the demand arising from the historical context and related political objectives<sup>143</sup>. In my opinion, it suggests that the dynastic myth's part in *Vita Basilii* may have been formed before or during the early period of the independent reign of Constantine VII (945–959), when the power of the 'purple-borned' emperor may have been in most need of legitimacy<sup>144</sup>; the *basileus*, setting forth beliefs in the predestination and

<sup>140</sup> Cf. J. BANASZKIEWICZ, *Podanie o Piaście...*, p. 17–35; cf. also N. TOBIAS, *Basil I...*, p. 62–68; L. VAN HOOFF, *Among Christian Emperors...*, p. 166.

<sup>141</sup> P. VARONA CODESO, *In Search of...*, p. 183–184; cf. also A. GURIEWICZ, *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, Warszawa 1976, p. 99–100.

<sup>142</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XV, 24–27, p. 58–59.

<sup>143</sup> For Ottonian context cf.: G. ALTHOFF, *Ottonowie. Władza królewska bez państwa*, Warszawa 2009, p. 23.

<sup>144</sup> For this statement, cf., for instance: L. VAN HOOFF, *Among Christian Emperors...*, p. 180–183; cf. C. HOLMES, *Byzantine Political Culture and Compilation Literature in the Tenth and Eleventh centuries: Some Preliminary Inquiries*, DOP 64, 2010, p. 64–68; P. PRASAD, *Splendour, Vigour, and Legitimacy: the Prefaces of the Book of Ceremonies (De ceremoniis) and Byzantine Imperial Theory*, [in:] *The*

perfection of his lineage, was manifesting his identity and was drawing boundaries between his dynasty and other lineages, especially the Lecapenus family<sup>145</sup>. This was exemplified in the scene concerning Michael's death. In the perception of *Vita's* author, eliminating this incompetent emperor was not erroneous behaviour. As the source mentions, his death or removal from the throne reflected the nature of his rule, which may be interpreted as parallel to Constantine's own views on Romanus and his son's reign<sup>146</sup>.

These perceptions should not be only reduced to contemporary terms of political propaganda and manipulative activity but can also be interpreted as the result of the beliefs of Constantine VII. Porphyrogenitus, as a result of his 'birth in the purple', awareness of being the heir to the throne after his father Leo VI, through education and the observation of reality during the time of his political marginalisation, acquired knowledge of the history of his lineage, formed consciousness of his political role and thus developed a sense of his own dynastic identity<sup>147</sup>. The building of *Nea Ekklesia*, or initiating works on a collection of laws called *Basilika*, a panegyric tradition on the Basil passed down, for instance, by Constantine's father Leo VI, proved that Basil's might have been perceived by Porphyrogenitus a few decades later as a time of Byzantine revival, when the state was ruled – as patriarch Photius indicated – by the new Constantine the Great<sup>148</sup>. Porphyrogenitus's perceptions of his hero-grandfather had a decisive influence on his choice of narrative form. As the founder of the family and the person who introduced the family to the throne, he became central to the dynastic identity of his subsequent descendants<sup>149</sup>. The memory of the hero-founder was thus mythicised, but at the

---

*Emperor in the Byzantine World. Papers from the Forty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. TOUGHER, London–New York 2019 [= SPBSP, 21], p. 241–245.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. W.J. BURSZTA, *Antropologia kultury*, Poznań 1998, p. 139.

<sup>146</sup> *Vita Basilii*, XXVII, 47–50.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. F. ZNANIECKI, *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. I, *Wychowujące społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 2001, p. 70–123; W.J. BURSZTA, *Antropologia...*, p. 85; *Vita Basilii*, I, p. 10–12; cf. A. MARKOPOULOS, *Constantine VII...*, p. 168–170; cf. also R. MICHAŁOWSKI, *Restauratio Poloniae...*, p. 463, 472; M. ELIADE, *Sacrum, mit...*, p. 89–125; IDEM, *Sacrum a profanum...*, p. 102–107; M. PROPP, *Nie tylko Bajka*, Warszawa 2000, p. 19; on the role of mimeticism in strengthening identity: C. WULF, *Antropologia. Historia – kultura – filozofia*, Warszawa 2016, p. 24–26; on the role of ancestors in the formation of identity: A. KALDELLIS, *Romanland. Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2019, p. 47; N. LEIDHOLM, *Elite Byzantine Kinship, ca. 950–1204. Blood, Reputation, and the Genos*, Leeds 2019 [= BME], p. 28–35; D. ZUPKA, *Medieval Dynasties in Medieval Studies: A Historiographic Contribution*, FHIS 13.2, 2019, p. 91–92.

<sup>148</sup> *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Homily 10, trans. et comm. C. MANGO, Washington D.C. 1958 [= DOS, 3], p. 189.

<sup>149</sup> It is worth mentioning that the dynastic memory of Basil survived – it was likely in honour of this ruler that his name was given to emperor Basil II (958–1025). On naming children in Byzantium cf. for instance: O.-M. COJOCARU, *Byzantine Childhood. Representations and Experiences of Children in Middle Byzantine Society*, London–New York 2022, p. 78–81.

same time formed the basis of his family's functioning in the social sphere. Therefore, the panegyric genre, which glorifies the person and their merits, could ideally reflect the perception of Basil's rule – his virtues and contribution to the state.

The myth in *Vita* explained that Porphyrogenitus was descended from an eminent family founded by an excellent hero who was a model of virtues worthy of emulation<sup>150</sup>. Basil's behaviour, in the eyes of his grandson, was reminiscent of the warriors and great conquerors of Heracles or Alexander the Great. These comparisons sent a clear *communicatio* to the recipients that only Basil and his descendants could withstand external threats and extend the size of the empire<sup>151</sup> – this is why Porphyrogenitus used comparisons to Heracles, Nimrod or Alexander the Great and emphasised the physical power of the protagonist<sup>152</sup>. This origin of Constantine Porphyrogenitus contrasted very strongly with the 'purple-borned' emperor opinion of Romanus I, whom he faulted for his lack of 'imperial and noble descent' (γένουος Βασιλείου καὶ εὐγενοῦς) and consequent lack of ability to govern the state<sup>153</sup>. The *Vita* expresses the view that only those with an excellent background and upbringing could effectively rule the empire<sup>154</sup>:

The lord Romanus, the emperor, was a common, illiterate fellow and not from among those who have been bred up in the palace and have followed the Roman National customs from the beginning, nor was he of imperial and noble stock, and for this reason, in most actions, he was too arrogant and despotic [...]<sup>155</sup>.

In conclusion, as the analysis of dynastic myth in *Vita Basilii* proposed, this poorly documented tradition could undergo the universalisation of narration according to the proposed Campbell monomyth scheme. In this regard, the study showed *Vita* that the tradition of Basil contained some motifs that Campbell mentioned: the setting out on an expedition combined with the defiance of a challenge, a series of adventures, including approaching the inner-most cave, in which the hero proved his worth for which he finally received the desired reward; and, finally, the motif of return, in which the protagonist, having achieved his position, did not set out to return, which marked his social advancement. Significantly, however, this process was consistent with the cultural codes of the society where the tales circulated. In the case of *Vita*, these perceptions adapted to narration requirements

<sup>150</sup> *Vita Basilii*, I, 17–18, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. conclusions: T. GREENWOOD, *Basil I, Constantine VII and Armenian Literary Tradition in Byzantium*, [in:] *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*, ed. T. SHAWCROSS, I. TOTH, Cambridge 2018, p. 456–466.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. T. PEŁECH, *Kreacja bohatera...*

<sup>153</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, 152, 52, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, <sup>2</sup>Washington D.C. 1967 [= *CFHB*, 1; *DOT*, 1] (cetera: CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS), p. 72.

<sup>154</sup> On the relationship between γένουος and εὐγένεια: N. LEIDHOLM, *Elite Byzantine Kinship...*, p. 13–14.

<sup>155</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, 13, 149–156, p. 72–73.

were deeply connected with ideological perceptions about the role and position of Byzantine emperors, proving the predestination of Basil to become ruler.

At the same time, the analysed part of Macedonian's dynastic myth provides an insight into the dynastic identity system of Constantine Porphyrogenitus: the associated perceptions and significance of his dynasty's past, as well as the resulting legitimacy for his social, cultural and political position in the state. Moreover, it proves confidence in legitimising the 'purple-borned' emperor and his grandfather's rule. The *Vita* manifested a perception of Porphyrogenitus superiority over the other rulers and Byzantine elites, especially the Lecapenus family. The heroic tale of the dynasty's founder served the Macedonians to demonstrate their conviction that only their family was capable of facing Byzantium's internal challenges and extending the frontier of the state and that their authority – established by providence in Basil's time – was inviolable and accepted by the transcendent authority of God.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*, ed. et trans. I. ŠEVČENKO, Berlin–Boston 2011 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 42].
- Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV*, ed. et trans. M. FEATHERSTONE, J. SIGNES CODOÑER, Berlin–Boston 2015 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis*, 53].
- CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington D.C. 1967 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1; *Dumbarton Oaks Texts*, 1].
- CONSTANTINUS PORPHYROGENITUS, *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae Libri Duo*, ed. J.J. REISKE, Bonn 1929 [= *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*].
- GENESIOS, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. et comm. A. KALDELLIS, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= *Byzantina Australiensia*, 11].
- HERODOTUS, ed. et trans. A.D. GODLEY, London–New York 1920 [= *Loeb Classical Library*, 4].
- The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, trans. et comm. C. MANGO, Washington D.C. 1958 [= *Dumbarton Oaks Studies*, 3].
- Iosephi Genesii regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. LESMÜLLER-WERNER, I. THUM, Berolini 1978 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 14].
- Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae*, ed. C.B. HASE, Bonnae 1828.
- LIUTPRANDO, *Antapodosis*, ed. et trans. P. CHIESA, Milano 2015.
- Oraison funèbre de Basile I<sup>er</sup> par son fils Léon VI le Sage*, ed. et trans. G. VENANCE, A. VOGT, I. HAUSER, Rome 1932.
- Plutarch's Lives*, ed. et trans. B. PERRIN, London–Cambridge 1919 [= *Loeb Classical Library*, 99].

- PROCOPIUS, vol. VII, *On Buildings*, trans. H.B. DEWING, London–New York 1940 [= Loeb Classical Library, 343], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-buildings.1940>
- Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, ed. S. WAHLGREN, Berlin 2006 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 41].
- XENOPHON, *Cyropaedia*, vol. I, *Books I–IV*, trans. W. MILLER, Cambridge–London 1983 [= Loeb Classical Library, 51].

## Secondary Literature

- ADONTZ N., *L'âge et l'origine de l'empereur Basile I (867–886)*, "Byzantion" 8, 1933, p. 475–500.
- AGAPITOS P., *I eikóna tou aftokrátora Basileíou A' stē filomakedonikē grammateía, 867–959*, "Ἑλληνικά" / "Hellenika" 40, 1989, p. 285–322.
- AHRWEILER H., *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1975.
- ALEXANDER P.J., *Secular Biography at Byzantium*, "Speculum" 15.2, 1940, p. 194–209, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2849049>
- ALTHOFF G., *Ottonowie. Władza królewska bez państwa*, Warszawa 2009.
- BANASZKIEWICZ J., *Kolorowe włócznie Wizygotów Euryka (Hydatius c. 243)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 94.2, 1987, p. 3–16.
- BANASZKIEWICZ J., *Młodzieńcze gesta Bolesława Krzywoustego, czyli jak się zostaje prawdziwym rycerzem i władcą*, [in:] *Takie sobie średniowieczne bajeczki*, ed. J. BANASZKIEWICZ, Kraków 2013, p. 563–585.
- BANASZKIEWICZ J., *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu. Studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi*, Warszawa 2010.
- BANASZKIEWICZ J., *Polskie dzieje bajeczne Mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wrocław 2002.
- BIAŁY K., *Krytycyzm literacki Jana Skylitza w prooimionie do „Zarysu historii”*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 106.1, 2015, p. 203–216.
- BIERNAT T., *Mit polityczny*, Warszawa 1989.
- BLOCH M., *Królowie cudotwórcy. Studium na temat nadprzyrodzonego charakteru przypisywanego władzy królewskiej zwłaszcza we Francji i w Anglii*, Warszawa 1998.
- BRUBAKER L., *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 1992.
- BRZOWSKA Z.A., LESZKA M.J., MARINOW K., *Piotr I Święty, Car Bułgarski (ok. 912–969). Maria Lekapena, Caryca Bułgarska (ok. 912–963)*, Kraków 2018.
- BUCHTHAL H., *The Exaltation of David*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes" 37, 1974, p. 300–333, <https://doi.org/10.2307/750846>
- BURSZTA W.J., *Antropologia kultury*, Poznań 1998.
- BURY J.B., *The Imperial Administrative System of the Ninth century – with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos*, Oxford 1911.
- The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, vol. I–II, ed. J. DIGGLE, B.L. FRASER, P. JAMES, O.B. SIMKIM, A.A. THOMPSON, S.J. WESTRIPP, Cambridge 2021.
- CAMERON A., *Early Byzantine Kaiserkritik: Two Case Histories*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 3, 1977, p. 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1179/030701377806931843>
- CAMPBELL J., *Bohater o tysiącu twarzy*, Kraków 2013.

- CAMPBELL J., *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton 1949.
- CARILE M.C., *The Vision of the Palace of the Byzantine Emperors as a Heavenly Jerusalem*, Spoleto 2012.
- CHARTIER R., *Le monde comme représentation*, "Annales: histoire, sciences sociales" 44.6, 1989, p. 1505–1520, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ahess.1989.283667>
- CHEYNET J.-P., *Pouvoirs et Contestations à Byzance, 963–1210*, Paris 1990.
- CHURCHILL J., *Depictions of Power in the Imperial Art of the Early Macedonian Emperors. Basil I, Leo VI and Alexander* (doctoral thesis, University of Sussex 2016).
- COJOCARU O.-M., *Byzantine Childhood. Representations and Experiences of Children in Middle Byzantine Society*, London–New York 2022, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429318498>
- DAGRON G., *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2007.
- DUDEK J., *Pęknięte zwierciadło – kryzys i odbudowa wizerunku władcy bizantyńskiego od 1056 roku do ok. 1095 roku*, Zielona Góra 2009.
- DVORNIK F., *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy*, vol. I–II, Washington D.C. 1966.
- ELIADE M., *Sacrum a profanum. O istocie sfery religijnej*, Warszawa 2022.
- ELIADE M., *Sacrum, mit, historia. Wybór esejów*, Warszawa 1970.
- ESHEL S., *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, Leiden–Boston 2018 [= *The Medieval Mediterranean*, 113], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004363830>
- FLUSIN B., *Construire une Nouvelle Jérusalem: Constantinople et les reliques*, [in:] *L'Orient dans l'histoire religieuse de l'Europe. L'invention des origines*, ed. A. MOEZZI, J. SCHEID, Paris 2000, p. 51–70, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.BEHE-EB.4.00929>
- GALLINA M., *La diffamazione del potere: l'invettiva contro Michele III nella Vita Basilii di Costantino VII*, "Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo" 112, 2010, p. 57–90.
- GEERTZ C., *Interpretacje kultur. Wybrane eseje*, Kraków 2005.
- GRABOWSKI A., *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship. Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany*, Amsterdam 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048538737>
- GRAVES R., *Mity greckie*, Kraków 2020.
- GREENWOOD T., *Basil I, Constantine VII and Armenian Literary Tradition in Byzantium*, [in:] *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*, ed. T. SHAWCROSS, I. TOTH, Cambridge 2018, p. 447–466, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108289993.023>
- GREER S. [rec.:], *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship: Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany*. By Antoni Grabowski. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam. 2018, "Early Medieval Europe" 29.2, 2021, p. 268–271, <https://doi.org/10.1111/emed.12461>
- GURIEWICZ A., *Kategorie kultury średniowiecznej*, Warszawa 1976.
- HALDON J., STOURAITIS Y., *Introduction. The Ideology of Identities and the Identity of Ideologies*, [in:] *Identities and Ideologies in the Medieval East Roman World*, ed. Y. STOURAITIS, Edinburgh 2022 [= *Edinburgh Byzantine Studies*], p. 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474493642-004>
- HEAD C., *Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing*, "Byzantion" 50.1, 1980, p. 226–240.
- HOLMES C., *Byzantine Political Culture and Compilation Literature in the Tenth and Eleventh centuries: Some Preliminary Inquiries*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 64, 2010, p. 55–80.
- Identities and Ideologies in the Medieval East Roman World*, ed. Y. STOURAITIS, Edinburgh 2022 [= *Edinburgh Byzantine Studies*].

- Identities. Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium "Days of Justinian I", Skopje, 15–16 November 2019*, ed. M.B. PANOV, Skopje 2020.
- JENKINS R.J.H., *The Classical Background of the Scriptorum Post Theophanem*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 8, 1954, p. 11–30, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291061>
- JENKINS R.J.H., *Constantine VII's Portrait of Michael III*, [in:] R.J.K. JENKINS, *Studies on Byzantine History of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries*, pars I, London 1970, p. 71–77.
- JUREWICZ O., *Historia literatury bizantyńskiej*, Wrocław 2007.
- KALDELLIS A., *Romanland. Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2019, <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674239685>
- KALDELLIS A., *The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions*, [in:] *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. STEPHENSON, London 2010, p. 61–71.
- KAMPANAKI T., *Vita Basilii: The Power of Rhythm in Constructing the Narrative Landscape of Imperial Propaganda*, [in:] *Landscapes of Power. Selected Papers from the XV Oxford University Byzantine Society International Conference*, ed. M. LAU et al., Oxford 2014, p. 179–194.
- KAPLAN M., *Konstantynopol a gospodarka miejska*, [in:] *Świat Bizancjum*, vol. II, *Cesarstwo Bizantyńskie 641–1204*, ed. J.-P. CHEYNET, Kraków 2011, p. 283–324.
- KASPERSKI R., *Model trójdzielny Dumézila, problem legitymizacji sukcesji oraz Getica Jordanesa*, "Rocznik Antropologii Historii" 11, 2018, p. 159–172.
- KAZHDAN A.P., *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, Athens 2006.
- KAZHDAN A.P., "Constantin imaginaire". *Byzantine Legends of the Ninth century about Constantine the Great*, "Byzantion" 57.1, 1987, p. 196–250.
- KISLINGER E., *Der junge Basileios I. und die Bulgaren*, "Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik" 30, 1981, p. 137–150.
- KISLINGER E., *Michael III. – Image und Realität*, "Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum" 75, 1987, p. 389–400.
- KOBIELUS S., *Bestiariusz chrześcijański. Zwierzęta w symbolice i interpretacji. Starożytność i średniowiecze*, Warszawa 2002.
- KOMATINA P., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio and the Byzantine Historiography of the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century*, "Зборник Радова Византолошког Института"/"Zbornik Radova Vizantologskog Instituta" 56, 2019, p. 39–68, <https://doi.org/10.2298/ZRV11956039K>
- KOPALIŃSKI W., *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa 2006.
- KOSIŃSKI R., *Rola czasu w późnoantycznej hagiografii*, [in:] *Człowiek wobec miar i czasu w przeszłości*, ed. P. GUZOWSKI, M. LIEDKE, Kraków 2007, p. 27–35.
- KOTŁOWSKA A., *Zwierzęta w kulturze literackiej Bizantyńczyków – Αναβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινά...*, Poznań 2013.
- KOUTAVA-DELIVORIA B., *Qui était Daniélis?*, "Byzantion" 71.1, 2001, p. 98–109.
- LE GOFF J., *Święty Ludwik*, Kraków 2001.
- LEIDHOLM N., *Elite Byzantine Kinship, ca. 950–1204. Blood, Reputation, and the Genos*, Leeds 2019 [= Beyond Medieval Europe], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781641890298>
- LEMERLE P., *Le premier humanisme byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1971.
- LESZKA M.J., *Uzurpacje w Cesarstwie Bizantyńskim od połowy IV do XI wieku*, Łódź 1999.

- LESZKA M.J., *Wizerunek władców bułgarskich u Konstantyna Porfirogenety, Genesisiosa i Kontynuatora Teofanesa*, "Slavia Antiqua" 41, 2000, p. 9–26.
- LILIE R.J., *Reality and Invention: Reflections on Byzantine Historiography*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 68, 2014, p. 157–210.
- LJUBARSKIJ J., *SO Debate: Quellenforschung And/Or Literary Criticism. Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings*, "Symbolae Osloenses" 73.1, 1998, p. 5–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679808590934>
- LJUBARSKIJ N.J., *Der Kaiser als Mime. Zum Problem der Gestalt des byzantinischen Kaisers Michael III.*, "Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik" 37, 1987, p. 39–50.
- MAGDALINO P., *Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik*, "Speculum" 58.2, 1983, p. 326–346, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2848257>
- MAGDALINO P., *Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah*, "Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik" 38, 1988, p. 193–196.
- MAGDALINO P., *Knowledge in Authority an Authorised History: the Imperial Intellectual Programme of Leo VI and Constantine VII*, [in:] *Authority in Byzantium*, ed. P. ARMSTRONG, New York–London 2013, p. 187–209.
- MARINOW K., *Dziki pęd wszczepiony w piękne drzewo oliwne Nowego Izraela. Bizantyńskie poglądy na miejsce Bułgarów w chrześcijańskiej ekumenie w świetle mowy „Na pokój z Bułgarami”*, [in:] *Balkany – Bizancjum – Bliski Wschód. Studia z dziejów kultury wieków średnich*, ed. A. PAROŃ, Wrocław 2022, p. 77–90.
- MARKOPOULOS A., *An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 46, 1992, p. 225–232, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291655>
- MARKOPOULOS A., *Constantine VII and the Macedonian Dynasty in Contemporary Historiography. Appendix: Three Letters from R.J.H. Jenkins to G. Moravcsik*, [in:] *Center, Province and Periphery in the Age of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos*, ed. N. GAUL, V. MENZE, C. BÁLINT, Weisbaden 2018, p. 22–38.
- MARKOPOULOS A., *From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 102.2, 2005, p. 697–715, <https://doi.org/10.1515/byzs.2009.017>
- MASTERSON M., *Between Byzantine Men. Desire, Homosexuality, and Brotherhood in the Medieval Empire*, London–New York 2022, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351135238>
- MESSIS C., *Du topos de la barbarie à l'émergence de la curiosité ethnographique: les Bulgares dans les textes byzantins (XI<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, [in:] *Laudator temporis acti. Studia in memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, ed. I.A. BILLARSKY, Sofia 2018, p. 260–281.
- MESSIS C., *Est-elle possible une lecture subversive de la Vie de Basile? Stratégies narratives et objectifs politiques à la cour de Constantin VII Porphyrogénète*, [in:] *Storytelling in Byzantium. Narratological Approaches to Byzantine Texts and Images*, ed. C. MESSIS, M. MULLET, I. NILSSON, Uppsala 2018, p. 201–222.
- MESSIS C., PAPAIOANNOU S., *Orality and Textuality (with an Appendix on the Byzantine Conceptions)*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*, ed. S. PAPAIOANNOU, Oxford 2021, p. 241–272, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199351763.013.23>
- MICHAŁOWSKI R., *Restauratio Poloniae w ideologii dynastycznej Galla Anonima*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 76.3, 1985, p. 457–480.
- MIELETINSKI E., *Poetyka mitu*, Warszawa 1981.



- MORAVCSIK G., *Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 15, 1961, p. 59–126, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291176>
- OSTROGORSKY G., *The Byzantine Emperor, and Hierarchical World Order*, "The Slavonic and East European Review" 35, 1956, p. 1–14.
- PATLAGEAN E., *De la Chasse et du Souverain*, "Dumbarton Oaks Papers" 46, 1992, p. 257–263, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1291658>
- PEŁECH T., *Hannibal ante portas. Interpretacja fabuły z 21 rozdziału III księgi Kroniki polskiej Anonima tzw. Galla*, "Meluzyna. Dawna Literatura i Kultura" 1.4, 2016, p. 5–13, <https://doi.org/10.18276/me.2016.1-01>
- PEŁECH T., *Kreacja bohatera w Aleksjadzcie. Zmagania Aleksego I Komnena z żupanem Raszki Wukanem w latach 1093–1094*, "Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne" 17.2, 2016, p. 59–70.
- PEŁECH T., *Obraz „obcego” w Aleksjadzcie Anny Komneny. Przypadek Normanów*, Wrocław 2016.
- PENJAK A., HRVOJE K., *Sport and Literature: an Overview of the Wrestling Combats in the Early Literary Texts*, "International Journal of Humanities and Social Science" 5.3, 2013, p. 49–55.
- PLESZCZYŃSKI A., SOBESIAK J., SZEJGIEC K., TOMASZEK M., TYSZKA P., *Historia Communitatem Facit. Struktura narracji tworzących tożsamości grupowe w średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2016.
- POLIAKOFF B., *Combat Sports in the Ancient World. Competition, Violence, and Culture*, New Haven–London 1987.
- PRASAD P., *Splendour, Vigour, and Legitimacy: the Prefaces of the Book of Ceremonies (De ceremoniis) and Byzantine Imperial Theory*, [in:] *The Emperor in the Byzantine World. Papers from the Forty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. S. TOUGHER, London–New York 2019 [= Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies Publications, 21], p. 235–247, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429060984-13>
- PROPP M., *Nie tylko Bajka*, Warszawa 2000.
- PYSIAK J., *Król i bestia. Cudowne i tajemnicze spotkania królów ze zwierzętami*, "Przegląd Historyczny" 91.4, 2000, p. 505–518.
- RAPP C., *Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium*, [in:] *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, R. NELSON, Washington D.C. 2010 [= Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia, 2], p. 175–198.
- RIEDEL M., *Leo VI and the Transformation of Byzantine Christian Identity. Writings of an Unexpected Emperor*, Cambridge 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781107281967>
- ROACH L., [rec.:] Antoni Grabowski, *The Construction of Ottonian Kingship: Narratives and Myth in Tenth-Century Germany. (Intellectual and Political History.)* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018, "Speculum" 95.4, 2020, p. 1175–1176, <https://doi.org/10.1086/710741>
- The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, ed. M.E. STEWART, D.A. PARNELL, C. WHATELEY, London–New York 2022.
- ROUX J.-P., *Król. Mity i symbole*, Warszawa 1998.
- RUNCIMAN S., *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1929.
- SAVAGE M., *Building Heavenly Jerusalem: Thoughts on Imperial and Aristocratic Construction in Constantinople in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries*, [in:] *Byzantium in Dialogue with the Mediterranean. History and Heritage*, ed. D. SLOOTJES, M. VERHOEVEN, Leiden–Boston 2019 [= The Medieval Mediterranean, 116], p. 67–90, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004393585\\_006](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004393585_006)

- SHEPARD J., *The Ruler as Instructor, Pastor and Wise: Leo VI of Byzantium and Symeon of Bulgaria*, [in:] *Alfred the Great. Papers from the Eleventh-century Conferences*, ed. T. REUTER, London–New York 2003, p. 339–358.
- SMITH J.M.H., *Europa po Rzymie. Historia kulturowa lat 500–1000. Nowe ujęcie*, Kraków 2005.
- STEINSLAND G., *Introduction. Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, [in:] *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages. Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, Orkney and the Faeroes*, ed. G. STEINSLAND, J.V. SIGURDSSON, J.E. REKDAL, I.B. BEUERMANN, Leiden–Boston 2011 [= *The Northern World*, 52], p. 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004205062.i-408.7>
- STRENSKY I., *Four Theories of Myth in Twentieth century History*, Iowa City 1987.
- SZCZEPANOWICZ B., *Święte drzewa w Biblii, kulturze, legendzie i sztuce*, Poznań 2020.
- TINNEFELD F., *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie. Von Prokop bis Nike-tas Choinates*, Munich 1971.
- TOBIAS N., *Basil I (867–886), the Founder of the Macedonian Dynasty. A Study of the Political and Military History of the Byzantine Empire in the Ninth century* (doctoral thesis, Rutgers University 1969; published: Lewiston 2007).
- TOPOLSKI J., *Historiografia jako tworzenie mitów i walka z nimi*, [in:] *Ideologie, poglądy mity w dzie-jach Polski i Europy XIX i XX wieku*, ed. J. TOPOLSKI, W. MOLIĆ, K. MAKOWSKI, Poznań 1991, p. 243–254.
- TOUGHER S., *After Iconoclasm (850–886)*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. J. SHEPARD, Cambridge 2018, p. 292–304, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139055994.012>
- TOUGHER S., *Michael III, and Basil the Macedonian: Just Good Friends?*, [in:] *Desire and Denial in Byz-antium. Papers from the Thirty-first Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1997*, ed. L. JAMES, London–New York 2016, p. 149–159.
- TOUGHER S., *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1997 [= *The Medieval Mediterranean*, 15], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004477582>
- TOYNBEE A., *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, New York–Toronto 1973.
- TREADGOLD W., *The Lost Secret History of Nicetas the Paphlagonian*, [in:] *The Steppe Lands and the World beyond them. Studies in Honor of Victor Spinei on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. F. CURTA, B.-P. MALEON, Iași 2013, p. 645–676.
- TREADGOLD W., *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137280862>
- TRZCIŃSKI Ł., *Mit bohaterski w perspektywie antropologii filozoficznej i kulturowej*, Kraków 2006.
- VAN HOOFF L., *Among Christian Emperors. The Vita Basilii by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus*, "Journal of Eastern Christian Studies" 54, 2002, p. 163–183, <https://doi.org/10.2143/JECS.54.3.1073>
- VARONA CODESO P., *Contribución al problema de la cronología y las fuentes de la Vita Basilii*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 102.2, 2009, p. 739–775, <https://doi.org/10.1515/byzs.2009.020>
- VARONA CODESO P., *In Search of a Byzantine Narrative Canon: the Vita Basilii as an Unconventional Work*, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies" 39.2, 2015, p. 173–190, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307013100015330>
- VARONA CODESO P., *Miguel III (842–867). Construcción histórica y literaria de un reinado*, Madrid 2010.
- WHITBY M., *George of Pisidia's Presentation of the Emperor Heraclius and his Campaigns*, [in:] *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641). Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. G.J. REININK, B.H. STOLTE, Leuven 2003, p. 157–173.

WRZOSEK W., *Historia – kultura – metafora. O myśleniu historycznym*, Wrocław 2022.

WULF C., *Antropologia. Historia – kultura – filozofia*, Warszawa 2016.

ZNANIECKI F., *Socjologia wychowania*, vol. I, *Wychowujące społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 2001.


ZUPKA D., *Medieval Dynasties in Medieval Studies: A Historiographic Contribution*, “Forum Historiae” 13.2, 2019, p. 89–101, <https://doi.org/10.31577/forhist.2019.13.2.6>

**Łukasz Kubicki**

University of Warsaw  
Faculty of History  
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28  
00-927 Warszawa, Polska/Poland  
[lukasz.kubicki1233@gmail.com](mailto:lukasz.kubicki1233@gmail.com)



Jasminka Kuzmanovska (Skopje)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5769-3607>

## TRACES OF PRE-GREEK LINGUISTICS SUBSTRATUM IN EARLY BYZANTINE TOPONYMY: LISTS RELATED TO MACEDONIA AND THESSALY IN PROCOPIUS' *BUILDINGS*

**Abstract.** In our contribution, we will focus on the traces of the old Pre-Greek linguistics substratum in certain names of forts from Justinian's building program presented in the Procopius' *Buildings* (Περὶ κτισμάτων, *De aedificiis*). Actually, the Book IV of the panegyric features a description of fortifications, built and restored by the Emperor Justinian in the European territories. This is the most detailed book in the work, written with great care and completeness, most likely due to the fact that the danger of barbarian incursions in these areas was the greatest. In the paper we will present certain examples of place names which obviously contain remnants of relict languages as very important and valuable toponomastic evidence, typical for the broader area. We are going to inspect the etymology of the place names by Procopius attested as Λάρισσα, Γόμφοι, Λόσσοнос, Πέλεκον, Χάραδρος and Βάβαç. If possible, we will comparatively examine testimonies from other ancient and medieval sources, as well as epigraphic and archeological data for each name.

**Keywords:** Procopius, *De aedificiis*, *Buildings*, fortress, Macedonia, Thessaly, place names, Pre-Greek substrate, etymology

Inspired by the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine studies in Venice and Padua themed *Byzantium – Bridge between Worlds*, we decided to refer to certain linguistic features we have noticed in toponyms recorded in Procopius' *Buildings*. These place names were attested in the transitional period of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, in a very unspecific work, written by the author who also is rather controversial. This significant time is a turning point in terms of historical relations between the so-called East and West, as well as the old and the inevitably approaching new, which in turn affects the language in a broader sense and on many levels. The source we will present in our contribution through the lens of toponymy, Procopius' *Buildings*, is also a reflection of this transitional era, and it is ambiguous as well, because in the 6<sup>th</sup> century panegyrics were not a common form of Byzantine

literature<sup>1</sup>. Regardless of motivation which led to the creation of this work, its style, and its structure, it is still unanimously accepted as a first-class source for geography, topography, and art from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the segment of place names enumerated in the Book IV, in the so-called κατάλογος. Of course, rhetorical descriptions and commonplaces are apparent in certain parts of Procopius' panegyric. Still, there is no doubt that the author had access to official documents from the state archives, reports of provincial administrators, authentic official registers, and maps or lists of still unrealized state projects<sup>2</sup>. In this sense, we fully agree with those researchers who claim that the catalogue from the Book IV, represents the only valuable and authentic testimony about the buildings, toponymy, and language of the Balkan Peninsula in the period<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, we must also take into account the challenging philology of the text (mostly embodied by many hapaxes – names of fortresses uniquely attested there) and the fact that some of the names are unclear and written in wrong or distorted spelling. In terms of language, it is an undeniable fact that in the time of Justinian things were reverted to what had been common practice in the administration of the Early Empire: Latin language to be used in the West and Greek in the East. As a result of Justinian's conquest, Latin language, in regard to territories and population, in certain way has been reintroduced to the Empire, which once again became truly bilingual. This bilingualism is largely confirmed by epigraphy, on the inscriptions, especially in the areas we are writing about in this paper<sup>4</sup>. Also, this bilingualism, reflecting Justinian's transitional era, is rather vivid in the text of *Buildings* on many occasions, and it is most noticeable on the presentation of long lists of fortresses. Actually, it is obvious that the Greek from the lists in which the names of the forts were composed, is a transcription from the Latin original, which was phonetically modified itself and also acquired some regional peculiarities in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, many place names in Macedonia and Thessaly show even deeper intertwining of languages, especially in the segment

<sup>1</sup> PROCOPIUS, *Buildings, History of the Wars, and Secret History*, ed. H.B. DEWING, G. DOWNEY, Cambridge Massachusetts 1914–1940 [= LCL, 343] (cetera: PROCOPIUS). We also consulted the edition: *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. IV, *De aedificiis*, vol. II, ed. J. HAURY, corr. G. WIRTH, Leipzig 1963–1964 [= BSGR].

<sup>2</sup> P. SKOK, *De l'importance des listes toponomastiques de Procope pour la connaissance de la latinite balkanique*, RIEB 1(5), 1937, p. 47–58; G. DOWNEY, *The Composition of Procopius, De Aedificiis*, TPAPA 78, 1947, p. 173–174.

<sup>3</sup> A. CAMERON, *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, Berkeley 1985 [= TCH, 10], p. 222; V. BEŠEVILIEV, *Zur Deutung der Kastellnamen in Prokops werk "De aedificiis"*, Amsterdam 1970, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> On the subject of bilingualism in the period of Late antiquity very valuable remarks are presented in: V. NEDELJKOVIĆ, *Justinian's πάτριος φωνή*, Balc 47, 2016, p. 55–73; IDEM, *Castles made of sand? Balkan Latin from Petar Skok to J.N. Adams*, [in:] *The Danubian Lands between the Black, Aegean and Adriatic Seas (7<sup>th</sup> Century BC – 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD). Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities (Belgrade 17–21 September 2013)*, ed. G.R. TSETSKHLADZE, A. AVRAM, J. HARGRAVE, Belgrade 2015, p. 323–328.

morphology, but also in certain linguistic features of semantics. Our closer examination of the Macedonian list has shown, for example, that there is a group of fortresses like: Σίκλαι, Φασκίαι, Κουμαρκίανα, and so on, which clearly confirm the influence that Latin (especially Vulgar Latin) exerted on the Greek vocabulary, both medieval and contemporary. It is true that this process started at a later date and was far less pervasive than the reverse influence of Greek upon Latin in the previous period, but it is still evident, especially in provinces where the Greek language has been dominant. The most important fact about this group of toponyms is that the words at their roots, through the later developed Byzantine form, had an adverse effect on Latin-derived Romance languages. Moreover, they were a crucial linguistic mediator for the entry of Romanisms in the Slavic languages of the Balkans. On this very important and complex linguistic process, we have spoken and written in other places and texts. In this paper we just wanted to briefly outline them as a linguistic expression of the unbreakable ties between East and West by the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Byzantine era and later<sup>5</sup>. Based on linguistic material from the sources, we can rationally conclude that these changes to the language are primarily a reflection of many other processes in society and, above all, of the ambiguity of identity and fluidity of political alliances in late antiquity.

From the exceedingly rich and complex toponymic testimony of Procopius' *Buildings*, we will focus on certain examples of place names from the Macedonian list, and of Thessaly as well, which clearly reflect traces of old Pre-Greek linguistic layers in early Byzantine toponymy. Technically speaking, Procopius presents Justinian's building activity in Thessaly in two places. Firstly, at the beginning of the Book IV, where the author describes the restoration undertaken in very old and famous cities. Although he initially announced that the remaining numerous forts restored in Thessaly will be included in the same list which concerns the territory of Macedonia, he enumerated only seven on the separate list, immediately after the Macedonian one<sup>6</sup>. So, we practically, have two lists in the text: one named Ἐπὶ Μακεδονίας and the other one named Ἀνανεώθη καὶ ἐπὶ Θεσσαλίας φρούρια τάδε<sup>7</sup>.

In the paper, we will point out only the most illustrative examples which clearly represent old substrate layers in Procopius' toponymy, which are still visible and perceptible in the period of Late antiquity and later on. As a matter of fact, the most ancient toponyms from Thessaly, which clearly reflect old, Pre-Greek linguistic

<sup>5</sup> J. КУЗМАНОВСКА, *Φασκίαι – топоним латинског порекла у македонском списку код Прокопија (о неким лексичким рефлексима у романским и словенским језицима)*, [in:] *Exegi topimentum aere pereptius* (Зборник во чест на Елена Колева, Љубинка Басотова и Даница Чадиковска, по повод 85 години од нивното раѓање), Sys посебно издание 5, 2019, p. 92–106, [https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5\\_cel.pdf](https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5_cel.pdf) [31 V 2023].

<sup>6</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 15, p. 244

<sup>7</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 4, 3, p. 255.

layer are mentioned in textual part, at the beginning of the Book IV as Λάρισσα (*Larissa*), Τρίκα (*Trika*), Φάρσαλος (*Pharsalos*), Γόμφοι (*Gomphoi*) and so on. Researching Procopius' place names, we realized that toponyms (in this particular source it is primarily fortifications), were evidently named according to physical/geographical characteristics of the terrain and they certainly belong to the group of so-called *oldest names*, which have also been classified as *natural names*<sup>8</sup>. Namely, this principle of establishing the names of the settlements, according to the nature of the landscape or closely connected to life and occupation of the people of a certain area, is the oldest and quite naturally reflects the oldest types of naming<sup>9</sup>. This is the main reason why their name has remained unchanged to this day.

The most typical example among place names from Thessaly is the city of Λάρισσα (*Larissa*)<sup>10</sup>. In Procopius' *Buildings* we find information related to the restoration of the city walls that were badly damaged *in recent times* (whereby Procopius most likely refers to the invasions of the Ostrogoths at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century). The spelling in which the name is recorded in ancient sources is Λάρισ(σ)α, with variation of a simple and doubled sibilant, in feminine singular. It is obvious that this toponym cannot be reliably explained by means of the Greek language. According to R. Katičić, names with this suffix -σσ, are more common than those with the suffix -vθ<sup>11</sup>. It is also very indicative that many other places in Thessaly, Argolis, Attica, on the islands of Crete and Lesbos, but also in Syria and Lydia were bearing the same name, as Stephen of Byzantium testifies under the plural entry: Λάρισα πόλεις ι' in his lexicon<sup>12</sup>. This testimony probably supports the thesis set forth by P. Kretschmer and later developed by other researchers of the Pre-Greek substratum<sup>13</sup>. According to him, Pre-Greek language, geographically present in the Aegean and southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, represented by toponyms with the above-mentioned suffixes, is very closely related to the languages in Asia Minor (Phrygian, Lydian) and older linguistic layers of Italy<sup>14</sup>. Bulgarian linguist V. Georgiev believes that the name Larissa comes from the Indo-European base \**lawarwentyā* 'stone', which imply that the word is, according to

<sup>8</sup> About so called *Naturnamen* in: *Namenforschung. Name Studies. Les noms propres. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik. International Handbook of Onomastics. Manuel international d'onomastique*, vol. I–III, ed. E. EICHLER, G. HILTY, H. LÖFFNER, H. STEGER, L. ZGUSTA, Berlin–New York 1995–1996, p. 702.

<sup>9</sup> П.Хр. Илиевски, *Балканолошки лингвистички студии со посебен осврт на историскиот развој на македонскиот јазик*, Скопје 1988, p. 476.

<sup>10</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 9, p. 243.

<sup>11</sup> R. KATIČIĆ, *Ancient Languages of the Balkans*, Michigan 1976, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> STEPHAN VON BYZANCE, *Ethnika Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt*, rec. A. MEINEKII, Graz 1958 (cetera: STEPHANUS), p. 412.

<sup>13</sup> For a longer period Pre-Greek language material has been interpreted in various ways. Despite the fact that from the variety of research theories, only the Anatolian, Pelasgian and Mediterranean theory survived, we believe that each individual interpretation of the Pre-Greek substrate in its own way improved our knowledge on the subject.

<sup>14</sup> P. KRETSCHMER, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen 1896, p. 401.

his famous Pelasgian theory of old, Pelasgian origin<sup>15</sup>. Milan Budimir, who, referring to Strabo's testimony that *all cities bearing this name in the Balkan-Anatolian region are located in the plains*, suggests a connection of the name with Hesychius' glossa λωρυμνόν 'deepest, lowest', while pointing to the well-known Indo-European vocal alternation *ā/ō*<sup>16</sup>. The geographical location of Thessalian Larissa fully corresponds to this interpretation, and, more importantly, equalization Λάρυμνα ἢ Λάρισσα in the appendix of *Urbium regionum fluminum et. nomina immutata* confirmed prof. Budimir's point of view<sup>17</sup>. Worth mentioning is another, more recent etymology, which seems to be the most likely, according to which: Λάρισσα < \*Λάρικ-ια, from the name for the 'yew tree' λάριξ, λάρικος, ἦ, which, also, confirms Paleo-Balkan origin of the name<sup>18</sup>. Non-Greek origin of the word is, also, as we have seen, implicitly confirmed by Stephen of Byzantium and actually, the very fact that not only Larissa, but all other above mentioned toponyms, are mainly interpreted by the glosses of Hesychius confirms that in their root are foreign, rare, and otherwise obscure terms that require additional explanation. Besides, the name is attested in Homer's *Iliad*, where the city is mentioned in the following passage: *Hippothous led the tribes of the Pelasgi that dwelt in deep-soiled Larisa*<sup>19</sup>. Also, illustrative fact for the thesis of pre-Greek origin is that the spelling of the city name in sources varies between a simple and a doubled sibilant, which is specific to old, pre-Greek stems.

Among other cities in the Book IV, Procopius also named Γόμφοι (*Gomphoi*), a town in Thessalian Histiaeotis<sup>20</sup>. The toponym is attested in ancient sources. In the work of Claudius Ptolemy the city is recorded under the name Γόμφοι as the second listed city in the district of Hestiaeotis<sup>21</sup>. As a fortified place (*castellum/oppidum*), it is also mentioned in other Latin sources, but historian Livy describes in more detail the strategic position of both, the place itself, and the surroundings<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> В. ГЕОРГИЕВ, *Найстарите славянски имена на Балканския полуостров и тяхното значение за нашия език и нашата история*, БЕ 8.4–5, 1958, p. 323.

<sup>16</sup> М. BUDIMIR, *Pelasto-Slavica. Poseban otisak iz 309 knjige Rada Jugoslovenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, Zagreb 1956, p. 81–194; *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, ed. H.M. SCHMIDT, Bonn 1867 (cetera: HESYCHIUS), p. 1001: λωρυμνόν· βαθύτατα, καθώτατα.

<sup>17</sup> *Hieroclis Synecdemus et Notitiae Graecae episcopatum, accedunt Nili Doxapatrui Notitia patriarchatum et Locorum nomina immutata*, rec. G. PARTHEU, Amsterdam 1967: Appendix. 1, 54: Λάρυμνα ἢ Λάρισσα, in commentary Λάρισσα sic Rh. Λάρυσα reliqui. In fact, this data mistakenly refers to a completely different city in Boeotia, as Hesychius confirms: Λάρυμνα, πόλις Βοιωτίας, but this association is important from phonetic and semantic point of view.

<sup>18</sup> В.Ю. ОТКУПЩИКОВ, *Догреческий субстрат. истоков европейской цивилизации*, Ленинград 1988, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> HOMER, *Iliad*, vol. I, *Books 1–12*, II, 840, trans. A.T. MURRAY, rev. W.F. WYATT, Cambridge Massachusetts 1924 [= LCL, 170] (cetera: HOMER), p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> PROCOPIUS, IV, 3, 5, p. 243.

<sup>21</sup> *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographia*, III, 12, 41, vol. I, ed. C. MÜLLERUS, Parisiis 1883: Γόμφοι μζ γο λθ γ.

<sup>22</sup> *Titii livi ab urbe condita. Tomus v libri XXXI–XXV, XXXII, 14, 2*, rec. A.H. McDONALD, [s.l.] 1965 [= SCBO]: *Ceterum Amynander, quia suo militia parum fidebat, petito a consule modico praesidio cum*



As for this very old toponym, mentioned even by Homer, both the archaeologist O. Karageorgu and researcher K. Miller were probably guided by a visual impression and unique configuration of the terrain when interpreting the name, starting from the technical meaning of the word γόμφος, -ου, ὄ 'stake, wedge'. Namely, O. Karageorgu believes that the name of this city is related to the unique configuration of the terrain, more precisely to its specific location on the hill now called Episcopi<sup>23</sup>. This hill is, actually, one of three that extend from the Pindus mountain range and enter the Thessalian plane in the form of a peg or wedge. K. Miller expresses the opinion that the fortified city of Gomphi was located on a peg-shaped rock<sup>24</sup>. P. Chantraine in his etymological dictionary mentions the term 'wedge' as the first meaning of the word, especially *a wedge used in shipbuilding*, a usage confirmed by ancient sources<sup>25</sup>. In addition, the wooden wedge served as a connecting device in general, especially for connecting the front and rear parts of the traction wheels, which clearly indicates that it is a very old technical term. According to P. Chantraine, the word is common in the Ionian and Attic dialects. In the Latin language the inherited form is *gomphus*, meaning 'large joint in the shape of a wedge, a rock in the shape of a wedge'. Grammarian Hesychius confirms those meanings: γόμφοι 'wedges, joints, connections, teeth-molars'<sup>26</sup>. Due to the fact that the word is polysemous, which means that denotes several terms, it is difficult to make a judgment concerning the basis from which it originates. Among different meanings offered, we believe that the meaning of *the wedge* would be the most suitable and the name of the fort is actually a description of the configuration of the terrain where it is located, as Karageorgu believes. In this sense, we can compare it with the Serbian geographical term *клик*, which as a toponymic metaphor can be connected with the term *кълъкъл* 'очѣак' (canine tooth), denoting *a bare rocky peak, a rock that rises above the surrounding land, a cliff*<sup>27</sup> and the etymology according to which Gr. γόμφος reflects the PIE word for 'tooth', probably 'cutting tooth' *gemb<sup>h</sup>* – 'bite' *gomb<sup>h</sup>o* – 'cutting tooth' reflected in that meaning in Skt. *jámbha*, Alb. *dhëmb*, OCS \*zobъ', Latv. *Zùobs*, ToA *kam*, ToB *keme*<sup>28</sup>.

From the separate list of fortresses rebuilt in Thessaly, we want to point out the name attested by Procopius as Λόσσονος, which is also mentioned by other

---

*Gomphos peteret, oppidum protinus nomine Phaecam, situm inter Gomphos faucesque angustas quae ab Athamania Thessaliam dirimunt, ui cepit. Inde Gomphos adortus, et per aliquot dies summa ui tuentes urbem, cum iam scalas ad moenia erexisset, eo demum metu perpulit ad deditionem.*

<sup>23</sup> O. KARAGIORGOU, *Urbanism and Economy in Late Antique Thessalia (3<sup>rd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)*. *The Archaeological Evidence. A Thesis in Three Volumes*, vol. I, Trinity 2001, p. 142.

<sup>24</sup> K. MÜLLER, *Geschichten hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, vol. III, Breslau 1824, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> P. CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des Mots*, vol. I–II, Paris 1968, p. 232. Cf. *Herodoti Historiae*, II, 96, rec. C. HUDE, <sup>3</sup>Oxonii 1927 [= SCBO], p. 186.

<sup>26</sup> HESYCHIUS, 805, 1, p. 356: \*γόμφοι· μύλοι· σφῆνες· δεσμά· ἄρθρα· σύνδεσμοι· καὶ ὀδόντες γόμφοι.

<sup>27</sup> A. ЛОМА, *Киљан 'пободен камен'-далматоромански остатак на тлу Црне Горе?*, ЈФ 65, 2009, p. 89–99.

<sup>28</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill–Leiden 2010, p. 282.

ancient sources with different spelling: Ὀλοοσσόν, Ὀλοοσσών, Ὀλοσσών<sup>29</sup>. It is not recorded as a city (πόλις) in archaic and classical sources, but it is reasonable to assume that it already had this status back then, because there is a testimony that it minted coins in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>30</sup>. Homer adds to the place name the epithet *white*, as Strabo explains later, *because of the light color of the clay that covers the ground on which it is located*. According to W. Leake, the city was divided by a rapid stream running through the middle of it. Actually, he noticed that two ravines, as well as several smaller torrents, have a white sediment composition, which aligns with the explanation why the city has received the epithet *white* since ancient times<sup>31</sup>. The geographer Strabo describes it as a city in Parabeia<sup>32</sup>, while the Byzantine author Stephen of Byzantium records it as a city in Magnesia, probably confusing it with the Magnesian city Olizon (Ὀλιζών), which he places in Thessaly in another entry in his geographical lexicon *Ethnika*<sup>33</sup>. Older sources confirmed the strategic position of the settlement, located near the crossroads of Western and Eastern Macedonia via passes Volustana and Petra towards the Thessalian plain. Procopius recorded modified spelling Λόσσονος in the Late Antiquity period, which is likely a distorted or corrupted version of the older one. Procopius testimony, the writings of Strabo and Lycophron, as well as the discovery of milestone from the pre-Christian period, confirm the existence of the settlement before the Byzantine era. The new name of the city Ἐλασσών was first recorded by Eustathius of Thessalonica and according to his opinion *it represents the form which was used instead of the barbarian variant Ὀλοσσών*<sup>34</sup>. In the work of Byzantine historian John Kantakouzenos it is registered as φρούριον, which along with three other fortifications, briefly fell under the dominion of John of Epirus<sup>35</sup>. In the *Notitia* 18, from the period of Andronicus the Third, it was recorded as an archbishopric and the same was confirmed in the *Notitia* 21<sup>36</sup>. The fortress described by Procopius is located on a hill northwest of today's town of Elassona, which is, actually, on the road from Larissa towards Macedonia. Above the old rampart of ancient Olosson, one can partially recognize the wall, built in the time of Justinian, with the aim of

<sup>29</sup> HOMER, II, 739, p. 104; *Lycophronis Alexandra*, ed. L. MASCIALINO, Leipzig 1964 [= BSGR], p. 906.

<sup>30</sup> E. BABELON, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines*, II, IV, vol. I–IV, ed. E. LEROUX, Paris 1901–1932, p. 327–328.

<sup>31</sup> W.M. LEAKE, *Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. III, London 1835, p. 345.

<sup>32</sup> STRABO, *Geography*, vol. IV, *Books 8–9*, trans. H.L. JONES, Cambridge Massachusetts 1927 [= LCL, 196], p. 424.

<sup>33</sup> STEPHANUS, p. 490, 11; p. 489, 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Eustathii commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, ad fidem exempli Romani editi*, vol. I–II, Lipsiae 1827, p. 270. Cf. J. KODER, F. HILD, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. I, *Hellas und Thessalia*, Vienna 1972, p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV. Graecae et Latine*, II, 28, vol. I–III, rec. L. SCHOPENI, Bonnae 1831 [= CSHB], p. 474.

<sup>36</sup> *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed., praef. J. DARROUZÈS, Paris 1981 [= GEEB], 18, 158: κς ἡ Ἐλασσών; 21, 82. ἐ ἡ Ἐλασσών.

strengthening the defensive capability of the old fort<sup>37</sup>. According to the opinion of M. Perrin-Henry, who deals with toponymy in the Book IV, the name of Procopius' fort is in the genitive case<sup>38</sup>. The spelling Ὀλοσσοнос in the work of Herodian grammarian confirms her opinion<sup>39</sup>. It is obvious that this is a distorted form, since the initial vowel, which is an integral part of the name in older spelling Ὀλοσσωών, as well as in the newer Ἐλασσών, is missing. The doubled sibilant also survived in Procopius' version. The testimony of Eusthatus of Thessalonica indicating that the new name is a replacement for the barbaric variation of the name, which was in use before, confirms that it is, actually, the non-Greek name in origin. Also, the fact that it was merely mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, together with other very old toponyms, as well as the location in Perabeia, leaves open the possibility that it is an old, Pre-Greek stem. The double sibilant as part of the name, as well as the ending -ων, point to the possible influence of Phrygian. A change of an initial vowel is perhaps the result of dialect variability.

Just to conclude, the original name Ὀλοσσωών, which might be of both Greek, or as we have seen, more likely of non-Greek origin and has nothing to do with the adverb ἐλαχὺς 'smaller, more insignificant, weaker'. The new form Ἐλασσών is obviously modified by paretyymology according to the comparative ἐλάσσων. In Procopius' *Buildings* a form in which the initial vowel is omitted is recorded. Since all other sources have recorded spellings with the variant o/e, we can assume, either that it is an orthographic error, or, which is more likely, that Procopius' form presupposes the decomposition of an article: Ὀλοσσωών understood as ὁ Λοσσωών.

In the Macedonian list, there is another hapax and a rather obvious substrate name Πέλεκον. Since it is not mentioned in other ancient sources, at least not under this name, it is very difficult to determine its location. According to A. Konstantakopoulou and A. Keramopoulos, primarily on the basis of archeological findings, believed that the fortress Πέλεκον can be identified with the town Petra (Πέτραι), modern Πέτρης, which is located on the left bank of the homonymous lake Λίμνη Πέτρον in Northern Greece<sup>40</sup>. According to Keramopoulos, in this place, which had a strategic position since the Roman road *Via Egnatia* passed in the immediate vicinity, the remains of defensive ramparts were found, the upper layer of which, by all accounts, is most likely from the Justinian period<sup>41</sup>. In addition to this opinion,

<sup>37</sup> M. SOTIRIOU, *The Early Paleologian Revival in the Countries and Islands of Greece during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century* (pl. 48–64), BChAS 22, 1966, p. 257–276.

<sup>38</sup> PROCOPE DE CÉSARÉE, *Les Édifices Livre IV. Traduction et commentaires*, ed. M. PERRIN-HENRY, Paris 1974, p. 188, f. 376.

<sup>39</sup> (*Aelius*) *Herodianus et Pseudo-Herodianus, Partitiones*, 229, 4, ed. J.F. BOISSONADE, London 1819.

<sup>40</sup> A. ΚΟΝΣΤΑΝΤΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ιστορική Γεωγραφία τής Μακεδονίας (4<sup>ος</sup>–6<sup>ος</sup> αι.)*, Ιωάννινα 1984, p. 256.

<sup>41</sup> Α.Δ. ΚΕΡΑΜΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Γ' Ἐρευναι ἐν Δυτικῇ Μακεδονίας*, ΠΑΕ 93, 1938, p. 54–60; *Tabula Imperii Romani (TIR) K 34 Naissus, Dyrrhachion-Scupi-Serdica*, ed. J. ŠAŠELJ, Ljubljana 1976, p. 100; cf. V. KRAVARI, *Villes et villages de Macedoine occidentale*, Paris 1989 [= RBZ], p. 314–315.

there is another possible identification. Namely, there is an assumption that it might be a mountain village Πελεκάνος (Pelekanos), whose older name is Πέλκα (Pelka), located at an altitude of 760 m in today's prefecture of Kozani, 47 km northwest of its capital bearing the same name<sup>42</sup>. V. Kolokotronis, who admittedly did not analyze the name closely, believes that the place with newer name, Pelka, which according to his opinion is found near ancient Kastoria, is actually a corrupted form of the name mentioned by Procopius in Macedonian list. In addition, the author notes that this fact only proves that the attempt to find the Slavic origin of the place names, not only in this case, but also in other fortifications listed by Procopius, is completely unacceptable and we fully concur with Kolokotronis' position.

Regardless of the identification, our attention in this paper concerns the meaning and origin of the name Πέλεκον mentioned by Procopius. We believe that the origin of it should be sought in the appellative, Pre-Greek noun of eastern origin πέλεκκον, -ου, τὸ οἰ πέλεκκος, οὔ, ὁ meaning 'an ax handle', which is derived from the old basis πέλεκυς, εως, ὁ 'axe, hewing axe or axe for killing sacrificial animals, battle axe'. For the long time, the word was considered Indo-European<sup>43</sup>, however, it is more likely that the word originates from some non-Indo-European base<sup>44</sup>. The double consonant -κκ also suggests Pre-Greek gemination, as indicated by Furnée. Considering the compatibility of Gr. πέλεκυς to sanscr. *paraśú-* 'axe, battle axe', from Iranian into Tocharian: ToA *porat*, ToB *peret* < QPIE \**peleku*, the word is evidently Proto-Indo-European, and even in this language it can also be a loanword<sup>45</sup>.

Identification of the fortress, despite the high probability that is located near the town of Pelka, approximately 48 km from Kozani, is still unconfirmed. Assumed localization of the fort has strategic value, because it controlled the passes of Upper and Western Macedonia to Elimeia, Orestida and Eordaea. Since the archeological findings of Keramopoulos date back to the second century BC, we assume that the fortress from Justinian period, listed by Procopius as Πέλεκον was rebuilt in the period of great barbarian invasions. Correctness of the interpretation and etymology of the name is also confirmed by toponymic examples from the identical semantic base in Slavic language. Namely, several place names in Macedonia are semantically related to the appellative *секира* 'axe', as the examples of *Секирани* (Sekirani), village north of Bitola, *Секирник* (Sekirnik) east of Strumica, *Секирци* (Sekirci) northwest of Prilep in today's North Macedonia, prove. These names are semantic parallels of the same old Proto-Indo-European basis.

<sup>42</sup> V. KOLOKOTRŌNĒS, *La Macédoine et l'hellénisme. Étude historique et ethnologique*, Paris 1919, p. 512.

<sup>43</sup> H. FRISK, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1973, p. 497.

<sup>44</sup> P. CHANTRAINNE, *Dictionnaire étymologique...*, p. 875.

<sup>45</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary...*, p. 1167.

In the Procopius' Macedonian list, there are several fortresses that evidently got their name according to the physical feature of the terrain, most of them denoting a 'ravine, gorge, watercourse'. Besides obviously Greek name Αὐλών and probably, Pre-Greek Κάλαρνος as well as the name of the fort – Χάραδρος which represent old Pre-Greek layer in the late ancient toponymy. In the interest of keeping a reasonable scope of the article, we don't want to go further into details regarding the localization of this fortress, but only to stress necessary details concerning the linguistic origin of the name. Namely, according to H. Frisk, who followed the opinion of Boisacq and Schwyzer on this issue, the word χάραδρος is derivative from the Greek noun χαράδρα, ἡ 'dry bed of a mountain river, torrent, ravine' which, in his opinion, is etymologically related to χέραδος 'rock, gravel, sediment'<sup>46</sup>. He also assumes that the word does not have a convincing etymology. All etymological dictionaries, including the most recent of Beekes agree that it is necessary to abandon the older connection with the verb χαράσσω 'cut, engrave' assumed by Bequignon and Pokorny<sup>47</sup>. He believes that there is no convincing alternative etymology for the lexeme. Since variation -χεραδ/-χαραδ, as Beekes claims, cannot be explained in IE terms, we can conclude that the word is probably Pre-Greek, which is quite plausible for geographical terms. Another proof for correctness of this opinion is the existence of a Macedonian parallel of the name Γάλαδρα(ι) recorded by Stephen of Byzantium. Prominent Macedonian classical philologist M. Petruševski quite correctly related it to the Greek noun χάραδρα. Namely, the author showed that the name Γάλαδρα(ι) originates from Ancient Macedonian appellative γάλαδρα (older γάραδρα) which is identical with the Greek χάραδρα, with the well-known Macedonian consonantism and the loss of aspiration in original *mediae aspiratae* in Ancient Macedonian (the syllable γα- corresponds to the Greek χα-). In addition, -λα in the second syllable has been interpreted as a result of liquid dissimilation due to the following -δρα, as attested by the variants of the text in Lycophron<sup>48</sup>. At the same time, this example is also valuable evidence that Ancient Macedonian and Greek share a number of words that have no parallels in other IE languages.

Another very illustrative example from the Macedonian list is the name of the fortress Βάβας (in one redaction of the text attested as Βάβος), mentioned only by Procopius. J. Kovačević was the first researcher, who, mainly according to archaeological and numismatic material, suggested the identification of Procopius' Βάβας with fortification near the rock under the oronym *Baba* near Prilep<sup>49</sup>. The identification proposed by Kovačević is fairly certain, primarily due to the

<sup>46</sup> H. FRISK, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch...*, p. 1088. Almost the same in P. CHANTRAINNE, *Dictionnaire étymologique...*, p. 1246.

<sup>47</sup> R.S.P. BEEKES, L. VAN BECK, *Etymological Dictionary...*, p. 1625.

<sup>48</sup> М.Д. ПЕТРУШЕВСКИ, ΓΑΛΑΔΡΑ = ΧΑΡΑΔΡΑ, ΓΑΛΑΔΡΟΣ = ΧΑΡΑΔΡΟΣ (=KA-RA-DO-RO), *ЖА* 16.1–2, 1966, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> J. КОВАЧЕВИЋ, Βάβας, [in:] *Зборник посветен на Бошко Бабиќ = Mélange Boško Babić: 1924–1984*, vol. V, Прилеп 1986, p. 119.

indisputable material evidence. Supporting his position with the opinion of K. Jireček that the Slavs used to replace incomprehensible geographical terms with similar sounding Slavic ones, he equates fort-name Βάβας with the well-known Slavic term *Баба*, which was usually used to denote *mountain peaks, rocks and mountains themselves*. The prominent Bulgarian linguist, Vladimir Georgiev, went even further and claimed its Slavic origin, connecting it with the root *baba* which denotes *the name of grandmother* in most of the Slavic languages. Moreover, Georgiev considered the name of the fortress Βάβας, among several others, as one of the most certain examples of Slavic names in Procopius' *Buildings*<sup>50</sup>. We, however, are of the opinion that his arguments are linguistically unfounded<sup>51</sup>. Serbian Prof. M. Budimir believes that the linguistic basis of *baba* is, actually, a very widespread and common anthroponym of theophoric origin among the ancient Bryges, or Phryges, the people of ancient Balkan, from where it also passed into Greek as the male and female name<sup>52</sup>. Actually, explaining the term *бабуни* he mentioned the cult of *Baba*, the main deity of fertility among the Balkan and Anatolian Bryges. Budimir claims that the word originates from the cultic Indo-European term *\*baba*. In addition, anthroponymic data also supports this thesis. Namely, names like *Babyllus* and *Babylon*, with an undisputable stem *-bab* are epigraphically attested in Macedonia in the village of Raštani, near Veles, i.e. in Eordaia<sup>53</sup>. Names with the same root are common in Phrygia, Lycaonia and other parts of Asia Minor, and an unidentified toponym *Baba* was attested in Armenia as well<sup>54</sup>. Besides, the personal name of the military commander Βάβας is also mentioned by Procopius in *Wars*, although the name is not epigraphically attested in Macedonia<sup>55</sup>. Procopius says that *he was from Thrace*, but this statement does not imply that he was an ethnic Thracian. F. Papazoglu rightly points out the complexity of the relations of the entire series of epichorion names in Macedonia with the Thracian due to the traditional treatment of the Thracian – Phrygian/Brygian as a unique linguistic area<sup>56</sup>. This example clearly shows and confirms the opinion of the modern linguistics that the Paeonian and Phrygian/Brygian have to be considered

<sup>50</sup> В. ГЕОРГИЕВ, *Найстарите славянски имена...*, p. 323.

<sup>51</sup> Sceptic concerning Slavic place names in Procopius *Buildings* is also G. HOLZER, *Gibt es slavische Kastellnamen in Prokops De aedificiis?*, FOC 7, 1998, p. 115–129.

<sup>52</sup> М. БУДИМИР, *Са балканских источника*, Београд 1969, p. 144.

<sup>53</sup> А. ΡΙΖΑΚΗΣ, Ι. ΤΟΥΡΑΤΣΟΓΛΟΥ, *Επιγραφές Άνω Μακεδονίας*, том. Α', Αθήνα 1985, p. 136; Б. ЈОСИФОВСКА, *Неколку неиздадени грчки и латински натписи од Македонија*, *ЖА* 3.1–2, 1953, p. 222–244.

<sup>54</sup> L. DILLEMAN, *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacentes. Contribution à la géographie historique de la région, du V<sup>e</sup> s. avant l'ère chrétienne au VI<sup>e</sup> s. de cette ère*, Paris 1962 [= IFAB.BAH, 72], p. 137, 141; *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. R.J.A. TALBERT, Princeton 2000, Map 89 Armenia, 1282.

<sup>55</sup> ПРОКОПИЈУС, *History of the Wars*, vol. V, Books 7.36–8. (*Gothic War*), VIII, 9, 7, trans. H.B. DEWING, Cambridge Massachusetts 1928 [= LCL, 217].

<sup>56</sup> Ф. ПАΠΑЗОГЛУ, *Етничка структура Античке Македоније у светлости новијих ономастичких истраживања*, *Balc* 8, 1977 (= *Зборник у част 80-годишњице академика Васе Чубриловића*, ed. М. БЕГОВИЋ, Београд 1977), p. 77.

as Indo-European languages separate from the Thracian. According to our opinion, due to the many registered analogies, written and epigraphic, we truly believe that the name of Procopius' fortification Βάβαϑ attested in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD is epichoric. The name originates from the Indo-European root *\*baba* 'stone, rock, cliff' and it belongs to the old, Pre-Greek linguistics stratum, most probably Phrygian, with the suffix -αϑ in the nominative singular, common in the later development of the Greek language<sup>57</sup>.

In conclusion, we can say that we truly believe that all these examples have clearly and sufficiently proven the presence of Pre-Greek linguistic substrate in the respective lists of place names enumerated by Procopius in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It's quite understandable and reasonable to expect such results, bearing in mind the nature of buildings recorded by this author, most of them fortresses, which were primarily erected as watchtowers in strategic positions for defense. These strategic fortifications, for the most part, inherited both the name and location as it is confirmed by older ancient sources, and they were, usually, naturally defensible spots on the hills, mountain passes, gorges, which have always strategic value to protect against invasions. Only a few of them were built contemporarily to Procopius, instead, they often have been rebuilt with the new name – commonly a personal name of a veteran whose land property in the uncertain times of barbaric incursions served as a shelter for the local population. These place-names confirm that this Pre-Greek substrate is a significant factor in the toponymy of the later era and therefore its systematic study is of great importance. Additionally, it is necessary to have in mind a very important fact that, along with hydronymy and oronymy, toponymy itself is essentially the most conservative linguistic discipline which in this sense, is truly confirmed as *the language of the soil, a guard of linguistic memories which survive human generations and buildings*.

<sup>57</sup> Concerning Procopius' Βάβαϑ in details: J. КУЗМАНОВСКА, *Један Прокопијев топоним из списка за Македонију*, Глa 55.1–2, 2011, p. 65–69. The researcher V. Polak came to, more or less, the same conclusion concerning the term *baba* as a substrate relic denoting 'rocky places, cliffs, caves' in an article that, unfortunately, wasn't available to me at the time of my doctoral work on Procopius' toponyms. V. POLAK, *Considérations sur la toponymie balkanique*, OJug 4, 1979, p. 32.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- (Aelius) Herodianus et Pseudo-Herodianus, *Partitiones*, ed. J.F. BOISSONADE, London 1819.
- Claudii Ptolemaei *Geographia*, vol. I, ed. C. MÜLLERUS, Parisii 1883.
- Eustathii commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, ad fidem exempli Romani editi, vol. I–II, Lipsiae 1827.
- Herodoti *Historiae*, rec. C. HUDE, <sup>3</sup>Oxonii 1927 [= Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis / Oxford Classical Texts].
- Hesychii Alexandrini *Lexicon*, ed. M. SCHMIDT, Bonn 1867.
- Hieroclis *Synecdemus et Notitiae Graecae episcopatum, accedunt Nili Doxapatrui Notitia patriarchatum et Locorum nomina immutata*, rec. G. PARTHEY, Amsterdam 1967.
- HOMER, *Iliad*, vol. I, *Books 1–12*, trans. A.T. MURRAY, rev. W.F. WYATT, Cambridge Massachusetts 1924 [= Loeb Classical Library, 170], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.homer-iliad>.1924
- Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris *historiarum libri IV. Graecae et Latine*, vol. I–III, rec. L. SCHOPENI, Bonnae 1831 [= *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*].
- Lycophronis *Alexandra*, ed. L. MASCIALINO, Leipzig 1964 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed., praef. J. DARROUZÈS, Paris 1981 [= La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin].
- Procopii *Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. IV, *De aedificiis*, vol. II, ed. J. HAURY, corr. G. WIRTH, Leipzig 1963–1964 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- PROCOPIUS, *Buildings, History of the Wars, and Secret History*, ed. H.B. DEWING, G. DOWNEY, Cambridge Massachusetts 1914–1940 [= Loeb Classical Library, 343], <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.procopius-buildings>.1940
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars*, vol. V, *Books 7.36–8. (Gothic War)*, trans. H.B. DEWING, Cambridge Massachusetts 1928 [= Loeb Classical Library, 217].
- STEPHAN VON BYZANZ, *Ethnika Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt*, rec. A. MEINEKII, Graz 1958.
- STRABO, *Geography*, vol. IV, *Books 8–9*, trans. H.L. JONES, Cambridge Massachusetts 1927 [= Loeb Classical Library, 196].
- Titi Iivi ab urbe condita. *Tomus v libri XXXI–XXXV*, rec. A.H. McDONALD, [s.l.] 1965 [= Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis / Oxford Classical Texts].

### Secondary Literature

- BABELON E., *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines*, vol. I–IV, ed. E. LEROUX, Paris 1901–1932.
- The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, ed. R.J.A. TALBERT, Princeton 2000.
- BEEKES P.R., VAN BECK L., *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill–Leiden 2010.
- BEŠEVILIEV V., *Zur Deutung der Kastellnamen in Prokops werk "De aedificiis"*, Amsterdam 1970.
- BUDIMIR M., *Pelasto-Slavica. Poseban otisak iz 309 kjige Rada Jugoslovenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, Zagreb 1956.
- BUDIMIR M., *Sa Balkanskih Istočnika*, Beograd 1969.



- CAMERON A., *Procopius and the Sixth Century*, Berkeley 1985 [= Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 10].
- CHANTRAINNE P., *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des Mots*, vol. I–II, Paris 1968.
- DILLEMANN L., *Haute Mésopotamie orientale et pays adjacents. Contribution à la géographie historique de la région, du V<sup>e</sup> s. avant l'ère chrétienne au VI<sup>e</sup> s. de cette ère*, Paris 1962 [= Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 72].
- DOWNY G., *The Composition of Procopius, De Aedificiis*, "Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association" 78, 1947, p. 171–183, <https://doi.org/10.2307/283492>
- FRISK H., *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1973.
- GEORGIEV V., *Naj-starite slavjanski imena na Balkanskija poluostrvo i tjachnoto značenje za našija ezik i našata istorija*, "Balgarski ezik" / "Balgarski ezik" 8.4–5, 1958, p. 321–342.
- HOLZER G., *Gibt es slavische Kastellnamen in Prokops De aedificiis?*, "Folia Onomastica Croatica" 7, 1998, p. 115–129.
- ILIEVSKI Hr.P., *Balkanološki lingvistički studii, so poseben osvrt na istoriskiot razvoj na makedonskiot jazik*, Skopje 1988.
- JOSIFOVSKA B., *Nekolku neizdadani grčki i latinski natpisi od Makedonija*, "Živa Antika" 3.1–2, 1953, p. 222–244.
- KARAGIORGOU O., *Urbanism and Economy in Late Antique Thessalia (3<sup>rd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D). The Archaeological Evidence. A Thesis in Three Volumes*, vol. I, Trinity 2001.
- KATIČIĆ R., *Ancient Languages of the Balkans*, Michigan 1976, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111568874>
- KERAMOPOULOS A.D., *Ereunai en ti Dutiki Makedonia*, "Πρακτικά Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας" / "Praktika Archaialogikēs Etaireias" 93, 1938, p. 53–66.
- KODER J., HILD F., *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. I, *Hellas und Thessalia*, Vienna 1972.
- KOLOKOTRŌNĒS V., *La Macédoine et l'hellénisme. Étude historique et ethnologique*, Paris 1919.
- KONSTANTAKOPOULOU A., *Istoriki Geographias tis Makedonias (4<sup>os</sup>–6<sup>os</sup> ai.)*, Ioannina 1984.
- KOVAČEVIĆ J., *Babas*, [in:] *Zbornik posveten na Boško Babić = Mélanges Boško Babić: 1924–1984*, vol. V, Prilep 1986, p. 119–121.
- KRAVARI V., *Villes et villages de Macedoine occidentale*, Paris 1989 [= Réalités Byzantines].
- KRETSCHMER P., *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen 1896.
- KUZMANOVSKA J., *Jedan Prokopijev toponim iz spiska za Makedoniju*, "Гласник" / "Glasnik" 55.1–2, 2011, p. 65–69.
- KUZMANOVSKA J., *Phaskiai – toponim latinskog porekla u makedonskom spisku kod Prokopija (o nekim leksičkim refleksima u romanskim i slovenskim jezicima)*, [in:] *Exegi monumentum aere perennius (Zbornik vo čest na Elena Koleva, Ljubinka Basotova i Danica Čadikovska po povod 85 godini od nivnoto raganje)*, "Systasis" posebno izdanje 5, 2019, p. 92–106, [https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5\\_cel.pdf](https://www.systasis.org/pdfs/posebni/zbornik5_cel.pdf) [31 V 2023].
- LEAKE W.M., *Travels in Northern Greece*, vol. III, London 1835.
- LOMA A., *Kiljan 'poboden kamen – dalmatoromanski ostatak na tlu Crne Gore?*, "Јужнословенски филолог" / "Južnoslovenski filolog" 65, 2009, p. 89–99, <https://doi.org/10.2298/JFI0965089L>
- MÜLLER K., *Geschichten hellenischer Stämme und Städte*, vol. III, Breslau 1924.
- Namenforschung. Name Studies. Les noms propres. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik. International Handbook of Onomastics. Manuel international d'onomastique*, vol. I–III, ed. E. EICHLER, G. HILTY, H. LÖFFNER, H. STEGER, L. ZGUSTA, Berlin–New York 1995–1996.

- NEDELJKOVIĆ V., *Castles made of sand? Balkan Latin from Petar Skok to J.N. Adams*, [in:] *The Danubian Lands between the Black, Aegean and Adriatic Seas (7<sup>th</sup> Century BC – 10<sup>th</sup> Century AD). Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities (Belgrade 17–21 September 2013)*, ed. G.R. TSETSKHLADZE, A. AVRAM, J. HARGRAVE, Belgrade 2015, p. 323–328, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvr43k44.49>
- NEDELJKOVIĆ V., *Justinian's πάτριος φωνή*, "Balcanica" 47, 2016, p. 55–73, <https://doi.org/10.2298/BALC1647055N>
- OTKUPSCHIKOV Yu.V., *Dogrečeskiĭ substrat. U Istokov Evropejskoĭ civilizacii*, Leningrad 1988.
- PAPAZOGLU F., *Etnička struktura Antičke Makedonije u svetlosti novijih onomastičkih istraživanja*, "Balcanica" 8, 1977 (= *Zbornik u čast 80-godišnjice Vase Čubrilovića*, ed. M. BEGOVIĆ, Beograd 1977), p. 65–82.
- PETRUŠEVSKI D.M., GALADRA = HARADRA, GALADROS = HARADROS (=KA-RA-DO-RO), "Živa Antika" 16.1–2, 1966, p. 310.
- POLAK V., *Considérations sur la toponymie balkanique*, "Onomastica Jugoslavica" 4, 1979, p. 25–32.
- PROCOPE DE CÉSARÉE, *Les Édifices Livre IV. Traduction et commentaires*, ed. M. PERRIN-HENRY, Paris 1974.
- RIZAKIS A., TURATZOGLU I., *Epigraphes apo Makedonias A'*, Athens 1985.
- SKOK P., *De l'importance des listes toponomastiques de Procope pour la connaissance de la latinité balkanique*, "Revue internationale des études balkaniques" 1(5), 1937, p. 47–58.
- SOTIRIOU M., *The Early Paleologian Revival in the Countries and Islands of Greece during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century (pl. 48–64)*, "Bulletin of the Christian Archaeological Society" 22, 1966, p. 257–276.
- Tabula Imperii Romani (TIR) K 34 Naissus, Dyrrhachion-Scupi-Serdica-Thessalonike*, ed. J. ŠAŠELJ, Ljubljana 1976.


**Jasminka Kuzmanovska**

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje  
 Department of Ancient and Medieval History  
 Institute of National History  
 Grigor Prličev 3, 1000 Skopje  
 Republic of North Macedonia  
[kuzmanovska.jasmina@gmail.com](mailto:kuzmanovska.jasmina@gmail.com)





Mirosław J. Leszka (Łódź)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2643-4520>

## HERACLIUS. A COMMANDER IN THE SERVICE OF LEO I AND ZENO\*

**Abstract.** Heraclius' career, the one that can be traced in primary sources, lasted seven years. In its course he held the position of *comes rei militaris* and, perhaps, *magister militum vacans* and *magister militum per Thracias*. His greatest victories came in a war against the Vandals. They forced Gaiseric, the Vandal's leader to undertake peace negotiations. However, these victories were eclipsed by Heraclius' failures in the fight against Theodoric Strabo's Goths and by the shameful circumstances of his death.

**Keywords:** Heraclius, Emperor Leo, Emperor Zeno, the Vandals, the Goths

The career of Heraclius, the hero of this text, began during the reign of Emperor Leo I, and ended, (not in the best of styles, to put it mildly), during the beginnings of the reign of Emperor Zeno. No separate study has so far been devoted to Heraclius, which is not, of course, to say that he has received no attention from scholars<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this article is to trace his career and to reproduce the way in which he was portrayed in primary sources.

---

\* This text was created as part of the project financed from the funds of the National Science Centre, Poland, granted under decision no. DEC-2018/31/B/HS3/03038.

<sup>1</sup> For the basic information on Heraclius see: J.R. MARTINDALE, *The Prosopography of Later Roman Empire*, vol. II, A.D. 395–527, Cambridge 1980 (cetera: *PLRE*), p. 541–542 (s.v. *Heraclius* 4); F. TINNENFELD, *Heraclius* 6, [in:] *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. V, ed. H. CANKIK, H. SCHNEIDER, Stuttgart 1998, p. 382; Ł. JAROSZ, *Wschodniorzymscy magistrowie militum w latach 395–527 studium prosopograficzne*, Kraków 2017 (unpublished doctoral thesis), p. 201–203; Ch. BEGASS, *Die Senatsaristokratie des oströmischen Reiches, ca. 457–518. Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, München 2018, p. 142–143. Cf. O. SEECK, *Herakleios* 15, [in:] *RE*, vol. VIII, ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1913, col. 503. This scholar claimed (without providing appropriate arguments) that Heraclius was Heraclianus, a honorary comes who participated in the sixth session of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (on the latter – *PLRE* II, p. 540, s.v. *Heraclianus* 4). In the absence of the source material, it is impossible either to prove or to disprove this view.

We have no knowledge of when he was born<sup>2</sup>, but we know where he was from and what his father's name was. According to Theophanes<sup>3</sup>, his family town was Edessa<sup>4</sup> and his father, referred to by the chronographer as τοῦ ἀπὸ ὑπάτων, bore the name of Florus<sup>5</sup>. It seems that Heraclius embarked upon a military career. This view is supported by the fact that all the available references made to him in primary sources pertain to his military activity. The first of those references concerns the events that, while dated to 467, took place on the empire's eastern border<sup>6</sup>. At the time, Heraclius was placed in charge of a unit whose task was to support the Lazi in their struggle against the Persians and Iberians. As can be inferred from Priscus' account, these troops were detached from the forces stationed on the border between Byzantium and the part of Armenia that recognized the Byzantine authority. It is believed that during the expedition, Heraclius served as *comes rei militaris*<sup>7</sup>. We do not know the details of the operation in which he was involved.

<sup>2</sup> The first reference regarding Heraclius pertains to 467. The mission with which he was entrusted at the time by Emperor Leo I required some military experience. For this reason, his birth can be cautiously dated to the 430s or the beginning of the 440s.

<sup>3</sup> THEOPHANES, *Chronographia*, AM 5963, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883 (cetera: THEOPHANES), p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Scholars usually indicate that Heraclius came from Edessa but do not specify which Edessa they pertain to cf. for example O. SEECK, *Herakleios...*, col. 503; *PLRE II*, p. 541; Ł. JAROSZ, *Wschodniorzeczyscy...*, p. 201. Only Ch. BEGASS (*Die Senatsaristokratie...*, p. 143) refers specifically to Macedonian Edessa, but provides no justification for this view. It certainly cannot be justified based on Theophanes' account in which Heraclius is referred to as τὸν Ἑδεσηνόν and which does not provide any additional information. It is worth noting that Edessa is mentioned in *Chronorgahia* only in reference to the town in Syria (THEOPHANES, AM 5864, 5867, 5997, 6017, 6079, 6095, 6096, 6118, 6119, 6120, 6125, 6128, 6130, 6145, 6170, 6217, 6232, 6235). That is why it is this Edessa that should be considered to be the town Heraclius was from, and not that situated in Macedonia.

<sup>5</sup> THEOPHANES, AM 5963, p. 117; *Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta quae Supersunt Omnia*, 233, ed. S. MARIEV, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 2008 [= *CFHB*, 47] (cetera: JOHN OF ANTIOCH), p. 424; given the fact that the name Florus (*PLRE II*, p. 482, s.v. *Florus 3*) does not figure in the lists of Consuls (R.S. BAGNALL, AL. CAMERON, S.R. SCHWARTZ, K.A. WORR, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta 1987, p. 713–714), it is believed that he was honorary consul. Since honorary consuls are recorded from the reign of Zeno, E. STEIN (*Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. II, *De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–465)*, Paris–Bruxelles–Amsterdam 1949, p. 68, note 4) believed that Florus should be identified with Florentinus, consul from 429, a prominent figure both during the reign of Theodosius II and during the beginnings of the reign of Marcian (*PLRE II*, p. 478–480, s.v. *Fl. Florentius 7*). This hypothesis is not necessarily right and it cannot be ruled out that Florus was given the title of honorary consul during the reign of Zeno, after his son's death – *PLRE II*, p. 482.

<sup>6</sup> PRISCUS, *Fragmenta*, 51.1, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus. Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, *Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes*, ed. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1983 (cetera: PRISCUS; the only source that mentions the event); on the date of the event: IDEM, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus. Priscus and Malchus*, vol. I, Liverpool 1981, p. 122, cf. p. 171, note 66; IDEM, *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, Leeds 1992, p. 73–74; G. GREATREX, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532*, Leeds 1998, p. 126, note 18.

<sup>7</sup> *PLRE II*, p. 542.

All we know is that it was dropped because of the difficulties encountered in supplying his troops with necessary provisions<sup>8</sup>. This unfortunate development did not cause Heraclius to lose the emperor's confidence. Quite the contrary, the latter must even have become convinced of his military skills since he entrusted him with a very responsible task in the war against the Vandals.

In 468, Emperor Leo I prepared a great expedition against the Vandals for which he laid down huge financial means and raised significant forces<sup>9</sup>. The charge of the expedition was handed over to Basiliskos, the emperor's brother-in-law. We have two testimonies regarding the expedition. One comes from Procopius of Caesarea<sup>10</sup> and the other from Theophanes<sup>11</sup>, both of whom are believed to have relied in their account of it on the work by Priscos, although it remains unknown whether they drew on it directly or through Eusthatus of Epiphany<sup>12</sup>. My goal is not to use those testimonies to reconstruct the course of the expedition, which is known to have ended in Byzantium's defeat, but to trace Heraclius' role in it. Based on Procopius' account, Heraclius was given command of the forces whose task was to attack Tripolitania from Byzantium<sup>13</sup>. We are told that he carried out the attack perfectly and after defeating the Vandals in a battle (whose location is not indicated by Procopius) and capturing a number of towns, he marched on Carthage. Following the defeat suffered by the Byzantine fleet near the Cap Bon, fifty kilometres away from Carthage, Heraclius, just like the remains of Basiliskos' troops, departed for home<sup>14</sup>. Where it pertains to Heraclius' participation in the war against the Vandals, Theophanes' account is in some respects different from that of Procopius<sup>15</sup>. It also provides more details. The Byzantine chronographer placed his reference to the expedition of Heraclius, next to whom he also mentioned Marsus

<sup>8</sup> PRISCUS, 51.1.

<sup>9</sup> On Basiliscus' expedition see: R. STEINACHER, *Die Vandalen. Aufstieg und Fall eines Barbarenreichs*, Stuttgart 2016, p. 221–225; M. WILCZYŃSKI, *Gejzeryk i „czwarta wojna punicka”*, Oświęcim 2016, p. 175–179; Ł. PIŁGOŃSKI, *Polityka zachodnia cesarzy Marcjana (450–457) i Leona I (457–474)*, Łódź 2019 [= BL, 29], p. 152–163; R.A. BLEEKER, *Aspar and the Struggle for the Eastern Roman Empire, AD 421–71*, London 2022, p. 148–155.

<sup>10</sup> PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars*, vol. II, *Books III–IV*, III, 6.1–25, ed. H.B. DEWING, New York 1916 [= LCL, 81] (cetera: PROCOPIUS).

<sup>11</sup> THEOPHANES, AM 5961 (contains the account of the Basiliscus' activity in 468); cf. AM 5963 (contains the account of the expedition led by Heraclius and Marsus).

<sup>12</sup> On the use by later authors of Priscos' account of the 468 expedition against the Vandals, including Procopius and Theophanes, see: D. BRODKA, *Priskos und der Feldzug des Basiliskos gegen Geiserich (468)*, [in:] *Griechische Profanhistoriker des fünften nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts*, ed. T. STICKLER, B. BLECKMANN, Stuttgart 2014, p. 103–120.

<sup>13</sup> PROCOPIUS, III, 6.9. Procopius' phrase ἐκ Βυζαντίου does not allow us to indicate where exactly the forces led by Heraclius and Marsus set out from. Scholars usually omit this issue, following Theophaes who in this context mentioned Egypt.

<sup>14</sup> PROCOPIUS, III, 6.25, trans. p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> THEOPHANES, AM 5963.

as his co-commander<sup>16</sup> (Marsus is absent from Procopius' account), under the year 470/471, that is, two years after Basiliskos' expedition. According to Theophanes, Heraclius and Marsus set out from Egypt and captured by surprise Tripoli and many other towns in Libya. With their success, Gaiseric, the Vandals' ruler, was forced to undertake peace negotiations with Leo<sup>17</sup>, a step to which the emperor agreed since he was readying himself for a final battle against Aspar and his sons. To defeat the latter, he needed the support of Basiliscus, Heraclius and Marsus. Scholars have had trouble trying to reconcile the two accounts<sup>18</sup>. The essential problem that arises here concerns the question of whether the expedition of Heraclius and Marsus was part of the campaign of 468, or whether it constituted a distinct operation that took place later. However, from the perspective of Heraclius' career, it is of secondary importance. Both Theophanes and Procopius unequivocally indicate that Heraclius carried out a successful operation against the Vandals and proved himself a good commander. Consequently, he must have gained recognition in the eyes of the emperor who started treating him as his trusted man.

It is not clear what position Heraclius held during his struggle against the Vandals. No source informs us of it<sup>19</sup>. The view to be found in modern scholarship is that, just as during the operation in the East of 467, he was *comes rei militaris*<sup>20</sup>. The operation against the Vandals was clearly more important than that in which Heraclius took part in 467. It thus cannot be excluded that in sending

<sup>16</sup> On Marsus, who was of Isaurian descent, see: *PLRE II*, p. 728–729, *s.v. Marsus 2*; Ch. BEGASS, *Die Senatsaristokratie...*, p. 190–191.

<sup>17</sup> There is no certainty that the negotiations resulted in signing a peace treaty. On this issue see M. WILCZYŃSKI, *Gejzeryk...*, p. 178.

<sup>18</sup> Some of today's scholars who deal with this issue consider Procopius' account to be credible, which leads them to conclude that Heraclius' units were engaged in one of the three main operations which were carried out in 468 (the remaining two involved the attack of the forces led by Basiliscus and the activity of the lord of Dalmacia, Marcellin, in Corsica, Sardinia and Sicily. This view can be found in: *PLRE II*, p. 542; J. STRZELCZYK, *Wandalowie i ich afrykańskie państwo*, Warszawa 1992, p. 143–144). Scholars who give priority to Theophanes' account claim that the operation of Heraclius and Marsus was not bound up with Basiliscus' expedition of 468 and took place in 470 or 471 (Ł. PIKOŃSKI, *Polityka...*, p. 154–157, 164; IDEM, *The Shields of the Empire. Eastern Roman Military Elites during the Reigns of the Emperors Theodosius II, Marcian and Leo I*, Łódź–Kraków 2023 [= *BL*, 47], p. 163–166). The most numerous are scholars who try to reconcile the two accounts. They indicate that the troops led by Heraclius and Marsus took part in the 468 campaign and after Basiliskos' defeat stayed in Africa until 470 or 471 (e.g.: R.C. BLOCKLEY, *East Roman...*, p. 76; A. MERRILLS, R. MILES, *The Vandals*, Oxford 2010, p. 122; Y. MODÉLAN, *Les Vandales et l'Empire Romain*, Arles 2014, p. 198; R. STEINACHER, *Die Vandalen...*, p. 222; M. WILCZYŃSKI, *Gejzeryk...*, p. 176–178; P. CRAWFORD, *Roman Emperor Zeno. The Perils of Power Politics in Fifth-century Constantinople*, Yorkshire–Philadelphia 2019, p. 70, 84, 86; R.A. BLEEKER, *Aspar...*, p. 155).

<sup>19</sup> Neither PROCOPIUS (III, 6.25), nor THEOPHANES (AM 5963) wrote about it. They only mentioned that he had been sent by Leo against Gaiseric.

<sup>20</sup> For example *PLRE II*, p. 542; P. CRAWFORD, *Roman Emperor...*, p. 67.

Heraclius and Marsus on their mission, the emperor entrusted them with the position of *magister militum vacans*, as is suggested by E. Glušanin<sup>21</sup>.

We do not know what role Heraclius played in Leo's bloody crackdown against Aspar, which took place in 471<sup>22</sup>. Sources provide us with no information about it. All we know is that he behaved loyally to the emperor to the end of his reign and remained in the circle of his close associates. The same can be said of Heraclius' attitude towards Zeno, Leo's brother-in-law, with whose reign the last known episode from Heraclius' life is bound up. It concerned the empire's struggle against Theodoric Strabo's Goths in Thrace. It seems that after rising to power, Zeno decided to withdraw the concessions that Leo had made to Theodoric in 473<sup>23</sup> and sent against him the troops led by Heraclius. During the fighting, of which we have no knowledge, Heraclius was taken captive in circumstances that remain unknown. According to Malchus<sup>24</sup>, Zeno sent envoys to the Gothic ruler to negotiate Heraclius' release. Theodoric agreed to free the emperor's commander for one hundred talents. The burden of paying the ransom was placed on Heraclius' family who raised the needed sum. Having received the money, Theodoric ordered Heraclius to be released. However, on his way back home the Byzantine commander was killed by the Goths. We have two testimonies regarding his death. According to John of Antioch, it was Theodoric himself who killed Heraclius at the walls of the Thracian Chersonesos<sup>25</sup>. Malchus, in turn, claims that some Gothic soldiers took his life in Arcadiopolis in revenge for the cruelties he had committed<sup>26</sup>. It is hard to say which version is true. More seems to speak in favour of the second one, which is more detailed<sup>27</sup>. However, it cannot be known for sure. An attempt to reconcile the two accounts would lead us to the following conclusion: First, Heraclius was killed; second, he was killed by Goths, and third, his death took place in Thrace.

<sup>21</sup> Е.П. ГЛУШАНИН, *Военная знать ранней Византии*, Барнаул 1991, p. 130. The Russian scholar presents the following justification of his hypothesis: *Организация вандальской экспедиции 468 г. очень близко напоминает африканский поход 441 г., презентального магистра Ареовинда с рядом magistri vacantes (Theoph. AM 5941)*. This line of argument indicates that Heraclius' and Marsus' expedition was part of the 468 campaign.

<sup>22</sup> The issue of the reasons and circumstances of the attempt on the lives of Aspar and his sons has recently been covered by: P. CRAWFORD, *Roman Emperor...*, p. 79–89; R.A. BLEEKER, *Aspar...*, p. 167–171; Ł. PIŁGOŃSKI, *The Shields...*, p. 169–173.

<sup>23</sup> On the agreement that Leo I concluded with Theodoric Strabo – Malchus, 2; cf. for example: Ł. JAROSZ, *Teodoryk Strabon*, ZNUJ.PH 140.3, 2013, p. 219; M. WILCZYŃSKI, *Germanie w służbie zachodniorzymskiej w V w. n.e.*, Oświęcim 2018, p. 410.

<sup>24</sup> MALCHUS, *Fragmenta*, 6.2, [in:] *The Fragmentary...*, vol. II (cetera: MALCHUS).

<sup>25</sup> JOHN OF ANTIOCH, 233.

<sup>26</sup> MALCHUS, 6.2. According to this account, Heraclius had both his head and his hands cut off.

<sup>27</sup> This version of the circumstances of Heraclius' death is advocated, among others, by Ł. JAROSZ, *Teodoryk...*, p. 220; M. WILCZYŃSKI, *Germanie...*, p. 411, note 40.



It is believed that during the campaign against the Goths, Heraclius held the position of *magister militum per Thracias*<sup>28</sup>. This view is based on the testimony of Malchus and, to some extent, on that of John of Antioch. Malchus referred to Heraclius as strategist<sup>29</sup>, but he did not indicate the area in which Heraclius had commanded. Since the operations against the Vandals were conducted in Thrace, one is led to conclude that the position he held was *magisterium militum per Thracias*. As far as John of Antioch's testimony is concerned, it basically gives us no clue in this respect: "Ὅτι ἐπὶ Ζήνωνος τοῦ βασιλέως Θεοδώριχος ὁ Τριαρίου τὴν στρατηγίδα τῶν Θρακίων διέπων Ἡράκλειον τὸν Φλώρου [...]. Taken literally, this passage indicates that the position of *magister militum per Thracias* was held by Theodoric Strabo. However, the text is believed to be damaged at this point, which opens up the possibility of suggesting that the post was held by Heraclius<sup>30</sup>.

As regards the question of when Heraclius served as *magister militum per Thracias*, it is claimed that he held the post during the beginnings of Zeno's reign<sup>31</sup>, that is after January 474<sup>32</sup>, and ceased to exercise it a few months before 9 January 475, which is when the emperor was forced to flee Constantinople because of Basilius' conspiracy<sup>33</sup>. From this it follows that he exercised the position of *magister militum per Thracias* just for a few months in 474. However, it cannot be entirely ruled out that he was appointed to the position towards the end of Leo's reign<sup>34</sup>. The last known *magister militum per Thracias* to serve before Heraclius was Armatius. However, we do not know exactly when Armatius' mission came to an end<sup>35</sup>.

**The family.** Except for the name of his father, we do not have specific information regarding members of Heraclius' family, and he certainly had one, if Emperor Zeno shifted the burden of raising a significant amount of money to buy him out

<sup>28</sup> PLRE II, p. 542; Ch. BEGASS, *Die Senatsaristokratie...*, p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> MALCHUS, 6.1–2.

<sup>30</sup> PLRE II, p. 542, 1074 (emendation from διέπων to διέποντα is suggested, which makes it possible to relate τὴν στρατηγίδα τῶν Θρακίων to Heraclius); JOHN OF ANTIOCH, p. 425, note 1.

<sup>31</sup> PLRE II, p. 542; Ł. JAROSZ, *Wschodniorzymscy...*, p. 202–203.

<sup>32</sup> In all probability, Zeno became co-emperor with his son, Leo II, on 29 January 474 (R. KOSIŃSKI, *Początki kariery Tarasikodissy-Zenona*, [in:] *Byzantina Europea. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi*, ed. M. KOKOSZKO, M.J. LESZKA, Łódź 2007 [= BL, 11], p. 303–304; IDEM, *The Emperor Zeno. Religion and Politics*, Cracow 2010, p. 71–72).

<sup>33</sup> PLRE II, p. 542; Ł. JAROSZ, *Wschodniorzymscy...*, p. 202–203. It should be noted that after Heraclius' death the command of the troops that continued to fight against Theodoric Strabo's Goths as late as 484 was given to Illus (JOHN OF ANTIOCH, 233). However, it is not known which position the latter was appointed to (cf. PLRE II, p. 588). Illus proved successful in the fight against the Goths and even managed to take part in the action that resulted in Zeno's removal.

<sup>34</sup> This would be at odds with Malchus' account (6.1) who clearly writes that Heraclius was strategist during Zeno's reign, but it cannot be ruled out that this author was interested not in the moment at which Heraclius had been appointed to the position of *magister militum per Thracias*, but in the activity in which he was involved while holding the post, and this activity made itself apparent during Zeno's reign.

<sup>35</sup> PLRE II, p. 148; Ch. BEGASS, *Die Senatsaristokratie...*, p. 77–78.

of the Gothic captivity<sup>36</sup> onto its shoulders. The ability to raise the money clearly indicates that the family was well-off. Some scholars suggest, that he was a predecessor of Emperor Heraclius (610–641)<sup>37</sup>. However, there is no evidence to support this opinion.

**The opinion.** Malchus left us with a view of Heraclius as a man who was brave and valorous, but not very prudent. He was also impetuous and refused to listen to other people's advice, which, we are told, brought about his downfall<sup>38</sup>. Malchus also hinted that he had been cruel<sup>39</sup>. Theophanes in turn referred to Heraclius and Marsus as δραστήριοι<sup>40</sup>, which is meant to convey the meaning of both effective and enterprising as well as defiant<sup>41</sup>. The last meaning corresponds to some extent to the opinion expressed by Malchus. However, can the first meaning of the word δραστήριοι be considered to be distant from Malchus' perception of Heraclius as a brave and impetuous man of action<sup>42</sup>? Even our scarce knowledge of what he accomplished during the wars against the Persians, Iberians, and especially the Vandals makes us abstain from uncritically accepting Malchus' unfavourable view of him.

It cannot be ruled out that Heraclius took care of the memory of himself, to which the fragmentarily preserved encomium found on the papyrus material from Egypt can be considered to bear witness. It is dedicated to a commander whose name is reconstructed as Heraclius. Was this commander the hero of this article? We do not know for sure<sup>43</sup>.

\* \* \*

Heraclius' career, the one that can be traced in primary sources, lasted seven years. In its course, he rose to an important position and found himself in the circle of those who enjoyed the trust of the empire's rulers, Leo I and Zeno, and his family, of whose members nothing is known, was well-off. His greatest victories as

<sup>36</sup> MALCHUS, 6.2.

<sup>37</sup> C. MANGO, *Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide. L'inscription historique de Martyropolis. Héraclius, Sahrvaraz et la vraie croix*, TM 9, 1985, p. 113–114.

<sup>38</sup> MALCHUS, 6.1. R.C. BLOCKLEY (*Fragmentary...*, vol. II, p. 457, note 12) notes that in describing Heraclius Malchus inspired himself with Thucydides (III, 82, 4).

<sup>39</sup> MALCHUS, 6.2. Bearing witness to this is the reference, already mentioned in the context of the circumstances of Heraclius' death, according to which the Goths, by murdering Heraclius, took revenge for his cruelties.

<sup>40</sup> THEOPHANES, AM 5963.

<sup>41</sup> *Słownik grecko-polski*, vol. I, A–Δ, ed. Z. ABRAMOWICZÓWNA, Warszawa 1958, p. 602; cf. 'activity', 'energy' – *LSJ*, p. 448.

<sup>42</sup> Leaving aside the question of whom Theophanes and Malchus relied on for their view of Heraclius, it is worth noting that Theophanes presented him from the perspective of what he believed to have been a successful expedition against the Vandals, while Malchus' perspective was that of Heraclius' tragic death and his failures in the fight against the Goths.

<sup>43</sup> On this issue, with references to further literature, see Ch. BEGASS, *Die Senatsaristokratie...*, p. 143.

a commander were those against the Vandals. However, they were eclipsed by his failures in the fight against Theodoric Strabo's Goths and by the shameful circumstances of his death.

*Translated by Artur Mękowski*

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Ioannis Antiocheni Fragmenta quae Supersunt Omnia*, ed. S. MARIEV, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 2008 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 47].
- MALCHUS, *Fragmenta*, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus. Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, *Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes*, ed. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1983.
- PRISCUS, *Fragmenta*, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus. Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, *Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes*, ed. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1983.
- PROCOPIUS, *History of the Wars*, vol. II, *Books III–IV*, ed. H.B. DEWING, New York 1916 [= Loeb Classical Library, 81].
- THEOPHANES, *Chronographia*, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883.

### Secondary Literature

- BAGNALL R.S., CAMERON A.I., SCHWARTZ S.R., WORTH K.A., *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta 1987.
- BEGASS Ch., *Die Senatsaristokratie des oströmischen Reiches, ca. 457–518. Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, München 2018, <https://doi.org/10.17104/9783406716331>
- BLEEKER R.A., *Aspar and the Struggle for the Eastern Roman Empire, AD 421–71*, London 2022, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350279292>
- BLOCKLEY R.C., *East Roman Foreign Policy. Formation and Conduct from Diocletian to Anastasius*, Leeds 1992.
- BLOCKLEY R.C., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus. Priscus and Malchus*, vol. I, Liverpool 1981.
- BRODKA D., *Priskos und der Feldzug des Basiliskos gegen Geiserich (468)*, [in:] *Griechische Profanhistoriker des fünften nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts*, ed. T. STICKLER, B. BLECKMANN, Stuttgart 2014, p. 103–120.
- CRAWFORD P., *Roman Emperor Zeno. The Perils of Power Politics in Fifth-century Constantinople*, Yorkshire–Philadelphia 2019.
- GLUŠANIN E.P., *Voennaja znat' rannej Vizantii*, Barnaul 1991.
- GREATREX G., *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532*, Leeds 1998.
- JAROSZ Ł., *Teodoryk Strabon*, “Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne” 140.3, 2013, p. 213–227.

- JAROSZ Ł., *Wschodniorzymscy magistrowie militum w latach 395–527 studium prosopograficzne*, Kraków 2017 (unpublished doctoral thesis).
- KOSIŃSKI R., *Początki kariery Tarasikodissy-Zenona*, [in:] *Byzantina Europea. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi*, ed. M. KOKOSZKO, M.J. LESZKA, Łódź 2007 [= *Byzantina Lodziensia*, 11], p. 289–304.
- KOSIŃSKI R., *The Emperor Zeno. Religion and Politics*, Cracow 2010.
- LIDDELL H.G., SCOTT R., JONES H.S. et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996.
- MANGO C., *Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide. L'inscription historique de Martyropolis. Héraelius, Sahrvaraz et la vraie croix*, "Travaux et mémoires" 9, 1985, p. 91–117.
- MARTINDALE J.R., *The Prosopography of Later Roman Empire*, vol. II, A.D. 395–527, Cambridge 1980.
- MERRILLS A., MILES R., *The Vandals*, Oxford 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444318074>
- MODÉRAN Y., *Les Vandales et l'Empire Romain*, Arles 2014.
- PIGOŃSKI Ł., *Polityka zachodnia cesarza Marcjana (450–457) i Leona I (457–474)*, Łódź 2019 [= *Byzantina Lodziensia*, 29].
- PIGOŃSKI Ł., *The Shields of the Empire. Eastern Roman Military Elites during the Reigns of the Emperors Theodosius II, Marcian and Leo I*, Łódź–Kraków 2023 [= *Byzantina Lodziensia*, 47], <https://doi.org/10.18778/8331-094-7>
- SEECK O., *Herakleios 15*, [in:] *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. VIII, ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1913, col. 503.
- Słownik grecko-polski*, vol. I, A–Δ, ed. Z. ABRAMOWICZÓWNA, Warszawa 1958.
- STEIN E., *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol. II, *De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–465)*, Paris–Bruxelles–Amsterdam 1949.
- STEINACHER R., *Die Vandalen. Aufstieg und Fall eines Barbarenreichs*, Stuttgart 2016.
- STRZELCZYK J., *Wandalowie i ich afrykańskie państwo*, Warszawa 1992.
- TINNENFELD F., *Heraclius 6*, [in:] *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. V, ed. H. CANKIK, H. SCHNEIDER, Stuttgart 1998, p. 382.
- WILCZYŃSKI M., *Gejzeryk i „czwarta wojna punicka”*, Oświęcim 2016.
- WILCZYŃSKI M., *Germanie w służbie zachodniorzymskiej w V w. n.e.*, Oświęcim 2018.


**Mirosław J. Leszka**

University of Lodz  
Faculty of Philosophy and History  
Institute of History  
Department of Byzantine Studies  
ul. Kamińskiego 27a  
90-219 Łódź, Polska/Poland  
[miroslaw.leszka@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:miroslaw.leszka@uni.lodz.pl)






Marios Marselos (Ioannina)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0025-6626>

Elias Valiakos (Larissa)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9315-468X>

## KIDNEY DISEASES IN THE TREATISE *DYNAMERON* OF AELIUS PROMOTUS (2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY AD) A COMPARISON WITH DIOSCORIDES AND NIKOLAOS MYREPSOS

**Abstract.** *Dynameron* is a medical treatise from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, written in Greek by an Alexandrian physician named Aelius Promotus. A copy made in Sicily during the 16<sup>th</sup> century is kept in the Marciana Library of Venice (Codex gr. Z. 295). In 130 chapters, *Dynameron* contains 870 recipes for the treatment of various diseases. Regarding the kidneys, Aelius describes 32 recipes with herbal (59), animal (6) and mineral (1) ingredients, with diuretic, spasmolytic, analgesic, or anti-septic properties, suitable for treating nephrolithiasis, strangury, dysuria and renal inflammations. Several diuretics of Aelius Promotus are similar to those found in *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides (1<sup>st</sup> century AD). On the other hand, all of them are also included in the treatise *Dynameron* of Nikolaos Myrepsos, written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. When the recipes are evaluated as a whole, it is evident that Aelius Promotus was a competent practising physician in a city with a glorious tradition in medicine and sciences.

**Keywords:** Alexandrian medicine, Aelius Promotus, *Dynameron*, Dioscorides, Nikolaos Myrepsos

### Introduction

In the Hellenistic and late Roman eras, between 288 BC and 300 AD, Alexandria was an important financial and cultural centre, gathering famous scientists and physicians from many other places. A central role was played by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BC), who established the Library of Alexandria and allowed and encouraged anatomical studies of the human body, as also did his successor Ptolemy III the Benefactor (246–221 BC). Many archaeological findings show the existence of a large variety of elaborate surgical instruments<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> J.S. MILNE, *Surgical Instruments in Greek and Roman Times, with Illustrations*, Oxford 1907, p. 14.

made mainly of bronze<sup>2</sup>. By the end of the so-called Imperial Rome (27 BC to AD 476), religious and social upheavals led to the gradual decline of the Alexandrian economic and cultural life, and eventually to the destruction of the famous Library<sup>3</sup>.

Many physicians lived and worked in Alexandria or visited the city. Some of them had written treatises on various diseases, therapies, or surgical and orthopaedic procedures. As a rule, these manuscripts were lost and only fragments can be found in the treatises of later authors, whenever they acknowledge their sources. Galen (c. 129–216 AD) practised medicine from a very early stage of his life in his home town Pergamum and, before going to Rome, in order to complete his medical education<sup>4</sup>, he visited Smyrna, Corinth and Alexandria<sup>5</sup>.

One of the physicians who lived and worked in Alexandria was Aelius Promotus, who wrote a large treatise titled *Dynameron*, containing detailed recipes for the treatment of numerous diseases. A copy of *Dynameron* was made in 1470 by a monk named Cosmas, in a Sicilian monastery close to Messina. This copy was made on the order of the cardinal bishop of Sabina Bessarion, a Greek scholar and clergyman, who donated his collection of manuscripts to the Senate of Venice. Promotus' *Dynameron*, kept today in the Marciana National Library (Cod. gr. Z. 295), has been edited by Daria Crismani<sup>6</sup>.

Each recipe of *Dynameron* describes the composition, the preparation and the administration of a remedy, usually containing many ingredients. Composite remedies were common among the followers of the Empiric school, although in the text there are also easily recognizable influences from other theoretical sects, especially the Methodic school<sup>7</sup>.

This article presents and discusses for the first time the parts of *Dynameron* referring to remedies for kidney diseases. Emphasis has been given to diuretics, which are examined in comparison with *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides (1<sup>st</sup> century AD)<sup>8</sup>, as well as with *Dynameron* of Nikolaos Myrepsos (13<sup>th</sup> century AD)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> R. JACKSON, S. LA NIECE, *A Set of Roman Medical Instruments from Italy*, Brit 17, 1986, p. 119–167.

<sup>3</sup> R. MACLEOD, *Alexandria in History and Myth*, [in:] *The Library of Alexandria, Centre of Learning in the Ancient World*, ed. IDEM, New York–London 2000, p. 1–18; L. CASSON, *Libraries in the Ancient World*, New Haven Connecticut 2001, p. 31–47.

<sup>4</sup> *Galen in Hippocratem de natura hominis commentarius*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, vol. XV, ed. C.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1828, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> V. NUTTON, *The Chronology of Galen's Early Career*, CQ 23, 1973, p. 158–171.

<sup>6</sup> ELIO PROMOTO ALESSANDRINO, *Manuale della salute*, ed. D. CRISMANI, Alessandria 2002 [= Hel, 9] (cetera: AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*).

<sup>7</sup> V. NUTTON, *Ancient Medicine*, London–New York 2013, p. 381–383.

<sup>8</sup> *Pedanii Dioscoridis Anazarbei De Materia Medica, libri V*, vol. I–III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berolini 1906–1914 (cetera: DIOSCORIDES, *De Materia Medica*).

<sup>9</sup> The title *Dynameron* is also found in the well-known medical book of Nikolaos Myrepsos, written in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the present article, we have used the following critical edition:

## The author and the manuscript

Little is known about Aelius Promotus and his life. At the very beginning of the treatise *Dynameron*, it is stated that the text is of Aelius Promotus of Alexandria<sup>10</sup>, indicating that the author was born in Alexandria. Although not clearly stated in the manuscript, Alexandria also seems to have been the place where he lived and practised medicine. Apart from *Dynameron*, Aelius Promotus also wrote a short treatise with the title Ἱατρικά, φυσικά καὶ ἀντιπαθητικά which has been edited by Max Wellmann<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, an anonymous manuscript with the title Περί ἰοβόλων θηρίων καὶ δηλητηρίων φαρμάκων has also been considered as of his authorship<sup>12</sup>.

The *Dynameron* of the Marciana Library (15<sup>th</sup> century) consists of 79 folia. Another manuscript from the 16<sup>th</sup> century is in the Library of the Holy Royal Monastery of El Escorial in Spain (Real Bibliotheca, manuscript code FI.02) and consists of 52 folia. Finally, there exists a fragment of an older (14<sup>th</sup> century) manuscript, which is kept in the Vatican Library (Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, manuscript code Vat. gr. 0299) and consists of only two folia, that is, it covers only four pages<sup>13</sup>.

*Dynameron* has the form of a practical manual of therapeutics, with 870 different recipes for the treatment of 130 pathological conditions. Based on historical data, one can conclude that Aelius Promotus practised medicine during the first half of the second century AD. In *Dynameron*, he acknowledges three other physicians as his sources: Soranus (recipe 6, Chapter 3)<sup>14</sup>, Menemachus (recipe 1, Chapter 19)<sup>15</sup> and Hermogenes (recipe 4, Chapter 63)<sup>16</sup>. At least Soranus of Ephesus lived and worked in Alexandria during the turn of the first and second century<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, the author mentions that one recipe for the treatment of respiratory diseases had been used by the troops of Emperor Trajan (recipe 8 in Chapter 35). We know that Trajan (*Marcus Ulpius Traianus*) died in 117 AD, while still in charge of a military expedition against Parthians in the northern Mesopotamia<sup>18</sup>. This recipe should be considered a *terminus post quem* for the time this

---

NIKOLAOS MYREPSOS, *Dynameron. Critical Edition*, vol. I–II, ed. I. VALIAKOS, Heidelberg 2020 (cetera: MYREPSOS, *Dynameron*).

<sup>10</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Ἱατρικά, Φυσικά και Ἀντιπαθητικά*, ed. M. WELLMANN, SKBAWM.HC 2, 1908, p. 772–777.

<sup>12</sup> *Der Traktat περί τῶν ἰοβόλων θηρίων καὶ δηλητηρίων φαρμάκων des sog. Aelius Promotus*, ed. S. IHM, Wiesbaden 1995 [= SeGr, 4].

<sup>13</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*, p. 17–24.

<sup>14</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*, p. 80.

<sup>16</sup> AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> *Soranus Ephesios*, [in:] *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. I. BEKKER, Berlin 1854, p. 1003.

<sup>18</sup> J. BENNETT, *Trajan Optimus Princeps*, Abingdon 1997, p. 183.



particular information was added to the text of *Dynameron*. Galen, on the other hand, in his book on *Synthetic remedies*, describes a collyrium for trachoma referring to it as a *recipe of Aelius*<sup>19</sup>. Indeed, in *Dynameron* there are several ophthalmological preparations with ingredients similar to the ones described by Galen. Therefore, the hypothesis that the *Aelius* mentioned by Galen was indeed Aelius Promotus seems plausible, as also seems the assumption that the two men had met and exchanged views on medical matters. As already mentioned, Galen visited and spent some time in Alexandria before returning to Pergamum at the age of 37 (around 165 AD), according to his own writings<sup>20</sup>. This is a *terminus ante quem* Promotus had written down at least some recipes pertaining to ophthalmological diseases.

Aelius used the Greek language of late antiquity, known as *Biblical Greek* or Κοινή Ἑλληνική (*Koinē Hellēnikē*), the *lingua franca* of much of the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, following the expedition of Alexander the Great<sup>21</sup>. The word *Dynameron* is related with the word *dynameis* (δυνάμεις; actions or properties of medicinal products), where also the modern term *Pharmacodynamics* originates from.

### Recipes in *Dynameron* referring to kidney diseases<sup>22</sup>

Aelius Promotus describes in *Dynameron* 32 different recipes of nephrological interest, which are found in the following 3 chapters:

- **Chapter 15:** *To patients with kidney diseases* (Πρός νεφριτικούς).
- **Chapter 16:** *To patients with nephrolithiasis and diuretics* (Πρός λιθιῶντας καὶ διουρητικά).
- **Chapter 17:** *Diuretics* (Διουρητικά).

The recipes of each chapter are presented in ascending numerical order. A standard recipe includes: (a) the pathological condition for which it is indicated; (b) all required ingredients and excipients, with their respective weight or volume units; (c) instructions for the proper mixing of the ingredients for the formulation of the medicine; (d) dosage, along with directions for administration and (e) incidental data related to comments of Aelius on efficacy and prognosis. Approximately the same structure is found in the recipes of *Corpus Hippocraticum*, as well as in early medieval recipes<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Galeni *De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos I–VI*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, vol. XII, ed. C.G. Kühn, Lipsiae 1826, p. 730.

<sup>20</sup> V. NUTTON, *Ancient Medicine...*, p. 160.

<sup>21</sup> G. HORROCKS, *Greek. A History of the Language and its Speakers*, New York 2010, p. 80–83.

<sup>22</sup> The numbering of chapters and recipes is according to: AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Dynameron*.

<sup>23</sup> L. TOTELIN, *Hippocratic Recipes. Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece*, Leiden–Boston 2009 [= SAM, 34], p. 48.

For the reason of simplicity, only the names of the ingredients are mentioned in the recipes cited here, without the respective weight or volume units. All ingredients applied in the formulations of these recipes are presented in Table 1, with comments on their probable scientific name<sup>24</sup>, as well as on their pharmacological properties<sup>25</sup>.

*Chapter 15. To patients with kidney diseases.*

1. Patients with kidney diseases, suffering from empyemas, gastric ailments and recent or chronic catarrh.

*Ladies' seal, Crocus, Torchwood, Myrrh, Spikenard, Dog rose, Storax, Camel's hay, Frankincense, Costmary, Apple, Raisins, Wild carrot, Honey, Sweet wine.* Give with honey diluted with water, or with sweet wine, a quantity equal to an Aegyptian bean or to a hazelnut.

2. Patients with kidney diseases and difficulty in micturition (strangury).

*Costmary, Parsley, Black pepper, Sweet wine.* Crush and dilute in sweet wine and give the half with a probe.

3. Kidney diseases.

*Wild carrot, Anise, Cucumber, Celery, Alexandrian senna, Bay laurel, Giant fennel, Alpine valerian.* Dilute with water and make lozenges having the size of the seed of lupine. Give on an empty stomach, at bedtime, with up to three cups of water.

*Chapter 16. To patients with urolithiasis and diuretics.*

1. Patients with urolithiasis, from my own experience.

*Bay laurel, Black pepper.* Give a large spoonful, with honey diluted in warm water.

2. Diuretic for patients with urolithiasis, or difficulty in micturition.

*Henbane, Hemlock, Opium poppy, Celery, Cucumber, Pine cones, Mallow, Almonds, Walnuts.* Give until improvement.

3. Diuretic for patients with urolithiasis.

*Myrrh, Wild carrot, Crocus, Bitter almonds.* Give to drink with water.

4. Suitable for dissolving kidney stones.

*Bay laurel.* Boil pieces of bark of bay laurel in water, until it evaporates to one third. Give to drink. It is very effective.

5. To those who urinate blood.

*Myrrh, Cabbage, Opium poppy.* Dilute with sweet wine. Make pills and give to the patient.

<sup>24</sup> B. LANGKAVEL, *Botanik der spaeteren Griechen vom Dritten bis Dreizehnten Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1866; J. ANDRÉ, *Les noms des plantes dans la Rome antique*, Paris 1985; *The Plant List*, <http://www.plantlist.org> [30 X 2022].

<sup>25</sup> P. SCHAUBENBERG, F. PARIS, *Guide des plantes médicinales*, Neuchâtel 1977.

6. Breaking down the stones of the kidney and expelling them.

*Baldmoney, Purple betony, Parsley, Rock foil, Gromwell, Flax seed, Wild carrot, Skirret, Jews'-stone, Black pepper, Wine, Honey.*

7. Suitable for urolithiasis, in order to urinate the stone.

*Soapwort, Rhubarb, Caper bush, White wine.* This remedy dissolves completely the kidney stones in eight days.

8. Provokes the urination of the kidney stones.

*Turtle dove, Wine with honey.*

9. Other similar.

*Alexandrian senna, Myrrh, Frankincense, Wild carrot, Anise, White opium poppy, Nut grass, Jews' stone, Parsley, Crocus, Bitter almonds, Asarabacca, Storax, Black pepper, Honey, Wine.* Dilute with warm water and honey. Give a dose the size of an Aegyptian bean with wine to feverless patients, and with water to those with fever.

10. Other similar.

*Mullein.* A handful of bark from the root of verbascum should be crushed with a wooden mortar and pestle. Then treat with hot water and filter. Give the patient to drink for nine days, then stop for one or two days and then give to drink again for eleven days. After drinking, the patient must take a long walk and have something to eat from time to time. It is very important to note that the patient and the physician should not have on them any iron items, neither in the fingers nor in the shoes or elsewhere. In addition, take care that the root of verbascum is taken from the earth without any iron instrument, and also that once it is taken it should not touch the earth again. This remedy I have used successfully many times.

11. Another remedy for urolithiasis, tested with success by me.

*Cicadas, Parsley, Ladies' seal, Wine (aromatic).* Give a spoonful of aromatic wine (containing pepper and honey), together with crushed cicadas, which should be collected when the vines are ripe and should be dried up in the shadow. Collect and dry many cicadas, so you may have them whenever you need them.

12. To patients who urinate sand.

*Alpine valerian, Parsley, Black pepper, Rhubarb, Iris, Cabbage, Wine (aromatic).* Give a small spoonful with aromatic wine or wine with honey.

13. Other remedy, for expelling stones, for nephropathies and for urination.

*Alexandrian senna, Celery, Myrrh, White pepper, Frankincense, Jews' stone, Wild carrot, Anise, Storax, Opium poppy, Nut grass, Spikenard, Bitter almonds, Sweet flag, Asarabacca, Cucumber, Honey, Sweet wine.* A dose the size of a fava bean is given with honey diluted in water. To feverless patients can be given together with a cup of sweet wine.

14. Other. It breaks and expels stones.

*Scorpions (mottled), Wine (aromatic)*. Burn down scorpions and mix up the ashes with diluted sweet wine. Give a small spoonful and you will be amazed with the results.

15. Other.

*Oreganon*. Boil oreganon in water, until it condenses to one third. Give a cup of the decoction, and the patient will urinate the stones.

### *Chapter 17. Diuretics.*

1. *Cucumber, Celery, Liquorice*. Boil equal parts in water and give to the patient. You may observe the colour of blood in the urine.

2. Other. To patients with difficulty urinating.

*Celery, Anise*. Boil together and give to the patient to drink.

3. Other. To patients with difficulty urinating.

*Thyme, Bay laurel, Hyssop, Oreganon, Parsley, Black pepper, Chicken egg (raw)*. Cut, mix up and give together with a raw egg.

4. Other. A good diuretic, for patients with difficulty urinating.

*Thyme, Fennel, Bay laurel, Wine, Chicken egg*. Trim, mix up and give with egg, or diluted wine.

5. Other. To patients with painful urination (dysuria).

*Parsley, Black pepper, Wine (sweet)*. Give a small spoonful with sweet wine, in the morning and the evening.

6. Other. For those seriously ill, men and women, who suffer from difficult and painful urination.

*Costmary, Honey, Water*. Give the patient to drink a cup with a mixture of these. Ask for your payment beforehand.

7. Diuretic with the name "diabetes" (διαβήτης).

*Alexandrian senna, Cyclamen*.

8. Other.

*Crocus, Liquorice, Wine*. Dissolve in wine and make lozenges. Give one at a time, with wine.

9. Other. To patients with painful urination (dysuria). It is also digestive.

*Myrrh, Black pepper, Castoreum*. Give a mixture of equal parts, on demand.

10. Other. To patients with strangury.

*Celery, Alexandrian senna, Thyme, Iris, Anise, Black pepper, Oreganon, Water*. Give as a warm water solution.

11. Other. To patients with strangury. It is effective in expelling stones. *Black pepper, Jews' stone, Spikenard, Parsley, Cardamom (green), Grass.* Give a decoction, together with wild grass (agrostis).
12. Other. To patients with dysuria. *Parsley, Figs, Water, Honey.* Boil in water and give with wine and some honey.
13. Other. *Nut grass, Wine diluted with water.* Give a small spoonful, together with diluted wine. The patient will urinate immediately.
14. Other. To patients with dysuria. *Fennel, Asarabacca.* Boil together and give the patient to drink.

A closer examination of the classification of the recipes above, as they have been grouped together by Aelius Promotus, reveals an overlap in both the ingredients as well as in indications. Thus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> recipe of Chapter 15, describes a diuretic medicine indicated for patients with kidney disease and strangury. On the other hand, in Chapters 16 and 17, the recipes referred to as *diuretic* are intended mainly for nephrolithiasis, as can be deduced by the indications of difficult urination (strangury) and painful urination (dysuria). It is probable, that Promotus describes with the adjective *diuretic* recipes facilitating the flow of urine rather than an increased volume of urine, as the term implies in modern medicine.

**Table 1**

**Ingredients in the recipes of *Dynameron* referring to kidney diseases**

Name	Description	Properties
Alexandrian senna – Κασία	<i>Senna (Cassia) alexandrina</i> (Fabaceae).	Laxative and fungicide.
Almonds – Κάρυα Θάσια	<i>Amygdalus communis</i> or <i>Prunus dulcis</i> (Rosaceae).	Source of minerals and other useful nutrients. Mild purgative.
Alpine valerian – Νάρδος [Κελτική]	<i>Valeriana celtica</i> or <i>Valeriana officinalis</i> (Caprifoliaceae).	Strong diuretic. Sedative, anxiolytic, analgesic and spasmolytic.
Anise – Άνισον	<i>Pimpinella anisum</i> (Apiaceae).	Carminative (reducing flatulence) and expectorant.
Apple – Μηλον	<i>Pyrus malus</i> (Rosaceae) (the fruit).	Digestive and diuretic.
Asarabacca – Άσαρον	<i>Asarum europaeum</i> (Aristolochiaceae) (the root).	Diuretic and emmenagogue.

Name	Description	Properties
Baldmoney – Μήον	<i>Meum athamanticum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ) (the root).	Antiseptic and antitussive. Used as a diuretic.
Bay laurel – Δάφνη	<i>Laurus nobilis</i> ( <i>Lauraceae</i> ) (the dried fruit or the bark).	Digestive (the essential oil of the fruit and the leaves). Used in strangury.
Bitter almonds – Κάρυνα [πικρά]	<i>Amygdalus communis</i> var. <i>Amara</i> ( <i>Rosaceae</i> ). The nuts (bitter almonds).	They contain amygdalin, which eventually yields glucose, benzaldehyde and traces of hydrocyanic acid.
Black Pepper – Πέπερι [μέλαν]	<i>Piper nigrum</i> ( <i>Piperaceae</i> ).	Orexigenic. Irritant for the mucosa of the alimentary and the urogenital system.
Cabbage – Κράμβη [σπέρμα]	<i>Brassica</i> spp. ( <i>Brassicaceae</i> ) (the seeds).	Mild laxative.
Camel's hay – Σχοινανθός	<i>Cymbopogon schoenanthus</i> ( <i>Graminaceae</i> ) (the essential oil).	Diuretic and antiseptic.
Caper bush – Κάππαρις [ρίζα]	<i>Capparis spinosa</i> ( <i>Capparaceae</i> ) (the root).	Diuretic, emmenagogue and carminative.
Cardamom (green) – Καρδάμωμον	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> ( <i>Zingiberaceae</i> ).	Expectorant and gastroprotective.
Castoreum – Καστόριον	Secretion of the perineal glands of European beaver <i>Castor fibre</i> ( <i>Castoridae</i> ).	Anti-inflammatory.
Celery – Σέλινον [κηπταίον]	<i>Apium graveolens</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ).	Diuretic, especially the seeds.
Chicken egg – Ώλιόν [ρόφητόν]	The raw egg of <i>Galus galus</i> ( <i>Phasianidae</i> ).	A source of protein.
Cicadas – Τέττιγες	Dried cicadas ( <i>Tibicen plebejus</i> , <i>Cicadidae</i> ), collected during summer.	Possibly, a source of protein.
Costmary – Κόστος	<i>Saussurea lappa</i> ( <i>Asteraceae</i> ).	Digestive, astringent and antiseptic.
Crocus – Κρόκος	<i>Crocus sativus</i> var. <i>graecus</i> ( <i>Iridaceae</i> ) (the stigmas of the flower).	Diuretic (the stigmas and the root) when taken with wine.
Cucumber – Σίκυς [ήμερος]	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> ( <i>Cucurbitaceae</i> ) (the seeds).	Diuretic, laxative and vermifuge. Suitable for ulcerations of the bladder.
Cyclamen – Κάσσαμος	<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i> ( <i>Primulaceae</i> ) (the bulb).	Purgative and diuretic.

Name	Description	Properties
Dog rose – Ρόδα [φύλλα]	<i>Cynorrhodom</i> ( <i>Rosa canina</i> , <i>Rosaceae</i> ) (the leaves and the seeds).	Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and astringent. The seeds are diuretic.
Fennel – Μάραθρον	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ) (the seeds and the leaves).	Carminative, digestive, lactagogue and diuretic.
Figs (dried) – Ίσχάδες	<i>Ficus carica</i> ( <i>Moraceae</i> ) (the dried figs).	Laxative and diuretic.
Flax seed – Λινόσπερμον	<i>Linum spp.</i> ( <i>Linaceae</i> ) (the seeds).	Diuretic, digestive and purgative.
Frankincense – Λιβανός	<i>Boswellia sacra</i> ( <i>Burseraceae</i> ) (the resin).	Sedative and diuretic.
Giant fennel (oleoresin) – Αμμωνιακόν [θυμίαμα]	<i>Ferula communis var. brevifolia</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ) (the resin).	Digestive and against dysentery.
Grass – Άγρωστις βοτάνη	<i>Agropyrum repens</i> ( <i>Poaceae</i> ).	A potent diuretic, with antiviral and antimicrobial properties.
Gromwell (common) – Λιθόσπερμον	<i>Lithospermum officinale</i> ( <i>Boraginaceae</i> ).	Sedative and antipyretic.
Hemlock – Κώνειον	<i>Conium maculatum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ).	A strong poison. At very low doses, it has been used for urinary bladder infections.
Henbane – Ύοσκάμος	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i> ( <i>Solanaceae</i> ).	At very low doses, as a spasmolytic.
Honey – Μέλι	Honey, often referred as “honey of Attica”, was usually diluted with water.	As an excipient, for improving the taste of the active ingredients.
Hyssop – Ύσσωπος [Κρητικός]	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> ( <i>Labiatae</i> ) (Cretan).	For sore throat and as an expectorant. It is spasmolytic and has been used in urinary tract infections.
Iris (bearded) – Ίρις	<i>Iris germanica</i> ( <i>Iridaceae</i> ) (the rhizome).	Expectorant, emollient and diuretic. Suitable as an excipient, because it contains aromatic viscous substances.
Jews’ stone – Τηκόλιθος άρρηγ και θήλυς (“male” and “female”)	<i>Lapis Judaicus</i> , <i>Lapis Syriacus</i> , <i>Phoenicites</i> or <i>Tecolithos</i> (“solvent stone”).	Fossil spines of the sea urchin <i>Balanocidaris</i> (now extinct). Powder or shaves were used with the belief that they dissolve urinary stones.
Laceflower – Άμμι	<i>Ammi visnaga</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ).	It is suitable for dysuria. May inhibit the formation of oxalate stones in the kidneys.

Name	Description	Properties
Ladies' seal (or Red bryony, or Cretan bryony) – Φύλλον	<i>Tamus communis</i> ( <i>Dioscoreaceae</i> ). The curcubit ampelos leuké (ἄμπελος λευκή) of Dioscorides.	A strong purgative, which has been used for gastro-intestinal disorders. Also a diuretic.
Liquorice – Γλυκύρριζα	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> ( <i>Fabaceae</i> ) (the root).	Beneficial in gastritis and gastric ulcers. Also, as an expectorant. It has been used in inflammations of the kidneys and the urinary bladder.
Mallow (common) – Μολόχη [ἀγρία, σπέρμα]	<i>Malva silvestris</i> ( <i>Malvaceae</i> ) (the seeds).	Diuretic, emollient and astringent. The seeds have soothing properties in ailments of the urinary bladder.
Mullein – Φλόμος [φλοιός ρίζας]	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i> ( <i>Scrophulariaceae</i> ) (the bark of the root).	Astringent and expectorant. Has been used in dysuria and diarrhoea.
Myrrh – Σμύρνα (Smyrna) (the resin)	<i>Commiphora myrrha</i> ( <i>Burseraceae</i> ).	A resin with antiseptic and diuretic properties.
Nut grass – Κύπερος [σπέρμα]	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i> ( <i>Cyperaceae</i> ) (seeds and the stem of the flower).	Digestive and anti-inflammatory.
Opium poppy – Μήκων	<i>Papaver somniferum</i> ( <i>Papaveraceae</i> ) (the sap of the fruit).	Sedative with strong analgesic and antitussive properties.
Oreganon – Όρίανον	<i>Origanum vulgare</i> ( <i>Labiatae</i> ) [boil to reduce to one third].	Spasmolytic, digestive, carminative, expectorant and diuretic.
Parsley – Πετροσέλινον [Μακεδονήσιον]	<i>Apium petroselinum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ).	Diuretic for patients with pain in the kidneys or the bladder.
Pine cones – Στροβίλια [πεφωσμένα]	<i>Pinus halepensis</i> ( <i>Pinaceae</i> ) (the small cones, roasted).	Diuretic (the seeds), for patients with ailments of the bladder.
Purple betony – Βεττονίκη	<i>Stachys officinalis</i> ( <i>Lamiaceae</i> ).	Diuretic. An astringent with many uses in traditional medicine.
Raisins – Σταφίδες [έκγιγαρτισμένα]	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> ( <i>Vitaceae</i> ) (the raisins, without the seeds).	Raisins are a valuable source of sugars and minerals.
Rhubarb – Ῥῆον [Ποντικόν]	<i>Rheum officinale</i> ( <i>Polygonaceae</i> ).	Astringent, digestive, cholagogue, laxative and diuretic.
Rock foil – Σαρξιδάγον (σαξιδραγός)	<i>Saxifraga spp.</i> ( <i>Saxifragaceae</i> ).	It has been used for patients with respiratory complaints, strangury and urolithiasis.
Scorpion (mottled) – Σκορπίος [τέφρα]	<i>Mesobuthus europeus</i> ( <i>Buthidae</i> ) (the ashes).	No data available.
Skirret – Σίνων	<i>Sium sisarum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ).	Digestive. Also as a diuretic, suitable for nephrolithiasis.



Name	Description	Properties
Soapwort – Στρουθίον	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i> ( <i>Caryophyllaceae</i> ).	Emollient, antiseptic and strong antifungal.
Spikenard – Ναρδοστάχυς	<i>Patrinia grandiflora</i> ( <i>Nardaceae</i> ) (the essential oil of the root).	An essential oil with pleasant odour and diuretic properties.
Storax – Στύραξ	<i>Styrax officinalis</i> ( <i>Styracaceae</i> ) (the oleoresin).	As an antiseptic together with frankincense and galbanum.
Sweet flag – Άκορον	<i>Acorus calamus</i> or <i>Calamus aromaticus</i> ( <i>Acoraceae</i> ) (the rhizome).	Digestive, carminative, antibacterial and diuretic.
Thyme – Θύμος	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i> ( <i>Labiatae</i> ) (the essential oil).	The essential oil (thymol) has antiseptic, diuretic, mucolytic and emmenagogue properties.
Torchwood – Ξηροβάλασαμον	<i>Amyris elemifera</i> ( <i>Rutaceae</i> ) (the resin).	The resin has antiseptic and diuretic properties.
Turtle dove – Τρυγών [ὄρνεον, κόπρος]	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i> ( <i>Columbidae</i> ) (droppings).	No data available.
Walnuts – Κάρυα [βασιλικά]	<i>Juglans regia</i> ( <i>Juglandaceae</i> ) (fruit).	The green peel of the nut is a strong astringent.
White Opium poppy – Μήκων [λευκή]	<i>Papaver somniferum</i> , var. <i>album</i> ( <i>Papaveraceae</i> ).	A sedative with strong analgesic and antitussive properties.
White pepper – Πέπερι [λευκόν]	<i>Piper album</i> ( <i>Piperaceae</i> ). The exfoliated seeds of <i>Piper nigrum</i> .	Orexigenic. Irritant in the mucosa of the alimentary and the urogenital system.
Wild carrot – Δαΰκος	<i>Daucus carota</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> ) (the root).	Digestive and diuretic.
Wine [aromatic] – Κόνδιτος οίνος Wine [sweet] – Γλυκός οίνος Wine [white] – Λευκός οίνος Wine [with honey] – Μελικρατος οίνος	Various types of wine and wine admixtures have been used as remedies ( <i>pharmaceutical wines</i> ). The so-called <i>aromatic wine</i> contained pepper and honey.	Wines have been used mainly as excipients, for dissolving the ingredients of a recipe and also for improving the taste. The ethanol contained in wines (usually 12–15%, per volume) is known for its diuretic properties.
Brackets contain additional specific information in the original text of Promotus' Dynameron.		

### Diuretic remedies in Dioscorides’ *De Materia Medica*

In the book *De Materia Medica* (Περὶ Ἰατρικῆς)<sup>26</sup>, written in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Dioscorides gives a full account for each of his remedies, suggesting various therapeutic indications according to their pharmacological properties. The structure of his text is therefore more akin to a book of Pharmacology than to a therapeutic index, as is the case with Promotus’ *Dynameron* and Myrepsos’ *Dynameron*. The plant species which Dioscorides classified, among many other properties, as διούρησις have been thoroughly examined with the aim of validating their effectiveness. The published scientific data is based on studies on both humans and experimental animals<sup>27</sup>. We have used the list of these published evaluations, for the comparison with the diuretic plants mentioned in *Dynameron* of Aelius Promotus.

Examining the diuretic remedies of Dioscorides, it is apparent that the book *De Materia Medica* classifies considerably fewer species as diuretic, when compared with the book of Aelius Promotus (Table 2). Of the total 59 diuretic ingredients in Promotus’ *Dynameron*, only 30 can be found in the text of Dioscorides.

### Diuretic remedies in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ *Dynameron*

*Dynameron* of Nikolaos Myrepsos was written approximately in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>28</sup>. It is a complete therapeutic index, with more than 2667 recipes intended for the treatment of a variety of diseases. Of the 320 recipes of nephrological interest, 265 recipes are cited as diuretic and are recommended for specific disorders, such as urolithiasis, dysuria, strangury etc. The ingredients of these diuretic recipes are mostly medicinal plants<sup>29</sup>, although one can find also ingredients of animal<sup>30</sup> and mineral origin<sup>31</sup>, as is the case with Dioscorides and Promotus.

As shown in Table 2, all 59 diuretic ingredients described in the recipes of Aelius Propotus’ *Dynameron* can be found in the text of Nikolaos Myrepsos.

<sup>26</sup> DIOSCORIDES, *De Materia Medica*, p. 78.

<sup>27</sup> E. YARNELL, A. TOUWAIDE, *Accuracy of Dioscorides’, De materia medica (First Century C.E.), Regarding Diuretic Activity of Plants*, JACM 25.1, 2018, p. 1–14.

<sup>28</sup> MYREPSOS, *Dynameron*, p. XLVII–XLVIII.

<sup>29</sup> E. VALIAKOS, M. MARSELOS, N. SAKELLARIDIS, T. CONSTANTINIDIS, H. SKAL TSA, *Ethnopharmacological Approach to the Herbal Medicines of the “Antidotes” in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron*, Jeph 163, 2015, p. 68–82; and E. VALIAKOS, M. MARSELOS, N. SAKELLARIDIS, T. CONSTANTINIDIS, H. SKAL TSA, *Ethnopharmacological Approach to the Herbal Medicines of the “Elements Alpha to delta” in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron. Part II*, Jeph 205, 2017, p. 246–260.

<sup>30</sup> E. VALIAKOS, M. MARSELOS, M.E. GRAFAKOU, H. SKAL TSA, N. SAKELLARIDIS, *Remedies of Animal Origin and their Indications in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron*, Jeph 276, 2021, p. 114–191.

<sup>31</sup> E. VALIAKOS, M. MARSELOS, H. SKAL TSA, *Inorganic Substances and their Uses in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron. Recent Applications in Modern Therapy*, ToxR 8, 2021, p. 1792–1802.

Table 2

The comparison of ingredients of diuretic recipes and of their respective uses in Aelius Promotus' *Dynameron*, Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* and Nikolaos Myrepsos' *Dynameron*\*

<i>Dynameron</i> of Aelius Promotus	<i>De Materia Medica</i> of Dioscorides	<i>Dynameron</i> of Nikolaos Myrepsos
1. Alexandrian senna <i>Senna</i> or <i>Cassia alexandrina</i> ( <i>Fabaceae</i> )	-	+
2. Almonds <i>Prunus dulcis</i> ( <i>Rosaceae</i> )	+	+
3. Alpine valerian – <i>Valeriana celtica</i> or <i>Valeriana officinalis</i> ( <i>Caprifoliaceae</i> )	+	+
4. Anise <i>Pimpinella anisum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	+	+
5. Apple <i>Pyrus malus</i> ( <i>Rosaceae</i> )	-	+
6. Asarabacca <i>Asarum europaeum</i> ( <i>Aristolochiaceae</i> )	+	+
7. Baldmoney <i>Meum athamanticum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	+	+
8. Bay laurel <i>Laurus nobilis</i> ( <i>Lauraceae</i> )	+	+
9. Bitter almonds <i>Amygdalus communis</i> var. <i>Amara</i> ( <i>Rosaceae</i> )	+	+
10. Black pepper <i>Piper nigrum</i> ( <i>Piperaceae</i> )	+	+
11. Cabbage [the seeds] <i>Brassica</i> spp. ( <i>Brassicaceae</i> )	+	+
12. Camel's hay <i>Cymbopogon schoenanthus</i> ( <i>Graminaceae</i> )	+	+
13. Caper bush <i>Capparis spinosa</i> ( <i>Capparaceae</i> )	+	+
14. Cardamom <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> ( <i>Zingiberaceae</i> )	-	+
15. Celery <i>Apium graveolens</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	+	+
16. Chicken egg [raw] <i>Galus galus</i> ( <i>Phasianidae</i> )	-	+
17. Cicadas <i>Tibicen plebejus</i> ( <i>Cicadidae</i> )	-	+

Dynameron of Aelius Promotus	De Materia Medica of Dioscorides	Dynameron of Nikolaos Myrepsos
18. Costmary <i>Saussurea lappa</i> (Asteraceae)	-	+
19. Crocus <i>Crocus sativus</i> var. <i>graecus</i> (Iridaceae)	+	+
20. Cucumber <i>Cucumis sativus</i> (Cucurbitaceae)	+	+
21. Cyclamen <i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i> (Primulaceae)	-	+
22. Dog rose <i>Cynorrhodom</i> ( <i>Rosa canina</i> , Rosaceae)	-	+
23. Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> (Apiaceae)	+	+
24. Figs [dried] <i>Ficus carica</i> (Moraceae)	-	+
25. Flax seed <i>Linum</i> spp. (Linaceae)	-	+
26. Frankincense <i>Boswellia sacra</i> (Burseraceae) (the resin)	-	+
27. Giant fennel [oleoresin] <i>Ferula communis</i> var. <i>brevifolia</i> (Apiaceae)	-	+
28. Grass <i>Agropyrum repens</i> (Poaceae)	+	+
29. Gromwell <i>Lithospermum officinale</i> (Boraginaceae)	+	+
30. Hyssop <i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> (Labiatae)	-	+
31. Iris <i>Iris germanica</i> (Iridaceae)	+	+
32. Jews' stone <i>Lapis Judaicus</i> or <i>Lapis Syriacus</i>	+	+
33. Laceflower <i>Ammi visnaga</i> (Apiaceae)	-	+
34. Ladies' seal <i>Tamus communis</i> (Dioscoreaceae)	+	+
35. Liquorice <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> (Fabaceae)	-	+
36. Mallow <i>Malva silvestris</i> (Malvaceae)	-	+
37. Mullein <i>Verbascum thapsus</i> (Scrophulariaceae)	-	+

<i>Dynameron of Aelius Promotus</i>	<i>De Materia Medica of Dioscorides</i>	<i>Dynameron of Nikolaos Myrepsos</i>
38. Myrrh <i>Commiphora myrrha</i> or <i>Commiphora gileadensis</i> ( <i>Burseraceae</i> )	-	+
39. Nut grass <i>Cyperus rotundus</i> ( <i>Cyperaceae</i> )	+	+
40. Opium poppy <i>Papaver somniferum</i> ( <i>Papaveraceae</i> )	-	+
41. Oreganon <i>Origanum vulgare</i> ( <i>Labiatae</i> )	-	+
42. Parsley <i>Apium petroselinum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	+	+
43. Pine cones <i>Pinus halepensis</i> ( <i>Pinaceae</i> )	+	+
44. Purple betony <i>Stachys officinalis</i> ( <i>Lamiaceae</i> )	+	+
45. Raisins <i>Vitis vinifera</i> ( <i>Vitaceae</i> )	-	+
46. Rhubarb <i>Rheum officinale</i> ( <i>Polygonaceae</i> )	-	+
47. Rock foil <i>Saxifraga</i> spp. ( <i>Saxifragaceae</i> )	-	+
48. Scorpion (mottled) <i>Mesobuthus europeus</i> ( <i>Buthidae</i> )		+
49. Skirret <i>Sium sisarum</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	-	+
50. Soapwort <i>Saponaria officinalis</i> ( <i>Caryophyllaceae</i> )	+	+
51. Spikenard <i>Patrinia grandiflora</i> ( <i>Nardaceae</i> )	+	+
52. Storax [oleoresin] <i>Styrax officinalis</i> ( <i>Styracaceae</i> )	-	+
53. Sweet flag <i>Acorus calamus</i> or <i>Calamus aromaticus</i> ( <i>Acoraceae</i> )	+	+
54. Thyme <i>Thymus vulgaris</i> ( <i>Labiatae</i> )	+	+
55. Torchwood <i>Amyris elemifera</i> ( <i>Rutaceae</i> )	-	+
56. Walnuts - Κάρυνα [βασιλικά] <i>Juglans regia</i> ( <i>Juglandaceae</i> )	-	+

<i>Dynameron</i> of Aelius Promotus	<i>De Materia Medica</i> of Dioscorides	<i>Dynameron</i> of Nikolaos Myrepsos
57. White pepper <i>Piper album</i> ( <i>Piperaceae</i> )	–	+
58. Wild carrot <i>Daucus carota</i> ( <i>Apiaceae</i> )	+	+
59. Wine, plain or “pharmaceutical” <i>Vitis vinifera</i> ( <i>Vitaceae</i> )	+	+
* The presence or absence of an ingredient is denoted with + or –, respectively. Brackets contain additional specific information in the original text of Promotus’ <i>Dynameron</i> .		

## Discussion and conclusions

It is a well-established fact that medicinal tradition flourished in the region of eastern Mediterranean basin throughout antiquity, starting with the centres of Kos and Knidos, in the fifth century BC, and eventually expanding to the mainland of Greece, Asia Minor, southern Italy, Cyprus and Egypt. In the Hellenistic era, Alexandria gradually became a famous centre of innovation, both in medicine as well as in surgery, due to a remarkable progress in the physiology and anatomy of the human body. The book of Aelius Promotus with the title *Dynameron* reflects the high level of Alexandrian medicine. Unlike *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, which gives a detailed account of each remedy, *Dynameron* of Aelius Promotus represents a *vade mecum*, a short manual for everyday use by a physician, written with the intention of giving practical solutions to common medical problems. It has the structure of a book of Pharmacotherapy, with 130 chapters on various diseases and their treatment. We also find the same structure in the books of Galen, as well as in the *Dynameron* of Nikolaos Myrepsos.

In the cited 32 recipes related to kidney ailments, Aelius Promotus describes the use of 59 different herbs, 6 ingredients of animal origin, as well as 1 mineral. As excipients, he uses water, wine and honey. For the treatment of nephrological diseases, he cites several well established remedies suitable for diuresis and for alleviating symptoms related to urolithiasis and renal inflammation. The author quite frequently added personal comments on the efficacy of a recipe, referring to his previous experience. This indicates that *Dynameron* is an account of treatments proposed by an experienced physician, and not a mere compilation of recipes from earlier medical texts.

Many of the recommended herbal ingredients are intended for diuresis in case of difficulty in micturition (strangury) or pain in micturition (dysuria), related to nephrolithiasis. Several other pathological conditions may not be specified (as e.g. nephritis, or renal neoplasms), but they are implied indirectly as *urination*

of blood. It is worth noticing that “hematuria” does not occur in ancient texts; it is a relatively new medical term coined at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup>.

Several medicinal plants are proposed as diuretics by Aelius Promotus, some of which, according to our current knowledge of Pharmacognosy, possess genuine diuretic properties. On the other hand, there are also plants facilitating diuresis due to their high-water content, since a greater urine output is to be expected after an increased fluid intake. This is the case with many herbal medicines and it may explain the rather frequent use of the term “diuretic” encountered in the texts of many physicians in antiquity<sup>33</sup>. Moreover, wine or water with honey are used as excipients and they are reasonably expected to add to the production of urine, due to the known diuretic properties of ethyl alcohol, as well as due to the increased intake of water (e.g., in recipe 3 of Chapter 15, the directions are: *Give [the remedy] with three cups of water*).

There are, in turn, herbal medicines which have entirely legitimate applications in the treatment of patients with nephrolithiasis, such as the spasmolytic henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) and the analgesic opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*). As a matter of fact, the active ingredients of these plants (scopolamine and morphine, respectively) continue to be irreplaceable agents in the armamentarium of modern medicine.

Some of the diuretic remedies proposed by Aelius Promotus can also be found in the book *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, where they are granted similar clinical uses. A high proportion of these herbs indeed possess significant diuretic properties, as has been shown in clinical studies on humans and laboratory animals<sup>34</sup>.

Promotus does not mention the name of Dioscorides in his book, despite the fact that he is usually very eager to acknowledge the origin of a recipe, a very common practice among the authors of the Roman period<sup>35</sup>. It is true that the time gap between these two authors is rather narrow (only a few decades), leaving room for a speculation that Aelius was not aware of the work of Dioscorides. The fact that many herbal remedies are advocated for the same indications by both writers may simply show that their use was well-established at that time, either as an official knowledge in written texts or as an oral tradition in folk medicine.

The text of Nikolaos Myrepsos contains virtually every single diuretic of Promotus, as opposed to the book *De Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, where only

<sup>32</sup> *Hematuria*, [in:] *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hematuria> [30 X 2022].

<sup>33</sup> M.M. SHOJA, S.R. TUBBS, A.N. BOSMIA, M.A.A. FAKHREE, A. JOUYBAN, M.W. BALCH, M. LOUKAS, K. KHODADOUST, M. KHALILI, G. EKNOYAN, *Herbal Diuretics in Medieval Persian and Arabic Medicine*, *JACM* 21.6, 2015, p. 309–320.

<sup>34</sup> E. YARNELL, A. TOUWAIDE, *Accuracy of Dioscorides...*, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> L. TOTELIN, *Hippocratic Recipes...*, p. 89.

half of the diuretics of Promotus can be found. It is impressive that after eleven centuries all 59 diuretics described in the Alexandrian *Dynameron* are also included in the Byzantine *Dynameron*. We do not know if Myrepsos had access to the manuscript of Promotus *per se*. It is probable that some parts of his manuscript were preserved in the works of subsequent medical writers. To date, this issue has not been addressed in detail, but some obvious similarities between the two texts are easily detectable.

Although Aelius Promotus was apparently a knowledgeable physician, some of his remedies are obscure and questionable. Perhaps the most typical example is *Jews' stone* as an agent that contributes to the dissolution of renal stones. This rather peculiar product was included in the official British Pharmacopoeia until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>36</sup>, but the scientific community has not come yet to a conclusion on its therapeutic efficacy<sup>37</sup>. The detailed description of how mullein is harvested (Chapter 16, recipe 10) is, in turn, definitely relating a superstitious ritual. In other chapters of *Dynameron*, not presented here, there are several examples of superstitions, usually referring to the phase of the moon, or to the need of invoking a divine power while preparing or administering a recipe. Magic remedies and superstitious beliefs, not uncommon among medical writers of that time (including Dioscorides), have gradually been eliminated and they are virtually absent in medical texts of the late Byzantine era<sup>38</sup>.

Aelius Promotus describes the treatment of many kidney ailments, using almost seventy different ingredients, several of them easily recognisable for their effectiveness even in the light of modern science. By adding various comments to his recipes, he enriched the medical information with hints of the everyday clinical practice. In most instances, Aelius is very confident and he does not hesitate to praise the efficacy of a recipe. However, there is one exception. In the 6<sup>th</sup> recipe of Chapter 17 (*For those seriously ill, men and women, who suffer from difficult and painful urination*) he seems almost cynical in his final advice: *Give the patient to drink a cup with a mixture of these. Ask your payment beforehand.*

In the prologue of the manuscript, Aelius Promotus states clearly that after having practised medicine for his entire life, he is writing down the recipes of *Dynameron* as an account of his professional experience and as a spiritual patrimony to the younger physicians. According to reasonable chronological estimations, this

<sup>36</sup> T. REDWOOD, *Gray's Supplement to Pharmacopoeia: Being a Concise but Comprehensive Dispensatory*, London 1848, p. 743.

<sup>37</sup> P. FARIDI, H. SERADI, S. MOHAMMADI-SAMANI, M. VOSSOUGH, A. MOHAGHEGHZADEH, J. ROOZBEH, *Randomized and Double-blinded Clinical Trial of the Safety and Calcium Kidney Stone Dissolving Efficacy of Lapis judaicus*, JEph 156, 2014, p. 82–87. S.A.A. MAKBU, N. JAHAN, G. AHMAD, *Hajrul yahood (Lapis judaicus): An Important Mineral Drug of Unani System of Medicine for the Management of Urolithiasis*, JEph 222, 2018, p. 165–170.

<sup>38</sup> I. GRIMM-STADELMANN, *Untersuchungen zur iatromagie in der Byzantinischen Zeit. Zur Tradierung gräkoägyptischer und spätantiker iatromagischer Motive*, Berlin–Boston 2020 [= BArchiv, 1], p. 233.



happened in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The fact that the manuscript of the Marciana Library is a copy made in 15<sup>th</sup> century implies that his medical knowledge was highly esteemed by many future generations of physicians. The chapters on kidney diseases analysed in the present paper show that Aelius Promotus's *Dynameron* is a detailed therapeutic manual written at a time when Alexandria was still a city with a glorious medical tradition. The historical and scientific value of this text has not yet been given the attention it deserves, especially when its possible influence on the work of subsequent medical writers comes into consideration.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- AELIUS PROMOTUS, *Iatrika, Fysika kai Antipathētika*, ed. M. WELLMANN, "Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München. Historische Classe" 2, 1908, p. 772–777.
- ELIO PROMOTO ALESSANDRINO, *Manuale della salute*, ed. D. CRISMANI, Alessandria 2002 [= *Hellenica*, 9].
- Galenus De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos I–VI*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, vol. XII, ed. C.G. KÜHN, Lipsiae 1826.
- Galenus in Hippocratem de natura hominis commentarius*, [in:] *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia*, vol. XV, ed. C.G. KÜHN, Leipzig 1828.
- NIKOLAOS MYREPSOS, *Dynameron. Critical Edition*, vol. I–II, ed. I. VALIAKOS, Heidelberg 2020.
- Pedanii Dioscoridis Anazarbei De Materia Medica, libri V*, vol. I–III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berolini 1906–1914.
- Suida Lexicon*, ed. I. BEKKER, Berlin 1854.
- Der Traktat περί τῶν ἰσθόλων θηρίων καὶ δηλητηρίων φαρμάκων des sog. Aelius Promotus*, ed. S. IHM, Wiesbaden 1995 [= *Serta Graeca. Beiträge zur Erforschung griechischer Texte*, 4].

### Secondary Literature

- ANDRÉ J., *Les noms des plantes dans la Rome antique*, Paris 1985.
- BENNETT J., *Trajan Optimus Princeps*, Abingdon 1997.
- CASSON L., *Libraries in the Ancient World*, New Haven Connecticut 2001.
- FARIDI P., SERADJ H., MOHAMMADI-SAMANI S., VOSSOUGH M., MOHAGHEGHZADEH A., ROOZBEH J., *Randomized and Double-blinded Clinical Trial of the Safety and Calcium Kidney Stone Dissolving Efficacy of Lapis judaicus*, "Journal of Ethnopharmacology" 156, 2014, p. 82–87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2014.08.003>

- GRIMM-STADELMANN I., *Untersuchungen zur iatromagie in der Byzantinischen Zeit. Zur Tradierung gräkoägyptischer und spätantiker iatromagischer Motive*, Berlin–Boston 2020 [= Byzantinisches Archiv. Series Medica, 1], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110619041>
- Hematuria, [in:] *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hematuria> [30 X 2022].
- HORROCKS G., *Greek. A History of the Language and its Speakers*, New York 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444318913>
- JACKSON R., LA NIECE S., *A Set of Roman Medical Instruments from Italy*, “*Britannia*” 17, 1986, p. 119–167, <https://doi.org/10.2307/526543>
- LANGKAVEL B., *Botanik der spaeteren Griechen vom Dritten bis Dreizehnten Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1866, <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.10990>
- MACLEOD R., *Alexandria in History and Myth*, [in:] *The Library of Alexandria, Centre of Learning in the Ancient World*, ed. R. MAC LEOD, New York–London 2000, p. 1–18.
- MAKBUL S.A.A., JAHAN N., AHMAD G., *Hajrul yahood (Lapis judaicus): An Important Mineral Drug of Unani System of Medicine for the Management of Urolithiasis*, “*Journal of Ethnopharmacology*” 222, 2018, p. 165–170, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2018.04.047>
- MILNE J.S., *Surgical Instruments in Greek and Roman Times, with Illustrations*, Oxford 1907.
- NUTTON V., *Ancient Medicine*, London–New York 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203081297>
- NUTTON V., *The Chronology of Galen’s Early Career*, “*Classical Quarterly*” 23, 1973, p. 158–171, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838800036600>
- The Plant List*, <http://www.plantlist.org> [30 X 2022].
- REDWOOD T., *Gray’s Supplement to Pharmacopoeia: Being a Concise but Comprehensive Dispensatory*, London 1848.
- SCHAUBENBERG P., PARIS F., *Guide des plantes médicinales*, Neuchâtel 1977.
- SHOJA M.M., TUBBS S.R., BOSMIA A.N., FAKHREE M.A.A., JOUYBAN A., BALCH M.W., LOUKAS M., KHODADOUST K., KHALILI M., EKNOYAN G., *Herbal Diuretics in Medieval Persian and Arabic Medicine*, “*Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*” 21.6, 2015, p. 309–320, <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2015.0031>
- TOTELIN L., *Hippocratic Recipes. Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth-Century Greece*, Leiden–Boston 2009 [= *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, 34], <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004171541.i-366>
- VALIAKOS E., MARSELOS M., SKAL TSA H., *Inorganic Substances and their Uses in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron. Recent Applications in Modern Therapy*, “*Toxicology Reports*” 8, 2021, p. 1792–1802, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.toxrep.2021.10.009>
- VALIAKOS E., MARSELOS M., GRAFAKOU M.E., SKAL TSA H., SAKELLARIDIS N., *Remedies of Animal Origin and their Indications in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron*, “*Journal of Ethnopharmacology*” 276, 2021, p. 114–191, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2021.114191>
- VALIAKOS E., MARSELOS M., SAKELLARIDIS N., CONSTANTINIDIS T., SKAL TSA H., *Ethnopharmacological Approach to the Herbal Medicines of the “Antidotes” in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron*, “*Journal of Ethnopharmacology*” 163, 2015, p. 68–82, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2015.01.005>

VALIAKOS E., MARSELOS M., SAKELLARIDIS N., CONSTANTINIDIS T., SKAL TSA H., *Ethnopharmacological Approach to the Herbal Medicines of the “Elements Alpha to delta” in Nikolaos Myrepsos’ Dynameron. Part II*, “Journal of Ethnopharmacology” 205, 2017, p. 246–260, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2017.04.021>

YARNELL E., TOUWAIDE A., *Accuracy of Dioscorides’, De materia medica (First Century C.E.), Regarding Diuretic Activity of Plants*, “Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine” 25.1, 2018, p. 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2018.0251>

**Marios Marselos**


University of Ioannina  
School of Health Sciences  
Medical Faculty  
Panepistimioupolis  
45110 Ioannina, Greece  
[mmarselos@uoi.gr](mailto:mmarselos@uoi.gr)

**Elias Valiakos**

University of Thessaly  
School of Health Sciences  
Department of Nursing  
History of Health Sciences  
Gaiopolis Campus  
41500 Larissa, Greece  
[valiakos@uth.gr](mailto:valiakos@uth.gr)



Ireneusz Milewski (Gdańsk)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5743-8060>

## BANKERS AND USURERS IN THE EARLY BYZANTINE HAGIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS\*

**Abstract.** The text discusses accounts from early Byzantine hagiographical texts depicting the activities of bankers and usurers in the period from the early 5<sup>th</sup> to the second decade of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Texts by Palladius of Helenopolis, John of Ephesus, John Moschos, and Leontius of Neapolis are analysed. In the collated material we find relatively little information depicting the activities of bankers and usurers. Neither do we find any further details of the conditions under which money loans were granted. However, we note the statement that the cancellation of a loan, even if forced by circumstances (even if due to the intervention of a holy man), is charitable in nature and the ‘lost’ capital by the creditor in such a case bears the characteristics of a merciful deed. Most of the analysed accounts are presented in a somewhat fanciful way, which, however, should not question the information conveyed by the narrative. Two aspects of the analysed accounts are most significant. Firstly, the absence of any criticism of the Alexandrian Church deriving, even if not high, some profits (interest) from monetary loans. Secondly, in the accounts analysed we note a peculiar narrative, or in fact a new way of reasoning, by means of which the authors wanted to reach their audience, the potential benefactors. Thus, we become acquainted with somewhat naïve tales of how the benefits of granting a non-refundable loan to the needy, not only to the poor but also to merchants who traded on the high seas (?) would quite quickly return to the merciful benefactor, in a tangible material benefit, while he was still alive. We do not find such an argument in the patristic texts of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, where accounts of this kind merely refer to a prediction or even a guarantee of ‘heavenly interest’ that could tip the scales in favour of the merciful donor (creditor) at the Last Judgement.

**Keywords:** early Byzantium, early Byzantine hagiography, money, bankers and usurers in early Byzantium

### Introduction

Hagiographical texts are a valuable source of insight into early Byzantine daily life, especially in the provinces. Compared to patristic texts of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Lives of the Saints devote relatively little attention to people who

---

\* This article was written with the financial support of Poland’s National Science Centre (UMO-2015/17/B/HS3/00135).

made their living lending money<sup>1</sup>. The presence of bankers (τραπεζῖται) and usurers (τοκιζωνταί), and the lending activities they carried out, is generally seen as an indicator of the economic condition of the area whose daily life is illustrated by the group of sources studied. In the following article, we will juxtapose the accounts of four early Byzantine authors: John of Ephesus, John Moschos, Leontius of Neapolis and Palladius of Helenopolis<sup>2</sup>.

### The Saint versus the usurers. John of Ephesus on the monetary loans in the forgotten Syrian countryside

Several references to the activities of bankers and usurers are found in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* by John of Ephesus. The first mentions a certain usurer living in an unspecified Syrian town who ‘terrorised’ the local population by claiming to be in possession of old (?) debentures (χάρταις, also called ὁμολογίαις<sup>3</sup>). The residents informed the local holy man, Habib, of the situation, who went to the usurer, who, seeing the holy man coming, tore up the financial documents in question<sup>4</sup>. According to the practice of the time, also known to us from other source texts, tearing up a debenture (χάρτης) meant the cancellation of a debt<sup>5</sup>. However, the aforementioned usurer did not cease his activities in the following years. When he died, his children searched his house, took all the scripts they found there and brought them to Habib, who in turn returned them to the debtors<sup>6</sup>.

An analogous story also appears later in the same *Life*. We read in it that there was a banker (τραπεζῖτης) living in Martyropolis who was in possession of contracts (χάρταις) which confirmed the loans taken out by many local residents. Unsurprisingly in this case, this man was infamous. News of his activities also

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. JUNDZIŁ, *Pieniądz w łacińskiej literaturze chrześcijańskiej późnego cesarstwa rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1984; I. MILEWSKI, *Pieniądz w greckiej literaturze patrystycznej IV wieku (na przykładzie pisma kapadockich Ojców Kościoła i Jana Chryzostoma)*, Gdańsk 1999.

<sup>2</sup> More on the authors of the analysed texts and on their works, Cf. A. HÜBNER, *Einführung*, [in:] PALLADIUS, *Historia Lausiaca. Geschichte aus dem frühen Mönchtum*, trans. et comm. A. HÜBNER, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2016 [= *FCh*, 67], p. 7–77; E.D. HUNT, *Palladius of Helenopolis. A Party and its Supporters in the Church of the Late Fourth Century*, *JTS* 24, 1973, p. 456–480; S.A. HARVEY, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis. John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints*, Berkeley 1990 [= *TCH*, 17]; H. CHADWICK, *John Moschos and his Friend Sophronius the Sophist*, *JTS* 25, 1974, p. 41–74; B.L. IHSSSEN, *John Moschos’ Spiritual Meadow. Authority and Autonomy at the End of the Antique World*, Washington 2013, p. 1–19; I. MILEWSKI, *Textile Prices in Early Byzantine Hagiographic Texts. Three Case Studies*, *SCer* 10, 2020, p. 401–402.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. I. MILEWSKI, *Bankers, Usurer and Merchants. Businessmen of the Late Antiquity Cities in Reports of Greek Church Fathers of the Fourth Century*, *MBAH* 20, 2001, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Vitae*, 1, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. I. MILEWSKI, *Bankers...*, p. 102–103.

<sup>6</sup> JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium. Lives of Eastern Saints*, 1, ed. E.W. BROOKS, [in:] *PO*, 17.1, Paris 1923 (cetera: JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium*), p. 9.

reached Habib, who decided to go to Martyropolis, to the aforementioned banker. Unfortunately, the rest of the text is corrupted, but presumably the visit ended with the same result as in the previous case<sup>7</sup>. There is yet another, almost identical situation in the same text. Here, too, the inhabitants asked the holy man to go to the usurer to recover their debentures (χάρταις). Thus, it was done. The saint arrived at the usurer's house, stood in front of his door until the usurer, repentant or perhaps just embarrassed by the situation, asked for forgiveness, after which he destroyed said documents<sup>8</sup>.

The *Life of Harphat*, bishop of the Syrian Anzetene (Arsamosata), on the other hand, shows that usury could in principle be practised by anyone with some surplus cash. Even small sums could be borrowed at interest. This practice is also attested to by other early Byzantine accounts<sup>9</sup>. In the aforementioned *Life* we read that the protagonist's cousin, when he was a child, managed his estate, also multiplying the money obtained from rent by lending it at interest, in other words he was a usurer. If the author of the account is to be believed, local debtors brought interest to his house every day. Seeing this, the protagonist of the story demanded a division of the property. The assets to be divided were allegedly '5,000 dinars' (miliarensia?) in cash and unspecified real estate, mainly landed estates from which leases were collected<sup>10</sup>.

### **It is worth giving loans (giving alms) without expecting anything in return from the borrowers (recipients). Accounts by John Moschos**

The issue of money-lending activities appears several times in the *Pratum spirituale* by John Moschos. The first of these is rather peculiar. It is basically a generously distributed almsgiving that develops into a monetary loan given to the poor. The guarantor of the 'return' of the capital and the payment of the 'interest' in this case is Christ himself. The account states that there was a Christian woman living in the Mesopotamian city of Nisibis who, unsurprisingly for a 'didactic' story in a hagiographical text, had a pagan husband. According to the author of the account, the couple were considered poor despite having fifty pieces of silver (μλιαρίσια πεντηκοντάς). One day, the husband announced to his wife that he intended to put their savings into a deposit (παρακαθήκη)<sup>11</sup> with a usurer (δανειστής) in order to obtain interest for them. The wife, trying to dissuade him, said that if he really wanted to give it to a usurer, then only to a trusted and tested one, the God of the Christians, and then she led her husband to the local church and

<sup>7</sup> JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium*, 1, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium*, 1, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. I. MILEWSKI, *Bankers...*, p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> JOANNES EPHEINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium*, 11, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. RAUF, *Depositum*, [in:] RAC, vol. III, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1957, col. 778.

pointed to the beggars crowding there, explaining that by offering them the money he had saved, not only would he not lose it, but he would also gain a generous interest, a gain that no usurer would offer him. This is what they did. They distributed the 50 miliaresions among the poor gathered there. After three months, the Christian woman's husband, worried about the lack of funds to cover current household expenses, began to reproach his wife for the fact that the God of the Christians have not offered them anything, even though they had given away all their savings, so that they themselves were now struggling. The woman reassured her husband and instructed him to go near the church to collect the interest. The obedient husband went to the place indicated, but soon returned to find that he had not met anyone at the church who could pay him the interest. However, he saw more beggars crowding there. Wondering which one of them he should ask for the interest due, he looked at the ground and found one piece of gold, picked it up and returned home. The convention of a hagiographic work demanded a twist at this point. A wise wife, a Christian woman, sent her husband to the market to buy food. So he went to the market and bought bread, wine and fish. In the gutted fish, the wife found a precious stone, which, as it turned out, the local jeweller (in this case referred to by two different terms: *τραπεζίτης* and *ἀργυροπράτης*) bought back from the couple for the enormous sum of 300 gold pieces. What is obvious is that the story carries a message. Seeing the sum obtained from the sale of the stone in question, the wife said to her husband, a pagan:

See how great the God of the Christians is, how good and generous! How inexhaustible are his riches! Not only has he returned to you the fifty pieces of silver which you lent him (by distributing them to the poor – I.M.), but he has also multiplied your capital many times over. Know therefore that there is no other God, either in heaven or on earth<sup>12</sup>.

Leaving aside the fanciful, if not naive, nature of the above story, three aspects should be noted. Firstly, the statement that the cash they had, 50 pieces of silver, according to the author of the account, placed the couple among the poor (?). What, then, can be said of the heroes of other stories in hagiographical texts, whose daily wage was often 'three' or 'ten' nummia, the proverbial 'pennies'? Another issue, in case of the story cited above, is the dissemination of the belief that the charitable practice and the giving of alms, can bring tangible material benefits to the donor while he is still alive, a measurable financial benefit offered by God. And finally, the third point is the husband's consideration of putting his savings into a deposit

<sup>12</sup> JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*, 185, [in:] PG, vol. LXXXVII.3, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1865 (cetera: JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*); trans.: JOHN MOSCHOS, *The Spiritual Meadow*, ed. et trans. J. WORTLEY, Kalamazoo 1992. Cf. also H.L. ADELSON, *A Note on the Miliarense from Constantine to Heraclius*, ANSMN 7, 1957, p. 125sqq; R. BOGAERT, *Changeurs et banquiers chez les pères de l'Église*, AS 4, 1973, p. 263.

so that he would earn interest, thus, the usurer mentioned in the account would make use of them by bringing some profit to the depositor. In this case, the author of the account is trying to instil the notion that, firstly, if anything, the profit from the usurer would be meagre and, besides, is laden with the risk of losing the capital. The profit described in the subsequent parts of the story would be far greater.

In the source material analysed, there is also the problem of insolvent merchants who borrowed money in order to carry out commercial activities. Accounts on this subject are few and, above all, very laconic. They show that some merchants operated without adequate cash reserves, or deliberately did not commit them for fear of losing funds due to a maritime disaster or pirate attack. Such circumstances created financial difficulties for both parties: the usurer (or banker), who at least temporarily, and often even irretrievably, would lose the borrowed capital, and the merchant, who, having lost the goods, often had no means to repay the loan taken out to cover the cost of the investment. The second of these situations is illustrated by another story by John Moschos. The protagonist lost all his cargo, the goods he had bought on credit, in a shipwreck and escaped from the sinking ship. When he returned to his home town, Askalon, his creditors captured him, threw him in jail<sup>13</sup>. And from his house they took all his movable property, which they then cashed in to cover part of their losses. The convention of the hagiographic work in such a case called for a rescue, which came from a rather unexpected party, from a repentant fellow prisoner, a robber and murderer. No longer able to save himself (he was waiting in prison for the judge to arrive and pronounce the sentence), he decides to support the aforementioned merchant by revealing to his wife hiding place in the suburb where he had hidden a jug of stolen money (χρήματα). As there was no way he could use it anymore, in this situation he decided to at least do a good deed at the end of his wicked life. Instructed, the woman went to the indicated place, where she actually found the loot. With the money she found, she bought her husband out of prison and paid off his creditors<sup>14</sup>.

### **Controversial activity: the money-lending operations of the Alexandrian Church in the account of Leontius of Neapolis**

We find some information about the activities of bankers and usurers in the *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*, a text depicting daily life in Alexandria in the second decade of the seventh century. In one of the stories reported, we read that a certain

<sup>13</sup> In antiquity, including its later period, the concept of 'arrest for debt' (δεσμοτήριον, φυλακή or πρακτόρειον), in which the debtors were jailed for a time, was well known, Cf. S. ARBANDT, W. MACHEINER, *Gefangenschaft*, [in:] *RAC*, vol. IX, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1976, col. 327–328, 335–336, 342–344, where this type of institution is referred to by the authors of the text with the unambiguous term 'Schuldhaft'.

<sup>14</sup> JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*, 189.



landowner, as a result of a crop failure, fell into financial difficulties<sup>15</sup>. In order to save himself from insolvency, he decided to take out a loan of 50 pounds of gold (about 3,600 solidi) from an Alexandrian banker. The loan was to be taken out at 200 per cent, a truly usurious interest rate! However, its payout was postponed because the banker did not have such a large sum at his disposal, which is surprising, as it was not some dizzying sum for a professional money-lender in such a large city as Alexandria. In this situation, the perplexed debtor decides to knock on the patriarch's door. As we read in the account of Leontius, John promised to grant him a loan, allegedly without even specifying the terms of the loan. However, this is not the end of the story. According to the author of the account, the patriarch 'appeared by night' to the aforementioned banker and encouraged him to grant the loan with truly evangelical words, stating: *Woe to the man who, having the intention of doing good, puts it off*<sup>16</sup>. As it was allegedly taken out 'for a just cause', by a man 'in need', its granting was thus elevated to the rank of an act of mercy towards the debtor. On this occasion, however, we do not even find a word of criticism of the interest rate, the aforementioned 200 per cent, a usurious interest rate by any standard. At the end of antiquity, including in Alexandria of the early seventh century, it was still the law to collect at most 8 per cent on so-called maritime loans<sup>17</sup>. Admittedly, papyrological texts from the Egyptian area confirm the charging of much higher interest rates as well (up to 50 per cent), but these are isolated cases<sup>18</sup>. The account discussed above is one of many depicting the story of John the Almsman, which ends rather unexpectedly. We do not find out whether the loan was actually granted and, more importantly, by whom: by the banker or by John? Perhaps, then, it is the awkwardness of the situation described (after all, we are probably talking about an interest-bearing loan of money) that has resulted in the information provided being rather imprecise.

The account discussed above is one of many depicting the story of John the Almsman, which ends rather unexpectedly. We do not find out whether the loan was actually granted and, more importantly, by whom: by the banker or by John? Perhaps, then, it is the awkwardness of the situation described (after all, we are probably talking about an interest-bearing loan of money) that has resulted in the information provided being rather imprecise. In the work of Leontius of Neapolis,

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A.Ch. JOHNSON, L.C. WEST, *Byzantine Egypt. Economic Studies*, Amsterdam 1967, p. 254–259. Similar problems were also faced in other provinces of the empire, Cf. I. HAHN, *Theodoretus von Cyrus und die frühbyzantinische Besteuerung*, AA.ASH 10, 1962, p. 124–131.

<sup>16</sup> LEONTIUS NEAPOLEOS, *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*, 29, [in:] *Leontios von Neapolis Leben des hl. Johannes des Barmherzigen*, ed. H. GELZER, Freiburg im Breisgau 1893 (cetera: LEONTIOS, *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*); trans.: LEONTIUS OF NEAPOLIS, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, [in:] E. DAWES, N.H. BAYNES, *Three Byzantine Saints. Contemporary Biographies Translated from Greek*, Oxford 1948, p. 207–270.

<sup>17</sup> R. BOGAERT, *Geld (Geldwirtschaft)*, [in:] RAC, vol. IX, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1976, col. 878.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 878. Cf. also W.N. ZEISEL, *An Economic Survey of the Early Byzantine Church*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1975, p. 138.

we also find a description of another analogous case. This time it concerns an anonymous Alexandrian merchant who, having wrecked his ship loaded with grain, came to the patriarch to borrow money in order to continue his trade and consequently make up for his losses. The patriarch lent him 5 pounds of gold, with which the shipowner purchased the grain, but this shipment too went down near Alexandria. The next loan was already for the sum of 10 pounds of gold. Having once again lost his cargo, the merchant broke down and came close to committing suicide, which, unsurprisingly in this case, he was dissuaded from doing by the patriarch in a dream vision. John explained to the unfortunate man that he had lost his cargo because he had been doing dishonest business, speculating in the grain trade, but that he could change that. The patriarch, giving the bankrupt another chance, entrusted him with the command of one of the ships of the Church's grain-trading flotilla<sup>19</sup>. The ship, allegedly loaded with twenty thousand *modii* of grain, made the trading expedition safely despite a storm, as the author of the account points out. After 20 days of sailing, the ship reached the shores of Britain (!), where the grain was sold at a price of one gold piece per *modius*. The grain sold was used to purchase 50 pounds of tin, which was then miraculously transformed into silver in the ship's holds 'due to the prayers of the patriarch' (who had been in Alexandria all this time!). The author of the account, Leontius of Neapolis, likens the event described to the miracle at Cana and the Gospel multiplication of bread. Obviously, the imported silver was used entirely for the needs of the Alexandrian poor<sup>20</sup>. In assessing the above account, the information about the deep-sea trade carried out by the Alexandrian Patriarchate at this time is not objectionable. Trade ships belonging to the Church reached ports in Palestine, Pentapolis, Sicily, ports of the Adriatic Sea, including Italy<sup>21</sup>.

The question of the lending activities carried out by the Alexandrian bishopric recurs in the next story described by Leontius. Among the borrowers, the clientele of the Alexandrian Church, there were sometimes crooks who knew that the merciful patriarch would not refuse them a loan. In other words, in a city as big as Alexandria, there was always someone who tried to borrow money without any intention of returning it. Thus, there was an impostor, who extorted a loan of twenty pounds of gold (just over 1400 *solidii*), which is quite a lot, and then started spreading the word that he had not borrowed anything from the patriarch. The circumstances described could suggest that, in this case, no written agreement had been drawn up between the parties, and no terms of repayment were specified

<sup>19</sup> On the grain trade of the Alexandrian patriarchate in the early Byzantine period, Cf. G.R. MONKS, *The Church of Alexandria and the City's Economic Life in the Sixth Century*, S 28, 1953, p. 356–360; M.J. HOLLERICH, *The Alexandrian Bishops and the Grain Trade: Ecclesiastical Commerce in Late Roman Egypt*, JESHO 25, 1982, p. 187–207; H.-J. DREXHAGE, *Handel I (geschichtlich)*, [in:] RAC, vol. XV, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1992, col. 550–552.

<sup>20</sup> LEONTIOS, *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. W.N. ZEISEL, *An Economic Survey...*, p. 81–82, 111–113.

either, which seems unlikely in the case of the responsible financial management of a patriarchate with innumerable needy people on its payroll<sup>22</sup>. As the author of the account states, church officials captured the conman and imprisoned him in the bishop's prison<sup>23</sup>, after which they made the sum that the captive had extorted public. According to Leontius, John was opposed to punishing him, and thus the dishonest debtor also escaped any sanction<sup>24</sup>. It is not even clear from the story whether the borrowed money was ever recovered. What was the purpose of such rather naive tales? It is possible that they were intended to whitewash somewhat the fact that the Patriarchate was engaged in lending activities, because, as it were, if even a small amount of interest was applied to such transactions, the final assessment of this activity could nevertheless be somewhat questionable.

### Other cases

We have discussed above the most extensive accounts depicting the activities of bankers and usurers that we found in early Byzantine hagiographic texts. Others barely mention their activities, for example, in another of John Moschos' stories we read that certain two brothers who came from Syria ran a banker's office in Constantinople<sup>25</sup>. In another case, in the *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladius of Heleopolis, we find a somewhat fanciful account in which it is mentioned that one of the Alexandrian bankers was entrusted with a deposit of 20 *solidii*, a sum that the hero of the story received by making a 'self-sale' into slavery<sup>26</sup>. Clearly, the story described devalues the veracity of the information provided. Of yet different type is another story by John Moschos, in which he reports the case of an insolvent peasant who, unable to pay his rent, takes out a loan from a monk. Obviously, in this case we are not dealing with a usurious loan but with the implementation of the Gospel recommendation encouraging people to lend (including money) without expecting anything in return (Lc 6: 27–38). Thus, the protagonist of the story, the monk John the eunuch, when asked by the peasant to borrow one piece of gold, not having such a sum takes it from the monastery treasury. The peasant promises to return the loan after a month. When two years passed and the farmer still has not paid it back, the monk called him in and demanded the money to be returned. The man refused, explaining that he did not have it. The convention of a hagiographic work required that from this seemingly hopeless predicament 'something good' would arise, in this case a positive solution to the problem. The

<sup>22</sup> Cf. D.S. CONSTANTÉLOS, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1968, p. 70sqq; R. BOGAERT, *Geld (Geldwirtschaft)*..., col. 869.

<sup>23</sup> Such 'instruments of repression' were known in late antiquity, Cf. S. ARBANDT, W. MACHEINER, *Gefangenschaft*..., col. 344.

<sup>24</sup> LEONTIOS, *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*, 34.

<sup>25</sup> JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*, 188. Cf. also R. BOGAERT, *Changeurs et banquiers*..., p. 261.

<sup>26</sup> PALLADIUS, *The Lausiaca History*, 37, 2–4, vol. II, ed. et trans. C. BUTLER, Cambridge 1904.

monk proposed that the debtor come to him whenever he had time, and that he recite thirty prayers in his presence each time. For each such visit, the peasant was to receive 1 *keration* (1 piece of silver) from the monk. After twenty-four visits, the debtor, having collected 24 silver coins, thus collected one gold *nummus* (*solidus*), which he could finally return to the monastery treasury<sup>27</sup>.

### Closing remarks

In the material compiled above, we find relatively few accounts of lending activities conducted by bankers and usurers. They show that usury could in principle be practiced by anyone with even a small surplus of money. The analyzed accounts of John of Ephesus depicting daily life in the remote Syrian countryside, describe the holy man's interventions against usurers to get them to not only stop collecting interest but also to renounce the loan whatsoever. In these accounts, unfortunately, we do not find any further details regarding the terms on which said loans were granted. We note, however, another claim, namely, that the cancellation of a debt, a loan taken out, even if forced by circumstances, has a charitable character and the capital 'lost' in such a case by the creditor (in such cases called a usurer) bears the characteristics of a merciful deed. In the texts analyzed, without exception, information about usurers appears in descriptions of certain negative events. However, the convention of a hagiographic work dictates that, as a rule, they also have a positive ending. Many of the analyzed accounts are presented in a somewhat fanciful way, which, however, should not question the main insights from the text. The second group of collated information concerns the lending activities of the Alexandrian Church. Only three accounts on this subject are presented, rather vaguely, without any evaluation of this activity, as something taken for granted. The accounts discussed show that the customers of usurers in the remote provinces (cases described by John of Ephesus) were generally destitute people, living on the poverty line, who took out small consumer loans. The situation is different in the case of bankers' loans and those made by the Alexandrian Church. The customers there are merchants, insolvent landowners, or tenants. We also read about their solvency troubles in other contemporary source accounts<sup>28</sup>.

The accounts on the circumstances of money-lending reported by: John of Ephesus, John Moschos, Leontius of Neapolis, and Palladius of Helenopolis are of little research value, providing no specific information on the money-lending market at the time. However, two aspects of these accounts are important. First, the absence, already signaled above, of any criticism of the Alexandrian Church deriving, even if not high, some profits from money-lending; not even a word of condemnation. What's more, in relation to the account of the merchant who

<sup>27</sup> JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*, 184.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. I. HAHN, *Theodoretus von Cyrus...*, p. 124–131.

was ready to borrow from a banker in Alexandria, the author of the account is not outraged by the information (even if false) of a loan bearing interest at 200 per cent, which was a truly usurious interest rate. The analyzed accounts confirm that in case of the inability to repay a debt, one was sent to prison for insolvency. One can only surmise what the purpose of this sanction was. Antiquity did not know the penitentiary system as we understand it, and detention was instead used to scold the inmate<sup>29</sup>. Under such circumstances, the family hastily collected money to satisfy the claims of creditors and thus also to free the inmate. The authors of the analyzed accounts try to instill with their stories the belief that it is possible to lend money without charging interest, but also to return it by those borrowers who could afford it. Let us note that this last remark applies only to the lending activities carried out by the Church (in this particular case by the Alexandrian patriarch John), and not by secular usurers. That is the theory and, perhaps, a kind of wishful thinking. But how would such a recommendation work in everyday life, if only in the case of the bishoprics, which probably without exception struggled with a lack of money to carry out ongoing charitable activities especially in the case of the Alexandrian Church of Patriarch John's time compounded by the massive influx of refugees from the Persian-invaded Levant? It is likely out of the question that the prudent Patriarch John would lend so recklessly, to the detriment of the Church treasury, especially since other bishoprics at the time were engaged in interest-bearing lending activities<sup>30</sup>. Thus, puzzling is the opinion of R. Bogaert, who was inclined to perceive such accounts in hagiographic texts quite literally, claiming: *Diese Darlehen sind in den Heiligenviten erwähnt, weil sie zinslos waren*<sup>31</sup>. What, then, was the purpose of disseminating such, somewhat infantile, stories? It cannot be ruled out that they were intended to whitewash to some extent the fact that the Patriarchate was engaged in lending, because, after all, the final assessment of this activity may have been questionable.

In the collected accounts, we note a peculiar narrative with which the recipient of those stories, the potential benefactor, was targeted. Thus, we are exposed to somewhat naive stories about the benefits of giving money to the poor, of providing them with a non-refundable loan, which would quite quickly return to the merciful donor, with a tangible material benefit, while he was still alive. We do not find such arguments in the patristic texts of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, where similar accounts merely refer to the guarantee of 'heavenly interest', which can tip the scales in favour of the merciful donor (or creditor) at the Last Judgement<sup>32</sup>. What, then, was the purpose of promoting somewhat naive examples in hagiographical

<sup>29</sup> Cf. S. ARBANDT, W. MACHEINER, *Gefangenschaft...*, col. 327–328, 335–336, 342–344.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. W.N. ZEISEL, *An Economic Survey...*, p. 138–145, 157–158, 185–186, 193–195.

<sup>31</sup> R. BOGAERT, *Geld...*, col. 877.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. I. MILEWSKI, *Pieniqdz...*, p. 104–139, 222–239.

texts, which life could, after all, verify quite quickly? Could it be that insufficient generosity at a time of growing needs, of increasing poverty, forced their authors to resort to this type of narrative? Likely, that was the case.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- JOANNES EPHESINUS, *Historia beatorum orientalium. Lives of Eastrn Saints*, ed. E.W. BROOKS, [in:] *Patrologia Orientalis*, 17.1, Paris 1923.
- JOANNES MOSCHOS, *Pratum spirituale*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. LXXXVII.3, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1865, col. 2852–3112.
- JOHN MOSCHOS, *The Spiritual Meadow*, ed. et trans. J. WORTLEY, Kalamazoo 1992.
- LEONTIUS NEAPOLEOS, *Vita Joannis Eleemosynarii*, [in:] *Leontios von Neapolis Leben des hl. Johannes des Barmherzigen*, ed. H. GELZER, Freiburg im Breisgau 1893.
- LEONTIUS OF NEAPOLIS, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, [in:] E. DAWES, N.H. BAYNES, *Three Byzantine Saints. Contemporary Biographies Translated from Greek*, Oxford 1948, p. 207–270.
- PALLADIUS, *The Lausiaca History*, vol. II, ed. et trans. C. BUTLER, Cambridge 1904.

### Secondary Literature

- ADELSON H.L., *A Note on the Miliarense from Constantine to Heraclius*, “American Numismatic Society. Museum Notes” 7, 1957, p. 125–137.
- ARBANDT S., MACHEINER W., *Gefangenschaft*, [in:] *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. IX, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1976, col. 318–345.
- BOGAERT R., *Changeurs et banquiers chez les pères de Église*, “Ancient Society” 4, 1973, p. 239–270.
- BOGAERT R., *Geld (Geldwirtschaft)*, [in:] *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. IX, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1976, col. 797–908.
- CHADWICK H., *John Moschus and his Friend Sophronius the Sophist*, “The Journal of Theological Studies” 25, 1974, p. 41–74, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/XXV.1.41>
- CONSTANTELOS D.S., *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1968.
- DREXHAGE H.-J., *Handel I (geschichtlich)*, [in:] *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. XV, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1992, col. 519–561.
- HAHN I., *Theodoretus von Cyrus und die frühbyzantinische Besteuerung*, “Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae” 10, 1962, p. 124–131.
- HARVEY S.A., *Asceticism and Society in Crisis. John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints*, Berkeley 1990 [= Transformation of the Classical Heritage, 17].
- HOLLERICH M.J., *The Alexandrian Bishops and the Grain Trade: Ecclesiastical Commerce in Late Roman Egypt*, “Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient” 25, 1982, p. 187–207, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3632110>
- HÜBNER A., *Einführung*, [in:] PALLADIUS, *Historia Lausiaca. Geschichte aus dem frühen Mönchtum*, trans. et comm. A. HÜBNER, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 2016 [= Fontes Christiani, 67], p. 7–77.


- HUNT E.D., *Palladius of Helenopolis. A Party and its Supporters in the Church of the Late Fourth Century*, "The Journal of Theological Studies" 24, 1973, p. 456–480, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/XXIV.2.456>
- IHSSEN B.L., *John Moschos' Spiritual Meadow. Authority and Autonomy at the End of the Antique World*, Washington 2013.
- JOHNSON A.Ch., WEST L.C., *Byzantine Egypt. Economic Studies*, Amsterdam 1967.
- JUNDZIŁ J., *Pieniądz w łacińskiej literaturze chrześcijańskiej późnego Cesarstwa rzymskiego*, Warszawa 1984.
- MILEWSKI I., *Bankers, Usurer and Merchants. Businessmen of the Late Antiquity Cities in Reports of Greek Church Fathers of the Fourth Century*, "Münstersche Beiträge zur Antiken Handelsgeschichte" 20, 2001, p. 96–113.
- MILEWSKI I., *Pieniądz w greckiej literaturze patrystycznej IV wieku (na przykładzie pisma kapadockich Ojców Kościoła i Jana Chryzostoma)*, Gdańsk 1999.
- MILEWSKI I., *Textile Prices in Early Byzantine Hagiographic Texts. Three Case Studies*, "Studia Cereana" 10, 2020, p. 399–413, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.10.19>
- MONKS G.R., *The Church of Alexandria and the City's Economic Life in the Sixth Century*, "Speculum" 28, 1953, p. 349–362, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2849693>
- RAUF J., *Depositum*, [in:] *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. III, ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1957, col. 778–784.
- ZEISEL W.N., *An Economic Survey of the Early Byzantine Church*, New Brunswick–New Jersey 1975.

**Ireneusz Milewski**

University of Gdańsk  
Faculty of History  
Institute of History  
Department of Ancient History  
ul. Wita Stwosza 55  
80-952 Gdańsk, Polska/Poland  
[ireneusz.milewski@ug.edu.pl](mailto:ireneusz.milewski@ug.edu.pl)



Natia Natsvlshvili (Tbilisi)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2250-0199>

## FEMALE MONASTIC PATRONAGE IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIA: QUEEN TAMAR AND HER MONASTERY IN TIGHVA \*

**Abstract.** Tighva Monastery was founded by Queen Consort Tamar, the daughter of David the Builder, a famous Georgian king who succeeded in uniting the country and making it a dominant regional power. According to the written sources, Tamar was married to Shah Manuchehr III, the Muslim ruler of Shirvan (modern Azerbaijan) around 1111, in order to “rule over Shirvan”. Tamar lived and reigned in the Muslim court for more than twenty years. Resulting from a need to secure a retirement home and final resting place, she initiated the construction of Tighva Monastery soon after her return to Georgia in the 1140s. As her husband Manuchehr died in 1160, it seems that Tamar left Shirvan still a married woman, for unknown reasons. Tamar cut ties with her family and spent the remainder of her life as a nun in Tighva.

The Church of the Crucifixion in Tighva Monastery, which represents the main focus of this paper, gives a good example of how the place occupied by women during the Divine Liturgy not only indicated their social status, but also determined their visibility, demonstrating how architecture could be used to establish the limits of physical appearance of royal women in the twelfth century Georgian monastic space.

**Keywords:** female monastic patronage, medieval Georgia, queen Tamar, monastery in Tighva

### “Queen of Queens and Truly Queen of the Heavens”

The history of the united Georgian kingdom began around 1000, when King Bagrat III from the Georgian royal family of Bagratids consolidated the majority of the country under his crown. The process was completed by his great-great-grandson King David IV the Builder (r. 1089–1125) in 1122, through his capturing of the historic centre of east Georgia, Tbilisi, the last enclave remaining from the Arab occupation. In the 35 years of his reign, David IV succeeded

---

\* This research was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) [grant no YS-21-629]. Project title: *Women, Power, and Architectural Patronage in Late Medieval Georgia*.



in making Georgia a dominant regional power with a strong army, centralized authority, and a flourishing economy.

We know little about the family of David IV. According to the information provided by the various chronicles, he was married twice. His first wife was an anonymous Armenian princess and the second was Gurandukht, the daughter of the khan of the Qipchaks. The majority of researchers concur that he had one son and two daughters from his first marriage and two (?) sons and two daughters from the second<sup>1</sup>.

Tamar, the eldest daughter of King David IV and subsequently the wife of Shah Manuchehr III of Shirvan (r. 1120–1160) is among the few medieval Georgian women whose name appears more than once in historical sources. This special attention derives both from her close connections to the ruling houses of the South Caucasus, as well as her personal contribution to the religious life of twelfth-century Georgia through establishing a monastery in Tighva. Thus, she is mentioned in the chronicles not only as a daughter, sister, mother, or aunt, as one would expect, but also as a founder. Despite her being mentioned several times, none of the sources is precise or detailed enough to reveal a full picture of her long life.

The exact date of Tamar's birth is unknown. *Life of David, King of Kings*, included in the Georgian Royal Annals (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*), informs us that she was the eldest child (*pirmsho*) of King David IV the Builder with his first wife. The date of their marriage is also unknown, but can be roughly calculated. In 1089, when David ascended to the throne, he was sixteen years old<sup>2</sup>. Most likely, he was

<sup>1</sup> Aside from Tamar, King David and his first wife shared several children, including successor to the throne Demetre I. Georgian Medieval sources are silent over the queen's name or origin. Twelfth century chronicler Mathew of Edessa merely emphasizes that Demetre had an Armenian mother (*Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Mathew of Edessa*, trans., comm. A.E. DOSTOURIAN, praef. K.H. MAKSOUDIAN, New York–London 1993, p. 231, 237). Neither does his contemporary Ancellus, Precentor of the Holy Sepulchre, bother to mention the queen's name in his letter addressed to the Archbishop of Paris announcing the arrival of a fragment of the True Cross from Jerusalem to Paris. According to the letter, the precious gift was donated by a nun, who appears to be a widow or ex-wife of King David the Builder (Z. AVALISHVILI, *The Cross from Overseas*, Geo 1.2–3, 1936, p. 10–11; G. BRESCH-BAUTIER, *L'enovi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris en 1120*, BEC 129.2, 1971, p. 386–397). Tedo Jhordania and Cyril Toumanoff propose that the first wife of David the Builder was Rusudan, Armenian princess to whom he divorced circa 1107 in order to arrange his second marriage with Gurandukht, daughter of Atraka, chief of the Kivchagh tribe (თ. ჯორდანია [T. JHORDANIA], *ქრონიკები* [Chronicles], vol. I, ტფილისი [Tbilisi] 1892 [repr. 2004], p. 240; C. TOUMANOFF, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasic chrétien (Arménie – Géorgie – Albanie)*, Rome 1976, p. 122). Their identification is shared by Donald Rayfield. D. RAYFIELD, *Edge of Empires. A History of Georgia*, London 2012 [repr. 2013], p. 91–92).

<sup>2</sup> R.W. THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasus History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation*, Oxford 1996 [repr. 2002], p. 315; *The Georgian Chronicles of Kartlis Tskhovreba. (A History of Georgia). The Life of David, King of Kings Translated and with Commentary*, trans. D. GAMQ'RELIDZE, ed. S. JONES, Tbilisi 2014, p. 173.

newlywed by that time or married soon after, which places Tamar's birth in the first years of the 1090s. In any case, Tamar reached marriageable age before 1112, since in that year she arrived from Shirvan to attend the funeral of her grandfather George II<sup>3</sup>, which means that she was already married there. This fact, recorded in the Georgian chronicles, is also confirmed by another historical source referring to her sister Kata's marriage to Isaac Komnenos, the son of Emperor Alexios I, in 1116:

he [King David] sent his daughter Kata to Greece to marry (the son of) the Greek emperor. For he had previously sent his first-born daughter Tamar to be queen of Šarvan, so that the two luminaries – one in the east, the other in the west – might be stars in the vault of heaven, taking from their father sunlike rays<sup>4</sup>.

Taking into account that the Church Council of Ruis-Urbnisi initiated and convened by King David IV in 1105 set twelve as the minimum age for women to marry<sup>5</sup>, Tamar's wedding should be placed between 1105 and 1111<sup>6</sup>.

The daughter of the famous Georgian king, who managed to transform his country into a dominant regional power, shared the fate of many other princesses, played as a diplomatic pawn in the political games of the medieval world<sup>7</sup>. Through marrying off his daughters to Greece and Shirvan, David the Builder not only sought allies against the Seljuks, but also aimed to broaden the sphere of influence of his kingdom<sup>8</sup>. When Tamar arrived at the court of Shirvan (part of modern

<sup>3</sup> თ. ჟორდანია [T. JHORDANIA], *ქრონიკები...*, p. 239–241.

<sup>4</sup> R.W. THOMSON, *Rewriting Caucasus History...*, p. 325; *The Georgian Chronicles...*, p. 177; R.T. PRINKE, *Kata of Georgia, Daughter of King David IV the Builder, as Wife of Sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos*, *Fou* 3(6), 2011, p. 489–502.

<sup>5</sup> ე. გაბიძაშვილი [E. GABIDZASHVILI], *რუის-ურბნისის კრების ძეგლისწერა* [The Code of Ruis-Urbnisi Council], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 1978, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> The date of her marriage varies from author to author and is placed between 1105 and 1116. See: H. HASAN, *Falaki-i-Shirwani. His Time, Life, and Works*, London 1929, p. 13; ნ. ბერძენიშვილი [N. BERDZENISHVILI], *აღმოსავლეთ კახეთის წარსულიდან (მოკლე პოლიტიკური ცნობა)* [From the History of East Kakheti (A Brief Political Note)], *მიმ* 3, 1953, p. 69; V. MINORSKY, *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Cambridge 1958, p. 136; ნ. ასათიანი [N. ASATIANI], *საქართველო-შირვანის პოლიტიკური ურთიერთობა XII საუკუნეში* [Political relations of Georgia and Shirvan in Twelfth Century], *ოსუმ* 125.6, 1968, p. 29; З. БУНИЯТОВ, *Государство Атабеков Азербайджана (1136–1125 годы)*, Баку 1978, p. 148; С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, *Государство Ширванишахов (VI–XVII вв)*, Баку 1983, p. 101–102.

<sup>7</sup> On the phenomenon of diplomatic marriages between Christian and Muslim courts see Antony EASTMOND, *Tamta's World. The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia*, Cambridge 2017, p. 84–100. Focusing on the thirteenth century, Eastmond's comprehensive study on the subject is also relevant for the earlier period.

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, he achieved the title “King of Apkhazians, Georgians, Heretians, Kakhეთians, Armenians, Shirvanshah and Sharvanshah” at some point during his reign. D. RAYFIELD, *Edge of Empires...*, p. 85–97.

Azerbaijan) as the wife of Manuchehr III, the state was ruled by her father-in-law Faridun I ibn Fariburz. He died in 1120, leaving the throne to Manuchehr, who enjoyed power until 1160<sup>9</sup>. We know almost nothing about Tamar's life as a queen of the Muslim court. As Hadi Hasan points out, none of her contemporaneous Persian court poets, *neither Falaki ... nor Khaqani ... mention Tamar anywhere in their poems*<sup>10</sup>. Of Manuchehr's seven children, only the eldest son and his successor Akhistan I (Aghsartan in Georgian sources) can be identified as Tamar's child with certainty<sup>11</sup>. In one of his odes, Khaqani says that Akhistan had Christian roots<sup>12</sup>. *Life of Kartli* attests that he was the cousin of Georgian King George III (r. 1156–1184), offspring of his aunt from his father's side<sup>13</sup>. Khaqani's reference to his Christian origin may also indicate that Tamar was allowed to remain Christian. Her case would not be exceptional, as some royal women not only retained their Christian faith after interreligious marriages, but also freely practiced their religion at Ayyubid and Seljuk courts, both much more powerful than that of Shirvan<sup>14</sup>.

Another issue raised about Tamar is the length of her marriage. It has been a widespread opinion among scholars that she returned to Georgia as a widow<sup>15</sup>. Levan Rcheulishvili, the author of the only monograph on Tighva Monastery, shared 1150 as the date of Manuchehr's death, proposed by Evgeny Pakhomov<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, *Государство Ширванишахов...*, p. 101–108; C.E. BOSWORTH, *The New Islamic Dynasties. A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, Edinburgh 1996, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> H. HASAN, *Falaki-i-Shirwani...*, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> For the genealogy see: З. БУНИЯТОВ, *Грузия и Ширван в первой половине XII века*, [in:] *საქართველო რუსთაველის ხანაში* [Georgia in the Age of Rustaveli], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 1966, p. 286; H. HASAN, *Falaki-i-Shirwani...*, p. 15–17; С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, *Государство Ширванишахов...*, p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> H. HASAN, *Falaki-i-Shirwani...*, p. 14; Konstantin Chaykin mentions that among many Odes there is one dedicated to Queen Tamar, however he does not bring any reference. ვ. ზაიკობი [K. CHAYKIN], *ქართულ-ირანული ურთიერთობიდან* [From Georgian-Iranian Relationships], *Moambe* 3, 1938, p. 18; Z. Bunyadov identifies a female character with Queen Tamar in Hakani's Ode dedicated to the death of King Demetre I. З. БУНИЯТОВ, *Грузия и Ширван...*, p. 291.

<sup>13</sup> *The Georgian Chronicles...*, p. 234.

<sup>14</sup> R. SHUKUROV, *Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes*, [in:] *The Seljuk of Anatolia. Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. A.C.S. PEACOCK, S.N. YILDIZ, London 2012 [= LMEH, 38], p. 120–124; A. EASTMOND, *Tamta's World...*, p. 206–210.

<sup>15</sup> The opinion that Queen Tamar lived in Shirvan until her husband passed away has been shared by all authors who studied the history of the Georgian-Shirvan relationship. See: V. MINORSKY, *A History of Sharvān...*, p. 14; З. БУНИЯТОВ, *Государство Атабеков...*, p. 156; O. Vilchevsky argues that Tamar had conspired with her younger son against her eldest son Akhistan in order to unite Shirvan with the Georgian kingdom. О. ВИЛЬЧЕВСКИЙ, *Хакани*, СВос 4, 1957, p. 6; Sara Ashurbeyli generally agrees to this idea, but she also suggests another interpretation of the event, proposing that the plot was headed by Manūchih'r's other wife. С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, *Государство Ширванишахов...*, p. 107–108.

<sup>16</sup> Е. ПАХОМОВ, *Краткий курс истории Азербайджана*, Баку 1923, p. 30–34. The year of Manūchehr's death is securely redated due to new numismatic evidence. С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, *Государство Ширванишахов...*, p. 104.

This date fits well in the reconstruction of the chronology of events, according to which Tamar became a widow in 1150, returned to Georgia, established a monastery, and took the veil in 1152. Moreover, on the basis of her being the wife of a Muslim ruler, the scholar excluded the possibility that the queen could have initiated the construction of the monastery from Shirvan<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, according to these dates, upon returning to her homeland, Tamar would have needed to have built the monastery within two years in order to have spent the rest of her life as a nun there.

In light of new research, the above story has obvious flaws and should be challenged. According to written evidence, the consecration of the church in Tighva and Tamar's taking of monastic vows happened simultaneously in 1152<sup>18</sup>. Yet, at present, it is commonly accepted that Manuchehr died in 1160<sup>19</sup>. Thus, it appears that Tamar became a nun during her husband's lifetime. Even assuming that the Georgian source contains an error and the church was consecrated not in 1152 but in 1162, its construction could hardly be started after 1160 as it would have been impossible to complete in two years a building of such a size (outer dimensions 14.5 × 24 m; height 22 m). In Medieval Georgia, the average construction period for churches of this size was around 10 years<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, there can be no doubt that the monastery in Tighva was founded no later than the beginning of the 1150s, which suggests that Tamar would have already left Shirvan and moved back to Georgia by that time.

The fact that Tamar was in Georgia in the 1150s is further evidenced by a now lost mural inscription once placed on the north wall of Ishkhani Cathedral. According to the inscription, Egnate, the Archbishop of Ishkhani, established *agape* for the royal household: [...] *Glorify, God the greatest among Kings, the most powerful King Demetre, his sister, Queen of Queens and truly Queen of the Heavens Tamar and his sons powerful Kings David and [George]*<sup>21</sup>. On the bases that King Deme-

<sup>17</sup> ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], თიღვა, შირვანის დედოფლის თამარის აღმშენებლობა (ნარკვევი XII ს. ქართული ხუროთმოძღვრებიდან) [Tighva, Construction of Queen of Shirvan (Study from the twelfth Century Georgian Architecture)], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 1960, p. 95.

<sup>18</sup> თ. ჟორდანია [T. JHORDANIA], ქრონიკები..., p. 254–255.

<sup>19</sup> ნ. ასათიანი [N. ASATIANI], საქართველო-შირვანის..., p. 45–46; С. АШУРБЕЙЛИ, Государство Ширванишахов..., p. 101–108; C.E. BOSWORTH, *The New Islamic Dynasties...*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> For example, a slightly large church at Mokvi (outer size: 27.2 X 18.8; height: 23.3) was built and consecrated in ten years by King Leon III of Apxhazia (957–967). ვ. ბერიძე [V. BERIDZE], ქართული ხუროთმოძღვრების ისტორია [History of Georgian Architecture], vol. II, თბილისი [Tbilisi] 2010, p. 87–88; დ. ხოშტარია [D. KHOSHTRIA], ნ. ნაცვლიშვილი [N. NATSVLISHVILI], დ. თუმანიშვილი [D. TUMANISHVILI], მშენებელი ოსტატები შუა საუკუნეების საქართველოში [Master Builders in Medieval Georgia], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 2012, p. 151.

<sup>21</sup> Translation by the author. M. Brosset, *Inscriptions géorgiennes et autres recueillies par le Père Nersès SARGISIAN, MAISSP, VII série, vol. VIII, N10, St.-Petersbourg 1864, p. 14–17, pl. III; ე. თაყაიშვილი [E. TAQAISHVILI], 1917 წლის არქეოლოგიური ექსპედიციის სამხრეთ საქართველოში [Archaeological Expedition of 1917 in the South Georgia], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 1960, p. 25–27; ვ. სილოგავა [V. SILOGAVA], კ. შენგელია [K. SHENGELIA], ტაო-კლარჯეთი [Tao-Klardjeti], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 2007, p. 197–198.*

tre was still alive and both David and George held the king's title, the inscription is dated back to 1155<sup>22</sup>. Epithet “Queen of the Heavens”, usually alluding the Mother of God, may indicate that Tamar had already taken monastic vows by that time. Being the only female member of the court mentioned next to the kings confirms her special status and equality to them. In addition to her strong personality, this fact can be explained by her prominent role in the upbringing of her nephew, the future King George III (r. 1156–1184). The thirteenth century chronicle *The History and Eulogy of Monarchs*, tells that in 1161, when King George captured Ani, *he on his part, fair faced appeared before his tutor, the Queen of Queens Tamar, who, washing her face with tears, was overwhelmed with joy; after this, triumphant and manly, he met his spouse*<sup>23</sup>. As Temo Jojua suggests, Tamar returned from Shirvan to Georgia in the 1130s and was actively involved in George's education<sup>24</sup>. Actually, Tamar's return coincides with important political shifts between the Georgian and Shirvan courts. At the end of the 1120s, Manuchehr III, supported by the Seljuks, sought for independence of his state from the Georgian kingdom. Finally, Shirvan was split into two parts across the Aksu River. Its northwest territories, with a significant Christian population, became a subject of Georgia, while the eastern part of the state was left to Manuchehr to rule over with minimal obligations towards Georgia<sup>25</sup>. Though it is unclear whether this turbulent period worked as a trigger for divorce. In any case, Queen Tamar had left Shirvan well before her husband died.

### The Establishment of Tighva Monastery

Tamar established her monastery wanting to secure herself a secluded abode and final resting place. She is said to have launched its construction in the 1140s. The village of Tighva, apparently royal land, was chosen for the new religious foundation.

Tighva is an old village in Shida (Inner) Kartli province. It is mentioned in the Georgian Chronicles in the context of tenth-century events<sup>26</sup>. Located 130 km from Tbilisi, the village is currently inaccessible to Georgian and international scholars because of the Russian occupation of the region. Therefore, the main source for the discussion of the setting and architecture of the monastery is the

<sup>22</sup> ე. თაყაიშვილი [E. TAQAISHVILI], 1917 წლის..., p. 27; ვ. სილოგავა [V. SILOGAVA], კ. შენგელია [K. SHENGELIA], ტაო-კლარჯეთი..., p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> *The Georgian Chronicles*..., p. 231.

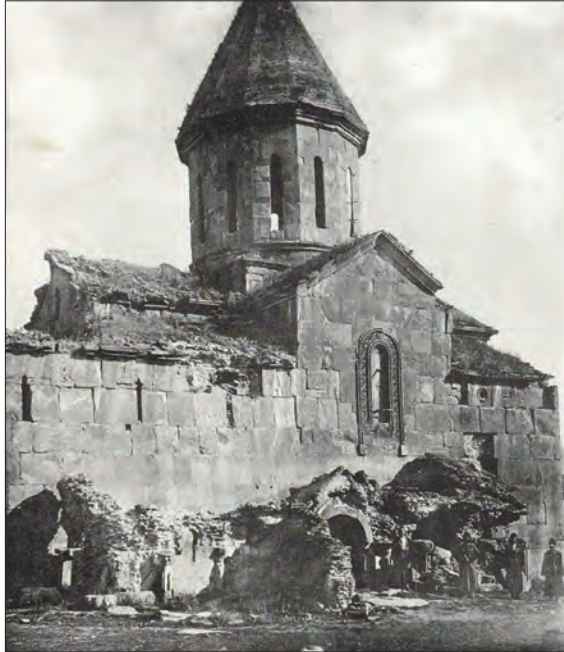
<sup>24</sup> T. JOJUA, *A Juridical Epigraphical Deed of Archbishop Egnate from Ishkhani Cathedral, the sixth international conference Archival Studies, Source Studies – Trends and Challenges*, held online on September 23–24, 2021, abstract is available on <https://archive.gov.ge/storage/files/doc/temo.pdf> [18 IX 2023].

<sup>25</sup> D. RAYFIELD, *Edge of Empires*..., p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> *The Georgian Chronicles*..., p. 149.

above-mentioned monograph by Levan Rcheulishvili. Most of the visual material presented here to illustrate this paper is also from his book.

The eighteenth-century *Description of the Kingdom of Georgia* by Prince Vakhushti Bagrationi is the earliest source praising Queen Tamar for building Tighva Monastery: *There is the Holy Cross Monastery in Tighva, which was built by the daughter of [David] the Builder; the domed church is very beautiful and well-constructed; there are plenty of buildings around it and only one priest to look after them*<sup>27</sup>. Thus, at that time, the monastery had already been abolished, yet most of its buildings were still standing. In the late nineteenth century, when the Russian archaeologist Praskovya Uvarova visited the site, the architectural structures, aside from the church itself, were in ruins<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 1). A century later, they were gone without a trace, leaving the church as the only material evidence of the once affluent monastery<sup>29</sup>.



**Fig. 1.** Tighva Monastery. The Church of the Crucifixion. South façade. Photo by P. Uvarova, 1894.

<sup>27</sup> Translation by author. ვახუშტი ბატონიშვილი [VAKHUSHTI BATONISHVILI], *აღწერა სამეფოსა საქართველოსა* [Description of Kingdom of Kartli], *ქართლის ცხოვრება* [Life of Kartli], IV, ed. S. QAUKHCHISHVILI, თბილისი [Tbilisi] 1973, p. 376.

<sup>28</sup> According to P. Uvarova by that time, the church had reconsecrated on the name of Dormition of Mother of God and it was under repair. *Материалы по Археологии Кавказа*, ed. P. UVAROVA, Москва 1894, p. 166–167.

<sup>29</sup> ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 7–8.

Originally enclosed within massive walls, the monastery housed the main church, cells and Queen Tamar's own residence. These isolated buildings were arranged to the north of the church, while agricultural structures stood outside and were attached to the eastern wall of the enclosure<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 2).

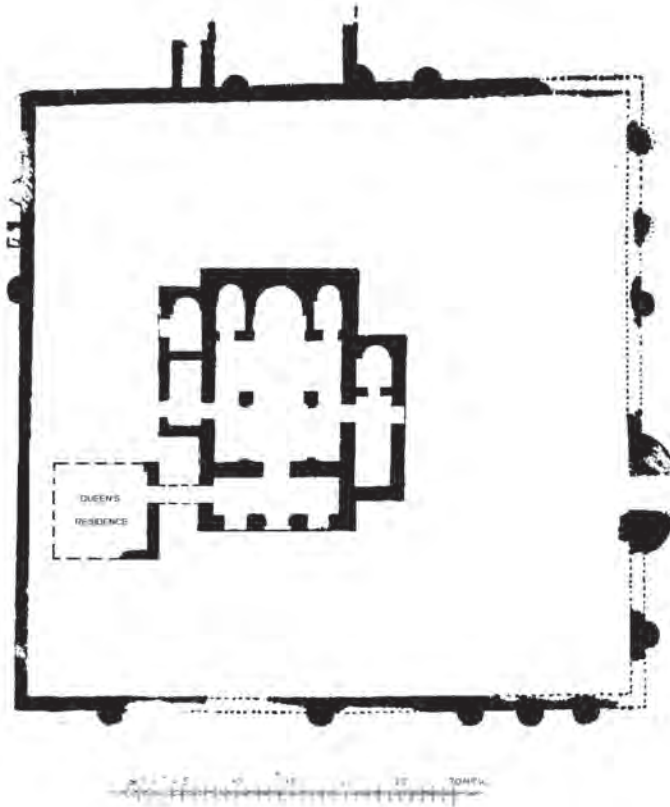
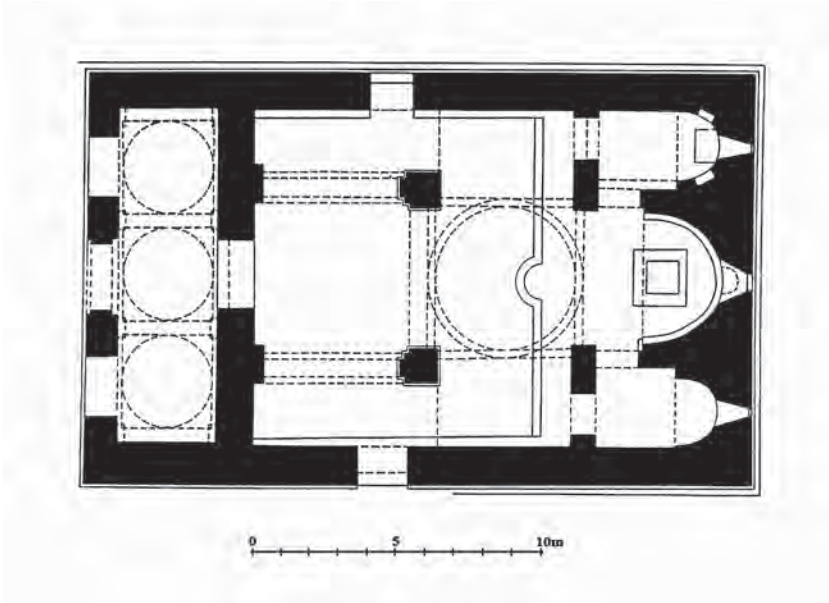


Fig. 2. Plan of Tighva Monastery after L. Rcheulishvili.

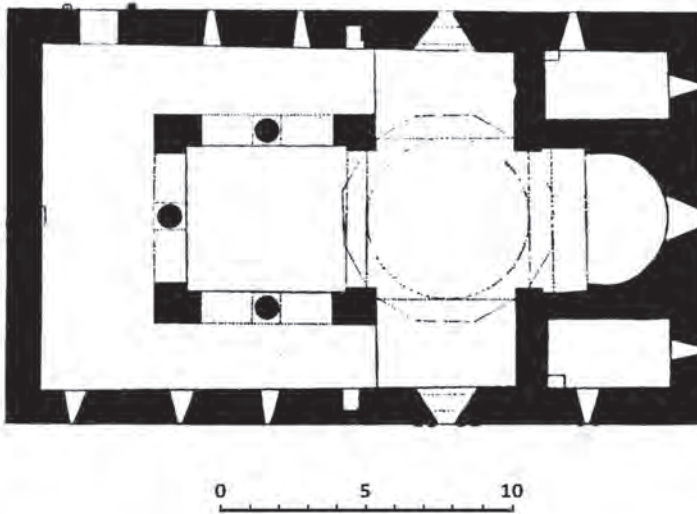
The church is cross-in-square in plan (Fig. 3). The crossarms are rectangular, except for the eastern one, terminating in apse flanked with pastophoria. A spherical dome rises on a drum, broken by twelve windows. It rests on two freestanding piers in the west and projections of the bema in the east. Pendentives serve to transition from the central square bay to the circular base of the dome<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9–10.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 13; ვ. ბერიძე [V. BERIDZE], *ქართული...*, p. 308–309.

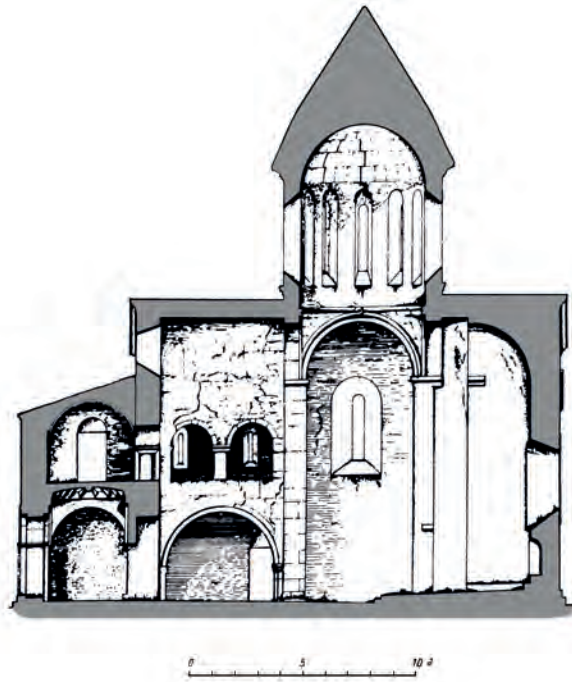


**Fig. 3.** Tighva Monastery. The Church of the Crucifixion. Ground plan after L. Rcheulishvili.



**Fig. 4.** Tighva Monastery. The Church of the Crucifixion. Upper floor plan after L. Rcheulishvili.





**Fig. 5.** Tighva Monastery. The Church of the Crucifixion. Longitudinal section looking north after L. Rcheulishvili.

The church is accessible through three entrances made in the south, north, and west walls. In front of the western one, 2.40 meters wide, there is a narthex, composed of three identical bays, each covered with individual low domical vaulting decorated with crosses<sup>32</sup>. The pendentives of the middle bay are additionally ornamented with shell-like insets. Three arched doorways, corresponding to each bay, once led to the narthex. At present, they are completely walled up<sup>33</sup>.

An upper gallery arranged above the narthex and the north-western and south-western corner compartments surrounds the western arm of the church (Fig. 4). Each section of the gallery is open through semicircular arches supported by round columns. The gallery could only be accessed only through the queen's residence (now in ruins) standing 3.5 m northwest of the church. A stone bridge leading from the two-storey residence led to a door in the north wall of the church. Thus, the gallery was exclusively reserved for the queen; any other person would have needed Tamar's permission to pass through her apartment (Fig. 5).

<sup>32</sup> For the vaulting type see: T. KAFFENBERGER, *Liminal Spaces of Memory, Devotion and Feasting? Porch-Chapels in Eleventh-Century Georgia*, CSup 1, 2021, p. 120, reference 5.

<sup>33</sup> ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 17–18.

Chapels to the north and south enveloped the main body of the building. They were destroyed during repair works conducted between 1889 and 1892 under the direct supervision of the Russian Exarchate of Georgia<sup>34</sup>.

The walls of the church are faced with finely hewn ashlar blocks, but lack carved decoration. Unlike other twelfth-century Georgian churches (Church of the Dormition in Gelati – 1106–1130, the Church of the Archangels in Ikorta – 1172) (Fig. 6), Tighva is distinguished for its unusually “severe” style: the façades are not articulated with blind arches, and, especially striking, there is a complete absence of decoration on the drum of the dome. Limited architectural ornamentation is concentrated on the northern façade. Here, the door, which once led Queen Tamar to the upper gallery, stands out for its carved decoration. The entrance is framed with interlaced geometrical ornamentation composed of alternating circles and rhombuses. There is a richly embellished ringed cross placed in the centre of the tympanum. A dedicatory inscription (discussed below) fills the areas between the frame and the cross (Fig. 7).

The window cut in the cross arm of the northern façade is adorned with S-shape floral ornamentation. The same motif is repeated on the entrance frame of the northern porch. Taking into consideration that this façade looked towards cells and was seen almost exclusively by nuns, limited decoration was intended for them, while other façades of the church impressed the secular audience with fine masonry of yellowish stones<sup>35</sup>.

These and other peculiarities, including the extraordinary planning of the monastery, raise a number of questions regarding the involvement of the donor in the planning and building process, the connection between the church building and dwelling in a monastic setting, the place of a female donor in the monastic church space, her visibility, and segregation among women according to their social status.

<sup>34</sup> *Материалы...*, p. 167, note 1; ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 39; The approach of the Russian Church Administration was more or less similar to all ancient religious monuments: the interior was usually whitewashed or plastered, thus ruining Medieval murals; traditional chancel barriers were replaced with high iconostasis typical of Russian churches; and a widely used method was to “clean” a church from damaged or partially ruined additional buildings such as porches, galleries, chapels, etc. Like in Tighva, the goal of repairs was to make a tidy setting for a building, which resulted in the loss of valuable architectural elements of the sites. ი. ელიზბარაშვილი [I. ELIZBARASHVILI], მ. სურამელაშვილი [M. SURAMELASHVILI], ც. ჩახუნაშვილი [T. CHACHKHUNASHVILI], ხ. ჭურგულია [Kh. TCHURGHULIA], *არქიტექტურის რესტავრაცია საქართველოში* [Architectural Restoration in Georgia], თბილისი [Tbilisi] 2012, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 7; P. Меписашвили, В. Цинцадзе, *Архитектура нагорной части исторической провинции Грузии-шида-картли* [Architecture of the Mountainous Part of the Historic Province of Georgia – Inner Kartli], Тбилиси [Tbilisi] 1975, p. 109.



**Fig. 6.** Ikorta. The Church of the Archangels. View from the south-west. The George Chubinashvili National Research Centre, 1978.



**Fig. 7.** Tighva Monastery. The Church of the Crucifixion. North façade. Photo by P. Uvarova, 1894.

Queen Tamar had a clear vision of not only the overall concept of her religious foundation, with the focus not only on seclusion, but also on the architectural appearance of the church<sup>36</sup>. The planning of the monastery and design of the church were dictated by the Queen, and served to represent the ascetic nature of the donor, who sought a place for the redemption of her sins rather than the staging of power through her establishment.

Very few medieval monastic cells and residences have survived to the present day in Georgia. While most of them stood at a distance from a church, one can also find living spaces incorporated into its body. St Nicholas Church at Kardanakhi Monastery (Kakheti region) is a hybrid building of the kind erected presumably in the seventh century. It is a barrel-vaulted single-nave church, with an apsed sanctuary on its eastern side. Three sides of the church, except for the east, are enveloped with ambulatory that also terminate in apses to the east. Its two-storey western and northern sections house an upper gallery and a dwelling respectively. These interconnected spaces open to the main church, although are only accessible from the outside<sup>37</sup>.

The Church of the Mother of God in Zegaani Monastery (again in Kakheti) resembles that of Kardanakhi in many ways. It is also a seventh-century church of similar planning, with three-sided ambulatory and auxiliary rooms flanking the sanctuary. A rectangular hall placed above the narthex, and opening through two arches to the church space, served as an accommodation for distinguished members of the monastic congregation. However, it is not clear whether they entered this room from the church space by means of a ladder, or whether there was a staircase attached to the church from the outside<sup>38</sup>.

Another religious building, which also incorporates a dwelling above the narthex is the ninth-century Church of Transfiguration in Iqalto Monastery (Kakheti). Heavily restored in the subsequent centuries, it is a structure of the cross-in-square plan, with a dome resting on four free-standing piers. A staircase arranged in the north corner of the narthex leads to the upper floor, where a rectangular room composed of two compartments, each covered with groin vaults, is located. Unlike the above-discussed churches, in Iqalto, the room communicates with the main space of the church only through one small arched window<sup>39</sup>. All three sites are identified as male monasteries, leading to the conclusion that abbots or former noble laymen who adopted the monastic life used to live in these rooms<sup>40</sup>. Different

<sup>36</sup> ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 53; დ. ხოშტარია [D. KHOSHCHARIA], ნ. ნაცვლიშვილი [N. NATSVLISHVILI], დ. თუმანიშვილი [D. TUMANISHVILI], *მშენებელი ოსტატები...*, p. 93–94.

<sup>37</sup> Г. Чубинашвили, *Архитектура Кахетий* [Architecture of Kakheti], Тбилиси [Tbilisi] 1959, p. 143–147.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164–173.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 339–349.

<sup>40</sup> The same practice can be seen in Saint Nicolas Church at Khintsvi Monastery (thirteenth century) and a single-nave church near the village of Pichkhovani (seventeenth century), which

approaches towards the openness of these spaces clearly depended on the desire of the donor and his conception of self-representation in the church.

Nuns were not so daring when planning their establishments. None of the female monastic churches included living spaces directly incorporated into their bodies. In the twelfth century, the noblewoman Febronia founded a small monastery in Lisa (Shida Kartli). The tiny Church of the Holy Cross is a single-nave building terminating in an apse to the east. A sole window is cut in the same wall. The church is accessed through a door arranged in the south wall. The inscription placed above the entrance informs that Febronia erected the church in order to pray for the safety of her brother captured by the Turks<sup>41</sup>. The tower, which served as a cell for Febronia, adjoins the church from the west. These two structures are separated by a blank wall, therefore every time the nun wanted to visit the church, she had to leave her room and enter the church through the outside door. The small size and simple architecture of Lisa Monastery correspond to the modest lifestyle and limited financial resources of Febronia.

As mentioned above, in Tighva, Tamar's residence stood 3.5 meters away from the church and was connected to the upper gallery by means of a stone bridge, which enabled her to enter the church, bypassing the naos. The only inscription made above the abundantly decorated door and written in iamb says: "When a creature of this world starts another life by the will of God Christ Crucified, assist your maidservant Tamar before Him during the Last Judgment"<sup>42</sup>. This inscription was intended solely for the former Queen, to remind her of her humble position every time she entered the church. By restricting herself to the gallery, Tamar found a proper shelter for herself – for a person who wanted to stay undisturbed while at her devotions, and less visible not only to the nuns, but also to monastery guests. The upper-storey gallery in Tighva church became an ascetic refuge as much as a place underlining the social status of the donor.

Georgian church building tradition attests to segregation based on social rank. It was common in cathedrals and parish churches where religious events were attended by members of the royal household or nobility<sup>43</sup>. Upper galleries developed from the seventh century in Georgian church architecture were used for

---

included a three-storey dwelling to the west to house former Bishop Partenoz. See: დ. ხომტარია [D. KHOSH-TARIA], ნ. ნაცვლიშვილი [N. NATSVLISHVILI], დ. თუმანიშვილი [D. TUMANISHVILI], *მშენებელი ოსტატები...*, p. 84–85.

<sup>41</sup> P. МЕПИСАШВИЛИ, В. ЦИЦАДЗЕ, *Архитектура нагорной части...*, p. 103–104; Z. ALEKSIDZÉ, *Le Nouveau Manuscrit Géorgien Sinaïtique N Sin 50*, Louvain 2001 [= CSCO, v. 586, t. 108], p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> Translation by the author. P. Uvarova is completely right when saying that the church was dedicated to the Crucifixion rather than the Holy Cross. For the reading of inscription see: M. BROSET, *Rapports sur un voyage archéologique dans Géorgie et dans l'Arménie*, St.-Petersbourg 1851, p. 106–107; *Материалы...*, p. 170; ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 35–38; თ. ჟორდანია [T. JHORDANIA], *ქრონიკები...*, p. 255.

<sup>43</sup> *Материалы...*, p. 170; ლ. რჩეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 35–38.

staging the power of the attendees. The galleries usually consisted of spaces above the south and north aisles, connected to each other by a platform to the west. This platform, completely open to and merging with the main space of the church, like that in Tsromi Church (626–634), Alaverdi Cathedral (early eleventh century), and the Church of the Dormition in Gelati Monastery (1106–1130), was used by members of the ruling class and served to emphasize their superior social status. It had a particular role in the construction of visual communication between the nobility and their subjects during church services. Even when the platform was too narrow to serve as a place to stand, and functioned just as a corridor connecting adjacent arched spaces, it still played the role of a stage, as everybody could see the movement of the nobility before and after the service. In other churches, the upper gallery was more isolated from the nave, aiming to restrict the physical appearance and visibility of the person who stood there from below<sup>44</sup>. In the church of the female monastery in Kalauri, built in 855 by Hilarion the Iberian for his mother and sister, the upper gallery located above the narthex and open towards the nave, through three arches arranged in two tiers, gives a limited opportunity for visual communication<sup>45</sup>.

In Tighva, the main western section of the arched gallery is wide (3.5 m) and is poorly illuminated, thus giving a perfect setting for less visibility due to a dark background. On the other hand, its central position, like a private lodge in a theatre, would enable the queen to follow the Divine Liturgy from the best place in the church. The place she occupied in the architectural space of the church separated her from the rest of the praying community. Moreover, she had the sacrament brought to her there, as many other royal and noble families did in other churches. So, when planning her own religious foundation, the former queen followed a tradition where noble persons occupied the galleries during the liturgy. Even if Tamar was hardly seen by the congregation, they would know that she was present there. Tamar's choice to sequester herself physically also corresponds to the view of twelfth-century Byzantine society on virtuous women being expected to stay out of sight<sup>46</sup>. In Tamar's case, the architecture participated in the con-

<sup>44</sup> ნ. ჩიტიშვილი [N. CHITISHVILI], *მეფე-დედოფლის სამყოფელი ქართული ეკლესიის სივრცეში* [Place of the King and Queen in the Space of Georgian Church], სს 17, 2014, p. 193–208.

<sup>45</sup> თ. დვალი [T. DVALI], *სოფ. კალაურის ნათლისმცემლის მონასტერი – ქართული ხუროთმოძღვრების საყურადღებო ძეგლი* [Kalauri Monastery of the Baptist – a Remarkable Monument of the Georgian Architecture], სს 20, 2017, p. 117–118, fig. 4, 6; This type of partition of space was first used in the church of All Saints in Gurjaani (eighth century). Here, five arches are arranged in three tiers, however, for public appearance of the nobility, the church also had a wooden balcony arranged on the south wall. E. BADSTÜBNER, *Die Kirche Kwela Zminda in Gurdshani und die Muttergotteskirche des Klosters Kwela Zminda in Watschnadsiani. Ihre Beziehungen zu Byzanz und zum Westen*, BB 2006, p. 41–49.

<sup>46</sup> L. NEVILLE, *Byzantine Gender*, Leeds 2019, p. 40–43.

struction of passive visibility of the female patron who founded the monastery, as a celebration of piety and expression of philanthropy.

The chronicles did not give the date of Tamar's death<sup>47</sup>. The last years of her life are uncertain, just as other important periods of her long life are. Most likely, her church served her also as a burial place. Her grave is expected to be found in the main nave in front of the sanctuary<sup>48</sup>. Yet, this new evidence awaits discovery.

## Conclusion

The history of nunneries in Medieval Georgia has yet to be studied sufficiently. Tighva Monastery, as a royal establishment of a very ascetic female donor, speaks clearly of the role of women in funding religious buildings of that period. Moreover, it attests that Queen Tamar was not only financially independent in architectural patronage, but was also actively involved in the process of planning and designing her establishment. It attests to how architecture can underline the ascetic nature of the donor on the one hand, and create a perfect setting for social subordination on the other. The limited written sources and scarce physical evidence about the female monasteries of Medieval Georgia make it difficult to say whether other queens or noblewomen also used the same approaches to show their elevated status by means of segregated areas in the church space of their religious foundations. On the examples of Kalauri (855) and Tighva (1152), one can conclude that it was at least not uncommon. Further research will hopefully shed more light not only on the history of female monasticism in Medieval Georgia, but also on the female touch in the architectural arrangements of those establishments.

<sup>47</sup> As T. Jojua convincingly showed Tamar was still alive in the end of 1160s and twice donated money to the Georgian Monastery on Mount Athos. See: T. JOJUA, *An Agape record of Queen Tamar from the Agape Register of the Georgian Monastery on Mount Athos, the seventh international conference Archival Studies, Source Studies – Trends and Challenges*, held online on September 8–10, 2022, abstract is available on chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpajpcglclefindmkaj/https://archive.gov.ge/storage/files/doc/4\_teimuraz\_jojua.pdf [18 IX 2023].

<sup>48</sup> Levan Rcheulishvili supposed that she was buried in a small building attached to the north porch. ლ. რჭეულიშვილი [L. RCHEULISHVILI], *თიღვა...*, p. 44.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Armenia and the Crusades. Tenth to Twelfth Centuries. The Chronicle of Mathew of Edessa*, trans., comm. A.E. DOSTOURIAN, praef. K.H. MAKSOUDIAN, New York–London 1993.
- The Georgian Chronicles of Kartlis Tskhovreba. (A History of Georgia). The Life of David, King of Kings Translated and with Commentary*, trans. D. GAMQ'RELIDZE, ed. S. JONES, Tbilisi 2014.
- VAKHUSHT'I BAT'ONISHVILI, *Aghts'era sameposa sakartvelosa. Kartlis tskhovreba*, vol. IV, ed. S. QAUKH-CHISHVILI, Tbilisi 1973.

### Secondary Literature

- ALEKSIDZÉ Z., *Le Nouveau Manuscrit Géorgien Sinaitique N Sin 50*, Louvain 2001 [= *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientaliū*, v. 586, t. 108].
- ASATIANI N., *Sakartvelo-shirvanis politikuri urtiertoba XII saukuneshi*, “თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის შრომები” / “Tbilisis sakhelmtsipo universitetis shromebi” 125.6, 1968, p. 7–54.
- ASHURBEYLI S., *Gosudarstvo Shirvanshakhov (VI–XVII v.v.)*, Baku 1983.
- AVALISHVILI Z., *The Cross from Overseas*, “Georgica” 1.2–3, 1936, p. 3–11.
- BADSTÜBNER E., *Die Kirche Kwela Zminda in Gurdshani und die Muttergotteskirche des Klosters Kwela Zminda in Watschnadsiani. Ihre Beziehungen zu Byzanz und zum Westen*, “Baugestalt und Bildfunktion. Texte zur Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte” 2006, p. 41–57.
- BERDZENISHVILI N., *Aghmosavlet Kakhetis tsarsulidan (mokle politikuri tsnoba)*, “მიმომხილველი” / “Mimomkhilveli” 3, 1953, p. 67–86.
- BERIDZE V., *Kartuli khurotmodzghvrebis istoria*, vol. II, Tbilisi 2010.
- BOSWORTH C.E., *The New Islamic Dynasties. A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, Edinburgh 1996.
- BRESC-BAUTIER G., *L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris en 1120*, “Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes” 129.2, 1971, p. 387–397, <https://doi.org/10.3406/bec.1971.449903>
- BROSSET M., *Rapports sur un voyage archéologique dans Géorgie et dans l'Arménie*, St.-Petersbourg 1851.
- BUNYADOV Z., *Gosudarstvo Arabekov Azerbaidzjana (1136–1125 godi)*, Baku 1978.
- BUNYADOV Z., *Gruzia I Shirvan v pervoi palavine XII veka*, [in:] *Sakartvelo Rustavelis khanashi*, Tbilisi 1966, p. 281–292.
- CHAYKIN K., *Kartul-Iranuli urtiertobidan*, “Moambe” 3, 1938, p. 13–24.
- CHITISHVILI N., *Mepe-dedoplis samqopeli kartuli eklesiis sivrtseshi*, “საქართველოს სიძველენი” / “Sakartvelos sidzveleni” 17, 2014, p. 193–208.
- CHUBINASHVILI G., *Arkhitektura kakhეთი*, Tbilisi 1959.
- DVALI T., *Sop. kalauris natlismtsemelis monastery – kartuli khurotmodzghvrebis saquradghebo dzegli*, “საქართველოს სიძველენი” / “Sakartvelos sidzveleni” 20, 2017, p. 98–144.
- EASTMOND A., *Tamta's World. The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia*, Cambridge 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316711774>



- ELIZBARASHVILI I., SURAMELASHVILI M., CHACHKHUNASHVILI T., TCHURGHULIA K., *Arkiteturis restavratsia sakartveloshi*, Tbilisi 2012.
- GABIDZASHVILI E., *Ruis-Urbnisis krebis dzeqlistsera*, Tbilisi 1978.
- HASAN H., *Falaki-i-Shirwani. His Time, Life, and Works*, London 1929.
- JHORDANIA T., *Kronikebi*, vol. I, Tfilisi 1892 [repr. 2004].
- JOJUA T., *A Juridical Epigraphical Deed of Archbishop Egnate from Ishkhani Cathedral, the sixth international conference Archival Studies, Source Studies – Trends and Challenges*, held online on September 23–24, 2021.
- JOJUA T., *An Agape record of Queen Tamar from the Agape Register of the Georgian Monastery on Mount Athos, the seventh international conference Archival Studies, Source Studies – Trends and Challenges*, held online on September 8–10, 2022.
- KAFFENBERGER T., *Liminal Spaces of Memory, Devotion and Feasting? Porch-Chapels in Eleventh-Century Georgia*, “Convivium Supplementum” 1, 2021, p. 116–137, <https://doi.org/10.1484/M.CONVISUP-EB.5.130913>
- KHOSHTRIA D., NATSVLISHVILI N., TUMANISHVILI D., *Mshenebeli ostatebi shua saukuneebis sakartveloshi*, Tbilisi 2012.
- Materiali po arkeologii Kavkaza*, ed. P. UVAROVA, Moscov 1894.
- MEPISASHVILI R., TSINTSADZE V., *Arkhitektura nagornoj chasti istoricheskoi provintsii gruzii-shidakarthi*, Tbilisi 1975.
- MINORSKY V., *A History of Sharvān and Darband in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Cambridge 1958.
- NEVILLE L., *Byzantine Gender*, Leeds 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781641890175>
- PAKHOMOV Y., *Kratki kurs istorii Azerbaidjana*, Baku 1923.
- PRINKE R.T., *Kata of Georgia, Daughter of King David IV the Builder, as Wife of Sebastokrator Isaakios Komnenos*, “Foundations” 3(6), 2011, p. 489–502.
- RAYFIELD D., *Edge of Empires. A History of Georgia*, London 2012 [repr. 2013].
- RCHEULISHVILI L., *Tighva Sharvanis dedoplis Tamaris aghmshenebloba (narkvevi XII s. kartuli khurotmodzghvrebidan)*, Tbilisi 1960.
- SARGISIAN P.N., *Mémoires de l'Académie Imperiale des Sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, VII série, vol. VIII, N10, St.-Petersbourg 1864.
- SHUKUROV R., *Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes*, [in:] *The Seljuk of Anatolia. Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. A.C.S. PEACOCK, S.N. YILDIZ, London 2012 [= Library of Middle East History, 38], p. 115–150, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9780755693368.ch-005>
- SILOGAVA V., SHENGELIA K., *Tao-Klardjeti*, Tbilisi 2007.
- TQAQISHVILI E., *1917 tslis arkeologiuri ekspeditsia samkhret sakartveloshi*, Tbilisi 1960.
- THOMSON R.W., *Rewriting Caucasus History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation*, Oxford 1996 [repr. 2002], <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198263739.001.0001>

---

TOUMANOFF C., *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasic chrétien (Arménie – Géorgie – Albanie)*, Rome 1976.

VILCHEVSKY O., *Khakani*, “Советское востоковедение” / “Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie” 4, 1957, p. 6–15.

**Natia Natsvlishvili**

The George Chubinashvili National Research Centre  
for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation

9 Atoneli St

Tbilisi 0105, Georgia

natsvlishvili@gch-centre.ge







Anastasia Nikolaou (Komotini)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3635-0534>

## THE HYMNOGRAPHY IN HONOUR OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELENA AND ITS CONNECTION WITH IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY\*

**Abstract.** This article presents an overview of published and unpublished Byzantine and post-Byzantine hymnographic texts dedicated to Saint Constantine, founder of Constantinople and first Byzantine emperor, and his mother Saint Helena. Specifically, we cite and comment upon some indicative passages primarily found in canons of the Matins, which refer to historical events from the lives of the saints and attribute to them, especially to Saint Constantine, virtues such as justice, piety, wisdom, and the defense of the true faith. These qualities are directly associated with the imperial political ideology as this was shaped principally by Eusebius of Caesarea in his works *Life of Constantine* and *Tricennial Oration*.

**Keywords:** Byzantine and post-Byzantine hymnography, canons, Menaion, Saint Constantine, Saint Helena, vision of Constantine, foundation of Constantinople, Council of Nicaea, discovery and exaltation of the Holy Cross, Eusebius of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, *Tricennial Oration*, imperial ideology

### Introduction

Byzantine hymnography constitutes the richest branch of Byzantine literature. However, as is known, little of this wealth has been included in the printed editions of the liturgical books of the Orthodox Church. The detection, study and dissemination of these texts is both a desideratum and a challenge for the discipline of philology.

The hymnographic compositions in honor of Saints Constantine and Helena, prominent figures of Christianity and Byzantium, have been researched by a number of scholars in the past. Yet, in the current Menaion of May only one canon for their feast is encountered, although manuscripts contain several more. Some

---

\* An abridged version of this article was presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Greek Byzantinologists (Ioannina, 27–30 November 2019).

of these canons have already been discovered, but the majority of them have not been examined and remain unpublished.

The content of these texts has been clearly influenced by the imperial ideology as this was shaped by the historical works of Eusebius of Caesarea, who was the first to formulate the basic principles of the Byzantine imperial ideology. These principles influenced not only the hymnography for Saints Constantine and Helena but also the much broader hagiological literature related to them. The imperial monarchy is projected in parallel to the heavenly hierarchy. The emperor is pictured as the chosen of God and at the same time as the protector of the Church. Frequent references are also made to the vision of the Cross, the founding of Constantinople and the observance and defense of the dogma against heresies and idolatry. Among other virtues, the piety of Saint Constantine is especially emphasized since it comprises a crucial characteristic of the imperial political ideology.

### Published and unpublished canons

The feast of sovereigns and Equal-to-apostles Constantine and Helena is celebrated on 21 May<sup>1</sup>. In the Eastern version of Christian iconography, the saints are depicted together holding the Holy Cross between them. The Menaion of May contains a full service for their commemoration<sup>2</sup>, which includes only one canon in the Matins<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, almost since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers have detected in manuscripts numerous other hymnographic texts (canons, stichera, kontakia, kathismata, etc.). Most of these compositions are anonymous and are found in Parisian, Sinaitic and Athonian manuscripts as well as in codices

<sup>1</sup> *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. E codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi. Adiectis synaxariis selectis*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, Bruxellis 1902 [= SCP], col. 697–700; M.I. ΓΕΛΕΩΝ, *Βυζαντινὸν Ἑορτολόγιον. Μνήμαι τῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ Δ' μέχρι τῶν μέσων τοῦ ΙΕ' αἰῶνος ἐορταζομένων ἁγίων ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, Κωνσταντινούπολις 1899, p. 106–107, 319; Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Ἄγιολόγιον τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας*, Ἀθήνα 1995, p. 266–267; *ODB*, s.v. Constantine I the Great, p. 499–500, s.v. Helena, p. 909; J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: Some New Reflections*, *Mil* 8, 2011, p. 128–145; C. MANGO, *Ιστορία του Βυζαντίου*, Ἀθήνα 2006, p. 43–51. The literature on Saints Constantine and Helena is quite extensive. Much of this literature (up to 2005) is cited in: I. PUCCI, *Orientamenti bibliografici inerenti Costantino il Grande*, *Porph* 2.4, 2005. A very important work for Greek research is ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Βίος Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου*, praef., comm. Β. ΚΑΤΣΑΡΟΣ, trans. Γ.Α. ΡΑΠΤΗΣ, Θεσσαλονίκη 2011 (cetera: ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Βίος*), with rendition into modern Greek and updated bibliography until 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Μηναῖα τοῦ ὄλου ἑνιαυτοῦ*, vol. V, Ἐν Ρώμῃ 1888–1901 (cetera: MR), p. 134–145.

<sup>3</sup> On the emergence and characteristics of the canon, cf. *ODB*, s.v. Kanon, p. 1102; E. WELLESZ, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford 1961, p. 198–206; N.B. ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ, *Ἡ βυζαντινὴ ὑμνογραφία καὶ ποίησις*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1993, p. 59–66; Θ. ΔΕΤΟΡΑΚΗΣ, *Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία*, Ἡράκλειο 1997, p. 69; Α.Σ. ΚΟΡΑΚΙΔΗΣ, *Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία*, vol. II, Ἀθήνα 2006, p. 151–153; Π.Ν. ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ, *Ἐκλογή Ἑλληνικῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ὑμνογραφίας*, Ἀθήνα 2007, p. 45–53.

of the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Sofia. Apart from these unpublished poetic texts, variations may also be noted in the rest of the hymnography of this feast.

A part of this material has already been published and annotated. For the purposes of this article, we investigated additional manuscripts, different from the ones used by previous scholars. Those codices include newer texts or reflect a textual tradition distinct from that of the codices published. Here is a brief outline of the manuscripts and printed editions consulted:

In 1913, S. Gassisi published kathismata, oikoi, stichera and two (2) canons, all accompanied by short critical notes. For his own edition he used the printed editions of the Roman and Venetian Menaia, Anthologies of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the edition of hymnographic texts of J.B. Pitra and manuscripts found in the libraries of Cryptoferra and the Vatican<sup>4</sup>.

Later on, S. Eustratiades provides in his *Άγιολόγιον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας* some brief information about some hymnographic texts that were still unpublished in his time, while in the *Ταμείον Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ποιήσεως* (1951) he presents the beginnings (*initia*) of troparia and canons<sup>5</sup>.

In 1993, A. Luzzi in an extensive article deals with hagiological issues, characteristics and attributes concerning the two saints, he comments on editorial issues regarding the texts cited by S. Gassisi and S. Eustratiades and he supplements the catalogue of hymnographic texts<sup>6</sup>.

In 1996, E. Papailiopoulos-Photopoulos records four (4) unpublished canons<sup>7</sup>. D. Stratigopoulos completes Papailiopoulos-Photopoulos's catalogue of manuscripts in an article he authored in 2006, adding a canon for the saints composed by Nikolaos Malaxos<sup>8</sup>. This canon, accompanied by critical notes, an Italian translation and relevant commentary, was published by A. Luzzi in 2010<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca in onore dei SS. Constantino ed Elena*, ReO 6, 1913, p. 56–85. For a critique of the edition of S. Gassisi, cf. A. LUZZI, *Il dies festus di Constantin il Grande e di sua madre Elena nei libri liturgici della Chiesa Greca*, [in:] *Constantin oil Grande dall' antichita all' Umanesimo. Colloquio sul cristianesimo nel mondo antico*, ed. G. BONAMENTE, F. FUSCO, Macerata 1993, p. 593–594. One of those two canons is the canon included in the Menaion of May and was republished by S. Gassisi.

<sup>5</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Άγιολόγιον...*, p. 266–267 (the author mentions codices Parisinus gr. 1566 and Ω 111 of Great Lavra, Mount Athos); ΙΔΕΜ, *Ταμείον Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ποιήσεως*, ΕΦ 50, 1951, p. 154–155.

<sup>6</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il dies...*, p. 585–643. He cites only the beginnings of the troparia by referencing *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae* by H. Follieri and the printed editions of Vouteris.

<sup>7</sup> Ε. ΠΑΠΑΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον ἀνεκδότων ἁσματικῶν κανόνων, seu Analecta Hymnica Graeca e codicibus eruta Orientis Christiani, Κανόνες Μηναίων*, Ἀθήναι 1996, p. 202.

<sup>8</sup> Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Κωνσταντῖνος καὶ Ἐλένη στήν Ὑμνογραφία*, [in:] *Niš and Byzantium. Fifth symposium, Niš, 3.–5. June 2006*, ed. M. RAKOCIJA, Niš 2007, p. 47–54.

<sup>9</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone di Nicola Malaxos per gli imperatori Constantino ed Elena*, [in:] *“Alle gentili arti ammaestra”*. *Studi in Onore di Alkistis Proiou*, ed. A. ARMATI, M. CERASOLI, Chr. LUCIANI, Roma 2010 [= TSB-N, 18], p. 257–291.

A detailed description of the data on the Matins canons that we obtained from the literature mentioned above and from our personal study of the manuscripts is as follows<sup>10</sup>:

1. A canon in the Plagal Fourth Mode beginning with “Μόνε ἐπουράνιε βασιλεῦ”, and with “Υγρὰν διοδεύσας” as the heirmos of the first ode. This canon appears as anonymous in the printed Menaia of May (of Rome, Venice and Apostoliki Diakonia). The heirmoi of the odes belong to various poets (John the Monk, Kosmas, Germanus). The canon is attributed by some scholars to Theophanes Graptus<sup>11</sup>. The same canon along with other hymnographic texts in honor of the two saints is contained in both editions of G. Vouteris (1899 and 1917)<sup>12</sup>.
2. A canon in the Second Mode, beginning with “Δεῦτε, πιστοὶ ἅπαντες, ἀνευφημήσωμεν”, and with “Δεῦτε λαοὶ” as the heirmos of the first ode. The heirmoi belong to Kosmas and John. This canon is encountered in three (3) codices:
  - In a 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the Library of Paris (Par. gr. 344, ff. 71r–81r), paper Anthology of the months March–August with the full services of Vespers and Matins and the synaxarion of the saints after the sixth ode<sup>13</sup>. The canon appears as anonymous. This manuscript is mentioned by S. Eustratiades and E. Papailiopolou-Photopoulou<sup>14</sup>.
  - In a 14<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the Ecclesiastical, Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria (EHAI gr. 384, ff. 326–332), paper Menaion of the months March–May, originating from the collection of

<sup>10</sup> The study of the manuscripts was carried out by means of digital photographs. Codices Paris. gr. 344, Paris. gr. 1566, Sinait. gr. 637 and Sinait. gr. 670 were accessed through the *Pinakes* digital database, the codex of the Patriarchate of Alexandria through the Palaeographic Archive of the Educational Foundation of the National Bank (Athens), the manuscripts of Great Lavra and Vatopedi through the microfilm archive of the Patriarchal Foundation of Patriarchal Studies of the Vlatades Monastery (Thessaloniki), the manuscript of Kafsokalyvia (Mount Athos) through photographs sent to us by monk Patapius and the manuscript of Sofia through photographs sent to us by the Ecclesiastical, Historical and Archival Institute of the Bulgarian Patriarchate.

<sup>11</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca...*, p. 76–80; A. LUZZI, *Il dies...*, p. 605–608 (the attribution of the canon to Theophanes is doubtful); A. ΖΕΡΒΟΥΔΑΚΗ, *Θεοφάνης ὁ Γραπτός, Βίος καὶ Ἔργο* (unpublished ThD Thesis, Ρέθυμνο 2002), p. 273.

<sup>12</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Ἀγιολόγιον...*, p. 267; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Ἐντυπες ἀκολουθίες ἁγίων*, Αθήνα 2007, p. 208–209.

<sup>13</sup> H. OMONT, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. II, Hildesheim–Zurich–New York 2000, p. 35; *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae...*, col. 697–700.

<sup>14</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 155; Ε. ΠΑΠΑΝΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 202, num. 612.

the monastery of Panagia Archangeliotissa in Xanthi (Greece). The canon is attributed to John the Monk<sup>15</sup>.

- In an 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the Athonian monastery of Vatopedi (Vatopediou 1667, ff. 180r–183r)<sup>16</sup>, paper Menaion of May. The canon appears as anonymous.
3. A canon in the Fourth Mode beginning with “Σοὶ τῷ βασιλεύοντι τῶν αἰώνων”, and with “Ἄισομαί σοι, Κύριε, ὁ Θεός μου” as the heirmos of the first ode. The heirmoi belong to Germanus, Kosmas and John. The canon is found in five (5) manuscripts and in some of them it is attributed to John<sup>17</sup>. S. Gassisi was the first to publish it from codex Vaticanus Reginensis gr. 65<sup>18</sup>. The remaining four (4) manuscripts in which it is encountered are the following:
- A manuscript of the Patriarchate of Alexandria (Alex. Patr. 93, 75v–77v), parchment Menaion of the months May–June<sup>19</sup>. The vesperal office is also included. The canon is attributed to John.
  - A 14<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the library of Paris (Par. gr. 1566, ff. 64r–67v), parchment Menaion of May–June<sup>20</sup>. The Vespers is also included in the whole service.
  - An 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of the monastery of Saint Catherine of Sinai (Sin. gr. 637, ff. 62v–66r), parchment Menaion of March–July<sup>21</sup>. The Vespers is included in the service.

<sup>15</sup> D. ΓΕΤΟΒ, *Incipitarius for the Apparently Unedited Liturgical Canons, as Contained in the Greek Manuscripts Kept in Bulgarian Libraries*, BBGG III, ser. 1, 2004, p. 98; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Κωνσταντῖνος καὶ Ἑλένη...*, p. 49; D. ΓΕΤΟΒ, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria*, vol. II, Turnhout 2014, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Σ.Ν. ΚΑΔΑΣ, *Τὰ σημειώματα τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μεγίστης Μονῆς Βατοπαιδίου*, Ἅγιον Ὄρος 2000, p. 297.

<sup>17</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il dies...*, p. 604–605, where a hypothesis about the author is made.

<sup>18</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca...*, p. 80–84. A. LUZZI relied on this edition for his commentary on the troparia.

<sup>19</sup> Τ.Δ. ΜΟΣΧΟΝΑΣ, *Πατριαρχεῖον Ἀλεξανδρείας. Κατάλογοι τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης*, vol. I, *Χειρόγραφα*, Ἀλεξάνδρεια 1945, p. 91–92 (where no dating for the manuscript is given); Ε. ΠΑΠΑΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 202, num. 613. There is no reference to this particular manuscript in the study of Ν.Π. ΤΖΟΥΜΕΡΚΑΣ, *Τα βυζαντινά χειρόγραφα τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης Ἀλεξανδρείας*, ΕΦ 85–86, 2014–2015, p. 297–332.

<sup>20</sup> Η. ΟΜΟΝΤ, *Inventaire...*, vol. II, p. 97; Ε. ΠΑΠΑΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 202, num. 613.

<sup>21</sup> K.W. CLARK, *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai*, Washington 1952, p. 9; V. GARDTHAUSEN, *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum Sinaiticorum*, Oxonii 1886, p. 147; Ε. ΠΑΠΑΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 202, num. 613.



- A 13<sup>th</sup> century manuscript of the monastery of Saint Catherine of Sinai (Sin. gr. 670, ff. 190v–210v), parchment codex containing services for feasts of saints<sup>22</sup>. The canon is attributed to John the Monk.

In the codex Sin. gr. 637, the text for the third and eighth odes is completely different from the text found in the rest of the manuscripts, while in the fourth and fifth odes only the last troparion differs. Finally, in the seventh and in the ninth ode half of the troparia are different.

4. A canon in the Plagal Second Mode, beginning with “Εξ ἀναξίων χειλέων καὶ ῥυπαρῶν δεήσεων”, and with “Ὡς ἐν ἡπίρῳ πεζεύσας” as the heirmos of the first ode. All the heirmoi belong to John. The canon forms the acrostichis “Ἐκτην δέησιν προσδέχου, Κωνσταντίνε”. This anonymous canon, which apparently is part of an octaechon, is handed down in a 16<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the Athonian Monastery of Great Lavra (Lavrae Θ 32, ff. 321r–315r), a paper Anthology containing services for all 12 months<sup>23</sup>. The service also includes Vespers. We do not know whether this canon is a text of the Byzantine period surviving in a later manuscript or a product of post-Byzantine hymnography. In this particular codex, the text has been copied rather clumsily, as it contains many noticeable errors, omissions of verses and metrical deviations.

As regards the canons composed in the post-Byzantine period, the following information is available:

5. A canon in the Second Mode, beginning with “Παντοκράτορ ὕψιστε, Χριστέ, βασιλεῦ αἰώνιε”, and with “Ἐν βυθῷ κατέστρωσε ποτέ” as the heirmos of the first ode. The heirmoi belong to John the Monk and Kosmas. The canon forms the acrostichis “Πιστῶν ἀνάκτων τὴν ἀπαρχὴν αἰνέσω· ὁ Μαλαξός”<sup>24</sup>. A. Luzzi published that canon from a Marcian codex<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> K. W. CLARK, *Checklist...*, p. 9; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Κωνσταντίνος καὶ Ἐλένη...*, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΗΣ – ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝ (ΛΑΥΡΕΩΤΗΣ), *Κατάλογος τῶν κωδίκων τῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας τῆς ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ὁρει, Ἐν Κανταβρυγία 1925* (= “Ἁγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” 2–3), p. 138; Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Ἀγιολόγιον...*, p. 267; *ΙΔΕΜ*, *Ταμείον...*, p. 155; Ε. ΠΑΠΑΝΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 202, num. 615; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Κωνσταντίνος καὶ Ἐλένη...*, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> On the author Nikolaos Malaxos, who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, cf. Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Ὁ Νικόλαος Μαλαξός, Πρωτοπαπᾶς Ναυπλίου καὶ το συγγραφικὸ τοῦ ἔργου*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2008 [= ΒΚΜ, 47], p. 98–125. The style of this specific canon is quite vivid and contains many references to the Old Testament.

<sup>25</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 274–291; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Ὁ Νικόλαος Μαλαξός...*, p. 198; *ΙΔΕΜ*, *Οἱ ἄγιοι Κωνσταντίνος καὶ Ἐλένη...*, p. 50.

6. A canon in the Plagal First Mode beginning with “Ὁ προγνώστης Θεός, ὁ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων τὸ πᾶν”, and with “Τῷ Σωτῆρι Θεῷ” as the heirmos of the first ode. All the heirmoi belong to John the Monk, while the composer of the canon is Cyril Lavriotes<sup>26</sup>. The canon is found:

- In a paper manuscript of the Monastery of Great Lavra, Mount Athos (Lavrae Ω 111) dating from 1789. The initial information about it is provided by S. Eustratiades<sup>27</sup>. The manuscript comprises the autograph codex of Cyril Lavriotes and contains prose and poetic works of the author. In this codex, the canon is presented without theotokia. The canon in the form in which it is included in Lavrae Ω 111 was published in 1938 in the journal “Ἀγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” (“Agioreitikhē Bibliothēkē”) with no mention of the publisher’s name<sup>28</sup>.
- In a paper manuscript of the Skete of the Holy Trinity of Kafsokalyvia, Mount Athos (Kafsokalyvion 171, ff. 446–450) dating from the year 1892, an Anthology of services<sup>29</sup>. The beginning of this canon and the manuscript of Kafsokalyvia, without its number, are mentioned in the catalogue of E. Papailiopoulos-Photopoulos<sup>30</sup>. The later catalogue of manuscripts compiled by the monk Patapius helped to detect the number of the manuscript, although this catalogue does not mention the name of the poet. In the manuscript of Kafsokalyvia, the order of the troparia up until the seventh ode is different from the order found in the autographic codex Ω 111 of Great Lavra. The theotokia in all the odes encountered in this manuscript are the same as the ones in the canon of the Ascension.

7. A canon in the Plagal Second Mode beginning with “Ἀναξ ἀνάκτων, ὦ Λόγε Υἱὲ Θεοῦ”, and with “Ὡς ἐν ἠπείρῳ πεζεύσας” as the heirmos of the first ode. The heirmoi belong to John the Monk. In the canon there is an alphabetic

<sup>26</sup> On Cyril Lavriotes, the Athonian learned hieromonk of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, who came from Messenia and produced rich hymnographic work, cf. ΠΑΤΑΠΙΟΥ ΚΑΥΣΟΚΑΛΥΒΙΤΟΥ, Ὁ ἀγιορεΐτης λόγιος Κύριλλος Λαυριώτης καὶ τὰ ἀνέκδοτα Συναξάρια τοῦ Τριωδίου καὶ τοῦ Πεντηκοσταρίου. Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν μελέτη τοῦ ἔργου του, ΓΠ 844, 2012, p. 27–72; Π. ΠΑΣΧΟΣ, Ὑμνογραφία καὶ ὑμνογράφοι στοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους, [in:] Ἁγιον Ὄρος, Φύση-Λατρεία-Τέχνη, Πρακτικὰ Συνεδρίων εἰς τὸ πλαίσιον τῶν παράλληλων ἐκδηλώσεων «Θησαυροὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους», vol. I, Θεσσαλονίκη 2001, p. 212; Ν. ΛΙΒΑΝΟΣ, Ἀθωνικὲς ἐρευνες καὶ ἀθωνίτες λόγιοι στοῦ β' μισοῦ τοῦ 19<sup>ου</sup> καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ 20<sup>ου</sup> αἰώνα, [in:] Τὸ Ἁγιον Ὄρος στὰ χρόνια τῆς Ἀπελευθέρωσης, Θεσσαλονίκη 2012, p. 214.

<sup>27</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΗΣ – ΣΠΥΡΙΔΩΝ (ΛΑΥΡΕΩΤΗΣ), Κατάλογος..., p. 353; Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, Ἀγιολόγιον..., p. 267.

<sup>28</sup> “Ἀγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” 23–24, 1937–1938, p. 176–178.

<sup>29</sup> ΠΑΤΑΠΙΟΥ ΚΑΥΣΟΚΑΛΥΒΙΤΟΥ, Κατάλογος τῶν χειρόγραφων κωδίκων τοῦ κυριακοῦ τῆς Σκήτης Ἁγίας Τριάδος Κανσκαλυβίων, Θεσσαλονίκη 2005, p. 264, num. 25.

<sup>30</sup> Ε. ΠΑΠΑΝΗΛΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΦΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Ταμείον..., p. 202, num. 614. No mention of the manuscript number is made in Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, Οἱ ἅγιοι Κωνσταντῖνος καὶ Ἐλένη..., p. 50.

acrostichis, while the initial letters of the theotokia form the name of Cyril Lavriotes. The text is included in the autographic codex of the poet of the Athonian monastery of Great Lavra (Lavrae Ω 111). The canon has been published in the journal “Ἀγιορειτική Βιβλιοθήκη”<sup>31</sup>.

8. A canon in the First Mode beginning with “Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα λαμπρῶν Χριστοῦ”, and with “Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα” as the heirmos of the first ode. This canon has been published in the “Ἀγιορειτική Βιβλιοθήκη”, where it is attributed to Theodore the Studite, without any reference to manuscripts<sup>32</sup>. A reference to the same canon is found in the catalogue of manuscripts of the Skete of Holy Trinity in Kafsokalyvia (Mount Athos), where the hieromonk Theodoritus from Ioannina is mentioned as the poet<sup>33</sup>. Commentary on the manuscripts and the canon may also be found in the work of monk Patapius on Theodoritus<sup>34</sup>.

### Historical events and hymnographic texts<sup>35</sup>

In all the existing hymnographic texts in honor of Saints Constantine and Helena, historical events from their lives are commemorated. What follows is an indicative reference to the most important ones, mainly from the texts that have not yet been published:

- From the life of Constantine the Great

The vision of the sign of the Cross in the sky is quite frequently mentioned. According to Eusebius of Caesarea<sup>36</sup>, this event was reported to him by Constantine the Great himself<sup>37</sup>. To provide an indicative sample, we cite the following troparia:

<sup>31</sup> “Ἀγιορειτική Βιβλιοθήκη” 23–24, 1937–1938, p. 178–182 (the publisher’s name is not specified).

<sup>32</sup> “Ἀγιορειτική Βιβλιοθήκη” 23–24, 1937–1938, p. 411–413.

<sup>33</sup> ΠΑΤΑΠΙΟΥ ΚΑΥΣΟΚΑΛΥΒΙΤΟΥ, *Κατάλογος...*, p. 218, num. 13.

<sup>34</sup> ΙΔΕΜ, *Ἀθωνικά Ὑμναγιολογικά Μελετήματα*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2014, p. 140–141, without any reference to the work published in “Ἀγιορειτική Βιβλιοθήκη”.

<sup>35</sup> The use of asterisk (\*) in the chapters III–IV indicates a change of verse and the use of *v* indicates the addition of a syllable.

<sup>36</sup> For the life and work of Eusebius of Caesarea, cf. ODB, s.v. Eusebios of Caesarea, p. 751–752; Α. ΚΑΡΠΟΖΗΛΟΣ, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί και Χρονογράφοι*, vol. I, Αθήνα 1997, p. 57–66.

<sup>37</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Über das Leben des Kaiser Konstantins*, ed. F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1975 (revised ed. 1992) [= GCS, I.1] (cetera: EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS), p. 30 “Ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας, ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκλινούσης, αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν ἔφη ἐν αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἡλίου σταυροῦ τρόπιον ἐκ φωτὸς συνιστάμενον, γραφὴν τε αὐτῷ συνῆφθαι λέγουσαν· τούτῳ νίκα”. This vision has raised many questions in historical research: Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία*, vol. I, Αθήνα 2002, p. 322–326; J.N. BREMMER, *The Vision of Constantine*, [in:] *Land of Dreams. Greek and Latin Studies in Honour of A.H.M. Kessels*, ed. A.H.M.H. LARDINOIS, M.G.M. VAN DER POEL,

Σὺ, βασιλεῦ, θεία ἐλλάμψει πεφώτισαι·\* ὁ γὰρ Σταυρὸς ὁ τίμιος\* ἀστροδεικτούμενος\* ἐπεφάνη σοι λέγων·\* Ἐν τούτῳ, Κωνσταντίνε,\* νικά τῷ ὄπλῳ ἐχθροῦς<sup>38</sup>.

Similar content is also encountered in the exapostilarion:

Σταυρὸν τετραστερόφωτον\* ἐν οὐρανοῖς τεθέασαι,\* θεόστεπτε Κωνσταντίνε,\* φωνῆς δὲ θείας ἀκούσας\* ἐν τούτῳ νικά ἅπασας\* τὰς τῶν βαρβάρων φάλαγγας<sup>39</sup>.

This vision, according to Eusebius, was the point of Constantine's conversion to Christianity<sup>40</sup>. The same view is reflected in the kathisma below:

Τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἐκτείνας πρὸς οὐρανὸν\* καὶ τῶν ἄστρον μανθάνων τὴν καλλονὴν\* ἐκ τούτων μεμύησαι\* τῶν ἀπάντων τὸν Κύριον·\* τοῦ Σταυροῦ δὲ τὸ ὄπλον\* ἐν μέσῳ ἀνέλαμψε\* διαγράφων «ἐν τούτῳ\* νικᾶν καὶ κρατύνεσθαι»·\* ὅθεν τῆς ψυχῆς σου\* ἐπανοίξας τὸ ὄμμα\* τὸ γράμμα ἀνέγγνωκας\* καὶ τὸν τρόπον μεμάθηκας,\* Κωνσταντίνε πανσέβαστε<sup>41</sup>.

The defeat of his opponent, Maxentius, at the Tiber bridge in October 312 is illustrated in the troparion:

Ἡ μόνη γέφυρα\* Θεὸς καὶ Κύριος\* ὀπηνίκα σὲ εἶδεν\* ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς,\* τῆς γεφύρας ἔσωσε,\* τὸν δ' ἐχθρὸν σου τῷ βυθῷ,\* παραδίδωσι, θεσπέσιε<sup>42</sup>.

The founding of Constantinople in 324 is reminisced in the apolytikion for the two saints and in many troparia of the canons<sup>43</sup>. For example:

V.J.C. HUNINK, Brill–Leiden–Boston 2006, p. 57–59; J.W. DRIJVERS, *The Power of the Cross. Celestial Cross Appearances in the Fourth century*, [in:] *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. CAIN, N. LENSKI, Farnham 2009, p. 239–243; ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Βίος*, p. 522–526, where older literature is cited.

<sup>38</sup> Par. gr. 344, ff. 72v–73r; EHAL gr. 384, f. 326; Vatopediou 1667, f. 180r (βασιλεύς in cd.).

<sup>39</sup> Σ. ΕΥΣΤΡΑΤΙΑΔΟΥ, *Ταμείον...*, p. 155.

<sup>40</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 81 “εἰκότως ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς ξένον τι χρῆμα προστησάμενος τὰ μὴτ’ ἀκοῆ γνωσθέντα μὴτ’ ὄψει παραδοθέντα δι’ αὐτοῦ κατειργάζετο”. On his conversion, cf. J.N. BREMMER, *The Vision...*, p. 67–74; J.W. DRIJVERS, *The Power...*, p. 240.

<sup>41</sup> MR, V, 141.

<sup>42</sup> “Ἄγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” 23–24, 1937–1938, p. 179; EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 35; on the association of Constantine the Great with Moses, cf. C. RAPP, *Imperial ideology in the making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as ‘Bishop’*, JTS 49.2, 1998, p. 685–695; EADEM, *Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium*, [in:] *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, R. NELSON, Washington 2010, p. 182–183.

<sup>43</sup> A. CAMERON, *Ἡ Ὑστερὴ Ρωμαϊκὴ Αυτοκρατορία (284 AD–430 AD)*, Αθήνα 2000, p. 108–109; Ι. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Τὸ Βυζαντινὸ Κράτος*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2001, p. 68–70; Ε. ΓΛΥΚΑΤΖΗ-ΑΡΒΕΛΕΡ, *Ἡ πολιτικὴ ἰδεολογία τῆς βυζαντινῆς αυτοκρατορίας*, Αθήνα 2007, p. 17–22; G. DAGRON, *Ἡ γέννηση μιᾶς πρωτεύουσας. Ἡ Κωνσταντινούπολη καὶ οἱ θεσμοὶ τῆς (330–451)*, Αθήνα 2009, p. 22–53.

Πόλιν τερπνήν σὺ ἐκ τερμάτων συνέστησας\* τὴν ἀληθῶς ἐπτάλοφον\* καὶ θεοπύργωτον,\*  
ἔνθα οἱ τῶν Ῥωμαίων\* σκηπτροῦχοι κραταιοῦνται\* καὶ μεγαλύνονται<sup>44</sup>.

Constantine the Great is credited with the initiative to convene the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325, during which the Arian doctrine was condemned<sup>45</sup>. These events are noted in the following troparion:

Ἐκ τῶν τῆς γῆς τεσσάρων περάτων, ἔνδοξε,\* ἡ ἐν Νικαίᾳ σύνοδος\* τῷ σῶ προστάγματι\*  
συνηθοίσθη, παμμάκαρ,\* Ἀρείου καθελοῦσα\* δόγμα τὸ ἄθεον<sup>46</sup>.

and in the sticheron of the Lauds:

Μέγας φωστήρ ἐξανέτειλας τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Χριστοῦ, Κωνσταντίνε μακάριε\* διὰ σοῦ γὰρ  
Ἄρειος ὁ παμμίαρος πέπτωκε\* καὶ ἀπεδείχθη ὀρθοδοξίας ἐχθρός\* συνοδικῶς γὰρ τοῦτον  
κατέβαλες\* ὅθεν αἰτουμέν σε\* τῷ Σωτῆρι πρέσβευε\* ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν\* πίστει τῶν τελούντων  
σου\* τὴν μνήμην σήμερον<sup>47</sup>.

The contribution of Constantine the Great to the formation of the Creed has also been decisive<sup>48</sup>. This fact is depicted in the troparion:

Σοῦ μακαρία ἡ μνήμη,\* ὑπερένδοξε ἀναξ,\* ἐν πάσῃ γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ\* σὺ γὰρ φυτὸν κατε-  
φύτευσας\* ἐπὶ γῆς καρποφόρον\* ἐκτρέφων τοῦ Κυρίου τὸν λαὸν\* τὴν ὀρθόδοξον πίστιν, τὸ  
τῆς Τριάδος σύμβολον<sup>49</sup>.

Hymnographic texts often refer to the demolition of pagan temples and altars<sup>50</sup> and the construction of Christian churches<sup>51</sup>. As an example, we cite the following troparion:

Ναοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς\* τῶν εἰδώλων καταστρέψας, παμμακάριστε,\* ναοὺς Κυρίῳ ᾠκοδόμησας\*  
καὶ τῶν ἁγίων τὰ λείψανα\* τούτοις εὐσεβῶς ἐναπέθου\* καὶ πανσόφως ἀνέκραξες\* εὐλογη-  
τὸς εἶ ὁ Θεὸς ὁ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 73r; EHA I gr. 384, f. 326; Vatopediou 1667, f. 180r.

<sup>45</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 83–85; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία*..., p. 413–469.

<sup>46</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 73r; EHA I gr. 384, f. 326 (τῶν τεσσάρων τῆς γῆς in cd); Vatopediou 1667, f. 180r (σκηπτροῦχοι in cd.).

<sup>47</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca*..., p. 71.

<sup>48</sup> Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ἱστορία*..., p. 464.

<sup>49</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 79v; EHA I gr. 384, f. 332; Vatopediou 1667, f. 182r.

<sup>50</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 96, 106–110, 111.

<sup>51</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 66–67, 101–102, 104–105; G. DAGRON, *Ἡ γέννηση*..., p. 442–457.

<sup>52</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 78v; EHA I gr. 384, f. 330; Vatopediou 1667, f. 182r.

In a canon, it is mentioned that Saint Constantine had placed one of the nails used to crucify Christ in the bridle of his horse:

Σὺ χαλινὸν προφητικῶς\* τὸν τοῦ ἵππου κατεσκεύασας, παμμάκαρ,\* ἐκ τῶν τιμίων ἡλων\* τῶν ἐμπαρέντων χερσίν\* ἀγίας Χριστοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν\* καὶ τοῦτο ὄπλον εὐρες\* κατ' ἐχθρῶν ἐν πολέμοις<sup>53</sup>.

This event is mentioned by historians Socrates Scholasticus, Theodoret of Cyrus and Sozomen and is correlated with prophet Zechariah of the Old Testament<sup>54</sup>.

There are many references to the baptism of Saint Constantine<sup>55</sup>. However, in the hymnographic texts the name of the person who baptized him, Sylvester, is mentioned only in two instances<sup>56</sup>. A canon reads:

Ναὸς γενόμενος Θεοῦ\* τῇ θεογενεσίᾳ\* <υῦῦῦῦ>\* τοῦ Σιλβέστρου βαπτισμῶ\* καὶ τῶν εἰδώλων βωμοῦς\* καταστρέψας,\* ἄναξ Κωνσταντίνε σοφέ<sup>57</sup>.

- From the life of Saint Helena

Saint Helena<sup>58</sup>, the Equal-to-apostles<sup>59</sup>, “ἡ πανάγαστος ὄντως βασίλισσα” and “εὐεργέτις πιστῶν”<sup>60</sup>, led a virtuous life. In the hymnographic texts, her name is

<sup>53</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 79r.

<sup>54</sup> SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I, 17, ed. P. MARAVAL, P. PÉRICHON, Paris 2004–2007 [= SC, 67]; THEODORET, *Kirchengeschichte*, 64, 21, ed. L. PARMENTIER, F. SCHEIDWEILER, Berlin 1954 [= GCS, 44]; SOZOMENUS, *Kirchengeschichte*, II, 1, 9, ed. J. BIDEZ, G.C. HANSEN, Berlin 1960 [= GCS, 50]; Zach 14: 20 – *Septuaginta*, ed. A. RAHLFS, R. HANHART, Stuttgart 2006; J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta...*, p. 152. This information is also mentioned in the synaxarion of the 14<sup>th</sup> September, cf. *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae...*, col. 45. On the hypothesis that the nails were added to the crown of the statue of Constantine the Great standing on the red Porphyry column of Constantinople, cf. ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Bίος*, p. 600.

<sup>55</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 278.

<sup>56</sup> S.N.C. LIEU, D. MONTSERRAT, *From Constantine to Julian. Pagan and Byzantine Views*, London–New York 1996, p. 26–28; A. KAZHDAN, *A History of Byzantine History (650–850)*, vol. I, Athens 1999, p. 131.

<sup>57</sup> Lavrae Θ 32, f. 313r. A reference to Sylvester is also found in a sticheron of the Vespers, cf. MR, V, 135.

<sup>58</sup> Quite comprehensive information about the life, activity and personal characteristics of the saint is contained in E. ΑΜΟΙΡΙΔΟΥ, *Φλαβία Ιουλία Ελένη και Μ. Κωνσταντίνος: το πορτραίτο μιας Μητέρας, Χριστιανής και Ρωμαίας Αυγούστας*, [in:] *Ο Μέγας Κωνσταντίνος και η εποχή του. 1700 χρόνια από το διάταγμα των Μεδιολάνων*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2020 (forthcoming).

<sup>59</sup> Kafsokalivion 171, f. 447.

<sup>60</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 282.

primarily associated with the discovery of the Holy Cross, the spear and the nails<sup>61</sup>. A troparion reads:

Σὺ ἀνεδείχθης ἐν κόσμῳ\* καρποφόρος ἐλαία,\* Ἑλένη, ἐκβλαστήσασα ἡμῖν\* πᾶσιν τὸ φῶς καὶ τὸ ἔλεος,\* τὸν Σταυρὸν τοῦ Κυρίου,\* τὴν λόγχην καὶ τοὺς ἦλους, καὶ τὴν σὴν\* ὑπερθαύμαστον μνήμην\* τελοῦντες ἐορτάζομεν<sup>62</sup>.

According to Eusebius, she rebuilt ruined churches in the Holy Land<sup>63</sup>. In the Menaion of May, we find the troparion:

Ὡς θαυμαστὸς ὁ πόθος σου\* καὶ ὁ τρόπος σου ἔνθεος,\* ἔνδοξε Ἑλένη,\* γυναικῶν τὸ καύχημα\* τὸς τόπους γὰρ φθάσασα,\* τοὺς τὰ σεπτὰ παθήματα\* ὑποδεξαμένους τοῦ Δεσπότη τῶν ὅλων,\* ναοὶς περικαλλέσι\* κατεκόσμεις βοῶσα\* Λαὸς ὑπερψῶστε Χριστὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>64</sup>.

Eusebius mentions that Constantine the Great converted his mother to Christianity, but in a troparion of the canon of Cyril Lavriotes the reverse idea is expressed:

Τρωθείσα τῇ ἀγάπῃ τοῦ Κτίστου σου\* ταύτη καὶ τὸν υἱὸν μετερρῦθμισας,\* Ἑλένη θεία, κοσμοπόθητε<sup>65</sup>.

### Political ideology and hymnographic texts

Although no Byzantine texts containing systematized views on the characteristics of the emperor have been handed down to us, we can locate and derive relevant information from other genres, such as the mirrors for princes, ceremonial speeches, preambles to laws, hagiological and historical texts<sup>66</sup>. In the same

<sup>61</sup> On the depiction of the discovery of the Holy Cross by Saint Helena in modern literature, cf. J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta...*, p. 149–150, 167.

<sup>62</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 80r; EHAI gr. 384, f. 332; Vatopediou 1667, f. 183r.

<sup>63</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 101.

<sup>64</sup> MR, V, 143; A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 284.

<sup>65</sup> Lavrae Θ 32, f. 447; EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 103 “οὕτω μὲν αὐτὴν θεοσεβῆ καταστήσαντα οὐκ οὔσαν πρότερον”; J.N. BREMMER, *The Vision...*, p. 69; J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta...*, p. 135.

<sup>66</sup> The literature on the hagiological texts referring to Saints Constantine and Helena is quite extensive. Particularly important are the biographies composed in the Byzantine period. The division of these biographies into five groups is very informative and useful to the researcher, cf. S.N.C. LIEU, D. MONTSERRAT, *From Constantine...*, p. 97–105; N. LENSKI, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, Cambridge 2012, p. 306–307. Cf. also (indicatively) A. KAZHDAN, “Constantin Imaginaire”. *Byzantine Legends of the Ninth century about Constantine the Great*, B 57, 1987, p. 196–250; IDEM, *Literature...*, p. 127–136; Σ. ΠΑΣΧΑΛΙΔΗΣ, Ὁ ιδεώδης ἀυτοκράτορας. Ὁ Μέγας Κωνσταντῖνος στη μεσοβυζαντινὴ ἀγιολογικὴ γραμματεία καὶ πολιτικὴ ιδεολογία, [in:] *Niš and Byzantium. Fifth...*

perspective we might also consider hymnographic production, which has been a popular research subject in recent years<sup>67</sup>.

These characterizations do not appear for the first time in hymnographic texts. Many of those virtues were attributed to the two saints as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century, mainly by Eusebius, while others relate to the political ideology of Byzantium<sup>68</sup>. Eusebius, principally through his two works *Life of Constantine* and *Tricennial Oration*, was the founder of the political theology of the Church, adding the Christian teachings to the concepts that had existed since the ancient classical and Hellenistic times<sup>69</sup>.

By studying the contents of the relevant hymnographic texts, one can clearly identify the images, traits and qualities of the two saints.

God crowned Saint Constantine as emperor and granted him the imperial authority. These views are present in many hymns. As an example, we cite the following troparion:

Ἐπέγνωσ τὸν ἄφθαρτον βασιλέα\* τὸν τὰ ἐπίγεια σκῆπτρα\* τῆ σῆ δεδωκότα χειρὶ\* καὶ γέγονας ὑπήκοος\* θεράπων, Κωνσταντίνε, Χριστοῦ<sup>70</sup>.

p. 39–49; E. ΚΟΥΝΤΟΥΡΑ-ΓΑΛΑΚΗ, *Ο Μέγας Κωνσταντίνος στο αγιολογικό έργο του Κωνσταντίνου Ακροπολίτη: Ιδεολογικές επαναλήψεις και νέες προσεγγίσεις*, [in:] *Aureus. Αφιερωματικός τόμος στον καθηγητή Ευάγγ. Χρυσό*, ed. T. ΚΟΛΛΙΑΣ, Κ. ΠΙΤΣΑΚΗΣ, Κ. ΣΥΝΕΛΛΗ, Αθήνα 2014, p. 679–704; T. PRATSCH, *Constantin der Große in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, [in:] *Prosopon Rhomaikon. Erzählende Studien zur Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, ed. A. BEIHAMMER, B. KRÖNUNG, C. LUDWIG, Berlin–Boston 2017, p. 65–83. More information about the field of historiography cf. (indicatively) A. ΜΑΡΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Constantine the Great in Macedonian Historiography: Models and Approaches*, [in:] *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Aldershot 1994, p. 159–179. On the issue of the preambles to laws, cf. G. ΠΑΠΑΓΙΑΝΝΙΣ, Μ. ΤΖΙΑΤΖΙ-ΠΑΠΑΓΙΑΝΝΙ, V.-A. ΚΟΛΛΙΑΣ, Α. ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ, *Observations on the Portrayal of the Ruler in the Novels of Leo VI*, SCer 11, 2021, p. 348–349.

<sup>67</sup> I. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Το βυζαντινό...*, p. 287, 289; A. SPANOS, *Political Approaches to Byzantine Liturgical Texts*, [in:] *Approaches to the Text. From Pre-Gospel to Post-Baroque*, ed. R. ERIKSEN, P. GOUNG, Pisa–Rome 2014, p. 64, 79–81; A. LUZZI, *Il dies...*, p. 629–634; Δ. ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οί ἅγιοι Κωνσταντίνος καὶ Ἐλένη...*, p. 47–49.

<sup>68</sup> H.G. BECK, *Η βυζαντινή χλιετία*, Αθήνα 2000, p. 105; E. ΓΛΥΚΑΤΖΗ-ΑΡΒΕΛΕΡ, *Η πολιτική ιδεολογία...*, p. 21–22.

<sup>69</sup> T.D. BARNES, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1981, p. 261–271; H. HUNGER, *Βυζαντινή Λογοτεχνία. Η λόγια κοσμική γραμματεία τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, vol. I, Ἀθήνα 1991, p. 134; S.N.C. LIEU, D. MONTERRAT, *From Constantine...*, p. 97–99; C. RAPP, *Imperial Ideology...*, p. 685–695; ΕΑΔΕΜ, *Old Testament Models...*, p. 182; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστική Ιστορία...*, p. 326; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Η θεματική των βυζαντινῶν «Κατόπτρων ηγεμόνος» της πρώιμης και μέσης περιόδου (398–1085)*, Αθήνα 2017, p. 298; for a different perspective, cf. A. KALDELLIS, *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome*, Cambridge, Massachusetts–London 2015, p. 167–168; Π. ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΑΔΗ, *Η ἀνοδος της μονοδοξίας στην Ὑστερη Αρχαιότητα*, Αθήνα 2018, p. 115–122.

<sup>70</sup> Alex. Patr. 93, f. 75v (θεράπων in cod.); Par. gr. 1566, f. 64r (Ἀπέγνωσ in cd); Sin. gr. 637, f. 62v (πιστώτατε (sic) θεράπων Χριστοῦ in cod.); Sin. gr. 670, f. 190v (θεράπων in cd.).



and the exapostilarion:

Οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἴληφε τὸ βασιλεῖον κράτος\* ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς θείας χάριτος Κωνσταντίνος  
ὁ μέγας\* σὺν τῇ μητρὶ οὐρανόθεν...<sup>71</sup>

His reign is characterized by the principles of justice, gentleness and sympathy:

Τὴν βασιλείαν σου ἐνδόξως κατεκόσμησε\* δικαιοσύνη καὶ πραότης καὶ συμπάθεια\* ὀρθοδο-  
ξία λάμπουσαν,\* ὅθεν αἰωνίζει ἡ μνήμη σου<sup>72</sup>.

and

Ὁ πορφυρίδα ἐνθέως\* τὴν συμπάθειαν <υ> στολισθεὶς\* καὶ ὁ χλαμύδα {τὴν} καλλίστην\* τὴν  
πραότητα <κατα>κοσμηθεὶς,\* βασιλεὺς ὁ θεῖος,\* ὕμνεϊ ὁ Κωνσταντίνος\* {τὸν} Χριστὸν εἰς  
τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>73</sup>.

He is full of sympathy, love and compassion, traits that are also mentioned  
in the troparion:

Ὡς πορφυρίδα, ἔνδοξε,\* στολισθεὶς τὴν εὐμένειαν\* καὶ ὡσπερ χλαμύδα\* τὴν καλὴν συμπά-  
θειαν\* στεφάνῳ κεκόσμησαι\* τῶν ἀρετῶν τελείῳ νοῖ\* καὶ μετατεθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς εἰς τὰ ἄνω\*  
βασιλεία κραυγάζεις\* Ἱερεῖς εὐλογεῖτε, λαὸς ὑπερυψοῦτε\* Χριστὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>74</sup>.

Saint Constantine abandoned the patriarchal fallacy, a fact that is mentioned  
numerous times in hymnography. Quite typical is the troparion cited below:

Τῷ φωτὶ ἐλλαμφθεὶς\* τοῦ ζωφόρου Σταυροῦ\* εἰδώλων πλάνην πᾶσαν <κατ>έλιπε\* καὶ  
τὸν Χριστὸν πάντων Θεὸν ὄντα προέκρινας <υ>\* διὸ καὶ δεδόξασαι\* ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, πάνσοφε<sup>75</sup>.

He was a victor and conqueror with the help of faith and the Cross. Hymnog-  
rapher Nikolaos Malaxos writes:

Νικήσας ἐχθρῶν\* παρατάξεις, μάκαρ, διὰ πίστεως\* συνεστήσω τρόπαια\* κατὰ αἰσθητῶν καὶ  
νοουμένων τε\* δυσμενῶν ἐσπερίοις\* δι' ἀμφοῖν θαυμαζόμενος<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> MR, V, 144.

<sup>72</sup> Alex. Patr. 93 f. 76; Par. gr. 1566, f. 66r; Sin. gr. 637, f. 64r; Sin. gr. 670, f. 197v–198r.

<sup>73</sup> Lavrae Ω 111, f. 184r.

<sup>74</sup> MR, V, 143.

<sup>75</sup> Lavrae Ω 111, f. 183r; on the same issue, cf. also MR, V, 144 “Ὁ βασιλεύων τῆς κτίσεως...”; EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 29 “τὸν δὲ πατρῶον τιμᾶν μόνον ψετο δεῖν Θεόν”; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία...*, p. 321.

<sup>76</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 280.

In another canon we read:

Ὁ πάλαι τὴν νίκην διὰ Σταυροῦ σου\* κατὰ βαρβάρων παρασχῶν\* τῷ σῶ Κωνσταντίνῳ\* αὐτὸς τῷ βασιλεῖ ἡμῶν\* καὶ τὰ νῦν ἐπικούρησον<sup>77</sup>.

He subdued his passions and had pious thoughts<sup>78</sup>. These qualities are also displayed in the troparion:

Θεόστεπτε,\* εὐσεβεῖ λογισμῶ κυβερνώμενος\* καὶ ἀνδρείως\* τῶν παθῶν αὐτοκράτωρ γενόμενος\* ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ\* τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκυβέρνησας<sup>79</sup>.

Both he and his mother, Saint Helena, despised the pleasures of the world:

Κοσμίους πάσας τὰς ἡδονάς,\* καίπερ βασιλεῖς τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς,\* ὅλως ἐλογίσασθε ἅγιοι,\* Κωνσταντίνε μάκαρ σοφέ,\* Ἐλένη σεπτῆ,\* διὸ ἐπαξίως αἰεὶ ἀγάλλεσθε<sup>80</sup>.

He was admitted to the heavenly kingdom because he reigned in piety, based on the laws of the State, and was subject to God<sup>81</sup>. He acquired the confidence (*parrhesia*) to intercede to God, while his tomb works miracles<sup>82</sup>. These attributes are expressed in the troparia cited below:

Εὐσεβῶς βασιλεύσας\* καὶ ἐννόμως ἰθύννας\* λαὸν τὸν ὑπήκοον\* ὡς Θεῶ ὑπήκοος,\* βασιλείας οὐρανῶν\* κατηξιώθης, βασιλεῦ θεόστεπτε<sup>83</sup>.

and

Ἡ ἐκκλησία τὰ σά\* ἀνδραγαθήματα βοᾷ, ἔνδοξε \* ἡ ὑπὸ σοῦ\* καινισθεῖσα πόλις\* θαυμάτων τὰ τερπνά,\* ἡ λάρναξ σου βρῦει\* πηγὴν τῶν ἰάσεων<sup>84</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> Alex. Patr. 93, f. 75v; Par. gr. 1566, f. 65r; Sin. gr. 637, f. 63v; on the same issue, cf. MR, V, 134; on the characterization of the enemies as “barbarians”, cf. A. SPANOS, *Political Approaches...*, p. 67–68; on the connection of the Cross with hymnography, especially that of 14 September, cf. *ibidem*, p. 69–72.

<sup>78</sup> ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Εἰς Κωνσταντίνον τὸν Βασιλέα Τριακονταετηρικός*, ed. I. HEIKEL, Leipzig 1902 (cetera: *Tricennial Oration*), p. 204 “νικητῆς ἐτύμως ὁ τὴν νίκην τῶν καταπαλαιόντων θνητῶν γένος παθῶν ἀράμενος” and *passim*; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Ἡ θεματική...*, p. 183–184.

<sup>79</sup> Alex. Patr. 93, f. 76v; Par. gr. 1566, f. 66r; Sin. gr. 637, f. 64v; Sin. gr. 670, f. 199v.

<sup>80</sup> “Ἁγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” 23–24, 1937–1938, p. 179.

<sup>81</sup> MR, V, 139.

<sup>82</sup> On the fact that Saint Constantine constructed his tomb in advance in the church of the Holy Apostles, cf. EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 144–145. On the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, cf. G. DAGRON, *Ἡ γέννηση...*, p. 457–466; I.A. ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Οἰκοδομώντας τὴν νέα μοναρχία*, [in:] *The Church in the Age of the Holy Emperor Constantine the Great. Πρακτικὰ Διεθνούς Ἐπιστημονικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, Βελιγράδι 2013, p. 106–108.

<sup>83</sup> Sin. gr. 637, f. 66r.

<sup>84</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 74v; EHA I gr. 384, f. 328.

St. Constantine is often compared to figures of the Old Testament. In a troparion from the canon of Nikolaos Malaxos we read:

Ἀπάντων κεκλήρωσαι\* δικαίων τὰ χαρίσματα\* Μωϋσέως τὸ πρᾶον\* τὰς ἀριστείας τε\* Ἰησοῦ Ναυῆ, τοῦ Δαυὶδ δὲ\* τὸ κραταῖόν,\* Ἡλιοῦ τὸν ζῆλον\* τῶν λοιπῶν ἀγίων τε\* τὸν θερμὸν πρὸς Χριστὸν ἔρωτα<sup>85</sup>.

The parallelism to Moses is particularly emphasized in the reference to the appearance of the Cross. A sticheron of the Vespers reads:

Κύριε,\* ὡσπερ τῷ Μωσῇ φανερωθεὶς ὁ Σταυρός σου\* προετύπου δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν\* τροπούμενα τὰ ἔθνη\*...<sup>86</sup>

The strong and gentle spirit of David and the wisdom and prudence of Solomon also constitute characteristics of Saint Constantine. At Vespers there is again a relevant troparion:

Ἐδωκας, φιλάνθρωπε,\* τῷ εὐσεβεῖ σου θεράποντι\* Σολομώντος τὴν φρόνησιν,\* Δαυὶδ τὴν πραότητα\* καὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων τὴν ὀρθοδοξίαν...<sup>87</sup>

Among the figures of the New Testament, a parallelism between Saint Constantine and Paul the Apostle is drawn<sup>88</sup>. Several times the saint is called Equal-to-apostles and successor of the Apostles<sup>89</sup>. The vision of the Cross was seen as a direct divine call, following Paul's case, and this is directly mentioned in the apolytikion:

Τοῦ Σταυροῦ σου τὸν τύπον\* ἐν οὐρανῷ θεασάμενος\* καὶ ὡς ὁ Παῦλος τὴν κλῆσιν\* οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δεξάμενος\* ὁ ἐν βασιλεῦσιν Ἀπόστολός σου, Κύριε,\* Βασιλεῦσαν πόλιν τῆ χειρὶ σου παρέθετο...<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 288, where the saint is also compared to Abraham.

<sup>86</sup> Τ.Π. ΘΕΜΕΛΗΣ, *Τὰ μηναῖα ἀπὸ τοῦ 11<sup>ου</sup> μέχρι τοῦ 13<sup>ου</sup> αἰῶνος*, ΕΦ 30, 1931, p. 533; C. RAPP, *Imperial Ideology...*, p. 694–695; ΕΑΔΕΜ, *Old Testament Models...*, p. 182–183.

<sup>87</sup> MR, V, 134; G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003 [= PPP], p. 48–50.

<sup>88</sup> MR, V, 141 “Οὐρανόθεν ὡς Παῦλον σε\* πάλαι σαγηνεῦει Χριστὸς ὁ Κύριος...”

<sup>89</sup> Kafsokalyvion 171, f. 447; Par. gr. 344, f. 78v; EHAI gr. 384, f. 330; Alex. Patr. 93, f. 76v; Par. gr. 1566, f. 66v; ΕΥΣΕΒΙΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙΑΣ, *Bíos*, p. 646; G. DAGRON, *Emperor...*, p. 135–143; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία...*, p. 327; O. GORDON, *Constantine the Great – Ὁ Ἰσαπόστολος*, ΙϚ 10, 2013, p. 60–61; H. DRAKE, *The Emperor as a “Man of God”: the Impact of Constantine the Great’s. Conversion on Roman Ideas of Kingship*, Hi (Sao Paolo) 35, 2016, p. 5–8; A. LUZZI, *Da ἐν βασιλεῦσι ἀπόστολος α ἰσαπόστολος tout court. Note sull’ epiteto isapostolos e sulla sua originaria associazione al nome dell’ imperatore Costantino il Grande*, [in:] “Ἀνατολή καὶ δύσις”. *Studi in Memoria di Filippo Burgarella*, ed. G. STRANO, C. TORRE, Roma 2020 [= TSB-N, 21], p. 255, 267–275.

<sup>90</sup> MR, V, 139; A. LUZZI, *Da ἐν βασιλεῦσι ἀπόστολος...*, p. 272.

and in a troparion of the canon composed by Nikolaos Malaxos:

Ἀρίστως διαπρέποντα\* σὲ ὀρῶν ὁ ὕψιστος\* ἐν θεαρέστοις πράξεσιν,\* οὐρανόθεν ὡς Παῦλον  
κέκληκε\* δι' ἀστέρων σταυρόν σοι προδεικνύμενος<sup>91</sup>.

Furthermore, in a sticheron of the Vespers, St. Constantine is characterized as priest and king:

...ἱερεύς τε χρισθεὶς καὶ βασιλεὺς\* ἔλαιψ ἐστήριξας τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ...<sup>92</sup>

He is an earthly angel and at the same time a heavenly man, a temple of the Holy Spirit. In the third ode of the canon contained in the manuscript Θ 32 of Great Lavra monastery, we read:

Ναὸς γεγένησαι\* τοῦ θείου Πνεύματος,\* Κωνσταντῖνε παμμάκαρ,\* ὡς ἀληθῶς...<sup>93</sup>

and in the sixth ode:

Ἐπίγειος ἄγγελος\* ἀνεδείχθης ἀληθῶς\* καὶ οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος,\* παμμάκαρ Κωνσταντῖνε,  
μύστα Χριστοῦ...<sup>94</sup>

Quite often the expression of these characteristics includes the concept of *light*: he shone the light of righteousness in the world<sup>95</sup>, he was “λαμπρὸς κομήτης ἐσπερώτατος”<sup>96</sup>, “φωστήρ τῶν ἐσκοτισμένων”<sup>97</sup>, “μέγας φωστήρ”<sup>98</sup>, “σέλας φαινότατον”<sup>99</sup>. In a kathisma we read:

<sup>91</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 276; and in a sticheron of the Vespers “Κύριε, ὡσπερ κατὰ Παῦλον τῷ σῶ Κωνσταντῖνῳ ἄνωθεν ὤφθης...”; Τ.Π. ΘΕΜΕΛΗΣ, *Τὰ μηναιῖα...*, p. 533.

<sup>92</sup> MR, V, 139; Π. ΧΡΗΣΤΟΥ, *Ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον*, Κλη 3, 1971, p. 13; G. DAGRON, *Emperor...*, p. 126–135; E. ΓΛΥΚΑΤΖΗ-ΑΡΒΕΛΕΡ, *Γιατὶ το Βυζάντιο*, Αθήνα 2009, p. 153–162.

<sup>93</sup> Lavrae Θ 32, f. 313r.

<sup>94</sup> Lavrae Θ 32, f. 313v.

<sup>95</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 274; cf. EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 55–56 “μᾶ τε τοῦ παντός ἀρχῆ ὡσπερ τινὶ κεφαλῇ τὸ πᾶν κατεκοσμεῖτο σῶμα μοναρχικῆς ἐξουσίας διὰ πάντων ἡκούσης, λαμπραὶ τε φωτὸς εὐσεβείας μαρμαρυγαί”. He is also compared to the sun by Eusebius: cf. EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 38 “Ὡσπερ δ’ ἀνίσχων ὑπὲρ γῆς ἥλιος ἀφθόνως τοῖς πᾶσι τῶν τοῦ φωτὸς μεταδίδωσι μαρμαρυγῶν, κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ δὴ καὶ Κωνσταντῖνος ἅμα ἡλίῳ ἀνίσχοντι τῶν βασιλικῶν οἰκῶν προφαινόμενος, ὡσαυτὴ συνανατέλλων τῷ κατ’ οὐρανὸν φωστῆρι, τοῖς εἰς πρόσωπον αὐτῶ παριοῦσιν ἅπασι φωτὸς αὐγὰς τῆς οἰκείας ἐξέλαμπε καλοκαγαθίας”. On the connection of the symbol of the sun with the imperial idea, cf. H. HUNGER, *Prooimion. Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden*, Wien 1964 [= WBS, 1], p. 75–80.

<sup>96</sup> A. LUZZI, *Il canone...*, p. 280.

<sup>97</sup> MR, V, 141.

<sup>98</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca...*, p. 71.

<sup>99</sup> MR, V, 139.

Θείαν ἔλλαμψιν καταπλουτίσας\* ὄρθρος ἔλαμψας θεογνωσίας\* καταφωτίζων εὐσεβεία τὰ πέρατα...<sup>100</sup>

In addition, this image of *light* is also conveyed to us by Eusebius in his narrative. While describing the first time he saw emperor Constantine as the latter was entering the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, he mentions:

αὐτὸς δὴ λοιπὸν διέβαινε μέσος οἷα θεοῦ τις οὐράνιος ἄγγελος, λαμπρὰν μὲν ὥσπερ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγαῖς ἐξαστράπτων περιβολήν, ἀλουργίδος δὲ πυρωποῖς καταλαμπόμενος ἀκτίσι, χρυσοῦ τε καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν διαυγέσι φέγγεσι κοσμούμενος<sup>101</sup>.

This event is recorded in the third book of his work *Life of Constantine*. But even in the first book of the same work it is emphasized that the bearer of the royal power must be the chosen of God and reign over the entire world according to God's will<sup>102</sup>. In the *Tricennial Oration* the reinforcing element of the vision is also mentioned as an indication of God's favor<sup>103</sup>. The emperor must rule with loyalty to the law and paternal stewardship, and he must lead his subjects to the knowledge of God<sup>104</sup>. The peace, security and salvation of the subjects, which all constitute primary goals of the sovereign, are also reflected in hymnography. We read in a troparion:

Στερέωμα ἡμῖν καὶ τεῖχος ἄρρηκτον\* καὶ ὄπλον ἐγένου καὶ σωτηρία\* τοῖς ἐν κόσμῳ, θεοπρόβλητε\* βασιλεῦ, Κωνσταντίνε, παμμακάριστε<sup>105</sup>.

The convening of the Council of Nicaea and the fight against heresies are also placed in the context of the political pacification of the state<sup>106</sup>.

<sup>100</sup> S. GASSISI, *Innologia Graeca...*, p. 63.

<sup>101</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 86.

<sup>102</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 27 “Οὕτω δὴ Κωνσταντῖνον, τοιοῦτου φύντα πατρός, ἄρχοντα καὶ καθηγεμόνα τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς ὁ τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου πρῦτανις δι’ ἑαυτοῦ προεχειρίζετο”; *Tricennial Oration*, p. 199 “παρ’ οὗ καὶ δι’ οὗ τῆς ἀνωτάτω βασιλείας τὴν εἰκόνα φέρων ὁ τῷ Θεῷ φίλος βασιλεὺς κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ κρείττονος τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀπάντων τοῦς οἵακας διακυβερνῶν ἰθύνει”; H. HUNGER, *Prooimion...*, p. 49–50; Π. ΧΡΗΣΤΟΥ, *Ὁ βασιλεὺς...*, p. 12; A. CAMERON, *Ἡ Ὑστερη...*, p. 115–116; I. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Το βυζαντινό...*, p. 294–295; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία...*, p. 326; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Ἡ θεματικὴ...*, p. 32–33.

<sup>103</sup> *Tricennial Oration*, p. 212 “ὅ καὶ τὸ αὐτοῦ σωτήριον ἀνέδειξε σημεῖον”.

<sup>104</sup> I. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Το βυζαντινό...*, p. 291–292; on the analogy to the image of the shepherd, cf. *Tricennial Oration*, p. 214–215 “ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ποιμὴν ἀγαθὸς τῆς αὐτοῦ ποιμνῆς τὸ πεπλανημένον ἀπαθῶς παρίδοι ἂν θρέμμα, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν εὖ ἔχοντα αὐτῷ ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ κείμενα καταλείψει, τῆς δὲ τοῦ πεπλανημένου χάριν σωτηρίας πᾶν ὅτιοῦν ἂν πάθοι, εἰ καὶ πρὸς θήρας ἀγρίου συμπλακῆναι δέοι”.

<sup>105</sup> Par. gr. 344, ff. 73r–73v; EHA1 gr. 384, f. 327; Vatopediou 1667, f. 180v.

<sup>106</sup> On the Synod of Nicaea, cf. EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 74–79, where Constantine's letter to bishop Alexander and presbyter Arius is quoted; I. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Το βυζαντινό...*, p. 307–310;

Eusebius was the first to associate Constantine the Great with the highest piety, a virtue ascribed to him almost simultaneously with the vision of the Cross and the victory against Maxentius<sup>107</sup>. The defense of the true faith<sup>108</sup>, beneficence<sup>109</sup>, charity<sup>110</sup>, gentleness and calmness<sup>111</sup> are qualities that have been attributed to Saint Constantine since the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the goals of the empire is to spread Christianity to the Gentiles and create one flock under one shepherd<sup>112</sup>. Hence, in a troparion we read:

Βασιλέων ἐγένεον ὑπέρλαμπρος\* καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ποιμὴν καὶ διδάσκαλος\* καὶ ἱερέων καύχημα\* ὀρθοδόξων τε πάντων καλλώπισμα<sup>113</sup>.

Constantine the Great was posthumously canonized in the East and many of his successors tried to imitate him or link their dynasty to him. This was also the case with some empresses who sought to associate their reign with Saint Helena<sup>114</sup>.

Through this emperor the work of Divine Providence was accomplished, as *imperium Romanum* was transformed into *imperium Christianum*<sup>115</sup>.

---

on the battle against heresies, cf. EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 117; Β. ΦΕΙΔΑΣ, *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱστορία...*, p. 333.

<sup>107</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 36 “Ὁ δ’ ἔμφυτον τὴν εἰς τὸν Θεὸν εὐσέβειαν κεκτημένος [...] τῆς δ’ ἐκ θεοῦ συνησθημένος βοήθειας, εὐχαριστήριον ἀπεδίδου παραχρήμα εὐχὴν τῷ τῆς νίκης αἰτίῳ”; EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 17 “μόνον γοῦν αὐτὸν τῶν ἐξ αἰῶνος ἀκοῆ βοηθέντων αὐτοκρατόρων οἷόν τινα μέγιστον φωστῆρα καὶ κήρυκα μεγαλοφωνότατον τῆς ἀπλανοῦς θεοσεβείας προσησάμενος, μόνῳ τὰ ἐχέγγυα τῆς αὐτοῦ θεοσεβείας διὰ παντοίων τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν κεχορηγημένων ἀγαθῶν ἐνεδειξάτο”; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Ἡ θεματικὴ...*, p. 38 (with many references to the two works of Eusebius).

<sup>108</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 34, 72–79, 82–88; *Tricennial Oration*, p. 199, 217; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Ἡ θεματικὴ...*, p. 48.

<sup>109</sup> H. HUNGER, *Prooimion...*, p. 137–143; Κ.Δ.Σ. ΠΑΪΔΑΣ, *Ἡ θεματικὴ...*, p. 155–166.

<sup>110</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 54; H. HUNGER, *Prooimion...*, p. 143–153.

<sup>111</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 40 “οὐκ ὄντα τὴν φύσιν τοιοῦτον ἡμερώτατον δὲ καὶ πραότατον καὶ φιλανθρωπότατον εἶ τις πώποτε καὶ ἄλλος”.

<sup>112</sup> EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, p. 56 “Ὁ δ’ ἀρετῇ θεοσεβείας πάσῃ ἐμπρέπων νικητῆς βασιλεὺς [...] τὴν ἐφάν ἀπελάμβανε, καὶ μίαν συνημμένην κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν ὑφ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐποίητο, μοναρχίας μὲν ἐξάρχων θεοῦ κηρύγματος τοῖς πᾶσι, μοναρχία δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦ Ῥωμαίων κράτους τὸν σύμπαντα πηδαλιουχῶν βίον”; H. HUNGER, *Prooimion...*, p. 100–102; Ι. ΚΑΡΑΓΙΑΝΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Τὸ βυζαντινὸν...*, p. 282.

<sup>113</sup> Par. gr. 344, f. 75r; EHAI gr. 384, f. 329; Vatopediou 1667, f. 181v.

<sup>114</sup> J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta...*, p. 145–146; A. SPANOS, *Political Approaches...*, p. 74–75.

<sup>115</sup> Σ. ΠΑΣΧΑΛΙΔΗΣ, *Ὁ ιδεώδης αὐτοκράτορας...*, p. 40.

## Index of codicum

CITY	MANUSCRIPT	DATE
Alexandria	Alex. Patr. 93	without date
Athos	Vatopediou 1667	18 <sup>th</sup> century
	Lavrae Θ 32	16 <sup>th</sup> century
	Lavrae Ω 111	1789
	Kavsokalyvion 171	1892
Paris	Par. gr. 344	15 <sup>th</sup> century
	Par. gr. 1566	14 <sup>th</sup> century
Sina	Sin. gr. 637	11 <sup>th</sup> –12 <sup>th</sup> century
	Sin. gr. 670	13 <sup>th</sup> century
Sofia	EHAI gr. 384	14 <sup>th</sup> century

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- EUSEBIUS CAESARIENSIS, *Über das Leben des Kaiser Konstantins*, ed. F. WINKELMANN, Berlin 1975 (revised ed. 1992) [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*, I.1].
- EUSEBIUS KAISAREIAS, *Eis Kōnstantinon ton Vasilea Triakontaetērikos*, ed. I. HEIKEL, Leipzig 1902.
- EUSEBIUS KAISAREIAS, *Vios Megalou Kōnstantinou*, praef., comm. V. KATSAROS, trans. G.A. RAPTIS, Thessalonikē 2011.
- Mēnaia tou olou eniavtou*, vol. I–VI, En Rōmē 1888–1901.
- Septuaginta*, ed. A. RAHLFS, R. HANHART, Stuttgart 2006.
- SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. P. MARAVAL, P. PÉRICHON, Paris 2004–2007 [= *Sources chrétiennes*, 67].
- SOZOMENUS, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. J. BIDEZ, G.C. HANSEN, Berlin 1960 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*, 50].
- Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae. E codice Sirmondiano nunc Berolinensi. Adiectis synaxariis selectis*, ed. H. DELEHAYE, Bruxellis 1902 [= *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Pro pylaeum ad Acta sanctorum Novembris*].
- THEODORET, *Kirchengeschichte*, ed. L. PARMENTIER, F. SCHEIDWEILER, Berlin 1954 [= *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte*, 44].

## Secondary Literature

- “Ἀγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” / “Agioreitikē Bibliothēkē”, monthly ecclesiastical journal, vol. 1936–1965.
- AMORIDOU E., *Flavia Iulia Eleni kai M. Konstantinos: to portraito mias Mēteras, Christianēs kai Rōmaias Avgoustas*, [in:] *O Megas Kōnstantinos kai ē epochē tou. 1700 chronia apo to diatagma tōn Mediolanōn*, Thessalonikē 2020 (forthcoming).
- ATHANASSIADI P., *Ē anodos tēs monodoxias stēn isterē arhaiotēta*, Athēna 2018.
- BARNES T.D., *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1981.
- BECK H.G., *Ē vizantinē chilietia*, Athēna 2000.
- BREMMER J.N., *The Vision of Constantine*, [in:] *Land of Dreams. Greek and Latin Studies in Honour of A.H.M. Kessels*, ed. A.H.M.H. LARDINOIS, M.G.M. VAN DER POEL, V.J.C. HUNINK, Brill–Leiden–Boston 2006, p. 57–79, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047409281\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047409281_009)
- CAMERON A., *Ē Isterē Rōmaiki Aftokratoria (284 AD–430 AD)*, Athēna 2000.
- CHRISTOU P., *O vasilevs kai o ierevs eis to Vizantion*, “Κληρονομία” / “Klērōnomia” 3, 1971, p. 1–25.
- CLARK K.W., *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine’s Monastery, Mount Sinai*, Washington 1952.
- DAGRON G., *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003 [= Past and Present Publications].
- DAGRON G., *I gennēsē mias prōtevousas, I Cōnstantinoupolē kai oi thesmi tēs apo to 330 mechri to 451*, Athēna 2009.
- DETORAKIS Th., *Vizantinē Hymnographia*, Irakleio 1997.
- DRAKE H., *The Emperor as a “Man of God”: the Impact of Constantine the Great’s. Conversion on Roman Ideas of Kingship*, “Historia” (Sao Paolo) 35, 2016, p. 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-436920160000000083>
- DRIJVERS J.W., *Helena Augusta, the Cross and the Myth: Some New Reflections*, “Millenium” 8, 2011, p. 125–174, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110236453.125>
- DRIJVERS J.W., *The Power of the Cross. Celestial Cross Appearances in the Fourth century*, [in:] *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. CAIN, N. LENSKI, Farnham 2009, p. 237–248.
- EUSTRATIADES S. – SPYRIDON (LAVREOTES), *Katalogos tōn kōdikōn tēs Megistēs Lavras tēs en Hagiō Orei*, En Kantabrigia 1925 (= “Ἀγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη” / “Agioreitikē Bibliothēkē” 2–3).
- EUSTRATIADES S., *Hagiologion tēs Orthodoxou Ekklēσίας tēs Hellados*, Athēna 1995.
- EUSTRATIADES S., *Tameion Ekklesiastikēs Poiēseōs*, “Εκκλησιαστικός Φάρος” / “Ekklēsiastikos Pharos” 50, 1951, p. 154–155.
- GARDTHAUSEN V., *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum Sinaiticorum*, Oxonii 1886.
- GASSISI S., *Innologia Graeca in onore dei SS. Constantino ed Elena*, “Rome e l’Oriente” 6, 1913, p. 56–85.
- GEDEON M., *Vizantinon Eortologion. Mnēmai tōn apo tou tetartou mechri tōn mesōn tou deka-touemptou aiōnos eortazomenōn agiōn en Cōnstantinoupolei*, Constantinoupolis 1899.
- GETOV D., *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria*, vol. II, Turnhout 2014.
- GETOV D., *Incipitarius for the Apparently Unedited Liturgical Canons, as Contained in the Greek Manuscripts Kept in Bulgarian Libraries*, “Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata” III, ser. 1, 2004, p. 93–114.
- GLIKATZĒ-AHRWEILER H., *Ē politikē ideologia tēs Vizantinēs Aftokratorias*, Athēna 2007.
- GLIKATZĒ-AHRWEILER H., *Giati to Vizantio*, Athēna 2009.



- GORDON O., *Constantine the Great – Ο Ισαπόστολος*, “Црквене студије” / “Crkvene studije” 10, 2013, p. 57–62.
- HUNGER H., *Prooimion. Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden*, Wien 1964 [= Wiener Byzantinistische Studien, 1].
- HUNGER H., *Vizantinē Logotechnia. Ē Logia Kosmikē Grammateia tōn Vizantinōn*, vol. I, Athēna 1991.
- KADAS S.N., *Ta simeiomata tōn chirografōn tēs Hieras Megistēs Monēs Vatopaidiou*, Agion Oros 2000.
- KALDELLIS A., *The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome*, Cambridge, Massachusetts–London 2015, <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674735866>
- KARAGIANNPOULOS I., *To Vizantino Kratos*, Thessalonikē 2001.
- KARPOZILOS A., *Historikoi kai Chronographoi*, vol. I, Athēna 1997.
- KAZHDAN A., “Constantin Imaginaire”. *Byzantine Legends of the Ninth century about Constantine the Great*, “Byzantion” 57, 1987, p. 196–250.
- KAZHDAN A., *A History of Byzantine History (650–850)*, Athens 1999.
- KORAKIDES A., *Vizantinē hymnographia*, vol. I–II, Athēna 2006.
- KOUNTOURA-GALAKI H., *O Megas Kōnstantinos sto agiologiko ergo tou Kōnstantinou Akropolitē: Ideologikes epanalēpseis kai nees prosegiseis*, [in:] *Aureus. Afieromatikós tómos ston kathēgētē Eváng.*, ed. T. KOLLIAS, K. PITSAKIS, C. SINELLIS, Athēna 2014, p. 679–704.
- LENSKI N., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, Cambridge 2012.
- LIEU S.N.C., MONTSERRAT D., *From Constantine to Julian. Pagan and Byzantine Views*, London–New York 1996.
- LIVANOS N., *Athōnikes erevnes kai athōnites logioi sto deftero miso tou 19<sup>ou</sup> kai tis arches tou 20<sup>ou</sup> aiōna*, [in:] *To Hagion Oros sta chronia tēs Apeleftherōsis*, Thessalonikē 2012, p. 207–219.
- LUZZI A., *Da ἐν βασιλεῦσι ἀπόστολος α ἰσαπόστολος tout court. Note sull’ epiteto isapostolos e sulla sua originaria associazione al nome dell’ imperatore Costantino il Grande*, [in:] “Ἀνατολή και δύσις”. *Studi in Memoria di Filippo Burgarella*, ed. G. STRANO, C. TORRE, Roma 2020 [= Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neellenici, 21], p. 255–277.
- LUZZI A., *Il canone di Nicola Malaxos per gli imperatori Costantino ed Elena*, [in:] “Alle gentili arti ammaestra”. *Studi in Onore di Alkistis Proiou*, ed. A. ARMATI, M. CERASOLI, Chr. LUCIANI, Roma 2010 [= Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neellenici, 18], p. 257–291.
- LUZZI A., *Il dies festus di Constantino il Grande e di sua madre Elena nei libri liturgici della Chiesa Greca*, [in:] *Constantino il Grande dall’ antichità all’ Umanesimo. Colloquio sul cristianesimo nel mondo antico*, ed. G. BONAMENTE, F. FUSCO, Macerata 1993, p. 585–643.
- MANGO C., *Historia tou Vizantiou*, Athēna 2006.
- MARKOPOULOS A., *Constantine the Great in Macedonian Historiography: Models and Approaches*, [in:] *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Aldershot 1994, p. 159–179.
- MOSCHONAS T., *Patriarcheion Alexandreas. Katalogoi tēs Patriarchikēs Vivliothikēs*, vol. I, *Cheirógrafa*, Alexandria 1945.
- OMONT H., *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. I–II, Hildesheim–Zurich–New York 2000.
- The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I–III, ed. A. KAZHDAN et al., New York–Oxford 1991.

- PAIDAS K.D.S., *Ē thematikē tōn vizantinōn Katoptrōn Ēgemonos tēs prōimēs kai mesēs periodou* (398–1085), vol. I, Athēna 2017.
- PANAGIOTOPOULOS I.A., *Oikodomōntas tēn nea monarchia*, [in:] *The Church in the Age of the Holy Emperor Constantine the Great. Praktika Diethnous Epistimonikou Sinedriou*, Beligradi 2013, p. 105–110.
- PAPAGIANNIS G., TZIATZI-PAPAGIANNI M., KOLLIAS V.-A., NIKOLAOU A., *Observations on the Portrayal of the Ruler in the Novels of Leo VI*, “*Studia Ceranea*” 11, 2021, p. 348–349, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.11.17>
- PAPAILIOPOULOU-PHOTOPOULOU H., *Tameion anecdotōn asmatikōn kanonōn, seu Analecta Hymnica Graeca e codicibus eruta Orientis Christiani, I. Kanones Mēnaiōn*, Athēna 1996.
- PASCHALIDES S., *O ideōdis aftokratoras. O Megas Kōnstantinos stē mesovizantinē hagiologikē grammateia kai politikē ideologia*, [in:] *Niš and Byzantium. Fifth symposium*, Niš, 3.–5. June 2006, ed. M. RAKOCIJA, Niš 2007, p. 39–49.
- PASCHOS P., *Hymnographia kai hymnographoi sto Hagion Oros*, [in:] *Hagion Oros, Phisē-Latreia-Tech-nē, Praktika Sinedriōn eis to plasion tōn parallēlon ekdēloseōn “Thēsavroi tou Hagiou Orous”*, vol. I, Thessalonikē 2001, p. 203–222.
- PATAPIOU KAFSOKALYVITOU (Elder), *Athōnika Hymnagiologika Meletēmata*, Thessalonikē 2014.
- PATAPIOU KAFSOKALYVITOU (Elder), *Katálogos tōn cheirōgrafōn kōdikōn tou kyriakou tēs Skētēs Agias Triádos Kafsokalyviōn*, Thessalonikē 2005.
- PATAPIOU KAFSOKALYVITOU (Elder), *O hagioreitēs logios Kirillos Lavriōtis kai ta anekdota Sinaxaria tou Triōdiou kai tou Pentēkostariou. Simvolē stē meletē tou ergou tou, “Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς” / “Grēgorios Palamas”* 844, 2012, p. 27–72.
- PHEIDAS V., *Ekklesiastikē Historia*, vol. I, Athēna 2002.
- PRATSCH T., *Konstantin der Große in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, [in:] *Prosopon Rhomaikon. Ergänzende Studien zur Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, ed. A. BEIHAMMER, B. KRÖNUNG, C. LUDWIG, Berlin–Boston 2017, p. 65–83, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110533804-006>
- PUCCI I., *Orientamenti bibliografici inerenti Costantino il Grande*, “*Porphyra*” 2.4, 2005.
- RAPP C., *Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as ‘Bishop’*, “*The Journal of Theological Studies*” 49.2, 1998, p. 685–695, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/49.2.685>
- RAPP C., *Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium*, [in:] *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. MAGDALINO, R. NELSON, Washington 2010, p. 175–197.
- SPANOS A., *Political Approaches to Byzantine Liturgical Texts*, [in:] *Approaches to the Text. From Pre-Gospel to Post-Baroque*, ed. R. ERIKSEN, P. GOUNG, Pisa–Rome 2014, p. 63–81.
- STRATIGOPOULOS D., *Entipes akolouthies hagiōn*, Athēna 2007.
- STRATIGOPOULOS D., *O Nikólaos Malaxós, Prōtopapás Nafplíou kai to syngrafikó tou érgo*, Thessalonikē 2008 [= Βυζαντινά Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται / Vyzantiná Keimena kai Melétai, 47].
- STRATIGOPOULOS D., *Oi hagioi Kōnstantinos kai Elenē stēn Hymnographia*, [in:] *Niš and Byzantium. Fifth symposium*, Niš, 3.–5. June 2006, ed. M. RAKOCIJA, Niš 2007, p. 47–54.
- THEMELES T.P., *Ta mēnaia apo tou 11<sup>ou</sup> mechri tou 13<sup>ou</sup> aiōnos*, “*Εκκλησιαστικός Φάρος*” / “*Ekklē-siastikos Pharos*” 30, 1931, p. 287–312, 348–387, 520–566.
- TOMADAKES N.V., *Ē vizantinē hymnographia kai poiēsis*, Thessalonikē 1993.
- TREMPERAS P.N., *Eklogē Hellinikēs Orthodoxou Hymnographias*, Athēna 2007.

TZOUMERKAS N.P., *Ta vizantina cheirographa tēs Patriarchikēs Vivliothēkēs Alexandreias*, “Εκκλησιαστικός Φάρος” / “Ekklesiastikos Pharos” 85–86, 2014–2015, p. 297–332.

WELLESZ E., *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford 1961.


ZERVOUDAKI A., *Theophanes o Graptos, Vios kai Ergo* (unpublished PhD Thesis, Rethymno 2002).

**Anastasia Nikolaou**

Democritus University of Thrace  
Department of Greek Philology  
School of Classics and Humanities  
Panepistimioupolis/Campus  
GR-69100 Komotini, Greece  
anikolao@helit.duth.gr



Zdzisław Pentek (Poznań)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6500-6559>

## THE CLERGY DURING THE FOURTH CRUSADE AS PORTRAYED IN GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN'S CHRONICLE

**Abstract.** An article analysing information about the clerics during the Fourth Crusade mentioned by the chronicler of this expedition, Geoffrey of Villehardouin († c. 1219), in the Old French chronicle *La conquête de Constantinople*. The author has distinguished three types of clerics, participants in the crusade, and traced mentions thereof in the work and the opinions about them.

**Keywords:** clergy of the Fourth Crusade, Constantinople, Geoffrey of Villehardouin

A long a multitude of knights and common soldiers, the Fourth Crusade attracted a small group of church notables. Until then, every crusade to the Holy Land included a group of clerics, natural hosts since the First Crusade. I intend to trace the source passages relating to it, deliberately relying solely on a single Old French account by Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Marshal of Champagne († c. 1219), *La Conquête de Constantinople*<sup>1</sup>. In the chronicle, the author refers to a total of 209 figures, mainly from the Western, Greek and Bulgarian milieus. From this number, excluding Pope Innocent III (mentioned in the chronicle in paragraphs: 1, 2, 31, 105–107, 368, 377, 388), who did not physically participate in the expedition, Villehardouin mentioned by name and anonymously nine clergymen, active participants, and one involved in the crusade's preparation. They represent almost one-twentieth of all the expedition participants mentioned

<sup>1</sup> The author was Marshal of Champagne, so he was certainly not a serial participant in the expedition; rather, he was a part of a group of wealthy and influential barons. Critical edition: GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, *La conquête de Constantinople*, vol. I–II, ed. E. FARAL, Paris 1938–1939 (ce-tera: GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN). There is extensive literature on the chronicler and his work: E. FARAL, *Geoffroy Villehardouin. La question de sa sincérité*, RH 177, 1936, p. 530–582; J. LONGNON, *Recherches sur la vie de Geoffroy de Villehardouin, suivies du catalogue des actes des Villehardouin*, Paris 1939; Z. PENTEK, *Geoffroy de Villehardouin. Rycerz i kronikarz IV wyprawy krzyżowej*, Poznań 1996 (extensive literature there); Polish translation – GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, *Zdobycie Konstantynopola*, trans. from Old French, praef. et comm. Z. PENTEK, Poznań 2018.

by the chronicler. How does this relate to the estimated number of participants in the expedition, according to historiography? Following the recent, meticulous calculations by Donald E. Queller (1925–1995) and Thomas Madden (\*1960)<sup>2</sup>, the number of crusaders in the Fourth Expedition was close to 12,000, excluding the Venetians. Thus, the number of clerics-crusaders was not high, and yet, because of their exceptional religious commitment, Villehardouin highlighted the individuals and actions.

At the very beginning, in the first chapter of his chronicle, Villehardouin identified the first advocate of the Fourth Crusade, namely **Folques of Neuilly**:

Sachiez que.M. et.C.... un saint home en France, qui ot nom Folques de Nuilli (cil Nuillis si est entre Ligni sor Marne a Paris) et ile re prestres et tenoit la parroiche de la ville. Et cil Folques dont je vos di comença a parler de Dieu par France et par les autres terres entor; et Nostre Sires fist maintes miracles por lui<sup>3</sup>.

The text clearly suggests that Folques was not only a priest residing in Lagny-sur-Marne; he travelled around the area encouraging people to take part in a new expedition to the Holy Land. Moreover, Villehardouin referred to him as a holy man (*un saint home*) through whom God performed numerous miracles (*et Nostre Sires fist maintes miracles por lui*). This tone was used for a reason, validating the idea of a new crusade, as it was preached by a holy man. The following words confirm this peculiar aura around Folques: *En l'autre an après que cil preudon Folques parla ensi de Dieu...*<sup>4</sup> This time, Folques was presented as a blessed (*preudon*) speaker. Folques was thus portrayed as a humble priest but one blessed by God – an advocate of a good cause. The clergyman further praised him in the 44<sup>th</sup> chapter of his chronicle: *Maintenant li evesques de Soisons et missire Folques li bons hom et dui blanc abé que il avoit amené de son pais l'enmainent a l'eglise Nostre Dame et li atauchent la croiz a l'espaule*<sup>5</sup>. In this case, Folques was described as a good man (*bons hom*), but the chronicler also hinted at his influence, mentioning the company of the (anonymous) bishop of Soissons (*evesques de Soisons*), and two monks (*et dui blanc abé*). To explain the origins of these two men, we need to look at the context of the part of the text which shows Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat († 1207) joining the crusaders, having taken command of the preparations for the crusade after the demise of its first leader, Theobald, Count of Champagne, in May 1201. The Marquis came from Montferrat in Piedmont, home of the Cistercian abbey in Lucedio, in the diocese of Verceil. This confirms the provenance of the 'white monks'. In the next chapter of the chronicle, Villehardouin again identified

<sup>2</sup> D.E. QUELLER, T. MADDEN, *The Fourth Crusade. Conquest of Constantinople*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Philadelphia 1997, p. 282–283, end notes 29.

<sup>3</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 1.

<sup>4</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 3.

<sup>5</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 44.

Folques as a *missire*<sup>6</sup> who arrived at the Cistercian abbey at Cîteaux on 14 September 1201 to preach the cross – *parler des croiz*<sup>7</sup>. Even this date is not coincidental, as it is linked to the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Villehardouin recorded news about Folques in May 1202. At that time the reader learns that he died. The cause of death remains unknown but the death of the advocate of the expedition provided an opportunity for the chronicler to raise the merits and supposed sanctity of this promoter of the expedition to the Holy Land yet again: ...*que messire Folques, li bons hom, li sains hom, qui parla premierement des croiz, fina et mori*<sup>8</sup>.

The Bishop of Troyes, **Garnier** (1149–1205), was mentioned by name only once in the chronicle in the fifth chapter of *Garniers li évesques de Troies*<sup>9</sup>. He was from Traînel<sup>10</sup>. In April 1193, he became bishop of Troyes<sup>11</sup>. Having embarked on the crusade, he did not seem to have played a significant role until he became elector of the first emperor of the Western world<sup>12</sup>. Interestingly, Villehardouin did not mention him by name in the list of the emperor's electors, or at the coronation of Baldwin I (1204–1205). The chronicler did not mention the bishop's death in Constantinople, on 14 April 1205. But this can be explained as coinciding with the defeat of Baldwin I at Adrianople, which the chronicler witnessed<sup>13</sup>.

**Névelon of Cherisi** († 1207), Bishop of Soissons (1175–1207), was another cleric, a participant of the expedition to Constantinople, mentioned by the chronicler<sup>14</sup>. This cleric was mentioned six times (chapters 7, 44, 105, 107, 260, 388) which may suggest his prominent position among the other clerics. He appeared for the first time in the lists of participants in the expedition (chapter 7). He was mentioned the second time in the context of a meeting with Folques and Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat (chapter 44), during the search for a successor to Theobald, Count of Champagne. Once Zadar was captured by the crusaders (November 1202), the barons decided to send a delegation to Innocent III to explain the unprecedented attack on the Christian city, launched in fact during the crusade against the Muslims. The delegation consisted of four individuals: two knights – Jean of Friaise and Robert of Bovesi, and two clergymen. One of them was the

<sup>6</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 45.

<sup>7</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 45.

<sup>8</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 73. Information about the time of Folques' death in *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, ed. H. PERTZ, Leipzig 1925 [= MGH.SS, 16], p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 5.

<sup>10</sup> J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons de Villehardouin. Recherches sur les croisés de la quatrième croisade*, Genève 1978, p. 13–15.

<sup>11</sup> *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, vol. I, ed. C. EUBEL, Monasterium 1913 (cetera: *Hierarchia catholica*), p. 521; PIUS GAMS, *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae catholicae*, Graz 1957 (cetera: PIUS GAMS), p. 643.

<sup>12</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 258.

<sup>13</sup> *Obituaires de la province de Sens*, vol. IV, *Diocèses de Meaux et de Troyes*, ed. A. LONGNON, Paris 1923, p. 228 E: *Obiit Constantinopoli Garnerus, Trecensis episcopus*.

<sup>14</sup> *Hierarchia catholica*, vol. I, p. 493; PIUS GAMS, p. 633 – 9 August 1175 – 14 Sept. 1207; J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons...*, p. 115–116.

bishop of Névelon: *et eslistent messages.ii. chevaliers et.ii. clers, telx qu' il savoient qui bon fussent a cest message[.] Des.ii. clers du li uns Nevelons li evesques de Soissons et maistre Johans de Noyon...*<sup>15</sup> It is clear from this text that Névelon was seen as a skilful diplomat who would convince the Pope of his reasons, so hopes were pinned on him to appease the wrath of pope Innocent III. That Névelon's message had the expected effect is evidenced by Villehardouin's words about the pope's decision: forgiveness, a show of mercy, greetings to the barons and pilgrims, and special powers of attorney until the arrival of Innocent III's legate, Peter of Capua: *et dona plain pooir a Nevelon lo vesque de Soissons et a maistre Johan de Noion delier et de deslier les pelerins trosqu'adonc que li cardonax venroit em l'ost*<sup>16</sup>. In May 1204, after the second occupation of Constantinople, Névelon was among the electors of the new emperor, and he seems to have played a leading role at the time, since the chronicler claimed that the honour of announcing the results of the deliberations on the election of the emperor fell to him:

Et cargierent lor parola, par le creant de toz les autres, a Nevelon l'evesque de Soissons [...] Seignor, nous somes acordé, la Dieu merci, de fairte empereor [...] Et nom le nomerons en l'eure que Diex fu nés: le conte Baudoin de Flandres et de Henaut<sup>17</sup>.

Although it is not directly apparent from Villehardouin's account, Névelon most likely crowned Baldwin I. Villehardouin attested the bishop's diplomatic aptitude in his subsequent election as envoy to the pope in May 1205: *Por ce secors fu envoieiz Novelons de Soissons*<sup>18</sup>. At this point, news of Bishop Névelon's participation and role in the historian's account came to a halt.

**Conrad of Krosigk** († 21 June 1225), bishop of Halberstadt (1201–1209) joined the expedition in Venice in August 1202<sup>19</sup>: *Et après ceste aventure lor vint une compaigne de mult bone gent de l'empire d' Alemaigne, dont il furent mult lié. Le vint li evesques de Havestat...*<sup>20</sup> There is a single reference to his participation in the expedition. Unfortunately, the historian did not mention him as elector of Baldwin I<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 105.

<sup>16</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 107.

<sup>17</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 260.

<sup>18</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 388.

<sup>19</sup> D.E. QUELLER, *The Fourth Crusade. Conquest of Constantinople 1201–1204*, Philadelphia 1977, p. 11, claimed that it happened on 29 June 1202, although the anonymous chronicler of Halberstadt stated that it happened on 13 August 1202 – *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium*, ed. L. WEILAND, Leipzig 1925 [= MGH.SS, 23], p. 116. In the second edition of this book: D.E. QUELLER, T. MADDEN, *The Fourth Crusade...*, p. 50, the authors revised the earlier view. For an extensive article on Conrad's career biography, see the extensive analytical text by Alfred ANDREA, *Conrad of Krosigk. Bishop of Halberstadt, Crusader and Monk of Sittichenbach: his Ecclesiastical Career, 1184–1225*, ACi 43, 1987, p. 11–91; *Hierarchia catholica*, vol. I, p. 270; J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons...*, p. 242–243.

<sup>20</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 74.

<sup>21</sup> *Lettre de l'empereur Baudouin de Oorkonden*, [in:] *De Oorkonden der graven van Vlaanderen (1191–1206)*, ed. W. PREVENIER, Bruxelles 1964 (cetera: *Lettre de l'empereur*), p. 572, no. 271.

**Jean of Noyon** († 1204) was a cleric and chancellor of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. Villehardouin mentioned him relatively late, only in early 1203, during his stay in Zadar<sup>22</sup>. It seems that, as a result of a longer stay in the city, the chronicler could get to know Baldwin's chancery milieu, since Jean of Noyon was not among the crusaders from Flanders mentioned in chapter 8<sup>th</sup> of *De la conquête de Constantinople* who vowed to embark on the crusade on 23 February 1200 in Bruges<sup>23</sup>. Jean of Noyon came from Picardy, but his presence at Baldwin's court opened up the prospect of further promotions, in the secular and ecclesiastical circles. Villehardouin recalled that Jean of Noyon, together with Bishop Névelon, were envoys sent to Innocent III: *et maistre Johans de Noion*<sup>24</sup>. Villehardouin mentioned him again after his successful visit to Rome, attributing the same role to him as to his companion Bishop Névelon<sup>25</sup>. While for Villehardouin Jean of Noyon was the anonymous elector of Baldwin I<sup>26</sup> he did not fail to mention his death in the second half of 1204. He fell victim to an unknown plague in Sérres (Σέρρες), Macedonia:

Lors fu morz maistre Johan de Noion ala Serre, qui ere chanceliers l'empereor Baudoin et mult bons clers, et mult sages, et mult avoit conforté l'ost per la parole de Dieu, qu'il savoit mult bien dire. Et sachiez que mult en furent li prodome de l'ost desconforté<sup>27</sup>.

Bearing in mind the characteristics of the other clerics, this one is almost comparable to the description of the achievements of Folques of Neuilly. The praise given to the deceased is as much about his merits in clerical life as it is about his oratorical skills.

**Peter** (Pierres), bishop of Bethlehem<sup>28</sup> was only noticed by Villehardouin because he was one of the victims of the Battle of Adrianople in April 1205: *La fu perdfuz li évesques Pierres de Betleem*<sup>29</sup>.

**Peter** (Perron, Pierre) († 1214) of Capua was a cardinal and a papal legate from Amalfi<sup>30</sup>. Villehardouin wrote about him sporadically, despite the high standing of Peter of Capua. The chronicler initially attributed to him promotion of the crusade and bringing an important promise to France – forgiving the sins of the crusaders on condition of taking part in the expedition: *et après i envoya un suen charnonal, maistre Perron de Chappes, croisié, et manda par lui le pardon tel con je vos dirai: tuit cil qui se croisseroient et feroient le servise Deu un en l'ost*

<sup>22</sup> J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons...*, p. 165–167.

<sup>23</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 8.

<sup>24</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 105.

<sup>25</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 107.

<sup>26</sup> *Lettre de l'empereur*, p. 572, no. 271.

<sup>27</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 290.

<sup>28</sup> *Regesta pontificum*, ed. A. POTTHAST, Graz 1967, no. 1067, p. 99; *Hierarchia catholica*, vol. I, p. 134.

<sup>29</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 361.

<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive study of his life and work cf. W. MALECZEK, *Petrus Capuanus. Kardinal, Legat am vierten Kreuzzug, Theologe* († 1214), Wien 1998.



*seroient quite de toz les pechiez que avoient faitz, dont il seroient confés*<sup>31</sup>. Yet again, Villehardouin did not recall his existence until April 1205. At that time, the legate was sent from Rome to Constantinople to discern the local situation on the spot. Upon his arrival, he heard the shocking news of the defeat of the Latin troops at Adrianople<sup>32</sup>. Perhaps under the pressure of the moment, the legate decided to take advantage of the pope's instructions and again grant indulgence to the Crusaders who would stay in Constantinople:

Maistre Pierre de Chappes, qui ere cardonalx de par l'apostoile de Rome Innocent [...] et o plors que il aüssent merci et pitie de la crestienté et de lor seignors liges, qui estoient perdu enla bataille, et que il demonrassent por Dieu<sup>33</sup>.

This episode in the cardinal's life put a stop to Villehardouin's account of him.

**Guy** († 1223), a Cistercian abbot of the northern French town of Vaux de Cernay, is among the unnamed clerics who took part in the fourth expedition<sup>34</sup>. It remains unclear why the chronicler did not mention his name, although he referred to him four times (chapters 83, 95, 97, 109) at an important moment in the crusade, and even claimed to quote from him. Possibly, Villehardouin failed to mention his name because the abbot strongly resisted attacking Zadar: *Et alors se leva un abbé de Vaux de l'orde de Cistials, et lor dist: «Seignor, je vos deffent de par l'apostoille de Rome que vos ne assailliez ceste cité, car ele est de crestiens et vos iestes pelerin»*<sup>35</sup>. As a consequence of these words, the abbot began to organise opposition against the idea of Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice, as it was proven a little later: *Et parla l'abés de Vals, de l'ordre de Cystiaus et cele partie qui voloit l'ost depecier: et distrent qu'il ne s'i accorderoient mie, que ce ere sor crestiens, et il n'estoient mie por ce meü, ainz voloient aler en Surie*<sup>36</sup>. Villehardouin attributed the abbot's attitude to his holiness and integrity: *Li Abés de Loz, qui mul tere sainz hom et prodom...*<sup>37</sup> Faced with the intransigence of Dandolo and Boniface of Monferrat, the abbot and the others left the crusaders: *...et 'abés de Vals, qui ere moine de ordre de Cistiaus...*<sup>38</sup> In view of the abbot's decisions, the chronicler automatically felt absolved from following his further actions.

<sup>31</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 2.

<sup>32</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 368.

<sup>33</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 377.

<sup>34</sup> J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons...*, p. 127–128.

<sup>35</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 83.

<sup>36</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 95.

<sup>37</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 97.

<sup>38</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 109.

Another anonymous figure from the Cistercian world was **Simon**, abbot of Loos<sup>39</sup>, an abbey in northern France nearby Lille. Villehardouin's narrative is reminiscent of that on Guido. Simon appears as a holy and righteous man: *Li abbé de Loz, qui mul ere sainz hom et prodom...*<sup>40</sup> Unlike Abbot Guido, Simon did not leave the crusader army and continued his pilgrimage reaching... Constantinople. There, in the autumn of 1203, he died, as the chronicler reported: *...li abbés de Los, qui ere sainz hom et prodom, fu morz, et qui avoit volu le bien de l'ost; et ere moines de l'orde de Cistials*<sup>41</sup>. Although Simon's conduct was different from that of Guido's, the chronicler's opinion on both was similar.

The last clergyman mentioned by Villehardouin in 1206 was **Benoît** († 1216), a papal legate, cardinal of the Church of St Susanna in Rome. In Villehardouin's chronicle, he is also anonymous<sup>42</sup>: *Li chardonaus qui ere de par l'apostoille de Rome...* and he arrived to *...et en fist pardon a toz cels qui iroient et qui moroient...*<sup>43</sup> in the future fights.

## Conclusion

Villehardouin's account was deliberately detached from other documentary and narrative sources<sup>44</sup>. The clergy and the participants in this crusade were portrayed by the chronicler as an important, symbolic, but not entirely decisive element of the crusaders' composition. The coverage of these individuals is rather selective, with the author only highlighting the leading clergymen, participants of the expedition, some of whom he met personally or knew of their existence. He provided a cross-section of the clerical world, from the cardinal-legate, to bishops, abbots, priests and clerics; not a coherent group, representing at least three types of actions. Folques was a representative of the first group – the advocates of the expedition.

<sup>39</sup> J. LONGNON, *Les compagnons...*, p. 165; *Diplomatica Belgica – Record 11089*, diplomata-belgica.be [30 XII 2022].

<sup>40</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 97.

<sup>41</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 206.

<sup>42</sup> *Hierarchia catholica*, vol. I, p. 3; *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, vol. II, ed. G.L. TAFEL, G.M. THOMAS, Wien 1856, p. 37–42.

<sup>43</sup> GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, sec. 427.

<sup>44</sup> I mean ROBERT DE CLARI's chronicle: *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Ph. LAUER, Paris 1924; ANONYMI SUSSIONENSIS, *De terra Iherosolymitana et quomodo urbe Constantinopolitana ad hanc ecclesiam allata sunt reliquiae*, [in:] *Exuviaesacrae Constantinopolitanae. Fasciculus documentorum minorum ad Byzantina Lipsana in Occidentem saeculo XIII<sup>o</sup> translata, spectantium et historiam quarti belli sacri imperiique gallo-graeci illustrantium*, vol. I, ed. P. Riant, Genevae 1877, p. 3–9; *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, [in:] *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues*, ed. Ch. HOPF, Berlin 1873, p. 86–92; GUNTHERI CISTERCIENSIS, *Historia captae a latinis Constantinopoleos*, [in:] *PL*, vol. CCXII, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1865, col. 223–256; NICETAE CHONIATAE, *Historia*, rec. I.A. VAN DIETEN, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 1975 [= *CFHB*, 11].

Guy, abbot of Vaux de Cernay and his anonymous acolytes, were another important group, representing an isolated position, fiercely and consistently opposing the further direction of the expedition. In contrast, the third group, the most numerous one, seems to have shared the political intentions of Dandolo and Boniface, intending to head for Constantinople. There is no information suggesting that this group opposed the change of direction of the expedition at all. Thus, the clerical community in Villehardouin's chronicle did not play a role as significant as that of the seniors, responsible for the military and political affairs alike.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- ANONYMI SUESSIONENSIS, *De terra Iherosolymitana et quomodo urbe Constantinopolitana ad hanc ecclesiam allata sunt reliquiae*, [in:] *Exuviaesacrae Constantinopolitanae. Fasciculus documentorum minorum ad Byzantina Lipsana in Occidentem saeculo XIII<sup>o</sup> translata, spectantium et historiam quarti belli sacri imperiique gallo-graeci illustrantium*, vol. I, ed. P. Riant, Genevae 1877, p. 3–9.
- Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, [in:] *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues*, ed. Ch. HOFF, Berlin 1873, p. 86–92.
- Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, ed. H. PERTZ, Leipzig 1925 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 16].
- Diplomatica Belgica – Record 11089, diplomata-belgica.be [30 XII 2022].
- GAMS P., *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae catholicae*, Graz 1957.
- GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, *La conquête de Constantinople*, vol. I–II, ed. E. FARAL, Paris 1938–1939.
- GEOFFREY DE VILLEHARDOUIN, *Zdobycie Konstantynopola*, trans. from Old French, praef. et comm. Z. PENTEK, Poznań 2018.
- Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium*, ed. L. WEILAND, Leipzig 1925 [= *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores*, 23].
- GUNTHERI CISTERCIENSIS, *Historia captae a latinis Constantinopoleos*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina*, vol. CCXII, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1865, col. 223–256.
- Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ed. C. EUBEL, Monasterium 1913.
- Lettre de l'empereur Baudouin de Oorkonden*, [in:] *De Oorkonden der graven van Vlaanderen (1191–1206)*, ed. W. PREVENIER, Bruxelles 1964.
- NICETAE CHONIATAE, *Historia*, rec. I.A. VAN DIETEN, Berolini–Novi Eboraci 1975 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 11].
- Obituaires de la province de Sens*, vol. IV, *Diocèses de Meaux et de Troyes*, ed. A. LONGNON, Paris 1923.
- Regesta pontificum*, ed. A. POTTTHAST, Graz 1967.
- ROBERT DE CLARI, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Ph. LAUER, Paris 1924.
- Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. G.L. TAFEL, G.M. THOMAS, Wien 1856.

## Secondary Literature

- ANDREA A., *Conrad of Krosigk. Bishop of Halberstadt, Crusader and Monk of Sittichenbach: his Ecclesiastical Career, 1184–1225*, "Analecta Cisterciensia" 43, 1987, p. 11–91.
- FARAL E., *Geoffroy Villehardouin. La question de sa sincérité*, "Révue historique" 177, 1936, p. 530–582.
- LONGNON J., *Les compagnons de Villehardouin. Recherches sur les croisés de la quatrième croisade*, Genève 1978.
- LONGNON J., *Recherches sur la vie de Geoffroy de Villehardouin, suivies du catalogue des actes des Villehardouin*, Paris 1939.
- MALECZEK W., *Petrus Capuanus. Kardinal, Legat am vierten Kreuzzug, Theologe († 1214)*, Wien 1998.
- PENTEK Z., *Geoffroy de Villehardouin. Rycerz i kronikarz IV wyprawy krzyżowej*, Poznań 1996.
- QUELLER D.E., *The Fourth Crusade. Conquest of Constantinople 1201–1204*, Philadelphia 1977.
- QUELLER D.E., MADDEN T., *The Fourth Crusade. Conquest of Constantinople*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Philadelphia 1997.


**Zdzisław Pentek**

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań  
Faculty of History  
ul. Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego 7  
61-614 Poznań, Polska/Poland  
zp26@amu.edu.pl






Alexandar Portalsky (Blagoevgrad)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4282-3668>

Mariya Bagasheva (Blagoevgrad)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1867-3321>

## THE MONASTERY NEAR KIYIKÖY IN EUROPEAN TURKEY

**Abstract.** The monastery near today's Kiyiköy settlement on the Black Sea coast is a very interesting rock-cut complex. It probably inherited an ancient sanctuary near the ancient Thracian and Roman city of Salmydessos, which became an important Christian center in the vicinity of Constantinople. In this text, we briefly review the historical information about the city, then describe the monastery, because there has been only one scientific publication since 1970 and the monastery is very difficult to access. We apply the three plans of the monastery that have been published since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to trace the change in the condition of the rock and the rooms that have been added. Then we analyze the architectural program and types of decoration of the three-nave basilica and the sacred spring, which have no exact analogue and are comparable both to examples from antiquity and to the best temples in the Byzantine capital. Based on this analysis, we assume three construction periods – ancient, from the time of Justinian and from the end of the iconoclastic period after the destruction of the city by the Bulgarian Khan Krum.

**Keywords:** Medea, Midieh, Salmydessus, rock monastery, rock church, Ayazma, sacred spring

### Significance of the site

Today's Kiyiköy settlement has a really rich and ancient history. It is located on the coast of the Black Sea in the Turkish part of Strandzha Mountains (Istranca dağı) in Kırklareli Province, Marmara region. The settlement is also known by the older Turkish names Midye and Midieh. In the Middle Ages it was known as the Byzantine settlement Μηδεια, and in antiquity by the name Salmydessus (in Latin) or Salmydessos (Ancient Greek: Σαλμυδησσός), also Halmydessus or Halmydissos (Ἀλμυδισσός)<sup>1</sup>. Kiyiköy is located approx. 97 km

<sup>1</sup> KLAUDIUS PTOLEMAIOS, *Handbuch der Geographie Griechisch-Deutsch*, III, 11.4, ed. A. STÜCKELBERGER, G. GRASSHOFF, [s.l.] 2006; GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, *Libri 1–6*, IV, 11.18, ed. K.F.Th. MAYHOFF, Lipsiae 1933 (repr. of the 1905 ed.); POMPONIUS MELA, *De situ orbis libri III*, Lipsiae 1831. The citation of ancient authors is in the universally established way, indicating the book and paragraph and the edition. There are no different readings in the quoted passages.

north of the entrance to the Bosphorus Strait on a high rocky promontory between two bays with beach areas into which two rivers flow. In ancient times there were two harbours, but today only the southern bay has harbour facilities for fishing boats. The two rivers are called Pabuçdere (to the north) and Kazandere. Today the Pabuçdere is quite shallow because of a dam that was built further up the river, but in ancient and medieval times it must have been full-flowing enough to shelter ships from the dangerous northerly winds and currents of the Black Sea.

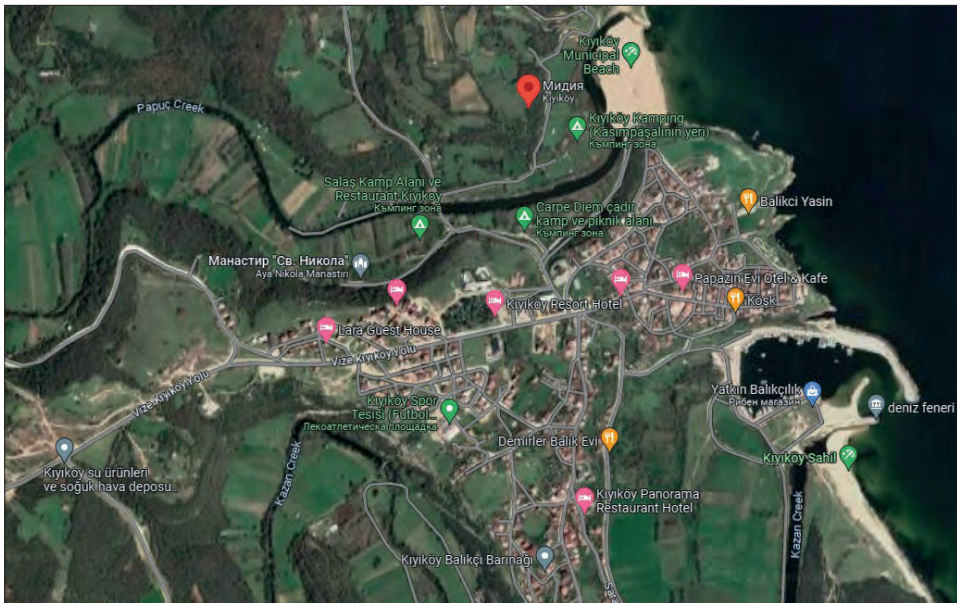


Fig. 1. Kiyıköy and environs from Google Earth.

On the right bank of the Pabuçdere, less than 1 km from the medieval fortress wall of the town, an abandoned rock monastery, known today as St. Nicholas, is situated. It is designated as a tourist site, but no special care is taken of the place. However, it has attracted the interest of tourists, mainly from Bulgaria, because of its proximity to beautiful beaches. But on January 1, 2020, natural gas was released on the TurkStream natural gas pipeline, which carries gas from Russia along the bottom of the Black Sea to the Balkan Peninsula and comes ashore right at Kiyıköy Bay. This made access to the monastery very difficult for Turkish researchers and practically impossible for foreigners. This led us to think that our observations and photographs of this site might prove valuable because no one can now say what the condition of the monastery is and whether when (and if) access to it is restored there will be no damage to architectural elements. The observation

that the publications of this rock monastery are very scarce also led us to undertake its description, even though none of the authors are specialists in ecclesiastical architecture.

### Brief history of the city

Salmydessos has two meanings<sup>2</sup>. The first is a coastal stretch, a territory on the west coast of Pontos Euxeinos (*aigialos*), even just a bay (*kolpos*), and the second a place (*topos*), most probably a city in Thrace where King Phineus lived. The Argonauts, led by Jason, received from Phineus a prophesy of how to cross the Cyanean Rocks also known as the Symplegades, a pair of rocks at the Bosphorus that clashed together whenever a vessel went through, according to Greek mythology. For that reason, Salmydessos is closely present in the mythological cycle of the Argonauts, and hence also in the ancient Greek tragedies. Aeschylus places Salmydessos at Themiscyra on the Thermodon river in Asia Minor, but this is an obvious mistake – he is the only ancient author with such a localization of the city<sup>3</sup> (*Themiscyra on the Thermodon, where, fronting the sea, is Salmydessus' rugged jaw, evil host of mariners, step-mother of ships*<sup>4</sup>). Sophocles gives an interesting additional account<sup>5</sup>:

[966] And by the waters of the Dark Rocks, the waters of the twofold sea, are the shores of Bosphorus and the Thracian city Salmydessus,

[970] where Ares, neighbor of that city, saw the accursed, blinding wound inflicted on the two sons of Phineus by his savage wife<sup>6</sup>.

The exact Greek expression in line 970 is ἀγχίπτολις Ἄρης, which translates as “near the city”, “dwelling hard by”<sup>7</sup> or “close neighbor to a city”<sup>8</sup>. Whether this sanctuary was the place where the successors of Phineus gave prophesies cannot be said. It has been suggested that this may be the pagan prototype of the rock monastery, as there is no other cult complex in the vicinity of the city, but this will remain unverifiable until systematic archaeological excavations are carried out<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> L. BÜRCHNER, *Salmydessos*, [in:] *RE. Zweiter Reihe (R–Z)*, ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1920, col. 1991–1992.

<sup>3</sup> AESCHYLUS, *Promētheús Desmôtēs*, 696sqq, ed. U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, [in:] *Aeschyli Tragoediae. Editio maior*, Berlin 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, London 1926.

<sup>5</sup> SOPHOCLES, *Antigone*, 966–975, ed. R.D. DAWE, Stuttgart 1996 [= BSGR].

<sup>6</sup> SOPHOCLES, *The Plays and Fragments*, pars 3, *The Antigone*, ed. et trans. R.C. JEBB, A.M. HACKERT, 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Clair Shores 1971.

<sup>7</sup> LSJ (online), <https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid=1> [6 VI 2023].

<sup>8</sup> *The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, vol. I–II, ed. J. DIGGLE, Cambridge 2021.

<sup>9</sup> А. ПОРТАЛСКИ, *Салмидесс – древное святилище и столица фракийских царей*, M&E 4.3, 2008, p. 276–279.



Herodotus mentions that after some resistance the inhabitants of Salmydesos submitted to the Persian king Darius in his campaign against the Scythians across the Danube<sup>10</sup>. The city is also mentioned by Diodorus Siculus<sup>11</sup> and Strabo<sup>12</sup> who add no significant new information. The only ancient author of the pre-Roman period whom we are sure that visited the city is Xenophon, who confirms the popular (and probably erroneous) opinion that the coast was very unsuitable for navigation, and that shipwrecks were regularly washed up there, which the natives plundered, and, in order that there might be no strife, divided the shore with stakes, and it is known exactly on whose ground the wreck was thrown<sup>13</sup>. The Athenian author probably gives this strange explanation of stakes for *dalyans* (specific fishing nets), which the Greeks did not know, but he left us no other description of the city.

Theophanes the Confessor (758/760 – 817/818) is the first to mention the city under the name *Mēdeia* in the year 763<sup>14</sup>. According to Andreas Külzer, this is related to a resettlement of the city according to Grēgoras<sup>15</sup>. In 813, *Mēdeia* was devastated by the army of the Bulgarian ruler Krum<sup>16</sup>. The war of 763 between the troops of Khan Teletz (761–764) and Emperor Constantine V was not particularly successful for the Bulgarians, but in 813 it is quite possible that the local population was taken captive in the interior regions of Bulgaria<sup>17</sup>. In the summer of 896, the Bulgarian troops under the leadership of Tsar Simeon (893–927) advanced south and, after the defeat of the Byzantine army at Bulgarophygon, managed to extend their sphere of influence to the region of *Mēdeia*, for the place is described as situated near the border<sup>18</sup>. In 925, the important city of Bizyē (Βιζύη – today's Turkish city of Vize) was captured by the Bulgarians led by Tsar Simeon after a siege of about five years. Most of the local population fled to nearby *Mēdeia*, which is told in the hagiography of the local saint Maria the Younger<sup>19</sup>. From the text of the

<sup>10</sup> HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, IV, 93, ed. H.B. ROSÉN, Lipsiae 1987 [= BSGR].

<sup>11</sup> GAIUS DIODORUS SICULUS, XIV, 37, [in:] *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes with an English Translation*, vol. IV–VIII, trans. C.H. OLDFATHER, Cambridge Massachusetts 1989.

<sup>12</sup> *Strabons Geographika. Mit Übersetzung und Kommentar*, I, 3, 4, 7; VII, 6, 1; XII, 3, 3, vol. I–X, ed. S.L. RADT, Göttingen 2002–2011 (cetera: STRABO).

<sup>13</sup> XENOPHON, *Anabasis*, VII, 5, 12, [in:] *Xenophontis opera omnia*, vol. III, Oxford 1904 [repr. 1961].

<sup>14</sup> *Theophanis Chronographia*, AM 6255, vol. I, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883, p. 434, 12–13.

<sup>15</sup> A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. XII, *Ostthrakien (Europe)*, Wien 2008 [= DKAW.PhH], s.v. *Mēdeia* (Μήδεια) 519. Cf. *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia: Graece et Latine*, III, 382, vol. II, ed. L. SCHOPENUS, B. NIEBUHR, Berlin 1828 (cetera: NICEPHORUS GREGORAS).

<sup>16</sup> A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*..., 520.

<sup>17</sup> Y.M. HRISTOV, *Prisoners of War in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Preliminary Remarks)*, SCer 5, 2015, p. 73–105.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita Euthymii Patriarchi CP*, ed. P. KARLIN-HAYTER, Bruxelles 1970, XVI Peri Niceta philosophou tou Paphlagonos, p. 107, 6–7; A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*..., 520.

<sup>19</sup> *Vita Mariae Junioris*, [in:] *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana*, Bruxellis 1925, Novembris IV, col. 692–705. Also ed. E. KOURILAS, [in:] *Thrakika* 26 (1957), p. 111–147; A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*..., 520.

hagiography it is clear that Mēdeia was not affected at that time. The place is mentioned briefly in a letter by the scholar Iōannēs Tzetzēs in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>20</sup>. The Arab geographer al Idrisi describes Īmīdhīa in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century as a flourishing *emporium* 25 miles from Agāthōbolī (i.e. Agathopolis, present-day Ahtopol in Bulgaria)<sup>21</sup>. After the conquest of Constantinople by the Western Knights in 1204, Mēdeia remained in the possession of the Latin emperors, and the city was later handed over to the Genoese<sup>22</sup>. In 1247, Ioannes III Dukas Vatatsēs in alliance with the Bulgarian king Michael II Asen managed to wrest from the Latins the cities Mēdeia, Tsurulon, Derkos and Bizyē<sup>23</sup>.

In 1347, Mēdeia was a possession of the Byzantine Empress Anna of Savoy at the civil war against Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos. Dobrotitsa (Τομπροτίτζας in contemporary Byzantine documents), brother of the Bulgarian ruler Mpalikas (Balik), came to help with an army, but was defeated in the battle of Sēlymbria; yet in gratitude he was appointed *Archōn of Mēdeia* by Anna of Savoy. From this place he resisted Kantakouzeni, whose authority he did not recognize, plundered the neighboring towns, but he was ultimately besieged by land and sea. Despite Mēdeia's defense options, Dobrotitsa sees how the struggle for the throne will end and prefers to surrender and come to terms with the emperor, for which he is rewarded with a court title<sup>24</sup>.

After their victory over the Crusader army at Nikopolis in 1396, the Turks organized a campaign along the Black Sea coast and captured Mesēmbria, Anchialos, Agathopolis and Mēdeia<sup>25</sup>.

In 1588 the Greek merchant Iakōvos Mēloītēs described Mēdeia as the first port on the Black Sea coast after leaving the Bosphorus<sup>26</sup>. The famous Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi visited Mēdeia along with other towns on the Black Sea coast in 1660 and described the local population as predominantly Christian. There were still

<sup>20</sup> *Ioannis Tzetzes Epistolae*, Ep. 7, ed. Th. PRESSEL, Tubingae 1851, p. 10, 17–20.

<sup>21</sup> Б. НЕДКОВ, *България и съседните ѝ земи през XII век според Идриси*, София 1960, p. 70, 76, 98.

<sup>22</sup> A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini...*, 520.

<sup>23</sup> GEORGIOS AKROPOLITES, *Opera*, 47, vol. I–II, rec. A. HEISENBERG, Leipzig 1903 (ed. anni MCMIII correctiore curavit P. WIRTH, Stutgardiae 1978), p. 85, 1–11; cf. R. MAKRIDES, *A Translation and Historical Commentary of George Akropolites' History* (PhD Thesis at King's College London 1978), note to p. 85, 22–24: *According to the anonymous note, the towns of Derkos and Medea, on the shores of the Black Sea, were also taken on this campaign.* The electronic thesis of dissertation: <https://kcl-pure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/a-translation-and-historical-commentary-of-george-akropolites-his> [11 VI 2023].

<sup>24</sup> IOANNES VI KANTAKOUZENOS, *Historia*, III, 95, ed. L. SCHOPEN, Bonn 1831 [= *CSHB*, 20], vol. II, p. 584–588; vol. III, p. 62–63; NICEPHORUS GREGORAS, XVI, 1–2, p. 795–801.

<sup>25</sup> A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini...*, 521.

<sup>26</sup> Σπυ. ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ, *Ὀδοιπορικὸν Ἰακώβου Μηλοΐτου*, Par 6, 1882, p. 632–642. About Meliotes see A. KÜLZER, *Peregrinatio graeca in Terram Sanctam. Studien zu Pilgerführern und Reisebeschreibungen über Syrien, Palästina und den Sinai aus byzantinischer und metabyzantinischer Zeit*, Frankfurt a. Main 1994, p. 33–34.

three active churches, but it is not clear whether one of them is that of the rock monastery. The town had no harbour, and as in ancient times smaller ships were simply hauled up on the beach<sup>27</sup>.

### Travelers and researchers of the monastery

In the modern era, Mēdeia remains mysterious and unknown to Europeans. Perhaps the clearest example of this is the research paper by Jan Stronk<sup>28</sup>, in which he explains that Salmydessos disappears from historical sources because it disappears physically (?!?!). The first reason for this was the subsidence of the coast by 4 mm per year, and the second – mentioned by Strabo the silting of the coast by the sediments of the rivers, especially near this city, where the raging streams contributed to this<sup>29</sup>. Stronk himself corrected his opinion at the next *Thracia Pontica* symposium after he had the opportunity at the end of the Cold War to travel to a border region of Turkey and visit the still existing Kiyıköy<sup>30</sup>. He conscientiously quotes the so-called sea-pilots – manuals with information on all possible problems facing sailors. There were no sea-pilots for the Black Sea before 1774, when the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarça between the Ottoman Empire and Russia allowed non-Turkish ships to enter the Black Sea. However, both the *Atlas Maritimus et Commercialis* and the description of the Dutchman Cornelius Cruys (vice-admiral of Russian Tsar Peter the Great), as well as the *Sailing Directory* published by John Purdy in 1834, and *Zeeman's Wegwijzer* of J. Swart mention Cape Ineada and the so-called “False Bosphorus” at the entrance of Lake Dercos, but between them there is no port named either Salmydessos, nor Mēdeia, nor Midieh<sup>31</sup>.

Kiyıköy was visited by land more often, but mainly by travelers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Before that, Joseph Pitton de Tournefort leaves a brief description in his book *Voyage du Levant* and places Mēdeia east of Constantinople, north of Mavromolos, around Belgrade<sup>32</sup>. Mavromolos was at that time a large monastery on the Bosphorus itself, near its mouth to the Black Sea. It remains unclear what kind

<sup>27</sup> H.J. KISSLING, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis Thrakiens im 17. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1956 [= AKM, 32.3], p. 69–71.

<sup>28</sup> J. STRONK, *Wreckage at Salmydessos*, [in:] *Thracia Pontica III. Troisième symposium international. Theme générale “Les Thraces et les colonies grecques, VII–V s.av.n.e.”*, Sofia 1986, p. 63–75 (= *Wreckage at Salmydessos*, Tal 18–19, 1986–1987, p. 63–70).

<sup>29</sup> STRABO, I, 3,7; I, 3,4.

<sup>30</sup> J.P. STRONK, *Conditions for Colonization. Calpes Limen and Salmydessos Reconsidered*, [in:] *Thracia Pontica, 4. Les agglomérations côtières de la Thrace avant la colonisation grecque. Les sites submergés. Méthodes des recherches. Quatrième symposium international. Sozopol 6–12 octobre 1988*, Sofia 1991, p. 97–108.

<sup>31</sup> IDEM, *Wreckage at Salmydessos...*; IDEM, *Conditions for Colonization...* with illustrations from navigational charts; cf. *The Black Sea Pilot. Comprising the Dardanelles, Sea of Marmora, Bosphorus, Black Sea, and Sea of Azov*, London 1908, p. 129–132.

<sup>32</sup> J.P. DE TOURNEFORT, *Voyage du Levant*, vol. II, Paris 1717, p. 153; cf. IDEM, *A Voyage into the Levant. Perform'd by Command of the Late French King*, trans. J. OZELL, Cambridge 2014.

of Belgrade it is, and everything points to the fact that the Frenchman himself did not visit the city. After him, the famous French epigrapher George Seure explains why Midieh remains such an unknown settlement. He passed through Strandzha Mountain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was warned that a large number of criminals lived in the mountains, protected by the difficult terrain. The government struggled to control them with violence and often the heads of the executed criminals were hung from the windows of the city council in the town Burgas. According to local residents, the smuggling channels to Constantinople passed through the mountain after the establishment of the Bulgarian state in 1878<sup>33</sup>.



Fig. 2. The Black Sea according to J.P. de Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, II.

There is data that there are three more travelers who visited Midieh in the 20<sup>th</sup> century before A. Portalsky: F. Schaffer, J. Stronk, and D. Müller. Enough was said about Stronk, and Schaffer was able to visit “Istrandscha Dag” for a geological survey and defined it as one of the least known areas in European Turkey. He also consulted Konstantin Jireček, who was kind enough to supplement his travel notes. He reached *the settlement of Midia, an apparently ancient city*<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> G. SEURE, *Inscriptions grecques du Pays des Astiens*, REA 31.4, 1929, p. 297 and note 2.

<sup>34</sup> F. SCHAFER, *Archäologische Beobachtungen auf eine Reise im östlichen Thrakien*, *ÖAIW* 6, 1903, p. 63–66.



**Fig. 3.** The walls of Midia on Schaffer's photograph from 1903.

He was told a local legend, a variant of the Argonaut myth, that the name came from the legendary poisoner and the wife of Jason's, Medeia. The legend is most likely very late and is the result of searching for an ancient tradition and proving the Greek roots of the settlements – a common occupation of educated Greeks in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Schaffer was impressed by the highly defensive position of the wall and moat. No trace of a moat is now visible near the wall, but according to Schaffer, it extended the whole width of the stone promontory, though in his time it was almost buried. Perhaps it made the walls appear higher, because according to Schaffer, it appears that they were 6–8 m in height. The walls were located on a rocky ledge above the steep bank, which made them inaccessible. This ledge cannot be seen now, probably owing to the burying of the moat, except in the northernmost part of the wall, under the corner tower, where it began to give way in antiquity and was fortified with bricks.

Schaffer also gives a brief description of the rock monastery, located according to him in the area of Papas dere, a quarter of an hour's walk from the city. He believes that the cave in which the church is located is of natural origin and we should believe him, having participated in a geological survey. However, the natural cave has been masterfully expanded and shaped. Schaffer writes about a later-dated jutting part (*Vorbau*), but he does not explain why he considers this part to be of a later period. Schaffer was struck by the many vaults of different heights inside the church and the sculptured decoration on the ceiling and columns, and there were also the remains of frescoes with half-erased names of saints. A full-flowing stream gushed from a gap in the rocks, the waters of which were collected in a cistern. We suppose he meant the sacred spring inside the church, but there is very little water in it, and there is no longer any trace of any full-water stream.

After the Austrian researcher, during the Balkan War, the rock monastery was visited and examined by Karel Škorpiľ, who was recruited as an archaeologist to the Bulgarian army and drew a good plan of the site.



Fig. 4. The preserved parts of city walls and old houses in Kiyiköy<sup>35</sup>.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Kiyiköy was visited by another famous German traveler – Dietram Müller<sup>36</sup>. His large-scale study of the topographical records of Herodotus was based to a great extent on his personal observations of roads and sites<sup>37</sup>. He gives a very accurate description of the city walls, the gates and the ancient and medieval architectural elements used in the construction of the houses accompanied by many black-and-white photos. Unfortunately, the rock monastery remains unknown to Dietram Müller and he has not devoted even a single line to it.

Then, within the framework of a summer university, a joint initiative between the municipalities of Malko Tarnovo in Bulgaria and Kırklareli in Turkey, as well as the Institute of Balkan Studies with Center for Thracology “Prof. Alexander Fol”

<sup>35</sup> After A. ODMAN et al., *Kiyiköy // Midye // Medea // Μηδεία Urban Workshop Book* – vol. I, February – September 2016, Urban and Regional Planning Department of the Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul, [https://www.academia.edu/27127687/K%C4%B1y%C4%B1k%C3%B6y\\_Midye\\_Medea\\_%CE%9C%CE%AE%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1\\_Urban\\_Workshop\\_Book\\_Vol\\_I](https://www.academia.edu/27127687/K%C4%B1y%C4%B1k%C3%B6y_Midye_Medea_%CE%9C%CE%AE%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1_Urban_Workshop_Book_Vol_I) [26 V 2023].

<sup>36</sup> We express our profound gratitude to the anonymous reviewer, who focused our attention on this edition, of which we had no information from the libraries in Bulgaria.

<sup>37</sup> D. MÜLLER, *Topographischer Bildkommentar zu den Historien Herodots. Kleinasien und angrenzende Gebiete mit Südostthracien und Zypern*, Tübingen 1997. Records concerning Salmydessos can be found on pages 752, 810, 884, 919–924, 940, 957, 959.

at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Alexandar Portalsky had the opportunity to visit the monastery several times, but the site was only briefly mentioned in his research paper<sup>38</sup>.

Finally, we must mention the most important researchers of the site so far. The first were the French explorer and traveler Xavier Hommaire de Hell (1812–1848) and his companion and printmaker Jules Laurens. De Hell became seriously ill during his travels and died in Turkey, but his widow diligently collected all the notes and diaries and published *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse exécutée par ordre du gouvernement français* in 4 large volumes with an additional volume of illustrations<sup>39</sup>. Hommaire de Hell certainly visited the rock monastery and was very impressed by it. According to one of Laurens’s engravings, the two spent the night in the monastery at the holy spring around a makeshift hearth, and the inscription **De Hell 1846** remains carved on the rock, which in 2012 could still be clearly seen. Hommaire de Hell examined the walls thoroughly and redrew the surviving Greek inscriptions, preparing them for publication. Finally, the two travelers also draw a fairly accurate plan of the site, but, inexplicably, it lacks the end rooms to the right of the sacred spring. We assume that the very dense vegetation along the river prevented the premises from being noticed.

The only scientific publication of the monastery is the work of Semavi Eyüce and Nicole Thierry<sup>40</sup>. Both authors are well-known names as scholars: Nicole Thierry has studied many other rock churches and monasteries, especially those in Cappadocia, and Semavi Eyüce (1922–2018) was one of the best experts at Byzantine antiquities in and around Constantinople.

Semavi Eyüce also has a preliminary publication in Turkish in which he explains that he intended to summarize his many observations in a book, but preferred to do so with the help of colleagues<sup>41</sup>. In the next text, however, he notes sadly that this book will not appear and therefore they make the joint publication with Nicole Thierry at least about the monastery. We also hoped that this text would be published after archaeological excavations of the monastery, which would clarify many things about the dating, but at the moment there is no prospect of that happening, so we decided to share our observations now.

<sup>38</sup> A. PORTALSKY, *Salmydessos Reconsidered*, [in:] *Thracia XVI. In honorem X congressus studiorum thraciorum*, София 2005, p. 35–44.

<sup>39</sup> X.H. DE HELL, Ph. LE BAS, M. DE LA ROQUETTE, J. LAURENS, *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse. Exécuté par ordre du gouvernement français*, Paris 1854–1860.

<sup>40</sup> S. EYÜCE, N. THIERRY, *Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace turque*, Car 20, 1970, p. 47–76.

<sup>41</sup> S. EYİCE, X. *Hommaire de Hell ve Ressam Jules Laurens Müşterek Türkiye Seyahatnamelerinin Değerlendirilmesi Yolunda Bir Araştırma*, BTTK 27(105), 1963, p. 59–88, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/tkbelleten/issue/73644/1213086> [11 VI 2023].

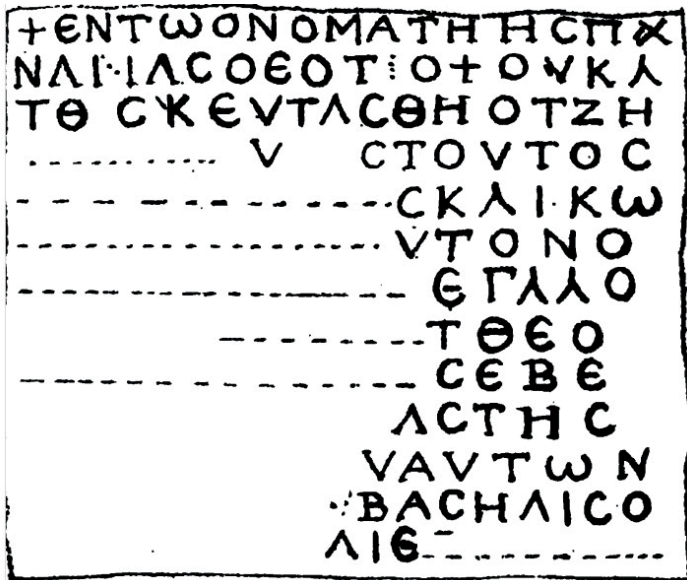


Fig. 5. The longest inscription in the church redrawn by De Hell and Laurens<sup>42</sup>.



Fig. 6. Narthex of the Rock Church, engraving by Laurens<sup>43</sup>.

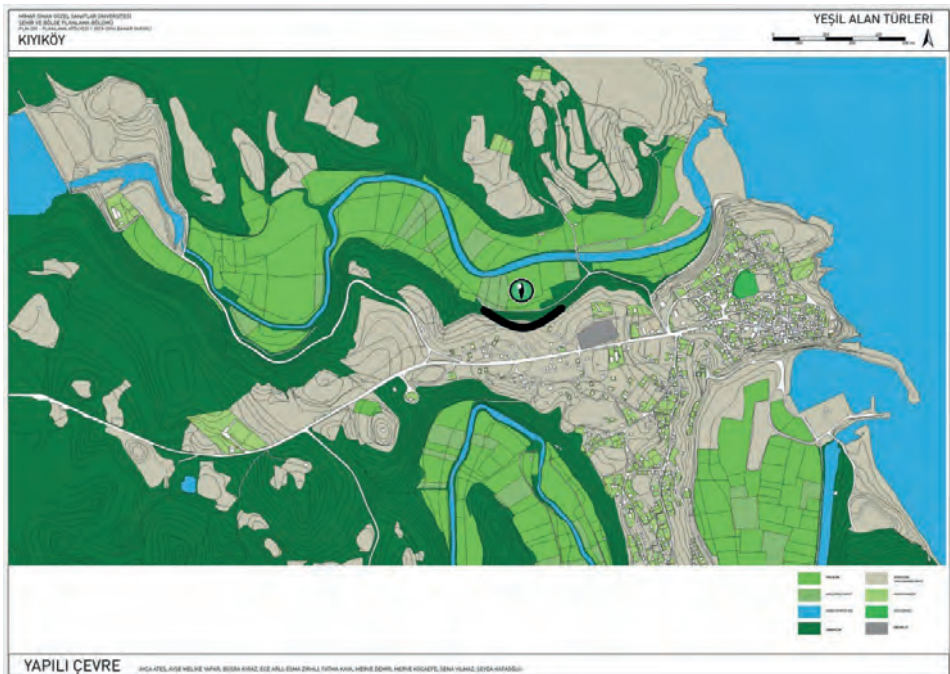
<sup>42</sup> After X.H. DE HELL, Ph. LE BAS, M. DE LA ROQUETTE, J. LAURENS, *Voyage en Turquie...*

<sup>43</sup> After *ibidem*.



## The monastery

Here we have the opportunity for the first time to offer all the known plans of the rock monastery. Of course, the most detailed and good is the latest one, which most accurately depicts the very few surviving masonry elements (with a dark black continuous line) and the presumed additions, which are shown with solid black lines without shading, while the shaded elements are those that are cut into the rock. This raises the question of the dating of the additions – whether they existed originally or were added later. The reason for such an extension could be the collapse of the rock ledge and the need to replace it with a wall and a roof. We are very skeptical of such a possibility for the following reasons.



**Fig. 7.** The plan of Kıyıköy. The location of the rock monastery is marked with a thick black line, and the location of the modern observer – with an eye. After A. Odman et al.



Fig. 8. Plan of Kiyiköy with elevation lines marked. The location of the rock monastery is marked with a thick black line, and the location of the modern observer – with an eye. After A. Odman et al.

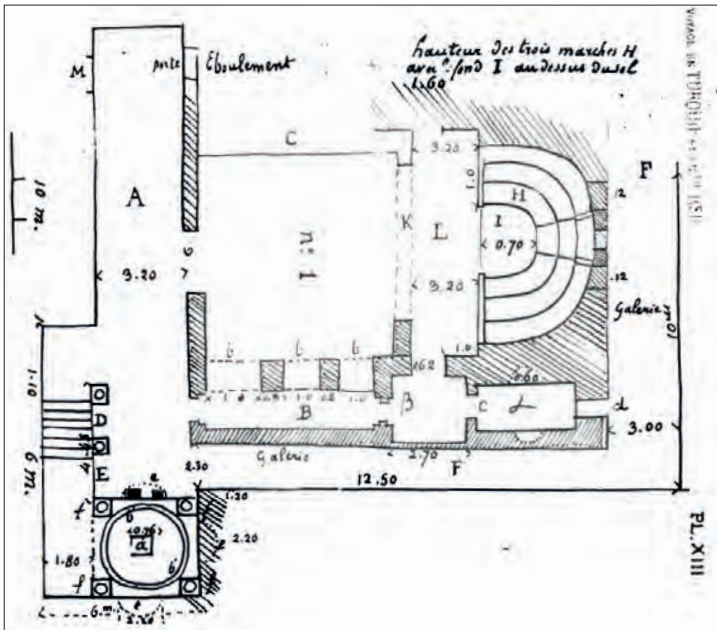
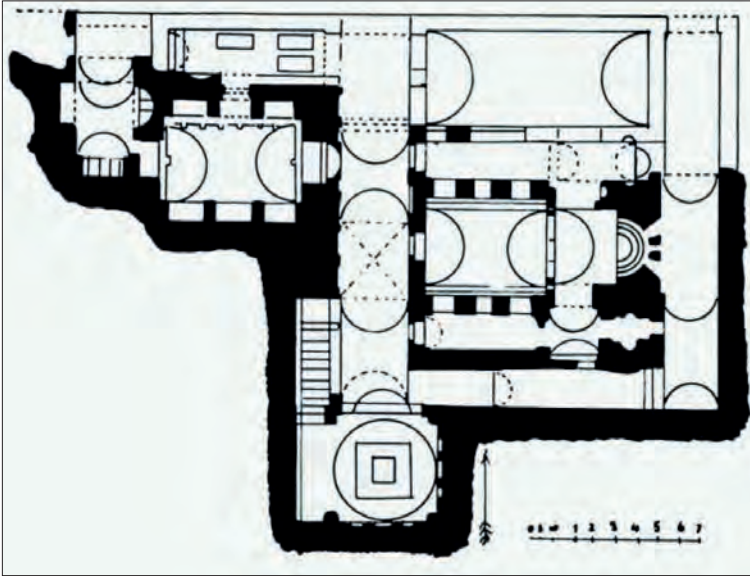
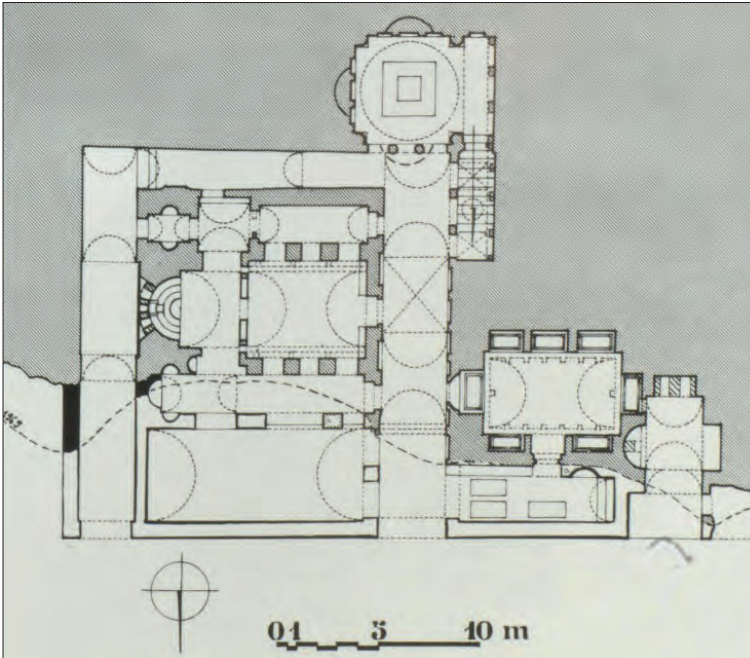


Fig. 9. Plan of the rock monastery after Hommaire de Hell *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse...* (plate XIII).



**Fig. 10.** Plan of the monastery after Karel Škorpil. After S. Eyice, *X. Hommaire de Hell ve Ressay Jules Laurens...*



**Fig. 11.** Plan of the monastery from 1969. After S. Eyice and N. Thierry, *Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace...*

It is clearly visible that the central and most important part of the monastery is located deepest in the rock. In Turkish it is named *Ayazma*, a name derived from the Greek term *hagiasma* meaning “holy water” or “holy spring”. This element is inherent in every ancient sanctuary, and therefore we believe that a place was sacred long before the Christianization of the Roman Empire. Water probably also created the original natural cave as defined by Schaffer. At the current line of the rock shelter, it reaches inward almost 23 meters. The depth of the burial of the church is a little over 12 m. This is a great depth, and even just shaping the rock to such dimensions required the labor of many craftsmen and it was expensive. On the plan after Eyiçe and Thierry 1970, the rock ledge line is indicated by the dashed line and dated 1969. In 2015, this line was practically unchanged. Hardly any part of the rock has collapsed as a result of erosion over the last 700 years, but it probably wasn’t a big part. Even if the shelter reached the end of the left side nave of the church, it could not have enclosed the temple as a side wall, and windows and columns could not have been cut into the rock. Therefore, we believe that the additional masonry parts of the church are a structural element being added later, but are not a part of the original construction of the temple. They also had the important role of radically changing the external appearance of the old pagan sanctuary, to show its new Christian nature and function.

This leads to the conclusion that the temple, which had masonry parts, could definitely have had plasterwork. Since it cannot have been applied to only some of the walls of the temple, it had not only sculpted but also painted decoration from the beginning. Schaffer claims to have seen remains of frescoes, i.e. they were visible until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, Eyiçe and Thierry write that in 1855–1856 the local Greeks undertook restoring the temple and make it a place of pilgrimage. The result of this late restoration was the declaration of the temple under the patronage of St. Nicholas. Therefore, we avoid calling it by this name, since it is most likely not the original one, but belongs to the maritime tradition of dedicating coastal temples and chapels to St. Nicholas, who is the patron saint of sailors and fishermen. Then, add Eyiçe and Thierry, a masonry extension was built to complement the collapsed facade, which they found completely destroyed. We need to make a clarification here. It is not about the left naos of the church, but about the vaulted room attached to it. It is not marked on Homere de Hell’s plan, but is clearly visible on Karel Škorpiš’s plan. A well-educated and schooled archaeologist like him would not be able to invent a non-existent room. However, Eyiçe and Thierry did not see it, and we did not notice even a trace of it on the field. This leads us to think that this room was not built in the Middle Ages, but was completed in 1855–1856. At that time, the site did not function as a monastery, but only as a church, and there was a need for such a room where the priests could change their clothes and store the church utensils. An additional argument for this is that this room spoils the general symmetry of the temple and does not allow the traditional circumambulation of priests and laitmen at Easter.

While on the right side of the right naos there is a carved corridor through which three people can safely pass in procession during the services. Hardly so much work was put into the aesthetic design of the rock temple – the corridor is still fully functional today.



**Fig. 12.** General view of the rock monastery in 2010. To the left, there are the incised columns that separate the central naos from the left one, to the right next to A. Portalsky is the entrance to the sacred spring, and the low opening further to the right leads to the tomb.

The church itself is a three-nave basilica, which is carved into the rock, but gives the full impression of a brick temple – with such precision and perfection all the architectural elements are formed.

The altar apse immediately makes an impression. It is small, but well formed with three rows of step-shaped seats that form a synthronon, bench reserved for the clergy in an Early Christian or Byzantine church. André Grabar, an expert at early Christian and Balkan Byzantine architecture, gives a very precise description of the meaning of the synthronon: each synthronon of a cathedral church serves to seat the priests during certain church services and also for other gatherings convened by the local bishop, and there is a throne in the middle of it; in the ordinary cathedral, as a rule, only one clergyman had the episcopal rank, but an archbishopric included several dioceses, each of which was under the leadership

of a bishop. In the archbishop cathedral, the presiding seat of the “synthronon” fell by right to the archbishop, surrounded by his deputies<sup>44</sup>. This is important because it explains the diligence in building this temple.



**Fig. 13.** The church: from the left naos you can see the middle one, part of the altar space, part of the right naos with a large window to the round corridor. Above the false vault, the beginning of a carved vault is visible, which covered at least part of the left naos, but hardly formed a whole vault without masonry parts.



**Fig. 14.** The entrances to the side rooms of the monastery.

<sup>44</sup> A. GRABAR, *Deux témoignages archéologiques sur l'autocéphalie d'une église. Prespa et Ochrid*, ЗРВИ 8.2, 1964, Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky, p. 163–165.



Fig. 15. The altar apse.



**Fig. 16.** Synthronon of the church of St. Sofia in Nicaea (Iznik).

On each side, two columns separate the central naos from the side naves. The base of the vault is highlighted by a triple cornice. Below this cornice, 6 consoles can be seen in a projecting forward part, 3 on each side. Those which are not damaged have the form of the protome of an eagle or a lion. Eyiçe and Thierry write about an iconostasis that was also cut into the rock, with an arch in the middle and a window on the right. In 1961, this entire thin barrier was destroyed, and now not even a trace of it can be seen. We have no reason not to trust the two authors, which also gives us clues about the possible dating of the temple: it is not too early, because the altar would not be hidden behind such a stable partition. On the other hand, the final shaping of the altar partition in the iconostasis took place after the end of the iconoclastic period. If the temple had a stable iconostasis, it would also resemble the eternal vault to which it was held. Therefore, we think that here it is not so much an iconostasis as an altar partition.





**Fig. 17.** The entrance to the central nave – view from the apse.



**Fig. 18.** The two “columns” between the central and left (north) naves.



Fig. 19. The ceiling of the corridor to the sacred spring.

The most important part of this complex was the sacred spring. It is in the deepest part of the rock and is shaped like a pool, which is reached by steps, completely in the spirit of the ancient tradition. The pool is quite voluminous and is designed to hold water over 1.5 m deep, but it is now almost completely dry – it is full of pebble stones, with a little water glinting through. If we judge by the height of the carved inscription **De Hell 1846**, the French traveler, stood in the same place as us, and then also there was not much water in the sacred spring. Above the pool there are semi-columns carved into the rock with ornate capitals that surround small panels, in the same manner as in some decorative frescoes in Pompeii. The space above the spring is masterfully shaped like a dome.

It is difficult to say when the sacred spring was shaped in this way. Many nymphaeums in antiquity had a similar appearance. The craftsmen's effort to cover every part of the rock with something speaks of a desire to erase the pagan purpose of this spring and to emphasize its already Christian use.

Capitals attract attention. With them, a plant ornament covers the entire surface and is in high relief, as if it was torn from the stone. As a prototype, Eyıçe and Thierry point to the decoration of the columns in St. Polyuctus of Constantinople

from 512–527 (fig. 25 in their article). This technique was very common in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and is visible in St. Sofia and St. St. Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople, San Vitale in Ravenna and elsewhere<sup>45</sup>.



**Fig. 20.** Decoration of the sacred spring.



**Fig. 21.** Capital above the sacred spring with the image of a vine.

<sup>45</sup> S. EYİÇE, N. THIERRY, *Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace...*, p. 64–67.

## **Conclusion**

It is difficult to give a reliable dating of the site without carrying out archaeological excavations. We agree with Eyiçe and Thierry, who argue that there are at least two construction phases. They believe, however, that the small western cell of a hermit situated not far from the spring must have been cut first. The authors agree that it was already a revered place, but they do not accept its formation in this way during antiquity, which for us is very likely. Later, according to Eyiçe and Thierry, the ensemble of rock halls must have been cut – the hall with the dome and the spring, the basilica and the circular corridor that served for processions. The funeral hall served for the burial of the first hypothetical hermit, and then of the abbots of the monastery.



**Fig. 22.** Beginning of the stairs to the spring.

The hypothesis of Eyiçe and Thierry that such large-scale construction could have been carried out in a period of longer peace is logical. For this region it may be the time of Justinian. A period of invasions followed, but in 626 the Avars were defeated and a period of peace began again until the beginning of the Bulgarian invasions around 710. Finally, there came the peace treaty with khan Omurtag, the successor of the Bulgarian ruler Krum, which gave a new long period of peace.

We assume there were three construction periods. The first is from antiquity. Then the sacred spring was created not in a completely natural environment, but in the traditions of Greco-Roman architecture. After that, the monastery got its original form during the time of Emperor Justinian. This is also Eyiçe and Thierry's opinion due to the many marks of the style, which seems to be an imitation of antiquity in the spirit of the age. Here we would also add the availability of financial means for such construction. Eyiçe and Thierry point out that the architecture and decoration are very homogeneous and reminiscent of a proto-Byzantine model, which is difficult to explain for such a secluded place: in large centers of civilization, works of the past could be successfully imitated for a long time, but it is not so in secluded places. Here we must note that today, and to the travelers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Strandzha Mountain seems a secluded and inaccessible place, but in the Middle Ages it was not like that at all. The mountain is the natural hinterland of Constantinople, aqueducts for water supply to the capital started from it and its defense began there. The above mentioned synthronon testifies that at least a bishop, and perhaps an archbishop, served in the temple, who would not have stood in a small and insignificant settlement. The city was populous, rich, and close enough to the capital for local craftsmen, though provincial ones, to diligently imitate the models of Constantinople.

During one of Khan Krum's campaigns, the city was destroyed and, since the Bulgarians were still pagans at the time, the monastery must have been looted as well. However, then its masonry part was damaged, since, even if it was tried to be set on fire, the rock could not burn. Therefore, it could most easily be restored afterwards.

According to Eyiçe and Thierry, the large supraapsidal inscription, as well as the cross that rises above it, as well as the cross (perhaps bejeweled) on the north wall, can be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century in its iconoclastic period. The decoration of the apse is indeed reminiscent of the large cross in St. Irene in Constantinople. Then probably a new plaster was also laid with the corresponding iconoclastic images, which were in complete harmony with the vegetal sculpted decoration. After all, the famous church of St. Sofia in Βιζύη, in Turkish Vize according to Eyiçe and Thierry (in note 43 they quote Cyril Mango) also dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Again, according to them, at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the monument seems to have been much visited, judging by the style of some graffiti in the narthex, but now these graffiti have already been erased by the many new ones.

Finally, we must add one more argument for the dating. The monastery has no cells for living, it is not coenobitic (κοινόβιον), which immediately distinguishes it from Aladzha Monastery near Varna or from the rock monasteries near the village of Ivanovo in Bulgaria. Their dating is accordingly after the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, while it was precisely in the early monasteries that the monks lived around, in small hermitages and dugouts, and gathered around the church only during ministrations. This again points to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. We also asked ourselves if there are any remains of such monastic dwellings nearby.



**Fig. 23.** Entrance to the skete near Kazandere.



**Fig. 24.** The interior of a supposed skete near Kazandere.

Indeed we found some. They have not been recorded until now because they are not located in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, but on the bank of Kazandere, the river on the southern side of Kiyıköy. They are so comfortable and practical that they are used even now as sleeping places by shepherds and fishermen by the river, and perhaps also by farmers working in the many gardens. In some of them, electricity has even been installed as well as lamps and refrigerators. Therefore, we could not examine these dwellings in detail, and we cannot rule out that they were carved in a very recent time, but the treatment of the stone makes us think that they are significantly older.

A beautiful and very specific rock monastery near Kiyıköy has revealed some of its charm and mysteries to us, but it seems that it will wait a long time for its serious archaeological investigation. Without such investigation, nothing more can be said about this site.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- AESCHYLUS, *Promētheús Desmôtēs*, ed. U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, [in:] *Aeschyli Tragoediae. Editio maior*, Berlin 1914.
- GAIUS DIODORUS SICULUS, [in:] *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes with an English Translation*, vol. IV–VIII, trans. C.H. OLDATHER, Cambridge Massachusetts 1989.
- GAIUS PLINIUS SECUNDUS, *Libri 1–6*, ed. K.F.Th. MAYHOFF, Lipsiae 1933 (repr. of the 1905 ed.).
- GEORGIOS AKROPOLITES, *Opera*, vol. I–II, rec. A. HEISENBERG, Leipzig 1903 (ed. anni MCMIII correctiorem curavit Peter Wirth, Stutgardiae 1978).
- HERODOTUS, *Historiae*, ed. H.B. ROSÉN, Lipsiae 1987 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana], <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110965926>
- IOANNES VI KANTAKOUZENOS, *Historia*, ed. L. SCHOPEN, Bonn 1831 [= *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 20].
- Ioannis Tzetzes Epistolae*, ed. Th. PRESSEL, Tubingae 1851.
- KLAUDIUS PTOLEMAIOS, *Handbuch der Geographie Griechisch-Deutsch*, ed. A. STÜCKELBERGER, G. GRASSHOFF, [s.l.] 2006.
- Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia: Graece et Latine*, vol. II, ed. L. SCHOPENUS, B. NIEBUHR, Berlin 1828.
- POMPONIUS MELA, *De situ orbis libri III*, Lipsiae 1831.
- SOPHOCLES, *Antigone*, ed. R.D. DAWE, Stutgardiae 1996 [= Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana].
- SOPHOCLES, *The Plays and Fragments*, pars 3, *The Antigone*, ed. et trans. R.C. JEBB, A.M. HAKKERT, <sup>3</sup>St. Clair Shores 1971.
- Strabons Geographika. Mit Übersetzung und Kommentar*, vol. I–X, ed. S.L. RADT, Göttingen 2002–2011.
- Theopanis Chronographia*, vol. I, rec. C. DE BOOR, Lipsiae 1883.
- Vita Euthymii Patriarchi CP*, ed. P. KARLIN-HAYTER, Bruxelles 1970.

*Vita Mariae Junioris*, [in:] *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana*, Bruxellis 1925, col. 692–705.

*Vita Mariae Junioris*, ed. E. KOURILAS, [in:] *Thrakika* 26 (1957), p. 111–147.

XENOPHON, *Anabasis*, [in:] *Xenophontis opera omnia*, vol. III, Oxford 1904 [repr. 1961].

## Secondary Literature

*The Black Sea Pilot. Comprising the Dardanelles, Sea of Marmora, Bosphorus, Black Sea, and Sea of Azov*, London 1908.

BÜRCHNER L., *Salmydessos*, [in:] *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Zweiter Reihe (R–Z)*, ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1920, col. 1991–1992.

*The Cambridge Greek Lexicon*, vol. I–II, ed. J. DIGGLE, Cambridge 2021.

EYİÇE S., X. *Hommaire de Hell ve Ressam Jules Laurens Müşterek Türkiye Seyahatnamelerinin Değerlendirilmesi Yolunda Bir Araştırma*, “Belleten, Türk tarih kurumu” 27(105), 1963, p. 59–88, <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ttkbelleten/issue/73644/1213086> [11 VI 2023].

EYİÇE S., THIERRY N., *Le monastère et la source sainte de Midye en Thrace turque*, “Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l’antiquité et Moyen Âge” 20, 1970, p. 47–76.

GRABAR A., *Deux témoignages archéologiques sur l’autocéphalie d’une église. Prespa et Ochrid*, “Зборник радова Византолошког института” / “Zbornik radova Vizantoloshkog instituta” 8.2, 1964, *Mélanges Georges Ostrogorsky*, p. 163–168.

DE HELL X.H., LE BAS Ph., DE LA ROQUETTE M., LAURENS J., *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse. Exécuté par ordre du gouvernement français*, Paris 1854–1860.

HRISTOV Y.M., *Prisoners of War in Early Medieval Bulgaria (Preliminary Remarks)*, “Studia Ceranea” 5, 2015, p. 73–105, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.05.03>

KISSLING H.J., *Beiträge zur Kenntnis Thrakiens im 17. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1956 [= *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 32.3].

KÜLZER A., *Peregrinatio graeca in Terram Sanctam. Studien zu Pilgerführern und Reisebeschreibungen über Syrien, Palästina und den Sinai aus byzantinischer und metabyzantinischer Zeit*, Frankfurt a. Main 1994.

KÜLZER A., *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. XII, *Ostthrakien (Europe)*, Wien 2008 [= *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Classe*].

LIDDELL H.G., SCOTT R., JONES H.S. et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996.

MAKRIDES R., *A Translation and Historical Commentary of George Akropolites’ History* (PhD Thesis at King’s College London 1978), <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/a-translation-and-historical-commentary-of-george-akropolites-his> [11 VI 2023].

MÜLLER D., *Topographischer Bildkommentar zu den Historien Herodots. Kleinasien und angrenzende Gebiete mit Südostthrakien und Zypern*, Tübingen 1997.

NEDKOV B., *Balgarija i sasednite I zemi prez 12 vek spored Idrisi*, Sofija 1960.

ODMAN A. et al., *Kiyıköy // Midye // Medea // Μηδεία Urban Workshop Book – vol. I*, February – September 2016, Urban and Regional Planning Department of the Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul, [https://www.academia.edu/27127687/K%C4%B1y%C4%B1k%C3%B6y\\_Midye\\_Medea\\_%CE%9C%CE%AE%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1\\_Urban\\_Workshop\\_Book\\_Vol\\_I](https://www.academia.edu/27127687/K%C4%B1y%C4%B1k%C3%B6y_Midye_Medea_%CE%9C%CE%AE%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1_Urban_Workshop_Book_Vol_I) [26 V 2023].

PAPAGEORGIOU S., *Hodoiporikon Iakōbou Mēloitou*, “Parnassos” 6, 1882, p. 632–642.

PORTALSKY A., *Salmidess – drevnoe sviatilishte I stolitsa frakijskih tsarej*, “Management and Education” 4.3, 2008, p. 276–279.



- PORTALSKY A., *Salmydessos Reconsidered*, [in:] *Thracia XVI. In honorem X congressus studiorum thraciorum*, Sofia 2005, p. 35–44.
- SCHAFFER F., *Archäologische Beobachtungen auf eine Reise im östlichen Thrakien*, “Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes” 6, 1903, p. 63–66.
- SEURE G., *Inscriptions grecques du Pays des Astiens*, “Revue des Études Anciennes” 31.4, 1929, p. 297–313, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rea.1929.2544>
- STRONK J., *Conditions for Colonization. Calpes Limen and Salmydessos Reconsidered*, [in:] *Thracia Pontica*, 4. *Les agglomérations côtières de la Thrace avant la colonisation grecque. Les sites submergés. Méthodes des recherches. Quatrième symposium international. Sozopol 6–12 octobre 1988*, Sofia 1991, p. 97–108.
- STRONK J., *Wreckage at Salmydessos*, [in:] *Thracia Pontica III. Troisième symposium international. Theme générale “Les Thraces et le colonies grecques, VII–V s.av.n.e.”*, Sofia 1986, p. 63–75 (= *Wreckage at Salmydessos*, “*Talanta*” 18–19, 1986–1987, p. 63–70).
- DE TOURNEFORT J.P., *A Voyage into the Levant. Perform'd by Command of the Late French King*, trans. J. OZELL, Cambridge 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107519022>
- DE TOURNEFORT J.P., *Voyage du Levant*, vol. II, Paris 1717.

**Alexandar Portalsky**


South-West University “Neofit Rilski”  
66 Ivan Mihaylov str. 2700  
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria  
[portalsky@gmail.com](mailto:portalsky@gmail.com)

**Mariya Bagasheva**

South-West University “Neofit Rilski”  
66 Ivan Mihaylov str. 2700  
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria  
[m\\_bagasheva@abv.bg](mailto:m_bagasheva@abv.bg)



Enrique Santos Marinas (Madrid)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8453-0014>

## THE USAGE OF SCRIPTURAL NATIVITY MOTIFS IN EARLY GREEK AND SLAVONIC HYMNOGRAPHY\*

**Abstract.** In this article I will make a survey of the usage of the main nativity motifs that can be found in early Greek and Slavonic hymnography, such as the *kata stichon* hymns. Moreover, I will compare them with the nativity motifs that are mentioned in several works belonging to the homiletic literature, such as Pseudo-Chrysostom's sermon known as *In illud, Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum* or St. Proclus' *Oratio in natalem diem Domini*, as well as with the apocryphal Gospels and Infancy Gospels. In this way, we can have an idea of the mutual references that are made between all those works, and of the different usage that they show.

**Keywords:** *kata stichon* hymns, Book of Hours, homiletic literature, Apocryphal Gospels, Nativity Motifs

By comparing Nativity motifs in the different works belonging to both the homiletic and hymnographic literature it is possible to grasp an idea of the richness of the intertextuality during the Middle Ages. Moreover, studying the usage of biblical motifs and quotations by a specific author can help us to determine their personal style compared to other authors, establishing a set of the preferred motifs employed by that hymnographer. Sometimes it can allow us to identify the composer of works whose authorship is disputed. On some occasions we can even detect the echo of a particular author in the works of others, by analysing their use of the instrument of biblical exegesis known as typology or prefiguration. On the other hand, the differences or variants can be style markers of the individual authors. Finally, this particular usage of biblical typology by an author and its influence on other works can be very useful finding the composition date of the hymnographic works as a secondary or indirect criterion.

---

\* This paper is a result of the author's scholarship "Salvador de Madariaga" from the Spanish Ministry of Education as a scholar of the Instituto Universitario de Ciencias de las Religiones (IUCR) of the Complutense University of Madrid in order to develop a research stay at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo under the supervision of Professor Stig S. Ragnvald Frøyshov from March until August 2019.

In this article, we will analyze different hymnographic works devoted to the Nativity, starting with one of the oldest and not so well-known poetic forms, the *kata stichon*, hymns, and continuing with some of the more famous and beautiful compositions on the Nativity: Romanos the Melodist's *kontakion* and the canons of St. Cosmas of Maiuma and of St. John of Damascus.

The hymns known as *kata stichon* are a poetic form in which each verse of the hymn contains the same number of syllables (isosyllabism) and stress is on the same syllables (homotony)<sup>1</sup>. During the Greek Antiquity, *kata stichon* was already employed for narrative texts. Afterwards, in the Christian era, liturgical poetry was composed in the *kata stichon* form starting from the fifth century and perhaps for two or three centuries onwards. The question regarding the geographic origin of the Greek *kata stichon* hymns has not been yet solved. Stig Frøyshov identified some of them in the Horologion, that is, the Book of Hours of the Resurrection Cathedral of Jerusalem (more commonly known as the “Church of the Holy Sepulchre”)<sup>2</sup>. The *kata stichon* hymns, even though they appear in the Horologion, do not seem to originate in Jerusalem, being rather supplements included in the Horologion outside of Palestine.

Frøyshov also identified several *kata stichon* hymns that were translated into Church Slavonic and included in some Russian Horologia, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In one of them, specifically in a short passage number 27 belonging to the Midnight service, Nativity motifs are employed in order to praise the figure of Jesus Christ, as can be read in the English translation:

<i>Book of Hours of Sinai, fol. 62v</i>	RGADA, F. 381, N° 48, fol. 39v
<p>9. ὃν ἡ πέτρα τὸ σπήλαιον ἐδείξεν καὶ ἡ μαῖα τὴν χάριν ἐδέξατο, 10. ὃν αἴστηρ καταλάμψας ἐμήνυσεν καὶ ποιμένες ἰδόντες ἐθαύμασαν, 11. ὃν οἱ μάγοι τὰ δῶρα προσήφερον καὶ Ἡρώδης τεμείν ἐβουλεύετο.</p>	<p>9. юмѹ же камень пещерѹ показа • а сѹзжачица влѣтъ прилатъ • 10. югоже зѣвѣзда просвѣтивши сѹ проповѣда а пастѹчи видѣвши дивнши сѹ • 11. юмѹ же волѣсви влѣѣ дары приносатъ • а иродѣ оубити мѹсислаше •</p>
<p>9. (You are the One) to whom the rock offered a cave and (for whom) the midwife received grace. 10. whom a shining star has revealed and whom the shepherds saw and marveled at. 11. The Lord to whom the magi brought gifts and who Herod was intending to kill.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> G. NAGY, *Greek Literature*, vol. IX, *Greek Literature in the Byzantine Period*, London–New York 2001, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> S.S.R. FRØYSHOV, *Часослов без последований Больших Часов (вечерни и утрени): Исследование недавно изданного Часослова Sin. gr. 864 (IX в.) (окончание)*, БТ 45, 2013, p. 272–307.

As we can see, together with typical Nativity motifs such as the cave, the star, the shepherds, the *magi* and King Herod, whose basic Gospel references are Matt 2: 2–13 and Luke 2: 16–17, another, not so common, motif can be found: the midwife who received the Grace called *служаци* in Church Slavonic and *μαῖα* in Greek. This motif comes directly from the apocryphal Gospels or Infancy Gospels, specifically from the *Protevangelium of James* (19–20) and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (13), in which it is recounted how Joseph went to Bethlehem looking for two midwives that he brought back to the cave in order to help Mary give birth.

Similarly, several homilies and hymns from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards contain apocryphal motifs. Romanos the Melodist also draws on the *Protevangelium of James* in his *kontakion* “On the Nativity of the Virgin Mary”<sup>3</sup>. However, this motif of the midwife has no parallels in the two canons for the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ which we will discuss hereafter. So we will leave it for later and will comment earlier the other elements.

Starting with the first verse, as it is already mentioned in a footnote of the edition of the *Book of Hours of Sinai*<sup>4</sup> the expression “to whom the rock offered a cave” resembles the famous *prooimion* or prelude of Romanos the Melodist’s *kontakion* “On the Nativity” that reads as follows:

Ἡ παρθένος σήμερον, τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει,  
καὶ ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον, τῷ ἀπροσίτῳ προσάγει.  
ἄγγελοι μετὰ ποιμένων δοξολογοῦσι.  
μάγοι δὲ μετὰ ἀστέρος ὁδοιποροῦσι·  
δι’ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη,  
παιδίον νέον, ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων θεός<sup>5</sup>.

Today the Virgin gives birth to him who is above all being,  
and the earth offers a cave to him whom no one can approach.  
Angels with shepherds give glory,  
and magi journey with a star,  
for to us there has been born  
a little Child, God before the ages<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> *Sancti Romani melodi cantica: cantica genuine*, ed. P. MAAS, C.A. TRYPANIS, Oxford 1963, p. 276–280. For more information on the usage of apocryphal motifs in hymns and sermons devoted to the Virgin, see T. ARENTZEN, *The Virgin in Song*, Philadelphia 2017 [= D.RLAR], p. 129; *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium. Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, ed. T. ARENTZEN, M.B. CUNNINGHAM, Cambridge 2019; M.B. CUNNINGHAM, *The Use of the Protevangelium of James in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God*, [in:] *The Cult of Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images*, ed. M.B. CUNNINGHAM, L. BRUBAKER, Aldershot 2011, p. 163–178; D. KRUEGER, *Liturgical Subjects*, Philadelphia 2017.

<sup>4</sup> *Livre d’Heures du Sinai (Sinaiticus graecus 864)*, ed. M.(L.) AJJOU, J. PARAMELLE, Paris 2004 [= SC, 486], p. 248, n. 27.3.

<sup>5</sup> *Sancti Romani melodi cantica...*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> St. ROMANOS, *Kontakia On the Life of Christ: Chanted Sermons by the Great Sixth Century Poet and Singer St. Romanos*, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, New Haven 2010 [= SLS], p. 3.

Actually, this prelude of Romanos' *kontakion* was sung after the sixth ode of the canon and the Small Litany at the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ until the 12<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>7</sup>, two canons of which we will discuss later. According to the legend, this *kontakion* was revealed in dreams by the Theotokos, the Mother of God, to the famous sixth-century hymnographer St. Romanos the Melodist during the Christmas Eve. The full *kontakion* consists of 24 strophes besides the prelude and is written in the form of a dialogue between the Mother of God and the *magi*. The basic Gospel text is Matt 2: 1–14, and the Nativity motifs that appear are the manger, the cave, the star, the *magi*, Joseph and his dream, the shepherds, Herod and the three gifts of the *magi*. Unfortunately we can not comment on all of them here.

But coming back to the prelude's formula "the earth offers a cave" and the similar expression in the *kata stichon* "the rock offered a cave", in the edition of the *Book of Hours of Sinai* it is said that it does not necessarily imply a direct influence between the Book of Hours and Romanos or vice versa, for this motif was to be found already since the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. in several homiletic works, for instance at the end of a sermon for the Nativity attributed to St. Proclus of Constantinople<sup>8</sup>. Actually, there is a difference between those works regarding which element of nature is offering the cave: it is the earth in the *kontakion*, the rock in the *kata stichon*, and the mountains in the sermon. In this case, it can be explained through a lexical or semantic play by the authors, who are employing the rhetorical device of metonymy, for both variants (the rock and the mountains) are a part of the earth as a whole. Moreover, the verb "to offer" also differs in the three works: προσάγει in the *kontakion*, ἔδειξεν in the *kata stichon* and προσφέρει in the sermon. This passage of the sermon bears the idea of all the elements of nature offering what they have to the new-born baby Jesus, and that reads as follows:

καὶ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις τῷ ἀπάτορι βρέφει προσφέρει τὰ ξένια· ἡ γῆ τὴν φάτνην· αἱ πέτραι τὰς λιθίνας ὑδρίας· τὰ ὄρη τὸ σπήλαιον· αἱ πόλεις τὴν βηθλεέμ· οἱ ἄνεμοι τὴν ὑπακοήν· ἡ θάλασσα τὴν ὑποταγήν· τὰ κύματα τὴν γαλήνην· ὁ βυθὸς τοὺς ἰχθύας· οἱ ἰχθύες τὸν στατήρα· τὰ ὕδατα τὸν Ἰορδάνην· [...] οἱ μάγοι τὰ δῶρα· [...] οἱ ποιμένες τὴν ὕμνωδιαν· [...] ἡ ἀνατολή τὸν ἀστέρα· [...]

All the Creation offers its gifts to the infant without father: the earth (offers) the manger; the rocks, the stone hydric urns; the mountains, the cave; the cities, Bethlehem; the winds, obedience; the sea, submission; the waves, the calm; the depth, fishes; the fishes, the stater (silver coin); the waters, the Jordan; [...] the *magi*, the gifts; [...] the shepherds, chants of praise; [...] the East, the star; [...]<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> A. LINGAS, *The Liturgical Place of the Kontakion in Constantinople*, [in:] *Liturgy, Architecture, and Art in Byzantine World. Papers of the 18. International Byzantine Congress (Moscow, 8–15 August 1991) and Other Essays Dedicated to the Memory of John Meyendorff*, ed. C.C. AKENTIEV, St. Petersburg 1995, p. 50–57, at p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> St. PROCLUS, *Oratio in natalem diem Domini*, IV, 3, [in:] PG, vol. LXV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864, col. 713C.

<sup>9</sup> Translation by the author.

Here we can see again some other Nativity motifs together with the cave: the manger, Bethlehem, the *magi*, the shepherds, and the star. Furthermore, according to the commentary of the *Book of Hours of Sinai*, this topic could have been already present in a Pseudo-Chrysostom sermon known as *In illud, Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum*<sup>10</sup> that could be in fact one of the oldest Greek sermons on the Nativity. There we can read the following:

Οἱ καιροὶ τοῦ χειμῶνος καὶ τοῦ φθινοπώρου ἀλλάγητε, καὶ παρὰ φύσιν καρποφορήσατε, καὶ τὰς ἐπικαρπίας ἑαυτῶν προσκομίσασατε τῷ ἐγκυμίσαντι ὑμῶν τοὺς καρπούς· [...] Ὡς δὲ πᾶσα· ἡ κτίσις ἠγάλλετο, ὁμοῦ καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ὑπ' οὐρανὸν ἐφαιδρύνοντο χάριτι.

You, the seasons of winter and autumn exchange your roles and bring forth the fruits out of season, offer your products to honour the one who has ripened your fruits. [...] All the creation has rejoiced, the earth at the same time that everything that is under the sky have shone forth with the grace.

The same idea is present also in the fourth *idiomelon*<sup>11</sup> or *sticheron* at the beginning of the liturgical service on the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ, when it says the following:

Τί σοι προσενέγκωμεν Χριστέ, ὅτι ὤφθης ἐπὶ γῆς ὡς ἄνθρωπος δι' ἡμᾶς; ἕκαστον γὰρ τῶν ὑπὸ σοῦ γενομένων κτισμάτων, τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σοι προσάγει· οἱ Ἄγγελοι τὸν ὕμνον, οἱ οὐρανοὶ τὸν Ἀστέρα, οἱ Μάγοι τὰ δῶρα, οἱ Ποιμένες τὸ θαῦμα, ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον, ἡ ἔρημος τὴν φάτνην· ἡμεῖς δὲ Μητέρα Παρθέρον. Ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων Θεὸς ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

What shall we bring you, Christ, who have appeared on earth as man for our sake? For each creature made by you gives you thanks, bringing: The angels, their song; heaven, the star. The *Magi*, gifts; the shepherds, the miracle; the earth, the cave; the desert, the manger; and we the virgin mother. God, who is before all ages, have mercy on us.

Some of the elements of this *sticheron*, such as ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον “the earth, the cave” could be an echo of Romanos, so it could date back to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> or the 7<sup>th</sup> c. This passage gave origin to a type of icon called after the first words of the *idiomelon* “What shall we bring you, Christ” (also known as the icon of the “Assembly of the Most Holy Mother of God”), that would date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> c. and that was very widespread in the iconography of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods<sup>12</sup>. This icon illustrates elements of the *sticheron* given above. At the centre we see Mary with the child Jesus. Directly above her is a star (“heaven, the star”). Beside it are angels (“the angels, their song”). To her left are

<sup>10</sup> St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Spuria*, [in:] PG, vol. LXI, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1862, col. 694–695.

<sup>11</sup> *Menaion*, vol. II, Rome 1889, p. 651, <https://glt.goarch.org/texts/Dec/Dec25.html> [28 II 2023].

<sup>12</sup> R. STICHEL, *Die Geburt Christi in der Russischen Ikonenmalerei. Voraussetzungen in Glauben und Kunst des Christlichen Ostens und Westens*, Stuttgart 1990, p. 118–120; On the typological images of the Virgin in hymnography, see Jaakko (DAMASKINOS) OLKINUORA, *Four Typological Images of Mary in the Hymnography for the Feast of the Entrance*, JISOCM 1, 2014, p. 33–42.

the three *Magi* (“the *Magi*, gifts”). To her right are shepherds (“the shepherds, the miracle”). At left is a figure representing the earth holding the manger (“the earth, the manger”) and at right another figure representing the desert (“the desert, the cave”)<sup>13</sup>. In the lower centre is commonly a group that varies in composition from one representation to another and may include singers, a king or kings, patriarchs, etc. On both sides of this group we see the renowned hymnographers of the eighth century, St. Cosmas of Maiuma and St. John of Damascus with scrolls bearing hymns, most probably with the canons that they allegedly composed for the Nativity of Christ, and that are sung during the liturgical service on the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ.

The theme of the canon of St. Cosmas is that Christ, having become man, has come down to earth while retaining his divine nature. Deeply moved by this event, the author glorifies him with passion and reverence and encourages others (and the whole creation) to rejoice and to praise the Lord. St. Cosmas begins his canon in the *Heirmos*<sup>14</sup> of the first ode with the words from a Nativity sermon by St. Gregory the Theologian:

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάζσατε. Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν· ἀπαντήσατε. Χριστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὑψώθητε, Ἄισατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ, καὶ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ, ἀνυμνήσατε λαοί, ὅτι δεδόξασται<sup>15</sup>.

Christ is born; glorify Him! Christ comes from heaven; go to meet Him! Christ is on earth; be exalted! Sing to the Lord, all the earth! And praise Him in gladness, O people, for He has been glorified!<sup>16</sup>

And at the end of the canon in the 9<sup>th</sup> ode repeats the words of St. John Chrysostom, when saying:

Μυστήριον ξένον, ὄρῳ καὶ παράδοξον! οὐρανὸν τὸ Σπήλαιον· θρόνον Χερουβικόν, τὴν Παρθένον· τὴν φάτνην χωρίον· ἐν ᾧ ἀνεκλίθη ὁ ἀχώρητος, Χριστὸς ὁ Θεός· ὄν ἀνυμνοῦντες μεγαλύνομεν<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Here we observe a little variation comparing to the formulae of the *sticheron* “the earth, the cave; the desert, the manger”, for in the icon the two elements have switched their offerings. It could be a play by the artist for stylistic reasons. Or it could be a way of rendering the gifts more “logical” from the point of view of the artist: it would be very unlikely for the desert to offer a manger. There is a third option, and it is that it could be reflecting a pictorial tradition, for in the iconography of the painting of icons the caves tend to appear close to the characters of saints living in the desert, such as St. Elijah or St. John the Evangelist. In any case, it is a rhetorical device of metonymy as we have seen in the other variants of the texts, for the desert is a part of the whole earth.

<sup>14</sup> In the Byzantine liturgical tradition is the initial troparion of an ode of a canon.

<sup>15</sup> St. COSMAS OF MAIUMA, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoyenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoyenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

<sup>16</sup> Translation by Michael Bishop: <https://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/nativity.htm> [28 II 2023].

<sup>17</sup> St. COSMAS OF MAIUMA, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoyenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoyenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

I see a strange and paradoxical mystery. The cave is heaven; the cherubic throne is the Virgin; the manger is the place in which Christ lay, the uncontainable God, Whom we magnify in song!

The second canon, attributed to Saint John of Damascus but of dubious authorship, was written originally in iambic verse and describes those salvific actions that took place for the humankind because of the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh, as was revealed in the New Testament. In general both canons contain the same Nativity motifs: the cave, the manger, the star, the *magi*, the shepherds and the angels, with just a few differences. For instance, St. Cosmas mentions a new motif in the first strophe of the 5<sup>th</sup> ode, the census of Emperor Augustus, according to which Christ was subject to the Emperor's decree and had to register as any other person living in the Roman Empire, a clear reference to Luke 2: 1–3.

Another difference is that king Herod is mentioned in an explicit way in the same canon of St. Cosmas as a cruel and furious murderer of children, in the second and third strophes of the 9<sup>th</sup> ode, while in the canon of St. John of Damascus the character of Herod is absent. Similarly as in St. Cosmas' canon, Herod was a main evil character for Romanos too, for he devoted a whole *kontakion* to the episode of the massacre of the innocents<sup>18</sup>.

There are many allusions to the Nativity motifs in those canons, but we will comment only on one of the most interesting, in our opinion, for its multiple occurrences and symbolic interpretations. It is the reference to the *magi* that can be found twice in the canon of St. Cosmas with a compound name, calling them “stargazers” (ἀστεροσκόποι in Greek) in the second strophe of the 4<sup>th</sup> ode and again naming them “stargazing kings” (Βασιλεῖς ἀστροπολοῦντας) in the third strophe of the 8<sup>th</sup> ode. The context of the first allusion of the *magi* is the fulfilment of the words of prophet Balaam regarding the rise of the star of Jacob as a messianic prophecy of the birth of Christ (Nm 24: 17–19).

Τοῦ Μάντεως πάλαι Βαλαάμ, τῶν λόγων μνητὰς σοφούς, ἀστεροσκόπους χαρὰς ἐπλησας,  
ἀστήρ ἐκ τοῦ Ἰακώβ, ἀνατείλας Δέσποτα, Ἐθνῶν ἀπαρχὴν εἰσαγομένου· ἐδέξω δὲ προ-  
φανῶς, δῶρά σοι δεκτὰ προσκομίζοντας<sup>19</sup>.

Thou hast filled the stargazers with joy, O Lord. They knew the hidden meaning of the prophet Balaam's words. Thou hast made the star of Jacob to rise. As the first-fruits of the Gentiles it led them unto Thee. Thou didst openly receive their precious gifts. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Kontakion 3 in Sancti Romani melodi cantica...*, p. 17–26.

<sup>19</sup> St. COSMAS OF ΜΑΙΟΥΜΑ, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoyenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoyenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

<sup>20</sup> Translation by Michael Bishop: <https://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/nativity.htm> [28 II 2023].



In addition, the *magi* are mentioned here as the first Gentiles or nations to worship the Lord in as a proof of the fulfilment of the messianic prophecies (as in Ps 86: 9).

The context of the second allusion shows also a very interesting subject. The *heirmos* of the 8<sup>th</sup> ode devoted to the Babylonian fiery furnace is employed to introduce the topic of the exile in Babylon. Though following the literary genre constraints Cosmas was obliged to mention the three men in the Babylonian fiery furnace in the 8<sup>th</sup> ode of the canon, here a very subtle and refined intertextual play can be detected here. Thus, in the first strophe of this same 8<sup>th</sup> ode, the *magi* are presented as the restitution of that crime against the people of Israel, making their journey the opposite way: if earlier the daughter of Babylon drove David's children from Zion as captives, plundering and stealing their treasures, now the "daughter of Babylon", that is, Chaldea, sends her own captivated children, the wise men, bringing back their treasures to David's daughter, that is the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, in order to worship the Messiah, the descendant from king David. By doing so, Cosmas follows the exegetical tradition from Irenaeus onwards of recapitulation/*anakephalaisios* in which an old sin is reverted towards salvation, being also a case of a typological reading of the Scriptures.

Ἐλκει Βαβυλῶνος ἡ θυγάτηρ παίδας, δορυκλήτους Δαυΐδ, ἐκ Σιών ἐν αὐτῇ, δωροφόρους πέμπει δέ, Μάγους παίδας, τὴν τοῦ Δαυΐδ θεοδόχον θυγατέρα λιτανεύσοντα· διὸ ἀνυμνοῦντες ἀναμέλωμεν. Εὐλογεῖτω ἡ κτίσις πᾶσα τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ὑπερυψούτω, εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>21</sup>.

The daughter of Babylon drove David's children from Zion with sword and spear. Now she sends her sons, the wise men, bearing gifts, to worship in David's city, where God has come to dwell. So let us raise the song: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him throughout all ages!<sup>22</sup>

This idea is repeated again in the third strophe of the same 8<sup>th</sup> ode, where the *magi* are referred to with the expression "stargazing kings", that we mentioned:

Σκύλα Βαβυλῶν τῆς Βασιλίδος Σιών, καὶ δορυκλήτον ὄλβον ἐδέξατο, θησαυροὺς Χριστός, ἐν Σιών δὲ ταύτης, καὶ Βασιλεῖς σὺν ἀστέρι ὄδηγῶ, ἀστροπολοῦντας ἔλκει· διὸ ἀνυμνοῦντες ἀναμέλωμεν· Εὐλογεῖτω ἡ κτίσις πᾶσα τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ὑπερυψούτω, εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> St. COSMAS OF ΜΑΙΟΥΜΑ, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermlhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermlhneia_xristoygenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

<sup>22</sup> Translation by Michael Bishop: <https://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/nativity.htm> [28 II 2023].

<sup>23</sup> St. COSMAS OF ΜΑΙΟΥΜΑ, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermlhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermlhneia_xristoygenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

Babylon captured the spoils of war and riches from the Queen of the cities of Zion. Now from Zion, Christ captivates her treasures, namely her stargazing kings themselves, bedazzled by the bright guiding star. So let us melodiously chant in praise: Let all creation bless and extol the Lord, and let it exalt Him supremely to the ages.

We see that it is repeated at the end the sentence *Let all creation bless and extol the Lord, and let it exalt Him supremely to the ages*, that reminds us what we commented earlier on the whole creation bringing its gifts to Christ, in this case singing chants of praise. And this idea is strengthened by the second strophe inserted in between the others, in which this subject is developed as association with the topic of the exile in Babylon. It reads as follows:

Ὅργανα παρέκλινε τὸ πένθος ὡδῆς· οὐ γὰρ ἦδον ἐν νόθοις οἱ παῖδες Σιών, Βαβυλῶνος λύει δέ, πλάνην πᾶσαν καὶ μουσικῶν, ἁρμονίαν Βηθλεὲμ ἐξανατείλας Χριστός· διὸ ἀνυμνοῦντες ἀναμέλψωμεν. Εὐλογεῖτω ἡ κτίσις πᾶσα τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ὑπερυψούτω, εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας<sup>24</sup>.

Lamentation once suspended organ of song; for Zion's children would not sing in strange lands. Rising out of Bethlehem, Christ abolished all the error of Babylon, her harmony of music as well. So let us melodiously chant in praise: Let all creation bless and extol the Lord, and let it exalt Him supremely to the ages.

It tells how the chants praising the Lord of the people of Israel were interrupted by the forced exile in Babylon, and even though their oppressors ask them to sing, they refused, as a quotation of the famous Ps 137: 1–4 that, according to the King James Version<sup>25</sup>, says as follows:

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

Therefore, the birth of Christ would imply the restoration of the universal harmony between humans and God through the music and the sacred chants that had been interrupted with the exile in Babylon.

In the canon of Saint John of Damascus the same idea is to be found in the second strophe of the 8<sup>th</sup> ode, but in an even more developed way:

Λύμην φυγοῦσα τοῦ θεοῦσθαι τῇ πλάνῃ,  
Ἄληκτον ὕμνει τὸν κενούμενον Λόγον.  
Νεανικῶς ἅπανα σὺν τρόμῳ κτίσις,

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>25</sup> However, Cosmas would rather refer to Psalm 136 in LXX.

Ἄδοξον εὐχος δειματομένη φέρειν,  
Ῥευστή γεγώσα, κἄν σοφῶς ἐκαρτέρει<sup>26</sup>.

Turning away from the guilt of its vain attempt to become as God,  
sings in praise of the eternal Word, who now empties Himself,  
the whole creation, like the three Children,  
yet in trembling, fearing in its corruption to bring  
a prayer unacceptable to God, although the (divine)  
wisdom ever maintains it in being.

Unlike St. Cosmas, St. John of Damascus does not encourage the whole creation to sing chants of praise. Instead, it states that the creation is already singing, like the three Children of the fiery furnace of Babylon, to praise the Word that was God, in the figure of Christ, having turned away from the original sin, and fearing not to be worthy of doing so, because of its temporary and ephemeral nature. However, as the composer says, the creation does not know that the Wisdom of God can make it eternal.

We can add here that a similar allusion to the Babylonian (or Chaldaean origin) of the *magi* was also mentioned in the strophe 13 of the *kontakion* of Romanos Melodos<sup>27</sup>, also associated with the fiery furnace of Babylon, and the worship of fire in the Zoroastrian religion<sup>28</sup>:

13. Ὡς δὲ ταῦτα αὐτοῖς / ἢ φαινή ἐλάλησεν,  
οἱ τῆς ἀνατολῆς / λύχνοι πρὸς αὐτήν ἔφησαν  
Μαθεῖν θέλεις, πόθεν / ἠλύθαμεν ὧδε;  
ἐκ γῆς Χαλδαίων, / ὅθεν οὐ λέγουσι· ‘θεὸς θεῶν κύριος’,  
ἐκ Βαβυλώνος, / ὅπου οὐκ οἶδασι  
τίς ὁ ποιητῆς / τούτων ὧν σέβουσιν·  
ἐκεῖθεν ἦλθε / καὶ ἦρεν ἡμᾶς  
ὁ τοῦ παιδίου σου σπινθῆρ / ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ Περσικοῦ·  
πῦρ παμφάγον λιπόντες / πῦρ δροσίζον θεωροῦμεν  
παιδίον νέον, / τὸν πρὸ αἰώνων θεόν.

<sup>26</sup> St. JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_iambikos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoygenna_iambikos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].

<sup>27</sup> *Sancti Romani melodi cantica...*, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> J. Grosdidier de Matons considers that Romanos does not distinguish here between Chaldeans and Persians, and that in this strophe he means the fiery furnace by the phrase “Persian fire” (see J. GROSDIDIER DE MATONS, *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes*, vol. II, Paris 1965 [= SC 110], p. 65 n. 2). However, due to the insistent remarks of Romanos about the pagan religion of the Chaldaeans (“they do not say, ‘The Lord is God of gods’”, “they do not know who is the maker of the things they reverence”), we could infer that here the expression “Persian fire” could refer both to the fiery furnace and to the Zoroastrian religion, from which the *Magi* were saved through the “the spark from your Child”, leaving “an all-devouring fire”, that is, the fire of paganism, and seeing “a fire which brings dew”, the fire and light of Christ.

13. When the Shining One had spoken thus, the lamps of the East said to her, “Do you wish to learn from where we have come here? From the land of the Chaldaeans, where they do not say, ‘The Lord is God of gods.’ From Babylon, where they do not know who is the maker of the things they reverence. From there it came, the spark from your Child, and raised us from the Persian fire; we have left an all-devouring fire and see a fire which brings dew: a little Child, God before the ages”<sup>29</sup>.

In the *kontakion*<sup>30</sup> an interesting comparison of the star that guided the *magi* with the pillar of fire that guided Moses in the exodus from Egypt (Ex 13: 21) can also be found, another example of Romanos’ typological exegesis:

18. [...] ἡμεῖς δὲ τούτοις / ὅπερ ἠπίσταντο / ἀντεπηρωτήσαμεν·  
 ὑμεῖς τὸ πάρος / πῶς διωδεύσατε  
 ἔρημον πολλὴν / ἤνπερ διήλθετε;  
 ὁ ὁδηγήσας / τοὺς ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου  
 αὐτὸς ὠδήγησε καὶ νῦν / τοὺς ἐκ Χαλδαίων πρὸς αὐτόν,  
 τότε στύλῳ πυρίνῳ, / νῦν δὲ ἄστρῳ τῷ δηλοῦντι  
 παιδίον νέον, / τὸν πρὸ αἰώνων θεόν.

18. [...] He who guided those who came from Egypt himself now guides those who come to him from Chaldaeae; then by a pillar of fire, now by the star which shows a little Child, God before the ages<sup>31</sup>.

Before concluding we will return to the motif of the midwife that appeared in the *kata stichon*, and that has no other parallels in the above-mentioned texts. As we said, it was rather surprising to find an apocryphal motif originally found in the *Protevangelium of James* (19–20) and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* (13)<sup>32</sup>. But unlike those works, which mention two midwives, in the hymn *kata stichon* only one of them appears. As the midwife has no name we are not able to tell to which of the midwives of the apocryphal gospels it refers: in the *Protevangelium of James* only one of the women bears a name, Salome. That was the woman who needed to touch the Virgin Mary in order to verify that she was still a Virgin after the miraculous birth. As a result, her hand was burned and fell off her body, being cured afterwards by touching the infant. In this manner the apocryphal Gospels added this story of the midwives as a way of demonstrating Mary’s virginity after the birth. In the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* both midwives are named: the first woman who saw a bright light caused by a miracle in the cave before the infant appeared is called Zelomi, and the unbelieving woman is called Salome like in the *Protevangelium of James*. Thus, we do not know which midwife the *kata stichon*

<sup>29</sup> St. ROMANOS, *Kontakia*..., p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Sancti Romani melodi cantica*..., p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> St. ROMANOS, *Kontakia*..., p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> A. WALKER, *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*, Edinburgh 1870, p. 11–12, 31–33.

refers to when saying that she received the grace: the first woman for being able to see the light and the miracle, or the second one, Salome, for being forgiven for her sin of unfaithfulness. Most probably it is alluding to the second one, for she was the one who “received the grace” of forgiveness of her sin of disbelief.

We would like to finish by reminding that, in spite of its absence in the canonical Gospels, this motif of the midwives has been very widespread in the medieval art, not only in the Eastern Christian churches (in Russian and Greek icons and paintings) but also in the Western Romanesque depictions (both in paintings and in sculptures). As in the Russian icon, they are represented performing the first bath of the infant<sup>33</sup>, a motif that does not appear in the aforementioned apocryphal Gospels. Moreover, there is a tradition according to which Salome was healed by pouring the water of the infant’s bath on her hand.

What we can say in conclusion, bearing in mind the studied texts on the Nativity motifs, is that during the Middle Ages all the Christian works were conceived as a whole, showing crossed influences between them: both the homiletic and hymnographic works, but also the hagiographies and of course the Scriptures (both the canonical and the apocryphal), having a reflection in the medieval Christian art too. Mainly, we have seen for instance how Romanos’s *kontakion* had an echo in later canons on the Nativity, and that his method of biblical exegesis through typology or prefiguration was widely spread in all the analysed liturgical texts. And we observed how the echo of Romanos on the fourth *idiomelon* or *sticheron* at the beginning of the liturgical service on the Vespers of the Nativity of Christ could be useful in finding out the date of the latter. In contrast, in the examples with different variants, as for instance regarding which element of nature is offering the cave to Christ (the earth in the *kontakion* and in the *sticheron*, the rock in the *kata stichon*, the mountains in the sermon, and the desert in the icon), the differences can be due to a stylistic or semantic play by the authors, who are employing the rhetorical device of metonymy, or even to the pictorial tradition in the icon.

---

<sup>33</sup> R. STICHEL, *Die Geburt Christi...*, p. 50–52.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- COSMAS OF MAIUMA (St.), *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_pezos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoygenna_pezos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].
- FATHER GERASIMOS, *Menaion of December*, Athens 1952, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_leitoyrgikh\\_praxh\\_eorthis.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoygenna_leitoyrgikh_praxh_eorthis.htm) [28 II 2023].
- JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (St.), *Spuria*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. LXI, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1862.
- JOHN OF DAMASCUS (St.), *Canon on the Nativity of Christ*, [http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia\\_xristoygenna\\_iambikos\\_kanwn.htm](http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/orthodoxy/explanatory/ermhneia_xristoygenna_iambikos_kanwn.htm) [28 II 2023].
- Livre d'Heures du Sinai (Sinaiticus graecus 864)*, ed. M.(L.) AJJOUR, J. PARAMELLE, Paris 2004 [= Sources chrétiennes, 486].
- Menaion*, vol. II, Rome 1889.
- PROCLUS (St.), *Oratio in natalem diem Domini*, [in:] *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca*, vol. LXV, ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1864.
- Sancti Romani melodi cantica: cantica genuine*, ed. P. MAAS, C.A. TRYPANIS, Oxford 1963.
- WALKER A., *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*, Edinburgh 1870.

### Secondary Literature

- ARENTZEN T., *The Virgin in Song*, Philadelphia 2017 [= Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion], <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812293913>
- CUNNINGHAM M.B., *The Use of the Protevangelion of James in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God*, [in:] *The Cult of Mother of God in Byzantium. Texts and Images*, ed. M.B. CUNNINGHAM, L. BRUBAKER, Aldershot 2011, p. 163–178.
- FRØYSHOV S.S.R., *Časoslov bez posledovaniј Bořšich Časov (večerni i utreni): Issledovanie nedavno izdannogo Časoslova Sin. gr. 864 (IX v.) (okončanie)*, “Богословские труды” / “Bogoslovskie Trudy” 45, 2013, p. 272–307.
- GROSDIDIER DE MATONS J., *Romanos le Mélode, Hymnes*, vol. II, Paris 1965 [= Sources Chrétiennes, 110].
- KRUEGER D., *Liturgical Subjects*, Philadelphia 2017.
- LINGAS A., *The Liturgical Place of the Kontakion in Constantinople*, [in:] *Liturgy, Architecture, and Art in Byzantine World. Papers of the 18. International Byzantine Congress (Moscow, 8–15 August 1991) and Other Essays Dedicated to the Memory of John Meyendorff*, ed. C.C. AKENTIEV, St. Petersburg 1995, p. 50–57.
- NAGY G., *Greek Literature*, vol. IX, *Greek Literature in the Byzantine Period*, London–New York 2001.
- OLKINUORA J. (DAMASKINOS), *Four Typological Images of Mary in the Hymnography for the Feast of the Entrance*, “Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music” 1, 2014, p. 33–42.
- The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium. Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, ed. T. ARENTZEN, M.B. CUNNINGHAM, Cambridge 2019.

ROMANOS (St.), *Kontakia On the Life of Christ: Chanted Sermons by the Great Sixth Century Poet and Singer St. Romanos*, trans. Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, New Haven 2010 [= Sacred Literature Series].


STICHEL R., *Die Geburt Christi in der Russischen Ikonenmalerei. Voraussetzungen in Glauben und Kunst des Christlichen Ostens und Westens*, Stuttgart 1990.

**Enrique Santos Marinas**

Complutense University of Madrid  
Faculty of Philology  
Edif. D, Desp. D-2.341  
Ciudad Universitaria s/n  
28040 Madrid, Spain  
esantos@filol.ucm.es



Viktor Zhukovskyy (Lviv)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3147-8173>

## THE UNITY, POWER AND ENERGY OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE THEOLOGY OF GREGORY OF NYSSA

**Abstract.** The article discusses the problem of the ontological distinction between God's transcendence and immanence in the theological thought of Gregory of Nyssa, a Church Father of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The author presents the main conceptual and terminological apparatuses that Gregory used in his antinomic approach to the complex interpretation of apophatic and kataphatic images of God. He analyzes the main characteristics of these two dimensions of the nature of God. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the Trinitarian approach in answering the question: how can God, who is completely ontologically removed from creation, be at the same time actively present in the world and filling it. In this context the author analyzes the key notions, which express the ontological remoteness of the divine essence of the Holy Trinity and God's active nearness in relation to created being.

**Keywords:** Gregory of Nyssa, apophatic, kataphatic, essence, power, energy, divine work, antinomy

The theological problem of the ontological link between the transcendence and immanence of God the Creator in relation to the world created by Him<sup>1</sup>, between the “hiddenness” and “openness” of the omnipresent Trinity, has an exceptional place in Christian thought. Its correct interpretation is of primary importance for substantiating the main truths of the Christian faith, namely: the creation of the world; the nature of God's Revelation and Tradition; the presence of the Triune God in the Church and the creative and saving omnipresence of the Creator in creation. The understanding of this problem is also decisive for the understanding of the sacramentological truth about the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ, in whom the deification of the human being takes place. This is no less important for understanding the anthropological and epistemological foundations of the spiritual path of a Christian, their experience of knowing God, the participation of human person in God's nature (cf. 2 Pe 1: 4) and their adoption (cf. Io 1: 12; Gal 3: 26) by the Heavenly Father. One of the best theological explanations and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Athanasius. The Coherence of his Thought*, London–New York 1998, p. 17.



conceptual representations of the problem of distinguishing between the simultaneous essential remoteness of the Holy Trinity and the closeness of the Creator to the created world can be found in the works of Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 – c. 395).

The development of apophatic theology, and the conceptual understanding of creation, animation, and maintenance of the entire universe, as well as the divine omnipresence, is connected in the works of the Cappadocians with their attempts to answer questions that arose in the context of the Trinitarian discussions of that time.

These patristic writers defended the unity of the three hypostases of the Holy Trinity and emphasized the distinction between essence (οὐσία) and persons (ὑπόστασις)<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of this article is to investigate and reveal the main aspects of the theological method of one of the Cappadocian theologians, namely Gregory of Nyssa, who by antinomously combining the apophatic and kataphatic ways of theology, substantiated the essential “bridge” between God who is “hidden” in His essence, and at the same time is a God who is “open” to communion in His various manifestations. To achieve the goal of this study, we will consider Gregory’s apophatic theological approach and the terminology he uses to describe the incomprehensible nature of God. We will also consider the method proposed by Gregory for expressing God’s activity in the world, and we will present his understanding of divine energy and power. Particular attention will be paid to the antinomian method of Gregory of Nyssa and its significance for the interpretation of theognosis.

In his understanding of the Triune nature of God<sup>3</sup>, Gregory of Nyssa offers a rather original approach, which is based on three defining elements: biblical, philosophical<sup>4</sup>, and theological<sup>5</sup>. Speaking about the transcendence of God’s being<sup>6</sup>, Gregory, on the one hand, follows Platonic thought, in which the Absolute exists in the realm “beyond being”, while on the other hand, his thinking about God’s transcendence is closely related to the classical biblical understanding of God, who “is above all (ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων θεός)” (Rom 9: 5)<sup>7</sup>. Although Gregory was influenced by Neoplatonism, he did not follow classical metaphysics. The divine Absolute surpasses all that exists and cannot be limited by anything in its nature. Nevertheless,

<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed consideration of the ousia–hypostasis distinction in the theological doctrine of the Cappadocians see J. ZACHUBER, *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, Leiden 2014, p. 70–79.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on this topic, see B. POTTIER, *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Etude systématique du “Contre Eunome” avec traduction inédite des extraits d’Eunome*, Namur 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the philosophical sources of the theology of Gregory of Nyssa, see J. ZACHUBER, *Human Nature...*, p. 8–12.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. MEREDITH, *Gregory of Nyssa*, London–New York 1999, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> On divine transcendence, see B.E. DALEY, *Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa’s Anti-Apollinarian Christology*, MTh 18, 2002, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. MEREDITH, *Gregory of Nyssa...*, p. 17–18.

along with this, Gregory clearly emphasizes the personal dimension of God's life<sup>8</sup>. Yet another difference between his theology and the philosophical concepts of the Neoplatonists and Philo of Alexandria, is the radical ontological opposition of the Triune Creator and creation, which cannot be weakened by any mediation<sup>9</sup>. In the theological thought of Gregory, the distinction between the Creator and His creation is extremely important. Some researchers<sup>10</sup> of Gregory's theological heritage consider the understanding of this problem to be one of his most important theological contributions. Here we have in mind the liaison and intercorrelation between God's infinity, on the one hand, and the variability of human existence, on the other, an intercorrelation that can serve as a kind of key to understanding both the soteriology and the anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa. The changeability of creation and the human being, as its center and summit, placed in contrast to the immutability of God, is a constitutive feature of all created being. The human person is called to boundless progress in perfection and knowledge of God and His infinite goodness<sup>11</sup>. The radical distinction between the unchanging Creator and the changing creation is one of the most fundamental features of the ontology and Triadology of Gregory of Nyssa<sup>12</sup>, but this ontology cannot be fully and systematically understood without an understanding of God's pervasive and providential presence in the world, which saves, creatively renews and transforms every human being and the whole universe.

### Creation vs Creator: the way of denial

The problem of the knowledge of God in His transcendence and immanence cannot be understood outside the context of the polemic with Eunomius<sup>13</sup>, who emphasized the possibility of knowing God's essence. Eunomius argued that God reveals himself *ad extra* by His essence, which has only one true and suitable name, expressed by the concept of "unbornness" (ἀγεννησία)<sup>14</sup>. This naming of God according to Eunomius is not just human reasoning (κατ' ἐπίνοιαν), but an

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 17–18, 142.

<sup>9</sup> H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Presence and Thought. Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, San Francisco 1995, p. 18. Also see S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy. Elementy teologii trynitarniej i antropologii w Homiliach do Pieśni nad Pieśniami*, Kraków 2006, p. 113–118.

<sup>10</sup> See E. FERGUSON, *God's Infinity and Man's Mutability. Perpetual Progress According to Gregory of Nyssa*, GOTR 18, 1973, p. 59–78.

<sup>11</sup> More on the concept of infinite goodness, which derives from God's infinity, see M. PRZYSZYCHOWSKA, *Nauka o łasce w dziełach św. Grzegorza z Nyssy*, Kraków 2010.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 110–111.

<sup>13</sup> For details on the polemic of Gregory of Nyssa with Eunomius, see J. ZACHUBER, *Human Nature...*, p. 93–122.

<sup>14</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 15, ed. W. JAEGER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. I–II, Leiden 1960 (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*), p. 231.

attempt to express the very essence of God<sup>15</sup>. All other concepts by which people call God are only figments of the mind, and they should be rejected as worthless<sup>16</sup>. The discussion between Gregory and Eunomius about the essence of God illustrates that the problem of the unknowability of God, the interpretation of revelation, and by extension, the possibility of knowing God, was one of the crucial points in the entire controversy<sup>17</sup>.

Gregory of Nyssa scoffs at the approach of Eunomius, for whom God's transcendence consists in a simple detachment and non-interference in human life. In Eunomius' interpretation of the nature of God he adhered to the Neoplatonist emphasis on the inferiority of the effect to the cause. All divine activity *ad extra* is not only strictly separated, but also ontologically inferior to its cause – the essence of Triune God. Eunomius' emphasis on the fact that God's transcendence is primary "regarding" and independent "of" His activity in the world, confronts Gregory's approach of simultaneously maintaining God's transcendence and His immanent activity. According to the soteriological narrative, Gregory defines divine activity as the power of humble love<sup>18</sup>. The bishop of Nyssa criticizes the conceptual position of Eunomius, according to which what is inert in philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία) is considered higher than what is active (ἐνεργήσαντος)<sup>19</sup>. The main difference between Gregory's and Eunomius' approaches to this issue lies in the denial that *divine activity per se is derived from divine being, and that the simplicity of God's essence denies any activity*<sup>20</sup>. For Gregory it is an obvious truth that God's being presupposes an effective manifestation of His love<sup>21</sup> and that whatever the cause is, so is its effect. A perfect cause has a perfect effect<sup>22</sup>.

Rejecting the arguments of Eunomius, Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes two main theses: God's unknowability by weak and limited human cognitive abilities and God's infinity and limitlessness in view of the inherent inner mystery of God, the Source of the origin of all that exists<sup>23</sup>. He depicts the mystery of the divine being,

<sup>15</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 44, p. 238.26–29.

<sup>16</sup> For more details on the linguistic and philosophical aspects of the controversy regarding the problem of naming God, see E. HEINE, *Perfection in the Virtuous Life. A Study in the Relationship between Edification and Polemical Theology in Gregory of Nyssa's De Vita Moysis*, Cambridge 1975, p. 136–142.

<sup>17</sup> For more details see *ibidem*, p. 148–158.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea. The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine*, Grand Rapids 2011, p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 3, 10, p. 36.

<sup>20</sup> K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 190.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. D.L. BALAS, *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966, p. 84.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 190.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. A. MEREDITH, *Gregory of Nyssa...*, p. 13.

His unrecognizability, and ineffability in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*<sup>24</sup>. No name, concept or attempt at understanding, is adequate and in fact hinders the seeker after God, Who is beyond anything that can be named, defined, conceived or expressed in any way<sup>25</sup>. The unknowability of God's nature is allegorically depicted by the bishop of Nyssa in the image of Abraham, who leaves his homeland, that is, everything earthly, everything that was familiar to him, to enter into the mysterious dialogic process of the knowledge of God. Gregory interprets the exodus from his native land as the need to get rid of earthly thinking, the need to rise, as far as possible, above the limitations of nature. With the help of the allegorical image of Abraham, Gregory emphasizes the impossibility of approaching God. Only faith can be the mediator that leads the God-hungry mind to unity with the immeasurable nature of the divine being. Gregory speaks in a similar way about Moses, who had to leave behind everything external that is perceived by the senses and the mind. God appears to Moses, first of all, in the form of fire, and then in darkness<sup>26</sup>. The nature of God surpasses all reason (διάνοιαν), but a human being remains within their own limitations. Therefore, it is sager not to investigate the essence of God, since the desire to know the unknowable paves the way to false interpretations and then to the acceptance of these false interpretations as truth<sup>27</sup>. Therefore in his apophatic approach, Gregory uses allegories to present a defining truth: to know God means to understand the truth about His unknowability<sup>28</sup>.

The main characteristic of the immanent reality of God's created world is negative: creation is not God<sup>29</sup>. The comparison of the Creator and creation reveals the ontological polarity between the two forms of being. One of the main features of everything that appeared in the process of creation is spatiality (διάστημα). In contrast, the application of the diastemic characteristic to the extra spatial God-Creator is absolutely impossible<sup>30</sup>. From the beginning, all creation is limited by its diastemic intervality and otherness. This "otherness" is embedded in the essence of world's reality and is one of its most important constitutive characteristics. The main diastemic characteristic of the world is that *it is all in its integrity, and each creature in it represents a separate ontological diastema – something separated from other things*<sup>31</sup>. The diastemic nature of creation characterizes the inherent dis-

<sup>24</sup> For more information about the apophatic theology of Gregory of Nyssa, see S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy...*, p. 110–143.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. E. HEINE, *Perfection...*, p. 145.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 146–147.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy...*, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding the teaching of Gregory of Nyssa on the creation of the world, see J. ZACHNIBER, *Human Nature...*, p. 145–186.

<sup>30</sup> H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Presence and Thought...*, p. 27–28.

<sup>31</sup> Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский. Бесконечность Бога и бесконечный путь к Нему человека*, trans. И. БЕЙ, Київ 2012, p. 284.

tance of otherness not only spatially, but also temporally<sup>32</sup>, and at the same time characterizes the mutual limitation of various dimensions of created being<sup>33</sup>.

### Apothatic terminology

Gregory of Nyssa uses a rich store of apothatic terminology to illustrate the impossibility for a human being to express who God is. The Divine nature of the Holy Trinity has no ontological kinship with lower created time-space being. Gregory often emphasizes this, using a number of terms indicating the radical ontological separation between the Creator and creation. The nature of God cannot be described (ἀπερίγραφος)<sup>34</sup>, cannot be depicted by any color (οὐ χροιάν) or any form (οὐ μορφῆς) and size (οὐ μέγετος)<sup>35</sup>. Divine nature is uniform and indivisible (ἀπλοῦς δὲ ὢν καὶ ἀμερῆς καὶ ἀσύνθετος)<sup>36</sup>, passionless (ἀπαθὲς)<sup>37</sup> and incomprehensible to human thought (ἀπρόσιτος)<sup>38</sup>. Along with the Eunomian concept of “unborn (ἀγέννητον)”, Gregory uses a number of other negative names, depicting with them the same transcendental reality of the inaccessible essence of the Holy Trinity and its transcendence relating to everything that God is not. They include: incorruptibility (ἀφθαρσία)<sup>39</sup>, immutability (ἀτρεπτος, ἀναλλοίωτος), immortality (ἀθάνατος), eternity (ἀτελεῦτητος) and omnipotence (παντοκράτωρ)<sup>40</sup>. For the bishop of Nyssa, God’s names express what God is not, or indicate the diversity of His energies<sup>41</sup>. Positive names, meanings, characteristics that we can use for God, refer to the fact that we can know certain things “around (περὶ)” God<sup>42</sup>. And *we know according to what God’s energies teach us*<sup>43</sup>.

Gregory of Nyssa relied on the thought of Basil the Great, who denied the possibility of verbal expression of both God and any created essence and rejected the

<sup>32</sup> For more information about the concept of being and time in the theological thought of Gregory of Nyssa, see J. DANÉLOU, *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970.

<sup>33</sup> See Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 284–285.

<sup>34</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, 27, 23, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Canticum canticorum*, homiliae 12, 1028 M, 5–15, ed. H. LANGERBECK, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VI, Leiden 1960 (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Canticum canticorum*), p. 357.

<sup>36</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*, 3, 1, 30, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1... (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*), p. 136.

<sup>37</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*, 3, 1, 21, p. 136.

<sup>38</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Canticum canticorum*, homiliae 1, 773 M, 9, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 192, 27–29, p. 280.

<sup>40</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 147, 9–12, p. 268.

<sup>41</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 149, 25–29, p. 268.

<sup>42</sup> See E.D. MOUTSOULAS, “Essence” et “Energies” de Dieu selon St. Gregoire de Nysse, [in:] *SP*, vol. XVIII.3, Leuven 1983, p. 521.

<sup>43</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 150, 7–8, p. 269.

main argument of Eunomius that “unborn” is the most adequate name of God<sup>44</sup>. Gregory continues to develop this approach and especially emphasizes the apophatic categories of the unreachable essence of God for human thought and language. Following this path, he develops the theory of language that can be used to talk about the mystery of the divine being, by deeply understanding the concept of God’s infinity<sup>45</sup>. He criticizes Eunomius, who associated the “unbornness” of God with His very essence, noting that with such an approach Eunomius *wants to limit the unlimited nature to a single expression* (προσηγορία μιᾶ τὴν ἀόριστον φύσιν περιμετροῦσι)<sup>46</sup>. It is impossible that *this word contains all the greatness of the Godhead* (ἅπαν τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς θεότητος)<sup>47</sup>.

It is obvious, for Gregory, that if a human being cannot understand and express the essence of created things, then, even more so, God’s unlimited, incomprehensible and uncreated essence is beyond the limits of any knowledge, comprehension and verbal expression. In the treatise *Against Eunomius* he deepens this topic, emphasizing that between the eternal God and the created human mind there is a “huge and insurmountable barrier”<sup>48</sup> that separates them, and thereby pointing to the radical otherness of the nature of creation in relation to the nature of the Creator. On the one hand, there is the limitlessness, “beginninglessness,” infinity, eternity of the divine being, and on the other hand – the limitation in size, time, space, place, the beginning and end of the created world<sup>49</sup>. The absolute otherness of God’s nature does not define or limit God’s being and His creative activity.

An impassable distance is constitutively embedded in the entire created world<sup>50</sup>. However, this previously mentioned fundamental distinction does not lead Gregory to either of two extremes. On the one hand, he does not develop any radical “technology” of apophatic theology and does not deny any possibility of thinking about God. Words do not have a divine origin, they cannot express either the essence of God or the deep essence of the things created by Him. Neither thought nor words can capture the essence of God, which can only be honored in silence<sup>51</sup>. Nevertheless Gregory does not reject the importance of language, words, and concepts, both in the knowledge of the world, man, human culture, and, in the knowledge of God<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 283–284.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 284.

<sup>46</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 125, p. 262.

<sup>47</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 62, p. 244.

<sup>48</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 69, p. 246.14.

<sup>49</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 70, 1–18, p. 246.16–26.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 284.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 3, 1, 104, p. 38.28, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 285.

Obviously, the bishop of Nyssa is not original in the use of rich apophatic language, but the particular merit of Gregory is that he complements the negative doctrine with new and strong arguments. In addition to transcendence, he emphasizes the infinity (ἄπειρος) of God and the infinite ontological difference between Him and created being. All creation is secondary to the creative Source of its origin<sup>53</sup>. Gregory is not satisfied with the ambiguous term “unborn (ἀγέννητον)” because it is Christologically ambivalent. On the one hand, the Divine Logos, the second hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, is uncreated and primordial, on the other hand, He is born from the Father<sup>54</sup>. According to Gregory, the optimal apophatic terms are “indestructibility”, “infinity (ἀόριστος)”<sup>55</sup>, or “boundlessness, infinity (ἄπειρος)”<sup>56</sup>. These concepts are suitable for defining all persons of the Trinity and express God’s unlimited goodness, immutability, and the infinity in His essence. The infinite is unlimited, and the unlimited is beyond the reach of either thought or word. What is impossible to understand is impossible to express<sup>57</sup>. Two levels of divine infinity can be distinguished in the theological thought of Gregory: ontological and moral<sup>58</sup>, that is, the infinity of God as the Source of all reality concerns not only His ontology, but also the moral dimension. God’s goodness cannot be limited by anything and is not similar to any created form of goodness. The concept of “infinity”, proposed by Gregory of Nyssa, *does not allow distinction in power: therefore all three Hypostases are equal*<sup>59</sup>. Gregory derives the opinion about God’s infinity *from the reflection that perfect good is indestructible and in no sense allows for an opposite (which would limit it, as it always happens in our earthly life), is boundless and, accordingly, infinite good*<sup>60</sup>.

For Gregory, it is the infinity, limitlessness, and unlimitedness of God that is the basis for another apophatic concept – His “immensity”, which means that the only possible way to know God is through the constant rejection of already acquired ideas, views, and concepts about what God is like<sup>61</sup>. Starting from his central apophatic concept of the “infinity” or “limitlessness” of God and His goodness, Gregory develops the idea of the endless movement of a human person in search of God and at the same time knowledge of God. Since God is limitless and infinite, then participation in Him will be infinite progress and growth, and an unlimited path without an end. It is in this vein that the Cappadocian develops his spiritual and soteriological approach to the doctrine of the knowledge of God<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. S. STRĘKOWSKI, *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy...*, p. 135–136.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 286.

<sup>55</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 105, p. 257.21–25.

<sup>56</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 3, 2, 20, p. 58.22.

<sup>57</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 3, 1, 104, p. 28.38–39.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. A. MEREDITH, *Gregory of Nyssa...*, p. 18.

<sup>59</sup> Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 287.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 219.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 288.

<sup>62</sup> See GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 1, 290–291, p. 112.9–20.

Addressing the question of the endless dynamism of the search for God, Gregory emphasizes that God can be found only in the constant surpassing of what has already been found, which is in the next step of the search. The search itself is already the understanding of God<sup>63</sup>. An adequate apophatic approach is presented with great intensity in the doctrine of Gregory. The divine Trinity, who transcends all thought, is best known as the unknowable and contemplated in silence<sup>64</sup>. Any ambitions of a person for the knowledge of God, and a positive understanding of God's nature, are limited only by the vivid personal experiencing of the divine energies (ἐνεργεῖν)<sup>65</sup>, in which the Triune God is revealed to the seeker. However, these aspirations do not claim, in any way, to know the unlimited nature (τὴν ἄοριστον φύσιν) of God's essence itself.

Through the use of the *via negativa*, Gregory confesses his faith, presents a theological argument about the infinity of God's nature, and emphasizes the immensity of God's all-pervading goodness and man's endless journey to God. Negative theology permeates all his treatises, commentaries, homilies, and letters<sup>66</sup>. Gregory of Nyssa clearly indicates that God, Who is absolutely unknowable in essence, reveals himself through the attributes, revealed by divine energy. The distinction between God's essence and energy is important in order to preserve the radical distinction between created and uncreated beings<sup>67</sup>. Texts in which Gregory formulates the doctrine of God's essence and energy occur quite often. This topic is present in his thinking about the Holy Trinity and is at the center of his theology and spirituality<sup>68</sup>. E. Heine, examining the difference between the approaches of Gregory and Eunomius to the interpretation of the essence of God in the context of the wider controversy with the Arians, emphasizes the two main antinomian theses of the bishop of Nyssa: 1) we can know God only through His energies; 2) we can know "that He exists" and not "what He is"<sup>69</sup>. Therefore, because of the world created by God, we know that God exists, but we are in complete ignorance about the nature of His essence<sup>70</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Ecclesiasten homiliae*, 7, ed. P.J. ALEXANDER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. V, Leiden 1962, p. 400.21 – 401. For more information about the path of endless progress in the ascent of a human being to perfection, see E. HEINE, *Perfection...*, p. 27–114.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 278.

<sup>65</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, 2, 149, p. 268.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. M. LUDLOW, *Universal Salvation. Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*, Oxford 2000, p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. E.D. MOUTSOULAS, "Essence" et "Energies"..., p. 519. On the problem of the interpretation of this distinction as ontological or epistemological, see J.P. HOUDRET, *Palamas et les Cappadociens*, *Isti* 19, 1974, p. 101–112.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. E.D. MOUTSOULAS, "Essence" et "Energies"..., p. 517–518.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. E. HEINE, *Perfection...*, p. 143.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 144.



### The triad of creative theophany: power – energy – work

In the theological thought of Gregory of Nyssa, divine majesty is revealed, first of all, in God's overcoming of the "limitations" of the divine nature, in a kind of excess of divine power that reveals this nature *ad extra*<sup>71</sup>. In the apophatic approach of Gregory, God's essence is immeasurable in the sense that it cannot be revealed passively by human intellectual efforts. The nature of the relationship between the infinite God and limited humanity is such that the knowledge of God can only be in the modality of acceptance, admiration and worship<sup>72</sup>. The fact that the human person cannot directly know the divine essence does not mean that he/she cannot know God. God-knowledge is possible only through immersion in the integrity of the divine self-revelation of the Holy Trinity. The center of this complex integrity of knowledge is the Christological dimension of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The salvation process begins with the revelation of God's glory to human being and the world. The Son of God through the mystery of the Incarnation, His life, the mystery of death and Resurrection, morally and physically transforms weak and fragile humanity. The Word of God, remaining transcendent and immutable, assumed human nature in Jesus and made it His own, so that all that was weak and corrupt in human nature, through union with the divine reality, became what the Deity itself is<sup>73</sup>.

Along with the soteriological-christological plane of God's entry into the world, Gregory does not neglect its pneumatological character and emphasizes the life-giving power (ἡ ζωοποιός δύναμις) of the Holy Spirit, which a human person receives during baptism. This refers to the life-giving grace (τὴν ζωοποιὸν χάριν) of the Only-begotten Son of God, which as true life perfects those who become worthy through the energy of the Spirit (τῆ ἐνεργείᾳ τοῦ πνεύματος)<sup>74</sup>. The pneumatological dimension of God's entry into the world, in turn, reveals Gregory's triadological vision of the knowledge of God. He professes faith in three Persons, "one Good (ἀγαθότητα), one Power (δύναμιν), one Deity (θεότητα)"<sup>75</sup>. Gregory emphasizes the personal and, at the same time, tri-hypostatic understanding of the mystery of God's inaccessible essence and His creative and saving activity in the world through the energy of the one God in three hypostases<sup>76</sup>. In his confession of faith, one of the central concepts that Gregory uses as an argument

<sup>71</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 178.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. B.E. DALEY, *Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation...*, p. 499.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Adversus Macedonianos de Spiritu Sancto*, 3, 1, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1..., p. 105–106.

<sup>75</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1..., p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> M. AGHIORGOUSSIS, *Christian Existentialism of the Greek Fathers: Persons, Essence, and Energies in God*, GOTR 23, 1978, p. 21.

in the triadological polemic is the one power of God (δύναμιν). One of the most important, well-known theses of the Cappadocians regarding Trinitarian theology is the well-argued assertion that the unity of God's nature (φύσις) follows from the unity of God's "external" activity. The liaison between the nature of God and His activity, for which Gregory uses two concepts – "power" (δύναμιν) and "energy" (ἐνέργεια), – is extremely important both, for understanding the relationship between the Creator and creation, and the intra-trinitarian relationship between hypostases<sup>77</sup>.

The concept of "power (δύναμις)" has a deep philosophical and biblical origin, and significance, as well as authority in patristic theology, where it was often used. In addition, by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, this concept already has a rich history of use in Trinitarian theology<sup>78</sup>. For Gregory, it was very important to show the life-giving and creative God-Trinity, who has the natural ability to "produce" a new creation. God is infinite good, which extends *ad extra*, to the created world, spreading his gifts<sup>79</sup>. Gregory often uses the notion of "power (δύναμις)" as a title for the divine nature, emphasizing that the power is transcendent (δύναμις ὑπερκειμένη). Divine power (δύναμις) and nature (φύσις) are one. Gregory uses these two concepts interchangeably. Moreover, he uses apophatic terminology much more often when speaking of the transcendence of God's power than when speaking of His nature (φύσις) or essence (οὐσία)<sup>80</sup>. The main and primary meaning of God's power is that of an activity in the creation and maintenance of the world, that is, creation is not only a property of God's nature, but also His nature since the existence of God is a creative existence that dynamically creates new things and renews old ones. The divine nature is productive in itself, possesses this ability (δύναμις), and is the source of the rising of everything to being<sup>81</sup>.

In the polemic with Eunomius, Gregory presented his concept of power in order to explain the source of the origin of God's energy "externally"<sup>82</sup>. He speaks not simply about the energy of God's nature, but also about the energy of the power (ἡ ἐνεργητικὴ αὐτοῦ δύναμις) of God<sup>83</sup>, which is a joint manifestation of the activity of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity<sup>84</sup>. For the bishop of Nyssa, it is God's power that generates energy (ἐνέργεια), which is the activity of this power (δύναμις)<sup>85</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. M.R. BARNES, *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology*, Washington 2001, p. 15–17.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 223–224.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 225.

<sup>83</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Canticum canticorum*, homiliae 15, 1012 M, 18–19, p. 336.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. E.D. MOUTSOULAS, "Essence" et "Energies"..., p. 524.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. M.R. BARNES, *The Power of God...*, p. 223–224.

Gregory considers three possible interactions between God's power and nature. Power, in its commonly used meaning, represents a kind of contrast between the natural ability to create or be the source of the appearance of something (fire and heat), and also the artificial (volitional) ability to produce something new (the builder and the building). The third type of interaction is a temporary ability to do something. For Gregory power is not something lower, separated from God's nature and, accordingly, something that is not in unity with this nature. Referring to the concept of divine power, Gregory rejects Eunomius' opinion about the dominance of God's nature over power as a separate, lower, derived reality<sup>86</sup>.

In understanding the antinomic nature of the transcendental-immanent being of God, Gregory especially emphasizes that the divine nature always remains dispassionate, even though it manifests itself effectively and philanthropically through God's various interventions in the conditions of human life<sup>87</sup>. Gregory highlights three main factors in the outward activity of the Word of God: power (δύναμις) – energy (ἐνέργεια) – work (ἔργον). The divine Word is alive, has free will, and has the power to act creatively. The Word broadcasts its will through power in His energy. The power of the Word, as well as that of the Father and the Holy Spirit, creatively manifests the divine life through divine energy in the creation of the world and by maintaining it in being<sup>88</sup>.

### The transcendence of the power of God

There are two main connotations of the concept of “power (δύναμις)” in Gregory's theology. Δύναμις means the special power of action possessed by any being in so far as it corresponds to its authenticity. First of all, power is the most inherent internal capability of a being. Secondly, δύναμις can also express various abilities of a being to cause various actions depending on its nature. These definitions of power characterize it as an integral and organic component of the nature of every being. An example of the first type is fire and heat, and for the second – drying, movement, and fuel consumption. Often, Gregory uses the concept of power as the ability to act, in contrast to passivity and inability to act, and sometimes he distinguishes different types of such ability<sup>89</sup>. The primary meaning of God's δύναμις is the ability to creatively, productively, and dynamically act, that is, to create. This is a characteristic that distinguishes the divine nature. The second meaning reveals the various attributes of God that characterize His activity *ad extra*<sup>90</sup>. Sometimes Gregory compares δύναμις to the heat of fire or the cold of

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 227–229.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 179–180.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 216–218. See GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Oratio catechetica*, 1, 43–45, 49–60, ed. E. MÜHLENBERG, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.4, Leiden 1996 (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Oratio catechetica*), p. 136–338.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 233.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

ice<sup>91</sup>. The concept of God's providence has a much broader meaning than the ability to produce or create. Providence encompasses all of God's activity in the world; this is, creation, care for all and, support of everything in existence, salvation, renewal, and transformation of the world and of humankind. This means, in the broadest sense, that the concept of δύναμις is one of the most important concepts not only for protology and cosmology, but also in the sphere of the Trinitarian, soteriological, and anthropological theology of Gregory of Nyssa<sup>92</sup>.

As we have already mentioned above, the divine power which brings everything into being, is completely transcendent. Gregory speaks about this in various works<sup>93</sup> and uses apophatic vocabulary for δύναμις, as well as for φύσις. Mostly, he prefers the first notion to the second as a title for the divine being, when he is describing the transcendence of the Holy Trinity<sup>94</sup>. Most often, among the negative terminology that he uses to denote the transcendence of God's creative power, we find such notions as "ὑπερεκούση (extraordinary)", "ὑπερκειμένη (surpassing)" or, less commonly, "ὑψηλός (exalted above)"<sup>95</sup>.

God is a being that has the power (δύναμις) to act, does act and, thanks to this activity and its fruits, reveals Himself to the human person, who then knows His existence. Conversely, to the degree of God's effectiveness, we can form concepts about His being. It is the divine power (θεία δύναμις) that effectively reveals who God is. The power (δύναμις) as a divine title is a central concept in Gregory's main sequence: essence – power – energy – work (οὐσία – δύναμις – ἐνέργεια – ἔργον)<sup>96</sup>. He often does not even take into account or add to this sequence, essence (οὐσία) or nature (φύσις), leaving only the causal sequence: δύναμις – ἐνέργεια – ἔργον, which expresses his main idea: the energy of force (τῆς δυνάμεως ἐνέργεια) causes the work of creation<sup>97</sup>.

The power of God is not a title for the persons of God, but a definition of what these persons are like, which means that such titles as Word (Λόγον), Power (Δύναμις), Wisdom (Σοφία), God (Θεόν) are equally acceptable, because they express the eternal power that creates all things<sup>98</sup>. Gregory uses the concept of God's power (θεία δύναμις), in the sense of God or deity much more often than the concept of God's nature<sup>99</sup>. Therefore, for him to speak about God as the Creator and the Cause of everything that arose into being, is to speak first of all about God as θεία δύναμις<sup>100</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 234.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 240.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 236.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 240.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 237.293–296.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 293.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Oratio catechetica*, 20 M, 16–24 M, 16, p. 15–18.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De vita Moysis*, 304 M, 13–14, 316 M, 22, 317 M, 10, 325 M, 3, ed. H. MUSURILLO, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VII.1, Leiden 1964, p. 7, 19, 23, 31.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. M.R. BARNES, *The Power of God...*, p. 240.

Gregory indicates the unity of God's power, which testifies to the unity of the hypostases of the Trinity. For him, the statement is axiomatic: if God's person did not have this divine power, then it would not belong to God's nature. The Holy Spirit is divine because it has the power of the Holy Trinity. Simultaneously, Gregory, speaking of the unity of power and energy of the Triune God<sup>101</sup>, points to the diversity of divine energies. Each energy fully and in unison expresses the unified power of the three hypostases<sup>102</sup>. From the variety of energies of God's power (δυνάμειος ἐνεργείας), which surpasses all and is above all, we derive different titles, where each energy (ἐνέργειαν) is designated by a name. All of these belong to one power (δύναμις), which comes from the one nature of the three Persons of the Trinity<sup>103</sup>.

In the theology of Gregory of Nyssa, a conceptual connection can be traced between the argument of the "power–nature" model and the "energy–nature" model, with an emphasis on the multifaceted energies that are common to the persons of the Holy Trinity. Over time, a change in approach took place in Gregory's theological search. He moved from the analogy of "fire is the power of heat" to the analogy of "fire is the energy of heat". M.R. Barnes associates such a change with the need for an apology for the divinity of the Holy Spirit<sup>104</sup>. Gregory uses the concept of ἐνέργεια to express the common action of the Triune God, although in this activity (ἐνέργεια) power is also implied.

Thus, the main line of argumentation of Gregory of Nyssa regarding the unity of the Triune nature of God and the divinity of the Spirit, is that if the Son and the Holy Spirit have the same energy and, accordingly, the same power, then they also have the same nature, which is the same for the three persons of God. Gregory formed a step-by-step logic of an increasingly higher level of unity between the Son and the Spirit, and therefore with the Father: common work (ἔργον), common activity (ἐνέργεια), common power (δύναμις) and common nature (φύσις)<sup>105</sup>. The argument of Gregory of Nyssa – from common energy to common nature – depends on the correlation of God's energy and power, which concerns the specifics of the relationship of the Son and the Spirit between themselves, and with the Father in a single nature<sup>106</sup>.

The Word of God, through the energy of the divine power that emanates from the nature of God, creatively acts in every single creation. God's will seems to mix this power with the diversity and at the same time the unity of all creation. Gregory draws a clear line of connection between natures and their inner powers,

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 297–298.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 298.

<sup>103</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei*, 121 M, 20–124 M, 20, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1... (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei*), p. 43–45.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. M.R. BARNES, *The Power of God...*, p. 299.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 303–304.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 304.

as well as between the indivisibility of nature and God's activity that orders creation. In the unity, integrity and, at the same time, diversity of created entities, we contemplate the single action of God, who is unique in His power<sup>107</sup>. God's indivisible nature is productive precisely because of the single, unifying and simple divine power, which, like heat and fire, is ontologically one. It is important not only that power is an internal dimension of nature, but also that it, being "around" nature, is the cause of the activity of divine energy in the world. L. Ayres calls this model of Gregory of Nyssa "transcendent causality"<sup>108</sup>. Man can grow in the knowledge of divine power through God's energies, while the divine nature will remain unknowable.

As already noted, Gregory proposes a ternary model of the revelation of God's creative presence in the world, which is "around" (περὶ αὐτὸν) an unknowable nature: power (δύναμις) – energy (ἐνέργεια) – deed (ἔργον). Nature (φύσις) possesses an inner power that contains and expresses the potential possibility for outward activity with its energy. In Gregory, this ternary model has two sides. On the one hand, nature contains an inner potency, on the other hand, various divine energies reveal the transcendent inner power of God's unknowable nature *ad extra*<sup>109</sup>. There is a clear linking between the intra-divine relationship and the energetic presence of God in the created reality<sup>110</sup>. L. Ayres notes that the Capadocian approach, according to which nature can be known through the energy that manifests it, does not fully extend to the opinion of Gregory of Nyssa. As we have mentioned above, the specificity of Gregory's approach is that energy reveals the power of God's immeasurable nature, and not simply the nature<sup>111</sup>. This energy comes from the Father as its source, engaged by the Son and completed by the grace and power of the Spirit<sup>112</sup>. This is a single energy from a single power, a single and indivisible divine nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit<sup>113</sup>. Christ, with his power and energy, enters the world and the human being as the Giver of life. This power and energy is the basis for everything that constitutes the life of Christ<sup>114</sup>.

In the "Beatitudes" discussing those people who are pure in heart, Gregory of Nyssa starts out from the classic patristic antinomian vision of God. On the one hand, those who are pure in heart can see God (cf. Mt 5: 8), and on the other hand, it is impossible to see God (cf. John 1: 18, 1 Tim 6: 16). Gregory clearly distinguishes between these two ontological levels of the possibility and impossibility

<sup>107</sup> Cf. L. AYRES, *On not Three People: the Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology as Seen in to Ablabius: On not Three Gods*, [in:] *Rethinking Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. S. COAKLEY, Malden 2003, p. 24–25.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 27.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 28.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 43.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei*, 128 M, 5–128 M, 20, p. 49–50.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. L. AYRES, *On not Three People...*, p. 29–32.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 36.

of seeing God. The divine nature in its essence<sup>115</sup> cannot be contemplated. God in His nature surpasses any being, He is invisible and ineffable (ὁ ἀόρατός τε καὶ ἀκατάληπτος)<sup>116</sup>. At the same time, He can be visible and comprehensible “in another sense”<sup>117</sup> – in effective creative manifestations of His wisdom and goodness, power and purity<sup>118</sup>. Thanks to this external appearance, a person can contemplate<sup>119</sup> and name God, who is invisible by nature, and who becomes visible in the energies that are “around Him”<sup>120</sup>. This approach is decisive in understanding the nature of the knowledge of God. God is not an inert object, but the subject of relations due to His life-giving, all-pervading “energetic” activity in the created world. Knowledge of God’s self-revelation is full knowledge of God Himself, not the knowing of something lower in the divine nature. It is impossible to penetrate into the knowledge of God’s immanence, but through the economy of the Holy Trinity in the world, the self-revealing dynamic activity of God’s nature, that is His energy (ἐνέργεια), which comes from the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit, we are able to discover that God is a subject of dialog and relationship with others. Knowing the energetic, creative, and unified cooperation of the Trinity, we can name God by notions and delineate Him with various concepts (ἐννοίας) in the living process of the knowledge of the personal God<sup>121</sup>.

It is incorrect to understand the distinction between God’s unknowable essence and His manifesting energies by building an impenetrable ontological “wall” between these two dimensions of the divine life of the Holy Trinity. Such thinking would be possible if the nature of God’s essence were a static object that does not participate in a divine activity. This vision is consistent with Eunomius’ approach. In contrast, for Gregory of Nyssa, if God’s essence is unknowable in itself and is outside the creative revelatory dynamics, nevertheless it is the divine energies that reveal who God is. The divine energies are the source of given characteristics, designations, and meanings, which serve as notional and conceptual bases for knowing and interpreting the nature of God’s self-revelation. Thus, the Triune God is radically active in His being and inaccessible outside of energetic self-presence. A meeting with Him is an endless journey of relationships and knowledge of God<sup>122</sup> without any claim to finally grasp and express God’s mystery<sup>123</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, 6, ed. J.F. CALLAHAN, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VII.2, Leiden 1992 (cetera: GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*), p. 140.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, 6, p. 140.27 – 141.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, 6, p. 140.27.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Л. КАРФИКОВА, *Святитель Григорий Нисский...*, p. 82.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, 3, p. 104.

<sup>120</sup> GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, 6, p. 141.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 230–231.

<sup>122</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see M. PRZYSZYCHOWSKA, *Nauka o łasce...*, p. 110–131.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. K. ANATOLIOS, *Retrieving Nicaea...*, p. 239–240.

## Summary

The Cappadocian Fathers brought considerable conceptual innovation to the understanding and definition of the nature of the Triune God, His existence “*in Se*” and “*ad extra*”. Their approach to the understanding of the ontological difference between the transcendence and immanence of God is marked by the thoroughness of their familiarity with the patristic tradition and their taking into account the conceptual tool of philosophical methods. Gregory of Nyssa developed a complex approach to the problem of the simultaneous otherworldliness and omnipresence of the Holy Trinity. The personalistic approach to Triadology and knowledge of God is decisive for him. Gregory’s theology is characterized by a radical opposition between the Triune Creator and the multifaceted created world. It is possible to understand God’s providential energetic omnipresence only by accepting the antinomian relationship between the unchanging Creator and the changing creation. Gregory combines both the ontological and epistemological dimensions of the understanding of the unknowable nature of God and emphasizes two main theses: God’s unknowability for weak and limited human cognitive abilities, and His infinity and limitlessness, given the intrinsic mystery inherent in the Trinity. Arguing with Eunomius, Gregory developed a rich apophatic terminology to express what God is not. For him, the absolute otherness of God’s nature does not define or limit His existence and creative activity. The merit of the bishop of Nyssa lies not in the originality of apophatic terminology, but in apophatic argumentation. He proposed the apophatic terms “boundlessness” and “infinity”, which refer to ontology, morality, and are important to his anthropological and ascetic systems. God is limitless; therefore man is called to move endlessly toward perfection. The very existence of the Triune God presupposes an operative manifestation of His love through energy, power, and grace, thanks to which we can know what God is and how He acts, but we cannot know what He is like in His essence.

The theological thought of Gregory of Nyssa is characterized by a special approach to understanding the power of God in comparison with the essence and energy of God. Energy derives from God’s power, so Gregory speaks of the energy of power. The result of the action of energy, which comes from power, is work. Gregory’s triad: God’s power – energy – work expresses his main idea, namely that the energy of power causes the work of creation. He reveals his approach to the interpretation of power as the transcendent, internal, natural ability of God’s essence to act. Nature is revealed outwardly by its inner force. Gregory uses the terms “power” and “nature” interchangeably and is more likely to use apophatic terminology when describing the transcendence of God’s power than His nature (φύσις) or even essence (οὐσία). God’s power is one for the three Hypostases, but the energies are diverse. This power, being “around” nature, is the reason for the creative and supportive activity of the divine energy of the Holy Trinity in the world.



## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Ablabium quod non sint tres dei*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 35–57.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Eustathium de Sancta Trinitate*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 3–16.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Ad Graecos ex communibus notionibus*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 19–33.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Adversus Macedonianos de Spiritu Sancto*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 89–115.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium*, ed. F. MUELLER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.1, Leiden 1958, p. 131–233.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Contra Eunomium*, ed. W. JAEGER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. I–II, Leiden 1960.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De beatitudinibus*, ed. J.F. CALLAHAN, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VII.2, Leiden 1992.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *De vita Moysis*, ed. H. MUSURILLO, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VII.1, Leiden 1964, p. 1–145.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Canticum canticorum*, ed. H. LANGERBECK, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. VI, Leiden 1960, p. 3–469.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *In Ecclesiasten homiliae*, ed. P.J. ALEXANDER, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. V, Leiden 1962, p. 277–442.
- GREGORIUS NYSSENUS, *Oratio catechetica*, ed. E. MÜHLENBERG, [in:] *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. III.4, Leiden 1996, p. 1–112.

### Secondary Literature

- AGHIORGOUSSIS M., *Christian Existentialism of the Greek Fathers: Persons, Essence, and Energies in God*, “Greek Orthodox Theological Review” 23, 1978, p. 15–41.
- ANATOLIOS K., *Athanasius. The Coherence of his Thought*, London–New York 1998.
- ANATOLIOS K., *Retrieving Nicaea. The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine*, Grand Rapids 2011.
- AYRES L., *On not Three People: the Fundamental Themes of Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology as Seen in to Ablabius: On not Three Gods*, [in:] *Rethinking Gregory of Nyssa*, ed. S. COAKLEY, Malden 2003, p. 15–44.
- BALAS D.L., *Metousia Theou: Man’s Participation in God’s Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Rome 1966.
- BALTHASAR H.U. VON, *Presence and Thought. Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*, San Francisco 1995.
- BARNES M.R., *The Power of God. Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa’s Trinitarian Theology*, Washington 2001.
- DALEY B.E., *Divine Transcendence and Human Transformation: Gregory of Nyssa’s Anti-Apollinarian Christology*, “Modern Theology” 18, 2002, p. 497–506, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0025.00200>

- DANIÉLOU J., *L'être et le temps chez Grégoire de Nysse*, Leiden 1970, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004433632>
- FERGUSON E., *God's Infinity and Man's Mutability. Perpetual Progress According to Gregory of Nyssa*, "Greek Orthodox Theological Review" 18, 1973, p. 59–78.
- HEINE E., *Perfection in the Virtuous Life. A Study in the Relationship between Edification and Polemical Theology in Gregory of Nyssa's De Vita Moysis*, Cambridge 1975.
- HOUDRET J.P., *Palamas et les Cappadociens*, "Istina" 19, 1974, p. 260–271.
- KARFIKOVA L., *Svyatitel' Grigoriy Nisskiy. Beskonechnost' Boga i bezkonechniy put' k Nemu cheloveka*, trans. I. BEY, Kiiv 2012.
- LUDLOW M., *Universal Salvation. Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner*, Oxford 2000, <https://doi.org/10.1093/0198270224.001.0001>
- MEREDITH A., *Gregory of Nyssa*, London–New York 1999.
- MOUTSOULAS E.D., "Essence" et "Energies" de Dieu selon St. Grégoire de Nysse, [in:] *Studia patristica*, vol. XVIII.3, Leuven 1983, p. 517–527.
- POTTIER B., *Dieu et le Christ selon Grégoire de Nysse. Etude systématique du "Contre Eunome" avec traduction inédite des extraits d'Eunome*, Namur 1994.
- PRZYSZYCHOWSKA M., *Nauka o łasce w dziełach św. Grzegorza z Nyssy*, Kraków 2010.
- STRĘKOWSKI S., *Sofiologia św. Grzegorza z Nyssy. Elementy teologii trynitarnej i antropologii w Homiliach do Pieśni nad Pieśniami*, Kraków 2006.
- ZACHHUBER J., *Human Nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical Background and Theological Significance*, Leiden 2014.


**Viktor Zhukovskyy**

Ukrainian Catholic University  
Faculty of Philosophy and Theology  
Theology Department  
St. John Paul II Avenue 35a  
79070 Lviv, Ukraine  
viktor@ucu.edu.ua







Barbara Zipser (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1600-1257>


Andrew C. Scott (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1998-3508>


Robert Allkin (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2107-4036>


Peretz Gan (Zippori)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0773-9760>


Andreas Lardos (Winterthur)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3552-654X>


Rebecca Lazarou (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1071-785X>


Efraim Lev (Haifa)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9914-4164>

Mark Nesbitt (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9588-4296>

Kristina Patmore (London)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7497-9782>

## PHARMACEUTICAL TERMINOLOGY IN ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL TIME – *ANDRACHNE*, *CHRYSOCOLLA* AND OTHERS\*

**Abstract.** Ancient and medieval pharmacological and medical texts contain a substantial amount of plant and mineral names. In some cases, the identification is straightforward. But for the majority of the data, we are unable to identify these ingredients with high certainty. In this paper, we discuss a selection of plant and mineral names both from a humanities and sciences point of view. In one case, the scientists were even able to examine a plant in situ. The conclusion of our paper is that a close collaboration between sciences and humanities is essential to avoid mistakes in the identification of *materia medica*.

**Keywords:** pharmacognosy, Byzantine medicine, medicinal plants, medicinal minerals, medical history, Greek medicine, *materia medica*

---

\* This research was funded in whole by the Wellcome Trust 217861/Z/19/Z. For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission. It is based at Royal Holloway University of London, and it is carried out at RHUL History and Earth Sciences, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Zurich University of Applied Sciences and University of Haifa. Without this generous support, it would not have been possible to undertake this research.

## Introduction

Ancient and medieval medical authors mention a significant number of plants and minerals that were meant to be used for the preparation of pharmaceuticals. In some cases, we can be confident that we know what these sources describe. Olive oil, or olives specifically, would be one such product. We have an abundance of information on olives throughout the centuries, from a broad selection of genres, there is a continuity in olive cultivation and use, and olives still have a similar name in many languages<sup>1</sup>. What is more, a recent genetic study concluded that the olive trees that can be found today throughout the Mediterranean go back to a cultivar from Turkey or Syria that was grown 6000–8000 years ago<sup>2</sup>. This also gives us a strong indicator to what extent olives may or may not have changed their properties over the centuries.

However, for the vast majority of plants mentioned in ancient or medieval sources we cannot be certain about the identity of the plant cited. Often, it is impossible to determine what a plant name in an ancient or medieval text would equate to in our modern world.

It would be easy to blame the underlying scientific system of Classical antiquity for this, which may in some aspects be out of date<sup>3</sup>. While these differences in the perception and definition of plants and minerals certainly play a part, our own use of terminology may also be inaccurate. We may use synonyms or homonyms, dialectal words, or inaccurate botanical nomenclature. For instance, the term “marigold” is associated with at least 18 different species of plant<sup>4</sup>, including species from different genera such as *Calendula* L., *Tagetes* L. and *Bidens* L. which have little in common other than they share the same colloquial name. Such names are part of ordinary language, their use varying between regions, or even between neighbouring villages, and their use changes over time. Scholars who do not have a background in botany often also use these colloquial terms in their publications.

---

<sup>1</sup> Our word ‘olive’ is related to the Greek word ἔλαιον, or rather its archaic form ἔλαιφον, pronounced *elaivon*.

<sup>2</sup> G. BESNARD, B. KHADARI, M. NAVASCUÉS, M. FERNÁNDEZ-MAZUECOS, A. EL BAKKALI, N. AR-RIGO, D. BAALI-CHERIF, V. BRUNINI-BRONZINI DE CARAFFA, S. SANTONI, P. VARGAS, V. SAVOLAINEN, *The Complex History of the Olive Tree: From Late Quaternary Diversification of Mediterranean Lineages to Primary Domestication in the Northern Levant*, PRS.B 280(1756), 2013, p. 1–7. For further detail see C. BRETON, M. TERSAC, A. BERVILLÉ, *Genetic Diversity and Gene Flow between the Wild Olive (*Oleaster*, *Olea europaea* L.) and the Olive: Several Plio-Pleistocene Refuge Zones in the Mediterranean Basin Suggested by Simple Sequence Repeats Analysis*, *JBio* 33, 2006, p. 1916–1928.

<sup>3</sup> For recent discussion of ancient botanical writings with bibliography, see G. HARDY, L. TOTELIN, *Ancient Botany*, London–New York 2015. For further information see also A. TOUWAIDE, *Pharmaceutical Literature*, [in:] *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms, Methods, Trends*, vol. I–III, ed. A. CLASSEN, Berlin 2010, p. 1979–2000.

<sup>4</sup> Medicinal Plant Names Services (2022), Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Version 11 [10 X 2022].

In contrast, scientific plant names are controlled. These names must be formally published in accordance with the International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi, and Plants<sup>5</sup>, including providing a description and citing one or more voucher specimens that may be referred to in perpetuity.

Yet even this system does not necessarily allow us to identify a given plant, not even if we are able to view and examine a specimen. We encountered such a situation during a recent research trip to Haifa, when Peretz Gan, the owner of Al Alim Medicinal Herb Center and himself a knowledgeable herbalist, asked the group whether they could determine the identity of a tree in his orchard. Our delegation included a number of capacities in the field, who examined the plant, but could not come to a conclusion.



Fig. Picture of the plant in question. Photographed by P. Gan.

<sup>5</sup> N.J. TURLAND, J.H. WIERSEMA, F.R. BARRIE, W. GREUTER, D.L. HAWKSWORTH, P.S. HERENDEEN, S. KNAPP, W.-H. KUSBER, D.-Z. LI, K. MARHOLD, T.W. MAY, J. MCNEILL, A.M. MONRO, J. PRADO, M.J. PRICE, G.F. SMITH, *International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi, and Plants (Shenzhen Code) Adopted by the Nineteenth International Botanical Congress Shenzhen, China, July 2017*, Glashütten 2018. For an in-depth discussion of the methodology see B. ALLKIN, K. PATMORE, *Botanical Nomenclature for Herbal Medicines and Natural Products: its Significance for Pharmacovigilance*, [in:] *Pharmacovigilance for Herbal and Traditional Medicines*, ed. J. BARNES, Cham 2022.

The shrub was originally believed to be *Commiphora gileadensis* (L.), which is in popular culture often equated with the balm of Gilead<sup>6</sup>, a plant gifted to King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, as described in the book of Kings I<sup>7</sup>. A number of other Hebrew, Latin and Greek writings also mention plants that were believed to be the balm of Gilead<sup>8</sup>.

The defining part of this tradition, however, is the story about the Queen of Sheba. Here, the textual evidence is far from unambiguous. The original of this story was written in Hebrew, probably between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, and then translated into Greek, and into Latin. The Hebrew original<sup>9</sup> Rg I 10, 10 uses the word רִבְשֵׁם־יָדִים which goes back to the root BŠM, which can denote a number of aromatic spices. The standard lexicon in the field identifies it with “cinnamon, calamus odoratus, balsam plant” and also lists ample evidence for a more general translation of spice<sup>10</sup>. In the Septuagint<sup>11</sup>, the Greek translation of the Hebrew original, probably dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, Rg III 10, 10 the plant in question is referred to as ἡδύσματα, which is a rather vague term that can denote spices or seasonings<sup>12</sup>. In Vulgate III Rg 10,10<sup>13</sup>, the Latin translation of the Hebrew original, dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, the word *aromata* is used, which merely denotes spices<sup>14</sup>.

This story is repeated in Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* VIII 174<sup>15</sup> of the first century AD, where the plant is called ὀποβάλασαμον (*opobalsamon*) or ἀποβάλασαμον

<sup>6</sup> In the present article, only a brief discussion will be presented. In depth information and a comprehensive picture of plant names mentioned in the bible can be found in A. DAFNI, B. BÖCK, *Medicinal Plants of the Bible – Revisited*, JEE 15.1, 2019, p. 57. And further discussion can be found in D. ILUZ, M. HOFFMAN, N. GILBOA-GARBER, Z. AMAR, *Medicinal Properties of Commiphora gileadensis*, AJPP 4, 2010, p. 516–520.

<sup>7</sup> This story is transmitted in 1 Kings 10, 10. The Septuagint and the Vulgate use different titles to refer to this book of the bible.

<sup>8</sup> Z. AMAR, D. ILUZ, *Balsam: the Most Expensive Perfume Plant in the Ancient World*, [in:] *The Paths of Daniel. Studies in Judaism and Jewish Culture in Honor of Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber*, ed. A.S. FERZIGER, Ramat Gan 2017, p. 15–27. This article offers an in depth analysis of the properties of *Commiphora gileadensis*. For further primary sources and discussion see also J.I. MILLER, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire 29 B.C. to A.D. 641*, Oxford 1969.

<sup>9</sup> *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. K. ELLINGER, W. RUDOLPH, Stuttgart 1977.

<sup>10</sup> *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, ed. W. GESENIUS, F. BUHL, Berlin–Göttingen–Heidelberg 1962, s.v.

<sup>11</sup> *Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, ed. A. RAHLFS, Stuttgart 1979.

<sup>12</sup> *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>13</sup> *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. WEBER, R. GRYSON, Stuttgart 2007.

<sup>14</sup> *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. GLARE, Oxford 2005, s.v.

<sup>15</sup> *Flavii Iosephi opera*, ed. B. NIESE, Berlin 1892 puts ὀποβαλάσαμου in the edition and mentions the variant ἀποβαλάσαμου in the apparatus, as transmitted by just one witness, and epitome of the work. The latest up to date edition, FLAVIUS JOSÈPHE, *Les Antiquités Juives*, vol. IV, ed. É. NODÉT, Paris 2005, publishes ἀποβαλάσαμου in the main text and does not list any variants in the apparatus.

(*apobalsamon*)<sup>16</sup>. This plant name, *opobalsamum*, is indeed known to us from various other Greek medical sources, and here in particular Dioscorides I 19<sup>17</sup>, the author of a highly important treatise on pharmaceutical ingredients of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, who also describes its medical uses.

Even this brief survey of the key evidence is enough to cause significant doubts. In tenth century BC, according to a passage of the *Old Testament* that was probably written some 300 years later, the Queen of Sheba brought a “spice” to Israel. Some one thousand years later this spice was identified with a plant that grew in these locations by Dioscorides, of which we then have a detailed description.

Therefore, the only matter we can conclude with relative certainty is that a plant described in Dioscorides existed during his life time, in the first century AD.

But whether this plant is the same as the ones grown in the Near East today is an entirely different question – and whether all the plants that are believed to be *Commiphora gileadensis* (L.) C.Chr. are actually one and the same species. A confusion like this might seem unlikely, given that these plants were supposedly either native to this area or had been grown there for millennia. But it might happen easier than one might assume at first sight: the trees at Al Alim were grown from seeds that were provided as *Commiphora gileadensis* by a trusted source, and they have been cultivated for some ten years. However, recently it has been suggested that these trees could indeed be *Bursera fagaroides* (Kunth) Engl. – a new world plant that looks very similar or even the same to the naked eye. Could there have been a mix-up somewhere down the line? And to what extent can we actually be certain that the trees labelled as balm of Gilead or *Commiphora gileadensis* growing in Israel today, or elsewhere, are even one and the same species? What is certain, though, is that some of these plants believed to be *Commiphora gileadensis* L. do indeed have pharmaceutical value<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Λέξικο της μεσαιωνικής Ελληνικής δημόδους γραμματείας 1100–1669, ed. E. KRIARAS, Thessalonike 1968–2022, s.v. lists οποβάλασαμον as a lemma but not αποβάλασαμον. He describes it as the aromatic resin of the βαλασαμόδεντρον.

<sup>17</sup> *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei de materia medica libri quinque*, vol. I–III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berolini 1907–1914.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance a very recent example in A. ALHAZMI, A.F. ALDAIRI, A. ALGHAMDI, A. ALOMERY, A. MUJALLI, A.A. OBAID, W.F. FARRASH, M. ALLAHYANI, I. HALAWANI, A. ALJUJUID, S.A. ALHARBI, M. ALMEHMADI, M.S. ALHARBI, A.A. KHAN, M.A. JASTANIAH, A. ALGHAMDI, *Antibacterial Effects of Commiphora gileadensis Methanolic Extract on Wound Healing*, *Mole* 27(10), 2022, p. 3320; L. BOUSLAMA, B. KOUIDHI, Y.M. ALQURASHI, K. CHAIEB, A. PAPETTI, *Virucidal Effect of Guggulsterone Isolated from Commiphora gileadensis*, *PLM* 85(16), 2019, p. 1225–1232; E. AMIEL, R. OFIR, N. DUDAI, E. SOLOWAY, T. RABINSKY, S. RACHMILEVITCH, *β-Caryophyllene, a Compound Isolated from the Biblical Balm of Gilead (Commiphora gileadensis), Is a Selective Apoptosis Inducer for Tumor Cell Lines*, *EBCAM* 2012.



In the following, we are going to discuss two more samples, a plant and a mineral, that would seem easy to identify from a modern lay perspective. But precisely this can be treacherous.

### Andrachne and andrachle

*Andrachne*, or ἀνδράχνη in the original Greek, is frequently mentioned in Greek medical texts<sup>19</sup>. Anecdotally, a lot of scholars working in the field would instinctively say that it is *Portulaca oleracea* L. The standard dictionary for Classical Greek states that it is the Attic form of ἀνδράχλη (*andrakhle*), which it equates with *Arbutus andrachne*<sup>20</sup>. Yet Lily Beck's Dioscorides translation, which many use as a dictionary of plant names, confidently identifies *andrachne* with *Portulaca oleracea* L.<sup>21</sup> This leaves us already with two very different plants, a tree and a shrub from two entirely different plant families.

Kriaras, the standard dictionary of medieval Greek, translates *andrachne* with two other Greek terms, ἀντράκλα (*antrakla*) and γλιστρίδα or γλυστίδα (*glistri-da*) without a further attempt at identification, other than stating that it is a type of plant<sup>22</sup>.

But what does the primary source evidence say? Let us start from scratch. The first comprehensive and authoritative work on ancient botany, which dates to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Greece, Theophrastus *Historia Plantarum* I 9, 3 and IV 15, 1, mention a tree called *andrachle*<sup>23</sup>. Pliny the Elder, a Roman author of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, on the other hand provides this curious account in XIII 40, 120 of his *Naturalis Historia*<sup>24</sup>:

*Andrachlen omnes fere Graeci porcillaceae nomine interpretantur, cum sic herba et andrachne vocetur unius litterae diversitate. Cetero andrachle est silvestris arbor neque in planis nascens, similis unedoni folio tantum minore et numquam decedente cortice non scabro quidem sed qui circumgelatus videri possit tam tristis adspectus est.*

*Andrachlen* almost all Greeks translate with the name *porcillacea*, whereas this plant is also called *andrachne* with a difference of one letter. Furthermore, *andrachle* is a forest tree and it does not grow on plains, it is similar to *unedo* just with a smaller and never shed leaf,

<sup>19</sup> Due to the large volume of mentions throughout ancient and medieval literature, we can only present a selection of primary sources. For further data see for instance J. ANDRÉ, *Les noms de plantes dans la Rome antique*, Paris 1985.

<sup>20</sup> *LSJ*, s.v.

<sup>21</sup> *Pedanius Dioscorides of Anazarbus De Materia Medica*, II, 124, trans. L. BECK, Zürich–New York 2005, p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> *Λέξικο της μεσαιωνικής...*, s.v. Kriaras also lists the variant spellings ἀντράχνη and ἀνδράχνη.

<sup>23</sup> Cited from the online collection Loeb Classical Library, [https://www-loebclassics-com.ezproxy01.rhul.ac.uk/view/theophrastus-enquiry\\_plants/1916/pb\\_LCL070.3.xml?rskey=DZKaYU&result=2](https://www-loebclassics-com.ezproxy01.rhul.ac.uk/view/theophrastus-enquiry_plants/1916/pb_LCL070.3.xml?rskey=DZKaYU&result=2) [29 IX 2022].

<sup>24</sup> *Pline l'Antic Historire Naturelle, livre XIII*, ed. et trad. A. ERNOUT, Paris 1956.

and a bark that is not rough in a way but which could appear to be frozen around it, this is how sad its appearance is.

Here, we can see a curious phenomenon. Pliny quotes Greek terminology, in one case an inflected form, but he writes it in Latin letters. At this point of time, a Greek book would most likely have been written in a handwriting in which the letter L and N look very similar – Λ and Ν, with just one line difference, which could suggest a scribal error. However, as we already know that both forms, with L and with N are well attested in other sources, which are unrelated we can assume that this was not the case, and that this palaeographical feature is just a mere coincidence.

Now that a transmission error can be excluded, what does Pliny say? According to him, the most common form of the word is *andrachle*<sup>25</sup>, whereas *andrachne* can also be found. He equates it, based on his sources, with *porcillacea*, a herb. A lesser known use of the word *andrachle* would be a term for a tree, which he describes in detail<sup>26</sup>. All we can take away from his testimony is that at his time in the first century AD, there were two plants associated with one name, and one with the other.

Dioscorides II 124 mentions *andrachne*, but does not describe what it looks like. He seems to assume that everybody would be familiar with this plant<sup>27</sup>. All we can take away from this passage is that the name was spelled with N.

Two later sources provide more information. A pseudo Galenic work, *Lexicon Botanicum*, describes it as follows<sup>28</sup>:

ἀνδράχνη τὸ χοιροβότανον ἴγουν ἢ ἀντράκλα.

*Andrachne* is *choirobotanon* that is *antrakla*.

In this instance, the lexicon equates the word forms spelled with L and N and adds another term. This word suggests that it is a herb rather than a tree.

<sup>25</sup> The transmission is not uniform, however, it is fair to assume that the above reconstructed text is correct. The latest edition cites the codex transmission of the first instance as *andraclem*, *andraclem* and *andraden*, and of the second instance *andrachne*, *andrache* and *andrahne*. Variant spellings of *ch* and *h* are common in Latin transmission, and it is easy to see how H and N could be confused in upper case letters. Moreover, *cl* and *d* could easily be mistaken for each other. *Pline l'Antique Historie Naturelle, livre XIII*, ed. et trans. A. ERNOUT, Paris 1956. An earlier edition comes to similar readings, adding also the variants *andrachie* and *andrachye* in a pinax. *C. Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae libri XXXVII*, vol. I, ed. I. SILLIG, Hamburgi–Gothae 1851.

<sup>26</sup> One of these would commonly be identified with two species of the strawberry tree, *Arbutus unedo* L. and *Arbutus andrachne* L., a characteristic element of the Mediterranean sclerophyllous forest, the other with the herb *Portulaca oleracea* L.

<sup>27</sup> *Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei...*

<sup>28</sup> *Anecdota Atheniensia et alia*, vol. II, ed. A. DELATTE, Paris 1939, p. 385–393. P. 386, 22f.

A similar text says<sup>29</sup>:

ἀνδράχνη ἢ γλυστίδα  
*Andrachne is glystrida.*

Oribasius, a prominent medical writer of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, mentions *andrachne* very frequently. In one passage, he compares another plant to “garden *andrachne*”. This suggests that there was a domesticated and a wild form of the plant<sup>30</sup>.

This is also supported by another source, *Hippiatrica Berolinensia* VII 9, 5, a Greek veterinary medical compilation with a complex history that makes it difficult to date<sup>31</sup>:

ἀνδράχνη λάχανόν ἐστὶν ἄγριον κηπουρικόν.  
*Andrachne is a wild garden vegetable.*

Simon of Genoa, a 13<sup>th</sup> century AD physician working at the papal court in Rome, mentions the plant in his multilingual dictionary of medical terminology, *Clavis Sanationis*, too<sup>32</sup>. See for instance these corresponding entries:

*Portulaca dicitur grece andragni arabice vero bachalachancha.*  
*Portulaca is called andragni in Greek but in Arabic bachalachancha*  
*Andragne grece portulaca ut apud Dy. sed grecus dicit andrachni...*  
*Andragne is in Greek portulaca as in Dioscorides but the Greeks say andrachni...*

Simon conducted in-depth research, which was based both on oral and written sources. The extent of his research is breath taking. He travelled extensively and he must have had access to a substantial number of libraries in the Mediterranean area. Simon equates *andrachne* with *portulaca* and an Arabic plant name, البقلة الحمقاء which is translated as “portulaca” in a standard modern Arabic dictionary, and the first part of the term actually translates to herb<sup>33</sup>. The plant bearing

<sup>29</sup> *Anecdota Atheniensia...*, p. 373.13.

<sup>30</sup> ORIBASIIUS, *Collectiones Medicae*, XII π 9, 3. *Oribasii Collectionum Medicarum Reliquiae*, vol. II, ed. I. RAEDER, Lipsiae–Berolini 1929.

<sup>31</sup> *Corpus hippiatricorum Graecorum*, vol. I, ed. E. ODER, C. HOPPE, Leipzig 1924 [repr. 1971]. This edition lists no variant readings in this passage.

<sup>32</sup> These entries are cited from [simonofgenoa.org](http://simonofgenoa.org) s.v. *portulaca*, <http://simonofgenoa.org/index.php?title=Portulaca> [29 IX 2022] and s.v. *andragne*, <http://simonofgenoa.org/index.php?title=Andragne> [29 IX 2022] and we acknowledge the work of Wilf Gunther on these lemmata.

<sup>33</sup> *Arabisches Woerterbuch fuer die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart*, ed. H. WEHR, <sup>5</sup>Wiesbaden 1985, s.v. BQL.

this name is also described in Al-Kindi, which provides further evidence that we are indeed dealing with a herb<sup>34</sup>.

The term *andrachne* is also mentioned in the medical work of Ioannes archiatus, but only on two occasions in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century vernacular commentary version does he provide *glistrida* as a synonym, in ω 43, 5 and 175, 12 respectively<sup>35</sup>:

ἀνδράχνης σπόρον ἦτοι γλιστρίδας

The seed of *andrachne*, that is *glistrida*

ἀνδράχνην τὴν λεγομένην γλιστρίδα

*Andrachne*, which is called *glistrida*

This brief survey of the key literature leaves us with doubts as to whether the common perception that *andrachne* is the Greek word for purslane is indeed correct. Not only does the term occur in two variations, with one letter difference, but it can also refer to two very different plants, a tree and a herb from different families.

This of course raises the question how ancient and medieval pharmacists would have known which plant to use. Oral traditions and practical training may have played a role. And in a case such as this, where the homonymous plants have a very different appearance, a competent herbalist could have recognised which one is required in a recipe based on the part of the plant that is used.

In the case of the plant name *andrachne*, a remedy prepared either with the seed of the plant or without specifying a plant part (which usually means that the whole plant or aerial part of the plant was used) would have referred to purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* L.). On the other hand, a remedy prepared with the fruits or the bark of the plant would have referred to the strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo* L. or *A. andrachne* L.). However, often this kind of context is not taken into account in modern dictionaries.

The conclusion of this part of the article certainly is that one should be critical of any identifications that would seem obvious as this can lead to a false sense of security. Anecdotally, if one walks into a Cypriot greengrocer's in London and asks for *glistrida* one is sold *Portulaca oleracea* L. It would then be easy to fall for a chain of conclusions such as *glistrida* equals *andrachne*, today's *glistrida* is *Portulaca oleracea* L. and therefore *andrachne* must have been *Portulaca oleracea* L. This is particularly treacherous when it comes to potential pharmaceutical use of these plants.

<sup>34</sup> E. LEV, Z. AMAR, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*, Leiden 2008, p. 253–255 provides extensive discussions of the corresponding medieval Hebrew term and the medicinal application described in all sources. See also this article for further secondary literature.

<sup>35</sup> *John the Physician's Therapeutics. A Medical Handbook in Vernacular Greek*, ed. B. ZIPSER, Leiden 2009.

In the following section, we are going to examine a case of a mineral that is mentioned in ancient sources.

## Chrysocolla

When it comes to the identification of minerals mentioned in ancient and medieval sources, the situation is quite similar to the problems described above in the section on medicinal plants. In some cases, such as native elements (gold, silver, copper and sulphur) the identification may be fairly clear. Gold for instance is extensively discussed in ancient sources, including its properties, and a wealth of gold objects have been preserved in the archeological record. Mercury certainly has very distinctive properties, and the ancient descriptions and methods of production meet our modern expectations<sup>36</sup>.

However, how people in general may identify a mineral is not necessarily the modern scientific method. A good example is the common name given to a gemstone in the British Crown Jewels: The Black Prince's ruby. This is a large red gemstone and is in the general public understanding a red gemstone that is commonly identified as a ruby, which is a type of corundum. However, a recent investigation yielded<sup>37</sup> that this gem is in fact a spinel – a quite different mineral. The mineral corundum is in some forms considered a gemstone. It is an aluminium oxide ( $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ ) and is very hard and has a trigonal crystal structure<sup>38</sup>. However, its colour is very variable from red (known as ruby) to blue (known as sapphire), green, pink, yellow brown and colourless, all also known as sapphire. The colours are caused by some elemental impurities; for instance, chromium gives a red colour and iron and titanium give a blue colour<sup>39</sup>. However, spinel is a magnesium aluminium oxide and has an isometric crystal structure and can be colourless, black, blue, red, violet, green, brown and pink<sup>40</sup>.

The method of naming minerals has had a very long and complex history, so much so that a more rigorous international approach was instigated in 1950 with formal international approval of names. Even so, this classification of using the chemical composition and mineral structure has been recently challenged with

<sup>36</sup> See for instance Vitruvius' first century BC account of vermillion and mercury, as described in VII 8. The description of the mineral and its physical properties allow for a conclusive identification. *Vitruvii de architectura libri decem*, ed. V. ROSE, Lipsiae 1899.

<sup>37</sup> W. SCHUMANN, *Gemstones of the World*, London 1977, p. 100. The name sapphire used to be applied to various stones. In antiquity and as late as the middle ages the name sapphire was understood to mean what is today described as lapis lazuli.

<sup>38</sup> J. BAUER, *A Field Guide in Colour to Minerals, Rocks and Precious Stones*, London 1974.

<sup>39</sup> W.A. DEER, R.A. HOWIE, J. ZUSSMANN, *An Introduction to the Rock-forming Minerals*, <sup>3</sup>London 2013.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*; J. BAUER, *A Field Guide...*

some additional properties and data of formation and origin<sup>41</sup> also suggested to provide a better classification<sup>42</sup>.

It should not be a surprise, therefore, that the identification of minerals in ancient pharmaceutical literature is problematic and some commonly assumed identifications might have to be challenged and reconsidered. Unlike with plants, where an illustration or description may provide an important clue to identification, the colour and gross form of a mineral may not provide sufficient detail to identify mineral species. We can take three examples from Dioscorides<sup>43</sup>.

Dioscorides V, 89 mentions a mineral called χρυσοκόλλα (*chrysocolla*). The name is derived from the Greek χρυσός (*chrysos*) meaning gold and κόλλα (*kolla*) meaning glue and was first used by Theophrastus in Hellenistic times<sup>44</sup> but revived as a formal mineral name in 1808<sup>45</sup>. Chrysocolla is a green or blue mineral that has a greasy or vitreous lustre. It is generally amorphous, compact and occurs as a crust or encrustation and often has grape-like aggregates. It is a hydrated copper silicate<sup>46</sup>.

As we shall see, there is no guarantee that the modern mineral meaning is the same as the ancient meaning. Dioscorides states that the best chrysocolla is the Armenian, being intensely green in colour, second best is the Macedonian, then the Cyprian. However, we know that chrysocolla (Plate, Fig. A) does not occur in Cyprus so what could the mineral be? There are a number of blue minerals with a similar form that occur in Cyprus but they all have a different chemical structure. For example, celadonite (Plate, Fig. B) does occur. This has a blue-green colour but has a monoclinic crystal structure but more importantly is a potassium silicate. The name is after the French *célador* for sea-green, its common colour<sup>47</sup>.

A more common example<sup>48</sup> that is often used in ancient texts is a mineral commonly identified as lapis lazuli. Consequently, Beck's standard translation of Dioscorides V, 91 identifies and translates the original word κυανός (*kyanos*) as lapis lazuli. The following text describes it as being produced in Cyprus from

<sup>41</sup> R.M. HAZEN, S.M. MORRISON, *On the Paragenetic Modes of Minerals: A Mineral Evolution Perspective*, AMin 107, 2022, p. 1262–1287; R.M. HAZEN, S.M. MORRISON, S.V. KRIVOVICHEV, R.T. DOWNS, *Lumping and Splitting: Toward a Classification of Mineral Natural Kinds*, AMin 107, 2022, p. 1288–1301.

<sup>42</sup> A. LU, *Mineral Evolution Heralds a New Era for Mineralogy*, AMin 107, 2022, p. 1217–1218.

<sup>43</sup> As above, we used both Wellmann's edition and Beck's translation as a basis. See also T.A. OSBALDESTON, R.P. WOOD, *Dioscorides De Materia Medica. Being an Herbal with Many Other Medicinal Materials Written in Greek in the First Century of the Common Era*, Johannesburg 2000.

<sup>44</sup> *Theophrastus On Stones*, ed. et trans. E. CALEY, J. RICHARDS, Columbus Ohio 1956, p. 39, 40.

<sup>45</sup> A.-J.F.-M. BROCHANT DE VILLIERS, *Traité élémentaire de mineralogique*, vol. I–II, <sup>2</sup>Paris 1808.

<sup>46</sup> J. BAUER, *A Field Guide...*, p. 102.

<sup>47</sup> W.A. DEER, R.A. HOWIE, J. ZUSSMANN, *An Introduction...*, p. 254.

<sup>48</sup> V.A. DRITSS, B.B. ZVIAGINA, D.K. MCCARTY, A.L. SALYN, *Factors Responsible for Crystal-chemical Variations in the Solid Solutions from Illite to Aluminoceladonite from Glauconite to Celadonite, Sample 69*, AMin 95, 2010, p. 348–361.

copper mines. This is a clear misidentification as the mineral does not occur in Cyprus<sup>49</sup> or as a result of copper mining or smelting<sup>50</sup>. The mineral is widely identified in ancient pharmacological texts but again this identification may not be secure. In modern terms Lapis Lazuli is a rock type, rather than a single mineral species. The name was first used in 1636 by Anselmus de Boodt in *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historium*<sup>51</sup> derived from the Latin *lapis*, rock, and the Persian *lazward*, meaning blue. It is an uncommon metamorphic rock that occurs only commonly in Afghanistan. The blue mineral is mainly lazurite or more commonly a sulphur-rich variety of hauyne<sup>52</sup>.

Just these two examples make it clear that a different approach to the identification of minerals in ancient pharmacological tests needs specialist input and a lot of consideration from both the geological and the philological side. The mineral name *kyanos*, for instance, is very similar to the name kyanite, a mineral known today, but the Greek word κύανος (*kyanos*) just means blue.

Our final example is that of calamine, as mentioned in Beck's translation of Dioscorides V, 74. The original Greek term is καδμεία (*kadmeia*), and Dioscorides states that it occurs in Cyprus. In addition, it is stated, according to Beck's translation, that *calamine is formed as copper is heated in furnaces and soot settles on the walls and roof of the furnaces*. However calamine (Plate, Fig. C), as it is understood today is in fact a mineral of zinc. The name is no longer used and in its place two mineral names are common: smithsonite, that is a zinc carbonate and hemimorphite that is a zinc silicate. Although with different crystal structures these two minerals exhibit the same botryoidal form and cannot be distinguished without chemical analyses<sup>53</sup>. A confusion exists in that the common term calamine lotion is used for a mixture of zinc oxide and iron oxide. In all these examples we must be very cautious in the certainty of any mineral identification.

<sup>49</sup> M.R. CLEINTUAR, G.J. KNOX, P.J. EALEY, *The Geology of Cyprus and its Place in the East-Mediterranean Framework*, GMij 56, 1977, p. 66–82; G. CONSTANTINOU, J.S. GOVETT, *Geology, Geochemistry, and Genesis of Cyprus Sulfide Deposits*, EGeo 68, 1973, p. 843–858; O. DAVIES, *The Copper Mines of Cyprus*, ABSA 30, 1928/1929 – 1929/1930, p. 74–85.

<sup>50</sup> N. ANTIVACHIS, *The Geology of the Northern Part of the Apliki Cyprus-type Ore Deposit*, BGS 49, 2015, p. 4–28; D.N. ANTIVACHIS, E. ELIAS CHATZITHEODORIDIS, N. SKARPELIS, K. KOMNITSAS, *Secondary Sulphate Minerals in a Cyprus-Type Ore Deposit, Apliki, Cyprus: Mineralogy and Its Implications Regarding the Chemistry of Pit Lake Waters*, MWE 36, 2017, p. 226–238; L. VAN BREMPT, V. KASSIANIDOU, *Facing the Complexity of Copper-sulphide Ore Smelting and Assessing the Role of Copper in South-central Cyprus: A Comparative Study of the Slag Assemblage from Late Bronze Age Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios*, JAS.R 7, 2016, p. 539–553.

<sup>51</sup> P. 273.

<sup>52</sup> W.A. DEER, R.A. HOWIE, J. ZUSSMANN, *An Introduction...*, p. 376.

<sup>53</sup> W.A. DEER, R.A. HOWIE, J. ZUSSMANN, *An Introduction...*; J. BAUER, *A Field Guide...*

### Some possible approaches to the identification of minerals in ancient texts

It is important to realize that the use of a mineral in any medical treatment may be because of several factors, apart from the more superstitious thoughts about colour. Indeed colour may be caused by a number of different reasons from changes in crystal structure to the incorporation of minor or trace elements in the crystal structure. What is often forgotten is that it is rarely a particular mineral that is significant but the elements that make up the mineral and how any particular element may be made bioavailable for external or internal use<sup>54</sup>. We note that minerals are made up of two main components: cations and anions. Cations have a positive charge and are mainly metallic atoms whereas anions have a negative charge and are non-metallic atoms. So for example, the mineral calcite is a calcium carbonate mineral, with the main metallic species being calcium. Calcium is an important element for the working of the body<sup>55</sup>. This is also the case with copper<sup>56</sup>. However, copper may be connected to a range of anions that may be more or less easy to be made bioavailable to the body<sup>57</sup>. For example we have copper oxide (cuprite), copper carbonate (azurite) (Plate, Fig. D), malachite (Plate, Fig. E), copper sulphide (e.g. chalcocite), each of which may react differently in pharmacological recipes<sup>58</sup>. Equally, although the colour blue is most often associated with copper minerals and derivatives (e.g. copper sulphate or blue vitriol) there are many blue minerals lacking copper<sup>59</sup>.

One key piece of evidence may be firstly the common occurrence of the mineral, where one element is needed for a particular use thereby making it a valuable commodity<sup>60</sup>. The second issue is whether the mineral can be transformed in a particular recipe. In this regard we need to consider the reactivity of the anions. For example silicate minerals are difficult to dissolve whereas carbonate, sulphate and sulphide minerals may react with an acid, such as the acetic acid in vinegar. Together, then this may reveal clues to identity.

<sup>54</sup> R.B. FINKELMAN, H.C.W. SKINNER, G.S. PLUMLEE, J.E. BUNNELL, *Medical Geology*, Geot 46, 2001, p. 20–23; *Essentials of Medical Geology*, ed. O. SELINUS, B. ALLOWAY, J.A. CENTENO, R.B. FINKELMAN, R. FUGE, U. LINDH, P. SMEDLEY, New York 2005.

<sup>55</sup> *Essentials of Medical Geology*...

<sup>56</sup> M.C. LINDER, M. HAZEGH-AZAM, *Copper Bio-chemistry and Molecular Biology*, AJCN 63, 1996, p. 797S–811S.

<sup>57</sup> W.G. ERNST, *Earth Materials and Human Health*, IGR 48, 2006, p. 191–208; *Essentials of Medical Geology*...

<sup>58</sup> H.H.A. DOLWETT, J.R.J. SORENSON, *Historic Uses of Copper Compounds in Medicine*, TEM 2.2, 1985, p. 80–87.

<sup>59</sup> J. BAUER, *A Field Guide*...

<sup>60</sup> O. DAVIES, *The Copper Mines*...



In relation to copper minerals, therefore, those of Cyprus are mentioned most often, indeed the name of the island is after copper<sup>61</sup>. The modern geology of Cyprus is particularly informative as well as the known historic exploitation of resources<sup>62</sup>. Whereas Cyprus is justifiably famous for its copper there is often a misunderstanding among non-geologists of how this occurs in Cyprus and indeed the wide range of copper minerals that exist<sup>63</sup>. These may be considered either as primary or secondary ores (sulphide ores or oxidation products such as carbonates or oxides) or else as different chemical associations (e.g. copper sulphides, copper carbonates, copper silicates etc)<sup>64</sup>. Each group may react in a different way to, for example acids such as with vinegar. We know that in Cyprus the main iron and copper ores are the massive sulphide deposits<sup>65</sup> that have been worked for over 5,000 years. We can learn much also from an examination of ancient slags to understand the nature and uses of these deposits<sup>66</sup>. The main ore is iron sulphide (iron pyrite) with copper sulphide being a minor component<sup>67</sup> (Plate, Fig. F). Bornite ( $\text{Cu}_5\text{FeS}_4$ ) also occurs<sup>68</sup> (Plate, Fig. G), but is much rarer.

Another issue relates to minor or trace elements that are present within a mineral and it may be that this rarer component is the one of interest. For example we now know that selenium is an important metallic element essential for some bodily functions<sup>69</sup>. The element rarely forms a mineral on its own. The element is found in several mineral species such as in over 100 copper minerals. It is possible that a mineral may be found to be of use by the chance occurrence of such a trace element.

Recent studies have indicated that selenium exerts a beneficial effect on coronary disease mortality, and that selenium plus garlic produces significant anti-cancer activity. Selenium is primarily taken up from the soil by plants as selenate ( $\text{SeO}_4^{2-}$ ) or selenite ( $\text{SeO}_3^{2-}$ ). The assimilation of selenate appears to follow the

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*; LSJ, s.v. κύπριος.

<sup>62</sup> A.B. KNAPP, V. KASSIANIDOU, M. DONNELLY, *Copper Smelting in Late Bronze Age Cyprus: The Excavations at Politiko Phorades*, NEA 64.4, 2001, p. 204–210. Particularly useful in this context is T. GREENSMITH, *Southern Cyprus. Geologist's Association Guide No 50*, London 1994.

<sup>63</sup> S. EDWARDS et al., *Classic Geology in Europe. Cyprus*, Edinburgh 2010; T. GREENSMITH, *Southern Cyprus...*

<sup>64</sup> O. DAVIES, *The Copper Mines...*; N. ANTIVACHIS, *The Geology...*; D.N. ANTIVACHIS, E. ELIAS CHATZITHEODORIDIS, N. SKARPELIS, K. KOMNITSAS, *Secondary Sulphate Minerals...*

<sup>65</sup> D.G. ELIOPOULOS, M. ECONOMOU-ELIOPOULOS, G. ECONOMOU, V. SKOUNAKIS, *Mineralogical and Geochemical Constraints on the Origin of Mafic–Ultramafic-Hosted Sulphides: The Pindos Ophiolite Complex*, Min 10, 2020, p. 454.

<sup>66</sup> L. VAN BREMPT, V. KASSIANIDOU, *Facing the Complexity...*

<sup>67</sup> O. DAVIES, *The Copper Mines of Cyprus...*; N. ANTIVACHIS, *The Geology...*; D.N. ANTIVACHIS, E. ELIAS CHATZITHEODORIDIS, N. SKARPELIS, K. KOMNITSAS, *Secondary Sulphate Minerals...*

<sup>68</sup> D.G. ELIOPOULOS, M. ECONOMOU-ELIOPOULOS, G. ECONOMOU, V. SKOUNAKIS, *Mineralogical and Geochemical Constraints...*

<sup>69</sup> *Essentials of Medical Geology...*

sulphate reduction pathway common to higher plants. Cereals and forage crops convert selenium into mainly selenomethionine and incorporate it into protein<sup>70</sup>.

This then leads to another possible approach. That is a consideration of the use of a mineral in an ancient recipe book for an identified condition and then the opposite – the use of an element for the treatment or identification of a condition in modern medicine. There has been rapid development of our understanding of the use of minerals in modern medical practice. A useful example is that of G. Borkow and J. Gabbay<sup>71</sup>. In this paper for example it is shown that copper has potent biocidal (including anti-fungal) properties.

Another approach is to consider both the ancient and modern use of minerals in medicines and indeed how lack of particular elements may themselves cause a range of medical conditions.

Ancient: There has been a significant rise of interest in ancient medicines in relation to modern cancer treatments<sup>72</sup>. Many of the approaches to potential cancer treatments have been summarised by Hajdu and these will be compared to treatments suggested in our texts and their current and potential use in modern medicines.

Modern: One aspect of ancient copper mining in Cyprus deposits<sup>73</sup> is related to the concentration of toxic heavy metals in soils and also in wild and cultivated plant species. Many of these have serious health implications<sup>74</sup>. Spoil heaps derived from ancient copper workings have elevated concentrations of sulphur, zinc, copper and lead. Manganese concentrations were also raised. In addition, cadmium appears to be in higher concentration in figs, peanuts and lemons as well as in grains and barley straw. Eating such materials cause a number of potential illnesses. Studies have also shown that heavy metal concentrations are high in native plant species such as *Dittrichia viscosa* (L.) Greuter and *Allium ampeloprasum*<sup>75</sup>. Iron-rich species have a range of both positive and negative effects on human health and this often depends on the structure of the iron compound concerned.

Historical records show that copper and copper compounds had been used medicinally at least as early as 400 BC<sup>76</sup>. Many copper compounds were used to

<sup>70</sup> *Essentials of Medical Geology...*

<sup>71</sup> G. BORKOW, J. GABBAY, *Copper, An Ancient Remedy Returning to Fight Microbial, Fungal and Viral Infections*, CChB 3, 2009, p. 272–278.

<sup>72</sup> S.I. HAJDU, *Pathfinders in Oncology from Ancient Times to the End of the Middle Ages*, Can 122, 2016, p. 1638–1646.

<sup>73</sup> L. VAN BREMPT, V. KASSIANIDOU, *Facing the Complexity...*

<sup>74</sup> A. CHRISTOU, P. CHRISTODOULOS, C.P. THEOLOGIDES, C. COSTA, K. IOANNIS, I.K. KALAVROUZ-IOTIS, P. SOTERIOS, S.P. VARNAVAS, *Assessment of Toxic Heavy Metals Concentrations in Soils and Wild and Cultivated Plant Species in Limni Abandoned Copper Mining Site, Cyprus*, JGEx 178, 2017, p. 16–22.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>76</sup> K.E. MASON, *A Conspectus of Research on Copper Metabolism and Requirements of Man*, JNu 109, 1979, p. 1079–2066.

treat a variety of diseases during the nineteenth century, and the presence of copper in plants and animals was recognized more than 150 years ago<sup>77</sup>. For quite some time it has been widely accepted that copper is an essential trace element required for survival by all organisms, from bacterial cells to humans<sup>78</sup>.

Waters draining from old mine areas also have the potential of having a range of dissolved minerals and salts<sup>79</sup>. In addition to primary dissolved iron and copper minerals there are many secondary minerals such as magnesium-, calcium-, sodium- and aluminium sulphate minerals and highly soluble iron sulphate salts. In both the ancient treatments<sup>80</sup> as well as the modern we can use the structure of medical use groups proposed by Staub et al.<sup>81</sup> that categorises treatments for a range of internal and external uses. This data can then be linked to known medical information concerning the importance of elements and hence be useful in helping to identify mineral species use in ancient pharmacological texts.

## Conclusion

Our project has so far established that the topic is far more complex than it would appear. Only very few plants are in the olive tree category, where we know conclusively what they were and whether they may have changed their properties over time. For the remainder, the names alone provide insufficient information due to their highly variable nature, over time and from place to place.

With inorganic materials, the balance is slightly different. We can be certain about a number of minerals, and in some cases we can narrow down what they would or would not have been. However, it still leaves us with a considerable number of items that are as such uncertain. What is more, once we move beyond basic lexicography, we realise how important minerals are in other ways, for instance as trace elements in water or absorbed in a plant. Moreover, minerals have to be considered in a much broader context than commonly thought.

In any case, the only way forward is to work in multidisciplinary teams, as this is a highly complex task.

<sup>77</sup> W.G. ERNST, *Earth Materials...*

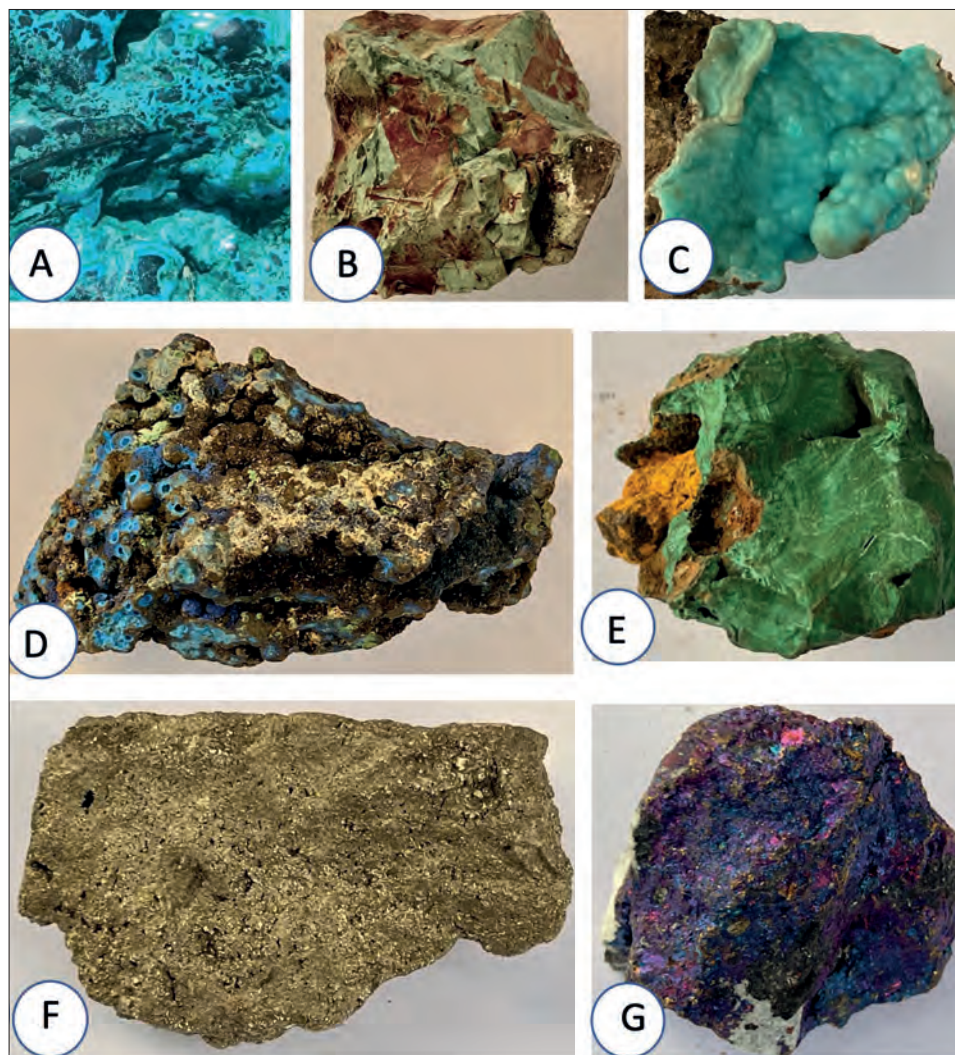
<sup>78</sup> M.C. LINDER, M. HAZEGH-AZAM, *Copper Bio-chemistry...*

<sup>79</sup> D.N. ANTIVACHIS, E. ELIAS CHATZITHEODORIDIS, N. SKARPELIS, K. KOMNITSAS, *Secondary Sulphate Minerals...*

<sup>80</sup> E. LEV, *Healing with Minerals and Inorganic Substances: A Review of Levantine Practice from the Middle Ages to the Present*, IGR 52.7–8, 2010, p. 700–725; U.G. LIMPITLAW, *Ingestion of Earth Materials for Health by Humans and Animals*, IGR 52.7–8, 2010, p. 726–744.

<sup>81</sup> P.O. STAUB, M.S. GECK, C.S. WECKERLE, L. CASU, M. LEONTI, *Classifying Diseases and Remedies in Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacology*, JEPH 174, 2015, p. 514–519.

## Plate. The geological samples



A. Chrysocolla ( $\text{Cu}_2\text{H}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5(\text{OH})_4$ ), locality unknown.

B. Celadonite ( $\text{K}(\text{Mg},\text{Fe}^{2+})(\text{Fe}^{3+},\text{Al})[\text{Si}_4\text{O}_{10}](\text{OH})_2$ ). In pillow lavas, Klirou Bridge, Cyprus.

C. Calamine (hemimorphite). Zinc silicate ( $\text{Zn}_4(\text{Si}_2\text{O}_7)(\text{OH})_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), Cumberland, England

D. Azurite ( $\text{Cu}_3(\text{CO}_3)_2(\text{OH})_2$ ), Bisbee, Arizona, U.S.A

E. Malachite ( $\text{Cu}_2\text{CO}_3(\text{OH})_2$ ). Zambia, Africa.

F. Copper ore comprising pyrite, chalcopyrite and covellite in propylitized lava. Limni Mine, Cyprus.

G. Bornite Peacock ore. ( $\text{Cu}_5\text{FeS}_4$ ), Cumberland, England.

## Bibliography

- ALHAZMI A., ALDAIRI A.F., ALGHAMDI A., ALOMERY A., MUJALLI A., OBAID A.A., FARRASH W.F., ALLAHYANI M., HALAWANI I., ALJUAIID A., ALHARBI S.A., ALMEHMADI M., ALHARBI M.S., KHAN A.A., JASTANIAH M.A., ALGHAMDI A., *Antibacterial Effects of Commiphora gileadensis Methanolic Extract on Wound Healing*, "Molecules" 27(10), 2022, p. 3320, <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27103320>
- ALLKIN B., PATMORE K., *Botanical Nomenclature for Herbal Medicines and Natural Products: its Significance for Pharmacovigilance*, [in:] *Pharmacovigilance for Herbal and Traditional Medicines*, ed. J. BARNES, Cham 2022, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07275-8\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07275-8_8)
- AMAR Z., ILUZ D., *Balsam: the Most Expensive Perfume Plant in the Ancient World*, [in:] *The Paths of Daniel. Studies in Judaism and Jewish Culture in Honor of Rabbi Professor Daniel Sperber*, ed. A.S. FERZIGER, Ramat Gan 2017, p. 15–27.
- AMIEL E., OFIR R., DUDAI N., SOLOWAY E., RABINSKY T., RACHMILEVITCH S.,  *$\beta$ -Caryophyllene, a Compound Isolated from the Biblical Balm of Gilead (Commiphora gileadensis), Is a Selective Apoptosis Inducer for Tumor Cell Lines*, "Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine" 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/872394>.
- ANDRÉ J., *Les noms de plantes dans la Rome antique*, Paris 1985.
- Anecdota Atheniensia et alia*, vol. II, ed. A. DELATTE, Paris 1939.
- ANTIVACHIS N., *The Geology of the Northern Part of the Apliki Cyprus-type Ore Deposit*, "Bulletin of the Geological Society of Greece" 49, 2015, p. 4–28, <https://doi.org/10.12681/bgsg.11047>
- ANTIVACHIS D.N., CHATZITHEODORIDIS E., SKARPELIS N., KOMNITSAS K., *Secondary Sulphate Minerals in a Cyprus-Type Ore Deposit, Apliki, Cyprus: Mineralogy and Its Implications Regarding the Chemistry of Pit Lake Waters*, "Mine Water and the Environment" 36, 2017, p. 226–238, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10230-016-0398-0>
- Arabisches Woerterbuch fuer die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart*, ed. H. WEHR, <sup>5</sup>Wiesbaden 1985.
- BAUER J., *A Field Guide in Colour to Minerals, Rocks and Precious Stones*, London 1974.
- BESNARD G., KHADARI B., NAVASCUÉS M., FERNÁNDEZ-MAZUECOS M., EL BAKKALI A., ARRIGO N., BAALI-CHERIF D., BRUNINI-BRONZINI DE CARAFFA V., SANTONI S., VARGAS P., SAVOLAINEN V., *The Complex History of the Olive Tree: From Late Quaternary Diversification of Mediterranean Lineages to Primary Domestication in the Northern Levant*, "Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences" 280(1756), 2013, p. 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2012.2833>
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. K. ELLINGER, W. RUDOLPH, Stuttgart 1977.
- Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. WEBER, R. GRYSON, Stuttgart 2007.
- BORKOW G., GABBAY J., *Copper, An Ancient Remedy Returning to Fight Microbial, Fungal and Viral Infections*, "Current Chemical Biology" 3, 2009, p. 272–278.
- BOUSLAMA L., KOUIDHI B., ALQURASHI Y.M., CHAIEB K., PAPETTI A., *Virucidal Effect of Guggulsterone Isolated from Commiphora gileadensis*, "Planta Medica" 85(16), 2019, p. 1225–1232, <https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1014-3303>
- BREMPT L. VAN, KASSIANIDOU V., *Facing the Complexity of Copper-sulphide Ore Smelting and Assessing the Role of Copper in South-central Cyprus: A Comparative Study of the Slag Assemblage from Late Bronze Age Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios*, "Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports" 7, 2016, p. 539–553, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2015.08.022>

- BRETON C., TERSAC M., BERVILLÉ A., *Genetic Diversity and Gene Flow between the Wild Olive (*Olea europaea* L.) and the Olive: Several Plio-Pleistocene Refuge Zones in the Mediterranean Basin Suggested by Simple Sequence Repeats Analysis*, "Journal of Biogeography" 33, 2006, p. 1916–1928, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2699.2006.01544.x>
- BROCHANT DE VILLIERS A.-J.F.-M., *Traité élémentaire de mineralogique*, vol. I–II, <sup>2</sup>Paris 1808.
- C. *Plinii Secundi Naturalis Historiae libri XXXVII*, vol. I, ed. I. SILLIG, Hamburgi–Gothae 1851.
- CHRISTOU A., CHRISTODOULOS P., THEOLOGIDES C.P., COSTA C., IOANNIS K., KALAVROUZOTIS I.K., SOTERIOS P., VARNAVAS S.P., *Assessment of Toxic Heavy Metals Concentrations in Soils and Wild and Cultivated Plant Species in Limni Abandoned Copper Mining Site, Cyprus*, "Journal of Geochemical Exploration" 178, 2017, p. 16–22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gexplo.2017.03.012>
- CLEINTUAR M.R., KNOX G.J., EALEY P.J., *The Geology of Cyprus and its Place in the East-Mediterranean Framework*, "Geologie en Mijnbouw" 56, 1977, p. 66–82.
- CONSTANTINO G., GOVETT J.S., *Geology, Geochemistry, and Genesis of Cyprus Sulfide Deposits*, "Economic Geology" 68, 1973, p. 843–858, <https://doi.org/10.2113/gsecongeo.68.6.843>
- Corpus hippiatricorum Graecorum*, vol. I, ed. E. ODER, C. HOPPE, Leipzig 1924 [repr. 1971].
- DAFNI A., BÖCK B., *Medicinal Plants of the Bible – Revisited*, "Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine" 15.1, 2019, p. 57, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13002-019-0338-8>
- DAVIES O., *The Copper Mines of Cyprus*, "The Annual of the British School at Athens" 30, 1928/1929 – 1929/1930, p. 74–85, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0068245400011497>
- DEER W.A., HOWIE R.A., ZUSSMANN J., *An Introduction to the Rock-forming Minerals*, <sup>3</sup>London 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1180/DHZ>
- DOLWETT H.H.A., SORENSON J.R.J., *Historic Uses of Copper Compounds in Medicine*, "Trace Elements in Medicine" 2.2, 1985, p. 80–87.
- DRITSS V.A., ZVIAGINA B.B., MCCARTY D.K., SALYN A.L., *Factors Responsible for Crystal-chemical Variations in the Solid Solutions from Illite to Aluminoceladonite from Glauconite to Celadonite, Sample 69*, "American Mineralogist" 95, 2010, p. 348–361, <https://doi.org/10.2138/am.2010.3300>
- EDWARDS S. et al., *Classic Geology in Europe. Cyprus*, Edinburgh 2010.
- ELIOPOULOS D.G., ECONOMOU-ELIOPOULOS M., ECONOMOU G., SKOUNAKIS V., *Mineralogical and Geochemical Constraints on the Origin of Mafic–Ultramafic-Hosted Sulphides: The Pindos Ophiolite Complex*, "Minerals" 10, 2020, p. 454, <https://doi.org/10.3390/min10050454>
- ERNST W.G., *Earth Materials and Human Health*, "International Geology Review" 48, 2006, p. 191–208, <https://doi.org/10.2747/0020-6814.48.3.191>
- Essentials of Medical Geology*, ed. O. SELINUS, B. ALLOWAY, J.A. CENTENO, R.B. FINKELMAN, R. FUGE, U. LINDH, P. SMEDLEY, New York 2005.
- FINKELMAN R.B., SKINNER H.C.W., PLUMLEE G.S., BUNNELL J.E., *Medical Geology*, "Geotimes" 46, 2001, p. 20–23.
- Flavii Iosephi opera*, ed. B. NIESE, Berlin 1892.
- FLAVIUS JOSÈPHE, *Les Antiquités Juives*, vol. IV, ed. É. NODÉ, Paris 2005.
- GREENSMITH T., *Southern Cyprus. Geologist's Association Guide No 50*, London 1994.
- HAJDU S.I., *Pathfinders in Oncology from Ancient Times to the End of the Middle Ages*, "Cancer" 122, 2016, p. 1638–1646, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.29955>
- HARDY G., TOTELIN L., *Ancient Botany*, London–New York 2015, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203458358>

- HAZEN R.M., MORRISON S.M., *On the Paragenetic Modes of Minerals: A Mineral Evolution Perspective*, "American Mineralogist" 107, 2022, p. 1262–1287, <https://doi.org/10.2138/am-2022-8099>
- HAZEN R.M., MORRISON S.M., KRIVOVICHEV S.V., DOWNS R.T., *Lumping and Splitting: Toward a Classification of Mineral Natural Kinds*, "American Mineralogist" 107, 2022, p. 1288–1301, <https://doi.org/10.2138/am-2022-8105>
- Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, ed. W. GESENIUS, F. BUHL, <sup>17</sup>Berlin–Göttingen–Heidelberg 1962.
- ILUZ D., HOFFMAN M., GILBOA–GARBER N., AMAR Z., *Medicinal Properties of Commiphora gileadensis*, "African Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology" 4, 2010, p. 516–520.
- John the Physician's Therapeutics. A Medical Handbook in Vernacular Greek*, ed. B. ZIPSER, Leiden 2009.
- KNAPP A.B., KASSIANIDOU V., DONNELLY M., *Copper Smelting in Late Bronze Age Cyprus: The Excavations at Politiko Phorades*, "Near Eastern Archaeology" 64.4, 2001, p. 204–210, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3210830>
- LEV E., *Healing with Minerals and Inorganic Substances: A Review of Levantine Practice from the Middle Ages to the Present*, "International Geology Review" 52.7–8, 2010, p. 700–725, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00206811003679661>
- LEV E., AMAR Z., *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*, Leiden 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004161207.i-621>
- Léxico tēs mesaionikēs Ellēnikēs dimōdous grammateías 1100–1669*, ed. E. KRIARAS, Thessalonike 1968–2022.
- LIDDELL H.G., SCOTT R., JONES H.S. et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, <sup>9</sup>Oxford 1996.
- LIMPITLAW U.G., *Ingestion of Earth Materials for Health by Humans and Animals*, "International Geology Review" 52.7–8, 2010, p. 726–744, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00206811003679695>
- LINDER M.C., HAZEGH-AZAM M., *Copper Bio-chemistry and Molecular Biology*, "American Journal of Clinical Nutrition" 63, 1996, p. 797S–811S.
- LU A., *Mineral Evolution Heralds a New Era for Mineralogy*, "American Mineralogist" 107, 2022, p. 1217–1218, <https://doi.org/10.2138/am-2022-8414>
- MASON K.E., *A Conspectus of Research on Copper Metabolism and Requirements of Man*, "Journal of Nutrition" 109, 1979, p. 1079–2066, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/109.11.1979>
- MILLER J., *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire 29 B.C. to A.D. 641*, Oxford 1969.
- Oribasii Collectionum Medicarum Reliquiae*, vol. II, ed. I. RAEDER, Lipsiae–Berolini 1929.
- OSBALDESTON T.A., WOOD R.P., *Dioscorides De Materia Medica. Being an Herbal with Many Other Medicinal Materials Written in Greek in the First Century of the Common Era*, Johannesburg 2000.
- Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. GLARE, Oxford 2005.
- Pedanii Dioscuridis Anazarbei de materia medica libri quinque*, vol. I–III, ed. M. WELLMANN, Berolini 1907–1914.
- Pedanos Dioscorides of Anazarbus De Materia Medica*, trans. L. BECK, Zürich–New York 2005.
- Pline l'Antic Historire Naturelle, livre XIII*, ed. et trans. A. ERNOUT, Paris 1956.
- SCHUMANN W., *Gemstones of the World*, London 1977.
- Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, ed. A. RAHLFS, Stuttgart 1979.
- STAUB P.O., GECK M.S., WECKERLE C.S., CASU L., LEONTI M., *Classifying Diseases and Remedies in Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacology*, "Journal of Ethnopharmacology" 174, 2015, p. 514–519, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jep.2015.08.051>

*Theophrastus On Stones*, ed. et trans. E. CALEY, J. RICHARDS, Columbus Ohio 1956.

TOUWAIDE A., *Pharmaceutical Literature*, [in:] *Handbook of Medieval Studies. Terms, Methods, Trends*, vol. I–III, ed. A. CLASSEN, Berlin 2010, p. 1979–2000, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110215588.1979>

TURLAND N.J., WIERSEMA J.H., BARRIE F.R., GREUTER W., HAWKSWORTH D.L., HERENDEEN P.S., KNAPP S., KUSBER W.-H., LI D.-Z., MARHOLD K., MAY T.W., MCNEILL J., MONRO A.M., PRADO J., PRICE M.J., SMITH G.F., *International Code of Nomenclature for Algae, Fungi, and Plants (Shenzhen Code) Adopted by the Nineteenth International Botanical Congress Shenzhen, China, July 2017*, Glashütten 2018, <https://doi.org/10.12705/Code.2018>

*Vitruvii de architectura libri decem*, ed. V. ROSE, Lipsiae 1899.

**Barbara Zipser**

Royal Holloway, University of London  
Egham Hill  
Egham, Surrey  
TW20 0EX  
United Kingdom  
[Barbara.Zipser@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Barbara.Zipser@rhul.ac.uk)

**Andrew C. Scott**

Royal Holloway, University of London  
Egham Hill  
Egham, Surrey  
TW20 0EX  
United Kingdom  
[a.scott@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:a.scott@rhul.ac.uk)

**Robert Allkin**

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew  
Kew, Richmond, London TW9 3AE  
Great Britain  
[b.allkin@kew.org](mailto:b.allkin@kew.org)

**Peretz Gan**

Al Alim Medicinal Herb Center  
Moshav Zippori 49 Hamovil 1791000  
Israel  
[alalim.p@gmail.com](mailto:alalim.p@gmail.com)



**Andreas Lardos**

Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften  
Gertrudstrasse 15, 8400 Winterthur  
Switzerland  
andreas.lardos@zhaw.ch

**Rebecca Lazarou**

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew  
Kew, Richmond, London TW9 3AE  
Great Britain  
rebecca@rebeccalazarou.com

**Efraim Lev**

University of Haifa  
199 Aba Khoushy Ave. Mount Carmel, Haifa  
Israel  
elev@univ.haifa.ac.il

**Mark Nesbitt**

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew  
Kew, Richmond, London TW9 3AE  
Great Britain  
M.Nesbitt@kew.org

**Kristina Patmore**

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew  
Kew, Richmond, London TW9 3AE  
Great Britain  
K.Patmore@kew.org

# MISCELLANEA





## NOTES ON A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE HELM FROM LUCERA

“*Studia Ceranea*” volume 12 contained an article regarding a previously neglected barrel helm found in Lucera, Italy in 1980<sup>1</sup>. The find was reliably dated to the third quarter of the thirteenth century. The article is a significant contribution to the study of Armour of that period. An element of its superior qualities is the amount of detail provided regarding the physical construction of the item. The usual general description was complemented by precise measurements of all the various components, and photographs of fine quality (Fig. 1). Such rich data provided the present author with an irresistible opportunity. Over that last five years the third quarter of the thirteenth century has become a major focus in mediaeval re-enactment in Britain. That is founded upon a new interest in the civil war that is traditionally referred to as “the second barons’ war”. That event was an attempt to bring into genuine fruition the more egalitarian constitution for England that had been hinted at in the text of the Magna Carta of 1215, but had remained void due to the resistance of the monarchy and those of the elite who were loyal to it. The civil war ended with the battle that became known as “the murder of Evesham” in 1265 where the royal forces prevailed and took ruthless vengeance on surviving rebels. The battle is now commemorated by a major event in early August each year, and other notable battles in that conflict are gaining attention.

Thus, the wealth of data provided in the article found the ideal application in the manufacture of a piece to be used in such re-enactments. The result, however, ought not to be described as a “reproduction of”, but rather as a “replica based upon” the Lucera helm. That is because two areas of change were implemented. One was superficial and self-indulgent. Re-enactments, especially battles, are theatrical productions, and while the dress and equipment used in them are theoretically faithful to historical precedents, the blandishments of theatrical display and the desire for glamour work their magic in ways that sometimes go beyond the evidence. Hence, while the Lucera helm is made of plain functional iron (as, indeed, is true of the great majority of comparable surviving helms), the replica employs polished copper alloy for the externally applied central spine and the reinforcement panel for the eye slits to make an attractive contrast to the

---

<sup>1</sup> R. D’AMATO, A.E. NEGIN, *A Neglected Medieval Helmet from Lucera in Italy*, *SCer* 12, 2022, p. 351–398.

blued iron of the body (Fig. 1). An omission from the replica initially is the crest holder that runs front to back along the centre of the top plate, although this may be remedied at a later time. The remaining area of change was more significant and practical.

The replica was made to be worn by a man of very average proportions. His brow circumference is sixty centimetres, with the addition of a padded arming cap and coif that then becomes seventy-two centimetres for that portion of the helm, which is just above the eye slits and middle circumferential joint. Making up a cardboard model in accord with the measurements of the original indicated necessary changes. The equivalent circumference at the midline of the original given in the article is eighty centimetres, while base circumference is eighty-seven centimetres. Thus, that aspect of the pattern had to be revised to fit the intended wearer. The greater size of the original can easily be explained by the helm being made for a man with a larger head, or by the use of a greater volume of padding, or a combination of those two factors. The other set of measurements, relating to height, required less adjustment, although were somewhat perplexing in that they needed to be in the opposite direction. The depth of the upper panels had to be increased by about fifteen millimetres in order for the eye slits to be at the correct level for vision. Precisely what the contradiction in those two areas of adjustments implies is unclear. If the original owner had a larger head, one would naturally expect that both areas of measurement would be larger. If the great circumference was a consequence of ample padding, it seems strange that so much would be arranged around the head with so much less above, a direction from which many powerful attacks would come. One possibility is that the wearer has sacrificed some padding in preference for the presence of a *cervelliere*, a closer-fitting dome helm often worn under such great helm, counting on that to reinforce a direction from which many powerful attacks would come.

Finally, a distinctive aspect of the Lucera helm is its various openings. Equally placed on each side near the top the lower back plate there is a pair of horizontally aligned holes. They are logically positioned to be locations for some sort of fastening, but the pairing and the fact that they are open raises the question of what the fastening might have been. Historical evidence for this aspect of helms of this sort is conspicuously lacking. A method used effectively on other varieties of helm might be attempted – a strap attached on each side, one bearing a buckle of some sort. Such straps would be attached by rivets, yet no hint of such remains. Furthermore, a buckle inside the helm would be an awkward thing to thread and pull tight. An alternative hypothesis is to have a leather chin cup held by laces – fixed on one side, longer and looser on the other allowing it to be pulled tight and tied off externally (Fig. 4). Tying off on the right side places it in an area less likely to struck (Fig. 5).

A very common comment from re-enactors wearing barrel hems modelled on other examples is how restricted their vision is. The Lucera helm addresses this in various ways. The eye slits of the helm are notably larger than many comparable survivals – eleven millimetres deep, and on the original extending fourteen centimetres on either side of the central spine, becoming twelve centimetres on the resized replica. That span gives complete peripheral vision. The piercing pattern on the lower faceplate is similarly distinctive. The primary openings are eight slots four millimetres by twenty millimetres arranged in pairs on either side of the spine, with four round holes aligned below them (Fig. 3). Similar arrangements of slots and holes are found on numerous surviving examples. What is surprising and seemingly unique to the Lucera helm, however, are a large number of additional holes. Lines of round holes a little more than two millimetres in diameter spaced about fifteen millimetres apart run horizontally out from the centre below the eye slits, then down beside the joint between the front and rear lower plates, and return to the centre in parallel to the lower edge. These are supplemented by lines of similar holes running diagonally down from just below the eye slits to the outer lower corner of the other small hole lines. It transpires that despite being as small and sparse as these holes are, they are remarkably generous in the additional visibility that they provide. The wearer can see the ground within half a metre of his feet directly in front without moving his head by doing no more than lowering his eyes. In addition to the horizontal peripheral vision given by the eye-slits mentioned above, the array of small holes affords useful lower peripheral vision across a wide arc as well.

This replica reaffirms the authenticity of the helm beyond what was well enough established in the previous study. It is a finely engineered item optimised for a range of uses. It is arguably less well suited than other surviving examples for the artifice of competitive jousting due to the vulnerability resulting from its large eye slits, yet its exceptional vision shows that it is very well suited to melee and battlefield combat, with the unusually generous lower zone vision telling us that the owner foresaw being able to fight effectively on foot, as well as on horseback.

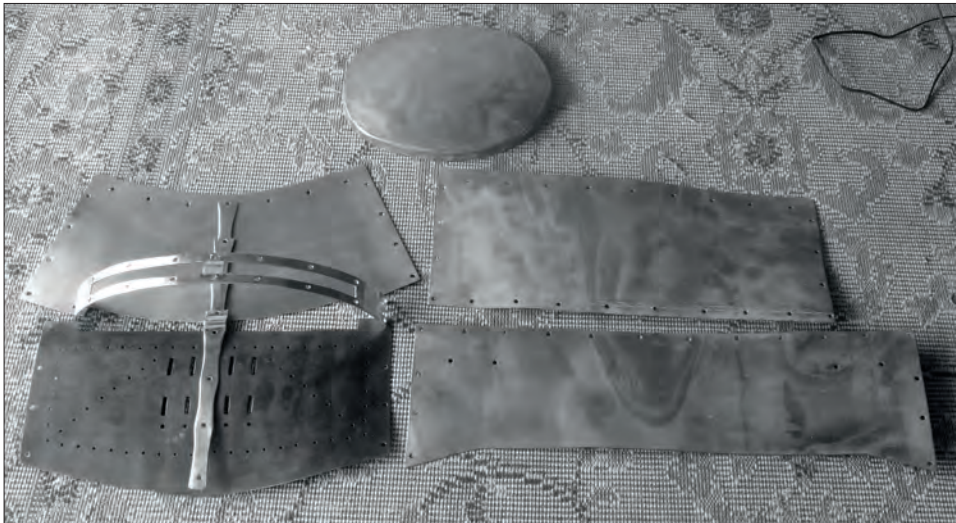
## Bibliography

D'AMATO R., NEGIN A.E., *A Neglected Medieval Helmet from Lucera in Italy*, "Studia Ceranea" 12, 2022, p. 351–398, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.12.19>

### Notes on a Reconstruction of the Helm from Lucera



**Fig. 1.** The original helm. After R. D'AMATO, A.E. NEGIN, *A Neglected Medieval...*



**Fig. 2.** The components of the helm reproduction, most prior to shaping.



**Fig. 3.** The author wearing complete late thirteenth-century panoply with the Lucera helm reproduction at the Battle of Evesham re-enactment 2022.



**Fig. 4.** A view of the interior of the replica showing the laced chin cup and padding ring in the crown.





**Fig. 5.** Right front view of the replica helm showing the complex arrangement of piercings and the tied off fastening of the chin cup.

*Timothy George Dawson (United Kingdom)*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9697-4699>



## PATRON OF THE STUDY OF THE BOGOMILS PORTRAIT OF SIR DIMITRI OBOLENSKY

### I. Introduction

Anyone engaged in the study of medieval Bogomils (approx. 950–1450) cannot avoid consulting Obolensky's absolute masterpiece, published in 1948: *The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*. Whenever an interested colleague asks me for a book in which he can find reliable and well-organised information regarding the Bogomils, the answer is invariably: *The Bogomils* by Obolensky.

Completed as a dissertation over eighty years ago (1942)<sup>1</sup>, it appeared revised in print six years later. It has been reprinted twice and (only) in 1998 it experienced a translation into Bulgarian, followed by a Croatian translation in 2008. After all these years, *The Bogomils* is still an undisputed standard work.

In this contribution, we outline the author's very particular colourful life history, larded with a few anecdotes. In doing so, we try to give his bogomilian research a place amidst his seemingly endless scholarly output as a byzantinist.

It then focuses on the significance and exemplary role his work still has today. All this is followed in the appendix by a bibliography.

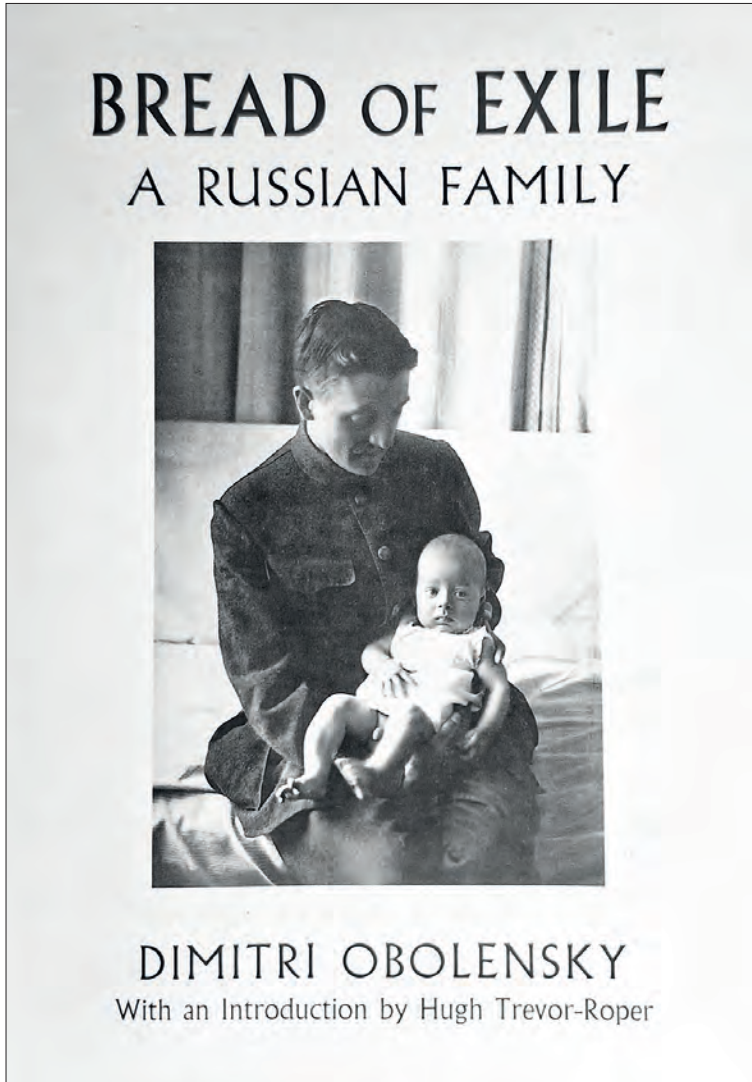
### II. Education and life

#### On the flight

Prince Dimitri Dimitrievich Obolensky was born 1 April 1918 in Petrograd (St Petersburg). Both his parents were of ancient and distinguished lineage. Countess Maria Shuvalova was the daughter of the City Governor of Moscow. Her mother Alexandra had many years earlier received a proposal of marriage from the future Nicholas II which she turned down with a great presence of mind: *What a good idea! I will marry Paul Shuvalov and you will appoint him your equerry!*

Obolensky's father Prince Dimitri Alexandrovich Obolensky was an observant, nature-loving landlord who took his public duties seriously. The humour and stoicism running through the memoir remained with him through the vicissitudes that followed the October Revolution. Such is the impression given by his son's affectionate reminiscences which recount – inter alia – his misapplied zeal as a night-watchman in Paris. Later on more about his father.

<sup>1</sup> D. OBOLENSKY, *A History of Bogomilism in Bulgaria* (diss., Cambridge 1943).



**Fig. 1.** Baby Prince Dimitri in the arms of his father.

The “brief unhappy marriage” of his parents ended. Maria re-married Count Andrey Tolstoy and from 1923 they lived in Nice. These years Obolensky described as “the happiest years” of my life. In 1929 Count Tolstoy was pressured to transfer the ménage a Paris because of financial problems.

We return to one-year-old Dimitri, who had thus already had to leave his homeland in 1919 to escape the Bolsheviks, after the family, like thousands of others, had first fled to Kyiv. Dimitri boarded a British Navy ship sent to Crimea to bring

Empress Widow Maria and Grand Prince Nicholas II to safety. Mikhail Bulgakow<sup>2</sup> writes about this poignantly in his novel *The White Guard: Endless flow of refugees from the north, many with forged (forged) papers acquired to cross the frontier, begging for visas, dreaming of Paris, some grateful for the reassuring presence of the German army all united by their hatred of Bolshevism*. The city of Kyiv changed administrations fourteen times during that chaotic period.

In Crimea, little Dimitri initially had a safe haven in the famously impressive Vorontsov Palace of Alupka, which had been built as a residence for his ancestor, Anglophile Governor General Prince Michael Vorontsov. In retrospect, however, Dimitri looked down on the Romanows with disdain. Rather, he considered himself a distant descendant of Riurik, the ninth-century Viking chieftain who settled in Ladoga (currently: Staraya Ladocha) and whose descendants established the Kyiv Empire. The semi-legendary Viking prince Riurik occupies a special place in Russian history. Around 862, he is said to have established the dynasty of Riurikids or Riuriken in Novgorod. According to that reading, Riurik (meaning “famous regent”) is said to be at the cradle of the Kyiv Empire, the early-medieval of today’s Russia, Ukraine and Belarus<sup>3</sup>.

### Bread of exile

Much information about the life of Dimitri Obolensky can be found in the book *Bread of Exile. A Russian Family* in which Obolensky looks back on his life. It is an intellectual autobiography, an account of his gradual recovery, in exile, through personal friendship and historical study. The title alludes to Dante’s verse: *Thou shalt leave everything loved most dearly, and this is the shaft which the bow of exile shoots first. Thou shalt prove how salt is the taste of another man’s bread and how hard is the way up and down another man’s stairs (Paradiso, Canto XVII)*<sup>4</sup>.

In *Bread of Exile* two opposing worlds jostle and succeed each other: the world of privilege and power of imperial Russia, struggling to survive communist persecution and military attack and a life of dispossession and exile, covers his infancy

<sup>2</sup> Author of one of the masterworks out of the world literature, *Master i Margarita*, trans. in Dutch by M. FONDSE, Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers 1968. MIKHAIL BULGAKOW, *The White Guard*, trans. R. CROCKRELL, Richmond Alma Classics 2000.

<sup>3</sup> H. THUIS, *Nestorkroniek. De oudste geschiedenis van het Kievse Rijk* [Nestor chronicle The oldest history of the Kiyv Empire], Nijmegen 2015, p. 18–20 and *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> D. OBOLENSKY, *Bread of Exile. A Russian Family*, trans. from Russian H. WILLETS, praef. H. TREVOR-ROPER, London 1999. In addition to this book, in depicting Obolensky’s life course, I have been guided by: J. SHEPARD, *Dimitri Dimitrievich Obolensky, 1918–2001*, PBA 124, 2004, p. 342–266; P. BAHNERS, *Der wahre Demetrius*, “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” 28 Januar 2002, no. 23, p. 47; A. BRYER, *Obituary: Professor Sir Dimitri Obolensky*, “The Independent UK” 31 December 2001; M. BOURDEAUX, *Sir Dimitri Obolensky Distinguished Scholar of Byzantium whose Infectious Enthusiasm Drew Students to the Fields of Russian and Balkan History*, “The Guardian” 4 Januar 2002; S. FRANKLIN, *Sir Dimitri Obolensky 1 April 1918 – 23 December 2001*, PAPS 148.1, 2004, p. 139–144.

in the Crimea and childhood in Nice, his time at an English preparatory school, his studies in Paris and his experiences as a teacher at Cambridge and Oxford.

In Nice, he enjoyed four years (from age 7 to 11) of excellent private education in Russian literature and religion. In Versailles, too, he received free personal tuition. Meanwhile, the young Russian prince developed as a “normal” young man with a passion for football and especially tennis, a sport he dreamed of doing great things in one day!

The move to Paris would prove important because Paris was the most important centre of the Russian emigration. It was there that political, literary artistic activity, as well as the religious life of the émigrés was in the main concentrated. Their leaders were convinced that they were the standard bearers of Russian culture. This was “proved” with award of Nobel Prize in literature to Ivan Bunin. He was in the company of people like Berdaev, Lossky, Chagall, Kandinsky, Stravinsky, Grabar and the chess player Aljechin. Bulgakow also had plans to come to Paris but after a telephone conversation with Stalin, he refrained from going abroad. Émigrés put pressure on each other in the French capital to maintain their no small cultural tradition. *For those of us who have lost our country, Russian literature is our final homeland, all that Russia was and will be*, Obolensky writes about it.

### **Altar boy in the Orthodox Church**

Dimitri was religiously educated in Paris (Neuilly) under the influence of his life-long admired mother in the Orthodox Church where he was an altar boy and a member of the Russian Orthodox Church. He was later reluctant to speak openly about his religious beliefs but his faith was “deep and abiding”, according to Shepard. He would continue to receive the sacraments regularly until his death. The priest Father George Florovsky was by then a household name in patristics and it was this celebrity that shaped him religiously. These were influences that would help define Dimitri for a lifetime.

His father led a professionally adventurous and extremely colourful life in Paris as an émigré: purser on the transatlantic Isle de France, training instructor horse riding, trader in rabbit skins, guide for wealthy Americans in Parisian nightlife, secretary to a curious Scot who wanted to buy up the rivers of Corsica for salmon fishing, a night watchman patrolling the area around the Paris Opera. All this united in one person. The majority of émigrés in Paris were impoverished but reliable Russians. His uncle Peter, for instance, was a taxi driver in Paris: out of 17,000 drivers, 7,000 were Russian at the time.

### **Trinity College**

Meanwhile, there were also ample periods when Dimitri went to England for his education. To gain admission to the famous Trinity College in Oxford, he had to take exams in French and Russian, Latin and English, and in what I would call

“Knowledge about UK”. The latter could well be a stumbling block. He got an admirable tutor in the healthiest town in UK Didcot (Berkshire) south of Oxford, where people reach the highest average age in the whole of UK: 86 in good health.

The tutor taught him a lot about English culture by always reciting from memory the best English poets. Returning to Paris one afternoon, Dimitri could welcome a telegram from Oxford: *A hundred pounds scholarship – congratulations*. That posed some problems for the stateless Dimitri who needed at least 220 pounds to live. But Trinity was generous: for the next five years he would be fully supported by Trinity. At first he wanted to do philosophy, where he also met Wittgenstein but, on reflection, that was not so prospective. So he returned to modern languages: French and Russian.

He was given two study leaders. The first was Elizabeth Hill, lecturer in Slavonic Studies who looked out for students who knew or wanted to learn Russian. Elizabeth Hill was a committed teacher and invited her students, for example, to her home in the evening to sing Russian songs. Obolensky mentions that it was Elizabeth Hill who provided him with the topic of the Bogomils for his dissertation. It was an inspired choice in which Obolensky could express his knowledge of Slavic languages, his fascination with the Orthodox Church and its past. It was also a subject that involved him in his personal life questions of Good and Evil that the Bogomils themselves had tried to answer. His work on the dissertation progressed astonishingly fast. He completed it in less than three years and demonstrated in it that he had a magisterial command of the nevertheless extremely complicated subject. The formidable problems concerning bogomilian beliefs, the origins of those beliefs and the reliability of the mostly hostile sources about so called heretics are handled with great clarity and insight. The story goes that at the same time Sir Steven Runciman was working room to room on his famous *The Medieval Manichee* but that is not correct. Runciman had already finished this book at the outbreak of war in 1940 and did not publish it until 1947. The gentlemen did become good – though characterologically very different – friends.

It was soon clear to French study leader Rev H. Stewart that Dimitri needed a knowledge of English literature rather than French. On his advice, Dimitri read some English classics including *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray which in turn was taken from John Bunyan’s allegorical *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The latter book significantly deepened his understanding of inner Christianity.

Working at the British Museum, Obolensky got to know Czech scholar Francis Dvornik<sup>5</sup>. His oecumenical approach and meticulous scholarship appealed to him. He learned from Dvornik the technique of organising complicated matters in texts and providing “signposts” for the average reader. All this added to Obolensky’s unspeakable talent for quickly mastering complicated matters and explaining them clearly and simply. In short: simplicity, overview and focus would become his academic hallmark.

<sup>5</sup> D. OBOLENSKY, *Father Francis Dvornik*, HSS 2, 1954, p. 1–9.



Fig. 2. Professor Dimitri Obolensky fotoportret.

### Prince turns Professor

Colourful details provide Obolensky's wartime adventures as a soldier! He had himself trained as a soldier. As an officer, he should soon be able to qualify but it was not easy. To become an officer, you had to be a British subject. A stateless person like soldier Dimitri could only join the staff with Czech refugees. The Cambridge authorities would probably not be so enthusiastic about his military potential: *I proved quite hopeless in dismantling and reassembling the Bren gun, and less than harp in drilling a platoon of recruits.* After observing his activities, an officer approached him head-shaking: *Obolensky you don't sound convincing.* But during a survival, things improved again when he was singing songs familiar to the men and the sergeant major not without irony attributed "leadership qualities" to him. But that was all. Exit Obolensky as a soldier!

1961 was the year when Obolensky's great abilities and his social function finally began to coincide. He became a professor at Oxford. As proof of his transformation, he had "Prince" painted over by "Prof." on the door of his room in the then famous Christcollege. This went even further when he was knighted by Elizabeth II as vice-president of the British Academy in 1984. The title of his famous 1971 book – *The Byzantine Commonwealth* – was an expression of his thanks to the country that saw its commonwealth gradually crumble and of which he had become a citizen in 1948. And not only that: *Obolensky's vision of the Byzantine Commonwealth as an international society of personal ties and basic Christian values was one by which he sought to live out his own life* (Shepard). It was a kind of life programme!

His personal life was less smooth than his scientific career. On 1 October 1947, he married Elisabeth Lopukhin, a Russian whose parents had emigrated to Paris via Manchuria and the US. The childless marriage lasted for 42 years until they divorced in 1989.

Dimitry Obolensky died at The Cotswold Home, near Burford in the Cotswolds, on 23 December 2001. During the Memorial Service Bunyan's known poem *To be a pilgrim* rang out and there was a reading from Six Byzantine Portraits.

### III. Works and opinions

#### To be a pilgrim in the past

A scientist of such aristocratic descent who had had to fight himself through the loneliness of hard life, a scientist also with a broad knowledge also of the history of Eastern Europe and Byzantium, additionally equipped with a special knowledge of languages, was ideally suited to do pioneering work in the research on the Bogomils. He could hardly rely on recent studies because the works of Slavists he held in high esteem such as Franjo Racki and Ivanov<sup>6</sup> were by now firmly dated<sup>7</sup>.

Because of his aristocratic origins and his experiences in exile, he had developed an unerring antenna for the class difference between Bulgarian countrymen and the Byzantine upper class. These feudal relations were one of the genesis factors of Bogomilism. Obolensky therefore explained the persistence with which the Bogomils maintained themselves in Bulgaria as a national resistance to Byzantium's domination. So much so that this political interpretation threatened to push somewhat into the background the appeal of the actual programme of the Bogomils' strict asceticism and criticism of the land-owning church. That Obolensky had a razor-sharp grasp of the aforementioned class difference and its effects

<sup>6</sup> D. OBOLENSKY, *A History of Bogomilism...*, p. 287.

<sup>7</sup> F. RACKI, *Bogomili I Patareni*, RJAZU 7, 8, 10, 1869–1870, p. 161–627; IDEM, *L'hérésie des Bogomiles en Bosnie et en Bulgarie au Moyen Âge*, trans. L. LÉGER, Paris 1870, p. 479–517; J. IVANOV, *Livres et Légendes bogomiles. Aux Sources du Catharisme*, trans. M. RIBEYROL, Paris 1976.



was evident, for example, in a beautifully written review which he provided with the all-important headline *Cads and Aristocrats*<sup>8</sup>.

But that is not the whole story. Obolensky explains the growing attention to the classic question *unde malum et quare?* (Whence evil and why?) in tenth-century Bulgaria from the dire social situation<sup>9</sup>. *It is an era of great social and economic crises, of invasions, of atrocities against the people, and among the peasantry. Then the question naturally arises as to why we are suffering, as individuals and as a society.* And this is precisely where the philosophy of Bogomils offered solace, and Obolensky makes an essential connection here.

### Evil is the absence of good

The Bogomils consider evil as the privation of good, Obolensky stated. This evil exists in good and depends for its existence on good. Hence the cause of evil is found to be in good. This good is man's free will which is a gift of God. Man's abuse of his free will caused his finite condition. His state of inferiority as a creature in relation to his creator has resulted in his separation from God. This separation resulted in a state of privation, which has brought about disorder, suffering, corruption and other manifestations of evil. In short: evil is the absence of good<sup>10</sup>.

The seat of evil is the visible material world where disorder and suffering are dominant. Hence also – in response – the well-known mantram of Manichean origin: *Love not the world but the father*. Man mirrors this fundamental dualism: the soul is of divine origin, the body is ineradicably evil<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> D. OBOLENSKY [rec.:], *Cads and Aristocrats*. R. Browning, *Byzantium and Bulgaria. A Comparative Study Across the Early Medieval Frontier*, TLS 2, 1975, p. 477.

<sup>9</sup> *Hérésies et Sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle 11<sup>e</sup>–18<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. J. LE GOFF, Paris 1968, p. 117, 118 – Obolensky's minuted oral contribution to a discussion after a lecture of Ch. THOUZELLIER, *Tradition et résurgence dans l'hérésie médiévale: considérations*, p. 105–116.

<sup>10</sup> This approach by Obolensky represents an important intermediate step towards a more modern approach to dualism that reached a provisional peak at the beginning of this century in the study by Yuri STOYANOV, *The Other God. Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*, New Haven–London 2000, p. 196 and 197. Paraphrased Stoyanov's approach to dualism boils down to the following: Dualism as a concept has only been in existence for two centuries and it can be applied to almost all gnostic systems. There are two completely separate worlds: the divine world created by God and this world, being the world of Satan and the world of evil. These worlds are often designated as the realm of light and the realm of darkness. Analogically, the human being is also of dual nature. He is matter, but there is also a divine principle in him which reminds him of his divine origin and, when his consciousness rises, guides him back to his divine source. Satan in bogomil-ian and catharist dualism was created by the higher God and because of his rebellion was casted out of heaven and created the material cosmos. Conversely, in medieval radical dualism Lucifer proceeds immediately from the eternal principle of evil, from an evil god, who was coeternal and coexistent with the good God.

<sup>11</sup> The British author Timothy Freke calls the body "the nightclub of the soul"! [T. FREKE, P. GANDY, *The Jesus Mysteries*, New York 2000, *passim*].

Building on this, Obolensky distinguishes two basic trends in Bogomilism

1. The first is the aforementioned dualistic cosmology which is of foreign origin and according to him imported from the Near East.
2. The second is largely autochthonous: based on the dissatisfaction with the reigning church, the Bogomils wanted to reestablish a universal religion in a desire to return to the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age.

Obolensky's reading is such that he can point out with his authority three features<sup>12</sup> of Bogomilism which are original:

- the doctrine of the two sons of God, the Devil and Christ;
- the teaching on the introduction of the soul into the body of Adam, the first man;
- the exclusive use of the Lord's Prayer. Obolensky: *These features cannot be explained by any outside influence and are original.*

### Foundation for continued studies

Dimitri Obolensky's "pilgrimage into the past of the Bogomils" saved this hitherto relatively unknown heretical movement from oblivion. This is Obolensky's greatest achievement with regard to the study of the Bogomils. He has done a thorough job of making the subject comprehensible and clear for Western researchers. Together with Steven Runciman<sup>13</sup>, Henri Charles Puech<sup>14</sup> and Milan Loos<sup>15</sup>, he laid the foundation for continued studies in medieval "heresies" after 1945.

To be sure, Racki and Ivanov (see note 7) had also thoroughly researched the subject long before Obolensky but due to language and cultural barriers, their work reached only a limited readership. And we have to go back as far as 1700 to find the first distinguished historian who was not only the first to introduce Bogomils but also to appreciate them. The brilliant German theologian/historian Gottfried Arnold<sup>16</sup> (1666–1714) posthumously stood up for them in no uncertain terms: *The bloodily persecuted Bogomils were the classic example of the fact that the so called heretics were merely witnesses of the truth. It is the clergymen who should be called heretics.* Arnold had an "epigone" in the theologian/historian, Johann

<sup>12</sup> D. OBOLENSKY, *A History of Bogomilism...*, p. 138.

<sup>13</sup> S. RUNCIMAN, *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge 1947.

<sup>14</sup> H.-Ch. PUECH, A. VAILLANT, *Le traité contre les Bogomiles du prêtre Cosmas*, Paris 1945.

<sup>15</sup> M. LOOS, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, Den Haag 1974.

<sup>16</sup> G. ARNOLD, *Unpartheyische Kirchen- and Ketzer-Historie vom Anfang des neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi 1688*, Frankfurt a. M.–Leipzig 1699.

Conrad Füssly<sup>17</sup>, sometimes called the Swiss Gottfried Arnold, who also included the first bibliography of the Bogomils in volume III of his comprehensive work.

Back again to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yuri Stoyanov (see note 10) and Bernard Hamilton<sup>18</sup> have written penetrating accounts on Bogomils and interesting publications appear regularly. But after eighty years the subject, meanwhile, deserves a newly updated, eye opening handbook!

### A Kindred spirit

Personally, I never experienced Dimitri Obolensky. That he had a beautiful sonorous voice with which he could mesmerise the lecture hall, that he could make the Slavonic texts ring loud and clear in every corner of a large church with beautiful articulation, that he could make his students super enthusiastic about Byzantium, that he was a frantic motorcyclist and that he harboured a great love for Greece... I have it all from ear and eye witnesses.

But finally, when You ask me to characterise him somewhat characterologically, I know of no hesitation and am immediately reminded of his portrait of Theophylact of Ohrid (~1055–1107) in *Six Byzantine portraits*<sup>19</sup> which stylistically and psychologically is a highlight of his oeuvre.

In it, he perfectly senses how Bishop Theophylact, appointed as head of the Bulgarian church, was experiencing his “exile” and yet was able to make commitment for his flock in solitude. Theophylact was an aristocratic Byzantine intellectual. He had served the court in Constantinople for many years as the educator of the young sovereign-who experienced his position in Ohrid as a tormenting task due to his homesickness. He must have felt rather schizophrenic in Ohrid. He despised his “barbaric” environment, he was annoyed by the “rude manners” of his faithful and by the “barbaric Slavic language”. Nevertheless he had the inspiration to write meanwhile brilliant commentaries on the four Gospels and the epistles of Paul.

<sup>17</sup> J.C. FÜSSLY, *Neue und unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie der mittleren Zeit*, vol. I–III, Frankfurt a. M. 1770–1774. For the remark about the bibliography I am thankful to the late Prof. Georgi Vasilev (personal e-mail from Sofia, July 2014). Füssly (1704–1775) wrote two dissertations about the migration of medieval heretics as Cathars, Waldensians and Patarenes to England and to Italy in Latin (*Dissertatio de fanaticis seculo XII in Anglia repertis; Dissertatio de fanaticis seculo XII in Italia repertis*, Bern 1761). This “Swiss Gottfried Arnold” was a relative of the Swiss painter Johann Heinrich Füssli (called Henry Fuseli in England) who worked in England and had much influence on the dualist motifs in the paintings of his spiritual friend the famous painter William Blake (G. VASILEV, *Heresy and the English Reformation Bogomil-Cathar Influence on Wycliffe, Langdale, Tyndale and Milton, Jefferson (North Carolina)*, London 2008, p. 159).

<sup>18</sup> HUGH ETERIANO, *Contra Patarenos*, ed. B. HAMILTON, J. HAMILTON, S. HAMILTON, Leiden 2004 [= MMe, 55], *Historical Introduction* by B. HAMILTON, p. 1–102; B. HAMILTON, J. HAMILTON, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650 – c.1405*, Manchester 1998.

<sup>19</sup> D. BOLENSKY, 2. *Theophylact of Ohrid*, [in:] *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1999, p. 34–82, *passim*.

So sharp and brilliant were these that Erasmus initially mistook him for a fourth-century church father<sup>20</sup>. On the other hand he gradually received more sympathy for the simple faithful that surrounded him and he became impressed by their pious devotion towards God. In social regard, he was warmly committed to the fate of the poor farmers. Theophylact agitated against the rapacious Byzantine tax collectors. He also became deeply involved in local cultural development.

The empathy Obolensky displays for this particular Byzantine “expat” bishop shows that he himself could somewhat identify with Theophylact’s special “split” personality, indeed: that he may well have recognised an early kindred spirit in Theophylact. Both aristocrats, both erudite intellectuals, both highly talented authors, both deeply religious, both alienated from their roots, both more or less foreigners in their world.

#### IV. Closing remarks

##### **The Beauty of a medieval Balkan model of Gnose**

Thanks to his cosmopolitan upbringing, Obolensky was a man of many worlds. This is precisely an indispensable quality when dealing with a subject like the Bogomils. According to its historical and literary qualities and the cosmopolitan view of the world of the author his publications have surely no peer among the writings of the Bogomils. I never cease to marvel at the acuteness of his mind and the wittiness of his statements.

Making history is reshaping the world in the rear-view mirror. It is a kind of collective effort of “survivors” who need each other to bring the past to life.

In this sense, Dimitri Obolensky is one of the most valuable researchers I ever met. He did not want to demonstrate only the oldness, the beauty and the power of a medieval Balkan model of Gnose. In a beautiful style he taught his audience to be interested in the past as far as we have a present and a future. Here I may quote the Chinese master Lao Zi who was living five centuries before Christ: *The experts of the past are the masters of the future.*

Goirle NL – Łódź PL, 13 May 2023

---

<sup>20</sup> M. SCREECH, *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*, London 1980, *passim*.

## V. Appendix

### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF OBLOENSKY ON THE BOGOMILS<sup>21</sup> during the course of his career

**1943**

*A History of Bogomilism in Bulgaria* (dissertation, Cambridge 1943).

**1945**

*The Bogomils*, "Eastern Churches Quarterly", p. 1–23, reprint in: *Byzantium and the Slavs. Collected Studies*, praef. I. Dujcev, London 1971, p. 1–23 and in: *Byzantium and the Slavs*, New York 1994, p. 259–280.

**1948**

*The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*, Cambridge, reprint: Twickenham 1972 and New York 1978.

**1950**

*Bogomilism in the Byzantine Empire*, [in:] *Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'études byzantines, Paris 27 juillet–2 août 1948*, Paris, p. 289–297.

**1954**

*Father Francis Dvornik*, "Harvard Slavic Studies" 2, p. 1–9.

**1963**

*Sts Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of Slavs*, "St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly" 7, p. 1–13, reprint in: *Byzantium and the Slavs. Collected Studies*, London 1971, p. 1–13 and *Byzantium and the Slavs*, New York 1994, p. 205–217.

**1964**

*Le Christianisme oriental et les doctrines dualistes*, [in:] *Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul tema. L'Oriente cristiano nella storia della civiltà*, Rome, p. 643–651.

**1968**

*Bogomils*, [in:] *Encyclopaedia Britannica Anniversary Edition*, vol. III, Chicago, p. 844–845.

**1969**

Knowles D., Obolensky D., *The Middle Ages*, London.

**1971**

*The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453*, London, reprint: London 1974 and Crestwood–New York 1982.

**1983**

*Papas Nicetas: A Byzantine Dualist in the Land of the Cathars*, "Harvard Ukrainian Studies" 7, p. 489–500.

<sup>21</sup> For these selected publications I am partly indebted to D. HOWELLS, *The Publications of Sir Dimitri Obolensky*, OSP 31, 1998, p. 1–11.

**1988**

*Six Byzantine Portraits*, London.

**1994**

[rec.:] *Review of N. Malcolm, Bosnia: A short History (London 1994)*, "The Times Literary Supplement" 8, p. 15–16.

**2008**


*Bogumili studija o balkanskom neomaniheizmu*, trans. Z. Filippi, Zagreb.

**Bibliography**

- ARNOLD G., *Unpartheyische Kirchen- and Ketzer-Historie vom Anfang des neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi 1688*, Frankfurt a. M.–Leipzig 1699.
- BAHNERS P., *Der wahre Demetrius*, "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" 28 Januar 2002, no. 23, p. 47.
- BOURDEAUX M., *Sir Dimitri Obolensky Distinguished Scholar of Byzantium whose Infectious Enthusiasm Drew Students to the Fields of Russian and Balkan History*, "The Guardian" 4 Januar 2002.
- BRYER A., *Obituary: Professor Sir Dimitri Obolensky*, "The Independent UK" 31 December 2001.
- FRANKLIN S., *Sir Dimitri Obolensky 1 April 1918 – 23 December 2001*, "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society" 148.1, 2004, p. 139–144.
- FREKE T., GANDY P., *The Jesus Mysteries*, New York 2000.
- FÜSSLY J.C., *Neue und unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie der mittleren Zeit*, vol. I–III, Frankfurt a. M. 1770–1774.
- HAMILTON B., HAMILTON J., *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c.650 – c.1405*, Manchester 1998.
- Hérésies et Sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle 11<sup>e</sup>–18<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. J. LE GOFF, Paris 1968.
- HOWELLS D., *The Publications of Sir Dimitri Obolensky*, "Oxford Slavonic Papers" 31, 1998, p. 1–11.
- HUGH ETERIANO, *Contra Patarenos*, ed. B. HAMILTON, J. HAMILTON, S. HAMILTON, Leiden 2004 [= *The Medieval Mediterranean*, 55], [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047405993\\_009](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047405993_009)
- IVANOV J., *Livres et Légendes bogomiles. Aux Sources du Catharisme*, trans. M. RIBEYROL, Paris 1976.
- LOOS M., *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, Den Haag 1974.
- OBOLENSKY D. [rec.:], *Cads and Aristocrats. R. Browning, Byzantium and Bulgaria. A Comparative Study Across the Early Medieval Frontier*, "The Times Literary Supplement" 2, 1975, p. 477.
- OBOLENSKY D., 2. *Theophylact of Ohrid*, [in:] *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1999, p. 34–82.
- OBOLENSKY D., *A History of Bogomilism in Bulgaria* (diss., Cambridge 1943).
- OBOLENSKY D., *Bread of Exile. A Russian Family*, trans. from Russian H. WILLETS, praef. H. TREVOR-ROPER, London 1999.
- OBOLENSKY D., *Father Francis Dvornik*, "Harvard Slavic Studies" 2, 1954, p. 1–9.
- PUECH H.-Ch., VAILLANT A., *Le traité contre les Bogomiles du prêtre Cosmas*, Paris 1945, <https://doi.org/10.3406/slave.1944.1415>
- RACKI F., *Bogumili I Patareni*, "Rad Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti" 7, 8, 10, 1869–1870, p. 161–627.

- RACKI F., *L'hérésie des Bogomiles en Bosnie et en Bulgarie au Moyen Âge*, trans. L. LÉGER, Paris 1870.
- RUNCIMAN S., *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge 1947.
- SCREECH M., *Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly*, London 1980.
- SHEPARD J., *Dimitri Dimitrievich Obolensky, 1918–2001*, “Proceedings of the British Academy” 124, 2004, p. 342–266, <https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197263204.003.0014>
- STOYANOV Y., *The Other God. Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*, New Haven–London 2000, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt5vm3q2>
- THUIS H., *Nestorkroniek. De oudste geschiedenis van het Kievse Rijk*, Nijmegen 2015.
- VASILEV G., *Heresy and the English Reformation Bogomil-Cathar Influence on Wycliffe, Langdale, Tyn-dale and Milton, Jefferson (North Carolina)*, London 2008.

**Dick van Niekerk** (Nijmegen; Tilburg)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4746-2575>

---

\* Radboud University Nijmegen; Tilburg University – The Netherlands

# BOOK REVIEWS







<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.09>

**DIANA MISHKOVA, *Rival Byzantiums. Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2023, pp. X, 357.**

The appearance of Diana Mishkova's book *Rival Byzantiums* is a remarkable event in the South-eastern European studies. It is unavoidable to classify it as such, regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with the chosen topic, with the methodology of the research, or with the arguments of the author. It is to say that the latter seem well constructed: in the field that features such a wide range of opinions, often strongly related to the national identity, she successfully managed to keep proper distance and to reliably represent different and sensitive issues. Clearly, Diana Mishkova has experience in this domain of research, as is proven by a number of her previous monographs: *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making* (2018); *Domestication of Freedom. Modernity and Legitimacy in Serbia and Romania in the Nineteenth Century* (2001) as well as joint publications, e.g.: *European Regions and Boundaries. A Conceptual History* (2017).

In my nearly forty years of work in this field, I have never seen such a topic being taken up. First of all, it is admirable that the author succeeded to assemble such a huge material (four centuries of research on Byzantine history) in a volume. It is yet another question how she was able to approach all these writings, moreover that some of them, I have to say, leave much to be desired. It is important to acknowledge the capabilities of the author: personal, professional and linguistic and to clarify the subject matter of the book, before getting into the research itself. Despite the fact that the monograph is largely based on history and the analysis of historical writings, it cannot be considered a historiographical work. The used

sources are just a basis for an investigation in the field of historical sociology, and the formation and development of the identities of the Balkan peoples. Diana Mishkova stated this in the very beginning of her book and the first authors she cited are Nicolae Iorga and Dimitri Obolensky, who contributed to the creation of the idea of Byzantium as a long lasting and immense phenomenon, exceeding its own spatial and temporal boundaries. What was the impact of this phenomenon on the identity formation and how it was used or abused is the main topic of the monograph.

The volume is divided in two parts and each consists of five chapters respectively. At the end, we have an *Epilogue and Conclusion*. The exposition is logical and follows different eras of development of Byzantine studies, presenting their methodological, cultural and political approaches, as well as the specific tendencies in the different Balkan countries. In my understanding, the main focus of the research is put on the second part of the work that covers the contemporary stages in the Byzantine studies in the Balkan countries after the Second World War.

The first part of the monograph is titled: *On the Road to the Grand Narrative*, and represents the Byzantine studies and their social impact up to the middle of the twentieth century. The first chapter (*Precursors: The Historiography of the Enlightenment*) is dedicated to the birth of the Byzantine studies between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The text is very interesting and enticing but it mainly serves as an introduction to the general topic of the monograph. It describes primarily the Western

studies since the local, Greek and Serbian, were only in their infancy. The most interesting is the introduction of the Romanian 'Transylvanian School' (*Școală ardeleană*) that had a considerable impact on the following development. The next chapters are divided in paragraphs thematically or by countries and I think that it would be useful for such an approach to be applied for this chapter too. Thus, we would have clearly divided texts between the western and the south-eastern ideas about the Byzantine heritage.

The second chapter (*The Century of History: Byzantium in the Budding National-Historical Canons*) presents the historiography of the nineteenth-century Romanticism and its impact in the South-eastern Europe under Ottoman rule. Both of these periods – the Enlightenment and the Romanticism – demonstrate usually negative or suspicious attitude towards the Eastern Roman Empire. Any kind of positive association is due to other, 'collateral' themes like philhellenic feelings and the interest toward the classical antiquity, preserved and transferred thanks to Byzantium. In Russia as well one can discover a dichotomy in the attitude: on one side the secular westerners were suspicious towards the contemplative culture of Constantinople, on the other, it was in Russian political interest to have influence and to control over the Balkan Christians. In Greece this is the time of the uprising and the creation of the modern state, and in that context Byzantium was perceived as an idea of the mediaeval past, however, during that time Greeks looked primarily to their Hellenic roots, not their Byzantine heritage. The political aspects were at the forefront, especially in relation to the *Megalé idea*, which, however, negatively impacted the relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the archons from Constantinople. The chapter also concerns the perception of Byzantium among the Slavs and Albanians. In Bulgaria, the second part of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the developments during the time of the 'ecclesiastical struggle' influenced Bulgarian attitude towards Byzantium. The Empire was commonly associated with the Greeks during that period and this negatively impacted how it was perceived among the public, as alien and hostile. In Serbia it was quite the opposite, however, and

the people increasingly identified themselves with the imperial heritage. One of the reasons for such a course was the idea identifying Serbia as Piedmont of the Balkans, and Belgrade developed ambition to revive a unified Orthodox empire. In the young Romanian nation state, however, the eyes were oriented westwards. This is one of the lasting effects of the *Transylvanian School*. It was less so to oppose the Byzantine, and rather of the Ottoman-Phanariot tradition, yet this negative reaction towards the 'East' influenced the general perception of the Greeks and the Empire as well.

The third chapter (*In Search of the 'Scientific Method'*) presents the developments from the beginning of the Twentieth Century, characterised as a time of re-evaluation of the Byzantine studies and their deliverance from the antagonism between the Eastern and Western Christianity as well as from the Enlightenment's ideological chains. It could be read together with the following chapter four (*Between Byzantine Studies and Metahistory*) that presents the interwar period, strongly marked by the disastrous results of the Great War. This was the time of the institutionalisation of the Byzantine studies in the West as well as in the East due to creation of specialised chairs in the universities, journals, and also by the foundation of the periodically organised Congresses of Byzantine studies. This period is associated with discipline's great fathers and can be characterized by its professionalisation, which however, often suffered as some embraced, while the others rejected the Byzantine heritage, usually motivated by national reasons, less so ideology. Greece accepted Byzantium through the lens of the Hellenic idea and the research was in many aspects affected by the 'Anatolian Catastrophe' and the end of their dreams. Bulgaria and Bulgarian scholars (with one sole exception) further developed the negative judgement of the Eastern Empire, classifying it as 'Hellenic'. Romania and Serbia continued on their already chosen way. In Bucharest the most prominent was great Nicolae Iorga, in whose research we find a fusion of the pure science and open politics in the complex situation during the interwar period. This is also the period when the renowned book *Byzance après*

*Byzance* appeared, in which some of the questions essential for the discussed topic were for the first time systematically asked.

Turkey was in a different situation after the victorious but disastrous war in Anatolia and a ruinous revolution. The author has chosen, for obvious reasons, to present the developments in Turkey separately in a single chapter of the first part (chapter five: *Byzantium in Ottoman and Early Republican Turkish Historiography*). Because of certain continuity, as well as the fact that Turkish approach to Byzantium is very different to how it was perceived in other Balkan countries, I shall treat the previous chapter and the chapter ten of the second part (*In the Fold of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis*), which concerns the situation after the Second World War, together. We can distinguish at least three separate periods: late Ottoman, early republican, and that after the Second World War (of course it does not mean the latter is uniform). During the end of 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century (and even much earlier) the Ottoman Empire began to integrate itself into Europe and this was reflected, if not in the interest in Byzantium, at least in regard towards the historical monuments and their maintenance and protection. The war and following revolution transformed the society in several ways, one of which was the turn to dismiss, reject, and oppose the *ancien régime*. In Turkish historiography, the attention Byzantium received was mainly in the context of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the topics such as the question of Turkishness and the interest towards ancient Turks and towards their language, which included the 'Sun Language Theory', dominated the research. All these political concerns left very limited space for Byzantine studies. The Empire was actually considered just a bad antecedent of the damned Ottoman Empire. The period after the Second World War was more complex mostly because of Turkey's growing relationship with the West. Diana Mishkova proposes a very interesting observation on the differences between relatively free-thinking scholars of Byzantine Studies working and publishing in the West and those who remain in Turkey. I believe that in this case the academic research follows the general political

trends and the author rightfully stresses that the context of conducting historical research in a revolutionary republican Turkey was far more oppressive and restrictive, at least in this field.

The Byzantine studies after the Second World War in Greece, presented in the sixth chapter (*From Helleno-Christian Civilisation to Roman Nation*), were strongly influenced by the civil war and the country's political problems, but they still remained connected to the global academia and were influenced by the intellectual currents from Europe and North America. Those developments led to ideas of 'Christian Hellenism' and 'Hellenic-Roman Nation' during the Middle Ages being raised by several scholars. The main issue being discussed was the continuity (or lack thereof) between Byzantium and the ancient Hellenism, but also that between Byzantium and modern Greece. The book presents well and in a critical manner the assortment of national, political, and philosophical ideas, as well as the impact of different academic environments.

The other three historiographies – Bulgarian, Serbian and Romanian – after the Second World War were victims to strong political and ideological oppression. However, in Serbia (chapter eight: *How Byzantine is Serbia?*) more free thought was allowed, primarily because of the relative independence of former Yugoslavia from the soviet control, but also because of the internal developments in Belgrade. The traditions of Byzantine studies were upheld, thanks to the School of Georgi Ostrogorsky and the presence of other White-Russian and 'foreign' scholars, which created a suitable environment to continue a relatively open academic life all things considered.

The developments in Bulgarian Byzantine studies, presented in chapter seven (*Toward 'Slavo-Byzantina' and 'Pax Symeonica': Bulgarian Scripts*) and in the Romanian, presented in chapter nine (*Post-Byzantine Empire or Romanian National State?*) share some similarities. Initially they suffered horrible political and ideological oppression, while the scholars who were deemed inconvenient to the regime were persecuted. Another characteristic trend was the continuous pressure on the

academic community to underline a Slavic identity and history of both nations. Because of that Romanian scholars had to abandon a centennial tradition of the *Transylvanian School* from then on. In both countries the pressure from the Stalinist communist regime was relaxed in 1960s, but after short *détente*, nationalist sentiments grew, especially in Bulgaria, which became quite oppressive towards the ethnic minorities. Another similar trend is the suspicion toward Helleno-Byzantine heritage, which was associated with the struggle of the 'national' church in Bulgaria or the condemned 'Phanariot regime' in Wallachia and Moldavia. In Bulgaria there was some continuity in several important topics (e.g. the formation of Bulgarian nationality and considering Bogomil heresy to be a type of mediaeval social movement) as the conclusions of the communist-marxist scholars (e.g. Dimitar Angelov) would align with those of the pre-war researchers, such as V.N. Zlatarski.

After the fall of the communist regimes in 1989, the academic communities in both Romania and Bulgaria looked for new ways to pursue research. The book of Diana Mishkova does not exhaust every single one of these, which is not necessarily a criticism. However, I would like to mention the importance of the French Doctoral School in Bucharest that had a significant impact on the formation of a new generation of historians. Arguably, all leading researchers in mediaeval studies in contemporary Romania and a some of them work in world renowned research centres in Europe and America attended its classes. In addition, one should acknowledge the mission of the *New Europe College*, from which a greater part of the aforementioned group, as well as other young scholars, can trace their origins.

Concerning the treatment of Bulgaria in the book, however, I feel the need to address a certain problem. It is surprising to me to realise the absence of even a mention about Peter Petrov, who was one of the main servants of the Stalinist and communist regime for the long period from 1940s to 1990s. As a mediaevalist, he participated in the formation of the thesis of Bulgarian historical exceptionalism, and also in specific political actions of the regime,

from the persecution of the professors when the communists took power to arguing in favour of discrimination of the Turkish minority in 80s. On the other hand, one of the main critics of Petrov's thesis – Ivan Bozhilov – is presented as the primary nationalist writer in Bulgaria. It neither is necessary to discuss his ideas regarding the nation, nor their impact on his research. I would only like to bring attention to the interpretation of the thesis about 'Preslav civilisation' and '*Pax Symeonica*' and their characterisation as a *prominent, on occasion hypertrophied expression of the distinctiveness and autonomy of Bulgarian medieval political ideology and culture with regard to the Byzantine sphere of influence* (p. 238). Actually, Bozhilov presented the political ideology of Bulgaria after the reign of Symeon as a bad imitation of the Byzantine one. In his terms, the so-called 'Preslav civilization' demonstrates that Symeon could not create a large spiritual basis for his political ambitions. Thus, having realised this, Symeon tried to substitute it by imitating Byzantine culture in the very confined milieu of the Preslav's court; '*Pax Symeonica*' is also an incorrectly, but ambitiously created name of an idea to substitute '*Pax Byzantina*' with something else. The citations are, of course, correct, however, they are taken from a half-fictional book, published in 1983 (*Tsar Symeon the Great (893–927). The Golden Age of Mediaeval Bulgaria*, in Bulgarian), in which Bozhilov expressed his partially interesting and significant thesis in such a pathetic way that even his greatest followers would be challenged to accept and agree with the message of the author.

In the *Epilogue and Conclusion* Diana Mishkova proposes a review on the developments in the domain of Byzantine Studies in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as well as a generalized synopsis on the ideas and research presented in the book. To sum up, we see a continuing trend for the research of the Eastern Roman Empire's to function as a basis, background, and tool for constructing of a national narrative, but prepared in a more structured way. I can agree, but only partially, since, as the author herself indicates, this approach to the study of Byzantium is neither monolithic,


nor it encompasses the whole corpus of research. The countries of South-eastern Europe, including the ex-socialist ones, are already much more open and free; the younger generation, trained in the great intellectual centres are what gives hope for that academic field.

I began this presentation of Diana Mishkova's book wondering how to classify it. It obviously is not just a historiographical research. If it were, it would be certainly incomplete, as one cannot be expected to cover several centuries of research in Europe, even on a specialised topic, in just one monograph. Furthermore, the author mentioned some detailed studies and publication of sources, for example the collections from 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, then from 19<sup>th</sup>, and from contemporary era, but it is disputable whether these admittedly great achievements of Byzantine studies are important to the main point of the book. On the other hand, it cannot be called a historico-sociological research on the identity formation because of the strong presence of the historiography and of Byzantium itself. I would say that this book

is pioneering a new type of research. That being said, it is unfortunate that the author did not include in her research the history of art and of literature. The expressions of culture in the images, would undoubtedly bring very interesting material, which could arguably offer the best examples in support of author's thesis, different in different countries. I believe it would be good to look for the same ideas not only in historiography, but also in the contemporary literary fiction and art, although this would further expand the scope of the research.

Since the book is now available, I strongly hope it will find its way to the countries and academic communities in South-eastern Europe. It certainly deserves attention and may have an impact on how the history is being written there.

*Ivan Biliarsky (Sofia)\**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8084-8858>

---

\* Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History



© by the author, licensee University of Lodz – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.21>

**ÁGNES KRIZA, *Depicting Orthodoxy in the Russian Middle Ages. The Novgorod Icon of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2022 [= Oxford Studies in Byzantium], pp. 362\*.**

The phenomenon of Sophia – the Divine Wisdom, as represented in the art and literature of medieval Byzantine-Slavic cultural area, has already been examined by scholars from both theological and historical perspectives. The fact that Ágnes Kriza decided to revisit the topic in her doctoral thesis (defended at the University of Cambridge in 2017) was justified by what seems to be the best possible reason one may have in studying the past – the discovery of a new source, a wall painting with the image of Sophia of the Novgorodian type. The painting was uncovered during the restoration work carried out by Vladimir Sarabianov in the cell of archbishop John in the Archiepiscopal Palace in Novgorod the Great in 2006–2007. The fresco is dated to 1441 and, consequently, its discovery allows us to shift the moment at which the iconography of the Divine Wisdom characteristic of the Novgorodian art was born, to the first half of the fifteenth century, or, more specifically, to the period in which the function of the local archbishop was exercised by Euthymius II (1429–1458).

Moreover, the Author, aware of the fact that one of the problems encountered in studies of

the images of the personified Divine Wisdom has been that of a small body of written sources directly related to it, has decided to introduce to scholarly circulation what is known as ‘Sophia commentary’ (*Слово о Премудрости*) – a source which, while it was analysed in some of the previous works (based on the manuscript ГИМ, Чуд. 320, fol. 341r–342r)<sup>1</sup>, has never been subjected to a thorough codicological and historico-literary examination. The source’s scholarly edition (based on the five manuscripts from 1450s–1470s) and its English translation are included in the appendix to Kriza’s work. It contains scholarly commentary discussing such issues as the dating and origin of the source’s different manuscripts, the manuscripts’ interrelations (*stemma codicum*), the text’s three different redactions and the specification of other texts that come next to it in various manuscripts (p. 289–302). The first part of the monograph is devoted to the analysis of the ‘Sophia commentary’, which is juxtaposed with other texts pertaining to the Divine Wisdom known in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* (*Word*, p. 19–64).

Based on the analysis mentioned above, which takes into account the findings of the research on the images of Sophia of the Novgorodian type from the fifteenth and sixteenth

\* This text has been written under the research project financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland (National Program for the Development of Humanities, module *Universalia* 2.1), entitled *Translation into Russian language and publication in “Aletheia” Scientific Publishing House, as a part of the series „Византийская библиотека”, a monograph by Zofia A. Brzozowska „Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża. Dzieje wyobrażeń w kręgu kultury bizantyńsko-słowiańskiej”* (21H 20 0042 88).

<sup>1</sup> Recently in works: В.Т. БРЮСОВА, *Икона „София Премудрость Божия” новгородского перевода и „Слово о Премудрости”*, [in:] *Герменевтика древнерусской литературы*, vol. X, ed. М.Ю. ЛЮСТРОВ, Москва 2000, p. 384–395; Z.A. BRZOWSKA, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża. Dzieje wyobrażeń w kręgu kultury bizantyńsko-słowiańskiej*, Łódź 2015 [= BL, 24], p. 368–371.

centuries (the catalogue of those images is included in the appendix, p. 303–316), Krisa has put forward an original and remarkable thesis, according to which the canon of representing the Divine Wisdom as a figure attired in imperial robes and seated on the throne, in the form of *deesis*, was elaborated, simultaneously with the ‘Sophia commentary’, on the initiative of archbishop Euthymius II in Novgorod the Great shortly after 1439. As such, it should be regarded as a cultural reaction to the Union of Florence. Images of this kind should therefore be regarded as representations of the Orthodoxy, the Orthodox Church, especially the Novgorodian Church, and thus interpreted in the context of religious polemics with the followers of Latin Christianity.

In the three following parts of the book, the phenomenon under discussion is approached from three different perspectives: that of the art history (*Image*, p. 65–131); that of the identity of the orthodox people of Rus’ (*Identity*, p. 133–217); and that of the history itself (*History*, p. 219–285). Unfortunately, the Author is very selective in her choice of the source material on which the line of reasoning followed in the book is based. This holds true for all the three sections of the work mentioned above. Consequently, some monuments and testimonies that could be adduced in support of the work’s main thesis are omitted from the Author’s analysis, as are some that could be considered to be in disagreement with it.

The fourth chapter, *Representations of Wisdom in Rus’* (p. 67–76) offers a review of the images of the personified Divine Wisdom which were brought into being across the lands of the Eastern Slavs before the emergence of the Novgorodian iconography (given the topic under consideration, the review is surprisingly brief). The Author is right to note that the images in question fall into two types: those used to illustrate a fragment from the Old Testament Book of Proverbs devoted to the personified Sophia (Prov 9: 1–6) and those showing her in a company of the evangelists (p. 67). Ágnes Krisa states, at the same time, that *female Wisdom figures are also adopted from Late Byzantine art* (p. 74). This statement can be applied only to the first

of the motives mentioned above (illustration to Prov 9: 1–6), although the iconography of this type formed itself at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, probably in the area not of the Byzantine empire but of the Serbian Nemanjic monarchy<sup>2</sup>. The tradition of creating the images of the personified Divine Wisdom in a company of Evangelists, Old Testament rulers and Church Fathers reaches back in Byzantine art to the sixth century, that is, to a much earlier period<sup>3</sup>. With the Author advancing the ecclesial interpretation of Sophia’s figure, it seems worthwhile to pay attention to the seals of the Church dignitaries of the Constantinople patriarchy from the sixth to the eighth centuries. The seals show a standing woman, signed as ΗΑΓΙΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ<sup>4</sup>.

The review of Sophia’s East Slavic images in which she is shown to serve as an inspiration for the Evangelists and Church Fathers is also incomplete. Among the artefacts created in Rus’ before the end of the sixteenth century, which are absent from the Author’s review, one should mention:

- Miniature from the manuscript ПГБ, 304. I.137, fol. Vv (1480s–1490s), containing a collection of texts by Gregory of Nazianzus, presented to the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius by Prince D.M. Požarskij. Sophia is shown there along with Gregory. There also appears a motif of the ‘source of Wisdom’,

<sup>2</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Wisdom Has Built Her House (Prov 9:1–6). The History of the Notion in Southern and Eastern Slavic Art in the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, SCer 5, 2015, p. 34; EADEM, *Sophia: The Personification of Divine Wisdom in the Lower Danube Region*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Byzantium and the Danube Regions (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century)*, ed. M.A. ROSSI, A.I. SULLIVAN, Abingdon-on-Thames 2024 [to be published].

<sup>3</sup> I have catalogued and analysed these images in the monograph: Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 174–193.

<sup>4</sup> V. LAURENT, *Le Corpus des sceaux l’Empire byzantin*, vol. V.1, *L’Église de Constantinople*, Paris 1963, p. 43–44, 532–533, 740, 748, 766; vol. V.2, *L’Église. Planches*, Paris 1965, fig. 49, 703, 931, 951, 996; W. SEIBT, M.L. ZARNITZ, *Das Byzantinische Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk. Katalog zur Ausstellung*, Wien 1997, p. 122–123. Analysis of these seals: Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 194–197.



known from the wall paintings in the Serbian monastery of Lesnovo<sup>5</sup>.

- Miniature from the Novgorodian manuscript ПГБ, 209.794, fol. 1v (the end of the fifteenth century), a collection of sermons by pope Gregory the Great – the winged (sic!) Divine Wisdom appears there with the Roman pope, which is particularly interesting in the context of the Author's anti-Latin interpretation of sapiential iconography<sup>6</sup>.
- Three miniatures from the Gospel Book produced in the scriptorium of the Valaam Monastery, БАИ, 13.1.26 (the end of the fifteenth century) and showing Sophia with St. Mathew (fol. 72v), St. Mark (fol. 148v), and St. Luke (fol. 195v)<sup>7</sup>.
- Miniature from the Novgorodian manuscript from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century it was framed as an icon – now in the holdings of the Andrej Rublev Museum in Moscow (КП 5318). It contains the image of Sophia with St. Mark<sup>8</sup>.
- Four miniatures from the Gospel Book ПГБ, 98.77 (mid-sixteenth century), showing the winged (sic!) Sophia with St. Mathew (fol. 9v), St. Mark (fol. 103v), St. Luke (fol. 164v) and St. John (fol. 262v).
- Three miniatures from the Gospel Book БАИ, 17.4.17 (from 1568) representing the Divine Wisdom with St. Mathew (fol. 23v), St. Mark (fol. 228v) and St. Luke (fol. 371v)<sup>9</sup>.

There is also a mistake that has crept into a description of one of the manuscripts mentioned by the Author: miniatures from the Gospel Book МГУ, 2 Bg 42 show Sophia in the company of St. Mark (fol. 81v) and St. Luke (fol. 126v)<sup>10</sup>, not St. Mark and St. Mathew (p. 67).

In the fifth chapter, *The 'Novgorod Sophia' Icon as a 'Deesis'*, Ágnes Kriza interestingly argues that the direct source of inspiration for those who created the Novgorodian iconography were the compositions of the *Royal Deesis* type containing images of Christ dressed in imperial-priestly robes, and of the Mother of God wearing the attire of Byzantine empresses. In Novgorod the Great, these images began to be created around 1380, and in the Balkans, in the first half of the fourteenth century. According to the Author, the *Royal Deesis* scheme is a borrowing from the Western European representations of the *Coronation of the Virgin* and *Maria Regina* types, known from Italy, especially from Rome. Kriza claims that until the fourteenth century, in Byzantine art there were no images of the Mother of God dressed in imperial robes (p. 77–112). Leaving aside the fact that the *Maria Regina* iconography stems straight from the canons of the Byzantine painting<sup>11</sup>, it was certainly advisable for the Author to pay attention to another monument (already analyzed in the subject literature) which is particularly significant in the context of studies on the origin of the representations of the personified Divine Wisdom: two mosaics surviving in the chapel of the amphitheatre in Dyrrachium (Durrës, Albania), from the sixth/seventh centuries. The mosaics contain two images of the Mother of God (the one of the *Maria Regina* type and the other almost entirely damaged) and the personified Sophia<sup>12</sup>.

The sixth chapter, *Sophia in the Womb of the Virgin* (p. 113–136), provides an analysis of the images of the Mother of God with Christ-Emmanuel set in a medallion (the Author returns to the issue in chapter 8, *Leaven and Byzantine Marian Iconography*, p. 172–187, and in chapter 9, *Depicting Orthodoxy in Rus'*, p. 211–217). Ágnes Kriza is right to stress that representations from this group (*Nikopoios*, *Theotokos Orans*, *Blacherniotissa*, *Platytera*, *Znamenie*) carry

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 234–235 (with bibliographic references to the older literature of subject).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 235–236.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 236–237, fig. 7, p. 471.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 237–238.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 238–239, fig. 8, p. 472.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 230–231.

<sup>11</sup> *Vide*: M. ANDALORO, G. BORDI, *La Maria Regina della 'parete palinsesto'*, [in:] *Santa Maria Antiqua tra Roma e Bisanzio*, ed. A. ANDALORO, G. BORDI, G. MORGANTI, Milano 2016, p. 154–159.

<sup>12</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 178–180, fig. 1, p. 467.

clear sapiential connotations: by carrying in her womb the Christ-Divine Wisdom, the Mother of God became 'Sophia's home', 'Sophia's temple', the Church. In this context, it comes as a surprise that the Author failed to include in her analysis the group of sources (the seals of the Novgorodian archbishops from the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries which often bore the image of the orant Mother of God with Emmanuel), which could be used as evidence supporting this view. On the seals of the archbishops, Dalmatius (1249–1274) and Clemens (1276–1299), the image is even accompanied by the inscription unambiguously identifying the Christ with Sophia<sup>13</sup>.



The seal of the Novgorodian archbishop Dalmatius (1249–1274). Drawing by E. MYŚLIŃSKA-BRZOZOWSKA according to: В.Л. Янин, *Актовые печати Древней Руси X–XV вв.*, vol. II, *Новгородские печати XIII–XV вв.*, Москва 1970, tabl. 10, fig. 454.

The tenth chapter, *Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, and the Union of Florence*, deals with references to Sophia found in Novgorodian chronicles. Krisa advances a thesis that the references pertain to the church understood both as a community of the faithful and as a specific building, the cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod the Great. This is where the question of some selectiveness sets in. Both redactions of the *Novgorod*

*First Chronicle* recording under AM 6746/AD 1237–1239 that Novgorod the Great was saved by *God and the great and sacred apostolic cathedral Church of St. Sophia*<sup>14</sup>, may of course suggest such an interpretation. However, it is worth noting that Sophia appears in this source in various contexts, often acting as an independent person. From the mid-fourteenth century on, the seat of the Novgorodian archbishops was referred to as 'St. Sophia's home', (a fact which is very important in relation to the Author's ecclesial understanding of the figure of the personified Divine Wisdom), and at the end of the twelfth century, the people of Novgorod began to believe that Sophia, apart from selecting a clergyman who was supposed to become their archbishop, took care of the city and its inhabitants, interceded with God on their behalf, resolved their disputes, and supported Novgorodian troops on the battlefield<sup>15</sup>. The question to be posed here is whether the Old Rus' understanding of the church (as a community and as a temple) allowed such beliefs to be held? It would be advisable to analyse the *Life of Euthymius* by Pachomius the Serb, to which the Author makes a reference (p. 242), and in which the personifications of Novgorodian churches, including the cathedral of St. Sophia, are to be found.

On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that Dobrynja Jadrejkovič (archbishop Anthony), whom we find mentioned in the book under review, states in the first words of the account of his trip (around 1200) to Constantinople that he reached the Byzantine capital *thanks to God's mercy and the help of St. Sophia – the Wisdom of the eternal Word*. There can be no doubt that he regarded Sophia – in line with the belief, widely accepted in Byzantine theology – as identical with Christ and that it was Christ to whom he referred in his work<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, ed. C. RAYMOND BEAZLEY, A.A. SHAKMATOV, London 1914, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sophia – the Personified Wisdom of God in the Culture of Novgorod the Great from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, SCer 4, 2014, p. 13–26; EADEM, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 321–334.

<sup>16</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *The Church of Divine Wisdom or of Christ – the Incarnate Logos? Dedication of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in the light of Byzantine Sources from 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century*, SCer 2, 2012, p. 90.

<sup>13</sup> В.Л. Янин, *Актовые печати Древней Руси X–XV вв.*, vol. II, *Новгородские печати XIII–XV вв.*, Москва 1970, p. 46–47, tabl. 10; Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 79, 168.

A similar phrase, although less developed, can be found in later Novgorodian *itineraria* (which are also omitted from the analysis). In Stephen of Novgorod's text from 1348/1349 one can, for example, read: *God, St. Sophia the Divine Wisdom, took pity on us*<sup>17</sup>. Formulas of this kind, pointing to acts of mercy/Sophia's intercessions with God, were also used in the preambles of agreements which the people of Novgorod the Great concluded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with, for example, the Hanseatic League or neighbouring rulers (another group of sources that is absent from the monograph)<sup>18</sup>.

However, the fact that the Author failed to include in her analysis a number of sources does not lessen the value of the work's main thesis, that is, the view that Sophia's iconography of the Novgorodian type, along with its commentary, was created around 1440 on the initiative of archbishop Euthymius II in reaction to the Union of Florence concluded between Constantinople and Rome in 1439, and that the figure of Sophia should be interpreted as a personification of the Orthodox Church in Novgorod the Great. However, it would be worth asking whether the creation of the iconography (like Euthymius's other initiatives) was motivated only by religious reasons (a polemic with Latin Christianity), or whether there were also more pragmatic factors involved. To put it differently, is it possible for this action to have been inspired not by the conclusion of the Union in Florence, but by the rejection of it in Moscow – a fact which entailed the unilateral proclamation of the autocephaly of the Rus' church. It is known that the people of Novgorod the Great watched with rising anxiety the growth of Moscow's expansionist tendencies. With the seat of the Kiev metropolitan having been moved to Moscow in 1325, Novgorod the Great sent several groups of envoys (one of those envoys was Stephen, the author of the *itinerarium* mentioned above) to the patriarch of Constantinople, probably with

the goal of changing the status of the Novgorodian archbishopric within the Kiev metropolitanate (autonomy? autocephaly?). A trace of the events of the time can be found in *The Tale of the Novgorodian White Cowl*, in which the pope is said to have passed this symbol of the highest ecclesiastical power to the patriarch of Constantinople who, however, feeling unworthy of it, had it sent to the archbishop of Novgorod the Great, Basil (1331–1352)<sup>19</sup>. It is worth noting that in terms of the Novgorodian archbishopric's ideological attitude toward Rome and Constantinople, which is discussed in the work's last chapter (p. 260–273), it would be helpful for the Author to include in her analysis the source mentioned above.

The creation of the new iconography of the Divine Wisdom, which was embedded both in the Christian orthodoxy and in the local tradition, may have been part of Euthymius's efforts to negotiate the highest possible position and the greatest possible scope of autonomy for his eparchy in the structure of the emerging, auto-cephalic church in Rus' (or, more hypothetically, outside this structure, but still within the Orthodox church). All the actions of this dignitary, of which we learn from Krisa's work (the renovation of the cathedral of the Divine Wisdom, the rebuilding of 'Sophia's home', that is, the seat of the Novgorodian archbishops, the canonization of local saints, the exhibition of their graves, the creation of hagiographical texts in their honour, the building and rebuilding of other churches in the city – p. 234–241), can be interpreted as aiming for the elevation of the status of the Novgorodian church. Moreover, Euthymius must have been aware of the fact that the threat posed by Moscow after 1448 continued to exist. Suffice it to mention that around 1450 he ordered the fortifications (walls and towers) surrounding the Novgorodian *kremlin* to be augmented<sup>20</sup>. There is one more coincidence

<sup>17</sup> *From the Wanderer of Stephen of Novgorod*, ed. G.P. MAJESKA, [in:] *IDEM, Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Washington 1984, p. 28–29.

<sup>18</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sophia – the Personified Wisdom...*, p. 22–23; ЕАДЕМ, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 336.

<sup>19</sup> The synopsis of the entire source with its fragmentary English translation: *The Tale of the White Cowl*, [in:] *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*, ed. S.A. ZENKOVSKY, New York 1974, p. 323–332.

<sup>20</sup> Н.Н. КУЗЬМИНА, Л.А. ФИЛИППОВА, *Кремль*, [in:] *Великий Новгород. История и культура IX–XVII вв. Энциклопедический словарь*, ed. В.Л. Янин, Э.А. Гордиенко, Санкт-Петербург 2007, p. 256.

that is not without significance: around 1420, Novgorod the Great began to mint its own coins featuring the image of Sophia on the reverse (another group of sources absent from Krisa's analysis)<sup>21</sup>. Thus, Euthymius II, in propagating the new iconography of the Divine Wisdom, drew on one of the important symbols of the sovereignty of Novgorod the Great.

However, the initiative he took did not yield the intended effect: 30 years after his death Novgorod the Great lost its independence. However, Krisa rightly argues that on the ideological plane, *together with the 'Novgorod Sophia' icon, the Novgorodian clerics also exported the long-standing traditions of Novgorodian anti-Latin visual polemics to Muscovy where they took on a new relevance in the service of the new Orthodox 'tsardom'* (p. 285).

To sum up, the monograph under review is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the research into the phenomenon of the personified Divine Wisdom in the culture of Eastern Slavs. As such, it inspires posing new questions and advancing new hypotheses. The inclusion in the book's appendix of the scholarly edition and the English translation of the source that is important for extending our knowledge of the motif under discussion is certain to advance our studies of the phenomenon of Sophia, especially those devoted to the Church Slavic literature (also the polemical one).

Translated by Artur Mękowski

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

*The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016–1471*, ed. C. RAYMOND BEAZLEY, A.A. SHAKMATOV, London 1914.

*From the Wanderer of Stephen of Novgorod*, ed. G.P. MAJESKA, [in:] G.P. MAJESKA, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Washington 1984, p. 28–47.

JANIN V.L., *Aktovye pečati Drevnej Rusi X–XV vv.*, vol. II, *Novgorodskie pečati XIII–XV vv.*, Moskva 1970.

<sup>21</sup> Z.A. BRZOWSKA, *Sophia – the Personified Wisdom...*, p. 23–24; EADEM, *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża...*, p. 337–339.

LAURENT V., *Le Corpus des sceaux l'Empire byzantin*, vol. V.1, *L'Église de Constantinople*, Paris 1963; vol. V.2, *L'Église. Planches*, Paris 1965.

SEIBT W., ZARNITZ M.L., *Das Byzantinische Bleisiegel als Kunstwerk. Katalog zur Ausstellung*, Wien 1997.

*The Tale of the White Cowl*, [in:] *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*, ed. S.A. ZENKOVSKY, New York 1974, p. 323–332.

### Secondary Literature

ANDALORO M., BORDI G., *La Maria Regina della 'parete palinsesto'*, [in:] *Santa Maria Antiqua tra Roma e Bisanzio*, ed. A. ANDALORO, G. BORDI, G. MORGANTI, Milano 2016, p. 154–159.

BRJUSOVA V.G., *Ikona „Sofija Premudrost' Božija” novgorodskogo perevoda i „Slovo o Premudrosti”*, [in:] *Germenevtika drevnerusskoj literatury*, vol. X, ed. M.JU. LJUSTROV, Moskva 2000, p. 384–395.

BRZOWSKA Z.A., *Sofia – upersonifikowana Mądrość Boża. Dzieje wyobrażeń w kręgu kultury bizantyjsko-słowiańskiej*, Łódź 2015 [= *Byzantina Lodziensia*, 24], <https://doi.org/10.18778/7969-825-7>

BRZOWSKA Z.A., *Sophia – the Personified Wisdom of God in the Culture of Novgorod the Great from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, “*Studia Ceranea*” 4, 2014, p. 13–26, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.04.01>


BRZOWSKA Z.A., *Sophia: The Personification of Divine Wisdom in the Lower Danube Region*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Byzantium and the Danube Regions (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century)*, ed. M.A. ROSSI, A.I. SULLIVAN, Abingdon-on-Thames 2024 [to be published].

BRZOWSKA Z.A., *The Church of Divine Wisdom or of Christ – the Incarnate Logos? Dedication of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in the light of Byzantine Sources from 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century*, “*Studia Ceranea*” 2, 2012, p. 85–96, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.02.08>

BRZOWSKA Z.A., *Wisdom Has Built Her House (Prov 9: 1–6). The History of the Notion in Southern and Eastern Slavic Art in the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, “*Studia Ceranea*” 5, 2015, p. 33–58, <https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.05.02>

KUZ'MINA N.N., FILIPPOVA L.A., *Kremľ*, [in:] *Velikij Novgorod. Istorija i kul'tura IX–XVII vv. Ėnciklopedičeskij slovar'*, ed. V.L. JANIN, Ė.A. GORDIENKO, Sankt-Peterburg 2007, p. 254–257.

Zofia A. Brzowska (Łódź)\*\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5951-3781>

\*\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.34>

**DOMINIKA GAPSKA, *Woman. Church. State. Cults of the Female Saints in the Writings of Serbian Orthodox Church, Scriptum, Cracow 2021, pp. 208.***

The newest monograph by Dominika Gapska, a paleoslavist and Serbist from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, is an extended English-language version of her doctoral thesis that was defended in 2020. It remains in line with a very important and increasingly popular trend in today's humanities (both historical and literary studies) to appreciate the role of female saints, especially female rulers, in medieval and early modern European culture. By taking as a starting point a view, that the cult of female saints in the Serbian Orthodox Church has been a unique phenomenon, for which there is no analogy in other areas remaining under the influence of Byzantine-Orthodox civilization (especially in its political-state aspect)<sup>1</sup>, the author set herself the ambitious task of collecting and presenting all the figures of this kind who are important for the Serbs' spirituality and national identity in one volume (p. 11–12). It is particularly noteworthy that the criterion on which she has relied in choosing these figures was not so much their ethnicity as

the function they exercised (p. 12). Such an approach has allowed her to include in her analysis not only women who were of Serbian origin (for example, Princess Milica) or who became by marriage members of the “holy” Nemanjić dynasty (for example, Queen Helen of Anjou), but also women who came from other Slavic regions (Zlata of Meglen) or from outside the Slavic environment (Petka), and whose cults have been adopted in Serbia over the centuries.

The work also distinguishes itself by the wide time span it covers. Dominika Gapska has decided to move beyond the mid-fifteenth century, which is usually considered to mark the end of the Middle Ages in historical research, as well as abandoning the perspective (characteristic for Slavic studies), in which the epoch is extended to include what is known as the post-Byzantine period (the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries). She has thus included in her study of the phenomenon under discussion some testimonies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even texts that are created recently and posted on the Internet. This approach appears to be fully justified by the specificity of the source material. It has enabled her to focus on female saints living as late as the eighteenth century (for example, Zlata of Meglen, who died in 1795), to trace the evolution of the cult of particular women, and to show how the Serbian Orthodox Church has come recently to appreciate the role of the women who have so far been deprived of a separate hagiographic tradition, serving just as a kind of a background for their husbands and sons (for example, Anna, wife of Stephen Nemanja, mother of Rastko-Sava and Stephen the First Crowned).

<sup>1</sup> The attitude towards female sanctity and the place held by female rulers in the state tradition distinguish the Serbian from the Bulgarian culture in the Middle Ages. The issue of how far the idea of saint female rulers from the Nemanjić, Hrebeljanović and Branković dynasties differs from the Byzantine model of *imperial feminine* and *royal female sanctity* is quite complex and as such requires further scholarly investigations. See: Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, M.J. LESZKA, *Maria Lekapene, Empress of the Bulgarians. Neither a Saint nor a Malefactress*, Łódź–Kraków 2017 [= BL, 36], p. 99–144, 149–150; M. HOMZA, *Mulieres suadentes – Persuasive Women. Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= ECEEMA, 42], p. 33–79, 211–215.

The monograph is made up of two parts. The first presents, in a chronological order, six saints whose cult has, over the centuries, gained a nationwide and statewide character (p. 21–156). These are: Anna (died in 1200), wife of the Great Župan of Raška, Stephen Nemanja; Queen Helen of Anjou (died in 1314); Princess Milica Hrebeljanović (died in 1405)<sup>2</sup>; Despotessa Angelina Branković (died 1520); Paraskeva-Petka (the eleventh century?) and Zlata of Meglen (died in 1795). The second part provides the profiles of three women who were worshiped locally, either, for example, in a specific monastery or in Serbia's specific region (p. 159–179): Bulgarian Tsaritsa, Anna Neda, a sister of King Stephen of Dečani (died c. 1340); Serbian Tsaritsa, Helen, wife of Stephen Dušan (died in 1374), Despotessa Helen Štiljanović (died in 1546).

The author makes an attempt to place the analysed phenomena in a wider context of *Slavia Orthodoxa* (it is with this goal in mind that she cites, for example, Eastern Slavic collections of the lives of saints, such as the work of the bishop of Rostov, Demetrius Tuptalo, from the end of the seventeenth century, and other works created later). She also approaches them from the perspective of the spirituality of the eastern churches and Byzantine-Orthodox civilization. Introducing the reader to this theme, Dominika Gapska rightly argues that the figure who served as a model for female sanctity in the Serbian Orthodox Church was the Mother of God (p. 11, 182). However, given the fact that all of the heroines dealt with in the monograph represent

the type of a saint ruler<sup>3</sup> (the only exception being a martyr, Zlata of Meglen), more attention should be devoted to the figure of Empress Helen (she is only marginally mentioned in the monograph, p. 12, 27, 29, 49, 63, 160), Constantine the Great's mother. In the mid-fifth century in Byzantium (and in Slavic regions at least as early as the eleventh century), St. Helen began to be regarded as an ideal of the Christian empress with whom all the later female rulers who distinguished themselves through their faith and the care given to the Orthodox Church were equated by being given the honourable name of a 'new Helen'<sup>4</sup>. The cult of St. Helen as well as of Kievan Princess Olga, which was modelled on that of St. Helen, certainly existed in Serbia from the first half of the fourteenth century<sup>5</sup>. It is likely that the phenomenon of 'new Helens' was also known to the archbishop Daniel II who was the author of the oldest surviving Serbian hagiographic text devoted to a woman, that is, the *Life of Helen of Anjou* (although he never explicitly used that comparison while writing about the Serbian queen). Moreover, the days of commemorating female saints bearing the name of Helen – as Dominika Gapska states – were sometimes set on 21 May, that is, on the celebration day of Constantine and Helen (p. 49, 160).

It will be worthwhile to complement the reconstruction of the Serbian model of female royal sanctity (p. 181–186) with a discussion of

<sup>2</sup> Apart from medieval texts discussed by the author and containing references to Milica (written by patriarch Daniel III, Anonymous from Ravanica, Constantine of Kostenets, Gregory Tsamblak), it would be worthwhile to take into account the *Word about St. Prince Lazar (Храна духовна, похвално надметање, речи високоузнетом међу мученицима, новом кнезу Лазару, и о преносу моштију његових)* by Anthony Rafal from 1419/1420. *Хрестоматија средњовековне књижевности*, vol. II, Српска књижевност, ed. Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, Београд 2012, p. 143–159. The work provides a dramatic description of the widowed Princess's mourning lament. Z.A. BRZOWSKA, *Księżna Milica – między sakralizacją władzy monarszej, oficjalnym kultem cerkiewnym i narodowym mitem*, PSS 5, 2013, p. 65–68.

<sup>3</sup> The 'monarchical character' of the cult of St. Petka has already been dealt with in scholarly literature: M. KUCZYŃSKA, *Paraskiewa-Petka Tyrnowska w rosyjskim wariacie służby – „monarchiczny” obraz świętości*, PSS 5, 2013, p. 157–171.

<sup>4</sup> M. НОМЗА, *Mulieres suadentes...*, p. 33–210.

<sup>5</sup> The lives of both female rulers can be found, among others, in the Prolog from Lesnovo (1330): САНУ 53, fol. 228–228' (St. Helen, 21.05), fol. 243–243' (St. Olga, 11.06). *Станиславов (Лесновски) Пролог от 1330 г.*, ed. P. ПАВЛОВА, В. ЖЕЛЯЗКОВА, Велико Търново 1999, p. 246, 261. There are also original South Slavic texts devoted both to St. Helen and to a 'new Helen', St. Olga. Н. ГАГОВА, *Владетели и книги. Участието на южнославянския владетел в производството и употребата на книги през Средновековието (IX–XV в.): рецепцията на византийския модел*, София 2010, p. 192.

the motive that, while known in the culture of Nemanjić monarchy from the thirteenth century, became widespread at the time when archbishop Daniel II created the work dedicated to Helen of Anjou, in the last years of Stephen Milutin (1282–1321) reign – Sophia, the female personification of [Divine] Wisdom<sup>6</sup>. Her images appeared not only on the walls of Serbian churches. Authors from the region also included references to Sapiential Books of the Old Testament (Prov, Sir, Wis) in texts devoted to female saints – a fact to which the author refers several times in her analysis (p. 33, 56–57, 127, 145–152).

While preparing the monograph's new edition – because of the topic it addresses and the insights it offers, it fully deserves to be published by the publishing house with an international reach – the aspects of it that pertain to scholarly technicalities should be refined. The bibliography that appears at the end of the work contains titles that are not referenced in the footnotes (and the other way around). Sometimes page numbers are missing from bibliographical references, like in chapter 7 devoted to Tsaritsa Anna Neda (p. 159), in which two works on Bulgarian female rulers are cited: С. ГЕОРГИЕВА, *Жената в българското средновековие*, Пловдив 2011 (Anna Neda appears only on a few pages of this monograph: 289–291, 345–347); В. ИГНАТОВ, *Българските царици. Владетелките на България VII–XIV в.*, София 2008 (it contains only a brief bibliographical note: p. 79–81). However, first of all it would be necessary to unify the wide source quotations woven into the text. Some of those quotations are in Serbian, some are in English and some are in parallel variants, both in Serbian and in English. In the English-language monograph sources should be quoted in their original version (in Church Slavic or

Serbian, depending on the epoch), possibly coupled with their English translations. However, these remarks are of secondary importance and do not detract from the significant value of the monograph that presents this little known part of European medieval culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

BRZOZOWSKA Z.A., *Księżna Milica – między sakralizacją władzy monarszej, oficjalnym kultem cerkiewnym i narodowym mitem*, "Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne" 5, 2013, p. 59–73, <https://doi.org/10.14746/pss.2013.5.4>

BRZOZOWSKA Z.A., *Sophia: The Personification of Divine Wisdom in the Lower Danube Region*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Byzantium and the Danube Regions (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century)*, ed. M.A. ROSSI, A.I. SULLIVAN, Abingdon-on-Thames 2024, p. 251–264.

BRZOZOWSKA Z.A., LESZKA M.J., *Maria Lekapene, Empress of the Bulgarians. Neither a Saint nor a Malefactress*, Łódź–Kraków 2017 [= *Byzantina Lodziensia*, 36], <https://doi.org/10.18778/8142-028-0>

GAGOVA N., *Vladeteli i knigi. Učastieto na južnoslavjanskija vladetel v proizvodstvoto i upotrebat na knigi prez Srednovekovieto (IX–XV v.): recepcijata na vizantijskija model*, Sofija 2010.

HOMZA M., *Mulieres suadentes – Persuasive Women. Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, 450–1450, 42].


*Hrestomatija srednjovekovne književnosti*, vol. II, *Srpska književnost*, ed. T. JOVANOVIĆ, Beograd 2012.

KUCZYŃSKA M., *Paraskiewa-Petka Tyrnowska w rosyjskim wariacie służby – „monarchiczny” obraz świętości*, "Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne" 5, 2013, p. 157–171, <https://doi.org/10.14746/pss.2013.5.11>

*Stanislavov (Lesnovski) Prolog ot 1330 g.*, ed. R. PAVLOVA, V. ŽELJAZKOVA, Veliko Tărnovo 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Z.A. BRZOZOWSKA, *Sophia: The Personification of Divine Wisdom in the Lower Danube Region*, [in:] *Routledge Handbook of Byzantium and the Danube Regions (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century)*, ed. M.A. ROSSI, A.I. SULLIVAN, Abingdon-on-Thames 2024, p. 251–264.

Zofia A. Brzozowska (Łódź)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5951-3781>

\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.22>

***Letopisi, chronographs, paratexts. Some remarks on the Eastern Slavic historical literature in the Middle Ages, on the Margins of the book by Timofei V. Guimon: *Historical Writing of Early Rus' (c. 1000–c. 1400) in a Comparative Perspective*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2021 [ = East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 71], pp. 778\****

The monograph by Timofei V. Guimon undeniably constitutes an essential reading for all scholars involved in studying the medieval literature from the region of *Slavia Orthodoxa* and the history of Eastern Slavs in the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Distinguishing itself through a thorough and insightful analysis, a broad perspective from which its main topic is viewed, a novel approach to issues under investigation, and a remarkable precision in recapitulating the findings of other scholars (along with lengthy references to the literature of subject), the monograph under review is certainly on a par with the classic works of such distinguished specialists as Gerhard Podskalsky (1937–2013)<sup>1</sup> or Simon Franklin (1953–)<sup>2</sup>. Just like the scholars mentioned above, the author, aware of the fact that it is impossible for a one-volume work to cover the material that is typologically so diverse and so broad as East Slavic medieval literature, focused his attention only on one genre – the historical writing. The result is a compendium that is

useful not only to historians specializing in the Middle Ages, but also to scholars representing other disciplines, including paleoslavists.

It should be stressed that the author unconventionally defined the timespan to be covered in his analysis. He did not follow the divisions of the history of the Old Rus' literature which were applied in previous works, and which involved, for example, the specification of the pre-Mongol era (until 1237) or the periods in which the point of gravity of political life in Rus' (if only ideologically) shifted from Kiev to Vladimir on the Klyazma River and to Moscow. Instead, he decided to include under the category of *early Rus'* those monuments whose manuscript copies, while still surviving, were prepared before 1400. The author refers to the epoch as a "parchment period", realising, however, the conventional nature of the concept. As he explains in chapter I, until the beginning of the fifteenth century, parchment was neither the only, nor the numerically prevailing material that texts were written on (some texts were also written i.a. on birch bark). The concept should thus be taken to apply to the period before the widespread use of paper, or, to be more precise, of paper codices (p. 16–17). Although it is not explicitly stated in the monograph, in terms of political history, the period was parallel to that preceding Moscow's rise to dominance in the region inhabited by the Eastern Slavs.

\* This text has been written under the research project *Orthodox Slavic Linguistic Varieties at the Threshold of Modernity: Continuity and Innovation. A Mixed-Methods Approach* (financed by the National Science Centre, Poland, No: DEC-2020/39/G/HS2/01652).

<sup>1</sup> G. PODSKALSKY, *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)*, München 1982.

<sup>2</sup> S. FRANKLIN, *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950–1300*, Cambridge 2002.



The choice of the codices as the criterion by which to define the period to be placed under analysis has significantly reduced the studied material, a fact of which Timofei V. Guimon was fully aware. The initial examination of primary sources for the period from the eleventh to the beginning of the fifteenth centuries allowed him to identify only fifteen parchment monuments of old Rus' origin (14 in Church Slavic and 1 in Byzantine Greek). The author discusses them in detail in appendix 2 (p. 405–408), providing their catalogue/accession numbers and offering a general overview of the basic literature devoted to them. He stresses in the preface that there are only three complete codices in this group, of which two contain original historical texts of Rus' origin: ГИМ, Син. 786 (which is now considered to be the oldest surviving East Slavic *letopis*<sup>3</sup>, the manuscript-convolute from Novgorod the Great, written around 1234, 1330 and in the years 1330–1352) and РНБ, Ф.п.IV.2 (known as the *Laurentian Codex*, compiled in 1377, probably in Nizhny Novgorod, and based on earlier sources of, among others, Kievan origin)<sup>4</sup>. The fact that both manuscripts contain works closely related to the two oldest and most dynamic centres of the early Rus' historical writing – ГИМ, Син. 786 constitutes the only known copy of the *Novgorod First Letopis* of older redaction and РНБ, Ф.п.IV.2 contains the text of the *Povest vremennykh let* (hereafter referred to as *PVL*) in the section that runs to AM 6618/AD 1100 – enabled him to weave into the two following chapters an account of the medieval historiography of Kiev and Novgorod the Great. Later monuments, created in other parts of Rus' and/or preserved in manuscripts dated to the

period after 1400, such as for example the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*<sup>5</sup>, are mentioned only as part of the context.

In the first chapter, the author undertakes a successful attempt to present – against a wide background of the Eastern Slavs' medieval literature – the Old Rus' historical writing, outlining the specificity of its language and characterizing the diversity of its genres (this issue I discuss in greater detail in a later part of my article). This introductory chapter is followed by the part devoted to the Kievan historiography in the first centuries of its existence. It opens with a discussion of *PVL*, probably the oldest surviving East Slavic historical work, created in Kiev around 1110. In the course of recapitulating, and sometimes challenging, views expressed in previous studies of the work, the author presents the reader with the corpus of its existing copies (five manuscripts created over the period from 1377 to mid-sixteenth century), their interrelations, and the text's different variants and redactions. He then goes on to describe the sources that its authors could draw on at the beginning of the twelfth century, and invokes different hypotheses regarding earlier texts/records/compilations that can be assumed to have appeared in Kiev as early as the eleventh century: the *Initial Compilation* of the 1090s, the *Compilation of Monk Nikon* from 1073, the *Oldest Compilation* from 1039, the *Oldest Tale* originating in the reign of Vladimir the Great (978–1015), records maintained in the Church of the Tithes in the first half of the eleventh century.

It should be stressed that Timofei V. Guimon not only develops the views of his scholarly predecessors, but also advances an original thesis regarding the oldest historical text created in Kiev, and perhaps the earliest work of this kind created in the lands of the Eastern Slavs. In his opinion, this relic served as the direct source for the *Memorial and Encomium for Prince Vladimir*, a text written by Jacob the

<sup>3</sup> Unlike the author I think it is more preferable for English language texts to use the term *letopis*, pl. *letopisi* (Church Slavic: *лѣтопись*, pl. *лѣтописи*) rather than 'annals' or 'chronicle', which are characteristic of the Western medieval historiography.

<sup>4</sup> The third Old Rus' historical codex which was created before 1400 and which survives in its entirety is, according to the author, the oldest copy of the Old Church Slavic translation of the Byzantine chronicle by George the Monk known as *Намартос* – РГБ, 173.I.100 (of the Tver provenance) from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century (p. 46, 407).

<sup>5</sup> On this work, which in view of its generic specificity can be (unlike the majority of the monuments of the Old Rus' historical literature) referred to as a chronicle, cf.: A. Јусуповић, *The Chronicle of Halych-Volhynia and Historical Collections in Medieval Rus'*, Leiden–Boston 2022 [= ECEEMA, 81].

Monk using earlier texts unknown to us, perhaps as early as the eleventh century. Because of the absence of the early manuscript tradition, this monument was dealt by experts with a dose of reserve (even though there is a wealth of literature on it; in Poland, it was studied e.g. by Andrzej Poppe)<sup>6</sup>. The oldest copy to which scholars had access at the beginning of the nineteenth century was dated to 1414. It burned in the fire of Moscow in 1812. The other copies range in date from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. However, this does not change the fact that the *Memorial* is an important source to which we owe our knowledge i.a. of the origin of the cult of the Saint Rurikid rulers, Olga and Vladimir.

The author advances a thesis that this earlier source on which Jacob the Monk based his account, and which was at the same time the first historical text created in Rus', was the *royal inscription* enumerating Prince Vladimir I's accomplishments. In all probability, it was created shortly after the consecration of the Church of Tithes in Kiev (around 995/996). In the years 996–1043, clergymen associated with the church added brief annalistic notes to it. Eventually, monks from the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery linked it with the material from the *Oldest Tale* into a single compilation. In the latter half of the eleventh century, it became one of the foundations of the Kievan *letopis* (p. 128–144).

This hypothesis deserves attention for several reasons. In line with the comparative perspective applied in the monograph (and mentioned in its title), the author points out that inscriptions commemorating rulers' deeds (i.a. Christianisation of a country) were created in Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries – the contacts that the region had with Rus', and the influence it exercised upon the culture of the Eastern Slavs are not, in view of the recent archaeological studies, to be doubted<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, as is also stressed by the author, analogical epigraphic material is known from the First Bulgarian State, which was linguistically and culturally related to Rus' (through the complex influence of the Byzantine civilization). This holds true both for the pagan period of its history as well as for the years which followed the acceptance of baptism by Prince Boris in 865/866<sup>8</sup>. Worth noting is also the fact that almost all the authors of the earliest texts produced in Kievan Rus' (historical, homiletical, hagiographical) focused their attention on two rulers from the reigning dynasty: Princes Olga and her grandson Vladimir. In East Slavic literature from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these two rulers are often cast as figures reproducing the scheme, derived from the Byzantine culture, of a “new Helen” and a “new Constantine” – perfect monarchs spreading the Christian religion among their subjects<sup>9</sup>. This motif appears to have been a ‘pretty’ theme to be included in a commemorative inscription, from which it could penetrate into other forms of writing.

The third chapter deals with the historical writing in Novgorod the Great. Since the book, written in English, is addressed to the Western reader, Timofei V. Guimon decided to precede a discussion of Novgorod's historiography with a brief account of the specificity of the Novgorod culture and literature, and of the unique character of its constitution (which was in force from the 1130s) – although the view that it bore republican traits is treated in the book with reserve (p. 172). In the pages following this introduction, the author presents medieval historical texts of Novgorod provenance, drawing on the findings of other scholars, as well as using his own research into the topic on which he has already published a number of articles in Russian<sup>10</sup>. He shows the interdependence between

<sup>8</sup> Cf. i.a. В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Първобългарски надписи*, София 1979, p. 139–140.

<sup>9</sup> Z.A. BRZOWSKA, *The Ideal Christian Rulers – Sts. Constantine and Helena in the Spiritual and Political Culture of Kievan Russia*, [in:] *Sveti car Konstantin i hrišćanstvo*, vol. I, ed. D. BOJČIĆ, Niš 2013, p. 497–508 (with references to the earlier literature).

<sup>10</sup> Cf.: Т.В. ГИМОН, *К генеалогии новгородских летописей XIII–XV вв.*, [in:] *Новгород и Новгородская земля. История и археология*, Великий Новгород

<sup>6</sup> Cf. i.a. A. POPPE, *How the Conversion of Rus' Was Understood in the Eleventh Century*, HUS 11, 1987, p. 299 (= A. POPPE, *Christian Russia in the Making*, London–New York 2007, III).

<sup>7</sup> W. DUCZKO, *Viking Rus. Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2004 [= NW, 12].

the *letopisi* of northern Rus': the *Novgorod First Letopis* of older redaction, preserved only in one manuscript (ГИМ, Син. 786) from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the younger variant of this text from mid-fifteenth century; *letopisi* from the Novgorodian-Sophian group and the *Tver Compilation*. The author has demonstrated that the *letopis* kept at the Novgorod Archiepiscopal Cathedral from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries served as the common source for all of the texts mentioned above (p. 181–193).

Much space in the chapter is devoted to discussing the origin of the *Novgorod Archiepiscopal Letopis*. Its creation, it is believed, was preceded by the tradition of making brief historical notes, and of preparing the list of the lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries. The notes appeared in Novgorod in the mid-eleventh century and the list began to be made in the 1090s. Combining these sources with some local compilation from the 1090s, which was based to a significant extent on the Kievan *Initial Compilation*, gave rise, around 1115, to the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*. The *letopis* was then continued by scribes who, in all probability, served as secretaries to successive heads of the Novgorodian eparchy (p. 213). The author has even made an attempt to establish the identity of those scribes, and in several cases his efforts have proved successful: an example of such an attempt is provided by Kirik the Novgorodian, the Old Rus' mathematician, who worked on the text in the years 1132–1156 (p. 215). The author has also examined the way in which the *letopis* was created, the redactions and changes it went through,

and the topics which were raised in its entries. A separate subchapter is devoted to the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 786 (p. 243–253). The author has proved it to be a copy of the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, which was prepared around 1234 for the St. George monastery in Novgorod the Great. Around 1300, the copy was complemented with information taken from the same source. Monks from the St. George monastery added to it some own entries regarding the events from 1330–1352 (the entries bear marks of paratexts).

Of great interest are also the remarks closing the third chapter. They pertain to other monuments of Novgorod's historiography: short excerpts from the *Archiepiscopal Letopis* that appear in the typikon of the Annunciation Monastery from the end of the twelfth century; graffiti and inscriptions discovered on the walls of different churches, paratexts from manuscripts created in the region under discussion, and relics of the oral tradition. I shall return to this issue in a further part of this article.

In the lengthy fourth chapter, Timofei V. Guimon, following the latest tendencies in the Western studies of medieval literature, attempts to outline the social context in which the Old Rus' *letopisi* were created. As he informs the readers in the first words of his monograph, his aim is to give answers to the following questions: *What were the Rus' annals (letopisi) written for? How did the annalists understand the purpose of their work? In what situations were the annals supposed to be read (used, consulted)? And in which cases were the annals read (used, consulted) in reality? Who were the intended (and real) readers (users) of the annals?* (p. 277). After discussing the hypotheses that have hitherto been advanced in relation to these questions (p. 280–289), the author goes on to conduct an in-depth analysis of the source material. It is worth noting that the geographical range of his research is extended here to include – in addition to works produced in Kiev (*PVL* and the *Kievan Letopis* compiled around 1198) and in the areas that came under the cultural influence of Novgorod the Great (the corpus of texts derived from the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, including the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 786) – the historiographical tradition of the Northeastern Rus',

2003, p. 231–239; ИДЕМ, *Как велась новгородская погодная летопись в XII в.?*, [in:] *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. 2003 г. Мнимые реальности в античных и средневековых текстах*, Москва 2005, p. 316–352; ИДЕМ, *Редактирование летописей в XIII–XV вв. Разночтения между списками Новгородской 1 летописи*, ТОДЛ 57, 2006, p. 112–125; ИДЕМ, *Новгородское летописание XI–середины XIV в. как социокультурное явление*, Москва 2014; ИДЕМ, *Летописание и развитие письменной культуры (Новгород, XI–первая половина XII в.)*, *Slov* 4.1, 2015, p. 94–110; ИДЕМ, *Рубеж XII–XIII вв. в новгородском летописании*, *Slov* 6.2, 2017, p. 163–187.

which took shape under the patronage of i.a. the bishops of Rostov and the Great Princes of Vladimir, and which is represented mainly by the *Laurentian Codex* from 1377.

Timofei V. Guimon has posed a number of research questions, to which he has tried to provide as precise answers as possible. Left unanswered are the questions with regard to which the source material provides no basis for drawing any specific conclusions. Below, I cite those questions and summarize the answers given to them by the author:

- *Who were the patrons of the annals and the annalists themselves?* – In Novgorod the Great, in the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, the *letopisi* was kept under the patronage of local bishops by people who served as their secretaries. Novgorod monasteries ordered its copies (ГИМ, СИН. 786 was, for example, created for the St. George monastery) or made excerpts, which were then included as paratexts in manuscripts devoted to non-historical topics (the typicon from the Annunciation Monastery). In the historiography of Northeastern Rus', an important role was played by the bishops of Rostov who were dependent on the Princes of Vladimir. The *Laurentian Codex* was made for the monastery in Nizhny Novgorod. In Kiev, annalistic records were made in the Pechersk Monastery, but the most important compilations, *PVL* and the *Kievan Letopis* were brought into being in the Vydubychi Monastery (p. 290–303).
- *What kinds of events were written down into the annals?* – More than half of the text of all the *letopisi* is made up of the accounts of military and political events of which the representatives of the Rurikid family are the main heroes. Much less frequent are the entries pertaining to events from the life of the ruling family (births, weddings, deaths), appointments to church posts, the construction of churches and other buildings, natural disasters, and natural phenomena (p. 303–325). It should be noted that the Novgorodian *letopisi* distinguish themselves through their content (which may have something to do with the socio-political specificity of Novgorod the Great).
- *How were the annals maintained and revised?* – From the moment the practice of their creation took shape in Rus' in the 1110s, the *letopisi* were maintained on an ongoing basis in the important writing centres (for example, at the Cathedral of St. Sophia – Divine Wisdom in Novgorod the Great, or at the Pechersk Monastery in Kiev). Sometimes their text was thoroughly reworked. Such reworking gave rise, for example, to *PVL*, the *Kievan Letopis*, or the compilation in the Northeast of Rus' from the beginning of the thirteenth century. Various institutions (e.g. monasteries) ordered copies of different *letopisi* (e.g. ГИМ, СИН. 786; the *Laurentian Codex*). Introducing changes to the existing manuscripts was also possible (p. 325–334).
- *Did the annals exist in several copies, did they circulate widely?* – The copies of particular *letopisi* were small in number, and the circle of their readers was limited. Monasteries that could not afford to order a copy of the full historical text resorted to other, minor forms of historical writing; we know of graffiti records made on the walls of churches and of paratexts included in manuscripts from monastic libraries (p. 334–337).
- *What were the interrelations between the annals and purely juridical texts?* – Texts of a legal nature were also included in the *letopisi* (e.g. Byzantine-Rus' agreements from the tenth century, abridged versions of the *Rus' Truth*, princely documents), as were messages that had been exchanged between princes (either in writing or in oral form). This last tendency grew stronger in the 1130s and the 1140s, that is, in the period that was marked by many changes to the princely throne in Kiev and by the growth of Novgorod's political independence (p. 338–359).
- *How did the annalists treat the sphere of politics and what was the role of 'non-political' themes in the annals?* – Authors of the *Kievan letopis* sought to present an objective assessment of the situations to which they

referred, regardless of their personal likes or dislikes. Novgorod the Great's historical records were made in keeping with loyalty to local bishops (the protectors of scriptorium) and in the spirit of fidelity to the community of 'free' Novgorodians. The annalists in the Northeast Rus' seem to have been most dependent on the secular authorities. The tendency to glorify rulers is particularly pronounced in the *letopisi* from this region. The accounts of non-political events, which make up 37% of all the surviving compilations, must have been considered by most of their authors, except for those from the Novgorod circle, to be of secondary importance (p. 359–389).

The author of this book should be commended not only for providing a detailed study of the Eastern Slavs' historical writing to the fifteenth century, in which he advances an original hypothesis regarding its obscure origin, but also for adopting a *comparative perspective* to the topic, which he declares in the title, and to which he consistently adheres throughout his narrative. However, it should be noted that the material with which he compares the Old Rus' historical writing is very diverse. Sometimes, it comes from the areas that were neither culturally nor geographically distant from the lands of the Eastern Slavs, and its creation took place at about the same time as the texts it is compared to. Analysing this kind of material allows the author to make some very interesting observations. A good example of this is provided by the thesis (chapter II) regarding the existence of the *royal inscription* commemorating Prince Vladimir I. It is based on the analogy drawn with epigraphic monuments from Scandinavia and the First Bulgarian State (both of which had contacts with Rus' in the tenth century). Equally promising could be the idea of conducting comparative research on the literature of the neighbouring monarchies (the Piasts and the Premyslids). The Czech medieval literature contains, for example, a motif, nearly identical to that known from Kiev, of two saint rulers Christianizing their subjects: Princes Ludmila and her grandson Vaclav. It has even been confirmed

that some texts devoted to these rulers became assimilated in Rus'<sup>11</sup>.

Analogies drawn between artefacts originating in the areas that are as distant from each other as China and Mesopotamia (p. 146) may prove interesting to literary studies specialists. This kind of analysis may show that under certain circumstances, different communities tend to create texts that are similar to each other, both in form and in content. However, such an approach is less useful in terms of studying historical processes. Similarly questionable is the use, most frequent, of the material from Anglo-Saxon England. First, it consists of works created between 597–1066, and as such does not coincide chronologically with the earliest period of the existence of the Old Rus' literature – a fact of which Timofei V. Guimon is clearly aware (p. 73). Second, the contacts between the British Isles and Eastern Europe were so limited at that time that it is impossible to speak in this regard of any kind of cultural transmission (p. 71–72). Consequently, it seems more advisable to focus on the search for a common (Roman-Byzantine) source of inspiration under which the compared texts were created. The author has so far been able to establish that the only foreign work that was known both in the Anglo-Saxon and the Old Rus' world was the *History of the Jewish War* by Joseph Flavius (p. 76). In this context, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at the works that may have been read by Bede the Venerable (672/3–735), an erudite who is known to have been familiar with works by, among others, Eusebius of Caesarea (circa

<sup>11</sup> *The Martyrdom of St. Ludmila*, [in:] *An Anthology of Czech Literature. 1<sup>st</sup> Period: from the Beginnings until 1410*, ed. W. SCHAMSCHULA, Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York–Paris 1991, p. 14–15; M. HOMZA, *The Role of St. Ludmila, Doubravka, St. Olga and Adelaide in the Conversions of their Countries (The Problem of Mulieres Suadentes, Persuading Women)*, [in:] *Early Christianity in Central and East Europe*, ed. P. URBAŃCZYK, Warszawa 1997, p. 187–202; G. PAC, *Kobiety w dynastii Piastów. Rola społeczna piastowskich żon i córek do połowy XII w.*, Toruń 2013, p. 50–58, 200; M. HOMZA, *Mulieres suadentes – Persuasive Women. Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= ECEEMA, 42], p. 20–22, 148–155.

264–340), a ‘forefather’ of the Byzantine model of the Christian ruler embodied by Constantine the Great and his mother Helena (which was well-known to Old Rus’ authors, including Metropolitan Hilarion and Jacob the Monk). Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) was one of those who introduced this model to Anglo-Saxon rulers. He referred to it in his letters addressed to them (XI, 35–37). It was also known to Gregory of Tours (538–594) with whose works Bede the Venerable was acquainted<sup>12</sup>. Similarities found, for example, in the accounts of Bede and Metropolitan Hilarion (p. 157–170) can be linked to the fact that they both read the same works and relied on the same literary inspirations, which flowed, in both cases, but independently of each other, from Constantinople.

The value of the book undoubtedly lies in its attempt to create a comprehensive typology of the Old Rus’ historical texts. The author signals the need to create it in the preface (p. 6) and offers his own proposal of it in the first chapter (p. 30–70), while at the same time suggesting the standardization of the English language terminology relating to the Eastern Slavs’ medieval historiography. In the following paragraphs he discusses the specificity of the two main genres of Rus’ historical literature: the *letopisi*, that is, texts devoted to the history of the motherland, and chronographs, that is, compilations based on the Church Slavic translations of Byzantine works recounting the general history. The claim that both genres arose as a continuation of the Byzantine historiography is attested to by their names: the first name (*лѣтописць*) is a translation while the second is a Slavic calque of the Greek term *χρονογράφος* (p. 30–32, 50). Timofei V. Guimon, taking into account the specificity of working on the *letopisi* in their mature form, a practice which showed some similarities

to the Western style of annals-writing, postulates for the texts of this kind to be referred to by the English term “annals”. However, it seems to me that to adopt such a solution is to run the risk of making scholars start viewing the *letopisi* as representing the same genre as the Western (also Latin) annals (this attitude, for example, can be discerned among Polish medievalists). In reality, they form a distinct genre of medieval historical writing which took shape in a culturally different environment, under the influence not of Latin but of Byzantine-Greek writing. The term that accurately reflects their specificity – a form halfway between the annals and the chronicles – is ‘annalistic chronicles’, which the author suggests, but does not use in his work (p. 31).

The paragraphs that come between those discussing the *letopisi* and the chronographs are devoted to Byzantine historians’ works that were known in Rus’ in their Church Slavic translations (p. 44–50). Unfortunately, the list of those works is incomplete. Absent from it are *Epitome historiarum* by John Zonaras and Constantine Manasses’s *Chronicle*. The reason why the works have not been included in the list seems to stem from the fact that no East Slavic manuscripts of them are confirmed to have existed before 1400.

In the following subchapters, the author discusses other monuments of the Old Rus’ literature. These monuments, which are usually shorter, are generically different from both the *letopisi* and chronographs, but because of the issues to which they are devoted, they can (and even should) be regarded as falling into the category of historical writings. Among the works included in this group are: the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Kiev Metropolitan Hilarion from the mid-eleventh century; works created in the circle of the Pechersk Monastery in Kiev (woven into the text of PVL or inserted into the *Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon*); the *Tale of the Blinding of Vasilko of Terebovl* (which is also preserved as part of PVL); the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* from the thirteenth century whose formal originality, which allows us to include it in the group of chronicles, may result from the influence of the Western literature in southeastern Rus’ (p. 55–57);

<sup>12</sup> G. PODSKALSKY, *Christentum...*, p. 36; R.A. MARKUS, *Gregory the Great and his World*, Cambridge 1997, p. 82–85, 181; C.B. KENDALL, *Modeling Conversion: Bede’s “Anti-Constantinian” Narrative of the Conversion of King Edwin*, [in:] *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. C.B. KENDALL, O. NICHOLSON, W.D. PHILLIPS JR., M. RAGNOW, Minneapolis 2009, p. 137–159.

the *Life of Aleksandr Nevskii* from the thirteenth century; the *Tale of Dovmont* from mid-fourteenth century; the *Word on the Life and the Heath of Great Prince Dmitry Ivanovich*, written around 1400; the *Memorial and Encomium for Prince Vladimir* by Jacob the Monk (the eleventh century?); works by Prince Vladimir Monomakh from the end of the eleventh century (included in the *Laurentian Codex*), and even the lists of the lay and church dignitaries, records made on Paschal tables, graffiti preserved on the walls of churches in Kiev and Novgorod the Great and paratexts.

Let us take a closer look at the last category. Timofei V. Guimon, as one of the few scholars dealing with the Eastern Slavs' medieval literature, pays attention to the important role that texts of this kind (colophons and glosses found in the margins of manuscripts) play in the studies of the Old Rus' historiography. Recapitulating the findings of the research (conducted by Lubov Stoliarova as early as the 1990s) into the manuscript material from before 1400<sup>13</sup>, he states that it contains as many as 514 paratexts made by scribes, illuminators and people who bound codices. 29 of them can be categorized as historical records, of which 14 have the compositional structure that is typical of the *letopis* and starts with a phrase: *In the year...* (*В льто...*). The oldest of them are dated to the thirteenth century (p. 64–65).

Timofei V. Guimon returns to the issue of paratexts a number of times. He does so while discussing Novgorod the Great's historical writing. It is worth noting that scribes could add glosses, which appeared in the margins of the main text, either while working on an original *letopis* text or while preparing its different redactions. According to the author, each of Old Rus' writing centres kept one main manuscript

of *letopis* (that of Novgorod the Great was kept at the archbishop's seat, in the scriptorium of the St. Sophia Cathedral). Other institutions (especially monasteries), eager to have the *letopis* of their own, ordered its handwritten copies. At a later period, such copies were sometimes complemented with new entries, which, however, were introduced on an irregular basis. This pertains especially to those communities that did not have the permanently functioning scriptoria. A good example of this phenomenon is provided by the codex ГИМ, Син. 786 – a copy of the *Archiepiscopal Letopis*, made for the St. George Monastery in Novgorod. In the years 1330–1352, monks from the monastery added new entries to it. It is worth noting that we are in a position to distinguish between the original *letopis* text and its later additions only when we have at our disposal the original manuscript to which these additions were added (such as ГИМ, Син. 786). It can be presumed that while another copy was being prepared, different paratexts were merged into the main text.

The phenomenon of paratexts, as found in the tradition of Novgorod's historiography, has one more dimension to it. As the author notes, poorer monasteries that could not afford to order a separate *letopis* copy confined themselves to making excerpts from it, which usually pertained to their history. These excerpts were included as paratexts on a blank page of one of the manuscripts from the monastery's library. An example of such a practice, which has been analysed by the author, is provided by the copy of Alexios Studites' *typikon* from the Novgorodian Annunciation Monastery, ГИМ, Син. 330 from the end of the twelfth century – brief notes of a *letopis* nature were found on one of its pages, fol. 281' (p. 253–259). This case shows that thorough research of paratexts (especially those created after 1400) may result in significant discoveries adding to the number of historical records known from Rus'. In line with the author's thesis, it would be advisable to examine in this way manuscripts from monastic collections as well as codices prepared for them, e.g. *typicons* and *menaions*.

<sup>13</sup> Л.В. Столярова, *Записи исторического содержания XI–XIV вв. на древнерусских пергаменных кодексах*, [in:] *Древнейшие государства Восточной Европы. Материалы и исследования. 1995 год*, Москва 1997, p. 3–79; ЕАДЕМ, *Древнерусские надписи XI–XIV вв. на пергаменных кодексах*, Москва 1998; ЕАДЕМ, *Свод записей писцов, художников и переплетчиков древнерусских пергаменных кодексов XI–XIV вв.*, Москва 2000.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BEŠEVILIEV V., *Pärvobälgarski nadpisi*, Sofija 1979.
- BRZOWSKA Z.A., *The Ideal Christian Rulers – Sts. Constantine and Helena in the Spiritual and Political Culture of Kievan Russia*, [in:] *Sveti car Konstantin i hrisćanstvo*, vol. I, ed. D. BOJOVIĆ, Niš 2013, p. 497–508.
- DU CZKO W., *Viking Rus. Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2004 [= *Northern World*, 12], <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047405436>
- FRANKLIN S., *Writing, Society and Culture in Early Rus, c. 950–1300*, Cambridge 2002, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511496509>
- GIMON T.V., *K genealogii novgorodskih letopisej XIII–XV vv.*, [in:] *Novgorod i Novgorodskaja zemlja. Istorija i archeologija*, Velikij Novgorod 2003, p. 231–239.
- GIMON T.V., *Kak velas' novgorodskaja pogodnaja letopis' v XII v.?*, [in:] *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy. 2003 g. Mniemy real'nosti v antičnykh i sredne-vekovykh tekstach*, Moskva 2005, p. 316–352.
- GIMON T.V., *Letopisanie i razvitie pis'mennoj kul'tury (Novgorod, XI–pervaja polovina XII v.)*, “Slověne. International Journal of Slavic Studies” 4.1, 2015, p. 94–110.
- GIMON T.V., *Novgorodskoe letopisanie XI–serediny XIV v. kak sociokul'turnoe javlenie*, Moskva 2014.
- GIMON T.V., *Redaktirovanie letopisej v XIII–XV vv. Raznočtenija meždu spiskami Novgorodskoj 1 letopisi*, “Труды отдела древнерусской литературы”/ “Труды отдела древнерусской литературы” 57, 2006, p. 112–125.
- GIMON T.V., *Rubež XII–XIII vv. v novgorodskom letopisanii*, “Slověne. International Journal of Slavic Studies” 6.2, 2017, p. 163–187.
- HOMZA M., *Mulieres suadentes – Persuasive Women. Female Royal Saints in Medieval East Central and Eastern Europe*, Leiden–Boston 2017 [= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 42].
- HOMZA M., *The Role of St. Ludmila, Doubravka, St. Olga and Adelaide in the Conversions of their Countries (The Problem of Mulieres Suadentes, Persuading Women)*, [in:] *Early Christianity in Central and East Europe*, ed. P. URBAŃCZYK, Warszawa 1997, p. 187–202.
- JUSUPOVIĆ A., *The Chronicle of Halych-Volhynia and Historical Collections in Medieval Rus'*, Leiden–Boston 2022 [= *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*, 81].
- KENDALL C.B., *Modeling Conversion: Bede's "Anti-Constantinian" Narrative of the Conversion of King Edwin*, [in:] *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age: Considering the Process in Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. C.B. KENDALL, O. NICHOLSON, W.D. PHILLIPS JR., M. RAGNOW, Minneapolis 2009, p. 137–159.
- MARKUS R.A., *Gregory the Great and his World*, Cambridge 1997, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139171236>
- The Martyrdom of St. Ludmila*, [in:] *An Anthology of Czech Literature. 1<sup>st</sup> Period: from the Beginnings until 1410*, ed. W. SCHAMSCHULA, Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York–Paris 1991, p. 14–19.
- PAC G., *Kobiety w dynastii Piastów. Rola społeczna piastowskich żon i córek do połowy XII w.*, Toruń 2013.
- PODSKALSKY G., *Christentum und theologische Literatur in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)*, München 1982.
- POPPE A., *How the Conversion of Rus' Was Understood in the Eleventh Century*, “Harvard Ukrainian Studies” 11, 1987, p. 287–302 (= A. POPPE, *Christian Russia in the Making*, London–New York 2007, III).
- STOLJAROVA L.V., *Drevnerusskie nadpisi XI–XIV vv. na pergamennych kodeksach*, Moskva 1998.
- STOLJAROVA L.V., *Svod zapisej piscov, chudožnikov i perepletčikov drevnerusskich pergamennych kodeksov XI–XIV vv.*, Moskva 2000.
- STOLJAROVA L.V., *Zapisi istoričeskogo sodržanija XI–XIV vv. na drevnerusskich pergamennych kodeksach*, [in:] *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Vostočnoj Evropy. Materialy i issledovanija. 1995 god*, Moskva 1997, p. 3–79.

Zofia A. Brzowska (Łódź)\*\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5951-3781>

\*\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology





<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.46>

**MARCELLO GARZANITI, *Słowianie. Historia, kultury i języki* [*The Slavs. History, Cultures and Languages*], trans. J. GROBLIŃSKA, K. KOWALIK, A. MAKOWSKA-FERENC, ed. Z.A. BRZOWSKA, P. KRĘZEL, J.M. WOLSKI, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2023, pp. 566.**

This book is in all respects uncommon. Its author, Prof. Marcello Garzaniti (born in 1956) a long-time lecturer at the University of Florence (*Università degli Studi di Firenze*) and an internationally recognizable scholar specializing in medieval Slavic literatures, undertook the titanic task (actually beyond the strength of one man) of presenting the history, cultures, literatures and languages of all Slavs – Western, Southern and Eastern – in one volume, beginning with the depths of its prehistory and through to the widely outlined Middle Ages and the present-day era.

Written with a view to developing Slavic studies at Italian universities, the book, intended for students, was designed by the author as the first academic textbook to collect in one volume all the important issues of the Slavic cultures and history. Its narrative framework draws on the material that Prof. Garzaniti has gathered over the years of teaching at the Department of Education, Languages, Interculturality, Literatures and Psychology of the University of Florence (*Dipartimento di Formazione, Lingue, Intercultura, Letterature e Psicologia*), including, among other things, the recordings of his lectures edited by Prof. Francesca Romoli from the University of Pisa. The book is enhanced by the insets that contain brief characterizations of various issues and some respective bibliographical references. The insets were prepared in the years 2006–2009 by a team of scholars that included (apart from the author) Alberto Alberti, Maddalena Betti, Adele Cilento, Maria Chiara Ferro, Claudia Pieralli, Lorenzo Pubblici, Francesca

Romoli, Elena Dell’Omo, Aleksandra Filipović and Marco Scarpa. Prof. Romoli also wrote chapter 5 and assisted the author in preparing chronological tables found in appendix 1 and Prof. Alberti from the University of Bologna had a hand in editing chapters 6 and 7. The work was published in 2013 by the prestigious Roman publisher (*Carocci Editore*) in a series devoted to academic textbooks. It was quick to gain in Italy the status of the fundamental position on the Slavic history and cultures, introducing the reader, especially the younger one, to the specificity of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The work’s second and revised edition was issued in 2019 by the same publisher. This modified version was translated into Polish and published by the Łódź University Publishing House.

In Poland, a Slavic country, the presented book can never be regarded as the first source of knowledge on the history of Central and Eastern Europe. Nor can it be used, for obvious reasons, by students of history, Slavistics and, especially, Polish philology as an academic textbook. From the Polish viewpoint, it can be considered to be of value only as providing the perspective of a non-Slavic outsider and created specifically for non-Slavic readers. As such, it will be of great use for scholars who specialize in the history of historiography or intercultural studies and who are interested in examining how the image of Eastern Europe produced outside of the Slavic world changed (or, quite the contrary, was, for some reason, petrified) over longer periods of time. It is certainly worthwhile to fathom the author’s intellectual world,

trying, for example, to answer the question of what Western Slavists know about us and our neighbours, how they perceive our world and what factors shape their perception.


The initiative of transplanting Garzaniti's thought 'from Italy to Poland' and entrusting the publication of the book to the Łódź University Publishing House was put forward many years ago by two scholars from the Faculty of Philology of the University of Łódź: Prof. Georgi Minczew from the Department of the Slavic Philology and Prof. Artur Gałkowski from the Department of Italianistics of the Institute of Romance Studies. Young scholars from the latter unit: dr Justyna Groblińska, dr Katarzyna Kowalik and dr Aleksandra Makowska-Ferenc were entrusted with the task of translating the work into Polish, while the process of editing it was given to the historians and simultaneously the Slavists: dr hab. Zofia A. Brzozowska (Department of Slavic Philology), dr Piotr Krężel (Department of Slavic Philology) and dr Jan M. Wolski (*Ceraneum* Centre).

Given the nature of the project – translating and publishing the work of a foreign author – our role in determining its text and conception has only been secondary. It should be stressed that Prof. Garzaniti, knowing Polish, has checked the translation, and the final form of it is the fruit of his collaboration with the editors. Some terms and phrases used in the translation have been introduced in accordance with his suggestions. In an effort to place the Italian scholar's thought in the context of Polish humanities,


the editors have provided the text with information regarding the Polish translations of the sources quoted and discussed in the work and supplemented it with references to Polish works and Polish translations of works by foreign authors. It is of course clear that since the work expresses the author's independent views, the editors and the Polish publishing team are not responsible for its content.

Bringing the book into the reader's hands, the editors may only suggest that it be looked at from the perspective from which the author has presented the Slavic history and cultures – that is, from a certain distance. Looking at ourselves with the eyes of other man, using his vision as a mirror in which to look at our reflection, even if it sometimes entails the necessity of going out of our 'comfort zone', is a cognitively and intellectually enriching experience.

*Zofia A. Brzozowska (Łódź)\**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5951-3781>

*Piotr Krężel (Łódź)\*\**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6427-0286>

\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology

\*\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.14>

***Ascetismo y santidad en el Cercano Oriente cristiano (siglos IV–XIII),***  
**ed. HÉCTOR FRANCISCO RODRIGO, LAHAM COHEN, PABLO UBIERNA,**  
**Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas,**  
**Buenos Aires 2022, pp. 162.**

**As** the editors of the monograph state in the introduction (p. 7–10), it was intended as a survey of the influence of religion on the life of various communities established around the Mediterranean basin in the first millennium after Christ. In the concluding section of the introduction, the editors briefly outlined the thematic layout of the book, disclosing that it was *de facto* divided (although this is neither indicated in the table of contents, nor in the structure of the monograph itself) into three sections: concerning Jewish-Christian relations, the use of religion in socio-political contexts, and thematically related to issues of Syriac Christianity. To begin with, a few technical notes. The various chapters of the book lack abstracts in commonly used congressional languages (not even in English), and the book contains texts not only in Spanish but also in Portuguese. Key-words are missing as well, but above all, neither a separately listed bibliography for each article, nor thematic indexes, even personal and geographical, are featured.

The book is divided into nine chapters/articles. As mentioned above, despite the promise to distinguish the three main parts of the monograph, we do not encounter this in the text itself. In the first chapter (p. 11–38), Gilvan Ventura da Silva of Brazil's Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (the text was published in Portuguese) presented an essay on the use of the motif of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans in the writings of John Chrysostom. In a rather extensive introduction to the main body of the text, the author addressed, among other things,

the issue of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism at the level of the empire as a whole, arguing quite successfully against the theses claiming the disappearance of the latter at the expense of the favoured denomination. He presented a wealth of information on the situation of the Jewish community in Antioch, reasoning that in Chrysostom's time we were witnessing its growth rather than its decline. The author strongly opposed the theories according to which the purpose of writing of the *Adversus Iudaeos* was to stop the phenomenon of Judaisation of the Antiochean Christians, pointing out that the arguments raised by John were intended to strike first and foremost at Judaism and the Jews themselves. Gilvan Ventura da Silva then went on to explain the methodological assumptions of his reinterpretation of Chrysostom's work from the perspective of the idea of heterotopia as an unfriendly, inhospitable place, according to the theories put forward by the sociologist Henri Lefebvre, well-known to proponents of various urban movements. This is the starting point for a discussion of the passages in *Adversus Iudaeos* in which John discouraged Christians from participating in Jewish festivals by emphasising that these celebrations were deprived of their metaphysical meaning if they ceased to take place in Jerusalem. In turn, as the Jews were expelled from the Holy City and it was itself razed as a punishment for their misdeeds (understood as participation in the death of Jesus Christ), then later rebuilt as Roman and as Roman Christianised (a large part of the text is an overview of the history of Jerusalem after the Jewish uprising of 66–73)

it became heterotopic for the Jews, hostile and inhospitable, which would in fact deprive their religion, Judaism, of its *raison d'être* as such. The essay prepared by Gilvan Ventura da Silva is an interesting interpretative proposal using modern sociological theories, but at times the author seems to become too involved in the topic he is tackling, especially in the context of his participation in the debate concerning the possible anti-Semitism of John Chrysostom. This seems to be an issue that requires a much more extensive examination relating to the semantics of the various words used in such debates, which necessarily could not be undertaken in this article due to the intended form of the text<sup>1</sup>.

The second chapter (p. 39–46), by Andrea Simonassi Lyon, is a continuation of the points made about John Chrysostom's writings on Jewish matters, and at the same time seems to be the second part of an article she had published in the same centre a year earlier, on the similar subject of the relationship between the actual Jews living in Antioch contemporaneously with the saint and those outlined in his writings, whom she had called 'rhetorical Jews' in her previous text<sup>2</sup>. There would be nothing surprising in this; after all, such divisions are often made for the sake of clarity of the lecture and the themes addressed, were it not for the fact that the article in the volume under discussion here is actually a summary of the conclusions presented in the previous one. In the third chapter, which is another text of the 'Jewish' part of the monograph, Ignacio Rosner dealt with another

influential Christian hierarch of the fifth century, Cyril of Alexandria, analysing the way in which his actions of 415 towards the Jews are presented in the works of Socrates Scholasticus and John of Nikiu (p. 47–59). Discussing the aforementioned accounts of other persecutions at the beginning of the fifth century, as well as later accounts indicating the functioning of the Jewish community in Alexandria, the author postulates that the expulsion of Jews in 415 from the city named after the great Macedonian was of a limited nature, possibly affecting only representatives of the elite or groups directly involved in the political dispute taking place in the city at the time.

In the second part of the book, Guido Torena addressed the interpretation of the accounts of Theodoret of Cyrhus in the context of the meaning given to the miracle-like events he described and the way they were used in the narrative, which, according to the author, had as one of its aims the maintenance of the social *status quo* in the empire regarding the existing stratification of society (p. 61–72). In his work, G. Torena presents several examples of descriptions of miraculous interventions by well-known ascetics, which ultimately lead to the restoration of the existing order, regardless of whether this order would seem just or not according to contemporary standards. The researcher also notes that the lower strata are merely the backdrop of events for Theodoret, while the main characters, apart from the saints, monks, and ascetics naturally, are representatives of the aristocracy, the upper classes. While the theory seems extremely elegant and has been clearly laid out, the question of Theodoret's approach to the lower classes itself seems somewhat more complex, given both the actions he took personally<sup>3</sup>, and the cases of misery of the lower classes he noted and described<sup>4</sup>. In the second text of this section, Uriel Nicolás Fernández

<sup>1</sup> It is worth adding, however, for the sake of completeness, that the author discussed the problem of John Chrysostom's attitude towards the Jews, also in the context of the idea of heterotopia, in a number of articles published earlier, e.g.: *Uma comunidade em estado de alerta: João Crisóstomo e o apelo aos cristãos de Antioquia no combate aos judaizantes*, Pho 20, 2014, p. 129–151; *A sinagoga como heterotopia segundo João Crisóstomo*, Pho 18, 2012, p. 134–156; *Sementes da intolerância na Antiguidade Tardia: João Crisóstomo e o confronto com os judeus de Antioquia*, Dim 25, 2010, p. 63–81.

<sup>2</sup> A. SIMONASSI LYON, *Judíos reales y judíos retóricos en la Antioquia de Juan Crisóstomo*, [in:] *Cristianos, judíos y gentiles. Reflexiones sobre la construcción de la identidad durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. R. LAHAM COHEN, E. NOCE, Buenos Aires 2021, p. 47–61.

<sup>3</sup> J. ŻELAZNY, *Kościół domem a biskup ojcem w świetle Konstytucji Apostolskich i innych pism syryjskich od I do V wieku*, VerV 20, 2011, p. 223–238; I. MILEWSKI, *Kilka uwag o roli biskupa w mieście późnoantycznym (na przykładzie prowincji wschodnich)*, VP 21, 2001, p. 407–424.

<sup>4</sup> I. MILEWSKI, *Wczesnobizantyński system podatkowy w świetle wybranych relacji hagiograficznych*, SGd 43, 2018, p. 87–95.

addressed the question of how representations of imperial piety were produced in hagiographic works, using the example of the way Leo I is depicted in the Life of Daniel Stylite (p. 73–91). The discussion of the motifs found in the work in the context of this emperor, indicating his piety and special relationship with the saint, does not seem original and has already been analysed many times, both by the authors mentioned in the article (e.g. Rafał Kosiński and Mirosław J. Leszka) and more recently by Katarzyna Sadurska<sup>5</sup>. It is worth noting, however, that Uriel Nicolás Fernández favours the hypothesis that the initiator behind the work, which so strongly emphasises Leo's merits for orthodoxy and the Chalcedonian creed, may have been his daughter, Ariadne, who, as the wife of two emperors, Zeno and Anastasius, became, as it were, the sole advocate for the continuation of her father's religious policy. As the author wrote: *Ariadna aparece como garante de ambos gobernantes, estableciendo su conexión con la dinastía leónida y con la ortodoxia de la fe, demostrando el compromiso doctrinal que ninguno de sus dos esposos fue capaz de mantener* (p. 91).

The next text in the volume, also the second in Portuguese, by Renato Viana Boy, is actually more of an essay of sorts than a research text, addressing the use of Christianity for the purpose of expanding imperial power (p. 93–115). It includes themes such as the use of the same orthodox beliefs to realise diplomatic alliances, the idea of defending Christianity against external enemies, the use of religion as an element to assert the empire's influence beyond the borders of the lands it actually administered, and the construction of a new Roman identity based on faith in Jesus Christ in opposition to their enemies, including religious ones, such as the Persians, Arabs, and Goths. All these remarks lead the author to conclude that the commonly used chronological and geographical divisions concerning the history of the Roman empire are somewhat unfounded, pointing out that, among other things, thanks to religion Constantinople did not give up its influence in the West long after the formally accepted collapse of the

Western Roman empire in the second half of the fifth century.

In the final chapter of this part of the book (which we could consider to be dealing with the relationship between imperial power and religion), Victoria Casamiquela Gerhold presented her thoughts on the methods of constructing a narrative on Constantine the Great in the context of his complicated relationship with the representatives of the Nicene Creed and the Arians (p. 117–134), focusing especially on the testimony left by opponents of the iconoclasts, such as Theophanes the Confessor. The author discusses the accounts of the *Chronography* relating to Constantine, paying particular attention to the way in which the circumstances of the emperor's baptism were presented in such a way as to remove his person as far as possible from any suspicion of links with the Arians. When also discussing the transmission of works such as *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* or the *Vita Metrophanis et Alexandri*, the author joins a number of scholars who note a tendency among iconodule writers to link opponents of the orthodoxy of centuries ago with iconoclastic views. Turning then to the special veneration for images supposedly shown by Constantine's supporters, she ponders why iconophiles were so keen to portray the founder of Constantinople as a supporter of icons. According to the author, this was a response to the programme of the iconoclasts, who considered the figure of Constantine to be part of their agenda, both as a symbol of the Christian warrior and as the one who venerated the cross, one of the essential emblems of the iconoclastic upheaval pursued by the Isaurian dynasty. The article basically repeats the theses that have already resounded on the subject in the English- and French-language literature<sup>6</sup>, moreover, the author herself emphasises in the conclusion that: *esta breve discusión, como*

<sup>5</sup> K. SADURSKA, *Między Rzymem a opozycją antychalcedońską. Zasadnicze kierunki polityki religijnej cesarza Leona I (457–474)*, VP 71, 2019, p. 423–446.

<sup>6</sup> At the same time, it is worth mentioning that in Polish scholarship we can also find similar texts referring, at least fragmentarily, to the ideas of Constantine in the context of later iconoclastic disputes. Cf. e.g.: S. TCHOREK-BENTALL, *Choroba ikonoklazmu i lekarstwo obrazu*, M 76, 2021, p. 101–138; S. BRALEWSKI, *Porfirowa kolumna w Konstantynopolu i jej wczesnobizantyńska legenda*, VP 30, 2010, p. 95–110; J. SPRUTTA, *Gloryfikacja władzy ziemskiej w ikonie*, SChr 16, 2009, p. 197–212.

*resulta claro, no permite (ni pretende) abordar adecuadamente la compleja cuestión de la eclesiología bizantina. Nuestra intención se limita, simplemente, a recordar que el conflicto en torno a la memoria de Constantino* (p. 133).

The final section of the book begins with an article by Sebastián Alejandro Vitale, whose subject matter takes us beyond the territories of the Empire to Sassanid Persia and the history of the Syriac Christian communities there (p. 135–147). In particular, the author analyses the *Ecclesiastical History* of Barhadshabb Arbay, one of the teachers of the school of Nisibis at the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries, who was a historian and theologian associated with the Church of the East, in the context of his construction of the image of Nestorius as well as emphasising a kind of ‘chain of transmitters’ of the orthodox (according to the Nestorians) creed, the links of which would include for example Diodorus of Tarsus, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. The portrayal of Nestorius as a victim of persecution, not an active but rather a reactive party to the dispute, is also significant. In the second text of this section, Daniel Asade has dealt with some excerpts from the medical works of Sergius of Resh’ayna (Theodosiopolis), concerning certain pharmaceuticals (p. 149–163). However, this is *de facto* only a pretext for discussing the transmission of Greek texts on healing methods through Syriac translations to Arabic medical treatises, from where the same content would in turn reach not only, for example, Christians in western Europe or the Byzantine Empire, but return to the Syrians themselves during the so-called ‘Syrian Renaissance’ of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It should be noted that the text may be difficult to read for those dealing strictly with Byzantine history, as the quotations given in the original include not only Greek, but also Arabic and Syriac.


In conclusion, the presented volume covers quite distant topics, but nevertheless, despite some inaccuracies pointed out above, it is worth reading, especially in the context of complementing certain perspectives in the study of the relations between imperial power and religions.

*Translated by Łukasz Pigoński*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BRALEWSKI S., *Porfirowa kolumna w Konstantynopolu i jej wczesnobizantyńska legenda*, “Vox Patrum” 30, 2010, p. 95–110, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.4327>
- MILEWSKI I., *Kilka uwag o roli biskupa w mieście późnoantycznym (na przykładzie prowincji wschodniej)*, “Vox Patrum” 21, 2001, p. 407–424, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.7991>
- MILEWSKI I., *Wczesnobizantyński system podatkowy w świetle wybranych relacji hagiograficznych*, “Studia Gdańskie” 43, 2018, p. 87–95.
- SADURSKA K., *Między Rzymem a opozycją antychalcedońską. Zasadnicze kierunki polityki religijnej cesarza Leona I (457–474)*, “Vox Patrum” 71, 2019, p. 423–446, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vp.4039>
- SIMONASSI LYON A., *Judíos reales y judíos retóricos en la Antioquia de Juan Crisóstomo*, [in:] *Cristianos, judíos y gentiles. Reflexiones sobre la construcción de la identidad durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. R. LAHAM COHEN, E. NOCE, Buenos Aires 2021, p. 47–61.
- SPRUTTA J., *Gloryfikacja władzy ziemskiej w ikonie*, “Saeculum Christianum” 16, 2009, p. 197–212.
- TCHOREK-BENTALL S., *Choroba ikonoklazmu i lekarstwo obrazu*, “Meander” 76, 2021, p. 101–138.
- VENTURA DA SILVA G., *A sinagoga como heterotopia segundo João Crisóstomo*, “Phoinix” 18, 2012, p. 134–156.
- VENTURA DA SILVA G., *Sementes da intolerância na Antigüedad Tardia: João Crisóstomo e o confronto com os judeus de Antioquia*, “Dimensões” 25, 2010, p. 63–81.
- VENTURA DA SILVA G., *Uma comunidade em estado de alerta: João Crisóstomo e o apelo aos cristãos de Antioquia no combate aos judaizantes*, “Phoinix” 20, 2014, p. 129–151.
- ŻELAZNY J., *Kościół domem a biskup ojcem w świetle Konstytucji Apostolskich i innych pism syryjskich od I do V wieku*, “Verbum Vitae” 20, 2011, p. 223–238, <https://doi.org/10.31743/vv.2040>

**Błażej Cecota** (Piotrków Trybunalski)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4746-0325>

\* Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.13>

***Cristianos, judíos y gentiles. Reflexiones sobre la construcción de la identidad durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. RODRIGO LAHAM COHEN, ESTEBAN NOCE, Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, Buenos Aires 2021, pp. 146.**

The reviewed publication consists of an introduction (p. 5–8), information on the authors (p. 9–11) and eight articles. The book is the product of two grants, received by the editors of the publication, and concerning *Adversus Iudaeos* type literature in late antiquity and the way in which Christians and Jews constructed socio-religious identity using the idea of an enemy to their own community between the first and seventh centuries. Admittedly, the publication is not without a basic critical apparatus, with footnotes and a bibliography for each article, however, one will not find here summaries in any of the congressional languages, nor keywords and, most significantly, indexes, which we would be used to by European scholarly publication standards.

The first article (p. 11–23), written by Mariano Splendido, deals with a passage from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 16.16–24), in which it is described how St Paul is said to have freed one of his female slaves from demon-possession. A close analysis of this short story provides an opportunity to discuss the problems the first Christians had in implementing their demands in a society with a certain structure, and their noticeable concession to the laws of that society, such as the treatment of slavery. In the second text of the publication, Analia V. Sapere provided a survey of the Jewish issues evident in Plutarch's writings (p. 25–45), particularly in the surviving part of the *Quaestiones Convivales*. Through detailed analysis, she was able to demonstrate both the author's

unpreparedness and ignorance, beyond the widely known issues of the functioning of food prohibitions among the Jews, and the methods of Hellenisation of the Mosaic religion to make it more comprehensible to Roman and Greek readers. In the third chapter, Andrea Simonassi Lyon took a closer look at the writings of John Chrysostom concerning both Judaism and the believers of the Mosaic religion themselves living in Antioch (p. 47–61), indicating that the Jews of the city became only a pretext, as it were, for the creation of the figure of the 'rhetorical Jew', used for polemic, reformatted for the purpose of reinforcing the process of self-identification of the Antiochene Christians in opposition to the multi-faith nature of the ancient city<sup>1</sup>. An important value of the text is the summary of research on the functioning of the Jewish community in Antioch.

The patristic deliberations continue in the following fourth chapter, where Esteban Noce

<sup>1</sup> However, the issues concerning the problem of self-identification of the Antiochene Christians and the separation of the community from the Jewish influence in the writings of John Chrysostom have already been summarized. For example, cf.: J. IŁUK, *Żydowska politeja i Kościół w imperium rzymskim u schyłku antyku*, vol. I, *Jana Chryzostoma kapłana Antiochii mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom*, vol. II, *Żydowska antyewangelia, antyczna tradycja i nowożytnie trwanie*, Gdańsk 2006–2010; św. JAN CHRYSOSTOM, *Mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom. Przeciwko Żydom i Hellenom*, trans., ed. J. IŁUK, *Kra-ków 2007* [= ŻMT, 41].

uses the *de facto* legacy of Maximus of Turin to discuss the question of the nomenclature used in reference to non-Christians (p. 63–77), pointing out the extremely rare use of the word *paganus* in comparison to *gentilis* or *gens*. Using the Latin originals and translations of Maximus' sermons as an example, the author showed that, although the term *paganus* is extremely rare in them (less than one per cent of cases), in translations into modern languages the term *pagan* is used in up to twenty per cent of cases. This was because translators replaced expressions such as *gentilis*, *gentilitas*, *gens*, *natio* or *populus* with the word mentioned, considering them equivalent in the given context of use. The second part of the text is devoted, among other things, to a discussion of the different meanings of the word *paganus* itself and its origins in plain or even vulgar language, as well as to issues of depreciation through language of a particular social group.

With the fifth chapter by Raúl González Salinero, we return to the subjects of the status of Jews in Late Antique societies, in the context of the events in Menorca in 418, when a synagogue was destroyed and an attempt was made to forcibly convert Jewish believers to Christianity (p. 79–101). The author raised the issue of the status of Jews and the local Jewish community in Menorca, elements of anti-Jewish propaganda appearing in Christian polemics, and, after describing the circumstances of the burning of the house of prayer, he also addressed the issue of so-called crypto-Judaism, a term which, according to him, can be applied not only to events in the history of late medieval Spain, but also to the late imperial and Visigothic periods.

The sixth article, written jointly by Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Margrethe Kamille Birkler, continues the threads of the Jewish-Christian polemic, this time in the context of the legacy of St Augustine of Hippo (p. 103–114). The authors provide both a historiographical outline of the problem and their own interpretation of selected writings of the Church Father, from which a rather complex picture emerges – on the one hand, St Augustine subscribes to anti-Jewish rhetoric, while on the other, there are calls in his texts for the protection of

the Jews and their important role in the divine plan. Certainly the most interesting reflections are those of the authors attempting to answer the question of whether the Saint of Hippo was in fact polemicizing against the Jews living in North Africa, or whether he was merely 'arguing' against the archetype of the representative of the Mosaic faith.

Julietta Cardigni, on the other hand, in the seventh chapter (p. 115–130), took up, in a somewhat essay-like manner, the theme of self-identification, in the context of the tension between traditional religion of the Romans and Christianity, in the works of such late antique grammarians and encyclopaedists as Macrobius, Servius, and, above all, Fabius Plancius Fulgentius. The work of the latter, entitled: *Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos morales*, in which Fulgentius probably tried to explain the *Aeneid* in a way acceptable to Christians, became the focus of the main investigation presented in the article. The final text of the monograph, authored by one of the book's editors Rodrigo Laham Cohen, presents a reflection on the relationship between given names and social identity using the example of the Jews (p. 131–146) in the context of epigraphic studies carried out in Jewish cemeteries in Italy, including the cities of Venosa (Venusia) and Taranto (Tarentum). Analyses of the names or inscriptions left on tombstones in catacombs and cemeteries make it possible, among other things, to observe the progressive Latinisation of Jewish communities in the first centuries after Christ and then, after the fall of the empire, the reverse process, called in the text re-Judaisation, or rabbinsation, associated with the emergence of the influence of rabbinic Judaism from the East, primarily Palestine. Unfortunately, the article does not explore the relationship between the collapse of the structures of the Roman state and the process observed by the author of the recovery of Jewish identity by local communities of followers of the Mosaic religion in Italy.

Some critical observations. In the context of Andrea Simonassi Lyon's text on the writings of John Chrysostom, it is necessary to raise the question concerning the positive situation of the Jews in Roman legislation of the fourth



to fifth century, a view taken by the author from Paula Fredriksen<sup>2</sup>. Such an expression is difficult to comprehend in view of the legal restrictions related to matrimonial issues or access to official positions that we find in the imperial edicts of the turn of the fourth to fifth century<sup>3</sup>. The author's intuition about the identification problems between some Christians and Jewish believers in the first centuries of the operation of faith in Jesus Christ is most valid, especially in an environment such as that of Antioch, it is all the more difficult to understand the absence of the fundamental work on similar issues edited by Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam H. Becker<sup>4</sup>, which appeared nearly twenty years ago<sup>5</sup>. The second text on Christian-Jewish relations, by Raúl González Salinero, is also worth mentioning at this point. It should be noted that virtually the entirety of this publication, including the conclusions concerning the status

of the Jewish community in Menorca, is based solely on the *Epistula Severi* (*Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*). The author did not refer at any length to the debate on the authenticity of the source, mentioning only that *superfluo reproducir de nuevo toda la argumentación que ha conducido en los últimos años al consenso historiográfico sobre este punto* (p. 81, note 22). However, it may have been worth including dissenting voices suggesting that the work may be a later forgery, legitimising actions against the Jews in the seventh century. More significantly, it seems that the author allows himself some conjecture towards Bishop Severus' intentions, interpreting parts of the letter as evidence that the clergyman was convinced that *le resulta imposible persuadir a los sabios judíos para que abracen el cristianismo porque reconoce su propia inferioridad en la ciencia escrituraria* (p. 93). It is difficult to regard such a sentence as an argument based on hard source evidence. At the same time, the author's argument on p. 93–95, in which he astutely observes that the imperial legislation, officially defending Jewish places of worship, de facto recognised the effects of the Christians' destruction of such places, should be regarded as an important voice in the discussion on the protection of Jews by the emperors already cited above.

In conclusion, in spite of a few polemical remarks, it should be considered that the texts collected in the volume appear to be important contributions to the study of Christian-Jewish relations and should be used in the development of further publications on this topic.

*Translated by Łukasz Pigoński*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

św. JAN CHRZYSTOM, *Mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom. Przeciwno Żydom i Hellenom*, trans., ed. J. IŁUK, Kraków 2007 [= *Źródła Myśli Teologicznej*, 41].

<sup>2</sup> P. FREDRIKSEN, *Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the Contra Iudaeos Tradition*, [in:] *Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire. The Poetics of Power in Late Antiquity*, ed. N.B. DOHRMANN, A.Y. REED, Philadelphia 2013 [= JCC], p. 249–266.

<sup>3</sup> A. DĘBIŃSKI, *Polityka ustawodawcza rzymskich cesarzy chrześcijańskich w sprawach religijnych*, Lublin 2020, p. 183–211; M. PIECHOCKA-KŁOS, *Późnorzymskie ustawodawstwo państwowe przeciw Żydom (IV–V wieku). Egzemplifikacja na podstawie ograniczeń praw obywatelskich*, SNT 11, 2016, p. 109–122. The calls for the protection of Jews and Jewish places of prayer appearing in imperial codifications were often linked to the persecution of Jews by Christian communities. It is therefore difficult to speak here of effective state protection of religion, although of course similar formulations can be found in official edicts. For a balanced treatment of this issue, cf. for example: J. IŁUK, *Chrześcijańska i żydowska politeja w późnorzymskim państwie (IV–V wiek)*, SSH 12, 2006, p. 9–31. Cf. also the traditional approach to Jews evident in the Roman state, for example in: A. KOWALCZYK, *Jak długo judaizm postrzegany był jako superstitio w pogańskim Imperium Romanum*, AUL.FH 92, 2014, p. 7–20.

<sup>4</sup> *The Ways That Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. A.H. BECKER, A.Y. REED, Tübingen 2003 [= TSAJ, 95].

<sup>5</sup> In Polish, this issue was comprehensively treated by: M. ROSIK, *Kościół a synagoga (30–313 po Chr.) na rozdrożu*, Wrocław 2016, especially p. 411–498.

**Secondary Literature**

DĘBIŃSKI A., *Polityka ustawodawcza rzymskich cesarzy chrześcijańskich w sprawach religijnych*, Lublin 2020.

FREDRIKSEN P., *Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the Contra Iudaeos Tradition*, [in:] *Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire. The Poetics of Power in Late Antiquity*, ed. N.B. DOHRMANN, A.Y. REED, Philadelphia 2013 [= *Jewish Culture and Contexts*], p. 249–266, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812208573.249>

ILUK J., *Chrześcijańska i żydowska politeja w późnorzymskim państwie (IV–V wiek)*, "Słupskie Studia Historyczne" 12, 2006, p. 9–31.

ILUK J., *Żydowska politeja i Kościół w imperium rzymskim u schyłku antyku*, vol. I, *Jana Chryzostoma kapłana Antiochii mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom*, vol. II, *Żydowska antyewangelia, antyczna tradycja i nowożytnie trwanie*, Gdańsk 2006–2010.


KOWALCZYK A., *Jak długo judaizm postrzegany był jako superstitio w pogańskim Imperium Romanum*, "Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica" 92, 2014, p. 7–20.

PIECHOCKA-KŁOS M., *Późnorzymskie ustawodawstwo państwowe przeciw Żydom (IV–V wieku). Egzemplifikacja na podstawie ograniczeń praw obywatelskich*, "Studia Nauk Teologicznych PAN" 11, 2016, p. 109–122.

ROSIK M., *Kościół a synagoga (30–313 po Chr.) na rozdrożu*, Wrocław 2016.

*The Ways That Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. A.H. BECKER, A.Y. REED, Tübingen 2003 [= *Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism*, 95].

**Błażej Cecota (Piotrków Trybunalski)\***

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4746-0325>

---

\* Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.12>

*Ethno-Cultural Diversity in the Balkans and the Caucasus,*

ed. IOANA AMINIAN JAZI, THEDE KAHL,

Austrian Academy of Science Press, Vienna 2023

[= *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, 927], pp. 394.

It could be said that the concept for the volume was conceived a decade ago<sup>1</sup> and was realised, among other things, through the organisation of a conference under the patronage of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2015, as well as the publication of the first volume in a series on religious and migration issues in 2017<sup>2</sup>. The book presented here is another result of the activities mentioned above. In the introduction to the publication (p. 9–20), Ioana Aminian Jazi and Thede Kahl introduced the basic premise of the book, gave an overview of the history of its creation and presented summaries of the individual articles. In addition to the fifteen articles, the book concludes with brief information on the individual authors (p. 385–389) and a moderately extensive index of basic proper names (geographical, names, and religious phenomena, p. 391–394).

In the first text, Keith Hitchins set out to compare the situation of the Balkan peoples, primarily the Bulgarians and Romanians, and the Caucasian peoples, the Georgians, in the context of the nineteenth-century rivalry over their territories between the two empires, the

Ottoman and the Russian (p. 21–35). The thesis presented here is interesting in that there are documented instances of the intellectual elites of the aforementioned nations seeking some form of closer contact with Western Europe and the ideological currents flowing from there as a way out of the adverse geopolitical situation that left them with virtually two options to choose from. This observation can be applied to the situation of Poland at the time. In the second article, Patrik Tátrai made interesting remarks on the methods of preparing, or rather manipulating (with the help of appropriately adjusted size or colours) maps presenting ethnic divisions in the Balkans and the Caucasus (p. 37–55). The text is more concerned with issues of contemporary nationality conflicts, but nevertheless the conclusions of the reading can be taken by the historian as a methodological guide to the manipulation of material he will encounter in his work. Similar issues were also addressed by Victor A. Shnirelman, who, using the example of the Ossetians, Chechens, and Ingush, analysed how historical (and supporting – archaeological and ethnological) narratives changed with regard to the way the history of the Caucasian peoples was presented (p. 57–80). Among the reasons for the narrative changes one could list: the emergence of theories that set back the development of research such as Nikolai Marr's Marrism, historical events (the deportation of Chechens and Ingush), ideology (internationalism, emphasising elements of co-operation where there may not have been any at all, and at the same time korenization, which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Th. KAHL, *Ethno-cultural Diversity in the Balkans and the Caucasus as an Objective for Comparative Research*, [in:] *The Balkans and Caucasus. Parallel Processes on the Opposite Sides of the Black Sea*, ed. I. BILIARSKY, O. CRISTEA, A. OROVEANU, Cambridge 2012, p. 172–187.

<sup>2</sup> *Sakralität und Mobilität im Kaukasus und Südosteuropa*, ed. T. DARIEVA, Th. KAHL, S. TONCHEVA, Wien 2017 [= SPHK, 882].

led to the awakening of national ambitions, also by seeking confirmation of the uniqueness of a given nation in history). The theses presented in this article will be of great help to those who are embarking on their 'adventure' with Russian and Soviet historiography, a kind of road map on how to navigate among the texts on the history of the Caucasian peoples, so as not to be misled by the often cleverly prepared manipulations of facts in the name of one or another ideology. A continuation of the themes presented above can be found in the work prepared by Babak Rezvani, who addressed, among other things, the functioning of the terms Azeri, Azerbaijani, and Azerbaijan in relation to the areas north of Aras, which in the Middle Ages were known as Shirvan (p. 81–104). Pointing to the intertwining political interests of both nationalist organisations, linked to some extent to the Young Turk movement, or the later use of the name for political purposes by representatives of the Soviet Union (thus expressing claims to southern Azerbaijan proper, *de facto* located in Persia-Iran), he discusses how the name came to be attached to the territory of the present-day republic. The second part of the text, dealing with more modern issues, deals with the strategies adopted by the authorities to officially reduce the number of national minorities living in Azerbaijan. Thus, we are in a way introduced to the next two texts, the first of which by Christoph Giesel presents information on the Bosnian minority that found its way to present-day Turkey as a result of the migration of *muhajirs* from the territories occupied by the Austrians (p. 105–142). The text helps to better understand how complex is the internal ethnographic structure of the Turkish people, composed of many minorities who arrived in Anatolia during the declining period of the Ottoman Empire. In the second article, the duo Fahri Türk and Kader Özlem discussed the legal and social situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, primarily pointing out examples of rights violations, such as in the terms of language teaching, the use of Turkish in public, or changes to Turkish town names (p. 143–157). The authors have also provided a fairly comprehensive historical background of the fate of the Turkish minority

in Bulgaria, with a particular focus on the communist period and attempts to assimilate Turks.

In the next part of the book, we return to historical subjects. Stéphane Voell has made an interesting comparison between communities living in the Balkans, in the northern part of Albania, and the Svans (from Svaneti, Georgia) in the context of the formation of autonomous institutions among them in relation to the central centres of power, with a particular focus on traditional law (p. 159–176). One should consider as important the author's remarks in relation to the process of building autonomy of northern Albania on the foundation of *kanun* – traditional law, which, according to her, was the result of Ottoman policy – the creation of a *de facto* loophole caused by the lack of real, not declared, interest in exercising legal and political control over these territories. This is important insofar as it provides inspiration in the context of research on other groups who retained autonomy due to the natural conditions in which they lived, not only in the modern era but also earlier. To the writer of these words, what naturally comes to mind are the Dagestan *jamaats*, free communities living according to the *adat*, but it seems that we would find more such examples, in Central Europe as well. A certain polemic with the theses presented above is the next article of the volume, by Florian Mühlfried (p. 177–191). The text deals with Tushetia, a high mountainous border region located between Georgian Kakheti and Chevsuretia and Chechnya and Dagestan, practically cut off from the rest of Georgia. According to the author's research, despite the difficult geographical conditions, numerous examples can be found of efforts made by its inhabitants in the seventeenth century to forge cooperation with the dominant centres of political power in the region, moreover, on the basis of a certain reciprocity and equal exchange of benefits. The author compares the actions of the people of Tusheti, developing military and diplomatic cooperation with Moscow or the Georgian kingdoms, with similar steps taken by representatives of the Dagestan *jamaats*. Indeed, the aim of the article was to challenge the thesis according to which it is sometimes assumed that mountain peoples

willingly cut themselves off from taking political or diplomatic action, taking advantage of their geographical location in order to achieve full independence. Often, it is precisely their activity in the above-mentioned spheres that can ensure autonomy.

The longest article in this volume is another work by Christoph Giesel, intended as a comprehensive study of the issue of the existence of Alevite minorities in the territories of today's Balkan states (p. 193–292). The author, however, discusses both the issues of the emergence of this religious community, elements of its history, theological issues (with emphasis on the problem of syncretism between Sunni and Shi'ite elements) and sociological issues (self-identification). A small part of the article is devoted to statistical data on contemporary Balkan Alevite communities in countries such as Albania and Macedonia. Through the text of Marieta Schneider's article (p. 293–320), we return to the issue of the appropriate reading of writings produced during the communist period, which has already been addressed in the book. The author has taken up the issue of the encounter between the Cherkesses returning from the territory of present-day Kosovo, who appeared there during the period of the migration of the *muhajirs* from the Caucasus to Ottoman Turkey, and those who remained in the Caucasus, which occurred in the late 1990s during an attempt to transfer some of the Cherkesses remaining in this over a century long emigration to the country of their ancestors. However, these observations are, for all intents and purposes, only a prelude to the development of an essay on the changes that the Soviet era brought to the life of the remaining Cherkess communities in the Caucasus in terms of culture and its perception. Similarly, the experiences of the Cherkesses from Kosovo are relevant, in the context of their staying close to other Muslim communities (e.g. Albanian) and the influence of the latter on the adoption of new customs, which, however, are considered indigenous. The observation of the phenomenon of raising ethnic issues, understood as folk culture, while at the same time neutralising or silencing their political dimension in cultural works, should serve as

a warning in relation to current historical research, which may be falsified by the influence of literature produced during the communist period with a specific purpose and thesis in mind. In the following section of the book, we can read two historical texts by Walter Puchner – the first discusses the cultural influence of the Greeks on the cities of the northern Black Sea coast at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (p. 321–334), while in the second the author takes up the issue of the cultural (especially theatrical) activities of the Greeks in the Danubian principalities (p. 335–344). The texts are summaries of the author's previous research, synthesising the theses presented so far in German and Greek-language publications. The last three articles deal with linguistic issues. Victor Friedman's intention was to provide a comparative analysis between the meaning of Arumunian and its influence and connections with Albanian, Greek and Slavic languages and the linguistic situation in Dagestan (p. 345–359). Helmuth Schaller, in turn, dealt with Slavic expressions preserved in modern Romanian, also attempting to outline the significance of historical events for the emergence of this linguistic phenomenon (p. 361–367). In the final text, Diana Forker presented an analysis of the meaning of enclitics in such Nach-Dagestan languages as Avar and Andean (p. 369–384).

A few remarks not necessarily critical but inspired by the reading of the individual texts. The first of these, by Keith Hitchins, lacks an elaboration of the passage concerning the first historiographical attempts made by the representatives of the nations discussed in the text. It would have been worthwhile to compare the conclusions of such an extended analysis with the findings presented in the article on the search for contacts in Western Europe or the role of religion and national churches for the construction of regional identity. In the context of Victor A. Shnirelman's article, it is worth adding that the interpretative problems presented there do not, after all, concern only the communist era, but also the period after the collapse of this system in Central and Eastern Europe. Neither do they refer only to the Caucasus, but also to many nations, where 'parallel historiographies'

of numerous interpretative problems, which seemed to have been solved long ago, concerning especially the early Middle Ages, were created<sup>3</sup>. Regarding Victor Friedman's article – the subject of actual languages that may have acquired the status or aspired to the level of inter-ethnic, e.g. the Avar war language 'bolmats' ('bolmacl', 'bolmaclcl') is unfortunately not addressed here<sup>4</sup>. While not questioning the linguistic competence of Helmuth Schaller, who gives in his work a number of interesting examples from Romanian, which are quite a surprise for a person who does not know this language but speaks (better or worse) several Slavic languages, it should be noted that the rather shallow treatment of historical issues, such as the complex history of Slavic migration to the Balkans, seems worrying in this article. There is also no reflection on the possibility of the loanwords presented in the text either in the late medieval period and the possible influence of, for example, liturgy conducted in a common Slavic language, or in the modern period, related to close relations with the Ruthenians or the later influence of the Russians. Quite surprisingly, the bibliography of this article is also limited to works from the interwar period and the Second World War. I mentioned in my introduction that the monograph was intended to

be the result of a deliberate organisational effort, from the presentation of the premises, through the conferences, to the publication of successive volumes presenting various aspects of the parallels between the Balkans and the Caucasus. Therefore, one may be puzzled by the lack of any breakdown of the content presented in the book. Although we can guess that the first part of the book consists of articles covering topics from a historical perspective, the second part deals with more contemporary issues, and the last part is devoted to linguistic issues, this is not explicitly stated. Exceptions to the above can also be found, so it is difficult to ascertain what the specific key to the ordering of the individual texts was, which is clearly a problem with many joint publications. As far as technical notes are concerned, it is unclear why the index was not included in the table of contents. It is somewhat puzzling that the volume contains exceptionally one text in German, despite the fact that the rest is in English (as are the indexes, biographies, etc.), especially as it takes up practically a quarter of the volume. Perhaps, however, such were the requirements of the project or grant from which the publication was funded.

In spite of the reservations presented above, the publication in question should be regarded as an exceptionally valuable contribution to comparative research into the history of the Balkans and the Caucasus. From the perspective of the author of these words, the observations presented here were particularly important in relation to the way in which contemporary historical narratives concerning the prehistory of some of the Caucasian peoples were constructed, data manipulated and propaganda messages created, as they confirmed his own observations of specific examples of such activities, both in the communist period and today<sup>5</sup>.

Translated by Łukasz Pigoński

<sup>3</sup> For example one could mention Bulgarian experiences concerning *de facto* falsifying of information on their earliest history: А. НИКОЛОВ, „Параисторията” като феномен на прехода: преоткриването на древните българи, [in:] *Историческият хабитус: предметната история, сб. в чест на 65-годишнината на доц. д-р Р. Донков*, ed. Ю. ТОДОРОВ, А. ЛУНИН, София 2013, p. 24–63; or Croatian and the local so-called Iranian theory: J. MOLAS, *Teoria o irańskim pochodzeniu Chorwatów – rozwój, funkcje i geneza*, [in:] *Problemy tożsamości kulturowej w krajach słowiańskich. (Jej formy i przemiany)*, vol. II, ed. J. GOSZCZYŃSKA, Warszawa 2003, p. 7–33. In Russia the issue concerns not only the Caucasus but also the Volga region: С. ЦВИКЛИНСКИ, *Татаризм vs. Булгаризм: “Первый спор” в татарской историографии*, trans. А. КАПУНОВСКОГО, *Абл* 3, 2003, p. 361–392.

<sup>4</sup> More elaborate treatment and Russian secondary literature: В. СЕСОТА, *Historia kaukaskich Awarów w średniowieczu. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022, p. 29–32.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. В. СЕСОТА, *Partu Patimat – kilka słów i obrazów o dagestańskiej historii pamięci*, [in:] *Kobieta na przestrzeni dziejów*, vol. IV, ed. IDEM, P. JASIŃSKI, A. SĘDERECKA, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022, p. 47–73; IDEM, *Anży-name, czyli o „chazarskim dziedzictwie” Kumyków*, [in:] *Człowiek a historia*, vol. VIII, ed. IDEM, P. JASIŃSKI, A. SĘDERECKA, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022, p. 93–127.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

CECOTA B., *Anży-name, czyli o „chazarskim dziedzictwie” Kumyków*, [in:] *Człowiek a historia*, vol. VIII, ed. B. CECOTA, P. JASIŃSKI, A. SĘDERECKA, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022, p. 93–127.

CECOTA B., *Historia kaukaskich Awarów w średniowieczu. Wybrane zagadnienia*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022.

CECOTA B., *Partu Patimat – kilka słów i obrazów o dagańskańskiej historii pamięci*, [in:] *Kobieta na przestrzeni dziejów*, vol. IV, ed. B. CECOTA, P. JASIŃSKI, A. SĘDERECKA, Piotrków Trybunalski 2022, p. 47–73.

CVIKLINSKI S., *Tamarizm vs. Bułgarizm: „Pervyj spor” v tatarskoj istoriografii*, trans. A. KAPLUNOVSKOGO, “Ab Imperio” 3, 2003, p. 361–392, <https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2003.0094>


KAHL Th., *Ethno-cultural Diversity in the Balkans and the Caucasus as an Objective for Comparative Research*, [in:] *The Balkans and Caucasus. Parallel Processes on the Opposite Sides of the Black Sea*, ed. I. BILIAK-SKY, O. CRISTEA, A. OROVEANU, Cambridge 2012, p. 172–187.

MOLAS J., *Teoria o irańskim pochodzeniu Chorwatów – rozwój, funkcje i geneza*, [in:] *Problemy tożsamości kulturowej w krajach słowiańskich. (Jej formy i przemiany)*, vol. II, ed. J. GOSZCZYŃSKA, Warszawa 2003, p. 7–33.

NIKOLOV A., *„Paraistorijata” jako fenomen na prehoda: preotkrivaneto na drevnite bǎlgari*, [in:] *Istoričeskijat habitus: opredmetenata istorija, sb. v čest na 65-godišnjinata na doc. d-r R. Donkov*, ed. Ju. TODOROV, A. LUNIN, Sofija 2013, p. 24–63.

*Sakralität und Mobilität im Kaukasus und Südosteuropa*, ed. T. DARIEVA, Th. KAHL, S. TONCHEVA, Wien 2017 [= *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, 882].

**Błażej Cecota** (Piotrków Trybunalski)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4746-0325>

\* Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.33>

### MIGRATIONS OF BAROQUE IDEAS IN THE LANDS OF THE SLAVS.

JUSTYNA ROMANOWSKA, *Polsko-ukraińsko-rosyjskie konteksty poezji metafizycznej serbskiego baroku* [*Polish-Ukrainian-Russian Contexts of Serbian Baroque Metaphysical Poetry*], Wydawnictwo Scriptum, Kraków 2022, pp. 262\*.

Cultural transfers between different parts of the Slavic region have rarely been, so far, the subject of comparative literary research within Slavic studies. It is all the more interesting to look at Justyna Romanowska's<sup>1</sup> publication entitled *Polish-Ukrainian-Russian contexts of Serbian Baroque metaphysical poetry*, in which the author analyzes the influence of Polish and Ukrainian-Russian Baroque metaphysical poetry on Serbian poetic works. Therefore, she sets herself the ambitious goal of presenting Serbian poetry of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in a broad cultural context.

The introductory part of the work already indicates great interpretive skills and a very good mastery of research techniques of old literature. The *Introduction* (p. 9–19) includes a brief overview of research areas, a presentation of basic problems, as well as characteristics of previous research on the Baroque in the Slavic world<sup>2</sup>. In this part of the work, the author

also presents the theoretical and methodological premises that enabled her to organize the rich literary material of diverse provenance. In this regard, the publications of D. Đurišin<sup>3</sup> and E. Sarnowska-Temeriusz<sup>4</sup> have been found particularly helpful.

In the first chapter (*Polish-Ukrainian-Russian influence on Serbian culture of the Baroque era*, p. 21–65), the author presents an extensive research scope in a historical and literary context, which she then elaborates further in subsequent chapters. This approach seems to be most justified, as it allows the reader to learn about the gradual development of the Baroque in the land of the Slavs. This chapter consists of three sub-segments. In the first one, Justyna Romanowska characterizes Baroque tendencies in the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with particular emphasis on Ukrainian areas. She points out the role that education played in this process, especially the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. It should also be noted that the author is very well versed in

\* This text was created as part of the project financed from the funds of the National Science Centre, Poland, granted under decision no. DEC-2019/32/C/HS2/00452 (*Cultural implications of the migrations of Serbs in the early modern era*).

<sup>1</sup> Justyna Romanowska is a part of the young generation of Slavists. Her interests include the culture and literature of Serbs in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the reviewed publication, the author has written a valuable article on the work of Hristofor Žefarović. Cf. H. ŽEFAROVIĆ, *Stematografija Hristofora Žefarovicia jako dokument kulturnih i narodnih težnja Srba u prvoj polovini XVIII veka*, *Ade* 4, 2014, p. 22–34.

<sup>2</sup> At this point, it is worth mentioning at least a few of the canonical works on the Slavic Baroque, which

were used by the author of the reviewed publication. Cf. E. ANGYAL, *Świat słowiańskiego baroku*, Warszawa 1972; M. PAVIĆ, *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba (XVII i XVIII vek)*, Beograd 1970; D. MEDAKOVIĆ, *Barok kod Srba*, Zagreb 1988; W. KOT, *Barok serbski w kontekście polsko-ukraińskim*, *RKH* 25, 1988, p. 181–191.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. D. ĐURIŠIN, *Podstawowe typy związków i zależności literackich*, *PLit* 59, 1968, p. 345–357.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. H. MARKIEWICZ, J. SŁAWIŃSKI, Kraków 1976.



the ethnic-confessional situation of the Polish-Lithuanian state, and she can also accurately describe the Polish-Ukrainian influence on Russian culture in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, which contributed to the spread of new literary trends in the Tsarist state. The second part of the first chapter seems to be the most valuable and, at the same time, crucial to understanding the entire reviewed publication, as it explains the reasons for the popularity of the Russian orientation in the lands inhabited by Serbs<sup>5</sup>. Justyna Romanowska draws attention to the circulation of Russian liturgical books among Serbs, the presence of Russo-Slavic and Latin-Slavic schools, the activities of East Slavic teachers (e.g., Maxim Suvorov, Emanuel Kozaciński), as well as Russian emissaries active in the Habsburg monarchy. In the case of the last component, it would be worthwhile to expand the narrative by characterizing the activities of Ludwik Łączyński (1680–1752), who made a significant contribution to spreading a positive image of the Russian state among 18<sup>th</sup>-century Serbs<sup>6</sup>. The author also introduced the reader to the polemics between researchers regarding the periodization of the Baroque in Serbian literature. She rightly noted that the landmark date, not only in the political and social life of the Serbs, but also in the literary one, was 1690, the time of the Great Migration of the Serbs, led by Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević (1633–1703). While Justyna Romanowska is undoubtedly well versed in the intricacies of Serbian history, it should be noted, somewhat out of the reviewer's duty, that the term "Vojvodinian Serbs" (p. 45) is not the best name for 18<sup>th</sup>-century Serbs, since the term "Vojvodina" was not introduced until the end of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> cen-

ture. Therefore, it is better to refer to them as Serbs living in the Habsburg monarchy, making it possible to include in the main consideration the representatives of the ethnos who lived not only in the territory of today's Vojvodina, but also in the Military Frontier, Slavonia, areas of the middle course of the Danube, etc. It should also be noted that the second migration of Serbs under the leadership of Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta (1698–1748), which is mentioned by the author (p. 43, 54), did not take place in 1740, i.e., after the end of the Austro-Turkish War of 1737–1739, but during its course<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, Nova Srbija and Slavenosrbija were not Serbian settlements, but separate districts (consisting of settlements) within the Russian Empire<sup>8</sup>.

The subsequent three chapters – which form the essential core of the reviewed work – focused on the analysis of poetic texts from three cultural areas of the land of the Slavs (Serbian, Ukrainian-Russian and Polish). These sections of Justyna Romanowska's book organize selected themes and toposes as the author attempts to *answer questions about common thematic areas and the ways and effects of adapting Polish-Ukrainian-Russian patterns in Baroque Serbian literature* (p. 65).

Thus, the second chapter, entitled *Man and the World* (p. 67–123), consists of two segments: *Harmoni mundi* and *Disharmonia mundi*, which are a sort of catalog of the toposes most frequently found in the texts studied by the author. Romanowska introduces her reader to visions of the cosmos, as well as the place of the individual in the universe, which were prevalent among 18<sup>th</sup>-century writers. An important place in the reflection of this chapter is given to the influence of the Holy Bible on the creativity of poets, but also its importance in the shaping of spatial imagery. Innovative conclusions are contained in the *Disharmonia mundi* segment, in which

<sup>5</sup> The author primarily focuses on the areas of the Habsburg monarchy where Serbs settled after the so-called Great Migration of the Serbs (Serbian *Velika seoba Srba*) of 1690. Cf. S. ČAKIĆ, *Velika seoba Srba 1689/1690 i patrijarh Arsenije Crnojević*, Novi Sad 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Ludwik Łączyński (1680–1752) was a Russian diplomat of Polish origin who was on a Russian outpost in Vienna in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. One of his tasks was to recruit Serbs into the Russian army. Cf. С.Г. НЕЛИПОВИЧ, *Русско-австрийский военный альянс второй четверти XVIII*, Москва 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. LANGER, *Nord-Albaniens und der Herzogovina Unterwerfungs-Anerbieten an Oesterreich 1737–1739*, Wien 1880; M. KOSTIĆ, *Ustanak Srba i Arbanasa u Staroj Srbiji protiv Turaka 1737–1739 i seoba u Ugarsku*, GSND 7–8, 1930, p. 203–235.

<sup>8</sup> M. KOSTIĆ, *Srpske naselja u Rusiji. Nova Srbija i Slavenosrbija*, Beograd 1923.

the author depicts a world deprived of harmony, characterized by evil and suffering, which is perhaps best evidenced by one of the cited works, *Nadgrobnno slovo Beogradu* by Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta, which is a specific description of the triumph of evil in the world, as well as the receding of order under the pressure of chaos (p. 121–122). The *vanitas* motif – which was one of the most productive toposes in Baroque literature, including the Slavic Baroque as well – is quite prominently emphasized in this part of the book, as evidenced by the poets cited by Romanowska, including Lazar Baranovych (1617–1693), Zbigniew Morsztyn (1628–1689), Symeon of Polotsk (1629–1680), and Gavriilo Stefanović Venclović (1680–1749).

The next chapter (*Man and Time*) was dedicated *in extenso* to artistic expressions dealing with human transience, evanescence, or the inevitability of the ending of human life. Again, in this part of the book, the *vanitas* motif and biblical concepts of understanding time are quite clearly emphasized. The interpretations of the poems included in this chapter are set in a theological and philosophical context, which has greatly enriched the essential reading of the book and made it possible to present the sources of the theme of death in various Slavic literatures. Romanowska rightly notes the important role that the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy played in the distribution of existential reflection in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area. She sees borrowings and themes conveyed in this context in the works of Gavriilo Stefanović Venclović, Jovan Rajić, or Emanuel Kozačinski, who resided in Serbian lands. The content of this part of the reviewed publication should be considered very precise and, at the same time, clear to the reader.

The book *Polish-Ukrainian-Russian contexts of Serbian Baroque metaphysical poetry* would undoubtedly be incomplete if it was not for the fourth chapter (*Man and God*), in which the author characterized man's bond with Divine Providence (p. 189–237). In this part of the work, the research attention was focused on writings from the monastic circle. The texts composed for the two most important Christian feasts – Christmas and Easter – are also discussed here. The works of Jovan Rajić and Gavriilo Stefanović Venclović

were particularly highlighted. It should also be noted that the poetic works were interpreted with a great deal of knowledge of literature theory, which allowed Justyna Romanowska to catch many symbols, concepts, metaphors, rhetorical figures, or references to the Bible. In addition, the author noted the Polish-Ukrainian-Russian influence on the development of mystery plays, Christmas plays and theatrical performances in Serbian culture. The result of this extended chapter is a comprehensive presentation of the man-God relationship in the Baroque literature of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* circle.

Justyna Romanowska's book is concluded with a short ending, which seemingly may appear quite inadequate for the volume of the publication (p. 239–241). The author summarizes her research and the theses set forth in the introduction in a condensed, yet extremely clear manner. She explains the role that the Baroque played in the development of Serbian literature. She again emphasizes both the importance of modern Serbian migrations since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and Polish-Russian-Serbian interference on the transformations that occurred in Serbian culture during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Above all, she points out the game-changing artists of the Serbian Baroque – Gavriilo Stefanović Venclović and Zaharije Orfelin (1726–1785). In the last paragraph, she outlines further research directions on Serbian poetry of the Baroque era, pointing out several research postulates, such as the contribution of the antique tradition in shaping the literature of the period and reflection on love poetry or humorous poetry. Justyna Romanowska also stresses the need for in-depth research on Serbian 18<sup>th</sup>-century bourgeois poetry (*Serbian gradanska poezija*), although in this last case, the answers to the author's questions can be found in the existing literature on the subject<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to an introduction, four extremely well-structured chapters and a conclusion, the book *Polish-Ukrainian-Russian contexts of*

<sup>9</sup> In addition to the work by Marija KLEUT (*Srpsko gradansko pesništvo*, Novi Sad 1991) cited by Justyna Romanowska, Serbian bourgeois poetry was also studied by Mirjana D. Stefanović. Cf. EADEM, *Srpska gradanska poezija. Ogled iz istorije stih*, Valjevo 1992.

*Serbian Baroque metaphysical poetry* also includes an extensive bibliography (consisting of a compilation of source texts and subject literature), as well as a summary written in English. However, the reviewed publication would be worth expanding with an index of people and geography, as well as a summary in Serbian, as the work could certainly be of interest to Serbian humanities.

Even though in the *Introduction*, Justyna Romanowska very modestly points out that *this book is an attempt to fulfill some of the postulates and introduce additions to the still insufficiently recognized area, which appears to be the metaphysical poetry of the Serbian Baroque, so far almost absent from the ground of Polish Slavic studies* (p. 19) it should be clearly noted that the reviewed publication is a very successful and thorough humanistic study, which can be fruitfully used by Slavists, historians, anthropologists and other researchers of the Serbian cultural sphere.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANGYAL E., *Świat słowiańskiego baroku*, Warszawa 1972.

ČAKIĆ S., *Velika seoba Srba 1689/1690 i patrijarh Arsenije Crnojević*, Novi Sad 1990.

ĐURIŠIN D., *Podstawowe typy związków i zależności literackich*, "Pamiętnik Literacki" 59, 1968, p. 345–357.

KLEUT M., *Srpsko građansko pesništvo*, Novi Sad 1991.

KOŠTIĆ M., *Srpske naselja u Rusiji. Nova Srbija i Slavosrbija*, Beograd 1923.

KOŠTIĆ M., *Ustanak Srba i Arbanasa u Staroj Srbiji protiv Turaka 1737–1739 i seoba u Ugarsku*, "Glasnik Skopskog Naučnog Društva" 7–8, 1930, p. 203–235.

KOT W., *Barok serbski w kontekście polsko-ukraińskim*, "Rocznik Komisji Historycznoliterackiej" 25, 1988, p. 181–191.

LANGER J., *Nord-Albaniens und der Herzegowina Unterwerfungs-Anerbieten an Oesterreich 1737–1739*, Wien 1880.

MEDAKOVIĆ D., *Barok kod Srba*, Zagreb 1988.

NELIPOVICH S.G., *Sojuz dvuglavykh orlov. Russko-avstrijskij voennyj al'jans vtoroj chetverti XVIII v.*, Moskva 2010.


PAVIĆ M., *Istorija srpske književnosti baroknog doba (XVII i XVIII vek)*, Beograd 1970.

*Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. H. MARKIEWICZ, J. SŁAWIŃSKI, Kraków 1976.

ROMANOWSKA J., *Stematografija Hristofora Žefarovića jako dokument kulturowych i narodowych dążeń Serbów w pierwszej połowie XVIII wieku*, "Adeptus" 4, 2014, p. 22–34, <https://doi.org/10.11649/a.2014.017>

STEFANOVIĆ M.D., *Srpska građanska poezija. Ogljed iz istorije stiha*, Valjevo 1992.

Piotr Krężel (Łódź)\*\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6427-0286>

\*\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology



© by the author, licensee University of Lodz – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.35>

**ПРЕДРАГ КОМАТИНА, *Константин Порфирогенит и рана историја јужних Словена*, уредник Љ. МАКСИМОВИЋ [Predrag Komatina, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the Early History of South Slavs*, ed. L. Maksimović], Византолошки институт САНУ, Београд 2021 [= Византолошки Институт Српске Академије Наука и Уметности Посебна Издања / Institute for Byzantine Studies Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Monographs, 50], pp. 404.**

The work by Constantine Porphyrogenitus entitled *De Administrando Imperio* is a mine of information about the peoples who, for a variety of reasons, found themselves in Constantinople's orbit of interest in the mid-tenth century, that is, at the time when the work mentioned above was created (948–952). Southern Slavs were among them. It should be stressed that our knowledge of the latter's history until the mid-tenth century is, to a significant extent, based on the learned emperor's testimonies. It can hardly come as a surprise that they have, for quite a long time, drawn scholarly attention in many countries. The work under review has been written by the distinguished Serbian scholar, Predrag Komatina. Part of the information provided by Constantine is devoted to the Serbs. As such, it concerns the history of Komatina's own country.

The book is divided into seven parts, as well as a preface (p. 7–12), conclusions (p. 339–341), a summary in English (p. 343–363), a bibliography (p. 365–394), and indexes (p. 395–404).

The first part, *Константин Порфирогенит. Између престола и пера* (*Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Between the Throne and a Pen*, p. 13–62) starts with a brief account of Constantine Porphyrogenitus's life until his rise to full power in 945 (p. 13–17). It then goes on to characterize the intellectual climate in which the emperor-erudite's interests took shape. We are told that Constantine was especially fond

of history and displayed a proclivity for encyclopedic knowledge. Komatina explains the motives that led the emperor to embark upon such works as *Excerpta Historica*, *De Administrando Imperio*, *De Cerimoniis*, *De Thematibus*, *Vita Basilii*. He argues that Constantine's efforts were, to some extent, designed to remedy the crisis of Byzantine historiography whose last distinguished representatives, that is, Theophanes the Confessor and Nicephorus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, were active as long ago as the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century (p. 17–52). This part of the book ends with a discussion of the works that grew out of the climate of Constantine VII's reign but were created already after his death. I mean here the sixth book of *the Continuation of Theophanes* and *the Chronicle* by Symeon Logothete.

In the second part, *Јужни Словени у византијској историографији од почетка IX до средине X века* (*The Southern Slavs in Byzantine historiography from the beginning of the ninth to the mid-tenth century*, p. 63–86) P. Komatina analyses Byzantine historiography's interest in the southern Slavs, focusing his attention on the period from the beginning of the ninth to the mid-tenth century. The first fragment of this part of the book deals with references devoted to the Slavs to be found in works by Byzantine authors from the sixth to the beginning of the ninth century (beginning with Procopius of Caesarea, Theophylact Simocatta,

Pseudo-Mauricius, St. Demetrius and through to Nicephorus, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and to Theophanes the Confessor, p. 63–70). The second part of the Chapter, in turn, analyses testimonies devoted to the Slavs in Greece found in *Tactica* by Leo VI, in works by John Kaminiates and Aretas, and in *the Chronicle of Monemvasia* (p. 70–86).

In the following part, *Јужни Словени у дворском церемонијалу и царској дипломатији Константина Порфирогенита* (*The Southern Slavs in the Court Ceremonial and the Imperial Diplomacy of Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 87–105) P. Komatina first deals with the issue of the origin of *De Cerimoniis* (p. 87–93) and then goes on to analyse it in terms of the information it provides about the southern Slavs, both those who were the emperor's subjects (p. 93–95) and those who enjoyed the independence of Constantinople (p. 95–105).

The part entitled *De administrando imperio* постанок и структура дела (*De administrando. The Creation and Structure of the Work*, p. 107–138), addresses the issue of the creation and structure of *De Administrando*. The author points out that the work was organized around five issues that Constantine Porphyrogenitus signalled in Proimion<sup>1</sup> and then developed further in the text. Komatina indicates that the first issue is discussed in Chapters 1 to the beginning of Chapter 13 (13.11). Part of Chapter 13 (12–194) focuses on the second issue, while Chapters 13.195 to 46.165 are concerned with the third (this part of the book can be divided into 3 sub-sections). The fourth issue is dealt with in Chapters 47 to 48.21, while the fifth is covered in the last section of *De Administrando*, which starts at the end of Chapter 48. The scholar supports the thesis that Chapter 30 forms the inherent part of the text and is not a later interpolation, while Chapter 29 belongs to the Italian and not the South-Slavic part of the work.

Next comes the most extensive part of the work, which is also the most important in terms

of the topic it takes up. Entitled *Јужни Словени у De administrando imperio* (*The Southern Slavs in Administrando Imperio*, p. 139–315), it provides an insightful analysis of those fragments of *De Administrando* that pertain to the southern Slavs. The author's discussion of the issue is divided into several parts. The first two deal with the Byzantine Dalmatia (p. 139–164) and the Slavs who inhabited it (p. 164–194). The third part is devoted to the Croats (p. 194–210), and the fourth to the Serbs (p. 210–300). The title of the fifth part is *the Danubian and Pannonian Context of the History of the Southern Slavs* (p. 301–307), while that of the sixth, the ultimate one, is *the Slavs in the Peloponnese* (p. 307–315).

The part entitled *Дипломатија и историографија под окриљем De administrando imperio* (*Diplomacy ad Historiography under the Auspices of De Administrando*, p. 317–330) raises the question of whether the ideas advanced in *De Administrando* actually affected the way in which Constantine conducted his foreign policy. The author answers it in the affirmative. His focus in this section of the book is also on the representation of the southern Slavs in works created in the circle of Constantine after he wrote *De Administrando*. We are told that the Slavs are almost entirely absent from those works.

In the ultimate part, *Порфирогенитова заоставштина у византијској историографији* (*The legacy of Porphyrogenitus in Byzantine historiography*, p. 331–337), the author deals with the issue of why the information about Southern Slavs found in *De Administrando* is absent from the Byzantine historiography, both that which was contemporaneous with the emperor (p. 331–334) and that which was created later (p. 334–337).

The book under review demonstrates – competently and with a deep knowledge of sources and secondary literature – what the Byzantines from the mid-tenth century knew about southern Slavs and where they knew it from. It also adds to our knowledge of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his times and gives us an idea of the place the emperor's works, and especially *De Administrando*, held in the history of

<sup>1</sup> CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*. Proimion, 14–24, ed., trans. Gy. MORAVCSIK, R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1985 [= *CFHB*, 1].


Byzantine literature. On the one hand, it sums up the scholarly discussion of the representation of Southern Slavs in *De Administrando* and, on the other, it also inspires scholars to further discuss the issue. For this reason, it is a good thing that the book is equipped with an extensive summary in English.

*Translated by Artur MękarSKI*

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

CONSTANTINE PORPHYROGENITUS, *De administrando imperio*, ed., trans. Gy. MORAVCSIK, R.J.H. JENKINS, Washington 1985 [= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, 1].

*Miroslaw J. Leszka* (Łódź)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2643-4520>

\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philosophy and History, Department of Byzantine Studies



© by the author, licensee University of Lodz – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.11>

***Old Church Slavonic Heritage in Slavonic and Other Languages,*  
ed. ILONA JANYŠKOVA, HELENA KARLIKOVA, VIT BOČEK, Nakladatelství  
Lidové noviny, Praha 2021 [= *Studia etymologica Brunensia*, 25], pp. 340\*.**

Volume 25 of the *Studia etymologica Brunensia* collection contains materials from the conference held in Brno in 2020. It includes papers by leading paleoslavists focusing on the history of Slavic languages. The conference topic *Old Church Slavonic Heritage in Slavonic and Other Languages* opened up the possibility of addressing a wider range of issues.

The book opens with several theoretical surveys by renowned authors.

In a lengthy study entitled *N.S. Trubetckoj und das Problem der Kirchenslavizität der slavischen Schriftsprachen* (p. 11–30), Helmut Keipert deals with the reception of Nikolai Trubetckoj's linguistic views in works by N. Durново, N. Tolstoy, A. Isachenko, V. Vinogradov, R. Jakobson, etc. In discussing Trubetckoj's understanding of the Russian literary language as a direct continuation of Church Slavonic, which was first advanced in his book *К проблеме русского самопознания* (*On the Problem of Russian Self-Knowledge*, 1927) and the article *Общеславянский элемент в русской культуре* (*The All-Slavonic Element in Russian Culture*), H. Keipert attempts to answer the question of why Trubetckoj's ideas often remained uncited. While silenced in the Soviet Union for political reasons, his works were known and used by European Slavists. However, difficulties in the acceptance of his views lay in their peculiar character. He claimed, for example, that

since Russian could function quite well as a literary language, there was no need to develop a Ukrainian form of this language. By way of illustrating Trubetckoj's views, Keipert reviews the semantic change in the Russian greeting *zdravstvujte* in relation to the underlying verb *sdravstvovati*, and its artificial forms *da zdravstvuyet*, *da zdravstvuyut* concluding that this form is deconstructed today.

In his article *Constantine and Methodius, 'silly Rus', and the vagaries of literary Ukrainian*, Andrii Danylenko develops George Y. Shevelev's ideas regarding Constantine and Methodius' "linguistic democratism" which, it is claimed, displayed itself in the Christianization of the Slavs in a comprehensible language of "their own". The article covers various linguistic processes to which the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) were subjected from 1600 to the present day. The author claims that the concept of "linguistic democratism" eventually played an important role in shaping both ecclesiastical and secular forms of the Ukrainian language. The specificity of the processes occurring in Ruthenia that was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lay, beginning with the first Ruthenian translation of Church Slavonic (the *Peresopnytsia Gospel*), in the dynamics of the Church Slavonic norm, as evidenced in sermons, commentaries on the Orthodox Church texts or homilies. The efforts of Vasyl Hrečulevyč (1791–1870), one of the representatives of the "Little Russian Triad", undertaken with a view to democratizing Church Slavonic, are considered through the prism of his sermons. In trying to describe the successive attempts in the

\* This review article has been written under the research project financed by the National Science Centre (Poland). Decision number: DEC2020/39/G/HS2/01652.

twentieth and twenty-first centuries to translate the Holy Scripture into the modern Ukrainian language, the author relies on the metaphor 'dialect Reconquista', which can also be encountered in works by Ukrainian contemporary dialectologists.

The role of language proximity as a factor in language contact is addressed by Vít Boček in the article *On language similarity as a factor in language contact, with a focus on the contact between (Old) Church Slavonic and other Slavonic languages* (p. 45–62). The issue is approached from the perspective of (Old) Church Slavonic and other Slavic languages. Contrary to the commonly held view that similarity facilitates transfer between languages, the author argues that it may also work differently, depending on the types of transfer induced through language contact, as claimed in Van Coetsen's (2000) theory.

Operating on this premise, the author critically assesses the work of A. Rabus (*Die Rolle des Sprachkontakts für die slavischen (Standard-) Sprachen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des innerslavischen Kontakts*, Habilitation thesis, University of Freiburg, 2013), while at the same time offering his own theory of the rapprochement and interaction between Church Slavonic and Russian. By specifying the process's main factors – transfer directions, transfer types, types of bilingualism, language consciousness, language similarities and language dissimilarities, – V. Boček puts forward a convincing scheme of the possible types of interaction between genetically related languages.

Some of the works mentioned below address various problems arising in the reconstruction of the Proto-Slavic language. Mariola Jakubowicz's article entitled *On the limitations of the role of the Old Church Slavonic lexicon in the reconstruction of Proto-Slavic semantics* discusses the limitations encountered in the use of the Old Church Slavonic lexicon to reconstruct the semantics of Proto-Slavic lexemes. The issue is dealt with by analyzing words that were meant to convey religious meaning such as *grěch* 'sin', *kaditi* 'to spread smoke and scents during the religious service', *gověti* 'to abstain from food and prepare for confession', etc. Her analysis

shows that the original Proto-Slavic meanings were often displaced by the religious ones. In reconstructing the former, it is thus necessary to examine a wide range of cognates and to consider the development of analogous cases in other Indo-European languages. The author provides a lot of examples of words whose semantics changed or narrowed to the point of losing their original meanings.

In her article *К проблеме сложных слов в праславянском (On the Problem of Compound Words in Proto-Slavonic*, p. 73–94), Svetlana Mikhailovna Tolstaya analyzes the varieties of Proto-Slavic composites using materials from the EDSL. Once the structural types of the composites are arranged according to the descending order of numerical indicators (taking into account specific conventions), it becomes clear that only two types can be quantitatively productive: noun + verb S+V (194) and adjective + noun A+S (134).

The composites-appellatives reconstructed in the dictionary allow us to develop some understanding not only of the vocabulary of the Proto-Slavic language, but also of the language's morphological and word-formation mechanisms (i.e., word-base selection, word truncations, ways of combining word-bases, connecting vowels, etc.). This is also the basis from which to explore the process of forming Old Church Slavonic counterparts of Greek composites and word combinations. By adopting the approach, it is also possible to reproduce the microsyntax and minimal textual units, i.e., word combinations on which particular composites were based: *\*biti maslo* 'to whip butter' (*\*maslobojъn'a* 'butter maker'), *\*koni pasti* 'to graze horses' (*\*konopasъ* 'horse-grazer'), *\*kostъ lomiti* 'to break bones' (*\*kostolomъ* 'he who breaks bones'), *\*kozijъ rogъ* 'goat horn' (*\*kozorogъ* 'goat-horned'), *\*krъvъ piti* 'to drink blood' (*\*krъvopija* 'he who drinks blood') etc. Appended to the article is a dictionary of reconstructed composites.

Aleksandar Loma offers a new view of the etymology of the Proto-Slavic word *\*brakъ* (*К этимологии ст.-сл. Бракъ*, p. 95–118), arguing that the primary form *\*ob-rakъ* 'arranged marriage' should be interpreted as a de-



verbative from \**ob-rekti* (*se*) ‘promise’ or, more specifically, from the equally frequently used \**obrĕkati se*, which is indicative of its long o-vocalism. The author gives a detailed account of scholarly debates regarding the origin of the word and shows how the views of its origin crystallized in works by G. Curtius, F. Miklosich, I. Sreznevsky, A. Meyer, E.K. Berneker, A. Sobolevsky and other authors. The author’s analysis is complicated by the fact that the word *брак/brak* ‘marriage’, while it is thought to have been assimilated into East Slavic and Serbo-Croatian from Church Slavonic, remains completely unknown in West Slavic. Indicating in detail the weaknesses of Georg Curtius’ etymological interpretation of it, Loma develops Oleg Nikolaevich Trubachev’s ideas regarding the relationship between the word’s meaning and the hapax *обракъ* which appears in a fourteenth-century document. Analysis of folklore and ethnographic materials has led him to the conclusion that the word is derived from Russian. The article reveals its multidimensional potential in providing eight different meanings of the hypothetical Proto-Slavic \**ob-rokъ* in comparison with the semantics of the proposed \**ob-rakъ*.

Loma’s analysis is followed by Aleksandr Konstantinovich Shaposhnikov’s article entitled *Способы адаптации церковнославянских лексических проникновений в живых славянских языках: книжные и изустные заимствования* (*Ways of Adapting Church Slavonic Lexical Penetrations in Living Slavic Languages: Book and Oral Borrowings*, p. 119–130). Shaposhnikov argues that Church Slavonicisms may not always be Proto-Slavic in origin, but that, conversely, there are many neologisms to be found in the language that are areally and diachronically restricted. The article’s general tone is set by the author’s polemic with views expressed by W. Mańczak in *Przedhistoryczne migracje Słowian i pochodzenie języka staro-cerkiewno-słowiańskiego* (Kraków, 2004). In discussing the data provided by the latter with regard to the mutual penetration of East Slavic and Church Slavonic elements, he argues for linking it with the Smolyani and Dregoviches’ early migrations into the region of Thessalonica

in the 580s (p. 123). The article’s theses are illustrated with a list of about one hundred Russian lexemes of Church Slavonic origin. It is indicated that the lexemes show a high degree of adaptation and are not viewed by speakers of Modern Russian as Church Slavonic. At this point, we unexpectedly find the author drawing on the outdated imperial opuses to differentiate the Slavic linguistic space. We are told that in the fourteenth century the “common Russian language” began to branch off into its “Great Russian, Belarusian and Little Russian dialects” (sic!) (p. 119). No less surprising are the claims regarding the situation of diglossia in Kyivan Rus, where a small number of educated people, it is claimed, not only wrote but also spoke (sic!) in Church Slavonic (p. 120). Whatever evidence the author may have to support these views, he fails to share it with the reader. The insignificant number of common lexical isoglosses shared by Church Slavonic and Belarusian as well as by Church Slavonic and Ukrainian is adduced to prove the following statement: *The latter two languages are Russian-Polish and Polish-Russian hybrids respectively, so the Church Slavonic lexical heritage in them is noticeably reduced by the leading status of the Polish language* (p. 123). Paradoxically, by rejecting the genetic self-sufficiency of the East Slavic languages, the author puts in doubt the scholarly character of his own study.

Viktorovna Kurkina’s aim in her article *Семантика слов с полногласием и неполногласием как один из источников восстановления внутренней формы слова* (*Semantics of words with pleophony and non-pleophony as one of the sources for the reconstruction of the internal form of words*, p. 131–140) is to reconstruct the internal form of some Proto-Slavic words. According to the author, the formal divergence of historically identical lexemes arising from the Slavic liquid metathesis entailed the emergence of homogeneous homonyms functioning in parallel and independently in different linguistic systems. An interesting example of this is provided by words commonly used today: *борошно* (*boroshno* – ‘flour’), *мука* (*muka* – ‘flour’), *брань-борона* (*bran-borona* – ‘harrow’), *прагъ-порог* (*prag-porog* – ‘doorstep’). These operations enable us to reconstruct the signs of reality that underlay nomination processes.

In the article by Anna Viktorovna Alekseyevich entitled *Церковнославянские заимствования в старобелорусском языке на фоне исконной лексики (Foreign Slavonic borrowings in the Old Belarusian language on the background of the original vocabulary)*, p. 141–152), Old Belarusian borrowings from Church Slavonic, Polish, and Czech are shown using the example of derivatives from the Proto-Slavic root \*vold. They may be either very close, or identical in meaning: *володату* (*volodati*), *володету* (*volodeti*), *володеть* (*volodet*), *владати* (*vladati*), *владету* (*vladeti*) ‘own’; or overlap only partially: *владарь* (*vladar*), *владарь* (*vladar*), *влодарь* (*vloadar*), *влодарь* (*vloadar*), *влодерь* (*vlooder*) ‘one who has power’, and *владька* (*vladuka*), *владика* (*vladika*), *уладька* (*uladyka*) ‘lord’; *волость* (*volost*) ‘province’ and *владза* (*vladza*), *власть* (*vlast*) ‘power’.

The following works are devoted to the discussion of the problems of the development of territorial recensions of Church Slavonic.

The first to be mentioned among these is the article by Halyna Mykhailivna Naienko *Переводы Симона Тодорского и церковнославянский язык в философском дискурсе Украины XVII–XVIII вв. (Translations by Simon Todorski and the Church Slavonic Language in the Philosophical Discourse of Ukraine in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries)*, p. 153–162).

Bohumil Vykypěl’s article entitled “*Südslavische Einflüsse*” auf das Tschechische (p. 163–166) discusses a number of examples of South Slavic languages’ influence on Czech. The author finds the influence weak, a conclusion that is corroborated by his analysis of the parallel examples of the languages’ influence on Russian. Church Slavonic’s role in Bohemia, we are told, was ceremonial and experimental only, while the Czechs’ everyday life was linguistically defined by adherence to *Slavia Latina*.

Three questions are dealt with in the article by Miroslav Vepřek *On the dative absolute in Czech Church Slavonic and Old Czech* (p. 167–178). The author asks whether the independent dative could appear by chance, created by Old Czech authors ad hoc, or whether it was a relic of an older grammatical feature, or whether it was an element inherited from

Church Slavonic. All the possibilities are carefully examined by analyzing materials from the Old Czech Text Bank (*Staročeská textová banka*, STB). While concluding that all of the options are plausible, the author gives priority to the specific archaic structure.

A similar problem is raised by Kateřina Voleková and Hana Kreisingerová in *Palaeoslovenisms in the second translation of the Old Czech Psalter* (p. 179–192). The authors investigate Old Slavic and Church Slavonic’s influence on the translations of the Old Czech Psalter, paying special attention to the second translation found in the Clementinum Psalter and the Chapter Psalter. The examples of previously unknown “paleocroatisms” are regarded by the authors as pointing to the possible connection between the manuscripts and the Slavonic Monastery.

Helena Karlíková’s *Ein alttschechischer Palaeoslavismus mit Übersetzungsfehler* (p. 193–198) analyzes errors in Old Slavonic and Old Czech translations from Greek and Latin. For example, the so-called Clementine Psalter contains the Old Czech verb *vnoziti* ‘to crash into, to enter’, which is a formal and semantic parallel to the Old Church Slavic verb *вънозити*. If the author’s line of reasoning is correct, then *vnoziti* may be an Old Czech paleoslovenism. Its peculiarity lies in the fact that the translator, in translating the original Latin text, mistook the verb *figere* ‘create, make’ for the verb *figere* ‘to thrust, pierce’, thus distorting the meaning of the translated text. Deep semantic analysis is accompanied by a polemic over J. Gebauer’s etymological explanations.

Jiří Rejzek’s article *Is Old Czech hlahol a Church Slavonicism?* (p. 199–204) discusses a possible Old Slavonic influence on the semantics and the frequency of the Old Czech word *hlahol*, tracing the development of its meaning in Slavic languages, old Czech sources. It is unique for the word to assume the meaning of ‘idiom, language’, and the same can be said of a number of other meanings developed from Proto-Slavonic \**golgolъ*. The branch semantics found in the sources from before the fifteenth century are explained by the Old Slavic influence emanating from the Sázava Monastery or the Emauzy Monastery.

Irena Fuková and Štěpán Šimek provide an in-depth study of *Old Czech adjectives přěsný/přiesný and přisný* (p. 205–216). Drawing on the extensive lexical material from the StČS card catalog, the authors focus on the etymology and the semantic development of the adjectives in question. The reconstruction of their formal development makes it possible to clearly define the relationship between their forms, to distinguish between their obsolete or archaic meanings, and to show how these forms are lexicographically represented.

The adjective *přěsný/přiesný* is primarily meant to convey the meaning of ‘fresh, unfermented’, which is considered to be bound up with the noun *honey*. This basic meaning is believed to have given rise to that of ‘fresh, new, recent’ and, in conjunction with the noun, *bread*, ‘baked without leaven’. The further emergence of abstract meanings such as ‘correct, true’, ‘accurate’, ‘original’, ‘stern, unfunny’, and ‘strict, uncompromising’ is convincingly illustrated drawing on contexts imposed by religious sources. The primary meaning of the adjective *\*prisnъ* ‘to be someone’ evolved toward ‘inherent in someone’, ‘identical’.

The authors have also traced the evolution of these adjectives’ derivatives: the nouns *přěsnost/přiesnost* and *přěsniceň*, and the adverbs *přěsně/přiesně* and *přisný > přisně*. The derivatives are considered from the perspective of the emergence of identical meanings and overlapping semantics. The article provides grounds for discussion of the proposed semantic chains. The authors’ search is also documented in a more concise form in ESSČ.

A ramified lexical group is discussed by Petr Nejedlý in *Some names of winds in Early Modern Czech* (p. 217–226). After describing their semantics and usage, the author points to the discontinuity in the use of the names of winds and cardinal directions. The article contains valuable observations regarding how Church Slavonic affected the modern Czech language, both in terms of the way it is used today, as well as in terms of such phenomena as linguistic reduction and frequency attenuation.

Roman Krivko’s article entitled *Гимн “Вогуродіца”: (церковно-?) славянские, латинские и германские параллели* (*Гимн “Vogurodzica”: (Church-?) Slavonic, Latin, and Germanic Parallels*, p. 227–252) focuses on the origin of the hymn which, according to the author, bear traces of Old Czech, Latin, and Middle High German influences. The hymn’s linguistic features indicate its archaic nature, that is, its creation in the early period of the development of Polish literature. The author’s analysis of lexical dialectisms, archaisms, and the hymn’s phonetic, syntactic and morphological features is consistent and convincing. The possibility that the hymn may be Byzantine or Church Slavonic in origin is rejected based on the specificity of the genre to which it belongs and which is modeled on Old Czech spiritual chants. The latter, in turn, are closest in form to Middle Upper German non-liturgical religious poems. For this reason, the author refers to the hymn as “the Polish answer to German poetry”.

Ilona Janyšková explores the etymology of Old Church Slavonic *ključьnъ* and Old Bohemian *ključný* ‘suitable, convenient’ (*Церковнославянское ključьnъ и старочешское kl’učny ‘artius’ с точки зрения этимологии*, p. 253–258). Suggesting that these words are derived from the Proto-Slavonic verb *\*kl’učiti (sę)* ‘will happen’, she proposes considering the semantic shift *\*will happen* → ‘to happen, to take place at a suitable moment’ → ‘suitable’, to which the Czech *přihodit se* ‘to happen’ may serve as a parallel: *přihodný* ‘approaching’. This root is also present in East Slavonic words: Old Russian *ключитися (klyuchitsya)* ‘to happen’, Russian *приключиться (priključitsya)*, ‘to happen’, *приключаться (priključatsya)* ‘to take place, to happen’, Ukrainian *ключитися (klyuchitisa)* ‘to take place, to happen’. The author believes that the Croatian Glagolitic *ključьnъ* is derived from Czech-Slavonic *ključьnъ*.

Petra Stankovska’s article entitled *Выражения для наименования избранных сосудов, их распределение и значение в старославянских и церковнославянских текстах в сравнении со значением в старочешском языке*

(*Expressions for the naming of selected vessels, their distribution and meaning in Old Slavonic and Church Slavonic texts in comparison with the meaning in Old Czech*, p. 259–270) compares lexemes denoting the names of vessels encountered in Macedonian and Croatian editions of Church Slavonic literary monuments with expressions from the Old Slavonic Dictionary. The article's focus is on the names of four vessels: 'basket', 'masters' bucket', 'cauldron for cooking meat', 'drinking bowl', all of which appear in the biblical book of Exodus to be found in the Croatian-Glagolic breviaries and missals from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The author extensively characterizes contexts in which such lexemes as *košijb*, *krabica*, *krabii*, *kovčegv*, *ošitka*, *s'sudb*, *súdec*, *osudie*, *čban'c*, *lon'cv*, *skudělnica*, *kotlv*, *hrnvcv*, *koryto*, *žlab* are used. In the Old Czech translation, these designata are referred to with entirely different words, which, in Stankovska's opinion, indicates its independence from Old Slavic.

The issue of Serbian Church Slavonic's influence on the style of charters and letters written in Old Serbian is discussed by Jasmina Grković-Major in *Serbian Church Slavonic influence on the Old Serbian language* (p. 271–280). The author proves that the phonological, phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactical borrowings discussed in the article had a normative character. Loan words became incorporated in the *invocatio*, *salutatio*, *intitulatio*, *oaths*, *sanctio*, and *datum*, giving these a generally solemn character. Only in exceptional cases and in special contexts were the words in question included in *dispositio*: with the names and titles of rulers and nobles, the names of Christian saints, the word "God", and with the solemn promises made in the charters issued by rulers and noblemen. At the same time, they served as a model for the creation of structural or semantic Old Slavonic neologisms, such as composites with *mnogo-*, *prě-* and *vse-*. Borrowed words denoting Christian concepts (*anděl* 'angel', *kaluđer* 'monk', *episkup* 'bishop' etc.) were fully incorporated into the Old Slavonic vocabulary. Finally, the situation of homogeneous diglossia led to the polysemy of a number of lexemes (such as *milost-*, *milosrbd-*, *svet-*), which, depending

on the context, were used in the meaning inherited from Proto-Slavic or Church Slavonic.

The purpose of Marija Vučković's article entitled *Compounds with the intensifying component 'three' in Serbian and Old Church Slavonic heritage* (p. 281–292) is to examine compound adjectives that are part of the (Old) Church Slavonic heritage in modern Serbian, and have the augmentative or intensifying component 'three', 'thrice', 'triple'. Focusing on the cultural meaning of number 3, the author considers the semantics of adjectives in modern Serbian and discusses words with intensifying component in Old Slavonic. According to the author, the status of Church Slavonic in the modern Serbian language is determined by a variety of factors: diglossia and, later, polyglossia between Church Slavonic, Serbian and Russian Church Slavonic, the orientation of modern literary language exclusively to the vernacular basis entailing the displacement of Church Slavonic words, etc. Old Slavonic, Serbian Church Slavonic, and Russian Church Slavonic lexemes are compared in the article with the help of about 20 words. The analysis of phonetic-phonological features makes it possible to determine the source of borrowing – Serbian or Russian Church Slavonic.

As is clearly indicated by the title of her article *Церковнославянское наследие в сербских диалектах: существительные среднего рода на -ије* (*Church Slavonic Heritage in Serbian Dialects: Neuter Nouns ending with -ije*, p. 293–306), Marta Bjeletić examines Church Slavonic heritage in Serbian dialects, paying special attention to nouns with the suffix *-ije*. Bjeletić is interested to investigate the etymological, formal, semantic, and functional aspects of the vocabulary under discussion. A Russian-Slavic or Serbian-Slavic origin of the examples examined in her article is borne out by the analysis of their etymological features, while their orthoepy shows adaptation to dialectal norms. Although most of the words analyzed by the author remain semantically stable, some are shown to have undergone semantic shifts or even significant semantic changes. For example, the word *наказаније* (*nakazaniye* 'punishment') was originally meant to convey the meaning of 'education, instruction, admonition'.

However, on dialectal grounds, under the influence of phonetically close, but etymologically different forms *наказа, наказан, унаказити* (*nakaza, nakazan, unakaziti*), it assumed the meaning of ‘ugly, monster’ (p. 302). Because of the nouns’ expressive coloring, their areas of functioning are limited: phraseological units *божје наказаније* (‘God’s punishment’), *скончаније света* (‘the end of the world’), *Исусово страданије* (‘Jesus’ suffering’), *тоаста на спасеније душе* (‘to the soul’s salvation’), *на здравље и спасеније* (‘to health and salvation’), and *цурса на усјеченије му било*.

A quotation from the article by Đorđić *Из историје нашег књижевног језика. Именице типа бденије* (1936) regarding the fate of Church Slavonic words in the formation of the new literary languages of Serbs and Ukrainians indicates that Slavic scholars continue to use the polysemous term *русский* (Russian), not always realizing it. Bjeletić writes: *The formation of these two literary languages meant at the same time their separation from the former literary languages, the Slavic-Serbian for Serbs and the Russian literary language for Ukrainians. Undoubtedly, such a striking feature of the church language as the ending -uje was clearly felt to be foreign and therefore was not included in either the new Serbian or Ukrainian languages* (p. 294). If one does not distinguish between *Ruthenian* and *Russian*, then the conclusions from the quoted passage can be very unexpected: does it mean that modern Ukrainian comes from *Russian* as the “former” language, or have the Russians assimilated the refined Ukrainian Church Slavonic along with the *-ue* (*-iye*) forms, as discussed in the above-mentioned work by H. Keipert?

Vladislav Knoll’s article entitled *The “Romanian Slavonic language” and lexicography* (p. 307–324) is an overview of the most important lexicographical works devoted to the Romanian form of Church Slavonic. The author opens his study with glosses and short dictionaries surviving in manuscript form, identifying F. Miklosic with his *Lexicon* (1862–1865) as a pioneer in the field. The author lists all the

appended sources published in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by P. Lavrov (1904), I. Bogdan (1922), G. Ghibănescu (1912), etc. A separate section details the conception, preparation, sources, and the publication of the *Romanian Slavonic Dictionary*.


An ambitious initiative undertaken during the Fourth Slavonic Congress held in Moscow in 1958 was to create an international Church Slavonic dictionary. Its first volume appeared in 1981 under the title *A Dictionary of the Romanian elements from Romanian-Slavonic documents 1374–1600* (DERS). Although the second volume was announced in 1983, it has not yet been published. Moldavian documents were studied by Ukrainian lexicographers as sources for the *Old Ukrainian Dictionary* (SSUM, Kyiv 1977–1978) and the *Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries* (SUM 16–17 c., Lviv 1994–2017). Particularly interesting is the section specifying the stages to be followed in creating a modern dictionary of Romanian Slavonic. According to the author one should proceed by classifying three groups of texts respectively: Middle Church Slavonic texts, Wallachian (and Transylvanian) documents and Moldavian documents. The author is right to point out that modern lexicography should be digital. Upon completion, his project may turn out to be very successful.

The article by Sandra Požar *(Old) Church Slavonic compounds in the Romanian language of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (p. 325–339) provides a detailed classification of linguistic composites. The classification draws on a dictionary found in the work by A. Oczko, *Rumuńska Słowiańszczyzna: Zapozyczenia południowosłowiańskie w języku rumuńskim w XVI i XVII w.* (Kraków, 2014). The article includes a short dictionary of these lexemes. The authoress specifies borrowings from Greek, which were mediated by (Old) Church Slavonic; composites identical (or almost identical) to their (Old) Church Slavonic models; morphologically adapted composites; and calques based on Church Slavonic models. By describing the compounds’ phonetic and

morphological changes and by demonstrating their Greek equivalents, the author opens up a possibility of making convincing generalizations about the quantitative ratio of different kinds of linguistic adaptations.

The abundance of the material and the variety of topics discussed in this volume make this publication an impressive contribution to the field of Slavic studies.

*Halyna Naienko (Łódź)\*\**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0485-5068>

---

\*\* University of Lodz, Faculty of Philology, Department of Slavic Philology; Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology, Department of the Ukrainian Language and Applied Linguistics



© by the author, licensee University of Lodz – Lodz University Press, Lodz, Poland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>)

---



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.13.10>

**RADU G. PĂUN, IVAN BILIARSKY, *Du combat pour la «juste foi» au péché politique. Pour une histoire du Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 2022 [= Schriften zur Balkanforschung, 4], pp. 415.***

The book is the effect of many years of research by both authors. It is based on Ivan Biliarsky's discovery of a previously unknown, unique Romanian synodicon text printed as part of the Triodion in 1700 (p. 9). The introduction (p. 15–29) is not very extensive but, thanks to a thoughtful way of laying out the emphasis, sufficient. Much could be said about the origins of the synodicon itself, as a type of liturgical text, and the celebration of Orthodox Sunday. The authors provide a handful of the essential information, referring the more inquisitive reader to the most important publications on the subject (p. 15–16). They devote a little more attention to the structure of the synodicon and its historical development (p. 16–25), as well as to the origins of the Romanian synodicon (p. 25–29). In the introduction, we find a preview of all the main topics taken up in the main part of the publication. Here the authors also explain their understanding of the concept of 'political orthodoxy', which foreshadows the 'political sin' of the title, and which is important for their interpretation of the meaning of the synodicon text. Theology acquires political significance when the authorities stand up for orthodoxy, seeing it as an important element of society's cultural and institutional identity (p. 20–23). The Russian synodicon, in which the opponents of the tsars were castigated on a par with heretics, is particularly significant in this context (p. 192–201).

The book is divided into three parts. The first one discusses the history of the orthodox synodicon in the Balkans (chapter 1, p. 33–62)

and among the Eastern Slavs (chapter 2, p. 63–95). The authors show the diversity of regional versions of this document. They have carried out a very extensive query of literature and sources. Perhaps the most interesting cited example of such 'regional variation' is the Cypriot synodicon (MS Panagia Kameriotissa no. 44), in which, in the polychronion, the Patriarch of Rome is mentioned first and only after him the one from Constantinople (the period in question is the thirties to forties of the fourteenth century, p. 34–35). The history of the synodicon after the fall of Constantinople is discussed, which naturally includes the subsequent printed versions, as well as the testimonies of the contemporaries about how the Feast of Orthodoxy was celebrated. The focus on the history of the text provides an opportunity to recall a number of interesting figures, including the Calvinist patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Loukaris. The celebration of the Feast of Orthodoxy brought more than one theological dispute to a head, which is discussed in this chapter.

Part two focuses on the history of the synodicon in Romanian countries (p. 99–201). In the context of the Buzău synodicon, the authors point out, among other things, that the synodicon was translated from Slavonic and not Greek (at the time, Dositheus of Jerusalem was the patriarch, who showed meticulous attention to dogmatic issues, and he frequently resided in Bucharest). The history of the Romanian synodicon also includes the history of the text's absence from the liturgical practice of the Romanian-speaking Church. It did not


appear until 1700 and was probably withdrawn from use fairly quickly.

The last part of the publication under review (p. 205–296) contains an edition of the first Romanian-language version of the synodicon originally printed in 1700 in Buzău as part of the Triodion (*Triodion ce să zice Tripeasneț*). The text is printed here in Latin transcription. It is equipped with an apparatus to facilitate understanding and interpretation of the text. Part Three opens with a chapter (p. 205–227) discussing the linguistic specificity of the monument. This is all the more valuable as the text is not easy to read and poses difficulties even for those skilled in old Romanian. The translator of the Buzău edition, as the authors of the study point out, did not fully understand the Orthodox Slavonic original. Being unfamiliar with theological topics, he repeatedly gave an unclear or inadequate translation. The next chapter (8, p. 229–234) details the principles of transliteration of the text, followed by a presentation of the content of the synodicon and its comparison with the Orthodox Slavonic and Greek versions (chapter 9, p. 233–234). The Orthodox Slavonic tradition is represented by the text printed in Lviv in 1664, and the Greek tradition by the manuscripts collected in Jean Gouillard's edition and the triodion printed in Venice in 1559. Pages 235–253 are taken up by the

text of the Romanian version of the synodicon. The footnotes below the line indicate extraneous grammatical and lexical forms, presumed explanations of unintelligible passages, biblical quotations with teachings from the Bucharest Bible, basic notes on persons mentioned in the text and more difficult-to-identify events. The personal footnotes are only three in this section, as the relevant prosopographical data on the persons condemned or commemorated are found in the next, 11<sup>th</sup> chapter (*Petit dictionnaire prosopographique*, p. 255–287). The decision to place the prosopographical notes separately was the right one; the extended footnotes below the line would have been less readable.

The book is enriched by annexes containing the Slavonic text of the synodicon (version from the Lviv Triodion, 1664, p. 299–313), the canon of Patriarch Methodius I in Romanian (p. 315–332), as well as the bibliography and index.

**Jan Mikołaj Wolski** (Łódź)\*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1052-9111>

\* University of Lodz, Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe, *Ceraneum*





## ABBREVIATIONS

A.H	Annales: histoire, sciences sociales
AA	Archäologischer Anzeiger
AA.ASH	Acta antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
AAd	Ars Adriatica
AAE	Anthropology and Archaeology of Eurasia
AAIt	Antichità altoadriatiche
AbI	Ab Imperio
ABSA	Annual of the British School at Athens, The
ABu	Archaeologia Bulgarica
Ac	Acme
ACi	Analecta Cisterciensia
Ade	Adeptus. Pismo Humanistów
AE	L'année épigraphique
AEMA	Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi
AFP	Archivum fratrum praedicatorum
AIs	Annales Islamologiques
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJCN	American Journal of Clinical Nutrition
AJPP	African Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ALIL	Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară
AlM	Al-Masāq
AMin	American Mineralogist
AMV	Acta Musei Varnensis
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , T. I, <i>Von den Anfängen Roms bis zum Ausgang der Republik</i> , Bd. I–IV, hrsg. H. TEMPORINI, New York–Berlin 1972–1973; T. II, <i>Principat</i> , Bd. I–XXXVII, hrsg. H. TEMPORINI, W. HAASE, New York–Berlin 1974–.
ANSMN	American Numismatic Society. Museum Notes

---

AOC	Archives de l'Orient chrétien
APHK	Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse
Arg	Argesis
ArM	Archeologia Medievale: cultura materiale, insediamenti, territorio
AS	Ancient Society
ASAAMIO	Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente
ATa	Antiquité tardive
AThe	Acta Theologica
Ats	Antaeus
AUAIC.L	Analele Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iași. Secțiunea Lingvistică
AUL.FH	Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica
B	Byzantion. Revue internationale des études byzantines
BAB	BABESCH. Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology, earlier Bulletin Antieke Beschaving
BAGB	Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé
Balc	Balcanica. Annual of the Institute for Balkan Studies
BAR	British Archaeological Reports. International Series
BArchiv	Byzantinisches Archiv
BASP	Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
BAus	Byzantina Australiensia
BB	Baugestalt und Bildfunktion. Texte zur Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte
BBA	Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten
BBE	Bibliothèque byzantine. Études
BBg	Byzantinobulgarica
BBGG	Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata
BBOS	Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies
BBRF	Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg
BBy	Bibliothèque de Byzantion
BCBW	Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World
BCCR	Brill's Companions to Classical Reception

BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BChAS	Bulletin of the Christian Archaeological Society
BCLSMF	Bulletin de la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, Académie royale de Belgique
BEC	Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes
BF	Byzantinische Forschungen. Internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik
BG.E	Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber. Ergänzungsband
BGA	Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum
BGSG	Bulletin of the Geological Society of Greece
BHR	Bulgarian Historical Review/Revue bulgare d'histoire
Bi	Bizantinistica
BISIME	Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie
BL	Byzantina Lodziensia
BME	Beyond Medieval Europe
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
BÖ	Bulgaren in Österreich
BOH	Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica
BOO	Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident
BPsy	Biological Psychiatry
Brit	Britannia: A Journal of Romano-British and Kindred Studies
BRP	Brill Research Perspectives in Ancient History
BSGR	Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BSIH	Brill's Studies in Intellectual History
Bsl	Byzantinoslavica. Revue internationale des études byzantines
BSNAF	Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France
BST	Bielańskie Studia Teologiczne
BTTK	Bellethen, Türk tarih kurumu
BVer	Biblia Vernacula
ByzNee	Byzantina Neerlandica
ByzS	Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift

---

C.RFLS	La Cultura. Rivista di Filosofia, Letteratura e Storia
CAI	Cuadernos de Arte e Iconografía
Can	Cancer
CAR	Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et Moyen âge
CBHB	<i>Corpus bruxellense historiae byzantinae</i>
CCEC	Cahiers du Centre d'Études Chypriotes
CChB	Current Chemical Biology
CCJB	Collection du Centre Jean Bérard
CCM	Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, Xe–XIIe siècles
CCS	Cambridge Classical Studies
CEMN	Collection d'études médiévales de Nice
CFan	Cahiers de Fanjeaux
CFHB	<i>Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae</i>
CFHB.SBe	<i>Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Berolinensis</i>
CFHB.SV	<i>Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Vindobonensis</i>
CFHB.SW	<i>Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae. Series Washingtonensis</i>
CGT	Cambridge Galen Translations
CiCS	Cincinnati Classical Studies
CICSEE	Cercetări de Istorie și Civilizație Sud-Est Europeană
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i> , Berlin 1862–
Cit	Cithara
CMG	Corpus Medicorum Graecorum
CMLat	Corpus Medicorum Latinorum
CMRS	Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique
CMT	Cambridge Medieval Textbooks
CollP	Colloquia Pontica
CPsyR	Clinical Psychology Review
CQ	Classical Quarterly
CRS	Cultural and Religious Studies
CS	Cristianesimo nella Storia. Ricerche storiche, esegetiche, teologiche
CSCA	California Studies in Classical Antiquity
CSCO	<i>Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium</i>

CSCT	Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition
CSEL	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae</i>
CSHSMC	Comparative Studies of Health Systems and Medical Care
CSIC	Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization
CSMLT	Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought
CSup	Convivium Supplementum
D.RLAR	Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion
Diad	Diadora. Journal of the Archaeological Museum in Zadar
Dim	Dimensões
DKAW.PhH	Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Classe
DOBSC	Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
DOT	Dumbarton Oaks Texts
E	Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum
EAI	Economic Alternatives
EBCAM	Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine
EBS	Edinburgh Byzantine Studies
ECEEMA	East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450
ECR	Eastern Churches Review
EGeo	Economic Geology
EJPCA	European Journal of Post-Classical Archaeologies
EME	Early Medieval Europe
EpiS	Epigraphische Studien
EPROLR	Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain
EstB	Estudios Bizantinos: Revista de la Sociedad Española de Bizantinística
EurJ	European Judaism. A Journal for the New Europe
F	Florilegium [Carleton University Annual Papers on Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages]
FA.REE	Figures de l'Art. Revue d'études esthétiques

FAS	Frankfurter archäologische Schriften
<i>FCh</i>	<i>Fontes Christiani</i> , Freiburg–Basel–Wien 1991–
FGHB	Fontes graeci historiae bulgaricae / Гръцки извори за българската история
FHis	Forum Historiae
<i>FLHB</i>	<i>Fontes latini historiae bulgaricae</i> / Латински извори за българската история
FOC	Folia Onomastica Croatica
Fol	Folklore
Fou	Foundations
FSM	Forschungen zu Spätantike und Mittelalter
GA	Graeco-Arabica
Gal	Galenos
GCS	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte</i>
GCS.NF	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte. Neue Folge
GEEB	La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin
Geo	Georgica
Geot	Geotimes
GMij	Geologie en Mijnbouw
GOTR	Greek Orthodox Theological Review
GRBS	Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
GSND	Glasnik Skopskog Naučnog Društva
HAM	Hortus Artium Medievalium: Journal of the International Research Center for Late Antiquity and Middle Ages
HCh-MR	History of Christian-Muslim Relations
Hel	Hellenica
Here	Heresis
HEROM. JHRMC	HEROM. Journal on Hellenistic and Roman Material Culture
Hi	Historia. Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte
Hi (Sao Paolo)	Historia
HIMA	Heresy and Inquisition in the Middle Ages

HLEUL.T	Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature. Texts
HOS.CA	Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 8, Central Asia
HOS.NME	Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1, The Near and Middle East
HRE	Historiography of Rome and its Empire
HSM	Histoire des sciences médicales
HSS	Harvard Slavic Studies
HTR	The Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
HUS	Harvard Ukrainian Studies
HWJ	History Workshop Journal
ICMR	Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
ICS	Illinois Classical Studies
IE	Impact of Empire
IFAB.BAH	Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth. Bibliothèque archéologique et historique
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae</i> , Berlin 1873–
IGR	International Geology Review
IHC	Islamic History and Civilization
IIED	İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi
IJCT	International Journal of the Classical Tradition
IJHSS	International Journal of Humanities and Social Science
IJLA	International Journal of Literature and Arts
IJPsy	International Journal of Psychophysiology
IJWPC	The International Journal of Whole Person Care
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones latinae selectae</i> , ed. H. DESSAU, Berlin 1892–1916
IoI	Idea of Iran
IPTS.TS	Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies
ISSJ	International Social Science Journal
Isti	Istina
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JACM	Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JAS.R	Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports



---

JBio	Journal of Biogeography
JCC	Jewish Culture and Contexts
JEaCS	Journal of Eastern Christian Studies
JEE	Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine
JEph	Journal of Ethnopharmacology
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JGA	Journal of Greek Archaeology
JGEx	Journal of Geochemical Exploration
JH	Jewish History
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JIH	Journal of Interdisciplinary History
JISA	Journal of the Institute for Sacred Architecture
JISOCM	Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Church Music
JMilH	Journal of Military History
JMMH	Journal of Medieval Military History
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNu	Journal of Nutrition
JÖAIW	Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JPsyR	Journal of Psychiatric Research
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSAl	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
JSJ.S	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
JWCI	Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes
KH	Kwartalnik Historyczny
KHA	Kölner Historische Abhandlungen
LAA	Late Antique Archaeology
Lar	Lares. Quadrimestrale di studi demoetnoantropologici
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LMEH	Library of Middle East History

LR	Limba Română
LSIS	Leiden Studies in Islam and Society
LSJ	H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, H.S. JONES et al., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9Oxford 1996
M	Meander. Rocznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego (1946–1996 Meander. Miesięcznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego; 1997–2004 Meander. Dwumiesięcznik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego; 2005–2012 Meander. Kwartalnik poświęcony kulturze świata starożytnego)
M&E	Management and Education
M&P	Mnhmeio & Periballon (Monument and Environment)
M.DLK	Meluzyna. Dawna Literatura i Kultura
MA	Le Moyen Âge. Revue trimestrelle d'histoire et de philologie
MAISSP	Mémoires de l'Académie Imperiale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg
MARo	Monumenta artis romanae
MBAH	Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte
Medi	Mediaevalia
MEMIW	Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World
Mer	Meridies. Estudios de Historia y Patrimonio de la Edad Media
MeW	Medieval Worlds
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
MGH.E	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae</i>
MGH.EK	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae Karolini aevi</i>
MGH.SRG	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae historicis separatim editi</i>
MGH.SRLI	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX</i>
MGH.SS	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores</i>
MicL	Micrologus' Library
MIDÉO	MIDÉO. Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales
Mil	Millennium. Jahrbuch zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. / Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.

---

Mil.S	Millennium-Studien. Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. / Studies in the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.
Min	Minerals
MIQOT	MIQOT. Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman
MJou	Medizinhistorisches Journal
MJSEA.B	Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Education and Art. Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Branch Blagoevgrad
<i>MLSDV</i>	<i>Monumenta Linguae Slavicae Dialecti Veteris</i>
MMe	The Medieval Mediterranean
MMed	Miscellanea Mediaevalia
MMS	Manchester Medieval Sources
Mole	Molecules
MOlt	Mitropolia Olteniei
MPMMA	Medieval and Post-Medieval Mediterranean Archaeology
MRGZ	Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums
MTh	Modern Theology
MVB	Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik
MWE	Mine Water and the Environment
NABHC	New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture
NAGÄDG	Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde
NC	The Numismatic Chronicle. The Journal of the Royal Society
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NEIS	The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys
NNum	Notae Numismaticae. Zapiski Numizmatyczne
NSA	Notizie degli scavi di antichità, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei
NW	The Northern World
O&M	Orient & Mediterranee
OccM	Occasional Monographs
OCh	Oriens Christianus. Hefte für die Kunde des christlichen Orients
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica

ODB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , ed. A. KAZHDAN et al., vol. I–III, New York–Oxford 1991
OHM	Oxford Historical Monographs
OJug	Onomastica Jugoslavica
OSB	Oxford Studies in Byzantium
OSHC	Onassis Series in Hellenic Culture
OSP	Oxford Slavonic Papers
PAPS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
Par	Parnassos
PBA	Proceedings of the British Academy
Pbg	Palaeobulgarica / Старобългаристика
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1857–1866
PH	Przegląd Historyczny
Phil	Philologus. Zeitschrift für antike Literatur und ihre Rezeption
PhJass	Philologica Jassyensia
Pho	Phoinix (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro)
Phoe	Phoenix. Journal of the Classical Association of Canada / Revue de la Société canadienne des études classiques
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series latina</i> , ed. J.-P. MIGNE, Paris 1844–1880
PLit	Pamiętnik Literacki
PLM	Planta Medica
PMZ	<i>Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit</i> , ed. R.-J. LILIE et al., Berlin 1999–
PO	<i>Patrologia orientalis</i>
Porph	Porphyra. La prima rivista online su Bisanzio
PP	Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies
PP.P	Past and Present Publications
PRS.B	Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences
PSS	Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne
PZH	Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne
RA	Revue archéologique

---

RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , ed. T. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1950–
RAH	Rocznik Antropologii Historii
RAug	Révue Augustinienne
RByz	Réalités Byzantines
RCT	Routledge Classical Translations
RE	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. G. WISSOWA, W. KROLL, Stuttgart 1894–1978
REA	Revue des études anciennes
REB	Revue des études byzantines
REG	Revue des études grecques
ReO	Roma e l'Oriente. Rivista criptoferratense per l'unione delle chiese
RH	Revue historique
Rh	Rhodopica
RHE	Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique
RIEB	Revue internationale des études balkaniques
RIM	Roman Imperial Biographies
RINSA	Rivista italiana di numismatica e scienze affini
RJAZU	Rad Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti
RKH	Rocznik Komisji Historycznoliterackiej
RMMM	Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée
RMP	Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
ROr	Rocznik Orientalistyczny
RRBS	Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies
RSla	Romanoslavica
RSRe	Recherches de science religieuse
RStI	Radovi staroslavenskog instituta
Ru	Ruthenica. Journal of East European Medieval History and Archaeology
RZav	Radovi Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru
S	Speculum. A Journal of Medieval Studies
S.JOLT	Sourozh. A Journal of Orthodox Life and Thought
SA	Slavia Antiqua

SAA	Studia Antiqua Australiensia
SAM	Studies in Ancient Medicine
SAMAI	SAMAI. Studia Antiquitatis et Medii Aevis incohantis
SAr	Sudhoffs Archiv. Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftsgeschichte (1929–1933 Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin; 1934–1965 Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften)
SB	Studia Balcanica
SBS	Studies in Byzantine Sigillography
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCBO	Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis / Oxford Classical Texts
SCer	Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Center for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-Eastern Europe
SChr	Saeculum Christianum
SCIA	Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
SCIV	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche
SCL	Studii și cercetări lingvistice
SCP	<i>Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae: Propylaeum ad Acta sanctorum Novembris</i> , ed. H. DELEHAYE, Brussels 1902
Scri	Scrinium
SeCer	Series Ceranea
SecS	Security Studies
SEER	The Slavonic and East European Review
SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> , ed. P. ROUSSEL et al., Leiden 1923–
SeGr	Serta Graeca. Beiträge zur Erforschung griechischer Texte
SeS	Scripta & e-Scripta
SEt	Studi Etruschi
SF	Südost-Forschungen
SFFBU	Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity
SGA	Scientia Graeco-Arabica
SGd	Studia Gdańskie

---

SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SKBAWM.HC	Sitzungsberichte der Königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München. Historische Classe
Slo	Slovo: Journal of Slavic Languages and Literatures
SLOc	Slavica Occitania
Slov	Slověne. International Journal of Slavic Studies
SLS	Sacred Literature Series
SMHC	Studies in Medieval History and Culture
SMIM	Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie
SMRT	Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions
SNT	Studia Nauk Teologicznych PAN
SO	Symbolae Osloenses. Auspiciis Societatis Graeco-Latine
SOec	Studia Oecumenica
SP	<i>Studia patristica</i>
SPBSP	Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies Publications
SPE	Studies in Political Economy
SPHK	Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Klasse
SPPGL	Symbolae Philologorum Posnaniensium Graecae et Latinae
SRel	Studia Religiosa
SSBP	Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana
SSH	Słupskie Studia Historyczne
SSL	Scando-Slavica
SSpi	Saecula spiritalia
STMAC	Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures
StPC	Studia Pontocausica
Str	Stromata. The Graduate Journal of Calvin Theological Seminary
SVTP	Studia in veteris testamenti pseudepigrapha
SW	Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne
Sys	Systasis
T	Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval Thought, History, and Religion

Tal	Talanta
TCH	Transformation of the Classical Heritage
Tech	Technai
TEM	Trace Elements in Medicine
TLS	The Times Literary Supplement
TM	Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et civilisation byzantines
ToxR	Toxicology Reports
TPAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TSB-N	Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neellenici
TTB	Translated Texts for Byzantinists
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TUGAL	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i> , Leipzig–Berlin 1882–
Turc	Turcologica
ULG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
V	Viator: Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies
VC.S	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
VerV	Verbum Vitae
VP	Vox Patrum. Antyk Chrześcijański
WBS	Wiener byzantinistische Studien
WP	World Politics
ŽA	Živa Antika
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins
ZNUJ.PH	Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ŽMT	Źródła Myśli Teologicznej



АДСВ	Античная древность и средние века
Аор	Археологически открития и разкопки
Архе	Археология
БВе	Богословский Вестник
БЕ	Български език
БЕг	Българска етнография
Биб	Библиотекар
Бт	Богословские труды
ВВ	Византийский временник
ВМгпу	Вестник Московского городского педагогического университета
ВПСТГУ. Витхи	Вестник Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета, V, Вопросы истории и теории христианского искусства
ГДА	Годишник на Духовната Академия „Свети Климент Охридски“
Гла	Гласник (Институт за национална историја, Македонија)
ГНм	Годишник на Народния музеј
ГСад	Гласник Српског археолошког друштва
ГСУ.БФ	Годишник на Софийския университет. Богословски факултет
ГСУ.ФИФ	Годишник на Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“. Философско-исторически факултет
ГЗФФ.С	Годишен зборник на Филозофскиот факултет (Скопје)
Даз	Донецкий археологичний збірник
ДК	Древности Кубани
ДХиае	Древности. Харьковский историко-археологический ежегодник
Епо	Епохи
ЕсLNet	Електронно списание LiterNet
Зам.С	Зборник на Археолошкиот музеј (Скопје)
ЗИК	Зборник историје књижевности. Одељење језика и књижевности
Зог	Зограф: часопис за средњовековну уметност
ЗРВИ	Зборник Радова Византолошког Института
ЗФФ.Б	Зборник Филозофског факултета (Београд)

---

ИАИ	Известия на Археологическия институт
ИАК	История и археология Крима
ИЗ	Исторически записки
ИИАИм	Интердисциплинарни изследвания на Археологическия институт и музей
ИИБИ	Известия на Института за Българска История
ИИБл	Известия на Института за българска литература
ИРАимк	Известия Российской Академии истории материальной культуры
ИРИМГ	Известия на Регионалния исторически музей – Габрово
ИРИМР	Известия на Регионален исторически музей – Русе
Исто	Историја / Journal of History
Кир	Кирилометодиевистика
КСИА	Краткие сообщения Института Археологи Академии наук СССР
МАИАСК	Материалы по археологии и истории античного и средневекового Крима
МАИАСТ	Материалы по археологии, истории и этнографии Таврии
Миа	Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР
МиаД	Материалы и исследования по археологии Дона
МиаСК	Материалы и исследования по археологии Северного Кавказа
Мин	Минало
Мпк	Музеи и паметници на културата
НиВ	Новый исторический Вестник
П.Ипк	Причерноморье. История, политика, культура
ПАрх	Поволжская археология
Пбф	Проблемы на българския фолклор
ПДП	Памятники древней письменности
ПИФК	Проблемы истории, филологии, культуры
САрх	Советская археология
Свос	Советское востоковедение
СЛ	Старобългарска литература

Слав	Славяноведение
Смак	Салтово-маяцька археологічна культура: проблеми та дослідження
Сп	Словенска писменост
Срэ	Славяно-русская этнография
ТГЭ	Труды Государственного Эрмитажа
ТОДЛ	Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы Института русской литературы Академии наук СССР
Ха	Хазарский альманах
Хс	Херсонесский сборник
ЦСту	Црквене студије
Чо	Человек и общество
Э	Эпохи
ЈФ	Јужнословенски филолог

\* \* \*

ВΚΜ	Βυζαντινὰ Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται
ΒΣυμ	Βυζαντινὰ Σύμμεικτα / Byzantina Symmeikta
ΓΠ	Γρηγόριος Παλαμᾶς
ΕΦ	Εκκλησιαστικός Φάρος
ΗΛΛ	Ἑλληνικά. Φιλολογικὸ, Ἱστορικὸ καὶ Λαογραφικὸ Περιοδικὸ Σύγγραμμα τῆς Ἑταιρείας Μακεδονικῶν Σπουδῶν
Κλη	Κληρονομία. Περιοδικὸν Δημοσίευμα τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἰδρύματος Πατερικῶν Μελετῶν
ΠΑΕ	Πρακτικά Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας
ΠΒ	Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά

\* \* \*

თსუმ	თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის შრომები
მიმ	მიმოძხილველი
სს	საქართველოს სიძველენი

## GUIDELINES FOR THE AUTHORS

**All manuscripts submitted to “Studia Ceranea” must be prepared according to the journal’s guidelines.**

### 1. Sources should be cited as follows:

*Theophanis Chronographia*, AM 5946, rec. C. DE BOOR, vol. I, Lipsiae 1883 (cetera: THEOPHANES), p. 108, 5–7.

THEOPHANES, AM 5948, p. 109, 22–24.

EUNAPIUS, *Testimonia*, I, 1, 19–20, [in:] *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. II, ed. et trans. R.C. BLOCKLEY, Liverpool 1983 (cetera: EUNAPIUS), p. 13–14.

Book numbers should be given in Roman numerals. Sources with singular structure are cited only in Arabic numerals. Pages are to be cited only when verses are counted on every page separately.

**If the same source is cited for a second (or further) time, an abbreviated version of the title (signalized in the first use with the word ‘cetera:’), and not ‘*ibidem*’, should be used, e.g.:**

<sup>25</sup> ZONARAS, XV, 13, 11.

<sup>26</sup> ZONARAS, XV, 13, 19–22.

### 2. Books by modern authors should be referenced as follows:

<sup>21</sup> M. ANGOLD, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204–1261*, Oxford 1975, p. 126.

<sup>22</sup> И. ИЛИЕВ, *Св. Климент Охридски. Живот и дело*, Пловдив 2010, p. 142.

**If the same work is cited for a second (or further) time, an abbreviated version of the title (consisting of the first word(s) of the title followed by an ellipsis) should be used, e.g.:**

<sup>23</sup> G. OSTROGORSKI, *Geschichte...*, p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> A. VAN MILLINGEN, *Byzantine Constantinople...*, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> G. OSTROGORSKI, *Geschichte...*, p. 72.

<sup>26</sup> A. VAN MILLINGEN, *Byzantine Churches...*, p. 44.

### 3. Articles and papers should be mentioned in the notes as:

L.W. BARNARD, *The Emperor Cult and the Origins of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, B 43, 1973, p. 11–29.

P. GAUTIER, *Le typikon du sebaste Grégoire Pakourianos*, REB 42, 1984, p. 5–145.

In footnotes, names of journals should be used exclusively in their abbreviated versions. The complete list of abbreviations is available at the “Studia Ceranea” website: [https://czasopisma.uni.lodz.pl/sceranea/\\_instrukcja-redakcyjna\\_](https://czasopisma.uni.lodz.pl/sceranea/_instrukcja-redakcyjna_), unabbreviated and fully Romanized references should be used in the final bibliography (see below).

Numbers of fascicles are cited only if pages are counted separately for every volume within a single year.

### 4. Articles in Festschrifts, collections of studies etc. should be cited as follow:

M. WHITBY, *A New Image for a New Age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius*, [in:] *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East. Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*, ed. E. DĄBROWA, Cracow 1994, p. 197–225.

Г. ТОДОРОВ, *Св. Княз Борис и митът за мнимото: избиване на 52 болярски рода*, [in:] *Християнската култура в средновековна България. Материали от национална научна конференция, Шумен 2–4 май 2007 година по случай 1100 години от смъртта на св. Княз Борис-Михаил (ок. 835–907 г.)*, ed. П. ГЕОРГИЕВ, Велико Търново 2008, p. 23.

### 5. Examples of notes referring to webpages or sources available online:

*Ghewond’s History*, 10, trans. R. BEDROSIAN, p. 30–31, [www.rbedrosian.com/ghew3.htm](http://www.rbedrosian.com/ghew3.htm) [20 VII 2011].

[www.ancientrome.org/history.html](http://www.ancientrome.org/history.html) [20 VII 2011].

### 6. Reviews:

P. СПЕСК, [rec.:] *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History / Nicephori patriarchae Constantinopolitani Breviarium Historicum...* – BZ 83, 1990, p. 471.

**Footnote numbers should be placed before punctuation marks.**

cetera:	<i>ibidem</i> (note: only used for secondary literature)	rec. [here: <i>recensuit</i> / <i>recognovit</i> ]
cf.	IDEM/EADEM	[rec.:] [here: <i>recensio</i> ]
col. [here: <i>columna</i> ]	IDEM/EADEM	s.a. [here: <i>sine anno</i> ]
coll. [here: <i>collegit</i> ]	IDEM/IDEM/EADEM	s.l. [here: <i>sine loco</i> ]
e.g.	[in:]	sel. [here: <i>selegit</i> ]
ed.	<i>l. cit.</i>	sq, sqq
et al.	p. [here: <i>pagina</i> ]	trans.
etc.	<i>passim</i>	vol.

**In all footnotes, only the conventional abbreviated Latin phrases should be used for referencing literature both in the Latin and in the Cyrillic alphabet.**

**These are:**

**References to the Bible are also indicated using the standard Latin abbreviations:**

Gn Ex Lv Nm Dt Ios Idc Rt 1Sam 2Sam 1Reg 2Reg 1Par 2Par Esd Ne Tb Idt Est Job Ps Prv Eccle Ct Sap Eccli Is Ier Lam Bar Ez Dn Os Il Am Abd Ion Mich Nah Hab Soph Ag Zach Mal 1Mac 2Mac

Mt Mc Lc Io Act Rom 1Cor 2Cor Gal Eph Phil Col 1Thess 2Thess 1Tim 2Tim Tit Philm Heb Iac 1Pe 2Pe 1Io 2Io 3Io Ids Apc

**Greek and Latin terms are either given in the original Greek or Latin version, in the nominative, without italics (a1), or transliterated (a2) – italicized, with accentuation (Greek only):**

(a.1.) φρούριον, ιατροσοφιστής

(a.2.) *ius intercedendi, hálme, asfáragos, proskýnesis*

**Classical names and surnames should preferably be Anglicised or at least Latinised. Likewise, names of medieval European monarchs, as well as geographical names, should preferably be rendered in their conventional English versions.**

**The Editorial Board kindly asks authors to send texts written in English.**

**Texts should be submitted in font size 12 (footnotes: 10), with 1.5 line spacing.**

Authors are advised to use the font Minion Pro. For quotations in Greek, Minion Pro is recommended, for early Slavonic – Cyrillica Bulgarian 10 Unicode, for Arabic, Georgian and Armenian – the broadest version of Times New Roman, for Ethiopian – Nyala.

Greek, Slavonic, Arabic, Georgian, Armenian, Syriac and Ethiopian citations should not be italicized.

Articles should be sent in .doc and .pdf format to the e-mail address of the Editorial Board (s.ceranea@uni.lodz.pl) or submit on Open Journal Systems:

<https://czasopisma.uni.lodz.pl/sceranea/user/register>

Pictures should be sent in .bmp or .jpeg (.jpg) format, with a minimal resolution of 300 dpi; CMYK colour model is highly recommended. Captions should be attached as a separate .doc file; they must contain the information concerning the source and the copyright as well as the date when the picture was taken. Authors are responsible for the acquiring and possession of reproduction permissions with regard to the pictures used.

An abstract written in English is obligatory. It should not exceed the length of half a standard page (font size: 10, line spacing: 1).

The text should be followed by keywords and a final bibliography divided into primary sources and secondary literature. The final bibliography should be fully Romanised and alphabetised accordingly. The ‘scientific’ Romanisation of Cyrillic should be strictly adhered to in the final bibliography; the transliteration table is provided below:

(O)CS: (Old) Church Slavic, **Rus.:** Russian, **Blr.:** Belarusian, **Ukr.:** Ukrainian, **Bulg.:** Bulgarian, **Mac.:** Macedonian. Note: for Serbian, the official Serbian Latin script should be used.

Cyr.	(O)CS	Rus.	Blr.	Ukr.	Bulg.	Mac.
a	a	a	a	a	a	a
б	b	b	b	b	b	b
В	v	v	v	v	v	v
г	g	g	h	h	g	g

Cyr.	(O)CS	Rus.	Blr.	Ukr.	Bulg.	Mac.
ґ			(g)	g		
д	d	d	d	d	d	d
ѓ						ѓ
е		e	e	e	e	e
ӗ		ӗ	ӗ			
є	e			je		
ж	ž	ž	ž	ž	ž	ž
з	z	z	z	z	z	z
ѕ	dz					dz
и	i	i		y	i	i
і	i	(i)	i	i		
ї	i			ї		
й		j	j	j	j	
ј						j
к	k	k	k	k	k	k
л	l	l	l	l	l	l
љ						lj
м	m	m	m	m	m	m
н	n	n	n	n	n	n
њ						nj
о	o	o	o	o	o	o
п	p	p	p	p	p	p
р	r	r	r	r	r	r
с	s	s	s	s	s	s
т	t	t	t	t	t	t
ќ						ќ
ћ	ѓ					
у	u	u	u	u	u	u



Cyr.	(O)CS	Rus.	Blr.	Ukr.	Bulg.	Mac.
ÿ			ÿ			
ф	f	f	f	f	f	f
х	ch	ch	ch	ch	h	h
ц	c	c	c	c	c	c
ч	č	č	č	č	č	č
џ						dž
ш	š	š	š	š	š	š
щ	št	šč		šč	št	
ѣ	ѣ	"			ǎ	
ы	y	y	y			
ь	ь	'	'	'	j	
ѧ	ě	(ě)	(ě)	(ě)	(ě)	
э		è	è			
ю	ju	ju	ju	ju	ju	
я		ja	ja	ja	ja	
‘			(omit)	(omit)		‘
ω	o					
Ϸ	ę					
Ϸ	ję					
Ϸ	q					
Ϸ	jq					
ǧ	ks					
ψ	ps					
ϥ	th					
υ	ü					
Ϸ	je					
Ϸ	ja					



Initiating Editor  
Sylvia Mosińska

Technical Correction  
Elżbieta Rzymkowska

© Copyright by Authors, Łódź 2023  
© Copyright for this edition by Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 2023

Printed directly from camera-ready materials provided to the Lodz University Press

Published by Lodz University Press  
First Edition. W.11192.23.0.C  
Printing sheets 52.5

Lodz University Press  
90-237 Łódź, 34A Matejki St.  
[www.wydawnictwo.uni.lodz.pl](http://www.wydawnictwo.uni.lodz.pl)  
e-mail: [ksiegarnia@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:ksiegarnia@uni.lodz.pl)  
tel. +48 42 635 55 77