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in Historiography and Literature*

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Voyages and Travelogues from  
Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages

*Edited by*

*Boris Stojkovski*

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Voyages and Travel Accounts in Historiography and Literature. Voyages and Travelogues from Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages

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## Introduction

“Travelling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.” These eternal words of the famous Muslim-Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta show the full meaning of undertaking voyages and recording them. Throughout centuries, travelling has inspired people to comment on the places they have seen and the experiences they went through. The means of transport also played a prominent role in accomplishing travels. There were numerous types of voyages, such as pilgrimages, for instance, but also conquests, as well as different kinds of travels prompted by spiritual or intellectual thirst.

This two-volume edition is a collection of different aspects of voyages, travelogues and perceptions of travelling in history, literature and culture in the broadest sense. The papers in both volumes include historical travel information on Central and South-Eastern Europe, the Islamic world, Byzantium, Portugal, but also China, from ancient times until the twentieth century. This complex volume is the result of a scientific project developed by a group of professors and researchers at the Department of History and the Department of Serbian Literature from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Novi Sad, together with the Faculty *Lazar Vrkatić* of the Union University of Novi Sad.

The idea was supported by the Provincial Secretariat for Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The result was a short-term (one year) scientific project, no. 142-451-2347/2019-02, titled *The Development of the Travel Culture and Travel Accounts in Serbian Historiography and Culture*. On behalf of the project team, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the secretary Prof. Dr. Zoran Milošević and his associates who recognized the scientific potential of this topic and this work and financially supported the project and our research, which resulted in this book.

The first volume is the result of a dedicated long-term research done by the members of the project team and many colleagues worldwide. Because Serbia and the Serbs, including Serbian lands throughout history, are in the focus of the project research, the results of several project team members and contributors from other institutions are dealing specifically with this main topic. Thus, these contributions deal with the territory of present-day Serbia and adjacent lands from the Roman times until the end of the Middle Ages. The civilizational reach of the volume is fascinating, with papers covering medieval Persian culture, but also Byzantine commonwealth, South-Eastern Europe, France and the Islamic world, while contextualizing all this information within the frame of the main topic of the project.

When preparing this edited collection, the project team decided to expand its topic beyond Serbia and Serbian historiographical and literary production. Having in mind that the project contributions have already expanded on the micro-historical Serbian topic in the European and even in wider contexts, the logical sequence of events was to invite different scholars from Serbia and abroad to contribute. The response was unexpectedly positive and we received papers on medieval Persia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Portugal, the Arabic world, but also papers discussing the the Byzantine Empire and medieval Western Europe (including an interdisciplinary musicological approach on travels to Byzantium). Mutual ties between parts of the medieval world are thoroughly examined in this volume, and by analyzing these papers one can see that ancient and medieval travelling was a cross-cultural phenomenon, which started already with the *father of history* Herodotus and ended during the sixteenth century. Reflexions of this conclusion can be seen also on the example of medieval Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The contributors of this volume originate from various Serbian scholarly institutions: the Faculty of Philosophy from the University of Novi Sad, as well as the Institute of History and Serbian Academy of Sciences of Belgrade. The international contributors to the volume belong to prominent scientific institutions such as Harvard University and its Art Museum, University Marseille-Aix, IEM – Institute of Medieval Studies (NOVA FCSH), the University of Crete and the South-West University “Neofit Rilski” of Blagoevgrad. Their papers cover travelogues and voyages in historical, literary, musicological and cultural contexts, from Antiquity to the medieval epoch, examining sources,



discovering new information, and generally largely contributing to and revising modern scholarship.

This first volume is dedicated to ancient and medieval voyages and travel accounts. It part covers the Balkans, Europe, the Islamic world and the Mediterranean and gives an interdisciplinary academic insight into the early historical phenomenon of travelling. Voyages in these papers are studied from the perspectives of historical sources, arts, musicology, manuscript tradition and medieval politics.

Having the honour of editing this volume, I am obliged to express my most sincere gratitude to my *Alma mater* Faculty of Philosophy, the institution in which the project on travels was conceived, but also a co-publisher of this volume. I would particularly like to thank the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Prof. Dr. Ivana Živančević-Sekeruš for her continuous institutional help in spreading knowledge and science. The distinguished publishing house in the field of history and medieval studies in particular, Trivent Publishing from Budapest gladly accepted to be the co-publisher of the volume. I sincerely thank them for undertaking this scholarly venture and for providing assistance and support and making this volume accessible worldwide.

Dr. Jagoda Topalov, assistant professor at the Department of English Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad translated the papers of the project members and invested considerable effort in proof-reading and copyediting. Her hard work is very much appreciated. Since the policy is that reviewers remain anonymous, they will not be named, but I thank them all for their generous help and for the *sine ira et studio* reviews of the papers. I am also grateful to my dear colleague Nebojša Kartalija on technical assistance on the editing of this volume.

The title page of both volumes is taken from the manuscript of the Serbian medieval writer Theodosius and his *Life of Saint Sava*, where Sava's voyage to the Holy Land is described. It is kept in the National Library of Serbia and I thank Dr. Vladan Trijić, the head of the Archeographic Department of the National Library of Serbia and his associate Dr. Ljiljana Puzović for their kind help and for providing us permission to use this wonderful piece of Serbian medieval hagiography in the travel context.

Finally, I thank all of the authors for their valuable contributions. This volume shows that joint cooperation and the support of state organs, parent institutions, a distinguished publishing house, and international

academia can result in a scholarly volume which will be impossible to avoid in the future when treating any topic connected to voyages and travelogues.

*Associate Professor Boris Stojković, PhD  
Faculty of Philosophy University of Novi Sad*

*Novi Sad, Pentecost 2020*

# Herodotus as a Travel Writer

Svetozar Boškov<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

The travels and travel experiences of ancient authors played a crucial role in many ancient texts, yet a clearly defined genre of travel writing did not exist at that time. Even though travelogues were not a characteristic literary form in antiquity, we can find descriptions among ancient writers that can be identified as travelogues with all their peculiarities. A comprehensive modern research that would deal with this topic has still not been conducted, and it was only in the last decade that researchers began to deal with this issue and look for the peculiarities of travelogues in the works of ancient authors.

Traveling in antiquity was considered an essential source of knowledge and wisdom, and was associated with the ideals of Greek culture and education.<sup>2</sup> The traveller could learn on his travels by seeing and visiting different places and civilizations, such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, or India. These civilizations particularly attracted Greeks because they were aware that these civilizations were older than they were, which gave them the possibility to learn from them. On the other hand, group travel was also the result of trade or war, and the individuals who were part of such expeditions described landscapes, curious customs, and other particularities that had until then been unknown to the Greeks. Ancient texts are not particularly dedicated to landscape descriptions and personal experiences, but in them, we can find passages that present old known and unknown peoples, the appearance of ancient cities or smaller settlements, as well as the characteristics of their population, including the descriptions of their customs and habits.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Novi Sad, Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> M. Pretzler, "Greek Intellectuals on the Move: Travel and Paideia in the Roman Empire," in *Travel, geography and culture in ancient Greece, Egypt and the Near East*, ed. Colin Adams and Jim Roy (Oakville: David Brown Books, 2007), 123-138.

Should we classify the ancient works that contain data which can be identified as belonging to the genre of the travelogue, the most accurate would be the division set by M. Pretzler,<sup>3</sup> who argues that such writings, in the widest sense, can be divided into two categories: 1. reports on certain travels and 2. texts that present details about places and cultures without a special discussion of the travel process itself.<sup>4</sup> If we accept this categorization, then we can return to the very beginning of Greek literature and look for traces of such information with Homer. The most relevant such data is the so-called “list of ships” found in the *Iliad*, which provides a list of Greek cities and tribes in a roughly geographical order.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Homer also provided descriptions of certain cities such as Knossos, Troy, and others, where we can also recognize information that can be divided according to Pretzler’s division.

If we focus on the ancient peoples, especially the Greeks, the easiest and most common way to travel was by sea.<sup>6</sup> In Greek history, the Mediterranean Sea was, for the most part, the centre of political and cultural events. On the other hand, the land was travelled on foot or by horseback. Those who were more affluent could also use carriages. The use of carriages is important because those engaged in writing and recording carried numerous utensils, including a large number of books. Possibly, slaves helped them during their travels.<sup>7</sup> As for accommodation, it came in various forms, but travellers preferred private accommodation, especially if they planned to stay somewhat longer in one place.<sup>8</sup>

## II. Travelogues in Antiquity

Numerous ancient texts bear the characteristics of travelogues. The first travelogues can be traced back to the earliest geographical texts created from the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries BC,

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3 M. Pretzler, “Travel and Travel Writing,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, Phirose Vasunia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 357.

4 Ibid.

5 Homer. *Iliad*, Volume I: Books 1-12, trans. A. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), Il. 2 484-785. (= Hom. *Il*)

6 L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 104.

7 M. Pretzler, “Turning Travel into Text: Pausanias at Work,” *Greece and Rome* 51:2 (2004): 202.

8 L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, 87-90 and 197-209.

which consisted of sailors' diaries, describing the delineation of coasts including important places and landmarks, and listing the steps and distances of and between land routes. The most important representatives of the travelogue genre are Hecataeus of Miletus who wrote the *Description of the Land. A Travelogue around the Known World* and Scylax of Caryanda who accompanied the Persian King Darius I on a war campaign, probably on the stretch of road from the Indus to the Arabian Peninsula. This type of literature was prevalent at that time, most likely because it was necessary for the navigation of the Mediterranean Sea, but also because of the active colonization carried out by the Greeks at that time. This was a common occurrence in all areas of the Mediterranean confirmed by Euthymenus of Massalia, who described the journey from Massalia to the African coast, and Hanno of Carthage, who wrote *The Journey of Hanno, the King of Carthage* in the first half of the fifth century BC. These works are significant both for their descriptions, and for their authors' interests in the customs of the neighbouring peoples.<sup>9</sup> Nearchus from Crete, Alexander's military leader who wrote about the peoples along the Indian and Persian coasts, should also be mentioned here.<sup>10</sup> Later geographers, such as Strabo, continued to rely on this data, but the work of geographers could already include information about local landscapes, history, and culture of certain places,<sup>11</sup> which already shows that ancient writers received such information exclusively on their travels. However, if we are to discuss works that are very similar to travelogues in antiquity, then the literary form of a *periegesis*, meaning "to lead around and show; (of law) to inspect on the spot," best corresponds to travelogues. Periegeses, i.e. descriptions or guides, reached their current form only in the early Hellenistic period. Above all others, they

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9 O. Luhtar, M. Šašel Kos, N. Grošelj, G. Pobežin, *Povest istorijske misli. Od Homera do početka 21. veka. Delo I* [A history of historical thought. From Homer to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Part I] (Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad: Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, 2013), 39-49.

10 The writings of all mentioned authors, Hecataeus of Miletus, Scylax of Caryanda, Euthymenus of Massalia, Hanno of Carthage and Nearchus from Crete, are only known indirectly in fragments in other Greek and Roman authors. See more: Stephanic West, "Hecataeus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 649; Eric Herbert Warmington, Jean-François Salles, "Scylax," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1335; Nicholas Purcell, "Hanno," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 645; Albert Brian Bosworth, "Nearchus," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1004.

11 M. Pretzler, *Travel and Travel Writing*, 357.

developed on the basis of the description of logographers, the aforementioned Hecataeus of Miletus and his younger contemporary, Herodotus.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most important representatives of periegesic writers was Pausanias. In his opus of ten books, he described Attica, Corinth, Laconia, Messenia, Elis, Achaia, Arcadia, Boeotia and Phocis. He wrote periegeses, i.e. works describing cities, countries, and their landmarks. He was not the first author to write a periegesic, but the concept of his work is such that it can also be considered a travelogue, because, in order to complete his work, Pausanias travelled around Hellas with the purpose of making his writing appealing to the future reader. In order to achieve this, he describes certain places, monuments and characteristic buildings, but in the descriptions, he also inserts many stories, historical data, myths, short stories and various biographies.<sup>13</sup> We know little about Pausanias' origins. In his work, we can recognize indications that he was originally from Lydia, from the city of Magnesia, the present-day Manisa, and that he was from a wealthy social class and a supporter of the monarchical system with a good ruler at the head of the state.<sup>14</sup> It is unclear what his main motives were for writing *The Description of Hellas*, but the first book offers several passages outlining his goals and methods.<sup>15</sup>

Oral tradition is one of his main sources and he tries to record the oral tradition that was not previously written down. Here it is possible to apply another classification put forth by M. Pretzler according to which one group of scholars classifies Pausanias' periegeses as a kind of local, oral tradition without exploring the nature and origin of the sources, while the other group focuses on identifying literary sources for the data used by Pausanias.<sup>16</sup> This division is made only to indicate the differences in the approach to the study of Pausanias' work, yet it is important for our work because we see that the oral tradition is an important source

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12 Lj. Vulićević, "O periegesama i o Pausaniji periegeti" [On Pausanias and his Periegeses], in Pausanija, *Opis Helade, knj. I*, ed. M. Flašar (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1994), 8.

13 M. Đurić, *Istorija helenske književnosti* [The History of Hellenic literature] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1996), 739.

14 Lj. Vulićević, "O periegesama i o Pausaniji periegeti," 12-13; A. Spawforth, "Pausanias," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 1097.

15 M. Pretzler, "Pausanias and Oral Tradition," *The Classical Quarterly* 55:1 (2005): 235.

16 Ibid.

for the formation of the travelogue as a literary genre dominated by the testimony of the author and his oral reporters about historical events, or myths and legends.

If we take a closer look at Pausanias' work, it can be said that we are dealing with an experienced traveller who is well prepared and who may also bring history books along on his travels in order to be better equipped to write. This can be concluded from the fact that Pausanias very often seeks a historical framework for what he writes about, because although autopsy is his guiding principle, it still does not prevent him from giving exhaustive reports that he places in the historical framework whenever possible.<sup>17</sup> These few examples show that among the works of ancient writers we can find the characteristics of travelogues, although their basic function is not to be classical travelogues that we are accustomed to from some later times.

### III. Characteristics of Herodotus' work

Looking for the characteristics of travelogues among ancient writers, our attention is focused on Herodotus. In describing the Greco-Persian wars he wrote the first true historiographical work, becoming the first true historiographer in the European tradition. Later, he was named the father of history.<sup>18</sup> Although this is a historical work, it contains many characteristics of a travelogue, since, in order to write his work, Herodotus travelled and recorded what he saw, heard from others and studied, i.e. learned through inquiry.<sup>19</sup> We can see this in many of his first-person singular statements when he wants to emphasize the manner in which he collects information or when he emphasizes success or failure in trying to attain that information.<sup>20</sup>

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17 M. Pretzler, "Turning Travel into Text: Pausanias at Work," 207-211.

18 He was referred to as the father of history (*...apud Herodotum patrem historiae*) by Cicero in *On the Laws* (*De Legibus*) (Cic. Leg. I 1, 5).

19 Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, Volume I: Books 1-2, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), Hdt. II 99 (= Hdt); K. Maricki Gadanski, *Grčka istorija. Deo I* [Greek History. Part I] (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, 1992), 72; O. Luhtar, M. Šašel Kos, N. Grošelj, G. Pobežin, *Povest istorijske misli. Od Homera do početka 21. veka. Deo I*, 56; M. Đurić, *Istorija belenske književnosti*, 399.

20 N. Luraghi, "Meta-historie: Method and Genre in the Histories," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, eds. Carolyn Dewald, John Marincola (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 76.

His intention was to describe Persia, a powerful state composed of many conquered peoples, because he wanted to glorify the great victory of a small democratic polis over a huge state headed by a king and dominated by Eastern despotism. Here we see that he exhibits an antagonism between East and West, between Europe and Asia, and ultimately, an antagonism between Hellenes and the barbarians.<sup>21</sup> For that purpose, he collected data by interviewing, and as the most appropriate source he considered the local population of various profiles, with the proviso that he always gave priority to priests, whom he considered the most educated members of the community, especially when it came to describing historical events.<sup>22</sup>

Herodotus' diverse style and his way of collecting data reveals another important fact for understanding his work as a travelogue. When describing cities, the most famous cities such as Babylon, Persepolis or Athens occupy a central place, but he pays equal attention to other smaller cities, i.e. poleis. It is in the attention he pays to smaller cities that we recognize his intention to explore their history in the same manner that he does with large cities,<sup>23</sup> which, in turn, exhibits his belief that explaining and discovering the history of these smaller communities can achieve the same effect as explaining and discovering larger communities, all with the aim of discovering historical truths. His approach to the places he visits is inclusive and he pays equal attention to small and large cities, approaching them without bias with respect to the reports he receives from its inhabitants or with already formed attitudes about its inhabitants.<sup>24</sup> Narration of events and the cause of events that are guided by certain goals, give the expected result in the interpretation of history. Herodotus developed this concept so firmly that by describing smaller units, he also developed some other literary genres that can without a doubt be highlighted among his works as a separate unit, the so-called stories. The descriptions of these smaller units are a real example of travelogues, since, in most cases, they contained the appearance of the cities, the founding of the city and the oral tradition

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21 M. Đurić, *Istorija belenske književnosti*, 395.

22 O. Luhtar, M. Šašel Kos, N. Grošelj, G. Pobežin, *Povest istorijske misli. Od Homera do početka 21. veka. Deo I*, 56.

23 Hdt. I 5.

24 R. Friedman, "Location and dislocation in Herodotus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 166.



for which the city is best known in history. This should not be surprising, because it was one of the main ways in which logographers communicated their data, but Herodotus differs from them in that he critically observed historical events.

In addition to the descriptions of cities and monuments that he saw on his travels, an important characteristic of Herodotus' work are also oral narratives. He did not need to invent stories in his work, because the oral tradition gave him a huge amount of material containing unwritten stories. Many authors have interpreted Herodotus' written oral tradition in different ways and sought the probable sources for these stories. It is not certain who his sources were and we can only rely on the information given to us by Herodotus in his work.<sup>25</sup> Based on this information, the main source is his conversations with priests, whom he trusted as the most educated people of that time. The consequence of recording oral tradition and gathering information is the development of Herodotus' interesting style of recording data. Namely, he develops a specific style of citing chronology. He follows the event he describes from the beginning to the end of that event no matter how long it lasts. However, he very often goes beyond the framework of that story when he mentions a person or a concept that is partially related to that story, and then follows that concept from the beginning to the end, returning later to the original story. The aim of this procedure is for the readers to conjure up as clear a visual effect as possible from many different aspects. A good example is when he describes the interest of Croesus, king of Persia, with respect to which polis is the most powerful among the Hellenes. Herodotus writes what Croesus learned about the Athenians and Spartans and what their main characteristics and abilities were, but there are several other descriptions in that story that could be separated as distinct stories, such as the story of how Pisistratus came to power in Athens, or how Lycurgus wrote the constitution in Sparta.<sup>26</sup>

It has already been mentioned that some earlier writers influenced Herodotus, but we should also not ignore the role of Homer, especially since, in the first four books, Herodotus, just like Odysseus, visited the cities of many peoples and got to know their mentality,<sup>27</sup> and then in the

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25 A. Griffiths, "Stories and storytelling in the *Histories*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 132-135.

26 Hdt. I 56-68.

27 Odiseja 1, 3 red.

following books he uses Homer's style from the *Iliad* and recounts events celebrating the heroes of a great conflict.<sup>28</sup> It is these first four books that offer a wealth of information about peoples who were still unknown to the Greeks, and whose countries Herodotus visited on his travels. The fact that Herodotus very often refers to Homer in his writing attests to Homer's influence on Herodotus' style.<sup>29</sup>

Data collection by means of observation, interviews and records of oral traditions is a good example of Herodotus' manner of presenting historical truth in order to more accurately describe and create a clearer picture of what he wants to present to the readers.

#### **IV. Excerpts of travelogues by Herodotus**

Herodotus is a curious Ionian traveller who saw and described many landscapes and cities on his travels from Media and Persia to southern Italy, from Olbia to Elephantine, giving reports about the miraculous Russian steppes, but also the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia and India.<sup>30</sup> We will present in this paper only certain passages from his *Histories* which clearly show that there are passages that can be recognized and which, excluded from his work, could represent independent stories or narratives and, in their essence, could be classified as travelogues. Most of these stories containing the characteristics of travelogues are related to the description of Persia. It is important to state that Herodotus gives more, or at least as much space, to Persia as to Greece. This is best seen from his descriptions of events in the lives of important figures in the history of Persia. We learn much more about Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes than, for instance, about Themistocles or Leonidas. Similarly, Herodotus writes more extensively about Babylon or Egypt in general, than he writes about the Greek poleis of Athens and Sparta.<sup>31</sup> To some extent, this is understandable, because his readers need to be informed more about, until then, unknown peoples and their rulers or famous people in the field of culture and religion, than about famous Greeks, Greek poleis and Greek customs. A detailed description of personalities from the life of Persia, and especially rulers in its rich

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28 A. Griffiths, *Stories and storytelling in the Histories*, 135.

29 Hdt IV 29.

30 O. Luhtar, M. Šašel Kos, N. Grošelj, G. Pobežin, *Povest istorijske misli. Od Homera do početka 21. veka. Deo I*, 52; M. Đurić, *Istorija belenske književnosti*, 417.

31 M. Flower, "Herodotus and Persia," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 274.

history, shows us that Herodotus perfectly understands their political influence and their rule, especially when it is related to the descriptions of countries and areas conquered by these rulers.<sup>32</sup> There are many examples of how he achieves that and how those stories are woven into the political relations of the states, and one of the most common is when the ruler sends envoys to the area he needs to conquer, or asks who he should wage war with.<sup>33</sup> Most of these stories about the geography and ethnography of these peoples were written by Herodotus from an autopsy, and thus can serve as an example of travel literature. We must note that political influence in Herodotus' writing must not be ruled out. We must not ignore the fact that Herodotus writes from a European experience and has a Eurocentric attitude in describing the conflict between Greeks and barbarians, which influences the formation of attitudes about the countries he describes, because examples are adapted to his experience and very often compare barbarian beliefs and customs with the beliefs and customs of the Greeks. Travel literature as a genre and the travel experience gained by Herodotus can hardly change if they were shaped by these political factors, with his views often being subject to these factors when it comes to transferring information from one culture to another, or in comparison with another culture.<sup>34</sup> It is for that reason that there are difficulties in the reconstruction of certain events surrounding the Greco-Persian wars.

Since Herodotus presents himself as the author-traveller who is able to see the bigger picture,<sup>35</sup> it would be best to present here a few examples that confirm that we can also treat him as a travel writer.

### A. Egypt

Of all the foreign lands, Herodotus was most interested in Egypt. As a true lover of Egypt, he travelled by boat along the banks of the Nile to Elephantine<sup>36</sup> and left us beautiful descriptions of pyramids, temples and tombs, but also stories about the religion and customs of the Egyptians. Herodotus devoted the entire second book of his *Histories* to Egypt. In

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32 T. Rood, "Herodotus and foreign lands," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 294.

33 Hdt I 56.

34 X. Guillaume, "Travelogues of Difference: IR theory and Travel Literature," *Alternatives: global, Local, Political* 36:2 (2011): 139-140.

35 R. Friedman, *Location and dislocation in Herodotus*, 166-167.

36 Hdt II 29.

the first 98 chapters he writes about geography, customs and religion, whereas in the remaining chapters writes about Egyptian history up to the time of Amasis (16<sup>th</sup> dynasty, 664-525 BC). Parts of his second book are a great example of how Herodotus collects his data and how important this is in confirming the claim that his work can be viewed in part as a travelogue.

The first important fact is that Herodotus himself makes a difference between the events described in the book that, on the one hand, he saw himself or learned of by means of interviews, and, on the other hand, those that others told him about. In both cases, we have data on buildings, customs and religion, with the difference that the second part is dedicated to the presentation of the history of Egypt, with the help of Egyptian priests as the main source of information.

Another important fact is that, on several occasions in the second book, Herodotus writes about all the places in which he stayed. In addition to Egyptian cities of Thebes<sup>37</sup> and Heliopolis,<sup>38</sup> he also mentions that he visited the city of Tyre<sup>39</sup> in Phoenicia and Arabia.<sup>40</sup> This, too, is an indication that his primary intention was to investigate the facts on his own and that he perceived traveling to the most distant places not as a burden, but an obligation.

Herodotus was certainly fascinated by Egypt and even wrote on several instances that the Egyptians were smarter than the Hellenes which was unusual at the time. A good example of this is when he writes about the Egyptian calendar.

But as regarding human affairs, this was the account in which they all agreed: the Egyptians, they said, were the first men who reckoned by years and made the year to consist of twelve divisions of the seasons. They discovered this from the stars (so they said). And their reckoning is, to my mind, a juster one than that of the Greeks; for the Greeks add an intercalary month every other year, so that the seasons may agree; but the Egyptians, reckoning thirty days to each of the twelve months, add five days in every year over and above

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37 Hdt II 3; Hdt II 55.

38 Hdt II 3.

39 Hdt II 44.

40 Hdt II 75.

the number, and so the completed circle of seasons is made to agree with the calendar.<sup>41</sup>

He further does not hide his enthusiasm when he writes about the buildings he saw in Egypt. The first example is when he writes about the pyramids. The fact that its construction lasted for twenty years speaks of its size.

The pyramid itself was twenty years in the making. Its base is square, each side eight hundred feet long, and its height is the same; the whole is of stone polished and most exactly fitted; there is no block of less than thirty feet in length.<sup>42</sup>

Another example is when he writes about a labyrinth that he claims is the largest building he has ever seen and surpasses even the pyramids.

Moreover they resolved to preserve the memory of their names by some joint enterprise; and having so resolved they made a labyrinth, a little way beyond the lake Moeris and near the place called the City of Crocodiles. I have myself seen it, and indeed no words can tell its wonders; were all that Greeks have builded and wrought added together the whole would be seen to be a matter of less labour and cost than was this labyrinth, albeit the temples at Ephesus and Samos are noteworthy buildings. Though the pyramids were greater than words can tell, and each one of them a match for many great monuments built by Greeks, this maze surpasses even the pyramids.<sup>43</sup>

If it has already been stated that one of the reasons why Greeks travelled to unknown lands is the desire to learn from older civilizations, then the example of Egypt shows that Herodotus pays the most attention to the unusual things that do not exist in Greece. In addition to the buildings and other temples that fascinated him, he was delighted with many unusual Egyptian customs that were not characteristic of the

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41 Hdt II 4.

42 Hdt II 124.

43 Hdt II 148.

Greeks, such as the veneration of sacred animals<sup>44</sup> or embalming the dead,<sup>45</sup> and, ultimately, the Nile.<sup>46</sup>

All this leads to the conclusion that we can accept the opinion of D. Stefanović when he says that Herodotus' experience of Egypt is deeply contradictory and that this is a country that fascinates him, but, at the same time, one that is distant and disliked.<sup>47</sup> It does not fit into the form and way of life that was common for Herodotus in Greece.

The extent to which Egypt is fascinating and how frequently the pyramids, tombs and temples have been visited over the centuries is best shown by an inscription, more precisely a graffiti, from the Valley of the Kings, which states: "Those who have not seen this place have never seen anything; blessed are they who visit this place."<sup>48</sup>

### *B. Babylon*

The information we find about Babylon with Herodotus also contains the characteristics of a travelogue. He writes about Babylon in the first and third books. Of importance for this paper are the parts of the first book where Herodotus describes the way Cyrus conquered Babylon. In addition to the description of the conquest of Babylon, Herodotus presents us with a picture of the city and its most beautiful buildings. Although he did not explicitly state that he visited the city, it is obvious that he describes what he saw himself. This can also be applied when he writes about the irrigation system, whereas when he writes about the wealth of the city and the customs of the inhabitants of Babylon, he uses information from conversations with the local population, mostly priests.

Herodotus sees Babylon as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. He gives a very detailed description of the city and is fascinated by its size.

Babylon was a city such as I will now describe. It lies in a great plain, and is in shape a square, each side an hundred and twenty furlongs in length; thus four hundred and eighty

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44 Hdt II 65-76.

45 Hdt II 85-90.

46 Hdt II 19-34.

47 D. Stefanović, "Helenska opažanja Egipta" [Hellenic views of Egypt], *Zbornik Matice srpske za klasične studije* 8 (2006): 61.

48 CIG III 4821; D. Stefanović. *Helenska opažanja Egipta*, 68.

furlongs make the complete circuit of the city. Such is the size of the city of Babylon; and it was planned like no other city whereof we know. Round it runs first a fosse deep and wide and full of water, and then a wall of fifty royal cubits' thickness and two hundred cubits' height.<sup>49</sup>

Herodotus also emphasizes the size of the city when he describes the buildings in Babylon. He gives special attention to the large walls, public buildings and unusual pyramids, known as the ziggurats, which, unlike the Egyptian pyramids, serve as temples.

These walls are the city's outer armour; within them there is another encircling wall, well-nigh as strong as the other, but narrower. In the midmost of one division of the city stands the royal palace, surrounded by a high and strong wall; and in the midmost of the other is still to this day the sacred enclosure of Zeus Belus, a square of two furlongs each way, with gates of bronze. In the centre of this enclosure a solid tower has been built, of one furlong's length and breadth; a second tower rises from this, and from it yet another, till at last there are eight. The way up to them mounts spirally outside all the towers; about halfway in the ascent is a halting place, with seats for repose, where those who ascend sit down and rest. In the last tower there is a great shrine; and in it a great and well covered couch is laid, and a golden table set hard by. But no image has been set up in the shrine, nor does any human creature lie therein for the night, except one native woman, chosen from all women by the god, as say the Chaldaeans, who are priests of this god.<sup>50</sup>

Another building particularly fascinated Herodotus. He describes it as a magnificent monument. Namely, he writes that Queen Nitocris constructed brick banks on the river Euphrates in the city and built a bridge of hewn stone in the middle of the city. This was an exceptional feat of the citizens of Babylon, with the construction of the bridge especially fascinating for Herodotus because it resisted the great power of the Euphrates.

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49 Hdt II 178.

50 Hdt I 181.

But the queen provided also for this; when the digging of the basin of the lake was done, she made another monument of her reign out of this same work. She had very long blocks of stone hewn; and when these were ready and the place was dug, she turned the course of the river wholly into it, and while it was filling, the former channel being now dry, she bricked with baked bricks, like those of the wall, the borders of the river in the city and the descents from the gates leading down to the river; also about the middle of the city she built a bridge with the stones which had been dug up, binding them together with iron and lead. She laid across it square-hewn logs each morning, whereon the Babylonians crossed; but these logs were taken away for the night, lest folk should be ever crossing over and stealing from each other. Then, when the basin she had made for a lake was filled by the river and the bridge was finished, Nitocris brought the Euphrates back to its former channel out of the lake; thus she had served her purpose, as she thought, by making a swamp of the basin, and her citizens had a bridge ready for them.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, it is important to mention one very interesting example, not common for the Hellenes, that appears both in the description of Egypt and in the description of the city of Babylon. It is the question of irrigation. On his travels, Herodotus correctly concluded that the proximity of the river was crucial for the development of these civilizations<sup>52</sup>, and that their development was, ultimately, enabled by the irrigation system.

For even though a man has not before been told it he can at once see, if he have sense, that that Egypt to which the Greeks sail is land acquired by the Egyptians, given them by the river - not only the lower country but even all the land to three days' voyage above the aforesaid lake, which is of the same nature as the other, though the priests added not this to what they said.<sup>53</sup>

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51 Hdt I 186.

52 Hdt I 5.

53 Hdt II 5.



There is but little rain in Assyria. It is this which nourishes the roots of the corn; but it is irrigation from the river that ripens the crop and brings the grain to fulness : it is not as in Egypt, where the river itself rises and floods the fields: in Assyria they are watered by hand and by swinging beams. For the whole land of Babylon, like Egypt, is cut across by canals. The greatest of these is navigable: it runs towards where the sun rises in winter, from the Euphrates to another river, the Tigris, by which stood the city of Nmus. This land is of all known to us by far the most fertile in corn.<sup>54</sup>

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Based on all the above, we notice that at the time when Herodotus wrote, there was no rigid separation of genres such as geography, ethnography, history of religion, culturology, philosophy or historiography.<sup>55</sup> That is why today it is possible to look for the characteristics of other genres, such as travelogues, in Herodotus' work. Essentially, Herodotus did travel and describe what he saw on those trips, but he also weaved that description into the story of the history of the Greco-Persian wars. Regardless of the fact that with Herodotus we can notice many different literary and stylistic characteristics and genres that classify him as a logographer, ethnographer, geographer, philosopher, culturologist and as we saw in this paper, as a travel writer, he will still be remembered in historiography as the first historian because of three basic principles: he strives for the truth, criticizes oral traditions and arranges the material according to a unique universal-historical point of view, i.e. he shows the collision of the East and the West. All the other characteristics that we find in Herodotus are just a confirmation that he is an excellent writer of great abilities who in single work managed to unite many different styles and ways of transmitting historical events to future readers. His genius did not go unnoticed even by ancient historians, when Dionysius of Halicarnassus described Herodotus' style as a combination of many historical works that include different places and different times, and

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<sup>54</sup> Hdt I 193.

<sup>55</sup> S. Sheehan, *A Guide to Reading Herodotus' Histories* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 9.

which Herodotus managed to transform into the history of the then known world.<sup>56</sup> Precisely because of the diversity of information that Herodotus gives us, using different styles and methods of communicating past events, we are today able to interpret his work in several different ways. That is why we find so many similarities with classic travelogues.

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56 E. Bakker, "The syntax of *historiē*: How Herodotus writes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 94.

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# Travelling as a Hostage: The Testimony of Kaminiates's *Capture of Thessalonike*

Konstantinos Karatolios<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

According to Kaminiates, the aim of his book *On the Capture of Thessalonike*<sup>2</sup> was to provide a narrative of the raid of the city by the Arabs, which took place on 31 July 904.<sup>3</sup> He addressed this narrative, in the form of a letter, to a certain Gregorios Kappadokes,<sup>4</sup> a person he met during the time he was held hostage. The first part of his work is an ἐκφρασις, a description of the city of Thessalonike. In the second part, the author provides an account of the plans and provisions of the Byzantines preparing for the oncoming assault. He describes the siege of the city in great detail and afterwards recounts the destruction, slaughter, and abductions wrought by the Arabs after the city fell. Kaminiates and his family are at the centre of his descriptions, as eyewitnesses sharing the fate of many others inside the city walls during the Arab conquest. Whether the book was written while Kaminiates was still a hostage or

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<sup>2</sup> Text version by Gertrud Böhlig, *Ioannis Caminiatae De Exspugnatione Thessalonicae* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on Thessalonike during the time of the capture of the city by the Arabs, see Élisabeth Malamut, “Thessalonique 830–904,” in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Lars Hoffmann and Anuscha Monchizadeh (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 159–170. The same researcher has published on the route of the Arab ships after the fall of Thessalonike. For this reason, we will only deal with this subject as part of the analysis of the conditions of the journey for those on board these ships. For the outline of the route, see É. Malamut, *Les Îles de l'empire byzantin (VIIIe–XIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988), 657.

<sup>4</sup> Although it is not at all certain if this was a historical figure.

not is a matter of contention.<sup>5</sup> The same is true of its dating. In 1978, Kazhdan published an article based on an older manuscript, now lost, arguing that the extant story was created in the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Since then, an increasing number of researchers have provided further support for this thesis.<sup>7</sup> An alternate dating was convincingly argued first by Tsaras and then by Odorico, who dated the work to the tenth century.<sup>8</sup>

The fall of Thessalonike was a long time coming. Since 827, the Arabs had challenged Byzantine superiority at sea. After 867, however, when Basil I became Emperor, the tide gradually began to turn. In 879, the Byzantine fleet under Niketas Oriphas gave a major blow to the Arabs, succeeding to dampen their pirate operations for almost two decades. The raids resumed once again in 901. The capture of Thessalonike in 904 formed the pinnacle of this resurgence.<sup>9</sup>

Kaminiates' testimony is of great importance because, contrary to the popularity of such narratives in the following centuries, travel writing sources from this particular period are scarce.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> While Eudoxos Tsolakis thinks that it is unlikely that Kaminiates was able to write a book under these circumstances. See: Eudoxos Tsolakis, *Ιωάννης Καμινιάτης, Εις την Άλωσιν της Θεσσαλονίκης* [Ioannis Kaminiates, The Fall of Thessalonike] (Athens: Kanaki, 2000), 13. Paolo Odorico argues convincingly in favour of this scenario, which is also considered the most plausible in the present investigation. See: Paolo Odorico, *Ιωάννης Καμινιάτης, Ευστάθιος Θεσσαλονίκης, Ιωάννης Αναγνώστης, Χρονικά των Αλώσεων της Θεσσαλονίκης* [Ioannis Kaminiates, Eustathios of Thessalonike, Ioannis Anagnostes, Chronicles of the Falls of Thessalonike] (Athens: Agra, 2009), 27–29.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, “Some Questions Addressed to the Scholars who Believe in the Authenticity of Kaminiates’ ‘Capture of Thessalonica’,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 71 (1978): 301–314.

<sup>7</sup> Vassilios Christides, “Once Again Caminiates’ ‘Capture of Thessaloniki’,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 74 (1981): 7–10, and later Angeliki Konstantakopoulou, *Βυζαντινή Θεσσαλονίκη – Χώρος και Ιδεολογία* [Byzantine Thessalonike – Locality and Ideology] (Ioannina: University of Ioannina Press, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> V. Christides, “Once Again Caminiates’ ‘Capture of Thessaloniki’,” 7–10, P. Odorico, *Ioannis Kaminiates*, 20, 22–25.

<sup>9</sup> Archibald Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500–1100* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951), 132–142.

<sup>10</sup> Catia Galatariotou, “Travel and Perception in Byzantium,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993): 221. There is another testimony of the raid, which proves that Kaminiates’s chronicle is trustworthy. It is written by an Arab, Abu Mādan, who took part in the raid of Thessalonike. See Grégoire Henri, “Le Communiqué arabe sur la prise de Thessalonique (904),” *Byzantion* 22 (1953): 373–378.

## II. Who was Kaminiates?

Kaminiates was probably born between 870 and 875.<sup>11</sup> He refers to himself, as well as to his father, uncle, and two brothers as members of the clergy (43.39.84–87). This, however, is contradicted later in the text. When the leader of the Arabs asked Kaminiates' father if he was the bishop of Thessalonike, the latter declined claiming that he was not part of the clergy (55.47.35–55.48.39). He may have been lying. However, there is no reason to make such an assumption because his life was at stake at the time and thus he would have wanted to appear as a significant person worth sparing. A leader of the Arabs claimed that he was the exarch of Greece.<sup>12</sup> The same person, however, only refers to the other captives that were with them concerning their relations to Kaminiates and his father (55.48.40–51). No one disagrees with his claims and it might be safe to assume that he was right. Perhaps the confusion is based on the fact that Kaminiates was an ἀναγνώστης,<sup>13</sup> the lowest rank of the clergy, living the life of a layman.

There is no doubt that the Kaminiates were rich. Their wealth must have been considerable and was used as a successful negotiation tool with the Arabs in exchange for sparing their lives. The treasure they had hidden must have been so valuable as ransom that it changed their captors' attitude towards them (54.47.11–20). Further on the subject of wealth, Kaminiates informs his readers that they had servants and that his other relatives, who were not captured with them, were also wealthy people who had hidden their valuables close to theirs (53.47.1–5).

## III. How did Kaminiates become a hostage?

After the fall of Thessalonike, the Arabs stormed the city massacring its residents. Kaminiates, his father, his two brothers, and his uncle

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<sup>11</sup> Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner. Bd. I Philosophie–Rhetorik–Epistolographie–Geschichtsschreibung–Geographie* (München: C. H. Beck, 1978), 357.

<sup>12</sup> This honorific title was bestowed to clerics who were on a special mission irrespective of their rank. On this subject, see Georgios Tsaras, “Η Αυθεντικότητα του Χρονικού του Ιωάννου Καμινιάτη” [The Authenticity of Ioannis Kaminiates' Chronicle], *Βυζαντιανά* [Byzantiaka] 8 (1988): 47. The same author, however, doubts the validity of the information (p. 14).

<sup>13</sup> Sophia Patoura, *Οι Αιχμάλωτοι ως Παράγοντες Επικοινωνίας και Πληροφόρησης (4ος–10ος α.)* [Captives as Agents of Communication and Information (4<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> c.)] (Athens: Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1994), 83.

(42.88.65–70, 47.42.9–11) retreated to an isolated tower. The men were together when the city fell. It is unknown what happened to Kaminiates' mother, who was still alive at the time (43.39.11). The men who retreated in the tower had no illusion that they would remain unseen but they thought that being separated from the crowd could perhaps give them the opportunity to negotiate for their lives (42.88.74–79). Things eventually turned out as planned. When a band of armed Arabs noticed them, the group managed to negotiate a significant ransom if their lives were spared. The Arabs not only spared their lives but also offered them protection, placing them at the centre of their group, until they reached their leader who made the final decisions (46.41.99–48.43.45). The headquarters of the group was at a monastery. The highest authority decided to let Kaminiates and his relatives live in exchange for their treasure but no one else from the hundreds of Byzantines that had sought refuge at the same monastery was spared (51.44.13–52.46.63). From there, Kaminiates and the rest of his family were taken to the port to meet another Arab leader, who ranked higher than the ones they had already met (53.46.73–54.47.32).

#### **IV. What were the plans in place for hostages?**

The leader of the Arabs, Leo the Tripolean, informed his captives of their fate in person. He even did it speaking in Greek. Kaminiates and his family would be transferred to Syria and then sent to Tarsus in Asia Minor. More Byzantines were held there, waiting to be exchanged with Arabs captured by the Byzantines on other occasions.<sup>14</sup> He claimed that when this had happened, they would be free to return home (55.59–64).

The same fate awaited other wealthy Byzantines. Among them was Leon Chatziliakis,<sup>15</sup> a high-ranking soldier whom the Emperor had sent to Thessalonike (56.49.83–88). It is worth mentioning that the Arabs had also captured the eunuch Rodofilis, a traveller who ended up in Thessalonike through an unfortunate coincidence. As a

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<sup>14</sup> On the treatment of captured Arabs to be exchanged by the Byzantines, see Liliana Simeonova, "In the Depths of Tenth Century Byzantine Ceremonial: The Treatment of Arab Prisoners of War at Imperial Banquets," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 22 (1998): 75–104.

<sup>15</sup> E. Tsolakis, *Ioannis Kaminiates*, 145, n. 40.



κουβικουλάριος,<sup>16</sup> he was sent by the Emperor from Constantinople to Sicily on a mission to transfer money to the Byzantine troops who were fighting against the Arabs.<sup>17</sup> On his way to Sicily, however, he fell sick and had to stop in Thessalonike. His journey ended there, as in the meantime both he and the city fell into the hands of the Arabs. Amidst all of these events, he nevertheless managed to send the payments to Sicily, for which the Arabs never forgave him. When they realised that holding on to him was futile, they beat him to death (59.51.57–59.52.6).

These cases, however, were singular. The vast majority of people taken as captives were destined to be sold as slaves. Upon arriving in Crete, the captives were transported to the markets and the Arabs living on the island spared no expense in acquiring as many as possible. Their incentive was not to keep the new slaves on the island. Kaminiates informs us of a certain “custom” in place there that did not exist among the Arabs of Syria, according to which slaves bought by the Arabs in Crete could be released to the Byzantines if exchanged with an Arab prisoner. For this, the new owners would be compensated with twice the amount they had spent to buy the prisoner in the first place (73.63.7–19).

## **V. How did Kaminiates view his captors?**

The Arabs are mentioned as “barbarians” numerous times throughout the text, a term that underlines their lack of culture.<sup>18</sup> The same word is used to highlight their different language and, thus, the reason they cannot understand Kaminiates, who is speaking Greek (47.42.19–20).

In terms of their characteristics, Kaminiates mentioned the dark colour of their skin and the fact that they were almost naked. He adds that they acted irrationally, were sneaky and, when they got angry, they ground their teeth like boars, twisting their eyes and shaking their jaws in a way described as typical among the Arabs (45.40.48–52, 49.43.74–49.44.79). They were also pictured as cold-hearted sadists, who found joy

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<sup>16</sup> *Κουβικουλάριοι* were eunuchs who played an important role in imperial ceremony and were often appointed as governors and commanders of the army. A. Kazhdan, “Koubikoularios,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1154.

<sup>17</sup> Hans Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973), 70–79, 183. See also E. Tsolakis, *Ioannis Kaminiates*, 151, n. 41.

<sup>18</sup> A. Kazhdan, Anthony Cutler “Barbarians,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 252–253.

in torturing and butchering people, leaving rivers of blood wherever they went (45.40.57–45.41.66, 53.46.74–79).

Upon their arrival in Crete, the Arabs held a celebration. The description of this celebration with people screaming and beating on drums reveals, once more, the attitude of the author towards them (71.60.95–4). Unsurprisingly, Kaminiates compared them to animals as his whole narrative strategy seems to be aimed at depriving them of everything civilised and human – unsurprisingly again, as they were responsible for the destruction of his hometown and people.

However, his captors were not the only ones he condemned. Kaminiates describes their country as evil, full of irrational sins, and a place where “men are treated like women” (72.62.77–84). He especially despised their religion and describes their prayers as disgusting (74.63.38–39).

Although Kaminiates had no positive words for the Arabs, they seem to have kept their promise and the 200 captives, including Kaminiates and the members of his family, were transferred to Tarsus to be exchanged.<sup>19</sup>

The attackers seem to have included several Muslims who were either of Byzantine origin or Greek speakers. This is not strange since Leo of Tripoli, the leader of this attack, was a former Byzantine Christian, who became a Muslim and eventually allied with the Arabs. It is of interest that Leo was a prisoner of the Arabs himself and it was during this time that he had converted to Islam.<sup>20</sup>

In any case, people speaking Greek frequently appear in the text. The first is a negotiator between Kaminiates’s family and the Arabs. Prior to his arrival, it seems that Kaminiates had a hard time communicating with the Arabs but things changed quickly when this person, the negotiator, joined them (47.42.19–22). This Greek-speaking soldier seems to have appeased their fears (48.42.38–48.43.45). He is described as a “God-sent person who arrived at the perfect time.” He proved useful again when, on their way to meet the leader of the Arabs, he kept away everybody who tried to harm them (49.43.72–49.44.88, 50.44.10–12). It must be mentioned, however, that this Greek-speaking individual had his own agenda, expecting to be compensated for his services from the ransom

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<sup>19</sup> S. Patoura, *Captives*, 83, 89.

<sup>20</sup> John Pryor, Elizabeth Jeffreys, *The Age of the Δρόμων. The Byzantine Navy ca 500–1204* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 62.

to be collected from Kaminiates' family. He was also among the invaders who sacked Thessalonike and slaughtered its people. Nevertheless, Kaminiates chose to describe him in a positive light. The negotiator is referred to again as translating, on behalf of the captors, the (Arab) words of Leo to his warriors (55.48.66–68).

The second person speaking Greek is described as the “leader of the whole army” by the negotiator mentioned above (48.32.33–35). This, however, seems to be an exaggeration and this second person is just one of the leaders, since there is another warrior at the port with him, who holds the same rank (55.48.40–41).<sup>21</sup> It seems that these two leaders are both of Byzantine origin. The first appears to speak both Greek and Arab (55.48.64–66),<sup>22</sup> while the other seems to be very well informed about the Byzantine hierarchy (55.48.40–50). Both, however, are Muslims, gathered at the port to pray, in what is described by Kaminiates as an “unholy ceremony” (55.48.33–36). It is interesting to note that when a leader of the Arab army does not speak Greek (like the Egyptian in charge of the ship on which Kaminiates travels), Kaminiates feels the need to acknowledge the fact (65.55.30–35).

Kaminiates does not hold back when it comes to speaking about Leo of Tripoli, the general leader of the attack, despite the fact that he was raised as a Byzantine. He especially portrays him as sneaky and cunning, greedy, fierce, and cold-hearted (62.53.63–64.55.23). He describes him as an igamous person (75.64.72), unable to show compassion, driven by his desire for wealth and deriving pleasure from injustice and murder (76.65.14–16).

We can assume that a significant factor for the description of the Arabs as barbarians and evil is their religion, which Kaminiates singles out frequently.

## **VI. Preparations for the journey**

Kaminiates states that all hostages destined to be taken away were gathered at the port. The ships did not leave for an additional ten days. During the first two days of their captivity (58.50.46, 65.55.28–29), the main problem was the lack of water. Given the Mediterranean climate

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<sup>21</sup> “ἄλλος δέ τις ἐγγύθεν ἐσῶς, ὃς ἦν ἀρχηγὸς τοῦ ἐτέρου στρατοῦ.”

<sup>22</sup> He also appears to communicate with Kaminiates and his relatives without the presence of a translator (55.48.50–59).

and the fact that the fall of the city took place at the height of summer, people were unsurprisingly relieved when the Arabs granted them permission to get some water from nearby sanitation pipes, even if the water was unsafe to drink (57.47.89–57.50.25).

Finally, when everything worth pillaging from the city was gathered, the ships were ready to sail. First, the Arabs boarded their supplies and the younger among the hostages, men, and women. Kaminiates states that they selected the best-looking individuals, which implies that they were probably meant to be sold as slaves (60.52.7–18, 73.62.4–73.63.7). They used ὀκιάδες, carrier ships, which were wide enough to accommodate a big crowd. Despite their size and the fact that the Arabs had 54 such ships at their disposal, there were still more captives than could be boarded. In order to solve this problem, they commandeered merchant ships already in port and even repaired and refloated the ones sank by the Byzantines while defending the city. The captives were as young as infants and adolescents (61.58–34.48). It seems that people destined to be sold as slaves outnumbered by far the ones expected to be exchanged, because the second category was split into groups of only five people and embarked on different ships. Some of the older people had to be left behind because of lack of space on the ships (62.53.49–62.54.71). Kaminiates states that, overall, the number of people taken from Thessalonike was 22,000 (73.62.95–96).

The Arab historian al-Tabari states that the outcome of the raid was the massacre of 5,000 people inside the city. He also claims that Leo delivered to freedom 4,000 Arabs, who were kept as captives by the Byzantines, and that 60 ships were captured which transferred thousands of prisoners to their lands.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that, despite the difficult situation, Kaminiates' father was in the place to ask the Arabs for favours. Kaminiates states that he approached the leader of the ship that was about to carry them away from Thessalonike and asked that the Arab reunited his family, separated during the sack. The leader seemed to have complied with this request although only partly. He had his soldiers find and bring to the ship Kaminiates' mother and one of his brothers, as well as one of his sisters-in-law. They were not able or did not try as hard to find

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<sup>23</sup> J. Pryor, E. Jeffreys, *The Age of the Δρόμων*, 63. For more information on Leo, Rasiq al Wardâmi and Ghulâm Zurâfa for the Arab historians, his life before he was captured and the reasons why he was selected to lead this raid, see S. Patoura, *Captives*, 83, 85–86, n. 9.

Kaminiates' wife, his sister, his three children, and other relatives (65.55.32–65.56.44). The family was informed of the fate of the rest of its members when the ships arrived in Crete. The spouse of his brother was sold while on the island. Kaminiates' mother, his wife, and two of his children were among those taken to Syria. The same fate awaited his brother (who was not travelling with him) and his sister. Furthermore, one of his children was lost at sea (73.63.23–28).

## **VII. The journey**

The journey itself is described as a living hell. Kaminiates and his relatives had their feet tied to wooden structures so that they were not able to move (66.56.47–48, 68.58.33–41). It seems, however, that most people had their feet free. Despite the number of ships that the Arabs had gathered, the prisoners were so numerous that people were struggling for air and constantly feeling that they were suffocating (66.56.48–58). Kaminiates was on board a two-decked byzantine warship. The deck above was reserved for the Arabs, while the prisoners were held on the deck below (74.64.48–51). On board of this particular ship were 1,000 people, 200 of which were Arabs and the rest captives (67.56.66–68).

Following so many days at sea without basic sanitary arrangements in overloaded ships, people were smelling so badly that it took significant effort for the ones beside them to keep breathing (68.58.34–41). The struggle, however, was not only for space. The captives had to face hunger and thirst, as well as the distressing effects of the sounds of infants dying (67.56.64–70). As expected, even the simplest things such as bodily functions could not be performed privately and people had to decide whether they preferred to embarrass themselves or face the dangers of trying to control them (67.56.70–74). The situation was exacerbated by the storms of the Aegean (67.57.95–3) and the heat of the Mediterranean summer, which made thirst unbearable (69.58.54–59.56).

On top of all that, there was an infestation of fleas, described as “creeping death,” a torture that made the lives of the captives unendurable (69.58.42–45). The way their captors treated them only added to their misery. Kaminiates states that this treatment was only suitable for inanimate objects and not for human beings (66.56.48–49). The Arabs swore at them, insulted them, and beat them (69.58.45–49).

Even when the prisoners were given food and water, like in the incident when the ships stopped on the island of Patmos, they were of low quality. The water is described as undrinkable as those who drank it had to withstand its disgusting smell. The bread was similarly difficult to eat. Kaminiates states that not only was it insufficient but it was also leading to a slow death because it was dirty and full of worms. He laments that it was even unsuitable for animals (68.57.10–68.58.26). It is no wonder that under these conditions the captives suffered considerable casualties. The Arabs threw the bodies overboard. The younger ones were the first to suffer this fate, according to Kaminiates (68.58.27–41).

The situation only got better when they arrived in Crete. The Arabs disembarked leaving more space for the captives and the hostages were given fresh water (70.59.85–70.60.89). Families could be reunited. This gave Kaminiates the opportunity to describe several remarkable scenes of mothers reuniting with their children and others mourning as they were informed of the loss of their infants (71.60.11–71.61.56). This, however, did not last long. The Arabs wanted to distribute their booty, and people were a part of it. They would only make an exception for mothers whose babies were still nursing, probably because they wanted to make sure that the offspring would not starve, thus depriving them of further profit (72.61.57–72.62.77).

The Arabs are described as never missing an opportunity to make more profit from the raid. Kaminiates claims that before they got too far originally, people on horseback came to the shore and, upon seeing them, the ships returned and some women were exchanged for a considerable amount of gold (67.56.74–67.57.80). On another occasion, the Arabs buccaneered a ship with a cargo of grain. Upon seeing the Arab fleet, the sailors abandoned their vessel and fled, but the Arabs managed to capture them and executed almost everyone (67.57.88–95).

Kaminiates describes the places the ship passed by, the topography and the resources available (e.g. 67.56.74–67.57.88). The way he writes about the locations they encountered remind of the descriptions we read in portulans, although none survive from that period.<sup>24</sup> Although the Arabs were familiar with the route, they did not choose the shortest way but, instead, preferred to wander around the Aegean, out of fear that they

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<sup>24</sup> For portulans, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, “Portulans and the Byzantine World,” in *Travel in the Byzantine World*, ed. Ruth Macrides (Cornwall: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), 59–71.

would encounter the Byzantine fleet that could be following them in pursuit (67.57.3–9).

The reports on these places are highly valuable for historians. For instance, we are informed that Naxos paid tribute to the ships that stopped there for two days and the men of the island gathered naval supplies and offered them to the Arabs (70.59.65–70). In Crete, the situation was more festive. After their initial fear that the fleet heading towards their island was Byzantine, the locals greeted the seamen and mutual “gestures of true love” between the raiders of Thessalonike and the inhabitants of the island were witnessed (70.59.77–85). Kaminiates also informs us that the island had an abundance of water, which contrasts with what he had seen thus far on other Aegean islands. He also states that there was a multitude of inhabitants in Crete and that they lacked nothing (70.59.85–70.60.91).

We are also informed that the voyage from Crete to Cyprus took about five days and that in Pafos, there were waters near the coast where the Arabs could take a bath (77.66.37–40). Another 24 hours were required for them to get to Tripoli, where the Arabs held a triumphal celebration for their success. During the celebration, the booty and prisoners from Thessalonike were displayed (77.66.40–56). From Tripoli, Kaminiates and the members of his family that were still with him (his father had died in Tripoli) were transferred to Tarsus, where they were kept as prisoners waiting to be exchanged with Arab hostages held by the Byzantines. Kaminiates states that this was the current situation at the moment of writing his book (77.66.56–77.67.65, 78.67.90–98). The rest of the prisoners, the ones destined to be sold as slaves, were scattered throughout the coast of Syria, and were bought, resold, and exchanged, ending up in places as far as Ethiopia (78.67.66–71).

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The narrative of Kaminiates is a valuable historical source. Not only is it a vast trove of information about the events that took place in Thessalonike in 904, the way that both sides fought, the composition of the Arab army, their weaponry and tactics, but it also provides insight into how the Byzantines and the Arabs viewed one another.

The journey of Kaminiates and his family gives us the opportunity to uncover more about the places they encountered, their topography, the available resources, their inhabitants, and the local dress, among other

things. Furthermore, it provides interesting information on the way the Arabs treated their prisoners, about piracy in the Aegean, the conditions in these journeys, and the time needed to get from one place to another.

It is no wonder that Kaminiates describes his journey the way he does. As a prisoner of the Arabs, he is the journey was difficult and unpleasant, all the more so since the Byzantines disliked travelling because “shipwreck, adverse winds, calms, and pirate raids were expectedly unexpected.”<sup>25</sup> Travelling, as a whole, was “dreadfully uncomfortable and highly dangerous,” not to mention the fact that most Byzantine sources imply that they would not like to leave their hometowns for any reason.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Margaret Mullett, “In Peril on the Sea: Travel Genres and the Unexpected,” in *Travel in the Byzantine World*, ed. Ruth Macrides (Cornwall: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), 259.

<sup>26</sup> C. Galatariotou, “Travel and Perception in Byzantium,” 221–241. Indeed, the prisoners of Thessalonike had to face storms twice, the first time just south of the island of Euboia (67.57.95–3), in a place that is still notorious for its heavy seas, and the second after they set sail from Crete. On this occasion, the storm was very dangerous and when a ship of their fleet began to sink, the Arabs were ready to offload their prisoners into the sea so they could make room for their fellow seamen who were in danger. Leo managed to get every single one of the 1,000 people on board the sinking ship, Arabs and prisoners alike, aboard his own just before the other vessel sank (75.64.66–76.65.24).



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# Travelling and Travellers: Persons, Reasons, and Destinations according to *A Tale of the Iron Cross*

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The essential role of narratives when trying to learn about the past is a fact. However, when the efforts of a researcher are focused on the early Middle Ages, they often face a dilemma. This is clearly illustrated by the question of how to accomplish quality historical research, provided that only a part (not always the most informative one) of the written sources is still extant. This is particularly the case with various types of texts of the Byzantine-Slavic world in South-eastern Europe. This peculiarity leads to particular approaches used by medievalists and their colleagues in related fields. On the one hand, the historical research is presented with a certain amount of reconciliation given the limitations of the preserved evidences; on the other hand, historical research explodes in a feverish tension when a new, unused, or forgotten historical sources are (re-) discovered.

These historiographical struggles can be easily applied to the voluminous Old Bulgarian medieval work titled *A Tale of the Iron Cross* (also recently known as *The Tale of the Monk Christodoulos*). This hagiographical work is relatively well-known but a sufficient number of significant details concerning everyday life of that time should be added to it. This medieval literary work has a complex structure. *A Tale of the Iron Cross* is a macro-composition that incorporates ten stories dedicated to Saint George – 1. *The Miracle with the Priest's son*; 2. *The Miracle with the Child*; 3. *The Miracle with the Monk*; 4. *The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian* (also known as *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior*); 5. *The Miracle with the Woman*; 6. *The Miracle with the Furious Adolescent*; 7. *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*; 8. *The Miracle with the Man with a Leg Injury*; 9. *The Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by Saint George*

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in War, 10. *The Miracle with the Woman Having a Breast Wound*. These miracle stories are framed by a preface and a closing part.<sup>2</sup> The first critical survey which concerns the entire hagiographical macro-composition was done by the Bulgarian scholar Bonyo St. Angelov in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> However, it must be highlighted that at least one of the *Tale*'s copies was studied quite earlier, in mid-nineteenth century, but in a limited manner. The study was primarily concerned with revealing the available copies of the work within the group of Old Slavonic manuscripts. The existence of this information was a reason to start using as a source the so-called story *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior* that is undoubtedly the most famous part of the entire hagiographical work.<sup>4</sup> This text had a good

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Rukopisi slavyanskaya i rossiyskaya, prinallezhashchiya pochetnomu grazhdaninu i Arkeograficheskoy komissii korrespondentu Ivanu Nikitichu Tsarskomu* [Slavic and Russian Manuscripts Owned by Ivan Nikitich Tsarski, the Honorary Citizen and Correspondent of the Archegraphic Commission], ed. Pavel Stroev (Moscow: Tipografiya V. Got'ye, 1848), 768, № 717; 781, № 728; *Sistematicheskoye opisaniye slavyano-rosskiiskikh rukopisey sobraniya grafa A. S. Uvarova* [A Systematic Description of the Slavic-Russian Manuscripts of the Collection of Count A. S. Uvarov], ed. Arkhimandrit Leonid, Part 4 (Moscow: Tipografiya A. I. Mamontov, 1894), 45, № 1783.

<sup>3</sup> B. Angelov, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast [A Tale of the Iron Cross]," *Starobalgarska literatura* 1 (1971): 121-155. Reprint: Idem, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast [A Tale of the Iron Cross]," in *Iz starata balgarska, ruska i srabska literatura*, ed. B. Angelov, Vol. III (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Balgarskata akademiya na naukite, 1978), 61-78; T. Mollov, "Arheografiya na SZhK i na otdelnite chudesa ot nego [Archaeography of TIC and its Miracle Stories]," in *"Skazanie za zhelezniya krast" i epobata na tsar Simon*, ed. A. Kaloyanov et al. (Veliko Tarnovo: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy", 2007), 218-223. For the miracle stories as a literary genre, with the enclosed bibliography, see: M. Hinterberger, "Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. St. Efthymiadis. Vol. II, *Genres and Context* (Farnham: Ashgate 2014), 25-60; St. Efthymiadis, "Collections of Miracles (Fifth-Fifteenth Centuries)," Ibidem, 103-142.

<sup>4</sup> Episkop Filaret Rizhskiy, *Kirill i Metodiy, slavyanskije pravitelitelj* [Kirill and Methodius, the Enlighteners of the Slavs] (Moskva: Izdanie Imperatorskago Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostey Rossiyskikh, Universitetskaya tipografiya, 1846), 5, n. 10; Arkhiiepiskop Evgeniy Astrakhanskiy, "Vneshneye sostoyaniye tserkvi Vostochnoy Pravoslavnoy, s poloviny IX-go veka do nachalo XIII-go [The External Condition of the Orthodox Church, from the First Half of the 9<sup>th</sup> to the Beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century]," *Khristskoye chtenie* 1 (1848): 249-250; O. Bodyanskiy, *O vremeni proiskhozhdeniya slavyanskikh pis'men* [About the Time of the Emergence of the Slavic Alphabet] (Moskva: Universitetskaya tipografiya, 1855), 357-358, CXIV-CXV; S. Palauzov, *Veka bolgarskogo tsarya Simeona* [The Epoch of the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon] (Sanktpeterburg: Tipografiya Imperatorskoy Akademii nauk, 1852), 23-24, n. 34; E. Golubinskiy, *Kratkiy ocherk istorii pravoslavnykh tserkvey: Bolgarskoy, serbskoy i rumynskoy ili moldo-valahskoy* [A Brief Essay on

reputation among scholars and it was widely and continuously exploited in the studies of the medieval Bulgarian history. As a result, a type of investigational habit was formed, supplemented by a little dose of inertness in the perception and usage of the *Tale's* stories. After the nineteenth century, the benevolent attitude to *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior* has been treated with some kind of neglect as compared to the other parts of *A Tale of the Iron Cross*. However, from the early 1970s, the scholars' interest has been increasing gradually. The study of the texts encompasses several main research directions, including: the *Tale's* origin as a complete literary work; the *Tale* studied as separate stories; the personality of the writer; the writer's literary fictions and linguistic peculiarities; and finally (but importantly), the value of the miracle stories as a source of diverse information regarding the late ninth and early tenth centuries.<sup>5</sup>

So far, the most prominent and steady research activities concerning *A Tale of the Iron Cross* have been conducted by the Russian scholar

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the History of the Orthodox Churches: the Bulgarian, the Serbian and the Romanian, also Known as the Church of Moldova and Wallachia] (Moskva: Universitetskaya tipografiya, 1871), 34, 256; Khr. Loparev, "Chudo syatogo Georgiya o bolgarine [The Miracle of St. George with the Bulgarian]," *Pamyatniki drevney pis'mennosti* 100 (1894): 19-21; M. Drinov, "Istoricheski pregled na Balgarskata tsarkva ot samoto i nachalo do dnes [Historical Overview of the Bulgarian Church from its Foundation to the Present Day]," in Idem, *Izbrani sacheniya*, Vol. 2 (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971), 34.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. with the enclosed bibliography: A. Turilov, "Vizantiyskiy i slavyanskiy plasty v «Skazanii inoka Khristodula» (k voprosu o proiskhozhdenii pamyatnika) [The Byzantine and the Slavic layers in "The Tale of the Monk Christodoulos" (on the Question Concerning the Narrative's Origin)]," in *Slavyane i ikh sosedi. Grecheskiy i slavyanskiy mir v Sredniye veka i ranneye Novoye vremya*, ed. G. G. Litavrin et al., 6 (Moskva: Indrik, 1996), 81-99; A. Stoykova, "Proizvedeniyata za sv. Georgi v balkanskite kirilski rakopisi (Predvaritelni belezhki) [The Works about St. George within the Balkan Cyrillic Manuscripts (Preliminary Remarks)]," in *Bulgaria i Serbia v konteksta na vizantiyskata tsivilizatsiya. Sbornik statii ot balgarsko-srabskiya simpozium 14-16 septemvri 2003*, ed. V. Gyuzelev et al. (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo „prof. Marin Drinov“, 2005), 413-422; D. Petkanova, *Starobalgarska literatura IX-XVIII vek* [The Old-Bulgarian Literature, 9<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries] (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Kliment Ohridski", 1997), 349-351; "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast" i epohata na tsar Simeon ["A Tale of the Iron Cross" and the Epoch of Tsar Symeon], ed. A. Kaloyanov et al. (Veliko Tarnovo: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy", 2007); *Istoriya na balgarskata srednovekovna literatura* [The History of Medieval Bulgarian Literature], ed. A. Miltenova (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2008), 30, 140-141; Ya. Hristov, *Sbrihi kam «Skazanie za zhelezniya krast»* [Essays on "A Tale of the Iron Cross"] (Blagoevgrad: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Neofit Rilski", 2012), 5-20.

Anatoliy A. Turilov. In his publications, he tried to find the answers to the questions of when, how, why, and by whom the work was written, taking into consideration the political and cultural situation on the Lower Danube in the late ninth – the early tenth centuries. The name of the medieval author (compiler) – the monk Christodoulos, who composed the regarded macro-composition, also became known through Turilov's research. He noted that the first three stories of the macro-composition's arrangement appear to be the obvious Byzantine layers in the *Tale*, while the rest of it (from the fourth story - *The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian*, to the last one - *The Miracle with the Woman*) were part of the original Old Bulgarian prose. To a great extent, this is also the reason why the current lines focus on the aspects related to the topic of travel and travellers, but only within the original part of the hagiographical collection.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the presence of translated and original strata

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<sup>6</sup> A. Turilov, "Skazaniye o zheleznom kreste kak istochnik po istorii i obshchestvenno-politicheskoy mysli Bolgarii kontsa IX - nachala X vv. [*A Tale of the Iron Cross as a Source for the History and Socio-Political Thought of Bulgaria at the End of 9<sup>th</sup> – the Early 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries*]," in *Ideologiya i obshchestvenno-politicheskaya mysl' v stranakh Tsentral'noy i Yugovostochnoy Evropy v period Srednevekov'ya: Sbornik materialov i tezisev IV chteniy pamyati V. D. Korolyuka*, ed. V. N. Vinogradov et al. (Moskva: Nauka, 1986), 36-37; Idem, "Dannyye «Skazaniya o zheleznom kreste» o khristianizatsii Bolgarii [The data of "A Tale of the Iron Cross" concerning the Christianization of Bulgaria]," in *Vvedeniye khristianskaya u narodov Tsentral'noy i Vostochnoy Evropy. Kreshcheniye Rusi: Sbornik tezisev*, ed. N. I. Tolstoy et al. (Moskva: Nauka, 1987), 53-54; Idem, "Novosibirskiy spisok *Skazaniya inoka Khristodula* [The Novosibirsk copy of the *Tale of the Monk Christodoulos*]," in *Obshchestvennoye soznanie, knizhnost', literatura perioda feodalizma*, ed. D. S. Likhachev et al. (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1990), 220-222; Idem, "Vizantiyskiy i slavyanskiy plasty," 81-99; Idem, "K izucheniyu *Skazaniya inoka Khristodula*: datirovka tsikla i imya avtora [To the study of the *Tale of the monk Christodoulos*: dating of the cycle and the name of the author]," in *Florilegium. K 60-letiyu B. N. Flori: Sb. statey*, ed. A. A. Turilov (Moskva: Yazyki russkoy kultury, 2000), 412-427; Idem, "Madra Pl'skovskaya i Madra Drastorskaya – dve Mundragi pervoy bolgaro-vengerskoy voyny (geografiya chudes vmch. Georgiya v *Skazanii inoka Khristodula*) [Madra Plyskovskaya and Madra Drastorskaya – two Mundragas of the first Bulgaro-Magyar war (the geography of St. George's miracle stories within the Tale of the monk Christodoulos)]," in *Slavyane i ikh sosed. Slavyane i koevery mir*, ed. B. N. Florya et al., 10 (Moskva: Nauka, 2001), 40-58; Idem, "Ne gde knyaz' zhyvet, no vne (Bolgarskoye obshchestvo kontsa IX veka v «Skazanii o zheleznom kreste») [Not where the prince lives, but outside (the Bulgarian society at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century according to *A Tale of the Iron Cross*)]," *Slavianovedenie* 2 (2005): 20-27. The opposition "original – translated" should not be overestimated. In the early Slavonic literature the translation of the Byzantine literary works sometimes was combined with a relatively free attitude to the protographs. Byzantine texts were used as a role model to follow, but the Slavonic

within the frames of the version of *A Tale of the Iron Cross* known today does not hinder its use as a complete historical source. There can be no doubt that the religious moment in the *Tale* is the leading one in the foreground, while the recorded daily life activities seem as secondary importance. Their presence in the work intensifies the eventful, geographical, and public background on which the celebration of St. George's miraculous intercession and the objects related to his cult was developed. Despite this, in an attempt to reconstruct the knowledge, skills, habits, or principles of social behaviour, the probable presence of unreal, imaginary characters in the fragments of the text is not significant, because the *Tale's* stories display selected examples and depict particular aspects of daily life.<sup>7</sup>

The focus of the stories on the events of the late ninth – early tenth centuries makes the geographical area outlined in the texts of the hagiographical macro-composition filled with descriptions of miracles, specific places or interpersonal relations among the lower strata members of the society in newly converted Bulgaria. More than once, the hagiographer makes a meaningful link between the separate stories within the entire work through a described series of travels. Such specifics are hardly surprising, at least because hagiography is a key source of traveling and travellers' information in the Orthodox world, especially when it comes to the travel of monks. And *A Tale of the Iron*

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authors often blur the boundary between this part of their works that was a result of their own creative genius and the one that was copied. Cf. I. Bozhilov, *Kulturata na Srednovekovna Bulgaria* [The Culture of Medieval Bulgaria] (Sofia: Abagar, 1993), 30-32; *Istoriya na balgarskata srednovekovna literatura*, 81-82; D. I. Polyvyanny, *Kul'turnaya identichnost', istoricheskoye soznanie i knizhnoye nasledie srednovekovoy Bolgarii* [Cultural Identity, Historical Consciousness and Literary Heritage of Medieval Bulgaria] (Moskva–Sankt-Peterburg: Tsentr gumanitarnykh initsiativ, 2018), 37-91. See also: I. Lunde, "Slavic Hagiography," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. St. Efthymiadis. Vol. I, *Periods and Places* (Farnham: Ashgate 2014), 369-383 [pp. 369-371 in particular].

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ya. Hristov, "Za bolestite i lechitelските praktiki v starobalgarskiya tsikal razkazi «Skazanie za zhelezniya kras» [On the Maladies and Healing Practices in the Old-Bulgarian Collection of Miracle Stories *A Tale of the Iron Cross*]," *Istoricheskoto badeshte* 1–2 (2011): 178-191; Ya. Hristov, *Shtrihi*, 109-118. For the use of hagiographical texts as the source of information see: M. Kaplan, El. Kountoura-Galaki, "Economy and Society in Byzantine Hagiography: *Realia* and Methodological Questions," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. St. Efthymiadis. Vol. II, *Genres and Context* (Farnham: Ashgate 2014), 389-418.

*Cross* is no exception. Judging by the records in the work, the inhabitants of the Lower Danube Plain, Dobrudzha, and the vicinity of Haemus moved from one place to another, driven by a variety of motives.

Only by simply skim-reading through *The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian* and *The Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by St. George in War* one can see that fairly significant attention was paid to the clashes between the Bulgarians and the Magyars in the war of 894-896. Undoubtedly, the concentration and deployment of different contingents from the Bulgarian armies at the dawn of the reign of Tsar Symeon the Great (893-927), as well as their retreat or flight from the battlefield, are beyond the scope of the scientific efforts in a publication dedicated to travel and travellers in Slavia Orthodoxa during the Middle Ages. However, descriptions concerning military actions, and especially those involved in them, should by no means be ignored. On the pages of the *Tale*, even in its today's well-known edited, revised and abridged version with its later copies, two models of maintaining and recruiting army units are noticed. These models are directly related to two different population groups. The information in *Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by St. George in War* represents a Bulgarian warrior who belonged to, or at least was close to the aristocratic circles and was in direct contact with the ruler.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Clement, the other Bulgarian warrior, George, was described in a very different way in *The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian*. This work is also known as *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior*.<sup>9</sup> The latter is the full, unabridged (large) version of the text, which can be found not only within the *Tale*'s frames but as a separate miracle story too. It is especially emphasized that George did not have and did not acquire a high position, did not belong to the aristocracy and the ruler's milieu, but was a member of a recruiting squadron of self-armed and self-equipped horsemen. "... I have never ever had a rank at all, any, and I have not lived where the prince lived, but out of the place and with my spear I fought..." – reads an illustrative passage of the unabridged text.<sup>10</sup> However,

<sup>8</sup> B. Angelov, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast," 150.

<sup>9</sup> Khr. Loparev, "Chudo svyatogo Georgiya o bolgarine," 20. See Fig. 1.

<sup>10</sup> I. Snegarov, "Starobalgarskiyat razkaz „Chudo na sv. Georgi s balgarina“ kato istoricheski izvor [The Old-Bulgarian Story "The Miracle of St. George with a Bulgarian Warrior" as a Historical Source]," *Godishnik na Duhovnata akademiya* 4.2 (1954-1955): 226; Hr. Kodov, *Opis na slavyanskite rękopisi v bibliotekata na Balgarskata akademiya na naukite*



participation in the troops recruited by the peasants in the provinces does not automatically mean social levelling in their group. According to the information, the depicted warrior did not belong to the aristocracy, but he was a wealthy owner of a relatively large farm with workers and servants. Despite this fact, he completed the military service in person and performed alone, along with others like him in the recruitment troop. Moreover, judging by the additional details in *The Miracle with the Furious Adolescent* (the *Tale*'s sixth miracle story), he was not young at all during the war of 894-896, as thirty years earlier, in the mid-860s he was already married.<sup>11</sup>

The attention to the information about the Bulgarian warrior in question from the fourth miracle story in *A Tale of the Iron Cross* is owed to the fact that in the subsequent fragments of the hagiographical collection, having already given up the worldly life and possessing a miraculous iron cross, he left his native village and undertook several short and long-distance trips, the final one of which was even beyond the Balkans. In this connection, one can appreciate the temptations surrounding the attempts to somehow approximate the localization of the settlement from which the journey began. Focusing only on the pieces of information in the fourth story of the *Tale* (notwithstanding whether the short-edited version or the extensive one of the text would be used) results in fruitful productivity. According to the facts, the settlement was about a three-day trip from the place of the Magyar defeat and, at the same time, it was beyond the scope of their loot raids.<sup>12</sup> Even

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[Description of the Slavonic Manuscripts in the Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences] (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Balgarskata akademija na naukite, 1969), 143. See Fig. 2. B. Angelov also published this copy of the story. Cf. B. Angelov, "Staroslavjanski tekstove: 1. Nov prepis na starobalgarskiya razkaz „Chudoto s balgarina“; 2. Razkaz za pastira, uhan ot zmiya [Old Slavonic Texts: 1. New Copy of the Old-Bulgarian Story "The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian"; 2. The Miracle Story about the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake]," *Izvestiya na Instituta za balgarska literatura* 3 (1955): 171-172. It is worth emphasizing that in the short version of *The Miracle with the Cross and the Bulgarian* the above-quoted passage as well as that one about Symeon's coup were abridged. In the long-awaited translation of the entire collection of miracle stories M. Spasova fills in the lack according to the text of a spacious version of the story from the fourteenth-century manuscript of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius (Russia). – M. Spasova, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast (prevod) [A Tale of the Iron Cross (Translation)]," in "*Skazanie za zhelezniya krast*" i epohata na tsar Simeon, 198, n. 26. For additional details see: Ya. Hristov, *Sbrihi*, 30-47.

<sup>11</sup> B. Angelov, *Iz starata balgarska, ruska i srabska literatura*, 88, 89.

<sup>12</sup> B. Angelov, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast," 142.

on this basis, and with certain caution, it can be assumed that the settlement from which soldiers were recruited for both phases of the Magyar conflict was located in the South-eastern parts of the Danube Plain and even in the adjacent parts of the Eastern Pre-Balkan. At the same time, other not so well-known and studied parts of the hagiographical collection provide some further details on the localization of the settlement and a wonderful example of expanding the knowledge of movement through the Eastern Haemus. These are the sixth and the seventh stories, respectively *The Miracle with the Furious Adolescent* and *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*.<sup>13</sup> Within the framework of the *Tale*, the two fragments point to the initial stage in the wanderings of the former warrior George who renounced the secular life. According to the monastic tradition, he had to be taken by a mentor for a period of his noviciate. But his mentor did not live in the proximity to George's home village, so he had to walk for two days to the easternmost wooded slopes of Haemus "*near to Mesembria*," where the hermit cell of the old monk Sophronius was located. Meanwhile, as it is inherent in hagiographical literature, through the intervention of St. George, Sophronius learnt about the arrival of his future novice and greeted him on the "*Severskiy road*" ("сѢВЕРСКИЙ ПѢТЬ"; "Severskiy" can be translated either as the Severian road or as the North road – Y.H.).<sup>14</sup>

The direction, and especially the name of the road, give reason to associate with the tribe of Severians – settled in the Eastern Haemus during the last quarter of the seventh century, as indicated by Theophanes the Confessor. The chronicler mentioned the Severians once again, in regard to the conflicts between Bulgaria and Byzantium of the 760s when their knyaz Sklavoun was abducted by people of Emperor Constantine V (741-775).<sup>15</sup> A recent hypothesis has further linked Severians with Mesembria [present-day Nesebar, on the Black Sea coast, South-eastern Bulgaria] and its environs in the first years of the ninth century. These thoughts are reliable and acceptable.

<sup>13</sup> In the 1950s B. Angelov drew attention to *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*. Cf. B. Angelov, "Staroslavjanski tekstove," 174-177; Idem, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast," 145-147. Despite this fact, it seems that the work still remains away from the scholars' proper attention. Cf. Ya. Hristov, "Otnovo za razkaza *Za pastira, ubapan ot zmiya* [Once again for *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*]," *Palaeobulgarica* 2 (2010): 78-84.

<sup>14</sup> B. Angelov, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast," 145; Idem, "Staroslavjanski tekstove," 175.

<sup>15</sup> *Theophanis, Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Vol. I (Leipzig: Tübnner, 1883), 359, 436.

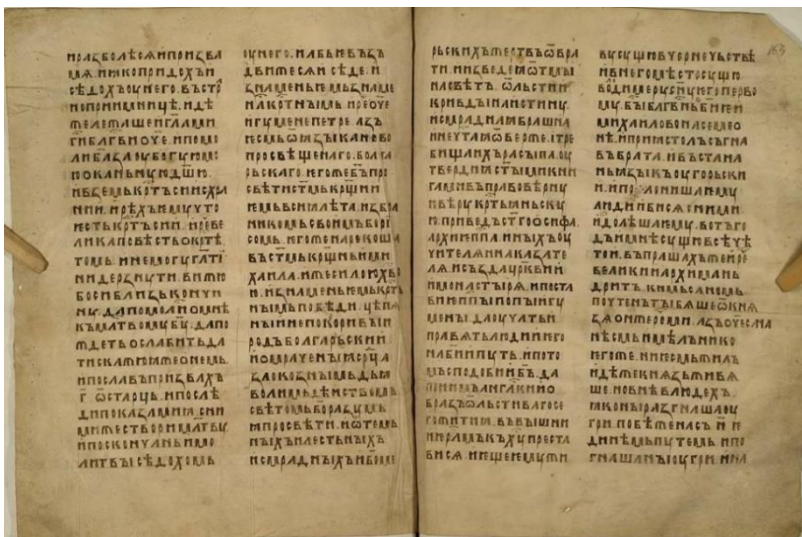


Fig. 1. *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior*  
(fourteenth-century manuscript of the Trinity Lavra of St. Serguis, Russia)

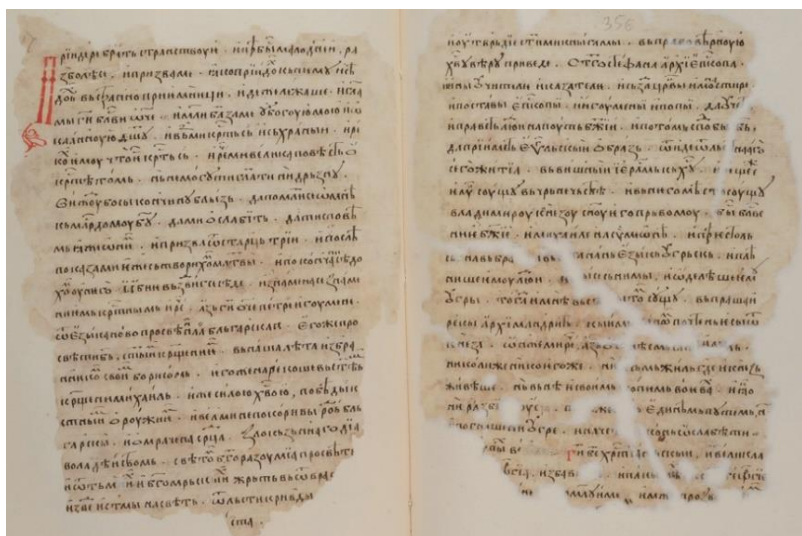


Fig. 2. *The Miracle of Saint George with a Bulgarian Warrior*  
(fourteenth-century manuscript of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

Defining one of the roads through the Eastern passages of Haemus as “сѣверскыи” in an Old Bulgarian collection of miracle stories might hardly be a mere coincidence. It is rather an echo of the former presence of Severians in the area which connects the Lower Danube lands with the important ports in the Southwestern Black Sea.<sup>16</sup>

The role of these routes for the movement of people and goods is described relatively clearly within the literary work under consideration. Interesting nuances in this particular direction provide the final sections of *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake* and the following 8<sup>th</sup> miracle story from the *Tale*, known as *Miracle with the Man with a Leg Injury*. “And one day, as we were sitting, the old man [the old hermit Sophronius – Y. H.] told me: George, get up, prepare a meal because guests from your land are coming to us ...” – noted in the final lines of the seventh miracle story, refined in the next section of the hagiographical work – “... Three of them were from Madra [Madara – misreading of the later copyists] Pliskovska, two from Drastarska ...”<sup>17</sup> The recorded movement on foot of the small group from Drastar [present-day Silistra, Northeastern Bulgaria] through the state centre of the early medieval Bulgaria (Pliska-Preslav area) towards Mesembria, is one of the several performed short or long-distance travels described within the framework of the *Tale*. However, the importance of consolidating the knowledge of traveling in the Eastern Balkans in the early tenth century is found not so much in the identification of the two significant political and spiritual centres as the starting points of it, but in a completely different aspect. Due to the fact that the Bulgarian ethnicity of novice George was explicitly emphasized, the notice of the five passengers from his homeland gains more nuances. According to the text, the group consisted of “four Bulgarians and one native Greek.”<sup>18</sup> Only the last of them was addressed by name - Ephraim, and the details about him have an important place in the ninth miracle of the macro-composition. The pieces of information concerning a person of a different ethnic origin from that of the other travellers would not have been paid attention to if some Byzantine hagiographical texts, relatively close to the time of the writing of *A Tale of the Iron Cross*, were not known

<sup>16</sup> K. Stanev, “Edna hipoteza za sadbata na severite sled pohoda na Nikifor I prez 811 godina [A Hypothesis about the Fate of Severi Tribe after the Campaign of Nicephoros I in 811],” *Acta Musei Varnensis* VIII.1 (2011): 431-450.

<sup>17</sup> B. Angelov, “Skazanie za zhelezniya krast,” 147.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

in the medieval studies. For example, the *Life of St. Germanos*, dedicated to a saintly monk, who lived along the lower reaches of the Strimon (Struma) and Axios (Vardar) rivers about the middle and the second half of the ninth century, mentioned the problems the saint had with the local inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> Equally revealing is the *Life of St. Vlasios of Amorion*, dedicated to another wandering monk from the second half of the ninth and the early tenth century. The text hinted of the possibility for foreigners passing through the Bulgarian lands to be deceived by their travel companions and be sold into slavery.<sup>20</sup> As far as we can rely on what is written in the *Tale's* stories, it was not completely accidental that the five companions were together, and each of them had left home for some (unfortunately unspecified – Y. H.) reason.

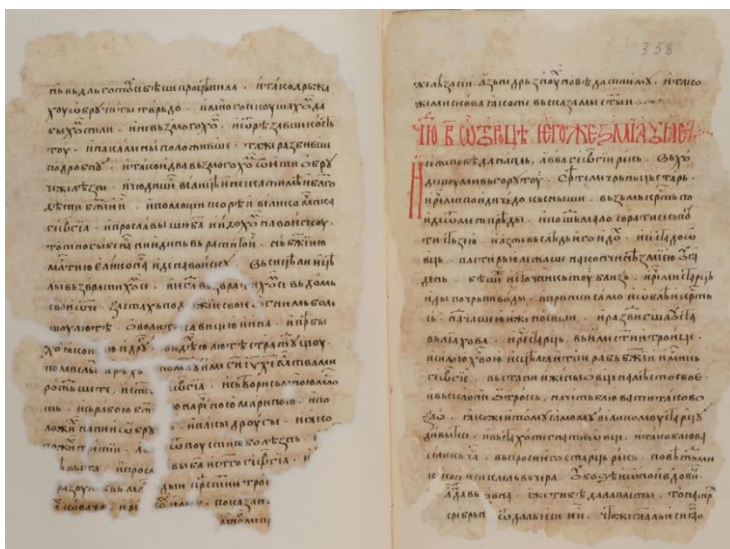


Fig. 3. *Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*  
(fourteenth-century manuscript of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

<sup>19</sup> “Vita sancti Germani,” in *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgariae*, ed. G. Tsankova et al., Vol. 5. (Sofia: Academic publishing house, 1964), 104-106.

<sup>20</sup> “Vita Blasii Amoriensis” in *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgariae*, ed. G. Tsankova et al., Vol. 5, 14-18; V. Gyuzelev, *Srednovekovna Bulgaria v svetlinata na novi izvori* [Medieval Bulgarian in the Light of the New Historical Sources] (Sofia: Narodna prosveta, 1981), 51-60; See also: P. Sophoulis, “Bandits and Pirates in the Medieval Balkans: Some Evidence from the Hagiographical Texts,” *Bulgaria Medievialis* 7 (2016): 339-350.

The different ethnicity of one of them is an important feature that makes the opening lines of *The Miracle with Clement Who Was Saved by Saint George in War* quite revealing. It becomes clear that the Greek Ephraim not only had set off on a journey from the Madara Drastarska but for years he had lived there and performed his duties as a priest among his Christian fellows of Bulgarian origin.<sup>21</sup> Such a record once again points towards one of those Byzantine missionaries who, after Bulgaria's converting into Christianity, remained in the newly baptized country, among the lower, middle and high levels of clergy in the new Bulgarian archdiocese.

Two more trips are recorded in *The Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*. The information about one of them is closely related to the well-known postulates in the Orthodox world. It can be defined as evidence of the fulfilment of the spiritual-mentoring duties and assistance among the members of the provincial clergy. Some conclusions might be drawn from the fact that the presbyter Sava arrived from the nearby town in the cell of the old monk Sophronius and performed the necessary ritual actions at the end of George's noviciate.<sup>22</sup> The abridging in the late copies of the text of the particular story included within the version of *A Tale of the Iron Cross* popular today, published by B. Angelov based on the manuscript of the sixteenth century, does not make it clear enough whether the cell of Sophronius had housed the old monk and his novice for a relatively long period. Fortunately, the gap can easily be filled in by comparing it with the available copies of the story, both from the manuscript No. 73 of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and from the *Collection* of various texts of the early seventeenth-century manuscript No. 805 (1901) of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius – Russia. These more informative copies report that the former warrior spent three years under the tutelage of Sophronius. The additional details make one think that the old monk and his novice's cell was adapted for long-term habitation, and more inhabitants might have been temporarily housed there. The hagiographer also reported about regular movement of people between the nearby settlements and the cell of the monk Sophronius, although without further details.

However, the text states that the two monks earned their living with knitting and rope making by exchanging ready-made ropes for food from people who came from nearby villages for their produce. Such a simple

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<sup>21</sup> B. Angelov, "Skazanie za zhelezniya krast," 147-148.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, 146.

small-scale barter is not surprising at all. This *Tale's* information overlaps entirely with the knowledge of the economic characteristics of the societies in the Eastern Balkans during the Middle Ages. At the same time, performing such activities was in line with the emerging trends among Orthodox monasticism at that time.<sup>23</sup>

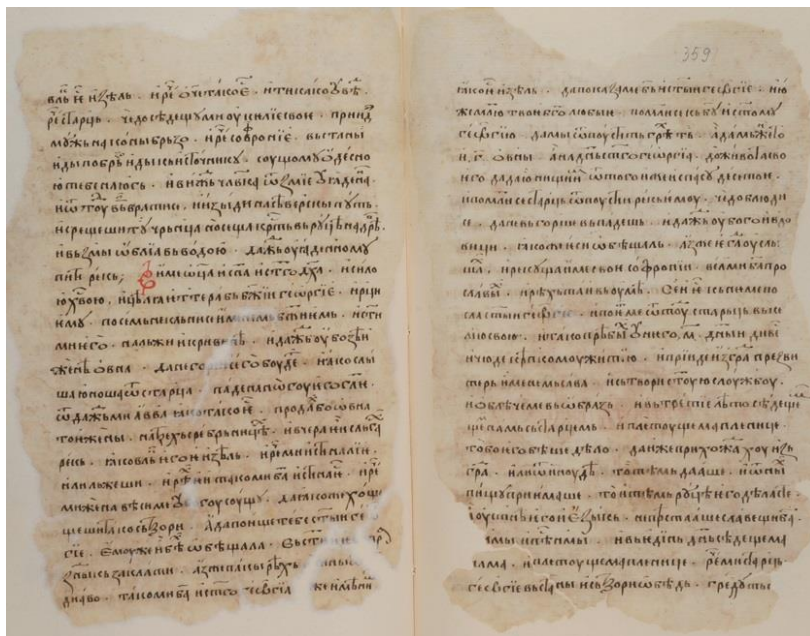


Fig. 4. *Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*  
(fourteenth-century manuscript of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

The forms of spiritual tutorship described and the life in relative seclusion (but without losing the connection to the surrounding population) fit into the well-known monastic practices in the tenth-century Bulgaria.<sup>24</sup> The compiler of the macro-composition also

<sup>23</sup> B. Angelov, "Staroslavjanski tekstove," 176. See Fig. 3, Fig. 4 and Fig. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. K. Popkonstantinov, "Kam vaprosa za otshelnicheskite praktiki v Bulgaria prez X vek. Svetiyat otets Antony ot Krepcha i sv. Yoan Rilski [On the Question of Hermit Practices in Bulgaria during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Holy Father Anthony of Krepcha and St. John of Rila]," in *Svetogorska obitel Zograf*, ed. V. Gyuzelev et al, Vol. 3 (Sofia: Gutenberg, 1999), 83-89; G. Atanasov, "Za hronologiyata i monasheskata organizatsiya v skalnite obiteli prez Parvoto



recounted another travel, in harmony with what was known at that time about the local mainly Byzantine (but not only) reality.<sup>25</sup> The Balkan residents, especially those near Constantinople, had the opportunity to seek medical care in the Imperial capital. It is significant that such a fragment was also described in the last, tenth miracle story of the *Tale*.<sup>26</sup> *The Miracle with the Woman Having a Breast Wound* describes the overnight stay of a woman with a breast wound at the gates of Constantinople. Moreover, the stay there was forced due to the fact that the traveling family arrived in the evening after the gates of the city were closed.<sup>27</sup> The next miraculous healing within the collection of miracle stories under review would hardly have attracted attention had it not resembled the popular Byzantine literary models.<sup>28</sup>

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balgarsko tsarstvo [About the Chronology and the Monastic Organization in the Cave Monasteries in the First Bulgarian Tsardom],” in *Svetogorska obitel Zograf*, ed. V. Gyuzelev et al., Vol. 3 (Sofia: Gutenberg, 1999), 281-293; R. Kostova, “Ot mirskiya zhivot kam monashestvoto. Kade e granitsata i koy ya preminava v Bulgaria prez X v.?” [From the Secular Life to the Monasticism. Where is the Border and Who Crosses it in Bulgaria during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century?],” in *Traditsii i priemstvenost v Bulgaria i na Balkanite prez srednite vekove*, ed. K. Popkonstantinov et al. (Veliko Tarnovo: Universitetsko izdatelstvo “Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy”, 2003), 147-166; Eadem, “Skalniyat manastir pri s. Krepcha. Oshte edin pogled kam monasheskite praktiki v Bulgaria prez X v. [The Cave Monastery Near the Village of Krepcha. Another Look at the Monastic Practices in Bulgaria in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century],” in *Prof. din Stancho Vaklinov i srednovekovnata balgarska kultura*, ed. K. Popkonstantinov et al. (Veliko Tarnovo: Universitetsko izdatelstvo “Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodiy”, 2005), 289-301; Eadem, “Patronage and Monastic Geography in Bulgaria in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” in *State and Church: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium*, ed. V. Gyuzelev and K. Petkov (Sofia: ARCS, 2011), 189-207.

<sup>25</sup> V. Gyuzelev, “Tsarigrad i bulgarite prez Srednovekovieto (VII - XV v.) [Constantinople and the Bulgarians during the Middle Ages (7<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)],” *Istoricheskoe badeshte* 1 (1998): 3-11; K. Belke, “Roads and Travel in Macedonia and Thrace in the Middle and Late Byzantine Period,” in *Travel in the Byzantine World: Papers from the Thirty-fourth Spring Symp. of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, Apr. 2000* [Society for Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Publications 10], ed. R. Macrides (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2002), 73-90; L. Simeonova, *Putuvane kam Konstantinopol. Targoriya i komunikatsii v Sredizemnomorskiya sriyat (kerayat na IX - 70-te godini na XI v.)* [Traveling to Constantinople. Trade and Communications in the Mediterranean (the End of 9<sup>th</sup> - 70s of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century)] (Sofia: Paradigma, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> B. Angelov, “Skazanie za zhelezniya krast,” 151.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, 151-152.

<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, one of the most popular examples is related to the appearance of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty in the Imperial capital. Cf. *Theophanes Continuatus, Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn: E. Weber, 1838), 222-224. Particularly useful in this regard are the comments of G. Moravcsik, “Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 15 (1961): 59-126; N. Koutrakou, “La rumeur dans la vie politique byzantine. Continuité et



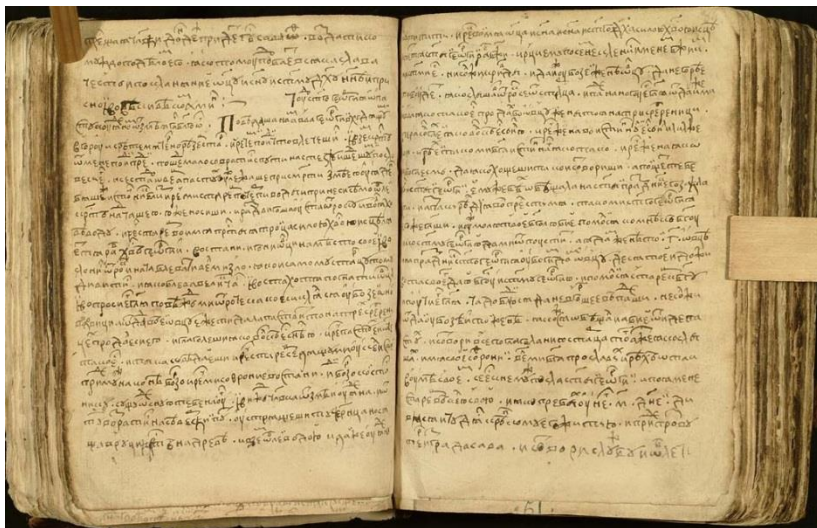


Fig. 5. *Miracle with the Shepherd Bitten by a Snake*  
(seventeenth-century manuscript of the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, Russia)

Analyzing the *Tale of the Iron Cross* as a source of information concerning the late ninth – the early tenth centuries makes it possible to identify the travels in the Eastern Balkans described in its texts as a problematic unit whose aspects are a subject to a certain classification. Traveling individually, in small or larger groups, religious and pilgrimage traveling, traveling with a non-religious character of laymen and clergymen can be easily tracked. In addition, the geography of miracles (in the words of Turilov), both in the compiled strata and in the original part of the *Tale*, covers a wide area - the lands around the Danube Delta, parts of the Eastern Haemus, the southwest coasts of the Black Sea, the surrounding areas of Constantinople and the Eastern Mediterranean. Within the outlined space, apart from the short-distance travel (in the immediate habitat), there was also long-distance traveling. Last but not least, it is important to point out that not all the moments of everyday life at a popular level in newly converted Bulgaria listed in the text have been discussed here, while others have been only briefly commented on.

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mutations (VIIIe - Xe siècles),” *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995): 66; G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 192 ssq.

This is quite understandable with a view to highlighting those aspects that are directly relevant to the major theme of traveling in Slavia Orthodoxa. What is more, it must be admitted that the present text can hardly deal with all the aspects that have remained out of the scope of attention of scholars dealing with the *Tale of the Iron Cross* until now. It is clear that the comments offered here are but a small step towards a thorough study of the entire text of the hagiographical work and its involvement in the full-scale scientific circulation of the historical information recorded within the frames of its miracle stories.

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# Medieval Travels and the Ensuing Texts as Mirrors of a Society, a Culture, and a World View<sup>1</sup>

Paulo Catarino Lopes<sup>2</sup>

For many years, despite all the evidence resulting from the wide circulation and mobility in the centuries of transition from the Roman world to the Medieval one,<sup>3</sup> from the expansion of Islam, the Nordic incursions to the East and West, the Crusades, the missionary campaigns,<sup>4</sup> and most of all, the Christian pilgrimages which

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<sup>3</sup> On the subject of the practice of travel, as well as circulation and mobility, at the end of the Roman Empire and in the early medieval centuries, see the nuclear study of M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims. Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005). In essence, this study explores a broad intersection of early monastic practices and itinerancy. In other words, it reveals the development of ascetic travel between the fourth and eighth centuries. Always contextualizing and substantiating, Dietz provides several important examples of travellers who crossed the contemporary paths, terrestrial and maritime, especially for religious reasons (in particular the wandering monks – gyrovague – and pilgrims, who then travelled along the ancient Roman roads, especially towards the Holy Land and the sacred places of biblical tradition). It should also be noted that throughout her analysis, Dietz refers to an important innovative bibliography on these issues. On the same subject, but covering an earlier chronology (the pre-Christian world, namely Greek and Roman), see also the study of J. Kuuliala and J. Rantala ed., *Travel, Pilgrimage and Social Interaction from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2020). In particular pages 1-14.

<sup>4</sup> The Medieval origins of Latin Christianity are largely associated with successive campaigns of evangelization and missionary movements. Carried out by itinerant clergy, they contributed to the annexation to the Catholicism of Mediterranean and urban roots, of vast rural areas of Europe and kingdoms and communities formerly situated, partly or entirely, outside the former Christian Roman Empire, from the British Isles to Poland and Hungary, passing through Scandinavia and Germany. Without the dislocations of clerics, who used Latin as the common language in the different countries, and the same holy texts as reference, Western Medieval civilization would not have been structured

continuously crossed through the heterogeneous spaces of Christianity,<sup>5</sup> the Middle Ages were not perceived as a period of circulation, mobility, or travel, especially covering long distances. This was a historiographic issue often addressed in the context of the study of Modernity, whereby the Middle Ages were seen as a predominantly rural period. Furthermore, from a perspective of long-duration, it was thought that the great fragility of urban life and of medium and long-distance commercial exchanges did not encourage dislocations.

However, in recent years, several studies have helped mitigate this excessively aprioristic vision, both in terms of social practices and of the imaginary. Historians have increasingly demonstrated how, especially in the Late Middle Ages, Western society saw an intense circulation of people, objects, models, and ideas, and today there is a vast amount of

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and established. Good examples, among many others, are those provided by the Roman monk Augustine of Canterbury (early sixth century-604), whom Pope Gregory the Great had sent to the Anglo-Saxons as a missionary in 596 (he is considered the “Apostle to the English” and a founder of the English Church); by Boniface (672-754), the Anglo-Saxon martyr and German missionary (he was a leading figure in the Anglo-Saxon mission to the Germanic parts of the Frankish Empire during the eighth century, true hostile lands); by Columba of Iona (521-597), an Irish abbot and missionary evangelist credited with spreading Christianity in what is today Scotland at the start of the Hiberno-Scottish mission; and by the famous Martin of Tours (c. 316-397), who travelled and preached especially through western Gaul. As Maribel Dietz refers, “Missionary travel, voyages to spread Christianity to non-Christians, reaches back to the earliest days of the church and was responsible for a great deal of religious movement at that time. Indeed, most of the movement in the first three centuries of the church was linked to missionary endeavours. Members of the early church were highly mobile, travelling from city to city; this mobility, as many historians have argued, helped to spread Christianity throughout the Mediterranean. (...) In the late sixth century, papal initiation of missionary travel would begin to have an impact in northern Europe.” M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 25-26. See also Ian N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> The extensive medieval geography of holy places, within, and sometimes beyond Christianity, generated numerous pilgrimages, which resulted in the organization and establishment of a vast network of roads that were used by medieval travellers, including non-pilgrims. Some of these road systems have survived until today, as demonstrated by the many routes leading to Santiago of Compostela. See J. Richard, *Les récits de voyages et de pèlerinages* [Travel and pilgrimage accounts] (Turnhout: Brépols, 1981), *I Congresso Internacional dos Caminhos Portugueses de Santiago de Compostela* [I International Congress of the Portuguese Paths of Santiago of Compostela] (Lisboa: Edições Távola Redonda, 1992).

research available about individuals who set out on journeys, a human group so wide and diversified that it is transversal to contemporaneity.<sup>6</sup>

It should be pointed out that it is reductive to resort to the traditional notion of a rupture, on the one hand, between the Roman Empire and the so-called Middle Ages (even because in the East, the same empire did not end), on the other hand between the Medieval world, seen as a period of darkness, and the subsequent Modern Age, entirely diverse, in the middle of which is that purifying bridge called Renaissance. Jacob Burckhardt's nineteenth-century interpretation of the Renaissance, and consequently of the Medieval period, has long since become outdated. As Jacques Le Goff points out:

That period of transition, which the Age of Enlightenment designated as the *Dark Ages*, was, since the beginning, defined by the expression 'Middle Ages' – a derogatory concept – like a period that was, if not negative, at least inferior to the one that followed it. [...] This chronological and derogatory definition of the Middle Ages has, for several decades, and especially in recent years, come under attack by the two extremes [...]. The Middle Ages/Renaissance polarity is contested in many aspects. [...] The past undoubtedly objects when we try control and tame it with

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<sup>6</sup> See, among others, A. T. Serstevens, *Los precursores de Marco Polo* [Marco Polo's forerunners] (Barcelona: Orbis, 1986), *Travel and travellers of the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Newton (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), B. Fick, *Los libros de viajes en la España medieval* [Travel books in medieval Spain] (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1976), E. Aznar Vallejo, *Viajes y descubrimientos en la Edad Media* [Travel and discoveries in the Middle Ages] (Madrid: Síntesis, 1994), J. P. Roux, *Les explorateurs au Moyen Age* [Explorers in the Middle Ages] (Paris: Fayard, 1985), J. R. S. Phillips, *La expansión medieval de Europa* [The medieval expansion of Europe] (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), J. Verdon, *Voyager au Moyen Age* [Travelling in the Middle Ages] (Paris: Perrin, 1998), J. Rubio Tovar, *Libros españoles de viajes medievales* [Spanish medieval travel books] (Madrid: Taurus, 1986), J. Á. García de Cortázar, *Los viajeros medievales* [Medieval Travellers] (Madrid: Santillana, 1996), M. Mollat, *Los exploradores del siglo XIII al XVI: primeras miradas sobre nuevos mundos* [Explorers from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century: first glances at new worlds] (Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), M. A. Ladena Quesada, *El mundo de los viajeros medievales* [The world of medieval travellers] (Madrid: Anaya, 1992), N. Ohler, *The Medieval Traveller* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1998), *Voyages et voyageurs au Moyen Age – XXVI<sup>e</sup> Congrès de la SHMES Limoges-Aubazine, mai 1995* [Travels and travellers in the Middle Ages – XXVI<sup>th</sup> SHMES Limoges-Aubazine Congress, May 1995] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996).

periodization. Certain divisions are, however, more lacking in fundament than others as evidence of change. The designation of Renaissance does not seem pertinent to me. Most of the characterizing signs which have been used to identify it appeared long before the period that we apply it to (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>7</sup>

It is important to be cognizant of the tenuousness of broad stagnant classifications and periodisations, namely concerning topics such as travel/circulation/mobility and the ensuing written work. *Continuity* is, more than ever, an irrefutable and operative element for any solid attempt at historical hermeneutics, particularly in terms of culture and mentalities. It is thus impossible for new practices, and political, cultural, or religious guidelines to be manifested without considering the legacy of previous centuries. The coexistence of techniques, ideas, styles, models, and tastes was a fact.<sup>8</sup>

An excellent example is offered by the continuity that occurred between the Roman world and the Middle Ages in terms of the ancient network of Roman roads being used by Medieval people. Indeed, the road system built over centuries by the Romans continued to be widely used after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the last quarter of the fifth century.

This was largely due to the fact that the nature, meaning, and perception of travel and of travellers changed during late antiquity. Refugees, Christian officials, women, and monks joined the ranks of the soldiers, Roman officials, merchants, and messengers who traditionally made up the majority of Roman travellers. This led to an increase in the

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<sup>7</sup> J. Le Goff, *O Imaginário Medieval* [The Medieval Imaginary] (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1994), 20.

<sup>8</sup> History is continuous, as António José Saraiva points out: “Not that new and miraculous entities had taken the stage or changed the substance of things. In reality, none of the facts that we pointed out can be considered precedents. (...) The Renaissance is the result of a historical process that began in the heart of the feudal world. (...) It would therefore be a mistake to think that the Renaissance is a miraculous eruption of forces generated from nothing; and it would be a mistake to also perceive it as a finished, uniform entity, independent of space and time.” Likewise, Jean Delumeau feels that the idea that “a violent break separated the dark ages from the period of light” is completely wrong. A. J. Saraiva, *História da Cultura em Portugal* [History of Culture in Portugal] (vol. II, Lisboa: Jornal do Fôro, 1953), 16-17; J. Delumeau, *A Civilização do Renascimento* [The Civilization of the Renaissance] (Lisboa, Edições 70, 2004), 9.

number of travellers (in general) at that time and in the following years, despite the extreme difficulties and the hostile environment (especially at the political-military level).

Many travellers of those times of change were on the road not by their own choice, but in flight from the upheaval and turmoil – especially at the level of the urban scene – resulting from Germanic migrations. As refugees headed first into Africa, and later, after the Vandal invasions, eastward to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece, and Asia Minor, which were still under Roman control, long-distance travel increased dramatically, and upheaval and displacement became a way of life. Therefore, it is worth noting that the migrations of the Germanic peoples, which caused the displacement of native Roman inhabitants, only served to increase the general itinerant character of society in this time of transition.

Travel was an integral part of Roman identity and culture because travel had played an essential role in Roman society from its beginning. The empire was created through conquest but kept together through communication, colonization, and the presence of the Roman legionaries. Roads made an early appearance in this culture as a means of strengthening the cohesion of the conquered territories (the provinces). Thus, movement existed at the heart of the Roman world since the moment it started to expand, with great relevance during the Republic and the Empire. Such a powerful phenomenon could not simply disappear, even because, despite the hostile environment for circulation, after the fall of imperial Rome, the physical structures were still available to make use of them. In another fundamental perspective, that of memory, the enduring remains of the vast Roman road system therefore serve as a physical reminder of the importance of travel in the Roman civilization.

On the other hand, based on the same postulate, in the medieval twilight, the culture of movement did not simply appear out of nowhere. In fact, it was present throughout the Middle Ages, having experienced a natural increase in the final centuries, due in large part to the opening atmosphere of the time, as well as to the economic growth and generalized development, which took place mainly in Southern Europe (Italy, Portugal, Castile, Aragon).

What stands out more than the practice of travelling *per se*, is how the world is perceived as the object of a profound transformation throughout these centuries of change. Furthermore, the question here is

not a momentary and superficial transformation – one associated with a short time, an event, an individual, that is, a history of short-duration (*événementielle*).<sup>9</sup> Nor is it a history of medium amplitude, cyclical “from the cycle to the ‘intercycle’ – which offers us the choice of a decade, a quarter of a century, and lastly, the half century of Kondratiev’s classic cycle.”<sup>10</sup> It is, instead, an ontological mutation, of great movements, that overturns and substitutes the foundations of the mental framework, and, consequently, of the structures of the imaginary, which are thus irreversibly altered. That mutation which Braudel talks about when he evokes the history of “secular amplitude”<sup>11</sup> and the “great permanencies,”<sup>12</sup> that is, “history of long, and even very long duration.”<sup>13</sup>

In this regard, Georges Duby points out that:

it is convenient to apply to the study of mentalities the outline proposed by Fernand Braudel which suggests that we should identify different levels of the past, especially three great frequencies of duration – in other words, three histories [...]. Micro-history, ‘heedful of short time, of the individual, of the event’, history of small pieces of evidence and dramas, that of the surface; history with oscillations of medium amplitude divided into segments of several decades, which we could call ‘cyclical’ [...]; more in-depth history, ‘of long, even very long duration’, which covers centuries.<sup>14</sup>

## I. Who travelled?

Like the period itself that serves as a background, the sociology of medieval travellers is hugely diverse. Apart from large groups – noblemen, clerics, and countless merchants from emerging European

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<sup>9</sup> Fernand Braudel calls it “a short time, commensurable with individuals, daily life, our illusions, our rapidly growing awareness.” F. Braudel, *História e Ciências Sociais* [History and Social Sciences] (Lisboa: Editorial Presença, 1990), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *Gramática das Civilizações* [Grammar of Civilizations] (Lisboa: Teorema, 1989), 42.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, *História e Ciências Sociais* [History and Social Sciences], 10.

<sup>14</sup> G. Duby, *Para uma História das Mentalidades* [Towards a History of Mentalities] (Lisboa: Terramar, 1999), 34-35.

cities between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries<sup>15</sup> – there is an immense gallery of subtypes: wandering or itinerant monks (both male and female), students, pilgrims, missionaries, warriors, robbers, second-born sons of noble families seeking their fortune, monks circulating between monasteries and often carrying that Medieval treasure that were books, messengers, minstrels, professional freight forwarders (*almocreves* in Portuguese), peasants, officials, craftsmen, explorers, paupers, fugitives, even vagabonds, and many others. All of them, to one degree or another, contributed to feed and make up the extensive human framework that comprised the mobility and circulation that were inherent to daily life in the twilight of the Middle Ages and early years of Modernity. Furthermore, they were all, at some point, simultaneously or separately, pilgrims searching for the sanctuaries and relics that allowed them to attain celestial blessings and protection.

## **II. The journey and the sacrosanct**

How was said, late antique and early medieval migrations left a new atmosphere in which travel and dislocation were commonplace. In this context, in which the practice of paths becomes part of the experience of many Christians, it was inevitable that the phenomenon of travel would be impregnated with religious significance (it was in this scenario that monastic men and women began to explore the ascetic qualities of the pilgrimage itself). Travel and Christianity were henceforth inextricably interconnected:

it became in many respects more difficult and more dangerous, and the stresses that this shift created caused a deep transformation in attitudes toward travel. Rather than being regarded as a desperate condition, wandering and homelessness could now be infused with meaning, including

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<sup>15</sup> One of the structuring changes introduced by the Renaissance in the twelfth century was the revival and reorganization of an entire network of commercial routes. From this reformist century onwards, cities, with their flourishing economic and social dynamism, broke away from the rigid frames of a predominantly rural society and became, concurrently, the main centres for cultural advancement. See J. Le Goff, “La fonction économique,” in *Histoire de la France Urbaine. La ville médiévale* [History of Urban France. The medieval town], dir. G. Duby (vol. II, Paris: Seuil, 1980), 241-261, idem, “O renascimento urbano,” in *A Civilização do Ocidente Medieval* vol. I [The Civilization of the Medieval West] (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1992), 102-109.

religious meaning. Those were the factors in late antique and early medieval travel.<sup>16</sup>

In short, at the same time when circulation became more common, travel gained a new spiritual dimension determined precisely by the conditions of reality (travellers were exposed to a variety of dangers, and difficulties).<sup>17</sup>

So it is legitimate to say that the intimate connection between Christianity and human circulation has its roots in the last centuries of the Roman Empire, extending into the beginning of the Middle Ages. Specifically, monasticism in this period was itself a loosely defined, multifaceted phenomenon that incorporated a wide variety of ascetic practices, namely absence of a commonly accepted paradigm of monastic behaviour and a variety of forms of religious travel. In fact, monasticism as a phenomenon closely linked to the practice of travel was born in this broad transition period: to a large extent, the origins and development of Christian religious travel in the West have their beginnings precisely in the travelling monks, both male and female:

Though pilgrimage is a more familiar mode of Christian religious travel, and the one that eventually eclipsed all others, it was in a monastic milieu that religious travel first claimed an essential place within Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims. Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> “And yet the physical aspects and logistics of making a long journey provide the necessary context in understanding the concerns and experiences of individual travellers as well as how travel and movement itself could acquire religious and spiritual meaning. This does not mean that all late antique travel came to have a religious motive or is open to a religious interpretation; on the contrary, most travellers during late antiquity were the migrating tribes and Roman refugees. However, many there were, religious travellers were only a small fraction of the total. Commerce, military campaigns, imperial business, communication, migration, and displacement were among the principal motives of those who crowded the roads and waterways of the late antique and early medieval Mediterranean basin. But travel, like other aspects of late antique Roman society, began to have a Christian dimension, one that would allow for religious travel and movement as an ascetic practice.” Ibidem, 23-24.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, 2.



In essence, men and women,<sup>19</sup> such as those monks, travelled and promoted travel for religious reasons, as a form of monasticism, with the belief that there was spiritual meaning in the itineracy itself.

What characterized most of these early Christian religious travels was that they did not concentrate on a particular sacred place. Rather, they were a practical way of visiting holy people alive and dead, and a means of religious expression of homelessness and temporal exile:

Travel was viewed as an imitation of the life of Christ, a literal rendering of the life of a Christian, a life only ‘temporarily on this earth.’ One was a wanderer until death, and with death eternal life in the Christian’s true homeland, heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup>

Although the practice of pilgrimage changed in the late Medieval period – starting to relate more to the world of lay people and due to the passage on monastic travel to the prevailing notion of monasticism as stability –, this idea of perpetual pilgrimage and that all Christians were always temporary sojourners on earth, because true home was in the heavenly paradise, will remain until the end of the Middle Ages. In fact, the man of the Late Middle Ages considered himself a *Homo Viator*, that is, someone who travelled the *road* from birth to his moment of death. He was an entity that became physical at birth and whose purpose was to *experience* some years of earthly life before joining God. This was the teaching of the Church, the supreme authority, so no one questioned the provisional character of their earthly existence. A person’s condition was immediately and ontologically that of a *pilgrim*. And their life was a *pilgrimage*.

For all this, the medieval journey<sup>21</sup> transcended the dimension of a mere dislocation motivated by profane preoccupations and needs. Although these aspirations were present in all the travellers, they eventually merged with, or became subordinate to spiritual and religious

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<sup>19</sup> Maribel alert to the role of women in early Christian travel, as travellers and patrons. From her perspective, for women, monasticism offered an alternative to marriage or remarriage, as well as a way of fulfilling a religious vocation in a world where they were increasingly barred from leadership positions in the church. One of the most expressive female cases that the author presents is that of the Iberian Egeria (fourth century). Ibidem, passim, but especially 107-154.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, all of it, from High to Late Middle Ages.

objectives, with the result that the traveller saw the itineraries as a sacred quest, and ultimately, as a chance of being absolved of his sins and saving his soul. From the demands of the gyrovagues<sup>22</sup> that characterized monastic life in the early Medieval centuries – until the moment when the *Regula Benedictina* finally extinguished its flame – to the innumerable military actions in the Orient that were part of the imperial plan of the Portuguese king Manuel I (1495-1521)<sup>23</sup>, which included the chimerical (re)conquest of Jerusalem, passing through the several Crusades and the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta in 1415<sup>24</sup>, there are many examples in which this spirit is present.

From another angle, piety was an important element to ensure the safety of travellers during their journeys. Consequently, travel narratives, both from the Middle Ages and from early Modernity often combined information resulting from the observation of reality and experience with the transcendental, marvellous or fantastic elements that travellers encountered, challenged, or overcame. In the forest of symbols, where roads were often transformed, the marks that threatened or protected those who ventured into them were remembered, insistently, helping them to find the powers with which to avert both the anxiety and fear caused by the *Other*, and the chaos and danger implicit in that encounter<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Wandering or itinerant monks without fixed residence or leadership, who relied on charity and the hospitality of others.

<sup>23</sup> Nicknamed *the Venturous*, King Manuel I was the last medieval king of Portugal and the first European Christian monarch to have agents acting on four continents simultaneously. See J. P. O. Costa, *D. Manuel I (1469-1521), Um Príncipe do Renascimento* [D. Manuel I (1469-1521), A Prince of the Renaissance] (Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2007), 255-261 and 369-372, L. F. Thomaz, “Cruzada,” in *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal* [Portuguese Religious History Dictionary] (vol. c-i, Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2000), 31-38, idem, “L’ Idée Impériale Manuéline,” in *La Découverte, le Portugal et L’Europe. Actes -du Colloque* [Discovery, Portugal and Europe. Conference proceedings], ed. Jean Aubin (Paris: Centre Culturel Portugais, 1990), 35-103.

<sup>24</sup> An action that inaugurates the European Christian presence in North West Africa after the eclipse of the conquests of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian’s (527-565) in that region.

<sup>25</sup> For a more in-depth understanding of the subject of the medieval mentality, particularly regarding travel, see C. Deluz, “Partir c’est mourir un peu. Voyage et déracinement dans la société médiévale,” in *Voyages et voyageurs au Moyen Âge – XXVI<sup>e</sup> Congrès de la SHMES Limoges-Aubazine, mai 1995* [Travels and travellers in the Middle Ages – XXVI<sup>th</sup> SHMES Limoges-Aubazine Congress, May 1995] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 291-303, C. Lecouteux, *Au-delà du merveilleux, Essai sur les mentalités du*

In a civilization where rurality was still a powerful foundation (although in the final centuries it started to lose ground to an urban-mercantile world), travelling often involved a prolonged rupture with the practices and values of daily life. Therefore, seeking divine protection was essential to confront the problems and fears that might arise during a journey, and was often equally important as the careful choice of timing and resources – all the truer in relation to the universe of maritime voyages from the 1420s onwards.<sup>26</sup>

In this context, whether it involved a peasant's daily journey to toil on the land of his lord, or a pilgrimage to Compostela or the Holy Land,

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*Moyen Âge* [Beyond the marvelous, Essay on mentalities of the Middle Ages] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), H. Martin, *Mentalités médiévales, XIème-XVème siècle* [Medieval mentalities, eleventh-fifteenth century] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 127-239, J. R. S. Phillips, *La Expansión Medieval de Europa* [The medieval expansion of Europe], 227-247, J. Verdon, *Voyager au Moyen Âge* [Travelling in the Middle Ages], 331-344.

<sup>26</sup> From the early fifteenth century onwards, Christian Europe was technically ready to contact the civilizational *Other* and new, unknown parts of the world, those which the classical tradition evoked and fabled about. The ocean, which was considered endless, a prime space of chaos and death, whose limits were unknown, started to be envisioned from a different perspective, more as an area that merely separated the familiar from the unfamiliar. Curiosity grew and provoked a desire to unveil its mysteries. And the men of the sea began to progressively confront the vast blue expanse, despite all of its dangers and tragedies. It was reminiscent of the fulfilment of Seneca's prophecy (4 BC-65 AD) in Medea: "Centuries will come in which the Ocean will open its barriers and new lands will appear; Tethys will discover new orbs [...]." Sêneca, *Medeia* (São Paulo: Editora Abril, 1973), 123. But fears were not dispelled easily. The weight of traditions was pervading and reinforced by the direct and brutal contact with the oceanic reality – storms, the night, shipwrecks, thirst and hunger that led to insanity on the high seas. As technology and political and economic plans progressed it, became possible to sail long distances, although this brought a new scenario of danger, and obviously, a new load of imaginary, which invariably required invoking divine protection. To deepen the subject of fear of the sea see J. Delumeau, *História do Medo no Ocidente 1300-1800* [History of Fear in the West 1300-1800] (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001), L. Krus, "O imaginário português e os medos do mar," in *A descoberta do homem e do mundo* [The discovery of man and the of the world], org. Adauto Novaes (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998), 95-105, idem, "Primeiras imagens do mar: entre o Desejo e o Medo," in *A arte e o mar* [Art and the sea] (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1998), 29-39, J. Mattoso, "O imaginário marítimo medieval," in *Obras Completas José Mattoso. Vol. I. Naquele Tempo – Ensaios de História Medieval* [Complete Works of José Mattoso. Vol. I. At that time – Medieval History Essays] (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2000), 231-244, idem, "O mar a descobrir," ibidem, 219-229, idem, "Os antepassados dos navegadores," ibidem, 245-264.

or a sea voyage to the South Atlantic, Medieval travelling required special material, and spiritual care which varied according to the distances, motivations, aspirations and economic resources of the different social groups.

It is therefore unquestionable that the medieval man, in particular the one who lived in the already pointed great periods of transition, travelled much more than has been presumed. Sometimes separately, but especially in groups, we know that individuals travelled the roads inside and outside of Western Christianity, exchanging experiences, techniques, knowledge, and ideas, which all contributed to the progressive establishment of a civilization with very different and differentiated characteristics and values from others with which they coexisted in time and space.

Had it not been for travelling, the genesis and the affirmation of the Christian West would not have been possible, which is why the Middle Ages (in particular, we insist, the centuries of transition, first with the Roman world then with Early Modernity) were in no way synonymous to an impermeable universe sustained by a sedentary and crystallized society, that is, closed in on itself and adverse to progress and innovation. On the contrary, this was a time and space marked by intense human dislocation involving both short distances and extensive itineraries: on the roads and maritime routes people went from place to place to wage war or engage in commerce, to preach or go on pilgrimages, to exercise justice or to escape it, to go into exile, to carry out diplomatic missions with foreign powers, or to proselytize. In short, there were almost as many reasons to travel as there were occupations.<sup>27</sup>

### *The centrality of pilgrimage*

Hereupon it is mandatory to highlight the centrality that the phenomenon of pilgrimage assumed throughout all the Middle Ages in the different social groups – Christians, Muslims, and Hebrews – and very particularly in terms of the religious and spiritual dimension (this without forgetting the implications and the scope it had in various activities of daily life, namely in the economic field). Indeed, in the Medieval centuries the paradigm of travel with a religious motivation it

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<sup>27</sup> J. Aurell, “El nuevo medievalismo y la interpretación de los textos históricos,” *Hispania, Revista Española de Historia* 224 (2006): 809-832.

is, without a doubt, the pilgrimage. However, as with monasticism, a phenomenon that initially went hand in hand with the pilgrimage, it is a term that has undergone an evolution at the semantic level (we have, moreover, come to observe how the notion of pilgrimage was more open in the first centuries of the Middle Ages in relation to what came to mean later). Thus, using the concept in the same way for the High and Late Middle Ages is an anachronistic exercise. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish between both aspects.

The notions of *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* that, roughly speaking, between the eighth and eleventh centuries were established and consolidated,<sup>28</sup> often had the consequence of changing the original meaning of the words and the underlying practices, not reproducing the phenomenon as it actually occurred at the end of the ancient world and in the medieval dawn.<sup>29</sup> The Christian pilgrimage has its roots in the biblical tradition and started as a practice in the early church, then remained a relatively unchanging activity, insofar as it was somehow independent of the temporal, geographical and cultural contexts.

However, at a given moment it gained other connotations, becoming crystallized in the fixed notion of a devotee, above all a layman, who embarks on a religious journey towards a particular sacred place (being the main motivations the search for a cure, the absolution of sins or the payment of a promise<sup>30</sup>). In this context, it is a temporary journey, organized with a permanent return in mind, sometimes with souvenirs of the place visited. The pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostela, to evoke just a very demonstrative example, fits almost absolutely into these parameters. Now, in relation to the act of ancient pilgrimage, that is, that of the classical world and the beginnings of medieval times, things happened in a different, more flexible way. The question is that, in these

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<sup>28</sup> A process largely related to Cluny and the Gregorian Reformation. See note 35.

<sup>29</sup> On pilgrimage in general during this period, see D. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), D. Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire, A.D. 312-460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips 1977), M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, P. Maraval, *Lieux Saints et pèlerinages d'Orient: Histoire et Géographie des Origines à la Conquête Arabe* [Holy Places and Eastern Pilgrimages: History and Geography from the Origins to the Arab Conquest] (Paris: Cerf, 1985).

<sup>30</sup> Not to mention the pilgrimage on behalf of third parties (including posthumously), that is, by proxy, almost always for the same reasons.

most indented centuries (and close to the original model), the word *peregrinatio* referred most of the time to the notion of “journey” – to mention that another Latin word commonly used to describe travel was *iter*, also meaning “journey”; for example the late fourth-century traveller to the Holy Land and beyond, Egeria, used *iter* repeatedly to describe her journey<sup>31</sup>– and, in turn, *peregrinus* to the notions of traveller and / or foreigner. In practice, this means that figures such as the gyrovagues, who travelled almost permanently, and other Christian personalities who took part in religious journeys of various kinds were considered pilgrims and their demands were pilgrimages<sup>32</sup>. Pilgrimage in this most indented period assumed, therefore, a more open connotation, relating to different types of religious travel – itineration’s always related to the Church and the religious world, but carried out for different reasons, that not just spiritual wandering; namely, institutional and representative travels such as journeys to councils (the church was a wide and highly mobile institution, with many important ecclesiastical and monastic leaders travelling to distant lands), missionary expeditions or even exiles. Thus, although distinct, ascetic or monastic travel and pilgrimage were included in the same consideration.

It is, for all of this, essential to retain that on the early medieval pilgrimage was not a uniform, regulated, or codified phenomenon. Just like in late antiquity, there was no set form of pilgrim dress, no established routes or rituals that defined a pilgrimage. The impact of this in reality was that, for example, reaching a particular destination was often less important than the journey itself. On the other hand, what was often considered pilgrimage – of which Egeria is a good example – was first of all monastic vocation, one that included travel at its very core. Pilgrimage thus consisted of a more free and flexible practice, therefore different from what it became in the following centuries.<sup>33</sup> A practice, no

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<sup>31</sup> A. B. Mariano and A. A. Nascimento ed., *Egéria – Viagem do Ocidente à Terra Santa no Séc. IV* [Egeria – Journey from the West to the Holy Land, in the fourth century] (Lisboa: Colibri, 1998).

<sup>32</sup> M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 27-35.

<sup>33</sup> Alfonso X (also known as *the Wise*), king of Castile and Leon (1252-1284), clearly stated in Title XXVII of the First *Partida* – the *Siete Partidas* (“Seven-Part Code”), or simply *Partidas*, was a Castilian statutory/normative code first compiled during the reign of Alfonso X, with the object of achieving legal uniformity for the Kingdom – not only what should be understood by pilgrims, but also the set of privileges and obligations that hung over them. The same monarch will partially return to this theme in Book VI of

doubt, associated to a special form of monastic spirituality derived from a quest for the ascetic qualities of the state of detachment. As Maribel underline:

Monasticism and pilgrimage had clearly diverged in their history: monasticism in the West, through the Cluniac reform movement, was now defined by stability, while pilgrimage became a form of religious travel practiced by the laity, focusing on a specific goal or quest. It also became increasingly standardized and regulated.<sup>34</sup>

Santiago of Compostela, in Northern Iberia, was one of the main centres that consecrated this new and definitive configuration of the pilgrimage. In fact, long-distance pilgrimage within Europe was developed by the tenth century, primarily in the form of travel to Santiago of Compostela.

The pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostela was closely associated with the *Reconquista* of the territories occupied by Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula. The *Reconquista* was a holy war, and Santiago was its leader and religious patron. And as the eleventh century progressed, the powerful monastery of Cluny began to associate themselves even more actively with pilgrimage to Santiago – the monks did not perform pilgrimages themselves, but they built guesthouses and hospitals along the pilgrimage roads, that is, they provided the necessary infrastructures for the success of the new way of pilgrimage. In a next phase, the growing popularity of the new pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostela helped to inspire a new kind of traveller, primarily lay people, to journey to Rome and Jerusalem. But from now on, unlike the earlier travellers to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the pilgrims travelled in large groups, and were far different from

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*Fuero Real*, another normative text of his authorship. According to the doctrine expressed by Alfonso X, pilgrimage always has a religious dimension that translates directly or indirectly into the service of God and honour of the Saints, and implies, at least temporarily, a removal of the closest family members and their own property, often with great sacrifices and expenses, to demand certain sanctuaries, centers of pilgrimage. It should be noted that the pilgrimage centres themselves, of which Santiago of Compostela with its diocesan constitutions are an excellent example, established a whole set of rules to be followed in relation to the pilgrimage practice. J. Marques, “A assistência aos peregrinos no Norte de Portugal, na Idade Média” [Assistance to pilgrims in Northern Portugal, in the Middle Ages], *Revista de História* 11 (1991): 9-22.

<sup>34</sup> M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 215. See also P. Zumthor, *La Medida Del Mundo* [The Measure of the World], 178-193.

the travelling monks who had visited the holy places and holy people in the early Middle Ages.<sup>35</sup> The influence of the Spanish Reconquista in the first crusade as a mass and armed pilgrimage, a journey of conquest and purification, is clear.

In short, during the first Medieval centuries, monastic travel and pilgrimage walked together (geographically, a good example is given to us by the Iberian Peninsula, Italy, and the Holy Land). However, over the centuries and the spread and predominance of the *Regula Benedictina* (by the tenth century it became the most influential monastic rule in Western Christianity) and the Cluniac and Gregorian reform movements,<sup>36</sup> religious travel and monasticism ended up diverging completely.<sup>37</sup> With the creation of the pilgrimage centre of Santiago of Compostela we can say that became “official” the emergence of a new model of religious travel: goal-centred, long-distance pilgrimage aimed at the laity rather than at monks, which became an emblematic example of a life of stability (in a monastery), under a written rule and an abbot, emphasizing the isolation of the cenobium itself.

Monasticism and pilgrimage, as well as their protagonists, simply assumed different faces and directions. This, despite maintaining some itinerancy on the part of monasticism due, for example, to the transportation of books, to the temporal administration of monasteries,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, 213-220.

<sup>36</sup> The Cluniac Reforms were a series of changes within medieval monasticism of the Western Church focused on restoring the traditional monastic life. The movement began within the Benedictine order at Cluny Abbey, founded in 910 by William I, Duke of Aquitaine (875-918). The reforms were largely carried out by Saint Odo (c.878 -942) and spread throughout France, into England, and through much of Italy and Christian Iberian Peninsula. Cluniac monks were strict observers of the Benedictine Rule. In its turn, the Gregorian Reformation had as its main driver Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), although it started a few years earlier, under the pontificate of Pope Leo IX (1049-1054). It was a reaction to the then considered degeneration of the clergy, initiating a wide range of reforms that aimed to return the Church to the primitive times of Christ, the Apostles and their immediate successors. The main objectives of this reform were consolidated in the *Dictatus Papae*, published by Pope Gregory VII, in 1075. Gregorian reform was initiated by the ecclesiastics of Cluny Abbey.

<sup>37</sup> Both rules, *Regula Benedictina* and its predecessor *Regula Magistri*, condemn the practice of monastic wandering and so the early diversity of Western monasticism. Monastic practices, for example by Egeria and Paul Orosius (c.385-c.420), as well as other more or less contemporary travellers, were very different from the precepts established in the *Regula Benedictina*, so they simply could not continue to exist.



to the practice of visitation and to travels to the general chapters – which often involved long distance journeys, especially by the abbots.

It will be with the advent of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the thirteenth century, begging movements that emphasized travel and preaching and underestimated the importance of a permanent and stationary monastery, that this dominant attitude will be clearly challenged. It is the resurgence of a new and highly successful mobile monasticism, which, ironically, will permanently erase the memory of the diversity of primitive Western monastic practices, which had travel and exile at its centre. Displacements imbued with Christian spirituality that consisted essentially of visiting and commune with holy people (both living and dead), giving gifts, venerating relics, and setting up monastic foundations. In their freedom from the strictures of stable society, from Benedictine monasticism, and from formulaic pilgrimage, those travellers from the first half of medieval times, in the prosecution of the late Roman world, created their own form of spiritual expression through voyage, an asceticism of wandering unique. A life of movement also characterized by escape from hostility, escape from social pressures, escape from the mundane.

### **III. Medieval travel narratives**

Much of the travel that took place in the Middle Ages, especially in the early and late centuries, generated written testimonies, the so-called *Medieval travel books*, which as a whole comprise a multifaceted, interdisciplinary and composite genre.<sup>38</sup> They are works of diverse natures and have different aims. However, despite the variants – which could lead to different typologies, based, for example, on their intentions<sup>39</sup>; such as didactic texts, works with pragmatic aims (namely the guides), books presenting new information, among others – they all had an articulation of documentary and literary discourse, endowing them with a unique profile. The predominant documentary discourse

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<sup>38</sup> F. Cristóvão, “Introdução. Para uma teoria da Literatura de Viagens,” in *Condicionalistas Culturais da Literatura de Viagens – Estudos e Bibliografias* [Cultural Conditions of Travel Literature – Studies and Bibliographies], ed. Fernando Cristóvão (Coimbra: Almedina, 2002), 13-52.

<sup>39</sup> Without forgetting the ever-important processes of intertextuality. See Sofia Carrizo Rueda, *Poética del relato de viajes* [Poetics of the travel story] (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1997).

resulted in descriptions, mainly of the urban world, giving it a crucial importance, and the literary discourse dominated the narrative aspects.<sup>40</sup> As a result, medieval travel books offered a clear vision of contemporary reality, and how the world was perceived at that time.

At this point, it is crucial to highlight an issue that has worried researchers<sup>41</sup>: when travel represents only one or more episodes of the text, that is, when it does not constitute the totality of the narrative and does not work autonomously, as happens, for example in chronicles and biographies (in this case the hagiographies<sup>42</sup> deserve special emphasis), can we consider that same text valid as a travel account? We think so, as long as travel is nuclear in the episodes in question and they comply at least with the first of the narrative procedures proposed below. A good

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<sup>40</sup> See L. Albuquerque-García, “El ‘Relato de Viajes’: hitos y formas en la evolución del género,” *Revista de Literatura* 145 (2011): 15-34, idem, “Los ‘Libros de Viajes’ como género literario,” in *Diez estudios sobre literatura de viajes* [Ten studies on travel literature], ed. Manuel Lucena Giraldo y Juan Pimentel (Madrid: CSIC, 2006), 67-87.

<sup>41</sup> See M. Á. Pérez Priego, “Estudio literario de los libros de viajes medievales,” *Epos* 1 (1984): 217-239; R. B. Llavador, “Los libros de viajes medievales castellanos,” *Revista de Filología Románica* 1 (1991): 121-164.

<sup>42</sup> Hagiography is a type of biography that consists of describing the life of some saint, blessed and servants of God proclaimed by some Christian churches, especially by the Catholic Church, for their life and for the practice of heroic virtues. Christian hagiographies focus particularly on the miracles ascribed to these special men and women. So by extension it's an adulatory and idealized biography, that is, a special form of literature with its own conventions and specific models. This made historians consider for a long time a smaller and with little value source for their research work, especially because of their use of *topoi* and the overt attempts to mould facts. However, many today historians start to understand the conventions of hagiography, thus achieving using these texts to understand not only the life of a particular individual, but also the social milieu, social interactions, and relations evidenced in the texts (as it happens with medieval cavalry novels). By carefully peeling away the layers of *topoi*, and by exploring those areas where the text does not quite fit the conventions, one can begin to make use of hagiography, namely at the level of the study of specific areas such as travels, travellers and travel conditions, among many other topics. See the following examples: A. A. Nascimento ed., *Vida de São Teotónio* [Life of Saint Teotónio] (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2013), Adamnán of Iona, *Adamnani Vita S. Columbae. Prophecies, Miracles and Visions of St. Columba (Columcille), First Abbot of Iona, A. D. 563-597* (London: Henry Frowde, 1895), M. Fontaine ed., *Sulpice Sévère, Vie de Saint Martin* [Severe Sulpice, Life of Saint Martin], 3 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967), M. Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Dublin: Blackrock, Co., 1996), S. Valério, *Vida de S. Frutuoso, Arcebispo de Braga* [Life of S. Frutuoso, Archbishop of Braga] (Braga: Oficina S. José, 1996).

example takes place with the Spanish text *El Victorial* or *Chronicle of Pero Niño*, by Gutierre Díaz de Games.<sup>43</sup>

From the great many adventures that were experienced, narratives emerged (independent or, as we said, inserted in other types of texts) that offered to an inquisitive Europe “a universe which until then was only known through fables.”<sup>44</sup> With the evolution of this process, literature turned the simple fact of attaining a destination into a spiritual act of great transcendence. The result was that medieval travel narratives acquired a very special status, regardless of whether they described real or imaginary dislocations.

In a broad sense, the medieval voyages of discovery, that is, long distance journeys, were concentrated in six main phases: in the transition from Antiquity to the Medieval period (spanning, therefore, several centuries) with the migrations of Germanic peoples that changed the western Mediterranean world,<sup>45</sup> the various missionary campaigns carried out, in particular, in central and northern Europe and the vacancies of

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<sup>43</sup> Gutierre Díaz de Games, *El Victorial*, ed. Rafael Beltrán Llavador, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, 1997.

<sup>44</sup> J. Baltrušaitis, *La Edad Media Fantástica, Antigüedades y exotismos en el arte gótico* [The Fantastic Middle Ages, Antiquities and Exoticisms in Gothic Art] (Madrid: Cátedra, 1994), 176.

<sup>45</sup> The barbarian invasions that marked the twilight of the Roman empire and the dawn of the medieval world resulted in wide movements of human communities, both in terms of escape and as the occupation and conquest of new territories: “As Rome slowly transformed itself after the economic and political crises of the third century, a new type of traveller emerged: the refugee. The degree of physical movement of people during this time was unprecedented, as was the impact these migrations would have on the Roman world. Beginning in the fourth century, a large number of Germanic people crossed the Roman frontier. The Germanic tribes were already known to the Roman Empire, but now were a new, threatening presence within its borders. The movements of the Germanic tribes ushered in a fundamentally new type of travel, brought on by hunger and the search for safety. This form of travel caused a chain reaction of displacement: as the Germanic tribes moved, invaded, and settled in areas of former Roman occupation, many inhabitants fled. The invasion of Italy by the Visigoths and the subsequent sack of the city of Rome in 410 spawned a wave of refugee migration to Africa and to the eastern provinces. Jerome, in his letter to Pacatula, notes the great number of Roman exiles throughout the Mediterranean. With the invasion of Spain in the fifth century, many more Romans fled to Africa by sea. In one of his sermons, Augustine writes of crowds of refugees in the city of Carthage. Orosius himself was one of these unfortunate travellers. The movement of refugees was not unidirectional: the sixth-century Vandal occupation of North Africa resulted in a wave of African refugees fleeing into Spain.” M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 22.

pilgrims (pilgrimage here towards the dawn of mediocrity, as highlighted above, which include the practice of monastic wandering); between the seventh and ninth centuries, with the expansion of Islam; at the end of the High Middle Ages, when Scandinavians extended the horizons of Western Christianity to the East and Northeast; in the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the first Crusades; during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when merchants, missionaries and diplomats opened the Asian routes to China – the Orient was a truly oneiric horizon for the Medieval man of Western Christianity –; and finally, in the fifteenth century when European navigators undertook the exploration of the Atlantic Ocean that led to the periplus of Africa, the opening of new maritime routes to Asia and the discovery of America. Obviously, the nature, scope, and repercussion of each one of these phases was different.

Right away, in the transition from the Roman world to the Middle Ages, stand out travel experiences and the consequent writings (direct or indirect) of figures like Egeria, Martin of Tours, Baquiaro (?-c. 425), Fructuosus of Dumio or of Braga (?-665), John Cassian (c. 360-435); Paul Orosius; Martin of Dumio or of Braga (c. 510-c.579) and the so-called Piacenza Pilgrim in the second half of the sixth century,<sup>46</sup> among many others.

More than pilgrims, in the current sense, Egeria, Orosius and even Bachiaro were ascetic wanderers, practicing a form of monasticism based on itinerancy (monasticism itself was in a formative period when they travelled).<sup>47</sup> Above all, they were interested in visiting, meeting, and observing the lives of the holy men and women (ascetics and monastics), living at various holy sites.

Other travellers to mention in this period and advancing through the High Middle Ages are, for example, Helena Augusta, or Saint Helena (c. 246-c. 330), mother of Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337)<sup>48</sup>; Saint

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<sup>46</sup> An anonymous Italian man known as the Piacenza Pilgrim, who undertook his Eastern journey in 570. See C. Milani ed., *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini: Un viaggio in Terra Santa del 560-570 d.C.* [Itinerarium Antonini Placentini: A journey to the Holy Land of 560-570 AD] (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1977).

<sup>47</sup> M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, passim.

<sup>48</sup> In 326-28 Helena undertook a journey to Palestine. According to Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265-339), who records the details of her pilgrimage to Palestine and other eastern provinces, she was responsible for the construction or beautification of two churches, the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, and the Church of Eleona on the Mount of

Melania the Elder (c. 350- c.417) and her granddaughter Saint Melania the Younger (c. 383-439), Jerome (c. 347-420)<sup>49</sup>; Peter the Iberian (c. 417- c. 491)<sup>50</sup>; Avitus of Braga and Hydatius (early fifth-century)<sup>51</sup>; Columba of Iona (521-597)<sup>52</sup>; Adamnán of Iona (c. 624-704), also known as Eunan; the Gallic bishop Arculf and Anglo-Saxon monk Willibald, each of whom journeyed to the Holy Land between 679 and 750 (their accounts are the best surviving testimonies of Western travellers visiting the newly Muslim-controlled East).<sup>53</sup>

Advancing into Medieval twilight, European expansion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries opened ocean lanes that became the prime roads for proto-globalisation, that is, connecting human beings at a global scale. But this extensive process of opening up the world and the subsequent end of compartmentalized and isolated continents, undeniably had its first pioneering steps, its key starting point, with the opening of Christian Europe to the Orient in the immediately preceding centuries.

The dislocations and ensuing experiences of Medieval European travellers in the heart of Asia helped to alter geographic concepts and mental representations of the world, especially from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards. As a result of their experience and

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Olives, sites of Christ's birth and ascension, respectively. Helena left Jerusalem and the eastern provinces in 327 to return to Rome.

<sup>49</sup> A monk who travelled extensively in the Mediterranean basin and who even has inhabited in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

<sup>50</sup> In the late fifth century Peter the Iberian (Peter was from Iberia in Asia Minor), an abbot of a monastery in Gaza, travelled around the Holy Land, where he met both Eudocia and Melania the Younger, also travellers to the Holy Land. An account of his life was written by one of his companions and followers, the monk John Rufus. See John Rufus, *Petrus der iberer* [Life of Peter the Iberian] (R. Raabe: Leipzig, 1885).

<sup>51</sup> Avitus of Braga and Hydatius were both from the Iberian Peninsula, and both took journeys, one to Jerusalem and the other to Rome. Avitus was a close friend of Paul Orosius.

<sup>52</sup> Adamnán of Iona, *Adamnani Vita S. Columbae*.

<sup>53</sup> Both left no written account of their travels by their own hand, however each told of his journeys to others who preserved them. Arculf related his story to the Irish abbot of Iona, Adamnán, who wrote it in his work *De locis sanctis*; and nearly a century later, the Anglo-Saxon Willibald, then bishop of Eichstätt, told of his to a nun of Heidenheim, Huneberc. As Maribel highlights, "these travelers' accounts reveal a remarkable continuity with the previous generation of travelers in terms of their monastic experience of the Holy Land." M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims*, 194.

testimony, both positive and negative, the legacy of Antiquity<sup>54</sup> underwent an irreversible transformation, the culmination of which took place in the aforementioned period of Discoveries.<sup>55</sup> Certainly, permanencies would continue to exist, as demonstrated by the countless texts written by Renaissance Humanists, namely Portuguese, such as *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* (c. 1506) by Duarte Pacheco Pereira (1460-1533), or *Urbis Olisiponis Descriptio* (1554) by Damião de Góis (1502-1574). But nothing would ever be exactly the same again: the symbolic geography

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<sup>54</sup> To a large degree, the perception of distant spaces (and the intrinsic imaginary) during the Middle Ages originated in the Greco-Roman world of Classical antiquity. The Romans inherited the Greek traditions, and medieval doctors copied and adapted them to a new reality: Christianity. This is evident in the manuscripts of the great medieval authors, as well as in the general coeval view of the world. To cite just one example, in the *Etymologies* – a compendium of ancient, profane and religious knowledge – written by St. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), the most widely read text after the Bible in the West during the High Middle Ages, the influence of Pliny the Elder (23-79) is as clear as it is determinant.

Let us look at the case of the notion of monster and monstrous. A monster is a manifestation of disorder and also, like all existing creatures, a manifestation of God – it appears by divine will. Leviathan's strength, for example, reveals the strength of God, its Lord. It is proof that God has dominion not only over the positive forces of life, but also the negative and destructive forces. To control them is, after all, a demonstration of the power and wisdom of God. This is the ambiguity that was always present in the Middle Ages, which came from Aristotle and was consolidated by St. Augustine and Isidore of Seville: within a natural order superior to the one we perceive, the monster is part of the divine plan and contributes to the composition of the universe as an element of diversity. The Middle Ages thus recognises the place of the monster in the norm of nature and spirit. This is evidenced by the massive transposition of the fabulous, the demonic and the wonderful – psychological elements of medieval daily life – to the walls and columns of cathedrals.

Regarding prodigious beings and revealing Pliny's clear influence – Pliny, of all the classical authors, was the most determinant in structuring medieval imagination regarding monsters –, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* performs a true synthesis on the notion of the monstrous. There are two main ideas to retain: monsters do not occur against nature, since they happen by divine will; and the Creator's will is the nature of all that is created. It follows that, instead, monsters occur contrary to *known nature*. The failure is therefore in man, who can only grasp part of nature, the part that he knows and through which he *assesses* monsters. See Pliny, *Natural History*, vol. III, book VIII (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1958-1962), Santo Agostinho, *A Cidade de Deus* [The City of God], vol. III, livro XXI, cap. VIII (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1995), Isidoro de Sevilha, *Etimologías* [Etymologies], vol. II, ed. José Oroz Reta y Manuel A. Marcos Casquero (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1983).

<sup>55</sup> P. Chaunu, *La expansión europea (siglos XIII al XV)* [European expansion (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)] (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1982).

of Christianity and the cosmography of the High Middle Ages had suffered a blow that it would never recover from.

The weight of Medieval authorities such as Cosmas Indicopleustes (seventh century), Beatus of Liebana (?-798), Isidore of Seville, Bede the Venerable (c. 673-735) or Aethiculster (seventh – eighth centuries) began to wane. Nor would their successors, such as Honorius Augustodunensis (c. 1080-1154), who gave continuity to many of the old cosmographic ideas, manage to resist the assault from the direct experience acquired (by travellers) in the Orient. It was the aforementioned transformation over a long time, measured in centuries.

The literary production associated with trade contacts with the Orient was copious. Obviously, the great protagonist was Marco Polo's book (1298–1299).<sup>56</sup> This collection of stories reflected, on the one hand, the explosion and subsequent predominance of urban life during this period, and on the other hand, the great importance of mercantile activity and maritime commerce as catalysts of multifaceted relations with the Asian world.

In the written accounts of merchants and missionaries alike, there is a European and Christian cultural identity, a civilizational reference that would be used as a means of comparison at a time when contacts were being established with the Oriental and religious *Others*. This model served as a basis for Western travellers to evaluate what they saw and experienced; especially, what they were unfamiliar with and what they found *strange*. Not being professional writers but rather deliverers of a certain way of seeing the world, and consequently invested with selective observation, the evidence that they conveyed was invaluable, even in terms of nature (and the physical world), the preferred backdrop for the human adventure.

Inevitably, the capacity of European travellers to distinguish between physical reality and symbolic representation, and consequently gain a more accurate idea of a territory, increased from the mid-twelfth century onwards. Their familiarity with the extra-European space was expanded and demonstrated by the ever more realistic cartography.

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<sup>56</sup> Marco Polo's book, which was largely the outcome of direct observation, became widely known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and strongly influenced the imagination and projects of future explorers, especially Christopher Columbus (1436-1506).

The expeditions to the Orient opened trade routes and cultural interaction that resulted in better knowledge of the geography of Eastern Europe and Asia. By the mid-thirteenth century, the Christians of the West already had a fairly accurate idea of both short and long itineraries – although somewhat uncertainly, and always dependent on the people they encountered upon arrival.

The medieval expeditions to the Orient enlarged the known world, just as the voyages of Discovery would do in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They changed the perception of the world, enriching the cultural panorama in numerous ways, such as the human element and its associated customs, but also, the fauna, flora, and of course, geography.

The material and spiritual repercussions were felt at different levels: in the geographic domain, with the expansion of Medieval borders; in the economic sphere with the opening up of new supply routes and new markets; in the political plane with new opportunities to form alliances to confront the threat of Islam, although this would prove to be more of an illusion than a reality; in the cultural sphere with the establishment of unprecedented relations with other civilizations; in the technical domain with the exchange of instruments and experiments; and ultimately, on the mental plane with greater open-mindedness. And (all this) without forgetting the actual travelling, which benefitted from abundant learning through theory and practice, namely in terms of preparing for long distance dislocations – maritime and overland – and the conscious examination of the conditions and requirements for travelling.

Heirs, especially in terms of daring and determination, of the aforementioned journeys of the missionaries of the early Middle Ages,<sup>57</sup> these voyages onto the far East represented the first decisive step towards a European expansion that would culminate in the transition from the Middle Ages to Modernity with the opening to planetary routes.

The distant and arduous missions of men like Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (c. 1182-1252), Guillaume of Rubrouck (c. 1220-c. 1293), Giovanni de' Marignolli (c. 1182-1252), Marco Polo (c. 1254-1324), Odorico da Pordenone (1286-1331) and Giovanni da Montecorvino (1247-1328),<sup>58</sup> not only proved – once again – that the Medieval world

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<sup>57</sup> See note 3.

<sup>58</sup> Considered the first apostle of China, this Italian missionary was the first archbishop of the Orient, having been inducted as the Archbishop of Peking (Khanbaliq) and



was familiar with long distance circulation and mobility,<sup>59</sup> but also made available to Western Europeans a body of information of unprecedented scale. This naturally led to a clash between innovation, and the knowledge derived from books; between contemporary experience and tradition.

The classical geographers situated the biggest wonders of the world, organic and inorganic, in the Orient. These were lands where all kinds of wonders abounded. The mythology of frontier, subordinate to the powerful centre-periphery logic, became one of the targets of European travellers' questioning: the further away we get from Christianity and the Mediterranean world, the bigger the lack of geographical accuracy and cases of *mirabilia* (marvels).<sup>60</sup> In other words, the further away we get

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Patriarch of All the Orient. He was, in fact, the only archbishop of Peking in the Middle Ages.

<sup>59</sup> In addition to the several examples already mentioned, note the wide journey of the Jew Benjamin of Tudela (1130-1173), who, in the second half of the twelfth-century, went to Jerusalem while Crusaders occupied the city, and visited the territories of the Seljuk Empire (Syria and Mesopotamia). Benjamin of Tudela was one of the most important Jewish travellers of the Middle Ages. From his long journey an account came to us – formed by Tudela's travel notes, but which is certainly not his own – titled in Hebrew *Sefer-Masa'ot* or Travel Book. Although the text is fragmentary and incomplete in relation to what the original work may have been, it offers us a unique travel itinerary from the Hebrew community and, on the other hand, provides a clear view of the conception of the coeval reality by a prominent member of the Iberian Jewish community. Tudela focuses his attention on three fundamental aspects: first, the socioeconomic, political and religious situation of the main coeval Hebrew communities; then, the structural lines of politics in and between the Christian and Islamic nations of the so-called world of Mediterranean influence; finally, the mercantile and artisan centers of both universes, as well as the main trade routes that unite them. The author evokes, in the context of the development of his journey, the main contemporary events, as well as the predominant religions and cults. It pays equal attention to the great contemporary political and cultural centers, never forgetting the built heritage and the economy – especially agriculture, industry and commerce. See Benjamin of Tudela, *The world of Benjamin of Tudela: a medieval Mediterranean travelogue*, ed. Sandra Benjamin (London: Madison/Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995).

See also the example of Margery Kempe (c.1373-after 1438), an English Christian mystic, known for writing through dictation *The Book of Margery Kempe*, a work considered by some as the earliest autobiography written in the English language. Her book chronicles her domestic tribulations, her extensive pilgrimages to holy sites in Europe and the Holy Land, as well as her mystical conversations with God. See Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Anthony Bale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> We consider, in this context, that Jacques Le Goff's definition of the term *mirabilia* is quite illustrative: "mirabilia are not limited to things that Man admires with his eyes (...),

from order and the safely familiar, the closer we get to the unknown, to disorder, chaos, and thus, the fabulous. Albeit very slowly, this mental attitude began to change – not so much in terms of actual logic, which continued to persist, to a degree, until our times, but rather regarding the nature of awe-provoking elements. Take the paradigmatic example of William of Rubruck, who in his *Itinerarium* (thirteenth century) wrote “I inquired about the monsters and monstrous men, which Isidore and Solinus talked about. They [the Mongols] told me that they never saw such things, and we greatly suspect that it may be true.”<sup>61</sup> Further on in his text, this traveller also mentions that “They stated as being true, which I do not believe, that beyond Cathay there is a province where a person of any age that enters it will remain the same age as when he arrived there.”<sup>62</sup>

The same occurred later with Christopher Columbus, again in relation to the mythology of the boundaries of the world. (In his work) Giovanni de’ Marignolli claims to have been in Ceylon, near the Earthly Paradise, and seen a footprint of Adam on a mountain, although at the same time he refutes the uninhabitability of that torrid area or the total depopulation of the antipodes.

Travellers combined accurate observations with inherited beliefs, as part of the imaginary that they had carried with them since birth. This interconnecting of perspectives in their travel accounts can be summarized in the following premise: although they contributed to the survival of ancient myths and legends, the narratives of medieval travellers extensively helped renovate geographic knowledge in an attempt to adapt to reality.<sup>63</sup> A good example is provided by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti (?-1347) with his *Pratica della Mercatura* (c. 1340),

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for it is a whole imaginary than can be ordered around that appeal to one sense, sight, and of a series of images and visual metaphors.” J. Le Goff, *O Imaginário Medieval* [The Medieval Imaginary], 46.

<sup>61</sup> W. Rubruck, “Itinerarium,” in *Crônicas de viagem: Franciscanos no extremo oriente antes de Marco Pólo (1245-1330)* [Travel chronicles: Franciscans in the far east before Marco Polo (1245-1330)] (Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS/EDUSF, 2005), 195.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, 195-196.

<sup>63</sup> More negative, for example, was the influence of copyists, who imagined, without ever seeing, or those who in their uncertainty, added unheard of and unfounded facts to the copies of travel books that they produced. See the emblematic case of several manuscript reproductions – and even some printed ones – of the book of Marco Polo, in which textual passages that merely refer to the great wonders of the world have illustrations of monsters, to attract the reader’s attention.

which presents a detailed itinerary for Cathay and was intended to be a useful guide for merchants. Another description with pragmatic objectives, which has the somewhat paradoxical curiosity of being an account of imaginary travels, stems from the Iberian *Libro del Conosçimiento* (*Book of Knowledge*, early fifteenth century). Both a travel narrative and a geographic compendium in the didactic sense of the term, this work presents the space in a dual way: on the one hand, a space to travel in, marked by the names of successive places so as to induce a symbolic appropriation (as seen by the result of the use of discursive artifices such as “vine” (we came) and “llegamos” (we arrived), which make plausible the illusion of spatial movement); on the other hand, a space as a source of learning, which has its maximum exponent in the coats of arms of the main places visited and in the description of the correct roads to Cathay: “The right roads to Cathay are two, one by way of Constantinople, crossing the big sea (...) The other route is to enter the Mediterranean Sea and go to the island of Cyprus and on to the Greater Armenia and going ...”<sup>64</sup>

From his desk, this anonymous author *travels* through dozens of countries, describing of their geography, flags, inhabitants and customs, and legends. The result is a truly practical guide for travellers.

At this point, one fact is established: thanks to their experience on the road and the ensuing travel manuscripts, the image of the world changed. There was unquestionably a revision of the concept of the planet, because the question of relations between different peoples and races arose on an unprecedented scale in Western Medieval Christianity, that is, the issue of alterity and of interculturality. Consequently, to fully understand the attitude of Renaissance explorers in relation to the novelties they encountered, for example, in the New World, one must go back to the first signs of opening up, and to the geographical and ethnographical contacts that took place between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with Western Christianity’s incursions into Asia.

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<sup>64</sup> *Libro del conosçimiento de todos los reynos et tierras et señoríos que son por el mundo et de las señales et armas que han cada tierra et señorío por sy et de los reyes et señores que los proueen, escrito por un franciscano español a mediados del siglo XIV* [Book of the knowledge of all the kingdoms and lands and lordships that are around the world and of the signs and blazonry that each land and lordship has by itself and of the kings and lords who provide them, written by a Spanish Franciscan in the middle of the fourteenth century], ed. Marcos Jiménez de la Espada (Madrid: T. Fortanet, 1877, Ms. S, escudo LXXVIII), 123.

Those travellers, much less prepared in every way than their future counterparts, observed the religious practices, daily customs and moral behaviour of the inhabitants that they came in contact with. And, a fundamental fact was that, in most cases, their views were based on value judgements of what they had seen and heard, that is, on conditioned knowledge.

In the first phase, there is a more or less harmonious coalition between a literary legacy, whereby books were a civilizational cultural referential, and direct observation, whereas in a later phase, there was a noticeable conflict between both sides, with the predominance of personal explorations. In effect, these medieval travellers slowly began to rely more on experience, and always strove to be plausible, as demonstrated in their accounts by their reiterated concern with accuracy.

Even after closing (its doors) again to foreigners with the fall of the ruling Mongol dynasty in 1368, the Far East remained a living memory to Western Christianity and helped kindle the ambitions of European explorers in the fifteenth century. Consequently, reminiscences of the endeavours of the 1300s can be found in writings as diverse as those of Peter of Abano (1250-1315), Boccaccio (1313-1375), or even Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1343-1400).

A series of events, such as the collapse of the Tartar Empire, the conversion to Islam of the Mongols of Turkestan and Iran, the bubonic plague and the Great Schism brought an end to the Christian missions in the mid-fourteenth century. Asia became closed again to Europeans. As a result, the accounts of renowned voyages began to fade in Western memory. Ancestral legends recovered lost ground in the contemporary mentality and less truthful narratives began to appear: around 1350, the supposed author John Mandeville wrote a travel memoir which combined an account of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with a book about the wonders of Asia; some years later an anonymous author wrote the *Libro del Conoscimento*. It is no coincidence that these texts were almost concurrent and were widely disseminated. A lack of first-hand information led to the publication of imaginary voyages that helped satiate readers' craving for new information, and which were soon assimilated into the familiar and accurate accounts of missionaries and merchants, operating thus a complex connection between real and imaginary facts, between actuality and tradition. For us today, these narratives appear different from each other, but at that time they were

not. The use of the *Libro del Conosçimiento* as a reference for real journeys is evidence of this fact.<sup>65</sup>

According to Paul Zumthor and María Jesús Lacarra, the authors and their audiences were not discriminating on credibility, a feature less important then, than it is today.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Jacques Le Goff states that “Medieval Western writers did not create hermetic compartments between scientific or didactic literature, and fiction. They included wonders to an equal degree in all these genres.”<sup>67</sup> The important point to retain is that readers of that period would read a work according to a plurality of perspectives, which, as Hans Robert Jauss points out, determined the conception of the actual works.<sup>68</sup>

The theory of this researcher is based on the central idea of a *horizon of expectations*, a concept that is defined by a set of cultural, ethical and literary expectations manifested by readers in the specific historical time in which the work emerges. Jauss defends that, apart from the traditionally accepted aesthetics of production and representation, there is another even more decisive one, at a deeper level, which is the basis of this production: an aesthetics of reception and influence. This aesthetics is founded on the previous literary experience of readers, and especially, on their horizon of expectations about a new work. This mental state predisposes and influences the author during the process of conception of a work.

In the case of texts like the *Libro del Conosçimiento*, where the use of the first person places it in the category of autobiographical models,

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<sup>65</sup> M. Jesús Lacarra, “La imaginación en los primeros libros de viajes,” in *Actas del III Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval* [Proceedings of the III Congress of the Hispanic Medieval Literature Association] (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1989), 501-509.

<sup>66</sup> P. Zumthor, *La Medida Del Mundo. Representación del espacio en la Edad Media* [The Measure of the World. Representation of space in the Middle Ages] (Madrid: Cátedra, 1994), 285-303. M. Jesús Lacarra, “El *Libro del Conosçimiento*: un viaje alrededor de un mapa,” in *Libro del conosçimiento de todos los rregnos et tierras et señorios que son por el mundo, et de las señales et armas que han* [Book of the knowledge of all the kingdoms and lands and lordships that are around the world, and of the signs and blazonry they have], ed. María Jesús Lacarra, María del Carmen Lacarra Ducay y Alberto Montaner (Zaragoza: Institución “Fernando El Católico” (CSIC) / Diputación de Zaragoza, 1999), 77-93.

<sup>67</sup> J. Le Goff quoted in D. Corbella Díaz, “Historiografía y Libros de viajes: *Le Canarien*,” *Revista de Filología Románica* 1 (1991): 104.

<sup>68</sup> H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Paris: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 3-45.

readers were led to make an association between the work and other similar productions, such as the travel reports of missionaries. This way, imagined texts gained authenticity and credibility – the unlikeliness of the itinerary of the *Libro del Conosçimiento*, for example, did not prevent it from being a reference for the conquerors of the Canaries, or even, as Peter Russell defends, possibly for the expeditions of Prince Henry (the Navigator) along the West African coast.<sup>69</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that in the countries of Christendom travel accounts benefited from a wide audience avid for information about the lands that existed beyond the familiar boundaries – this huge lack of news, is, in fact, one of the causes for the extensive dissemination and acceptance of this literary genre. The influence of these writings on readers was, therefore, considerable, because of the facts they mentioned and the importance they had in the collective mentality. It entailed, ultimately, a response to a need of that audience.

Hence, it is easy for us to understand that when applied to the Middle Ages, the distinction between “real” and “fictitious” is an ineffectual exercise. The travel accounts alternated observations derived from reality with descriptions of myths and local legends. Knowledge of a space did not preclude the fantastic or unreal elements, which were largely derived from Antiquity and from the Scriptures; they overlapped and complemented each other in a discursive totality without regard for the resulting contradictions.

Another argument that reveals the weak operativity of the division between real and fictitious narratives, as well as the simplistic character of these classifications, resides in the intense interaction between geographical and travel works. The same work could have “diverse” origins, some very different from each other.

In summary, the so-called “real” narratives were, in the Middle Ages, full of fantasies, while those classified as “fictitious” had many passages full of true information, the fruit of the author’s experience or acquired from someone who had travelled and recorded, or transmitted orally, their adventures.

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<sup>69</sup> P. Russell, “A Quest Too Far: Henry the Navigator and Prester John,” in *The Medieval Mind: Hispanic Studies in Honour of Alan Deyermond*, ed. Macpherson and R. Penny (London: Tamesis, 1997), 401-416, Idem, “The Infante Dom Henrique and the Libro del conocimiento del mundo,” in *In memoriam Ruben Andressen Leitão*, vol. II, ed. J. Sommer Ribeiro (Lisboa: INCM, 1981), 259-267.

## *1. Narrative procedures*

Many individuals from all walks of medieval life left written evidence of their experience on the roads, giving rise to a vast literature: guides and reports of pilgrimages, accounts of missionaries and ambassadors, epistolography records, itineraries, merchants' guides, explorers' and adventurers' narratives, and even descriptions of imaginary journeys.<sup>70</sup>

Although diversified<sup>71</sup> and comprehensive, this genre involved a series of narrative procedures – not necessarily simultaneous –, which make medieval travel narratives an autonomous and coherent form of literature in the panorama of medieval narrative prose.<sup>72</sup> However elementary they may seem, these literary mechanisms help, in fact, to identify this type of accounts, and, consequently, contribute to the identitary legitimation of the greater whole of which, after all, they are an integral part.

### *A. Observing an itinerary*

The first and pivotal tenet was to respect an itinerary. These narratives were structured according to a main trajectory, which constituted the backbone of the story and is present from the beginning to the end.

Following a route, was, therefore, the structuring element, the essence of a medieval travel narrative, even in the form of a pilgrimage guide, a letter/report concerning an embassy, or an account written by missionaries.

### *B. Chronological order*

Chronological order is another particularity of travel narratives. Following an itinerary, the narrator was obliged to adopt a temporal sequence. It was not an absolute dependence on time, as was the case of chronicles and biographies. It was, rather, the use of an instrument whose objective was to contextualise, within a temporal framework, the roads

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<sup>70</sup> These borrowing from intertextuality.

<sup>71</sup> Diversified here may take on the meaning of hybrid, interdisciplinary, or even possessing a notable capacity to metamorphose, given the kaleidoscope of dimensions it covers.

<sup>72</sup> At this point, we follow closely the proposal of analysis of M. Á. Pérez Priego, “Estudio literario de los libros de viajes medievales,”

travelled, in other words, that function as an element that legitimizes the likelihood of the travelogue.

The more historically accurate a travel narrative was, the more objective chronological order was. On the other hand, the more fabulous a narrative was, the less accurate was the chronological order of the text, bringing us closer in this case to a novel.

### *C. Spatial order (the central role of cities)*

Albeit, the most important thing in Medieval travel books, that which created its real narrative order, was space, not time. Intimately associated to the itinerary, the spatial order materialized with the places that were passed through and described.

Having reached this point, we come across an essential fact: in the pursuit of a trajectory not everything had the same importance for the traveller, who was obliged to choose and select the fundamental milestones of the itinerary: the cities.

In Medieval travel narratives cities became an essential reference, through which the description of the itinerary developed. Consequently, urban centres were converted into the true narrative nuclei around which the rest of the story was organized, the description of the journey. When there were no cities in a given stage of the itinerary, there was a sudden speeding-up of the narration and the space covered. On the other hand, the presence of an important city slowed down the temporal rhythm and extended the narration.

This centrality of the urban world is a legacy of the ancient world, more specifically of the late Roman city, whose imaginary has passed to medieval times and is closely associated with the practice of travel: Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople are just three major examples.<sup>73</sup> The cities were, in essence, the civilizing points of connection that, through the system of Roman roads, structured the entire empire, both West and East.

Centres of power par excellence, cities were superior and vital spaces which were usually mentioned with an intense fervour. The *urban*

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<sup>73</sup> Alexandria, Antioch, Bethlehem, Braga, Chalcedon, Cologne, Corinth, Damascus, Sepphoris, Ephesus, Hebron, Hipona, León, Milan, Nazareth, Nicaea, Pergamon, Cana (of Galilee), Ravenna, Rhodes, Toledo, Tours, Sidon, Tyre, Bordeaux, Gades, Lisbon, Merida, among many others.



*conscience* that invaded Europe from the twelfth century onwards clearly determined how the authors thought, and the view of the world that was conveyed in their narratives.

Three basic foundations ensured that cities had a very specific place in the contemporary world view: isolation (in the sense of individuality and delimitation of what surrounded it), solidity (safety and protection from what came from the outside, embodied by its walls and “personal” army), and verticality (in the sense of magnitude and power).<sup>74</sup>

Cities were Order. Their centrality in relation to the region they were integrated in separated them from the rurality and wild exterior where disorder, violence, and chaos reigned. What lay beyond the walls was the antithesis of that which their inhabitants sought in the streets, squares, bell towers, and markets.

Furthermore, cities were always associated to learning, study and science. They were the space of knowledge, for it was there where the greatest centres of learning were located: the universities. In this whole picture, the influence of the rhetorical paradigm of the *laudibus urbium* in the descriptions of the cities that offer medieval travel books should be highlighted.

In essence, it is about the presence in these texts of the rhetorical procedure of *evidentia*, concretized in the *evidentia topographica* of the said *laudibus urbium*. Hence, the authors observe with particular attention in their urban descriptions topics such as antiquity and the founders of the place, the location and fortifications, the fertility of the surrounding fields, the quality and abundance of the waters, the customs of the inhabitants, the buildings and monuments, the famous men, the comparison with other known cities (in particular those of their nations of origin).<sup>75</sup>

#### *D. The presence of mirabilia*

The treatment of wonders or *mirabilia* are another defining element in medieval travel narratives. Travellers often interrupted their itineraries to describe the *mirabilia* that they came across, or that they heard about. They were fabulous narratives, intrinsically associated to the spaces travelled, and provoked great expectations in the readers. They depicted

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<sup>74</sup> P. Zumthor, *La Medida Del Mundo* [The Measure of The World], 108-137.

<sup>75</sup> R. B. Llavador, “Los libros de viajes medievales castellanos,”

the strange and unknown, but absolutely real because they had been seen and experienced by the authors/narrators, and marvellous, because they were related to what was not seen and observed daily. One example is that which was conveyed by the discovery of real marvels, found in the grandiosity of constructions such as the Basilica of Saint Sophia (*Hagia Sophia*), or the surviving structures of Ancient Rome. The contemplation of such creations – some human, others natural – caused great awe and admiration in the traveller, and later in the reader (good examples are provided by Ruy González de Clavijo's *Embajada a Tamorlán* [Embassy to Tamorlán] and Pero Tafur's *Andanças e viagens por diversas partes del mundo avidos* [Journeys around different parts of the world]).

As we have already pointed out, using Jacques Le Goff's definition,<sup>76</sup> the word *mirabilia* refers to phenomena perceived by medieval man not so much with the senses, but more with the "soul." It is, in effect, an inner look, that is, to apprehend something with the "eyes of the spirit", therefore with the imagination. The very etymology of the word elucidates us about its semantics and the way it distances itself from the current meaning: *mirabilia* comes from the root *mirror*,<sup>77</sup> which means (transitive) astonished at, marvel at, admire, amazed at, wonder at; and *miror*, in its turn, comes from latin *mirus* (wonderful, marvellous, amazing, surprising, fantastic). Thus, the *mirabilia* were something concrete, endowed with materiality, for medieval man. It was not a chimera, as it is for us today, instead it was part of "the possible." Hence, Le Goff proclaim that "In what corresponds to our 'wonderful,' and where we see a category – category of spirit or literature –, the clergy of the Middle Ages (and those who received information and training from them) saw a universe without a doubt, which it is very important, but a universe of objects: more of a collection than a category."<sup>78</sup>

The way of medieval man to know and represent the world was the result of a determined cultural, symbolic and religious construction. It was a system that worked from a prefigured model and that implied a pre-established initial relationship. It was an entire knowledge prepared and offered beforehand, which served to decode the profound meanings of existence. After all, the main activity of medieval man focused

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<sup>76</sup> See note 59.

<sup>77</sup> Where does the word come from, in English, "mirror."

<sup>78</sup> J. Le Goff, *O Imaginário Medieval* [The Medieval Imaginary], 46.

precisely on deciphering the divine message. It was what gave meaning to his existence, which was organized according to a codified conduct.

For this reason, the traveller, especially the clergyman and the merchant, confronted the reality discovered at every moment with that represented in the models and cultural patterns he inherited. The issue is that, sometimes, the previously integrated does not match with personal experience (the seen and heard by itself) or even with that transmitted by third parties. In these cases, a conflict is generated, since the divergent circumstance requires, on the one hand, a process of deconstruction of the already known, and, on the other hand, in parallel, the codification of an unprecedented reality with the consequent creation of a new and original knowledge. This is the right moment for the appearance of *wonder*, because it encompasses everything that is different and with an amazing character, to cause astonishment. Now, this conflict is new and guarantees travel books the merit of breaking with tradition, thus legitimizing their autonomy as a genre.<sup>79</sup> Because they are heterogeneous in nature and content, the books of the supposed John Mandeville,<sup>80</sup> Marco Polo,<sup>81</sup> Jordan Catala of Sévérac (c. 1280-c. 1330),<sup>82</sup> Odorico da Pordenone,<sup>83</sup> William of Rubruck,<sup>84</sup> and Niccolò da Conti (1385-1469)<sup>85</sup> constitute perhaps the best examples of this phenomenon.

The category of “strange” is, in short, the difference that characterizes the unknown lands and causes attraction for them. And this difference

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<sup>79</sup> E. Popeanga Chelaru, “Lectura e investigación de los libros de viajes medievales,” *Revista de Filología Románica* 1 (1991): 9-26, M. S. Mazzi, *Los Viajeros Medievales* [Medieval Travellers] (Madrid: Antonio Machado Libros, 2018), 203-220.

<sup>80</sup> Jean de Mandeville, *Le Livre des merveilles du monde* [The Book of Wonders of the World], ed. Christiane Deluz (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 2000).

<sup>81</sup> Marco Polo, *The book of Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the east*, 2 vols., ed. Henri Codier, Amy Frances Yule, Henry Yule (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1975).

<sup>82</sup> Jordan Catala de Sévérac, *Une image de l'orient au XIV<sup>e</sup>me siècle: les Mirabilia descripta de Jordan Catala de Sévérac* [An image of the Orient in the fourteenth century: the *Mirabilia descripta* by Jordan Catala de Sévérac], ed. Christine Gadrat (Paris: École des Chartes, 2005).

<sup>83</sup> Odorico da Pordenone, *Relación de viaje* [Travel Book], ed. Nilda Guglielmi (Buenos Aires: Bibloscop., 1987).

<sup>84</sup> William of Rubruck, *The mission of Friar William of Rubruck: his journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253-1255*, ed. Peter Jackson and David Morgan (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990).

<sup>85</sup> Nicolò de Conti, *Le voyage aux Indes* [The journey to India], ed. Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary, Geneviève Bouchon (Paris: Chandeigne, 2004).

is precisely what causes the “wonder.” Medieval imagination, tired of routine and everyday triviality, needs to exalt the strange and the difference (hence, for example, the great acceptance and impact of legends such as those of Alexander the Great and, above all, Prester John). It feeds on this novelty. And because they reveal to the reader these distant places full of extraordinary and amazing, travel books are the perfect way to achieve this – it is not, by chance, that these legends are present in several of these narratives, in particular those imaginary that good examples are *Libro del conocimiento*, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and the *Libro del infante don Pedro de Portugal* [Infante Don Pedro's from Portugal book], authored by Gómez de Santisteban (who, very importantly, refers to the real travels made by the protagonist)<sup>86</sup>.

Northern Europe, Africa, Asia, and the oceans were the places of marvels and of divergent (this is where monsters and monstrous races inhabited, for example)<sup>87</sup>. The place where anything was possible, but to get there it was necessary to travel. In that respect, wonder, space and travel must walk hand in hand. The traveller was in search of differences, not similarities. He recorded the extraordinary, that which amazed him in the *Other*, which he found so far away. And he usually did it by comparing it with what he was familiar with, that is, using his own cultural and civilizational patterns as reference.

A final revealing aspect of the importance of “wonders” in this type of text is the fact that it sometimes appears in the title itself, as with the narratives of the aforementioned Marco Polo, Jordan Catala de Sévérac and “John Mandeville.”

### *E. Absence of a clear separation between geography, history, legend, and myth*

In these narratives, there was no clear separation between geography, history, legend, and myth. Here, contrary to the *Imago Mundi*, that clearly present these topics as independent areas, the reference to a specific

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<sup>86</sup> Gómez de Santisteban, *Libro del infante don Pedro de Portugal* [Infante Don Pedro's from Portugal book], ed. Francis M. Rogers (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1962).

<sup>87</sup> India, for example, because absolutely strange, was configured as the territory par excellence of wonders. See Jacques Le Goff, “O Ocidente medieval e o oceano Índico: um horizonte onírico”, in *Para um Novo Conceito de Idade Média – Tempo, Trabalho e Cultura no Ocidente* [Towards a New Concept of the Middle Ages – Time, Work and Culture in the West] (Lisboa: Editorial Estampa, 1993), 263-280.

space could be used to evoke a political event, designate its fantastic inhabitants or recall a hero associated to its founding. Legend and History, fable and reality walked side by side, especially in fictitious travel narratives – texts whose fundamental purpose was to produce an overview of geographic knowledge at a given moment, in which the reading of the *auctoritas*,<sup>88</sup> the study of maps and the use of oral legends and testimony of contemporary travellers, substitute in large part the real events experienced by the actual author.

At this point, we again call attention to the influence of the rhetorical paradigm of *laudibus urbiu*m in the descriptions of cities that characterize a large part of Medieval travel books (for example, the Iberian ones), and where preferential aspects to be observed by the authors are the antiquity and the founders of the place, the location and the fortifications, the fertility of the surrounding fields, the quality and abundance of the waters, the customs of the inhabitants, the buildings and monuments, the famous men.<sup>89</sup> In the descriptive development of all these elements, the aforementioned absence of a clear separation between geography, history, legend and myth predominates.

The texts that exemplify this narrative procedure are very varied. Right away, the already named narrative of Egeria (fourth century). Modelling at the level of travel practice in the transition from the ancient world to medieval times, this text is paradigmatic in relation to the absence of a clear separation between geography, history, legend, and myth. For the same period and for the High Middle Ages, pilgrimage guides and accounts should also be mentioned, namely the primitive *itineraria* and descriptions of the Holy Land. Then, for the High Middle Ages and despite its very specific nature, the *Christian Topography* of Cosma Indicopleusta (c. 550).<sup>90</sup>

In the framework of the Late Middle Ages, a whole set of important narratives stands out, namely, the *Historia Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus* of Giovanni di Pian di Carpine (1240s)<sup>91</sup>; the *Itinerarium fratris*

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<sup>88</sup> Classical and Medieval authors considered the supreme authorities in certain matters. Main examples are Herodotus, Saint Isidore of Seville and Saint Augustine.

<sup>89</sup> See subpoint (c).

<sup>90</sup> Cosma Indicopleusta, *Topografia Cristiana* [Christian Topography], ed. Antonio Garzya (Napoli: M. Dauria Editore, 1992).

<sup>91</sup> Jean du Plan Carpin, *Histoire des Mongols* [History of the Mongols], ed. Jean Becquet et Louis Hambis (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1965).

*Willielmi de Rubruquis de ordine fratrum Minorum, Galli, Anno gratia 1253 ad partes Orientales* of William of Rubruck (c.1255)<sup>92</sup>; *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* of Burchard of Mount Sion (1283)<sup>93</sup>; *Liber Peregrinacionis* or *Itinerarius* of Ricoldo di Montecroce (1288-1291)<sup>94</sup>; *Il Milione* (*Livre des Merveilles du Monde* or *Devisement du Monde*) of Marco Polo (1298-1299)<sup>95</sup>; *Letters from Khanbalik* of Giovanni da Montecorvino (1305-1306)<sup>96</sup>; *De modo saracenos extirpendi* of Guillaume Adam (1316-1318)<sup>97</sup>; *Letter to the guardian of Perusa from Chaitón* of André of Perusa (1326)<sup>98</sup>; *Itinerarium Terrarum* of Odorico da Pordenone (1330)<sup>99</sup>; *Directorium ad passagium faciendum* of Guillaume Adam (1332)<sup>100</sup>; *Mirabilia descripta* of Jordan of Severac (1329-1338)<sup>101</sup>; *Letter from Almalik* of Pascual de Vitoria (1338)<sup>102</sup>; (*Le digressioni sull'Oriente nel*) *Chronicon Bohemorum* of Giovanni de' Marignolli (1355-1359)<sup>103</sup>; *Embajada a Tamorlán* [Embassy to Tamorlán] of González de Clavijo (early fifteenth century)<sup>104</sup>; *Le voyage aux Indes* [The journey to India] of Niccolò da Conti (1444)<sup>105</sup>; *Andanças e viages por diversas partes del mundo avidos* [Journeys around different parts of the world] of Pero Tafur (1453-1454)<sup>106</sup>; *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* of Bernhard of Breidenbach (1486).<sup>107</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See note 83.

<sup>93</sup> Burchard of Mount Sion, *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae* [Description of the Holy Land], ed. John R. Bartlett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>94</sup> Ricoldo de Montecroce, *Peregrinatores medii aevi quatuor* [Book of Travels], ed. J. C. M. Laurent (J. C. Hinrichs Bibliopola: Lipsae, 1873).

<sup>95</sup> See note 80.

<sup>96</sup> Henry Yule ed., *Cathay and the way thither*, vol. III (London: Hakluyt Society, 1913-16).

<sup>97</sup> Guillaume Adam, *De modo saracenos extirpendi* [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1906].

<sup>98</sup> Henry Yule ed., *Cathay and the way thither*.

<sup>99</sup> See note 82.

<sup>100</sup> Guilherme Adam, "Directorium ad faciendum passagium transmarinum," *American Historical Review* XII-4 (1907): 810-857, XIII-1 (1907): 66-115.

<sup>101</sup> See note 81.

<sup>102</sup> Henry Yule ed., *Cathay and the way thither*.

<sup>103</sup> Johannis de Marignola, *Chronicon*, ed. Josef Emler (Praha: s.n., 1882).

<sup>104</sup> Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlán* [Embassy to Tamorlán], ed. Francisco López Estrada (Madrid: Castalia, 2005).

<sup>105</sup> See note 85.

<sup>106</sup> Pero Tafur, *Andanças e viages por diversas partes del mundo avidos* [Journeys around different parts of the world], ed. Marcos Jiménez de la Espada (Madrid: Miraguano/Polifemo, 1995).

<sup>107</sup> Isolde Mozer Hrsg., *Bernhard von Breydenbach: Peregrinatio in terram sanctam. Eine Pilgerreise ins Heilige Land. Frühneuhochdeutscher Text und Übersetzung* [Bernhard von Breydenbach: *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam*. A pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Early modern high German text and translation] (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010).

Regarding the universe of imaginary travel accounts, we refer in particular to the aforementioned *Libro del conoçimiento*<sup>108</sup> and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*.<sup>109</sup> We give special emphasis to the latter as it makes use of others (real) travel texts known at the time, articulating them in a coherent whole, and also due to the dissemination and consequent success that it experienced.

An account of an imaginary journey, *Le Livre des merveilles du monde* [The Book of Wonders of the World] was originally written in French, around 1357. The popularity throughout Europe of this work attributed to John Mandeville represents an extraordinary phenomenon. This is confirmed by the almost three hundred manuscripts that still exist today. From beautifully illustrated codices to modest copies, this text was unrivalled in its dissemination and acceptance in the context of medieval books related to travel.

Probably the main cause for such success lies in the fact that the text reached a very diverse audience: while satisfying the curiosity of those who wanted to know the most recent wonders discovered in the East, it provided important data to those eager for geographic knowledge.

After having travelled the paths of the world for thirty-five years, the author / traveller returns to his native land, England, then deciding to put in writing the memories of his adventure. The result is an account that provides an image of the world that we can consider representative of European cultured men of the fourteenth century, before the discovery of Ptolemy's work. This, in addition to being an excellent portrait of the variety of tastes and knowledge of the European man of the Middle Ages. Although the author's final objective is to show the prodigies of God – the work, a remarkable compilation of monstrous beings, was conceived as if it were a popular encyclopaedia, being therefore written in a simple and accessible style that would allow to easily disclose the wonders to report –, *The Book of Wonders of the World* is also an important geographical treatise. Indeed, in his text, Mandeville illustrates how contemporary astronomers applied mathematical reasoning to the land and the firmament, showing that the geographic knowledge of his time was not as fantasy and archaic as we now believe.

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<sup>108</sup> See note 63. See P. C. Lopes, *Viajar na Idade Média. A visão ibérica do mundo no Livro do Conhecimento* [Travel in the Middle Ages. The Iberian view of the world in the Book of Knowledge] (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2005).

<sup>109</sup> See note 80.

On the other hand, the idea of the sphericity of the earth is widespread throughout the work.

The text reflects well the intellectual formation of the author and the works he used. In fact, the diversity of sources he used and articulated made it unequivocal that he consulted an ecclesiastical library. Particularly noteworthy are the author's various attempts throughout the text to make one believe the veracity of the journey.

Also, worth mentioning are the Muslim travel texts, the *rihla*, which we will delve into in the next section using four model texts, including for the topic here in discussion.

#### *F. To inform about the world*

To inform about a specific reality, the world as perceived through the eyes of the traveller, was the guiding principle of travel narratives. The important thing was the information that was transmitted. But these accounts were also an initiation to the enigmas that the world concealed within its frontiers (stands out here the didactic feature of these texts, which guarantees them a discursive singularity). Consequently, the journey emerged as a quintessential mechanism to reflect about Creation, time, space, diversity, and unity. And it went even further, as it became a prime vehicle to gain access to knowledge. Ultimately, to wander the world was synonymous with coming across its mysteries, its questions, its past, and its future.

In terms of the imaginary, we can claim that Medieval travel narratives reverted to the spirit of Antiquity, where travelling meant seeing the wonders of the world.

From another perspective, taking to the roads meant breaking with daily monotony as well as with familiar environments. It represented an escape from the known world. In this context, the imaginary became as vital for the existence of the traveller as the immediate experience of reality. And the further away from the ordering centre that the traveller was familiar with, the bigger were the driving forces to escape the monotony of reality. That is why the periphery of the world was so seductive. Ultimately, it was in faraway, isolated, and different places that *mirabilia* were exposed to the eyes of the medieval Christian.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> See Jacques Le Goff, "O Ocidente medieval e o oceano Índico: um horizonte onírico."



Good examples are provided to us, once again, by the narrative of Egeria (fourth century); by Almerich's work *The 'fazienda' of overseas* (twelfth century)<sup>111</sup>; and by four major examples of the *rihla*, namely, *Across the East* of Ibn Yubayr<sup>112</sup>; *Travel Account* of Abu Hamid al-Gharnati<sup>113</sup>; *Travel in the Volga Bulgarian Nation* of Ahmad Ibn Fadlan<sup>114</sup>; and *Gift on the Curiosities of Cities and the Wonders of Travels* of Muhammad Ibn Battuta.<sup>115</sup>

As a general rule, the journeys practised by Muslims constitute, in form, intention, and content, an extension of the journeys of Antiquity. Indeed, Islamic travellers developed their itineraries under the same purpose as travellers from ancient Greece: to collect teachings about the world, to reflect on knowledge, to seek the wonders of Creation. That is why they developed a large part of their routes in the regions bordering the Mohammedan territory: Europe, Central and East Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

The routes that cut through the Medieval Muslim world are frequented by many travellers: merchants, officials, individuals willing to educate themselves, long-distance sailors, among several other categories of practitioners of the paths. Naturally, the pilgrimage to Mecca is the main motivation for travelling. However, it is far from being the only one. And, many times, the journey that had the sole purpose of reaching the sacred city and returning becomes an adventurous voyage through the surrounding spaces.

A large number of these travellers left testimony of their experiences around the known world. These are the *rihla*, travel accounts in Arabic, a literary genre of great importance in Muslim civilization, in many cases inseparable from the texts of geographers and historians. Arising from the twelfth century, the *rihla* have in their genesis the pilgrimages of

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<sup>111</sup> Almerich, *La fazienda de ultra mar* [The 'fazienda' of overseas], ed. Moshe Lazar (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1965).

<sup>112</sup> Ibn Jubayr, *The travels of Ibn Jubayr*, ed. William Wright (Leiden: David Brown Book Co., 1973).

<sup>113</sup> Abu Hâmîd al-Gharnâtî, *Abu Hamid el Granadino y su relación de viaje por tierras eurasiáticas* [Abu Hamid the Grenadian and his travel report through Eurasian lands], ed. César E. Dubler (Madrid: Maestre, 1953).

<sup>114</sup> Ahmad Ibn Fadlan, *Mission to the Volga*, ed. James E. Montgomery (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

<sup>115</sup> Muhammad Ibn Battuta, *The travels of Ibn Battûta*, ed. Hamilton Gibb (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1994).

Muslim scholars to the holy places of Islam. Attracted by the search for knowledge, they travelled long distances with the aim of attending the erudite centers of the great metropolises of the Islamic East: Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo. As they completed the journeys, they wrote down their travel impressions day by day, and sometimes even hourly, gradually building up a kind of travel diary in which they echoed the surprises, wonders and difficulties they encountered along the way.

The main objective of the *rihla* was to inform, harmoniously combining the wonderful and the fantastic with factual observations and elements of reality, usually quite relevant and objective. The sensitivity to the marvellous, the concern of objectivity in relation to the real and the ability to filter what is really important in what is directly observable are, in fact, a defining characteristic of this Muslim literature. Everything suggests that the *rihla* genus was inaugurated by Sevillian Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi (1076-1148). However, his work was lost. In this context, due to its importance and the model it created, the text of Valencian Ibn Yubayr became formally considered the founder of the genre (he was plagiarized numerous times in the following centuries, including by the famous Ibn Battuta<sup>116</sup>).

Several of these Muslim travel narratives are from an anonymous source (much of which will be integrated into the monumental work *The One Thousand and One Nights*). The *rihla* were particularly cultivated in the Muslim West, mainly in the Iberian Peninsula and in Morocco. Exponents are the testimonies of Ibn Djubayr, Ibn Batutta and Abu Hamid.

### *G. The use of alterity and of the processes of identitary construction*

As a general rule, when travellers recorded their first contact with a human landscape (one that they had never seen before, or had heard about but had not “experienced”), the exercise of alterity took place

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<sup>116</sup> Here, it should be noted that, among Medieval authors, and especially among Muslims, there was a custom of copying, when not plagiarizing, more or less extensive parts of the works of their predecessors without, in most cases, mentioning them. These were model works, so the idea was that they could be used freely. In semantic terms, it was, therefore, a notion quite different from the current one. See Felipe Maíllo Salgado, “Introducción”, in Ibn Yubayr, *A través del Oriente: el siglo XII ante los ojos, Riḥla* [Across the East: the twelfth century before our eyes, Riḥla], ed. Felipe Maíllo Salgado (Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1988), 17-35.

through different channels<sup>117</sup> and could assume different meanings. This also led to potential identitary constructions, both on the part of the traveller/narrator, and the *Other*, the one that was different – as well as, in a later stage, of possible processes of interculturality. From Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages and in the most diverse formats (guides, itineraries, accounts, and reports from embassies, epistles, among others), there are countless narratives that contain characteristic moments of this topic. The narratives of Marco Polo, Ruy González de Clavijo, Ricoldo di Montecroce, Giovanni di Pian di Carpine, William of Rubruck, Giovanni da Montecorvino, Odorico da Pordenone, Pascual de Vitoria, Niccolò da Conti, Bernhard of Breidenbach, as well as Ibn Fadlan's impressive *rihla* are superior examples of how much this topic marks the texts of Medieval journeys, in particular those relating to the Late Middle Ages and very especially those involving travel to the east, territory par excellence of contact with the *Other*.

#### *H. Forms of presentation of the accounts*

In terms of the presentation of the accounts, Medieval travel texts have a unique characteristic that differentiates them from most of the other forms of contemporary narratives, namely, the absence of parallel or interwoven actions that obliged the narrator to interrupt or leave the story in suspense (its narrative core was to follow an itinerary). Instead, they were distinguished by a linear and continuous narration, with a main character – individual or collective, real or fictitious –, almost always the narrator of the story. It should be noted, at this point, that this identity between protagonist and narrator established the “Self” of the travellers, expressed in the continuous use of the first person singular, as a privileged form of presentation of the account – a premise that resulted largely from the absence of parallel action, which in turn ensued from the fact that the development of these narratives involved following an itinerary.

We are, therefore, facing the predominance (not exclusive, it has to be highlighted<sup>118</sup>) of the “Self” of travellers in the discursive development

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<sup>117</sup> That is, clothing, funerary practices, food, customs, physical traits, and other cultural features that were agents of differentiation, and consequently, of evaluating eyes.

<sup>118</sup> When, by its nature, the account comes close, for example, to the chronicle or official historiography, sometimes the use of the third person takes place. A good example is provided by the *Embajada a Tamorlán* [Embassy to Tamorlán] of González de Clavijo,

of the text. Good examples lie in *Journeys around different parts of the world* of Pero Tafur and also, almost axiomatically, in the *Libro del conocimiento*. The *Libro del infante don Pedro de Portugal* [Infante Don Pedro's from Portugal book], on the other hand, almost always uses the plural first person, because the narrator, Gómez de Santisteban, who is one of the elements of the expedition in question, intends to present the journey as a collective experience, even though his attention is concentrated especially on individual figure of the Portuguese Infant, who is the true protagonist of history.

This technique helped make the narrative more appealing to the reader, to whom it transferred more easily real or imagined experiences without the interference of a narrator. But especially, it had a substantiating function, reinforcing the credibility and authenticity of a narration.

However, despite the almost constant use of the first person singular, Medieval travel books show a preference for external information, not the personal universe of the traveller – a situation which will only be verified with the arrival of Modernism. The protagonist was, above all, someone who observed and assessed; the biggest incursion into the domain of the personal was, for example, when the narrator evoked the reasons that led him to remain for a given time in a certain place.

Still, regarding the form of presentation of the account, it should be noted that the authors of travel books often combined small legendary or historical texts. Traditionally related with important figures or events in the contemporary collective memory, and to some extent associated with the itinerary to be followed, that is, the spatial order of the narrative in which they were inserted, these narratives (in other words, intertwining stories) operated the global articulation of the literary and documentary components of the work.

## 2. Audiences

In the late fourteenth century and throughout the fifteenth century, the intended audiences of travel books belonged mostly to chivalric and

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which has a diplomatic mission as its backdrop and features a collective protagonist (the ambassadors of King Henry III of Castile), which in itself facilitates the use of the third person. The very historicity of this specific text renders any complementary device of verisimilitude and credibility unnecessary.

aristocratic circles. The reason was that these works reflected the mentality and chivalric life of European society in the 1400s more than clerical and scholarly ideology or mercantile activity. Notably, the audiences for these books were increasing, and were socially diverse. Ultimately, the authors wrote for different reasons: to satisfy people's curiosity, to cause awe, inform, instruct, glorify God, extol (for secular reasons) the kingdoms where they came from, disseminate knowledge, construct geographical and ethnical depictions, and very importantly, for the enjoyment of readers (in this aspect, the late Medieval travel texts precede Illuminism).

Also, fundamental is the fact that travel books strove to be thrilling. So apart from being informative, they also had a pragmatic function: to fill a void and break routines, transporting readers to the space and time of the text.<sup>119</sup> Readers not only read the work, they interiorized it, appropriating the references provided by the author. This is especially true for the pilgrimage accounts (whose superior model is provided by those who focus on the journey to the Holy Land). Indeed, its reading is not only informative, but also pragmatic, of integration of the individual's inner journey. Because each story is unique and because the pilgrimage is a journey that requires inner self-recognition. It is a deeply personal process. For this reason, too, reading the pilgrimage texts imposes itself as eschatological and pious.<sup>120</sup> Pilgrimage has a (spiritual) scope that other journeys do not, because it represents the time of salvation in space and is an image of the life of man on earth. The High Middle Ages met pilgrims who refused any other position in the world, enlightened nomads whose quest sought to reproduce the example of Jesus, such as the wandering monks of the early medieval times and the Irish monks in the sixth century.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Pedro Manuel Cátedra García, "La dimensión interior en la lectura de los libros de viajes medievales," in *Actas del primer congreso anglo-hispano* [Proceedings of the first Anglo-Hispanic Congress], vol. II, ed. Alan Deyermond and Ralph Penny (Madrid: Castalia, 1993), 41-58.

<sup>120</sup> Jeannine Guérin Dalle Mese, "Io o lui? (Il problema del narratore in alcune relazioni di viaggio del Trecento-Quattrocento)," in *La letteratura di viaggio dal Medioevo al Rinascimento. Generi e problemi* [Travel literature from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Genres and problems] (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1989), 7-17.

<sup>121</sup> J. Rubio Tovar, "Viajes, mapas y literatura en la España Medieval," in *Libros de viaje: actas de las Jornadas sobre los Libros de Viaje en el Mundo Románico, celebradas en Murcia del 27 al 30 de noviembre de 1995* [Travel books: Proceedings of the Conference on Travel Books in

Furthermore, the work merited being read or listened to because of the marvellous and curious things described therein – places, things and people.

### 3. *The repercussions of medieval travel books*

Medieval travel books influenced decisively the civilizations that saw them emerge. Their most notable achievement was to help definitively broaden the horizons of knowledge of that period. The fascination for the new and unknown that they transmitted (thus of the mysteries of the world), as well as the traveller's actual experience, were a permanent appeal to the curiosity and incentive for new endeavours that would culminate in the geographical discoveries of the Late Middle Ages, the last great travel adventure of medieval man.

From another perspective, with the exception of pilgrimage narratives, apart from supplying the West with invaluable and often first-hand information about distant lands and people, and about different subjects such as history, geography, and economics, this literature had the benefit of portraying a group of works that became emancipated from the spiritual constraints and the traditional limitations of learning and experience that were typical of written works from the earlier Middle Ages. Texts in which, comparatively, a more traditionalist and closed perspective of the world prevailed. There is an unmistakable encroachment on the limits (previously) imposed by the *autoritas*, which gained momentum over the centuries. The physical obstacles that had prevented access to the *Other's* space, distant and different, were now conquered. From the outset, these *realizations* ensured that travel narratives – which revealed a different objective in each case – had a well-demarcated place in the context of the culture in which they were inserted.

At each step in their trajectory travellers wanted to identify the cultural categories of the medieval encyclopaedia. However, their inquisitiveness increased more and more. Apart from attempting to recognize in nature what they had previously learned, the traveller (especially in the Late Middle Ages) wanted to learn more about the new space that he is experiencing. This opportunity led him to progressively

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the Romanic World, held in Murcia from 27 to 30 November 1995], ed. Fernando Carmona Fernández (Murcia: EDITUM, 1996), 321-343.

start comparing the knowledge acquired formerly with the knowledge gained *in situ*, whereby a mental transformation occurred in which the real place, inevitably different from the imagined, tended to gain ground over the aprioristic geography.<sup>122</sup> William of Rubruck was the first to refute the existence of the marvels sanctioned by Isidore of Seville. Next, Giovanni de'Marignolli claimed that during his journey to the land of the three Indias he did not encounter any proof of the existence of extraordinary beings. Other examples of the evolution in the connection between what was learned and what was directly observed and experienced, that is, between the past and the present, were the cataloguing, reflective and organizing perceptions of travellers like Marco Polo, Pero Tafur (c. 1410-c. 1484), and González de Clavijo (?-1412).

This resulted in a didactic attitude in relation to their contemporaries, who might come to travel the same paths. The written work of today was the guidebook for tomorrow's travellers, which would help them find solutions for different and immediate problems.

This transmutation was also evident in the audience of readers, as demonstrated by the great number of texts in circulation, and the readers' thirst for them – texts where the journey was always omnipresent, even if it was not the essential element. The anticipation with which travel narratives were received revealed a growing cultural need for discovering the geographic reality of the world. Although very slowly, it gave rise to a picture of plausible worlds and led to the great expansion movement that began in the 1400s under the aegis of the Iberian kingdoms.

At this point, one final observation: the Middle Ages invented a new concept of travel in relation to previous periods, that is, throughout the Medieval centuries, with a great culmination in the Late Middle Ages, travel was seen not only as a physical endeavour, but also as an intellectual exercise, since the written word was intrinsic to it. In other words, the traveller was someone with a degree of literacy, learned, and thus able to actively influence the society of his time. The traveller transferred his experience and the knowledge he acquired to the community around him, of which he was a part.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> A. Crosby, *La Medida de la Realidad, La cuantificación y la sociedad occidental, 1250-1600* [The Measure of Reality, Quantification, and Western Society, 1250-1600] (Barcelona: Crítica, 1988).

<sup>123</sup> S. A. Legassie, *The Medieval Invention of Travel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), vii-x, 1-18.

The journey was perceived also as a literary undertaking, and we see a reinvention of the classical ideals. In Antiquity the heroism of travellers entailed, above all, self-control in the face of temptations of the flesh, but also the work/effort of the hero. In the Middle Ages journeys were considered to be the triumph of willpower over the flesh, but also an intellectual endeavour orientated towards producing written evidence. As travel narratives gradually became a prominent feature in the medieval cultural landscape, the travelling hero also distinguished himself as a self-disciplined individual, who (now) adopts reading and writing practices. In this framework, literacy (of different types) has an original and important role in the formulation and rationalization of new and ennobling forms of mobility.

#### IV. Final Notes

In the turbulent advent of travel narratives, independently of the motivations and purposes that generated their emergence, we understand finally how much the attitude of medieval men and women has been changing in relation to human circulation and mobility. A slow but irreversible change occurred, a desire to broaden horizons and carry out critical self-analyses (which could even lead to a change in convictions), an inclination to transcend stereotypes and former preconceptions, inquisitiveness about new and different things, capacity for continuous adaptation to new realities, the ability and openness of spirit to find different solutions for new and repeated problems. The Medieval traveller – in particular the one from Late Middle Ages – is now increasingly an independent thinker capable of anthropological and sociological reflections. A true *Homo Viator*.

An individual whose imaginary is increasingly filled over the centuries with the symbolic dimension of travelling and the faraway spaces associated with it. A person who always moves and sees, either by way of the physical roads he travels on, or the initiatory paths that lead to the salvation of his soul.

In this sense, there is even a kind of closing of the circle, because, although with different contours (the very notion of pilgrimage is different, since it is no longer the monks – men and women – who travel and wander, but the mendicant friars and laymen), this late-medieval traveller somehow continues the idea of intense circulation and mobility that characterized the end of the ancient world and the dawn of the



Middle Ages. Finally, from a certain perspective, there is a resumption of the “freedom” that characterized these distant times, also of transition and profound change.

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# Southern Hungary and Serbia in al-Idrisi's *Geography*

Boris Stojkovski<sup>1</sup>

The reign of the Norman Sicilian King Roger II (1130-1154) represented a significant rise for the Norman Kingdom. In their foreign policy, the Normans clashed for dominance in the Mediterranean with the Byzantine Empire, whereas internally, an economically stable, ethnically and religiously mixed country was being established. The Norman Kingdom owed its economic rise, above all, to the grain trade. In the time of Roger II and his successors in Sicily, the international trade in agricultural products was highly developed, first of all concerning grain, but also salted meat and commodities. Trading was most frequently done with Tunisia, and the Normans had an international trade treaty with Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

The kings of Sicily, especially Roger II, supported learned men of Greek or Arab descent. For example, the Greek scholar Eugenio resided on the island and was for some time involved in the Sicilian king's administration work, while he also translated Ptolemy's *Optics* from Arabic into Latin. Therefore, apart from his native Greek, he also spoke Arabic and Latin, the three most important languages in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Orient at the time.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, also in Sicily, Enrico, named Aristippus after Socrates' disciple, translated works from Greek into Latin. He translated Plato's dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedrus*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more details on Norman economy, see an excellent overview by David Abulafia, "The crown and the economy under Roger II and his successors," in *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean 1100-1400* (London: Variorum, 1987), 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> Vera Falkenhausen, Eugenio di Palermo, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 43 (1993), [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eugenio-da-palermo\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/eugenio-da-palermo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) (accessed on 27 January 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Ezio Franceschini, "Enrico Aristippo," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 4 (1962), [www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enrico-aristippo\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/enrico-aristippo_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (accessed on 27 January 2020).

Apart from them, a crucial role at the court of King Roger II, in light of the topic of this paper, was that of traveller and geographer, Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Idrisi.

Al-Idrisi maintained that, like many descendants of prominent Muslim families of the time, he came from the family of the Prophet Muhammad himself. One of his ancestors was Idrisi II, who was the ruler of Malaga in the eleventh century. However, he was most likely born in Ceuta in 1100, although a significant number of scholars treat with caution almost all the information in his biography, with the exception of the year he completed his voluminous work. There is one piece of circumstantial information with respect to the year 1100; namely, Idrisi, in his writings, explicitly states that he was 16 years old when he visited Asia Minor in the year 510 of the Islamic calendar (1115-1116 AD). Thus, one can infer the year of his birth. He was educated at Cordoba, which was at the time the centre of Islamic science and culture in Arabic Spain. He travelled extensively throughout Spain, toured North Africa and was also familiar with the Arabic East. It is not known exactly how and when he came to the court of King Roger of Sicily, but he closely worked with the king for 15 years to produce his work, thus receiving his epithet *aş-Şiqillî*. His famous work is entitled *Kitab nuṣḥat al-muṣṭaḥḥ fi ḥtirāk al-aḫāḥ* – *The pleasure excursion of one who is eager to traverse the regions of the world*, or shorter, *al-Kitāb al-ruġārî* or *Kitāb Ruġār* – *The Book of Roger*, named after the king it was dedicated to. It is known in scholarly circles under its own name, which is still commonly used today – *Geography*. This work was completed either between 10 December and 20 December 1153, or in January 1154, or, as Idrisi states, in the month of *shawwāl* of the Islamic calendar. Idrisi is believed to have died around 1165, though this information is also not entirely certain.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For more details on his life see, Boris Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija i sŭsednite i ţemi prez XII vek spored geografijata na Idrisi* [Bulgaria and its neighboring countries in the XII century according to the "Geography" of Idrisi]. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1960, 9-13; Elter István, „Magyarország Idrisi Földrajzi művében,” [Hungary in the geographical work of Idrisi] *Acta universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József Nominatae, Acta historica*, tomus LXXXII (1985): 53-55; Giovanni Oman, “al-Idrīsī,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam Vol. 3*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 1986), 1032-1035; Ramazan Şeşen, “İdrīsī Şerīf,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İbnü'l-Cezzâr-İhvân-ı Müslimîn* [Encyclopedia of Islam by Turkish Diyanet], ed. Süleyman N. Akçesme (Ankara: TDV, 2000), 493-495.

It should be noted that even this end date for *The Book of Roger*, as well as much of Idrisi's biography, was massively criticized by Henri Bresc and Annliese Nef in their revision of

In his work, Idrisi describes many of the countries he travelled to, such as Lombardy, Sicily, and all of Italy. He also describes Eastern and South-eastern Europe, including Poland, the Czech lands, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, and finally Byzantium. Upon his return to Palermo, Idrisi asked the king to help him draw up a map of the countries he visited. The king thus ordered that a large map be made of pure silver. The masters then drew seven climates (seven large sections travelled through by Idrisi), followed by cities, inhabited and uninhabited places, hills, forests, lakes, seas, and more. In order to complement this large disk, or rather, silver board, Roger II asked Idrisi to produce a book describing the cities and territories on the map, including their characteristics, typical food, representative types of cereals and plants, and trade. The work on the map took fifteen years to complete, probably starting in 1138, when Idrisi most likely came to the court of the Sicilian ruler. In the preface, Idrisi points out that his goal was to reach new insights. He critically studied the sources, but was not satisfied with them particularly because they did not offer new insights or contribute to the development of science. As he states, Idrisi also collected oral traditions, getting his information from ordinary people. However, the cartographic results of his research are relatively poor. The map composed in the court of King Roger II cannot be used for scientific purposes as a serious geographical work. Nevertheless, Idrisi's work is crucial for cartography so its significance and precision cannot be denied entirely. Following Ptolemy's model, he divided the regions he travelled into seven climates, i.e., seven lines of land extending north from the equator. Idrisi also delimits seven seas and he further divides each climate into ten sections, each of them being a geographical whole. Although he reports distances in miles, he also refers to them in days – so a day of light travel equals 23-25 miles, a day of more difficult travel amounts to 30-36 miles, whereas travelling by water makes about 100 miles a day. Of course, when making these calculations, the accessibility of the terrain should be

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Jaubert's French translation of Idrisi's work, while Nef did the same in her own work, c.f. *Idrisi, La première géographie de l'Occident*, ed. and trans. Henri Bresc and Annliese Nef (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1999); Annliese Nef, 'Al-Idrīsī: un complément d'enquête biographique,' in *Géographes et voyageurs au Moyen Âge*, ed. Henri Bresc and Emmanuelle Tixier du Mesnil (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2010), 53-66.

considered. Although he writes simply, his style aspires to art in a beautiful and harmonious Arabic.<sup>6</sup>

Idrisi's sources are diverse. First of all, he used all the Arab scholars, cartographers, and geographers available to him; the most significant being Ibn Hawqal, *al-Khwarizmi*, and *al-Biruni*. Furthermore, he used classical works, most significantly those of *Ptolemy* (both the Greek version and the Arabic translation); however, it is also worth noting that other ancient and Byzantine authors were available to him in the library at the Norman court. A significant corpus of his sources is composed of oral news he compiled from diplomatic missions at the court of the Norman king in Palermo; also, it was from these sources that he was likely able to learn a great deal about Hungary and events taking place in the kingdom. Lewicki believed that a number of documents were also available to Idrisi while he was preparing *The Book of Roger*. Idrisi himself alluded to using the royal archives. While he portrayed Asia and the Islamic world mostly on the basis of Islamic geographers and authors, he described almost all of Europe by mainly using oral sources from the Norman court and the navy of the Sicilian king. Finally, *Ptolemy* represented one of his primary sources as he portrayed most of the world according to him.<sup>7</sup>

The information provided by Idrisi is well known in historiography. A critical edition of the Arabic text of his *Geography* was published in several volumes in Palermo.<sup>8</sup> Among the editions of this valuable piece, a prominent version, authored by Tadeusz Lewicki, includes the Arabic

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<sup>6</sup> Tadeusz Lewicki, *Polska i sąsiednie w swietle "Księgi Rogera,"* I [Poland and neighbouring countries in the light of Book of Roger] (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1945), 1-124; B. Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija*, 13-15 particularly refuted the scientific features of Idrisi's map. G. Škivanić, "Idrisijevi podaci o jugoslovenskim zemljama (1154) [Idrisi's data on Yugoslav countries (1154)]." in *Monumenta cartographica Jugoslaviae II*, ed. Gavro A. Škrivanić (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga 1979), 11-14; on the other hand, there are more cautious and detailed analyses of Idrisi as a cartographer, see: Ahmad, S. Maqbul, "Cartography of al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī," in *The History of Cartography Vol. 2 Book 1: Cartography in the traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, ed. J.B. Harley, D. Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 156-174; Alexandru Madgearu, "Comentarii asupra unor informații din Geografia și Harta lui al-Idrīsī" [Commentaries on some informations from *Geography* of al-Idrīsī], *Pontica L* (2017): 138-140.

<sup>7</sup> T. Lewicki. *Polska.*, 34-86; A. S. Maqbul, "Cartography," 168-170.

<sup>8</sup> Enrico Cerulli, Alessio Bombaci, eds., *Al-Idrīsī, Opus geographicum: sive "Liber ad eorum delectationem qui terras peragrarare studeant."* 1970-1984 (Naples: Brill). (further *Al-Idrīsī*).

text with Polish translation and commentary.<sup>9</sup> Over a century ago, Amédée Jaubert penned a translation of Idrisi's *Geography* into French based on two manuscripts kept in Paris.<sup>10</sup> The Hungarian translation of the fragments related to medieval Hungary was provided by Istvan Elter,<sup>11</sup> while there are two Bulgarian editions – an older one by Boris Nedkov<sup>12</sup> and a newer one by Stoianka Kenderova and Boân Beševliev.<sup>13</sup> With reference to certain areas of present-day Romania, Alexandru Madgearu provided an essential contribution on Idrisi.<sup>14</sup>

In Serbian scholarship, parts of Idrisi's *Geography* was published by Gavro Škrivanić – although this edition is incomplete and contains some errors, it is useful and provides a wealth of good data.<sup>15</sup> More recently, Boris Stojkovski also investigated Idrisi, but this initial survey also had to be supplemented and some misconceptions corrected.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, an analysis of Idrisi's writings reveals that he was much more interested in *the other*, than his contemporary Abu-Hamid al-Garnati. Idrisi in his work describes cities, places, peoples, rivers, as well as economic and social circumstances, flora and fauna. At the time of his visit to Srem (or at least chronologically close to it), another Arab travel writer, the said Abu-Hamid al-Garnati, also travelled through Hungary. However, the latter, being a devout Muslim, concentrated on the Muslim population. Although he provided almost no information related to settlements in Hungary, he is a first-hand source regarding the Muslims with whom he

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<sup>9</sup> T. Lewicki, *Polska i sąsiednie w świetle "Księgi Rogera"* I [Poland and neighbouring countries in the light of Book of Roger] (Kraków: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1945); II (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> P. Amédée Jaubert, trans. & ed. (1836–1840), *Géographie d'Édrisi traduite de l'arabe en français d'après deux manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du roi et accompagnée de notes* (2 Vols) (Paris: L'imprimerie Royale, 1836–1840). Along with a series of errors pertaining to the topic of this paper, the author mistakes Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár) with Belgrade, and Veliki Varadin (Nagyvárad, the present-day Oradea) with Petrovaradin.

<sup>11</sup> Elter, "Magyarország," 53–63.

<sup>12</sup> B. Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija*

<sup>13</sup> Stoianka Kenderova, Bojan Beshevliev, *Balkanskijat poluoströv, izobražen v kartite na Al-Idrisi Paleografsko i istoriko-geografsko izsledvane* [The Balkan Peninsula, depicted in the maps of Al-Idrisi Paleographic and historical-geographical study] (Sofia: Nar. biblioteka "Kiril i Metodii," 1990)

<sup>14</sup> A. Madgearu, "Commentarii," 137–159.

<sup>15</sup> G. Škrivanić, "Idrisijevo podaci," 11–35.

<sup>16</sup> Boris Stojkovski, "Arapski geograf Idrizi o Južnoj Ugarskoj i Srbiji [Arab geographer Idrizi about Southern Hungary and Serbia]," *Zbornik za istoriju Matice srpske* 79–80 (2009): 59–69.

lived, both in Srem and throughout the Hungarian kingdom. Thus, the two Arab authors complement each other.<sup>17</sup>

By using the aforementioned works, as well as others, a referenced selection of the data related to the territory of southern Hungary and Serbia in the period around 1154 is made here; in other words, this study focuses on the information provided by the Arab geographer al-Idrisi regarding the area of present-day Serbia. Serbia, also referred to as Macedonia by Idrisi (a term used for the entire area from Belgrade to Bulgaria), is described in the fourth section of the fifth climate, as well as in the third and fourth sections of the sixth climate. Part of the sixth climate and its third section also describe the Hungarian Kingdom and its southern settlements, which are now part of Serbia; these will also be discussed here. Climate sections V 4 and VI 4 describe both Bulgaria and Macedonia (Serbia), including cities south of the Sava and Danube, all the way south to Pirot. It should be noted that Idrisi is not entirely accurate, and because of the Arabic place names, which were not always translated consistently, it is challenging to identify the location of individual settlements. For this purpose, advanced studies in the refinement of individual toponyms have been used, namely the works of Jaubert, Nedkov, Lewicki, and Elter, since they all treat the territory examined here. However, when this was not possible, additional efforts were made based on geographical and historical data to determine the location of individual sites. Most of the locations have already been designated by earlier foreign authors, but accurate data was often missing, while in some instances, additional clarification of Idrisi's data was necessary. Since the general academic public has so far not had the opportunity to learn in English the information provided by the Arab geographer on medieval southern Hungary and Serbia (with certain exceptions), this study can provide useful information on how this region was seen and described by a representative of a different culture, who came from the European and Mediterranean capital of science of the time. Finally, it should be highlighted that this paper will not analyse Idrisi as a cartographer, nor will it analyse the data related to other parts

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<sup>17</sup> Boris Stojkovski, Nebojša Kartalija, "The Other and the Self in the travel accounts of Southern Hungary and Serbia in the works of Al-Idrīsī and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġarnāṭī," *Romano-Arabica XVIII* 2018, *Geographies of Arab and Muslim Identity through the Eyes of Travelers*, 207-215.



of the world where he travelled, but exclusively the data on southern Hungary and Serbia.

The first data regarding the region is provided by the Arab geographer in the fourth section of the fifth climate. There are some valuable observations about the area of present-day south-eastern Serbia:

From 't.r.l.s<sup>18</sup> أتراليسَة 'Atrālīsā – Sofia) to the town of 't.r.b (أتروبي, Atrūbī – Pirot) there is a day of travel. The town is located on a mountain-top, from whence the river of M.r.f (مورافا Mūrāfā – Morava) flows.<sup>19</sup>

The Pirot region was part of Byzantium, and a trace of it was preserved in the later-named Galata-mahalla in Pirot. Moreover, and more significantly related to this subject, there are some clues regarding the existence of a fortification dating from the twelfth century. Archaeological data largely fill in the existing gaps regarding Pirot and the Pirot region in the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup>

From the aforementioned town of 'Atrūby and N.y.s.w (نيسو Nīsū – Niš) there is a day of travel. Nīsū is a city in the neighbourhood of a river, the aforementioned Mūrāfā. The river springs in the Serbian mountains.<sup>21</sup>

This informaton is followed by the data from the third and fourth sections of the sixth climate, which contain several relevant pieces of information related to this topic.

From the town of 'r.y.n.h (رينية Arīnīyah – Győr) to the town of B.k.š.n (بقصين Baqašīn – Bač) southbound along the river

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<sup>18</sup> The reference first includes the transcription that can already be found in the literature, primarily with Lewicki, *Polska* and Elter, "Magyarország." Then it is followed by the form of the word or phrase observing the modern transcription rules, the Arabic name, and the modern name of the location.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 794.

<sup>20</sup> The word-form *Atrubi* most likely comes from *Turris*, meaning a tower which was located at the site of Pirot since the late ancient period; for more on Pirot during the Middle Ages and Idrisi's time, see Petar, "Ponišavlje u antičko doba [Valley of Nišava in ancient time]," *Pirotski zbornik* 8-9 (1979): 177-184; "Pirotski kraj u srednjem veku [Pirot region in the Middle ages]," *Pirotski zbornik* 8-9 (1979): 188-189; B. Nedkov, *Bulgarija*, 115.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 794-795. B. Nedkov, *Bulgarija*, 115-116. He believed that the form of the word *Niš* comes from the Greek declined word *Niσou*.

D.n.w (دنو Danaw / Dunū – Danube) there are 60 miles. Baqašīn is a famous town, one of the largest towns. There are squares, merchants, artisans and learned Greek people علماء إغريقون there. They have farms and arable land. Wheat, however, is very cheap because it is abundant.<sup>22</sup>

This information coincides with that offered by the Byzantine writer John Kinnamos. He writes that Baqašīn is the most important city in Sirmium, being also the seat of the archbishops. The name *Baqašīn*, similar to the ancient Hungarian name of *Bagacsi*, is referred to as Παράτιτον by Kinnamos.<sup>23</sup> With respect to the church organization, it is a matter of disagreement in scholarship, further fuelled by the fact that Idrisi does not provide other information than that on learned Greeks or priests.<sup>24</sup> This paper will not provide further details about the origin and development of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa-Bacs, but it should be noted that, at that time, there was probably already an archdiocese with two seats, one in Kalocsa and the other one in Bač; however, there are also claims about the existence of an older archdiocese in Bač. At the time when Idrisi wrote his *Geography*, there is a record mentioning an archbishop named Miko (from 1156 to 1165), while the first record of an archbishop in Bač dates from 1134. Thus, undoubtedly, one can speak

<sup>22</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 884.

<sup>23</sup> C.f. *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije IV* [Byzantine sources for the history of the people of Yugoslavia] (Belgrade: Vizantološki institut Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti, 1971), 70-71, (further referred to as VINJ); John Kinnamos, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. C.M. Brand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 168; for the transfer or relics of Saint Procopius from Niš to Sirmium, as well as for the transfer of Syrmian bishopric from Sirmium to Bač see Vladislav Popović, “Kulturni kontinuitet i literarna tradicija u crkvi srednjovekovnog Sirmijuma” [Cult continuity and literary tradition in the church of medieval Sirmium], in *Sirmium-grad careva i mučenika (sabrani radovi o arheologiji i istoriji Sirmijuma)*, ed. Vladislav Popović (Sremska Mitrovica-Belgrade: Projekat Blago Sirmijuma: Arheološki institut, 2003), 168; 304; Boris Stojkovski, “Bač-središte sremske crkve?” [Bač-the centre of the Sirmium Church?], *Srpska teologija danas* 2009. *The Collection of papers from the first annual symposium held at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology on 29-30 May 2009*, ed. Bogoljub Šijaković (Belgrade: Institut za teološka istraživanja Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2010), 380-386.

<sup>24</sup> C.f. VINJ 70-71 where Jovanka Kalić (who also wrote a commentary of Kinnamos’ data in VINJ) puts forth her hypothesis as to which church had its seat in Bač: the Roman-Catholic one or the Greek one.

of a two-seat archdiocese in Idrisi's time, the older one in Kalocsa and the other in Bač.<sup>25</sup>

However, the remark that the Greek scholars, whom Idrisi refers to as *ulamas*, live here, certainly indicates that this was also the seat of a Greek church. Therefore, Greek (Byzantine) priests were also present in the area. Another indication to support this claim is that when the Hungarians conquered and plundered Niš in 1071-1072, they took away the hand of Saint Procopius and brought it to Hungary. The hand was taken to Sirmium, the Church of Saint Demetrius, where it was located until 1164 when Manuel Komnenos returned it. At the same time, in 1071-1072, the Diocese of Sirmium was probably transferred to Bač, and was rebuilt by the Byzantines during the period when the Empire held Sirmium, between 1164-1180. This transfer of the diocese to Bač signifies the existence of a bishop, perhaps referred to as "the seat of the archbishops of these people" as mentioned by John Kinnamos, or perhaps being one of the *ulamas* who speak Greek, as Idrisi claims.<sup>26</sup> Idrisi's account of the city's grain and its wealth is also accepted by other historians, as well as by some other authors who researched Bač and its past.<sup>27</sup>

From the town of Baqašin to the town of Qāw.n (قاون Qāw – Kovin) there are 60 miles due east. Qāw is a big, prosperous town on the river Danaw/Dunū, with squares and craft workshops. From the aforementioned town of 'k.r.h (أقرة 'Aqrah – Jegar) to the town of Qāw there are 160 miles.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Attila Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája* [The lay archontology of Hungary]. (Budapest: História-MTA Történettudományi intézete, 2011), 83 with additional references.

<sup>26</sup> Györfly does not question the existence of a Greek bishop either, see Györfly, György. *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza I.* [The historical geography of Hungary of the age of Árpád] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), 212 (hereinafter *AMTF*). For more details see, B. Stojkovski, "Bač," 380-386. On the pillaging of Niš in the *Illuminated chronicle*, Latin edition *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, vol. I, ed. Emericus Szentpétery, (Budapest: Nap, 1999), 377; *The Illuminated Chronicle: Chronicle of the Deeds of the Hungarians from the Fourteenth century* ed. János M. Bak, László Veszprémy (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press; National Széchényi Library), 208-209.

<sup>27</sup> Györfly, *AMTF* I, 212; Miomir Petrović, "Srednjevekovna kula u Baču-Donžon [The medieval tower in Bač-Donjon]," *Rad vojvođanskih muzeja* 29 (1984-1985): 124.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Idrisī, 884-885. T. Lewicki. *Polska*, 129. Refers to Kovin as Qāw.

Kovin is mentioned as early as 1072 as *urbs Keve* in the *Illuminated Chronicle*, as the place where the Danube was crossed. Kovin was also the seat of the county that covers much of today's Banat region. As Idrisi wrote about it 80 years after its first mention in other sources, when Kovin started to gain significance, his remarks about the town, including Bač somewhat earlier, are quite logical and correct.<sup>29</sup>

From the town of 'f.r.n.k b.y.l.h (Francavilla, ap. Ifrankabilah-إفرنكيلة – Mandelos) due north-east, there are 50 miles to the town of 'b.r.n.d.s (Abrandis-أبرندس – Petrovaradin, or the present-day Novi Sad). Abrandis is a civilized city with many squares and buildings. It is located beneath a hill, in a valley.<sup>30</sup>

Francavilla, the Hungarian Nagyolasz, refers to today's village of Mandelos in Srem. This name, similar to the name of Fruška Gora, is a remnant of the Frankish administration of Srem from the time of Charlemagne.<sup>31</sup> The town was also the location of the Holy Cross Monastery, and it was a place where, during the Middle Ages, inhabitants of Western (primarily French and Italian) descent settled.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> SRH I, 377; The *Illuminated Chronicle*, 210-211; Sima Ćirković, "Prilošci za istoriju Kovina u srednjem veku [Contributions to the history of Kovin in the Middle Ages]," *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 1 (1970): 83-86.; Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, "Slovenski živalj u urbanim naseljima srednjovekovne ugarske države" [Slavic population in the urban settlements of the medieval Hungarian state], *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 37 (1988): 25; Aleksandar Krstić, "Kovin," in *Leksikon gradova i trgova srednjovekovnih srpskih zemalja*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2010), 131-134, the information on p. 131 is relevant for this topic, holding the most complete list of references about this issue.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 885. T. Lewicki, *Polska* 130, and Elter both use the name *Ibrandis*, with the exception that Elter places its location at Braničevo, Elter, "Magyarország," 59-60, Lewicki refers to Franca villa as Ifrankabilla with respect to this location.

<sup>31</sup> VINJ IV, 119, c.f. footnote 14 at 118-119; Konstantin Jireček, "Hrišćanski elemenat u topografskoj nomenklaturi balkanskih zemalja" [The Christian element in the topographic nomenclature of the Balkan countries], *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I*, ed. Mihailo Dinić (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1959), 524-525; the name of Fruška Gora is of the same origin, Máttyás Gyóni, *Magyarország és a magyarország a bizánci források tükrében* [Hungary and Hungarians in the mirror of Byzantine sources] (Budapest: Pázmány Péter Tudományegyetem Görög Filozófiai Intézet, 1938), 109; Petar skok, "Toponomastika Vojvodine" [Toponymy of Vojvodina], *Vojvodina I*, ed. Dušan Popović (Novi Sad: Istorisko društvo, 1939), 118-119. Lewicki and Škrivanić erroneously identified as Sremska Mitrovica, T. Lewicki, *Polska*, II, 70-72; G. Škrivanić, *Idrisijevi podaci*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> Stanko Andrić, "Samostan Svetoga Križa u Frankavili (Mandelosu)" [The Monastery of the Holy Cross in Francavilla (Mandelos)] *Istorijski časopis* LII (2005): 33-82.

As for the other city, Abrandis, we can safely assume that it is not Braničevo, as Istvan Elter claims. Although he likely took this theory from earlier historiography, first and foremost from Tadeusz Lewicki, he surely cannot be referring to Braničevo, which also appears further on in Idrisi's work under a different name, as will be seen later. It is also worth noting that Braničevo is not located in the northeast of Mandelos, i.e., area of Srem, but in the south-east. A further theory was put forth that Idrisi might have referred to Banoštor, i.e. Petrik.<sup>33</sup> Ban Belos owned this property in Idrisi's time, where he built a Benedictine monastery that would become wealthy and famous during the Middle Ages and eventually the seat of the Diocese of Srem.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, sources reveal that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, in the campaign to Hungary in 1164, was opposite Titel, which in fact refers to Petrik, i.e. Banoštor, or Hungarian Kő, which is the origin of the medieval name of this place.<sup>35</sup>

Distance may be problematic here, as Idrisi states that there are 50 miles between Mandelos, or Francovilla, and Abrandis, whose location we are trying to identify. Perhaps, because of this and the shape of the place, this town should be identified with Varadin or Petrovaradin, which is the modern-day Novi Sad, on the left bank of the Danube, as opposed to Banoštor. The word *Ibrandis* (Abrandis with Lewicki), as used by Idrisi, could be similar to Varadinus, Petrovaradinus, Peturvarad, Waradinum Petri, as well as to the adjective *Waradiensis* (of Varadin, belonging to Varadin) and similar forms encountered in the sources. Of course, all of this is adapted to Arabic pronunciation, where "v" becomes "b."<sup>36</sup>

Identifying Bovi Sad would be essential because it would enrich the history of the city by deeming it a significant hub of the time. Furthermore, it would be the first mention of Novi Sad as a well-organized and wealthy city, which coincides with contemporary and somewhat later sources. The fact that it is located below a hill can easily point to Fruška Gora. The letter from Pope Honorius III to the Byzantine Empress Margarita, the widow of Isaac II Angelos, refers to

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<sup>33</sup> Stojkovski, "Arapski geograf Idrizi," 64, footnote 13.

<sup>34</sup> Jovanka Kalić, "Raški veliki župan Uroš II" [Grand Prince of Raška Uroš II], *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 12 (1970): 24; eadem, "Župan Beloš" [Prince Beloš], *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 36 (1997), 78.

<sup>35</sup> VINJ IV, 68-69, c.f. footnote 169; John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, 164-165.

<sup>36</sup> Györffy, *AMTF II*, 230

Varod as one of the possessions she received from her brother Andrew II, King of Hungary. This letter, from 30 March 1223, as well as a charter by Béla IV, confirm the existence of Petrovaradin or Varadin on the left bank of the Danube, on the site of present-day Novi Sad.<sup>37</sup> It came into Margarita's possession after 1213, when it was confiscated from Ban Peter, after whom Petrovaradin was named. The charter also mentions the existence of a palace, which probably belonged to Ban Peter. Idrisi states that the location includes many squares and buildings, and reveals that the citizens of Petrovaradin and the whole surrounding area came by ferry to Stari Petrovaradin, i.e. present-day Novi Sad. Although this later information dates from a later period, the existence of the palace and the folk tradition, along with the name of the place, Vasáros-Várad, indicate that trade seems to have been developed in Idrisi's time. One document indicates that there was a ferry on both river banks as early as 1267 and that Varad, i.e. Peturvarad, was a storage facility where the serfs of Bačka brought their duties, they were due to pay in agricultural products.<sup>38</sup>

Based on the information above, one can hypothesise, but not conclude with certainty, that in Idrisi's time, Novi Sad was a town which included a mayor's palace (which would later be known as Peter's palace), a ferry, as well as squares frequented by people from the surrounding areas. Considering that present-day Novi Sad was inhabited by Hungarians since its settlement, and before 895 by other populations, it is relatively safe to assume that Idrisi is referring here referring to Varadin, i.e. Novi Sad.<sup>39</sup> This way, just like for Bač, the work of the Arab

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<sup>37</sup> Melhior Erdujhelji, *Istorija Novog Sada* [The History of Novi Sad] (Novi Sad: Izdalo opštinstvo slob. kr. varoši Novoga Sada, 1894), 44-46; Peter Rokai, "Iz srednjovekovne istorije Novog Sada," [From medieval history of Novi Sad] *Zbornik za istoriju Matice Srpske* 11 (1975): 107-108, c.f. footnotes 15-25 with an extensive, somewhat earlier Hungarian bibliography and sources. The data from Peter Rokai and the Hungarian historians he refers to provide an even stronger basis for our assumption that Abrandis is Petrovaradin, i.e. present-day Novi Sad.

<sup>38</sup> Several Hungarian charters confirm the existence of Petrovaradin (present-day Novi Sad) see Gusztav Wenzel, *Árpádkori új okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus. VII. 1235-1260* (Budapest: MTA történelmi bizottmánya, 1860), 27-31; Augustin Theiner, *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, Vol. 1 (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1859), 39; István Gyárfás, *A jász-kunok története II. kötet* [The History of Jas and Cumans] (Kecskemét: s. p., 1873), 420-421.

<sup>39</sup> Erdujhelji, *Istorija Novog Sada*, 1-36.

geographer significantly supplements the history of these places in the twelfth century.

Continuing his description of present-day Vojvodina, while traveling through it, Idrisi states:

From thence, by the river Danaw to the town of Qāūn there are 70 miles. Similarly, from the town of Abrandis to the town of Baqašīn there are also 70 miles. Baqašīn is west from Qāūn. Baqašīn and Qāūn are two famous towns, both with numerous inhabitants and plenty of traffic going in and out of them (both are busy towns).<sup>40</sup> To turn back to the aforementioned, it was said that from the town of B.d.wār.h (تيتلو Budawārah – Buda) to the town of T.y.t.l.w.s<sup>41</sup> (تيتلو Tīt(a)lūs, Titel), by riverway due east there are 75 miles.<sup>42</sup>

Titel dates from the eleventh century. From start, it was more significant than all of the other settlements at the confluence of the rivers Tisa and Danube. Its chapter of the canonical order of Saint Augustine and the monastery was of particular importance. The Titel chapter was also a site of the “public faith,” and as such, it undoubtedly had great importance because only the cathedral chapters and larger collegiate chapters had this right. Additionally, the chapter itself was dedicated to Saint Sophia, which is a unique case in medieval Hungary.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 885.

<sup>41</sup> This is the transcription according to Tadeusz Lewicki, T. Lewicki, *Polška*, 131.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 885. This is certainly south-east, since Titel is not located to the south of Buda, whereas the riverway most likely refers to the Danube.

<sup>43</sup> Ede Ivánfi, *Titel mint prépostság, káptalan, bíteles hely és vár* [Titel as provost, chapter, place of authentication and fortress] (Temesvár: s. p, 1877); Menyhért Érdujhelyi, “A titeli káptalan története” [History of the chapter in Titel], *A Bács-Bodrogh vármegyei történelmi társulat évkönyve* 11 (1895): 49-85; *ibid*, *A kalocsai érsekség a renaissance korban*. [The archbishopric of Kalocsa in the age of renaissance] (Zenta: s. p, 1899), 157; D. Dinčić-Knežević, *Slovenski živalj*, 35; Petar Rokai, Zoltan Đere, Tibor Pal, Aleksandar Kasaš, *Istorija Madara* [History of the Hungarians] (Belgrade: CLIO, 2002), 33-34; Gábor Thoroczky, “A Szent Bölcsesség egyháza, A titeli társaskáptalan története a kezdetektől a XIV. század közepéig” [The Church of Saint Sophia. A history of chapter in Titel from the beginnings to the mid-14th century], *Fons* 21 (2014): 331-350; Boris Stojkovski, “Pravoslavlje u Bačkoj u srednjem veku. Nekoliko priloga” [Orthodoxy in Bačka in the Middle Ages. A few contributions], in *Eparhija bačka kroz vekove*, eds. Brane Milovac, Predrag M. Vajagić (Bačka Palanka: Srpska Pravoslavna crkvena opština: Društvo nastavnika istorije Bačke Palanke, 2018), 238–240. Idem, “Vizantijski manastiri u srednjovekovnoj Ugarskoj [Byzantine monasteries in medieval Hungary].” in *Pravoslavno*

We have already mentioned that from the town of Tītlūs to the town of Ifrankabīlah due south there are (missing data) miles. From the town of Ifrankabīlah to the town of Qāūn there are 100 miles. From the town of Ifrankabīlah to the town of Abrandis there are 50 miles. From the town of Abrandis to the town of Bān.y.h (بانية Bānīah) located on the river L.y.n.h (لينة Līnāh) there are 75 miles. It is small, but it has town districts and fortifications on the river bank. The river debouches between Qāūn and B.l.g.r.d.w.n (بلغردون Bālgrādūn – Belgrade).<sup>44</sup>

Līnāh Elter identified this river as the Lim. We know that the Lim does not flow into the Danube, so it may in fact be the river Mlava, or even Jezava or some other smaller river. The town of Vānīah could perhaps be identified as Pančevo. However, later on, al-Idrisi states that it takes five days to travel from this town to Belgrade, which would exclude the possibility that he would even Pančevo in his work. Tadeusz Lewicki, and via him Gavro Škrivanić, believed that this was Pribojska Banja, but it is unclear what sources they used.<sup>45</sup> The fact is that there are several older buildings in the complex of the Monastery of Saint Nicholas in Banja near Priboj on the Lim, a temple that has been the seat of the Diocese of Dabar since 1219. However, the lack of written sources does not lend us the right to quickly reach a conclusion.<sup>46</sup> In addition, if this

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*monaštvo. Tematski zbornik posvećen arhimandritu Dionisiju (Panteliću), duhovniku manastira Svetog Stjepana u Lipovcu, povodom sedam decenija njegove monaške službe* [Orthodox monasticism. Collected papers dedicated to hegoumenos Dyonisios (Panteliá) on the occasion of seven decades of his monastic service], ed. Dragiša Bojović (Niš: Centar za crkvene studije, 2019), 135-136.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 887.

<sup>45</sup> T. Lewicki, *Polska*, II, 145-146; G. Škrivanić, *Idrisijevi podaci*, 15.

<sup>46</sup> It appears that the first to point to the possibility that this is Banja was Konstantin Jireček, see Konstantin Jireček, “Trgovački putevi i rudnici Srbije i Bosne u srednjem vijeku” [Trade routes and mines of Serbia and Bosnia in the Middle Ages], in *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I* [Works of Konstantin Jireček volume I], ed. Mihailo Dinić (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1959), 246, but he did not specify where in the sources he found this interpretation; for more on archaeological studies, c.f. Mirjana Šakota, “Prilozi poznavanju manastira Banje kod Priboja” [Contributions to the knowledge of the monastery of Banja near Priboj], *Saopštenja* 19 (1970), 19-46; Marija Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije srpske crkve u srednjem veku* [Episcopates and metropolitanates of the Serbian church in the Middle Ages] (Belgrade: Istorijski institut: Narodna knjiga 1985), 175-177; Marina Bunardžić, “Manastir Svetog Nikole u Dabru-arheološka istraživanja trema”



were accepted as Pribojska Banja, the question of the river would still remain because the Lim is far from the Danube and does not debouch anywhere between Kovin and Belgrade.

Bānīah is thus likely to remain entirely unknown, as is the river, since the Arab geographer does not provide more information on their possible location. It could possibly be Ram, which was mentioned in 1128 as a place in which the Byzantines defeated the Hungarians, so it did exist two decades later, when Idrisi could have visited it. Ram, or Horom, or Hram is also mentioned in 1161 in connection with the conquering plans of the Emperor Manuel I Komnenos – thus, it coincides chronologically and to some extent geographically. Since the town is also referred to in different sources as Borona, Brana, Vrana, it is not impossible that Hram/Horom be the closest possible determination of Idrisi's unknown toponym. The problem is that there are no written sources on Hram/Horom. It may be assumed that this were Kulič, or another town located on a smaller river, a tributary of the Danube, so that they are somewhat geographically close, but it is almost impossible to find any similarity to the names that Idrisi uses. However, the fact that the river flows into the Danube between Belgrade and Kovin reduces the possible choices to Kulič, or even to Smederevo, but it is still almost impossible to link the names, so perhaps these assumptions should already be rejected. As he later refers to a five-day journey, and a two-day journey from Kovin to Belgrade, it can be assumed that this is a town in today's central Serbia, perhaps in the Morava basin, which might be the most accurate solution, if we look at how Idrisi described the regions he travelled through. In this case, however, the location identified as Petrovaradin would be wrong, and we would return to Istvan Elter's basic idea that Abrandis refers to Braničevo. But the fact that there are more than 50 miles from Braničevo to Mandelos, makes the problem of the identification of the town and river even more complicated. This was probably an error made by Idrisi when he wrote his *Geography*, especially since the next town he mentions is Plana, stating it is 90 miles away, while Plana is a mining settlement near Kopaonik.<sup>47</sup>

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[Monastery of Saint Nicholas in Dabar-archeological excavations of porch], *Saopštenja* 41 (2009): 265-278.

<sup>47</sup> With respect to Ram, see Mladen Cunjak, *Ram i ramska tvrđava kroz vekove* [Ram and Ram Fortress through the centuries] (Požarevac-Smederevo: Narodni muzej; Regionalni zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture, 2008), 37-39; c.f. also Aleksandar Deroko,

Of course, there may nevertheless still exist an extinct or unidentified fortress near or on the Lim River. However, the lack of both archaeological and written sources does not allow us to make safe assumptions. The Kovin Fort was located on the Lim River, but it is uncertain if it was built before the fifteenth century.<sup>48</sup> In the end, almost no assumption can quite fit this issue, leaving the question open. Idrisi later mentions Bānīah in several places, indicating that this is more likely present-day central or southwestern Serbia, than a particular town on a river that flows into the Danube or that is located next to such a river.

From the town of Bānīah to the town of 'blān.h (أبلانة)  
'Ablānah – Plana) there are 90 miles. This is a prosperous town.<sup>49</sup>

As far as Plana is concerned, it was the place of an advanced mining region in the late Middle Ages where the Ragusan consuls were located. Although the first record of Plana in the Dubrovnik Archives dates to the fourteenth century, archaeological traces point to one century earlier, when mining thrived. Therefore, a town may have been located in the region even before the thirteenth century, which would continue to develop into one of the most important mining areas until the fall of the Despotate.<sup>50</sup>

The distance between the town of 'Ablānah to the town of Rabnah is 120 miles. Rabnha is a large and prosperous town.<sup>51</sup>

Ravno, today's Čuprija, is the ancient Horreum Margi. This city was located on an important route from the Roman times and was also mentioned by numerous Latin European writers, especially historians of the Crusades. Interestingly, Idrisi contradicts one of them, Arnold of

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*Srednjovekovni gradovi na Dunavu* [Medieval cities on the Danube] (Belgrade: Turistička štampa, 1964), 23.

<sup>48</sup> With respect to Kovin on the Lim, c.f. A. Krstić, "Kovin", 130-131.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 887. T. Lewicki. *Polska*, 133 cites the form Iblāna.

<sup>50</sup> Vasilije Simić, "Plana. Srednjovekovno naselje rudarske privrede" [Plana. Medieval settlement of the mining economy], *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta Srpske akademije nauka* 4-6 (1955-1957): 105-122.; Snežana Božanić, "Rudarstvo u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni." [Mining in medieval Serbia and Bosnia], *Spomenica Istorijaskog arhiva Srem* 1 (2002), 91; Sima Ćirković, Desanka Kovačević-Kojić, Ruža Ćuk, *Staro srpsko rudarstvo* [Old Serbian mining] (Belgrade-Novı Sad: Vukova zadužbina: Prometej, 2002), 37-38; Aleksandra Fostikov, "Plana," *Leksikon gradova i trgova*, 214-215.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 887.

Lübeck, who described the Serbs as savages who did not like foreigners. The most likely reason for Arnold's description is the Serbian attack on the Crusaders in 1172 at Ravno. In Idrisi's time however, Ravno is a town that was already developed and well-known, and which had great strategic importance.<sup>52</sup>

There is a four-day journey from the town of Rabnah due south to the town of Gān.l (غابل Gānal/ Gānul Konavljje). This town was occupied and ravaged by the Venetians. The town is located on a large river, on which the city of Nīsū is also located. The distance between the two towns is crossed by land in four days, whereas it takes only two days to cross it by river.<sup>53</sup>

It has been assumed earlier by Boris Nedkov that this passage refers to Konavle, although it may also refer to Hum, as was suggested by earlier editors of Idrisi's work both Boris Nedkov and Jaubert. Konavljje is located by the sea, and is much further away than the four-day journey Idrisi suggested. At the time when Idrisi described these areas, Konavle was, along with the entire Hum region, under the authority of župan Desa, which was preceded by a long period under the strong influence of the Byzantine Empire, so that in the ninth century the inhabitants of Konavle participated in the defence of Bari against the Arabs. What is further confusing is the fact that Niš and Konavljje are not on the same river. Therefore, the information must be erroneous. The question of which Venetian devastation al-Idrisi's refers to also remains open.<sup>54</sup>

The distance between Nīsū and Rabnah is 50 miles. The distance between Bānīah and the town of Bālgradūn due north is five days by land, and between Bānīah and the town of Qāūn is 100 miles. The distance from Qāūn to Bālgradūn is 70 miles, or good two days by foot, whereas it takes less

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<sup>52</sup> Aleksandar Uzelac, "Ravno," *Leksikon gradova i trgova*, 234-235; idem, *Krstaši i Srbi* [Crusaders and Serbs] (Belgrade: Utopija, 2018), 125-126, 129-131, 139, 144, 159-160, 180 with detailed references of Western authors on Ravno.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 887.

<sup>54</sup> C.f. B. Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija*, 111-112. c.f. Radoslav M. Grujić, *Konavli pod raznim gospodarima od XII do XV veka* [Konavle under various lords from the 12th to the 15th century] (Zemun: Makarije, 1926), 3-5. Jaubert even thought that this referred to Novi, Jaubert, *Géographie*, 379, but this fortress is known to have been built later.

by river. Bālgradūn is a prosperous town, with numerous inhabitants and beautiful temples.<sup>55</sup>

Belgrade was an important trading centre throughout the Middle Ages, and the Byzantine and Hungarian conflicts over Belgrade were in progress during Idrisi's time. Byzantine historian John Kinnamos provides detailed records of the fight over Belgrade, the city that had a key strategic point in these conflicts. However, it is unclear to which temples Idrisi refers.<sup>56</sup>

The distance from here to 'f.r.n.y.s.fā (أفرنيسفا) 'Afranīsfa – Braničevo) is 75 miles, two days by river. 'Afranīsfa is a large and prosperous town. The distance between Bālgradūn and Rabnah is 150 miles through the plains, between Rabnah and 'Afranīsfa there are good two days by foot, or, as stated earlier, 100 miles. This is a prosperous town in the plains. It is busy, the goods are cheap, fruit is always available, there is plenty of water supply from the river, it is located in a spacious flatland. Its commerce is ongoing, and there is opulence throughout. It is one of the towns of M.k.d.w.n.y.h (مقدونية) Maq(a)dūnīah – Serbia).<sup>57</sup>

Hungary seemed to have a larger trade colony in Braničevo, a city where border trade flourished. Hungarian merchants even went to Constantinople via Braničevo also selling their goods there. The importance of Braničevo was further confirmed by the fact that the Byzantine attack on it in the late 1120s was the catalyst for the war

<sup>55</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 887.

<sup>56</sup> see Kalić Jovanka, "Beograd u međunarodnoj trgovini srednjeg veka [Belgrade in the international trade of the Middle Ages]," in *Zbornik radova SANU, Oslobođenje gradova u Srbiji od Turaka 1862-1867*, ed. Vasa Čubrilović (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Odeljenje društvenih nauka, 1970.) 47-60; VINJ IV, 39-55; John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, 18, 104-105, 162, 181; as well as Jovanka Kalić, *Beograd u srednjem veku* [Belgrade in the Middle Ages] (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1967), 47-50.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 888. B. Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija*, 116 has a point in concluding that the Arabic version of Braničevo has a Byzantine source, originating from Greek and Byzantine sources which use the term Βρανετσοβα; more specifically, the name is also used by Idrisi's contemporaries, John Kinnamos and Nicetas Choniates (VINJ IV, 13, 16, 43, 47, 48, 50, 61, 117, 129, 131, 137, 151—153); John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, 19, 93, 100, 103; *City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketa Choniates*, transl. Harry Magoulas (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 11, 72, 77, 149, 154-155. Lewicki proposes the form *Ifiranisufa*. T. Lewicki, *Polska*, 134.

between Byzantium and Hungary at the beginning of the reign of Stephen II (1116-1131).<sup>58</sup> At the time of the Second Crusade, the Crusaders also passed through Braničevo, but, unlike Idrisi, having visited it earlier, in 1147, they considered the city poor.<sup>59</sup>

The distance between here and Nīsū is 50 miles. Nīsū is one of the cities of Maqdūnīah. Other parts of the country of Maq(a)dūnīah will be described if God gives us strength. From Qāūn to the country of 'n.k.r.y.h (أنكرية) Ankriā/Unkarīa – Hungary) the road leads north.<sup>60</sup> Due south, after eight days of travel by foot, the river Danaw flows between the towns of Baqaṣīn and Qāūn. The distance between Qāūn and the town of Š.n.t (شنت Šanat – Cenad) is four days, it is west of the river. It is prosperous, charming and civilized. One of the towns in Maq(a)dūnīah is Nīsū. It is famous. There are plenty of fish, honey, milk at low prices. There is also plenty of fruit. It sits on top of a hill and next to the river Mūrāfā which flows from the Serbian mountains. There is also a large bridge across the Mūrāfā, which serves as an entry point to the city.<sup>61</sup>

Niš had been a rich city even before Idrisi wrote about it. Many merchants gathered there, and luxury ceramics found there confirm this thesis.<sup>62</sup> During the war between Hungary and Byzantium in 1071-1072, when the hand of Saint Procopius was taken away, the citizens of Niš gave bounteous gold, silver, and other precious gifts to the Hungarian King Solomon, a fact also confirmed by *Illuminated Chronicle*. Niš was, at Idrisi's time, a wealthy city of great strategic importance. It was also along the route of the Crusaders, who stopped for supplies here, as this was the only city where they could get enough food during the Second

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<sup>58</sup> *Istorija Mađara*, 48-49.

<sup>59</sup> Mihailo Dinić, *Braničevo u srednjem veku* [Braničevo in the Middle Ages] (Požarevac: Narodni univerzitet, 1958), 12; J. Kalić, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 44, also c.f. footnote 41 on p. 350 for further bibliographical references.

<sup>60</sup> Idrisi further in the text describes parts of Hungary which are not the focus of this paper, and, at the end of the paragraph, returns to the area described here. Al-Idrīsī, 888.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 888.

<sup>62</sup> Marija Bajalović-Hadži-Pešić, "Nalazi vizantijske keramike XI-XIII veka na području Srbije" [Finds of Byzantine ceramics of the XI-XIII century on the territory of Serbia], *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 36 (1997), 147.

Crusade. Even the Emperor Manuel I Komnenos stayed in Niš around the time when Idrisi travelled and compiled his *Geography*; in 1150, he commanded the war with the Serbs and the Hungarians from Niš.<sup>63</sup>

The distance between Nīsū and Atrūbī is 40 miles. Atrūbī is located on a small river, which springs from the Serbian mountains (جبال صربية), flows by Atrūbī in the east and into the river Mūrāfā, thus joining together into a large river. After this, the river flows on, until it joins with the Danaw/Dunū, in the vicinity of 'Afranīsfā. There are numerous watermills, gardens and vineyards along the river (Morava). The distance between Atrūbī and 'Atrālīsā mentioned in the fifth section (climate) is 40 miles.<sup>64</sup>

There is a day's journey between Nīsū and رابنة) Rabnah – Ravno). Between Rabnah (Ravno) and 'Afranīsfā there is a day and a half of journey. 'Afranīsfā has many inhabitants and is located in the mountains overlooking the river Danaw/Dunū – Danube.<sup>65</sup>

Braničevo, alongside Belgrade, as the most important fortress on the Danube and Byzantium's stronghold against Hungary, was the location of numerous battles and a place of great strategic importance. Interestingly, at the time when Idrisi wrote his *Geography* (around 1154),

<sup>63</sup> With respect to the sources on Niš c.f. SRH I, 377; *The Illuminated Chronicle*, 208-209; Jovanka Kalić, "Niš u srednjem veku [Niš in the Middle Ages]," *Istorijski časopis* 31 (1984): 10-21, with respect to Niš and its role in the eleventh and twelfth century politics, see Boris Stojkovski, "Niš u vizantijsko-ugarskim odnosima u XI i XII veku" [Niš in Byzantine-Hungarian relations in the 11th and 12th centuries], in *Niš i Vizantija* 7, ed. Miša Rakocija (Niš: Grad Niš: Univerzitet: Niški kulturni centar, 2009), 383-394.; for more on Niš during the Crusades see in detail with numerous references A. Uzelac, *Krstaši*, 11, 14, 29, 32-33, 41- 44, 52, 55-57, 59-61, 66, 93, 104, 108, 117-118, 126, 128-129, 131- 133, 135-138, 143, 145, 151, 157, 160-162, 165-170, 172-173, 180- 181.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 893, clearly provides relative reliable data here, since the Nišava does in fact merge with the South Morava, which in turn merges at Stalač with the West Morava and together make the Great Morava, which indeed, as it is well-known, merges with the Danube not far from Braničevo. Dragan Rodić, Mila Pavlović, *Geografija Jugoslavije I* [Geography of Yugoslavia I] (Belgrade: Savremena administracija, 1994), 144-145.

<sup>65</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 795 and 894, in a somewhat abridged version which does not include references to distances. T. Lewicki, *Polska*, 129. *Dunū* is quite possibly a more accurate form of the word.

the Hungarian siege of Braničevo was underway, taking place probably at the end of 1154.<sup>66</sup>

There is a two-and-a-half-day journey from 'Afranīsfā, along the river Danaw/ Dunū to the town of N.k.s.trū (نوڪسترو Nūkastrū – Novigrad). The town of Nūkastrū is located on a hill, next to the Danube, which flows here from the south. The mouth of the Morava is also in its vicinity. It is a nice, cheap town, with finely kept farms, and numerous vineyards.<sup>67</sup>

It is very likely that this is the former Novigrad, and not Kladovo, as it was erroneously claimed by Boris Nedkov.<sup>68</sup> Apparently, Idrisi also heard the word-form *Novicastrum*, or something similar. Kladovo was built by the Turks in 1524, but some scholars believe it was erected before that, as there is information about King Sigmund's visit to the town in 1419. There are also foundations of an even older town, which Aleksandar Deroko, a Serbian and Yugoslav architectural historian, believes date back to Sigmund's time. Therefore, Kladovo can be dismissed with considerable certainty for the period when Idrisi mentions it as a solution for the ubication in *The Book of Roger*. It is, however, very likely that this was a site near Čezava, identified as *Castrum Novae*, a late antique and early Byzantine site located 18 km downstream of Golubac. It may be assumed that this was the town that Idrisi visited and that survived until a later period.<sup>69</sup> Here, however, the lack of other written sources does not give much room for new assumptions, but the relatively precise ubication by Idrisi, as well as the Latinized name of the place he mentioned, allows us to assume that it was Novigrad, i.e. Čezava.

This exhausts the information that al-Idrisi wrote in his *Geography* regarding southern Hungary and Serbia of his time, that is, the entire

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<sup>66</sup> Ferenc Makk, "Contribution à la chronologie des conflits hungaro-byzantines," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 20 (1981): 31-33; J. Kalić, "Niš u srednjem veku," 19-20.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Idrīsī, 896-897.

<sup>68</sup> B. B. Nedkov, *Bŭlgarija*, 69, 79, 133. He was at first correct in identifying it as Novigrad; however, he referred to older references and accepted the incorrect conclusion that this is Kladovo.

<sup>69</sup> A. Deroko, *Srednjovekovni gradovi*, 25; for more on Novigrad see Miloje Vasić, "Čezava-Castrum Novae," *Starinar* 33-34 (1982-1983): 92-121., 92-121; *Arheološko blago Đerdapa* [Archaeological treasure of Đerdap], ed. by Gordana Marjanović-Vujović et al. (Belgrade: Narodni muzej, 1978), 83.

territory of present-day Serbia. Idrisi's data are valuable albeit not always precise and accurate, but they are an important historical source that in some cases complements known data. At times, one might even say that he provides the first or even the only written source for some places, while other times his writings are difficult to comprehend and cannot be used in research. Certainly, Idrisi's information on southern Hungary and Serbia merits an analysis from a geographical point of view, and his journey through these areas is a rare and, therefore, worthwhile case of a famous Arab author leaving behind a wealth of information about present-day Serbia.

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# The Perception of the Balkans in Western Travel Literature from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century

Nebojša Kartalija<sup>1</sup>

Throughout history, the Balkans have been a meeting place for numerous peoples and cultures. This area was the borderline between the two great spheres of civilization: the Latin West and the Orthodox East. The ethnic image of the Balkan Peninsula has undergone drastic changes on several occasions during Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the period from the fourth to the seventh century, there were various Turkic, Germanic, and Slavic ethnic elements influencing the area. At the beginning of the seventh century, the Byzantine Limes collapsed, which enabled a deeper penetration of the Slavs into the interior of the Balkan Peninsula. During this period, Serbs and Croats settled. In the middle of the ninth century, the Turkish population of Bulgarians settled, which in the following period underwent a gradual process of Slavicization. The last in a series of migrations took place at the end of the ninth century when the Hungarians settled in Pannonia.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, we will look at the perception of the interior of the Balkans in the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. First of all, we will discuss the sources that speak about the perception of the Balkan, that is, the territories of medieval Hungary, and to a lesser extent Serbia and Bulgaria.

The most important road that stretched from north to south was the *Via militaris*, also known as *Via diagonalis*, *Via Traiana*, or *Constantinople*

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<sup>2</sup> P. Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque Romaine jusqu'au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue Historique* 211-2 (1954): 265-308; S. Andrić, "Southern Pannonia during the age of the Great Migrations," *Scrinia Slavonica* 2-1 (2002): 117-167; H. Gračanin, *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju (od konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)* [Southern Pannonia in Late Antiquity and early the Middle Ages (from the end of the fourth to the end of the eleventh century)] (Zagreb: Plejada, 2011).

*Road*. The Byzantines called this communication βασιλική ὁδός (imperial road).<sup>3</sup> Crusade sources attributed the construction of *Via Militaris* to Charlemagne. Allegedly he constructed this road during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>4</sup> The second important road, which stretched from east to west, was *Via Egnatia* (Εγνατία ὁδός), which began at Apollonia and Dyrrachium and ended in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> The unstable political situation, especially in the period from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century, affected the possibility of roads. During this period, the Balkans represented a barrier between Western and Eastern Europe. Communication between these areas during the ninth century took place almost exclusively on the Danube. This is confirmed by the Life of St. Blaise of Amorion.<sup>6</sup> The conflict with the Bulgarian state of

<sup>3</sup> About *Via militaris* see more: K. Jireček, "Vojna cesta od Beograda do Carigrada i balkanski klanci [Military road from Belgrade to Constantinople and Balkan gorges]," in *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečka I*, ed. Mihailo Dinić (Beograd: Naučno delo, 1959), 70-189; G. Škrivanić, *Putevi u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* [Roads in medieval Serbia] (Beograd: Turistička štampa, 1974), 82-102; A. Avramea, "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 65-67.

<sup>4</sup> *Una pars Francorum in Hungariae intrauit regionem, scilicet Petrus Hermita, et dux Godefridus, et Balduinus frater eius, et Balduinus comes Monte. Isti potentissimi milites et alii plures quos ignoro venerunt per viam quam iam dudum Karolus Magnus mirificus rex Franciae aptari fecit usque Constantinoploim. Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum/ The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. Rosalind Hill (London-Paris-New York: Nelson, 1962), 2-3. *Hic cum fratribus suis Eustachio et Balduino et magna manu militum peditumque per Hungariam iter arripuit, per viam scilicet quam Karolus Magnus incomparabilis rex Francorum olim suo exercitui fieri usque Constantinopolim precepit. The Historia Iherosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, eds. Damien Kempf, Marcus G. Bull (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), 9.

<sup>5</sup> For *Via Egnatia* see more: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (New York: Oxford University, 1992), 679. (Cyril Mango); F. O'Sullivan, *The Egnatian Way* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1972); N. L. G. Hammond, "The western part of the Via Egnatia," *Journal for Roman Studies* 64 (1974): 185-194; N. Oikonomides, "The medieval Via Egnatia," in *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996), 9-18; Y. Lolos, "Via Egnatia after Egnatius: Imperial Policy and Inter-regional Contacts," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 22 (2007): 273-293.

<sup>6</sup> D. Obolensky, "The Balkans in the Ninth Century: Barrier of Bridge?," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 13 (1988): 47-66; *Vita S. Blasii Amoriensis*, Acta Sanctorum Novembris IV, eds. Hippolyto Delehaye, Paulo Peeters (Bruxelles: Brepols, 1925), 660-661; "Žitie za Vlasij Amorijski/Vita Blasii Amoriensis [Life of Blaise of Amorion]," in *Grčki izvori za bałgarskata istorija V*, eds. Vojnov M. i al. (Sofija: Izdanie na Bałgarskata Akademija na Naukite, 1964), 15-16. Analysis of Vita of St. Blaise of Amorion: H. Grégoire, "La vie de St. Blaise d'Amorium," *Byzantion* 5 (1929-1930): 391-414; V. Gjuzelev, "Žitiето na Vlasij



Tsar Samuel ended with Byzantine domination in the Balkan Peninsula. Emperor Basil II (976-1025) re-established the borders of the Empire on the rivers Sava and Danube.<sup>7</sup> The Byzantine *reconquista* of the Balkan territories enabled the unhindered movement of travelers between East and West. This route was especially interesting for Christian pilgrims who traveled to the Holy Land. The Christianization of Hungary at the beginning of the eleventh century further facilitated the movement of Western travelers.<sup>8</sup>

One of the first descriptions of the pilgrimage across the Balkans was given by Adémar de Chabannes. He described the pilgrimage of the Count of Angoulême, William, who traveled to the Holy Land in 1026. The pilgrims were received on this occasion by the first Hungarian king, Stephen I (1000/1-1038) with great honors and he richly endowed them.<sup>9</sup> This description complements the anonymous work *Historia pontificum et comitum Engolismensium*, which states that no one had used this road until then and that Christianity was a new religion in Hungary and Slavonia.<sup>10</sup> A few decades later, the French chronicler Raoul Gleber mentions the increase in the popularity of this road.<sup>11</sup> The movement on this

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Amorijski kato izvor za bałgarskata istorija [The life of Blaise of Amorion as a source for Bulgarian history],” *Godišnik na Sofijskaja universitet. Filosofsko-istoričeski fakultet* 61-3 (1968): 3-31.

<sup>7</sup> G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije* [The History of the Byzantine State] (Beograd: Narodna knjiga-Alfa, 1998), 295; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Bălgarskata dăržava prez srednite vekove tom I, čast 1* [History of the Bulgarian State in the Middle Ages Volume I, Part 1] (Sofia: Univerzitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2007), 743-788; S. Runciman, *A History of The First Bulgarian Empire* (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd, 1930), 242-252; P. Stephenson, *The legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 35-36; C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 426-427.

<sup>8</sup> J. France, *The Crusades and the Expansion of Catholic Christendom 1000-1714* (London: Routledge, 2005), 234.

<sup>9</sup> Adémar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, trans. Jules Chavanon, (Paris: Picard 1897), 189-190; *Historia d'Adémar de Chabannes* ed. J. Lair (Paris 1899), 233-234.

<sup>10</sup> *Ea tempestate, Willermus Engolismensium comes, per Bajoariam iter cepit ad sepulcrum Domini; nam ante eum per illas partes nullus praeeterierat, quippe quia novella adhuc Christianitas per Ungriam et Sclavoniam erat. Comitatus sunt cum Odoardus Bituricensis princeps, Ricardus Dolensis abbas. Stephanus rex Ungariae cum omni honore eum suscepit, et muneribus magnis ditavit. Historia pontificum et comitum Engolismensium*, ed. Jaques Boussard (Paris: Librairie d'Argences, 1957), 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ipsa igitur tempore Vngorum gens, que erat circa Danubium cum suo rege ad fidem Christi conversa est. Quorum regi, Stephano ex baptismo vocato, decenterque Christianissimo, dedit memoratus*

communication was temporarily interrupted due to the uprising of Petar Odeljan in 1040-1041. That there has been a decline in the number of pilgrims can be seen from the testimony of Radulf of Cambrai written by *Vita Lietberti episcopi Cameracensis auctore Rodulfo monacho S. Sepulcri Cameracensis*. It describes the pilgrimage of Bishop Cambre, Lietbert from 1054. In it, he described the suspicion of the Hungarian King Andrew I (1046-1060) in the intentions of the pilgrims, because almost no one uses this road.<sup>12</sup> This biography also records the presence of the nomadic population of the Pecheneg in the border area between Hungary and the Byzantine Empire. Members of this nomadic people group attacked pilgrims moving through an area of dense forest that Radulf calls the *desert of Bulgariae* (the Bulgarian desert).<sup>13</sup> We can see from the *Life of Vita Theoderici abbatis Andaginensis* from 1053 that the presence of the Pechenegs in some cases completely prevented the movement of pilgrims. Namely, Theodoric of Andage and his companions were forced to give up traveling across the Balkans. After some time they arrived in Constantinople via Apulia.<sup>14</sup> Mentions of the Pechenegs, as well as

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*imperator Henricus germanam suam in uxorem. Tunc temporis ceperunt pene universi, qui de Italia et Galliis ad sepulchrum Domini Iherosolimis ire cupiebant, consuetum iter quod erat per fretum maris omittere, atque per huius regis patriam transitum habere. Ille uero tutissimam omnibus constituit uiam; excipiebat ut fraters quoscumque uidebat, dabatque illis immense munera. Cuius rei grati pronocata innumerabilis multitudo tam nobilium quam uulgi Iherosolimam abierunt. Ex Rodulphi Glabri historiarum libris V usque ad. 1044, ed. Georgius Waitz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS VII (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1846), 62; Rodulfus Glaber, *Opera*, ed. John France, Neithard Bulst, Paul Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 96-97. For the analysis of Glaber's description of Hungary: A. Györkö, "La relation de Raoul Glaber sur les premières décennies de l'Etat hongrois," in *The First Millennium of Hungary in Europe*, eds. Klára Papp, János Barta (Debrecen: Debrecen University Press, 2002), 120-126.*

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Lietberti episcopi Cameracensis auctore Rodulfo monacho S. Sepulcri Cameracensis*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXX-II, (Lipsiae: Impensis Karoli W. Hiersemann, 1934), 854.

<sup>13</sup> A more detailed description of this area in the works: A. Uzelac, "Skitski razbojnici u bugarskoj pustinji: pogled jednog hodočasnika na Pomoravlje sredinom XI veka [Scythian brigands in Bulgarian desert: A Pilgrim's view of Great Morava Valley in mid eleventh century]," *Istorijski časopis* 59 (2010): 59-76; Ibid, "Zapadnite pātešestvenici v 'Deserta Bulgariae' predi pārvija krāstonosen pohod [Western Travelers in the 'Deserta Bulgariae' before the First Crusade]," *Spisanie Epobi* 25-1 (2017): 196-206.

<sup>14</sup> *Vita Theoderici abbatis Andaginensis* 1087, ed. W. Wattenbach, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XII (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1856), 36-57; *Chronicon sancti Hubert Andaginensis*, ed. L. Bethmann, W. Wattenbach, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS VIII, Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1848, 572.

another nomadic people group, the Uzes, can be found in the description of the so-called The Great German Pilgrimage (1064/65).<sup>15</sup> The Pechenegs are also mentioned in the Byzantine service by Albert of Aachen, the chronicler of the First Crusade. He mentions the conflicts between the pilgrims of Peter the Hermit and the Pechenegs when crossing the Hungarian-Byzantine border near Belgrade and again at the Byzantine city of Niš.<sup>16</sup> In the work of Albert of Aachen, we can also find mention of movement through the dense so-called *Bulgarian forest*.<sup>17</sup>

The chroniclers of the Second Crusade (1147-1149) gave us a somewhat more detailed picture of Hungary. Odo of Deuil, a chronicler and close associate of the French King Louis VII (1137-1180), describes the territory of Hungary as a country with a swamp on the western border, separated from Bulgaria (i.e. the Byzantine Empire) in the south by clear streams. The Drava River, which flows through central Hungary, separates the hills from the steppe areas. The flooding of this river made it difficult for the crusaders to move.<sup>18</sup> The French chronicler states that Hungary is very rich in food. After a journey that lasted fifteen days, the Crusaders crossed into Byzantine territory. Like their predecessors, they

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<sup>15</sup> E. Joranson, "The Great German Pilgrimage of 1064-1065," in *The Crusades and Other Historical Essays Presented to Dana C. Munro by his Former Students*, ed. Louis J. Paetow (New York: F. S. Crofts & Company, 1928), 3-43. H. Kortüm, "Der Pilgerzug von 1064/65 ins Heilige Land. Eine Studie über Orientalismuskonstruktionen im 11. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 277-3 (2003): 561-592.

<sup>16</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 16-17; J. Kalić, "Podaci Alberta Ahenskog o ugarsko-vizantijskim odnosima krajem XI veka [Albert of Aachen's data on Hungarian-Byzantine relations at the end of the eleventh century]," *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* 10-1 (1968): 187-188.

<sup>17</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> *Hungaria ex hac parte aqua lutosa cingitur, ex alia vero a Bogaria amne lucido separatur. In medio sui fluvium habet Droam, qui stanni more unam ripam proclivem habet et alteram arduam. Unde modica pluvia effluit, et aditus vicinis paludibus, etiam aliquanto remota submergit. Audivimus, eum multos Alemannorum qui nos precesserant subito inundasse; nos autem ubi castra eorum fuerant vix potuimus transgredere. In hoc parvas naves habuimus et paucas, et ideo fuit opus equos natare, qui facilem ingressum et egressum difficilem habentes, cum labore quidem, sed tamen Deo volente sine dampno transibant. Cetera omnis aqua terre huius lacus sunt et paludes et fontes; si tamen fontes sunt, quos paululum fossa humo etiam in estate faciunt transeuntes; excepto Danubio, qui hanc satis in directum preterfluit et multarum regionum divitias nobili civitati Estrigun navigio convehit. Odonis de Deogilo, Liber de via sancti sepulchri*, ed. Georgius Waitz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXVI* (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1882), 62; Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII In Orientem: The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1948), 30-31.

traveled through the Bulgarian forest. Odo notes that after two days of travel, they reached the poor town of Braničevo. He says that the surrounding area consists of wooded pastures or pasture forests (*nemorosum vel nemus pabulosum*).<sup>19</sup> This area is fertile and especially suitable for growing vines and cereals, which is fed by numerous springs and streams. After five days, the crusaders reached Niš. The testimony of the French chronicler depicts the passivity of the border area between the two countries. The area north of the Danube, and even more so the interior of the Byzantine territory, was very passive and sparsely populated, which affected the spread of forests. They were a significant resource in the medieval economy. Deforestation was a basic precondition for medieval agriculture, to reach arable land. Also, forests were used as a source of timber, firewood, hunting area, for catching birds, fishing, grazing livestock, and pig breeding and collecting medicinal herbs. In crises, the forest could serve as a place of refuge and shelter. According to available data, estimates indicate that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 25-30% of the Carpathian Basin was under forest cover, which was unevenly distributed.

A similar description of the interior of Hungary was given by Otto of Freising, a chronicler who traveled with the German king Conrad III (1138-1152) during the Third Crusade. He states that this country has wide plains intersected by rivers and streams. Numerous forests are the habitat of many species of wild animals. This province is known for its very beautiful landscapes and rich in fertile fields. Otto of Freising compared this province to Paradise or the Biblical land of Egypt.<sup>20</sup> With as many positive words Otto speaks about the natural resources of Pannonia, he negatively describes the inhabitants of Hungary. He says

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<sup>19</sup> The term *nemus* usually means difficult-to-pass areas with dense forest. On medieval forest terminology: M. F. Jeitler, "Wald und Waldnutzung im frühmittelalter," *Das Mittelalter* 13-2 (2008): 12-27.

<sup>20</sup> *Haec enim provincia, eo quod circumis quaque silvis et montibus et precipue Apennino clauditur, ex antiquo Pannonia dicta, intus planitie campi latissima, decursu fluminum et amnium conspicua, nemoribus diversarum ferarum generibus plenius conserta, tam innata amenitate faciei laeta quam agrorum fertilitate locuples esse cognoscitur, ut tamquam paradysus Dei vel Egyptus spectabilis esse videatur.* *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rachewini*, ed. B. de Simpson, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS rer. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum XLVI (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1912), 50-51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, eds. Charles Christopher Microw, Richard Emery (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 65.

that they are barbaric and that they rarely decorate their houses. He also notes that the border of Hungary is made so much by mountains and forests, but by mighty rivers.<sup>21</sup> He says that the Hungarians behave wildly and animalistic. They eat raw meat and even drink human blood. On the other hand, they are experienced in the use of bows and arrows. He claims that the Pechenegs and Cumans still eat raw horse and cat meat.<sup>22</sup> Otto wonders at how fate or divine providence has left such a wonderful country to such people who are like monsters.<sup>23</sup> In his description, one can feel animosity towards Hungary, with which the German king had been at war only a year earlier. When he described Hungarian villages and fortifications, he claims that those look poor, built of reeds, rarely of wood and stone. During the summer and autumn, they live in tents.<sup>24</sup> These observations are only partially correct. The Arab travel writers Al-Idrisi and Abu Hamid Al-Garnati, who visited Hungary in a chronologically very close period, inform us about the existence of the urban culture.<sup>25</sup> As for the administration of Hungary, Otto states that

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<sup>21</sup> *Habet enim pulcherrimum, ut dixi, naturaliter spectaculum, sed ex barbarae gentis rituum menium vel aedium rarum ornatum terminosque non tam montium vell silvarum quam cursumaximorum fluviorum septos. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 49; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 65-66.

<sup>22</sup> *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis, Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XLV (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Typis Culemannorum 1912), 271-272; Otto, Bishop Of Freising, ed. *The Two Cities: A Chronicle Of Universal History To The Year 1146 A.D.*, trans. Charles Christopher Microw, ed. Austin P. Evans, Charles Knapp (New York: Columbia University Press 2002), 371.

<sup>23</sup> *Sunt autem predicti Ungari facie tetri, profundis oculis, statura humiles, moribus et lingua barbari et feroces, ut iure fortuna culpanda vel potius divina patientia sit admiranda, quae, ne dicam hominibus, sed talibus hominum io monstris tam delectabilem exposuit terram. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 50; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 66.

<sup>24</sup> *Denique cum vilissima in vicis vel oppidis ibi, id est ex cannis tantum, rara ex lignis, rarissima ex lapidibus habeantur habitacula, toto estatis vel autumpni tempore papiliones inhabitant. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 50; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 66.

<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of the travel testimonies of Abu Hamid and Idrizi, see: T. Lewicki, "Węgry i muzułmanie węgierscy w świetle relacji podróżnika arabskiego Abū Hāmid al-Andalusiego [Hungary and Hungarian Muslims in the light of the accounts of the Arab traveler Abū Hidid Al-Andalusī]," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 13 (1938): 106-122; I. Hrbek, "Ein arabischer Bericht über Ungarn [An Arabic report on Hungary]," *Acta Orientalia* 5 (1955) 206-230; J. Kalić, "Podaci Abu Hamida o prilikama u južnoj Ugarskoj sredinom XII veka [Abu Hamid's data on the situation in southern Hungary in the middle of the twelfth century]," *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 4 (1971): 25-37; B. Stojkovski, Boris. "Abū Hāmid in Hungary." *Istraživanja* 22 (2011): 107-115; B. Stojkovski, "Arapski

the territory of this kingdom is divided into seventy counties, from which the king enjoys two-thirds of the income, while one third remains to the local counts. When describing the royal power, the German historian claims that it is absolute. The king arbitrarily imprisoned the accused regardless of their social status. The accused were held without trial and tortured.<sup>26</sup> Otto of Freising also describes the military organization of Hungary. He states the existence of a general military obligation. Among every nine peasants, one is equipped for war. As for the knights, they are recruited in the period of greatest danger. The king also has at his disposal bodyguards, who are foreigners. The sons of foreigners who participate as soldiers are called mercenaries (*solidarios*).<sup>27</sup> These data speak of the successful centralization of power during the reign of Géza II (1141-1162).<sup>28</sup>

The well-known crusader chronicler William of Tire gave a very negative description of Serbs in his work *Historia Rerum in Partibus transmarinis gestarum*. In the year 1168, as an envoy of the King of Jerusalem, he visited Constantinople. Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) was absent on the campaign against the Serbian Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja (1166-1196), the founder of the Nemanjić (Nemanjid) dynasty. According to him, Serbia (Servia) is a mountainous area covered with forests between Dalmatia, Hungary, and Illyricum. He depicted Serbs as rude and undisciplined people, dwelling in the forests

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geograf Idrizi o južnoj Ugarskoj i Srbiji [The Arabian Geographer Idrīsī on South Hungary And Serbia],” *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 79-80 (2009): 59-69; B. Stojkovski, Boris, N. Kartalija, “The Other and the Self in the Travel Accounts of Southern Hungary and Serbia in the Works of Al-Idrisi and Abu Hamid Al-Garnati,” *Romano-Arabica* 18 (2018): 208-214; I. Elter, István. “Magyarország Idrīsī földrajzi művében (1154) [Hungary in geographical work of Idrīsī],” *Acta historica* 82 (1985) 53-63.

<sup>26</sup> *Hinc est, ut, cum predictum regnum per LXX vel amplius divisum sitcomitatus, de omni iusticia ad fiscum regum duae lucri partes cedant, tertia tantum comiti remaneat, nullusque in tam spacioso ambitu, rege excepto, monetam vel theloneum habere audeat. Quod si aliquis ex comitum ordine regem vel in modico offenderit vel etiam de hoc quandoque non iuste infamatus fuerit, quilibet infimae condicionis lixa a curia missus eum, licet satellitibus suis stipatum, solus comprehendit, in vinculis ponit, ad diversa tormentorum genera trahit. Nulla sententia a principe, sicut apud nos moris est, per pares suos exposcitur, nulla accusato excusandi licentia datur principi, sicut apud nos moris est, per pares suos exposcitur, nulla accusato excusandi licentia datur, sed sola principis voluntas apud omnes pro ratione habetur.* *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rachevini*, 50-51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 67.

<sup>27</sup> *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rachevini*, 51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 67.

<sup>28</sup> P. Rokai, Z. Đere, T. Pal, A. Kasaš, *Istoriya Madara* [The History of the Hungarians] (Beograd: Clío, 2002), 53.

and mountains. They have no knowledge of agriculture but possess large flocks and herds which supply them abundantly with milk and cheese, butter, meat, honey, and wax. They have magistrates who are called *suppani* (srp. župani). William believes that the Serbian (Servi, lat. slaves) have this name because they are the descendants of slaves who worked in marble quarries and mines. He also says about Serbs: *At times they obey the emperor, but at other times, since they are a bold and warlike race, they sally forth from their mountain fastnesses and lay waste all the surrounding country.* Because of this, the emperor Manuel went on the campaign against them. He was finally successful in subduing them and captured their principal chief.<sup>29</sup>

Henry the Lion (1142-1180), Duke of Saxony and Bavaria and cousin of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1172. Thanks to the description given to us by Arnold of Lübeck, we can reconstruct the journey of the Saxon duke to the East, about which other contemporary sources say very little.<sup>30</sup> After traveling from

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<sup>29</sup> *Detinebatur porro eo temporis articulo imperator in Servia, que regio, montuosa et nemoribus obsita difficiles habens aditus, inter Dalmatiam et Hungariam et Illiricum media iacet, rebellantibus Servis et confidentibus de introitu ad se angustiis et de inpervia eorum regione. Habent vetuste traditiones hunc omnem populum ex deportatis et deputatis exilio, qui in partibus illis ad secunda marmora et effodienda metalla dampnati fuerant, originem habuisse et inde etiam nomen traxisse servitutis. Est autem populus incultus, absque disciplina, montium et silvarum habitator, agriculture ignarus, gregibus et armentis copiosus, lacte, caseo, butiro, carnibus, melle et cera uberius habundantes. Hii magistratus habent quos suppanos vocant, et domino imperatori aliquando serviunt, aliquando de montibus et silvis egredientes omnem circa se regionem, ut sunt audaces et bellicosi viri, depopulantur: ob hec ergo intolerabilia vicinis eorum maleficia ingressus erat ad eos in virtute multa et innumera manu dominus imperator. Quibus subactis et precipuo eorum principe vinculis mancipato redeunti domino imperatori post multiplices viarum labores in provincia Pelagonia, in eiviate que vulgo dicitur Butella, occurrimus, iuxta illam antiquain et domini felicissimi et invictissimi et prudentis Augusti. Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi, Chronicon, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis vol. LXIII (Tvrnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1986), 916; William, Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* vol. II, trans. Atwater Babcock, A. C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 348-349; About this conflict see: G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije* [The History of the Byzantine State], 364; Serbian Grand Prince was captured by Byzantine ruler but in 1172. Kalić, "Srpsko-vizantijski sukob 1168. godine [The Serbian-Byzantine conflict in 1168]," *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu* 11-1 (1970): 193-204.*

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of the pilgrimage from 1172: E. Joranson, *The Palestine Pilgrimage of Henry the Lion*, Medieval and historiographical essays in honor of James Westfall Thompson, eds. James Lee Kate, Eugen N. Anderson (Chicago, 1938), 146-225; P. Barz, *Heinrich der Löwe. Ein Welfe bewegt Geschichte* (Hamburg, 1987), 249-259; J. Ehlers, *Heinrich der Löwe: Eine Biographie* (Göttingen-Zürich, 1997), 96-103; W. Störmer, "Heinrich der Löwe-Ein

Braunschweig to Vienna, the duke and his entourage continued their journey along the Danube to Braničevo. Once again, we can see the importance of the Danube as a communication. The duke experienced a shipwreck near this city, from where they continued their journey by land. The only inconvenience during the pilgrimage happened near Ravna (today Čuprija), where the Serbs, although nominal subjects of the Byzantine Empire, refused hospitality to the pilgrims, only to attack them later. Arnold from Lübeck describes the Serbs very negatively. He calls them the sons of Belial, who do not know the yoke of the Lord but indulge in carnal passions. According to their name Servi, i.e. servants, they serve all that is unclean and are savage.<sup>31</sup>

Ansbertus, the chronicler of the Third Crusade (1189-1192) and companion of German Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa (1155-1189) gives us a different image of the Serbs. After crossing over through Hungary, where the Crusaders were well received, they experienced the first attacks on the Byzantine territory. The Crusaders were attacked by Greeks, Serbs, and semi-barbarian Vlachs, who used poisoned arrows against Crusaders. From the prisoners, they learned that they were acting on the orders from the Duke of Braničevo, who was carrying out the imperial instructions.<sup>32</sup> On the territory of the Serbian grand prince Stefan Nemanja, the crusaders were warmly welcomed. The emperor and his forces were welcomed by Nemanja and his brother Miroslav at the city of Niš. The Serbian ruler received the German emperor and his entourage very nicely. Numerous animals, such as tamed boars and deer,

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europäischer Fürst des Hochmittelalters,” *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 73-3 (2010): 779-789.

<sup>31</sup> *Procedentes igitur appropriabant urbi que Ravenelle dicitur, que in medio nemoris sita est, cuius habitatores Servi dicuntur, filii Belial, sine ingo Dei, illecebris carnis et gule dediti et secundum nomen suum immunditiam omnibus servientes et iuxta locorum qualitatem bellualiter vivendo, bestiis etiam agrestiores. Arnoldi abbatiss Lubecensis Chronica*, ed. I. Lappenberg, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXI* (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1869), 118; *The Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck*. (London-New York: Taylor & Francis, trans. Graham A. Loud, 2019), 44. About this incident see: A. Uzelac, “„Čuvaj se Belijalovih sinova i otrovnih strela!“-Pomoravlje u drugoj polovini XII [“Beware the sons of Belial and poisoned arrows!”-Great Morava Valley in the Second Half of the Twelfth Century],” in *Stefan Nemanja i Toplica*, ed. Dragiša Bojović, Niš: Centra za crkvene studije, 2011, 97-107.

<sup>32</sup> Ansbert, “The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick,” in *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*, trans. Graham A. Loud (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 52; 60; I. Komatina, “Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders],” *Istorijski časopis* 64 (2015): 76-77.



were presented to the emperor. Among the gifts were even seal (Monachus Monachus).<sup>33</sup> This testifies to the economic power and political influence of the Serbian ruler in the Maritime area. Nemanja and Miroslav offered Barbarossa a vassal oath and an army for the conflict against the Byzantine emperor, which the German ruler refused.<sup>34</sup> Barbarossa did not accept Nemanja's proposal, because he aspired to carry out the crusade. However, there has been closer cooperation between the two sides. It was formalized by an agreement on marriage between the daughter of Berthold IV, the Margrave of Istria, and Toljen (Tomislav), the son of Prince Miroslav.<sup>35</sup> In the end, this marriage did not take place. The potential support of Serbia and the newly independent Second Bulgarian Empire was an important argument in the negotiations between Barbarossa and the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185-1196; 1293-1204).<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, no Serbian source mentions the meeting between the Serbian Grand Prince and the German emperor.

The Mongols appeared as a significant factor in Western European politics. Their penetration into Western Europe in 1241-1242 left a great impression on the contemporaries. In Hungary, the Mongols caused a great demographic catastrophe. A large number of settlements were destroyed, and the population was killed or enslaved. Despite the danger, the Mongols posed, the Western world, saw them as a potential ally in the fight against the Arabs. The interest in the Mongols aroused missionary tendencies that are present in the travel literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This tendency is evident from a work

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<sup>33</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 61; M. Paulova, "Účast Srbů při třetí křížové výpravě [The Participation of the Serbs in the Third Crusade]," *Byzantinoslavica* 5 (1933-1934): 281-282; I. Komatina, "Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders]," 78.

<sup>34</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 61; J. Kalić-Mijušković, "Niš u srednjem veku [Niš in the Middle Ages]," *Istorijski časopis* 31 (1984): 24-25.

<sup>35</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 62; I. Komatina, "Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders]," 78-79; K. Jireček, "Toljen sin kneza Miroslava humskog" [Toljen son of Grand prince Miroslav of Hum], in *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka* I, ed. Mihailo Dinić (Beograd: Naučno delo, 1959), 443-441.

<sup>36</sup> This can be seen from Barbarossa's negotiations with Emperor Isaac II, where the German emperor mentions the forces of 60,000 Serbs and Vlachs at his disposal (of which 20,000 are Serbs). Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 84; 94.

such as the anonymous work *Descriptiones terrarum*, written between 1255 and 1260. As a border country of Latin Christianity, Hungary became a possible base for missionary activities. The description of Serbia is especially interesting, for which an anonymous author says that the Eastern Church begins with it. The etymology of Serbia, according to the author of the writing, originates from its subordination to Greece.<sup>37</sup> The only city that is mentioned in the entire text is Bar (Anteuariam), which is situated in Serbia.<sup>38</sup> The mention of this city indirectly indicates the origin of the writings. Bar was the center of the Catholic Church in the Nemanjić Serbia. This writing shows the clear missionary tendencies that the papacy had in this period. The *Descriptiones terrarum* was written in the circle of the famous Franciscan missionary Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (c. 1185-1252) who was appointed Archbishop of Bar in 1248 upon his return from the Karakorum.<sup>39</sup>

The *Anonymi descriptio Europe orientalis*, written in late 1310 or early 1311 under Pope Clement V (1305-1314), has a similar character. The primary intention of the writer of this work is to initiate action against Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, who were considered schismatics by the Western Church. This action was to be led by Charles of Valois, titular Latin Emperor of Constantinople and King of Hungary, Charles Robert (1308-1342).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Orientalis uero ecclesia incipit a Grecia siue Seruia, que sic dicta est quia Grecie seruiebat. L. S. Čekin, „Opisanie zemel“, anonimnyj geografičeskij traktat vtoroj poloviny XIII v. [“Description of lands”, an anonymous geographical treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century],” *Srednie veka* 55 (1993): 215; 219; D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 37 (1998): 252.

<sup>38</sup> *De genere est Sclauorum, Anteuariam in se continens, et per Greciam procedens terminator uersus orientem in montibus Scilicie et Syrie superius nominatis.* L. S. Čekin, „Opisanie zemel“, anonimnyj geografičeskij traktat vtoroj poloviny XIII v. [“Description of lands”, an anonymous geographical treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century],” 215; 219; D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” 252.

<sup>39</sup> D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” 250-251 I. Komatina, “Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders],” 314.

<sup>40</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis = Anonimov Opis istočne Evrope* [Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe], eds. Tibor Živković, Vladeta Petrović, Aleksandar Uzelac (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2013) 13-70.

When it comes to the description of Hungary, it is largely anachronistic, especially as far as the earliest history of Hungary is concerned, and in a sense of geography. Anonymous states that Hungary is divided into 16 areas, of which 5 are duchies. Along with Buda, which was the capital, the cities were located in episcopal centers such as Esztergom, Győr, Zagreb, Veszprém, Pécs, Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia). As episcopal centers, he also mentions Trnava, Pozsony, and Baja (the very first mention), which were not. He states that there are only five more cities in Dalmatia. Despite numerous fortifications and countless villages, Hungary seems deserted.<sup>41</sup> The writer says that it is one of the greatest in the world. It is rich in pastures, grain, wine, cattle, gold, and silver.<sup>42</sup> There are large salt deposits in Transylvania.<sup>43</sup> Hungary is also very rich in fish, Anonymous especially emphasizes the size and richness of the Danube River. In addition to the richness of fish, the rivers in the area of Transylvania are also gold-bearing. They were also used to transport salt for trade.<sup>44</sup> The inhabitants of Hungary are described as short, thin, but accustomed to war, especially good as archers. Anonymous exaggerates the military power of Hungary. Allegedly, the Hungarian king was able to recruit as many as 100,000 soldiers. The king did not stay in cities but military camps. This corresponds to the situation after the takeover of power by King Charles Robert, who sought to consolidate the seized power.<sup>45</sup> The Hungarian king has been described as a good Catholic ruler who has marital relations with many European rulers, including the schismatic Milutin.<sup>46</sup>

The Serbian state, called by Anonymous the Kingdom of Raška (Rascia), consisted of two areas, Raška and Serbia. These are often synonymous names for the Serbian state, but the author is aware of the distinctions between them. Since the beginning of the thirteenth century, the name Servia or Serbia had been in the title of the Hungarian rulers and shows their political pretensions. Concerning the Serbian state, Hungarian rulers use the term Rascia. In *Anonymi descriptio Europae orientalis*, Raška represents the area ruled by King Milutin (Vrosius) (1282-

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 135; 141.

<sup>42</sup> *Est enim terra pascuosa et fertilis ualde in pane, uino, carnibus, auro et argento.* Ibidem, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, 135-136.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, 137.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, 139-140.

<sup>46</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 140-143.

1321), while the area of his deposed brother Dragutin (Stephanus) (1276-1282), which incline towards Hungary, he uses the term Serbia.<sup>47</sup>

Raška is ruled by King Milutin, about whom the anonymous author has an extremely bad opinion. Raška consists of three provinces: Hum, Duklja, and Maritime province.<sup>48</sup> Raška is mostly a schismatic state, while Catholics living in the Maritime province.<sup>49</sup> The Catholic population suffers from the pressure of the fickle and schismatic King Milutin.<sup>50</sup> This presentation of Milutin's policy towards the Catholic population does not correspond to the facts. Catholics were not persecuted, they enjoyed a certain autonomy, and they used to be part of the royal administration. The Serbian ruler was negatively represented because he rejected the promised union with Rome.<sup>51</sup> Raška is not only a schismatic land but also a refuge for heretics.<sup>52</sup>

Raška has great economic potential. There are seven mines on its territory, which are in possession of the Serbian king and which are located near the Maritime area.<sup>53</sup> This area is rich in silver, lead, and iron, respectively.<sup>54</sup> As for the cities, there are six of them and they are all located in the coastal area. In the rest of Serbia, there are only large

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<sup>47</sup> M. Dinić, "O nazivima srednjovekovne srpske države [About the names of the medieval Serbian state]," *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* 32 (1966): 29-34. The Geographical Perception of Nemanjić State in Western sources from twelfth to fourteenth century: A. Uzelac, "Država Nemanjića u geografskim predstavama zapadnoevropskih savremenika [The Nemanjić State in Geographic Representations of the Western European Contemporaries]," in *Srpska kraljevstva u srednjem veku*, ed. Siniša Mišić, Beograd-Kraljevo: Filozofski fakultet, Odeljenje za istoriju, Centar za istorijsku geografiju i istorijsku demografiju, Beograd: Filozofski fakultet Novi Sad: Odsek za istoriju: Univerzitet: Centar za vizantijsko-slovenske studije Niš: Kraljevo: Grad Kraljevo, 2017, 357-380.

<sup>48</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 120.

<sup>49</sup> In hac Maritima Regione habitatores eiusdem sunt puri catholici et quasi Latin. Ibidem, 121.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, 125-126.

<sup>51</sup> About Milutin's relations with Western powers: A. Uzelac, Aleksandar, B. Radovanović, "Crkvena i svetovna politika kralja Milutina prema zapadnim silama—nekoliko novih zapažanja [Ecclesiastical and Secular Policies of King Milutin towards the Western Powers - Some New Observations]," *Sveti car Konstantin i brišćanstvo, Međunarodni naučni skupnoporodom 1700. godišnjice Milanskog edikta*, I, ed. Dragiša Bojović (Niš: Centar za crkvene studije, 2013), 593-608.

<sup>52</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 121.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 122.

<sup>54</sup> *Habundat enim dictum regnum in argento et plumbo et ferro*. Ibidem, 122.

villages with 300 to 400 houses.<sup>55</sup> This claim is certainly exaggerated, but the Western European view of urban settlements. Raška is described as a country rich in wheat, livestock, and dairy products. The population consumes milk and beer, while the king and the aristocracy drink wine imported from the Maritime province.<sup>56</sup> It is further stated that men and women in this country are tall and beautiful, but unaccustomed to warfare. The author of the writings knows the change of government in the Serbian state and the conflict that arose between King Dragutin and Milutin.<sup>57</sup> He interprets Milutin's pro-Western policy as fear of the power of Charles of Anjou.<sup>58</sup> The other area, called Serbia, was managed by Milutin's brother, Dragutin. Serbia consists of: three provinces: Mačva, Bosnia, and Markija (probably the area of Braničevo and Kučevo). These are the northern areas of Serbia, which he kept after he handed over power to Milutin in 1282. Two years later, he received the Banovina of Mačva and the areas of Usora and Soli from the Hungarian king Ladislaus IV (1272-1290).<sup>59</sup> As the antipode of his brother, Dragutin is described as a good ruler, a saint in his faith, who loves Catholics who live in his area.<sup>60</sup> Anonymous says that Dragutin handed over power to Milutin, who then usurped it and their conflict continues at the time when this source was written.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Preterquam in Maritima Regione dicta, ubi sunt sex civitates, in toto regno prefato non est aliqua ciuitas. Sunt tamen in eo multa castra, fortalicia et magne uille de trecentis et quadringentis domibus de lignis et asseribus edificatis sine aliqua clausura.* Ibidem, 122.

<sup>56</sup> *Alias, dictum regnum est fertile in pane et carnibus et lacticiis, sed deficit in uino et piscibus. Nam communiter non bibitur uinum ibi, sed ceruisia et lac. Rex tamen et barones utuntur uino in copia, a Maritima Regione portatum.* *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 122-123;

<sup>57</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 123-124; About the relation between these Serbian rulers: M. Dinić, "Odnos između kralja Milutina i Dragutina [The relation between King Milutin and Dragutin]," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 3 (1955): 49-82.

<sup>58</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 126-128.

<sup>59</sup> About king Dragutin's land after abdication: M. Dinić, "Oblast kralja Dragutina posle Deževa [The area of King Dragutin after Dežev agreement]," *Glas SANU* 203 (1951) 61-82; Ibid, "Uz raspravu oblast kralja Dragutina posle Deževa [With the discussion of the area of King Dragutin after Dežev agreement]," *Istorijski časopis* 3 (1952) 249-251.

<sup>60</sup> *Est enim dictus rex Stephanus homo iustus, bonus et in ritu suo reputatus multum sanctus, catholicos diligens et amplectens. Habet enim in uxorem filiam regis Hungarie, sororem regine Sicilie, ex qua habet prolem decentem utriusque sexus, nec umquam habuit aliam uxorem.* *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 125.

<sup>61</sup> *Quidam tamen dicunt quod tradidit ei regnum simpliciter et renuntiavit regno in manibus suis, quidam alii dicunt, et hoc idem rex Stephanus fatetur, quod non tradidit simpliciter, nec renuntiavit, sed sub condicione si uiueret, quod regnum sibi restitueretur; si uero tunc moreretur, quod haberet regnum. Sed*

Bulgaria is described as a great empire with Vidin as its capital. The land is wide, vast, and fertile, with ten rivers. Bulgaria is rich in grain, cattle, fish, as well as mineral treasures, silver, and gold-bearing gold. Wax and silk are mentioned among the products.<sup>62</sup> Unicorns, tigers, and beavers are mentioned among the animals that inhabit this country.<sup>63</sup> Anonymous states that Bulgaria was under the rule of Byzantium, which was liberated later on. Bulgaria was temporarily occupied by King Andrew, but when the Hungarian government weakened, Bulgaria came under the Tatar rule.<sup>64</sup>

Chronologically, a very close work by an anonymous Tuscan geographer was created between 1313 and 1315, which was incorporated into the World Chronicle, attributed to the Florentine Amaretto Mannelli. When talking about Hungary, the Tuscan geographer says that it borders Germany. His observation about the ethnic composition of this state is interesting. Besides Hungary, there are Romanians and Vlachs, who have their kingdom and are pagans.<sup>65</sup> This

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*frater iunior intrans regni possessionem numquam ipsi fratri restituit licet conualuisset, sed tenuit iam per XXVI annos et adhuc tenet ueridicus. Propter quod ortum est bellum et dissensio inter dictos fratres usque ad hodiernum diem.* Ibidem, 124-125.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, 128-129.

<sup>63</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 130. Under the tiger, as in the description of the fauna of other Slavic countries, author understood the European bison Zubr or Wisent (Bison bonasus), and the unicorn is the aurochs (Bos primigenius). A. Uzelac, "Tigrovi na donjem Dunavu"—mali prilog proučavanju megafaune srednjovekovnog Balkana [Tigers on the Lower Danube—A Small Contribution to the Research of the Medieval Balkan Megafauna], *Braničevski glasnik* 8 (2012): 7-23.

<sup>64</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 130. The description of Bulgaria is only referred to the Principality of Vidin. Hungarian King Andrew II (1205-1223) forced the Bulgarian Tsar Boril to cede to him the then northwestern areas of the Trnovo Empire - Braničevo and Belgrade. Boril's successor Ivan Asen II captured the Hungarian king on his return from the Holy Land. Ivan Asen II managed to get these areas back. He also married King Andrew's daughter. The Hungarians conquered Braničevo from Bulgaria in 1232-1233. H. Dimitrov, *Bylgaro-ungarski odnosbenija prez srednovekovieto* [Bulgarian-Hungarian relations in the Middle Ages] (Sofija: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Prof. Marin Drinov", 1998), 132-139. Bulgaria became a dependent state of the Golden Horde in the years after Mongol invasions of Europe 1241-1242. Prince Shishman of Vidin around 1285 recognized the supreme authority of the Mongol lord Nogai. About Tatar influence on the Balkans, especially in Bulgaria see: I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars-Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185-1365* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69-98.

<sup>65</sup> *La settima provincia si è Vngaria, e anche a reame, sono molta gente, non u'a contadi grandi, confina colla Magnia e dall'altra sono cristiani Vngheri. In quella medesima provincia sono i Rumeni e i Valacchi, e quali sono due grandi generazioni, e anno reame e sono paghani.* P. Gautier Dalché,

is the first mention of Romanians under this name in medieval sources. The misconception about the pagan religion of the Romanians-Vlachs stems from the fact that they were associated with the neighboring Cumans. His information was probably obtained by Italian merchants on the Black Sea or by Franciscan missionaries.<sup>66</sup> The ruler of Serbia is called the King of Raška. He says that its population is Christian, but they do not obey the Roman Church and there are mistakes in their religious practice. There are no big cities in Raška.<sup>67</sup> This claim should be understood very conditionally, there were cities on the territory of Serbia and Bulgaria but they are not of great importance for the author, so he did not even record them. The description of Bulgaria is very concise. The Christian population lives in this country, with the Christian emperor, but Bulgaria is subservient to the Tatars, i.e. the Golden Horde.<sup>68</sup>

For medieval travel writers in the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, the territory of the Balkans was *terra incognita*, a space located on the edge of the Western world. In the beginning, this area was important for travelers to the Holy Land. During the Crusades, the population of the Balkans were often perceived as savage pagans or just Christianized people. The lack of large urban settlements favored the presence of a nomadic population. The passivity of a significant area of the Balkans is attested in Western sources by the view that there are almost no cities on the territory of Hungary, Serbia, and Bulgaria. There

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“Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle),” in idem, *L'espace géographique au Moyen Âge* (Firenze, 2013), 176.

<sup>66</sup> A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” in *Spomenica akademika Miloša Blagojevića (1930-2012)*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, Centar za istorijsku geografiju i istorijsku demografiju, 2015), 239-240

<sup>67</sup> *La decima provincia si è Cierina, chiamasi re di Rascia, sono cristiani, non ne ubbidiscono alla chiesa di Roma, e anno molti errori tra loro per la fede, anno reame, non u'a terra grossa.* P. Gautier Dalché, “Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle),” 176; A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” 237; 240-241.

<sup>68</sup> *La undecima prouincia si è Bulgaria, anno imperadore, sono cristiani, ubbidiscono a' Tartari, non u'a grandi cittadi, sono assai gente.* P. Gautier Dalché, “Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle),” 176; A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” 237; 240.

was certainly an urban culture in this area, but not to the extent that Western travelers would expect. Increasing interaction with the West has changed the view of the inhabitants of the Balkans. Religion, much more than ethnic origin, played a role in the perception of medieval travel writers. That is why Hungary is increasingly seen as an *antemurale Christianitatis*, which can serve as a stronghold from which Catholicism could spread further to the East. Due to the dominant role of Orthodoxy, Serbia was seen as a schismatic country, in which the Catholic minority was persecuted, although this image does not correspond to the factual situation. Although often subjective and colored by religious animosity, travel literature brings us more than significant information about this area. The perception of the former Bulgarian presence in a significant part of the Balkan Peninsula is attested in the geographical names of Western travel writers. The area south of the Sava and the Danube was perceived as Bulgaria, although until the end of the twelfth century, Byzantium had at least nominal control over it. As an independent political entity, Bulgaria played a limited but important role for Italian merchants on the Black Sea, as well as in the missionary activity of the Franciscan order. When we take into account that the sources of domestic provenance are not informative enough or do not exist at all, their significance is even greater. Owing to them, we can shed light on the dynamic history of the Balkans in this period.

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# From Mačva to Tarnovo: On the Roads of the Balkan Politics of Prince Rostislav Mikhailovich

Djura Hardi<sup>1</sup>

In the mid-thirteenth century, due to complex political circumstances, a member of the Russian ruling Rurik dynasty, Prince Rostislav Mikhailovich, the son of Chernigovian and Kievan Prince Mikhail Vsevolodovich, became the lord of Mačva or, referred to by its older name, *Sirmia Ulterior*. This was a border area of the Kingdom of Hungary, located south of the rivers Sava and Danube. Rostislav did not become the master of Mačva by his own will. As the son-in-law of the Hungarian King Béla IV and the husband to Béla's beloved daughter Anna, his intention was to take possession of the Russian principality of Galicia. For the throne of Galicia, Rostislav and his father fought for a full decade against a close cousin, Rostislav's uncle, Daniil Romanovich, the prince of neighbouring Volhynia. However, on 17 August 1245, Rostislav's army, made up of his Russian supporters and detachments given to him by the Hungarian king and Polish ally and cousin, Prince of Krakow, Boleslaw the Chaste, suffered a severe defeat in the battle of Yaroslav. Probably in 1246, Rostislav's father-in-law and political patron Béla IV made peace with Daniil Romanovich in the town of Zwolen, marrying his other daughter Constance to his son Leo. This way, the Hungarian court (at the expense of Rostislav Mikhailovich and Anna) ceded the right to Galicia to the Romanovichs. The Hungarian king did so because of the Mongolian threat from the East, but primarily because of his plans to acquire Austria and Styria after the recent death of the last male representative of the Babenberg dynasty, Frederick II the Quarrelsome. After this turn of events, as compensation for Galicia, Rostislav acquired

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from the hands of his father-in-law, Mačva, sometime between 1248 and 28 June 1254.<sup>2</sup>

Mačva, clearly, could not make up for the loss of Galicia for Rostislav, because how could we otherwise explain the fact that for the rest of his life he emphasized Galicia in his ruling title, while minimizing his lordship over Mačva. It appears that the power over Mačva was even less satisfactory when it came to the ruling ambitions of this Russian prince in the role of a son-in-law of the Hungarian king. The imposed arrival to the southern Hungarian border provided Rostislav with the opportunity to turn his gaze to the neighbouring southern Slavic countries and start pursuing an independent policy towards them, with the support, we believe, or at least a favourable sentiment, of his father-in-law. In any case, symbolically speaking, Rostislav's routes and ambitions led further south from Mačva. Due to the silence of the historical sources, we do not know anything about the lord of Mačva's policy towards Serbia. We seemingly know a little more about his presence in Bosnia, but again not enough to discuss the time and place of his stay on the other side of the Drina River.

However, while searching for a reliable itinerary of Rostislav Mikhailovich, available sources lead us towards Bulgaria. We take this direction in light of the unusually important role Rostislav Mikhailovich had in the Hungarian-Bulgarian relations in the thirteenth century, which is today a well-known topic in historiography.<sup>3</sup> The information on

<sup>2</sup> For more details see: T. Senga, "TV Béla külpolitikája és IV Incepápához intézett „tatár-levele” [The Foreign policy of Béla IV and *Tartar-letter* sent to Pope Innocent IV], *Századok* 1–2 (1987): 584–612; Dj. Hardi, *Itinerarij Rostislava Mihailoviča* [The Itinerary of Rostislav Mikhailovich] (Sremska Mitrovica; Novi Sad: Istorijski arhiv Srem – Filozofski fakultet u Novom Sadu, 2019), 24–85, 91–95.

<sup>3</sup> P. Nikov, "Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija ot 1257 do 1277 godina. Istoriko-kritično izsledvane" [Bulgarian-Hungarian relations from 1257–1277], *Sbornik na Blgarskata akademija na naukite, Klon istoriko-filologičen i filozofsko-obščestven* [Review of the Bulgarian academy of sciences. Historical-philological and philosophical-social class] 11 (1920): 57–110; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata država prez srednite vekove III. Vtoro blgarsko carstvo, Blgarija pri Asenevci (1187–1280)* [History of the medieval Bulgarian state III. The second Bulgarian Empire, Bulgaria under the Assen dynasty] (Sofija: BAN, 1940), 456–490; I. Petkova, "Nordwestbulgarien in der Ungarischenpolitik der Balkanhalbinsel im 13. Jahrhundert." *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1, (1983): 58–62; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošenija prez srednovekovieto* [Bulgarian-Hungarian relations in the Middle Ages] (Sofija: Akademično izdatelstvo "Marin Drinov", 1998), 153–166; I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevci (1186–1460): genealogija i prosopografija* [The Assen Family. Genealogy and

Rostislav's presence in the politics of the Second Bulgarian Empire is, nonetheless, limited. It constitutes only a few, although prominent, immediate sources, among which the historical work of the Byzantine dignitary and writer George Acropolites, who had the opportunity to meet Rostislav in person and deal with him, is of paramount importance.

As far as contemporary historiography is concerned, there is no doubt that in Acropolites' writing a certain "ὁ Ρῶσος Οὐῤος" – or elsewhere simply "Οὐῤος" – presented as the "father-in-law of the Bulgarian emperor (Michael II Asen) and the son-in-law of the Hungarian king" refers to our Rostislav Mikhailovich.<sup>4</sup> As a close and undoubtedly influential cousin of the Bulgarian emperor, he was assigned the role of chief Bulgarian mediator in the peace talks conducted in the summer of 1256 on the River Regina with the Emperor Theodore II Laskaris of Nicaea and George Acropolites himself, who was at that time the imperial grand logothete in charge of concluding agreements with other rulers and states.<sup>5</sup> If for a time there was a dilemma as to who owned the title "ὁ Ρῶσος Οὐῤος" (*Rōsas Uros*), it was definitely resolved by Vencel Gustav. This biographer of the "Galician hercog, the son-in-law of Hungarian King Béla IV" logically concluded that Rostislav's title of Dominus connected with Mačva (*Dominus de Machou*), recorded in Béla IV's charter issued on 28 June 1254,<sup>6</sup> corresponded to the old Hungarian

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prosopography] (Sofija: BAN, 1994), 106–110, 113–114; V. Achim, *Politica sud-estică a regatului ungar sub ultimi Arpădi* [The southeastern policy of the Hungarian Kingdom under the last Árpáds] (Bucharest, 2008), 141–150.

<sup>4</sup> *Georgii Acropolitae*, Opera I. ed. Augustus Heisenberg, correctiorem curavit Peter Wirth (Stuttgart: in aedibus B. G. Teubner, 1978) (= Acropolites), 127; for an overview of references to Rostislav Kikhaiovich by Acropolites, or later by Theodore Skoutariotes and other Byzantine sources see: Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica. Sprachreste Der Türkvölker in den Byzantinischen Quellen* II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), 237–238; M. Bibikov, *Byzantinorossica. Svod vizantijskikh svideatelstv o Rusi I* [Byzantinorussica. Data of Byzantine writers on Rus'] (Moskva: Jaziki slavjanskoj kulturi, 2004), 614; "Uroš," in *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*. CD ROM Version, erstellt von Erich Trapp, unter Mitarbeit von Rainer Walther, Hans-Veit Beyer und anderen (Wien: VÖAW, 2001), no. 21194.

<sup>5</sup> Owing to the fact that he was a grand logothete, the imperial dignitary in charge of conducting diplomatic affairs, Acropolites had the opportunity to meet Rostislav Mikhailovich directly. For more on the dignity of the grand logothete in the given negotiations see: M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204–1261)* (Oxford University Press, 1975), 164–165.

<sup>6</sup> *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis* I–XI. Georgius Fejér ed. (Budae: Typis typogr. Regiae Universitatis, 1829–1844) (= F), IV/2, 218; *Az Árpád-házi királyok okleveleinek kritikai jegyzéke*–*Regesta regum stirpis Arpadianae critico diplomatica* I–II/1, ed.

title of *úr*. The latter title found its direct reflection with Acropolites, when he identified Rostislav in accordance with his title and origin as *Rōsos Uros* or “Russian lord.”<sup>7</sup> Finally, the only son-in-law of the Hungarian king who resided in Hungary in the 1250s and who could have physically been in the Balkans was precisely Rostislav. And let us remember the aforementioned piece of information provided by Acropolites, which is invaluable in understanding the entries in Rostislav’s Bulgarian itinerary. In his work, the well-informed Byzantine writer on two occasions provides the unique news that Rostislav, i.e. *Rōsos Uros*, was the father-in-law of the Bulgarian Emperor Michael II Asen.<sup>8</sup> Owing to the work of Gojko Subotić, today it is certain that the eldest daughter of Anna of the house of Árpád and Rostislav Mikhailovic was called Anna. That is the name inscribed on a portrait on the façade fresco of the Temple of Brigadier Michael in Kostur (Kastoria).<sup>9</sup> The earliest possible year of Anna Rostislavich’s birth was 1243. When she became a Bulgarian Empress and consort of Michael Asen and how old she was at the time, is left entirely to speculation.<sup>10</sup> In the broader

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Szentpétery Imre (Budapest: MTA, 1923–1943); II/2-3, ed. Szentpétery Imre, Borsa Iván (Budapest: MTA 1961); II/4, ed. Borsa Iván (Budapest: MTA 1987). (= RA), no. 1011.

<sup>7</sup> G. Wenzel, *Rostizlav galicizai herceg, IV. Béla királynak veje* [Rostislav, Prince of Galicia and son-in-law of King Béla IV] (Budapest: MTA, 1887), 14–15; An overview of older historiographic sources is given by: P. Nikov, “Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija,” 60–61; For a more detailed interpretation of the titular meaning within the Byzantine and Hungarian context see: K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba, prva knjiga do 1537. godine*, drugo, ispravljeno i dopunjeno izdanje, preveo J. Radonić [The history of the Serbs. Second, revised edition] (Beograd: Slovoљubve 1978), 180, ref. 99; Gy. Moravcsik, *Bizánc és a Magyarság [Byzantium and the Magyars]* (Budapest: MTA, 1953), 87–89; G. Ostrogorski, “Urum-despot, Počeci despotskog dostojanstva u Vizantiji” [Urum-despot. Beginnings of the despot dignity in Byzantium], in *Iz vizantijske istorije, istoriografije i prosopografije* [From Byzantine history, to historiography and prosopography], ed. G. Ostrogorski (Beograd: Prosveta, 1970), 211–214; F. Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni. Political relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12<sup>th</sup> century* (Budapest: MTA, 1989), 87–88.

<sup>8</sup> Acropolites, I, 127, 152.

<sup>9</sup> G. Subotić, “Portret nepoznate bugarske carice” [The portrait of an unknown Bulgarian empress], *Zograf* 27 (1998/1999), 93–102.

<sup>10</sup> It was Spiridon Palauzov, considering the example of the marriage of Rostislav’s daughter, in a comparative analysis of Helen, the daughter of John II Asen married to Theodore II Laskaris (1235), who noted that in this part of Europe, princesses entered into royal marriages even at the age of ten. That is, age was not a key precondition for marriage. We also add that Hungarian king Béla III married his daughter Margaret to the Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos before she turned ten. Palauzov, “Rostislav Mihajlović, knjaz Mačvi,” [Rostislav Mikhailovich, prince of Mačva], *Žurnal Ministerstva*

political context, this marriage, in our view, was probably made between 1253 and 1255. In any case, it probably took place at a time when Rostislav had already established his rule in Mačva on the one hand, and in the circumstances of straining Bulgarian-Nicaean relations (1254) on the other – leading to Bulgaria's rapprochement with Hungary, which was based on the marriage alliance.<sup>11</sup>

Rostislav's son-in-law, Michael II Asen (1246-1257), was the son of the powerful Bulgarian Emperor Ivan Asen II and the princess of Epirus Irene Komnene. He was born between 1238 and 1241.<sup>12</sup> He ascended to the throne as a boy, following the "sudden" death of his half-brother Kaliman, at a moment of general decline of the Bulgarian Empire, which found itself in the position of a Mongol tributary. The fact that the Bulgarian ruler was not yet of age and that the regency, headed by his mother, was overall passive, was exploited by the Nicaean Emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes. Without much resistance, the Nicaean troops

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*Narodnogo Prosvetšeniya* 8 (1851): 31–32; See: M. Wertner, *Az Árpádok család története* [The History of the Árpád family] (Nagy Becskerek: Pleitz Ferenz Pál könyvnyomdája, 1892). Idem, "Margit császárné fiai" [Sons of Empress Margareth], *Századok* (1903): 593–611; L. Tautu, "Margerhita di Ungheria imperatrice di Bisanzio," *Antemurale* 3 (1956): 51–79.

<sup>11</sup> In the sources, this marriage is usually dated to 1255. This chronology is not impossible. Already, it was Mór Wertner who dated the event "around" 1255. On the basis of an analysis of Hungarian diplomatic materials, Petar Nikov dated the marriage in the last quarter of 1255 or at the beginning of 1256 at the latest. His position is consistently taken by other authors. However, on this occasion, we only note that Nikov's analysis of the diplomatic material has several shortcomings. M. Wertner, *Az Árpádok család története*, 473; P. Nikov, "Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija," 57–58; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 456; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 456; S. Todorova, "Dščerjata na Rostislav Mihajlovič i sbitijata v Blgarija ot sredata na XIII v.," [Daughter of Rostislav Mihailovich and her destiny in Bulgaria in the mid-13th century] *Istoričeski pregled* 2 (1989), 52–53; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošenija*, 157; J. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans – A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1997), 159; I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevci*, 108; V. Mandžak, "Rostislav Mihailovič –, Dux Galiciae et imperator Bulgarorum," *Knjažva doba: istorija i kultura* 5 (2013): 141; M. Font, "Prince Rostislav in the Court of Béla IV," *Russian History* 4:44 (2017): 502; the work that is possibly related to this topic was unavailable at the time this paper was written: L. Havlíková, "Cherchez la femme, Czech-Bulgarian Relations in the 13th Century," in *Bălgarsko srednovekovie: obšestvo, vlast', istorija. Sbornik v čest' na prof. d-r. Milijana Kajmakamova*. Studia historica, sâst. Georgi N. Nikolov – Angel Nikolov (Sofia: Universitetsko izd. "Sv. Kliment Ohridski," 2013), 331–343.

<sup>12</sup> For more on the personality and the reign of Michael Asen see: I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevci*, 106–110; G. Cankova-Petkova, *Blgarija pri Asenevci* [Bulgaria under the Asens] (Sofija: Narodna prosveta, 1978), 138–148.

placed the former vast conquests of Michael's father under the authority of the Greeks. It was not until the death of John III Vatatzes, on 4 November 1254,<sup>13</sup> that young Michael, who had just come of age, or rather, his ruling environment, finally acted with arms against the Nicaean Empire. At first, the Bulgarians were successful, as they took over a number of fortified cities in the Rhodopes region and attempted to further conquer the regions of Thrace and Eastern Macedonia. However, the new Byzantine emperor, the energetic Theodore II Laskaris, wasted no time. Already during the coming winter, Laskaris headed the available army through Hellespont and, in a relatively short time, managed to recapture almost all of the recently lost fortresses and lands except for the invincible Tsepina in the Rhodopes. The reluctance of Michael II Asen and his warlords, who had withdrawn from their camp on the Maritsa River, avoiding battle with the Nicaean emperor, played a considerable role in this unexpected success of the Byzantines. In this way, at the end of 1255, the long battle year ended favourably for the Greeks. However, a crucial battle did not occur, with both sides preparing for another war spring. It was initiated by the Bulgarian side, sending an army to Thrace consisting of 4000 Cumans newly allied with the Bulgarians. The cavalry detachments of the steppe warriors inflicted defeat on the Nicaean forces, devastated the area around the town of Didymoteicho (Demotika), and then withdrew quickly with the spoils, in accordance with their mode of waging war. At that time, Theodore II Laskaris arrived in Thrace at the head of a relatively large army, which he had collected from all sides during the previous months in the Minor Asian provinces of his country, adding to it the detachments of unavoidable mercenaries.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> D. Polemis, *The Doukai, A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London: Athlone P., 1968), 108.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the events of the Bulgarian-Nicaean war of 1254-1256 and its outcome, ending in the so-called Peace of Regina: A. Gardner, *The Lascaris of Nicaea, the Story of an Empire in Exile* (London: Methuen 1912), 211-220; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata drzava*, 447-464; I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevi*, 106-110; G. Cankova-Petkova, *Blgarija pri Asenevi*, 138-148; I. G. Iliev, "Reginskijat miren dogovor i srednovkovnijat grad Cepina," [The peace treaty of Regino and medieval town of Cepina] *Epohi V* (1997), 82-90; N. Kanellopoulos, and J. K. Lekeai Joanne, "The struggle between the Nicaean Empire and the Bulgarian state (1254-1256): towards a revival of Byzantine war tactics under Theodore II Laskaris," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 5 (2007): 56-69; A. Madgearu, *The Asanids The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1280)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 240-243.

Reaching the area of Vize, or Bizya, from where the Cumans allegedly escaped before the Nicaean swords, Theodore Laskaris set up his military camp on the Regina River. At this point, George Acropolites introduces us to the character and role of Rostislav Mikhailovich. Namely, we learn that after the arrival of a large Byzantine army near the borders of the Bulgarian state, Michael Asen hesitated and decided to make peace, which as a mediator, “ὁ Πῶτος Οὐζος”, his father-in-law, but also the son-in-law of the Hungarian king, was to arrange. Michael Asen had previously organized a safe arrival of Rostislav Mikhailovich, in accordance with his high status and the familial relationship with the emperor, and a meeting with Theodore II Laskaris. Indeed, at the head of an escort made up of Bulgarian dignitaries, Rostislav arrived at the Byzantine camp and was received with great honours. He made a peace treaty and affirmed it with an oath in his own name and in the name of his son-in-law. According to the agreement, the Bulgarians agreed to abandon the extremely strategically important fortress, the invincible Tsepina, which was the only one still in their possession,<sup>15</sup> further agreeing that the borders between the two countries be restored to their original location before the war broke out. Rostislav’s acceptance was ensured with rich gifts from the Byzantines – horses and fabrics among other gifts – which, according to Acropolites, amounted to 20,000 [hyperpyrons?]. After the agreement was reached, the emperor with his army remained in the area of the Regina River, awaiting the surrender of Tsepina and certain other areas in Macedonia.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the account of the Acropolites’ report, the ubication of Rostislav’s 1256 itinerary is quite certain.<sup>17</sup> Starting, no doubt, from the Bulgarian capital of Tarnovo with the powers authorized by his son-in-law, he met with Emperor Theodore II Laskaris and chief Nicaean negotiator George Acropolites on the Regina River in the Byzantine military camp. The Regina (Rēgina; Ergene in Turkey) still flows today through the plain of eastern Thrace and, as Maritsa’s left tributary, flows

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<sup>15</sup> For more on the strategic significance of Tsepina in the Rhodopes within the framework of these events see: D. Cončev, “La Forteresse TZEIAINA – Cepina,” *Byzantinoslavica* 20 (1959): 285–305.; I. G. Iliev, “Reginskijat miren dogovor,” 82–90.

<sup>16</sup> Acropolites, I, 126–127.

<sup>17</sup> Acropolites, I, 126.

into it near Cypsela.<sup>18</sup> Closer determination of the meeting place, i.e. the Nicaean military camp, possibly reveals the same source from which we learn that the Byzantine forces pursuing Cumans reached the area of the Eastern Thracian strategic city of Bizya (Byzē, today Vize), located northeast of Arcadiopolis, from which military campaigns had often been initiated.<sup>19</sup> Following this, Theodore II arrived at the Regina, where he erected a camp that was apparently located on the upper or middle course of this river. According to Ivan Božilov and Vasil Gjuzelev, although Acropolites did not specify the exact location of the Byzantine camp, it had to be located on the aforementioned river southeast of Demotika.<sup>20</sup> Again, let us suppose that after the Regina, Rostislav returned to Tarnovo.<sup>21</sup>

When was the so-called Peace of the Regina signed and when did the Russian prince visit the eastern Thracian regions near Constantinople? There are at least three approaches to answering this question in historiography.<sup>22</sup> Crucial to the chronology of events is the news brought to us by both the aforementioned Acropolites and his contemporary Theodore Scoutariotes. The chronicle of the imperial diplomat and ecclesiastical dignitary Theodore Scoutariotes in accounting these events is based on the excerpts from Acropolites' work, with valuable additions that fortunately relate to the topic that is also of interest to us.<sup>23</sup> Let us start first with our main source, the work of the grand logothete George Acropolites. In his account of the events that immediately followed at the imperial army camp on the Regina after the peace was made, Acropolites pauses to describe the event that took place on the feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus – 6 August 1256. How could he not, when

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<sup>18</sup> P. Soustal, *Thrakien (Thrace, Rhodope und Haimimontos). Tabula Imperii Byzantini Band 6.* (Wien: VÖAW, 1991), 425–426; P. Koledarov, *Političeska geografija na srednovekovnata blgarska država I* (Sofija: BAN 1989), 65.

<sup>19</sup> T. E. Gregory. "Bizye," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Aleksandr P. Kazhdan, (New York : Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), 292–293.

<sup>20</sup> I. Božilov and V. Gjuzelev, *Istorija na Srednovekovna Blgarija VII–XIV vek* [History of medieval Bulgaria] (Sofija: Anubis 1999), 507.

<sup>21</sup> This opinion is also put forth, logically, by: Palauzov, "Rostislav Mihajlovič," 46.

<sup>22</sup> An overview of the historiographic sources and views is given by: I. G. Iliev, "Reginskijat miren dogovor," 87, ref. 2; c.f.: *George Acropolites, The History.* translated with an introduction and commentary by Ruth Macrides (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2007), 304–305

<sup>23</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, "Scoutariotes Theodore," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Aleksandr P. Kazhdan (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991), 1912–1913.



this day likely remained with him as a traumatic memory. On the basis of a report that Rostislav had actually made a false oath and that the Bulgarians did not intend to comply with the agreed peace provisions, the timid emperor became furious and accused the alleged failure of negotiations on his teacher and grand logothete, who had earlier specified the agreement in writing and had probably been the first to advocate for the highly valuable gifts. The emperor ordered George Acropolites to be punished – to be flogged with 24 lashes and publicly humiliated. However, the allegations were unfounded.<sup>24</sup> From this, it is clear that the peace was certainly made before 6 August 1256 (*datum ante quem*), and certainly all historians who, guided by Acropolites' narrative, dated it this way were right – it took place before 6 August: at the end of July or the first days of August, i.e. in the summer of 1256.<sup>25</sup>

Acropolites' work is, in chronological terms, complemented by Theodore Scoutariotes, who provides a precise report stating that Emperor Theodore II Laskaris waited for the surrender of Tsepina from the day of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul – 29 June – until the end of August.<sup>26</sup> Although historiography has long had access to Scoutariotes' report,<sup>27</sup> we will point out the comments made by Ruth Macrides, who concludes that the peace was made during June, probably on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of that month.<sup>28</sup> Ivan Božilov, that is, Božilov together with Vasil Gjuzelev, conclude that the treaty was made at the end of June, beginning

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<sup>24</sup> Acropolites, I, 127–133; comment: J. B. Pappadopoulos, *Théodore II Laskaris, Empereur de Nicée* (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et fils, 1908), 93–97.

<sup>25</sup> *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches* 3 Teil, F. Dölger – P. Wirth eds; zweite erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage bearbeitet von Peter Wirth (München: Beck 1977), no. 1839; *Grčki izvori za blgarskata istorija – Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae*, VIII, ed. Mihail Vojnov, *Izvori za Blgarskata istorija – Fontes Historiae Bulgaricae*, XV (Sofija: BAN 1971), 194, ref. 5; G. Cankova-Petkova, *Blgarija pri Asenevci*, 143; *Georgios Akropolites (1217–1282), Die Chronik*, übersetzt und erläutert von Wilhelm Blum (Stuttgart: Hiersemann 1989), 233, ref. 149; P. Soustal, *Thrakien*, 425.

<sup>26</sup> *Theodoros Skoutariotes, Ἀγωνίου Σύνοψις Χρονολογία*, ed. Konstantinos N. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη* VII (Venice–Paris: Phoinix and Maisonneuve, 1894), 525. 1–5.

<sup>27</sup> J. Pappadopoulos, *Théodore II Laskaris*, 92, ref. 1 – he believes that by this date the Byzantines had already taken over Tsepina.

<sup>28</sup> R. Macrides, *George Acropolite*, 304; Her work influenced: D. G. Angelov, “Theodore II Laskaris, Elena Asenina and Bulgaria,” in *Srednovekovniat blgarin i drugite*. Sbornik v čest na 60-godišninata na prof. din Petr Angelov (Sofija: Universitetsko izdatelstvo „Sv. Kliment Ohridski”, 2013), 292, ref. 94; A. Madgearu, *The Asanids*, 243.

of July 1256.<sup>29</sup> Some sources, however, also put forth that the peace treaty was concluded as early as May 1256. If we are right, this is a mistake the origin of which leads to Franz Dölger and the third volume of his *Regesta of Imperial Documents of the Byzantine Empire* (“kurz vor 25. mai 1256”). It was already in the second edition of Dölger’s book, written by Peter Wirth, that, alongside the unchanged accompanying text, this date was revised to August (“kurz vor 6. august”).<sup>30</sup> By trusting the report of Theodore Scoutariotes, we can conclude that, at the end of June 1256, Rostislav was staying in the Byzantine imperial army camp on the Regina River, and that by 29 June, or possibly earlier, he had confirmed a peace treaty by swearing an oath, and perhaps by providing his signature.

Rostislav’s presence and role in the conclusion of the Bulgarian-Nicaean peace is confirmed by the proclamation of Theodore II Laskaris sent to his subjects in the east about the recent successes of the war and the triumph of their emperor.<sup>31</sup> From its contents we also learn that the mediator in the peace talks was the Russian prince (ὁ τῶν Ρώσων ἄρχων), who had sworn an oath to the Emperor of Nicaea on behalf of the Bulgarians. The appeals of this “worthy man” allegedly softened the emperor in his intentions to pursue the strictest demands he had intended to impose on the “defeated side.”<sup>32</sup> Finally, himself an eloquent writer, Theodore Laskaris, bringing the missive to its end, presented the entire course of the war to his subjects with a compelling allegory. In his words, driven by hunger and beastly intentions, a dog, a lion cub and a

<sup>29</sup> I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenenci*, 108, 110; I. Božilov and V. Gjuzelev, *Istorija na Srednovekovna Blgarija*, 507; c.f.: I. G. Iliev, “Reginskijat miren dogovor,” 87; the work of Božilov and Gjuzelev influenced: Georgij Akropolit, *Istorija*, perevod, vstupilateljnaja statja i priloženija Petra I. Žavoronkova (St. Peterburg: Alteija, 2005), 266, ref. 814.

<sup>30</sup> c.f. *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453* Teil. 3. F. Dölger ed. (München; Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1932), no. 1833, 1834; *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden* 3. P. Wirth ed. no. 1839, 1839d; also see: M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 165; V. Gjuzelev, “Bulgarien und das Kaiserreich von Nikaia (1204–1261),” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 26 (1977): 143–154.

<sup>31</sup> As the emperor waited for the surrender of Tsepina until the end of September 1256, the missive was created after the end of this month.

<sup>32</sup> *Theodori Ducae Laskaris Epistulae CCXVII*. ed. Nicolaus Festa (Firenze: Carnesecchi, 1898), 280. 34–42; the translation of the missive into Bulgarian: G. Balasčev, “Pismo ot imperatora Teodora II Laskar po sključvanieto mira s car Mihaila Asena (1256 g.)” [Letter of Emperor Theodor II Laskaris after concluding peace treaty with Emperor Michael Asen], *Minalo* 5–6, II (1911): 60–66; c.f.: V. Zlatarski. *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 459–463.

bear teamed up and attacked the Empire. But these beasts were defeated by God, having sustained a blow to the head by the rod of the Byzantine Imperial army. The dog was beheaded, the lion cub escaped, while the bear (ἡ ἄρκτος) unexpectedly, on behalf of the former two, emerged as a mediator seeking peace with the emperor.<sup>33</sup> Without a dilemma, historiography unanimously concluded, beginning with Alyssa Gardner, that the bear in this imperial story symbolized Rostislav Mikhailovich, while in all likelihood the dog represented the Cumans, and the lion cub Michael II of Asen and Bulgaria.<sup>34</sup> The content shown is also the only source for our next assumption, which further illuminates the Bulgarian itinerary and the politics of the Russian prince. If by now, by logic of things, we could have guessed that Rostislav, in addition to his role as chief negotiator of the Bulgarian emperor, was at the same time his aide and participant in the Bulgarian-Nicaean war of 1254-1256, the announcement of a bear teamed with two other allies, a dog and a lion cub, who attacked the Byzantine Empire, confirms this assumption. Unfortunately, not counting Acropolites' description of the Cuman military movement in the spring of 1256, sources fall short of more detailed news related to the operation of the Bulgarian imperial army and possibly Rostislav's presence with military forces before the conclusion of the Regina Peace.

The outcome of the war may have sealed the fate of young Michael II Asen. The tumultuous events that would soon follow in Bulgaria would initiate the campaign of Rostislav Mihailovich, the destination of which would be the Bulgarian capital of Tarnovo. Since we have previously made the assumption that Mikhailovich may have already been to the throne city of the Bulgarian Empire, as it was the starting and ending point of his diplomatic mission from 1256, it hypothetically follows that he was familiar with the route to Tarnovo. In contrast, it remains unknown from which direction and location the Russian lord headed towards the centre of the Bulgarian state. Was it from the

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<sup>33</sup> *Theodori Ducae Laskaris Epistulae*, 282. 83–94.

<sup>34</sup> A. Gardner, *The Lascaris of Nicaea*, 218–219 (ref 1 p. 219); see the discussion of Andreeva and Zlatarski: M. Andreeva, "Statji V. N. Zlatarskago po istorii Bolgarii," [The works of V. N. Zlatarski on the history of Bulgaria], *Byzantinoslavica IV* (1932): 446–447; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 462–463; Idem, "Južna Blgarija sled smrtta na Ivan Asenja II i reginskijat mir" [Southern Bulgaria after the death of Ivan Asen II and the peace of Regino], in *Sbornik B. Djakovič* (Sofija: Narodna biblioteka Plovdiv, 1927), 336.

direction of Severin and south-eastern Hungary, having crossed the Danube somewhere in the Wallachian Plain – as was customary for the Hungarian royal armies, or possibly from the direction of Mačva, along the well-known Balkan routes south of the Danube? Of course, we do not rule out the possibility that he had a river flotilla with him as a support for his advancement. The only immediate source with respect to Rostislav's new journey is, once again, George Acropolites. Although the Byzantine statesman and writer set aside his interests in Bulgarian affairs for a while, he returned to them, describing in chapter 73 a number of bloody upheavals concerning the last male representatives of the Asen dynasty. Informed by certain residents of Tarnovo, Acropolites tells us that the well-known enemy of Byzantium, Bulgarian ruler Michael II Asen was fatally wounded by his paternal cousin, Kaliman.<sup>35</sup> Upon killing him, Kaliman took Michael's widow as wife, intending to seize power over the Bulgarians. This did not come to be, because, as Acropolites reports, “ἀλλ' ὁ Ρῶσος Οὐρος μετὰ στρατευμάτων ἐπελθὼν τῷ Τρινόβῳ τὴν θυγατέρα τοῦτον...”<sup>36</sup>

Among the translators of Acropolites' works, there are mainly two approaches to transcribing this passage that are of particular interest to us. According to the first approach, the translation is as follows: “but Rōsos Uros entered Tarnovo with his army and took his daughter, Michael's wife.”<sup>37</sup> According to the second approach: “but Rōsos Uros attacked Tarnovo with his army and took his daughter, Michael's wife.”<sup>38</sup> At first glance, these are minute details that do not change the meaning of the translation. All the more so, as the Acropolites goes on to explain that Kaliman – who had in the meantime apparently fled Tarnovo – was killed as he wandered from one place to another.<sup>39</sup> However, the whole course of events, reduced to the question of whether Mikhailovich entered Tarnovo, is of particular weight to a number of historians. The problem is only indirectly related to the issue of Rostislav's itinerary, and essentially concerns the epilogue of the event, that is, the legitimacy of Rostislav's title of Imperator Bulgarorum.

<sup>35</sup> Kaliman Ase, the son of sebastokrator Aleksandar. I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenovi*, 113-14.

<sup>36</sup> Acropolites, I, 152.

<sup>37</sup> P. Žavoronkov, *Georgij Akropolit*, 122; R. Macrides, *George Acropolite*, 334.

<sup>38</sup> M. Vojnov, *Grčki izvori za blgarskata istorija*, 204–205; W. Blum, *Georgios Akropolites*, 170;

P. Nikov, “Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija,” 73–77; V. Zlatarski. *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 470.

<sup>39</sup> Acropolites, I, 152.

At one time, Petr Nikov made considerable efforts to prove that Rostislav in fact attacked Tarnovo, but did not conquer it, because the city was heavily fortified and was allegedly held by an anti-Hungarian boyar party, which advocated for the coming of the subsequent Bulgarian emperor Constantine I. Admittedly, according to Nikov, Rostislav took with him his daughter, who became a widow again and was free. His title of Emperor Bulgarorum, preserved in one of his charters, did not, therefore, refer to the conquest of Tarnovo or to the throne in Tarnovo, but rather as an ephemeral manifestation of the claim of the Russian prince or the result of the conquest of a part of the Bulgarian northwest territories, possibly Vidin, which, after Rostislav's time, in the 1260s, was ruled by another Hungarian vassal (and royal relative) with the title of Emperor Bulgarorum, despot Yakov Sviatoslav.<sup>40</sup> This thesis was especially advocated by Vasil Zlatarski and it has become widely accepted in Bulgarian historiography today.<sup>41</sup>

If we are to return to the aforementioned Acropolites' report, Rostislav clearly took his daughter from Tarnovo, from where Kaliman had fled before him; with respect to everything else, historians had to create a series of assumptions that were based on other assumptions. We must also not overlook the fact that Anna Rostislavich was a legitimate Bulgarian empress and that through her, by taking her as his wife, quite possibly under duress, the usurper Kaliman tried not only to gain legitimacy with the Bulgarians, but also to position himself closer to Rostislav and indirectly Hungary, despite the fact that he had initially acted against their interests. The assumption of a number of historians that Rostislav allegedly rushed to Bulgaria to support his son-in-law's killer, in our view, contradicts Acropolites' account.<sup>42</sup> Why, then, did Kaliman not take his bride with him and went to her father during his escape from Tarnovo? With all the political twists and turns, it is unlikely that such an action could have been expected from the executioner of Emperor Michael II Asen who had been under Rostislav's tutelage.

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<sup>40</sup> P. Nikov, "Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija," 66–77.

<sup>41</sup> V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 469–470; I. Petkova, "Nordwestbulgarien in der Ungarischenpolitik," 61–62; S. Todorova, "Dščerjata na Rostislav Mihajlovič," 54–56; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošenija*, 166.

<sup>42</sup> Following Nikov's work: I. Petkova, "Nordwestbulgarien in der Ungarischenpolitik," 61; S. Todorova, "Dščerjata na Rostislav Mihajlovič," 56; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošenija*, 159; V. Achim, *Politica sud-estică*, 146.

Rostislav also certainly had a real impact on the Bulgarian imperial court until the death of his son-in-law. He recalled that it was Rostislav who, in front of the Bulgarian lords, had led the peace mission on the Regina River. We do not know what the internal situation in Bulgaria was on the eve of the conclusion of the so-called Regina Peace, and we do not rule out the possibility that Rostislav only represented the interests of the young Michael and the ruling circles of the court in Tarnovo, who, by all accounts, did not have the strength to continue the war against the Nicaean Empire, which rested, with a huge force, on the Bulgarian borders. Petr Nikov sought to resolve this contradiction by anticipating further Acropolites' account. For, the Byzantine writer states that after the death of both Michael Asen and Kaliman (with whom the Asen male lineage became extinct), the Bulgarian state lost its rightful ruler and the boyar champions decided the new emperor to be Constantine, the son of Tych, who was not a member of the ruling dynasty. According to Nikov, it was these Bulgarian boyars who held firmly the power in Tarnovo and kept Rostislav away. Unless, one might also notice, these gentlemen from Tarnovo had previously not expelled Kaliman, preventing him from taking Bulgarian Empress Anna with him, and opened the gates of the capital of Tarnovo to the Russian prince.<sup>43</sup> Acropolites, it is true, was not informed that Rostislav possibly declared himself Emperor in Tarnovo. The election of Constantine Tych certainly followed Rostislav's departure. The new ruler Constantine Tych was much more interesting to the learned Acropolites, and his previous laconic presentation was intended to explain to his reader how this Bulgarian lord ascended to the Bulgarian throne. Namely, in the conditions of the general collapse of the Bulgarian state, Constantine Tych soon turned for help to Theodore II Laskaris. He became his son-in-law, thus forming familial ties with both the Laskaris and the Asen dynasties, and as a Nicaean protégé, began to pursue anti-Hungarian policies.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the fortifications of Tarnovo see: I. Dujčev, "Търново като политически и духовен център през ксното средновековие" [Tarnovo as political and spiritual center in the late medieval times], in *Българско средновековие. Прочувания върху политическата и културната история на средновековна България* [Medieval Bulgaria. Studies on political and cultural history of medieval Bulgaria], ed. Ivan Dujčev (Sofija: Izdatelstvo Nauka i izkustvo, 1972), 416–417.

<sup>44</sup> I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevci*, 115–117.

Let us, therefore, turn to the source of all the aforestated questions. We agree with Petr Nikov and those who are like-minded that, by emphasizing the title of Bulgarian emperor, Rostislav only expressed his claims to this country and that he had no real dynastic or other rights to the Bulgarian throne, or lasting influence in Tarnovo. It is further not impossible that he, from that time, or some time before, maintained control over the north-eastern Bulgarian area by controlling Vidin, although this assumption is not supported by immediate sources.<sup>45</sup> However, all these circumstances do not in the slightest dispute the possibility that Mikhailovich indeed entered Tarnovo, from where he, with dignity, took along his daughter Anna, at that moment the legally crowned Bulgarian Empress and widow of Michael II Asen. For us, this interpretation is unambiguous.<sup>46</sup> Of course, we agree that Rostislav apparently did not have the strength for a longer stay in Tarnovo, but had to withdraw from there.

In addition to being a matter of aspirations, medieval titles also had to have a foothold either in law, or ruling ideology, or in a ceremonial act. The very emphasis in Rostislav's intitulation of the grandiose title of Imperator Bulgarorum, in what is today his only preserved and unfortunately undated charter (1257?), which, in light of these circumstances, only adds value to it,<sup>47</sup> indirectly points to the confirmation of his entry into Tarnovo. Under these circumstances, the enterprising Rurikovich could, in such events, seize the opportunity and, after the extinction of the male lineage of the Asen dynasty, proclaim and crown himself, in the place allotted for this act, the Bulgarian emperor. He met at least one requirement for such an act and claim. During his Hungarian period of life, we know with certainty that Rostislav still remained loyal to the Orthodox Church, a fact long ago emphasized by František Palacký.<sup>48</sup> Rostislav's march and, we believe, entry into

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<sup>45</sup> P. Nikov, "Blgaro-ungarski otnošenija," 76.

<sup>46</sup> It is also supported by, for example: S. Palauzov, "Rostislav Mihajlovič, knjaz Mačvi," 46; K. Jireček, *Istorija Srba*, 180.

<sup>47</sup> *A zichi és vásonkeői gróf Zichy-család idős ágának okmánytára. Codex diplomaticus domus senioris comitum Zichy de Zich et Vasonkeo I-XII*, ed. Nagy Imre, Nagy Iván, Véghely Dezső (Budapest: Kiadja a Magyar Tört. Társulat, 1871-1931), (= Z), I, 5.

<sup>48</sup> F. Palacký, "O Ruském knížeti Rostislawovi" [On the Russian prince Rostislav], *Časopis Českého Museum* XVI/1 (1842): 34–35; c.f.: Dj. Hardi, "Religioznaja prinadležnost knjazja Rostislava Mihajloviča vo vremja ego žizni v Vengrii," [Religious belonging of Pince Rostislav Mikhailovich in the time of his life in Hungary] in *Rus' and Countries of the latin*

Tarnovo, took place after the murder of Michael II Asen. In historiography, these events, with respect to the considerable gap in Acropolites' report of Bulgarian affairs, are usually dated to the end of 1256, beginning of 1257.<sup>49</sup> In our opinion, it is also possible that Rostislav went to the Bulgarian capital in the spring of 1257.

Finally, Rostislav's Bulgarian successes and the appropriation of the Bulgarian imperial title appear to have been reflected in the Czech countries, above all with the continuator of the Chronicle of the Cosmas of Prague. This chronicler was, in 1261, well informed that the future Czech Queen Kunigunda, as the bride of the Czech King Ottokar II, was "the filiam of Rostislai [Hostislai] Ducis Bulgarorum."<sup>50</sup> This tradition

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*Culture (10th–16th c.)*, ed. Vitaliy Nagirnyy (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2016), 154–162; Dj. Hardi, "Rutheni sunt schismatici: konfesijna naležnistj ruskich knjaziv Rostislava Mihajloviča ta Leva Daniloviča u svitli vibranih ugarskih i českich diplomatičnih džerel – porivnjalnij analiz" [The confessional belonging of Russian princes Rostislav Mikhailovich and Lev Danilovich in the light of selected Hungarian and Czech diplomatic sources-comparative study], in *Religions and beliefs of Rus' (9th–16th centuries)*, ed. Vitaliy Nagirnyy (Krakow: Jagiellonian University, 2018), 259–268.

<sup>49</sup> P. Nikov, "Blgaro-ungarski otnošeniya," 80–81; V. Zlatarski. *Istorija na Blgarskata država*, 469; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošeniya*, 159; I. Božilov, *Familijata na Asenevci*, 113–114.

<sup>50</sup> *Letopisy české od roku 1196 do roku 1278*, Fontes rerum Bohemicarum (=FRB), II, *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum cum continuatoribus*, ed. Josef Emler (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého 1874), 291; *Cosmae chronicon Boemorum*, edente D. Rudolfo Köpke (*Annalium Pragensium pars I. a. 1196-1278*). Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores (=MGH, SS) IX, ed. Georgius Henricus Pertz (Hannover: Societas Aperiendis Fontibus Rerum Germanicarum Medii Aevi 1851), 178.

<sup>50</sup> "... Kunegundem, filiam Rostyslay ducis Bulgarie..." *Neplacha, opata opatovského, Krátká kronika římská a česká* [Short Roman and Czech chronicle], ed. Josef Emler, FRB III (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého 1882), 474–475; "... Cunegundym, filiam ducis Bulgarorum..." *Kronika Jana z Marignoly* [The Chronicle of Jan of Marignoly], ed. Josef Emler, FRB, III, Praha (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého 1882), 571; "... Gunegundem, filiam Rostilsai ducis Bulgarorum neptem Bele regis Ungarie," *Kronika Pulkarova*, [Chronicle of Pulkav] ed. Josef Emler, FRB, V (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého, 1893), 152–153; *Joannis Długossii seu Longini canonici cracoviensis, Historiae Poloniae libri XII*. ed. Alexander Przezdziecki, II, libri 6–8, Opera Omnia, XI (Cracoviae: Kirchmayer, 1873), 383, 505; an analysis of historiography: G. Wenzel, *Rosztisław galiczyński herceg*, 16–17; M. Wertner, "Boris und Rostislaw, II Rostislaw von Halics und seine Familie," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Heraldik, Sphragistik und Genealogie* XVII, Heft 2 (1889): 185–186; Idem, *Az Árpádok család története*, 467–468; *W. Swoboda*, "Księżna kaliska Bułgarka? przyczynek do rozbioru krytycznego *Annalium Długosza*," [Princess of Kalisz Bulgarian? Contribution to the critical understanding of *Annals of Długosz*], *Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Wielkopolski i Pomorza* 26. 13–2 (1980): 71–77; V. Adamovič, "Belo IV. a Uhorsko



was later adopted by the Czech chroniclers of the fourteenth century and is reflected with Jan Neplach, John of Marignolli and Pribik Pulkava. A century later, Polish historian Jan Długosz took over the news from Pulkava, taking it one step further and concluding that Kunigunda's younger sister Gryfina, the widow of the Krakow prince Leszek II the Black, was a "matronam Bulgariae ortam."<sup>51</sup>

Why, however, did the Czech chronicler and Rostislav's contemporary not mention his imperial title? We would not dare to put the testimony of a narrative source and Rostislav's formal intitution in his original charter on the same scale. The intitution certainly has an undeniable original weight. However, the answer may lie in the short-lived nature of Rostislav's Bulgarian imperial ambitions. In any case, the issue deserves special discussion. We are at least certain of one thing: after 1257, in relation to the Hungarian-Bulgarian war, for some reason, we no longer find Rostislav Mikhailovich in the sources, nor any mention of his name. However, in one of his 1260 grants to a certain Torda, the son of Győr, in the name of the Cheusy estate that belonged to the Zala fort, the Hungarian Crown Prince, young King Stephen, among other things, cited the merits of this warrior during the campaign "in Bulgariam." Stephen was personally informed of this by the initiator of the grant, his baron and the mayor of Zala, magister Csak, who also led the march.<sup>52</sup> Gyula Pauler was the first to conclude, given the course of the renewed Hungarian-Czech conflict over Austria and Styria, as well as

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v českých kronikách (do 14. století)" [Béla IV and Hungary in Czech chronicles up to the 14<sup>th</sup> century], *Historické štúdie, Acta historica Posoniensia* XXIV (2014): 44–62.

<sup>51</sup> "... Kunegundem, filiam Rostyslay ducis Bulgarie..." *Neplacha, opata opatovskébo, Krátká kronika římská a česká*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB III (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého 1882), 474–475; "... Cunegundym, filiam ducis Bulgarorum..." *Kronika Jana z Marignoly*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB, III, Praha, (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého 1882), 571; "... Gunegundem, filiam Rostilsai ducis Bulgarorum neptem Bele regis Ungarie," *Kronika Pulkavova*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB, V (Praha: Nákladem Musea Království Českého, 1893), 152–153; *Joannis Długossii seu Longini canonici cracoviensis, Historiae Polonicae libri XII.* ed. Alexander Przewydziecki, II, libri 6–8, Opera Omnia, XI (Cracoviae: Kirchmayer, 1873), 383, 505; an analysis of historiography: G. Wenzel, *Rostizslaw galiczai herceg*, 16–17; M. Wertner, "Boris und Rostislaw, II Rostislaw von Halics und seine Familie," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Heraldik, Sphragistik und Genealogie* XVII, Heft 2 (1889): 185–186; Idem, *Az Árpádok családi története*, 467–468; *W. Swoboda, "Księżna kaliska Bulgarka?"*, 71–77; V. Adamovič, "Belo IV. a Uhorsko" *Historické štúdie*, 44–62.

<sup>52</sup> *Hazai okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus patrius I–VIII.* Nagy Imre ed. et. al. (Győr; Budapest: Sauerwein Géza betűvel, etc. 1865–1891) (= H), 105–107; RA, no. 1768.

the rule of Stephen's cousin in Zala County, that magister Csak (mayor of Zala from 1256 to 1259 and 1260)<sup>53</sup> undertook the Bulgarian march probably in 1259. Yet, it was of little use to Rostislav. Constantine Tych remained on the throne and Rostislav was left to continue to carry his Bulgarian imperial title and, perhaps realistically, to rule over certain Bulgarian regions (Vidin). Pauler's view became generally accepted in historiography.<sup>54</sup> As is well known, during the second half of 1260 the Bulgarians took advantage of Hungary's preoccupation in the war against the Czech king and seized the Banat of Severin. The initiator and main actor of the Hungarian campaign against Bulgaria in 1261 was the son of Béla IV, Hungarian Crown Prince Stephen. To reiterate, there is no mention of Rostislav in the Hungarian charters created in connection with the coming wars.<sup>55</sup>

Bringing to a close the discussion of Rostislav's travels throughout the Balkan region, we are obliged to look at another piece of information. The author of the *Chronicle of Morea* reports that, in the Battle of Pelagonia, which took place in the autumn of 1259, among many allies who fought on the side of Michael Palaeologus and the Nicaeans, there were also the Hungarians and the Serbs, whose troops were personally led by their respective kings.<sup>56</sup> If the King of the Hungarians could hypothetically have been the young Prince Stephen, son of Béla IV, since the Serbian ruler Stefan Uroš was at that time a proven enemy of the Nicaean Empire, Eugen Darkó identified none other than Rostislav Mikhailovich as the King of Serbs who, according to the aforementioned source, commanded a detachment of 600 men. This issue remained

<sup>53</sup> A. Zsoldos, *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1000–1301* [Hungarian lay archonotology 1000–1301] (Budapest: MTA 2011), 231–232.

<sup>54</sup> The logical question that arises is if this Zala army, led by Csak, directed by Stephen, could have been a support to Rostislav during his march to Trnovo, 1257?

<sup>55</sup> For more on subsequent Hungarian-Bulgarian relations in which the young King Stephen played a significant role: Gy. Pauler, "V. István bolgár hadjárata" [Bulgarian campaign of Stephen V], in *Hunfalvy-album, Hunfalvy Pál felszázados akadémiai tagsága emlékére* [Hunfalvy-album. In the memory of the Pál Hunfalvy 50 years in as a member of the Academy] (Budapest: Kiadják tisztelői, 1891): 164–174; Gy. Kristó, *Az Árpád-kor háborúi* [The wars of the Árpád era] (Budapest: Zrínyi Katonai Könyvkiadó, 1986), 137–138; H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnosenija*, 170–175.

<sup>56</sup> *The Chronicle of Morea*, TO XPONIKON TOY MOPEΩΣ., ed. John Schmitt (London: Methuen & Co. 1904), 238; *Chronicle of Morea*. translated from the Greek with notes and introduction by E. Harold (New York; London: Columbia University Press, 1964), 178.

unanswered in historiography.<sup>57</sup> If, in the summer of 1259, we would turn our gaze to Styria and Carantania, more than a thousand kilometres away from Pelagonia, there we would find Hungarian Crown Prince Stephen of the House of *Árpád* at the head of his Cuman and Hungarian troops. It was the beginning of a new great Hungarian-Czech war, which would end the following year, at the Battle of Kressenbrunn. There, gathered together, were almost all of the Hungarian able-bodied men and king's allies, probably including Rostislav Mikhailovich's units. These events have already been discussed in more detail in our book. In this context, the information put forth in the *Chronicle of Morea* should be taken with great caution.

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<sup>57</sup> E. Darkó, *Byzantinisch-ungarische Beziehungen in den zweiten Hälfte des XIII Jahrhunderts* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau's Nachfolger, 1933), 10; *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches* 3, F. Dölger – P. Wirth, no. 1867g; c.f. the overview of the attitudes in historiography by: H. Dimitrov, *Blgarsko-ungarski otnošenija*, 167–168.

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# Echoes of Constantinople: Rewriting the Byzantine Soundscape in Travel Accounts

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## I. Introduction

Travel stories are quite divided about Byzantium: it is a brilliant empire, an oversized capital overwhelmed by luxury and splendour, but it is also populated by treacherous Greeks. All these texts draw a popular image of Byzantine life, splendour, and excessiveness. These literary testimonies are, however, quite difficult to approach, for several reasons. First of all, context obviously modulates travel experience. Merchants are just passing through to go much further. Ambassadors are expected to report back on what they have seen, heard, and discovered. Pilgrims evoke their religious experience while guiding future travellers. All of them report the novelties and wonders they have seen. For some of them, it is just curiosity notes; for others, it is a way to measure the value of the Empire, whether it is a friend or rival. The traveller's cultural background is also important. All witnesses report the great impression the Byzantine power left on them, except for the Crusaders, who were obsessed with the triple fault of the Byzantines (perfidy, treachery, and effeminacy). At last, there are also the writer's literary choices, since these texts can serve multiple purposes and multiple audiences.

Faced with such a difficulty of analysis, we may try to go back to the basics. First and foremost, otherness is discovered through senses. All these texts are in fact built on a sensory experience, which is, for the most part, both visual and aural. Writers tell what they have seen, heard, and even felt. Some of them speak about sound like any other attraction. Others talk about it to create a specific literary (re)creation of Byzantine culture. In fact, the sound experience and its literary transcription might create a “pop” knowledge of Constantinople.

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The recent boom of sound studies proves that an auroral approach is legitimate.<sup>2</sup> The aural dimension has been evoked in Byzantine otherness studies, but in a quick way.<sup>3</sup> The Empire might provide a suitable field of research. Social, religious, and imperial rituals are all strongly sonorous, making a solid impression on foreigners. There, strangers discover odd new music. Consequently, travel accounts can be valuable sources to complement Byzantine sources and to shed light on the effect this official music produces. Therefore, in this paper, we will research the Constantinopolitan sounds travellers heard and choose to recall. Then, we will try to understand how these echoes can enlighten real and literary experiences of Byzantine otherness.

## II. A religious capital city

The striking aural impression seems to be more generally related to the church. The Capital is like a “reliquary-city” one visits as a curious visitor or as a devoted pilgrim: everywhere religious chants resound.

### 1. Some pilgrimage experiences

Pilgrims make a liturgical tour to visit each church and to test each office. Usually, pilgrims to the Holy Land spend only a short time in Constantinople, devoting most of their descriptions to the Holy Places. Only Russian pilgrims describe extensively Constantinople, which they believed to be the New Jerusalem. As in the Holy Land, there are guided tours and report-writing templates. Anthony of Novgorod, Stephen of Novgorod, Ignatius of Smolensk, Alexander the clerk... all of them evoke the same sanctuaries, the same relics, the same songs. They are religious tourists, prepared for what they are going to see.

However, the stories of Anthony, Stephen, and Ignatius are enriched by personal accounts of their emotions and remarks. These three texts

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<sup>2</sup> R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World: Toward a Theory of Soundscape Design* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1977); *Le paysage sonore de l'Antiquité*, ed. S. Émerit et al. (Le Caire: Publication de l'IFAO, 2015); *Les paysages sonores*, ed. L. Hablot et al. (Rennes: PUR, 2015); J.P. Gutton, *Bruits et sons dans notre histoire* (Paris: PUF, 2000); B. Pentcheva, *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics, and Ritual* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2017); *Knowing Bodies, Passionate Souls. Senses Perceptions in Byzantium*, ed. S. Ashbrook Harvey and M. Mullet (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> K.N. Ciggaar, *Western Travelers to Constantinople* (Leiden-New York-Cologne: Brill, 1996); M. Carrier, *L'autre chrétien pendant les croisades* (Saarbrücken: EUE, 2012).

are particularly rich in sound evocations. They are built on the more or less detailed evocation of places, relics, liturgical objects, practices, and emotions. Sound is everywhere, so much so that it seems to sound in their ears. These Russian pilgrims attended various services, followed numerous processions, and prayed in front of many relics. Devotion and excitement are apparent; accounts are full of lyricism, emotion, and sensorial impressions. These texts evoke the same echoes of hymns, cries, and vibrant prayers one can hear in Jerusalem. These pilgrims expect to find the same atmosphere, the same fervour, the same liturgical practices. They fully feel all liturgies.

Let us follow Anthony of Novgorod. This layman, the future Bishop of Novgorod, came to visit the Capital in May 1200. His account is a typical pilgrimage report: he lists the places he saw, the offices he attended, the relics he kissed. He is interested only in the liturgical circuit and he does not talk about other aspects of the city life. His conclusion sheds light on his writing motivations: he has to write for pilgrims since, without a guide, Constantinople is a vast forest where the stranger can lose himself. Therefore, his aim is above all practical, but his style goes beyond this rather dry framework. His account is exhaustive and is clearly the liveliest of all: it is full of the sounds, sensations, and emotions that emerge during this liturgical journey. It may be due to his personal writing style, but in doing so, he creates a specific literary experience of Byzantium liturgy.

In *Hagia Sophia*, he attends the procession of what looks like the Tablets of Law, which is performed by the clergy.<sup>4</sup> He describes the scene, the gestures and then he depicts the atmosphere. Everybody is weeping, moved, and greatly humbled, the priests are filled with fear and respect. Anthony is fully moved by the Patriarch humility and compunction: this state of mind seems to be best way to perfection. Indeed, all the monastic *typika* constantly repeat the importance of compunction: one must pray with fear, both like a trembling servant and a mourning widow. This mourning spirit explains the emotionally charged atmosphere: people groan and weep over their sins, repeating the *Kyrie eleison* hundreds of times, in all voices, often with tears in the eyes. Cries, begging, compunction are clearly expected during Byzantine liturgies, especially in front of the most sacred relics. The *Kyrie* resounds

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony of Novgorod, *Pilgrim book*, ed. Loparev and trans. M. Ehrhard, "Le livre du pèlerin Antoine de Novgorod," *Romania* 58-229 (1932): 44-65, here 54.

almost like a mantra. In this feverish atmosphere, one sings hymns and psalms.

## 2. *Feeling the divine*

One of the liturgical tour usual stops is the *Theotokos Hodegetria* church, to see the image St Luke is said to have painted. This icon is famous for its history and for the miracle it performs every Tuesday. In 1348-49, Stephane of Novgorod also came to this church with some friends. He is even more explicit than Anthony.<sup>5</sup> The office seems quite simple: several men must carry the heavy and very large icon. It is so heavy that it has to be a miraculous action. In fact, the miracle is created by the celebration itself. The monks sing “a very beautiful chant in front of it, while all the people cry out with tears, ‘*Kyrie eleison*’.” They sing, implore, weep, beg, cry... all at the same time. *Kyrie*, hymns, and cries call for divine action and help the icon bearers. It is both a collective and liturgical moment, and, more importantly, it is a great sound experience. In this moment, all senses are needed, but the hearing is highly stimulated. All these pilgrims transcribe it and, doing so, spread an emotionally and acoustic rich experience of Constantinople.

They feel the Divine collectively visiting the most important sanctuaries and relics. Everything here seems to be extraordinary, even the offices. The pilgrim’s tour follows a dozen of stages, the offices last all night, the choirs sing all day long, the crowd is very numerous... and everyone is suffering together as one heart. The literary translation of these sound liturgical experiences is made very lively and vibrant by using many details and a very touching and sensory style. Here, the pilgrim’s story clearly serves as much to inform as to continue the pilgrim’s lived experience even after going back home. This is clearly stated by Anthony of Novgorod when he exhorts his readers to remember and to imitate this peculiar way of attending liturgy.<sup>6</sup> By this writing, these texts prepare the future pilgrim for all the multi-sensory experiences that await him and guide those who will only go on a mental/interior journey.

Other witnesses remain more descriptive. Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, sent to Tamerlane’s court for Henry III of Castile, writes about his visit

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen of Novgorod, *Wanderer*, trans. G.P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2007), 30-36.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony of Novgorod, *Pilgrim book*, 64.

to Constantinople during the fall of 1403. He follows a guided tour and describes these same two important stops.<sup>7</sup> In the *Hodegetria* church, he also notices the “prayers and devotions with sobbing and wailing.” He is genuinely convinced of the miraculous action, but never uses an exalted tone. It is not his style, neither the aim of his story. He is a Latin, but this description proves that he has been marked by the sound liturgy.

### 3. *The voice of angels*

In this atmosphere, one hears constant singing. Obviously, as the pilgrim goes from one site to another, he is offered a continuous liturgical experience. But generally speaking, in Byzantium, the Sacred Chanting is intended to be uninterrupted. Monastic life seeks to imitate the angelic practices.<sup>8</sup> Monks must therefore spend their time singing like angels in order for their singing be effective. This music’s almost-angelic dimension is well-known among the Byzantines, but the same idea can be found in foreign accounts.

This seems quite normal among Russian pilgrims: the compunction Anthony and Stephen noticed is matched by Man’s unspeakable joy praising his God. This so-called “rejoice with trembling” state of mind seems to be provided by the singers’ voices.<sup>9</sup> In the *Theotokos Bebaia Elpis* monastery, the founder Theodora Synadenos clearly demands that the chanting nuns “stand consumed with fear and much trembling, with contrition weeping for the sins.”<sup>10</sup> She is not the only one to say so: since hymns are above all musical prayers, nuns and monks have to adopt one and only attitude: that of the angels. Thus, Anthony of Novgorod hears the *Orthros* at *Hagia Sophia* and says the choir sings as harmoniously and softly as the angels.<sup>11</sup> When the emperor is attending the office, the ritual changes and Anthony has the impression of leaving the Earth, carried by the scent of the incense and by the voices: the singing is as marvellous as that of the angels; it is like being in heaven or in paradise, the Holy Spirit

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<sup>7</sup> Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane. 1403-1406*, trans. G. le Strange, (London: Routledge, 1928), 83-84.

<sup>8</sup> R. Dubowchik, “Singing with the Angels: Foundation Documents as Evidence for Musical Life in Monasteries of the Byzantine Empire,” *DOP* 56 (2002): 277-296.

<sup>9</sup> Echoes of Ps. 2:11 can be seen in the *typika* of Theotokos Bebaia Elpis (*BMFD*, 116), Theotokos Kosmosoteira (*BMFD*, 834), Theotokos Petritzonitissa (*BMFD*, 58).

<sup>10</sup> Theodora Synadenos, “Theotokos Bebaia Elpis typikon,” in *BMFD*, 1541.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony of Novgorod, *Pilgrim book*, 56-57.

fills the soul with joy and gladness. Once again, sound is a part of a Holy experience. Voices, sighs, lights, fragrances, warmth: everything contributes to building an exalted atmosphere anticipating celestial realities.

Under the Palaiologans, Ignatius of Smolensk had the same liturgical experiences and even tasted the greatest of Byzantine imperial ceremonies. He goes to Constantinople with his Bishop for ecclesiastical affairs. He stays there for three years (1389-1392) and describes the churches, services, and relics he sees, as other pilgrims do. On February 11, 1392, he also attends the coronation of Manuel II Palaiologos and evokes this great moment in detail, focusing on the gestures performed at *Hagia Sophia*.<sup>12</sup> He admires the demonstration of the God-given power. He is impressed by the choir and the music. He describes a choir of about twenty singers, all sumptuously dressed and wearing pointed hats. They are led by an old one, with an immaculate beard, and they sing “indescribable, unusual music.” Ignatius has no words to define this music and this extraordinary experience, exclaiming: “who can express the beauty of this moment?” He might be familiar with Byzantine sounds, since Russian hymnology is built on a common heritage. However, here he discovers very specific songs and a very specific office. This virtuosic music is only performed by the choir’s elite and is excessively adorned with melismas. One again, just like the other Russian pilgrims, Ignatius had an almost mystical experience, moved by the angelic music.

### III. Echoes of Byzantine musical practices

We find an almost equally strong observation among Latins, even among the most critical ones. Not only do pilgrims note but even appreciate the vocal prowess of Byzantine choirs. This music intrigues, fascinates, and even inspires a certain emulation.

#### 1. *Pleasant voices*

Since the Carolingian period, Byzantine chant has sparked great interest. But times changed during the Crusades. The Western musical tradition is built around the *organum*. At the end of the twelfth century, the Notre-

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<sup>12</sup> Ignatius of Smolensk, *Journey to Constantinople*, trans. Majeska, *Russian*, 106 and 110.



Dame school style and other more complex polyphonies began to flourish. Byzantine music remains resolutely monodic. The melodic intervals are moreover specific. In fact, hearing it, Crusaders discover new and strange musical practices. They are also reluctant to remain objective or moderate in their descriptions. Against this backdrop, one might expect some very sharp criticism about Byzantine chant. On the contrary, they are thrilled. On October 9, 1147, Emperor Manuel I Komnenos sent his cantors to the Crusader camp, in front of the Capital, to perform the liturgy of St. Denis. Louis VII's chaplain, Odo of Deuil, describes the imperial choir vocal performance: "these clerics differed from ours in the words they spoke and in the quality of their voices, but their gentle modulations were very pleasant. The mixture of voices, a stronger voice joining with a clearer voice, a eunuch's voice with a man's voice (for there were many eunuchs among them), was apt to charm the French."<sup>13</sup> He notes three aspects of Byzantine sacred music: eunuch's voice, Greek musical system, and specific ritual performance. The extraordinary voice of eunuchs obviously fascinates Westerners since it is not common for them and since it is used for a virtuoso repertoire, with movements of the fingers.

*Aural* chock would have been clearly understandable. Because the ear is accustomed to quite precise intervals and timbres, any novelty may shock or repel. But Odo is not put off: he even finds this new music attractive, maybe because he is a Clunisian? He keeps on denouncing the Byzantine's flaws without any moderation, but he mentions the only thing he appreciates. He even takes the time to describe, explain, and render the musical performance correctly. He does so only twice in his chronicle. He is not indifferent to sounds as he is constantly evoking trumpets and war drums. His description is quite long: it surely reveals his interest, but one can see how he uses it to expose Manuel I's treachery: one more proof that all Byzantine gifts are poisoned, to lose the Crusaders better. Nevertheless, the aural effect must have been significant. Louis VII himself mentions this performance in a letter he sends to Suger. The interest it aroused might explain the creation of a Greek mass which was sung in St Denis Abbey. So, the religious Byzantine soundscape may attract very diverse interests because of its style, its voices, and its high sophistication.

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<sup>13</sup> Odo of Deuil, *De projectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, trans. J. Brundage, *The Crusades: A Documentary Survey* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1962), 111.

## 2. *Singing practice in Byzantium*

An indication of its popularity can be found in its frequent literary mention. Travelers should have considered it was something new, interesting, and exotic enough to be recorded. However, these literary echoes remain short. We therefore need to look into Byzantine sources to get details about whatever sounds they remember having heard. The first discovery might have been the singers. Until 1204, the eunuch's voice is specifically used in church and aulic rituals.<sup>14</sup> Singers, who can be identified by their extra-human voice, their rich white robe, and their beardless face, make a huge impression. These eunuchs are professional musicians who have been trained in technical virtuosity and brilliant melodies. After 1204, no trace of singing eunuchs can be found: liturgical and aulic chants are still performed but by bearded singers. Nevertheless, this vocal transformation in no way lessened the vocal skills of cantors and the accounts are equally enthusiastic, as Ignatius of Smolensk describing the remarkable voices he heard at the crowning. For the Byzantines, the choir of eunuchs is defined by white clothes, beardless faces (in a world where the beard is an aesthetic norm), and crystalline voices. Singing endlessly under *Hagia Sophia's* dome, they are an earthly version of the angelic choir.

Travelers do not linger too long on the melodies, yet the style might be quite specific and the harmonies quite strange to foreign ears. Neither do they distinguish between the musical repertoires, which are in fact strictly defined. In monasteries, one hears an ascetic song that must remain simple and severe. The founders are very clear: no eunuchs in the congregation,<sup>15</sup> nor virtuosic, beautiful and sparkling singing. Only in secular church (especially in *Hagia Sophia*) music can be virtuosic, since the melodic beauties can lead the laity to God.<sup>16</sup> The musical difficulty reaches its peak in imperial churches. This rite, which is only performed by the singers' elite, is brilliant. In Palaiologan time, the virtuosity rises even more in the so-called kalophonic style, so full of melismas.

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<sup>14</sup> E. Wellesz, *A history of Byzantine music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 147; N. Moran, "Byzantine castrati," *Plain-song and medieval music* 11:2 (2002): 99-112.

<sup>15</sup> Gregory Pakourianos, "Theotokos Petritzonitissa typikon," in *BMFD*, 541.

<sup>16</sup> Nicephoros Blemmydes, "Ematha typikon," *Idem*, 1204; Nilos Damilas, "Theotokos Pantanassa typikon," *Idem*, 1474; Luke of Messina, "San Salvator typikon," *Idem*, 644.

### 3. Musical performance

The sacred Byzantine chant thus offers a powerful experience that might have been difficult to put into words. By including it in his story, traveller evokes this Byzantine elsewhere and makes the reader imagine sounds he has never heard before, and even he cannot imagine. No need to go into too much detail describing them: these *are* angelic sounds. All the testimonies agree on this music's sweetness because of the eunuchs' crystalline voice and the melodic style. Byzantine church singing is monodic, unaccompanied and turned towards the angelic pattern. Canon 75 of the Council *In Trullo* had clearly forbidden to shout, to sing loudly and without moderation in the church. Everything has to be structured, guided, and controlled by the choir's voice, which imposes a pure aesthetics and harmony. In this case, the angelic inspiration is the one of the Psalmist, with its softness, delicacy, moderation, simplicity and not the more thunderous one of the Archangels and Seraphims. This delicate atmosphere supports all religious worship and thus colours the singing.

The musical performance is also visual: attitudes, costumes, and gestures complete the powerful impression voices can produce. In 1147 Odo seems as much marked by the voices as by the show given by the choir. He thus evokes some movements of hands that John Brundage translates as a "clapping." But this is more like chironomy: while singing, the singers use their fingers to follow the melody and the vocal movements and to keep the tune. Musical practice is indeed performed from memory, the singing books being rather used by the choirmaster to tell the mode and the beginning of melody. In 1432, Bertrandon de la Broquière is sent by duke Philip of Burgundy as an ambassador in Serbia and in Byzantium. In 1433, he visits the Capital, observes the empress, the polo game, and is intrigued by the singer's clothes and chironomy.<sup>17</sup> His account of Constantinople lingers only for a short time. He is rather enchanted by the Capital's wealth and beauty but takes the time to evoke shortly the clergy, about music. Thus, the performance of this religious chant might have seemed odd and new to him. In fact, generally speaking, travellers seem to remember the Byzantine sung liturgies.

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<sup>17</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *The Voyage d'outremer*, trans. Galen R. Kline, (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 105.

## IV. The sounds of the Empire

One visits Constantinople and discovers its streets, palaces, buildings, and curiosities. But it is above all the place where the imperial authority is staged. The sound practices of power provoke very different reactions among travellers.

### 1. Cheers and songs of praise

One of the earliest accounts is that of Liutprand of Cremona. This Lombard diplomat, Bishop of Cremona, was sent twice on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople. On September 17, 949, he comes to conclude a matrimonial alliance for the Marquis of Ivrea Beranger II: it is a great success and quite an experience. He fully enjoys the honour the most powerful Christian prince offers him. He is thrilled, and after his departure on March 31, 960 he writes down in his *Retribution*, using a dithyrambic tone, all that he could have seen and heard. Doing so, he confirms contemporary Byzantine sources, as the *Book of Ceremonies* compiled by Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus around 944-959. When he comes back in 968, from June 4 to October 9, the context is different: so does the account. This mission is a disaster and his second text (*Embassy*) is clearly written with resentment and outrageous criticism. Indeed, he then acted on behalf of Otto I and suffered Byzantine disdain towards his brand-new imperial ambitions. He has been sent to the imperial rival, whom he has to discredit and to mock. All his account is built to prove Ottonian legitimacy by denouncing Byzantine excesses. The aulic pomp is an excellent point of argument. In 968, therefore, after a catastrophic meeting with Nicephoros II Phocas, he is invited to a *prôeleusis*, the imperial procession. Very frequently, for religious, aulic, or popular celebrations, the emperor walks in a procession through a certain part of the palace and the city, followed by the choir, to be greeted by the crowd. At each stop, he must hear an endless series of songs and cheers. And that is exactly what Liutprand describes.

He takes this unique opportunity to criticize the crowd, the clothes of the inhabitants, then he focuses his mockery on the ritual songs. Sitting with a front row next to the choir, he mocked the rite:

the adulating *psaltas* called out: ‘Here comes the morning star, there arises *Eous*, he reflects the sun’s rays with his glare, the pallid death of the Saracens, Nicephoros the *μῆδων*’ (the

prince). And they sang on, *Μέδοντι* (the prince) ‘Nicephoros, may there be *πολλὰ ἔτη* (many\_years)’ [...] How much more accurately they might have sung: “Come, burnt cinder, *μέλας*, old hag in your walk, elfin in your expression, boor, jungle-wanderer, goat-footed, horned.”<sup>18</sup>

Observing this ritual with resentment and frustration, he only concentrates on the symbolic discourse to denigrate Nicephoros II. His dark skin contrasts indeed quite radically with the bright metaphor here developed, and lyrics clearly sing of imperial glory. Yet he must have heard these same ritual chants during his first embassy, as he was admitted to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos official audience. He did not mention nor criticized them before; in the new context of 968, this liturgy appears to be a solid argument for his indictment. According to him, this musical practice proves “how ignorant the Greeks are, how enamoured of their glory, what adulators, how greedy.”<sup>19</sup> His testimony is precious as he saw, heard, and understood everything, even if he uses it to vilify Byzantines.

In 1147, Odo of Deuil also dislikes these ritual acclamations, called *polychronia*. He understands that this is a stereotypical language, typical of Byzantine courtly life, but he is almost disgusted in so many aulic manners. Westerners are very wary of the aulic atmosphere as they prefer a more direct (and rough) expression of authority. This voice control, ultra-complex etiquette, and aulic language give them the impression that they are being deceived by a fake friendliness. But this musical pomp does not seem to bother the other writers. In his large chronicle, William of Tyre confirms the Byzantines perfidious “nature” but fully recognizes John II and Manuel I Komnenos’ valour. The Archbishop of Tyre, who was Baldwin IV’s preceptor and sent as ambassador to two different Byzantine emperors, was born in the Latin East. When he writes and even uses other sources to evoke the First Crusade, he knows how to put gestures into context. He evokes the pomp, splendour and liberality that characterize the imperial authority. Thus, he evokes John II Komnenos’ entrance in Antioch in 1137: “songs of praise and the sound of musical instruments accompanied his progress as well as frequent bursts of

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<sup>18</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Embassy*, trans. P. Squatriti, *The Complete works of Liutprand of Cremona* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 244.

<sup>19</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Embassy*, 255.

joyous applause from the populace.”<sup>20</sup> He fully understands that music and cheers simply build the imperial demonstration of power.<sup>21</sup> Because it is impressive and specific to the Byzantine authority style, it is a good reason to talk about it.

## 2. *Voices in imperial ritual*

The emperor appears in a variety of feasts, audiences, and ceremonies, but few foreigners experience them. In most cases, they attend the *proëleusis* and/or the imperial entrance (*adventus*). Both are real stagings of authority: gestures, attitudes, and sounds take place in a grandiose theatrical experience. Sound is a major element in these authority performances. Indeed, the emperor gets his legitimacy from God and the unanimous acclaim of the army, the Senate, and the Church. During his reign, almost every week, he must constantly repeat this social approval to keep his own popularity intact. The books of ceremonies thus detail the very long series of verses chanting imperial authority, interspersed with hundreds of preventative *polychronia* such as “many years for many years.” In order to preserve, or impose, a ritual order (*taxis*) and a musical harmony, this vocalization is divided into two parts. The imperial choir sings at length the Emperor’s praises and orthodoxy, in a rather brilliant way, then begins the stereotyped cheers. These *polychronia*, which Liutprand and Odon denounced, are then taken up by the entire audience hundreds of times. These experiences of authority are carried out according to ritual rules, under the control of the master of ceremonies and guided by the singers’ voices. It goes on during hours, and it adds a lot of drama and majesty. This is what Ignatius of Smolensk felt at Manuel II Palaiologos coronation, in 1392: according to him, this was “wondrous to see.”<sup>22</sup>

All this sung dialogue must be heard at every imperial theophany. Cheering confirms legitimacy but it can also initiate power. The

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<sup>20</sup> William of Tyre, *History of deeds done beyond the sea*, ed. and trans. E. Atwater Babcock and A.C Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), t. II, 97.

<sup>21</sup> On cheering in imperial rite, see: M.E. Torres, “Πολλὰ ἔτη εἰς πολλὰ: Some Litanic Practices in Byzantine Imperial Ceremonies?” in *The Litany in Arts and Cultures*, ed. W. Sadowski and F. Marsciani (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), 101-124; A. Berger, “Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople,” in *Byzantine Constantinople*, ed. N. Necipoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 73-87.

<sup>22</sup> Ignatius of Smolensk, *Journey*, 104.

acclamation reveals the political pretension of any candidate to the throne. This one must obtain supports and create, stimulate, and frame the cheers that would make him emperor. In April 1390, Ignatius of Smolensk witnesses a very significant episode of the civil war. Feeling deeply aggrieved by his grandfather John V Palaiologos, John VII Palaiologos besieges the Capital, with the help of the Turks. As the inhabitants finally opened the doors to his grandson, John V locked himself in the palace. To seize power, John VII must both dislodge the old emperor and be cheered by the people. All night long, Ignatius hears cheers resounding in the midst of the urban revolt.<sup>23</sup> Soldiers are running in the streets, waking up the inhabitants while singing the ritual acclamation: “many years to you Andronikos.” As John VII Palaiologos has two first names (John Andronikos),<sup>24</sup> his followers carefully acclaim him only as Andronikos, to avoid confusion. The popular voice must be clear: the rebels want these *polychronia* to be sung everywhere and by everyone. Only unanimous cheering should legitimize John VII-Andronikos. Singing cheers might not be enough to win the throne, but it is a mandatory gesture.

### 3. *The soundscape of the Capital*

Singing and cheering take place in a broader soundscape that enhances the show of power. Other ritual instructions<sup>25</sup> are confirmed by William of Tyre and even by Ibn Battuta in 1332. During his third journey, Ibn Battuta went to the Capital, accompanying a Byzantine princess, who was married to some Mongol prince. He thus attends and describes imperial *adventus*. Its account was written in 1335 by the court secretary Ibn Juzayy, who often complements the testimonies he writes down with books excerpts. But the description of this imperial entrance seems to come directly from Ibn Battuta own experience. This one recalls the striking noise of this collective celebration, saying that the people “beat their church gongs until the very skies shook the mingling of their sound” and

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<sup>23</sup> Idem, 102.

<sup>24</sup> This is quite exceptional in the Byzantine context, but this double first name is very useful for John VII's claims. He thus appears quite different from his grandfather and belatedly rehabilitates his father Andronic IV, who was ousted by John V.

<sup>25</sup> Such as Philotheos' *Kletorologion* (ninth c.), Constantine VII's *Book of Ceremonies* (tenth c.), and pseudo-Kodinos' *Book of Offices* (fourteenth c.).

that “drums, trumpets and fifes were sounded.”<sup>26</sup> His testimony is important because it describes the deafening effect of these sumptuous rituals, where excessiveness is also sonorous. This sound power can either impress, frighten or even repel.

His testimony also sheds light on a brand-new Byzantine sound: bells. In fact, the ringing of bells does not appear in the Byzantine soundscape before the thirteenth century. Even after that, it would not fully replace the *semantra*.<sup>27</sup> In 1200 Antony of Novgorod notices that there is no bell in *Hagia Sophia*.<sup>28</sup> A few years earlier, Isaac Komnenos *sebastocrator* (son of Alexios I Komnenos) offered two bells to the monks of the *Kosmosoteira*,<sup>29</sup> but to be used only for Saturday-Sunday worship. Until Palaiologian times, the *semantra* still remained the main and distinctive Byzantine sound signal. At the very beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo still reports that Greeks do not use bells in *Hagia Sophia* but “strike a wooden board to mark the more important moments of the ritual.”<sup>30</sup> He clearly saw and heard the *semantra* in a religious context. Surprisingly, there are few mentions of this Byzantine sound device in travel accounts, but it is true that travellers should have been able to hear it and to understand its use as a signal — whether liturgical or urban, before reporting it.

However, these two sounds have provoked quite strong reactions from some people. Thus, Bishop Eustathios describes the Normans capture of Thessaloniki in 1185. He deplores their ransacking and brutality and he is astonished at their behaviour. They are startled when the *semantra* rings.<sup>31</sup> The Normans do not know this sound and see it as a tool to incite to revolt. Considering the City situation, the atmosphere might be tense, of course, but one can see here how an unfamiliar sound can easily provoke a powerful reaction. That is what happens to Ibn

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<sup>26</sup> Ibn Battuta, *The Travels*, ed. C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti and trans. H.A.R. Gibb, (Farnham: Ashgate, 1959), 502, 504, 505.

<sup>27</sup> See B. Miljković, “*Semantra* and Bells in Byzantium,” *Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog instituta* 55 (2018): 271-303; A. Rodríguez Suarez, “The fate of bells under ottoman rule,” in *Cross-Cultural interaction between Byzantium and the West*, ed. A. Lymberopoulou (London: Routledge, 2018), 303-317.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony of Novgorod, *Pilgrim book*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> Isaac Komnenos, “Theotokos Kosmosoteira typikon,” in *BMFD*, 802.

<sup>30</sup> Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, 113.

<sup>31</sup> Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *The Capture of Thessaloniki*, ed. S. Kyriakidis and trans. J.R. Melville Jones (Canberra: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 1988), 135-137.



Battuta too. Unlike Westerners, he is used to hearing the *semantra*,<sup>32</sup> but when he first hears the bells ringing, in Caffa, he is startled. He begins to pray and to chant the *Qur'an*.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4. For the lucky ones: the imperial audience

The aulic rite leaves a great impression because it is designed that way. In 944, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos compiled all imperial rituals, even the oldest ones. In his text, he clearly explains the meaning of such complex ritualization:

... through praiseworthy ceremonial the imperial rule appears more beautiful and acquires more nobility and so is a cause of wonder to both foreigners and our own people ... Through the rite, the imperial power will have measure and order, reflecting the harmony and movement of the creator in relation to the whole, and it will appear to those subject to it to be more dignified and for this reason both sweeter and more wonderful.<sup>34</sup>

Travelers clearly experience this search for harmony and admit to being dazzled by the reception, the majesty of the entertainment and the prevailing order. The ceremonial ordering manifests the *taxis* favoured in Byzantium.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it is the perfect demonstration of the emperor's authority. Music helps to unify the whole and to orchestrate everyone's contribution.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the entire soundscape constructs and modulates the expression of Byzantine power. One sees, hears, and feels an overwhelming authority.

The core of the imperial theophany is, of course, the audience: after waiting for days or even weeks, some foreigners are admitted into the *Chrysotriclinos*. The rare testimonies confirm the Byzantine ritual

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<sup>32</sup> The ringing of bell is forbidden in Islamic territories and is replaced by *semantra*.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Battuta, *Idem*, 470.

<sup>34</sup> Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies*, ed. A. Riecke and trans. A. Moffat and M. Tall (Canberra: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 2012), 3-5.

<sup>35</sup> G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> About imperial music see: A. Carile, "Le cerimonie musicali alla corte bizantina," in *Da Bisanzio a San Marco. Musica e liturgia*, ed. G. Cattin, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997), 43-60; M.E. Torres, "Du sonore dans les sources non musicales," in *Paysages sensoriels : quelle place dans les sciences humaines et sociales?*, ed. V. Mehl and L. Péaud, (Rennes: PUR, 2019), 119-134.

regulations. The audience provides the experience of the Byzantine supremacy, of God-given authority, and cosmic harmony. This is expressed through the abundance of precious materials and the strict orchestration of bodies, voices, and spaces. Each voice must be heard at the right time. The master of ceremonies is a sort of conductor because he alone allows each voice to be heard in an orderly fashion. Authority is both sound and sound harmony. In front of the emperor, silence prevails, each sound being made only with special authorization.

Obviously, it might be difficult to isolate one of the elements of this highly sophisticated staging, but we could focus on the sound dimension, particularly using Liutprand's *Retribution*. In his first account, he indicates having been brought in front of the emperor during a highly sonorous stage. He describes the room, the dignitaries standing, motionless and completely silent, the golden throne of the emperor adorned with roaring automatons and the bronze tree decorated with machine birds.<sup>37</sup> He is told what to say, what to do. He is a spectator of an authority designed to be inaccessible and universal. When he enters the hall, "the lions emitted their roar and the birds called out, each according to its species." When the emperor stands up, the organ plays. After these automatons, he hears the singers' voices, the organ, the master of ceremonies, but never the emperor's voice. The latter "speaks" only by nodding his head a little.

Liutprand is experiencing the complete dramatization of the Byzantine authority. The emperor participates in a true staging, where movements, voices, and sounds are entirely controlled. The distance between the emperor and the rest of the world must be genuinely felt and his divine authority must be made tangible. The most important thing is to amaze.<sup>38</sup> The full sound orchestration strengthens the distance that has to be experienced. The means used will vary on who is received by the emperor. Ritual order, voice control, and silence build an impression of a powerful massive and well-ordered Empire. The

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<sup>37</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Retribution*, 197.

<sup>38</sup> N. Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore* (Louvain: Peeters, 2015), 505. See also: G. Dagron, "Trônes pour un empereur," in *Βυζάντιο. Κράτος και Κοινωνία* [Byzantium. Power and Society], ed. A. Avraméa (Athens: Institute for Byzantine Research, 2003), 179-203; M. Featherstone, "The Great Palace as Reflected in the *De Cerimoniis*," in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft*, ed. F.A. Bauer (Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2006), 47-61; G. Brett, "The Automata in the Byzantine 'Throne of Solomon,'" *Speculum* 29 (1954): 477-87.

obsessive focus on harmony is evident in most of the testimonies: sound practices largely contributes to it and even magnifies it.

Nevertheless, Crusaders are conquerors and reluctant to this pompous expression of authority. Byzantine emperors therefore would have to make significant ritual compromises to impress them without repelling them too much. Imperative silence has to be broken.

### *5. Some extraordinary entertainments*

Even among the Crusaders who were wary of this ritualized power, the palace usually offered outstanding experiences. Westerners discover excessive pomp, aulic pleasures, and grandiose entertainments. All the senses are stimulated, and the descriptions hardly give a complete account of these unique moments. However, they are evoked, quite exhaustively, in some texts that endlessly denounce the Greeks' weakness, perfidy, and vanity. This shows that the impression was very strong, so strong as to overcome prejudices and resentments. Liutprand himself tells that "it is a very long thing to write about" all the novel and marvellous things he saw, and does not seem to have recovered from the wonders performed by the acrobats.<sup>39</sup> Later, Odo of Deuil says that banquet satisfies "eyes, tongue and ears alike."<sup>40</sup> William of Tyre adds that "various kinds of musical instruments were brought in, from which strains of marvellous sweetness in harmonious measure were evoked for their delight. Again, choruses of maidens [eunuchs] sang, and pantomimes of great merit were presented."<sup>41</sup> The banquets offer a profusion of fine foods, artistic performances, brilliant music, and ritual cheers. In 899, the banquet attendant Philotheos recalled that the choir's elite of *Hagia Sophia* must come and sing during Christmas and Epiphany banquets. People at the table must sing and accompany together the said sacred song.<sup>42</sup> Feast is also a part of the imperial rite, giving another glimpse of Byzantine superiority.

At the beginning of the tenth century, Ahmad ibn Rustah included Harun ibn Yahya's testimony in his *Book of precious things*. The latter, held prisoner in Constantinople near 881, is invited to a banquet in the palace:

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<sup>39</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, *Retribution*, 200.

<sup>40</sup> Odo of Deuil, *De projectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 109.

<sup>41</sup> William of Tyre, *History of deeds*, 381-382.

<sup>42</sup> Philotheos, *Kletorologion*, ed. John B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911).

among other things, he is amazed by the golden organ.<sup>43</sup> This musical instrument is played during the entire imperial ritual and it fully demonstrates the Byzantines' technical superiority. Harun recalls it as an astonishing device: a sort of wooden box, covered with strong leather, into which sixty pipes of copper are put. Two men have to blow it so as the organist can play. This musical instrument is a Byzantine specificity, used only when the emperor is there. It is played even during banquet but never in a religious context. It is fascinating because it generates a rare sound and it is a jealously guarded technical marvel. Constantine V offered two organs to Pepin the Short in 757,<sup>44</sup> a gift the first Carolingians greatly appreciated. In 826, Louis the Pious hastened to pay a Venetian priest offering to "compose an organ in the manner of the Greeks."<sup>45</sup> Thus, for several centuries, this musical instrument remained a specifically Byzantine sound element. From the tenth and the eleventh centuries, a new Latin variant of the organ is created and enter the sacred Western soundscape.<sup>46</sup> The Crusaders should therefore not have been surprised to see and hear organs in Byzantium, although its use for imperial authority might have seemed odd, even confusing. Generally speaking, aulic banquets always provide rich and brilliant multi-sensorial experiences that leave a deep impression. Arab travelers would expect such splendor, but not Westerners. The impact of this opulent courtly life can be guessed from the many references to the Byzantine Court in the chivalric literature.

## V. Conclusions

So, despite of the precise writing contexts, the sound echoes of Constantinople are easy to thing. No matter why they visit Constantinople, they behave, at one time or another, like ordinary tourists. Their experience, and the account they tell of it, is therefore

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<sup>43</sup> Ahmad ibn Rustah, *The Book of precious things*, ed. A. A. Vasiliev and trans. H. Grégoire and M. Canard, *Byzantium and Arabs*, t.II-2 (Bruxelles: CBHB, 1935), 388.

<sup>44</sup> *Carolingian chronicles: Royal Frankish annals and Nithard's Histories*, ed. and trans. B.W. Scholz and B. Rogers (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 42.

<sup>45</sup> Idem, 120.

<sup>46</sup> J. Herrin, "Constantinople, Rome and the Franks," in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1992) 91-107; P. Williams, *The Organ in Western Culture, 750-1250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 137-42; P. Hardouin and J. Perrot, "De l'orgue de Pépin à l'orgue médiéval," *Revue de Musicologie* 52 (1966), 21-55.

necessarily fragmentary. These various echoes of the Byzantine city reveal what astonishes foreigners but also how Constantinople wants to show itself. The semantha does not seem to be of any interest, nor does the noise of the city or the people. But the religious chants, the Aulic rite, and the imperial festivities attract a lot. No matter what the traveller thinks about Byzantine culture, these sounds appeal, impress, and amaze. The discovery is worthy of the city's splendors: manifold, brilliant, sensorial, quasi-divine. A completely different world appears before the traveler's eyes and ears, or rather two worlds. On one side, the paradise antechamber, enchanted by celestial songs, angelic voices, and soul crying. On the other, the arena of an overwhelming sensuality, filled with perfumes, gold, dances, vocal and instrumental music. In the middle is the Byzantine power, which plays on both sides, using sensorial stimuli, especially sound, to build and demonstrate its power, superiority, and pretensions.

This sonic vision is certainly fragmentary, distorted, oriented, and incomplete, but it is nonetheless very much alive and striking. These texts are built on preformatted expectations, focused descriptions, more or less impartial explanations, but they are very precious testimonies. They confirm Byzantine texts and give glimpses on the performativity of these sonorous demonstrations of authority. All these sound echoes are useful arguments for the traveler to recreate his experience of the Empire, and thus to stage what he thinks about it. These extraordinary sounds fill these extraordinary places. The echo of Constantinople is thus richer, longer, and more vibrant.

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# The Temptations of the Night Journey: An Image from the Voyage of Nicephorus Gregoras through Serbia

Radivoj Radić<sup>1</sup>

*A good traveller knows not where he's going.  
A perfect traveller knows not whence he's coming from.*  
(Lao Tze)

In patristic vocabulary, “night” was a metaphor for spiritual darkness and, in a broader sense, for sin, misfortune, and uncertainty. Thus, without a doubt, the meaning of the night features its damaging characteristic. The impenetrable darkness of the night wears a man down, deprives him of the necessary orientation signs, and engrosses him in blindness.<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by Rabanus Maurus, the signs of night are debauchery and vice, shamelessness and idolatry, swearing and the likes.<sup>3</sup> At that time, human endeavours become impossible and the sheer vastness of night is dehumanizing.<sup>4</sup> Only those whose endeavours harm human life and property, in other words, thieves and bandits, continue to roam this vastness of the night.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, all the journeys taken during the night always carry the risk of turning into an adventure with

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<sup>2</sup> Sancti Gregorii papae, *Dialogorum libri IV de miraculis partum Italicorum*, Patrologia Latina 111, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Parisiis: Migne, 1896), I 10.8.

<sup>3</sup> Rabanus Maurus, *Expositionum In Leviticum Libri Septem*, Patrologia Latina 108, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Parisiis: Migne, 1964), III.1; Ibid, *Enarratio Super Deuteronomium Libri Quatuor*, Patrologia Latina 108, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Parisiis: Migne, 1964), II.6. Cf. C. Bojadziev, *Nošćta prež srednovekovieto* [Night in the Middle Ages] (Sofija: Iztok-Zapad, 2000), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Beda Venerabilis. *De temporum ratione liber*, ed. Charles W. Jones, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 123B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Rabanus Maurus, *De Universo Libri Viginti Duo*, Patrologia Latina 111, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Parisiis: Migne, 1852), X 6; Cf. Bojadziev, *Nošćta prež srednovekovieto srednovekovieto*, 12.

unpredictable consequences. One such journey was the voyage of Nicephorus Gregoras through Serbia.

Nicephorus Gregoras, a historian, statesman, and a leading Byzantine intellectual in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, travelled through Serbia. It was in 1327, or perhaps 1326,<sup>6</sup> when by order of Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282–1328) he visited the court of King Stefan Uroš III of Dečani (1282–1321). This diplomatic mission's goal was to bring back to Constantinople Irene, mother-in-law of the Serbian king and daughter of the great logothete Theodore Metochites. Her daughter Maria Palaiologina married the Serbian king in the late summer of 1324.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, the Byzantine delegation consisted of one hundred and forty people with many work animals.<sup>8</sup> It was not uncommon in the Middle Ages for the delegations that visited other countries' courts to consist of more than a hundred people. Thus, for example, the delegation from the Kievan Rus, which in the middle tenth century visited Constantinople and the court of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959), headed by Princess Olga, consisted of as many as one hundred and twenty-three members, eighty-eight men and thirty-five women.<sup>9</sup>

The delegation led by Nicephorus Gregoras did not choose the road via Thessaloniki, but rather turned at Amphipolis to *Via Egnatia* and continued along the river Strymonas, probably near Petrič, and then on

<sup>6</sup> P. Schreiner, "Die Gesandtschaftsreise des Nikephoros Gregoras nach Serbien (1326/27)," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 38 (1999/2000): 331–342.

<sup>7</sup> M. Živojinović, "O vremenu sklapanja braka Stefana Uroša III (Dečanskog) sa Marijom Paleolog" [About the time of the marriage of Stefan Uroš III (Dečanski) with Maria Palaiologina], *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 38 (1999/2000): 327–330; S. Pirivatrić, "Podatak Ničifora Grigore o hronologiji braka Stefana Dečanskog i Marije Paleolog" [Report of Nikephoros Gregoras regarding the chronology of Stephan Uroš III marriage with Maria Palaiologena], in *Spomenika akademika Sime Ćirkovića*, ed. Srđan Rudić (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2011), 337–345.

<sup>8</sup> Nicephori Gregorae, *Epistulae II (Epistulas continens)*, ed. P. A. M. Leone (Matino: Tipografia di Matino, 1982), № 32, 106 (henceforth Greg. Epist. II); *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije* [Byzantine Sources for the History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia] VI, ured. Franjo Barišić, Božidar Ferjanić (Beograd: Vizantološki institut Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti, 1986), 621. (Ninoslava Radošević) (henceforth *VINJ VI*)

<sup>9</sup> F. Uspenski, *Istorija Vizantijskog carstva. Period Makedonske dinastije, 867–1057* [The History of the Byzantine Empire. Period of the Macedonian dynasty, 867–1057] (Beograd: Zepther Book World, 2000), 299; 571.

to Strumica, Štip, and Skopje. In order to reach their final destination as soon as possible, one day, just around the sunset, the Byzantine emissaries, instead of pausing their voyage and spending the night at a safe location, continued on their journey. They were hoping to find a better place to spend the night, but it was not to be. Nicephorus Gregoras recorded the following:

Our hopes were in vain. Several bandit raids that had been repeatedly taking place in this area a while ago quickly turned this region into a desolate and uninhabited area. And we carried on like some planets, placing our faith in the God and unclear hopes. At that point the darkness came about: 'the sun had set and darkness covered the roads,'<sup>10</sup> and there was no moon.<sup>11</sup>

With this sentence, full of premonition and warning, Gregoras hinted at the troubles in which that the Byzantine delegation would soon find themselves. The learned polymath continued:

This moonless night was accompanied by the shadows of nearby hills. They were so tall that they covered the skies above us making it impossible, as the saying goes, to use the stars for directions in this unfortunate journey. 'And my heart broke in my chest,' because I was to go 'on a long and laborious trip.'<sup>12</sup> We came across very dense thicket, uneven terrain with many higher points and precipices. We no longer paid any notice to our clothes and shoes that were completely torn by the thorny bushes; we were worried about our eyes because the thick and endless tree branches became enemies of our faces; letting go of the reins of our horses, we used our hands to cover our faces. And among the servants who were accompanying us and were paying no attention whatsoever to our fear, there were some who were making a lot of noise and singing heroic songs; they were singing about the famous feats of heroes whose glory 'we

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<sup>10</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, *Volume I: Books 1-12*, trans. A. T. Murray, revised William F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library 170 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), II, 338. (henceforth Homer, *Odyssey*)

<sup>11</sup> Greg. Epist. II, № 32, 106–107; *VIIINJ* VI, 622. (Ninoslava Radošević).

<sup>12</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, IV, 481 and IV, 393.

just hear about and know nothing more.<sup>13</sup> And the precipices and so many valleys between the surrounding hills took in the noise and, like some living beings, kept it unchanged and intact and with the same melody echoed like melodious choirs that take turns and sing in the same key. And in the midst of it all I did my best to keep my sanity and persevere and not give into my fears; but my reason would not be convinced, but rather was scolding me for taking this journey in the ill time, and kept going back to the notions of ambushes and bandits and bloodthirsty men, so as not to jump from the side and make us a prey to their daggers.<sup>14</sup>

Nicephorus Gregoras evidently succumbed to the atmosphere of uncertainty and fear that prevented him from rational thinking. The journey reached its critical point, and thus the Byzantine historian recorded:

As we were advancing, suddenly some men jumped in front of us from behind those precipices and rocks, dressed in black wool and leather that they would take from the animals when needed, resembling some demonic appearance. However, they were not soldiers in armour, although their weapons were more than light, as most of them were prepared for direct combat, carrying spears and axes. Some of them carried crossbows. At first sight we were shocked and terrified. And how could we not be? In a foreign land, at such an hour of a day, and, besides, they were speaking a foreign language. Most of them were Mizians (Bulgarians), who have lived in the surrounding areas since the old times and lived alongside our countrymen.<sup>15</sup>

However, their intentions were good as they explained that they guarded the roads with the goal to prevent any robbers from coming to their neighbourhood. They soon could hear the dogs barking from a

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<sup>13</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, *Volume I: Books 1-12*, trans. A. T. Murray, revised William F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library 170 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), II, 486; IX, 189; *Ibid*, *Odyssey*, VIII, 73.

<sup>14</sup> Greg. Epist. II, № 32, 107-108.

<sup>15</sup> Greg. Epist. II, № 32, 108.

nearby village, and that completely dissuaded the tired Byzantine travellers who longed for rest after the difficult night adventure.

We hurried towards the village and everyone ended up in a different inn, like shipwrecked men who after the storm were looking for any kind of port. As they say that a piece of bread is sweet to a hungry man regardless of its quality, so we thought it pleasant and joyful to roll over in ashes.<sup>16</sup>

In this case, a night journey that could have turned into an unfortunate incident, concluded quite unexpectedly with a happy ending. However, things could have ended quite differently.

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<sup>16</sup> Greg. Epist. II, № 32, 109.

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# Dante (1265-1321): The Exile and Birth of a Pilgrim

Sandra Dučić Collette<sup>1</sup>

## I. Florence (1265 1302) – *Vita Nuova* e *Esilio* – *Humilitas*.

To Sr. M. Diletta Maria Pacetti

THE DREAM. Dante's mother, just prior to his birth, in the end of May, 1265, had a dream with a vision of a peacock whereas *instead of Dante she saw a beautiful peacock* ("subitamente non lui, ma di lui uno bellissimo paone le pareva vedere").

The gentle lady in her pregnancy saw herself at the foot of a lofty laurel, hard by a clear spring, and there gave birth to a son, who, as I have above said, in a short time, feeding on the falling berries of that laurel and the water of the spring, became a great shepherd, and exceedingly desirous of the berries of the laurel under which he was. While he tried to reach them, it appeared to her that he fell, and suddenly she seemed to see, not him, but instead of him a beautiful peacock.<sup>2</sup>

It remains unknown whether this is true or not. It is certain however that beyond its veracity, the dream is fully justified by the work of Dante.

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<sup>2</sup> Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's Life of Dante* Vol. 40, B (New York & London: Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 1990), 136. Cf. G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello in Laude di Dante* [Treatise in Laude of Dante] (1362), [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Trattatello\\_in\\_laude\\_di\\_Dante](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Trattatello_in_laude_di_Dante) (accessed May 9, 2020), 57: "Vide la gentil donna nella sua gravidezza sé a piè d'uno altissimo alloro, allato a una chiara fontana, partorire uno figliuolo, il quale di sopra altra volta narrai, in breve tempo, pascendosi delle bache di quello alloro cadenti e dell'onde della fontana, divenire un gran pastore e vago molto delle frondi di quello alloro sotto il quale era; a le quali avere mentre che egli si sforzava, le pareva che egli cadesse; e subitamente non lui, ma di lui uno bellissimo paone le pareva vedere. Dalla quale maraviglia la gentil donna commossa, ruppe, senza vedere di lui più avanti, il dolce sonno."

Surely, Dante's work, just like the peacock's flesh, does not perish. "La Vita Nuova," which starts with the death of Beatrice, celebrates both the poet's first meeting with her and her death in this world. It is also the only work that Dante accomplished in Florence where he had only one possibility to conceive his future *Divina Commedia*: on Easter Sunday 1300.<sup>3</sup> On January 27, 1302, the first sentence of his exile was already being enforced. On March 10, Dante was permanently exiled. The sorrow of exile is doubled by the loss of his beloved Beatrice: "dal venir meno della bella difesa per la partenza della donna dello schermo."<sup>4</sup> This is how Dante's journey began.

It is well known that Dante suffered tremendously because of his condemnation to exile in 1302. Furthermore, he considered it to be profoundly undeserved.<sup>5</sup> He was at first desperate to return to Florence and even attempted a military attack on the black Guelphs who had expelled him. But after some time, it seems that he ceased to wish to return.<sup>6</sup> Why? We would like to suggest that more than anything else, the answer lies within the heart of his poetical oeuvre. The political *essilio* did not simply give Dante the opportunity to completely devote himself to writing, but, more profoundly, it was a landmark in his personal poetical and intellectual development, leading Dante to recognize *himself* as a pilgrim. "Exile" and "pilgrimage" are words regularly taken interchangeably in modern commentaries on Dante's oeuvre. However, although closely related, these are terms with fundamental differences that should be kept in mind if we want to better understand the poetical and philosophical connection between *Vita Nuova* and *Divina Commedia*. In the *Vita*, a poem predating his exile, Dante does not yet recognize himself as a pilgrim, but only addresses a *sonnetto* to pilgrims titled: *Deh peregrini che pensosi andate*.<sup>7</sup> On this occasion, he defines, in general terms,

<sup>3</sup> When the first sentence of Dante's exile from Florence was enforced on January 27, 1302, Dante was completing his *Vita Nuova*. The completion of this work would mean in the same time the beginning of *Commedia* which was written during the forty years of poet's exile from Florence, i.e. abroad and until his death.

<sup>4</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander, ed., *Princeton Dante Project, Opera omnia, with English Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997-1999), <https://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html> (accessed May 9, 2020), *VN* V, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *exul inmeritus*, *Ep.* II, 3.

<sup>6</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *VN* V, 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, *VN* XL, 5.



what a pilgrim is: “chiunque è fuori de la sua patria.”<sup>8</sup> Such a definition does indeed closely connect pilgrims to exiles. However, in *Vita Nuova*, pilgrims are already endowed with a particular feature: they possess a spirit of love.<sup>9</sup> This feature inexorably separates pilgrims from exiles, as can be seen from a reading of Dante’s *Convivio*, an unfinished book he seems to have written two or three years after his condemnation, and shortly before he started the *Commedia*. In *Convivio*, Dante reflects on intelligences both in Heaven and on earth, and we learn that intelligences unable to philosophize are the ones where “love is entirely extinguished.”<sup>10</sup> These intelligences, he says, are “in essilio della superna patria,”<sup>11</sup> exiled from Heaven and dwelling in Hell.<sup>12</sup> In the *Divina Commedia*, we see that Dante’s pilgrims never appear in Hell, and instead are in the Anti-Purgatory, where they are presented “d’amore punge.”<sup>13</sup> Only in *Paradiso* we finally see Dante presenting himself as “quasi peregrine,” a pilgrim who has eventually made his way to “the temple of his vow.”<sup>14</sup> The poetical movement that led Dante to his own pilgrimage would probably never had happened without his political exile, since exile made him literally “fuori de la sua patria,” like a pilgrim. But without his own poetical reflection, started already before the exile, he would probably never have been capable of transforming his exile (in any sense of the term) into a pilgrimage of love.

### 1. From Ulysses’ Haughtiness (pride) to pilgrim’s humilitas

“O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.” *Lamentationes* I. 12.

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<sup>8</sup> “E dissi ‘peregrini’ secondo la larga significazione del vocabulo; ché; ché peregrini si possono intendere in due modi, in uno largo e in uno stretto: in largo, in quanto è peregrino chiunque è fuori de la sua patria; in modo stretto non s’intende peregrino se non chi va verso la casa di sa’ Iacopo o riede.”

“And I used the word ‘pilgrims’ in its general sense, for the term can be understood in two ways, one general and the other specific.” Ibidem, *VN* XI, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, *VN* XLI, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, *Conv.* III, 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Conv.* III 13, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, cf. “le infernali Intelligenze.”

<sup>13</sup> *Purg.* VIII, 4-5. “pierced with love.”

<sup>14</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Par.* XXXI, 43.

Canto XVII of Dante's *Inferno* depicts clear enough the appalling note on his exile from Florence, the flight on the wings of Gerion. It is a detail that could position us not only on our journey through the *Commedia* but also through Dante's historical journey. Dante is presented here as a person (i.e. *personaggio*), while the monster Gerion personifies the exile, or more precisely, the way Dante has lived it. Exile became thus a providential constraint (from the forces of evil) with an advantage for the pilgrim's future. Here, the pilgrim symbolizes *l'humilitas* (a pure Christian notion) as opposed to the state of pride. This providential intervention, in the clothes of the monster (cf. *Inferno*) and in exile itself in Dante's real life, is an answer to the pilgrim's submission, who henceforth will be guided "where you do not want to go."<sup>15</sup> In this journey, he is only a simple passenger, contrarily to Ulysses, and Virgil is here to sustain him. It is an execution of order, *Io non Enea, io non Paulo sono*,<sup>16</sup> to prompt the pilgrim on his way.<sup>17</sup> In Dante's case, it is Gerion who participates on one side; Beatrice on the other side. Beatrice is the true light, the true Guide, in Dante's worldly as much as poetic journey. She will show him, after his exile from Florence, the right path toward the City,<sup>18</sup> a City he is looking for from the beginning of his journey, the City of God. During his exile, embittered, little by little Dante will learn through *humility* how to become himself *quasi peregrin d'amore*.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it is only when he reaches the gates of "Paradiso," thirty years later, that we see Dante presenting himself as a pilgrim who had finally accomplished his vow *nel tempio del suo voto*.<sup>20</sup>

And as a pilgrim in the temple of his vow,  
Content within himself, looks lovingly about

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<sup>15</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (John 21:18)

<sup>16</sup> *Inf.* II, 32.

<sup>17</sup> Aeneas, the hero of Virgil's epic poem, *Aeneid*, written between 29 and 19 BC. It tells the legendary story of Aeneas, a Trojan who travelled to Italy, where he became the ancestor of the Romans. As St. Paul in the Christian world, Aeneas is kind of proto example of lost self-dependence and won humility. As for the future apostle, his previous self-dependant and self-sufficient Saul was transfigured into Paul. In such a sense, Aeneas is already seen by Dante as a pre-pilgrim, although without Christian cognition.

<sup>18</sup> *Par.* XXXI, 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Purg.* VIII, 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> *Par.* XXXI, 43. Thirty-three years separates the *Vita Nova* from *Paradiso*.

And expects to tell his tale when he gets home (...).<sup>21</sup>

Only after he had drunk of the waters ‘*quest’acqua* flowing from *the river of Light*, “e vidi lume in forma di rivera,”<sup>22</sup> Dante is eventually ready to see the true light.<sup>23</sup> Beatrice prepares him for this baptismal assumption before he will enter into the *temple of his will* (“tempio del suo voto”).<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Μουσηγέτης<sup>25</sup>

Where is this *temple of will*? It is no longer in Florence, even not in Ithaca, where Ulysses returns one day and tells of his journey. This temple is somewhere else (“over the seas”) and it is only Dante who will be allowed to enter and to return from, *the seas I still were never sailed before*, “L’acqua ch’io prendo già mai non si corse.”<sup>26</sup>

The seas I still were never sailed before.

Minerva fills my sails. Apollo is my guide,  
nine Muses point me toward Beers.<sup>27</sup>

This stanza displays an extraordinary poetic constellation which constitutes a kind of fusion, or river, full of verses related to Christian *humilitas* from the *Vulgata*

And being found in appearance as a man,  
he *humbled* himself

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<sup>21</sup> *Par.* XXXI, 43-45. “E quasi peregrin che si ricrea nel tempio del suo voto riguardando, e spera già ridir com’ ello stea (...).”

<sup>22</sup> *Par.* XXX, 61.

<sup>23</sup> *Par.* XXXI.

<sup>24</sup> *Par.* XXX, 70-75.

<sup>25</sup> It is one of many epithets given to Apollon, Μουσηγέτης, Mousēgetēs, proceeding from Μούσα “Muse” and ἡγέτης “leader.” Deriving from the Muses and the poets.

<sup>26</sup> *Par.* II, 7-9; and, S. Dučić-Collette, “Reč, tišina i blagovest. *Per verba non si poria*” [“Word, Silence and Grace: Per verba non si poria”], *Jezici i culture u vremenu i prostoru* 8:2 (2019): 11-22; 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> *Par.* II, 7-9. “L’acqua ch’io prendo già mai non si corse; Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo, E nove Muse mi dimostrar l’Orse.” We shall go from the “easy” spectre (cf. *Inf.* V.61-62: in the fifth circle of *Inferno* are all those condemned by lust, with Virgil being perhaps the most significant exemplar of it) to the “decidedly difficult” one. A very difficult one is presented in the second Canto of *Paradiso* (cf. *Par.* II, 7-9), where Dante makes a strong claim for the inspired nature of his third canticle (*Par.* III, 10-15) of his poem.

by becoming obedient to death –  
even death on a cross!<sup>28</sup>

Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
*humbled* by him, and afflicted.”<sup>29</sup>

and from *Vita Nuova*<sup>30</sup> - *Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare* - where Beatrice is vested in humility, *benignamente d'umiltà vestuta*.<sup>31</sup>

*Ab, pilgrims*, moving pensively along, thinking, perhaps, of things at home you miss, could the land you come from be so far away (as anyone might guess from your appearance) that you show no signs of grief as you pass through the middle of the desolated city, like people who seem not to understand the grievous weight of woe it has to bear?

If you would stop to listen to me speak, I know, from what my sighing heart tells me, you would be weeping when you leave this place: lost is the city's source of blessedness, and I know words that could be said of her with *power to humble* any man to tears.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Phil. 2:8.

<sup>29</sup> Is. 53:4.

<sup>30</sup> *VN* XXVI.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *VN* LX. “And it is to be known further that there are *three ways that those who travel in the service of the Most High* may be accurately designated. They are called ‘palmeri’ who cross the sea to the Holy Land and often bring back palms; they are called ‘pilgrims’ who travel to the house of Galicia, because the tomb of St. James is farther away from his own country than that of any other apostle; they are called ‘Romers’ who travel to Rome, where those whom I call ‘pilgrims’ were going” (*VN* XL, 7). English translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*. “E però è da sapere che in tre modi si chiamano propriamente le genti che vanno al servizio de l’Altissimo: chiamansi ‘palmieri’, in quanto vanno oltremare, là onde molte volte recano la palma; chiamansi ‘peregrini’, in quanto vanno a la casa di Galizia, però che la sepultura di sa’ Iacopo fue più lontana de la sua patria che d’alcuno altro apostolo; chiamansi ‘romei’, in quanto vanno a Roma, là ove questi cu’ io chiamo ‘peregrini’ andavano. Questo sonetto non divido, però che assai lo manifesta la sua ragione.”

<sup>32</sup> English translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *VN* XL, 9-10. “Deh! peregrini che pensosi andate, forse di cosa che non v’è presente, venite voi da sì lontana gente, com’a la vista voi ne dimostrate, che non piangete quando voi passate per lo suo mezzo la città dolente, come quelle persone che neente par che ’ntendesser la sua gravitate. Se voi restaste per volerlo audire,

Dante's native Florence, the most ungrateful of all places, *harsh mother to her bard*, "Huic ingrata tulit tristem fructum, Exilium, vati cruda suo"<sup>33</sup> is also the city where the poet has lost his *beatitudine*, *perduta la sua Beatrice*,<sup>34</sup> in the earthly death of his beloved Beatrice. But Beatrice will never leave him and will become the first companion during his journey. She will go so far as to humble herself to come down from Heaven into the darkness of the *Inferno* in order to plant the seed of hope within Dante's broken heart.<sup>35</sup> Beatrice becomes, instead of death, the annunciator of life eternal. How she transforms Dante's "death" to this world into the vision of Heaven is masterly depicted through Canto XXX of *Paradiso* and *Inferno*,<sup>36</sup> which work together as counterpoints to each other—one bringing the fruit of the seed, hope, planted by Beatrice in Dante's darkness,<sup>37</sup> and the other opening the poet's eyes and making him able to see the true light in the form of a river located in the middle of Rosa Candida.<sup>38</sup>

From that torrent issued living sparks  
And on either bank, they settled on the flowers,  
Like rubies ringed in gold.<sup>39</sup>

The angels, similar to bees, flying around Rosa Candida and feeding themselves with perfumes and pollen which emanate from it, recall in us the picture from Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Plays with a passing breath, and whispers thro' the trees;  
And, just before the confines of the wood,  
The gliding Lethe leads her silent flood.  
About the boughs an airy nation flew,

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certo lo cor de' sospiri mi dice che lagrimando n'uscireste pui. Ell'ha perduta la sua beatrice; e le parole ch'om di lei pò dire hanno virtù di far piangere altrui."

<sup>33</sup> Epitaph written by Master Giovanni del Virgilio of Bologna (*ibidem*), a famous poet at the time and intimate friend of Dante. It was written to be put on Dante's tomb in Ravenna but was undone because of inspected historical coincidences. Cfs. Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 71-72; G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Dante here makes an allusion to himself, losing his earthly *Beatrice*.

<sup>35</sup> *Inf.* II, 43-126.

<sup>36</sup> *Par.* XXX, 64-66, and *Inf.* II, 43-126.

<sup>37</sup> *Inf.* II, 43-126.

<sup>38</sup> *Par.* XXX, 64-66.

<sup>39</sup> English translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Par.* XXX, 64-66. "Di tal fiumana uscian faville vive, E d'ogne parte di metien ne' fiori, Quasi rubin che oro circumscrive."

Thick as the humming bees, that hunt the golden dew;  
In summer's heat on tops of lilies feed,  
And creep within their bells, to suck the balmy seed:  
The winged army roams the fields around;  
The rivers and the rocks remurmur to the sound.<sup>40</sup>

On its own turn, this image also recalls the initial one, always the second Canto of *Inferno* (II. 32), where Dante exceeds himself and his own “prophecy.”<sup>41</sup> Dante is conscious now that he had failed, in his vision of protagonist, to be similar to two of his precedents, Paolo and Aeneas. It is at this point that he is reborn as he indeed becomes a new Paolo and a new Enea.<sup>42</sup> This poetic string and reminiscences from the Bible and classical sources have their own tone:

Like sudden lightning that confounds  
The faculty of sight, depriving eyes  
Of taking in the clearest objects<sup>43</sup>

At this point, it becomes necessary for Dante to find the appropriate language which would be able to capture alive and clothe in words his vision of Paradise. Propertius' verses which follow show clearly that the poet's mission is sacerdotal and that he (Propertius) is the first priest (*sacerdos*) who will bring the sacred *canti* from Greece to Italy and who will crown it, if the Muses give him the grace, with a new Latin canto:

Shade of Callimachus and rites of Coan Philitas,  
suffer me, I pray, to come into your grove.  
I am the first to enter, priest from an unsullied spring,

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<sup>40</sup> English translation, J. Henderson, ed., *Loeb Classical Library* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010), <https://www.loebclassics.com> (accessed May 9, 2020), *Aen.* VI, 703–709. “Interea uidet Aeneas in ualle reducta seclusum nemus et uirgulta sonantia siluae, Lethaeumque domos placidas qui praenatat amnem. hunc circum innumerae gentes populique uolabant: ac ueluti in pratis ubi apes aestate serena floribus insidunt uariis et candida circum lilia funduntur, strepit omnis murmure campus.”

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem. “Io non Enea, non Paulo sono; me degno a cio né io né altri ¶crede.” “I am not Aeneas, nor am I Paul. Neither I nor any think me fit for.” English translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander, *Inf.* II. 32–33.

<sup>42</sup> *Par.* XXX, 49–52.

<sup>43</sup> English translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Par.* XXX 49–51. “così mi circunfulse luce viva, e lasciommi fasciato di tal velo del suo fulgor, che nulla m'appariva.”

bringing Italy's mystic emblems in dances of Greece.<sup>44</sup>

Dante, following this model, will search on his own turn for a new language.<sup>45</sup> To this new language, the poet gives the name of *donna gentile*. She shall serve the poet as a remedy, as an instrument to overpass the death of beloved Beatrice. This *donna gentile* is none other than *Minerva oscura* (whom Boccaccio names once in his *Prosopoea di Dante*), the Lady Philosophy.<sup>46</sup> Armed only with her teaching, Dante grasps that grace will be given to him to go over the water of oblivion and overcome death ("first" as he says). This *donna gentile* will unmask his disguised exile into a "blessing." And the flight on the wings of Gerion to *Inferno* becomes now for Dante the springboard (veiled benediction, *benedizione mascherata*) and the means of how to reach his future *Paradiso*. In Propertius' own manner, Dante sees himself as an *auriga*, who first opens the highway for the return of the Muses exiled from Italy (*apre la via al ritorno delle Muse, bandite d'Italia*).

This was that Dante of whom I write; this was that Dante who was granted to our age by the special Grace of God; this was that *Dante who first was destined to open the way for the return to Italy of the banished Muses*.<sup>47</sup>

Questi fu quel Dante, del quale e il presente sermone; questi fu quel Dante che a' nostri secoli fu concesso di speciale

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<sup>44</sup> J. Henderson, ed., *Loeb Classical Library*, Propertius, *Elegies*, III. I, 1-5. Sexti Properti, *Elegiarum Liber Tertius*, I, 1-5: "Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae, in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus. primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros."

<sup>45</sup> *Comp.* I, 10-13.

<sup>46</sup> "Dante Alighieri son, Minerva oscura/ D'intelligenza e d'arte, nel cui ingegno/L'eleganza materna aggiunse al segno/Che si tien gran miracol di natura." C. Da Pistoia, *Le Rime di M. Cino da Pisotia e d'altri del secolo XIV* [The Rhymes of Cino Da Pistoia and Others of the 14th Century XIV] (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1862). G. Boccaccio, *Prosopoea di Dante*, [https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Prosopoea\\_di\\_Dante](https://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Prosopoea_di_Dante) (accessed May 10, 2020), CVIII, 1-4. *Opere Volgari di Giovanni Boccaccio*, "Sonetto CVIII: Prosopoea di Dante" (Firenze: L. Fiacchi & I. Moutier (eds.), 1827-1834).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 47. "This was that Dante of whom I write; this was that Dante who was granted to our age by the special Grace of God; this was that *Dante who first was destined to open the way for the return to Italy of the banished Muses*. By him the Glory of the Florentine idiom was made manifest; by him all the beauties of the common speech were set to fitting numbers; by him dead poetry may properly be said to have been revived. These things, if fittingly considered, will show that he could have rightly had no other name than Dante."

grazia da Dio; questi fu quel Dante, il qual primo doveva al ritorno delle Muse, sbandite d'Italia, aprir la via.

Boccaccio, Giovanni, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, II, "Patria e maggiori di Dante."<sup>48</sup>

And he is honouring it with a new language, neither Greek, nor Latin, but Italian.

## II. Verona (1303–1304/1312–1318?). *Commedia* and unaccomplished works (*Convivio* and *de Volgari eloquentia*)

Through Cantos XV to XVII of *Paradiso*, Dante introduces his great-grandfather, Cacciaguida, who gives him two prophecies. The first is the poet's exile from Florence. The second one is his journey to, and stay in, Verona. They both foretell the months of vain hopes and Dante's wanderings in Tuscany before he arrives in Verona at the court of Bartolomeo della Scala.

You shall leave behind all you lost dearly love,  
and that shall be *the arrow first loose from exiled bow*.<sup>49</sup>

In these verses Dante might be alluding to Hippolytus from Virgil's poem<sup>50</sup> and Hippolytus' *second life* under the name of "Virbus" (i.e. double men). Dante is portraying himself as a New Hippolytus. We may also consider that "Dante's Phaedra"<sup>51</sup> is Florence, his boldest betrayer.

But Trivia, kindly goddess, hides *Hippolytus* in a secret dwelling, and sends him away to the nymph Egeria and her grove, that there alone, amid *Italian woods*, he might live out his inglorious days, and take the *altered name of Virbius*.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio [Treatise in Laude to Dante. Complete works of Giovanni Boccaccio]. Vol. 3, ed. P. G. Ricci (Milano: Mondadori, 1974), 9.

<sup>49</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, Par. XVII, 55-57. "Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta più caramente; e questo è quello strale che l'arco de lo essilio pria saetta."

<sup>50</sup> *Aen.* VII, 774 – 777.

<sup>51</sup> J. Henderson, ed., *Loeb Classical Library*, Virgil, *Aen.* VII. 777; Ovid, *Metam.* XV, 497-546.

<sup>52</sup> J. Henderson, ed., *Loeb Classical Library*, Virgil, *Aen.* VII. 774-777. "(...) at Trivia Hippolytum secretis alma recondite sedibus et nymphae Egeriae nemorique relegat, solus ubi in silvis Italis ignobilis aevum exigeret versoque ubi nomine Virbius esset."



Here follow the verses from *Paradiso*, the second prophecy, and how it mirrors Virgil's Epic:

You shall find welcome and first refuge,  
In the courtesy of the noble Lombard,  
the one who bears the *sacred bird* above the ladder.<sup>53</sup>

### 1. At the Court of Bartolomeo della Scala

Dante arrives in Verona in 1303 where he is received with benevolence by Bartolomeo della Scala (1277-1304).<sup>54</sup> He writes here his two unfinished works, *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Convivio*. It is difficult to know much more of his life during these years, and the little we know, we know by identifying ourselves with the “cacciatori alla pantera” from *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Furthermore, it is only by applying their *assiduous practice of cunning* that we can take hold of *pantera's* moving.

Now that we have hunted across the woodlands and pastures of all Italy without finding the panther we are trailing, let us, in the hope of tracking it down, carry out a more closely reasoned investigation, so that, by the assiduous practice of cunning, we can at last entice into our trap this creature whose scent is left everywhere but which is nowhere to be seen.<sup>55</sup>

Between the mount and the vales of Italy, Dante finds that the beast (“panther”) smells and sniffs everywhere but does not remain in any one place, *redolentem ubique et necubi*.<sup>56</sup> The beast we are looking for is none other than the fruit of Dante's exile, and Dante's love for Beatrice. It shall be the future language for all those *fedeli d'amore* and humbled in their heart, for all those who are going to serve the Lord (“delle genti che

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<sup>53</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, Par. XVII, 70-73. “Lo primo tuo refugio e 'l primo ostello sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo che 'n su la scala porta il santo Uccello.”

<sup>54</sup> Giovanni Bocaccio says “Alberto della Scala” by error, cf. Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 64; 183.

<sup>55</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *De Vulgari Eloquentia* I, xvi 1. “Postquam venati saltus et pascua sumus Ytalie nec panteram quam sequimur adinvenimus, ut ipsam reperire possimus, rationabilius investigemus de illa ut, solerti studio redolentem ubique et necubi apparentem nostris penitus irretiamus tenticulis.”

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem.

vanno al servizio de l'Altissimo").<sup>57</sup> In other words, the pilgrims. This new language must hold within itself Christ's dream for a renovated humanity through the spirit of love (*lo spirit sopra lo amore*)<sup>58</sup> whose signature is tinged with *humilitas*. *Humilitas* will become the seal and the crown of Dante's entire work and life.<sup>59</sup> It is now evident that this new tongue cannot be at the same time *humble* and *renowned, cardinal, and notorious* as Latin was, "illustre, cardinale, aulicum e curiale."<sup>60</sup>

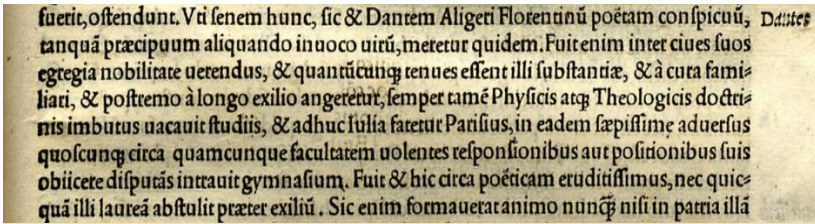


Fig. 1. Trattatello in Laude di Dante, apud Giovanni Boccaccio

On March 17, 1304, Cardinal Nicola da Prato is invited by the new Pope Benedetto XI (1240-07 July 1304) to pacify Florence with the union of the divided Guelphs. Dante immediately leaves for Verona, as recorded in his Epistle I to Messer Niccolò Vescovo from Ostia and Veletri, written in late March or early April. From the end of March and the end of April or beginning of May (we do not know precisely), Dante moves probably to Treviso (or to Padova or Venezia) where he is received at the court of Gherardo da Camino.<sup>61</sup> At the beginning of May,

<sup>57</sup> VN LX, 7.

<sup>58</sup> VN XII, 11.

<sup>59</sup> *Epistle I Cor.* 9:2. "If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." Dante has seen himself as the seal of Beatrice's apostleship. After her death, he continues his apostleship in recreating his own language, *lingua Nova e Dolce*, to all *fedeli d'amore e di gentil'cuor* ("faithful in love and of gentle heart"). Dante's *Convivio* will become a kind of a catechesis of the Good News already foreboded in *Vita Nuova* through a new style of writing. So *Convivio* (i.e. "Symposium") could refute a traditional language (which was clearly Latin) and choose a new one, as it were a frame for a New Icon, a shell around *Vita Nuova* which was about to be borne.

<sup>60</sup> *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. XVI, 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Conv.* IV, 16. Gherardo III da Camino (c. 1240- 1306) was an Italian feudal lord and military leader. He is generally considered the most outstanding member in the Camino family. Gherardo was a tyrannical, but efficient administrator, and increased its economic importance. He was also patron of feasts and arts, housing in his courts numerous

he comes to Arezzo. The mission of Nicola fails when on June 7 Pope Benedetto dies unexpectedly. By July 20, the alliance between the Ghibellines and the Whites in the camp of La Lastra also fails. But Dante, for a while dissociated from the alliance, remains in Arezzo. On this same date, Petrarch is born in the same city, *sì ch'a te fia bello averti fatta parte per te stesso*.<sup>62</sup> In Canto XVII of *Paradiso* (61-69), there is a passage which records this historical day which will have a resonance beyond history.

But the heaviest burden, your shoulders must bear  
Shall be this the companions, wicked and witless,  
Among whom you shall fall in your descent.<sup>63</sup>

When the papal court transfers to Avignon, Dante may have visited Paris (from 1309 -1310), as Boccaccio says in *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, XV, vi., and in *Genealogia deorum gentilium* [*On the Genealogy of the Gods of the Gentiles*] XV, 6 “Dante apud Boccaccio.”<sup>64</sup>

From 1310 to 1312, Dante visits different places, Asti and Poppi, during the descent of Henry VII, but mainly he remains at Casentino. In 1310 Henry VII (1274 – August 24, 1313), whom Dante admired for his courage and rightmindedness, came to Italy. In this period of renovated political hopes Dante writes one *Epistle* (*Ep.* VII) to the Holy Roman Emperor. During the same year, it is possible that Dante also writes *Monarchia* (notwithstanding, many believe it to be later, in 1317). The death of Emperor Henry VII in 1313 in the neighbouring city of Siena destroys both Dante’s hope for the regeneration of Italy by the help of an imperial guide and the hope that his own honour might be restored in Florence during his lifetime.<sup>65</sup> He immediately decides to return to Verona, where he is received by Messer Cangrande della Scala “il quale egli (Dante) oltre a ogni altro uomo avea in reverenza,” *whom Dante*

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cultural figures, such as Dante Alighieri, and of the troubadours (one of the last!) the renowned composer and anthologist Ferrarino da Ferrara.

<sup>62</sup> *Paradiso*, XVII, 67-69. “And it shall bring you honour to have made a single party of yourself alone (...).” It is a clear reminder, or better to say, Dante’s own prophecy of the day of the birth of the future poet, he obviously could not know at this moment!

<sup>63</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Par.* XVII, 61-63. “E quel che piu ti graverà le spalle, sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle.”

<sup>64</sup> G. Boccaccio, “Genealogia deorum gentilium” [*On the Genealogy of the Gods of the Gentiles*] (Basel, 1532), *Dante apud Boccaccio* [Dante by Boccaccio], Liber XV. vi. 389.

<sup>65</sup> Dante was in Verona after the death of Henry VII and in the neighbouring city of Siena in 1313. The city of Verona was at that time under the seignory of Cangrande della Scala.

*reverenced beyond any other man.*<sup>66</sup> In this same year is born Giovanni Boccaccio. In 1314, Dante publishes *Inferno*, which he dedicates to Cangrande della Scala, “Egli era suo costume, quale ora sei o otto o più o meno canti fatti n’avea, quegli, prima alcuno altro gli vedesse, donde che egli fosse, mandar a messer Can della Scala (...).”<sup>67</sup> Cangrande della Scala was the great Signore of Verona, and Dante admired him for his courage, boldness, and humanity.<sup>68</sup>

Not with cloudy sayings, by which the foolish folk  
Were once ensnared, before the Lamb of God,  
Who takes away our sins, was slain,  
But in plain words and with clear speech  
That paternal love replied (...).<sup>69</sup>

The poet depicts him as a kind of lombard Robin Hood, “per lui fia trasmutata molta gente, / cambiando condizioni ricchi e mendici,” *on his account many will find alteration, Rich men changing states with beggars.*<sup>70</sup>

Look to him and trust gracious deeds.  
On his account many will find alteration,  
Rich men changing states with beggars.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to his noble hospitality, Cangrande was also a great protector for Dante, one of the many great writers of that time who enjoyed an association with him. Some say that he [Dante] had dedicated not only a third of his *Paradiso* but all of it to Messer Cane Grande della Scala, and not to Federico of Sicily, as it is believed.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>66</sup> G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, XVI; Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 123; 50, n. 209.

<sup>67</sup> Cfs. G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, 52; “It was his custom, when he had finished six or seven cantos, more or less, before anyone else saw it, to send it from wherever he was, to Messer Cane della Scala, whom he revered (...),” Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 123.

<sup>68</sup> *Par.* XVII, 70-75, 88-90.

<sup>69</sup> Translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Par.* XVII, 70-75. “Né per ambage, in che la gente folle già s’inviscava pria che fosse anciso l’Agnel di Dio che le peccata tolle, ma per chiare parole e con preciso latin rispuose quello amor paterno (...).”

<sup>70</sup> *Par.* XVII, 89-90.

<sup>71</sup> Translation, The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Par.* XVII. 88-90. “A lui t’aspetta e a’ suoi benefici; per lui fia trasmutata molta gente, cambiando condizion ricchi e mendici (...).”

<sup>72</sup> “... the third part, namely *Paradise*, be dedicated to Frederick III, King of Sicily. Some say that he had dedicated it all to Messer Cane Grande della Scala...” cf. Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 129.

In this same year, 1313, Dante also writes several epistles to Italian cardinals (especially *Ep.* XII).<sup>73</sup> In July/August 1315, he rejects the offer of the citizens of Florence, urged by the chief of Ghibellins, Uguccione della Faggiuola, allowing all the exiles permission to return to their city if they pay an amount “very reduced in respect of the initial fine.”<sup>74</sup>

## 2. Catulli Carmina manuscript

1316 is an important date [for us humanists as it was for Dante] because of the discovery of Catulli Carmina's (*Codex Vaticanus Ottobonianus Latinus* 1829) manuscript in Verona. By 1316, Dante is in the midst of his redaction of the future *Paradiso*. It was not merely coincidental, we would say [we are in fact personally convinced] that Dante was impressed by catulian poetry – a type of poetry which celebrates, amongst everything, the happy way back home. It is also a type of neoteric poetry with a new and unusual style, in comparison to Catulu's contemporaries. Let it be recorded that Catullus influenced many poets that Dante openly celebrates and names in his *Commedia* such as Virgil or Horace. However, Dante never names Catullus, but records him under the cloth of the poetic reminiscence of “nostos aristocratico.” In it, Dante sees his own

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<sup>73</sup> In this letter (*Ep.* XII) written on 19 May 1315, addressed to “amico fiorentino” (in which the appellative of “pater” reserved for him is avoided by the poet so that it is not identified with a religious man), Dante thanks the interlocutor for having poured out his favour for his [i.e. Dante] way back in Florence. Briefly summarizing the conditions imposed on the exiles for the revocation of the provision of exile and for the reintegration into their civil and political rights (payment of a fine and oblation of oneself to San Giovanni during a public ceremony), Dante rejects with disdain the proposal of his friend, considering it harmful to his dignity. After declaring that he is willing to accept any other agreement capable of safeguarding his honour and fame, Dante concludes that he is in any case ready to no longer return home if a solution that he can consider honourable is not found. In the final outburst, the tone of the letter is elevated, with a calm and incisive style, yet the refined images lacking rhetorical ornaments are striking, certainly due to the distance that now separates him from his city and at the same time from nostalgia and from hope. If there is no possibility for him to return to Florence, perhaps he will not be able to see, under any sky, the sun and the stars, and will be not able to devote himself to his studies and philosophical reflections? He will not miss bread either (he is a guest of Cangrande della Scala in Verona).

<sup>74</sup> Cfs. R. Hollander, *Dante Alighieri Life and Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 93. n. 203; “Life of Dante,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Jacoff Rachel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-13.

*happy way back Home*, not to Florence, but to the City of Heaven, his *Paradiso*.

At this point, it became a necessity for Dante to also create a new language—a language appropriate to describe a poet’s visions of this New City and to put in words what is wordless. All its beauty makes him blind, speechless.<sup>75</sup> Dante’s Maecenas, instead of Cornelius Nepos (or Hieron of Syracuse or Theron),<sup>76</sup> will be the nobleman, Can’Grande della Scala, to whom he dedicated the first part of his *Paradiso* (§xxx).<sup>77</sup> It is within the aristocracy at the court of Verona that Dante had discovered and recognized his Latin Master, Catullus. It is through Catullus’ poetry that Dante could also directly have an access to the antique religious valour and to unknown sources, or those forgotten by his contemporaries. Like Propertius, Dante claimed for himself “*primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos Itala per Graios orgia ferre choras*” (§x Sexti Properti, *Elegiarum*, L.III.I.)<sup>78</sup> Dante recognizes himself to be under the same mission as Propertius’, *Primo Sacerdos*. Exiled from his own homeland (Florence), he found himself honoured by the citizens of Verona and Ravenna to whom he brought back this “font” (i.e. fount) of living water—*L’acqua della Vita*—coming from the Muses’ songs.<sup>79</sup> In all his poetic fusion and re-creation of historical and poetic realities, the rediscovery of the Catullan manuscript was paramount, and its poetic *nostos* is not to be neglected.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Par.* XXX-XXXIII.

<sup>76</sup> The poetic reminiscence of Catullus’ *nostos*, which looks back to Homer (“Odyssey”), the happy way back to home comes to its apex at the court of Hieron of Syracuse (or Theron), tyrant of Syracuse in Sicily from 478 to 467 BC.

<sup>77</sup> G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, 26.

<sup>78</sup> J. Henderson, ed., *Loeb Classical Library*, Propertius, III. I.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *Par.* II, 7-9.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. S. Dučić-Collette, (upcoming paper) “CATULLI CARMINA. CODEX VATICANUS OTTOBONIANUS LATINUS 1829 E IL SUO INFLUSSO SUL PASSO DEL CANTO XXXI DI PARADISO DI DANTE” [“Catullus’ Poems. CODEX VATICANUS OTTOBONIANUS LATINUS 1829 AND ITS INFLUENCE IN CANTO XXXI OF DANTE’S PARADISE,”] *Proceedings of the Fifth Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Heritage of Western Greece* (2021).

### III. Ravenna (1318-1321) – The End of the *Commedia*<sup>81</sup> – The Feast of Holy Cross

The final period of Dante's life, 1312-1321, was probably his happiest. He enjoyed longer periods of time in fixed dwellings (1312- 1318) at the court of Cangrande della Scala (1291-1329) in Verona, and eventually in Ravenna where he was received as the guest of a graceful nobleman and knight, "podestà e nobile cavaliere," Guido Novello da Polenta (1275-1333). Dante died in Ravenna, where he also completed his *Commedia*. Boccaccio, although through a novelistic shade in his reconstruction of Dante's life, offers us a persuasive account of Dante's situation in his twilight years:

In those days there was the Lord of Ravenna, a famous and ancient city of Romagna, noble knight, whose name was Gido Novello da Polenta. Trained in liberal studies, he paid high honours to men of worth especially those who surpassed others' knowledge.<sup>82</sup>

It is by that time, having all hope of ever returning to Florence taken away (as if the desire were not removed), "tolta via ogni speranza di ritornare mai in Firenze, come che tolto non fosse il disio,"<sup>83</sup> that Dante eventually acquires the serenity for which he desperately languished throughout his journey. With this serenity he moves to the court life of Ravenna: "The Lord there honourably received him, and revived his fallen hope by kindly fosterings and giving him abundantly such things as were fitting, he kept him with him there for many years – even to the last year of his life."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> The important biographical data on Dante's life came from the precious account of Andrea Poggi, Dante's nephew and close friend of Boccaccio. Andrea Poggi "greatly resembles him in face and stature, Boccaccio receives much information as to Dante's ways and habits from (...)" cf. Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, n. 142.

<sup>82</sup> G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, "Dante ospite di Guido Novel da Polenta" XII. "Era in que' tempi signore di Ravenna, famosa e antica città di Romagna, uno nobile cavaliere, il cui nome era Guido Novel da Polenta; il quale, ne' liberali studii ammaestrato, sommamente i valorosi uomini onorava, e massimamente quegli che per iscienza gli altri avanzavano..."

<sup>83</sup> G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, "Grandezza del poeta volgare -Sua morte" XIV.

<sup>84</sup> Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 66; G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, 26. "Dove onorevolmente dal signore di quella ricevuto, e con piacevoli conforti risuscitata la caduta speranza (...) in quella seco per più anni il tenne, anzi infino a l'ultimo, anzi infino a l'ultimo della vita di lui."

## 1. *Dante's last years and death*

In Ravenna, Dante enters in poetic correspondence with several great humanists of his period, including Giovanni del Virgilio (1280?–1327?) in 1319.<sup>85</sup> In this period, Giovanni del Virgilio lectured in Cesena (1319, November 24 and March 23, 1320) and Bologna (?) about his last work, *De Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*. The great humanist opens his lecture with Dante's lessons, which are also the first written investigations of humanistic teaching in the Italian universities of the late Medieval period, *la prima prova scritta dell'insegnamento umanistico nelle università italiane del tardo medioevo*.<sup>86</sup>

... under the protection of this gracious lord; and hereby his teachings trained many scholars in poetry, and especially in the vulgar tongue, who, according to my judgment, was the first to exalt and make esteemed among us Italians, precisely as Homer made his tongue esteemed among the Greeks and Virgil his among the Latins.<sup>87</sup>

In the same year, 1319, Dante is invited to Milano by Matteo Visconti (1250-1322), a man of arms and faithful servant to his great-uncle Ottone in his battles and conquest of Milano. In 1287, uncle Ottone made him the captain of “Popolo” of the potent Lombard community: an invitation which cost Dante the nickname “mago” (magus) since Dante was suspected of participating in the poisoning of Pope John XXII.<sup>88</sup> Shortly before his death in 1321, Dante goes as an ambassador of his protector, Guido da Polenta, to Venice, sent with a mission of re-pacification after

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<sup>85</sup> Giovanni del Virgilio (da Bologna ...) was a poet, grammarian and Italian Latinist, contemporary to Dante and famous for having entertained correspondence with him.

<sup>86</sup> P.O. Kristeller, “Un ‘Ars Dictaminis’ di Giovanni del Virgilio” [An ‘Ars Dictaminis’ by Giovanni del Virgilio], *Italia medioevale e umanistica* IV (1961): 181-200. In his letter of proposal (Pyridum vox alma ...) which swings between the 19<sup>th</sup> and mid-29<sup>th</sup> of the first of Dante's eclogues (Vidimus in nigris ...) and from December 20<sup>th</sup> to the late spring and autumn of 1320 with Dante's answering eclogue (Forte sub inriguos ...); and from September 1320 to 1321, in other words, the last years of his life, Dante's second eclogue (Velleribus Colchis ...), which arrived only posthumously to his correspondent.

<sup>87</sup> Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, 77. G. Boccaccio, *Trattatello*, XV, *Grandezza del poeta volgare - Sua morte*. “e quivi con le sue dimostrazioni fece più scolari in poesia e massimamente nella volgare; la quale, secondo il mio giudicio, egli primo non altramenti fra noi Italici esaltò e recò in pregio.”

<sup>88</sup> Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio's*, n. 98.



a long period of rivalry between the two cities. We do not know how his mission went. We only know that Dante came back with malaria. During the same year, he finishes *Paradiso*. Little after, during the vigils of the Feast of the Holy Cross, Dante dies in Ravenna in the arms of his daughter, Beatrice,<sup>89</sup> who became an abbess shortly after his death. He was buried at his favourite church, San Francesco, in Ravenna.

## 2. *Paradiso and “coronated humility”*

Beatrice appears twice in *Commedia*. She assists Dante to “overcome” two experiences otherwise unattainable to human nature. In the first instance, she makes her epiphany in Canto II of *Inferno*:

I who bid you go am Beatrice.  
I come from where I most desire to return.  
The love that moved me makes me speak.<sup>90</sup>

She thus sows in the poet’s broken heart the seed of Hope and shows him the right path toward the City he is languishing for, *Paradiso*. She will reappear a second time at the Entrance to *Paradiso*.<sup>91</sup> The first time she is descending from Heaven to *Inferno* to reach Dante, and the second time she is awaiting him on his ascent toward the Gates of *Paradiso*. Beatrice’s descent clearly recalls in us the picture of Christ’s coming down (*Philippians* 2), allowing herself to leave her footprints there in Hell.

O lady who give strength to all my hope  
And who allowed yourself, for my salvation,  
To leave your footprints there in Hell (...)<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Z. Bollettino, *Giovanni Boccaccio*’s, 102, n. 102.

<sup>90</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Inf.* II, 70-72. “T’son Beatrice che ti faccio andare; Vegno del loco ove tornar disio; Amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare.”

<sup>91</sup> *Par.* XXX, 19-21.

<sup>92</sup> *Par.* XXXI, 79-80. “O donna in cui la mia speranza vige, e che soffristi per la mia salute in inferno lasciar le tue vestige.” The appellative, “O donna,” never noted in the various interpretations of *Commedia*, could be seen as a sign that Christ sent to Beatrice—a sign that she may come down from Heaven to console and give spirit to Dante on his journey in *Inferno*.

She opens Dante's eyes, unaccustomed to all the light flowing down from the streams of the Living Waters of *Paradiso*.<sup>93</sup> The Waters of Divine Wisdom are personified in *Minerva che spira*, "Minerva fills my sails."<sup>94</sup>

In the same year, 1319, the crown of Dante's earthly life, he finishes writing *Paradiso*. The verses below conclude both our study and Dante's journey, *Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare*,<sup>95</sup> best illustrating Dante's journey: how a bitter exile was transfigured into a sweet song of praise, *Paradiso*; how Beatrice, twice, clothed in humility, will become for Dante a living icon of Pietà. A miracle.

Moving, benignly *clothed in humility*,  
Untouched by all the praise along her way,  
She seems to be a creature come from Heaven to earth,  
to manifest a *miracle*.<sup>96</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Beatrice is not an abstract lady the troubadours would sing about, nor is she similar to Buonagiunta's intellectual love for Lady philosophy.<sup>97</sup> *Dama gentile sì*, Dante's Beatrice is alive; she is *la Porta* (Gate) and *la Scala verso il Cielo* (Ladder to Heaven). All of Dante's work has born to witness it, going through the earthly realm in the same proportion as through the heavenly one.<sup>98</sup> In Dante's heart, Beatrice transforms his vision of antique Eros to *caritas Cristiana*, and Dante's journey from bitterness and

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<sup>93</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., Princeton *Dante Project*, *Par.* XVIII 73-78. "E come augelli surti di rivera,/ quasi congratulando a lor pasture, fanno di sé or tonda or altra schiera, sì dentro ai lumi sante creature (...)." "And as birds risen from the river's edge,/ seeming to celebrate their pleasure in their food,/ from new a rounded arc, and now another shape,/ so radiant within their lights, the holy creatures (...)."

<sup>94</sup> §Par. II 7-9.

<sup>95</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *VN* XXVI, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Ibidem, *VN* XXVI, 6. "Ella sì va, sentendosi laudare, benignamente d'umiltà vestuta; e par che sia una cosa venuta da cielo in terra a miracol mostrare."

<sup>97</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project*, *Purg.* XXIV, 34-63; and 34-35: "But as man might look around and take more note, / Of one than another, so I did with him from Lucca, / who clearly seemed to know me." "Ma come fa chi guarda e poi s'apprezza/più d'un che d'altro, fei a quel da Lucca,/che più pareva di me aver contezza."

<sup>98</sup> R. Jacoff, *The Cambridge*, 20. "Dante and the Lyric Past".

offence toward a pilgrimage of love, *moving, benignly* ...“Ella si va, sentendosi laudare, ...”<sup>99</sup> The Poet has lost his Beatrice in this earthly life together with his native Florence, but he eventually finds her at the end of his *Paradiso*.<sup>100</sup> She greets Dante shortly before his earthly death, “I who bid you go am Beatrice. *I come from where I most desire to return*, “I’son Beatrice che ti faccio andare”!<sup>101</sup> Once she had opened Dante’s eyes for the vision of the heavenly Light,<sup>102</sup> in Canto XXX of *Paradiso*, it is only then that Dante hears the echo of her voice transforming and gathering every vision into the ray of light, with a single “salute”!

The love that calms this haeven  
Always offers welcome with such *greetings*,  
To make candle ready for its flame.

Sempre l’amor che queta questo cielo  
accoglie in sé con sì fatta *salute*,  
per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelò.<sup>103</sup>  
*Par. XXX. 50-52.*

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. Here Dante alludes to *I Peter* 3:3-4 “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and humble [quiet] spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.”

<sup>100</sup> §II. 7-9

<sup>101</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project, Inf. II*, 70-72.

<sup>102</sup> In these verses of *Paradiso* (XXX. 50-52), Dante makes a clear allusion to Saul who by the Lord’s doing and through light on his way to Damascus has been transfigured into Paul, *Acts of the Apostles* 22:6-11, “About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked. ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ He replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of Him who was speaking to me. ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked. ‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.” By light from *Paradiso* and by Beatrice’s *salute* ‘poet’s [Dante’s] Saulo’ has also been transfigured into a new one, a Pilgrim who eventually came back to his Home.

<sup>103</sup> The Trustees of Princeton University and R. Hollander ed. & transl., *Princeton Dante Project, Par. XXX. 50-52.*

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## Abbreviations

<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneis</i> [ <i>Aeneide</i> ]
<i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoseon libri</i> [ <i>Metamorphosis</i> ]
<i>V. N.</i>	<i>Vita Nova</i> [ <i>New Life</i> ]
<i>Inf.</i>	<i>Inferno</i> [ <i>Hell</i> ]
<i>Purg.</i>	<i>Purgatorio</i> [ <i>Purgatory</i> ]
<i>Par.</i>	<i>Paradiso</i> [ <i>Paradise</i> ]
<i>Conv.</i>	<i>Convivio</i> [ <i>Banquet</i> ]



# The Journey of *The Gift of the Noble*

Shiva Mihan<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

The *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* (The Gift of the Noble) is a mystic-didactic poem in *mathnavī* form by the prominent Persian poet ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414–1492). It was composed in 894 AH/1489 AD in honour of the influential Naqshbandi Sufi, Khwāja ‘Ubaydullah Aḥrār (1404–1490). In this work, Jāmī followed the manner of the *Makḥẓan al-Asrār*, an ethico-philosophical poem by the well-known poet Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1141–1209). In 947/1540–41, around half a century after Jāmī’s death, a copy of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was transcribed in Herat – the city where the poet resided – which begins with Jāmī’s prose preface (punctuated with verses) to the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār*, followed by the poem. This copy is now preserved at the Harvard Art Museums, no. 2019.106.

The earliest printed edition of *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was published in London in 1848, edited by Forbes Falconer, containing a preface compiling the accounts of Jāmī in three *tazkiras*, including Daulatshāh Samarqandī’s *Tazkirat al-Shu‘ara*. The editor relied heavily on a copy of *Haft Aurang*, partly (*Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* and four other *mathnavīs*) penned by ‘Alī Hijrānī, in Herat, dated 934/1528 (formerly in the collection of N. Bland, Esq. of Randall’s Park), and an undated, but old copy (formerly, ms. 1317, East-India Company). A comparison between this edition and our manuscript shows great resemblance and also proves the precision of the scribe in transcribing.

Harvard’s copy of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* has evidently had an eventful journey through time. Although the text block dates to 1540–41, the marbled margins are probably from the eighteenth century and the binding is similar to a technique found in nineteenth-century productions. It provides an unusual case for analysis from different points of view. In what follows, first I briefly mention some of its

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard Art Museums, USA.

significant codicological features and then discuss its historical and art historical value.

## II. Codicological information

The manuscript of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* of Jāmī copied in 1540–41 in Herat on gold-sprinkled paper with marbled-paper margins was a gift from Edward Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> (California, acquired before 1986) bequest to the Harvard Art Museums.

### 1. Binding

The cover, measuring 140 × 223 mm, is dark-brown, coarse-grained leather with decorated pendants, centre- and corner-pieces, which are decorated with embossed, stamped flowers in various colours on a gold ground (fig. 1). The doublures (inside covers) are made of a glossy marbled paper, etched with a fine gold tooling, very probably contemporary with the cover (fig. 2). The binding is in near pristine condition.

This type of binding with shagreen leather and painted, embossed flowers was in fashion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries during the late Zand and Qajar periods. They are known as *minā'i* in Iran, as the painted flowers resemble enamels. The Harvard Art Museums has one other binding in the same technique, enclosing a Manuscript of Prayers (ms. 14.2015), dated 1253/1837 (fig. 3).<sup>2</sup> Based on that manuscript, we could deduce that the binding of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* too was probably made in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Iran. However, a comparison of central pieces in the two codices shows that the painted parts in Jāmī's manuscript are slightly more well-defined, and the leather of the Manuscript of Prayers (14.2015) has a slightly larger granulated surface.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. Paper

The support is well-burnished paper, known as *tirmah*, possibly a production of Samarqand, which measures 140 × 220 mm, with text

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<sup>2</sup> Portions of this manuscript can be viewed at [www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/352089?position=0](http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/352089?position=0) (accessed April 5, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For more on shagreen, see W. M. Floor, "Čarm," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. IV, fasc. 7 (London, 1990), 820–822.



panels measuring 75–80 × 128–130 mm. The paper is speckled with finely grained gold, resembling dust, covering the folio surfaces.

All 76 folios are numbered in the bottom right corner of verso pages, with a jump from folio 69 to 80 instead of 70. Although the manuscript foliation mistakenly ends in 86, a comparison with the printed edition of the text confirms that there are no lacunae between 69 and 80. A note in *siyāq* script on the first flyleaf also provides the number of folios as 76.

The first and the final folios are mounted on reddish paper, but the rest are re-margined in marbled paper. This could indicate that in addition to probable damage to some of the borders and edges, the codex suffered from lack of binding for a while (fig. 4). As a result of the removal of original margins, all the catchwords are lost, but the manuscript is otherwise complete.

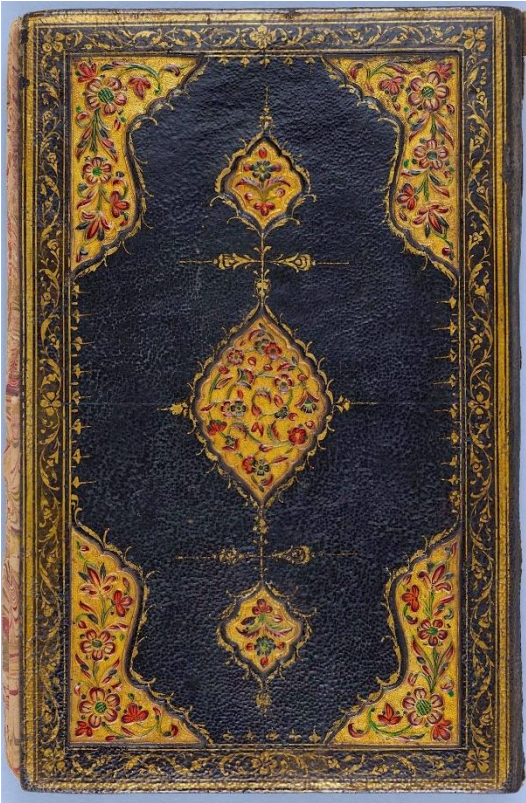


Fig. 1. The cover. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

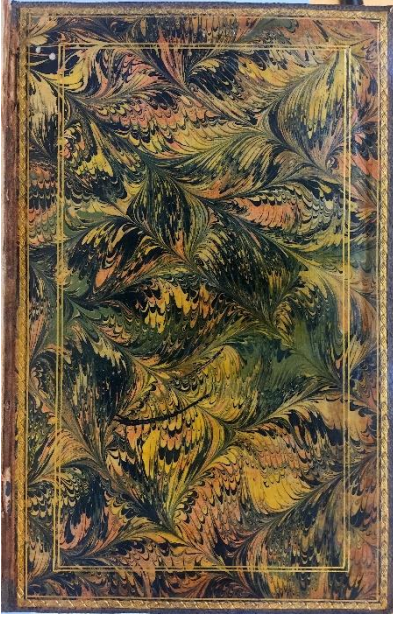


Fig. 2. The doublure. *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār*, 1540-41, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

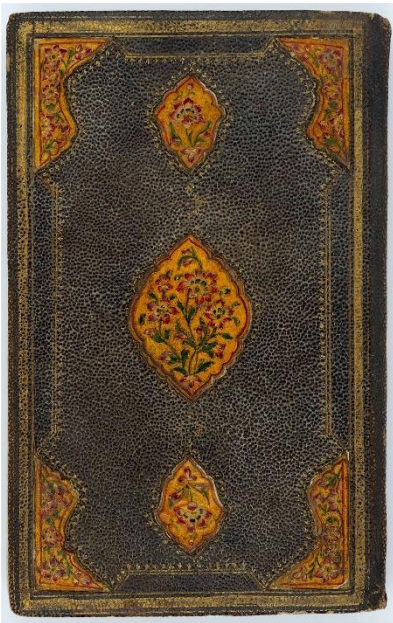


Fig. 3. The cover. *Manuscript of Prayers*, 1837, 14.2015, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Loan from A. Soudavar in memory of his mother Ezzat-Malek Soudavar.

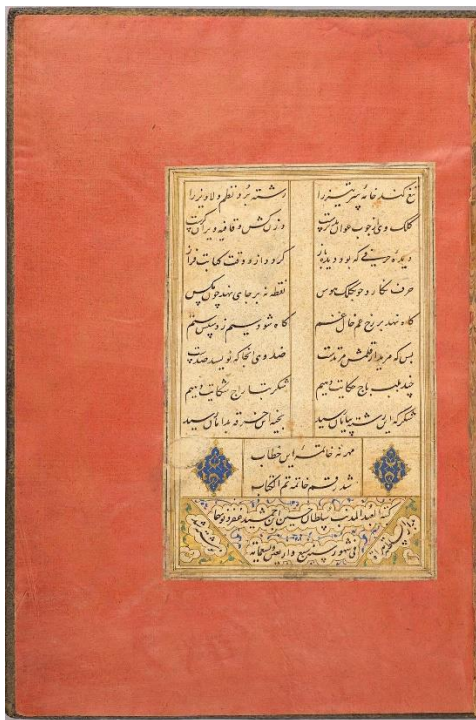


Fig. 4. Red margins. *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār*, 1540-41, f. 77r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

### 3. Marbled paper

Marbling, “essentially a form of fluid monotype printing,” first appeared in Iran in the late fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In this technique patterns are transferred from floating pigments on the surface of a liquid vat onto paper. The margins here are a fine and high quality example of marbled paper. The visually riveting, marbling design of the margins was created by a comb-like tool, in a palette of cream, sap green, light brown, reddish purple, with occasional accents of pale yellow and violet, on ochre-tinted, handmade paper (fig. 5).

Jake Benson, an expert on marbled paper in Islamic art of the book, suggests that the marbled margins of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* are of

<sup>4</sup> J. Benson, “The Art of Abri: Marbled Album Leaves, Drawings, and Paintings of the Deccan,” in *Sultans of Deccan India 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, ed. Navina Haidar and Marika Sardar (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 157.

‘subcontinental style’ and from the late seventeenth or eighteenth century. “By 1600, several albums, including one with an ornate prose preface lavishing praise upon an enigmatic Persian artist and émigré to India – likely the Deccan Sultanates – named Muhammad Tahir, feature highly innovative marbled paper mounts including intricately-worked ‘homeomorphic’ combed designs.”<sup>5</sup> “From India, Muhammad Tahir’s novel pattern-making methods rapidly spread to Greater Iran,” where marblers made papers imitating his distinct style for about two centuries.<sup>6</sup> That this can be taken as a correct analysis for our manuscript is confirmed by Sheila Canby, the former head of the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who curated an exhibition of marbled paper in 2019. She attributed the same type of marbled paper to eighteenth-century Iran in the exhibition labels.

#### 4. Text Block

The codex opens with a double-page illuminated frontispiece (fig. 6), decorated with very fine arabesque and palmette motifs in gold, white, green, yellow and pink on a lapis blue ground in the style of late Timurid Herat. The pigments are very high quality, and even without chemical tests, the fineness of lapis lazuli and the purity of gold, deployed in the illumination, are visible. In addition to the sumptuously illuminated opening, the poem is decorated throughout with diversely illuminated headings, carrying arabesque vines and floral motifs in various colours (fig. 7).

The text and heading inscriptions are both written in a beautiful *nasta‘liq*, bordered with ruled lines in gold and lapis. Except for the frontispiece with 6 lines per page, the verses are arranged in 12 lines and two columns to a page.

The colophon appears on folio 76r and provides the name of the scribe, as well as the date and place of production. His signature reads: “It was penned by the slave, the sinner, Sultan Ḥusayn son of Jamshid, may God forgive his sins, in 947 Hijra (1540–41) at the capital Herat.”

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<sup>5</sup> Personal communication from Jake Benson to the author, March 2020.

<sup>6</sup> J. Benson, “Curious Colors of Currency: Security Marbling on Financial Instruments During the Long Eighteenth Century,” *American Journal of Numismatics*, second series 31 (2019): 282.



A French note on the first flyleaf states incorrectly that the manuscript was copied for Sultan Ḥusayn in Herat in 947/1541, “en très beau nastaliq.” This false judgment seems to have stemmed from the similarity of the scribe’s name to that of Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (1438–1506), the Timurid ruler and great patron from a few decades earlier in Herat.

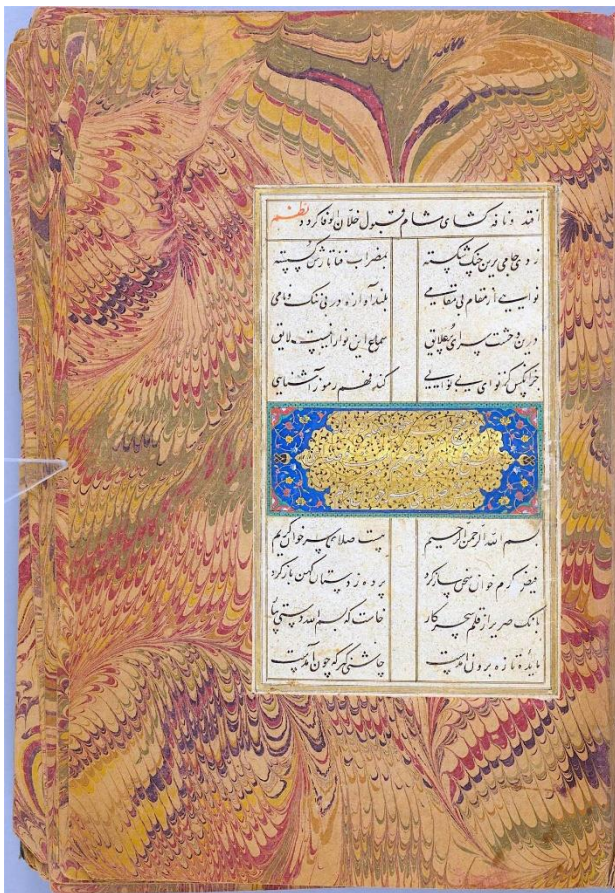


Fig. 5. Marbled margins. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, f. 4r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.



Fig. 6. Frontispiece. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, ff. 2v-3r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

### III. The Scribe

In the history of Islamic art of the book the information on the life and work of calligraphers is unfortunately sparse. To that end, primary sources have not much to offer about the life and career of the scribe Sultan Ḥusayn ibn Jamshīd.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1. Lineage

The *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* (Principles of Scripts), written in 960/1553 by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad, discusses the principles of calligraphy and provides accounts of calligraphers. It contains an account of Sultan Ḥusayn and his father: “Maulānā Jamshīd Mu‘ammā’ī (the riddle writer) had a beautiful calligraphic hand and was famous for his skills in riddle writing.” He was educated in Herat and died in 953/1546-47, according

<sup>7</sup> M. Bayānī, *Alval va athar-i kbushnvisān* (Tehran, 1363/1984): 233, nos. 371-72.

to a chronogram in a poem by his son, Maulānā Sultan Ḥusayn Jamshīd, whose penname was ‘Ayālī. The *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* reports that ‘Ayālī wrote in *nasta‘liq* and was a pupil of Muḥammad Qāsim Shadishāh. Among Sultan Ḥusayn’s students, he names Maulānā ‘Ayshī, who was well versed in calligraphy, poetry and riddle writing. The treatise adds that: “Maulānā [Sultan Ḥusayn] was also a pupil of Sultan Muḥammad Khandān.”<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 7. Illuminated headings. *Tuḥfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, 2019.106, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

<sup>8</sup> N. Māyil Haravī, *Kitāb'arāyī dar tamaddun-i Islāmī: majmū'a-yi rasā'il dar ḡamīna-yi kbūshnīvisī, murakkab-sāzi, kaḡhaḡ-garī, taḡḡīb va tajlīd: ba inḡimām-i farhang-i vāḡḡigān-i nīḡām-i kitāb-ārā'i* (Mashhad, 1372/1993): 316–17. For an account of Sultan Muḥammad Khandān, see M. Bayānī, *Aḡvāl va Athār*, 268.

Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh (d. after 955/1548) was a prominent scribe and a poet. There are reports that Shadīshāh often had quarrels with his contemporary calligraphy master Mīr ‘Alī Haravī.<sup>9</sup> He was also a famous Naqshbandī sufi and his tomb – known as Shāhzāda Qāsim – is located in Mashhad Rizeh in Taybad (district of Khurasan), very close to Herat, where the manuscript was copied.<sup>10</sup>

The lineage of Sultan Ḥusayn’s tutelage goes back to Mīr ‘Alī Tabrizī, the canoniser of the *nasta‘liq* script in the late fourteenth century.

Sultan Ḥusayn bin Jamshīd (d. after 965/1557-58)

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Sultan Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh (d. after 955/1548)<sup>11</sup>

|

Sultan Muḥammad Khandān (d. after 930/1523-24)<sup>12</sup> &

Sultan Muḥammad Nūr (c. 877/1472 – c. 940/1533)<sup>13</sup>

|

Sultan ‘Alī Mashhadī (1453–1520)

|

Aẓhar Tabrizī (d. c. 1475)

|

Ja‘far Tabrizī (Bāysunghurī) (d. c. 1455)

|

Mīr ‘Alī b. Ḥasan Tabrizī (fl. 1370–1410)

(Canoniser of *nasta‘liq* script)

The word ‘Sultan’ before the names of calligraphy masters seems to have been added as a title and initially was not part of their names, as

<sup>9</sup> A. A. Na‘īmī, *Khattātān va naqqāshān-i Harāt* (Herat, 1353/1974): 41–42.

<sup>10</sup> A. Īrānī, *Paydayish-i khatt va khattātān* (Tehran, n.d.): 212.

<sup>11</sup> *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* refers to Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh as a direct student of Sultan ‘Alī Mashhadī. Māyil Haravī: 314.

<sup>12</sup> Bayānī states that he had seen a manuscript in his hand dated 957, but it seems unlikely that he would have been active that long. He was certainly alive in 930, as mentioned alive and a resident of Herat by Khwāndamīr in the *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* (composed in 930). See A. A. Na‘īmī, “Sultan Muḥammad Khandān,” *Ariana* 1:4 (1322/1943): 31.

<sup>13</sup> For details of his life and works, see M. Bayānī, *Ahvāl va Athār*, 272–80. An example of his hand is found on: [www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/453167](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/453167) (accessed April 6, 2020).



their accounts appear in some sources without the word Sultan. As an example, the author of the *Qavānīn al-Khuṭūṭ* refers to Sultan Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh without ‘Sultan’.

## 2. Works<sup>14</sup>

The Harvard Art Museum’s manuscript *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* of Jāmī, dated 947 AH, is probably the earliest manuscript signed by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd. He copied the *Haft Manẓar* of Hātifi in the same year (ms. no. 100 in the Yehuda Collection of the National Library of Israel).<sup>15</sup> We also know of a manuscript of the *Būstān* of Sa’dī in his hand, dated Ramadan 953 AH (October-November 1546), now in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library, Isl. Ms. 302.<sup>16</sup> The double-page frontispiece of the *Būstān* is similar to the Harvard manuscript regarding its design and layout (fig. 8). The four rectangular boxes on the top and bottom of each page in the frontispiece of both manuscripts carry inscriptions on decorated cartouches in a similar arrangement; however, the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* is decorated slightly more profusely and exquisitely. The headings in the *Būstān* manuscript are narrower and less elaborate. The margins in the *Būstān* are also replaced, but in that case with gold-sprinkles on tinted paper. *Būstān*’s colophon does not inform us about the place of copying, but contains the scribe’s name: Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd (fig. 9).

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<sup>14</sup> To avoid confusion, I do not provide a Gregorian equivalent date for most hijri dates here.

<sup>15</sup> E. Wust, *Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Manuscripts of the Yehuda Collection of the National Library of Israel* (London: Brill, 2016): 176–77.

<sup>16</sup> The ms is accessible in: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015079128206;view=1up;seq=2> (accessed July 10, 2020).



Fig. 8. Frontispiece. *Bustan* of Sa'di, 1546, ff. 2v–3r, Isl. Ms. 302, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library.

Another manuscript transcribed by him is the *Yusuf and Zulaykhā* of Jāmī, which he signs Sultan Ḥusayn bin Jamshīd Haravī, in Bukhara, dated 963 AH (Aligarh University Library, ms. no. 88/2).<sup>17</sup> In the same year, he copied *Gūy-u Changān* (*Hal-nāma*) of 'Ārifī Haravī, now preserved in the Golestan Palace Library, no. 2222.<sup>18</sup> The scribe states that it was copied “in haste” in Bukhara at the *khanqah* (sufi convent) of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (c. 756/1355, Bukhara – 822/1419, Medina),<sup>19</sup> who

<sup>17</sup> I was not able to find the reference for this manuscript but it is mentioned in A. Ḥabībī, *Hunar-i 'abd-i Taymuriān* (Tehran, 1355/1976): 754.

<sup>18</sup> M. Dirāyatī, *Fihristvāra Dastnīshht-hā-yi Irān*, vol. 5 (Tehran, 1389/2010): 1073.

<sup>19</sup> M. A. Mudarris Tabrīzī, *Raḥānat al-Adab*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1369/1990): 310, gives his birth date as 749.

was a famous Naqshbandi sufi, and the founder of the Pārsā'iyya order.<sup>20</sup> He was the author of numerous books, including a Persian commentary on the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn 'Arabi. Jāmī met Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā in 822, in Bukhara at the age of 5. In *Nafāḥāt al-Uns* he stated that he could still remember Khwāja's luminous face, and that the joy of that meeting was still in his heart.<sup>21</sup> The *Khanqah* of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā was reconstructed and repaired a few years before the scribe copied those two works in Bukhara in 963. "In 959 [1552] in Balkh, His Excellency, of guiding rank, 'Abd al-Hadi Parsa, rebuilt (*ta'mir namudand*) the lustrous resting place of his noble forebears and distinguished ancestors."<sup>22</sup>

A couple of years later, in 965, Sultan Ḥusayn copied the *Ramṣāt al-Muḥibbin* (Garden of Lovers) or *Dah-nāma* of Ibn 'Imād Khurāsānī (d. 800/1398), now in the Astan Quds Library in Mashhad.<sup>23</sup> In Ramadan of the same year, he copied the *Divan* of Amīr Alīshīr Navā'ī in Chagatai Turkic, *Navādir al-Shabāb* (Rarities of Youth), which is now housed in the Malek National Library and Museum, no. 5300 (fig. 10).<sup>24</sup>

The author of the *Rayḥān-i Nasta'liq*, a treatise on calligraphy, written in 989/1581-82, records that the scribe had also penned a copy of the *Subḥāt al-Abrār* by Jāmī.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately he does not provide further information about the date and place of copying.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For more on Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā, see J. Misgar-nizhād, "Pārsā, Khwāja Muḥammad," in *Dānishnāma-yi Buṣurg-i Islāmī*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1375/1996): 2588. <http://lib.eshia.ir/23019/1/2588> (accessed March 31, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> A. Jāmī, *Nafāḥāt al-Uns* (Tehran, 1370/1991): 398. See ibid, 401, where Jāmī quoted from Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā: "Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus* is the soul and his *Futūḥāt* is the heart."

<sup>22</sup> R. McChesney, "Architecture and Narrative: The Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa Shrine. Part 1: Constructing the Complex and Its Meaning, 1469–1696," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 94–119.

<sup>23</sup> 'Ala' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Imād Khurāsānī composed this work in 794/1392. He also composed many poems praising the Prophet and other Imams, which indicate his strong shi'ism.

<sup>24</sup> Alīshīr Navā'ī composed this work of 5423 verses in 1492-98.

<sup>25</sup> A. M. Chaghata'ī, *Rayḥān-i Nasta'liq* (Lahor, 1941): 25–26. For a study of the treatise, see T. Beers, "On the so-called *Rayḥān-i nasta'liq*" (a conference paper presented in September 2019, Berlin, ccis 9). I am grateful to Dr Theodore Beers for sharing with me his unpublished paper on this subject.

<sup>26</sup> Our scribe should not be mistaken with another scribe who was known as Sultan Ḥusayn Haravī, who was active several decades earlier. He was the scribe of the Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kashifī's *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī* (Or. 13089 in the British Library) dated 912/1506, and the *Shah-nāma* of Firdausī (ms. Elliott 325, Bodleian Library) copied 14 Ramadan 899/18

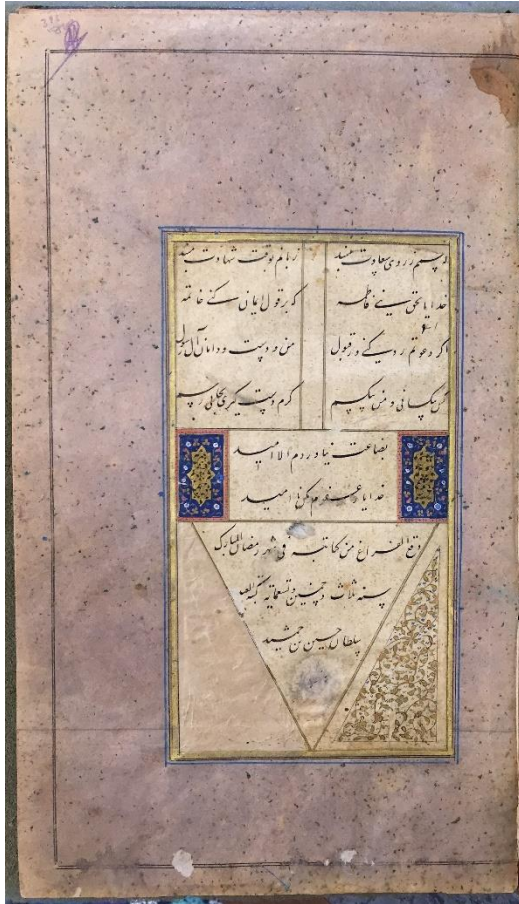


Fig. 9. Colophon. *Bustan* of Sa'di, 1546, ff. 22r, Isl. Ms. 302, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library.

Piecing together the *Tuhfat al-Ahrār* and other works copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī adds to our knowledge of the scribe's life and career and we can assume now that he was already a prominent scribe in 1540, based in Herat (Khurasan) before he later travelled to Bukhara.

June 1494. He signed his name as Sultan Ḥusayn b. Sultan 'Alī b. Aslān Shāh al-Kātib. My thanks to Prof. Maria Subtelny for mentioning the full name of the scribe.

Table 1. Manuscripts copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd

Title	Date	Place	Signature	Collection
<i>Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār</i>	947	Herat	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>ibn Jamshīd</u>	Harvard Art Museums, 2016.106
<i>Haft Manẓar</i>	947	?	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd al-</u> <u>Haravī</u>	Yehuda Collection, <u>ms.</u> no. 100
<i>Būstān</i>	Ramadan 953	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd</u>	Ann Arbor, Isl. Ms 302
<i>Subḥat al-Abrār</i>	?	?	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd</u>	Not found (mentioned in the <i>Ravḥān Nasta'īq</i> )
<i>Yūsuf and Zulaykhā</i>	963	Bukhara	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd al-</u> <u>Haravī</u>	Aligarh University Library, <u>ms.</u> no. 88/2
<i>Hāl-nāma</i> ( <i>Gūy-u</i> <i>Chawgān</i> )	963	Bukhara <u>Khangah</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	Golestan Palace Library, no. 2222
<i>Rawḥat al-</i> <i>Muḥibbīn</i> ( <i>Dab-nāma</i> )	965	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	<u>Astan Quds Razavī</u> (formerly in Dr Reza <u>Sehhat's</u> collection), <u>ms.</u> 10378
<i>Divan of</i> Amīr Alishīr Navā'ī	Ramadan 965	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	<u>Malek Library</u> , <u>ms.</u> 5300

Piecing together the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* and other works copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī adds to our knowledge of the scribe's life and career and we can assume now that he was already a prominent scribe in 1540, based in Herat (Khurasan) before he later travelled to Bukhara.

#### IV. The Patron

The high quality of the Harvard's manuscript presupposes a patron of equally high status. To identify the patron of this manuscript, a look at the history of Herat, the city where it was produced, seems necessary. Herat was under the rule of the Safavid king, Shah 'Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). In 943/1536–37, the governorship of the city was bestowed on Sulṭān Muḥammad Mīrzā (b. 938/1531–32), Shah Tahmasp's eldest son, on the occasion of the defeat of the Shaybanid 'Ubaid Khan that year and the Uzbek's temporary retreat from the assaults on Khurasan

throughout this period. Sultān Muḥammad Mīrzā was only 5 at that time and obviously could not have been an active patron. He is the Muḥammad Khudābanda, who eventually became king, and was the father of the famous Safavid king, Shāh ‘Abbās. Although in later life he is not credited with being a patron of the arts, this may only have followed the onset of his blindness from c. 974/1566 during his third spell as prince-governor of Khurasan (based in Herat). He was supposed to be slightly unworldly and a poet under the name ‘Fahmī’.<sup>27</sup> He was potentially interested in maintaining the royal atelier at first, but obviously too young in 947–953 (dates of the earliest manuscripts by the same scribe).

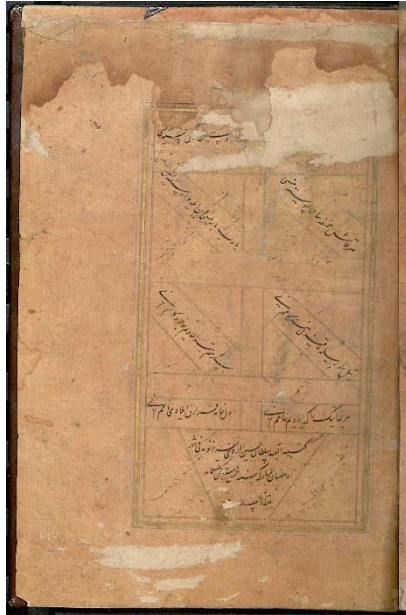


Fig. 10. *Divan* of Amīr Alishīr Navāʾī. f. 146r, no. 5300, Malek National Library and Museum.

His guardian, however, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Oğlu (of Tekkelu tribe), appointed at the same time, seems more likely to have

<sup>27</sup> For his biography see I. B. Munshī, *‘Ālam Arā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, 2 vols.; tr. R.M. Savory as *The History of Shah Abbas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977): 206–7.

been the patron. He had been a governor of Baghdad and rose to influence under Shah Tahmasp, who appointed him commander-in-chief in Khurasan and guardian to the prince at Nowruz 943/March 1537. Together, Sultan Muḥammad Mīrzā and his guardian, presided over a period of peace and regeneration in Herat, keeping the Uzbeks at bay. Muḥammad Khān died in 964/1557; that is, after holding the post for twenty years after giving considerable security and stability to the city and, therefore, the opportunity for the arts to flourish.<sup>28</sup>

There is a report in Qāzī Aḥmad's *Gulistan-i Hunar* – (Rose Garden of Art) of c. 1596-1606 –stating that Muḥammad Khān commissioned the Herati artist, Agha Ḥasan Naqqāsh, to decorate the inside of the Shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad – surely a sign not only of his piety, but also interest in the arts.<sup>29</sup> His piety can also be supposed from Qāzī Aḥmad's lengthy description of his last days, when Muhammad Khan paid a final visit to Mashhad before dying in late Dhu'l-Hijja 964/October 1557, but unfortunately there is at present no other indication of his artistic patronage.<sup>30</sup>

It is perhaps worth noting that the year before the manuscript of *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was completed (i.e. when it could have been commissioned, 946), was the death of the great Uzbek ruler and threat to Iran, 'Ubayd Khan. So that could have been a reason for celebration!<sup>31</sup>

## V. Conclusion

The *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* in the Harvard Art Museums is yet another example of an artistic and literary treasure with a complicated history. The text was copied and decorated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the margins were replaced

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<sup>28</sup> See K. Husaynī, *Tarikh-i Ilchi-i NizāmShah* (2000): 136–37, for an account of Muhammad Khan's rise, and p. 141 for his appointment as guardian. See also Falsafi, Naṣrullāh, *Zindigāni-i Shah 'Abbas I*, ed. F. Murādi, vol. 1 (Tehran: Negah, 1391/2012): 37.

<sup>29</sup> Qumī, Qāzī Aḥmad, *Gulistan-i Hunar*, tr. V. Minorsky, *Calligraphers and Painters* (Washington, D.C., 1959): 187.

<sup>30</sup> Q. A. Qumī, *Khulāsat al-Tawārikh*, ed. I. Ishrāqī, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1350/1971): 390–91. The obituary does not say anything about his patronage of arts, but he was clearly not simply a rough and ready military chief, but a sophisticated person and died of old age. He was governor at the time the Mughal sultan Humāyūn sought refuge with Tahmasp, and passed through Herat.

<sup>31</sup> I am thankful to Prof. Charles Melville for his help to identify the patron of this work.

in late seventeenth or eighteenth century and the binding was replaced around mid-nineteenth century. Similar to many elegant Persian manuscripts, the codice's history is reflected in the various transformations it underwent over time and place during its journeys from library to library.

This study has assembled details of all currently known manuscripts penned by the calligraphy master Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī, which in turn suggested its probable patron, who has not previously been identified as a significant promoter of the arts: Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Oġlu who was the guardian of Shah Tahmasp's heir, Sultan Muḥammad Mīrzā (Khudābanda).

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# The South Slavic Parish in Light of Stephen Gerlach's Travel Diary

Stanoje Bojanin<sup>1</sup>

## I. Basic Concepts

One of the key questions faced when researching the South Slavic parish towards the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Early Modern Period (1300–1600) is the issue of transmission of the official Church teachings into the local, lay environment. The parish is recognized as the basic unit of church organization within which the entire social and religious life of the individual played itself out: “one belonged to one’s parish from birth to death and even beyond. The infant received baptism here, thereby becoming a social-moral creature.”<sup>2</sup> During this period, the largest number of parishes in Europe were found in rural areas, while the peasantry represented by far the largest social group.<sup>3</sup> Territorially, in an ideal state, the boundaries of a parish overlapped with the boundaries of a village,<sup>4</sup> representing the basic meeting point of different types of knowledge: general and international, rooted in the century-long written tradition of the educated Church elite, on the one hand, and local knowledge, beliefs, and skills of the parishioners gained through direct experience which was transferred

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute for Byzantine Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 78.

<sup>3</sup> “On the Continent... 80 to 90 per cent lived in the country and for the most part worked on the land,” E. Le Roy Ladurie, “Peasants,” in *The New Cambridge Modern History. Vol. 13: Companion volume*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979), 115.

<sup>4</sup> B. Kuripešić, *Itinerarium der Gesandtschaft König Ferdinand I. von Ungarn nach Konstantinopel 1530. Faksimiledruck nach der Ausgabe von 1531*, herausgegeben, mit einem Nachwort sowie einer Namenskonkordanz versehen von S. M. Džaja und J. Džambo (Bochum 1983), 44 gave a generalised presentation of the societal picture in Serbia (in the region of Kosovo and Metohija) in 1530, noting that “almost in every village there is a church and priest, who performs services at a designated time according to the rules of St Paul.”

orally, on the other. The said meeting could not play itself out through learned theological debates or lectures, but could instead be recognised in the external forms of piety and basic forms of Church life which were part of the everyday routine of the faithful. The basic question then becomes the following: what could have been the fund of adopted knowledge ensuing from this communication? Were certain ideas and concepts accepted in a more or less “pure form”? Which elements of Church teachings became an inseparable part of the religious and societal life of individuals we collectively refer to as “the people”? Certain answers can be reached only if we search for them in concepts such as popular culture, popular religion, and mediaeval folklore.

As Jean-Claude Schmitt argues, these concepts should not be understood as being mutually different or separate, as in this historical period culture was not separated from religion, nor should popular religion be seen as separate from folklore, which, in turn, is wrongly seen as fossilised “pagan heritage.”<sup>5</sup> Rather, in order for these concepts and societal relations they describe to be represented more clearly, research into popular culture distinguishes between concepts such as “high” and “low” tradition, written and oral, “learned” and “unlearned” (from the viewpoint of official education) or clerical and lay culture, ruling and subordinate social classes, or the official and unofficial.<sup>6</sup> Communication between the parish and Church authorities (the bishopric, metropolis, or

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<sup>5</sup> J.-C. Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society in the Medieval West,” in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, eds. Lester K. Little, Barbara H. Rosenwein (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), 384–386. For similar views, see N. Z. Davis, “From ‘Popular Religion’ to Religious Cultures,” in *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. Steven Ozment (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982), 321–342. Views that suggest that popular culture is static or unchangeable have been rejected not only by historians, but also folklorists, anthropologists and ethnologists, C. Lindahl, J. McNamara and J. Lindow, “Preface,” in *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs, I–II*, ed. Carl Lindahl et al. (Santa Barbara–Denver–Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2000), xxiv–xxv. Folklore is seen as the unofficial culture of all societal groups, not just as the culture of the poor, cf. C. Lindahl, “Folklore,” in *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs, I–II*, ed. Carl Lindahl, et al. (Santa Barbara–Denver–Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 333–342.

<sup>6</sup> P. Burke, “Popular Culture,” in *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, vol. V, ed. in chief P. N. Stearns (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2001), 5–6 on the stated dichotomy and usability of *the binary model* for researching societal relations which enables consideration of levels of cultural distance and changes on the chronological plane.

patriarchate) can also be successfully described using the dichotomy of “centre” and “periphery.”<sup>7</sup> These dichotomies should not be understood in their ultimate form, nor in the traditional understanding that cultural models are determined by social class.<sup>8</sup> Instead, we are referring to methods that enable us to understand both interactions and states between these said poles.<sup>9</sup> Societal interaction is not unidirectional on the societal scale,<sup>10</sup> and research into popular culture can be represented through several concepts such as hegemony (subordinated classes view society through the eyes of their masters), resistance (different forms), acculturation, and appropriation (active reinterpretation of “offered” messages and meanings).<sup>11</sup>

The transmission of knowledge and official teachings of the Church in the late medieval and early modern parish should not be seen or understood through the process of Christianising the masses or the final phase of the Christianisation of Europe that, according to Jean Delumeau, began when the Reformation and Counter-Reformation came onto the historical stage.<sup>12</sup> Our research will not achieve its goal if we rely on the terminology of the educated mediaeval Church elite which viewed popular beliefs and customs primarily within the framework of

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<sup>7</sup> W. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) distinguishes “two levels” of Catholicism in Spain in the 16th century. Alongside the universal Church, the sacraments, the Roman Liturgy and calendar are popular holy places, relics, local patron saints, holy days, which had a significance for the local community, independently of its social dividedness; cf. N. Z. Davis, “From ‘Popular Religion’ to Religious Cultures,” 322, 324; P. Burke, “Popular Culture,” 7.

<sup>8</sup> Members of the educated elite of early modern Europe were “bilingual” and as such “bicultural,” as Peter Burke referred to them, as they were able to take part equally in both traditions, “high” and “low,” P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1978), 28.

<sup>9</sup> P. Burke, “Popular Culture,” 5–6.

<sup>10</sup> J.-C. Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society,” 382–383; P. Burke, “Popular culture between History and Anthropology,” *Ethnologia Europaea* 14 (1984): 6–7.

<sup>11</sup> P. Burke, “Popular Culture, 4–5, 6 takes the concept of hegemony from the Italian Marxist A. Gramsci, while the strategy of appropriation is taken from the French sociologist M. de Certeau.

<sup>12</sup> J. Delumeau, *Katolicizam između Lutera i Voltera* [Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire] (Sremski Karlovci–Novi Sad, 1993), 5, 6 challenged the generalised and idealised picture of the Christian Middle Ages. His thesis sparked a fruitful discussion on the character of popular religion and folklore, in which the views of Delumeau lost a lot of their significance, cf. J.-C. Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society,” 379, *passim*; N. Z. Davis, “From ‘Popular Religion’ to Religious Cultures,” 321, 324.

something undesirable and worthy of contempt, accompanied with accusations of superstition and paganism.<sup>13</sup>

## II. Sources and Their Methodological Analysis

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Europe were illiterate; hence Gurevich dedicated his book on the mediaeval world to the culture of the “silent majority.”<sup>14</sup> Our understandings of popular beliefs, attitudes, meanings, artefacts and performances<sup>15</sup> are mostly indirect, via those who had mastered the written word. Hence, as Peter Burke has observed, we can view the popular culture of the past times only “through two pairs of alien eyes our own and those of the authors of the documents, who mediate between us and the people we are trying to reach.”<sup>16</sup> When it comes to sources, the first group of them is made up of – to borrow another of Burke’s metaphors – the “hostile eyes” of those who were prone to changing popular culture with the aim of aligning it with the views of the learned elite.<sup>17</sup> The second important group of sources is made up of the observations of foreigners, passing visitors, most often represented in the form of travel writing or diary notes. Their importance lies in the fact that they have preserved direct testimonies regarding particular customs, performances and societal phenomena which, to the local literate elite, were ordinary, treated as given and thus not seen as worthy of mentioning.<sup>18</sup> Yet regardless of the extent to which the passing visitor might have been a good observer and drawn by a particular phenomenon, he could not offer the relevant views of an “insider” who was native to the culture which he was describing. As an “outsider,” the traveller was unlikely to be able to capture the sentiments, “local allusions” and – at first sight – hidden meanings of social phenomena which he was encountering.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 207–243 (Chapter: “The Triumph of Lent: The Reform of Popular Culture”).

<sup>14</sup> A. Gurevich, *Srednevekovyi mir: kul'tura bezmolstvuiushchego bol'shinstva* [The Medieval World: The Culture of the Silent Majority] (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> P. Burke, “Popular culture between History and Anthropology,” 5.

<sup>16</sup> P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, 207–243; cf. P. Burke, “Popular Culture,” 4.

<sup>18</sup> P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 66 argues that “much of we know about the great carnivals in Rome and Venice between 1500 and 1800 comes from the descriptions left by foreign visitors...”

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, 66.

Travel accounts from South-Eastern Europe in the sixteenth century had significant value as a historical source for research into the first centuries of Ottoman rule. They contain much important information that pertains to historical geography, communications, economy and offer certain insights into demographic, ethnic and religious conditions.<sup>20</sup> A far smaller number contain a far greater wealth of other information which makes them important sources for researching popular culture. Indeed, not just of their own time period, but also of an earlier historical epoch of the Late Middle Ages. In this regard, one of the most important sources is the travel diary of Stephan Gerlach from the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The information which it contains increases even more in

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<sup>20</sup> The significance of travel-inspired writings and diaries as a source for the history of South-Eastern Europe was observed a long time ago in the works of Čedomir Mijatović, Konstantin Jireček, Petar Matković, see next footnote. The researches of O. Zirojević, "Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije (1459–1683)" ["The Constantinople Road from Beograd to Sofia (1459–1683)"], *Zbornik Istorijeskog muzeja Srbije* 7 (1970): 3–197, and *Carigradski drum od Beograda do Budima u XVI i XVII veku* [The Constantinople Road from Beograd to Buda in the 16th and 17th centuries] (Novi Sad: Institut za izučavanje istorije Vojvodine, 1976) distinguish themselves from a methodological point of view, as the information from foreign travel writings is systematically compared to information from Ottoman documents, *defters* above all else.

<sup>21</sup> *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch...*, Franckfurth am Mayn 1674. Gerlach's diary waited a whole century to be published. This occurred thanks to the efforts of his grandson, Samuel Gerlach, as is clear from the Baroque and long title of his book. A smaller part of it was translated into Bulgarian, S. Gerlah, *Dnevnik na edno pŭtuvane do Osmanskata porta v Carigrad* [A Diary of a Journey to the Ottoman porte in Constantinople], podbor, prevod, uvod i komentar Mariya Kiselincheva; predgovor i redaktsiya Bistra A. Tsvetkova (Sofia, 1976), while a translation into Turkish was published more than a decade ago, Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günliğı* [Turkish Diary], 2 vols., ed. K. Beydilli; trans. by T. Noyan (Istanbul, 2006). The information contained in Gerlach's diary gained the interest of researchers as early as the second half of the 19th century who were interested in the communication route from Buda to Constantinople, Č. Mijatović, "Pre trista godina. Prilog izučavanju izvora za istoriju našeg naroda u XVI veku" ["300 Years Ago. A Contribution to the Study of Sources for the History of Our People in the 16th Century"], *Glasnik SUD* 36 (1872): 203–215; K. Jireček, "Stari pŭtšestviya po Bŭlgariya ot 15–18 stoletie" ["Ancient Journeys in Bulgaria from the 15th to the 18th Centuries"], *Periodichesko spisanie na Bŭlgarskoto knižborno družestvo* 6 (1883): 1–44; 7 (1884): 96–127; P. Matković, "Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI vijeka: Putopisi Stj. Gerlacha i Sal. Schweigera" ["Travels Across the Balkan Peninsula in the 16th Century: Travel accounts of Stj. Gerlach and Sal. Schweiger"], *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 1–65; Y. Nikolov, "Bŭlgariya i bŭlgarite v sachineniyata na Stefan Gerlah i Martin Kruzius" ["Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in the Works of Stephan Gerlach and Martin Crusius"], *Godišnik na Sofijskiya universitet–Istoricheski fakultet* 67 (1973–1974): 58–74. The

significance when compared to those from completely different sources, such as the Slavic penitentials intended for the pastoral practice of the Church. These are ecclesiastical legal sources arising from the desire of the ecclesiastical elite to modify the views and attitudes of the mainly illiterate believers for the sake of “correcting the human roughness” as is noted in one of them.<sup>22</sup> These types of literary works are characterised by the simple language of rules and instructions, while their compilatory and often apocryphal mark can be seen in the free combination of genres (legal texts and apocryphal literature) and texts of a canonical and non-canonical origin, which brings them closer to the manner of communication in the environment for which they were intended – the parish.<sup>23</sup> Simplification and adjustment of the text points to the overlapping reach of different influences and reveals, as Gurevich notes, the specific nature of the “zone of contact” between the learned and folk culture viewed through the “dialogue-conflict” relationship.<sup>24</sup> In this regard, the penitential books belong to the type of mediaeval literature that is counted among the “mediators” between oral, lay culture and

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itinerary of Gerlach’s travels and stay in the Ottoman Empire were presented summarily, in the form of a list, by S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs dans l’empire Ottoman (XIV<sup>e</sup> – XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Ankara, 1991), 302–305. For the prosopographical research and the review of the content of the diary, see R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie der Reisenden und Migranten ins Osmanischen Reich (1396–1611)*, vol. III (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2006), 46–123. Recently, Gerlach’s diary data were used in research on the Istanbul Jews, Y. Ben-Nach, G. Saban, “Three German Travellers on Istanbul Jews,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 12 (2013): 35–51.

<sup>22</sup> V. Jagić, “Sitna gradja za crkveno pravo” [“Smaller Collections of Ecclesiastical Law”], *Starine JAZU* 6 (1874): 147. On the Latin penitential literature, see A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, 78–103. Following Gurevich, I pointed out the similar societal significance of South Slavic penitentials, S. Bojanin, *Zabave i svetkovine u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji (od kraja XII do kraja XV veka)* [Entertainment and festivities in medieval Serbia (from the end of the 12th to the end of the 15th century)] (Beograd: Istorijski institut–Službeni glasnik, 2005), 25–29, passim; S. Bojanin, “Parohijska zajednica u ogledalu srpskih penitencijalnih zbornika” [“Parochial Community in the Mirror of Serbian Penitential Compilations”], in *Srednjovekovno pravo u Srba u ogledalu istorijskih izvora* [Medieval Law in Serbian Lands in the Mirror of Historical Sources], ed. S. Čirković, and K. Čavoški (Beograd: SANU, 2009), 261–283.

<sup>23</sup> S. Bojanin, “Penitencijalni sastavi u dečanskim trebnicima № 68 i № 69” [The Penitentials of the Dečani Trebniks № 68 and № 69], in *Dečani in the Light of Archeological Research*, ed. T. Subotin-Golubović (Beograd: Narodna biblioteka Srbije, 2012), 163–181.

<sup>24</sup> A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, 222–223.



learned culture.<sup>25</sup> Analysing the concrete information described in the diary of a “foreign observer” within the context of the problems highlighted in the Slavic penitentials allows us to gain a more reliable and, I believe, more complete picture regarding Church life and education in the parish. Applying this method of comparison also allows us to evaluate the data contained in the sources themselves.

### III. Stephan Gerlach's Diary

The travel accounts in the diary of Stephan Gerlach (1546–1612), a German Protestant clergyman, later professor from Tübingen and church dean of Tübingen,<sup>26</sup> contain all the advantages and disadvantages one might expect from this type of source. The author is a learned German theologian, the young chaplain of the Hapsburg diplomatic mission in Constantinople (1573–1578) who, as a talented observer, noted a wealth of information and observations regarding various topics.<sup>27</sup> During his time in Constantinople, which lasted several years, Gerlach found himself in the midst of lively negotiations between the Protestant leaders and humanist scholars from Tübingen on the one hand, and the senior hierarchy of the Greek clergy on the other. The negotiations were intended to secure the mutual understanding and cooperation of the two Churches, but these expectations were not fulfilled.<sup>28</sup> It is these circumstances and the general preoccupation of the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, 25–28; cf. J.-C. Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society,” 382.

<sup>26</sup> Gerlach was born in Knittlingen, in the Duchy of Württemberg, as the son of a quarryman. Upon completion of his studies of theology in Tübingen, he was ordained as a priest and appointed as chaplain to the Habsburg diplomatic mission of David von Ungnad in the Ottoman Empire. Upon his return to Germany, he became a doctor, which enabled him to have a university career as a professor. M. Kriebel, “Stephan Gerlach. Deutscher evangelischer Botschaftsprediger in Konstantinopel 1573–1578,” *Die evangelische Diaspora* 29 (1958): 74–75, 95.

<sup>27</sup> Assessments of Gerlach as a sober observer and his diary as an important historical source, were given by the most early researchers such as K. Jireček, “Stari püteshestviya,” 17–19, 96–111; P. Matković, “Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku,” 16–17; A. P. Lebedev, *Istoriia greko-vostochnoi cerkvi pod vlastiü turok. Od padeniia Konstantinopolia (v 1453 godu) do nastoiashchago vremeni* [The History of the Greek Eastern Church Under Turkish Rules. From the Fall of Constantinople (in 1453) to the Present] (S.-Peterburg, 19032), 52–54 or more recently, M. Kriebel “Stephan Gerlach,” 79 and Y. Nikolov, “Bülgariya i bülgarite,” 58–59.

<sup>28</sup> M. Kriebel “Stephan Gerlach,” 89–95. On the mentioned negotiations, A. P. Lebedev, *Istoriia*, 571–620; E. Benz, *Wittenberg und Byzanz. Zur Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung der*

Protestant intellectuals with the current religious and ecclesiastical questions of the time (included in the Augsburg Confession) that significantly influenced the formation of Gerlach's interests and his selection of the information that he presented in his diary. He presents himself as someone knowledgeable regarding the political and societal circumstances in the Ottoman Empire and an inquisitive investigator of the customs and religion of the Greeks, Turks, Slavs, Armenians and others. Gerlach noted that the Orthodox Christian "Bulgarians, Vlachs, Moldovans, Russians, Muscovites" share with the Greeks a common "religion, faith and Church customs."<sup>29</sup> In several places, he describes Church rituals, in particular the Holy Liturgy with a special focus on the Eucharist. He discusses the behaviour of the faithful during the rituals, as well as the various customs relating to annual holidays and the life cycle, the belief in the cult of saints, etc. He gathered the most information on the South Slavs during his return from the mission to Constantinople, during the summer of 1578.<sup>30</sup> His span of interest was the areas that lay along the road from Constantinople. The years spent in Constantinople made him relatively well acquainted with local administrative and political circumstances. For example, he wrote that the settlements of Burgas (Bergasch) and Dragoman (Dragomanli) belonged to Mehmed Pasha Sokolović or that the village of Vetren (Vedreno), south-east of Sofia, and the town of Belgrade fell within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Patriarch Gerasim of the Patriarchate of Peć.<sup>31</sup>

Gerlach presented his observations regarding parish life in the places through which he passed systematically, as if observing the forms from the visitation protocols kept in Protestant and Catholic lands. This may be one of the reasons why his diary is richer in description of religious

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*Reformation und der östlich-orthodoxen Kirche* (Marburg, 1949), 94–96, 122; S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity. A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 247–255; D. Wendebourg, *Reformation und Orthodoxie: Der ökumenische Briefwechsel zwischen der Leitung der Württembergischen Kirche und Patriarch Jeremias II. von Konstantinopel in den Jahren 1573–1581* (Göttingen, 1986); W. J. Jorgenson, "Eastern Orthodoxy," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation II*, ed. in chief Hans J. Hillerband (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15–17 has the most important bibliography in English.

<sup>29</sup> "... Religion / Glauben / und Kirchengebräuchen," *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 56.

<sup>30</sup> The description of the journey to Constantinople in 1573 is twice shorter than the description of the return in 1578 and contains far less information on local Christian communities.

<sup>31</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 510, 517, 521, 530.

life and practice compare to other writers of a similar genre.<sup>32</sup> The diary contains diverse information regarding the parish, the appearance of churches, cemeteries, basic church inventory (the chalice, an object upon which the author places a particular focus, books and icons), all the way to the societal position of the clergy, its education and familiarity of the laity with the basics of Christian teachings. With the goal of gathering as much information as possible, Gerlach did not limit his contacts with the local population to merely buying food or superficially enquiring about local attractions. He entered into conversations confidently, in the first instance with local parish priests who showed him their churches, but also with ordinary people who showed the good will to answer to his varied questions. The diverse and numerous information from Gerlach's diary on the familiarity of ordinary people with official Christian religion and the state of religious and social life in the South Slav parishes can be categorized into three basic thematic groupings. The first grouping is made up of issues related to the means and channels of communication through which the basic content of the Christian faith was transmitted (the language of the liturgy, familiarity with basic prayers and the cult of icons and relics), the second encompasses customs and forms of behaviour during rituals regardless of whether they belong to the official Church or not, while the third relates to issues of authority i.e. the attitude of the laity towards the parish priest as the official representative of the ecclesiastical authorities.

#### **IV. Verbal Messages: the Language of the Church and the Language of the Parish**

One of the basic questions that concerned Stephan Gerlach related to the language of Church rituals. Do the faithful understand the language of the liturgy and the sermon of the priest? Gerlach attended Church services relatively frequently on various occasions during his stay in the Christian areas of the Ottoman Empire and gained the impression that the participation of the "ordinary man" ("der gemeine Mann") in the

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<sup>32</sup> On the "visitation protocols" see J. Delumeau, *Katolicizam između Lutera i Voltera*, 232–239. A newer analysis of the "visitation protocols" as a source for research into the parish, along with remarks on the methodological limitations of their use, G. Strauss, "Visitation," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation IV*, ed. in chief Hans J. Hillerband (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 238–243.

Church rituals was reduced to the making of the sign of the cross (“Creutz machen”), chanting *Kyrie Eleison* and saying the word *Amen*, and that “he does not know nor understand more than that.”<sup>33</sup> The stated observation can be considered generalised, to some degree oversimplified, which is shown in some of the more detailed descriptions of the liturgy in his diary. The impression which he gained is entirely in line with the fact that he came from a very different milieu of Church rituals and practices in which understanding the words uttered in the ritual is closely tied to understanding the actions of the ritual and active participation in it. Gerlach set out his understanding of the importance of the vernacular in the pastoral work of the Church in one conversation with his friend and protonotarius Joannis Zygomalas, in which they considered the importance of diglossia in the Church life of the Greek community.<sup>34</sup>

Understanding the language of the liturgy was one of the most important issues during the spread of Protestantism into South-Eastern Europe. Protestant missionaries pointed to the diglossia phenomenon. In the vicinity of Sibiu, for example, liturgical books in use in 1546 were not in the “local” but “foreign,” “Serbian language” (“Die Raczische Sprach”), while the local clergy were much divided over their use.<sup>35</sup> For his part, Gerlach was informed regarding similar circumstances in Albania, where the clergy was mostly Greek, from Morea and Ioannina. The local village population (“Land-volck”) did not understand the Church services, hence sermons were occasionally held in the Albanian language.<sup>36</sup> A similar situation was prevalent in the Greek Orthodox communities of Asia Minor where the Christians mainly spoke Turkish, while the liturgy in the Greek language was often not understood even

<sup>33</sup> “Mehrers weiß und versteht er nicht,” *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 206; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, 100.

<sup>34</sup> In his diary (13 January 1577), Gerlach noted his disagreement with the views of the learned Greek that the sermon should be “in ancient Greek” (“in der alten recht Griechischen”), even if only two persons could understand it, as this was the language of the Bible and other religious literature. He held a view on the importance of the sermon being “in the common language” (“in der gemeinen Sprach”) so that the “people” (“Volck”) could understand it, *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 304.

<sup>35</sup> J. Karácsonyi, and F. Kollányi, ed., *Egyháztörténelmi emlékek a magyarországi hitújítás korából IV (1542–1547)* (Budapest, 1909), 522; on the content of this document, see S. Čirković, “Srbi i rani protestantizam” [“The Serbs and Early Protestantism”], *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 36 (1987): 16.

<sup>36</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 151.

by the priests themselves.<sup>37</sup> Especially interesting are Gerlach's observations regarding diglossia in the Slavic churches. In conversation with the peasants of Bulgaria and Serbia, Gerlach observed that certain difficulties existed in understanding the Church Slavonic language of the liturgical books and rituals. In the Bulgarian village of Vetren, Gerlach noted on 20 June 1578 that the "ordinary man" does not fully understand the Divine Service.<sup>38</sup> He received a similar response from Christians in Belgrade, around twenty days later, where believers admitted that they did not fully understand the language of the liturgy, but that they did understand most of it.<sup>39</sup>

The Slavic language of the Church rites was the language of liturgical books and inscriptions on icons and holy objects. Gerlach referred to this language using different names: "Slavic or Illyrian language" ("in Sclavonischer oder Illirischer Sprache") but also "Croatian." In the aforementioned village of Vetren the liturgy was served in the "Croatian language" ("Crabatischer Sprache"), while the Slavic inscriptions on the icons were written in "Croatian letters" ("mit Crabatischen Buchstaben").<sup>40</sup> The diversity in the names of the language and alphabet should not be seen as an indication of Gerlach's lack of knowledge. His system of reference is entirely in line with the different names for the language and alphabet of the South Slavs among German Protestants.<sup>41</sup> Gerlach's "Croatian," meaning Slavic, or rather Cyrillic letters could, in other circumstances, be referred to as "Rascian" ("characteribus ut vocant Racianis"), or "Serbian," as in the aforementioned source on the need to print the Catechism in the "Vlach" language.<sup>42</sup> The practice of designation the South Slavic languages does not reflect the existence of diglossia in the church life of the South Slavs to which Gerlach pointed.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, 372.

<sup>38</sup> "Den Gottesdienst... der gemeine Mann nicht alles verstehet," Ibidem, 518.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, 530. Gerlach reports the direct testimony of contemporaries regarding the existence of diglossia when it comes to performing rites. In Slavistics, diglossia was considered only on the basis of preserved written material. For newer reflections in the context of mediaeval Serbian literature, see J. Grković-Mejdžor, *Spisi iz istorijske lingvistike* [Writings on Historical Linguistics] (Novi Sad, 2007), 443–459.

<sup>40</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 517, 518, 524.

<sup>41</sup> On the South Slay language with many names, E. Benz, Wittenberg und Byzanz, 180–183. During that time, there were opinions that Serbian and Croatian are the same language, "lingua Croatica sive Serviana," S. Ćirković, "Srbi i rani protestantizam," 17–18, note 38.

<sup>42</sup> See above note. треба 35, јер су додали једну напомену на почетку.

It does not clearly differentiate the old and universal written Church Slavonic language of the liturgical books from the contemporary vernaculars and dialect.<sup>43</sup>

Through conversations with Slavic believers, Gerlach brings direct testimony regarding their knowledge of basic elements of Christian teaching. Most of the faithful in Serbia and Bulgaria did not know a single official Church prayer. A smaller number of them could recite the Pater Noster (“Vater Unser”) or Credo (“Glauben”) “in their language” (“in ihrer Sprache”) but could not name the Ten Commandments (“die 10. Gebotte”).<sup>44</sup> The Protestant clergyman says nothing about knowledge of the Song of the Most Holy Theotokos (the Ave Maria).<sup>45</sup> It is from the content of these prayers that the basic knowledge regarding the Christian faith was drawn. Without getting into more detailed intricacies of theology, the faithful knew that there existed one God, that his son was Jesus Christ who suffered for the people and was crucified and resurrected, and that Christians awaited the resurrection of the dead and eternal life.<sup>46</sup> They openly made clear their poor knowledge of the basic Christian teachings and Church rites to Gerlach. The inhabitants of Vetren, Belgrade or Prhovo in Srem were aware that only a few members of their community knew these prayers. Some of them blamed, as in the case of the village of Klokotnica (Semisze), their parish priest for their lack of knowledge (see below). Despite their limited religious knowledge, all of them considered themselves Christians and kept to the annual cycles of fasting and feasting.<sup>47</sup> Upon Gerlach’s observation that he could not understand why the majority does not at least know the most

<sup>43</sup> In supporting this consideration, there is a case in another source when the syntagma “Cyrillic language” was used to mark the spoken language: “Die cirulisch gantz voll, dieselbig auch sein angeporne sprach ist,” S. Ćirković, “Srbi i rani protestantizam,” 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 518.

<sup>45</sup> “Seine Bauren können das Vater Unser und den Glauben / aber die 10. Gebotte nicht / wie auch keiner in der Bulgarey oder Servien,” Ibidem, 532. A similar state prevailed in the lay areas of Roman Catholic Europe towards the end of the Middle Ages. The prayers Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, knowledge of the ten commandments and seven deadly sins, was intended to represent the basic repertoire of knowledge which was not reachable to the vast majority of the faithful, P. J. Geary, “Peasant Religion in Medieval Europe,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 12 (2001): 201–202. The faithful of New Castile in Spain in the 16th century knew only the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, W. Christian, *Local Religion*, 141–142.

<sup>46</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 530; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, 121.

<sup>47</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 515.

important Christian prayers, the inhabitants of Belgrade responded that as peasant labourers they did not have time for learning. They spent three to four months in the fields with the oxen or had to carry out work for their Turkish feudal overlords day and night.<sup>48</sup> The given explanation represents a widespread conviction stated in line with the basic way of life of the vast majority of Europeans in the 16th century, regardless of the country in which they lived or the faith of the master for whom they worked.<sup>49</sup> This did not mean that they were not familiar with other prayers or formulas close to those from the apocryphal literature of parish priests. Aside from this, the free time of holidays could be spent in entertainment, with dancing and song (see below), which was more appealing than learning the Catechism or reciting of prayers to God.<sup>50</sup> For the educated Church elite, most probably for the German clergyman as well, knowing the official prayers, along with regular church attendance, confession and communion, were the basic marks of a good Christian.<sup>51</sup> These were the criteria for evaluating the piety of ordinary believers and the pastoral role of local priests.

## **V. Visual Message: The Power of Image and Relics**

The message of the mediaeval Church could most easily be understood in the form of image. In the parish churches of the Orthodox world from Srpski Kovin or Räckeve (Raitzenmarck) and Slankamen (Schlamikanik) in the middle Danube region to the Greek villages in the closer and further environs of Constantinople, Gerlach noted the strong devotion

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<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 530; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, 120.

<sup>49</sup> P. J. Geary, "Peasant Religion," 202. Laborious work and lack of free time as excuses for not knowing the most important Christian prayers was a common place in the Early Middle Ages sermons of Caesarisus of Arles (died in 542), A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Data from the Protestant visitations in the region of Wiesbaden mention a village from which the male and female youth went to Catholic regions in order to avoid Catechism lessons on Sundays, "so as to be free to dance all the day," G. Strauss, "Success and Failure in the German Reformation," *Past and Present* 67 (1975): 57. A call to religious instruction on Sundays and on feast days is contained in the mediaeval Penitential Nomocanon of Pseudo-Zonaras which was included among the Serbian printed Trebniks from the first half of the 16th century, S. Bojanin, "Epitimijni nomokanon Goraždanskog molitvenika (1523) u svetlu štampane i rukopisne knjige" ["The Penitential Nomokanon of the Goražde Prayer Book (1523) in the World of Printed and Manuscript Books"], *Crkvene studije* 15 (2018): 190.

<sup>51</sup> P. J. Geary, "Peasant Religion," 202.

towards icons, which he refers to as “pictures” (“das Bild”). The first encounter with holy “pictures” in the summer of 1573 reminded him of the “papist” decoration of churches.<sup>52</sup> Aside from being painted on the walls or part of the iconostasis, the “pictures” were exhibited in the central part of the church as well, where the appropriate icon was placed on the analogion for most major holidays.<sup>53</sup> Gerlach noted that these icons were kissed by people upon entering the church.<sup>54</sup> Communication via images and gestures were considered more comprehensible, while cults of the saints were closer to the religious experience of the faithful than other religious knowledge.<sup>55</sup> In the churches along the road to Constantinople, icons of St. George, St. Nicholas and Elijah’s ascension could be seen most often, leading Gerlach to conclude that these three “pictures” were present in every “Bulgarian church.”<sup>56</sup> These saints were particularly popular and as a result a significant number of parish churches in Serbia and Bulgaria that the author visited were dedicated to them. Nevertheless, the diary entries do not contain more detailed notes regarding the beliefs of the Slavic parishioners in the cult of the icon and the saints, unlike in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. In the Greek villages around Constantinople money and votive gifts were placed on the icons of saints for securing healing from sickness.<sup>57</sup> On one occasion, Gerlach witnessed a sick child being brought to the icon of St. Paraskeva in order to secure healing by, as he noted, “two incredibly beautiful (trefflich-schöne) women.”<sup>58</sup> However, the most sacred object which he saw and described on the road to Constantinople was not an icon, but the relics of the “Bulgarian King” St. Stephen.<sup>59</sup> They were on display in

<sup>52</sup> Räckve (Srpski Kovin), 23 June and Slankamen, 29 June 1573, *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 13, 15. For identifying the places, see O. Zirojević, *Carigradski drum od Beograda do Budima*, 89–92, 156–158; S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs*, 302.

<sup>53</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 341.

<sup>54</sup> “Wer in die Kirche hinein gehet / der küsset es,” Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. P. J. Geary, “Peasant Religion”, 200–201; A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, 39–77; W. Christian, *Local Religion*, 23–69.

<sup>56</sup> “... die 3. Bilder hab ich noch in allen Bulgarischen Kirchen gefunden,” *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 521.

<sup>57</sup> Holy Angel, 6 June 1576 and Aghia Paraskevi, 1 May 1577, Ibidem, 206, 341. For identifying the villages, see S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs*, 303. Compare the similar practice of votive offerings in New Castile in the 16th century, W. Christian, *Local Religion*, 95–96.

<sup>58</sup> The village of Aghia Paraskevi, *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 341.

<sup>59</sup> These were the relics of Serbian King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) from the Nemanjić dynasty which were moved to Sofia, probably in the second half of the 15th



the main Sofia church dedicated to St. Marina. The “chest” (“Truhe“), i.e. reliquary was placed in front of the iconostasis, while the “body” (“Cörper”), i. e. the relics themselves were wrapped in garments, apart from the hands, which were exposed to the direct gaze of the faithful. Several bowls were placed on the chest of the saint in which Gerlach noticed several money donations.<sup>60</sup>

Observations regarding the “modest” level of knowledge of Christian teachings in the parish are stated by Gerlach without any intention of belittling. Nevertheless, on the margins of the diary there have been printed occasional comments with explanations and remarks on the main body of the text. In one of them, the belief in the healing power of saints was labelled as “the superstition and idolatry of the Greeks.”<sup>61</sup> The comment was printed along with the main text which describes the money offerings on the icon of St Athanasius which represents a votive gift of a woman who was cured from the plague.

## **VI. The Power of Customs: Official and Unofficial Rites of the Parish**

Gerlach's diary contains a number of important descriptions of the ritual behaviour of the faithful, either with regard to official Church or unofficial and local customs. The value of his observations is derived from the fact that they are unique and that they come from an individual interested in various ecclesiastical and religious questions in the regions in which he stayed. His descriptions of the liturgy are not limited purely to the acts of the priest and deacon, but also the behaviour of the ordinary faithful. Thanks to such descriptions, certain elements of the local lay practice within the universal rite are preserved. Particularly interesting is Gerlach's description of the celebration of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul on 29 June 1578 in the village of Klisurica (Ku-

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century, K. Jireček, “Stari püteshestviya,” 118. Today, the relics are kept in the cathedral church of St. Sunday in Sofia.

<sup>60</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 521.

<sup>61</sup> “Aberglaub und Abgötterey der Griechen,” Ibidem, 206. The comment corresponds to the views of an educated Protestant who considered healing through prayer, amulets or magical healing as the “superstition” of the mediaeval church, cf. M. Lindemann, “Medicine and healing,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation II*, ed. in chief Hans J. Hillerband (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39–41.

Guritzesme) not far from Bela Palanka, between Niš and Pirot.<sup>62</sup> The village church of St George was too small to receive all the gathered villagers. Inside the church were older men (“etlich alte Männer”), while women (“das Weiber Volck”) stood outside the main door.<sup>63</sup> This order reflected the existing social stratification of the holy space of the church, which was present in other parishes too. In his description of the Belgrade church of the Holy Archangels, Gerlach noted, alongside the gender and age differences, those of class as well. In the central part of the church, along the wall, were benches intended for older men, while from the “third part” of the church, or rather the narthex in which stood two marble baptismal fonts, the liturgy was followed by women and “common people” (“der gemeine Pöbel”).<sup>64</sup>

In his descriptions of church services, Gerlach pays significant attention to the rite of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the acts of the priest in the altar space and the ritual behaviour of the faithful. During the Great Entrance, the faithful would bow to the ground “as if they were not worthy of seeing the sacrament with their own eyes.”<sup>65</sup> Interested in the question of Eucharist, he describes the act of receiving communion and distributing the antidoron after the end of the liturgy.<sup>66</sup> Active participation of the laity in certain parts of the liturgy showed that they possessed certain knowledge, at least to the extent that they were familiar with the basic repertoire of prayers (see above). However, the behaviour of individuals during the Divine Service could literally depend on where they stood in the church. During the liturgy on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, the portion of faithful who could not enter the church – i.e. women – showed little interest in the rite. As they stood outside, at a certain distance from the centre of activity, they spent their time in non-religious conversation (“prattle”) as if they were “in any other place.”<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> For identifying the place, see O. Zirojević, “Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije,” 183. In S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs*, 303, 304 the belief is expressed that this is Bela Palanka.

<sup>63</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 522.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, 529–530.

<sup>65</sup> “...bückten sich alle zu der Erden nieder / als ob sie nicht würdig wären das Sacrament mit ihren Augen // anzuschauen,” Galata, Constantinople, 26th Septembre 1574, Ibidem, 64. Several years later, Gerlach described similar behavior at the liturgy in Klisurica: “daß Volck bückte sich bis gar auff den Boden/und creutzigte sich,” Ibidem, 523.

<sup>66</sup> Description of the distributions of antidoron after the liturgy, Ibidem, 64, 523.

<sup>67</sup> “Sie...haben ein Geschwätz miteinander / wie sonst auf einem Platz,” Ibidem, 522.

In the description of the liturgy in the village of Klisurica some less formal types of behaviour during the communion of the faithful are presented. In the direct meeting with the parishioners, the priest would, despite the delicate part of the rite, stay in short conversation with some of them – even in laughter – receive a small amount of money from another in lieu of some debt and so on. Such behaviour by the priest and villagers who were receiving the holy gifts appeared irritating to Gerlach.<sup>68</sup> From the point of view of the community, on the contrary, it was not considered unusual or inappropriate. The priest did not live in the same village and the meeting with him was, likely for most, temporally and spatially limited. The Protestant clergyman did not fail to note that children of the age of two to three years old also received communion, particularly as he saw that one of them spat out the holy gifts.<sup>69</sup> For the participants in the liturgy, this was not an unusual act, but an inevitable part of the practice of delivering communion to small children. In other areas, some children would receive a smack from the priest for such behaviour.<sup>70</sup> The handling of the Eucharist is an important topic in the penitential texts in which there are warnings regarding irregularities, with the threat of appropriate penances. A member of the faithful was to swallow the communion, the priest had to take care not to spill the contents of the holy cup (along with the wooden or brass chalice, Gerlach often mentions a piece of cloth and several brass spoons), while it was important to ensure that any communion that was spat out was not eaten by a dog. If an unpleasant event did occur, whatever was spilled was to be “buried” in the ground, along the wall of the church or burnt, while reading the 100th psalm.<sup>71</sup> The attitude towards the Eucharist was not just a matter of the rite. The priest was called upon to keep a close eye on the parishioners, as in such situations he could uncover any hidden heretics secretly attempting to spit out the holy gifts.<sup>72</sup>

After the liturgy, the priest would bless the food brought to the church, the bread, wine and first fruits, and then he would hurriedly set

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<sup>68</sup> “Dabey es doch auch sehr ärgerlich zugegangen,” Ibidem, 523.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, 523.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, 166,

<sup>71</sup> The penitentials dealt with the different issues of the spilled or spat the holy gifts, V. Jagić, “Sitna gradja,” 136, 141, 144, 148–149.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, 149.

off for home. The inhabitants of Klisurica would carry on with the celebrations. The blessed food was consumed in the church and around it, for the purpose of which long tables and benches were used, across which Gerlach came relatively often, as he says, in front of the doors of “Greek and Bulgarian churches.”<sup>73</sup> The tables were used for organizing feasts on the occasion of the celebration of a saint or the commemoration of a deceased.<sup>74</sup> A special event at the celebration of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul were the song and dance of two groups of maidens.<sup>75</sup> Gerlach had attended similar celebrations before. The inhabitants of Aghia Paraskevi not far from Constantinople had gathered on 26 July 1577 to celebrate the village Feast day. The community was somewhat richer and the women were dressed in “velvet and silk,” carrying gold and silver necklaces. A group of young adult males sat separately gathered. After the liturgy, a feast was organized around and inside the parish church.<sup>76</sup> On another occasion, the author referred to the organization of a lay celebration during the time of the fasting cycle. The villagers of Klokotnica would gather after the liturgy to praise, in a good mood (“sind guter Dinge”), God, the saints, the Virgin Mary and St Nicholas, the patron of the village church.<sup>77</sup>

In Gerlach’s description of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, he presents the detailed content of a celebration that mediaeval Church authors would have described as “twofold (suguba) joy and mirth” or “spiritual and carnal celebration.”<sup>78</sup> The societal importance of the lay celebration is stressed in the penitential texts. In an effort to align the celebrations of the faithful with the official views of the Church, parish priests were banned from organizing feasts with food and drink in front of the church. The obligation of the priest and his parishioners was to

<sup>73</sup> “Vor der Thüre hat es wie vor allen andern Griech = und Bulgarischen Kirchen / viel Bänck und lange Taffeln,” *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 522.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, 206.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, 523. Cf. S. Bojanin, *Zabave i svetkovine*, 125, 329.

<sup>76</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 368.

<sup>77</sup> Gerlach was in Semisze (Klokotnica) on 16 June 1578, at the time of the fast of SS. Peter and Paul, *Ibidem*, 515.

<sup>78</sup> S. Bojanin, “Srednjovekovna svetkovina između privatnog i javnog” [“The Medieval Festivity Between the Private and the Public”], in *Privatni život u srpskim zemljama srednjeg veka* [Private Life in the Medieval Serbian Lands], ed. S. Marjanović-Dušanić and D. Popović (Beograd: Clio, 2004), 253–254, 277; S. Bojanin, *Zabave i svetkovine*, 61–62, 70–72.

move the “carnal celebration” from the public holy space of the church yard to the private space of the home.<sup>79</sup>

Another event that drew the attention of the German clergyman was the tragic death of several inhabitants of the village of Grocka (Klein Palanka), not far from Belgrade, on 8 July 1578. During stormy weather the rain caused a landslide in which several houses disappeared, killing members of two families. The husbands and fathers avoided death as they were not in the village during those days. As with every other rite of the life cycle, the funeral was tightly rooted in local practice and interwoven with the official Church rite-at the same time. The deceased were laid on the ground, dressed in clean clothes, while their heads were decorated with wreaths of flowers and scented plants. Mourning women gathered around the deceased, crying and wailing (“beweinten sie / und sungen ihre Klaglieder”), beating their own chests, ripping out their own hair and scratching their own faces, occasionally kissing the deceased on which blood fell from their cheeks. All the members of the community, “women and men, young and old” (“Weiber und Männer / Junge und Alte”), took part in the burial rite, which ensued several hours later, after the graves had been dug. The bodies of the deceased were buried in two separate graves, while a clod of turf was placed under their heads. Instead of a coffin, the bodies were framed and covered with wooden planks. For his part, the priest sprinkled red wine over each of the buried and threw several pieces of earth to each of the four sides of the grave. The priest’s service ensued, after which those gathered dispersed home.<sup>80</sup>

Gerlach ends his description at this point. He does not mention the funeral feast (*daća*) which perhaps did not take place. He wrote of a funeral feast three weeks earlier during his stay in Klokotnica. There, he noted that the funds for its organization were taken from the estate of the deceased, to the value of 5 to 8 thalers, depending on the size of their estate. After weeping for the deceased, a feast would ensue during which a jovial atmosphere could be observed.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> On the ecclesiastical and lay concept of celebration see S. Bojanin, “Srednjovekovna svetkovina između privatnog i javnog,” 270–273; S. Bojanin, *Zabave i svetkovine*, 43–98. Similar forms of celebration existed in other parts of Europe as well in the 16th and 17th centuries and both Catholic and Protestant reformers of parish life spoke out against them, P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 207–243.

<sup>80</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 528.

<sup>81</sup> “Wann sie den Todten genugsamb beweynet / so verzehren sie dieses Geld und machen sich miteinander wieder fröhlich,” Ibidem, 515.

The tragic event in Grocka was cause for making a fairly detailed account of the funeral customs. Wishing to find out more about the customs which he was unfamiliar with, Gerlach asked the priest regarding the meaning of pouring the wine over the deceased or throwing the lumps to the sides of the grave. The answer that he got was laconic: “that is the custom among us.”<sup>82</sup> Nor was there explanation in terms of theology, religion or social significance which the author, perhaps, expected from his colleague. For the parish priest and inhabitants of Grocka, the rite was a familiar one and did not require further explanation. Gerlach met with the same response several days later, in Belgrade, although the cause was different. Enjoying the hospitality of Belgrade’s priests, he learned of the widespread practice of widowed priests taking the monastic vows, as well as of the practice of divorcing on the part of priests wishing to withdraw into monastic solitude. Upon his objection that the latter was contrary to Holy Scripture (“wider die Heilige Schiff”), there ensued the – by now familiar to him – laconic answer – “that is the custom among us” – after which all discussion would become superfluous.<sup>83</sup>

This phrase was intended to express in the most succinct manner possible the significance and importance of the current custom. Detailed and scholarly explanations regarding its origins, meaning, etc., were not necessary for it to be respected. The importance of the rite was rooted in its holiness and belief in its longevity and unchangeability. Objections and reference to authorities originating outside the local community with the goal of the local practice being abandoned did not succeed. The answer given to Gerlach is not just evidence of a well-established practice, but also of a certain strategy of resistance towards views and attitudes that did not originate from a domestic environment. It is within this paradigm that we should examine the extent of the influence of the mediaeval penitentials of parish priests and the ruling hierarchy of the mediaeval Church.

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<sup>82</sup> “Es sey bey ihnen der Brauch also,” Ibidem, 528.

<sup>83</sup> “...antworteten sie mir: Es sey bey ihnen der Gebrauch also,” Ibidem, 530. The historiography is familiar only with the first part of Gerlach’s conversation with the priests in which they discuss the taking of monastic vows by a widowed priest, R. Grujić, *Iz naše prošlosti: O drugom braku sveštenstva* [From Our Past: On the Second Marriage of Priest] (Sremski Karlovci, 1909), 3–4.

## VII. Parish and Authority: The Flock and Its Priest

The parish priest was the most important mediator in the spread of the views and knowledge of the Church elite in the parish. As noted, this knowledge was not transmitted in the parish in its “learned” form, while the parish priesthood was in many ways a partaker of the culture of its parishioners.<sup>84</sup> The priest’s knowledge and his views of the world were significantly formed by the cultural forms of the environment in which he grew up and worked. Probably in line with the custom of parish visitations of his time – and being a clergyman himself – Gerlach paid due attention to the societal position of the parish priesthood. He noted that in terms of dress or external appearance the priest was not particularly distinct from other parishioners and that he dressed “as the Bulgarian” or “as any other Serbian peasant.”<sup>85</sup> In the summer, he could walk barefoot, with shortened trousers, thus dressed holding a funeral service, as in the case of the tragically deceased in Grocka. What did set him apart from his flock in terms of his external appearance was his “priest’s hat” (“Pfaffenhütlein” or “Priester Cäplein”).<sup>86</sup> It was an important item of clothing, which indicated the social standing of the individual and represented the basic symbol of the priestly occupation.<sup>87</sup> During the time of Christian and Muslim rulers, the Orthodox clergy of the Slavic Churches did not fully belong to the economically ruling class.<sup>88</sup> The basic income of the priests were derived from their services around the parish, or rather from offertory or “alms” (“Allmosen“), as Gerlach referred to them, which they received for baptisms, weddings, confessions and funerals.<sup>89</sup> These were also incomes mentioned in the

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, 10–21, passim; J.-C. Schmitt, “Religion, Folklore, and Society,” 382.

<sup>85</sup> “Wie ein ander Bulgar” or “wie ein ander Servischer Bauer,” *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 523, 528.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, 523, 528.

<sup>87</sup> The “priest’s cap” as a symbol of the priestly rank is mentioned in Article 31 of Dušan’s Code, M. Burr, “The Code of Stephan Dušan: Tsar and Autocrat of the Serbs and Greeks,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 28 (1949): 204.

<sup>88</sup> D. Dinić-Knežević, “Prilog proučavanju sveštenstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji” [“A Contribution to the Study of the Priesthood in Medieval Serbia ”], *Godišnjak Filozofskog Fakulteta u Novom Sadu* XI/1 (1968): 51–56.

<sup>89</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 530. The so-called “epitrachelion income” is referred to here, regarding which we know little due to the lack of sources, cf. R. Grujić, *Srednjovekovno srpsko parohijsko sveštenstvo* [The Medieval Serbian Parish Priesthood] (Skopje,

mediaeval penitentials, although not the only ones in the period of Christian rulers.<sup>90</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, the mentioned income was not enough to support the existence of many priests, hence some of them engaged in additional, artisanal work, as in the case of the Belgrade archpriest Lazar, who was “a dyer” (“Färber”).<sup>91</sup>

What set the priest apart from his flock was mastery of the holy sacraments and the written word, from which were derived the priest’s spiritual powers in the social life of the parish.<sup>92</sup> As literate individuals, in mediaeval Serbia and Bulgaria they were the bearers of basic education and disseminators of written texts through the copying of books necessary for the Church life of the community. Gerlach left testimony of the existence of several educational centres in the regions along the road to Constantinople. In Sofia, the metropolitan’s seat, there was a “Bulgarian school” and alongside it another one for boys.<sup>93</sup> The parish priesthood was trained in individual monasteries, where schools were also established. Gerlach mentions them in the monastery of St. Demetrius not far from Bela Palanka and the wider area of Belgrade, in the monastery of St. Nicholas and in Hopovo in Fruška Gora (most probably both refer to the same monastery).<sup>94</sup>

The body of knowledge contained in the penitentials from the Trebnik (prayer book) were mainly intended for the parish priesthood, which was expected to inform the believers regarding various transgressions and different types of sins. In them, the weight of each sin was determined through the length of penance. A particular tool for transmitting such knowledge was confession, which was, according to the penitentials, compulsory twice a year, at the start of the Christmas

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1923), 62. In his writings, B. Kuripešić, *Itinerarium*, 44 writes vaguely and idealistically of the parish which supports its priest. Regarding the modest incomes of parish priests under the Ottomans, see M. Mirković, *Pravni položaj i karakter srpske crkve pod turskom vlašću (1459–1766)* [Legal Status and Character of the Serbian Church under Turkish Rule] (Beograd: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 1965), 147–150.

<sup>90</sup> A. Solovjev, “Srpska crkvena pravila iz XIV veka” [Serbian Ecclesiastical Rules from the 14th Century], *Glasnik SND* 14 (1934): 37. Cf. D. Dinić–Knežević, “Prilog proučavanju sveštenstva,” 56–61.

<sup>91</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 530; cf. R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, 64, 121.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. S. Bojanin, “Jezik pretnje u srednjovekovnim pokajničkim knjigama” [“The Language of Threat in the Medieval Penitentials”], in *Theolinguistic Studies of Slavonic Language*, ed. J. Grković-Mejdžor and K. Končarević (Beograd: SANU, 2013), 333–356.

<sup>93</sup> *Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 521.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, 524, 530.



and Easter fasts for all those older than 12 years.<sup>95</sup> The confessor was expected to question the confessant regarding a larger number of sins written down on lists or according to questionnaires that were usually part of the rite of confession. How this worked in practice and the extent to which the priest strictly kept to the instructions regarding confession, we do not reliably know. Certain descriptions of the practice are given by Gerlach who, at the time of the aforementioned Feast of St. Paraskeva in the village of the same name near Constantinople, witnessed the confession of the parishioners. They formed a queue in the church and waited for the priest or monk to hear their confession, each one of them individually before the icon of St. Paraskeva. After confession, a book was placed on their heads from which prayers of absolution were read. At the end of the rite, each person left some money for the priest, between 6 and 20 aspers.<sup>96</sup> As usual, Gerlach does not fail to notice the gifts to the priests for their services, derived from their power to administer the sacraments. He lists the liturgies (masses), betrothals, weddings funerals, and “other spiritual services.” Holiness and money went hand in hand in the everyday life of the parish, “as with the Papists” (“wie auch bey den Papisten”), notes the Protestant clergyman.<sup>97</sup>

The authority of the priest was not derived merely from his ordination; rather, he had to be accepted by his local community as well. The penitentials contain detailed instructions to priests on how to engage with their flock and how to preserve their authority.<sup>98</sup> Gerlach recorded the existence of disagreements between the inhabitants of the village of Klokotnica and their priest who ministered to several other villages.<sup>99</sup> It would seem that the disagreements were significant, as the peasants openly expressed their discontent to a foreigner. They blamed their priest for his poor pastoral work, accusing him of being responsible for their poor knowledge of the Christian faith. Aside from that, he forced them to fast strictly including a complete ban on eating meat. It would seem that the reasons for their dissatisfaction lay elsewhere. The parish priest displayed certain ambitions to interfere with the marriage policies of his parishioners on the authority of his spiritual power. He banned entry into

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<sup>95</sup> A. Solovjev, “Srpska crkvena pravila iz XIV veka,” 36.

<sup>96</sup> *Gerlachs des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 368; see above note. Треба 89.

<sup>97</sup> *Gerlachs des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 357.

<sup>98</sup> See above note. Треба 92.

<sup>99</sup> *Gerlachs des Aeltern Tage-Buch*, 514–515.

second marriage, even when a spouse had died early. Such actions brought about a significant increase in the number of young widows in the village. If someone did dare to enter into a second marriage, the priest had to be informed and the couple married for the second time would have to pay him a significant amount of money. In ordinary circumstances, notes Gerlach, the second marriage tax paid to the priest was twice as much as for the first (24 aspers), while the local spahi also needed to be paid. On the basis of this information, it is clear that the parish priest used his religious and societal position to impose on his parishioners control over their eating habits and, indirectly, over the creation of kinship and societal ties at the local level.

### **VIII. “That is the Custom among Us”**

Gerlach’s travel diary contains information unusually important for studying the popular culture of the South Slavic lands not only in the 16th century but also in the Late Middle Ages. The author describes phenomena that are mediaeval, long present in the parish and particular to its societal and religious function. These phenomena can be considered in the context of relations between the learned and written culture and the local culture of the oral word. In certain mediaeval sources, they are presented typologically or determined by genre, whether in penitential books, certain hagiographies or apocryphal literature, regarding which Aaron Gurevich has written. When it comes to South-Eastern Europe, it is important to stress the continuity of these relations and phenomena in the parish after the Ottoman conquest. In a certain way, this continuity was confirmed ecclesiastically and politically through the renewal of the Patriarchate of Peć in 1557, within whose boundaries lay most of the South Slavic communities along the road to Constantinople through which Stephan Gerlach travelled.

Doubtless, the significance of the diary for this research topic owes most to its author. Unlike his colleagues in Catholic and Protestant Europe who scrutinised the customs of ordinary people, Gerlach can be seen as a “double outsider” in the Slavic (as well as Greek) lands. He is a member of the learned class who visits rural communities while on the other hand, as a Protestant he belongs to different religious and political centres and their customs. Viewing societal phenomena from that fairly distant position, he pointed in a generalised way to a certain unity of customs and beliefs in the Orthodox Greek–Slavic–Romanian world of

South-Eastern and Eastern Europe. Such a view does not necessarily see all the possible diversity of local customs in individual parishes, nor does it more precisely or clearly testify to the dynamics of control over the parishes on the part of Orthodox religious centres in Constantinople or Peć. Thanks to his position of being a foreigner in passing, rather than a domestic reformer of village customs, Gerlach bequeathed to us very interesting information regarding Church and everyday life in the lay environment of the Balkan peninsula. Thanks to his meticulously kept diary, the “silent majority” was in some moments able to “speak up,” briefly but fairly clearly and convincingly.

Diglossia was present in the official and ritual communication of the Church (the liturgy and other Church rites) and the extent to which an individual peasant, herder or artisan – who represented the bulk of the population in the parishes of the Ottoman period – understood official Church rites and prayers was dependent on the individual efforts of a priest (or his bishop). These same groups did not belong to a privileged social class, nor were they such in mediaeval Christian states. In Gerlach's time, it is important to note, local masters – as adherents of the Islamic religion – remained outside the parish structure. However, this did not mean that there was no societal or economic stratification in the South Slavic parish. It was vaguely described by the traveller in the case of the creation of the societal concept of space in the parish church in Belgrade. It is clearly recognizable from his descriptions that a certain consensus existed in the parish regarding deference towards certain customs, either those related to official Church rites or other, unofficial ones. Organization of societal space (the church and the churchyard) and time (feast days), behaviour during the liturgy and after it, devotion to icons and relics, and the belief in saints and their miraculous apotropaic powers, were part of the experience and knowledge of the local community. An important role in creating this knowledge lay with the parish priest who interpreted the basics of Christian teachings. Certain disagreements could arise between him and the flock (Klokotnica) during the unaligned application of general and comprehensive traditions of the Church in the sphere of local knowledge and behaviour. Customs and experiences cultivated in the parish represented the strong identity of the entire community. Hence, it was not necessary to explain them in terms of categories of “high” culture. The smallest attempts at change from “above” could run into corresponding forms of resistance. In

communication with the curious foreigner, there was a type of indeterminate, but unambiguous response which expressed faith in the complete validity of the practice – “antworteten sie mir: ‘Es sey bey ihnen der Gebrauch also,’” i.e. “they answered me: ‘that is the custom among us.’”

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# Vegetation in the Territories of Serbia and Southern Hungary in Travel Accounts (Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries)

Aleksandar Krstić<sup>1</sup>

Travellers passing through the territory of present-day Serbia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries used several roads. The section of the well-known Constantinople Road between Buda and Constantinople was travelled the most, while Belgrade was mostly reached from Buda by boat. The corresponding land route was used far less frequently. Travelling back from Constantinople, some travellers would use the land route running across Srem and Baranja to get from Belgrade to Buda and Vienna. While the Buda–Belgrade section stretched across areas of either uniformly flat land or, occasionally, marshlands, the Belgrade–Sofia Road ran through the river valleys and mountainous terrain. This route was used by official European state delegations, primarily those of the Holy Roman Empire, on their diplomatic missions to Constantinople. The mission members left travel accounts or diary entries with descriptions of their travels through southern Hungary and Serbia.<sup>2</sup> Some travellers made use of the so-called

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<sup>2</sup> O. Zirojević, *Carigradski drum od Beograda do Budima u XVI i XVII veku* [The Constantinople Road from Belgrade to Buda in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries] (Novi Sad: Institut za izučavanje istorije Vojvodine, 1976), 4–9; eadem, O. Zirojević, “Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije (1459–1683)” [The Constantinople Road from Belgrade to Sofia (1459–1683)], *Zbornik Istorijskog muzeja Srbije* 7 (1970), 20–41; Z. Konstantinović, *Deutsche Reisebeschreibungen über Serbien und Montenegro* (München: Verlag R. Oldenburg, 1960), 21–37; S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs dans l’empire ottoman (XIV–XV<sup>e</sup>ème siècles). Bibliographie, itinéraire et inventaires des lieux habités* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), 46–49, passim; M. Popović, *Von Budapest nach Istanbul. Die Via Traiana im Spiegel der Reiseliteratur des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2010); we used the book in its Serbian translation: M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja. Via Traiana u svetlu putopisne literature u periodu od 14. do 16. veka* [From Buda to Constantinople. *Via Traiana* in the light of travel literature from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century] (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2017), 113–117, 130–133, 143–145, 147–162.

“Via Drine,” running from Dubrovnik, through Herzegovina – via Trebinje, Foča, and Goražde, to the Lim river valley. Others would leave Foča for Serbia up the river Čehotina, then across Pljevlja, to Prijepolje. Less often, some travellers would reach Serbia from Bosnia, from the direction of Srebrenica, where they would arrive by the road running from Split. Venetians, also predominantly members of official diplomatic missions, mostly used the maritime road from Venice to Constantinople. They also frequently crossed the sea to Split or Dubrovnik, and took the land road from there onwards.<sup>3</sup> As a result of an increased interest of the French public in the Orient and the Ottoman Empire, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the appearance of many travel books and treatises. Their authors included members of diplomatic missions and various state delegations, as well as adventurers travelling to the East. On their journeys, they travelled down the Constantinople Road and other routes connecting the Adriatic coast to the central and eastern areas of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>4</sup> In the fifteenth and most of the sixteenth centuries, travellers from England passing through these parts were mostly pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, tradesmen appeared on these travels, as did those who wanted to complete their education in preparation for a career in state service or business, and those driven by an adventurous spirit.<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>3</sup> G. Škrivanić, *Putevi u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* [Roads in Medieval Serbia] (Beograd: Turistička štampa, 1974), 43–50, 60–61; P. Matković, “Putovanja po balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka. III–V. Putovanje Kornelija Duplicia Šepera g. 1533; Putovanje Jeana Chesneau-a g. 1547.; Putovanje Katarina Zena g. 1550” [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Parts III–V. Travels of Corneille Duplicius de Schepper in 1533, Jean Chesneau in 1547 and Caterino Zeno in 1550], *Rad Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* (hereafter: *Rad JAZU*) 62 (1882): 45–133; idem, “Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka: XIV. Dnevni o putovanju mletačkih poslanstva u Carigrad: osobito Jakova Sorance od g. 1575. i 1581., i Pavla Kontarina od g. 1580” [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Part XIV. Diaries on the journeys of the Venetian embassies to Constantinople, especially Jacob Sorance’s in 1575 and 1581, and Paul Contarini’s in 1580], *Rad JAZU* 124 (1895): 1–102; S. Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs*, 38–40.

<sup>4</sup> R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika XVI–XVII veka* [Belgrade and Serbia in the Writings of French Contemporaries of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *Građa za istoriju Beograda* (Beograd: Istorijski arhiv, 1961, 33–108.

<sup>5</sup> V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze između jugoslovenskih zemalja i Engleske do 1700. godine* [Cultural relations between the Yugoslav lands and England before 1700] (Beograd: SANU, Posebna izdanja, 1972) 271–333; idem, “Stari engleski i škotski putopisci o uslovima putovanja kroz naše zemlje” [Old English and Scottish travel writers on the conditions of travel through our countries], in *Britanski putnici u našim krajevima od sredine XV do početka*

descriptions provided by the Western travellers through the Balkan Peninsula were significantly expanded by the notes left by the well-known Ottoman travel writer Evliya Çelebi on his journeys around these parts in the 1660s.<sup>6</sup>

Western travellers were mostly passing through Hungary and the Balkan countries, and rarely stayed in a single location for more than one day. Depending on the reason for travel, their education, personal interests, or what they experienced on their journeys, different aspects drew their attention. Some travellers recorded the information on the fortresses or ruins thereof, on the towns and settlements that they passed through and stayed in, on the Christian and Muslim religious buildings, or on the remnants of the Roman road and other traces of the ancient past. Some document the information on the food and drink they consumed on the road, as well as their accommodation, weather conditions, or the hardships of travel. Others were interested in the relationships between the Turks and the subjugated Christian populace, as well as the customs and lifestyles of the Turks and the Balkan nations they encountered in their travels. Descriptions of the vegetation along the roads were certainly not the focus of their observations, and many travel writers dedicated little to no attention to that at all. Nonetheless, there were many factors at play that resulted in the travel writers passing through the territory of present-day Serbia between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries leaving mostly summarizing information on

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XIX *veka* [British travellers in our region from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century], ed. Z. Levental (Gornji Milanovac: Dečje novine, 1989), 20–29.

<sup>6</sup> Evliyâ Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zillî, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 307 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu – Dîzîni* [Evliyâ Çelebi's Book of Travels. Vol. V. Transcription of the Baghdad Manuscript no. 307 of the Topkapı Palace Library with Index], ed. Y. Dağlı, S. A. Kahraman, İ. Sezgin (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001); *VI. Kitap, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Revan 1457 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu – Dîzîni* [Vol. VI. Transcription of the Yerevan Manuscript no. 1457 of the Topkapı Palace Library with Index], ed. S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002); *VII. Kitap, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 308 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu – Dîzîni* [Vol. VII. Transcription of the Baghdad Manuscript no. 308 of the Topkapı Palace Library with Index], ed. Y. Dağlı, S. A. Kahraman, R. Dankoff (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003); Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis. Odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama*, prevod i komentar H. Šabanović [Travelogue. Excerpts on Yugoslav countries. Translation and comments by H. Šabanović] (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1979). On Evliya Çelebi and his work, see also: R. Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Boston–Leiden: Brill, 2004).

vegetation. Some showed considerable interest in the natural resources of the countries under the Ottoman rule, including soil fertility, distribution and level of cultivation of arable land, as well as types of agricultural crops (especially grain and vine). Others were taken by the thick forests that they made their way through, primarily due to the dangers lurking in them (above all the bandits and *hajduks*). Still, others deemed it necessary to inform their readers about what they had eaten and drunk on their journeys, ranging from bread made from different types of grain, through various fruit, to wine. This way, they indirectly left additional first-hand accounts of the crops cultivated in different locations and parts of today's Serbia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

On their journeys from Buda to Belgrade, travellers were struck first and foremost by the fortresses and settlements along the banks. However, the Flemish diplomat Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq noted in 1554 that there were many trees along the riverbanks, with trunks, branches, and stumps overhanging the river and posing a danger during sailing, especially in windy weather.<sup>8</sup> His colleague Antun Vrančić observed the riverbank areas between Buda and Petrovaradin from a boat one year earlier. He also mentions the Danube River bends, forested river islets, and numerous tree trunks in the water, all hindering the navigation. At the time, the consequences of the armed conflicts over many years, the destruction and the depopulation, resulted in the annexation of these areas to the Ottoman state (1526–1541), were still visible. The fields and vineyards were overgrown with weeds and shrubbery, and one could rarely see a farmer working in a field, or livestock grazing, while scenes of desolation were frequent. A Serbian

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<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, a certain number of travelogue editions were unavailable for me. Therefore, some travel writers and their works are not discussed in this essay.

<sup>8</sup> *Augerii Gisleinii Busbequii Omnia quae extant* (Basel: Typis Jo. Brandmulleri, 1740), 18–19. About Busbecq, see: Z. von Martels, “On his Majesty’s Service. Augerius Busbequius, Courtier and Diplomat of Maximilian II,” in *Kaiser Maximilian II. Kultur und Politik im 16. Jahrhundert* (Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit 19), ed. F. Edelmayr, A. Kohler (München: Verlag R. Oldenburg, 1992), 169–195; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie der Reisenden und Migranten ins Osmanische Reich (1396–1611). Berichterstatte aus dem Heiligen Römischen Reich, außer burgundische Gebiete und Reichsromania*, II (Leipzig: Eudora-Verlag, 2006), 39–77; J. Novaković Lopušina, *Srbi i jugoistočna Evropa u nizozemskim izvorima do 1918. godine* [Serbs and Southeastern Europe in Dutch Sources until 1918] (Beograd: Revision, 1999), 30–34; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 77–78.

bargee told the traveller on the occasion that a single village had had more farmers than could now be found in around thirty villages, adding that there were abandoned settlements whose names were lost entirely. Vrančić says that Banoštor in Srem was in ruins and that the vineyards surrounding the fort like a wreath were desolate. He further states that (Sremska) Kamenica used to have 150 brick houses, and that it had only 15 reed ones at that moment. When the Turks took hold of it, they smashed 7,000 barrels of wine, so wine flowed in a stream. (Sremski) Karlovci was also devastated, but had nonetheless suffered less damage, so Vrančić noted fertile fields and vineyards around this town. He adds that the wine from Srem was famous far and wide. As for Fruška Gora, he relates it was famous for the vineyards situated at its foot, while the higher areas of the mountain were overgrown with thick and pleasant forests. He could see only 20 vineyards from the Danube, whereas earlier all the deforested land had been under vineyards, especially the hillocks facing south.<sup>9</sup> On his way back from Constantinople, after crossing from Belgrade to Srem, Busbecq notices that the grass was so tall there, that a coach, that went before, could hardly be seen by another that came after. For Busbecq, that was a great argument of the goodness of the soil.<sup>10</sup>

In 1587, Reinhold Lubenau described the fields downstream from the confluence of the Drava and Danube rivers, where large numbers of livestock used to graze. Speaking of the area of land stretching along the banks of the Danube, he stresses its wealth, estimating that it could feed not only Hungary but also Germany, Croatia, Bosnia, and even Italy. Adding that this area had an abundance of grain and wines, he makes mention of beautiful gardens further downstream, around Erdut in Srem, which had in his day become desolate, as well as the dried-up trees. Near the Petrovaradin fortress, he saw beautiful vineyards. After he describes Belgrade, where the border between Hungary and Serbia used to be, Lubenau speaks in general terms about the wealth of Hungary, so we do

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<sup>9</sup> A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái* [The entire work], Monumenta Hungariae Historica, Scriptorum II (Pest: Eggenberger Ferdinánd, 1857), 289–295; P. Matković, “Putovanja po balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka VI. Putovanje Antuna Vrančića g 1553” [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16th century. Part VI. The journey of Antun Vrančić in 1553], *Rad JAZU* 71 (1884): 5–14, 16–17; A. Krstić, “Bačka pod osmanskim vlašću” [Bačka under Ottoman Rule], *Bačka kroz vekove: slojevi kultura Bačke*, ed. Miodrag Matićki, Vidojko Jović (Beograd: Vukova zadužbina, 2014), 59–60. On Vrančić see also: R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, X, 55–71; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 76–77.

<sup>10</sup> *Augerii Gisenii Busbequii Omnia quae extant*, 99–100.

not know what actually relates to the area of present-day Vojvodina through which he passed. He mentions ores, which most probably refers to Transylvania, then fowl and game, several species of Hungarian plums, watermelons, potato, Spanish and other types of cherries, and various apples and pears.<sup>11</sup> Having arrived in Belgrade ten years earlier (1577), Salomon Schweigger makes similar claims, noting that Hungary was rich in various crops, fruits (apples, pears, plums, melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, etc.), animals, fish, wines, ores, forests, and trees. Rich fields of grain and vineyards could also be referring to the area of present-day Vojvodina.<sup>12</sup>

Describing the journey through Srem from Zemun to Sotin in 1555, Hans Dernschwam recorded that it was a beautiful, flat and fertile area, with vineyards in the direction of the Danube, lying on low, shady hills. Before his arrival in Sotin, he passed through a pleasant flat tract of land, riding across a heath so overgrown that its beautiful tall grass resembled shrubbery.<sup>13</sup> Some ten years later (1567), Marco Antonio Pigafetta recorded that the land around the village of Mali Karlovci in Srem

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<sup>11</sup> W. Sahn, *Beschreibung der Reisen des Reinhold Lubenau*, Mitteilungen aus der Stadtbibliothek zu Königsberg in Preußen, VI (Königsberg in Preußen, 1915), 116–118, 124–125; the Serbian translation and comments: O. Zirojević, “Rajnold Lubenau o Beogradu i Srbiji 1587. godine” [Reinhold Lubenau about Belgrade and Serbia in 1587], *Godišnjak grada Beograda* 13 (1966): 51–52. About Lubenau, see also: J. Koder, “Early Modern Times Travellers as a Source for the Historical Geography of Byzantium: The Diary of Reinhold Lubenau,” in *Géographie Historique du Monde Méditerranéen* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 7), ed. Hélène Ahrweiler (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1988), 141–148; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, V, 254–304; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 87–89.

<sup>12</sup> S. Schweigger, *Ein neue Reyssbeschreibung auss Teutichland nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem*, Nürnberg 1608, 37–38; P. Matković, “Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka XIII. Putopisi Stj. Gerlacha i Sal. Schweigera, ili opisi putovanja carskih poslanstva u Carigrad, naime Davida Ungnada od g. 1573–78. i Joach. Sinzendorfa od g. 1577.” [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16th century, part XIII. Travelogues of St. Gerlach and Sal. Schweigger, or descriptions of the travels of the imperial embassies to Constantinople, namely David Ungnad’s in 1573–1578 and Joach. Sinzendorf’s in 1577], *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 87. About Schweigger see also: R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, VIII, 267–320; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 85–86.

<sup>13</sup> F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam’s Tagebuch einer Reise nach Konstantinopel und Kleinasien* (München–Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1923), 264–265. M. Vlainac, “Iz putopisa Hansa Dernšvama 1553–1555. godine” [From the travelogue of Hans Dernschwam 1553–1555], *Brastvo* 21 (1927): 101. About Dernschwam and his journey see: R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, II, 199–220; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 74–76.

(present-day Karlovčić west of Belgrade)<sup>14</sup> was desolate and cultivated to a minimal degree. Stating that the Roman emperor Probus had sown vineyards on Mount Fruška Gora, Pigafetta notes that the undulating landscape would be beautiful and fertile, were it to be cultivated as it once had been.<sup>15</sup> On his way to Constantinople in 1573, accompanying the emperor's envoy David Ungnad, Stephan Gerlach also states that Fruška Gora was full of vineyards and fields. He notices that in the upper town in Slankamen the gardens were the only thing that was pleasant and worth mentioning. Returning in 1578 from the Ottoman capital, Gerlach crossed from Belgrade to Zemun. He notes that the beautiful Hungarian plains could be seen from there, resembling a large tract of farmland. He also mentions beautiful fields under grain and vineyards situated around the Danube. Travelling further on towards Sremska Mitrovica, he took a beautiful flat road along both cultivated and uncultivated fields. The fields were covered by an abundance of grass, which is why the Serbs had large numbers of livestock. There was also shrubbery in the flatlands by the Sava, but he did not see a single tree on his journey.<sup>16</sup> Melchior Besolt noted in 1584 that good wine was made in Karlovci, of a very beautiful colour, and that he had not had anything better since Vienna.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Đ. Kostić, *Reiseberichte über Serbien im Spiegel der Ortsnamen (1539–1740)* (München: LDV, 1998), 31.

<sup>15</sup> "Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette u Carigrad od god. 1567" [The Travelogue of Marco Antonio Pigafetta to Constantinople from 1567], ed. P. Matković, *Starine JAZU* 22 (1890): 183–184. P. Matković, "Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka. X. Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette, ili drugo putovanje Antuna Vrančića u Carigrad 1567. godine" [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16th century. Part X. Travelogue of Marco Antonio Pigafetta or the second journey of Antun Vrančić to Constantinople in 1567], *Rad JAZU* 100 (1890): 140.

<sup>16</sup> *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch der von zween glornwürdigsten römischen Kaysern, Maxiimiliano u. Rudolpho, beyderseits den andern dieses Namens, höchst seeligster Gedächtniss, an die ottomanische Pforte zu Constantinopel abgefertigten und durch den wohlgebohrnen Herrn Hn. David Ungnad, Freyherrn zu Sonnegk u. Preyburg etc. römisch-kaiserl. Rath, mit würlklicher Erhalt- und Verlängerung des Friedens, zwischen dem ottomanischen u. römischen Kayserthum und demselben angehörigen Landen u. Königreichen etc. glücklichst vollbrachter Gesandtschaft* (Frankfurt am Mayn, 1674), 15, 531–532; P. Matković, "Putovanja XIII", *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 14–15, 61–62. On Gerlach and his travel account, see: R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, III, 46–122.

<sup>17</sup> M. Besolt, *Deß Wolgeborenen Herrn Heinrichs Herrn von Liechtenstein von Nicolsburg etc ... Reyß auf Constantinopel im 1584. Jar ...* in Leunclavius, *Neuwe Chronica Türckischer nation* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1590), 523. On Melchior Besolt and his journey, see: P. Matković, "Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka. XV. Putopisi Hen. Porša od g. 1579, g., A. Wolfa i Lev. Ryma od g. 1583. i Mel. Besolta od g. 1584" [Travels on the Balkan

Vineyards, good wine, beautiful pastures, and plenty of livestock around Karlovci were also noted by Maximilian Brandstetter in 1608.<sup>18</sup>

The French travel writer Quiclet produced an interesting description of Srem, having travelled to Constantinople via Venice and Dubrovnik in 1658. He entered Srem at Sremska Rača travelling from Sarajevo, making his way to Belgrade. From there he journeyed on towards Sofia by the Constantinople Road. Quiclet mentions a thick forest around the river Bosut in Srem, which travellers had to cross very cautiously because of the danger of bandits. After Sremska Mitrovica, Quiclet passed through the village of Šašinci and arrived in the village of Kraljevci. He describes the latter as being fenced in by means of a hedge rather than walls, and that it was surrounded by lovely flatlands and meadows full of horses, oxen, and cows. He emphasizes that he has never seen “such vast, so flat and so beautiful fields.” On his way to Belgrade, he also noted the villages of Putinci and Petrovci, where fields sown with barley, hemp, and “good hay” stretched on either side of the road, and red poppy flowers could be seen from time to time, with colours “transcending the colour of fire.”<sup>19</sup>

The English travel writer Edward Browne started in 1668 on a journey from Vienna, through Hungary and southeast Europe, arriving in Belgrade in September 1669. He states that he travelled from Buda to Belgrade over large plains, green swards and unworn roads. The land was blessed with rivers and fish, good horses and bread, and wine. In this way we can draw indirect conclusions about the grain fields and vineyards,

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Peninsula during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Part XV. Travelogues of Heinrich Porsch from 1579, Andreas Wolf and Levinus Rym from 1583 and Melchior Besolt from 1584], *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 43, 53; F. Babinger, “Melchior Besold, ein vergessener Stambulfahrer des 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante* 3 (München: Südosteuropa-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1976), 69–77.

<sup>18</sup> I. Bojničić, “Putovanje carskoga poslanstva u Carigrad g. 1608” [The Journey of the Imperial Embassy to Constantinople in 1608], *Vjesnik kraljevskoga hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskoga zemaljskoga arhiva* 12 (1910): 212–213; J. Bogičević, “Putovanje carskog poslanstva u Carigrad 1608. godine” [The Journey of the Imperial Embassy to Constantinople in 1608], *Glasnik Istorijskog društva u Novom Sadu* 4 (1931): 441.

<sup>19</sup> *Les Voyages de M. Quiclet à Constantinople par terre. Enrichis d'Annotatations par le Sieur P. M. L.* (Paris: Pierre Bienfait, 1664), 96–97, 100–104. Parts of Quiclet's travel account, as well as of the works of other French travel writers from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries making references to Serbia (the French original and the Serbian translation) were published by: R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 192, 436. About Quiclet, see: *Ibidem*, 84–87.



discussed by other travel writers as well. Browne states that no other place in Europe had better bread and that it was very cheap – one could buy for two pence as much bread as for 12 pence in England. He adds that the Srem wines were very strong and good to drink. Dr. Browne also mentions an island near Belgrade, made from the silt of the Sava and Danube rivers,<sup>20</sup> where nothing could be seen 35 years before, but at the time of his visit it was full of trees.<sup>21</sup>

On the territory of Srem, Evliya Çelebi mentions vineyards and gardens in Nemci (Nijemci on the Croatian side of the present-day state border), Irig, Grgurevci, the town of Fruška, Sremski Karlovci, Petrovaradin, and Čerević. The town of Rača was situated in an area covered in greenery, and was famous for bread, plums, apples, and grapes. Morović lay in a green field on a flat terrain, and Nemci was also in a large and fertile field full of flowers and greenery. Their bread, butter, honey, and white cherries were very good. Evliya describes Sremska Mitrovica as lying in a field of green, and notes that when cherries were in season, throngs of people gathered in the town, purportedly as many as 40,000 to 50,000. The town (*kasaba*) that he calls Fruška, which may be identified as Vrdnik,<sup>22</sup> Evliya describes as lying near the Fruška Gora plateau and being surrounded by vineyards. In addition to trade, viticulture was the main activity of its inhabitants. Evliya makes mention of Sremski Karlovci plums in addition to vineyards. From Sremski Karlovci to Petrovaradin, the road ran through forests and vineyards, villages with large populations and green fields. From Petrovaradin to Čerević, he passed through villages situated on hills with vineyards and gardens. The entire southern side of Čerević was rich in forests and

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<sup>20</sup> The present-day Veliko ratno ostrvo (“The Great War Island”) is at the confluence of the Danube and Sava rivers in Belgrade.

<sup>21</sup> E. Brown, *A Brief Account of Some Travels in Hungaria, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, and Friuli: As Also Some Observations on the Gold, Silver, Copper, Quick-silver Mines, Baths, and Mineral Waters in Those Parts: with the Figures of Some Habits and Remarkable Places* (London: Benj. Tooke, 1673), 9–12, 39; the Serbian translation: Z. Levental, *Britanski putnici*, 118–119, 123–134. About Browne, see: N. Moore, “Browne Edward (1644–1708),” in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. L. Stephen, (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1886) 42–43; K. van Strien, “Browne, Edward (1644–1708),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com) (accessed March 21, 2020); V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, 289–290.

<sup>22</sup> A. Krstić, “Vreme turske vlasti u Sremu” [The Period of Ottoman Rule in Srem], *Srem kroz vekove: slojevi kultura Srema* [Srem throughout the centuries: layers of the Srem cultures], ed. Miodrag Maticki (Beograd: Vukova zadužbina, 2007), 94–95.

vineyards. From Banoštor to Ilok, the road ran through stone-covered terrain, forests, and vineyards. He describes Voćin (present-day Šarengrad in Croatia) as having many vineyards and gardens, adding that the fruit there was so succulent that the plums and apples kept their sweetness long after being picked.<sup>23</sup>

The first-hand accounts of the territory of present-day Banat are very rare, as this area was out of the way of diplomatic envoys and other passengers travelling from Vienna to Constantinople. This is why the account made by the Burgundian traveller Bertrandon de la Broquière is precious. Returning from the Holy Land in 1433, he travelled through Serbia and Hungary. Broquière crossed into Pančevo from Belgrade by boat, reaching Bečkerek (Beeskerek, present-day Zrenjanin) and Bečej. There he crossed the river Tisa and journeyed on to Szeged. He notes that from Pančevo onwards he was making his way along the “flattest land” he had ever seen, never seeing a hill or a valley. Between Bečej and Szeged he did not see a single tree except for two small groves hemmed in by rivers. He adds that, due to the lack of wood, the locals used hay and reed which could be found at rivers and in marshland to light a fire.<sup>24</sup> Almost two and a half centuries later (1660), Evliya Çelebi relates that flat fields without any stones stretched on north-eastwards from Pančevo towards the village of Seleuš. This area had so much plants and grass that a horseman could lose his bearings there. In the Banat area, Evliya notes gardens and vineyards in Bečej, Bečkerek and Vršac. Vine was sown on

<sup>23</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, VI. Kitap, 102–103, 296–297; VII. Kitap, 54–59; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 354–356, 486–487, 514–526. On agricultural production in the area of Srem, based on contemporary Ottoman sources (tax registers), see: B. W. McGowan, “Food Supply and Taxation on the Middle Danube (1568–1579),” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 1 (1969): 148–150, 168–171, 174, 193–194; N. Lemajić, “Agrarni odnosi i razvoj poljoprivrede u Sremu polovinom 16. veka” [Agrarian relations and development of agriculture in Srem in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century], *Istraživanja* 15 (2004): 75–103; N. Močaniin, *Town and Country on the Middle Danube 1526–1690* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2006), 15–66, 183–193.

<sup>24</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le voyage d'Outremer*, Recueil de voyages et de documents, ed. Charles Schefer and Henri Cordier (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1892), 231–232; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Putovanje preko mora* [The Journey across the Sea], the original text with the Serbian translation and comments of Miodrag Rajićić (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1950), 146–147. On Broquière and his travel account, see also: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, ed. Norbert Angermann et al. (München – Zürich: Lexma Verlag, 1980), 2044; *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. I, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (New York–Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 284; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 51–52.

the eastern slopes of Vršачki Breg, below the ruins of the old fort and above the town of Vršac, and the ruby-coloured grapes were delicious. Evliya adds that in Bečkerek (whose Hungarian name he translates into Turkish as “five melons”) the river Begej supplies water to thousands of vineyards and gardens. He mentions that the inhabitants of Bešenova, situated in the Romanian part of present-day Banat, grew watermelons and melons, which points to the possibility that this fruits was also grown in the adjacent settlements of the Banat flatlands. Evliya travelled from Bečkerek to Felnak (Felnac, west of Arad) through fields and forests.<sup>25</sup> In Bačka, Evliya Čelebi noted in 1665 that Subotica, Bač, and Sombor were surrounded by vineyards and gardens, adding that melons and watermelons were sold in Sombor.<sup>26</sup>

Landscapes around Belgrade were described by travellers arriving in this city from three different directions: from Buda, from where one travelled mostly by boat; from the direction of Niš via Grocka; and by a road from Valjevo. Antun Vrančić noted in 1553 the gardens in Belgrade, on the outskirts in the eastern and southern sides of the city. Two decades later, Stephan Gerlach also said that the numerous gardens by the houses in the city and the surrounding area were more beautiful than those in Buda.<sup>27</sup> Melchior Besolt noted in 1584 that Belgrade had many gardens, as it was located on the slopes of hillocks, the air there was moderate, and the seasons pleasant. However, when one left Belgrade and made way towards Niš, the land was abandoned and depopulated, with no inhabitants five to six miles off the road.<sup>28</sup> In 1616, Adam Wenner noticed that Belgrade was a city situated in a very fertile area

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<sup>25</sup> *Evliya Čelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 201; VII. Kitap, 144, 166; Evliya Čelebi, *Putopis*, 95, 539–543.

<sup>26</sup> *Evliya Čelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, VII. Kitap, 139–141; Evliya Čelebi, *Putopis*, 530–538; A. Krstić, “Bačka pod osmanskim vlašću”, 73–76.

<sup>27</sup> A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 297; *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Melchior Besolt, *Reyß auf Constantinopel im 1584. Jar*, 523; P. Matković, “Putovanja XV”; *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 53, 55–56, 60. See also: J. Kalić, “Evropski putopisci o Beogradu” [European travel writers on Belgrade], in *Beograd u delima evropskih putopisaca* [Belgrade in the works of European travel writers], ed. Đ. Kostić (Beograd: Balkanološki institut SANU, 2003) 13–16; Đ. Kostić, “Tvrđava, podgrade, grad: nemački pogled na Beograd” [A fortress, a suburb, a town: the German view of Belgrade], *ibidem*, 17–22; E. Miljković-Bojanić, “Putopis i istorijski izvor: Beograd u XVI veku” [An account of travels and historical source: Belgrade in the 16<sup>th</sup> century], *ibidem*, 46–52.

with beautiful gardens by the houses as large as in Nürnberg.<sup>29</sup> Baron Louis Deshayes de Courmenin, who visited Belgrade in 1621, also noted that it was full of gardens, which made the time spent in the city very pleasant. Further, he points out that there was an abundance of all sorts of foodstuffs in Belgrade and the surrounding area.<sup>30</sup> Evliya Çelebi calls Belgrade a “heavenly abode,” mentioning beautiful rose gardens and saying that only God knew how many flowers, leaves, and trees there were. Watermills on the Danube ground red, yellow, and white wheat, barley, white beans, fava beans, and millet, and the locals made bread from oat, rye, and buckwheat. Foodstuffs from various places arrived in Belgrade, so everything was cheap – apples, red onion, cucumber, pumpkin, cabbage, leek, and garlic, but rice and sugar were expensive. The garden of a Muslim scholar in Belgrade had apricots, juicy peaches, grapes, plums, pears, cherries, melons, and watermelons. Vineyards stretched from the southeast part of the city to the village of Višnjica, and further on to the fortress of Avala, situated on the mountain south of Belgrade bearing the same name. In the area surrounding Avala, Evliya saw many vineyards, vegetable patches, and beautiful gardens; at a local cemetery, he also saw a tall pistachio tree, which was very rare in Rumelia.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Adam Wenner, *Ein gantz new Reysebuch von Prag auß biß gen Constantinopel: das ist: Beschreibung der Legation und Reise, welche von der Roem. Kaey. auch zu Hungarn und Boeheimb, & Koenigl. May. Matthia II. an den Tuerckischen Kaeyser Ahmet, ... : So Anno 1616. angefangen und Anno 1618. gluecklich verricht ...* (Halbmayer, 1622), 27.

<sup>30</sup> *Voiage de Levant fait par le commandement du Roy en l'année 1621 par le Sr. D. C.* (Paris: Chez Adrian Taupinart, 1624), 54; Jovan Tomić and Radovan Samardžić argued that the travel account was written by someone from the baron's entourage: J. Tomić, “Opis dva putovanja preko Balkanskog Poluostrva francuskog poslanika de He-a u 1621. i 1626. g. od nepozatog pisca” [Description of two voyages across the Balkan Peninsula by the French envoy des Hayes in 1621 in 1626 from an unknown writer], *Spomenik Srpske kraljevske akademije* 37 (1900); R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 64–65, 164, 407. See also: G. Tongas, *L'Ambassadeur Louis Deshayes de Courmenin (1600—1632): Les relations de la France avec l'Empire Ottoman, le Danemark, la Suède, la Perse et la Russie* (Paris: Lavergne, 1937).

<sup>31</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 199–201; VI. Kitap, 54; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 90–94, 330–331; B. Tezcan Aksu, “Beograd u XVII veku prema viđenju Evlije Čelebije” [Belgrade in the 17th century as seen by Evliya Çelebi], *Srednji vek u srpskoj nauci, istoriji, književnosti i umetnosti* [The Middle Ages in Serbian Science, History, Literature and Arts] VIII, ed. G. Jovanović (Despotovac: Institut za srpski jezik SANU, Biblioteka “Resavska škola” Despotovac, 2017), 61–70. See also: H. Šabanović, “Grad i njegovo stanovništvo u XVI i XVII veku” [The city and its population in the 16th and 17th centuries], in *Istorija*

One of the first passengers to produce a description of Serbia in the fifteenth century was Bertrandon de la Broquière, who passed through its territory in 1433. Broquière travelled along the Južna Morava river valley from Niš to Kruševac, and when he left the river valley, he passed through a thick forest in the mountains, “not too tall or difficult to cross.”<sup>32</sup> Broquière probably traversed the slopes of Mount Jastrebac, as he subsequently arrived in Kruševac. After Kruševac, he travelled via Stalać down the Velika Morava valley, noting that he had been riding all day through a big forest and along a road running over hills and valleys. Although this area was forested and mountainous, Broquière noticed that it had a significant number of villages. The Burgundian then arrived in the market town of Nekudim (by the present-day village of Pridvorica near Smederevska Palanka), where one of the residences of the Serbian ruler, Despot Đurađ (George) Branković (1427–1456), was located.<sup>33</sup> Here Broquière met Despot Đurađ, while the latter was out hunting, as the area had groves and rivers suitable for game hunting and falconry. Travelling further towards Belgrade, Broquière passed “many great forests, hills and valleys,” stating that the villages he passed through had “good food, and especially good wine.”<sup>34</sup>

One hundred and twenty years later, travelling on the Constantinople Road through Serbia, Hans Dernschwam left interesting descriptions of its vegetation, as well as the decline in population levels and land cultivation compared to previous periods. In August 1533, he reached Belgrade by boat, and continued his journey to Constantinople on land. Returning from Constantinople in 1555, Dernschwam notices that area around Belgrade was beautiful and flat; earlier it had had an abundance

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Beograda [The History of Belgrade], vol. I, ed. V. Čubrilović (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1974), 386–422.

<sup>32</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le voyage d'Outremer*, 204–205; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Putorvanje preko mora*, 126–127.

<sup>33</sup> On Nekudim, see: A. Krstić, “Grad Nekudim i Nekudimska vlast” [The Town of Nekudim and Nekudim’s “Vlast” (County)], *Istorijski časopis* 55 (2007): 101–113; idem, “Srpski gradovi i trgovi u ugarskoj građi iz vremena ‘Duge vojne’ 1443/1444. godine” [Serbian Cities and Market Places in Hungarian Documentary Sources from the Time of the ‘Long Campaign’ (1443–1444)], *Istorijski časopis* 65 (2016): 139–141.

<sup>34</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le voyage d'Outremer*, 206–211; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Putorvanje preko mora*, 128–131; B. Stojkovski, “Bertrandon de la Broquière on Byzantium and Serbia. Richness and Decline in the Age of Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans”, *Byzanz und das Abendland V. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia*, ed. E. Juhász (Budapest: Eötvös-József-Collegium, 2018), 125–128.

of fields and vineyards, but meanwhile it was overgrown like a veritable desert, full of oak shrubs and forests. However, some plot borders could still be discerned.<sup>35</sup> In 1573, Stephen Gerlach travelled from Grocka on the Danube to Smederevska Palanka (Ak Kilise)<sup>36</sup> across fields, then through a large forest of young oaks, and again across cultivated and uncultivated fields. On his way back from Constantinople in 1578, Gerlach again mentions beautiful fields and a forest of young oak trees between Kolari near Smederevo and Grocka. There were fertile fields and vineyards one mile from Belgrade, with a beautiful area stretching past the forest and shrubbery, as this was the place of confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers.<sup>37</sup> In 1596, the English ambassador Edward Barton travelled from Constantinople to Belgrade, and his mission was described by Thomas Glover. He mentions a large flatland half a mile from Belgrade in the direction of Niš, with hawthorn providing a pleasant shade.<sup>38</sup> Andreas Wolf, who wrote an account on Baron Paul

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<sup>35</sup> F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 262. Ottoman tax registers (*defters*) provide significant data on agriculture and viticulture in the region of Belgrade during the 16th century. They reveals that inhabitants of almost two hundred villages grew wheat, barley, rye, millet, vines, hemp, cabbage, red onion, garlic and other vegetables. Villagers also paid dues for wood and hay, hives and, in some cases, for orchards and pannage in oak woods: H. Šabanović, *Turski izvori za istoriju Beograda I/1, katastarski popisi Beograda i okoline 1476–1566* [Ottoman sources for the history of Belgrade I-1, cadastral censuses of Belgrade and its surroundings 1476–1566] (Beograd: Istorijski arhiv Beograda, 1964) 117–577; A. Krstić, “Okolina Beograda u poznom srednjem veku (od početka XV do prvih decenija XVI veka)” [Surrounding Areas of Belgrade in the Late Middle Ages (from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century)], in *Srednji vek u srpskoj nauci, istoriji, književnosti i umetnosti* [The Middle Ages in Serbian Science, History, Literature and Arts], vol. IX, ed. G. Jovanović (Despotovac: Institut za srpski jezik SANU, Biblioteka “Resavska škola”, 2018), 216–220. See also: M. Blagojević, *Zemljoradnja u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* [Agriculture in Medieval Serbia] (Beograd: Službeni list SCG, 2004<sup>2</sup>), 81–90; E. Miljković-Bojanić, *Smederevski sandžuk (1476–1560). Zemlja, naselja stanovništvo* [The Smederevo Sanjak (1476–1560). Territory, Settlements, Population] (Beograd: Istorijski institut, Službeni glasnik, 2004), 78–96; M. Šteić, “Zemljoradnja i stočarstvo,” in *Šumadija u XV veku* [Agriculture and animal husbandry, in Šumadija in the 15<sup>th</sup> century], ed. S. Mišić, M. Koprivica (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2018), 243–248, 255, 259–260, 265, 271.

<sup>36</sup> Đ. Kostić, *Reiseberichte über Serbien*, 49.

<sup>37</sup> *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 17–18, 527–529; P. Matković, “Putovanja XIII”, *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 53–55.

<sup>38</sup> T. Glover, “The journey of Edward Barton Esquire, her Majesties Ambassadour with the Grand Signior, otherwise called the Great Turke, in Constantinople, Sultan Mahumet Chan,” in S. Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes*, vol. VIII

von Eitzing's mission to Constantinople in 1583, notes that the area around Belgrade was hilly, almost clay-like, whereas the area near Grocka was flat.<sup>39</sup> Louis Deshayes notes that he travelled from Grocka to Kolari across a hilly and forested tract of land in 1621.<sup>40</sup>

Dernschwam notes that the area around Smederevo, although more beautiful and fertile than other parts of Serbia, was mostly uncultivated, but there were beautiful vineyards around the city itself. Vrančić also saw vineyards and orchards on the hills around Smederevo.<sup>41</sup> In 1577, Solomon Schweigger states that there was an abundance of fertile soil between Kolari and Bela Crkva (present-day Smederevska Palanka), which could feed many people and livestock,<sup>42</sup> while Baron Deshayes adds that the village of Kolari was situated amid a meadow (1621).<sup>43</sup> Evliya Çelebi, who visited Smederevo in 1661, notes that the gardens and vineyards there stretched as far as the eye could see. Vineyards were found on hills near the fort of Kulić at the confluence of the Morava and Danube rivers, as well as sweet and succulent white cherries, black plums, and pears (1665). He also mentions that there were a few vineyards around Kolari.<sup>44</sup>

Travelling from Smederevo to Niš in 1533, Dernschwam mentions that they found barley, hay, and wine in the deserted Serbian village of Livada.<sup>45</sup> He also notes that the area around Jagodina in the Južna Morava valley was overgrown with copse, and mentions a forest through

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 307. The Serbian translation: Z. Levental, *Britanski putnici*, 61. On Glover, see also: V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, 396–397.

<sup>39</sup> “Wolf Andreas’ von Steinach Edelknabenfahrt nach Constantinopel (1583),” ed. J. von Zehn, *Steiermärkische Geschichtsblätter* II/4 (1881): 207; P. Matković, “Putovanja XV,” *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 29.

<sup>40</sup> *Voïage de Levant*, 65–66; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 169, 412.

<sup>41</sup> F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 5–6, 260; A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 298; M. Vlajinac, “Iz putopisa Hansa Dernšvama,” 61, 98; P. Matković, “Putovanja VI,” *Rad JAZU* 71 (1884): 20.

<sup>42</sup> S. Schweigger, *Ein neue Reyssbeschreibung*, 39–40; P. Matković, “Putovanja XIII,” *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 88; Đ. Kostić, *Reiseberichte über Serbien*, 52.

<sup>43</sup> *Voïage de Levant*, 66; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 169, 412.

<sup>44</sup> *Evlīya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 190, 318; VII. Kitap, 168; Evlija Çelebi, *Putopis*, 69, 314, 547–548.

<sup>45</sup> This village, which name means “meadow,” lay by the river Velika Morava near Veliko Orašje, east of Smederevska Palanka: A. Krstić, “Kučevo i Železnik u svetlu osmanskih deftera” [Kučevo and Železnik in the Light of the Ottoman Census Books], *Istorijski časopis* 49 (2003): 143; idem, “Grad Nekudim,” 101.

which he had passed on the way to this settlement. Dernschwam also relates that they stayed in a yard under two big oak trees in one of the neighbouring villages.<sup>46</sup> His fellow traveller Antun Vrančić writes about the forests in this region as well, noting that they left Smederevo and travelled through beautiful vast areas, with the road surrounded on either side with meadows. They spent the night in the village of Livada in the forest of Lomnica, near the confluence of the Jasenica and Velika Morava rivers. The forest was not wide and overly thick, but it was in fact dangerous because of bandits.<sup>47</sup> Vrančić was not the only writer mentioning the forest of Lomnica. Narrating at the beginning of the seventeenth century about the war led by Emperor Stefan Dušan against the Hungarian King Louis I in mid-fourteenth century, Ragusan historians Mauro Orbini and Jakob Lukarević noted that the Serbian emperor had retreated with his army behind a large forest of Lomnica and Mount Rudnik, one day of walking from the Danube.<sup>48</sup>

In 1578, Stephen Gerlach continued his journey from Jagodina towards Belgrade over a “high mountain,”<sup>49</sup> and across a flatland to the left of which there were villages full of grain fields. Travelling through forests and across meadows, he arrived in Batočina. Having climbed a big hill, Gerlach noted that one could see beautiful hillocks, bushes, and valleys, but that there were no villages and that the land was not

<sup>46</sup> Dernschwam correctly noticed that the name “Jagodina” derives from the Serbian word “jagoda,” which means “strawberry”: F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 6–7; M. Vlajinac, “Iz putopisa Hansa Dernšvama,” 61–62.

<sup>47</sup> A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 301–303; P. Matković, “Putovanja VI,” *Rad JAZU* 71 (1884): 22.

<sup>48</sup> Mauro Orbini, *Il regno degli Slavi* (Pesaro: G. Concordia, 1601), 262–263; Giacomo di Pietro Luccari, *Copioso ristretto degli annali di Rausa libri quatro* (Venezia, 1605), 57. During the late 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a large territorial administrative unit (*nahiye*) in the Smederevo Sanjak named Lomnica: A. Aličić, *Turski katastarski popisi nekih područja zapadne Srbije (XV i XVI vek)* [Ottoman cadastral censuses of some areas of western Serbia (15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)], vol. I (Čačak: Međuopštinski istorijski arhiv, 1984), 16–20; D. Bojanić, *Turski zakoni i zakonski propisi iz XV i XVI veka za smederevsku, kruševačku i vidinsku oblast* [Ottoman laws and regulations from the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries for the Smederevo, Kruševac and Vidin regions] (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 1974), 28, 93; E. Miljković-Bojanić, *Smederevski sandžak*, 51; A. Krstić, “Grad Nekudim,” 101.

<sup>49</sup> This was actually the low-lying hilly area near Bagrdan, forming the Bagrdan Gorge that Velika Morava flows through. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, A. Pouillet and Quiclet mention it as Mount *Deveh Bayrı*, overgrown with thick forests: R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 196, 212, 440, 458; O. Zirojević, “Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije,” 26.



cultivated. From there, they reached a flat wetland, arriving in the village of Velika Palanka (Ak Kilise or Bela Crkva, present-day Smederevska Palanka). In 1573, he mentions dangers on the way through the woods between Smederevska Palanka and Jagodina because of robbers.<sup>50</sup> The travel account of Andreas Wolf (1583) mentions that they hunted a bear near Bive Palanka (Velika, i.e. Smederevska Palanka), and made their way towards Jagodina through shrubbery and forests.<sup>51</sup> Travelling from Belgrade to Niš in 1587, Reinhold Lubenau noted passing across pastures, over big mountains, and through a forest between Mala Palanka (Grocka on the Danube) and Velika (Smederevska) Palanka. Once he passed the “high mountain” (at Bagrdan), he reached Jagodina, situated in a flatland.<sup>52</sup> According to Louis Deshayes’ travel account (1621), it took six hours to get from Kolari to Hasan Pasha’s Palanka (Smederevska Palanka), the road leading through a forest, and twelve and a half more hours through another forest to reach Jagodina.<sup>53</sup> The forests around Jagodina are discussed by the later travel writers, Quiclet (1658) and Edward Browne (1688/89), noting that they were so large and dangerous due to wolves and bandits.<sup>54</sup> Evliya Çelebi says that Hasan Pasha’s Palanka lay in a fertile valley full of greenery. In 1661, he also described the dangers posed by bandits on the road from Jagodina to Smederevo, stretching across hills and through forests.<sup>55</sup>

Returning from Constantinople in 1555, Dernschwam mentions a large fertile flatland with fields and a few vineyards not far from Niš going northwards. Further towards Jagodina, the soil was also fertile, but the land was desolate and overgrown. In some places, the forests were so large and unsafe that guardsmen with drums were positioned on hills

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<sup>50</sup> *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 18, 526; P. Matković, “Putovanja XIII,” *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 52.

<sup>51</sup> “Wolf Andreas’ von Steinach Edelknabenfahrt nach Constantinopel (1583),” 207–208; P. Matković, “Putovanja XV,” *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 30–31; Đ. Kostić, *Reiseberichte über Serbien*, 56.

<sup>52</sup> Lubenau erroneously calls the Avala fortress Grocka and uses the name Mala Palanka for Grocka: W. Sahn, *Beschreibung der Reisen des Reinhold Lubenau*, 126–127; cf. O. Zirojević, “Rajnold Lubenau o Beogradu i Srbiji,” 56, 62, notes 54, 57.

<sup>53</sup> *Voiage de Levant*, 66; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 169–170, 413–414.

<sup>54</sup> E. Brown, *A Brief Account of Some Travels*, 42; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 196, 440.

<sup>55</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 190, 316; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 69, 311.

by the road, signalling that the passage was safe.<sup>56</sup> Passing through abandoned villages, Dernschwam noted that there was nothing there except old holes that had once been used as granaries. He saw neglected vineyards, but also well-developed ones, low and large like the vineyards around Vienna by the Danube. The forests had plenty of wild and old vines, testifying to the fact that these parts had been cultivated before. Going further northwards, after crossing the river Morava, he again saw a forested flatland, and fields and low vineyards in the villages. In some places, the vineyards had been converted to fields. The land was covered in groves all around the road, making it unsafe to travel.<sup>57</sup>

On his way back from Constantinople in 1578, Stephan Gerlach noted that on the section of the road between Niš and Ražanj one had to pass through shrubbery, over hills and through valleys. Two and a half decades earlier, Vrančić cites that Ražanj was located below forested hillocks.<sup>58</sup> The English traveller Peter Mundy also mentions a large forest near Ražanj in 1620.<sup>59</sup> According to Gerlach, the road then went on through shrubbery and sporadically cultivated areas of land. When the passengers climbed to a stretch of elevated ground, they saw before them a large valley full of grain fields and meadows. Travelling on, they reached Paraćin, which was surrounded by lush fields of grain and gardens.<sup>60</sup> After he and his fellow travellers passed by a small forest and crossed the river Morava, they arrived in Jagodina, where they were given good wine by the Hungarian locals. During his first stay in Jagodina in 1573, Gerlach notes that it was a beautiful place due to its gardens.<sup>61</sup> Marco Antonio

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<sup>56</sup> They were the *derbencis* (pass guards), cf. O. Zirojević, “Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije,” 97–108; eadem, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji 1459–1683* [Ottoman military system in Serbia 1459–1683] (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 1974), 176–183.

<sup>57</sup> F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 258.

<sup>58</sup> A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 304–305; P. Matković, “Putovanja VI,” 23.

<sup>59</sup> *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, vol. I. Travels in Europe (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1907), 70; the Serbian translation: Z. Levental, *Britanski putnici*, 79.

<sup>60</sup> Gerlach describes this section of the road in a similar way when he travelled to Constantinople in 1573: *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 18, 524–525.

<sup>61</sup> *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 18, 525. According to Hans Dernschwam, Hungarians were brought to Jagodina to settle there by Derviş Bey, the first governor of the Szeged Sancak: F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 6, 259. These Hungarians were also recorded on Derviş Bey's estate in Jagodina in the *defters* of the Smederevo Sancak in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, see: O. Zirojević, “Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije”, 138–139; eadem, “Rajnold Lubenau o Beogradu i Srbiji,” 62, note

Pigafetta notes that they were served unleavened bread in the Ravanica monastery near Čuprija in 1567. The bread was half-baked and hard to eat, although it was made from good white flour.<sup>62</sup> On their way to Constantinople in 1572, a member of Ungrad's deputation noted that in Paraćin three monks of the Ravanica monastery brought them a lamb, sauerkraut, and wine. They travelled to the Bovan settlement through deep valleys, a veritable "robber forest" and fields. Further on towards Niš lay another "robber forest," hills and valleys.<sup>63</sup>

Marco Antonio Pigafetta saw many rice fields near Jagodina and Aleksinac in 1567.<sup>64</sup> An anonymous author accompanying the emperor's envoy Karel Rijn on his journey to Constantinople (1571) also recorded that rice was grown near Jagodina. He described the fields as very flat and divided up by furrows to ensure that the rice was watered at all times. Further on towards Niš, he mentions a tract of flat land with abundant wheat and other crops, as well as good wines from the vineyards growing in the valley edges and on hills situated on the far end of Niš.<sup>65</sup> The travel

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61; G. David, "A Life on the Marches, the Career of Derviş bey," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54:4 (2001): 417–420, 424.

62 Pigafetta says this kind of bread is eaten all over Bulgaria: "Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette," 180–181. It is a kind of unleavened bread called *pogača*, which was widely used in Serbia and other south-Slavonic countries. Hans Dernschwam described how it was made: F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 8, 128.

63 *Beschreibung einer Legation und Reise von Wien aus Ostreich auff Constantinopel, durch den wohlgeborenen Herrn, Hern David Ungnaden, Freyherrn zu Sonneck und Pfands Herrn auff Bleyburgk, auss Römischer Keyserlichen Majestät befählig und Abforderungen an den türckischen keyser, anno 72 verrichtet*, ed. Franciscus Omichius (Güstrow, 1582), 24; P. Matković, "Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka XII. Opis putovanja dvaju carskih poslanstva u Carigrad: K. Ryma godine 1571 i D. Ungnada godine 1572" [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16th century. Part XII. Description of the journey of two imperial embassies to Constantinople: K. Rym's in 1571 and D. Ungnad's in 1572], *Rad JAZU* 112 (1892): 217.

64 "Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette," 179–180.

65 S. de Vriendt, *Reyse van Bruussee vut Brabant te Constantinopels in Thracyen en Reyse van Weenen in Hoosteryc te Constantinopels in Thracyen: twee reisjournaals uit de jaren 1570-1585* (Gent: Secr. van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor taal- en letterkunde, 1971). The book was unavailable to me, quoted according to the Serbian translation of J. Novaković Lopošina, *Srbi i jugoistočna Evropa*, 227–228; P. Matković, "Putovanja XII," *Rad JAZU* 112 (1892): 175. About Karel Rijn and his journey, see also: F. Babinger, "Der flämische Staatsmann Karel Rijn (1533–1584) und sein verschollenes türkisches Tagebuch," in *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. III (München: Südosteuropa-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1976), 277–285; R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, VIII, 29–46; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 84–85.

account of David Ungnad's mission (1572) notes rice fields around Paraćin, while a Dutch traveller (1583) mentions rice fields around Jagodina. After passing Paraćin, he describes a beautiful flat field on one side of the valley, and a nice grove on the other.<sup>66</sup> As early as the 1430s, Bertrandon de la Broquière noted that rice was grown around Niš. The rice fields around Niš are also mentioned by Stephan Gerlach, who writes that Niš was located in a large flatland with meadows, vineyards, and fields of grain.<sup>67</sup> Salomon Schweigger notes that the land around Niš and in the Nišava river valley was beautiful but unpopulated. There were no forests, only scattered oak trees.<sup>68</sup> Louis Deshayes, who visited these parts in 1621, also noticed rice fields around Niš, pointing out that the red rice was "nowhere near as good as the white one." Travelling from Paraćin to Niš, he passed through a hilly and much forested area. This traveller notes that the land was fertile, but that the locals did not dare farm it, as the Turks took everything away from them.<sup>69</sup> Evliya Çelebi describes the area around Ražanj as very forested, and writes that he crossed mountains covered in a thick forest on his way to Paraćin. In 1660, he saw several vineyards in Ražanj, and vineyards and gardens in

<sup>66</sup> *Beschreibung einer Legation*, 24; S. de Vriendt, *Twee reisjournaals*, according to J. Novaković Lopusina, *Srbi i jugoistočna Evropa*, 233; P. Matković, "Putovanja XV," *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 30–31. About Levinus Rijn and the travel account attributed to him, see also: R. C. Müller, *Prosopographie*, VIII, 47–50; M. Popović, *Od Budima do Konstantinopolja*, 86–87.

<sup>67</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Le voyage d'Outremer*, 204; Bertrandon de la Broquière, *Putovanje preko mora*, 126–127; Stephan Gerlachs *des Aeltern Tagebuch*, 19, 524; P. Matković, "Putovanja XIII," *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 50; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 172, 412; B. Stojkovski, "Bertrandon de la Broquière," 125. On rice cultivation around Niš and on other locations in Serbia, see: O. Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje*, 214–215; D. Bojanić, "Niš do Velikog rata 1683." [Niš up to the Great Turkish War in 1683], in *Istorija Niša I. Od najstarijih vremena do oslobođenja od Turaka 1878. godine* [The History of Niš. Vol. I. From the earliest times to the liberation from the Turks in 1878], ed. Danica Milić (Beograd: Istorijski institut; Niš: Gradina, 1983), 122–123; A. Krstić, *Ponišavlje u XV veku* [The Nišava Region in the 15th century] (Beograd: C-print, 2001), 83; M. Koprivica, "Niška oblast od 1428. godine do polovine 16. veka" [The district of Niš from 1428 to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century]. *Braničevski glasnik* 5 (2008): 98–100; D. Amedoski, "Introduction of Rice Culture in the Central Balkans," in *State and Society in the Balkans before and after Establishment of Ottoman Rule*, ed. S. Rudić and S. Aslantaş (Belgrade: Institute of History – Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Turkish Cultural Centre Belgrade, 2017), 235–253.

<sup>68</sup> S. Schweigger, *Ein neue Reysbeschreibung*, 41; P. Matković, "Putovanja XIII," *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 88–89.

<sup>69</sup> *Voïage de Levant*, 69–72; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 171–172, 414–415.

Paraćin. He also notes that the land around Paraćin was very fertile and the climate pleasant, that the outing spots and hunting grounds were rich and that rice had been grown there before. However, as in his view the populace had no talent for land cultivation, the land was desolate and uncultivated. Evliya Çelebi notes that he passed through thick forests and lines of trees on the road from Paraćin, across the bridge on the Morava at Ćuprija, and all the way to Jagodina. This town also had many vineyards, vegetable patches, and gardens.<sup>70</sup>

The observations of Serbia by two English travel writers who passed through its territory in the seventeenth century, 25 years apart, are interesting. John Burbury travelled through Serbia in 1664 and Edward Browne in 1688/89. Browne describes Serbia as a fertile and beautiful land, with flatlands, forests, and hills likely containing good metal ores. There were also hearty people, good horses, wines, and rivers, and “if it were in the Christians hands of the temper of those in the Western part of Europe, it might make a very flourishing country.”<sup>71</sup> John Burbury’s view is that the tyrannical Turkish rule joined hands with the laziness and pride of the natives, and that this resulted in their lands being so desolate that one could barely see a single village during an entire day of travel. He also notes seeing vast forests and fields with rich and fertile soil, which was in such a poor state that it could at best be used for pasture. He also relates that he saw land under grain only sporadically.<sup>72</sup>

Travelling on from Niš to Sofia in 1553, Vrančić notes that a flatland lay from Niš onwards, but that one quickly entered the Kunovica Gorge. It was long, rocky, narrow and with many dangerous bends. His fellow traveller Hans Dernschwam relates that the hills around Niš were high and barren, and the hillocks that had once had fields and vineyards were at that time entirely desolate and overgrown. He then mentions that wheat, barley, and millet were grown around Pirot, and that one could see the abandoned vineyards. As mentioned above, on his way back from Constantinople (1555), Dernschwam provides more detailed description of the area through which he travelled. He notes, for instance, that the

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<sup>70</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 189–190; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 65–66, 68.

<sup>71</sup> E. Brown, *A Brief Account of Some Travels*, 40.

<sup>72</sup> J. Burbury, *A Relation of a Journey of the Right Honourable, My Lord, Henry Howard, from London to Vienna, and Thence to Constantinople in the Company of His Excellency Count Lesley* (London: T. Collins, I. Ford and S. Hickman, 1671), 113–114; the Serbian translation: Z. Levental, *Britanski putnici*, 102.

population in the area around Caribrod (present-day Dimitrovgrad) paid their tithe in barley and wheat, and that Novo Selo, around six miles away from Caribrod, was in a beautiful area with plenty of grain and many vineyards, although most of the vineyards were neglected. Further on towards Niš, there was a beautiful area with valleys and hills strewn with fields of grain. There were also tracts of red, oily clay-like soil, covered in groves.<sup>73</sup>

Stephan Gerlach was returning from Constantinople in the entourage of the emperor's envoy David Ungnad in 1578. They entered the territory of present-day Serbia in late June, having reached a vast field surrounded on all sides by high hills (in the area of Caribrod). There they met the local Christians, who brought them food for sale: bread, cheese, milk, and strawberries. Travelling on across a beautiful and fertile field, they arrived in Pirot, around which lay vast and nice fields under grain, and to the right of which was a mountain with vineyards and beautiful gardens. Having left Pirot, they then climbed a high mountain (Kunovica) and saw before them a several-mile long, wide, and beautiful valley, with a stream rich with fish and with land under orchards and grain. In the village of Kuru Česma (near Bela Palanka), Gerlach attended the service in an Orthodox church situated on a hill and surrounded by trees. They reached the flatland of Niš passing through forests, bushes and hills.<sup>74</sup> The difficulties of travelling from Niš to Sofia are a topic discussed also by the travel account describing the journey of Karel Rijn (1571). It notes the difficult climb to Kunovica, where there was a constant sound of the drums announcing that the area was safe for travel. He mentions much livestock on the mountain, which means the area was suitable for grazing.<sup>75</sup> In 1584, Melchior Besolt wrote on the same area that from Niš one travelled across high hills and mountains, arriving in Pirot, which

<sup>73</sup> A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 311–312; F. Babinger, *Hans Dernschwam's Tagebuch*, 12–14, 255–256. P. Matković, "Putovanja VI," *Rad JAZU* 71 (1884): 30.

<sup>74</sup> On his way to Constantinople in 1573, Gerlach describes the same section of the road in a very similar manner: *Stephan Gerlachs deß Aeltern Tagebuch*, 19, 521–524; P. Matković, "Putovanja XIII," *Rad JAZU* 116 (1893): 48–50. On the Kuru Česma (Klisurica) village, see also: O. Zirojević, "Carigradski drum od Beograda do Sofije," 183–184.

<sup>75</sup> An almost identical description can be found in the travel account attributed to Levinus Rijn (1583): S. de Vriendt, *Twee reisjournaals*, according to J. Novaković Lopusina, *Srbi i jugoistočna Evropa*, 228, 233; P. Matković, "Putovanja XII," *Rad JAZU* 112 (1892): 176.

was situated in the flatlands.<sup>76</sup> Reinhold Lubenau also states that he travelled over a high rocky mountain on the way from Niš to Pirot.<sup>77</sup>

Venetian travellers also described the section of the road between Niš and Caribrod. Caterino Zeno, who travelled from Split to Constantinople in 1550, notes that hillocks and fields around Niš were well cultivated; the plain is full of beautiful villages, built of wood. After Niš, they travelled through the “Cerovich” forest, where guardman kept watch of the road.<sup>78</sup> After passing through a valley between hills, which were called Suva Planina (*Sutta montagna*), and over the villages of Novo Selo and Suva Klisura, where everything was in abundance, they came to the forest near the village of Kuru Česma (*fontana sutta*). After that, they came in the Nišava river valley (around Pirot), which was, according to Zeno, named “Zamise” or “yellow forest” (*bosco giallo*). After passing Caribrod they travelled through the forest of the Ježevica Gorge to Sofia.<sup>79</sup>

Travelling from Dubrovnik to Constantinople via Novi Pazar and Toplica in 1581, the Venetian diplomatic mission of Paolo Contarini arrived in Niš. The description of the travel was provided by an anonymous member of the delegation. He describes Niš as lying on a fertile flatland surrounded by mountains on one side, and on the other by beautiful hillocks with vineyards which would have been more fertile if cultivated better.<sup>80</sup> Travelling on from Niš to Sofia, the mission passed through a fertile field in the Nišava river valley, after which they entered

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<sup>76</sup> Melchior Besolt, *Reyß auf Constantinopel im 1584. Jar*, 526; P. Matković, “Putovanja XV,” *Rad JAZU* 129 (1896): 32, 61–62.

<sup>77</sup> W. Sahm, *Beschreibung der Reisen des Reinhold Lubenau*, 132–133; O. Zirojević, “Rajnold Lubenau o Beogradu i Srbiji,” 58–59.

<sup>78</sup> If the forest name was accurately written and did not refer to Kunovica, it was an oak forest (“cer” is a type of oak – *Quercus cerris*). On the other hand, Kunovica Mount was also named after its forests – “kun” is Montpellier maple (*Acer monspessulanum*).

<sup>79</sup> “Descrizione del viazo di Constantinopoli 1550 de ser Catharin Zen, ambassador straordinario a sultan Soliman, e suo ritorno,” ed. P. Matković, *Starine JAZU* 10 (1878): 209–210; P. Matković, “Putovanja V,” 101–104.

<sup>80</sup> *Diario Del Viaggio Da Venezia a Costantinopoli Di Paolo Contarini Che Andava Bailo Per La Repubblica Veneta Alla Porta Ottona Nel 1580: Ora Per La Prima Volta Pubblicato* (Venezia, 1856), 23; P. Matković, “Putovanja po Balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka: XIV. Dnevnici o putovanju mletačkih poslanstva u Carigrad: osobito Jakova Sorance od g. 1575. i 1581., i Pavla Kontarina od g. 1580” [Travels on the Balkan Peninsula during the 16th century. Part XIV. Diaries on the journeys of the Venetian embassies to Constantinople, especially Jacob Sorance’s in 1575 and 1581, and Paul Contarini’s in 1580], *Rad JAZU* 124 (1895): 67–68.

the narrow Kunovica valley, where they took rest near the village with the same name. There they saw an ox cart transporting rice to Hungary. They went on through this fertile valley between beautiful uncultivated mountains, which according to the travel writer made up the border with Bulgaria. As they made their way along the Mount Kunovica side, they descended to the small town of Klisura (near Bela Palanka). From there the mission travelled over a rocky and barren hillock and, after 18 miles, reached a beautiful but mostly uncultivated valley. From there they entered the flat Nišava valley, which took them to the town of Pirot. From the Pirot valley they crossed into another flatland, hemmed in by mountains and broken up by rivers and streams, and went down into the deep, rocky, and barren Dragoman valley, fenced in by forest-topped mountains.<sup>81</sup> The travel account of Louis Deshayes notes that after the descent from the mountains covered with forests, one arrived in Pirot, situated in a fertile flatland.<sup>82</sup> Describing Niš and Pirot, Evliya Çelebi observes in general terms that the towns were surrounded by vineyards and gardens.<sup>83</sup>

Very few travel writers passed through north-eastern Serbia. Evliya Çelebi travelled through this area in 1665, when he visited Hram (Ram), Golubac and Kladovo. Describing these settlements and their fortresses on the Danube banks, he notes that they had a pleasant climate and beautiful vineyards and gardens. Having reached the Soko Banja spa below Mount Ozren in 1663, Evliya noted that there were many vineyards and gardens there, emphasizing that the area had tasty and succulent pears.<sup>84</sup>

It has already been noted that some travellers and official delegations travelling to Constantinople used the road leading from Dubrovnik, via Herzegovina, to the Drina river valley. Benedict Kuripečić (Curipeschitz) entered Serbia near Priboj in 1530, and reached Nova Varoš having crossed “the high and rocky mountain by the name of Kamenica”. From there he reached the river Uvac, and travelled by Brezovo Brdo (“Birch

<sup>81</sup> *Diario Del Viaggio Da Venezia a Costantinopoli Di Paolo Contarini*, 24–25; P. Matković, “Putovanja XIV,” *Rad JAZU* 124 (1895): 84–85. Vrančić’s description of the same section of the road is similar, cf. A. Verancsics, *Összes munkái*, 314.

<sup>82</sup> *Voïage de Levant*, 73; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskib savremenika*, 172, 412.

<sup>83</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 187–189; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 61, 63.

<sup>84</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, VI. Kitap, 100; VII. Kitap, 167–168, 175; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 350, 547, 551–552.



Hill”), Novi Pazar, and Mount Rogozna, arriving in Zvečan and Kosovska Mitrovica. Kuripečić mostly describes fortresses or their ruins visible from the road. Speaking about the so-called Upper Bosnia, which, based on the Ottoman administrative division at the time, stretched from Vrhbosna (Sarajevo) to Zvečan and Mitrovica, Kuripečić relates that there were many pastures and plateaus hemmed in by barren hills. These descriptions correspond to both the present-day eastern Bosnia and south-western Serbia. He notes that vine was grown around Višegrad and Novi Pazar. Kuripečić observes that the local populace did not cultivate the land by the road as the Turks took their yield by force and did not pay for it. This was why people stayed away from roads and chose fertile pastures for cultivation purposes instead. His diplomatic mission arrived in the nicely cultivated field of Topolnica (in the Kriva Reka river valley) via the Field of Kosovo, the towns of Vučitrn, Priština, Novo Brdo, and several villages. From there they made their way to Vranje, and then reached Surdulica by a road running at the foot of high hills. Travelling on over the high mountain of Čemernik, they descended to the valley, reaching the village of Strezimirovci (near the present-day border between Serbia and Bulgaria). Unfortunately, Kuripečić does not provide any details on the vegetation in the areas that he passed through; rather, he only notes at the end of his descriptions of the journeys through Serbia that this land, although it had several high mountains, was very fertile and had an abundance of various kinds of grain. He describes the Field of Kosovo as relatively flat and full of big villages and well-cultivated fields. From Strezimirovci, Kuripečić took across a beautiful and well-cultivated field of Znepolje towards Sofia.<sup>85</sup> Travelling from Sofia in 1582, Jean Palerne Forésien mentions the forest at the foot of Čemernik and the guardsmen beating the drums to signal that the forest was safe to pass through.<sup>86</sup>

Jacques Gassot, who entered Serbia from Herzegovina in 1548, relates that he travelled from Foča to the Mileševa monastery (near

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<sup>85</sup> Benedict Curipeschitz, *Itinerarium Węrayss Kün. May. potschaft gen Constantinopel zu dem Türckischen Kayser Soleyman. Anno XXX, 1531*, 26–35, 39–41; the Serbian translation: B. Kuripečić, *Putopis kroz Bosnu, Srbiju, Bugarsku i Rumeliju 1530*, trans. Đ. Pejanović (Beograd: Čigoja, 2001), 31–43.

<sup>86</sup> *Peregrinations du S. Jean Palerne Foresien, Secretaire de François de Valois Duc d'Anjou...* (Lyon: Jean Pillehotte, 1606), 504–506; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 137–139, 380–382.

Prijepolje) through forests that were dangerous on account of bandits. This was why local villagers were exempted from paying any taxes, as they kept their watch on the road. They would beat the drums and thus signal to the travellers that the road was safe.<sup>87</sup> A decade and a half before Gassot, Corneille Duplicius de Schepper traveled in the opposite direction. After passing Sjenica and crossing the river Uvac, he arrived at the monastery of Mileševa over a forested mountain.<sup>88</sup> In 1582, Jean Palerne Forésien also mentions large forests on the road from the Mileševa monastery to Bosnia.<sup>89</sup> Jacques Gassot passed through Novi Pazar and over “Srebrna Planina,” i.e. Mount Kopaonik – which was difficult to cross and also a mining site where great quantities of silver ore were extracted – reaching Niš and travelling on towards Sofia.<sup>90</sup>

Travelling in early 1573 in cold and snowy weather from Foča, via Čajniče, Pljevlja, Prijepolje, Mileševa, Uvac, Novi Pazar, Banjska, Zvečan, Mitrovica, Vučitrn, Lipljan, and Kačanik to Skopje, Philippe Du Fresne-Canaye did not pay any heed to the vegetation in the valleys and mountains that he crossed. Nonetheless, he appears to have had a liking for fruit. For instance, he noted coming across many excellent pears of “bergamotte” variety in Čajniče in eastern Herzegovina, and described (Kosovska) Mitrovica as a nice town in a flatland with an incredible amount of fruit, but did not specify what kinds exactly. He also mentions that good wine could be found in a village between Vučitrn and Lipljan. On the way from Kačanik to Skopje, Du Fresne-Canaye and his fellow travellers passed through the Kačanik Gorge, going down uneven meandering paths, through the narrow glens and thick forests.<sup>91</sup> Evliya

<sup>87</sup> They were *derbenci* pass guards, cf. note 55. See also: S. Rudić, “Pljevaljski kraj u putopisima XVI veka” [The Pljevlja Area in Travel Accounts of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century], *Glasnik Zavičajnog muzeja Pljevlja* 2 (2001): 134–135.

<sup>88</sup> *Missions diplomatiques de Corneille Duplicius de Schepper, dit Scepperus: ambassadeur de Christiern II, de Charles V, de Ferdinand Ier et de Marie, reine de Hongrie, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, de 1523 à 1555*, eds. J. de Saint-Genois, G. A. de Schepper (Brussel: M. Hayez, 1856) 198–199; J. Novaković Lopušina, *Srbi i jugoistočna Evropa*, 217.

<sup>89</sup> *Peregrinations du S. Jean Palerne Foresien*, 508–509; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 137–139, 380–382.

<sup>90</sup> J. Gassot, *Le Discours du Voyage de Venise a Constantinople, contenant la querele du grand Seigneur contre le Sophi: avec elegante description de plusieurs lieux, villes, et citez de la Grece, et choses admirables en icelle* (Paris, 1550), 6–7; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 114, 358–359.

<sup>91</sup> *Le Voyage du Levant de Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1573)*, ed. H. Hauser (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1897), 27–33, 221–223; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih*

Çelebi observed many gardens and vineyards in the area of Kosovo and Metohija, which were flourishing owing to a pleasant climate, and made specific mention of those in Banjska, Vučitrn, Priština, and Kačanik.<sup>92</sup>

The travel writer who described the new Venetian bailo Paolo Contarini's journey to Constantinople in 1580 provides a detailed account of travelling from Dubrovnik to Pljevlja, mentioning mountains overgrown with pine forests. On the other hand, the journey through Serbia to the slopes of Mount Kopaonik is described in insufficient detail. He mentions the Mileševa monastery as having a good income in the form of bread, wine, and livestock.<sup>93</sup> Six years earlier, in 1574, Pierre Lescalopier notes that he ate a green onion soup in the Mileševa monastery, which indirectly suggests that this vegetable was grown in the vegetable patches of the monastery.<sup>94</sup> Travelling on from Mileševa, Contarini's travel writer mentions a few times that they went across a

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*savremenika*, 128–129, 372–373. Ottoman *defters* of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries reveals the structure of agricultural production of the area of Kosovo and Metohija. Cereals were grown in most rural settlements of that area, primarily wheat, but also barley, oats, rye, millet, and in some cases spelt. The majority of villages had vineyards and there were orchards in many settlements. Walnut was the only type of fruit directly mentioned in the *defters*. In some villages, dues were paid of lentils, bitter vetch and broad beans. Villagers also paid dues of cabbage, red onion, garlic and other vegetables grown in the gardens, of flax, wood, hay and hives: *Oblast Brankovića. Opširni katastarski popis iz 1455. godine* [The Region of Branković. Detailed cadastral register from 1455], ed. H. Hadžibegić, A. Handžić, E. Kovačević (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut, 1972); T. Katić, *Opširni popis Prižrenskog sandžaka iz 1571. godine* [Detailed register of the Prizren Sancak from 1571] (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2010); B. Hrabak, "Poljoprivredna proizvodnja Kosova i susednih krajeva sredinom XV veka" [Agricultural production of Kosovo and neighbouring areas in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century], *Glas Srpske akademine nauka i umetnosti* 290, Odeljenje istorijskih nauka, vol. 1 (1974): 33–73. This area was characterized by oak and beech forests, and spruce forests in high mountains: J. Cvejić, "Šume u Oblasti Brankovića polovinom XV veka" [Forests in the Region of Branković in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century], in *Naselja i stanovništvo Oblasti Brankovića 1455. godine* [Settlements and population of the Region of Branković in 1455], ed M. Macura (Beograd: SANU, Službeni glasnik, 2001), 149–163.

<sup>92</sup> *Enliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 291–295; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 276–279.

<sup>93</sup> *Diario Del Viaggio Da Venezia a Costantinopoli Di Paolo Contarini*, 17–19; P. Matković, "Putovanja XIV," *Rad JAZU* 124 (1895): 64–66. See also: O. Zirojević, "Turski izvori XV i XVI veka o posedima manastira Mileševa" [Ottoman sources of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries on estates of the Mileševa monastery], *Zograf* 18 (1987): 76–78.

<sup>94</sup> E. Cleray, "Le voyage de Pierre Lescalopier 'Parisien' de Venise à Constantinople, l'an 1574," *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 35 (1921): 21–55; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 135, 378.

“snow-covered mountain.” They reached Novi Pazar via the Raška river valley, crossed the river Ibar, and covered six miles across Mount Kopaonik, which is where the writer saw the most beautiful pastures and plentiful waters. Having crossed Kopaonik, characterized as “the silver mountain,” the mission made their descent through the forest and an uncultivated area, reaching the Toplica river valley. The road running along the river Toplica led through the valley and across beautiful meadows, surrounded by forests and mountains. The travel writer describes the Toplica river valley as beautiful and fertile, with many vineyards located on hillsides. Travelling on over the slopes of Mount Jastrebac towards Niš, they came across a barren and rocky, mostly hilly area. The traveller describes the village of Gornja Draguša (near Blace) as lying in a poorly cultivated flatland, and the neighbouring village of Svarče as affording the best grazing for horses. As they made their way towards the Južna Morava, they saw a succession of hillocks, fields, and good pastures. He mentions the village of Hreljinci (present-day Reljinac north of Prokuplje), situated in a beautiful flatland, where they saw many storks in fields and meadows.<sup>95</sup> In 1534, Corneille de Schepper mentions pleasant valley along the river Toplica, well-populated and overgrown with vineyards. Passing through the valley of Toplica in 1550, Caterino Zeno saw many roses, violets, and other flowers along the way.<sup>96</sup>

The French travel writer Le Fevre provided a more detailed description of this road, accompanying the royal ambassador De Sansy on his journey to the East in 1611. The diplomatic mission arrived in Serbia from Foča. Le Fevre describes the area between Foča and Prijepolje as full of game, fruit, and grain, whereas mountains were overgrown with oak forests. In the direction of Prijepolje the road went down the hills completely covered with forests. At the Mileševa monastery, the monks served them damson plums. They travelled on over the slopes of Mount Jadovnik, which was entirely covered in trees. Then they passed over another mountain (i.e. over the slopes of Mount Zlatar around the village of Aljinovići), which did not have a single tree and was completely barren, arriving in a large field called Sjenica, which the river Uvac flowed through. He describes the Field of Sjenica as six

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<sup>95</sup> *Diario Del Viaggio Da Venezia a Costantinopoli Di Paolo Contarini*, 19–23; P. Matković, “Putovanja XIV,” *Rad JAZU* 124 (1895), 66–68.

<sup>96</sup> *Missions diplomatiques de Corneille Duplicius de Schepper*, 197; Caterino Zeno, “Descrizione del viazo di Constantinopoli,” 208–209.

miles wide and surrounded by mountains. Making their way across the Pešter Plateau towards Novi Pazar, they had lunch in the village of Rogatac, situated in a field that the Ljudska stream flowed through. Le Fevre notes that there were forests in this area, and that the remaining soil was good and suitable for cultivation. However, regardless of the fact that it was fertile, the soil was not cultivated; rather, it was sparsely populated, with about ten houses spread out across the mountain. He notes that good wine was made in this area. Observing Novi Pazar, Le Fevre notes that poplar trees grew between houses in the town. He notes that “this tree is grown with pleasure, always planted in large numbers by the side of their mosques as decorations.”<sup>97</sup> Benedict Kuripečić discussed the vineyards near Novi Pazar almost a century before.<sup>98</sup> In the second half of the seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi also mentioned gardens and vineyards around Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Mileševa, and Novi Pazar. He points out that the climate in Novi Pazar was very pleasant, and that there were 48 types of apples and 35 types of pears, adding that he saw many orchards in Priboj.<sup>99</sup>

Travelling on down the Raška river valley, Le Fevre relates that a mountain half-covered in young oak trees rose on either side of the field. The soil was good, and it was a shame that it had not been cultivated much, suitable as it was for growing grain with high yields. There was also vine, which was strewn across the slopes of the mountain facing south. Similar to other travel writers, Le Fevre opined that the land was insufficiently cultivated due to negligence and laziness – only what was needed was cultivated, while the rest was left to lie fallow. Having left the Raška river valley near the village of Banja, the mission climbed Mount Rogozna, which was entirely covered in forests. They set up camp in the village of Bare on the other side of the mountain, where the cook was preparing food in a garden the entire night. Travelling on across the forested slopes of Rogozna, they crossed the river Ibar, and climbed Mount Kopaonik. In the Ibar river valley, the soil was cultivated well,

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<sup>97</sup> R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 156–159, 400–403. See also: E. C. Antoche, “Un ambassadeur français à la Porte ottomane : Achille de Harlay, baron de Sancy et de la Mole (1611–1619),” in *Istoria ca datorie: omagiu academicianului Ioan-Aurel Pop la împlinirea vârstei de 60 de ani*, ed. I. Bolovan, O. Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015), 750.

<sup>98</sup> Benedict Curipeschitz, *Itinerarium*, 31.

<sup>99</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 289–291; VI. Kitap, 248–250; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 264–267, 393–396.

and there were some vineyards on the mountain sides. Le Fevre describes Kopaonik as covered in forests and tall, straight trees. He relates that they had lunch on a small plateau, which was really pleasant owing to the beech forest shade.<sup>100</sup> As they travelled in August, they certainly appreciated the shade. The travel writer notes that all the mountains were visible as far as the eye could see from the bare high peaks of Kopaonik. Le Fevre found it difficult to descend from Kopaonik by a road running through a beautiful beech forest, which covered the surrounding slopes as well as those of all neighbouring mountains. Going further eastwards through an area overgrown with tall trees and brushwood, which made the road unsafe with the threat of bandits, the French mission reached the river Toplica. They crossed Lepa Gora Mountain, left behind the forest, and came across a fertile field full of grain and vine in the Toplica region. Le Fevre describes the area around the town of Prokuplje as being hemmed in by two mountains entirely covered in forests (i.e. Jastrebac in the north and Vidojevica and Pasjača in the south), rich with vine, and with chernozem that was good for grain.<sup>101</sup>

The description of the route from Herzegovina to Niš was also provided by a travel account concerning the journey of the envoy Louis Deshayes de Courmenin from Dubrovnik to Constantinople in 1626. The part of the travel account relating to these regions contains many well-known facts. The high French delegation entered Serbia from the direction of Pljevlja. Having left the Pljevlja area, they made their way through forests and across hilly land, which made this route unsafe with the threat of bandits. When they left the mountains, they arrived in the Mileševa monastery. The travel writer mentions Sjenica, which he describes as having an abundance of hay and grass. After Kopaonik, they entered the Tesna Toplica (“Narrow Toplica”) mountains, but the road did not follow the mountain but a narrow valley that took seven hours to cross. The mountains rising above the valley were covered in forests, “which made them very pleasant.” Once they left the mountain area, they

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<sup>100</sup> In 1534, Corneille de Schepper mentions that they refreshed themselves on Kopaonik at a spring they found under the trees: *Missions diplomatiques de Corneille Duplicius de Schepper*, 197.

<sup>101</sup> R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 160–161, 403–405. After he crossed the Ibar, likely near Jarinje, where a ferry was available, Le Fevre made his way across Kopaonik, following the route of the village of Blaževo – Merčez (the Toplica crossing) – Više Selo – Grgure – Tulari – Prokuplje.

entered a tract of open land, called Ravna Toplica (“Flat Toplica”). From there carts and carriages were available for travel. Prokuplje lay in a vast flatland rich with grain.<sup>102</sup>

Visiting Toplica in 1661, Evliya Çelebi describes Kuršumlja as being surrounded by gardens and vineyards. From Kuršumlja to Kruševac he travelled across the plateau and Mount Jastrebac, noting big and tall trees. Evliya Çelebi relates that in Kruševac the climate was pleasant, and the town itself, situated on the west and north side of the fortress, had vineyards and gardens. The surrounding area was also strewn with vineyards on hospitable, low-lying hills.<sup>103</sup>

There is not much data on the vegetation in western Serbia in the travel accounts in the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth century, as this particular route was less frequently used. One of the few people who passed through there was the above-mentioned Peter Mundy. In early June 1620, he started off from Belgrade towards Valjevo, noting that he was travelling across a field. From Valjevo to the Drina Mundy probably took the Jablanica river valley and then crossed Mount Medvednik, continuing along the Ljuboviđa river valley. After Valjevo, a stretch of thick forests followed, so the travellers made their descent across pleasant mountains that exceeded in height and beauty any that Mundy had seen until then. The hills were not steep, rising gently and gradually, and the land at the peak was as fertile as at the foot. The area was rich with springs but deserted, covered in weeds and forests of unusually tall oak, maple, and other kinds of trees. Occasionally one saw soil cultivated by poor Christians, as well as very rudimentary animal husbandry. Peter Mundy then made his descent down a steep slope, with a river flowing between the rocks and a stone bridge over it. By the riverbank (most likely of the river Ljuboviđa) they found ripe strawberries of the kind “as none of our company ever saw the like” so that they could pick them by the handful, as well as plenty of wild apples and cherries. There was a place where the earth was covered in a kind of

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<sup>102</sup> R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 173–175, 417–419.

<sup>103</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 316; Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis*, 309–310. On Kuršumlja, Prokuplje and Kruševac at that period, see: D. Amedoski–V. Petrović, *Gradska naselja Kruševačkog sandžaka (XV–XVI vek)* [Urban Settlements of the Sanjak of Kruševac (15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries)] (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2018), *passim*.

a wild rose, of a beautiful colour and scent, growing on short stalks close to the ground.<sup>104</sup>

Several years later, in 1624, the French travel writer Louis Gédoyne "Le Turc" passed by this road, but from the direction of Bosnia. He entered Serbia from the direction of Srebrenica, and probably took the same road as Peter Mundy. Louis Gédoyne mentions high mountains and rich valleys, decked with large fir tree and other kinds of beautiful forests, as well as the many gardens of Valjevo. From Valjevo to Belgrade the road stretched through a wide flatland. He travelled in January, and this was probably why the area did not leave an impression on him.<sup>105</sup> Spending more time in Belgrade, unable to travel on account of snow, he wrote a few letters that he sent to France. In one of them he says: "Our princes sleep and languish, and when they do wake, it is in order to fight over an acre of land or a passage through some valley, not knowing that these plentiful lands, fertile, rich, and vast, could satisfy their ambition, provide all with a rich share, and bring actual titles that they could take pride in."<sup>106</sup>

A few decades later, Evliya Çelebi notes that on the road from Belgrade to Valjevo one travelled through a forested area. He made his way from Belgrade, via the village of Rušanj, to the village of Lisović in 1662, crossing many pastures, and travelled on to Ljig through forests and across mountains. Passing through the area around Valjevo on his second journey in 1664, Evliya relates that he crossed the Crna Gora plateau (present-day Valjevska Podgorina) from Slavkovica (near Ljig) to Ovčar Banja. With his fellow travellers he observed trees so tall that "each tree seemed to rise to the heavens," and the trees were so thick that it took ten people quite a bit of effort to encircle the entire tree trunk. He describes the Ovčar Banja spa in the Ovčar-Kablar Gorge as located near mountains rich with trees, adding that when watermelons were in season as many as 40,000 to 50,000 people gathered at the fairs there. Describing Čačak and Požega, Evliya mentions their gardens and vineyards. Discussing the town of Rudnik situated on the mountain bearing the same name in central Serbia, Evliya Çelebi notes that it was

<sup>104</sup> *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, vol. I, 78–80.

<sup>105</sup> *Journal et correspondance de Gédoyne "le Turc", consul de France à Alep 1623–1625*. Ouvrage publié pour la Société d'histoire diplomatique par A. Boppe (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1909), 42–43; R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 177, 421.

<sup>106</sup> R. Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika*, 181–182, 426.



situated on the western drop-off of the cliff below the fortress, rising above the fertile valley full of vineyards and gardens. In Užice, in addition to the vineyards and gardens, he was particularly struck by the greenery of a *musalla* (an enclosed area in the open air, used for a Muslim common prayer). Plane trees, lindens, poplars, weeping willows, spruces, cypresses, and laurel grew in this *musalla* by the river Đetina, and beautiful fragrances added to the enjoyment of the believers.<sup>107</sup>

The travel writers who left notes on the vegetation in Serbia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries travelled on roads that were already known well. They note that the area of present-day Vojvodina was a flatland with fields under grain, grass, and vine on the slopes of Fruška Gora, but without forests. The area between Belgrade and Niš had an undulating and forested terrain, for the most part without detailed information on the forest type. On occasion the information is provided that it was oak tree forests. The vegetation in this section of the road has changed the most in the present day. Between Aleksinac and Niš, vineyards are mentioned in addition to fields under grain, and rice fields around Jagodina, Aleksinac, and Niš. The road from Niš to Caribrod (present-day Dimitrovgrad) was mostly difficult for the travellers, which was the main impression they were left with. Only a few travel writers mention forests or the rich valley near Pirot, with fields under grain, with some noting vineyards as well. Forests and pastures were prevalent from Valjevo towards the Drina too. The road leading from Prijepolje, via Sjenica, Novi Pazar, the slopes of Kopaonik and Toplica to Niš was covered in forests and pastures; some travellers mention vine around Novi Pazar. Toplica was a fertile area, with fields of grain and vineyards, whereas the travel accounts have very little data on the vegetation in the area of Kosovo and Metohija. Based on what the travellers ate and drank, only an indirect conclusion can be drawn that grain fields and vineyards were prevalent there. This conclusion can be confirmed by the data provided by the Ottoman tax registers (*defters*). Only a few travel writers mention what fruit they ate or the type of forest they passed through. The common impression of the Western travellers was that the land was

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<sup>107</sup> *Erliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, V. Kitap, 221; VI. Kitap, 55, 239, 244, 246; *Evliya Çelebi, Putopis*, 97, 333–334, 378–383, 386; D. Bojanić-Lukač, “Les mousallas dans la ville balkanique,” in *La culture urbaine des Balkans (XV<sup>e</sup>–XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles)* 3, ed. V. Han, Recueil de travaux, Colloque international, Belgrade, 1989 (Belgrade: Institute des études balkaniques, 1991), 76.

insufficiently cultivated, even “desolate” at times, and that its resources were insufficiently used, which some ascribed to the treatment of the subjugated populace by the Ottoman authorities, and others to the laziness of the locals.

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