

THE BYZANTINE CITIZEN IN THE *GESTA REGUM SCLAVORUM*

The so-called “Chronicle of the Priest of Diokleia” (also referred to as *Gesta Regum Sclavorum*¹) covers a period that ranges from the fifth to the middle of the twelfth century and an area that includes modern Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and part of Albania, in other words the historic region of Western Illyricum. The Chronicle begins by mentioning the Byzantine emperor Anastasios and ends with a reference to Manuel I Komnenos. Beginning and ending with the two emperors should cause no surprise, since Byzantium played an important role in the region during the period in question, either as an actual overlord or as a titular one.

However, despite Byzantium’s indisputable role, the references of the Priest of Diokleia to it and to the Byzantines and their emperors in general range from the very rare to the almost non-existent. Often he does not name the emperors, while other times he confuses people or events. Generally speaking, the image of Byzantium which may be drawn from the sporadic references to it

¹ In the past there have been other opinions regarding the composition and authorship of the Chronicle; they are summarized in the following works: S. Ćirković, *Istorija srpskog naroda* (=History of the Serbs), Beograd 1994, here pp. 180-211, V. Ćorović, “Primedbe o Diokleianinovo-voj Hronici” (=Comments on the Chronicle of Diokleia), in B. Marinković (ed.), *Scripta minora*, Valjevo 1998, pp. 76-112, here p. 77, J. Ferluga, “Die Chronik des Priesters von Diokleia als Quelle für die byzantinische Geschichte”, *Bužanina* 10 (1980) 431-460, here pp. 431-434, F. Rački, “Ocjena starijih izvora za hrvatsku i srpsku poviest Srednjega Vieka” (=Evaluation of the earliest sources on medieval Croatian and Serbian history), *Književnik* 1 (1864) 35-77, T. Zivković, “O prvim poglavljima Letopisa Popa Diokleianina” (=The first chapters of the chronicle of the Priest of Diokleia), *Istorijski Časopis* 44 (1998) 11-34, here pp. 11-15 and p. 11 n. 2 with relevant bibliography, idem, “O takozvanom saboru na Duvanjskom polju” (=The legendary synod at Dalma), *Zbornik za Istoriju Bosne I Hercegovine* 4 (2004) 45-65, idem, *Forging Unity. The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2007, pp. 205, 207-209, 220, 229-235, 266, 293-294, 318. See also F. Šišić, *Letopis Popa Diokleianina*, Beograd 1928, -who was the first to publish a critical edition of the text-, here p. 179. The aforementioned view was originally expressed by Zivković in the second volume of his work on the Chronicle; the volume deals exclusively with the issue of authorship. An English translation of the summary of his conclusions may be found at the end of the volume. Cf. T. Zivković, *Gesta Regum Sclavorum*, v. 2, Belgrade 2009, here mainly pp. 379-384. On the various views regarding the chronicle in general, see Angeliki Papageorgiou, *To Chronikó tou Ieréa tēs Dióklēias*, Athens 2012, pp. 12-23.

is that it was not a decisive factor in the region's history. Thus, the aim of this paper is to highlight the Priest of Diokleia's perception of Byzantium and the Byzantines, as well as the reasons behind the image that is drawn in the Priest's work, in other words the "how" and the "why" of Byzantium's presence in the Chronicle.²

At this point I must stress that, although in recent years researchers have been dealing with the issue of "otherness" (*image des autres*) and despite the fact that numerous studies have been written on the image of the "others" in Byzantine eyes³, very few studies have been published with regard to the image of the Byzantines as perceived by the "others" and they deal exclusively with the perception of Byzantium by Westerners⁴. Hardly a study exists relating

² For the way in which the Priest treats the Byzantines in general see Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, pp. 370-414.

³ On the image of the "other" in general during the twelfth century see for instance J. Gaudemet, "L'étranger au bas-empire", *L'étranger*, Bruxelles 1958, pp. 209-235, J. Gilissen, "Le statut des étrangers, à la lumière de l'histoire comparative", *L'étranger*, Bruxelles 1958, pp. 5-57, D. Jacoby, "The Byzantine Outsider in trade (c. 900-c.1350)", in D.C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to themselves: The Byzantine outsider*, Aldershot 2000, pp. 129-147, M. Mullet, "The "Other" in Byzantium", στο D.C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to themselves*, op.cit., 1-22. Regarding the image of the Slavs, the first to study the subject is E. Malamut. On the image of the Serbs during the second half of the twelfth century (from the reign of Manuel I onwards) see E. Blangez-Malamut – M. Cacours, "L'image des Serbes dans la rhétorique Byzantine de la seconde moitié du XIIe siècle", in Fl. Karsten (ed.), *Byzantium, Identity, Image, Influence*, Copenhagen 1996, pp. 97-122, E. Malamut, "Concepts et réalités: Recherches sur les termes désignant les Serbes et les pays serbes dans les sources byzantines des Xe-XIIe siècles", in *EYΨΥΧΙΑ, Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, Paris 1988, pp. 439-457, eadem, "Les adresses aux princes des pays slaves du sud dans le Livre des Cérémonies, II, 48 : interprétation", *TM* 13 (2000) 595-615. See also A. Papageorgiou, "Βάρβαρός τε καὶ τὰ πάντα ἄστοργος καὶ μηδὲν σεμνὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἔχει καταπροϊέμενος: Η εικόνα του Μιλούτιν και της Σερβίας στα βυζαντινά ιστοριογραφικά κείμενα", in *Σλάβοι και Ελληνικός Κόσμος, Πρακτικά Α' Επιστημονικής Ημερίδας Τμήματος Σλαβικών Σπουδών*, Athens 2015, pp. 91-100, eadem, "The wake behind the mission of Cyril and Methodius: Byzantine echoes in the Chronicle of the Priest of Diokleia", in *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs*, Thessaloniki 2015, pp. 718-727.

⁴ On the image of the Latins see indicatively from a vast literature C. Asdracha, "L'image de l'homme occidental à Byzance: le témoignage de Kinnamos et de Choniates", *ByzSlav* 44 (1983) 31-40, M. Gallina, "Il mezzogiorno normanno-svevo visto da Bisanzio", in *Il mezzogiorno normanno-svevo, Atti delle XIII giornate normanno-sveve, Bari, 21-24 Ottobre 1997*, Bari 1999, pp. 201-204, A. Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and reality from the eleventh to the twelfth century", in A.E. Laiou – R. Parviz Mottahedeh (eds.), *The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C. 2001, pp. 83-100, J. Hermans, "The Byzantine view of the Normans-Another Norman myth?", in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies* 2 (1979) pp. 81-82, P. Odorico, "L'étranger et son imaginaire dans la littérature Byzantine", in M. Mayali – M.M. Mart (eds.), *Of strangers and foreigners (Late antiquity-Middle ages)*, Berkeley 1993, pp. 65-79, L. Mavromatis, «Σημειώσεις για την εικόνα του άλλου στο Βυζάντιο», *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα* 10 (1996) 235-239, O.J. Schmitt, "Das Normannenbild im Geschichtswerk des Niketas Choniates", *JÖB* 47 (1997) 157-177, A. Simpson, "Byzantine "latinophobia": some explanations concerning the central aspect of Byzantine popular attitudes towards the Latins in the XII century", *Mesogeios* 3 (1999) 64-82. On the perception of the Byzantines in the Western mind see for instance M. Arbagi, *Byzantium in Latin eyes 800-1204*, Michigan 1983, M. Carrier, *L'image du Grec selon les chroniqueurs des croisades: Perceptions et réactions face au ceremonial byzantin 1096-1204*, Ottawa 2000, B. Ebels-Hoving,

to the way the Slavs perceived the Byzantines. This undoubtedly is due to the paucity of written Slavonic sources that refer, to a smaller or greater degree, to Byzantium. Therefore, we are essentially forced to rely solely on the text, if we are to interpret the image we draw from the Priest of Diokleia regarding Byzantium and the Byzantines. After all, this is exactly what interests us at this point: the way Byzantium is perceived by the author and not by the Slavs in general.

Already in the first chapter, immediately following the introduction, the Priest of Diokleia begins with the following phrase: *Regnante in urbe Constantinopolitana imperatore Anastasio, qui se et alios multos Eutychniana haeresi maculaverat*⁵. This is the first mention of a Byzantine emperor by name in the text. However, the author uses this reference more as a starting point than anything else, as he does not link Anastasios directly to the individuals and the region in which the events in his Chronicle are about to unfold. The clear negative judgment of the emperor that he expresses (“he had stained both himself and many others with the heresy of Eutyches”) is not connected to the appearance of the Goths, who he sees as the forefathers of the Slavs; Anastasios’ name is simply used — as are those of the other individuals mentioned, Pope Gelasius, Bishop Germanus of Capua, Sabinus of Canusium and Saint Benedict⁶ — as the Chronicle’s starting point.

Nevertheless, introducing Byzantium by mentioning as a chronological marker the reign of a heretical emperor, whose unorthodox deviation is underlined, even though it is of interest only as a chronological point of departure, cannot be a random act. At the time of the composition of the Chronicle, the ruler sitting on the throne of Constantinople was Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328). Despite the trouble he was facing in the northwestern part of his empire — and the fact that Byzantium was unable to reclaim lost territories in the region where the Chronicle was composed —, in 1298 Andronikos had concluded a marriage alliance with the Serbian ruler Stefan Uroš II Milutin⁷, Subić’s⁸ main adversary in the region. Consequently, the reference to a heretical

“Byzantium in Latin Eyes before 1204. Some remarks on the thesis of the ‘growing animosity’”, in K. Ciggaar – A. Van Aalst (eds.), *The Latin Empire, some contributions*, Hernen 1990, pp. 21-32. See also the recent study by E. Tounta, “The perception of difference and the difference of perception: The image of the Norman invaders of Southern Italy in contemporary Western medieval and Byzantine sources”, *Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα* 20 (2010) 111-142.

⁵ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. I, p. 24.

⁶ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. I, p. 24-25.

⁷ On Andronikos II see for instance A. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, Cambridge 1972, mainly pp. 95-99, 230-233, 281-282. See also M. C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army. Arms and Society 1204-1453*, Philadelphia 1992, pp. 67-84 and mainly pp. 72-73 and 82-83, J. V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, Ann Arbor 1987, mainly pp. 230-252. On Milutin see L. Mavromatis, *La fondation de l’empire serbe, Le kralj Milutin*, Thessaloniki 1978, M. Dinić, “Odnos između kralja Milutina i Dragutina”, *ZRVI* 3 (1955) 49-82, Fine, *Late Balkans*, mainly pp. 217-227, 255-270, 311-314.

⁸ Pavle Subić (1245-1312) belonged to the illustrious Croatian family Subić, which acquired power during the thirteenth century, enjoying the support of the Hungarian crown. Pavle Subić is considered the most powerful Croatian nobleman of the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century. In 1273 he was named ban of Croatia, a title which he held until his death. In 1292

emperor, Anastasios, aimed at weakening the image of Byzantium and, therefore, of any possible imperial aspirations in the region. This is one of the main objectives of the Chronicle in general; it is within this framework and through this prism that Byzantium is viewed throughout the text.

In this paper we will examine the Priest's perception of Byzantine officials and the presence of everyday Byzantines in the Chronicle. Starting with the former, the Priest deals with the individuals who fall within the framework of the description of the battle of October 7th, 1042 that led to the independence of Diokleia from Byzantine rule⁹. To begin with the author mentions the Byzantine *dux* (= commander) Armenopoulos. John Scylitzes, who also refers to the event, preserves a different name, that of Michael the patrician, son of the *logothetes* Anastasios¹⁰. In the case in question, the Priest had no reason to use the wrong name, unless of course this is a genuine case of ignorance. In any event, the emperor's emissary fails, thanks to the bravery of Radoslav, son of Dobroslav. Radoslav unhorses the Byzantine commander, as a result of which the enemy troops cut and run¹¹. The Priest does not specify whether Armenopoulos (Michael) was killed by the fall. On the contrary, John Scylitzes informs us that the Byzantine official survived¹². Despite the fact that the Priest does not say so explicitly, I believe that the lack of clarification on whether Armenopoulos was killed in battle or not is intentional, since it is possible that the author himself was unsure. Thus, he prefers to insinuate that Armenopoulos survived, in order to make the Byzantines' flight even more shameful and the victory of the Slavs even more prestigious.

Charles I of Hungary gave him command of the regions between the rivers Gvozd and Neretva. In 1299 Pavle conquered Bosnia and started styling himself as «dominus Bosniae», while since 1305 he added to his title the term *totius*, i.e. of all Bosnia (*totius Bosniae dominus*). Despite the fact that he was under the dominion of the Hungarian crown, Pavle Subić acted almost independently and struck his own coins. He died in May 1312. On Pavle Subić see indicatively Fine, *Late Balkans*, pp. 206-210, 258, 276. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, pp. 19-21 and n. 23.

⁹ Ioannes Scylitzes refers to this battle and incorporates into his text the appearance of a comet the day before as a bad omen. He also states that during the battle 40.000 of the 60.000 Byzantine soldiers were perished. This number is almost certainly exaggerated but it is indicative of the magnitude of the byzantine defeat. On the battle see J. Thurn (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzes Synopsis Historiarum* [CFHB 5], Berlin – New York 1973, pp. 424⁵⁸-425².

¹⁰ Ioannes Scylitzes, p. 424⁶⁵⁻⁶⁸: μή φέρων ὁ Μονομάχος τὰς ἐκείνου καταδρομὰς τῷ ἄρχοντι τῷ τότε τοῦ Δυρραχίου (ἦν δὲ Μιχαὴλ πατρικίος, ὁ Ἀναστασίου τοῦ λογοθέτου υἱός) γράμμασιν ἐγκελεύεται τὸν ὑπ' αὐτὸν ἀθροῖσαι τοῦ Δυρραχίου στρατόν.

¹¹ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 38, p. 61: *Tunc imperator Craecorum iratus vocavit unum ex ducibus suis nomine Armenopolos, iussit eum venire et debellare regem Dobroslauum et eius filios. Qui congregato magno exercitu militum et peditum, pervenit usque ad planitiem Zentae. Rex etiam Dobroslavus, congregans exercitum, dedit partem exercitus quatuor filiis misitque eos in locum, qui Vuranie dicitur, contra orientalem plagam, ut ibi expectarent eventum beili. Ipse vero cum Radoslavo filio suo ex parte occidentali irruiit super Graecos caeperuntque valde trucidare eos. Radoslavus itaque iuvenis potens et strenuus armis, dextera laevaue vulnerans, pervenit ad ducem, quem cum cognovisset, gladio percussit atque de equo in terram proiecit. Quod videntes Graeci in fugam conversi sunt cecideruntque ex eis plurima multitudo, quam dinumerare nemo potuit.*

¹² Ioannes Scylitzes, p. 425¹⁻²: διεσώθη δὲ μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ Μιχαὴλ, τὴν ἴσσην καὶ αὐτὸς περικείμενος τύχην.

John Scylitzes ends the description of the battle with the flight of Michael (Armenopoulos). The Priest of Diokleia, however, goes on to mention another individual that played an important part in the battle, Cursilius. According to the author, after the Byzantines' defeat at the hands of the Slavs, Emperor Constantine IX ordered Cursilius, the local commander in Dyrrhachion, to reclaim the region. Indeed, Cursilius collected a large army, so numerous that Dobroslav decided to use a stratagem in order to defeat them. Specifically, he managed to trap them and launch a coordinated attack that demolished their formation. The action resulted in the wounding of Cursilius, who shortly afterwards succumbed to his wounds. In fact, the spot where he died was named "cross of Cursilius", since there was a cross at the site¹³.

However, although he devotes a great part of his narrative to the battle between the forces of Cursilius and Dobroslav, the Priest does not offer any characterization of the Byzantine local lord. He focuses on the behavior and actions of the Slavic ruler, his sons and the Byzantine rank and file. This follows, in my opinion, from his effort to stress the positive qualities and abilities of his heroes, as well as the multitude and concurrent cowardice and incompetence of the Byzantines. Thus, he is not interested in outlining the enemy leader's personality. Besides, the latter may be seen from the result (the crushing defeat of his troops and his death). Furthermore, by presenting the Byzantine soldiers as cowards and unable to react to their opponents' charge, in reality the writer is giving us the picture of an inexperienced and incompetent military leader, in other words Cursilius.

The Priest of Diokleia's final reference to Byzantine officials differs from the previous ones in that the officials in question now belong to the side the author supports. They are the *duces* Pirigordi¹⁴ and Alexios Kontostephanos¹⁵.

¹³ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 38, pp. 60-65.

¹⁴ There is not much information on this nobleman. P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan frontier. A political study of the northern Balkans, 900-1204*, Cambridge 2000, p. 184 claims that he is the same person as Pyrrogeorgios who had under his command byzantine troops in Ikonion in 1146 and he is described by Ioannes Kinnamos (A. Meineke (ed.), *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, Bonn 1836, 44¹⁹⁻²³: ὅπερ ἐπειδὴ τάχιστα βασιλεὺς ἤγκουσε δυνάμεις τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ τὴν ταχίστην ἐξέπεμπεν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, ὧν Πυρρογεωργιὸς τε ἤρχεν ἀνὴρ δραστήριος μάλιστα, ὅς καὶ τῷ τοῦ προμικηρίου τῆς ἀλλῆς ἐσώστερον τετίμηται ἀξιώματι) as a man extremely potent or else he is a relative of the same name. Given the fact that Pirigordi mentioned by the Priest of Diokleia was already *dux* of Dyrrhachion during the reign of John II Komnenos while Pyrrogeorgios of Ioannes Kinnamos was not yet *primikerios* in 1146, we have to assume that the two persons are not one and the same, even though they probably belonged to the same family branch. On the family of Pyrrogeorgios see B. Skoulatos, *Les personnages byzantins de l'Alexiade. Analyse prosopographique et synthèse*, Louvain 1980, p. 105, on George Pyrros, the first of the family. T. Živković supports, without using any proof, that Pirigordi of the Priest of Diokleia is the same person to Pyrrogeorgios of Ioannes Kinnamos' (see T. Živković, "Dioclea between Rascia and Byzantium in the first half of the 12th century", in T. Živković (ed.), *Forging Unity, The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, pp. 293-312, here p. 311 n. 37), a claim that I do not support for the aforementioned reasons. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁵ Member of the Kontostephanus family which appears in the late 10th century. (See A.P. Kazhdan – A.-M. Talbot – A. Cutler – T.E. Gregory – N. Ševčenko (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1,2,3, New York–Oxford 1991. (hereafter ODB), vol. 2, pp. 1148-

The events in which they participated take place during John II Komnenos' two expeditions against the Serbs (1122, 1129). The Byzantine emperor campaigned against Đorđije, who wanted to take power against the will of Byzantium and throw off the emperor's overlordship¹⁶.

The activities of Pirigordi (Pyrrhogeorgios) were brief and fall within the second expedition. After he collected an army along with Gradinja¹⁷ and Dragichna¹⁸, he occupied the region as far as Vuranea¹⁹ and Antibaris²⁰ and

1149). Alexios Kontostephanus is not mentioned as *dux* of Dyrrachion by other, unless a bull of the mid-12th century kept in the Dumbarton Oaks (W. Seibt, "Zur Problematik byzantinischer Monogrammsiegel", in *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 3, Washington 1993, 19-28, here p. 26) belongs to him. Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, p. 184 supposes that he is probably the brother of Stephanus Kontostephanus who was married to Anna, daughter of the emperor Manuel I. He must not be confused with the younger Alexios Kontostephanus, nephew of Manuel I. On the Kontostephanus family see H. Gregoire, "Notes épigraphiques", *Revue de l'instruction publique en Belgique* 52.3 (1909) 152-166, J. Darrouzès (ed.), *Georges et Dèmètrios Tornikès. Lettres et Discours*, Paris 1970, pp. 57-62. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, p. 199.

¹⁶ On this subject see A. Papageorgiou, "Βυζάντιο και Σέρβοι: το ζήτημα των εκστρατειών του Ιωάννη Β' Κομνηνού εναντίον των Σέρβων", *Eoa kai Esperia* 8 (2008-2012), 353-367.

¹⁷ Gradinja Branislavljević, son of Branislav, is only known by the Priest of Diokleia. During his reign (1130/1131 - 1142/1143), he was a vassal of the Byzantine empire. See J. V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 233, 298 (Fine supports that Gradinja's reign lasted from 1127 till 1146), T. Živković, "Dioclea between Rascia and Byzantium in the first half of the 12th century", in T. Živković (ed.), *Forging Unity, The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, 293-312, here pp. 293, 299-300, 306, 310 n. 35 and 312 n. 73 and idem, "Zavida's sons", in T. Živković (ed.), *Forging Unity, The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, 313-334, here pp. 319-320, 325. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, p. 195

¹⁸ Son of Branislav, grandson of Radoslav and nephew of Contantine Bodinus. See Fine, *Early Balkans*, pp. 232-233, 298, T. Živković, "Dioclea between Rascia and Byzantium in the first half of the 12th century", in T. Živković (ed.), *Forging Unity, The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, pp. 293-312, here pp. 299, 310 n. 35 and idem, "Zavida's sons", in T. Živković (ed.), *Forging Unity, The South Slavs between East and West: 550-1150*, Belgrade 2008, 313-334, here pp. 314, 319-320. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, pp. 189-190.

¹⁹ Modern Vranjina, island on the northern shore of the lake Shkodër which belongs to Montenegro. See P. Dragičević, *Montenegro*, Oakland - London 2009, pp. 128-129. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, p. 365.

²⁰ Modern Bar of Montenegro. See G. Moravcsik – R. J. H. Jenkins (eds.), *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio*, v. 1 [CFHB, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 1], Washington D.C. 1967 (hereafter DAI) — v. 2: *Commentary*, F. Dvornik – R. J. H. Jenkins κ.α., London 1962 (here after DAI Commentary) DAI, ch. 30, p. 144⁹⁵⁻⁹⁷: ἡ δὲ Διόκλεια πλησιάζει πρὸς τὰ καστέλλια τοῦ Δυρραχίου, ἤγουν πρὸς τὸν Ἐλισσὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸ Ἐλκόνιον καὶ τὴν Ἀντίβαριν,... See also, DAI Commentary, p. 122, F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 14, 33, 101, 134, 192, 268, 275, 335, 339-340, 346, 368, 389, 395, 397, D. Dragojlović, "Dyrrachium et les évêchés de Docléa jusqu' à la foundation de l'archevêché de Bar", *Balkanica* 21 (1990) 201-209, J. V. A. Fine, *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans: A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*, Ann Arbor 2006, pp. 36, 99, 101, 107-108, 212, 260, 300, 415, 430, idem, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 206, 215-216, 221, 223-224, idem, *Late Balkans*, pp. 7-8, 41, 44-46, 51, 138-141, 220, 265, 341, 359, 361-362, 376, 390, 420-

then decided to return to Constantinople. In order to return safely, he was escorted by Gradinja as far as Dyrrhachion²¹. Although there is no direct characterization of Pirigordi, the Priest manages to present him as a mere ally of the Serbs, who needed their assistance in order to make it to safety and return to Constantinople. Of course, this is done in order to stress once again the fact that it was the Slavs that ruled the region and that Byzantine presence was negligible, to such a degree that it was dangerous for them to cross the area without escort. However, the author indirectly recognizes Byzantium's domination over the lands around Dyrrhachion, since he mentions it as an area that was deemed safe for the Byzantine commander.

After Pirigordi returned to Constantinople, a new *dux*, Alexios Kontostephanos, appeared in the region²². Just like Pirigordi before him, Kontostephanos collected an army along with Gradinja and Dragichna. They managed to put Đordije to flight and the Byzantine *dux* returned to Dyrrhachion, leaving Gradinja in his place, who went on to capture all the lands claimed by Đordije, except the castle where the latter had taken refuge. At this point Gradinja sent for Kontostephanos, who in the meantime had gone to Scodari (modern Shkodër), and together they laid siege to the castle. In the end, Đordije was handed over by his own people inside the castle. Kontostephanos took custody of him, removed him to Dyrrhachion and from there sent him to Constantinople, where Đordije died.²³ The Priest refrains from attributing characterizations to

421, 479, 491, 512-513, 516-517, 519-520, 522, 531, 533, 556, 559, 600, 602, D. Mijović, "Bar (Antibaris), est-elle l'héritière directe de Diokleia?", στο W. Hensel (ed.), *Miedzynarodowy kongres archeologii stoivianskej. Warszawa, 14-18 IX 1965*, v. 5, Warsaw 1970, pp. 140-155, V. Popović, "Byzantines, Slaves and autochtones dans les provinces de Prévalitane et Nouvelle Epire", in *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'Ecole Française de Rome, Rome 12-14 mai 1982, Rome 1984*, pp. 181-243, here p. 184-185, 206, P. Skok, „Ortsnamenstudien zu *De administrando imperio* des Kaisers Constantin Porphyrogenetos“, *Zeitschrift für Ortsnamenforschung* 4 (1928) 213-244, p. 220, Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier*, pp. 119-121, 144, 147, 264. See also Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, pp. 247-248.

²¹ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 45, pp. 77-78: *Post hoc Pirigordi dux cum Gradichna et Dragichna, congregantes populum et magnum exercitum, venerunt et ceperunt terram usque Vuraneam et usque Antibarim, sed quia dux ire volebat Constantinopolim, Gradichna relinquens nepotem suum Prevosium in Obliquo ad custodiendum castellum transportaverunt ducem usque Durachium.*

²² The events described here took place during the John II's second expedition against the Serbs, in 1129.

²³ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 45, pp. 78-79: *Postquam autem dux Pirogordi ivit Constantinopolim, venit alius dux Durachium, Kiri Alexius de Condistephano. Interea rex Georgius congregans populum venit et obsedit Obliquum, Prevoscius vero cum suis fortiter defendebat se. Audiens autem [haec] dux Kiri Alexius, cum Gradichna et cum fratre congregantes exercitum venerunt supra regem. Quia vero iam rex erat exosus omni populo, non fuit quis, qui hoc ei annunciarer quousque venit dux cum Gradichna et cum exercitu. Et percusserunt castra eorum et occiderunt et vulneraverunt plurimos et fugaverunt eos. Rex evasit tunc et fugit [in] Cermenizam. Et dux fugato eo, reliquit Gradichnam cum exercitu et ipse reversus est Durachium. Tunc quia propter tribulationes et bella, terra iam deserta erat et quotidie magis magisque dessolabatur, rebellavit Decatarus et postea tota terra regis Georgii. At Gradichna cum suis caepit comprehendere terram et persequi regem, alia autem ex parte Rassani eum persequabantur. Rex autem cum suis per montana et per silvas huc illuc fugiens latitabat. Praeterea videns rex undique persecutionem sibi*

Alexios Kontostephanos and simply follows the latter's activities. Just as he did with Pirigordi, the author presents Kontostephanos as an ally to the Serbs; an ally that was successful thanks to the participation of Gradinja in the operations, but also because of the hostile reaction against Đordije of the castle's inhabitants and his friends. However, the Priest indirectly acknowledges that without the participation of the Byzantine official it would not have been easy to overthrow Đordije, since he has Gradinja inviting Kontostephanos at the epicenter of operations, outside the castle where their opponent was, so that they could take him prisoner. Even so, however, the author prefers to attribute the capture of Đordije to treason on the part of his people, rather than the participation of Byzantine troops.

In concluding this paper on the image of the Byzantines in the Chronicle, we need to mention the citizens of Byzantium and the way in which they are presented. To begin with, it must be made clear that the Priest of Diokleia is concerned solely with those Byzantines that were active in the region. They are always referred to as Greeks and they are characterized by two key traits: they are high in numbers and low in courage²⁴.

accidere, nesciens quid ageret, intravit in castellum, qui Obolon dicitur. Tunc Gradichna obtinuit [totam] terram usque Decatarum, praeter castellum quo rex tenebatur. Inter haec dux venit in Scodarim et Gradichna misit ad eum, ut quantocius veniret, quatenus caperent castellum et regem. Qui veniens cum exercitu obsederunt castellum. Tunc hi qui amici et proximi regis esse videbantur et qui edebant panem eius, levaverunt contra eum calcaneum suum et alii de foris alii de intus castellum tradiderunt et regem duci Kiri Alexio, quem dux comprehendens duxit secum Durachium; inde vinculatum et cum custodibus misit Constantinopoliim, ubi mortuus est in custodia.

²⁴ Papageorgiou, *Ἱερέας*, ch. 13, p. 36: *Et ceciderunt Graeci et multi gladio perierunt et plurimi capti sunt, alii vero in fugam conversi sunt.*, ch. 30, p. 47: *Occisis ergo una die omnibus Graecis, perrexit rex cum socero et suis cognatis, et obtinuit totam Rassam constituitque socerum suum, sicut prius fuerat, iupanum maiorem et cognatos suos sub potestate patris iupanum constituit, ut dominarentur eam provinciam et possiderent, salvo tamen iure regio.*, ch. 33, p. 50: *Eo tempore surrexit in gente Bulgarinorum quidam Samuel, qui se imperatorem vocari iussit et commisit praelia multa cum Graecis proiecitque eos ex tota Bulgaria, ita ut in diebus eius Graeci non auderent propinquare illuc.*, ch. 38, pp. 60-66, see especially pp. 60-61: *Graecis occulte consilium dabat ut dure et iniuste se agerent contra populum. Similiter et populis occulte dicebat: «Quare tam grande malum sustinetis a Graecis? Iniuste vos iudicant, bona vero tollunt, uxores adulterant, filias vestras virgines corrumpunt et polluunt. Numquam patres rnei, qui ante me reges fuerunt, talia operati sunt vobis; grande et grave malum est hoc». Dumque sic ageret per singula loca, caeperunt populi in eum intendere et valde diligere Graecosque nimium odisse. Inter haec consilio inito populi inter se quadam die uno consensu mittentes legatos et cartulas mutuo ad invicem surrexerunt et uno die interfecerunt omnes magnates Graecorum, qui sunt inventi per totam Dalmatiam.*, p. 61: *Ipse vero cum Radoslavo filio suo ex parte occidentali irruit super Graecos caeperuntque valde trucidare eos.*, p. 61: *Quod videntes Graeci in fugam conversi sunt cecideruntque ex eis plurima multitudo, quam dinumerare nemo potuit. Plurimi autem eorum fugientes cum iam se evasisse putarent, insurgentes filii regis, qui in orientali parte erant, trucidaverunt eos. Et facta est contritio et plaga magna in Graecis die illa.*, p. 62: *Igitur Cursilius cum omni exercitu venit et resedit in planitiae civitatis Scodrinae, ut ibi congregarentur omnes. Congregata est ergo ibi tanta multitudo, ut vix eos terra caperet.*, p. 62: *Rex vero Dobroslavus cum filiis et gente sua manebat in Cermeniza, cernens autem, quod magna multitudo esset Graecorum timensque, ne Luttovid transfretaret cultum, ne concluderetur in medio.*, p. 63: *Quod verbum per castra sonuit et omnes nimio terrore concussi sunt.*, p. 63: *Quod videntes Graeci valde turbati sunt.*, p. 64: *Graeci vero valde timere caeperunt et quia tarde audiebant eos descendere,*

A paradox that may be traced in the Priest's narrative is that, when referring to Byzantine armies, their numbers are extremely high²⁵, but when it comes to local inhabitants, the Slavs are able to wipe them out in a single day²⁶, which shows that native Byzantines were not numerous in Western Illyricum. It must be noted here that, whenever the author mentions Byzantine troops, he does not clarify whether they were local levies or soldiers that had marched from other, non-Slavic areas. It is usually implied that the troops were native-born.

This contradiction on the part of the writer is easily explained if his main goal is taken into consideration. When troops are concerned, he feels bound to mention their great numbers, so that the Slavic victories may increase in value and be considered more glorious. However, when ordinary local citizens are involved, the goal is to make them appear so few in number that they could be eliminated in the space of just one day. As has been repeatedly stated, the Priest attempts to prove that Byzantium's presence in the region was insignificant. Thus, whereas a multitude of troops serves the narrative's purpose, which is to impress the reader with the illustrious victories of the Slavs, the small number of the Byzantines permanently settled in the area also contributes to the author's aim, that is to the deter any Byzantine claims to a region where there were precious few Greek-speaking inhabitants.

Byzantine cowardice in the face of the military skills and bravery of the Slavs is an indispensable element of the narrative. The goal is to give prominence to the might of the Slavic troops and this is achieved by painting the Byzantines as a terror-stricken mob, ready to panic and flee whenever coming under attack, whether the attack was sudden or expected. Nevertheless, there is a single reference to Slavic trepidation in the face of an imminent Byzantine attack²⁷, a fact that undoes, to a certain degree, the pattern of the cowardly

quia nox erat et videre non poterant, putabant maximam multitudinem, quemadmodum audiebant ab Antibarensi. At ubi audierunt sonitum tubarum et buccinarum et vociferationis hinc iam prope esse et supra se irruere, terrore percussi in fugam conversi sunt. Ut autem cognovit rex et qui cum eo erant, fugam iniisse Graecos, aurora appropinquante irruentes in castra eorum caeperunt vulnerare, trucidare et interficere, post terga eorum persequentes eos., p. 65: Post haec misit rex Goyslavum filium suum curn exercitu obviam Lutovid principi, dans ei L Grecos, qui capti erant et vulnerati, ut dum appropinquaret hostibus, mitens eos sic vulneratos et sanguine aspersione in castra Lutovid principis, ut Graeci referrent ea, quae eis acciderant; quod, si Graeci ire nollent, omnes capite trucidaret., p. 66: Qui exeuntes depraedabant Graecos et captivabant eos quotidie., ch. 39, p. 68: Tunc Michala et Saganech, timentes ne Graeci terram invaderent, eo quod Graeci praeparabant se venire, et nolebant exire eis obviam.

²⁵ See for example Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 38, p. 62: *Igitur Cursilius cum omni exercitu venit et resedit in planitiae civitatis Scodrinae, ut ibi congregarentur omnes. Congregata est ergo ibi tanta multitudo, ut vix eos terra caperet.*

²⁶ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 30, p. 47: *Occisis ergo una die omnibus Graecis, perrexit rex cum socero et suis cognatis, et obtinuit totam Rassam constituitque socerum suum, sicut prius fuerat, iupanum maiorem et cognatos suos sub potestate patris iupanos constituit, ut dominarentur eam provinciam et possiderent, salvo tamen iure regio., ch. 38, pp. 60-61: Inter haec consilio inito populi inter se quadam die uno consensu mittentes legatos et cartulas mutuo ad invicem surrexerunt et uno die interfecerunt omnes magnates Graecorum, qui sunt inventi per totam Dalmatiam., p. 66: Qui exeuntes depraedabant Graecos et captivabant eos quotidie.*

²⁷ Papageorgiou, *Ιερέας*, ch. 39, p. 68: *Tunc Michala et Saganech, timentes ne Graeci terram invaderent, eo quod Graeci praeparabant se venire, et nolebant exire eis obviam.*

Byzantines. Thus, despite their proven cowardice, the Priest allows us a glimpse of Byzantine military skill. Besides, the fact remains that, despite the author's persistent efforts to prove the opposite, a careful reader realizes that in most cases the outcome of any war to which the Byzantines took part as allies of the Slavs would most probably not be the same without the military assistance of the former.

In summary, the image of Byzantium that the Priest of Diokleia is trying to promote is that of an empire which is mostly absent from the region. Byzantine officials, when not succumbing to the Slavs' military supremacy, need their assistance so as to achieve victory, while the army's soldiery consists of worthless cowards incapable of standing up to Slavic bravery and military might. This specific image was created by the author, as has already been stated at the beginning of this paper, in order to stave off the danger of Byzantium returning to the region in question. Thus, he makes every effort to weaken and diminish the influence and the presence of the Byzantine Empire throughout the ages, beginning in the fifth century with a reference to the heretical Anastasios and ending in the twelfth.

However, the task the author took on was extremely difficult. Because of that, although the reader's first impression may correspond to the writer's goal, a more careful analysis of the Chronicle reveals a different reality. Imperial authority in the region might have been intermittent, yet Byzantium's dominion and influence were continuous, a fact that, despite his determined efforts, the Priest of Diokleia is unable to conceal. Thus, occasionally and very infrequently he implies, possibly without meaning to, that, if nothing else, Byzantium was, one way or another, exerting its influence.

Ангелики Папагеоргиу
ГРАЂАНИН ВИЗАНТИЈЕ У GESTA REGUM SCLAVORUM

GRS, рукопис познатији као *Хронике Попа Дукљанина* обухвата хронику од петог до дванаестог века, а обухваћене су територије које данас припадају Хрватској, Црној Гори, Босни и Херцеговини и делимично Албанији. Другим речима у питању су области Западног Илирикума. Хронике почињу поменом цара Анастасија а завршавају се поменом цара Манојла I. Није изненађујућа чињеница да су почетак и крај Хронике обележене поменима царева који су имали веома важну улогу у византијској историји.

Упркос важности Византије у наведеним подручјима, поп Дукљанин врло ретко помиње Византију у Хроници. Некада не помиње ни имена царева а појављују се и грешке у идентификацији личности и догађаја. Генерално говорећи, слика коју на први поглед предочава поп Дукљанин је да Византија готово да није имала битног значаја на наведеним подручјима. Циљ овог рада је да покаже да је поп Дукљанин ипак указивао на постојање Ромеја, другим речима рад објашњава „како“ и „зашто“ се у Хроници ипак појављује Византија.