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## **MEDIEVAL EPIRUS: ASPECTS OF HISTORY AND PROSOPOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>**

*Abstract:* The University of Ioannina research project titled “Prosopography of Medieval Epirus (4<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> c.)” is the first comprehensive documentation and presentation of the individuals who acted in Epirus during the Middle Ages. The project identifies all individuals, whether locals or foreigners, from higher or lower social strata, named and anonymous, and registers them into an alphabetical prosopographical catalogue. The comparative and quantitative analysis of the information of the catalogue resulted in measurable data describing the anthropogeography of Epirus, demonstrating at the same time the importance of utilizing all the available sources to explore individuals and personal or family networks.

*Keywords:* Epirus, Greece, Individuals, Names, Byzantium, Middle Ages, Prosopography

Far from Constantinople, at the “fringes of the Roman dominion” (Gregoras), we find the western regions (Pachymeres), Epirus – both Nova and Vetus, according to the terminology of the proto-Byzantine administrative system.<sup>2</sup> After the establishment of the “themes” system, the region encompassed the “themes” of Nicopolis (899), Dyrrachium (842/3), and Kephallenia (809).<sup>3</sup> Here, on the

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<sup>2</sup> *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Shopen- I. Bekker (CSHB), vol. 1-3, Bonn 1829-1855, here vol. 1, 13. Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, ed. A. Failler (CFHB, Series Parisiensis 24.1-5), vol. 1-5, Paris 1984-2000, here vol. 1, 151. On Epirus Nova and Epirus Vetus see E. Chrysos, Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Ηπείρου κατά την πρωτοβυζαντινή εποχή, *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* 23 (1981), 1-11, here 12-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ηπειρος 4000 χρόνια ελληνικής ιστορίας και πολιτισμού*, ed. M.B. Sakellariou,



Fig. 1

frontier between East and West, the state of Epirus was founded after the Crusader conquest of Constantinople (1204). This state, the so-called Despotate, became influential through the engagement of various local-regional and international powers (Byzantines, Epirotes, Italians, Albanians, Serbs, Ottoman) primarily during the 14<sup>th</sup>- and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, thus shaping its identity in the medieval history not only of Byzantium, but of the Balkans and the Mediterranean in general.<sup>4</sup>

The historical evolution of medieval Epirus was studied by several prominent 19<sup>th</sup>-century scholars (P. Aravantinos, I. Romanos, A. Miliarakis)<sup>5</sup>, whose work was continued through treatises on the political, ecclesiastical and administrative organization, institutions, and society of the region. D. Nicol's monograph, written in the late 1950s, remains the authoritative study on the Despotate.<sup>6</sup> He examined the demographic backdrop of Epirus, while also taking an active interest in Byzantine prosopography.<sup>7</sup> From the 1990s onwards there has been an impressive increase in scholarship on Epirus, which continues to develop and is expected to revisit conclusions of the past, fill in research gaps, and propose new scholarly fields, such as everyday life, society, and, of course, prosopography.<sup>8</sup>

The latter field in particular offers fertile ground for the (re-)interpretation of the political, economic, demographic, ethnological and social conditions. It formulates relevant questions, and while not always offering answers, it utilizes a wealth of combined sources (archival, narrative, paleographical, inscriptional, nu-

(Athens 1997), 185-186.

<sup>4</sup> For the state of Epirus see D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epirus, 1267-1479. A contribution to the history of Greece in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1984. On the wars of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> c. see E. Sygkellou, *Ο πόλεμος στον δυτικό ελληνικό χώρο κατά τον ύστερο Μεσαίωνα (13ος-15ος αι.)*, Athens 2008.

<sup>5</sup> P. Aravantinos, *Χρονογραφία της Ηπείρου των τε ομόρων ελληνικών και ιλλυρικών χωρών*, vol. 1-2, Athens 1856-1857. I. Romanos, *Περί του Δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου. Ιστορική πραγματεία*, Corfu 1895 (repr. Arta, 2002). A. Miliarakis, *Ιστορία του βασιλείου της Νικαίας και του Δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου (1204-1261)*, Athens 1898 (repr. 1994).

<sup>6</sup> D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epirus*, Oxford 1957. See also above footnote 4.

<sup>7</sup> D. Nicol, Refugees, mixed population and local patriotism in Epiros and Western Macedonia after the Fourth Crusade, *XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines*, I, Athens 1976, 1-33. His interest in prosopography is apparent in several of his works, such as: D. Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460*, Washington D.C. 1968. Idem, *Studies in Late history and prosopography*, VR London 1986. Idem, The prosopography of Byzantine aristocracy, *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XII centuries*, ed. M. Angold, Oxford 1984, 79-91. See also P. Magdalino, Prosopography and Byzantine identity, *Fifty Years of Prosopography: The Later Roman empire, Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. A. Cameron, (Oxford 2003), 41-56, here 41, 43. For Nicol's efforts to publish a brief biographical lexicon see A. Savvides, Σχέδιο για ένα νέο βιογραφικό λεξικό του Βυζαντίου (ΒΑΒ) (Με προτεινόμενο λημματολόγιο), *Βυζαντινός Δόμος* 28 (2020), 1-46, here 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> For the recent research on medieval Epirus see *The recent research. Developments and prospects*, Arta 11 November 2016 (<https://uoi.academia.edu/EfstratiaSygkellou/Workshops>), ed. E. Sygkellou, D. Georgakopoulos, (Athens 2021), (forthcoming).

mismatic, sigillographical), providing a crucial contribution to our knowledge of the historical geographic region and its inhabitants and tracing its anthropogeography. As a discipline, prosopography is intrinsically connected with the study of society and is favored by the shortcomings of the relevant evidence.<sup>9</sup> It can thus become a crucial methodological tool, in combination with other disciplines, such as genealogy, lexicography et al., for the study of medieval Epirus, whose sources are incomplete, scattered, heterogenous and fragmentary.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, local factors, such as political fragmentation and the multinational nature of the Epirote centers of power, which were created during the late Byzantine period, make the study of individuals, the primary subject matter of prosopography, a complex, challenging affair.<sup>11</sup> Research on these individuals can be expanded to the study of divergent worlds (e.g. East and West), where the extremely unstable conditions lead them to re-assess their identity. Prosopography is thus undoubtedly connected with the issue of ethnic, political, or cultural identity.<sup>12</sup> In Epirus, as in the late Byzantine world, individual identity was usually formed through processes of symbiosis and osmosis. Bogoi, whom the Chronicle of Ioannina describes as Serb-Alvanite-Bulgarian-Vlach, was an ambitious early-15<sup>th</sup>-century lord of Arta of unknown origin, and is an indicative example of the complex social and political situation that had practically become the norm in the Byzantine periphery, influencing both individual and collective identity.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, due to its specific research preconditions, the study of medieval Epirus has much to benefit from prosopography. Indeed, this discipline, which began to flourish from the 1960s onwards, continues to attract the attention of scholars. There is a wealth of biographical works on the Byzantine emperors and their families, political and ecclesiastical officials, scholars, but also familial branches, in the international bibliography. Concurrently, the prosopographical lexicons that have been published, largely through major research programs, demonstrate the importance of the discipline's contribution to the study of Byzantine history. The most notable of these are: **a.** *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (PLRE) (ed. A. Jones – J. Martindale), **b.** *Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas – Empire. Prosopographie du Diocèse D'Asie (325-641)* (ed. S. Destephen), **c.** *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* (PMBZ) (ed. R. J. Lilie et al., -in

<sup>9</sup> Cf. A. Cameron, Preface, *Fifty Years of Prosopography*, *op.cit.*, XI. P. Magdalino, *Prosopography*, *op.cit.*, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. P. Magdalino, *Prosopography*, *op.cit.*, 50. For an evaluation of the late-period written sources see Sygkellou, *Πόλεμος*, *op.cit.*, 31-39. S. Asonitis, *Το Νότιο Ιόνιο κατά τον Οθωμανο Μεσαίωνα. Κομητεία Κεφαλληνίας, Δουκάτο Λευκάδας, Αιτωλοακαρνανία*, Athens 2005, 39-47.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. C. Roueché, *Defining identities and allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, ed. J. Herrin, G. Saint-Guilain, (Farnham-Burlington 2011), 1-5, here 4.

<sup>12</sup> S. McKee, *Sailing from Byzantium: Byzantines and Greeks in the Venetian world*, *Identities and Allegiances*, *op.cit.*, 291-300.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. C. Holmes, *Concluding remarks*, *Identities and Allegiances*, *op.cit.*, 309-314, here 311. J. Herrin, *Thirteenth-century prosopography and refugees*, *Identities and Allegiances*, *op.cit.*, 307. For Bogoi see Sygkellou, *Πόλεμος*, *op.cit.*, 113.

two series), **d.** *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire* (PBE), an electronic publication now known as *Prosopography of the Byzantine World* (PBW), **e.** *Prosopographisches Lexicon der Palaiologenzeit* (PLP) (ed. E. Trapp).<sup>14</sup>

Professor Savvides has also made a noteworthy contribution with his works on Byzantine prosopography, such as the *Prosopographical Lexicon of Medieval / Byzantine Pontus* (in Greek), a specialized lexicon that focuses on a specific geographic region of Byzantium.<sup>15</sup> Another work published in the previous decade is *The Prosopography of Byzantine Lesbos, 284–1355 A.D.* (ed. by A. Kaldellis – S. Euthymiadis).<sup>16</sup> These efforts are part of the wider trend of documenting the individuals of a specific geographical region, and thus reservations expressed by past prosopographical research regarding its geographical (and chronological) breadth are constantly being redefined, contributing to the research of the local communities.<sup>17</sup> In fact, only recently a digital workshop was held in Vienna titled: *Bridging the gap: the prosopography of a fragmented world (13<sup>th</sup> cent.)*, a subject that had been discussed at a related Symposium in 2007.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Epirus could also obtain its own personal prosopography, an effort we have begun at the University of Ioannina through research program co-funded by the EU and the Hellenic government.<sup>19</sup> It is our ambition to publish in the future a prosopographical lexicon, a specialized work among the general-purpose Byzantine lexicons, which would cover an existing gap in the prosopographical history of Epirus. Indeed, prosopographical research on Epirus is currently limited to a scattering of scholarly papers that examine individual figures or families, in addition to a number of sigillographical studies on the “theme” of Nicopolis. Sporadic prosopographical references can also be found in archaeological publications or collective volumes on the history of the region.<sup>20</sup> Our research program aims at a comprehensive overview of the individuals that lived and acted in Epirus throughout the Byzantine and medieval period (until the Ottoman conquest).

<sup>14</sup> For all these works (prosopographical and encyclopaedic lexicons) see A. Savvides, Σχέδιο, *op.cit.*, 7-8. See also the Preface of A. Cameron (XIV-XV) and the scholarly articles of J.F. Martindale, W. Eck, and especially of R.W. Mathisen (The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire: Yesterday, today and tomorrow, 23-40) included in the 1<sup>st</sup> section of the volume *Fifty Years of Prosopography*, *op.cit.*, C. Roueché, Defining identities, *op.cit.*, 1-3. C. Roueché, Defining identities, *op.cit.*, 1-3. See the online project *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, 2016, ed. M. Jeffreys et al., London 2017: <http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk>

<sup>15</sup> A. Savvides, Σχέδιο, *op.cit.*, 6. He was also involved in the publication of an *Encyclopaedic Prosopographical Lexicon of Byzantine History and Civilization* (in Greek); see *loc.cit.*, 6-7. For his works on Byzantine prosopography see *loc.cit.*, 1 footnote 1 (with all the relevant references).

<sup>16</sup> A. Kaldellis - S. Euthymiadis (eds), *The Prosopography of Byzantine Lesbos 284-1355 A.D. A Contribution to the Social History of the Byzantine Province*, Wien 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. R.W. Mathisen, The Prosopography, *op.cit.*, 34. Such is the work of Savvides on Pontus; see above footnote 15.

<sup>18</sup> Bridging the gap: the prosopography of a fragmented world (13<sup>th</sup> cent.), Digital Workshop 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Universität Wien. See also the Colloquium titled *The Eastern Mediterranean in the 13<sup>th</sup> century: Building a prosopographical methodology of identities and allegiances*; C. Roueché, Defining identities, *op.cit.*, 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> See above footnote 1

<sup>20</sup> See for example G. Prinzing, Epirus 1204-1261. Historical outline, Sources, Proso-

However we had to restrict our research to Epirus Vetus, the region delineated by the Akroceraunian mountains to the north and Nafpaktos to the south, centered on the Byzantine “theme” of Nicopolis.<sup>21</sup> This geographical breadth was the first of many criteria we needed to define in order to determine our research methodology. The selection of a geographical framework, despite being necessitated by the temporal constraints of the program, allowed uninterrupted research into the actions of individuals within a single, defined region. There are documentations of individuals from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Nicopolis, the church of which traced its founding to the apostle Paul, had numerous active bishops, such as Heliodorus in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>22</sup> The importance of this metropolis and its homonymous “theme” was connected with the activities of both political and ecclesiastical officials, who are documented mainly from lead seals, inscriptions and synodal church documents. But these types of sources (seals and inscriptions in particular) are not always available, a perennial problem for Epirote historical research of the entire medieval period.<sup>23</sup>

Among the criteria that were considered and are often considered in the study of prosopography was who was eligible to be documented, apart from those

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prosopography, *Identities and Allegiances*, *op.cit.*, 81-98. C.N. Constantinides, Προσωπογραφικά της οικογένειας των Φιλανθρωπηνών. Ο στρατηγός Αλέξιος και ο ιερέας Μιχαήλ οι Φιλανθρωπηνοί (13<sup>ος</sup>-14<sup>ος</sup> αι.), *Πρακτικά Συμποσίου. Μοναστήρια νήσου Ιωαννίνων. 700 χρόνια 1292-1992 (Ιωάννινα 29-31 Μαΐου 1992)*, Ioannina 1999, 517-627. N. Zečević, *The Tocco of the Greek Realm. Nobility, Power and Migration in Latin Greece (14th - 15th centuries)*, Belgrade 2014. Eadem, Notes on the prosopography of the Strategopoulos family, *Faculty of Philosophy, Collection of papers* 15/2 (2013), 123-136. G. Schirò, Eudokia Balsic, Vasilissa di Giannina, *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 8/2 (1964), 383-391. Idem, La genealogia degli Spata tra il XIV e XV sec. e due Buia sconosciuti, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neolatenici* 28-29 (1971/2), 67-85. C. Stavrakos, The Albanian family of Spata in Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Epirus: the epigraphic testimony, *Epirus Revisited. New Perceptions of its History and Material Culture*, ed. C. Stavrakos (Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization, 16), (Turnhout 2020), 37-58. C. Stavrakos - K. Kontopanagou - S. Kordoses - F. Lytari - C. Tsatsoulis - E. Pinakoulis, Ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα για τις Βυζαντινές και Μεταβυζαντινές κτιτορικές επιγραφές της Ηπείρου (Αριστεία II), *Το Αρχαιολογικό έργο στη Βορειοδυτική Ελλάδα και τα νησιά του Ιονίου, Ιωάννινα, 10-13 Δεκεμβρίου 2014, Πρακτικά*, Athens 2018, 55-57. A.-K. Wassiliou-Seibt, Der Familienname Pegonites auf byzantinischen Siegeln und in anderen schriftlichen Quellen, *Realia Byzantina*, ed. S. Kotzabassi, G. Mavromatis, (Berlin / New York 2009), 303-319. P. Papadopoulou, Five Lead Seals from Byzantine Butrint (Albania), *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 11(2012), 133-142. C. Tsatsoulis, Some Remarks on the Date of Creation and the Role of the Maritime Theme of Cephalonia (End of the 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Century), *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 11 (2012), 153-172. Some relevant articles are included in: *Epirode. Proceedings of the 10th International Symposium of Byzantine Sigillography, Ioannina, 1-3 October 2009*, ed. C. Stavrakos – B. Papadopoulou, (Wiesbaden 2011). *Μεσαιωνική Ήπειρος. Η νεώτερη έρευνα*, *op.cit. Nikopolis II. Πρακτικά Β' Διεθνούς Συμποσίου για τη Νικόπολη, Πρέβεζα. 11-15.9.2002*, ed. K. Zachos, vol. 1-2, (Preveza 2007).

<sup>21</sup> The province of Epirus Vetus may have covered the themes of Nikopolis and Kephallenia; see P. Soustal-J. Koder, *Nikopolis und Kephallenia* (Tabula Imperii Byzantini 3), Wien 1981, 47-40. M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus. A Topography of transformation. Settlements of the seventh-twelfth centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece*, Leiden-Boston 2012, 19-21.

<sup>22</sup> *Ήπειρος 4000 χρόνια ελληνικής ιστορίας*, *op. cit.*, 160.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. C. Holmes, Concluding remarks, *op. cit.*, 310-311.

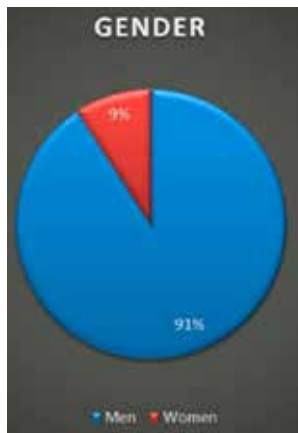


Fig. 2

individuals found within the spatial boundaries of the region; in short, whether those who were connected with Epirus and are referenced in the Greek and Western sources ought to be documented as well.<sup>24</sup> We thus created a prosopographical catalogue in which we categorized all the figures who acted in this particular region, a first for Epirote research. More particularly, we documented all individuals, Greek or foreign, who either lived in Epirus on a permanent basis or passed through the region in pursuit of their objectives. The catalogue presents the figures in alphabetical order and with supplementary information on their activities or their familial relations with other documented individuals. For this reason, we have fully utilized the information of the sources and the secondary bibliography. Additionally, their status, wherever it is mentioned, has also been documented, and so we see that there are political and ecclesiastical officials, priests and monks, soldiers, merchants, diplomatic representatives, landowners and *paroikoi*, as well as artisans, weapon-smiths, notaries, scribes, painters, cooks, hunters et al. We have also documented private individuals mentioned only once, and in most cases connected with everyday life, in particular with divorces or inheritances. The catalogue currently contains 1192 entries. Of these, 134 are of anonymous figures, for which the sources only record status. Indeed, among their ranks one can observe, in addition to individuals belonging to the lower social classes, secular and ecclesiastical officials, such as the archbishop of Leukas,<sup>25</sup> but also groups of individuals, soldiers, priests, migrants, villagers, tribes, et al. Each entry constitutes a valuable self-contained prosopographical story.<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 1)

Of the named individuals documented in the catalogue, the vast majority are men (91%) while women are a small minority (9%). This should come as no surprise; the female presence was limited to issues of family life, while men were mostly occupied with political and ecclesiastical administration, and the military.<sup>27</sup> As for the clergy, they seem to represent about 19% of entries, indicating the ecclesiastic and monastic activity, which reached its peak during the rise of the Despotate.<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 2, 3) From the 13<sup>th</sup> c. onwards individuals from the middle and lower social strata begin to appear in the sources, thus allowing, to a certain extent, a glimpse into the local social framework.<sup>29</sup> More particularly, we have documentations during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> c. of Greek (local) and foreign merchants, who were active in the region due to the economic exchanges between the

<sup>24</sup> Cf. R.W. Mathisen, *The Prosopography*, op. cit., 32.

<sup>25</sup> For this person see *Απαντα Ιωάννου Αποκαύκου. Συλλογή των μέχρι σήμερα διασωθέντων κειμένων του επιφανούς και λογίου Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου και Άρτης Ιωάννου Αποκαύκου (αρχές 13ου αιώνας)*, ed. I. Delimaris, (Nafpaktos 2000), 297-298.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. R.W. Mathisen, *The Prosopography*, op. cit., 35.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. A. Kiousopoulou, *Ο θεσμός της οικογένειας στην Ήπειρο κατά τον 13ο αι.*, Athens 1990, 118.

<sup>28</sup> M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus*, op.cit., 293-294.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. C. Holmes, *Concluding remarks*, op.cit., 310. G. Prinzing, *Epirus 1204-1261*, op. cit., passim.

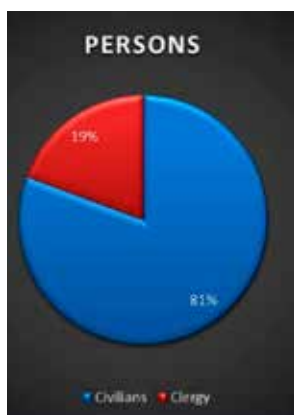


Fig. 3

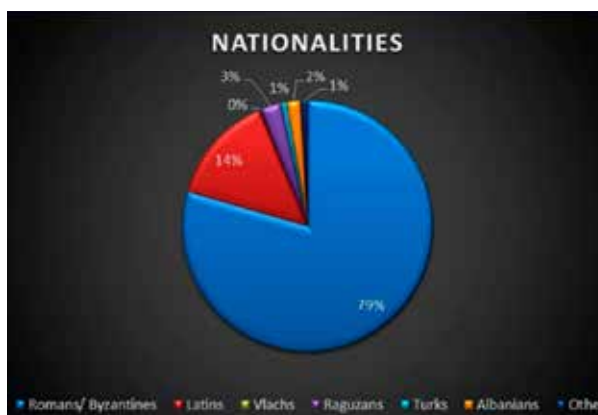


Fig. 4

lords of Epirus and Venice or Ragusa.<sup>30</sup> Specialized soldiers, such as crossbowmen and *stradioti*, both named and anonymous, formed networks of soldiers, and are also documented. Prominent clans, such as the Bua or the Mouzaki, founded martial houses that practiced the *stradioto* profession parallel to their agricultural occupation.<sup>31</sup> The prosopographical catalogue also includes individuals of foreign ethnic identity, who constituted a significant percentage both of the local populace and of the individuals who were active at some point in Epirus. Naturally, the Slavic invasions of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. and the late-Byzantine migrations, most prominent of which was that of the Albanians in the 14<sup>th</sup> c., altered the demographic map of the region. The sources speak of named and anonymous Italians, Vlachs, Bulgarians, Jews, Albanians, Serbs, Raguseans, Ottomans et al.<sup>32</sup> Especially noteworthy is the percentage of Westerners (14%), some of whom even managed to obtain positions of power in the region, such as the Orsini or the Tocci. Others served in important positions, such as the arch-bishop of Nafpaktos Rostangus de Candole (1407) or the head (κεφαλή) of the castles of Varnakas and Kandeles in Aetoloacarnania Manos Meliarsis.<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 4)



Fig. 5

<sup>30</sup> See S. Asonitis, *To Nότιο Ιόνιο, op.cit.*, 269-271. M. Kordoses, *Τα Βυζαντινά Γιάννενα. Κάστρο (πόλη) - Εξόκαστρο. Κοινωνία-Διοίκηση - Οικονομία*, Athens 2003, 264-272. Idem, Για μια ιστοριογεωγραφική μελέτη της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Άρτας, *Η βυζαντινή Άρτα και η περιοχή της, Πρακτικά Β' Διεθνούς Αρχαιολογικού και Ιστορικού Συνεδρίου. Άρτα 12-14 Απριλίου 2002*, ed. E. Sygkellou, (Arta-Athens 2007), Arta-Athens 2007, 53-140, here 96, 103-104. S. Asonitis – E. Sygkellou, Ο Αμβρακικός κόλπος κατά τον όψιμο Μεσαίωνα: Χώρος – Οικονομία, *Πρακτικά Β' Διεθνούς Συμποσίου για την ιστορία και τον πολιτισμό της Πρέβεζας, Πρέβεζα, 16-20 Σεπτεμβρίου 2009*, Preveza 2010, vol. I, 69-85, here 77.

<sup>31</sup> On the *stradioti* see K. Korre, *Μισθοφόροι stradioti της Βενετίας: πολεμική και κοινωνική λειτουργία (15ος-16ος αιώνας)*, PhD Thesis, Ionian University, Corfu 2018.

<sup>32</sup> For this multiethnic society see B. Osswald, *The Ethnic Composition of Medieval Epirus, Imaging frontiers, contesting identities*, ed. S.G. Ellis, L. Klusáková, (Pisa 2007), 125-154.

<sup>33</sup> S. Asonitis, *To Nότιο Ιόνιο, op.cit.*, 240, 155, 229. It must be noted that despite their ethnic or religious particularities, foreigners participated in a linguistically and culturally

But even the Greeks documented in the catalogue cannot always be readily identified as Epirotes, as many of them arrived in Epirus after 1204 and only later appear to have been fully incorporated into the local social fabric. Families such as the Strategopouloi, the Philanthropenoi, the Kantakouzenoi, or the Vatatzes all indicate Constantinopolitan aristocracy, which played a crucial role in local political developments in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> c. On the other hand, there was also an Epirote aristocracy, to which it appears the Apsarades, Kapsokavadedes, Monomachoi, Gorianites, Gostynopouloi families, among others, seem to have belonged; these noble houses formed a framework of familial networks, a phenomenon also observable among the lower social strata, such as the Mardaropouloi, the Mesimerides, the Patrenoi, the Triakontaphylloi, the Mandoukoi, the Lykoudades, the Kalognomoi et al. The sources also refer to professionals who established familial networks, such as the family of Theodoros the bugler from Arta (as is the case with the *stradioti*).<sup>34</sup>

The origins of Greek Christian and family names followed the wider trends of the period (names of martyrs, saints, and emperors, in addition to ancient Greek names). Names were also drawn from toponyms (e.g. Peratis), professions (e.g. Vodinopoulos, Vouteros), or official positions (e.g. Stratiotopoulos, Kavallaropoulos), or even from the founding dynasty of the state of Epirus (Michael, Theodoros, et al.), especially popular during the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> Many names denote foreign ancestry (e.g. Amyralis, Voulgaros, Rossos), most commonly Western (e.g. Valerianos, Frangos, Romaios, et al.).<sup>36</sup> As for the ratio of first names to surnames, we see that the latter began to be more prevalent during the late-Byzantine period, when the use of family names became widespread throughout Byzantium.<sup>37</sup> As per custom, the clergy and the lower social strata (shepherds etc.) are documented with their first names only, while lords and other prominent individuals (e.g. Konstantinos Ermoniakos), officials and *stradioti*

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homogenous society, often inter-married, and shared a common perception of coexistence with the local population.

<sup>34</sup> On the family of Theodoros see M. Kordoses, Για μια ιστορικογεωγραφική μελέτη, *op.cit.*, 95-96. For the Epirote families see Idem, Τα Βυζαντινά Γιάννενα, *op.cit.*, 176-183. Idem, Οι κλάδοι Κωνσταντινοπολιτικών οικογενειών στα Γιάννενα μετά το 1204 και η νομή της εξουσίας, *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. L. Hoffmann, A. Monchizadech, (Wiesbaden 2005), 445-456.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. J.-C. Cheynet, L'anthroponymie aristocratique à Byzance, L'anthroponymie document de l'histoire sociale des mondes méditerranéens médiéval, ed. M. Bourin, J.-M. Martin, F. Menant, (Rome 1996), 267-294, here 281-282. For the origins of family names in Byzantium see É. Patlagean, Les débuts d'une aristocratie byzantine et le témoignage de l'historiographie : système des noms et liens de parenté aux ix<sup>e</sup>-xe siècles, *The Byzantine Aristocracy ix to xii Centuries*, ed. M. Angold, (Oxford 1984), 23-43. A. Kazhdan, The formation of Byzantine family names in the ninth and tenth centuries, *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 90-109.

<sup>36</sup> For relevant western-origin names see P. Magdalino, Prosopography, *op.cit.*, 50-52. For ethnics as names see P.M. Fraser, Ethnics as personal names, *Greek personal names. Their value as evidence*, ed. S. Hornblower, E. Matthews, (Oxford 2000), 149-157. A. Kazhdan, The formation of Byzantine family names, *op.cit.*, 104.

<sup>37</sup> P. Magdalino, Prosopography, *op.cit.*, 48. J.-C. Cheynet, L'anthroponymie aristocratique, *op.cit.*, 273-278.



had family names.<sup>38</sup> There are certain cases of locals of unknown economic or social status that have family names, such as Konstantinos Kalligis, a resident of Lefkada.<sup>39</sup> In certain cases it is difficult to discern whether an individual has been called by a family name or by a sobriquet (e.g. Matzouklis, Niketas ho tou Protomyлона, Nikephoros ho Peratis).<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 5)

To conclude, we could say that the prosopographical study of medieval Epirus is an invaluable tool for the comprehensive examination of the history and the individuals of the region, both generally speaking and particularly. And if prosopography limits history to the individual (Magdalino),<sup>41</sup> the individuals of Epirus and their stories are more than capable of narrating their social and economic situation. For example, a prosopographical survey of Arta, Ioannina, or Nafpaktos could provide an outline of the Epirote cities and their economic, military, political, and ecclesiastical functions in the medieval period. Within such a framework, the genealogies of soldiers, merchants, or other professionals could be reconstructed, given of course that there were enough generations of them, as is the case for example with the Shpata family.<sup>42</sup> The sources remain a serious impediment that often precludes concrete conclusions. Issues of terminology and generalizations often lead to losses in pursuit of the identities of individuals, while other elements of the documented individuals, such as age, education et al. cannot be verified. Individuals also disappear from the narrative sources, in which anonymity is often due to each author's agenda.<sup>43</sup> Naturally, the Chronicles that refer to Epirus, such as the local Chronicle of Ioannina and the Western-style Chronicle of the Tocco, describe individuals within the context of the local political situation.<sup>44</sup> There are numerous references primarily to individuals (and families) of Western origin in the documents of Venice and Ragusa (late-14<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> c.). By contrast, the Byzantine-Greek documents concerning the region (patriarchal documents, chrysobulls), with the exception of the episcopal catalogues, are on the one hand exceedingly rare and on the other describe the framework of a central policy, within which there is no room for references to individual figures apart from certain members of the ruling class. Thankfully, we possess the case files of the church courts, which have been included in the works of Ioannis Apokafkos,

<sup>38</sup> For Konstantinos Ermoniakos see C.N. Constantinides, Από την πνευματική ζωή του Κράτους της Ηπείρου (1204-1304), *Μεσαιωνική Ήπειρος. Πρακτικά Επιστημονικού Συνμποσίου*, ed. C.N. Constantinides, (Ioannina 2001), 231-256, here 242-243. E. Jeffreys, Constantine Hermoniakos and Byzantine Education, *Δωδώνη* 4 (1975), 79-109.

<sup>39</sup> *Άπαντα Ιωάννου Αποκαύκου*, *op.cit.*, 353-355.

<sup>40</sup> *Demetrii Chomateni, Ponemata Diafora*, ed. G. Prinzing (CFHB 38), Berlin - New York 2002, 340. *Άπαντα Ιωάννου Αποκαύκου*, *op.cit.*, 252. For Nikephoros Peratis see M. Kordoses, *Τα Βυζαντινά Γιάννενα*, *op.cit.*, 89 footnote 220.

<sup>41</sup> P. Magdalino, *Prosopography*, *op.cit.*, 47.

<sup>42</sup> For the Shpata family see G. Schirò, *La genealogia degli Spata*, *op.cit.* C. Stavrakos, *The Albanian family of Spata*, *op.cit.*

<sup>43</sup> Cf. T. Shawcross, *The lost generation (c. 1204-c.1222): Political allegiances and local interests under the impact of the Fourth Crusade*, *Identities and Allegiances*, *op.cit.*, 9-45, here 16-17.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Cronaca dei Tocco de Cefalonia di anonimo. Prolegomeni, testo critico e traduzione*, ed. G. Schirò (CFHB, X), Roma 1975. *Το Χρονικόν των Ιωαννίνων κατ' ανέκδοτον δημόδη επιτομήν*, ed. L. Vranousis, *Επετηρίς του Μεσαιωνικού Αρχείου* 12 (1962), 57 - 115.

metropolitan of Nafpaktos, and Demetrios Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid, and provide invaluable insights for research, thus covering the entire social spectrum.<sup>45</sup> Another source from which we could draw prosopographical information are lead seals, which have already provided a wealth of information on the “theme” of Nicopolis, but are lacking in the late period.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, inscriptions, when studied, can also contribute. These demonstrate the extent to which prosopographical research is dependent on material evidence.

Finally, the prosopographical study of medieval Epirus, apart from its methodological issues – the geographical boundaries, for which there is no consensus, being the most crucial – has led us to conclude that it is fertile ground for the creation of a who’s-who. This work will almost certainly result in the publication of new social, economic/demographic, or even statistical studies, stretching to the early modern period. Of course, this is an arduous task, and will require coordination and cooperation with other related programs, primarily with regards to the period from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as well as with scholars from related disciplines, such as medievalists, archaeologists et al., and even with Albanian institutions, given that Southern Albania was part of Medieval Epirus. Nevertheless, the present research project on the prosopography of medieval Epirus will be an innovative and invaluable scholarly tool for the region itself and the Byzantine world in general.

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#### СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНИ ЕПИР: АСПЕКТИ ИСТОРИЈЕ И ПРОСОПОГРАФИЈЕ

Средњовековни Епир је недавно поново привукао пажњу истраживача заинтересованих за византолошке студије у домену историје, археологије, епиграфике, нумизматике и сл. Једна од дисциплина која је у повоју свакако је просопографија. Овај рад представља просопографску анализу Епира у којој се указује на политичке, економске, демографске, етнолошке и друштвене аспекте региона. Универзитет у Јањини носилац је пројекта „Просопографија средњовековног Епира (IV – XV века), отуда је могуће и спроводити овакву студију. По први пут, сви који су били део историје средњовековног Епира идентификовани су и регистровани у просопографском каталогу. У каталогу је тренутно 1200 личности које су представљене алфабетски кроз примарне и секундарне изворе. Сви чланови различитих сталежа од радника до важних мушкараца и жена, чинилаца друштвеног живота, укључени су у ову студију. Компаративна и квантитативна анализа од изузетне су важности за каталог, посебно за географију хуманиорума Епира, а важан део каталога представља архивска грађа, као и материјални подаци. Напоследку, каталог представља почетак рада на просопографском лексикону средњовековног Епира за који је очекивано да ће допринети бољем познавању сада фрагментних сазнања византијске периферије.

<sup>45</sup> For these scholars see C.N. Constantinides, *Από την πνευματική ζωή του Κράτους της Ηπείρου*, *op.cit.*, 234-244. For the written sources and the archaeological testimonies of Epirus see indicatively E. Chrysos, *Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Ηπείρου*, *op.cit.* M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus*, *op.cit.* D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epirus*, *op.cit.* See also above footnote 10.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. C. Holmes, *Concluding remarks*, *op.cit.*, 311.