The Other Europe in the Middle Ages
Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans.
East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450-1450
Edited by Florin Curta with the assistance of Roman Kovalev
LEIDEN • BOSTON
2008

pp. 339-362

DANUBE BULGARIA AND KHAZARIA AS PARTS OF THE BYZANTINE *OIKOUMENE*

Veselina Vachkova

The Byzantine concept of oikoumene

A Byzantine prophecy from the second-half of the eighth century reads, "This people [the Saracens] expels the Byzantines from the whole of Syria . . ., conquers Cilicia, and totally devastates Cappadocia because of the position of Mars (Ares). However, they [the Saracens] will not shatter the kingdom of the Byzantines itself owing to the position of the Sun, and also because Mars stands highest in the sky. Yet, Mars itself is declining—i.e. it is in Cancer—and for that reason the people of Mars will be humiliated by the Saracens. And because it [Mars] appears in the middle of the sky, the kingdoms of the people influenced by it—that is, the Byzantines, the Turks, the Khazars, the Bulgars and the like—will last for ever."[1]

This "astrological forecast" attributed to the famous head of Theodosius' school, Stephen of Alexandria, has three significant aspects. First, the text clearly marks a subsiding of the apocalyptical pathos and eschatological pressure instigated among the eastern Christians by the rise of Islam and the expansion of the Ummayad caliphate.[2] On the other hand, the quoted prophecy might be considered the first premeditated Byzantine attempt to demarcate the new boundaries of the *oikoumene* imposed by the Arab conquest. Lastly, the words of Stephen of Alexandria bear an eloquent testimony to the flexibility and, in a sense, the radicalism of the Byzantine religious-political ideology, which was readily able to rearrange its priorities—that is, to reduce and reshape the pattern of the *oikoumene* so that the kingdom of the Byzantines might always remain in its sacred centre, being duly safeguarded by similar communities.

---

1 Stephen of Alexandria, *Vaticinium de Bulgarorum regno*, in Duichev, Tsankova-Petkova *et al*. 1960, 206–207.

2 The "subsiding" in question was very much due to the fact that the Abbasids moved their capital from Damascus to Baghdad.

The Other Europe in the Middle Ages

Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans.

East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450-1450 *Edited by* Florin Curta with the assistance of Roman Kovalev LEIDEN • BOSTON

2008

pp. 339-362

DANUBE BULGARIA AND KHAZARIA AS PARTS OF THE BYZANTINE *OIKOUMENE*

Veselina Vachkova

The Byzantine concept of oikoumene

A Byzantine prophecy from the second-half of the eighth century reads, "This people [the Saracens] expels the Byzantines from the whole of Syria . . ., conquers Cilicia, and totally devastates Cappadocia because of the position of Mars (Ares).

However, they [the Saracens] will not shatter the kingdom of the Byzantines itself owing

to the position of the Sun, and also because Mars stands highest in the sky. Yet, Mars itself is declining—i.e. it is in Cancer—and for that reason the people of Mars will be

humiliated by the Saracens. And because it [Mars] appears in the middle of the sky, the kingdoms of the people influenced by it—that is, the Byzantines, the Turks, the Khazars,

the Bulgars and the like—will last for ever." 1

This “astrological forecast” attributed to the famous head of Theodosius’ school,

Stephen of Alexandria, has three significant aspects. First, the text clearly marks a subsiding of the apocalyptical pathos and eschatological pressure instigated among the

eastern Christians by the rise of Islam and the expansion of the Ummayad caliphate.2 On the other hand, the quoted prophecy might be considered the first premeditated Byzantine

attempt to demarcate the new boundaries of the *oikoumene* imposed by the Arab conquest. Lastly, the words of Stephen of Alexandria bear an eloquent testimony to the flexibility and, in a sense, the radicalism of the Byzantine religious-political ideology, which was readily able to rearrange its priorities—that is, to reduce and reshape the pattern of the *oikoumene* so that the kingdom of the Byzantines might always remain in

its sacred centre, being duly safeguarded by similar communities.

---

1 Stephen of Alexandria, *Vaticinium de Bulgarorum regno*, in Duichev, Tsankova-

Petkova *et al*. 1960, 206–207.

2 Th e “subsiding” in question was very much due to the fact that the Abbasids moved their capital from Damascus to Baghdad.

In this particular case the criterion of similarity is clear enough: the kingdoms of

the Byzantines, the Turks, the Khazars and the Bulgars will last, because they are all ruled by Mars. The Byzantines, the Turks, the Khazars, and the

Bulgars were naturally expected to survive neither because their respective horoscopes were favorable

(according to Claudius Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* the lands inhabited by these people were ruled by the Capricorn, the Virgo, and the Aquarius),3 nor by virtue of any climate-bound characteristics of temperament, national psychology, or racial type that they possibly

shared. These particular peoples were destined to survive only because of the divine

providence, which had predetermined their being ruled by Mars. The fact that all "kingdoms" mentioned in the prophecy, except the Byzantines themselves, were pagan

seems to have been unimportant. Unimportant was also who exactly were "the Turks" referred to in the text.4 What really mattered was the survival of the kingdom of the Byzantines; that of the Bulgars, who were to protect the Danube frontier; and that of the Khazars, who were to be on alert at the Caspian gates. In other words, the Byzantine

position, called by T. C. Lounghis "theory of limited *oikoumene*",5 had already been developed nearly two centuries before being clearly formulated in the writings of

Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the Continuator of Theophanes, and later implemented in the policies of the emperors from the Macedonian dynasty. This conclusion should not

surprise us if taking into account that Byzantium inherited both the Christian idea of ecumenical (in a broader sense "worldwide") power of the *basileus* and the classical Hellenic concept of the *oikoumene* as a clearly outlined space which was regarded as

sacred and, in this sense, in opposition to the rest of the profane world.

It is not the purpose of the present study to make an in-depth analysis of the

idea

of the universal power of the Byzantine Emperor, the dimensions of which remained basically unchanged after the establishment of the Islamic caliphates. Being purely

theoretical, the Emperor’s authority was, as a rule, not affected by the concrete historical experiences: Isaac II Angelus and Constantine XI were, for instance, by no means less “universal” emperors than Constantine the Great and Justinian I. No less enduring was the ancient idea of the sacred space of the *oikoumene* .

---

3 Claudius Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 2.3, in Robbins 1940, 157–160.

4 Th ere could hardly be any doubt that the “kingdomof the Turks” mentioned here was actually the Avar Khaganate.

5 Lounghis 1999, 119–122.

Although it was at all times closely linked to the dynamically changing situation, the concept of the *oikoumene* as spreading south to the Pillars of Hercules, north to the Caucasian gates, east to the rivers Tigris and Euphrates and west to the Danube was as

valid for the contemporaries of Ephorus (the author of the first known map, dated to the fourth century B.C.) as for the contemporaries of Stephen of Alexandria or Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Of course, in the Byzantine context one is presented with a *principal*

validity of the ancient vision of the *oikoumene*, which was *principally* not open to

discussion in much the same way as the hypothetical engagements and

prerogatives of the basileus-cosmocrat were *principally* not to be reflected upon. For that reason, there

always existed in Byzantium, irrespective of its real political frontiers, the faith in the universal providential mission of the unified and unique Christian kingdom on one hand and, as surprising as it might seem, not two (as expected) but four positions for the East and West: two to mark the two cardinal points of the world and two more marking the

relevant directions of the *oikoumene*. Accordingly, Byzantine authors used four terms instead of two: *Dysis* (Sunset) and *Eos* (Dawn)—when they meant to denote the

geographic directions West and East—and *Hesperia* and *Anatoliki*—when the western and eastern parts of the *oikoumene* were concerned. Following the same logic, the lands

north of the Danube were referred to as "northern" (the territories around the Caspian gates thus representing the extreme north), while the lands south of the Danube were seen as "western" (*ta Hesperia*). Besides, the western frontier (i.e. the Danube River),6 which

protected the *oikoumene* from the northern barbarians, always remained the most problematic.

The latter assertion is sure to raise a series of strenuous objections such as: the Great Enemy was in the East because of the religious opposition between Christian

Byzantium and Zoroastrian Persia and the Islamic caliphates, emirates and sultanates; or the Great Enemy was in the West, since the "deviation" of the Fourth Crusade was not in the least bit a tragic mistake, but a purposeful act fostered by the centuries-long alienation between eastern and western Christians; or the Great Enemy was Bulgaria, which used to

weaken Byzantium with constant wars and megalomaniac claims. One could probably find arguments in favour of

6 Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, *Dolni Dunav—granichna zona za Vizantiiskaia zapad. Kăm istoriiata na severnite i severoiztochnite bălgarski zemi, kraia za X–XII v.* (Sofi a,

1976).

every one of these positions, but still they will all be modern arguments supplied by

investigators who, more oft en than not, impose the theoretical construct of the “Byzantine Commonwealth” and the “family of the peoples and the rulers” onto the real historical matter. It is true that the theoretical construct in question, which was developed

in detail in the studies of Obolensky and Dölger7 and many a talented follower of theirs, is extremely orderly and reasonable, and thence—quite attractive. It is also true that the Byzantine rhetoric has frequently resorted to the arguments of faith and sacred hierarchy

in the context of the theme of the natural subjection of all Christian rulers to the father—

basileus in Constantinople. The only problem is that in actuality both Byzantine diplomacy and real policies never specified at which level of the elegant pyramid of

“peoples and the rulers” were the truly important military-political factors in the stability and prosperity of the New Rome to be found.

In short, in the sphere of its actions to maintain the delicately balanced *oikoumene*, there emerges an *Other Byzantium*, whose policy was utterly pragmatic,

unaffected by religious emotions, unscrupulous, and seeking to safeguard its interests in its choice of allies and recognition of adversaries. It should be pointed out in this

connection that, while it is still highly questionable whether “spiritual son” was an official Byzantine institution or just a rhetorical figure of speech (in spite of the abundant

epistolary evidence), “*Oikoumene*” was the most enduring, and perhaps the only commonwealth ever realized and recognized by the Byzantines.8 The “Byzantine commonwealth” was never thought of nor instituted as a system of artificial kinship with

fellow-Christians and carefully nurtured friendships with rulers of unbelievers, heathens, and insignificant Christian states, such as the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as viewed from

Constantinople.9 Like the ancient Hellenic (and Hellenistic) *inhabited world*, the Byzantine *oikoumene* was a multiethnic and multicultural system, where the knowledge

of the “civilized” Greek language used to be an advantageous fact without being a mass phenomenon. Furthermore, in much the same way as the Pax Romana, the “Byzantine Commonwealth” wasorganized around its sacred cen-

---

7 See Dölger 1943, 186–198; Obolensky 1971, 5–41.

8 About the traditional ideas of *oikoumene* inherited by Byzantium fromthe Antiquity see Mastino 1983; Turcan 1983. More specifically about the crystallization of the Byzantine concept of the sacred space of the *oikoumene*, see Vachkova 2004, 97–136.

9 Dölger 1943, 191.

ter—the New Rome—the protection of which was the only argument for maintaining the

whole commonwealth. It is this specific feature of the Byzantine Empire that opened up the possibility for "shrinking" and restructuring the *oikoumene*, which was meant for the maximum protection of the City. Thus, due to the geopolitical situation of the New Rome

coupled with the fact that the Scythians, who were invading from the north, were extremely "barbarian"10 and absolutely alien to the spirit and traditions of the Mediterranean civilizations, the territories between the Danube and the Haemus

Mountains came to be regarded as crucial for the Empire.

If judging from the cited theses about the "Byzantine Commonwealth" and perhaps the equally popular theses about "Byzantine imperialism,"11 one might expect the

aggression and the assimilatory ambitions of the Byzantium to have been directed towards the Bulgarian Kingdom, which was founded on lands previously under Byzantine rule. However, the historical reality is somewhat different.

Byzantium and the Old Great Bulgaria

The Byzantine accounts of the Bulgars prior to their contact with Khan Kubrat

strictly follow the pattern of the typical descriptions of the "barbaric environment" of the New Rome. In other words, the Bulgars were at first barbarians, their ethnonym being frequently mistaken for the names of other related or neighboring tribes (such as the

Huns). The situation seems not to have perceptibly changed in the writings concerning the Bulgarian-Byzantine relationships of the 630s. The accounts of the treaty between

Emperor Heraclius and Kubrat mostly replicate the old stereotypes: the *basileus* was visited by emissaries from the Bulgar ruler Kubrat; peace was established between the two, which lasted “till the end of their days”, because the *basileus* gave presents to the khan and honoured him with the title “patricius”. The benevolence of the Byzantines is

easy to explain even outside their usual practice of “buying” (whenever possible) the peace with the barbarians. In this particular

---

10 It is a well-known fact that, irrespective of the concrete political situation, the Byzantine apocalyptic, prophetic and patriographic writings used to picture Constantinople as sacked by

barbarians from the north at the end of times. See P. Alexander, “Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques,” in Alexander 1987,

3–9 (Essay XV); Dagron 1984, 329 with n. 57.

11 Ahrweiler 1975.

occasion the actions of the Bulgars overlapped with the interests of Byzantium, whose situation remained critical despite its recent victories over the Persians (628).

In this connection, I do not find it pointless to spell out the diplomatic implications carried by the title of *patricius*, which was bestowed upon certain foreign rulers by the Byzantine emperor. Like most titles inherited from Rome, the title of *patricius* used to imply different things at different times. During the period we are

interested in it still preserved the idea of noble origin and close connection to the high

circles of authority. However, it was an office reserved at the time exclusively for eunuchs.12 Yet, we should bear in mind the fact that before the khan of the Bulgars the

title had been conferred upon the barbarian kings Odoacer and Theoderic, who were officially acknowledged as legitimate rulers governing in Rome on behalf of the emperor in Constantinople. Thus the symbolism and the political significance of the title can be as easily deciphered: a *patricius* was (or was supposed to be) closely integrated into the life

of the Byzantine state; he had shown loyalty (and was expected to remain loyal in the future), which was only natural, since being a *patricius* meant being a high-ranking civil

servant. However, a *patricius* could not possibly make claims for the throne in Constantinople, since a eunuch could never become a *basileus*. Therefore, the title of

patricius was a kind of "invitation" to a barbarian ruler (hence to his people) to continue his (their) rising up in the hierarchy. Unlike the Goths, who had already imposed their authority in the Empire and were baptized (albeit in the Arian confession), the Bulgars

accepted the "invitation" prior to their establishment on the Balkans and long before their conversion to Christianity.

It is difficult to decide whether this special attitude towards the Bulgars— which is hinted by John of Nikiu, a contemporary of the events— was due to some old

relationship between Heraclius and "the chieftain of the Huns, Koubrat, the nephew of Organa," who had been baptized in Constantinople as a child.13 The fact is, however, that other Byzantine authors, who do not go into detail

about this aspect of the prelude to the treaty, also exhibit special attitudes towards the Bulgars. The latter is noticeable in the

accuracy with which the Byzantine authors call the people and its rulers by their correct names and not by some archa-

---

12 Bréhier 1970, 110–111.

13 John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 120.47, in Charles and Litt 1916, 197.

isms or eponyms.14 It also shows up in the tendency to call the Bulgar ruler most oft en by

the title *kyrios* (*kyris*), that is “legitimately reigning”, or “reigning as a host”, or “plenipotentiary ruler”, instead of using the impersonal *archon*; also to name him by the Bulgar title *kanas*, which the Byzantines were familiar with, or by no less well-known

title *k(h)aganos* of the Avars and Khazars.

Still less typical for the Byzantines is their vivid interest in the stately tradition of

the Bulgars from the period before they became immediate neighbors of Byzantium. The detailed, markedly nostalgic accounts of Patriarch Nicephorus and Theophanes the

Confessor of the Old Great Bulgaria make an important point, which has not so far been satisfactorily explained. It is possible to translate *he palaia Megale Boulgaria* as “Old

Great Bulgaria”, but it means rather “the old Big Bulgaria”. This is to say that, being situated at the Caspian Gates, Bulgaria of Kubrat was a

periphery, not a main part of the Byzantine world according to the analogy with the ancient designations Minor Scythia/Big Scythia, Minor Asia/Big Asia etc., which used to indicate not a geographical

scale or time of colonization, but rather the quality a country had of being civilized and organically connected with the *oikoumene* or, by contrast, being remote and, to a certain

extent, “barbaric”. Seen through this prism, the Danube Khanate founded by Khan Asparukh was the other, “Minor”, that is “civilized” and “Romanized” Bulgaria. And it

was quite natural, since Bulgaria was situated on this side of the Danube.

Bulgaria—the West of the oikoumene

In the course of the intense contacts between Khan Tervel and Emperor

Justinian II, the natural evolution of the Bulgar-Byzantine relationships culminated, after 681, in bestowing the title “caesar” upon the Bulgar ruler in 705. Unlike the office of *patricius*, the office of Caesar represented rather a period of training before ascending to

the throne. The possible practical consequences of this truly unique act — the acknowledgement of such a title of the Bulgar ruler —are not hard to identify. Justinian

II himself must have realized that by calling the

---

14 By way of comparison, it could be noted that at the same time the ruler of the Avars was

simply mentioned as the “Avar” despite his family ties to the court of Constantinople. About the “frivolous” usage of such ethnic names as “Avars” and “Slavs,” see Curta 2004, 513–550.

Bulgar khan “caesar”, by enthroning him in line with himself, by throwing on his

shoulders “the imperial mantle of purple color” and ordering “the people to pay homage to them jointly”,15 he has granted Tervel the right to make, under certain circumstances, legitimate claims to the throne in Constantinople. The title in question was not an

honorary one but an official public investiture. At least that was how Justinian II saw the situation. Not only did he fail to arrange the marriage between his daughter and the Bulgar khan negotiated in 704–705,16 but he was quick in breaking the peace with the

Bulgars and ensuring the throne of the Byzantines through “marrying” his Khazar wife and his juvenile son “to the kingdom” by declaring them “augusti.”

In light of these events, the integration of the Bulgars into the “Byzantine

system” appears to have been completed no later than the early eighth century much in the same way that the Goths and the Franks in the West, as well as the Georgians and the Armenians in the East, had been integrated before. There was, however, a substantial difference — the Bulgars remained officially pagan until the 860s. This fact did not

discourage the Byzantines from regarding the power of the Bulgar khans over the Byzantine West as legitimate, and in that sense, as “caesar’s”, therefore, deserving all

regalia but church sanctification, which was reserved for the equal to the Apostles, the *basileus* in Constantinople. As far as the Bulgars’ position is concerned, it is best judged

from the way they got closely involved in the Byzantine dynastic crisis

which followed (and which was to be overcome with the rise of the Isaurian Dynasty in 717), as well as by their contribution to the defense of Constantinople against the Arabs in 718. As for the

Byzantines, this period seems to have beenexactly the time when they came to regard the Danube Khanate as the western part of their Kingdom — that is, a state enjoying almost

full autonomy and relative separation, which was previously characteristic of the Western Roman Empire towards the Eastern one.

Modern studies, which tend to dramatize the constant borderland conflicts so common in medieval times, fail to explain the extent to which Byzantium not only tolerated but rather appreciated the new

---

15 Nicephorus, *Historia syntomos* 22, in Boor 1880, 42 (Duichev, Cankova-Petkova *et al.* 1960, 297); see also Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, in Boor 1883–1885, 374.

16 Actually, this marriage might not have been contracted for purely objective reasons. See Head 1972, 106–110.

status quo. However, the extant sources from that time unequivocally reflect the authentic

attitude of the Byzantines. As an eloquent testimony could be cited, for instance, the fact that under the reign of Constantine V (741–775) and later under Nicephorus I (802–811), who conducted the bloodiest wars against the Bulgars, the Byzantine writers most

consistently and sharply criticized the policies of their sovereigns. Their negative reactions might, of course, be attributed to the natural hostility of Patriarch Nicephorus and Theophanes the Confessor towards the

iconoclastic emperors. This enmity, however,

should not be overemphasized, if at all taken into consideration, which is proven by the

fact that Theophanes, canonized later as Confessor because of his being an icon worshipper, criticized with even greater resentment his fellow iconodule and would-be

saint Theodore the Studite as an inspirer of the wars of Michael I against Bulgaria. 17

Another powerful testimony is the fact that, no matter what their concrete war ambitions, the Byzantine emperors came to call Haemus "*their* (i.e., the Bulgars') mountain" and set the "outermost Byzantine boundaries" in Thrace, in the lands around

the towns of Mesembria and Anchialos. In other words, the Danube River was still the western frontier of the Kingdom of the Byzantines, but it was no longer Constantinople

that had the real control over the Western lands; neither did it have the difficult duty to defend them. The new situation was generally regarded in Constantinople as perfectly

reasonable and satisfactory. In the light of these facts, the policies of the Bulgar khans could be assessed as loyally keeping the agreement on their part, as well as an unbending expectation of loyalty from the Byzantines. 18

As could be expected, in view of the economic potential and common interests, it was the Byzantine Empire that was the main source of finance for the defense of the

Danube frontier. For that reason, the duties of the Bulgars are recorded in our extant sources as "*favours bestowed on the Christians*",19 while the Byzantine obligations figure

as *pakta*. Most often *pakton* (*pakta*) is translated as “tribute” and is wrongly interpreted as a sign that Byzantium acknowledged the military supremacy of the

---

17 Theophane Confessor, *Chronographia*, in Boor 1883–1885, 498 (Duichev, Cankova- Petkova *et al*. 1960, 287).

18 That the Bulgar rulers were aware of their responsibility to defend the region results, for example, fromthe fact that Omurtag built a palace near the Danube (see Beshevliev

1981, 191–200 and facsimile 141.56), in a town so-called Little Preslav, which so much impressed Sviatoslav of Kiev in the 960s, that he wanted to move his capital there.

19 Beshevliev 1981, 80.

Bulgars. However, quite a different picture appears, if the payments in question are

considered in the context of, say, Khan Kardam’s request for Constantine VI to pay for the fortification works done by the Byzantines in the Thracian towns. This situation suspiciously reminds one of the events of the Persian-Byzantine war under Justinian in

the sixth century. Then the Byzantines started strengthening their military stronghold Dara (situated in a demilitarized zone on the frontier) instead of regularly paying to Persia their contribution to the defense of the Caucasian Gates (a frontier whose defense

against the barbarians was the common duty of the two powers).20 It is obvious that both

these cases have nothing to do with paying some debasing “contribution” but rather show disregard on the part of the Byzantines for their duty to maintain and defend the complex

system of inner and outer borders of the *oikoumene*. In the Byzantine relationships with Bulgaria the same system of double — outer (common) and internal (within the *oikoumene*) — borders was in effect. That is why the abovementioned concept of Haemus being a “Bulgarian mountain” does not contradict the idea of the River Ister

(Danube) being at the same time the offi cial western frontier of the Byzantine Empire and the front gate to Bulgaria itself. It was no accident that when he appealed for help to

Khan Tervel, Justinian II stopped at the Danube and sent emissaries to the khan with his proposals. Following the same logic, each larger campaign against Bulgaria was

organized (contrary to all tactical and financial considerations) by both land and water, the fleet proceeding as far as the Danube River.

The role of Bulgaria as the defender of the West neither involved a planned Romanization, nor did it require the conversion of its population to Christianity. In the Byzantine view it was exactly their “semi-nomadic” and “semi-barbaric” status that made

the Bulgars the most reliable shield against the truly barbarian tribes of the Scythians coming from the north. That was why, although the Byzantine emperors were otherwise

completely lacking in missionary enthusiasm,21 the acts of

---

20 About the Persian-Byzantine relations the logic of which was later followed, to a great extent,

in the Bulgarian-Byzantine relations (with the difference that in the first case Byzantium was the Western and in the second, the Eastern kingdom) see Vachkova 2006, 111–127.

21 This lack of missionary enthusiasm, however, rested more on practical grounds than on religious and psychological reasons, as Ivanov 2003 has it. Accordingly, we could speak, for the period under Michael III and Basil I, of a (re-)vitalization of the missionary rhetoric, but not of

“grandiose missionary campaigns in the mid-ninth century” (Ivanov 2003, 157).

civilizing their neighbors were deliberately postponed and limited to the baptizing of this

or another khan. In such a situation where the conflicts and cooperation were limited strictly to the military and political spheres the Bulgars adopted and gradually came to consider their own the idea of the two frontiers — respectively the two territories — of

their state, hence the double statute of their ruler, who was concerned with both the interests of Pliska/Preslav/Tărnovo and those of Constantinople. These two types of border — the inner one, encompassing Bulgaria, and the outer one, including also

Byzantium—were of different natures and the correction of either of them had a different

effect on the whole *oikoumene*. Thus, notwithstanding the expansion of Bulgaria northwards and westwards, which made the Danube an “internal Bulgarian river”, the

Danube did not cease to be at the same time the western Byzantine frontier. Its defense was a collective duty and whenever the Byzantines would fail to keep the agreement, the Bulgars would just let the “Scythians” cross their

lands on their way to Constantinople. This peculiar concept explains both the attitude of the Byzantines, who regarded the

Bulgars as their closest relatives (along with the Armenians and the Alans)22 in the “family of the peoples”, and at times the rather inconsiderate hints of the Bulgars that the

“Greeks” would simply not have survived without the Bulgars and that “God sees” when “the Christians forget the numerous favours” done to them by the Bulgars. 23

As for the preservation of the inner boundary between Bulgaria and Byzantium in Thrace, the centuries-long history of the two neighboring countries demonstrated that it did not depend on a temporary military supremacy of either one of the two sides and still

less on a radical revision (either on the part of Bulgaria or on the part of Byzantium) of the concept of Bulgaria and Byzantium as a *sui-generis dual monarchy*. The wars which

went beyond the normal conflicts over the borderlands (at that time to fight over disputed land brought honour among the

---

22 As a rule, the “Byzantine commonwealth” should be considered in the light of the typical Byzantine family, in which the brothers of the father were external elements and had neither rights nor obligations to his sons (their nephews), except the usual moral and emotional ones.

Furthermore, while in the “family of the peoples” the Bulgars and the Armenians rank highest,

occupying the fifth level of “sons”, in later Byzantine prophesies about the “righteous kingdoms”, the Alans were not mentioned, and the Armenians, who were “semi-faithful”, are replaced by the

Iberians (Georgians) and even by Germans (who were also semi-faithful).

23 For the complete text of the stone inscription (carved probably under Khan Persian), see Beshevliev 1980, 80.

neighbors) were matters of personal ambitions and complexes of some rulers, who decided to put right the “unnatural” autonomic existence of the Byzantine West.

As we have already seen, the Bulgars gained the unique position of legitimate rulers of the Byzantine West in the first place by their keen sense of the interests they

shared with the Byzantines. The khans, later the Bulgarian kings and emperors, were not at all bothered by the fact that the Byzantines preferred to refer to Bulgaria as the West of their Empire. Like the Byzantines themselves, they regarded the ornate diplomatic

rhetoric as a means to build up their self-confidence, be on their best behaviour, and, of

course, keep the peace. Taking this into account, the Bulgars’ conversion to Christianity in 864 seems not to have changed the already established system which had hitherto

proved its efficiency. It was not by accident that the Bulgars would make it clear, whenever they had the chance to do so, that their privileged position in the *oikoumene* was based on their merits, and not on the Christian faith they shared with the Byzantines. An extremely curious demonstration of this attitude was the way the delegates of the

Bulgarian Christian rulers were dressed when they visited the Emperor’s court in Constantinople. Liutprand mentions that the envoys of Tsar Peter, who took a place of

honor at the imperial receptions, appeared “unwashed”, “stripped to the waste”, “dressed in skins” and “girded with copper chains”.24 Moreover, the rumors (so conscientiously

spread by the Bulgars that they even reached the ears of the abovementioned bishop of Cremona) had it that Boyan (in all probability Tsar Peter’s brother) was an extremely skillful sorcerer and could easily transform himself into a wolf, a dog and all sorts of

animals.

However, of relevance in this context is not so much the extent to which the

Bulgars preserved their national outfits or faith in the supernatural power of their ruler’s blood after Christianization, but rather that, parallel to their quick adaptation to the

religious-political pattern of the Byzantines, the Bulgars were keen on preserving those symbols and traditions that had bearing on their self-consciousness. They insisted on being accepted as Bulgars and not as an impersonal segment of some “Byzantine commonwealth” unified by Byzantinism. Perhaps the most decisive action in this

direction was the abandonment in 893

---

24 Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 19, in Duichev, Voinov *et al*. 1960, 320–323.

of the Greek language and the establishment of the Slavonic language as the official language of the Bulgarian state.

On the border of the oikoumene

The state of the Khazars founded on the territory of the former “Old

Great Bulgaria”25 not only inherited a large part of its population and its experience from

Khan Kubrat’s state but also the functions imposed on it by Constantinople. The role assigned in the Byzantine policy to the new northern neighbour of the *oikoumene* is comparatively easy to determine. The Khazar Khaganate was established on borderlands, so it was its duty to defend the Byzantine frontiers (including the Byzantine West).26 The

military rise of the Khaganate dovetailed with the Byzantine interests; all the more that the Khazars were now expected not only to prevent a possible barbarian invasion from

the north but also to repel the constant Muslim pressure from the south. One should admit that the Khazars fully fulfilled and even exceeded the Byzantine expectations. Before it

was destroyed by the Kievan Rus’ in the tenth century, the Khazar power maintained, as a rule, peaceful relationships with Byzantium, ensuring relative peace in the north, and preventing Arab invasions. 27

Except for being a military ally of Byzantium, Khazaria was its reliable political partner. This development had as much to do with the inner evolution of the Khaganate

itself as it did with the complicated international situation where, following the fall of Persia, the initial aggression of the Muslim world rendered the place of the civilized

eastern neighbour vacant for a long time. At the end of the eighth and during most of the ninth century this place was, indeed, to be occupied by the Abbasid

---

25 The discussion about whether the Old Great Bulgaria disintegrated under the Khazars pressure (as most modern investigators believe) or the Khazars took advantage and invaded the already

disintegrating polity of Kubrat (as the Byzantine authors assert) has a purely academic value. 26 The Khazars were probably first mentioned as Byzantine allies in the reign of Heraclius.

See below note 33. As for the Bulgarian-Khazar conflicts, they did not go beyond the usual border clashes. Some scholars (for example G. Atanasov and P. Popov) claim that Byzantium made attempts to have the Khazars as allies against Danube Bulgaria, but such claims are groundless.

See Atanasov 2003, 92–113; Pavlov 2003, 122–141 (especially 122–129).

27 For surveys of the Byzantine-Khazar relationships in the light of the Byzantine defensive imperialism(as Obolenski and Shepard view the matter) see Noonan 1992,

109–131; Shepard 1998, 11–34; Obolensky 1966, 476–498.

caliphate, rightly called by some a “continuation of Sasanian Persia.”28 Until then it was the Khazar Khaganate29 which was to play the role of a power that was great, neutral, tolerant and strong enough in military respects to be able to take that position. In that

sense, the functions of the Khaganate, whose ruler was praised in the Armenian and Syrian sources as the “true Tsar of the North”, far exceeded the practical reasons for which Byzantium used it as a northern guardian of civilization. This change of attitude is

judged from the willingness of the Byzantine emperors to marry noble Khazar women. It

is safe to say that Justinian II (685–695 and 705–711), while seeking shelter

in the Khaganate, was forced to marry the daughter of the Khagan, whereas Leo III married his

son to a Khazar princess (733) as a sign of loyalty to his political ally. Nonetheless, the Byzantines still viewed the region as the “lands at the end of the world”, and this concept did not change much with the rise of Khazar power. Nor did close relationships with the Khaganate alter that concept and even less the statement of Patriarch Photius that, due to

the Christians’ enterprises in Chersonesus, not only was the Black Sea turned from “inhospitable” into “hospitable”, but it even became “pious” (to be sure, the description

was far from accurate).30 It was in Chersonesus that most influential people perceived to be a threat to the stability of the state were sent into exile. Pope Martin was sent there in

the early seventh century, and at the end of that same century so was the former emperor Justinian. It wasagain in Chersonesus that the leaders of theiconodules were exiled in the early eighth century. The most eloquent example in this respect is the well-established

tradition, especially in Byzantine novels about Alexander the Great, which attributes to him the closing of twenty-two “impious peoples” (including Gog and Magog) behind the

Caspian Gates.31 It was the duty of the Byzantine *basileis* to see that those gates remain closed for as long as possible. 32

---

28 Brown 1999, 216–218.

29 For details on the development of the Khazars see:Artamonov 1962; Novosel’tsev 1990.

30 Photius, *ep*. 97, in Laourdas and Westerink 1983, 132.

31 Trumpf 1974, 6–8.

32 It is noteworthy that the “closing” and “opening” of the Caspian Gates is highlighted as an exclusive prerogative of the Byzantine emperors even by Frankish authors. Fredegar knew that Heraclius had taken 150,000 warriors from the Caucasus Gates to aid him in the war against the

Arabs (Fredegar IV 66, in Krusch 1888, 153). For the identification of Heraclius’ allies with the Khazars see Devellers and Meyers 2001, 158 with n. 519.

The Judaic experiment of the Khaganate

In so far as the newly established powers preserved neutrality in the Middle Ages

primarily on religious grounds, the decision of the khagan to adopt Judaism in the ninth century might well be interpreted as his breaking neutrality.33 Furthermore, this act not

only increased the distance between Khazaria, on one hand, Christian Byzantium and the Muslim world, on the other hand, but also removed the Khazar elite from traditional

Tangrism, which was official in Bulgaria at the time, thus emphasizing the nonaligned position of the khagans. It should be mentioned, in this connection, that the prospective of Christianization presented the Khazars and the Bulgars (as well as, later on, the Rus’) with far more complicated situations if compared to, say, that of the Franks, the Goths

and other Germanic peoples. The dilemma for Bulgars and Khazars was not simply to choose between paganism and Christianity: they could also choose between Judaism and

Islam (and even opt for Manichaeism, if we take into consideration the "Manichaean experiment" of the Uighur Khaganate).34 As for Judaism, the decisive role for its spread

was played by Anan ben David and his followers (the Karaites), because Judaism was principally limited to Jewish communities. This movement, which was considered heretical by Orthodox Jews, had as a result a temporary opening of the Jewish religion

towards other cultures and peoples. Irrespective of the number of the Jews living in Khazaria, most typical for this period is the unusual activation of Judaic missionary work,

without which the conversion of the Khazars could not have taken place. In evaluating these events, however, two more facts must be taken into account. First, each medieval

community used to consider itself "a chosen people of (their) God". However, unlike the Christians and the Muslims, whose national identities had been blurred by the universalism of their respective religions, the Khazars found themselves in a unique position of being "a chosen people," which not only preserved its ethnic identity, but also

strengthened it. Second, the Khazar experiment with Judaism was not at all an exotic phenomenon.

---

33 Some scholars believe that the Khazars adopted JudaismunderKhagan Boulan in 809, while others think it happened around 860–861. See Artamonov 1962, 261–263;

Zuckerman 1995. For the date of the conversion established on numismatic arguments, see Kovalev 2005.

34 See Stepanov 2005, 74–78, 122–124. Consider also the thesis of

Gumilev about the destructive role of the Manicheans in the Uighur Khaganate (Gumilev 2002, 210–211).

Noteworthy is that a similar attempt was made on the periphery of the Byzantine oikoumene in the 500s. In Yemen, Himyara's ruler Masruq Dhu Nuwas (515–525) converted to Judaism, assumed the name Joseph, and launched a massive pro-Judaic

propaganda. A massacre in the town the Najran caused not only the martyrdom of many Christians, but also a conflict between Ethiopia and Himyar. The ensuing war proved to be catastrophic for the "Judaic king" and prompted the official baptism of Kaleb, the king

of Aksum, who had made a vow to convert to Christianity, if granted victory over Dhu

Nuwas.35 On the other hand, an increased interest in Judaism and things Jewish can be observed in ninth-century Europe (including in the caliphate of Cordoba, where the

Hasdai-ibn-Shaprut was the financial advisor of Abd-ar-Rahman III). Thus, for example, Charlemagne (or his son Louis the Pious) established the special offi ce of *magister Iudaeorum*, which placed the Jews directly under the protection of the Emperor and made it possible for them not only to be tried by Jews, but also to live *more Iudaeo* (*halakhah*).

The protective and sometimes preferential treatment Jews enjoyed under the Carolingians is attested by a number of facts. First, one of the three Frankish envoys to the court of

Harun ar-Rashid was the Jew Isaac.36 Later, Agobard, the bishop of Lyon and author of the famous treatise *Deinsolentia Iudaeorum*, was temporarily exempt from his office by

Louis the Pious under accusation of having disobeyed the order of the

35 These events, along with the abundant and varied sources on the basis of which they have been reconstructed, are studied in detail in Pigulevskaia 1951, 78–122. See also Moberg 1924. For the role of the Byzantine diplomacy in the Aksumite campaign against Himyar, see Malalas **,** *Chronographia*, in Dindorff 1831, 433–34. Even though according to Malalas, the campaign took place during Justinian's, not Justin's rule, Kaleb's war against Dhu Nuwas (Joseph) is commonly dated between 521–525, with the final Aksumite victory taking place in either 525 or 526. See

also *Martyrium Sancti Arethae*, in Boissonade 1962, 1–62; Shahid 1964, 115–131. Procopius of

Cesaraea provides only a brief account of the Aksumite victory over "Jews and pagans**" (***Wars* 1. 20, in Haury 1905, 107).

36 Jews were oft en employed by Christian rulers as translators because of their command of foreign languages, but this can hardly be the case of Isaac. Merovingians and Carolingians carefully selected the members of their embassies. The guiding principle for Merovingian rulers

seems to have been the selection of persons of sufficient nobility, civilization, and predisposition

(Goubert 1956, 17–19, 76–7, and 105–159). In addition, Carolingian rulers were concerned with obtaining a good representation of as many ethnic groups within their empire as possible.

Including Jews in an embassy sent to the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad was in fact a way to prove the point that Jews lived not only within the Caliphate, but also within the Carolingian Empire. For the composition of the embassies sent to Baghdad and Constantinople, respectively, see the

Annals of Fulda, s.a. 797 and 811, in Kurze 1891, 15 and 18.

emperor and instigated a riot.37 The accusation referred, among other things, to the bishop's criticism of Evrard, the *magister Iudaeorum* who is said to have attracted Christians to the Jewish way of life and religious practices.38 The Emperor did not change

his mind even after a scandal broke around the episode of Bodo, a court deacon who had adopted Judaism, assumed the name Eleazar and escaped to the Arabs in Spain.39 In 877 some suspected that Charles the Bald was poisoned by his personal physician, the Jew

Sedekia.40 Many churchmen were furious that Christian rulers like Charles surrounded themselves with Jews, even though those Jews happened to be experienced doctors.

One of the peculiar side effects of this eccentric tendency of the European

Christian rulers to "ennoble" their courts by attracting as attendants Jews who were able to trace their ancestors back to King David himself, was that a number of self-governing Hebrew communities (*kahal/juderia*) appeared in the ninth century.41 There is also evidence of the existence of autonomous Jewish communities ruled by their own *nasi*42 in

Rouan,43 Narbonne (where Jews were granted by Charlemagne the statute known as the *Cortada Regis Iudaeorum*),44 and probably Mainz, a city in which Charlemagne himself

settled a branch of the Italian-Jewish family of the Kalonymos.45 It would of course be a mistake to view the legislation and actions in question as some pro-Judaic policy of the

Carolingian rulers. By such means, Jewish communities were effectively set apart from the rest of society, and the New Israel (as the Christian peoples used to consider themselves) wasthus separated from the Old

37 Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* 57, in Tremp 1995, 517. For Evrard's office of *magister Iudaeorum*, see Bachrach 1977, 99–102.

38 Agobard of Lyon, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, in Van Acker 1981, 191–195.

39 Frank 2005, 131–157; Bourdel 2004, 22–30. Calimani 1996, 109–129. It is worth mentioning that there are, indeed, precedents in the Old Testament of entire peoples (e.g., the inhabitants of Shechem) being circumcised and converted to Judaismat once (Gen. 34). For the sharp reaction of Bishop Agobard of Lyon against the "pro-Jewish" policy of Louis the Pious, see for example Poliakov 1955, 46–50. About the continuation of the same policy aft er the Carolingians, see Langmuir 1960, 203–239.

40 *Annals of St. Vaast*, a. 877, in Simson 1909, 42; *Annals of St. Bertin*, a. 877, in Waitz 1883, 136–137.

41 See Schwarzfuchs 1986.

42 For the meaning of 'nasi' (*nagid*), see Meyers 2001, 165–205, especially 178. For Jewish political and social thought aft er the Exile, including the development of the idea of Jewish "princes" as subjects to foreign rulers, see Leith 2001, 276–316 (especially

282–315); Vidal-Naquet 1978, 846–882.

43 Golb 1985, 127–129.

44 Calimani 1996, 123.

45 For Narbonne,see Graboïs 1973, 191–202; Cohen 1977, 45–76.

(Hebrew) one. It is important to note that the process appears to have taken place in Byzantine and Latin Christian societies. The only difference is that

in Byzantium the

segregation seems to have remained in the sphere of rhetoric, without any significant judicial sanctions.

In view of the afore-mentioned developments the conversion of the Khaganate to Judaism (i.e., their identification with the renewed Israel of the Hebrews) no longer

appears as an extraordinary event. This may also explain the rather indifferent attitude of the imperial government in Constantinople. During the period in question, in the context

of anti-Islamic polemics and of the debates surrounding the cult of the icons, Jewish learning became popular in Byzantium, where Jews enjoyed no preferential treatment. Nevertheless, the anti-iconoclastic (and anti-Judaic) discourse does not seem to have made any use of the religious changes taking place in Khazaria for supporting its

arguments.46 At least, that is what the situation appears to have been judging from the extant sources from the period.

Was the Khazar mission a success or a failure?

As modern researchers have almost consistently pointed out, the Byzantine

authors were not terribly interested in Khazaria. As regards the Byzantine lack of interest in the conversion of the Khazars, suffice it to say that their position might only appear

strange, while being completely normal for at least two reasons. First, that lack of interest in the event in question is characteristic of all medieval European authors, and the conversion of Khazaria is now reconstructed, for the most part, on the basis of some Slavonic hagiographic writings.47 On the other hand, the reticence of the learned circles in

Constantinople could be attributed to

46 The situation of the Jews in Byzantium and the anti-Judaic theme in the iconodule discourse is

discussed in Cameron 1996, 249–274; Ducellier 1996, 33–37, 88–122, and 146–167; Cameron 1994, 198–215; Sharf 1971; Bowman 1985. However, Kazhdan 2002, 184–220 rejects the direct

connection between anti-Iconoclastic, anti-Islamic, and anti-Jewish rhetoric.

47 It is noteworthy that according to the *Golden Legend* the Byzantine mission was sent to Chersonesus with the only purpose of recovering the relics of St Clement. The author of the *Legend* is careful in explaining that his sources disagree on whether the relics were found by the Philosopher or by "the blessed Cyril, the bishop of Moravia", the two being obviously considered

different persons. See Jacques de Vorragine, *La Légende dorée*, in Wyzewa 1998, 644–655. For

the mission sent by Emperor Michael III to Chersonesus, see Wyzewa 1998, 654. For a survey of sources pertaining to the Khazar mission, see Trendafi lov 1999, 21–47.

the fact that the Byzantines were not particularly interested in the religion practiced by the Khazars, as long as it was not Islam. The traditional "do-not-do-anything-about-it" policy48 was in this case reinforced by, and reformulated in agreement with, what was

also a traditional Byzantine policy, namely the *damnatio memoriae*.49 For that reason, it would be more interesting and far more fruitful to see Bulgaria's reaction to this event, given that the country itself officially adopted Christianity in 864.

It should be pointed out from the beginning that no mention exists in Bulgarian

sources of the conversion of Khazaria. The reader is even left with the impression that, after the brilliant performance of Constantine the Philosopher in the disputations with the

“Jew” and the “Saracen,” the khagan decided to adopt Christianity. At the same time, there is another important moment in the *Life of Constantine*,50 which helps explain, despite the somewhat unusual character of the evidence, what really happened. At the end of the Khazar mission (860/1), the Philosopher refused the rich gift s of the khagan, and

only wanted the release of the Christian captives.51 The number of the captives that Constantine took with him to Constantinople was 200, exactly the number of

“unbelievers” said to have been baptized after the disputation at the court of the Khazar ruler. Can this be a narrative strategy of excluding the Judaic Khaganate from the

oikoumene? The existing evidence does not seem to substantiate such an idea. On the contrary, the intention of the Bulgarian author of the *Life of Constantine* seems to have rather been to impress upon the reader the idea that the Khazar mission (however

religious or political it might have been) had nevertheless been a complete success by helping to maintain the *status quo* in Khazaria, which was acceptable to all parties. It thus

seems that the Bulgarian position in rendering the events was in agreement with the Byzantine one. This unanimity is easy to explain, given that the Bulgars adopted the

Byzantine vision

48 See in detail Shepard 1985, 233–293 (p. 251 in particular).

49 The Bulgarian-Byzantine treaties of 913 and of 923/4, under the reign of Tsar Symeon of Bulgaria, provide an excellent example in this respect. The Byzantine authors' deliberate neglect

of the endeavours of Cyril and Methodius is discussed in Mechev 1999, 309–344.

50 *Life of Constantine*, in Mechev 1999, 371–534. Forthe *Th essalonican Legends* and the *Brief Lives* of Constantine-Cyril and Methodius see Ivanov 1970, 281–289.

51 *Zhivot na nashiia blazhen uchitel Konstantin Filosof părvi nastavnik na slavianskiia*

narod (Life of our Blessed Master Constantine the Philosopher First Teacher of the Slavonic People), in Mechev 1999, 521.

of the structure and character of the *oikoumene*. The latter fact could shed some light on the question of whether the Byzantine diplomacy was really "good at dividing but not so good at uniting".52 In this connection, and to sum up what has been said so far, one needs

to examine the practical eff ects of including Bulgaria and Khazaria into the structure of the Byzantine *oikoumene* .

"In Byzantine likeness"

Gilbert Dagron has given a precise definition of that peculiar mixture of traditions which constituted the so-called "Byzantine civilization". According to him, "Byzantium really drew from all traditions, however, outside their specific contexts. It

adopted the Hellenistic idea of the divine origin of kingdom, excepting the philosophical doctrines which gave substance to it; it was modeled on the biblical kingdom of David,

excepting the Jews; it adopted Roman universalism (*universalitas*), excepting Roman history. Put together, all these components produced a rather schematic and weak theory

but extremely powerful images."53 Dagron's observation can as well be applied to Bulgaria and Khazaria, both of which formulated their respective state ideologies in parallel with their establishment as the West (and Frontier) of the Byzantine

oikoumene .

Bulgaria copied the Byzantine model, excepting the Greek language; it used the

Slavonic language, ignoring the Slavonic inheritance; it put forward claims for the western crown and also for being a Second or New Rome,54 disregarding the Latin

language and the Roman institutional system. Even the Bulgarian tradition proper was seen and expressed not so much in a strictly national perspective as a legacy of the "steppe empire." This is demonstrated, for example, by the rhetorical usage of

—

---

52 This observation of Gennadii Litavrin is followed by comments on the "chaotic" development of the *oikoumene*, the best realization of which is the multinational monastic "republic" on the

Holy Mont Athos. Litavrin 1999, 11–47, especially 37–38.

53 Dagron 2001.

54 The students of the Middle Ages usually maintain that the Bulgars put forward the idea of the Third Rome (Tărnovo), which was later brought to Russia by bishop Cyprian in the form of “Moscow—the Third Rome” (for example, Kartashev 1991, 320–339 and 396–407). The

Bulgarian sources show, however, that Tărnovo was considered not the Third, but the New (or

Second) Rome, which had risen aft er the Byzantine betrayal of Orthodoxy at the Council of Lyon (1274). See Vachkova 2005, 101–103.

khagan,55 a title Bulgar rulers never claimed for themselves. Khazaria, on the other hand, did not mind being the New Israel, but never developed the idea of a sacred New Jerusalem; it adopted Judaism, but not the Talmudic theology; the Khazar ruler declared

himself a successor to David and Solomon, but besides bearing the title of “exilarch” (i.e., of leader of the Jewish diaspora) he maintained the old, Turkic forms of power representation.56 As the Khazar King Joseph put it, not without nostalgia, although his

subjects enjoyed peace and prosperity, “they lived away from Sion” and “had their eyes

fixed . . . at the Hebrew wise men, at the academies in Jerusalem and the academy in Babylon.” 57

At first glance, these “hybrid” civilizations give the impression of being artificial and non-viable. It is a standing fact, however, that both Byzantium and Bulgaria were, in the Middle Ages, key war and political factors, as well as cultural centers, whose radiation went well beyond their boundaries and even their ambitions. The same holds

true, to a great extent, for Judaic Khazaria, although in its case the religious-political formula proved to be charged with much more incongruities than could be successfully

harmonized in a lasting society.

References

Ahrweiler, H. 1975, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin.* Paris.

Alexander, P. 1987, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire.* London.

Artamonov,M. I. 1962, *Istoriia khazar.* Leningrad.

Atanasov, G. 2003, "Bălgarsko-khazarskata granica i bălgaro-khzarskata vrazhebnost ot kraia na VII do sredata na IX v." In *Bălgari i khazari v rannoto srednovekovie*, ed. Ts. Stepanov, Sofia, 92–113.

Bachrach, B. S. 1977, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe.* Minneapolis. Beshevliev, V. 1981, *Părvobălgarski epigrafski pametnici.* Sofia.

Boissonade, J. (ed) 1962, "Martyrium Sancti Arethae". In *Anecdota Graeca*, V, Paris, 1–62.

Boor, C. de (ed) 1880, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opuscula historica.* Leipzig.

——.1883–1885,*Theophanus, Chronographia.* Leipzig.

Bowman, S. B. 1985, *The Jews of Byzantium 1204–1453.* New York.

Bréhier, L. 1970, *Les institutions de l'Empire byzantin.* Paris.

Brown, P. 1999, *Th e Late Antiquity World.* Sofia.

55 Examplary in this respect is “khagan Michael” mentioned in the Vision of *Daniel.* See Tsvetelin Stepanov in this volume.

56 Stepanov 2003.

57 Kokovtsov 1932, cited after http://gumilevica.kulichki.net/Rest/rest0501.htm (visit of September 18, 2006).

Bourdel, Ph. 2004, *Histoire des Juifs de France. Des origines à la Shoah.* Paris. Calimani, R. 1996, *L’Errance Juive.* Paris/NewYork/Amsterdam.

Cameron, A. 1994, “Texts as weapons: polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages”.In *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World,* eds A. Bowman and G. Woolf, Cambridge, 198–

215.

——.1996, “Byzantines and Jews:some recent workon early Byzantium”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20, 249–74.

Charles, P. H., and Litt, D. D. (eds) 1916, *John Bishop of Nikiu, Chronicle*. London. Cohen, J. 1977, “The Nasi of Narbonne: A Problem in Medieval Historiography”, *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 2, 45–76.

Curta, F. 2004, “Barbarians in Dark-Age Greece: Slavs or Avars?”. In *Civitas divinohumana. V chest na profesor Georgi Bakalov,* eds Ts. Stepanov and V. Vachkova, Sofia,

513–50.

Dagron, G. 1984, *Constantinople imaginaire. Etudes sur le recueil des “Patria”,* Paris. ——.2001, “L’oecuménicité politique, droit sur l’espace, droit sur le temps”. In *Les actes du colloque sur l’oecuménicité, 29 nov.–2*

dèc. 2001, Athènes, unpublished manuscript. Devellers, O. and Meyers, L. (eds) 2001, *Frédégaire, Chronique des temps mérovingiens* , Turnhout.

Dindorff , L. (ed) 1831, *Joannes Malalas, Chronographia.* Bonn.

Dölger, F. 1943, “Srednovekovnoto semeistvo na vladetelite i narodite i bălgarskiat vladetel”, *Spisanie na Bălgarskata Akademiia na Naukite* 66, 181–216.

Ducellier, A. 1996, *Chrétiens d’Orient et l’Islam au Moyen Age VIIe–XVe siècle.* Paris. Duichev, I., Voinov, M., Lishev, S., and Primov, B. (eds) 1960, *Latinski izvori za*

bălgarskata istoriia, II, Sofia.

Duichev, I., Tsankova-Petkova, G., Tăpkova-Zaimova, V., Ionchev, L., and Tivchev, P. (eds) 1960, *Grătski izvori za bălgarskata istoriia*, III, Sofi a.

Frank, R. 2005, “From Aachen to Al-Andalus: the journey of Deacon Bodo (823–76)”, *Early Medieval Europe* 13, no. 2, 131–57.

Graboïs, A. 1973, “Une principauté juive dans la France du Midi à l’époque carolingienne?”, *Annales du Midi*, 85, 191–202.

Golb, N. 1985, *Les Juifs de Rouen au Moyen Age. Portait d’une culture oubliée.* Rouen. Goubert, P. 1956, *Byzance avant l’Islam,* II, Paris.

Gumilev, L. 2002, *Tysiachiletie vokrug Kaspiia.* Moscow.

Haury, J. (ed) 1905, *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia.* Leipzig.

Head, C. 1972, *Justinian II ofByzantium.* Madison/London.

Ivanov, S. 2003, *Vizantiiskoe missionerstvo. Mozhno li sdelat’ iz “varvara” khristianina?,* Moscow.

Ivanov, I. 1970, *Bălgarski starini iz Makedoniia.* Sofia.

Kazhdan, A. P. 2002, *Istoria visantiiskoi literaturii (650–850gg.*). St. Petersburg. Kartashev, A. 1991, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi tserkvi.* Moscow.

Kokovtzov, P. K. 1932, *Evreisko-khazarskaia perepiska v X veke.* Leningrad (also available online at http://www.hist.ru/ER/sources.htm).

Kovalev, R. K. 2005, "Creating Khazar identity through coins: the special issue dirhams of 837/8". In *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed F. Curta,

Ann Arbor, 220–53.

Krusch, B. (ed) 1888. *Fredegarii Scholastici Chronicarum libri IV cumcontinuationibus* . Hannover.

——.1891, *Annales Fuldenses sive Annales regni Francorum orientalis*. Hannover. Labande, E.-R. (ed) 1981, *Guibert de Nogent, Autobiographie*, Paris.

Langmuir, G. I. 1960, "'Judeinostri' and the beginning of capetian legislation", *Traditio* 16, 203–239.

Laourdas, V. and Westerink, L. (eds) 1983, *Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani Epistolae et Amphilochia*. Leipzig.

Danube Bulgaria and Khazaria 361

Leith, M. J. W. 2001, Israel among the Nations. Th e Persian Period. In Coogan, M. (ed), *Th e Oxford History of the Biblical World*, Oxford, 276–316.

Litavrin, G. G. 1999, "Geopoliticheskoe polozhenie Vizantii v srednevekovom mire

v VII–XII vv.". In *Vizantiia mezhdu Vostokom i Zapadom*, ed G. G. Litavrin, St. Petersburg, 11–47.

Lounghis, T. C. 1999, “La théorie de l’oecumène limité et la revision du *Constitutum Constantini*”. In *Obshtoto i spetsifi chnoto v balkanskite kulturi dokraia na XIX*

vek. Sbornik v chest na 70-godishninata na prof. Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, eds A. Dzhurova and G. Bakalov, Sofia, 119–22.

Mastino, A.1983, “ORBIS, KOSMOS, OIKOYMENE. Aspetti spazziali dell’idea di imperio universale da Augusto a Teodosio”. In *Roma,Costantinopoli, Mosca.Atti del*

I seminario internazionale di studi storici “Da Roma alla terza Roma”,21–23 aprile 1981,Università degli studi di Roma “La Sapienza” , Naples, 63–129.

Mechev, K. 1999, *Proizkhod na slaviano-bălgarskata pismenost po danni na bălgarski, ruski, vizantiiski i latinski izvori.* Sofi a.

Meyers, C., 2001, “Kinship and kingship. Th e early monarchy”. In *Th e Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. M. Coogan,Oxford, 165–205.

Moberg, A.(ed) 1924, *Book of the Himyarites. Fragments of a Hitherto Unknown Syriac Work.* Lund.

Novosel’tsev, A. P. 1990, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol’ v istorii Vostochnoi Evropy i Kavkaza.* Moscow.

Noonan, T. S. 1992, “Byzantium and the Khazars: a special relationship?” In *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium ofByzantine Studies* , eds J. Shepard and S. Franklin, Adershot, 109–32.

Obolensky, D. 1971, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453.* London. ——.1966, “The Empire and its Northern Neighbours 565–1018.” In J. Bury (ed) *Th e*

Cambridge Medieval History, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 473–518 **.**

Pavlov, P. 2003, “Bălgaro-khazarski vzaimootnosheniia i paraleli”. In *Bălgari i khazari v rannoto srednovekovie*, ed Ts. Stepanov, Sofi a, 122–29.

Poliakov, L. 1955, *Du Christ aux Juifs de cour.* Paris.

Robbins, F. E. (ed) 1940, *Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos*. Cambridge, Mass.

Schwarzfuchs, S. 1986, *Kahal. La communauté juive de l’Europe médiévale.* Paris. Shahid, I., 1964, “Byzantino-Arabica: Th e Conference of Ramla, A.D. 524”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2, 115–31.

Shepard, J. 1985, “Information, disinformation and delay in Byzantine diplomacy”, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 9, 233–93.

——.1998, “Th e Khazar’s formal adoption of Judaism and Byzantium’s northern policy”, *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 31, 11–34.

Shepard, J., and Franklin, S. (eds) 1992, *Byzantine Diplomacy.* Aldershot.

Simson, B. von (ed) 1909, *Annales Xantenses et Annales Vedastini.* Hannover. Stepanov, Ts. 2003, “Razvitie na kontseptsiiata za sakralniia tsar u khazarite i bălgarite prez rannoto srednovekovie”. In *Bălgari i khazari prez rannot srednovekovie*, ed.

Ts. Stepanov, Sofia, 219–32.

——.2005, *Bălgarite i stepnata imperia prez rannoto srednovekovie. Problemăt za drugite.* Sofia.

Tăpkova-Zaimova, V. 1976, *Dolni Dunav—granichna zona na Vizantiiskiia zapad. Kăm istoriiata na severnite i severoiztochnite bălgarski zemi, kraia na X–XIIv.* Sofia.

Trendafi lov, H. 1999, *Khazarskata polemika na Konstantin-Kiril.* Sofia.

Tremp, E. (ed) 1995, *Das Leben Kaiser Ludwig* / *Astronomus vita*

Hludowici imperatoris. Hannover.

Trumpf, J. (ed) 1974, *Vita Alexandri Regis Macedonum.* Stuttgart.

Turcan, R. 1983, “Terminus et universalité hétérogène: idées romaines et chrétiennes”. In *Roma, Costantinopoli, Mosca. Atti del I seminario internazionale di studi storici*

“Da Roma alla terza Roma”,21–23 aprile 1981, Università degli studi di Roma “La Sapienza” , Naples, 49–62.

Vachkova, V. 2004, *Traditsii na sveshtenata voina v ranna Vizantiia.* Sofia.
——.2005, *Simeon Veliki: Pătiat kăm koronata na Zapada.* Sofi a.

——.2006, *Les images et réalités des frontières en Europe médiévale (III–XI s.).* Sofia. Van Acker, L. (ed) 1981, *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera omnia.* Turnhout.

Vidal-Naquet, P. 1978, “Les Juifs entre l’Etat et l’Apocalypse”. In *Rome et la conquête du monde méditerranéen,* ed C. Nicolet, II, Paris, 846–82.

Waitz, G. (ed) 1883, *Annales Bertiniani.* Hannover.

Wyzewa, T. de (ed) 1998, *La Légende dorée.* Paris.

Zuckerman, C. 1995, “On the date of the Khazars’ conversion to Judaism and the chronology of the kings of the Rus, Oleg and Igor. A study of the anonymous Khazar

letter from the Genizah of Cairo”, *Revue des études byzantines* 53, 237–70.