

ANTIQUITAS • BYZANTIUM • RENASCENTIA V.
(BIBLIOTHECA BYZANTINA)

BYZANZ
UND DAS ABENDLAND:
Begegnungen
zwischen Ost und West



EÖTVÖS-JÓZSEF-COLLEGIUM
ELTE

BYZANZ UND DAS ABENDLAND:
BEGEGNUNGEN ZWISCHEN OST UND WEST

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Srdan Pirivatrić

Emperor's Daughter in Love with a Prisoner: Comparing the Stories of Scyltizes and Anonymus Presbyter Diocleae

According to the *Synopsis of History* of John Scyltizes, the “monarch of all Bulgaria” Samuel married his daughter Miroslava to Ashot Taronites, his prisoner of war and son of the former Byzantine Duke of Thessaloniki: Ὁ Σαμουήλ δὲ πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ἀνασωθεὶς γαμβρὸν ἄγεται ἐπὶ τῆ αὐτοῦ θυγατρὶ Ἀσώτιον τὸν τοῦ Ταρωνίτου υἱόν, τῶν δεσμῶν ἐλευθερώσας· πρὸς τοῦτον γὰρ ἡ παῖς αὐτοῦ Μιροσθλάβα ἐρωτικῶς διατεθεῖσα ἐξάξειν ἑαυτὴν ἠπεῖλει, εἰ μὴ νομίμως αὐτῷ συναφθεῖη. ἐκτελέσας δὲ τοὺς γάμους ἐκπέμπει μετ’ αὐτῆς τοῦτον εἰς τὸ Δυρράχιον, ἐπὶ φυλακῇ τάχα τῆς χώρας. In translation: “When Samuel returned safely to his homeland he took Asotios, son of Taronites, out of prison and made him his son-in-law by marrying him to his daughter. For she had fallen in love with him and was threatening to kill herself unless she could be legally married to him. Once the marriage was a fait accompli, he sent him off with her to Dyrrachion to ensure the security of the district.”¹ The event took place immediately after Samuel had lost the battle with the Romans at Spercheos, i.e. 996 A.D.²

In the same text there is another relative of Samuel mentioned. The data on Vladimir, prince and ruler of Duklja and Serbia, his relationship with Bulgarian rulers and subsequent death, are a kind of short introduction into the further narrative on Emperor Basil II's affairs in Bulgaria and at Dyrrachion: ἕως μὲν γὰρ Τριβαλίας καὶ τῶν ἀγχοτάτω Σερβίας μερῶν ἦρχε

¹ THURN, H. (ed.): *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. Berlin 1973. 342; the translated passage: *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057*. Cambridge 2010. 324; translated by J. WORTLEY.

² On the chronology of the event and further developments: Пириватрић, С.: *Самуилова држава. Обим и карактер*. Београд 1997. 103–116. (Bulgarian translation: *Самуиловата држава. Обхват и карактер*. Софија 2000. 122–130); cf. STEPHENSON, P.: *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans*. 900–1204. Cambridge 2000. 58f.

Βλαδιμηρός ὁ ἐπὶ θυγατρὶ τοῦ Σαμουὴλ κηδεστής, ἀνὴρ ἐπιεικῆς καὶ εἰρηνικός καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀντεχόμενος, ἡρεμίαν εἶχε τὰ ἐν Δυρραχίῳ. ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁ Γαβριὴλ παρὰ τοῦ Ἰωάννου ἀπώλετο, καὶ οὗτος παρασπονδηθεὶς καὶ τοῖς ὄρκοις πιστεύσας παρὰ Ἰωάννου δοθεῖσιν αὐτῷ διὰ Δαβίδ τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου Βουλγαρίας ἑαυτὸν ἐνεχείρισε καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν ἀπεσφάγη, πολὺν εἶχε τάραχον καὶ κλόνον τὰ ἐκεῖσε πράγματα, ἐγκειμένου καθ' ἑκάστην καὶ διὰ στρατηγῶν πολλακίς τοῦ Ἰωάννου καὶ δι' ἑαυτοῦ πάλιν ἐλεῖν τὴν πόλιν. In translation: “As long as Vladimir, the husband of Samuel’s daughter was ruling Tribalía and the nearer parts of Serbia, things were calm at Dyrrachion, for he was a man of integrity, peace and virtue. But when Gabriel was slain by John, Vladimir was also betrayed. He had put his trust in the oaths which John had sworn by the agency of John (David), archbishop of Bulgaria, and surrendered to him, only to be slain by him a little later”. The death of Vladimir is dated to 22 May 1016. He is mentioned briefly once more in the *Synopsis*, in another passage (the same mode of quotation as in previous citations) ...ὅτε τὸν Ῥαδομηρὸν τὸν υἱὸν Σαμουὴλ σὺν τῇ αὐτοῦ γυναικὶ καὶ Βλαδιμηρὸν τὸν τούτου γαμβρὸν ἀνεῖλεν. In translation: “... when he (sc. John) slew Radimir, son of Samuel, together with his wife and Vladimir his brother-in-law”.³

According to the so-called *Annales Anonymi Presbyteri Diocleae* who used or incorporated the text he referred as *Librum gestorum beati Vladimiri* the story goes that Samuel, who at the time wished to be recognised as “*imperator Bulgarinorum*”, defeated king Vladimir on the slopes of Oblik mountain and made him prisoner in his court at Prespa. Then Samuel’s daughter Cossara felt in love with Vladimir and threatened her father that she would commit suicide if he did not allow her to marry him. *Volens post haec a vinculis liberare eum accedit ad imperatorem et prostrata pedibus illius taliter locuta est: ‘Mi pater et domine, scio quia daturus es mihi virum sicuti moris est. Nunc ergo, si tuae placet magnitudini, aut des mihi virum Vladimirim regem quem tenes in vinculis, aut scias me prius morituram, quam alium accipiam virum.’ Imperator haec audiens, quia valde diligebat filiam suam et quia sciebat Vladimirim ex regali progenie ortum, laetus effectus est, annuit fieri petitionem illius. Statimque mittens ad Vladimirim et balno... * * * vestibusque indutum regis iussit sibi praesentari et benigne intuens atque osculans coram magnatibus regni sui tradidit ei filiam in uxorem. Celebratis itaque nuptiis filiae suae more regali constituit imperatori Vladimirim in regem et dedit ei terram et regnum patrum suorum totamque terram Duracenorum.* In translation:

³ Scylitza (n. 1) 353–354, 359; the translation: WORTLEY (n. 1) 335, 340. On the date, see *Пириватрић* (n. 2) 126.

"She approached the emperor, threw herself at his feet and addressed him thus: 'My Father, my lord, I know that you mean to present me with a husband, as is customary. Now, if it pleases your eminence, I would have you give me the king Vladimir whom you are holding in chains. You should know that I would rather die than accept another man.' The emperor was overjoyed when he heard this, and granted her request because he loved his daughter deeply, and knew that Vladimir was of royal lineage. Immediately he sent for Vladimir, and ordered that he be brought before him bathed and clothed in the manner of a king. Then, gazing fondly upon him, and kissing him in front of the nobles of his kingdom, he gave his daughter to him for his wife. Having celebrated his daughter's marriage in a regal manner, the emperor made Vladimir a king, and gave him both the land of his patrimonial kingdom, and the whole territory of Dyrrachium."⁴ The conquest of Duklja may be dated to c. 998 A.D. or some ten years later, around 1009–1010.⁵

Soon after Scylitzes completed his work, Michael the bishop of Devol, a seat in the archdiocese of Ohrid, wrote a number of interpolations (amendments and corrections) to a manuscript of the *Synopsis* he had before him. In one of these he added that the name of Samuel's daughter who married Ashot was Μίροσθλάβα, at another that Samuel was married to Agatha, daughter of John Chryseilios who was the *proteuon* of Dyrrachion. He also amended that Vladimir was actually ἐπὶ θυγατρὶ Θεοδωρίτου τοῦ Σαμουηλ ὁ κηδεστής – a son-in-law of Samuel through a daughter of Theodorites.⁶

We may summarize for the moment that we have three sources which partially overlap but in the way that they do not corroborate each other in all of the details. On the contrary, they actually call each other's accounts into question. What we have are data on two daughters of Samuel who fell in love under similar circumstances and two of Samuel's sons-in-laws who were appointed to watch the region of Dyrrachium. We also have data which, literally taken, suggest a different family relation of Vladimir to Samuel, not through the daughter of the latter but through a certain

⁴ Шишић, Ф. (ур.): *Летопис Попа Дукљанина. Београд–Загреб 1928. 331–342; Gesta Regum Sclavorum. I. Beograd 2009. 124–138; the translation of the passage made by Paul Stephenson provided at <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/sbook1c.asp#Serbia/Montenegro>, is now unavailable.*

⁵ On the date of the conquest see the discussion in: Живковић, Т.: Поход бугарског цара Самуила на Далмацију. *Историјски часопис* 49 (2002) 9–25; Пириватрић, С.: Дукља, Бугарска и Византија на јужном Јадрану крајем X и почетком XI века. In: *България и Сърбия в контекста на византийската цивилизација*. Софија 2005. 91–101.

⁶ РРОКИЋ, В.: *Die Zusätze in der Handschrift des Johannes Scylitzes. Codex Vindobonensis hist. Graec. LXXIV. München 1906. no. 14, 29, no. 22, 31, no. 31, 32.*

Theodorites, or Theodoros. Through an interpretation they also suggest a possible different or second name of Samuel's daughter, not Cossara but Theodora or Theodora Cossara.

We should also note that the stories and the data are from texts written in different languages and in different political and social milieu. The *Synopsis of History* was written by a high dignitary and official of the Empire of the Romans (i.e. Byzantine Empire) *kouropalates* and *megas droungarios* John Skylitzes, probably in the first half of the reign of Alexios I, i.e. after the year of 1084.⁷ The *Librum gestorum* is believed to have been written between 1075–1089 in the kingdom of Duklja, at the city of Bar (Antivari, modern Bar in Montenegro), with the aim of beatification of Vladimir, prince of Duklja. At the time when the *Librum* was written the principality of Duklja (Tribalia, how it is referred to by Skylitzes) had already separated from the state and church organisation of the Byzantine Empire. It may sound dramatic if we say that Duklja during the course of the 11th century moved from the East to the West but that corresponds to the fact that the land was under the church jurisdiction of Dubrovnik and Rome and that in 1078 its ruler *rex Sclavorum* Michael asked for a papal confirmation of his title, i.e. a sceptre, a papal flag and a crown.⁸ But there was no such sharp distinction or border between the two “others”. Son of rex Michael, Constantine Bodin as *eksousiarches of Diokleia and Serbia* was also holder of the Byzantine court title of *protosebastos*, although he also held the title of *rex*, and in 1089 asked from the anti-pope Clement III to issue a charter on the elevation of the seat of Bar bishopric to that of archbishopric.⁹ Later the *Librum* was incorporated as a whole or was at least drawn on extensively as a source for a part of the so-called *Chronicle of the priest of Dioclea*, i.e. *Annales Anonymi presbyteri Diocleae* as we have called it here in the title, or *Gesta Regum Sclavorum* as suggested in the most recent edition of this enigmatic and rather obscure text. In the recent study that accompanies the new edition it is stated that there actually

⁷ A recent contribution to the biography of Scylitzes and the dating of his work: HOLMES, C.: *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)*. Oxford 2005. 81–91.

⁸ GASPAR, E. (ed.): *Das Register Gregors VII. MGH Epistolae selectae. II/2*. Berolini 1955. 365.

⁹ A seal of Constantine Bodine bearing his Byzantine court title has recently been published: CHEYNET, J.-C.: *La place de Serbie dans la diplomatie byzantine à la fin du XI^e siècle*. *ЗРВИ* 45 (2008) 89–97; on the Byzantine titles of Bodin: Коматина, П.: *Византијска титула Константина БОДИНА*. *ЗРВИ* 48 (2011) 61–76; the charter on the foundation of the archbishopric in Bar: КЕHR, P. (ed.): *Papsturkunden in Italien. Reiseberichte zur Italia Pontifica*. II. Città del Vaticano 1977. 330–331.

were two close versions of the text dating from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries.¹⁰ In another new study it is suggested that the text dates from a much later period, from the end of the 16th century or the very beginning of the 17th century.¹¹ In previous research it was mostly claimed that the date of the composition of the *Annales* was the second half of the 12th century.¹² Bishop Michael made his interventions in Skylitzes' *History*, that are generally considered as mostly accurate and very valuable as historical data, in 1118 at Devol (in today's Albania) and the problem of his sources remains open, including the assumption that he was using a lost Bulgarian court chronicle written in Old Bulgarian, i.e. Old Slavonic language.¹³ Questions regarding the historical accuracy of the data, chronology and context of the events, as well as of intertextuality i.e. possibility of a direct influence of one text to another are all connected.

One of the common elements in the stories of Scylitzes and Anonymus is that both Ashot and Vladimir were given the Dyrrachion i.e. Dyrrachium region by Samuel after the marriage. Ashot was in Dyrrachion from 996 until he fled from the town together with Miroslava for Constantinople, carrying a letter containing a promise to surrender the city to the Byzantine emperor. The town was indeed surrendered in 1005 to Emperor Basil II by the sons of John Chryselios, the *proteuon* of Dyrrachion. It is concluded that the name of the elder son was Theodoros and that he actually was the uncle of Miroslava, since his sister Agatha was married to Samuel.¹⁴ It can be assumed, if we follow the text literally, that Vladimir was given not the city itself but only the region of Dyrrachium, since Anonymus always made a strict distinction between *totam terram Duracenorum* and *ipsam civitatem Dyrrachium*.¹⁵ The question of the chronology of Vladimir's appointment in his *patrimonium* and *terram Duracenorum* is connected with the chronology of

¹⁰ Живковић Т.: *Gesta Regum Sclavorum*. II. Коментар. Beograd 2009. 373–378; 379–384.

¹¹ ВУЈАН, S.: La Chronique du Prêtre de Dioclee: Un faux document historique. *REB* 66 (2008) 5–38.

¹² Живковић Т. (n.10) 25–26 n.2. Note the only one exception dating the work at the end of 14/beginning of the 15th century.

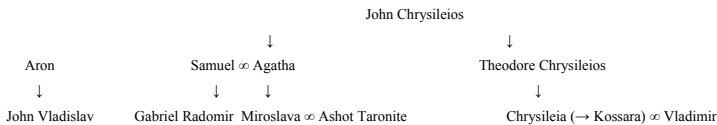
¹³ FERLUGA, J.: John Scylitzes and Michael of Devol. *ЗРВИ* 10 (1967) 163–170. On the Bulgarian court chronicle: Николов, Г. Н.: *Централизъм и регионализъм в ранносредновековна България (края на VII – началото на XI в.)*. София 2005. с. 54–5; see also HOLMES (n.8) 76–77. n. 24.

¹⁴ Scylitzes (n. 1) 342–343; 349; Lupus Protospatarus: *Annales* a. 855–1102. *MGH SS V*. 56. Cf. Пириватрић (n. 2) 114; 128; STEPHENSON (n. 2) 67.

¹⁵ DULAJ, E.: Zhvillime politike të Durrësit krahinës së tij në fillim të shekullit XI. *Studime historike* 44 (27) (1990) 131–148.

Samuel's military campaign on the Adriatic coast. According to Anonymus, after having captured Vladimir Samuel turned along the coast towards Ulcinj, Kotor, Dubrovnik and finally Zadar, afterwards on the way home he passed through Bosnia and Rassa as well. We incline more towards cca. 999 than cca. 1009/10 as the year of Samuel's invasion of Dalmatia.¹⁶ Less likely than that both of them were appointed to watch the region of Dyrrachion is that they were both prisoners who became an emperor's sons-in-law in the same way. The veracity of one of these two love stories may be questioned, either that with Ashot or that with Vladimir. We may pose the question: who took from whom this particular story of an emperor's daughter who fell in love with a prisoner?

But the first problem is, if they both became emperor's sons-in-law in the same way, as husbands of two daughters? If we follow Skylitzes through the corrections made by Michael of Devol it seems that Vladimir was related to Samuel through his marriage with the daughter of Theodorites, who could be identified as Theodorus, the man who surrendered the Dyrrachion to the Byzantines, i.e. Theodoros Chrysilios, brother-in-law of the Bulgarian emperor. Then the name Cossara could perhaps be conceived as a corruption of her family name Chrysileios/Chrysilia. From there it may be concluded that the love story of Ashot and Miroslava somehow became the model for the story of Vladimir and Cossara. In this way it is assumed that the tragic death of Vladimir was actually the only one factual piece of data in the text by Anonymus and that the rest should be conceived as a falsification.¹⁷ It may also be assumed that a version of Scylitzes – probably not the exact one on which Michael of Devol made his interventions – or that of Kedrenos influenced the so-called anonymous priest from Diocleia.¹⁸



1. Reconstruction of a part of the family tree according to N. Adontz.

¹⁶ See the note 5.

¹⁷ ADONTZ, N.: Samuel l'Arménien, rois des Bulgares. *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres* 38 (1938) 1–63; 51–63.

¹⁸ On use of Scylitzes or Kedrenos by Anonymus see the opinion of Живкович (n. 9) 233; 247–249 et passim.

Such a radical solution suggesting almost total falsification is unacceptable for several reasons. The campaign of Samuel in Dalmatia is corroborated by other sources as well.¹⁹ There is no reason to reject the story of the battle on the mountain Oblik, and the subsequent subjugation and incarceration of Vladimir. We should also bear in mind that the text of Anonymus is extremely complex. It is evident that a *Librum gestorum eius* was being used for the narrative on Vladimir. The writing of *Librum gestorum* was a part of the beatification of Vladimir – an act important for the claims of Michael and Bodin for royal insignia and elevation of Bar to the rank of archbishopric.²⁰ We shall briefly consider the political conditions of the epoch when *Librum* was supposedly written. During the revolt of Voitech in 1072 Bodin was proclaimed tsar of Bulgarians. He was a descendant of Samuel, according to Anonymus: his grandfather Dobroslav married a *nepotem* of emperor Samuel in Dubrovnik.²¹ The connection of the founder of the dynasty that Bodin was a member of with the late emperor of Bulgaria as reported in *Librum* had thus been made stronger than it really was and could well have served in reinforcing the image of Bodin's lineage and his political position. Vladimir already had his place in the house of Samuel and the report of the *Librum* moved his position closer to the emperor in the terms of historical memory. We should also remember that such a text of dynastic purpose was to a certain degree verifiable. The *Librum gestorum* was written with the aim of becoming a part of the public memory of the time. It is not very probable that at the end of the 11th century the version of Vladimir's connection with Samuel, which we have before us in this work, could have been established with much hope of gaining credibility if it were a complete invention. Moreover, if we believe that the version of Vladimir's marriage was modelled after the influence of a good story, that of Ashot, then the whole text of the *Librum* should be dated after the year when the text of Scylitzes appeared at the earliest in the region of Dyrrachion, i.e. sometime during the reign of Alexius I (1081–1118) according to the dating of the *Synopsis*. But, was the story of Vladimir as married to Samuel's daughter that we have in the text of Anonymus indeed a part of the *Librum*? We may also speculate on a later insertion and pose the question when and more importantly, why it was made?

¹⁹ GELCHIC G. (ed.): *Estratto dalla "Legenda de miser San Tryphon martire confalon et protector della Cittade de Catharo"*. (Storia documentata della Marinerezza Bocchese). Ragusa 1889. 81–86; see also n. 5.

²⁰ Живковић (п. 9) 262–271; cf. Ингам, Н.: Мучеништво светог Јована Владимира Дукљанина. *Летопис Матице српске* 44/6 (1990) 876–896.

²¹ Шишић (п. 4) 344; *Gesta Regum Sclavorum* (п. 4) 142–143.

While speculating on the source material for the author of the *Annales*, who was writing in Bar, it should also be observed that manuscripts of Scylitzes *Synopsis of History* had evidently been circulating in the region. One was certainly in Devol at the beginning of the 12th century, another one was observed in Ohrid in the 19th century but also dating from the early 12th century.²² Their appearance there perhaps should be connected with the specific needs of this church center both in terms of historical memory and for the purposes of the practical politics of the Ohrid archbishopric. The same may be supposed for the region of Dyrrachion in this epoch, as the city was the seat of the Byzantine governor. Evidently the *Synopsis of History* of Scylitzes was a handbook of the state and church officials of the time. Therefore it may be supposed that a manuscript of the *Synopsis*, containing the information on Vladimir, could have been available to the author of the *Annales*.

Perhaps it was easier to make notes of the romantic and literary motives knocking around than to explain the political motives for strengthening the family connection of the Duklja ruling house with the Bulgarian one. Recent research on Anonymus and his work may offer some grounds for a hypothesis. It is suggested that this work is a historical construct made from very different sources and pieces of information and written in two versions in two different cities, Split and Bar, at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century for the political purposes of its *auctor*: the *banus* of Croatia and Dalmatia Pavle Šubić. It is concluded that among the many texts the supposed author, Rudger, used there was a historical work written in the Slavonic/Old Serbian language at the beginning of the 13th century for Vukan Nemanjić the then king of Duklja. It is possible that the anonymous writer of that work had been borrowing from the *Liber gestorum beati Vladimiri*. But Vukan certainly could not have been hoping to gain any profit from connecting Vladimir more closely to Samuel. At least the same holds for the person of Šubić, keeping in mind the political circumstances of the moment when – as it is supposed – the final drafting of the *Anonymi Annales* occurred.²³ Another fresh study sees dum Mauro Orbini, the author of *Il regno degli Slavi*, published in 1601, where an old-Italian translation of the *Annales* is

²² The basic info on the Ohrid manuscript: OLIVIER, J. M.: Le “Scylitzes” d’Ohrid retrouvé. BZ 89 (1996) 417–419. Prof. Peter Schreiner, who is preparing a critical edition of the Ohrid manuscript, has kindly provided me with the information on its date. Here I would like to express my cordial gratitude for this.

²³ Живковић (n. 9) 373–378; 379–384.

incorporated, as the real author behind this text too.²⁴ It should be observed that in case one accepts the authorship of Orbini the problem of the profit from connecting Vladimir to Samuel in the *Annales* remains even more unclear, since there is no mention of that important connection in the rest of *Il regno degli Slavi*, where Orbini borrowed from Kedrenos (i.e. Scylitzes) and his account on Vladimir.²⁵

It seems that we should try to follow another path. It was suggested that the aforementioned intervention by Michel of Devol should be conceived in the sense that he amended the name of Samuel's daughter and not of his son-in-law. So, the name of Samuel's daughter who was married to Vladimir was Theodora.²⁶ This name should be her second, Christian name, just like many other personages in the circle of Samuel who had double names: Gabriel Radomir, John Vladislav. A weak point of this reconstruction is the correction of the source, i.e. Theodora instead of Theodorites, at least at first sight. However, regarding the text of Scylitzes and the interventions of bishop Michael related to the family affairs of Samuel two important points should be noted. The first is that Scylitzes was not well informed about the family of Samuel. This is clear when we look at the additions made by Michael of Devol but it is also much more obvious when we consider his corrections of the Scylitzes's text. Namely, he corrected the data on Gabriel Radomir's mother: she was not the beautiful Eirene, captured at Larissa, but Agatha, daughter of John Chrysileios. He intervened on a few occasions regarding the name of Samuel's son and heir, correcting Romanos to Radomir. He also cleared it up that Eirene from Larissa was the wife of Gabriel Radomir who gave a birth to Peter Delianos, the later rebel and emperor of the Bulgarians in 1040.²⁷ The second important issue is that the interventions of bishop Michael relating to family names, relations etc. are precise, namely they always refer to an otherwise known person or provide clear enough information on family relations.²⁸ The addition Θεωδορίτου differs in the sense that he neither explained who this Θεωδορίτης was nor can his identity be inferred from the main body of the *Synopsis*. Only at the very end of the text is there a reference to Theodore Chrysileios, who was a patrician during the reign

²⁴ BUJAN (n. 11) 5–38.

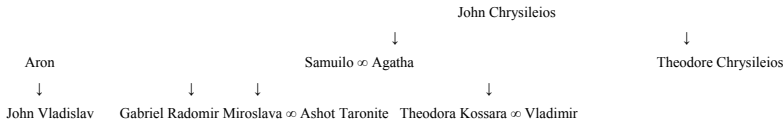
²⁵ *Mauro Orbini il regno degli Slavi*. Ragusa 1601; Serbian translation: Мавро Орбин, *Краљевство Словена*. Београд 1968, 245, 248; note also the story on Asotios and Miroslava on p. 370.

²⁶ PROKIĆ (n. 6) no. 31, 32.

²⁷ PROKIĆ (n. 6) no. 22, 31, no. 24, 31, no. 11, 29, no. 27, 31, no. 61, 36, no. 62, 36.

²⁸ PROKIĆ (n. 6) no. 29, 32; Scylitzes (n. 1) 352; 353.

of Michael VI in 1057, but this Theodore certainly cannot be identified with the same Θεωδορίτης of the bishop Michael.²⁹ The only Theodore of that epoch known from the *Synopsis* and Michael's interventions is the one who in 1015 became *kaukanos*, the holder of the most important title in Bulgaria after that of the emperor.³⁰ However, there is no data on a family relation between Samuel and that Theodore. Finally, when compared with the other interpolations of Bishop Michael, the note Θεωδορίτης seems simply to have been the name of Samuel's daughter. Perhaps it was corrupted in the course of the manuscript's tradition from the early 12th to the 14th century, the epoch when the existing manuscript with the interpolations of Bishop Michael was written.³¹



2. Reconstruction of a part of the family tree according to B. Prokić

Another common element in the stories of Scylitzes and Anonymus is that two of Samuel's daughters fell in love with prisoners. Even if we can allow that there were two daughters who finally married two war prisoners, it is certainly impossible that this could have occurred under such similar circumstances. We saw that the information of Scylitzes on the personal affairs of the Bulgarians was not always correct and surely not detailed enough. We may make the hypothesis that – for whatever reason – he could have attributed the love story of Vladimir to Ashot, just as he attributed the wife of Gabriel Radomir (she was also a war prisoner, captured at Larissa) to his father Samuel.³² As regards bishop Michael, it seems that everything that had some importance for the issues of legitimacy and inheritance in recent Bulgarian history was familiar to him. On the other hand, it is not at all sure that his source, which perhaps was a Bulgarian court chronicle, contained any information on the romances of the Emperor's daughters. This means that we cannot *ex silentio* assume that since Michael made no correction to Scylitzes' report on Ashot and Miroslava this means the story is authentic.

²⁹ Scylitzes (n. 1) 498.

³⁰ Scylitzes (n. 1) 353; PROKIĆ (n. 6) no. 29, 32.

³¹ THURN (n. 1) XXVI.

³² Cf. Банашевић, Н.: Летопис попа Дукљанина и народна предања, Београд 1971, 167.

It is quite possible that Michael of Devol was completely ignorant of the circumstances of the two's love affairs. He probably had no information on Vladimir's romance with Samuel's daughter and had no source base to make any correction to the *Synopsis* regarding the love story of Ashot and Miroszlava nor to attribute it to Vladimir and Theodora.

Finally we may conclude that it was not an anonymous writer who used Scylitzes for his story on Vladimir but that it was Scylitzes (or his lost written source) who for one or another reason attached the essence of Vladimir's love story to the other data he had on Ashot. We should certainly not exclude the possibility that *Librum gestorum* itself or another local source was echoed in Scylitzes: the historian referred to Vladimir as ἀνὴρ ἐπιεικῆς καὶ εἰρηνικὸς καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀντεχόμενος – *a man of integrity, peace and virtue*. The vocabulary seems very close to that of a *vita*, i.e. *Librum gestorum*. The tradition of pious Vladimir who married a daughter of the Bulgarian emperor Samuel is also echoed in a *ακολουθία* of Vladimir, written in Greek and published in the late 17th century.³³ It is important to note that no obvious connection between that *Ακολουθία* and *Librum, Annales* or Scylitzes/Kedrenos can be established. Although the data on Vladimir's life in the *Ακολουθία* are extremely corrupted, the tradition of his family connection to Samuel derives probably from an earlier, unknown *synaxarion* written in Bulgarian, mentioned as one of the sources used for the *Ακολουθία*.³⁴ It seems that this data, albeit remotely, supports the conclusion that Vladimir of Duklja was indeed married to the daughter of Emperor Samuel, after they became acquainted in such a manner that it appeared literary attractive enough for writers of different cultural milieus and epochs.

³³ Ακολουθία του ἁγίου ενδόξου βασιλέως και μεγαλομάρτυρος Ἰωάννου του Βλαδιμήρου και θαυματουργοῦ. Βενετία 1690; cf. Острогорски, Г.: Синајска икона св. Јована Владимира. *Гласник скопског научног друштва* 14 (1934) 99–106; Живковић, Т.: *Портрети српских владара (IX–XII)*. Београд 2006. 73–74.

³⁴ Cf. ТАРКОВА – ЗАЙМОВА, V.: Un manuscript inconnu de la Vie de Saint Jean Vladimir. In: *Byzance et les Balkans à partir du VI^e siècle*. London 1979. XXXI, 179–189.

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Vorwort	9
Peter Schreiner: Die Begegnung von Orient und Okzident in der Schrift	11
Jana Grusková: Zur Textgeschichte der Chronik des Eusebios zwischen Okzident und Orient („ <i>Eusebii Chronici fragmentum Vindobonense</i> “ – ein neues griechisches Handschriftenfragment).....	43
Andreas Rhoby: Byzantine Greek Words in English Vocabulary?.....	53
Zsuzsanna Ötvös: A Group of Marginal Notes from Another Textual Tradition	71
Erika Juhász: <i>Chronicon Raderianum</i>	121
Christian Gastgeber: Der Umgang des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel mit der lateinischen Kirche im 14. Jahrhundert	131
Emese Egedi-Kovács: Le souvenir de Béla-Alexis dans la littérature française du XII ^e siècle.....	161
Vlastimil Drbal: Transformation des Kassiopeia-Mythos in der Spätantike	179
Andrea Massimo Cuomo: Nicephorus Gregoras, Barlaam Calaber, Matthaëus Blastares e la riforma del calendario	187
Ádám Bollók: <i>Apotropaion</i> and Burial in Early Byzantium: Some Preliminary Considerations.....	227
Dora E. Solti: Das dritte Rom als Retter von Konstantinopel: Messianische Erwartungen und nüchterne Politik im Dienste der Rückeroberung Konstantinopels.....	243

Éva Révész: Einige bulgarische Quellen zur ungarischen Geschichte während des ersten Millenniums.....	253
Srđan Pirivatrić: Emperor's Daughter in Love with a Prisoner: Comparing the Stories of Scylitzes and Anonymus Presbyter Diocleae	273
Tamás Mészáros: Notes on Procopius' <i>Secret History</i>	285
Iván Tóth: Some Thoughts on the Proem of Kritobulos' <i>Historiai</i>	305
Zoltán Farkas: Sailing to (Yeats') Byzantium	315
Péter Ekler: Papias' <i>Ars</i> and George of Trebizond's <i>Compendium</i> : Two Grammars Based on the <i>Institutiones Grammaticae</i> of Priscian	327
Konstantinos Nakos: Die Rolle von Byzanz bei der Entstehung der modernen griechischen Identität.....	339
Katalin Delbó: Anmerkungen zu den Marginalien des <i>Florilegium Vindobonense</i>	347
Tamara Schüzler: A Manuscript from the Library of Péter Váradi: Physical Features	353
Orsolya Hegyi: <i>Florilegium patrum latinorum de processione Spiritus Sancti</i>	359
Ágnes Mihálykó: Griechische und koptische Texte der spätantiken ägyptischen christlichen magischen Tradition	363
Zoltán Szegvári: Anna Comnena and the West	371