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THE MAKING OF THE SLAVS BETWEEN ETHNOGENESIS, INVENTION, AND MIGRATION

Ethnogenesis, especially the ethnogenesis of the Slavs, is still a popular research topic, and not just in Russia. While presenting new material and arguments, the essays above are a good illustration of that popularity, and they offer much that will require careful consideration by future students of early Slavic history. Instead of responding to each and every one of the points raised by contributors to this volume, I shall confine my comments to highlighting some lines of reasoning which are either particularly promising or problematic¹. In the meantime, it bears emphasizing that more nuanced approaches to ethnogenesis and unexpected evidence keep emerging from studies from several countries and in several languages. Ethnicity is now viewed by both archaeologists and historians as fundamentally performative, which explains the emphasis placed on identity as a category of historical analysis (for the absence of an archaeology of identity in Russia, see my paper in this volume)². The critique of the ethnogenesis model embraced by many German and

¹ I will specifically and deliberately leave out Petr Shuvalov's critique of the archaeological and especially numismatic arguments in chapter 4 of the *Making of the Slavs*. My reasons for doing so have less to do with his misrepresentation of what I wrote than with his misunderstanding of economy, especially ancient economy, combined with a blatant ignorance of recent studies of sixth- to seventh-century Byzantine coins in the Balkans. See, for example: *Duncan G. L.* *Coin Circulation in the Danubian and Balkan Provinces of the Roman Empire AD 294–578*. London, 1993; *Curta F.* *Invasion or Inflation? Sixth- to Seventh-century Byzantine Coin Hoards in Eastern and Southeastern Europe* // *Annali dell'Istituto Italiano di Numismatica*. 1996. Vol. 43. P. 65–224; *Oberländer-Târnoveanu E.* *La monnaie byzantine des VIe-VIIIe siècles au-delà de la frontière du Bas-Danube. Entre politique, économie et diffusion culturelle* // *Histoire & Mesure*. 2002. Vol. 17. Nr 3–4. P. 155–196. — Ironically or not, Shuvalov's own work is at variance with his critique of my work; see: *Шувалов П. В.* *Случайные флуктуации или преднамеренный отбор? (Три клада фолисов последней четверти VI в.)* // *Stratum plus*. 1999. № 6. С. 104–110.

² *Mirnik Prezelj I.* *Re-thinking ethnicity in archaeology* // *Slovenija in sosednje dežele med antiko in karolinško dobo. Začetki slovenske etnogeneze* / Ed. by R. Bratož, H.-D. Kahl. Ljubljana, 2000. S. 581–603; *Profantová N.* *Kulturní diskontinuita a možnosti její interpretace jako etnické změny (problém tzv. slovanské expanze): Problém symbolického systému sebeidentifikace elity a jeho nedostatečného poznání* // *Archaeologia historica*. 2003. Vol. 28. S. 19–31; *Barford P. M.*

Austrian scholars inspired by Reinhard Wenskus's work has now drawn attention to the need to treat written sources as texts, using traditional means of textual analysis, as well as current theoretical approaches to literary analysis (e. g., narratology) in order to establish the cultural context and to define authorial purpose³. Much has recently been written in that vein about Jordanes, but there are already signs of change in scholarly approaches to the works of other authors mentioning the Slavs, especially Procopius⁴. The implications of such a «literary turn» for the analysis of written sources remain to be seen, but it has already become clear that in order to make any progress the research on (Slavic) ethnogenesis needs to distance itself from the practice of perpetuating the stereotypes embedded in the late antique ethnography. Meanwhile, new approaches to the construction of ethnicity through material culture and ethnicity have also transformed our understanding of the relations between the late antique Empire and the barbarians. Ongoing research should clarify how the militarization of the sixth-century Balkans affected the rise of new ethnic groups on the northern frontier of the Empire⁵. A hitherto neglected approach to language contact promises dramatic changes in the study of early medieval languages and their relation to ethnic identities⁶. And, as some now maintain, throughout the early Middle Ages (Common) Slavic may have been used as a *lingua franca*, that too would have obvious implications for the notion of a Slavic ethnogenesis and migration⁷.

Identity and material culture. Did the early Slavs follow the rules or did they make up their own? // East Central Europe/L'Europe du Centre-Est. 2004. Vol. 31. Part 1. P. 77–123; Pohl W. Die Namen der Barbaren: Fremdbezeichnung und Identität in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter // Zentrum und Peripherie — gesellschaftliche Phänomene in der Frühgeschichte: Materialien des 13. internationalen Symposiums «Grundprobleme der frühgeschichtlichen Entwicklung im mittleren Donauraum», Zwettl, 4.–8. Dezember 2000 / Hrsg. von H. Friesinger und A. Stuppner. Wien, 2004. S. 95–104; Васильев М. А. Анты, словене, немцы, греки: Славянский культурно-лингвистический мир и его соседи в раннесредневековое время // Славяноведение. 2005. № 2. С. 3–19; Стенанов Ц. Етноси, съжителства, етногенезиси в раннесредновековна Европа: (Предизвикателствата на фактите и на историографските тези) // История. 2006. № 4–5. С. 35–42; Bálint Cs. Az ethnos a kora középkorban (a kutatás lehetőségei és korlátai) // Századok. 2006. Évf. 2. O. 1–70; Tabaczyński S. Procesy etnogenetyczne jako problem badawczy archeologii // Archeologia o początkach słowian: Materiały z konferencji, Kraków 19–21 listopada 2001 / Red. P. Kaczanowski, M. Parczewski. Kraków, 2005. S. 37–50; Härke H. Ethnicity, «Race» and Migration in Mortuary Archaeology: An Attempt at a Short Answer // Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History. 2007. Vol. 14. P. 11–18.

³ For a brief survey of the debate, see: Gillett A. Ethnogenesis: A Contested Model of Early Medieval Europe // History Compass. 2006. Vol. 4. Nr 2. P. 241–260.

⁴ Fundamental for the new treatment of Jordanes's work as a literary text is now: Goffart W. Jordanes' Getica and the Disputed Authenticity of Gothic Origins from Scandinavia // Speculum. 2005. Vol. 80. P. 379–398. — For Procopius, see Kaldellis A. Procopius of Caesarea. Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity. Philadelphia, 2004; Brodka D. Die Geschichtsphilosophie in der spätantiken Historiographie. Studien zu Prokopios von Kaisareia, Agathias von Myrina und Theophylaktos Simokattes. Frankfurt a. M.; Berlin; Bern; New York, 2004; Revanoglou E. M. Geographika kai ethnographika stoicheia sto ergo tou Prokopiou Kaisareias. Thessaloniki, 2005.

⁵ Dunn A. W. Was there a militarisation of the southern Balkans during Late Antiquity? // Limes XVIII. Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies / Ed. by P. Freeman. Oxford, 2002. P. 705–712; Curta F. Frontier Ethnogenesis in Late Antiquity: The Danube, the Tervingi, and the Slavs // Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages / Ed. by F. Curta. Turnhout, 2005. P. 173–204; Kirilov Ch. The Reduction of the Fortified City Area in Late Antiquity: Some Reflections on the End of the «Antique City» in the Lands of the Eastern Roman Empire // Post-Roman Towns, Trade, and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium / Ed. by J. Henning. Berlin; New York, 2007. P. 3–24.

⁶ The approach is spelled out in: Thomason S. G. Language Contact: An Introduction. Washington, 2001. — For an exemplary application of the approach to an early medieval situation, see: Townend M. Language and History in Viking-age England: Linguistic Relations Between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English. Turnhout, 2002. — For the implications of that approach for the history of Slavic languages, see: Curta F. The Slavic *lingua franca* (Linguistic Notes of an Archaeologist Turned Historian) // East Central Europe/L'Europe du Centre-Est. 2004. Vol. 31. Part 1. P. 125–148.

⁷ Pritsak O. The Slavs and the Avars // Gli Slavi occidentali e meridionali nell'alto Medioevo. Spoleto, 1983. P. 353–435; Lunt H. G. 1) On Common Slavic // Зборник Матице српске за филологију и лингвистику. Нови Сад, 1984–1985. Књ. XXVII–XXVIII. С. 417–422; 2) Slavs, Common Slavic, and Old Church Slavonic // Litterae Slavicae Medii Aevi.

For migration is the real bone of contention. That that is indeed the case needs no better illustration than Paul Barford's paper. As he points out, a polemical debate is currently taking place in Poland between advocates of a Polish *Urheimat* of the Slavs (primarily linguists or linguistically trained historians) and those students of Kazimierz Godłowski who embraced the idea that the Slavs had come to Poland from an *Urheimat* located in Subcarpathian Ukraine⁸. Both positions are therefore predicated upon the idea that the Slavs must have come from somewhere, a more or less large area in Eastern Europe, which may be viewed as their primordial homeland. Barford in any case thinks that the «migrationists» are wrong, but he still believes that «until some time before the mid-sixth century, when they appear before the eyes of the East Romans on the Danubian plain... the Slavic speaking groups were separated from the Roman world by three to five hundred kilometers of steppe, forest steppe and mountains», although, of course, no evidence exists for such a statement. Historians are now moving away from the idea that there ever was such a thing as the Great Migration⁹. Barford still believes that since «this was after all the *Völkerwanderungszeit*», «some Slavic speaking groups... moved south and southwest to the areas faced by Justinian's frontiers». Again, no evidence of migration from the north exists for the «areas faced by Justinian's frontiers», a point that Barford himself acknowledges. Nevertheless, the problem with Barford's idea is even deeper. It has long been noted that for an ethnic group to exist, a name must be attached to it, which represents two concomitant processes taking place in any ethnogenesis: self-identification and recognition by others. For the Slavs to exist anywhere, one would expect a certain group of people to call themselves by that name or be called as such by others. We do not know anything about how the inhabitants of the «areas faced by Justinian's frontiers» called themselves in their own language. All we have is the testimony of sixth-century authors, such as Procopius, who claim that those were Sclavenes. Whether or not the Sclavenes spoke a Slavic language, we at least know who those people were, even though our only source of knowledge about that is what is reported by outsiders. What about the regions of Europe, for which there is no such report? The problem, as Barford rightly notes, «is that "the Slavs" is as much a linguistic concept as an ethnic or archaeological one». No source written in the sixth century or earlier mentions the Slavs in what is now Poland. For the sixth century, there are in fact no ethnic names to be associated to the territory of present-day Poland. We also have no way of knowing how inhabitants of the settlement sites of Barford's «Central Polish groups» called themselves. Nor is it possible to put any ethnic names on the «Mogila group», which appeared at some point in south-eastern Poland, allegedly from outside the territory of present-day Poland. What then is the basis for calling any or all of those peoples «Slavs»? If I correctly understand Dmitrii Polyvianni's argument, the very use of that name is historically associated with the classification methods and

Francisco Venceslao Mares Sexagenario Oblatae / Hrsg. von J. Reinhart. München, 1985. S. 185–204. — See also: *Nichols J.* The linguistic geography of the Slavic expansion // *American Contributions to the Eleventh International Congress of Slavists*. Bratislava, August–September 1993. Literature, Linguistics, Poetics / Ed. by R. A. Maguire and A. Timberlake. Columbus, Ohio, 1993. P. 377–391.

⁸ *Parczewski M.* 1) Praojczyzna Słowian w ujęciu źródłoznawczym // *Cień Światowita czyli pięć głosów w sprawie etnogenezy Słowian* / Red. A. Kokowski. Lublin, 2002. S. 22–68; 2) Remarks on the Discussion of Polish Archaeologists on the Ethnogenesis of Slavs // *Archaeologia Lituana*. 2003. Vol. 4. S. 138–142; *Kaczanowski P.* Uwagi do stanu badań nad zagadnieniem praojczyzny Słowian // *Archeologia o początkach Słowian: Materiały z konferencji, Kraków, 19–21 listopada 2001* / Red. P. Kaczanowski, M. Parczewski. Kraków, 2005. S. 13–18; *Makiewicz T.* W sprawie aktualnego stanu badań nad problemem kontynuacji kulturowej pomiędzy starożytnością a wczesnym średniowieczem w Polsce. Punkt widzenia autochtonisty // *SA*. 2005. T. 46. S. 9–38. — For Barford's own position in the debate, see: *Barford P. M.* Crisis in the Shadows: Recent Polish Polemic on the Origin of the Slavs // *SA*. 2003. T. 44. S. 121–155.

⁹ See, for example: *Goffart W.* *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire*. Philadelphia, 2006.

patterns of Byzantine authors. When referring in a ninth-century inscription (otherwise written in Greek) to the «Slavs under imperial rule» and the «Slavs who live along the sea coast, and are not ruled by the emperor», the Bulgar ruler Omurtag (or the stone carver he employed for the job) had in mind an audience of Byzantines, not of Bulgars¹⁰. The same appears to be true about Constantine of Preslav writing in Old Church Slavonic in the 900s about the «Slavic people soaring high, having all turned toward baptism»¹¹. Denis Alimov's exceptional analysis of the historiographic topics of «migration» and «Christianization» in reference to the Croats in Dalmatia makes a similar argument from the other, Latin-speaking side of the evidence. In three out of five inscriptions mentioning his name, Branimir, a ruler otherwise known from five letters of Pope John VIII dated between 879 and 882, is described as ruling over some group of people¹². Two of them (the inscriptions found in Nin and Ždrapanj near Skradin) call Branimir *dux Slavorum* and *dux Clavitorum*, respectively¹³. Most scholars have interpreted those mangled ethnic names to refer to the Slavs (Sclavi), but not much ink was spilled over the explanation of those misspellings. A third inscription found in Šopot near Benkovac has Branimir's name associated with such titles of *comes* and *dux Cruatorum*¹⁴. Why was Branimir a ruler of the Slavs in some inscriptions and of the Croats in others? Given that most papal documents and contemporary Frankish sources have no knowledge of the Croats, it is possible that Branimir's title in the Nin and Ždrapanj inscriptions is simply the result of a Roman or Frankish usage¹⁵. Alimov believes however that «Slavs» and «Croats» were two names for one and the same ethnopolitical community. But as John Fine has long observed, the variation in Branimir's title may not be accidental¹⁶. Few among those who studied the inscriptions have paid sufficient attention to their archaeological context and the possible audience for their messages. All five inscriptions with Branimir's name originate from churches and were carved onto architraves and gables of altar screens. None of them was dedicated to Branimir himself, whose name appears only as a means to authenticate (and date) the dedication

¹⁰ For the Greek text of the inscription, see: *Beshevliev V.* Die protobulgarischen Inschriften. Berlin, 1963. S. 190–206; English translation from: *Petkov K.* The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century: The Records of a Bygone Culture. Leiden; Boston, 2008. P. 8.

¹¹ Constantine of Preslav, *Alphabetical Prayer* // *Кыев К. М.* Азбучната молитва в славянските литератури. София, 1974. С. 170–174 (English translation from: *Petkov K.* The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria... P. 60). — It is important to note in this context that in the *Annunciation of the Gospel*, Constantine employed the plural («Slavic peoples») when encouraging his audience to listen to the Word «that prepares us to know God». See: *Иванов Ъ.* Български старини из Македония. София, 1970. С. 147–150 (English translation from: *Petkov K.* The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria... P. 62).

¹² For both letters and inscriptions, see: *Matijević-Sokol M., Sokol V.* Hrvatska i Nin u doba kneza Branimira. II. izdanje. Zagreb, 2005. S. 35–57, 63–74.

¹³ *Delonga V.* Latinski epigrafički spomenici u ranosrednjovjekovnoj Hrvatskoj. Split, 1996. S. 207–208, 252–254. — For the Branimir inscriptions see also: *Rapanić Ž.* Bilješke uz četiri Branimirova natpisa // SHP. Split, 1981. Ser. III. Sv. 11. S. 179–190; *Margetić L.* Branimirov natpis iz 888. godine i međunarodni položaj Hrvatske // Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu. 1990. Sv. 40. Br. 1. S. 5–16; *Zekan M.* Pet natpisa kneza Branimira s posebnim osvrtom na nalaz iz Otrisa // Kačić: Zbornik Franjevačke provincije Presvetoga Otkupitelja. 1993. Sv. 25. S. 405–420.

¹⁴ *Delonga V.* Latinski epigrafički spomenici... S. 166–167.

¹⁵ To Godescalc of Orbais, Trpimir (one of Branimir's predecessors, who ruled between ca. 845 and 864) was also a *rex Sclavorum*. See: *Lambot C.* Oeuvres théologiques et grammaticales de Godescals d'Orbais. Louvain, 1945. P. 169.

¹⁶ *Fine J. V. A.* Croats and Slavs: theories about the historical circumstances of the Croats' appearance in the Balkans // BF. 2000. Bd 26. S. 211. — To be sure, Fine also believes that *dux Sclavorum* is a genuine expression of Slavic ethnic self-awareness and, as such, a proof that I was wrong when writing that «the first clear statement that “we are Slavs” comes from the twelfth-century *Russian Primary Chronicle*» (*Curta F.* The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500–700. Cambridge; New York, 2001. P. 350). — See his review of my book in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*. 2004. Vol. 38. Nr 3. P. 337–338.

on behalf of some other donor¹⁷. In other words, Branimir's title matters to the donor as a means to confirm publicly the act of the donation. The name of the donors is preserved entirely in two of the five inscriptions (those found in Šopot and Ždrapanj) and only partially in another¹⁸. The donors of the altar screen in Ždrapanj are *zhupan* Priština (*Pristi[na] iupanus*), who was most certainly a Croat, and his un-named wife¹⁹. By contrast, the donor in the case of the Šopot inscription is a certain abbot named Theudebert, who is said to have put up the altar screen «for the salvation of his soul». Much has been made of the abbot's name, as supposedly indicating foreigner of Frankish origin²⁰. Whatever his place of birth, the donor was clearly a monk, possibly of the Benedictine order, and he characteristically asked the reader of the inscription to pray for his sins (*[quis] []eget oret pro me peccator[e]*). The audience of Theudebert's inscription was thus one of people capable of reading Latin, not of speakers of Slavic, be they «Croats» or «Slavs». It is important to note at this point that, although a «native», *zhupan* Priština was equally addressing a Latin-reading audience, who may have been more familiar with his title (*iupanus*) than with the name of the people over whom Branimir is said to have ruled (*Clavitiini*, an allegedly corrupted form of *Sclaveni*). That in the inscription carved on his behalf, Priština mangled the name of the people to whom he allegedly belonged, but not his title or social rank, is a strong argument in favor of Alimov's persuasive idea of «Croats» being the name adopted by an elite in the process of inventing a history and identity for the justification of its own power. Much like Omurtag, *zhupan* Priština and Abbot Theudebert employed «Slavs» as an ethno-political category, which made much more sense to an audience of «outsiders» (Greek- or Latin-speaking foreigners) than to one of «natives». In other words, «Slavs» was an etic, not an emic category. This, however, did not prevent its use by «natives» in contexts and circumstances in which assuming a name coined by «outsiders» could advance one's social or political goals²¹.

Polyvianni's superb book on the cultural specificity of medieval Bulgaria has long demonstrated that a significant part of that peculiarity was the use of Byzantine cultural patterns for the formulation of «native» (or «national») expression of culture²². Now Polyvianni would go as far

¹⁷ The standard phrase including Branimir's name is preserved relatively well in the inscription from the Church of St. Ambrose in Nin: (*T*)emporibus domno B(r)animiro dux Slavorum. See: Delonga V. Latinski epigrafički spomenici... S. 207.

¹⁸ Delonga V. Latinski epigrafički spomenici... S. 217–218.

¹⁹ For the title of *zhupan* in ninth-century Croatia, see: Curta F. Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250. Cambridge; New York, 2006. P. 139–141.

²⁰ Matijević-Sokol M., Sokol V. Hrvatska i Nin... S. 70.

²¹ Let me employ here two modern analogies in order to clarify the point. No one among those called in the United States «Hispanics» actually uses that label to define himself or herself, for he or she is always of Cuban, Colombian, Venezuelan, or Peruvian origin. Much like «Slavs», «Hispanic» is a label created by outsiders for purposes that were initially foreign to all or any of the interests of those to whom that label referred. Similarly, «Indians» was initially not a name willingly used or even accepted by those called so by the European settlers to North America, people who would otherwise employ for themselves such names as Potawatomi, Kwakiutl, or Hopi. However, when, in more recent times, at stake were political or economic interests depending upon the classification produced for that purpose by the United States government, both Hispanics and (American-) Indians quickly assumed that identity forced upon them in order to further their group interests. Indeed, to this day, both «ethnic» groups — otherwise completely artificial creations based on «umbrella» terms — operate effectively in the political field manipulating that identity, which has by now been recognized by others, from politicians to media pundits.

²² *Польвианный Д. И.* Культурное своеобразие средневековой Болгарии в контексте византийско-славянской общности. Иваново, 2000. — See also: *Польвианный Д. И.* Византийско-славянская общность в представлениях болгар X–XIV вв. // Славяне и их соседи: Греческий и славянский мир в Средние века и раннее Новое время: Сб. статей к 70-летию акад. Геннадия Григорьевича Литаврина / Под ред. Б. Н. Флори, Е. М. Ломидзе, Н. С. Захарьиной. М., 1996. С. 100–108.

as to claim that even the «Slavic *excursus*» in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* may be viewed as an attempt to obtain recognition by the same cultural means that have consecrated the Slavs in the political discourse of early Byzantium. He may be right as far as the use of the Byzantine chronicle of George the Monk is concerned, but the Rus' chronicler's approach is different from both Procopius of Caesarea (see below) and Constantine of Preslav or others writing in the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. Unlike all of them, the chronicler assigned to the Slavs a homeland on the Danube, no doubt modeling the history of the Slavs after that of the Hebrews in the Old Testament (twelve tribes spreading out over the face of the earth from an original homeland). Moreover, he used «Slavs» as a name for a territory, along with Epirus, Illyricum, and Lychnitis²³. His goal was clearly not just to link the Slavic Rus' to the lands where the Slavs had received the Word in their own language, but also to advance the idea of a new Chosen People²⁴. It is that that I had in mind when writing that with the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, another story begins, namely that of the «national» use of the Slavs «for claims to ancestry»²⁵.

But let us return to Barford's paper about the Polish lands. According to him, «linguistic and other types of evidence seem to show that Slavic languages were being spoken over a wide area of east-central Europe by the ninth century at the latest». What about the sixth century? Do we know anything for sure about the language(s) spoken in what is now Poland? Honest scholars have long given a negative answer to such questions²⁶. It would be a mistake, as Barford is right to point out, to associate river names of archaic Slavic type with any specific archaeological culture. If so, then it would be equally mistaken to associate such names with the Slavs as known from the written sources. Barford writes: «We are therefore faced with the paradoxical situation that the area may have been occupied by Slavs who were not in the slightest interested in wearing so-called "Slavic fibulae"». In the light of my remarks above, it is curious that Barford did not see a much simpler explanation for his paradoxical situation: those rejecting «Slavic fibulae» were not Slavs, at least not like those who not only wore «Slavic fibulae», but were also called Slavs (Sclavenes) by contemporary, early Byzantine authors. This remains true even if, as Barford invites us to do, one shares the widespread belief that Slavic was spoken in what is now Poland during the sixth century (a belief otherwise based on no evidence whatsoever). «Slavs did not become Slavs because they spoke Slavic, but because they were called so by others»²⁷.

Similar problems emerge from Petr Shuvalov's contribution. Like Barford, Shuvalov believes in the existence of a «(Baltic-)proto-Slavic population» somewhere in the forest belt of Eastern Europe, even though the very existence of any such population remains to be demonstrated, for it is not attested by any source. Much like Barford's Slavic-speaking groups «moving south and

²³ Lunt H. G. What the Rus' Primary Chronicle Tells us About the Origin of the Slavs and of Slavic Writing // HUS. 1995. Vol. 19. P. 335.

²⁴ Avenarius A. Začiatky slovanov na strednom Dunaji: autochtonistická teória vo svetle súčasného badania // HČ. 1992. Roč. 40. Č. 1. S. 1–16; Tolochko O. P. The Primary Chronicle's «Ethnography» Revisited: Slavs and Varangians in the Middle Dnieper Region and the Origin of the Rus' State // Franks, Northmen, and Slavs. Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe / Ed. by I. H. Garipzanov, P. J. Geary, P. Urbańczyk. Turnhout, 2008. P. 178.

²⁵ Curta F. The Making of the Slavs... P. 350. — In that respect, in his desire to prove that language is the most significant aspect of (any) ethnicity, B. J. Darden (*Darden B. J. Who were the Sclaveni and where did they come from?* // BF. 2004. Bd 28. S. 135–137) completely misses the point. His interpretation of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* is therefore anachronistic, to say the least.

²⁶ Schenker A. M. Were there Slavs in Central Europe before the Great Migration? // International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics. 1985. Vol. 31–32. P. 359–374; Popowska-Taborska H. Wczesne dzieje Słowian w świetle ich języka. Wrocław, 1991.

²⁷ Curta F. The Making of the Slavs... P. 346.

southwest to the areas faced by Justinian's frontiers», Shuvalov's Balto-*proto-Slavs* «spilled» over the fertile lands of the forest-steppe belt in the aftermath of the Hunnic invasion of the late fourth century. But unlike Barford, Shuvalov is upset by my supposedly flummocky formulations, «especially the INVENTION OF THE SLAVS». He writes: «Curta denies the *proto-Slavs* the possibility of migrating from the north». Shuvalov sees no problem with the old «model» of Slavic ethnogenesis advanced by Russian scholars such as Mark Shchukin and Dmitrii A. Machinskii. That the Slavs were aware of being Slavs without having to be invented by Byzantine authors results (so Shuvalov) from an episode in Theophylact Simocatta's *History*. Given the weight of this piece of evidence in Shuvalov's line of arguments, the episode is worth citing in full:

On the following day, three men, Sclavenes by race (ἄνδρες τρεῖς Σκλαυηνοὶ τὸ γένος), who were not wearing any iron or military equipment, were captured by the emperor's bodyguards. Lyres were their baggage, and they were not carrying anything else at all. And so the emperor enquired what was their nation (βασιλεὺς διηρώτα τί τὸ ἔθνος αὐτῶν), where was their allotted abode, and the cause of their presence in the Roman lands. They replied that they were Sclavenes by nation and that they lived at the boundary of the western Ocean (οἱ δ'εὖ τὸ μὲν ἔθνος ἔφρασαν πεφυκέναι Σκλαυηνοὶ πρὸς τῷ τέρματι τε τοῦ δυτικοῦ ὠκεανοῦ); the Chagan had dispatched ambassadors to their parts to levy a military force and had lavished many gifts but refused him the alliance, assenting that the length of the journey daunted them, while they sent back to the Chagan for the purpose of making a defense these same men who had been captured; they had completed the journey in fifteen months; but the Chagan had forgotten the law of ambassadors and had decreed a ban on their return; since they had heard that the Roman nation was much the most famous, as far as can be told, for wealth and clemency, they had exploited the opportunity and retired to Thrace; they carried lyres since it was not their practice to gird weapons on their bodies, because their country was ignorant of iron and thereby provided them with a peaceful and trouble-free life; they made music on lyres because they did not know how to sound forth on trumpets. For they would quite reasonably say that for those who had no knowledge of warfare, musical pursuits were uncultivated, as it were²⁸.

This Shuvalov takes as a proof that the Slavs were calling themselves by that name and were fully aware of their own ethnic identity. He astutely, yet rhetorically asks «how could those northerners, who had never before visited the Danube region», have been able to tell Emperor Maurice that they «were Sclavenes by nation» if not fully aware of that very fact²⁹. Shuvalov clearly took the text at face value, without even questioning its authenticity³⁰. That the Sclavenes claimed that they had heard «that the Roman nation was much the most famous, as far as can be told, for wealth and clemency» raised no red flags for him. He does not seem to have been troubled at all by the contradiction between the fact that the country of the Sclavenes is said to have been «ignorant of iron» and the intention of the qagan of the Avars «to levy a military force» from among those same peace-loving Sclavenes. Nor does he seem to have noted the striking similarity

²⁸ Theophylact Simocatta. *History* 6.2, 10–15: Theophylacti Simocattae. *Historia* / Ed. C. de Boor; Re-ed. P. Wirth. Stuttgart, 1972. P. 223–224; English translation: *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* / Engl. transl. by Mary and Michael Whitby. Oxford, 1986. P. 160–161..

²⁹ Shuvalov wrongly attributes the statement about the Slavs being a «tribe» (γένος, translated as «race» by Mary and Michael Whitby) to the emperor, when in fact that is Theophylact Simocatta's authorial voice.

³⁰ Doubts about the authenticity of this episode have first been raised by: Kollautz A. Die Idealisierung der Slawen bei Theophylakt als Beispiel seiner ethnographischer Darstellungsweise // *Rapports du III-e Congrès international d'archéologie slave*. Bratislava, 7–14 septembre 1975 / Ed. by B. Chropovský. Vol. 2. Bratislava, 1980. P. 189–204. — For more recent doubts, see: Dulnicz M. Frühe Slawen im Gebiet zwischen unterer Weichsel und Elbe. Eine archäologische Studie. Neumünster, 2006. S. 28.

between this story and Tacitus' description of the Fenni, who like Theophylact's Slavs, had no iron³¹. More importantly, he let himself duped by Theophylact's otherwise worn-out narrative strategy: For the Sclavenes to say that they lived at the boundary of the western Ocean, they must have known that there was also an eastern and southern ocean. In other words, the lyre-players, who (and on this point Shuvalov understood Theophylact correctly) had never before visited the Roman Empire, must have had some solid knowledge of Greek and Roman geography, from Herodotus to Ptolemy. Perhaps more importantly, when asked about it, they must have been aware not only of the fact that they were «Sclavenes by nation», a point Shuvalov was much too quick to pick, but also of such abstract categories of ethnographic classification as ἔθνος. For all their peaceful and trouble-free life on the beaches of the western Ocean, Theophylact's Slavic musicians seem to have kept themselves busy studying all those works of Greek and Roman ethnography in preparation for their interview with Emperor Maurice.

As *The Making of the Slavs* states (P. 18), the transactional nature of ethnicity resides in that, «in the practical accomplishment of identity, two mutually interdependent social processes» are at work, «that of internal and that of external definition (categorization)». The argument is that the Slavs cannot be recognized by others as such, without knowing themselves that they are Slavs. Conversely, there is no point for any group of humans to affirm being Slavs, if by doing so, they are not going to be distinguished from, and recognized by others who are not Slavs. In this typically social interactionist perspective, objective cultural difference is always a by-product of something else, largely to be explained with reference to social interaction. It is important to understand, however, just how the «others» come to perceive «us» as Slavs when «we» declare ourselves to be Slavs. In other words, for ethnic identity to be visible (literally), the very process of ethnic formation must involve the manipulation of material culture, be that dress, food, house architecture, or pottery decoration. The self-conscious use of specific cultural features as diacritical markers distinguished an ethnic group from others. Ethnic boundaries are therefore created in specific social and political configurations by means of material culture styles.

Andrej Pleterski's impassioned plea would have us shift the emphasis from ethnicity to religion. To him, since the internal categorization in the process of ethnic formation is fundamentally subjective, there is no necessary material culture correlate. Instead, he suggests that the we regard the archaeological evidence as pointing to religious, and not ethnic phenomena. Pleterski proposes that the room structure of a cluster of Slavic settlements (*zhupa*, «nest») be viewed as based on fundamental religious principles, primarily three distinct sanctuaries dedicated to three different deities. Ethnic identity would thus be just another name for membership in a religious community, an idea which echoes similar claims made in recent studies on early Slavic ethnicity³². Moreover, Pleterski suggests that religious structures may have been responsible for the rise of the first leaders in Slavic society, a process he believes to date back to the fourth century, given that the word *knez* in Slavic is a Gothic loan. This of course is a very tempting hypothesis. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to substantiate it. There are so far no early Slavic sanctuaries or any special-purpose buildings known from any part of Eastern Europe³³. The description which Procopius gives of the

³¹ Anna L. de. The Peoples of Finland and Early Medieval Sources: The Characterization of «Alienness» // Suomen varhaishistoria: Tornion kongressi 14.–16.6.1991 / Ed. by K. Julku and M. H. Korhonen. Rovaniemi, 1992. P. 11–22 (with reference to Tacitus, *Germania* 46).

³² Gąssowski J. Dawni Słowianie — naród czy religia? // Aetas media, aetas moderna: Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin / Red. A. Bartosiewicz et al. Warszawa, 2000. S. 257–262.

³³ Not a single one of the structures discussed by Irina P. Rusanova (*Русанова И. П. Истоки славянского язычества. Культурные сооружения Центральной и Восточной Европы в I тыс. до н. э. – I тыс. н. э. Чернівці, 2002*) can be securely dated to the sixth or seventh century.

religious beliefs of the Sclavenes and the Antes is in fact a watered-down version of Greek paganism, with little, if any relation to the actual beliefs of the sixth-century barbarians living north of the Lower Danube³⁴. Whatever archaeological evidence exists of ritual or magical practices, they seem to be strongly associated with domestic activities taking place in individual households, and not with special-function structures or buildings, such as sanctuaries³⁵. Finally, the *tročan* of the nineteenth- or twentieth-century Slovenian folklore can hardly be regarded as evidence of the religion of the early Slavs in the sixth, and much less in the fourth century (if one can even speak of Slavs at that time)³⁶.

Almost in opposition to Petr Shuvalov, Boris Todorov rightly insists upon *origines gentium* accounts in Byzantine sources to be analyzed not as «objective reports of real events», but as «later constructions» of a rather intellectual, if not altogether bookish, nature. Barring new insights into the way in which Byzantine authors, such as Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and Theophanes Confessor, obtained their information about «native» versions of local history, what their accounts of *origines gentium* can tell about ethnic history is naturally limited. But they do seem to illuminate Byzantine attitudes towards the ethnic groups whose history they purport to tell.

I find myself in general agreement with Todorov's propositions. Our opinions differ, however, on the sources of information used for *origines gentium*. Todorov contests the very evidence of such texts for the «collective memory of the empire's neighbors», as well as its interpretation. Thus he suggests that, while the purpose of such texts was to justify imperial claims, serious doubts exist about the authenticity of much of the information they provide. The reasoning is unclear. Though he probably made up the association between the Serbs and Emperor Heraclius or the etymology of the ethnic name «Dukljans» («Diocletians», allegedly derived from the name of Emperor Diocletian), Emperor Constantine did not make up the word «servula» (apparently referring to the pig-skin footwear of Balkan peasants) from which the name of the «Serbs» is supposedly derived³⁷. Similarly, he could not have concocted out of thin air the names of the five brothers (Kloukas, Lobelos, Kosentzis, Mouchlo, and Chrobatos) and of two sisters (Touga and Bouga) who are said to have split from the Croats «beyond Bavaria, where the Belocroats are now» and have come with their folk to Dalmatia. Nor is it possible to treat as Emperor Constantine's invention the information on the Pechenegs contained in chapter 37 or that on the Milingoi and Ezeritai of Peloponnesus to be found in chapter 50 of the *De administrando imperio*. As Danijel Dzino rightly shows, the general goal of that work was didactic. Emperor Constantine's purpose was to educate his son, as clearly spelled out in the Proem:

Lo, I set a doctrine (διδασκαλίαν) before thee, so that being sharpened thereby in experience and knowledge, thou shalt not stumble concerning the best counsels and the common

³⁴ Loma A. Procopius about the Supreme god of the Slavs (Bella VII 14.23): Two Critical Remarks // ЗРВИ. 2004. Кн. 41. С. 67–70.

³⁵ Stamati I. Les petits pains en glaise — discussion sur la mentalité des habitants de l'établissement de Lazuri datant du Haut Moyen Age // Transylvanian Review. 2001. Vol. 10. Nr 2. P. 83–95; Stanciu I. Tonbrote' als Indiz für die Wanderung und die magisch-ritueller Glauben und Praktiken der frühen Slawen // Eastern Review. 2001. Vol. 5. P. 123–154. — See also: Váňa Z. Archeologické doklady kultu a magie u Slovanů // Slovenská archeológia. 1988. Roč. 36. Č. 2. S. 343–352.

³⁶ The fallacy of anachronistically linking sixth-century accounts of migrations from across the Danube into the Balkans to nineteenth- or early twentieth-century linguistic or folkloric phenomena in Balkan countries is also evident in Ivan Mužić's insistence upon the different map distribution of the pair of words *vatra* / *oganj* or the historical significance of the *krsna slava*. The problem with both examples is of course that there is no way to date them with any precision. Without chronological precision, one should instead be cautious about using any ethnographic or linguistic parallels for historical reconstruction.

³⁷ DAI 29, 32: *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*. De administrando imperio / Greek text ed. by Gy. Moravcsik; Engl. trans. by R. J. H. Jenkins. Washington, 1967. P. 122, 153.

good: first, in what each nation has power to advantage the Romans, and in what to hurt, and how and by what other nation each severally may be encountered in arms and subdued; then, concerning their ravenous and insatiate temper and the gifts they demand inordinately; next, concerning also the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in, its geographical description and measurement, and moreover concerning events which have occurred at various times between the Romans and different nations...³⁸

Dzino points out that because of its didactic character, *De administrando imperio* relies heavily on a didactically useful form of ethnographic classification. Although generally drawing inspiration from the model of the late antique ethnography, Emperor Constantine pays little if any attention to such details as the «ancient» history of the «nations» described. His is a much more practical goal, namely to classify and explain, not to display his knowledge of the ancient authors:

And if in setting out my subject I have followed the plain and beaten track of speech and, so to say, idly running and simple prose, do not wonder at that, my son. For I have not been studious to make a display of fine writing or of an Atticizing style, swollen with the sublime and lofty, but rather have been eager by means of every-day and conversational narrative to teach you (διδάξαι) those things of which I think you should not be ignorant, and which may without difficulty provide that intelligence and prudence which are the fruit of long experience³⁹.

To classify is to give names to political categories. As Dzino persuasively argues, «Croats» was a name for those, who in the aftermath of the Carolingian encroachment into Southeastern Europe, regarded themselves (and were regarded by others) as neither «Romans» («Dalmatians»), nor «Slavs». In that respect, Boris Todorov is quite right: in Emperor Constantine's narrative, *origines gentium* function as a justification for such political categorization. But unlike Todorov, Dzino claims — quite rightly, in my opinion — that the story of the five brothers and two sisters moving from the land of the «Belocroats» into Dalmatia is not a fabrication⁴⁰. Instead, it must have been a local version of Croat history, one that served the interests of local elites and justified the tribal or clan distinctions within the new Croatian polity. Emperor Constantine simply put a new spin on it, thus giving the myth a new meaning within the context of his scholarly effort towards ethnographic explanation and teaching of good government. But where did Emperor Constantine learn about the story of Kloukas, Lobelos, Kosentzis, Mouchlo, Chrobatos, Touga, and Bouga? It has long been noted that the detailed information about the Magyars («Turks») in chapters 38 and 40 of the *De administrando imperio* may well derive from conversations with the Magyar envoys accompanying *harka* Bulcsu to Constantinople, in 948, where he received baptism with no other than Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus himself as sponsor at the baptismal font⁴¹.

³⁸ *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*. *De administrando imperio*. P. 45, 47.

³⁹ DAI 1: *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*. *De administrando imperio*. P. 49.

⁴⁰ DAI 30; *Ibid.* P. 143.

⁴¹ *Pecz V*. 1) A magyarok ősi neve Konstantinos Porphyrogenetosnál // *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny*. 1896. O. 385–389, 800–806; 2) A magyarok ősi neve Konstantinos Porphyrogenetosnál // *Ibid.* 1898. O. 209–221; *Fiók K*. *Sabartioiasfaloi*. A magyarok régi neve Konstantinos Porphyrogenetosnál // *Századok*. 1896. Évf. 30. O. 607–616; *Fehér G*. Magyarország területe a X. század közepén Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos *De administrando imperio*ja alapján // *Ibid.* 1922. Évf. 56. O. 351–380; *Moravcsik Gy*. Szövegkritikai megjegyzések Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos magyar fejezeteihez // *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények*. 1936. O. 285–293; *Kristó Gy*. Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos und die Herausbildung des ungarischen Stammesbundes // *Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica*. 1981. T. 23. O. 77–83; *Várady L*. Revision der Ungarn-Image von Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos // *BZ*. 1989. Bd 82. S. 22–58; *Váczy P*. The Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and the saga of the Hungarian conquest // *Antaeus*. 1990. Vol. 19–20. P. 251–256;

I think it is not too far-fetched to imagine Emperor Constantine relying on informants from Dalmatia, perhaps one of those «Croats who wish to engage in commerce, traveling round from city to city, in Paganía and the gulf of Dalmatia and as far as Venice»⁴². This by no means implies that the accounts of Croatian history to be found in *De administrando imperio* are a transcription of the testimony of Emperor Constantine's informant. But it would be equally misleading to ignore that certain categories of information in *De administrando imperio* could not have been found either in the works of ancient ethnographers or, for that matter, in the imperial archives.

Whatever his sources, Emperor Constantine's general attitude towards authentic information appears to be somewhat different from that of Procopius of Caesarea. As Anthony Kaldellis has recently showed, the latter's *excursus* on the Hephtalites, who are compared in civilization to the Romans and the Persians «is undeniably peculiar; the Roman reader would probably find it utterly preposterous. I believe that it is entirely an invention of Procopius. None of the information available to him would have justified it»⁴³. Sergei Ivanov disagrees with that. He simply dismisses the testimony of Procopius' own work without engaging with the analysis that substantiated its significance in the *Making of the Slavs*. To him, it is without any question that the «Slavic *excursus*» in the *Wars* is entirely the result of the personal interviews Procopius had with Sclavene and Antian mercenaries in Italy. Ivanov even claims to know the precise date of those interviews, namely April 537. According to him, «the barbarians communicated to Procopius their own self-designations, Slavs and Antes, as well as the name which they themselves initially used for both tribes, *Sporoi*». Whether or not one shares the appraisal of my work as «deliberate manipulation of facts», Ivanov's treatment of Procopius at this point is a far cry from his older views on the *Wars*. In his 1991 comment on the passage (*Wars* VII.14.29) in which Procopius mentioned *Sporoi* as the old common name of both Sclavenes and Antes, Ivanov astutely noticed Procopius' playful intentions, for he derived *Sporoi* from the «sporadic» settlements of the Sclaveni and the Antes⁴⁴.

Antonopoulos P. Ho autokratōros Konstantinos Z' ho Porphyrogenetos kai hoi Oungroi. Athens, 1996; *Zimonyi I.* Constantinus Porphyrogenitus *De administrando imperio* magyar fejezetének török háttéréről // *Studia varia. Tanulmányok Szádeczky-Kardoss Samu nyolcvanadik születésnapjára* / Szerk. F. Makk, I. Tar, Gy. Wojtilla. Szeged, 1998. O. 159–166; *Kristó Gy.* Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos über die Landnahme der Ungarn // *Byzanz und Ostmitteleuropa, 950-1453. Beiträge zu einer table-ronde des XIX Internationalen Congress of Byzantine Studies, Copenhagen 1996* / Hrsg. von G. Prinzing und M. Salamon. Wiesbaden, 1999. S. 13–22.

⁴² DAI 31: *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio.* P. 151.

⁴³ *Kaldellis A.* Procopius of Caesarea... P. 72. — Turning the Hephtalites into civilized humans amounts to diminishing the civilized character of those with whom Procopius compares them, namely the Romans. In other words, the goal of Procopius' narrative strategy is not to justify imperial claims, but to criticize the very basis for such claims, at least under the rule of Justinian.

⁴⁴ *Иванов С. А., Гиндин Л. А., Цымбурский В. Л.* Прокопий Кесарийский // *Свод древнейших письменных известий о славянах. Т. I: (I–VI вв.)* / Сост. Л. А. Гиндин, С. А. Иванов, Г. Г. Литаврин. М., 1991. С. 227–228. — True, Ivanov claims that *Sporoi* is a *hapax*, deriving from some Slavic self-designation. Needless to say, there is absolutely no evidence for that, either in the text of the *Wars* or in any other source (*pace* George Vernadsky, there is no connection between Procopius' *Sporoi* and Jordanes' *Spali*). It seems to me to be much easier to explain Procopius' playful etymology in terms of his own narrative goals. His remark about the *Sporoi* comes at the end of the «Slavic *excursus*» in which he mentions, among other things, that the Sclavenes and the Antes «live in pitiful hovels which they set up far apart from one another, but as a general thing, every man is constantly changing his place of abode» (*Wars* VII 14.24; English translation: Procopius of Caesarea. *Wars* / Ed. by J. Haury; Engl. transl. by H. B. Dewing. Vol. 5. Cambridge, Mass.; London, 1924. P. 271). *Sporoi* is a quite adequate name for those whom Procopius viewed as living sporadically, each man at a large distance from his neighbor and constantly on the move. This is further substantiated by the examination of Procopius' usage of the word he employs for the Sclavene and Antian «hovels»: *καλύβαι*. In two other contexts in which he employs the same word (*Wars* II 19.32 and IV 6.10), reference is made either to temporary shelters for soldiers on campaign, or to houses of nomads.

He now sees the story of the *Sporoi* as nothing less than a myth about origins. In his eyes, Procopius' playful etymology has turned into one of those *origines gentium* discussed by Boris Todorov, for Ivanov strongly believes Procopius' to be a «native», authentic story.

The shift in emphasis from Ivanov's earlier endorsement of a (moderate) instrumentalism to his current primordialist views is quite clear in his discussion of language. He contests that «language in general did not play any consolidation role»⁴⁵. Against this, Ivanov argues that «people were not indifferent as to what language they spoke». However, at the beginning of his paper, he also argued that «one does not know that one speaks, say, proto-Slavic, unless of course one is a linguist». This seems to contradict all the sociolinguistic evidence available: in a bilingual situation, when one switches from one language to another, one always conceptualizes that transition in some way, even if the name attributed to one or the other of the two languages is simply «our language». But one could not speak any language without calling it by some name, and thus applying to the linguistic map the same categories of classification as those used for the ethnic map. Be as it may, the question again is how to take Procopius' statement about Sclavenes and Antes having «the same language, an utterly barbarous tongue (ἔστι δὲ καὶ μία φωνὴ ἀτεχνῶς βάρβαρος)»⁴⁶. This Ivanov interprets to mean that «the Antes were not initially speakers of Slavic, [but] ultimately adopted the Slavic language». There is, however, no mention in Procopius of what was the language that both Sclavenes and Antes spoke: the only adjective modifying the noun φωνή is βάρβαρος. This is unusual for Procopius, who always uses the noun φωνή together with some ethnic attribute, i. e., always mentions a language of some kind: Latin, Gothic, Armenian, Phoenician, Persian, or Greek⁴⁷. That Procopius had knowledge of at least some of those languages is beyond any doubt. He described a horse whose body was dark gray, except for this head, which was white: «Such a horse the Greeks call “phalius” and the barbarians “balan”». The barbarians in question are the Goths, for Procopius explains that the Goths understood that they needed to shoot at that particular kind of horse, since it was Belisarius'⁴⁸. By contrast, nothing suggests that he knew the linguistic value of «barbarous», when applied to the language spoken by Sclavenes and Antes. To claim that the language referred to by Procopius was what we now call (Common) Slavic is an over-interpretation, at the very least, and a gross mistake, at most. All that Procopius tells us is that, to his ears, the language that both Sclavenes and Antes spoke was «utterly barbarous». This is to be read as an ethnic stereotype («barbarians cannot speak but barbarous languages»), not as a bit of information resulting from Procopius' «long and detailed conversations» with Slavene and Antian mercenaries in Italy. This is further confirmed by what he has to say about further similarities between Antes and Sclavenes:

Nay further, they do not differ at all from one another in appearance. For they are all exceptionally tall and stalwart men, while their bodies and hair are neither very fair or blonde, nor indeed do they incline entirely to the dark type, but they are all slightly ruddy in colour. And they live a hard life, giving no heed to bodily comforts, just as the Massagetae do, and,

⁴⁵ Ivanov sends the reader to page 344 of the *Making of the Slavs*, where in fact I wrote nothing of the sort. Instead, I rejected the idea that, in the case of the Slavic ethnic, language was a «precondition for the rise of ethnic communities», as Soviet ethnographers had it.

⁴⁶ Wars VII 14.26; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars. Vol. 5. P. 270.

⁴⁷ Latin: Wars II 1.7, II 23.6, III 1.6, V 14.4, VII 14.36, and VIII 5.13. Gothic: Wars III 2.5 and V 10.6–13. Armenian: Wars VII 26.24. Phoenician: Wars IV 10.20. Persian: Wars VIII 10.8. Greek («Hellenic»): Wars II 25.4.

⁴⁸ *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars V 18.6. — For another case of bilingualism, see: Wars VI 1.13–19 (Gothic and Latin spoken by the Goths).

like them, they are continually and at all times covered with filth; however, they are in no respect base or evil-doers (πονεροὶ μέντοι ἢ κακοῦργοι), but they preserve the Hunnic character in all its simplicity (ἀλλὰ κἄν τῷ ἀφέλει διασώζουσι τὸ Οὐννικὸν ἦθος)⁴⁹.

Simplicity was a typically barbarian feature to Procopius⁵⁰. That he mentioned the Sclavenes and the Antes as neither base, nor evil-doers raises a red flag as to his intentions. Πονηρία is an attribute he typically associated with such characters as John the Cappadocian, Emperor Justinian, or tyrants, in general⁵¹. His remarks are therefore to be read as an attempt to turn the Sclavenes and the Antes into *bons sauvages*, the mirror into which the wicked Romans need to look in order to understand their moral degradation. What about the physical features? The ruddy complexion of the Sclavenes and the Antes looks more like Procopius' direct reference to the Budini of Herodotus⁵², while his comment about them being «exceptionally tall and stalwart» is nothing but a stereotype, which he had already applied to the «Gothic nations», all of which were «tall and handsome to look upon»⁵³. The «Gothic nations» — Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, and Gepids — although distinguished from one another by their names, «do not differ in anything else at all». Like Sclavenes and Antes, they all «use the same laws and practice a common religion». Similarly, they all speak «one language called Gothic»⁵⁴. The parallel is too important to be ignored: in describing the Sclavenes and the Antes—including their language — Procopius does not look over his reporter notes of interviews with Slavene and Antian mercenaries, but applies the same stereotypes about barbarians that he uses for the description of the «Gothic nations». Moreover, the parallel implies that, like the «Gothic nations», the Sclavenes are not one single «nation», but a multitude of tribes, which he specifically mentions as such when narrating the return of the Heruli to Thule⁵⁵. Similarly, the Antes were not a single «tribe», but «many and countless»⁵⁶. Far from «boldly affirming their relation to the Sclavenes», as Sergei Ivanov would have us believe, the Antes had their own country, clearly separate from that of the Sclavenes⁵⁷. Were then Procopius'

⁴⁹ Wars VII 14. 27–28; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars. Vol. 5. P. 271, 273.

⁵⁰ Wars VII 34.23. Ἀφέλεια is a trait of the Tetraxite Goths and of the Abasgi (Wars VIII 4.11 and VIII 3.14-15). — Similarly, when Procopius mentions that Sclavenes and Antes do not «wear even a shirt or a cloak, but gathering their trews up as far as their private parts they enter into battle with their opponents», this is by no means a description of ethnographically specific customs. After all, the same is said about the barbarian soldiers (in general) who fought in Belisarius' army: «And not one of them had a cloak or any other outer garment to cover the shoulders, but they were sauntering about clad in linen tunics and trousers» (Wars II 21.6).

⁵¹ John the Cappadocian: Wars I 25.9. Justinian: Secret History VIII 22. Tyrants: Wars IV 18.1. — For Sclavenes and Antes as the opposite of tyrants, see also: *Revanoglou E. M. Geographika kai ethnographika stoicheia*. P. 208.

⁵² Herodotus IV 108.1. See: *Revanoglou E. M. Geographika kai ethnographika stoicheia*. P. 206 with n. 1191.

⁵³ *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars III 2.4. «Stallwart» are also the inhabitants of Brittia (Wars VIII 20.28). — All those nations were alike because they lived in the North. For Procopius' use of the theory of climes, see: *Benedicty R. Die Milieu-Theorie bei Prokop von Kaisareia // BZ. 1962. Bd 55. S. 1–10.*

⁵⁴ Wars III 2.2-6; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars / Ed. by J. Haury; Engl. transl. by H. B. Dewing. Vol. 3. Cambridge, Mass.; London, 1916. P. 9, 11. — It is interesting in this respect to note the similarities in terms of religion. According to Procopius, the Sclavenes and the Antes sacrifice to rivers and nymphs and some other spirits, making divinations in connection with such sacrifices (τὰς τε μαντείας ἐν ταύταις δὴ ταῖς θυσίαις ποιοῦνται; Wars VII 14.24). The same is however said about the Franks, who, although Christian, practice human sacrifice, «and it is in connection with these that they make their prophecies» (ταυτῆ τε τὰς μαντείας ποιούμενοι; Wars VI 25.10). For Procopius' concept of divination, see *Revanoglou E. M. Geographika kai ethnographika stoicheia*. P. 200–201.

⁵⁵ *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars VI 15.2: ἤμειψαν μὲν τὰ Σκλαβηνῶν ἔθνη ἐφηξίης ἅπαντα. That by ἔθνη Procopius meant politically independent entities results from his mention, within one and the same paragraph, of the thirteen «tribes» living in Thule, each with its own king.

⁵⁶ Wars VIII 4.9; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars. Vol. 5. P. 84.

⁵⁷ Wars VII 14.17.

Antes «also Slavs», as claimed by Ivanov? And what exactly is the relation between Procopius' Sclavenes and Ivanov's Slavs?

Ivanov takes issue with my conclusion that the «Slavs did not become Slavs because they spoke Slavic, but because they were called so by others». He states that «the Slavs became Slavs, because they called themselves Slavs». This is to turn again to the realm of «linguistic beliefs», rather than facts, for no evidence exists that any Slavic-speaking people in the early Middle Ages called themselves «Slavs». Nor do we know what was the name which Procopius' Sclavenes used for themselves, although most historians presume that Procopius employed that very name, with which the Sclavenes called themselves. As I conceded in the *Making of the Slavs*, «it might be that “Sclavene” was initially the self-designation of a particular ethnic group» (P. 119). It is nonetheless significant that in Romanian and Albanian, two languages for which we may safely presume an early contact with the idiom in use among the Sclavenes, *șchiau* and *Shqâ* derive not from Σκλαβήνος/Sclavenus, but the shorter form Σκλάβος/Sclavus, which is undoubtedly of Byzantine origin⁵⁸. Be as it may, naming and classifying a group of people as Sclavenes was a Byzantine, not Sclavene practice. In that respect, I believe that Ivan Mužić's approach to the confusion between Goths and Croats (or Slavs) in medieval sources is inadequate, while I find Aleksei Kibin's paper on the Yatvingians most illustrative of the process at work in the case of the sixth- and seventh century Slavs. Both authors deal with late sources, the *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea* and the *Historia Salonitana* of Archdeacon Thomas of Spalato, in Mužić's case; and the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (or the *Hypatian Chronicle*), in Kibin's case. However, Mužić's taking the sources at face value is not very convincing.

The confusion between Goths and Slavs (or Croats) is not a direct mirror of what had happened in the early Middle Ages, but the result of the several bookish influences, which have been painstakingly delineated by Neven Budak and which would form the basis for the kind of historiography that A. I. Filiushkin rightly called «Illyrianist»⁵⁹. Most believe that the *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea* is a reliable source for more recent periods, such as, for example, the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century history of southern Dalmatia⁶⁰. However, that same source is completely unreliable when it comes to earlier periods, specifically to those which concern Ivan Mužić. Inconsistencies, obscurities and downright fictional characters have permanently damaged the reputation of the *Chronicle*, which is now believed to be the work of Gregory, Archbishop of Bar⁶¹. Like the unknown author of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, Archbishop Gregory was not interested in separating fact from fiction, but in writing a report of Dalmatian history that could support the claims to superiority of his see over that of Split, no doubt in the context of the re-elevation

⁵⁸ Schramm G. Venedi, Antes, Sclaveni, Sclavi: Frühe Sammelbezeichnungen für slawische Stämme und ihr geschichtlicher Hintergrund // JGO. 1995. Bd 43. S. 192; Brezeanu S. Schei/Șchei. Ethnonymie et toponymie roumaines // Revue des études sud-est-européennes. 2002. Vol. 40. P. 67.

⁵⁹ Филишкин А. И. Представление о славянском этногенезе у восточноевропейских средневековых авторов // Этногенез и этнокультурные контакты славян / Отв. ред. В. В. Седов. М., 1997. С. 317, 322. — See also: Budak N. Prilog valorizaciji humsko-dukļanskog kulturnog područja u prvim fazama njegova razvitka (do 12. st.) // SHP. Split, 1986. Ser. III. Sv.16. S. 127; Katičić R. Uz početke hrvatskih početaka: Filološke studije o našem najranijem srednjovjekovlju. Split, 1994. S. 253–266; Heyduk J. Źródła do tzw. etnogenezy chorwatów dalmatyńskich w świetle nowszej literatury // SA. 2003. T. 44. S. 46.

⁶⁰ Živković T. Dioclea between Rascia and Byzantium in the First Half of the 12th century // ЗРВИ. 2006. Књ. 43. С. 451–465 (reprinted in: Živković T. Forging Unity: The South Slavs Between East and West: 550–1150. Belgrade, 2008. P. 293–334).

⁶¹ Peričić E. Sclavorum Regnum Grgura Barskog: Ljetopis Popa Dukļjanina. Zagreb, 1991.

of Bar to the status of archbishopric and of the Dukljan-papal contacts of the late 1100s⁶². To accept at face value the evidence of the *Chronicle* is at best naïve and at worst suspect.

Tibor Živković has shown how in at least two cases — the account of the Council on the Duvanjsko Polje and the legend of Pavlimir Belo — Archbishop Gregory made up stories designed to serve a political purpose, namely the demonstration of the long-established supremacy of Dioclea over Rascia and the subordination of its ecclesiastical organization to the Archbishopric of Bar⁶³. Archbishop Gregory claims that a Croatian king named Tomislav defeated in battle the Hungarian king Attila⁶⁴. Should we believe him? And if we dismiss that as being unreliable information, why should we accept at face value what Archbishop Gregory has to say about Silimir and Bladina and their Slavic-speaking Goths? What is ultimately the difference between reading the twelfth-century *Chronicle* of Archbishop Gregory as a genuine and veridic account of what had happened in Dalmatia in the sixth century and taking at face value the account of King Arthur and his father, Uther the Conqueror in the equally twelfth-century *History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth? Mužić does not seem to be troubled by such questions and comparisons, and his uncritical approach to sources written six centuries after the events narrated makes his otherwise interesting idea of native Croats (or at least Croatian Slavs) look very dubious. The thesis has meanwhile received a theoretically much more sound treatment by Danijel Dzino and has a good chance of stirring much debate, especially since it does not contradict what others have written from a rather different point of view⁶⁵.

This is certainly not the time to evaluate the idea, which historians and archaeologists alike will have to consider in great detail. However, no one could seriously raise any doubts about the survival of the local, «late antique» population of the northwestern Balkans after *ca.* 600. Were these Goths, especially those Goths that Archbishop Gregory had in mind? While Mužić seems ready to jump to that conclusion, few would follow him. Equally suspect in my mind are attempts to read ethnicity (-ies) in haplotypes and old names. Names such as Mutimir or Branimir may well be just as «Germanic» (or Gothic) as Mezamer (or Mezamir), the name of the Antian envoy killed by the Avars in the early 560s⁶⁶. No connection can however be established by such means between the Goths and the Croats⁶⁷. As for genetics, the main problem is the high degree of uncertainty involved in the identification of group affiliation on the basis of biological data. First, as modern studies have shown, there is no complete overlap between haplotypes and ethnicity⁶⁸. While haplotypes may be able to show a degree of similarity between any given population and its recent neighbors, they do not in fact map the ethnic diversity within that same population. More

⁶² *Živković T.* О првим поглављима Летописа Попа Дукљанина // ИЧ. 1997. Књ. 44. С. 11–34.

⁶³ *Živković T.* О такозваном saboru на Duvanjskom polju // Zbornik za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine. 2004. Sv. 4. S. 45–65; *Živković T.* Легенда о Павлимиру Белу // ИЧ. 2004. Књ. 50. С. 9–32.

⁶⁴ *Mošin V.* Ljetopis pora Dukljanina: Latinski tekst sa hrvatskim prijevodom i «Hrvatska kronika». Zagreb, 1950. S. 58; *Peričić E.* Sclavorum Regnum Grgura Barskog. S. 258.

⁶⁵ See: *Fine J. V. A.* Croats and Slavs... S. 205–218.

⁶⁶ For Mezamer's name, see: *Strumins'kyj B.* Were the Antes Eastern Slavs? // HUS. 1979. Vol. 3–4. P. 792–793; *Werner R.* Zur Herkunft der Antes: Ein ethnisches und soziales Problem der Spätantike // Kölner historische Abhandlungen. 1980. Bd 28. S. 590; *Wiita J. E.* The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises: Ph. D. dissertation, University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, 1977. P. 262.

⁶⁷ By the same token, *pace* Polyviannyi, I do not believe that the name of *bagatur bagaina* Slavna mentioned in a ninth-century Bulgar funerary inscription is any indication of that official's Slavic ethnicity. See: *Beshevliev V.* Die protobulgarischen Inschriften. S. 292–293.

⁶⁸ *Renfrew C.* The Roots of Ethnicity. Archaeology, Genetics, and the Origins of Europe. Rome, 1993.

importantly, the study of haplotypes of any modern population cannot inform about any other populations in the past, especially since no data have so far been collected from the skeletal remains of medieval populations. Finally, Mužić's positivist stance undermines his otherwise instrumentalist approach to ethnicity. If ethnicity is in the genes, then why did the name (and «culture») of the population in the northwestern Balkans have to change from Goths to Slavs (or Croats)?

Kibin' has a very different approach to ethnic names. As he points out, despite many claims to the contrary, Yatvingians (*ятвяги*) was one of four names (the other three being Sudovians, Dainovians, and Pollexiane) given to one and the same group of people inhabiting the region of Suwałki, on the present-day northeastern border of Poland. Much like *варяги* and *колбяги*, the origin of the word Yatvingian is Scandinavian, not Baltic or Slavic. In other words, this was not a self-designation and certainly not a name of Baltic, «native» origin. That during the second half of the thirteenth century, the word designated a political and ethnic entity perceived by Rus' princes, Mazovian dukes, and crusading orders as *the enemy* is an indication that the original meaning had meanwhile changed. But the Rus' chronicler who first mentioned the Yatvingians did not fabricate their initial identity. The late tenth- and early eleventh-century archaeological record of the region around Vawkavysk in northeastern Belarus may be interpreted as indicating the presence of retinues of warriors, the same warriors against whom Prince Vladimir directed his expedition of 983. Archaeology clearly supports Kibin's suggestion that Yatvingians was an all-encompassing label, which the chronicler applied while painting with a broad brush the image of the enemy. In fact, the reality on the ground was clearly much more complex.

Similarly, my argument in the *Making of the Slavs* was not that the name «Sclavene» was a Byzantine invention, but that the «Sclavenes» (as an ethno-political category) were invented by the Byzantines. There is much misunderstanding in Sergei Ivanov's critique of my approach, which is ultimately based on an error of translation. To both Ivanov and Shuvalov (but neither to Polyviannyi, nor to Kibin'), the English word «invention» means in Russian *изобретение*, a word which in English may be translated as «contrivance» or «fabrication» (Ivanov even writes of «propagandistic devices», using such words as *уловка*, which means «subterfuge» or «flim-flam»)⁶⁹. He does not seem to be aware of the other, etymologically older meaning of the word «invention», namely «discovery» (as in the «Invention of the Cross» by St. Helena). Invention-as-discovery is what I had in mind when writing: «The making of the Slavs was less a matter of ethnogenesis and more one of invention, imagining and labeling by Byzantine authors».

⁶⁹ Adding insult to injury, Petr Shuvalov even insists that in English «invention» means only «fabrication». Such insistence turns him into ridicule, for Shuvalov is utterly wrong. «Invention» means first and foremost «the action of coming upon and finding; the action of finding out; discovery (whether accidental or the result of research and effort)». This is in fact no surprise, for the word ultimately derives from the Latin verb *inuenio*, *-ire*, which means «to come upon», «to find out», or «to discover», as in Cicero's famous adage, *inuenio coniurationem*. This is not contradicted by what we know about the earliest attestation of the word in English, a gloss in a mid-fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Life of St. Stephen*: «Saynt Steuyn inuencioun: Þat es þe finding of his body» (*Altenglische Legenden* / Hrsg. von C. Horstmann. Heilbronn, 1881. S. 30). The most frequent use of «invention» in modern English is in such phrases as «scientific invention», which thoroughly preserves the initial meaning of the word. Invention-as-discovery is also widely used in the media jargon, both in Britain and in the United States. Catchy book titles such as *The Invention of the Native American Literature* (Ithaca, 2003) or *Vermeer and the Invention of Seeing* (Chicago, 2001) most certainly refer to something else than «contrivance» or «fabrication». One currently speaks of the «invention of religion» in American politics, while the horse in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa is regarded as a British colonial invention.

As Table 4 (pp. 115–116) in the *Making of the Slavs* shows, the first *independent* raid of the Sclavenes known from the sources is that of 545. According to Procopius, in 530 Chilbudius was «ordered to keep watch so that the barbarians of that region (the Danube frontier) could no longer cross the river, since the Huns and Antae and Sclaveni had already made the crossing many times and done irreparable harm to the Romans»⁷⁰. From this, Ivanov draws the conclusion that the Sclavenes must have been a threat well before Chilbudius' campaigns against them in the early 530s⁷¹. But Chilbudius did not move against the Sclavenes alone, and Procopius himself lists the Sclavenes after the Huns and the Antes, who were apparently perceived as more dangerous. Moreover, after the death of Chilbudius in 533, those crossing the river Danube «just as they wished» were not the Sclavenes, but «barbarians» in general⁷². Be that as it may, Ivanov's arguments are set against a straw man, for my only claim was that the first recorded raid of the Sclavenes was that of 545⁷³. More importantly, Procopius did not write his remarks about Chilbudius in either 530 or 545. If Chilbudius campaigned against Huns, Antes, and Sclavenes, then the conclusion is that in 530 the Sclavenes were not the only, or even the main problem. Although there certainly were Sclavenes north of the Danube before 545, they seem to have become a major military and political problem only after that. AD 545 is therefore important for the demonstration in the *Making of the Slavs* because the Sclavenes appear to have reacted to a political and military situation, namely the implementation of Justinian's fortification program and his alliance with the Antes, not because the Sclavenes first appeared on the «historical stage» at that date⁷⁴.

There is no contesting of the possibility that the Sclavenes may have in fact participated in barbarian raids across the Danube before 545. But the Sclavenes were not on the mind of those who built the forts in the Balkans. The forts themselves are a response to a particular threat, namely that of rapid raids by horsemen. Here, too, precise chronology is critical for the broader history of the Danube frontier. When the Sclavenes began to raid the Balkan provinces by themselves, Justinian's fortifications were already in place. In the absence of any indication that between 545 and 558, the Sclavenes joined marauding expeditions organized by others (Huns, Bulgars, or Cutrigurs), the Sclavene reaction to the changing circumstances in the Balkans (the implementation of the fortification program) would mean something very different from their reaction to military campaigns organized against them by Chilbudius in the early 530s.

⁷⁰ Wars VII 14.2; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars. Vol. 5. P. 263.

⁷¹ A similarly uncritical treatment of Procopius appears in: *Liebeschuetz J. H. W. G. The Lower Danube Region under Pressure: From Valens to Heraclius // The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond / Ed. by A. G. Poulter*. Oxford, 2007. P. 111 with n. 77. — He postulates «extensive raiding by Sclavenes in the 520s and later 530s». This may well have been so, but there is absolutely no evidence of that in any of our existing sources.

⁷² Wars VII 14.6; English translation: *Procopius of Caesarea*. Wars. Vol. 5. P. 264.

⁷³ Similarly, there is no use of the phrase «Slavic colonization» in the *Making of the Slavs*, and no conclusion «that the sixth-century Slavic society was at a very low level of development». I have not denied the veracity of the *Miracles of St. Demetrius*, either on page 54 of the *Making of the Slavs*, or anywhere else.

⁷⁴ Sergei Ivanov uses a quote from page 339 in order to show that I «amazingly» ignored the Sclavene threat to which Justinian's program of fortification responded. The quote, however is truncated: «These measures were not taken in response to any major threat, for Roman troops were still in control of the left bank of the Danube, possibly through bridge-heads such as those of Turnu Severin (Drobeta) and Celei. This is shown by the edict 13, issued in 538, which clearly stated that troops were still sent (if only as a form of punishment) north of the Danube river, "in order to watch at the frontier of that place"». By truncating the quote, Ivanov has altered its meaning in order to adapt it to his own line of arguments. He thus attributed to me statements that I have never made.

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These remarkably diverse and stimulating contributions make one thing crystal clear. Historians of the early Middle Ages in Eastern Europe are entering a new era in which new concepts, new data, and new approaches will foster new insights and correct old ones, so long as we are attentive to when and where the evidence is coming from, to the complexity, chronology and context of the data. The hope indirectly expressed in the *Making of the Slavs* that the model of analysis proposed there could be brought to bear on the great question of early medieval ethnicity, to test and improve our understanding of later periods, is becoming reality far more swiftly and broadly than I would have ever dared to imagine.