Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ Source on the Earliest History of the Croats and Serbs

The paper analyses the sources Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus may have used in describing the earliest history of Croats and Serbs in 30 through 32 chapters of his work *De administrando imperio*. It aims to show that the basic source for the earliest history of the Croats and Serbs belonged to the literary genre *De conversione*. The author proposes an interpretation according to which Constantine VII. Porphyrogenitus’s source was somehow related to the late ninth-century account of the conversion of the Bavarians and Caranthanians (*De conversione Bagioariorum et Carantanorum*). As such a genre never existed in the Byzantine empire it seems very likely that it was composed in the Latin West. Therefore the present paper focuses on the textual relations between the *De conversione Bagioariorum et Carantanorum* and the *De administrando imperio*.

The Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus wrote an extensive account about the early medieval history of the Croats and Serbs in his work dedicated to his son Roman, the *De administrando impreio*, as Meursius titled it four centuries ago. In addition to the chapters on the Croats and Serbs (31 and 32), Constantine wrote two chapters on the province of Dalmatia (29 and 30), as well as four far smaller chapters on the principalities of Pagania, Zachlumi, Terbounia, and Diocleia (chs. 33–36). These eight chapters on the Southern Slavs and Dalmatia have become the main source for the history of this region during the so-called Dark Ages.

The unique information about the Southern Slavs preserved in the *DAI*, has attracted the attention of historians for almost four hundred years. Those basic questions, which have tortured the minds of generations of scholars, have been:

---

1 The standard edition is MORAVCSIK 1967. The commentary of this edition (the first edition was published in 1949) is JENKINS 1962.
who were these Croats and Serbs; did they come as foederati of the Emperor Heraclius or not; did they receive holy baptism from Rome and through the cooperation of the pope and Heraclius; and, did they truly originate from distant northern lands – i.e. southern Poland and Bohemia? Naturally, there are some other questions, which arise from Constantine’s writings – i.e. the overall political situation in Dalmatia and the Byzantine presence there, the ethnogenesis of the Croats and Serbs, the mutual relationships between the principalities of the South Slavs, Dalmatia being divided between the Franks and Byzantium, as well as various ecclesiastical issues. Therefore, it is understandable why the DAI has become the most studied medieval source for the history of the Southern Slavs.

It is important to note that the methodology by which the DAI has been scrutinized has actively followed the same rules during its four centuries of investigation. Namely, the researchers’ starting point has been the author himself and from his eyes the text has been solely observed. In turn, this approach has forced scholars to judge Constantine’s information about the Croats and Serbs as having been true – untrue, invention – genuine, possible – impossible, reliable – unreliable. Yet, the most important question has been set aside, that of Constantine’s sources. It is usually taken as granted that Constantine wrote the history of the Croats and Serbs according to their actual oral tradition, which had reached Constantinople through an informant from Dalmatia. This mysterious man from Dalmatia has hence become a Deus ex machina. If any particular information - such as data from the Archives of Imperial Palace - is unable to be classified, it is then invariably said that: “This must have come from Constantine’s informant!” However, this mysterious man from the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus would have not been able to know 300 years of Croat and Serb history based only upon their oral tradition. For instance, the oral tradition about the Croats’ history is very richly detailed in the seventh century (the date of their arrival in Dalmatia, their baptism in the time of Heraclius, their fight against the Avars, their settlement in Pannonia, and their pact concluded with the holy See), but then is silent until ca. 850, not to


5 For instance, see JENKINS 1962, 120 (“the native Croat tradition” – for the identification of Porin and Porga), 122 (“a native of Zara” – for the župa of Croatia), 124 (“his informant” – for the etymology of the Croat name), 128 (“an unknown Croat source” – for the conflict between the Croats and Bulgarians ca. 854), etc.

6 DAI 30.61-67, 75-78; 31.6-10, 17-21, 31-42.
become extremely verbose again until ca. 878 (the arrival of the holy man Martin among the Croats, the revolt against the Franks and its outcome, the administrative division of Croatia, the conflict between the Croats and Bulgarians, the exact figures of the Croat army and fleet, and the names of the Croat archontes who ruled between ca. 855 and ca. 862). After this year, not a single piece of information about Croat history can be traced from oral tradition (the White Croats and their relations with Otto I, the borders between the principalities of the Southern Slavs, the tribute paid by Dalmatian cities to the Slavs, and the attempt to establish the latest figures of the Croat army and fleet). The same pattern is obvious for the Serbs. The alleged informant had known about the date of the Serb arrival and baptism, after which he was silent until ca. the late 840’s, when he supplied a detailed account about the Serb-Bulgarian wars and their relations, but only up to ca. 856. Until 891, he was unable to say a single word about the Serbs. Similarity in the composition of the Croat and Serb chapters of the DAI is naturally sought after. In fact, its authorship did indeed belong to the same man – Constantine Porphyrogenitus. However, it has never been assumed that this similarity is a consequence of using the same, unique, well composed source, which Constantine had at his disposal in Constantinople.

In addition to the chronicles, histories or geographical works which can be traced - such as: Theophanes the Confessor, Theophanes of Sygriane, and George the Monk - Constantine’s sources for the DAI are chiefly from the Archives of the Imperial Palace. There are a number of places in his work where he mentions

---

7 DAI 30.78-87, 90-94; 31.42-52, 60-67, 71-74, 75-78.
8 DAI 30.71-75, 94-119, 132-142; 31.79-82.
9 DAI 32.2-30; 33-64.
10 It has been proposed that chapter 32 on the Serbs was actually based on the so-called “Serbian Chronicle”, which had been composed sometime before 944; cf. OSTROGORSKI 1948, passim; MAKSIMOVIĆ 1982, passim.
11 The exception regarding its authorship is chapter 30, over which much has been discussed in historiography. An overview of the previous historiography on this question is given by FERJANČIČ 1978, 67–70 (with notes 1 – 13); FERJANČIČ 1996, 117–154; FINE 1991, 49–59. BURY 1906, 525, who did not notice any difference in style except for the absence of the oti. However, JENKINS 1962, 112–113 insists on the fact that there is an apparent difference in style; similarly, this was noticed by GRAFENAUER 1952, 17–18. For works bearing the emperor’s name that are in different styles, see, ŠEVČENKO 1995, 184, n. 44; see LEMERLE 1971, 274–295 as well. I do not agree the supposition that chapter 30 was written by another author. Chapter 30 is Constantine’s final version about Dalmatia and the Croats, based on material that had already been used in chapters 29 and 31; cf. ŽIVKOVIC 2010.
12 Cf. DAI 14.1–35 (based on George the Monk); 17.1; 21.1, 35; 22.1; 22.78 (based on Theophanes the Confessor); 25.1 (Theophanes of Sygriane). The amount of the tribute paid by the Dalmatian cities to the Slavs (DAI 30.132–142), the imperial keleusis to the Southern Slavs regarding their role in the Italian expedition and siege of Bari (DAI 29.106–112), the description of the cities of Spalato, Tetragourion, Ragusa, Diadora (Iadera) and Decaterum (DAI 29.217–284), as well as the description of the borders between the principalities of the Southern Slavs (DAI 30.94 –119), are from the Archives of the Imperial Palace.
letters exchanged between the emperor and the *archontes* of various nations, i.e. Taron.\(^ {13} \) There are obvious traces of the usage of the imperial *keleusis*, such as Basil’s I order to the Southern Slavs to take part in the military expedition against the Arabs of Bari.\(^ {14} \) There are traces of documents relating to military or finance, such as the demand for horses to be supplied to the *theme* of the Peloponnesus,\(^ {15} \) the transfer of *bandons* between provinces,\(^ {16} \) the taxation of the Slavs of Peloponnesus,\(^ {17} \) and the amount of *nomismata* paid by Dalmatian towns to the Slavs.\(^ {18} \) His list of sources had also included reports by imperial envoys sent to foreign nations, or reports of certain officials sent to settle issues in bordering provinces; for instance, the mission of the strategos of the *theme* of Dyrrachion to Pagania and his meeting with the Serb *Archon* Peter,\(^ {19} \) the mission of the cleric Gabriel to the Turks,\(^ {20} \) or the mission of Petrona in Chazaria and Cherson.\(^ {21} \)

It is plainly clear that Constantine had an enormous amount and variety of written documents at his disposal. This material was not concentrated in one place, but was kept in different departments of Byzantine administration: the Imperial Court (i.e. the golden *boula* which had been issued to the metropolis of Patras by Leo VI and which Constantine had seen with his very own eyes),\(^ {22} \) the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. It was up to Constantine to label these sources regarding their particular issues, as these sources had been of different timelines and therein could have possibly contained conflicting information on the same subject; for instance, the list of towns in the principalities of Southern Slavs falls into two different groups: the *kastra oikoumena* and the *kastra* (*simples*). These two groups of towns are always preserved in separate *oti-sections*, having been extracted from different sources.\(^ {23} \) The former group designates those cities which were ecclesiastically organized, while the other *kastra* were merely fortresses or strongholds: for instance Bona and Hum in Zachlumi, Ras in Serbia,

\(^ {13} \) DAI 43.30–32; 100-101; 109-114; 135-137; 163-167; 177-179.

\(^ {14} \) See note 12.

\(^ {15} \) DAI 52.1 – 15.

\(^ {16} \) DAI 50.92 – 110.

\(^ {17} \) DAI 50.46 – 52.

\(^ {18} \) See note 12.

\(^ {19} \) DAI 32.81 – 84.

\(^ {20} \) DAI 8.23 – 33.

\(^ {21} \) DAI 42.23 – 55.

\(^ {22} \) DAI 49.50 – 59.

\(^ {23} \) For instance, the *kastra oikoumena* appear regularly in the separate *oti-section*; cf. DAI 31.68 – 70; 32.149–151; 33.20–21; 34.19–20; 35.12–13; 36.14–15. The cities of Rasa, Bona, Hum, and Diocleia are regularly written separately from the *kastra oikoumena*, and they are mentioned only as *kastra*; cf. DAI 32.53; 33.13–14; 35.9–11. On the other hand, the Byzantine cities of the *theme* of Dalmatia are also recorded in the separate *oti-sections*; cf. DAI 29.216 – 284.
and Dioclea in Dioclea.\textsuperscript{24} These lists therefore did not only belong to different timelines, but also to different sources.

Having all this in plain sight, the \textit{DAI}'s chapters regarding the South Slavs can be approached. The story about the Croats preserved in chapter 31 consists of eight \textit{oti sections} of more or less equal length. The story about the Serbs is of three \textit{oti sections}, but of disproportional length, as the first \textit{Isteon oti} covers 96% of this chapter (145 out of 151 lines overall). This should mean that the Serb chapter had almost been brought to its final version. The stories of the settlement and baptism of the Serbs and the Croats are told in a similar fashion. The Croats came from White Croatia as refugees to the Emperor Heraclius, defeated the Avars and then settled in Dalmatia. Then, Heraclius sent priests from Rome to them to have them baptized.\textsuperscript{25} The same pattern can be traced for the Serbs. They also came as the refugees to Heraclius from the north (Bohemia) descending from the White Serbs. The Serbs had first settled around Servlia (modern Servia), and asked permission to leave after some time. Heraclius granted this permission, but they changed their minds when they reached Belgrade and asked Heraclius, through the \textit{strategos} of Belgrade, to give them yet another place to settle in. Heraclius therein granted them the lands of (\textit{what is now}) Serbia, Pagania, Zachlumi, and Terbounia, and thereafter ordered and sent priests from Rome to baptize them.\textsuperscript{26} Both stories contain an etymology of the names of the Croats and Serbs. While the Serb history becomes interrupted at this spot, the Croat history contains further information about the oaths given by the Croats to the pope of Rome where they state that they will not attack any foreign country and in exchange will receive the protection of Christ and Peter the Apostle.\textsuperscript{27} There is also another ecclesiastical theme: after many years a certain pious man, named Martin, arrived among the Croats and confirmed their oaths given two centuries before. It was in the time of the Croat \textit{Archon} Terpimer (ca. 840–855).\textsuperscript{28} The list of the \textit{kastra oikoumena} also belongs to the issue of ecclesiasticism and it comes near the end of the narrative in both chapters.\textsuperscript{29}

It appears that Constantine’s source had paid lot of attention to ecclesiastical matters. It is interesting that Rome was marked as the center from which both the Croats and the Serbs received their baptism. Additionally, there are the oaths by which the Croats bound themselves to the pope — i.e. to Rome. The question is then why the Byzantine Emperor would have invented such a story? Of course,

\textsuperscript{24} \v{Z}ivković 2008, 19-21.
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{DAI} 31.6–25.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{DAI} 32.2–29.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{DAI} 31.31–42.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{DAI} 31.42–52.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{DAI} 31.68–70; 32.149–151.
there is no trace of Heraclius and Rome in chapter 30; rather, there is only a short remark that the Croats received baptism from Rome during the Archon Porin (who is the same Porga mentioned in chapter 31). If chapter 30 is the final version about Dalmatia and the Croats, then it could have only been Constantine who removed Heraclius from the story. The reason why he would have done so is obvious: in 950 the *Vita Basilii*, an official history of the specific period of Byzantine history, was composed, and in this work all credit for the baptism of the South Slavs was given to Basil I, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty. What the situation 300 years ago had actually been was completely unimportant. Yet, traces of Constantine’s source were preserved in the *Vita Basilii* as well. Constantine states that the Serbs and the Croats fell from Christian doctrine, which would mean that he had reason to emphasize that they had been Christians earlier. He knew about the earlier baptism from his source which was the basis for chapters 31 and 32.

The narrative in the Croat and Serb chapters clearly shows traces of ecclesiastical provenience. This is even more obvious in chapter 31 than in 32, but not due to its different sources, but rather that the source had not been equally informed about the Croats and the Serbs. What appears to have been used as the genuine oral tradition about the earliest past of the Croats, served as the basis for the history of the Serbs. The Croat *origo gentis* is rich. It mentions the names of five brothers and two sisters, while the Serb *origo* knows only two unnamed brothers. The Croat baptism includes an archbishop, a bishop, priests, and deacons, while the Serbs received only priests. The Croats defeated the Avars and settled in Dalmatia, while the Serbs wandered from Servia to Belgrade, and then back to Dalmatia (Dalmatia in the Roman sense). Both stories underline that the Croats and the Serbs had always been in submission to the emperor of the Romaioi since the very beginning. Both stories settled them exclusively in Dalmatia. The Croats were not under the direct rule of Byzantium in Constantine’s time, nor in any other previous century except during a short period from 878 to 879, when the Archon Zdeslav ruled as the Byzantine protégée.

---

31 BEKKER 1838, 288.10–289.2; 291.1–292.13.
32 This has already been noted in historiography, see GRAFENAUER 1952, 24.
33 *DAI* 31.58 – 60; 32.146–148.
34 According to BERTO 1999, 140: *His diebus Sedesclavus, Tibimiri ex progenie, imperialis ful tus presidio Constantinopolim veniens, Selavorum ducatum arripuit filiosque Domagoi exilio trusi*. The same source speaks about the deposition of Zdeslav in 879 (April); cf. also BERTO 1999, 142: *His diebus quidam Sclavus, nomine Brenamir, interfecito Sedescavo, ipsius ducatum usurpavit.*
Constantine had insisted that the Serbs and the Croats ruled Dalmatia, to whom would he have thought to allow claims on the former praefecture of Illyricum? To the Bulgarians? Why would have Constantine described the Franks in chapter 30 as criminals when he was pursuing an active policy of cooperation with Otto I at the same time? The borders of Dalmatia are also incorrectly given; they match neither the boundaries of Roman nor Byzantine Dalmatia. Dalmatia extended far to the north – to the Danube, and the Avars had allegedly ruled and lived in such an extended Dalmatia. Archaeological evidence, even though it has been eagerly searched for over the last century, has not provided even a tiny trace of the Avars in Dalmatia. However, they did live in Pannonia and, supposedly for Constantine’s source, Pannonia was part of Dalmatia. In that same source the inhabitants of Dalmatia must have been called Romani as his source used the same term in chapters 29 and 31, but never in chapter 30, which was his final word on Dalmatia.

The ecclesiastical traces of Constantine’s source for both stories are of crucial importance. The important role of Rome is underlined at least three times in the Croat chapters and is an important clue to be followed. The forcible attachment of Pannonia to Dalmatia speaks not about a political, but rather of an ecclesiastical issue. The list of kastra oikoumena, for when these cities can be identified, shows the distribution of the Roman Church’s bishoprics and their parishes. For Zachlumi, Terbounia, Pagania and Croatia, the first kastra mentioned are the always well known ecclesiastical centers: Nin, Ston, Trebinje, and Mokro – all of which were bishoprics or at least had been the most prominent ecclesiastical centers in these principalities since the second half of the ninth century. Not a single one of these cities belonged to the ecclesiastical organization of the Byzantine church. Finally, there is also an interesting terminology used: baptized Croatia versus unbaptized Croatia; baptized Serbia versus unbaptized Serbia/Serbs.

There is an interesting source which originated in 871 from the Arcbishopric of Salzburg. It was written in the turbulent time when Rome and Salzburg competed with one another in Pannonia and Moravia. This source, at its very end, accused Methodius of being a trouble maker in Pannonia; a place which was considered

35 Cf. DAI 30.80–82.
36 For the politics of Byzantine to Otto I during the rule of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, see LOUNGIS 1980, 201–203.
37 This has been discussed by many authors; cf. NOVAKOVIĆ 1972, 11; FERJANČIĆ 1978, 77. KLAJČ 1985, 47–48, argued that the author of chapter 30 had had the Byzantine province of Dalmatia in mind and not the Roman one.
38 PETRINEC 2009, passim. For the settlements of the Avars in Pannonia, see VIDA 2008, 13–46; STADLER 2008, 47–82.
40 Cf. DAI 31.68, 71, 86; 32.2, 5, 149.
to be the missionary field of the Salzburg Church. The author of this work – The *De conversione Bagioariorum et Carantanorum* (*DCBC*) – was perhaps even the Archbishop Adalwin himself and he tried to prove that Salzburg had already had ecclesiastical rights over Pannonia since ancient times.\footnote{For a detailed analysis of the *DCBC*, see KOS 1936, 17–100; WOLFRAM 1995, 227–336.)} To achieve this goal, the author included a number of genuine documents in his work,\footnote{*DCBC* 9.40–10.2; 10.12-19; 12.3-5; 12.10-17; 12.28-32; 13.12-17; 14.8-11.} which had already been sent to Rome by 873.\footnote{See, KOS 1936, 101 – 105, who has the general conclusion that the *DCBC* was written as a piece of information to the Archbishop Adalwin in 871 regarding his ecclesiastical rights over his own territory and was presented to Louis the German. WOLFRAM 1995, 193–197, argued that the *DCBC* was probably written by Archbishop Adalwin himself for Louis the German in 870 and was written against Methodius. However, as further analysis would eventually unveil, the *DCBC* served as the model for the document, which, most probably, was composed in Rome. This would therefore mean that the *DCBC* had been, in fact, sent to Rome.}

The *DCBC* states that the Romans had ruled over Pannonia in ancient times, but then the Avars came, expelled the Romans and took possession of their land. Thereafter, the Bavarians and Carantanians expelled the Avars. For the author of the *DCBC* however, the Avars still lived there. It should be noted that the *DAI* contains the exact same sequence of events; only the place is different. Instead of Pannonia, the *Romani* had ruled Dalmatia (which also included Pannonia) until the Avars expelled them. Then the Croats appeared, fought the Avars for some time, and finally took possession of Dalmatia and ruled over the rest of the Avars, who were still living in Dalmatia:

**(A) DCBC**: *Antiquis enim temporibus ex meridiana parte Danubii in plagis Pannoniae inferioris et circa confines regiones Romani possederunt...* (*DCBC*, 9.3–4)

**DAI**: *Ἡ δὲ καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν Ῥωμάνων διακράτησις ἦν μέχρι τοῦ Δανούβεως ποταμοῦ, οἱ καὶ ποτὲ θελήσαντες τὸν ποταμὸν...* (*DAI* 29.14–15)

DAI: Παρὰ δὲ τῶν Αβάρων ἐκδιωχθέντες οἱ αὐτοὶ Ρωμάνοι ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ
αὐτοῦ βασιλέως Ρωμαίων, Ἡρακλείου, αἰ τούτων ἔρημοι καθεστήκασιν χώραι. (DAI 31.15–17).

DCBC: Nunc adiciendum est qualiter Sclavi qui dicuntur Quarantani et confines
eorum fide sancta instructi christianique effecti sunt, seu quomodo Huni Romanos
et Gothos atque Gepidos de inferiori Pannonia expulerunt et illam possederunt
regionem, quosque Franci ac Bagoarii cum Quarantanis continuis affligendo bellis
eos superaverunt. Eos autem qui obedienti fidei et baptismum sunt consecuti,
tributarios fecerunt regnum, et terram quam possident residui, adhuc pro tributo
retinent regis usque in hodiernum diem (DCBC 6.20–7.4).

DAI: [Οἱ δὲ Χρωβάτοι] ... ἦλθον εἰς Δελματίαν, καὶ εὗρον τοὺς Ἀβαρεῖς κατέχοντας
tὴν τοιαύτην γῆν. Ἐπί τινας οὖν χρόνους πολεμοῦντες ἄλληλους, ὑπερισχύσαν ὁι Χρω-
βάτοι, καὶ τοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἀβάρων κατέσφαξαν, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς ὑποταγὴν κατηνάγκα-
sαν. Ἐκτοτε οὖν κατεκρατήθη η τοιαύτη χώρα παρὰ τῶν Χρωβάτων, καὶ εἰσὶν ἄκμη
ἐν Χρωβατίᾳ ἐκ τοὺς τῶν Ἀβάρων, καὶ γινώσκονται Ἀβαρεῖς ὄντες. (DAI 30.66–71).

These examples speak for themselves: not only is the pattern and description
of the events used the same, but the choice of words as well. At this point it can be
safely said that Constantine’s source was used in chapters 29, 30 and 31 respec-
tively, and it is the evidence that the same source had been used as the basis for
both chapters. The same evidence is confirmation that the author of these three
chapters is the same person – Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

However, Constantine’s source had to find a way to include Pannonia under
the political rule of the Croats, upon whom he had obviously relied in supporting
his ecclesiastical claims. In the same chapter (30) he therefore states:

(B) DAI: Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν Χρωβάτων, τῶν ἐλθόντων ἐν Δελματία, διεχωρίσθη μέρος
τι, καὶ ἕκρατησε τὸ Ἴλυρικὸν καὶ τὴν Παννονίαν... (DAI 30.75–77).

Furthermore, the baptism of the Croats very much resembles the baptism of
the Carantans:

(C) DCBC: Peractis aliquantis temporibus praenominatus dux Carantanorum
petit Virgilium episcopum visitare populum gentis illius, eosque in fide firmiter
confortare. Quod ille tunc minime adimplere valuit, sed sua vice misso suo episco-
po nomine Modesto ad docendam illam plebem, et cum eo Wattonem, Regin-
bertum, Cozhariam, atque Latinum presbyteros suos, et Ekihardum diaconum
cum alis clericis, dans ei licentiam ecclesias consecrare et clericos ordinare iuxta
canonum diffinitionem (DCBC 7.29–35).
Note the hierarchy of the clerics listed in the DCBC: bishop, presbyteros, deacon, clerics, while in the DAI it is archbishop, bishop, presbyteros, deacons. These are used to give the same general idea – to show that the ecclesiastical organization of the area had already been completely built in the very early stages of Christianity. The anonymous author of Constantine’s source went even further; he stated that the Croats received an archbishop, while in the DCBC the most prominent cleric is only a bishop. This is easy to explain. The archbishop of Salzburg would not have been able to send another archbishop to his new diocese, but the pope would have been; this is why this tiny trace places our anonymous author closer to the pope in Rome.

The DCBC then speaks about the spreading of Christianity among the other Slavs in Pannonia:

(D) DCBC: Interim contigit anno videlicet nativitatis domini DCCXCVIII, Arnonem iam archiepiscopum a Leone papa accepto pallio remeando de Roma venisse ultra Padum eique obviasse missum Caroli cum epistola sua, mandans illi ipso itinere in partes Sclavorum ire et exquirere voluntatem populi illius et praedicare ibi verbum dei. Sed quia hoc facere nequivit antequam responsum referret suae legationis, festine perrexit ad imperatorem, et retulit ei quicquid per eum domnus Leo papa mandavit. Post expletam legationem ipse imperator praeecepit Arnoni archiepiscopo pergere in partes Sclavorum et providere omnem illam regionem et ecclesiasticum officium more episcopali colere, populusque in fide et christianitate praedicando confrotare. Sicuti ille fecit illuc veniendo, consecravit ecclesias, ordinavit presbyteros, populumque praedicando docuit (DCBC 10.1–8)

DAI: ... οὖς οἱ βασιλεὺς πρεσβύτας ἀπὸ Ῥώμης ἁγαγὼν ἐβάπτισεν, καὶ διδάξας αὐτοὺς τὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας τελεῖν καλῶς, αὐτοῖς τὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν πίστιν ἐξέθετο. (DAI 32.27–29).

The anonymous author had used the exact same pattern: it was the emperor (Heraclius) who ordered the priests to be sent to the Serbs, who had to teach them to perform works of piety and to expound to them the faith of the Christians. There is no hierarchy of the Church dignitaries – only the presbyteros. The model of
baptism of the Carantanias served as the pattern for the Croats and the model of the baptism of the Pannonian Slavs served as the pattern for the Serbs. The role of the emperor was crucial for the author of the *DCBC*, and this is why the anonymous author had had to use the same pattern. In the *DCBC*, Salzburg had been looking for political power to rely on in Pannonia – and this is why the anonymous author made the choice of the Bavarians and the Carantanians, as both were backed by the Frankish emperor. For this anonymous author, who was obviously in Rome, his political powers were the Croats and the Serbs, also backed by an emperor – the Byzantine one. This is why Constantine wrote that the Croats and the Serbs were in the servitude of and in submission to the emperor of the *Romaioi*. It had simply been stated in his source.

Speaking about the establishment of the ecclesiastical organization in Carantania, the author from Salzburg mentions the three most prominent churches. He thereafter mentions another 13 places in which churches had been consecrated in Pannonia. This was, most probably, the main reason why the anonymous author supplied his list of *kastra oikoumena* for all the principalities of the Southern Slavs, as to show that the Roman Church had established its organization there quite some time prior.

Speaking about the Carantanian dukes, the *DCBC* knows only four of their names. The anonymous author also only knew the names of four Serbian rulers. This could have been accidental, but gains more ground when the whole context is seen: their names are given merely to strengthen the statement of both authors that these dukes/archontes had been subjugated and had been in servitude to the emperor – the Carantanians to the Frankish emperor and the Serbs to the Byzantine one:

**E) DCBC:** Tunc primus ab imperatore constitutus est confini comfini comes Goterammus, secundus Werinharius, tertius Albricus, quartus Gotafridus, quintus Geroldus. Interim vero dum praedicti comites orientalem procurabant plagam, aliqui duces habitaverunt in illis partibus ad iam dictam sedem pertinentalibus. *Qui comitibus praefatis subditi fuerunt ad servitium imperatoris; quorum nomina sunt Priwizlauga, Cemicas, Ztoimir, Etgar (DCBC 11.13–18).*

**DAI:** Μετὰ δὲ χρόνων τινὰς ἐγεννήθη ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁ Βοϊσέσθλαβος, καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁ Ροδόσθλαβος, καὶ ἀπ’ ἐκείνου ὁ Προσηγόης, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ὁ Βλαστίμηρος, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου ὁ Βλαστίμηρος, καὶ

---

44 *DCBC* 12.32–13.2. Item in eadem civitate ecclesia sancti Johannis baptistae constat dedicata, et foris civitatem in Dudleipin, in Ussitin, ad Businiza, ad Bettobiam, ad Stepiliperc, ad Lindolveschirchun, ad Keisi, ad Wiedhereschirchun, ad Isangrimeschirchun, ad Beatuseschirchun, ad Quinque basilicas temporibus Liuprammi ecclesiae dedicatae sunt; et ad Otachareschirchun et ad Paldmunteschirchun, ceterisque locis ubi Priwina et sui voluerunt populi. Quae omnes temporibus Priwinæ constructæ sunt et consecratae a praesulibus Iuvanensium.
At this point, it can be safely concluded that Constantine’s source about the earliest history of the Croats and Serbs had been titled the *De conversione Croatorum et Serborum* (*DCCS*). This is why even the chapters in the *DAI* follow an order of appearance where the Croats come first and the Serbs come second, as it is strange that the chapter on the Serbs (who were by far more important for Byzantium in the first half of the 10th century) come after the two Dalmatian chapters and the Croat one. The future research of chapters 30, 31, and 32 could perhaps provide a definite answer about the composition of the *DCCS*. Through the research of these chapters, it would be possible to see what had been originally placed in this source, and what Constantine’s conclusions were. Furthermore, the entire perception of the earliest history of the Serbs and Croats must be changed, since it was not the invention of the Byzantine emperor, but rather of an author who was based in Rome ca. 877/878. The literary genre intended to describe the conversion of a pagan *natio* to Christianity simply did not exist in Byzantium; it only existed in the Latin West. This is the strongest evidence as to why the authorship of this kind of source must be sought in the West. On the other hand, the futile discussion about the “ideology” of Constantine Porphyrogenitus as being the main generator for his approach to the history of the Southern Slavs should finally be annulled. Furthermore, another barren discussion – that about a different authorship of chapter 30 – should also be placed *ad acta.*

**Bibliography**

**Sources**


Secondary literature


BURY, John Bagnell (1906), The treatise *De administrando imperio*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 15/2, 517–577.


KLAIĆ, Nada (1984), O problemima stare domovine, dolaska i pokrštanja dalmatinskih Hrvata, Zgodovinski časopis 29/4, 253-270.


KOS, Milko (1936), Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum, Ljubljana.


MARGETIĆ, Lujo (1977), Konstantin Porfirogenet i vrijeme dolaska Hrvata, Zbornik Historijskog zavoda JAZU 8, 5-88.

NOVAKOVIĆ, Relja (1972), Neka zapažanja o 29. i 30. glavi De administrando imperio, Istoriji časopis 19, 5-54.

OSTROGORSKI, Georgij (1948), Porfirogenitova kronika srpskih vladara i njeni hronološki podaci, Istoriji časopis 1-2, 24-29.

PETRINEC, Maja (2009), Groblja od 8. do 11. stoljeća na području ranosrednjovjekovne hrvatske države, Split.

STADLER, Peter (2008), Avar Chronology Revisited, and the Question of Ethnicity in Avar Qaganate, The Other Europe in the Middle Ages, Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans, ed. F. Curta – R. Kovalev, Leiden, 47-82.


ŠIŠIĆ, Ferdo (1925), Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara, Zagreb 1925


ŽIVKOVIĆ, Tibor (2010), De conversione Croatorum et Serborum – A Lost Source, (in print in the Byzantinoslavica).
Izvor Konstantina Porfirogeneta za najstariju povijest Hrvata i Srba


**Ključne riječi:** Konstantin VII. Porfirogenet, *kastra oikoumena*, *De Conversione Bagioariorum et Carantanorum*, Hrvati, Srbij, Bizant, Franci

**Key words:** Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *kastra oikoumena*, *De Conversione Bagioariorum et Carantanorum*, Croats, Serbs, Byzantium, Franks
RADOVI ZAVODA ZA HRVATSKU POVIJEST
FILOZOFSKOGA FAKULTETA SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU

Knjiga 42

Izdavač
Zavod za hrvatsku povijest
Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
FF-press

Za izdavača
Damir Boras

Glavni urednik
Hrvoje Gračanin

Uredništvo
Bruna Kuntić-Makvić (stara povijest)
Zrinka Nikolić Jakus (srednji vijek)
Hrvoje Petrić (rani novi vijek)
Željko Holjevac (moderna povijest)
Tvrtko Jakovina (suvremena povijest)
Silvija Pisk (mikrohistorija i zavičajna povijest)

Izvršna urednica za tuzemnu i inozemnu razmjenu
Kristina Milković

Tajnik uredništva
Dejan Zadro

Adresa uredništva
Zavod za hrvatsku povijest, Filozofski fakultet Zagreb,
Ivana Lučića 3, HR-10 000, Zagreb
Tel. +385 (0)1 6120 150, 6120 158, faks +385 (0)1 6156 879

Časopis izlazi jedanput godišnje
Ovi su Radovi tiskani uz financijsku potporu
Ministarstva znanosti, obrazovanja i športa Republike Hrvatske
Naslovna stranica
Iva Mandić

Grafičko oblikovanje i računalni slog
Boris Bui
Marko Maraković
Ivanka Cokol

Lektura
Julija Barunčić Pletikosić

Tisak
Hitra produkcija knjiga d.o.o.

Tiskanje dovršeno u prosincu 2010. godine

Naklada
200 primjeraka

Časopis je dostupan na portalu znanstvenih časopisa Republike Hrvatske
Hrčku na adresi http://hrcak.srce.hr/radovi-zhp