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Gender Stereotypes in Historical Biographical Novels for Children and Young Adults: *Anna and Theophano* by Kira Sinou

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Biographical novels for children constitute an interesting case, as authors employ their creative imagination while combining history and factual descriptions to invite young readers to become part of a distant reality rich in social, anthropological and historical significance. This article focuses on the work of Greek writer Kira Sinou titled *Anna and Theophano: Princesses Abroad* (*Άννα και Θεοφανώ, πριγκίπισσες στα ξένα*, Κέδρος 2004) and her effort to narrate the life of significant feminine personalities of the Byzantine period in a “truthful” sense, so as to revive literary past-present dialogues. This article aspires to highlight the ways in which the author makes use of the narrative nature of historiography to reveal the Byzantine past to children and adolescents, attempting not only to underline the importance of timeless sociopolitical issues, but also to contribute to the shaping of children’s self-identity and attitudes by using gender stereotypes and critical literacy practices.

Keywords: adolescent literature, biographical fiction novels, gender stereotypes, history, Byzantium

There is a fine line between literature and history that has hardly ever been clearly defined. This is arguably because historical and literary narration share important common characteristics, such as the art of rhetoric, the interpretational approach to reality (rather than its precise depiction), authors’ effort to evoke their readers’ emotions and to support political and moral systems (Barraclough 1958; Frazer 2019), their innovative treatments of the past, etc. (Barthes 1987: 33-38; Jenkins 1997; Ricoeur

1985). Several methodologies and theories provide different answers to “what history is”, but it is widely accepted that historical studies are both rhetorical and literary, and are conceived as being both art and science (Ajaegbo 2013; Satpathy 2004: 20–26). It is also commonly accepted that historians are interested in past human deeds and in the motives of those actions, as well as in feelings, patterns of behaviour, states of mind, moral habitudes, and the states of society with which they are conversant in order to recreate the past (Hegel 2000: 16–18; Megill 1994; Watkins 1992; Munslow 1997: 101; White 2000: 396–397), for instance by interpreting the various forms and differences of social groups or by justifying their conflicts. As for the definition of “what literature is”, it is considered to be a complex concept that is either defined by features, by cultural norms, or by function (Desmet 2007: 23–25).

The fact that reality does not exist “beyond” the reach of language (Spiegel 1990) and that history is a textual construction open to interpretations (Boldt 2014: 3) and mediated linguistic fabrications, since value judgements are hard to avoid in any historiographical narrative, has led to the adoption of terms and expressions such as “historicity of texts”, “historicisation of the past”, and “textualisation of history” by researchers and scholars who have not hesitated to characterise the narrative depiction of the past in historical books as “imaginary” (Gossman 1990; Scott 2001; White 1978; Jenkins 2009: 150). The above admissions offer the writers of texts with historical context the opportunity to provide a “realistic” background to the characters of their novels, altering the historical reality to an acceptable extent in order to serve the fictional element (Iggers 2017; Jordanova 1980; Roberts 1995). The latter summarises the attempt made by the writer Kira Sinou in her novel for children and young adults titled *Άννα και Θεοφανώ, πριγκίπισσες στα ξένα* [Anna and Theophano: Princesses Abroad] (2004), as she herself admits in the introduction of her book.

Sinou is multilingual and, being born in Russia, has a multicultural sensibility which is shown in this book. As this article will later discuss, the writer attempts to reconstruct the Byzantine past by depicting historical events as recorded in historical documents that the writer studied and which she references at the end of her book. According to her own statement, “She studied several primary sources about Byzantium, as well as about Germany’s and Russia’s history of civilization”, but as “she discovered many inconsistencies, since every historian depicts the history of his/her own country the way he/she believes it should be presented” (Sinou 2004: 12),¹ she used her imagination “to fill in the gaps and chose the versions of history that served her narrative” (13); in her case, this proved to be a manner of (re)writing the history of two exceptional female figures, Anna and Theophano, whose behaviour is depicted to reveal symbolic meanings. But as Sinou also confesses, “she respects history”; therefore, she “did not want to misquote any events in her novel” (12), hence she combines novel-writing techniques and evidence-based biographical discourse in her book. She offers her readers useful information based on the serious archival research she conducted, which can be proven by the accurate citations, footnotes, and bibliography that may be found in the book.

¹ The translations of quotations from Greek into English are by the author of this paper.

At this point it is worth noting that, as adults and children differ, so does the literature specifically written for them. Children's literature has a more educational, didactic, and moralising purpose than literature for adults and tends to raise existential questions, for example about gender, sexual identity, accepting diversity, the history of outsiders, etc. (Trupe 2006: v–vi; Falconer 2010: 87–89). Authors of contemporary historical novels, in addition to connecting the past with the present (Moniot 1993; Silvio 1995; Spivak 1993), while relying on historical sources and accepted patterns of historical explanation (Rüsen 2000; Gerrig 1994; Ruprecht 1997), often challenge the nature of history by rewriting silenced histories, meaning deliberately omitted, incomplete, or inaccurate histories, such as those of women, with the help of fictional elements blended with historical material (Sangster 1994; Greenblatt 1980; Barry 2009; Parvini 2012). What is also interesting is that contemporary writers produce texts that challenge readers' conceptions of history and the world, and resist the dominant discourse of patriarchal history, while trying to deconstruct the gendered identity that is constructed by patriarchy (Humez & Crumpacker 1979; Keen 2006a: 179; Wake 2016).

Historical novels for children and young adults

One could claim that in literary genres where the main subject is history and which are addressed to children, for instance in novels, historical knowledge is more accessible and easily understood, especially by young people for whom narration probably constitutes the ideal way of familiarising themselves with the past (Hooker 2010; Karpozilou 2000: 74; Kokkinos 1998: 303; Pasco 2004). In contemporary children's literature, history is approached in a hermeneutical, interpretative way so that people's lives are understood as historical; the world is viewed from the perspective of the "other", and marginalised groups and humans' actions can be understood in a social context, so that young people can be prepared to act as engaged citizens within a society (Rüsen 2011; Persson & Thorp 2017).

In historical novels, a "truthful" sense of historical reality is depicted by authors who study and try not only to interpret historical sources to explain historical facts that are "emplotted" according to linguistic tropes, but also to describe the morals, the culture, and the traditions of the selected era, while combining their book's plot with historiography and historical drama (Kellner 1997; Harrison & Spiropoulou 2015). Yet, reflection on the undisputable relation between fiction and history is not only found in contemporary historical novels; it is also present in biographical novels, where the emphasis is rather on historical precision and, naturally, on the presentation of specific historical figures. Multiple scholars have researched the biographical novel's relation to the historical novel and consider there to be no coincidence that both biographical novels and historical ones were developed in the 18th century (Kalamatianos 1974; Winslow 1978).

Novelists draw elements from specific periods of history to make new versions based on their creative imagination, their linguistic strengths, and ability to turn the subjective tone of a narration into an objective one, thus intriguing readers and transporting them

mentally into the atmosphere of the narrated era. Authors for children and young adults especially tend to merge facts and fiction to make it possible for their readers to free their imagination and make the imaginative leap into the past (Angelaki 2021). But while incorporating historical material into their narratives, authors also try to trigger the readers' emotions, while encouraging them to understand the heroes' actions and emotions, too (Keen 2006b). They often use narrative techniques to promote children's emotional involvement and identification with the historical characters in order to cultivate their empathy; yet they also attempt to help children understand collective consciousness, defined by Durkheim as a shared way of understanding the world, despite each individual being unique (Nodelman 1992; Norton 1995: 511; Oatley 2012; Rimmon-Kenan 1985: 59–62; Smith 2014: 21–29).

Since an understanding of history and significant histories may lead to an understanding of ourselves, numerous historians, educators, and theorists of literature have concluded that historical novels for children and young adults offer readers the chance to approach the pace of life of the narrated era empathetically (Angelaki 2018: 75–77; Bradbury 1993: 432). Young readers “make meaning by the activities that characters perform on texts” (Benton 2005: 87–89), which means that, according to various reader-response approaches (Sinou 2004: 92–97), readers can be absorbed, with the help of the characters, in the narrative, and can understand and feel the story through the thoughts and feelings of the heroes and heroines, who usually constitute social role models (Nodelman & Reimer 2003: 16–17).

This cognitive and emotional involvement of readers (whose personalities are admittedly still under development) has prompted researchers to link historical novels with moral didacticism and, in general, with issues connected with social, political, ethical, and religious ideology that writers consciously or unconsciously pass on to their reading audience (Karakitsios 2004; Smyrniaios 2008: 9). Nonetheless, it must be underlined that the use of Byzantine history in children's literature, a phenomenon that may be seen especially in Greece for at least the last two centuries, seems to coincide with the distancing of writers from blunt didacticism that used to characterise a significant number of novels for young people (Katsiki-Gkivalou 2015; Spanaki 2004: 59–61).

The mixed genre of the biographical novel

The promotion of a specific historical figure behind whom an ideal role model is usually hidden can be found in fictional biography as much as in biographical or autobiographical notes, memoirs, etc. Fictionalised biography has greatly encouraged researchers to ask whether or not it may be justified as a literary genre, due to its literary analysis and the discursive nature of the representation of the past of each historical figure. The authors of fictional biographies make themselves invisible throughout the narration and, as they combine historical and fictional elements to create narrative plausibility, they suggest an experimental kind of biographical writing (Benton 2009: 3–10; Farinou-Malamatari 2009).

More specifically, in biographical novels, the authors disentangle the intertwined threads of fiction and reality by starting off with real life incidents of the historical figure whose biography they are writing, then adding details that are sometimes unverified or invented to add literary value to their work (Guignery 2007; Sahinis 1989: 206; VanderHaagen 2018a). Especially in fictional biographies for children and adolescents, authors describe and narrate a person's past as history and each selected personality constitutes, in most cases, a behavioural role model (Meyers, Holbrook & May 2009). The historically valid information connected to the life of their heroes and/or heroines is sometimes presented by the novelists with illustrations alongside fictional additions (such as, for example, with the help of constructed internal monologues or fictional dialogues) in a simplified or partial way, in order to ensure that the readers can delve into the world of the person whose biography they are reading (Girard 1989; Hannabuss 1993; Schabert 1982).

This article, as previously mentioned, examines the case of Greek writer Kira Sinou and her attempt to challenge the boundaries between history (and more specifically, the history of the Byzantine period) and untold feminine stories. In her novel *Anna and Theophano. Princesses Abroad*, she primarily describes the lives of Anna and Theophano, two representative female figures of the narrated time and holders of certain values, such as courage, decisiveness, dignity and pride, who started their new lives as princesses abroad, aiming to accomplish the Byzantine mission by building bridges based on the constructive interaction of Christian, Roman, and Greek features (Haralampakis 2011). Additionally, this article will show how Sinou tried to offer alternative histories (Khagi 2018; Ramos 2017) by using her imagination, for example in the parts of the book where she informs her readers “about Theophano's and Anna Porphyrogenita's origins and family trees”, since “that is unclear in historical records” (Sinou 2004: 13). Finally, the article discusses the author's attempt to emphasise that literary history can be considered a literary genre and part of a larger cultural history, while also questioning dominant patriarchal ideologies (LaCapra 2013: 39).

Anna and Theophano: Princesses Abroad

In the introduction of her biographical novel, which can be characterised as polyphonic since it includes a diversity of simultaneous points of view and voices (Bakhtin 1984: 7), Kira Sinou informs her readers that she wrote this book “aiming to present two Byzantine princesses who were married to foreign monarchs and managed to influence them with their Byzantine customs. Two extraordinary women whose legacy is unknown to Greece and this is not fair” (2004: 11). We may consider this book as the writer's attempt to restore this injustice by representing the aforementioned women's lives, while introducing to her reading audience the medieval atmosphere of the 10th century, during which the Macedonian Dynasty was in power and the Byzantine Empire was at its peak. Sinou tried to strike a balance between authenticity and invention by incorporating, in her biographical novel, real characters who contribute, on the one hand, to the “structuring” of the two main heroines' personalities and, on the other, to

the building of the plot itself. The book's plot, as mentioned above, is placed at a time when the Byzantine Empire was financially and intellectually developing, making the most of the intellectual and cultural forces it possessed thanks to the conglomeration of the Hellenistic culture and ethics and the Roman administrative and social structures. According to the third-person narration, during this same period, Byzantium was geographically expanding and the emperors were trying to unite different peoples by bringing its opponents closer together through Christianisation, diplomacy, and mixed marriages (Cheynet 2014; Vlyssidou 2004).

In this context, the two heroines of the novel, Anna and Theophano, are asked to leave their homeland and families and get married to monarchs from other nations: Anna Porphyrogenita, daughter of Byzantine Emperor Romanos II and sister of Emperor Basil Bulgaroktonos (The Bulgar-Slayer), married Prince Vladimir of Russia and undertook an evangelising role as soon as she arrived in Kiev in the summer of 988; Theophano, the niece of Emperor John Tzimiskes, according to the narration, went to Rome in 972 to marry Prince Otto II of Germany and then acted as ambassador for Byzantium. The writer gives useful details about the critical institution of marriage in Byzantium, ensuring that her readers would comprehend that "Byzantine marriage was an agreement arranged by men, not out of love but for reasons of political expediency". This often "led them to send their daughters to distant and even remote countries and marry them to boorish and loutish men, even though they were rulers" (Sinou 2004: 96).

According to the third-person narration, Anna was a "petite, religious and modest figure who didn't talk much" and was jealous of Theophano as "she was going to marry and fly away from her golden cage in the Byzantine palace" (Sinou 2004: 43). This is why Anna so desperately "hoped for someone to arrange a marriage for her; otherwise she would end up in a monastery despite being a princess and this frightened her to death" (44) (see Herring 2013: 103). But life can be unpredictable: by the time Anna was 25 years old, "dangerously old enough to remain an 'old maid'" (Sinou 2004: 289) (after all, Byzantine women were married at the onset of puberty), her brother, Basil, announced to her that he had made all the arrangements for her to marry Prince Vladimir for the sake of Byzantium.

But, to Basil's surprise, Anna strongly resisted: he believed that his sister would not disobey since she "was a good Christian" (Sinou 2004: 215) (see Kraemer 2011). Anna did not wish to marry Vladimir and expressed deep distress, as "she wanted nothing to do with those dirty barbarians in the Rus realm who sacrificed other men to their bloodthirsty gods". She was even said to be crying, daring to say that she "could not stand to see that savage, illiterate man, Vladimir, who had 800 women and countless children" (Sinou 2004: 289). After her brother told her not only that "Russians were clean enough, rich enough, and strong enough to benefit the Byzantine Empire" (Sinou 2004: 291), but also that she was considered a prize for Vladimir who was happy to "become a Christian just to marry her" and "promised that he would stop dating his other mistresses" for her sake (Sinou 2004: 271), the reader is informed that Anna decided to "sacrifice her

dreams for her country” (Sinou 2004: 291) and went “to her destination with tears in her eyes” (Sinou 2004: 292). One could argue that Sinou not only implies that women’s obedience was a norm in the patriarchal society of Byzantium, but at the same time enables children to understand that the way Anna conformed and accepted her fate was due to the morals of the era and did not originate from any lack of courage on her part (Nasaina 2018).

Theophano, the other heroine of the novel, is presented as a “smart, delicate and beautiful” girl “who was forced to leave her homeland and her family in order to live in a foreign country with different habits. A cold country that, despite being financially powerful, was not as culturally developed as the Byzantine Empire” (Sinou 2004: 98). According to the narrator, this is something that made the young heroine wonder “whether she could handle the Germans’ rough behaviour” (Sinou 2004: 96), and even made her think of “escaping the ship she was on, in order to run away from her fate as empress of the Holy Roman Empire by marriage to Emperor Otto in Germany” (Sinou 2004: 100). In this very episode of the book, readers are informed that “she remembered that her fate ever since being a little girl was not sweet, but harsh instead; even harsher compared to the life of a woman who had no power in her hands” (Sinou 2004: 96). It is at this precise moment that she “decided to stand on her own two feet and face her fear” (Sinou 2004: 101), which was a life next to a total stranger and his “insidious mother”; after all, she knew that “her parents would feel ashamed of her if she refused to fulfil her mission” and that “if she returned home, they would send her directly to become a nun” (Sinou 2004: 100), something she did not want either.

Even though Theophano was “mentally and physically exhausted by her departure” (Sinou 2004: 116), she decided to open her heart to Otto and serve her country with pride. She played a significant role in the life of the empire, according to the book, and “lived the life of an independent woman who could stand up for herself”. Theophano is also described as falling in love with her husband and feeling grateful not only “for being financially strong according to the marriage certificate”, but also because “her husband truly respected her opinion and knew that he would love her until death do them part” (Sinou 2004: 143–144).

At this point, it must be emphasised that the writer, alongside useful details about marriage and its link to Byzantine diplomacy, and to the historical, political, and social aspects and events of the narrated era, describes the mindsets, feelings, emotions, and patterns of the intimate personal behaviour of the female protagonists and their surroundings in order to inform her young readers about women’s presence in Byzantium (Hutton 1981). By doing so, it might be claimed that she resists universalisms about the dominance of the male perspective (Mishra 2013). She even offers her readers the opportunity to explore the female perspective of Byzantine history as she “brings her subjects from darkness to light” (De Groot 2010: 70) and presents them with the traits they had, which are recognisable to present-day audiences; the two female protagonists are smart, independent, and dynamic, and thus both take on their mission so responsibly and become co-architects of their husband’s success, ensuring Byzantine triumph.

Anna, according to the text, let go of her doubts and fears, learned Russian and actively participated in the Christianisation of Rus; she acted as the religious adviser of Vladimir and his people, “who got baptized in large groups” thanks to her influence, and then “Russia became a civilised country” (Sinou 2004: 302). She influenced her husband whom she also imbued with Byzantine religious practices, resulting in him becoming an Eastern Christian. According to the narrator, at first he had doubts about becoming a Christian, even though he had promised Anna’s brother; but finally he “took her advice and got baptised” (Sinou 2004: 293). At this point, it must be underlined that the writer makes clear that Anna dared to express her wish to the prince, but with “sweetness, gentleness and calmness” (Sinou 2004: 297), which is why he took her advice, stopped seeing other women and “loved her so much that she was considered to be one of the luckiest women in the world, even though her sons were murdered” (Sinou 2004: 303). Since it was her character and personality and not her “royal appearance, her wonderful dark hair and her gorgeous eyes” (Sinou 2004: 197) that made Vladimir fall in love with her, it may be claimed that stereotypes about feminist consciousness, gender roles, and women’s behaviour are by implication deconstructed in the book.

Theophano is also presented as a calm, obedient, and religious woman who played a significant role in Byzantium’s western alliance. In her case, too, the narrator makes clear that the aforementioned characteristics alongside her education make her stand out as a highly skilled wife, a role model in the presented era – even though “she was not a legitimate daughter born in the special purple chamber of the Byzantine Emperor’s Palace” (Sinou 2004: 201; Brubaker & Smith 2004: 102–120). More specifically, it is mentioned that “all the people who knew her, including her tutors, were impressed by her wit and her ability to obtain knowledge very easily” and that “her intelligence and education were the reasons why the Byzantine Emperor John I Tzimiskes chose his niece to accomplish such a difficult mission” (Sinou 2004: 49). Since only in certain aristocratic households could girls acquire basic knowledge of reading and writing (Mullett 1990: 156–157), with an emphasis on the dominant oral traditions in Byzantium, it is implied that her education and the fact that “she knew many languages” (Sinou 2004: 104), which she was “willing to refresh, as it was vital for her image to be considered literate” (Sinou 2004: 103), all contributed to her being chosen as a prize for Otto II (Herring 2013: 238–253). It is also implied in the text that education was not a common thing for women in Byzantium. Consequently, young readers can understand that women were seen, in general, as culturally inferior to men in the social pyramid, despite having a pivotal role at home, mainly because Christianity recognised women as equal to men in the family unit; but, paradoxically, according to Byzantine legislation, only the father or the husband was the dominant figure (Laiou 1981: 243–245; Nikolaou 2005: 13, 29–35).

Just like Anna, Theophano is presented as a dedicated citizen of the Byzantine Empire, and that “it was important for her to have allies in that foreign country if she wanted to accomplish her mission for her own people’s sake” (Sinou 2004: 102). Readers are informed that she prioritised brushing up her speaking skills in German, “because this way she could make friends and at the same time could have the chance

to understand what her future husband's followers and relatives would say and see who really wanted her to succeed" (Sinou 2004: 104) or would only pretend to be her friend and "talk behind her back" (Sinou 2004: 146) – as did, for example, not only her mother-in-law, Adelaide of Italy, because "Theophano was not born in the purple", but also other noble ladies in Germany, who were "extremely jealous of her luxuries" (ibid) (Georgi 1991: 159–160). According to the narration, Theophano did not care about being mocked. The fact that due to her distinguished noble heritage "she avoided adopting aggressive and self-defeating behaviour and did nothing to change her customs in order to be liked by other people" (Sinou 2004: 148) leads the reader to believe that the writer intends to define authenticity as the basic element of a meaningful life.

Theophano "knew exactly what she had to do to intertwine the German and Byzantine cultures, as her uncle had ordered her to do" (Sinou 2004: 119; Wangerin 2014). This is why she courageously subverted the stereotypes of the narrated era and "ate at the same table as the men who served her" in order to make friends, "taking advantage of the rights that the country she was going to allowed such things, considering that Otto's mother often ate with male companion, too" (Sinou 2004: 119). Sinou informs her readers that Theophano participated in social and political activities because the customs in the country of which she became princess were not as strict for women as they were in Byzantium, where women had limited or no contacts at all with people of the opposite gender, where they "could not take part in social groups and were confined to the house or could only go to church" (Sinou 2004: 117). In our opinion, the author does this to intrigue her readers to seek further information about the dominant ideology and patriarchy in the Byzantine era. Furthermore, in presenting Theophano as a young woman who acts courageously and fearlessly within an androcentric society, she possibly aims to destroy the hegemonic accounts of the past and strives to create role models of emancipated women that young readers can identify with (Lerner 1981: 178; Trofimenkoff 1985: 5).

One could argue that the detailed depiction of the gender stereotypes and the presentation of the female figure in the religious, financial, political, and social life of the urban milieu of the Byzantine Empire reflect the author's intention of rebutting the monolithic discourse of history and to construct role models that young readers can become more related to (Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue 2009; Ivaldi & O'Neill 2010). From our standpoint, Sinou's intention was to reconstruct the past based on historical evidence to bring the discourse of patriarchal history into question and to incorporate the female experience, while highlighting gender issues (Friedman 1997: 235). It may be claimed that the fact that neither Anna nor Theophano is depicted as a passive, weak and indecisive woman willing to adopt behaviour determined by the dominant phallogocentric ideology, but rather chooses values that stand against traditionalism, social conservatism, and the domineering structures of society, turns this biographical novel into double-voiced discourse. Through her female protagonists who are sources of imperial power and who yet retain certain feminine functions and successfully maintain the role of wife and mother, Sinou evidently criticises the colonial, patriarchal, and

hegemonic powers of the time, while expressing her concerns about the representation of women in the readers' imagination and consciousness (Bakhtin 1986: 95; Grewal 2006).

Conclusion

Kira Sinou intertwines historical science and literary techniques, using historiography as the means of raising gender awareness and revealing to the young reader the mechanisms of social structures through time. She attempts to help them rethink the history and agency of Byzantine women who were subordinated under various forms of patriarchy. Sinou makes use of primary sources to make her reading audience realise that imperial women were ascribed both masculine and feminine roles; at the same time, however, their femininity constantly challenged and reaffirmed existing gender constructs (Ong 2003; Yeyenoglou 2003; Eagly, Wood & Diekmann 2000). Offering fictional episodes for the well-known historical figures of Anna and Theophano in her book, the author emphasises the literary aspect of past and present history while underlining the text's connection to the social context in which it is produced. Equally important, the author also claims that women do have the right to be heard, to be complex personalities, and to have different attitudes to life from those that are typically attributed to them (Bakhtin 1992: 324–325; Marcella 1993).

Sinou's feminist writing may be considered a tool of constructing reality on behalf of women who are not silenced under the monology of men (Caine 1994: 250; Hutcheon 1991: 170; VanderHaagen 2018b). Even though Anna and Theophano have to follow specific rules, the noble heroines of the book may not, in any way, be characterised as marginalised figures who accept their inevitable fate, since they are described as being discreet but at the same time decisive and ambitious, both of them emotionally and intellectually (as educational pursuits are not presented by the narrator solely as a masculine privilege) equal to their emperor husbands.

Admittedly, it may be argued that Sinou attempts to establish historical parallels and encourage her readers to reflect on the gender roles and timeless gender-divided societies by honouring the Byzantine women whose biographies she wrote. The fact that in her biographical novel past beliefs and traditions underline the undisputed contingencies linked with contemporary social structures and gender stereotypes could also be interpreted as her way of preparing female readers for the possibility of them becoming limited by the dominant culture. The writer also suggests ways of fighting any kind of such oppression. Hence, the author confirms that the connection between literature and history for children and young adults is indeed able to reproduce, change, and overthrow the social prejudices of the time (Katsiki-Gkivalou 2015; Kornfield & Jackson 1987; Tyson 2001: 83–86).

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**Rodni stereotipi u povijesnim biografskim romanima za djecu i mladež:
Anna i Theophano Kire Sinou**

Biografski romani za djecu predstavljaju zanimljiv slučaj jer se autori oslanjaju na svoju kreativnu maštu pri kombiniranju povijesti i faktografskih opisa kako bi privukli mlade čitatelje da postanu dio udaljene stvarnosti bogate društvenim, antropološkim i povijesnim značajem. Ovaj je rad usredotočen na roman *Anna i Theophano: Princeze u inozemstvu* (*Άννα και Θεοφανώ, πριγκίπισσες στα ξένα, Κέδρος* 2004) grčke spisateljice Kire Sinou i njezino nastojanje da pripovijeda o životima važnih žena iz bizantskoga razdoblja na „istinit“ način kako bi oživjela književne dijaloge prošlosti i sadašnjosti. Cilj je rada istaknuti načine autoričine porabe pripovjedne naravi historiografije kako bi djeci i adolescentima otkrila bizantsku prošlost. Pritom pokušava istaknuti važnost vječnih društveno-političkih pitanja, a također i pridonijeti oblikovanju samoidentiteta djece čitatelja i uspostavljanju njihovih stavova izlažući ih rodno uvjetovanim stereotipima i praksi kritičke pismenosti.

Ključne riječi: književnost za adolescente, biografski romani, rodni stereotipi, povijest, Bizant