Patterns of Byzantine and Western Historiography in the Chronicle of Nestor

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Patterns of Byzantine and Western Historiography in the
Rus’ Primary Chronicle

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The *Povest' vremennykh let* (*Russian/Rus’ Primary Chronicle, Tale of Bygone Years* or *Chronicle of Nestor* etc.), dated between 1113 and 1118, and covering the period from 852 to 1110, is the most valuable source both for the history of the early tribes of Eastern Europe as well as the circumstances of the first state formation (that of Kievan Rus’) in the region. With regard to the numerous suggestions and debate over the identity of the author of the text (hereafter *RPC*), scholars initially attributed it to Nestor, a monk at the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, although later theories focused on Sylvester, abbot at the Monastery of St. Michael in Vydubychi near Kiev. Taking into account the views of certain Eastern European scholars, A. A. Shakhmatov believes that monk Nestor compiled the first –and not preserved– redaction of the *RPC* in 1113, while the second redaction was completed by abbot Sylvester in 1116, a hypothesis based on Sylvester’s postscript on the *RPC*. A. A. Gippius, along with P. P. Tolocko, O. V. Tvorogov and S. M. Mikheev, consider as *terminus post quem* for Sylvester’s postscript the year 1110. According to S. M. Mikheev’s investigation on the textual history of the *RPC* and the composition of its various parts, an initial *Old Saga* (*Drevnee skazanie*) was produced in Kiev c. 1016/17 and was extended into *Nikon’s Compilation* (*Svod Nikona*), c. 1078/79. A new enriched version, the *Initial* or *Beginning Compilation* (*Nachal’nyj svod*), appeared between 1093 and 1115, while in 1116 abbot Sylvester revised the *Initial Compilation* and compiled the *Tale of Bygone Years*, a text copied and supplemented the following year (*Redaction of 1117*). On the other hand, excerpts from the manuscripts of the *Initial Compilation* and the *Old Saga* were used as the
basis for the Novgorod Annals that are reproduced in the Novgorod First Chronicle\(^1\).

Being one of the so-called ‘national Chronicles’ in Eastern Europe, the RPC legitimizes ideologically the integration of the Rus’ into the Christian world (\(οἰκουμένη\)) by the Rurikids and, on the other hand, provides the geographical and ethnological map of Kievan Rus’ and its surroundings\(^2\).

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In other words, the *Chronicle* is nothing but an *origo gentis* of the Kievan Rus’ (or other nations) with limited credibility. For the composition of the *Chronicle*—in which there are extensive references to Byzantium and Byzantine-Rus’ relations—the RPC uses narrative models and testimonies from the Byzantine literature, part of which had already been translated into Church Slavonic. His main sources, as the author notes, are the *Chronography* of George the Monk and the *Chronography* of John Malalas, the *Chronographikon Syntomon* of Nikephoros, patriarch of Constantinople, the texts of the Rus’-Byzantine treaties in 911 and 944 AD etc. The influence of the Byzantine chroniclers is also evident in the dating system followed by RPC (*Era of the World*, with references to the fifteen-year cycle of Indiction).5

In the RPC the elements of the Syriac Church Literature for the barbarian peoples of the North (the so-called Apocalyptic Literature, with eschatological content), which influenced the Byzantine and Slavic Literature, are clearly visible. Such elements are traceable in works such as the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius/Methodius of Patara (late 7th century) and the *Myth of Alexander* (circa 629/30). A quite popular theme in the

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Apocalyptic Literature, and in various versions, is the exclusion of twenty-two “unclean nations” from Alexander the Great, who, after carrying them from the East to a mountain in the North, enclosed them behind bronzen doors (points identified with the Caucasus and Caspian Gates respectively). In other traditions, however, they are referred to as descendants of Ishmael and include, among others, the peoples of the steppe. Under the influence of Pseudo-Methodius, the author of the RPC identifies populations of the Northwest Urals with the “unclean nations” who are descended from Japheth. The background of the relevant descriptions are the biblical references to the mythical peoples Gog and Magog, who lived north of the Caucasus and their name was synonymous with destruction, a theme equivalent to the morals of nomadic peoples in the historiography of Antiquity.

According to Pseudo-Methodius, two disasters will occur at the end of the world, first by the Ishmaelites and then by the grandsons of Japheth, who are Gog and Magog, as well as the confined by Alexander “unclean nations.” Additionally, recording their barbaric customs, he states that “for the nations coming from the North eat the flesh of men and drink the blood of beasts like water and eat unclean things: snakes and scorpions and all abominable and disgusting beasts and the reptiles that creep upon the earth and brutal things and dead bodies and the aborted fetuses of women. And they will slaughter infants, even producing them from their wombs, and they will boil the meat and eat it. And they will corrupt the earth and befoul it and deface it, and there will be no one able to stand before them.”


On the other hand, *The Legend of Alexander*, recording the cruelty of the Huns, presents the killing of embryos as part of a ritual practice\(^\text{12}\).

In the *RPC*, the mythical elements about the “unclean nations” are mixed with eschatological Christian perceptions about the Second Coming and the end of the world, as well as the idea that God would send a pagan barbarian people to punish the Christians\(^\text{13}\). This providential threat is projected through the nomads Polovtsians (also known as Cumans\(^\text{14}\)), who will punish the Christians Rus’ “for their sins”, a popular motif in Christian literature for the barbarian peoples. The tradition about the Ishmaelites, the “unclean nations” and the bronze doors, is recorded by *RPC* on the occasion of the attack of the Polovtsians in 1096. In the *RPC* author’s view, the Polovtsians are identified with the Ishmaelites and represent the fierce and warlike descendants of the biblical Ishmael\(^\text{15}\). It should be also noted that in the thirty-two references of the term *pagan/s* in the *RPC*, thirteen concern the Polovtsians, who in three other cases are described as *atheists*\(^\text{16}\). Further, following the model of *The Last Emperor* in the *Apocalypse*, the *RPC* attributes that role to the princes Sviatopolk (1093–1113) and Vladimir Monomakh (1113–1125), who fought the Polovtsians under the protection of Archangel Michael. Simultaneously, the perception of the *chosen people* for the Rus’, who fight their pagan opponents in the name of the true God, is introduced here\(^\text{17}\).

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\(^{14}\) 13. Isoaho, Last Emperor, 55.

\(^{15}\) 14. The Polovtsians, who lived in the south-Russian steppes, were for a long time the most important enemy in the rear of Kievan Rus’. See O. Prutsak, The Polovcians and Rus, *Archivium Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982), 321-380.


\(^{17}\) 16. Ostrowski, Pagan past, 244, 246-247.

\(^{17}\) 17. Isoaho, Last Emperor, 53, 56, 73-75.
The comparison of barbarians with wolves in Byzantine sources also strikes a negative tone. With wolves likens the Polovtsians Vladimir Monomach in his *Instruction*, while the *RPC* uses that comparison for a certain person. In the year 945, when the envoys of the Dervlians arrived at the Rus’ court, Princess Olga inquired why they came to her. The Dervlians replied that they had murdered her husband Igor because he looked like a wolf and was crafty and greedy. By contrast, for the Cumans, namely the chieftain Bonyak, the *RPC* follows the historiographical motif of lycanthropy, based likely on a similar reference of Pseudo-Caesarius for the Early Slavs (*Sclaveni*). Pseudo-Caesarius (one of the sources of the *RPC* along with George the Monk), inspired by the Syriac tradition, attributed to the Early Slavs a set of “barbaric customs including that of infanticide and the eating of wild animals.” In addition, the *RPC* quotes a fragment from...

19. *RPC*, 213: *The Polovcians showed their teeth at us, as they stood like wolves at the fords and in the hills*.
21. *RPC*, 196: *While on their journey, they pitched a bivouac, and at midnight Bonyak arose and rode away from the troops. He straightway began to howl like a wolf, till first one and then many wolves answered him with their howls*.
22. Caesarius, *Four Dialogues* ed. J. P. MIGNE [PG 38], Paris 1862, II, 110, col. 985: πῶς δ’ ἐνέτέρων μήματι ὄντες οἱ Σκλαυηνοὶ καὶ Φυσωνῖται, οἱ καὶ Δανούβιοι προσαγορευόμενοι, οἱ μὲν γυναικομαστοβοροῦσιν ἡδέως, διὰ τὸ πεπληρώσατο τὸν γάλακτος, μινὸν δίχθην τοὺς ὑποτίθθους ταῖς πέτραις ἐπαράττοντες οἱ δὲ καὶ τῆς νομίμης καὶ ἀδιαβλήτου κρεωβορίας ἀπέχονται; Καὶ οἱ μὲν ὑπάρχουσιν αὐθάδεις, αὐτόνομοι, ἀνηγεμόνευτοι, συνεχῶς ἀναιροῦντες, συνεσθιόμενοι ἡ συνοδεύοντες, τῶν σφῶν ἡγεμόνας καὶ μονικῶς ἀναλυόντας, αὐτῶν ἡ σφύδος καὶ τὰς ἐνδρύμους κάττας καὶ μονικῶς ἀναλυόντας, καὶ θυσίας ὑποττατόμενοι οἱ δὲ καὶ ἀδηφαγίας ἀπέχονται, καὶ τῷ τυχόντι ὑποττατόμενοι καὶ ὑπεύχοντες; (And how is occurring, those living on either side of the river, the Sclaveni and Fysonites, who are called Danoubians, the former to devour pleasantly female breasts when they are full of milk, and fly breastfed infants in stones like rats, and the latter abstain even from lawful and permissible meat eating? Why the former are wild, autonomous and not dominated by someone and constantly kill the ruler and lord when they eat together or when they follow him? Why they eat foxes, wildcats and boars and call each other by imitating the howl of the wolves, while the latter abstain from any kind of voracity and obey and subjected...
the *Chronicle* of George the Monk on the traditional barbarian customs that violated the statute law, among them as murder and incest. Among the peoples practicing these customs are reportedly the Indians, where cannibalism (anthropophagy) is observed, the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, and the Britons. On the other hand, a more positive image emerges for the Syrians and the Brahmans.¹²

Based on George the Monk and, secondly, on Pseudo-Caesarius, the *RPC* treats the tribes of Kievan Rus’ during the pagan period in a negative way: “α δεκλανε χιλιαξυ ζηκρικακιχυς ωκραξια χιμαξιχυς ουκιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη κοιλιαξυνην ετερην ουκιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεχατο· κακα αυξη νεκρημην ου κοιλιακη· ναυλικιναχυς αυξη ανεchod found in the older literature. Андрейчева, Образы, 42-56, who also names Palladius of Elenopolis (On the Peoples of India and the Brahmins) as one of the sources of the *RPC*. On the relevant sources, see also д. 10. Андрейчева, Этнографическое описание восточных славян в космографическом введении Повести временных лет, Диалог со временем 58 (2017), 155-180.


24. Андрейчева, Образы, 24, 32-35, 40-41, 44-46, 57-61, where possible parallels between certain peoples in the *RPC* author’s sources and the Slavic tribes in Kievan Rus’ as well as the Polovtsians (Derevlians – Indians; Radimichians and their...
are presented in much the same way: „ίδοσεν μενεκά ιππα την πρώτη γεύμα. Πολυτικοὶ
ζάκων δεξιάζοντα σίμη εγκάμον. Κρός προλικαίς και χελλαίς ύμως εἰκὼν. Ιδαμήις
μελετήμενοι και κέος χειρότοτον. Χολίζοντας και ουσιολοχοί. Ιδαμήις
μαντευμένοι ιππα ιππα. Ιδαμήις και ιππα ὑποκλίμα οτε καὶ εὐδαμον.”
25. The only exception concerns the Slavs Polianians in the Kiev region, who “retained the mild
and peaceful customs of their ancestors”, and were in a sense the connecting
link between two different eras (paganism and Christianity)26. As M. J.
Andreicheva points out, by correlating the Polianians with the “Brahmans”
and the Fisonites, the author of the RPC emphasized their importance and
their role in the future Christianization of the Old Russian lands. Having a
special power to fulfill “God’s destiny”, the Polianians were given a key role
in the Chronicle regarding both the Christianization of the Eastern Slavs
and the formation of the Old Russian ἔθνος27.

In addition to the above, the RPC also adopts the Syriac historiographical tradition concerning the division of the world among the three
sons of Noah after the cataclysm, and the presence of the Slavs in the
territory of Japheth, a tradition also used by George the Monk28. According
to Syriac authors, who followed the relevant Judaic and Christian traditions,
the Slavs were descended from Japheth and lived in the northeastern part
of the world (οἰκουμένη), next to the Sarmatians and Bulgars29. The author
of the RPC accepts this version noting “these are the narratives of bygone
years regarding the origin of the land of Rus’, the first Princes of Kiev, and

neighbors – Indians, Amazons and partly the Britons; Polovtians – Chaldeans, Babylonians
and Indians; the positive connection concerns the Polianians with the Syrians, the Brahmans
and the Phisonites).

25. Ἄλκης, col. 16. RPC, 58: Just so, even in our own day, the Polovcians maintain
the customs of their ancestors in the shedding of blood and in glorifying themselves for
such deeds, as well as in eating every dead or unclean thing, even hamsters and marmots.
They marry their mothers-in-law and their sisters-in-law, and observe other usages of their
26. RPC, 56. ΠΒΛ, 14-15. Τολοχικοί, Slavs and Varangians, 180. Ανδρείχεκα, Οκανία,
23, 29-30, 35-36.
27. Ανδρείχεκα, Οκανία, 59.
28. See RPC, 23. ΠΒΛ, 184, 197.
29. S. Βεναρωϊκς, Syriaco-Slavica. What did the Syriac medieval writers know about
the Slavs, Orientalia Christiana Cracoviensia 2 (2010), 40-41. ΚΑΡΔΑΡΑΣ, Pseudo-Caesarius,
93.
from what source the land of Rus’ had its beginning”. Japheth ruled over the northern and western regions, along with a part of Asia Minor, and the RPC locates in his territory the Rus’ (here the Varangians) and the Slavs, pointing out that they were descended from him. The same is said for the non-Slavic tribes who paid tribute to the Rus’30. The influence of George the Monk is also evident in the description of the story of Babel’s tower (right after that of the cataclysm), which the RPC uses as a means of explaining the dispersion of the Slavic tribes. In addition, it connects the biblical account of the twelve Jewish tribes with the settlement of an equal number of Slavic tribes in Eastern Europe31.

Another task that needs to be undertaken here is the comparison between the ethnogenetic accounts provided by the RPC and certain Byzantine sources. From Byzantine writers we hear of the migration of certain peoples under the leadership of a symbolic number of brothers, namely the five sons of the khagan of Great Bulgaria Kubrat32 as well as the five brothers and two sisters who led the Croats to their present homeland33. In the description of Kiev’s foundation, which probably derives from legend of the tribe of the Polians, the RPC mentions that “[и] бъıша ·г҃· брать ѭєдиному имѧ Кии· а другому ІЦекъ· а третьєму Хоривъ [и] сестра ихъ Лъıбедь· сѣдѧще Кии на горѣ гдѣже нъıне оувозъ Боричевъ· а Щекъ сѣдѧше на горѣ· гдѣже нъıне зоветсѧ Щековица· а Хоривъ на третьєи горѣ· ѿ негоже прозвасѧ Хоревица· и створиша градъ во имѧ брата своєго

33. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio, ed.-trans. G. MORAVCIK – R. J. H. JENKINS, Washington 1967, 30.63-66, 142: Μία δὲ γενεὰ διαχωρισθεῖσα ἐξ αὐτῶν, ἤγουν ἀδελφοὶ πέντε, ὁ δὲ Κλουκᾶς καὶ ὁ Λόβελος καὶ ὁ Κοσέντζης καὶ ὁ Μουχλὼ καὶ ὁ Χρωβάτος καὶ ἀδελφαὶ δύο, ἡ Τουγὰ καὶ ἡ Βουγά μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτῶν ἦλθον εἰς Δελματίαν καὶ ἔφορον τοὺς Ἀβαρὲς κατέχοντας τὴν τοιαύτην γῆν (From them split off a family of five brothers, Kloukas and Lobelos and Kosentzis and Mouchlo and Chrobatos, and two sisters, Toug and Bouga, who came with their folk to Dalmatia and found the Avars in possession of that land).
The main ethnogenetic myth, however, is that of the Rus’ themselves. In this case, scholars, in search of similar narrative models, turned their attention to the Western medieval literature. The mythical narration, also known as “calling of the Princes”, concerns the request made by certain eastern European tribes to the Varangian Rus’ (who lived in present-day Sweden) to send them a ruler. According to the RPC, in the year 859 the Varangians imposed a tax on five tribes (Chud, Slavs of Novgorod, Meria, Ves and Krivitsians). Three years later, in 862, four tribes, the Chud, the Slavs of Novgorod, the Ves and the Krivitsians (among them, the author of the RPC believes that only the second and the latter were of Slavic origin), refused to pay tribute to the Varangians and chased them out “beyond the sea”. At the same time, however, they decided to send an embassy to the latter with a very important demand: “всѧ землѧ наша велика и ѡбилна· а

34. ΛΔΗ, col. 9. RPC, 54: there were three brothers, Kiy, Shchek, and Khoriv, and their sister was named Lybed’. Kiy lived upon the hill [i.e. Kievitsa] where the Borichev trail now is, and Shchek dwelt upon the hill now named Shchekovitsa, while on the third resided Khoriv, after whom this hill is named Khorevitsa. They built a town and named it Kiev after their oldest brother. Around the town lay a wood and a great pine-forest in which they used to catch wild beasts. These men were wise and prudent; they were called Polyanians, and there are Polyanians descended from them living in Kiev to this day. ΠΒΛ, 13, ΛΙΝΔ, Problems of Ethnicity, 257.

35. RPC, 54-55. ΠΒΛ, 13, 223-227, 236.

36. ΛΔΗ, col. 12. RPC, 56: There were in fact among the Lyakhs two brothers, one named Radim and other Vyatko. Radim settled on the Sozh’, where the people are known as Radimichians, and Vyatko with his family settled on the Oka. The people there were named Vyatichians after him. ΠΒΛ, 14, 231-232.
In view of the relevant testimony of the RPC scholars, there has long debated whether a Scandinavian element participated or not in the formation of Kievan Rus’ (the dispute between the Normanist and Anti-Normanist theories)\(^{38}\). At this point we may note that the author of the RPC uses the name *Rus’* to denote either the Varangians or, later, the new people, that of Kievan Rus’ (an ethnonym or a state formation), who emerged in Eastern Europe as a result of the ethnic mixing between Varangians and the local, mostly Slavic, tribes\(^{39}\).

According to O. Pritsak, there is an important difference between the RPC and the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, according to which the “calling of the Princes” was made not by tribes but by inhabitants of cities. What is more, the fact that three Scandinavian rulers arrived and settled in these particular areas has led the scholar to suggest that the invitation was addressed by the inhabitants of Staraya Ladoga, a city located nearby Novgorod (Rurik), Beloozero (Sineus) and Izborsk (Truvor). These cities were controlled by the Chud, the Ves and the Slavs of Novgorod respectively\(^{40}\). On the other hand, while rejecting any possible influences of Western sources to the “calling of the Princes” (as e.g. the *Chronicle* of Widukind), D. Nikolayev formulated a rather attractive hypothesis which draws a comparison between the RPC and the legendary account of a rebellion found in the Irish poem *Sóerchlanda Érenn uile* (probably of the early 12th century). This rebellion broke out

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40. PRITSAK, Invitation, 11-22.
due to the heavy taxation and the oppressive rule of the leader and can be summarized as follows: some tribes in Ireland, were subjected to a foreign ruling class, decided to overthrow it as they were dissatisfied. The ruling class was almost exterminated, and only three pregnant women managed to escape to Scotland. The Irish tribes, however, suffering various deprivations and realizing that they cannot govern themselves, decided to search for good rulers who would be accepted by all. For this reason they send an embassy “beyond the sea” and asked the three Princes -legitimate successors now- to return to Ireland; the latter, accepting the invitation and dividing the country among themselves, concluded a treaty with the local tribes, thereby becoming the founders of the Irish dynasty41.

Without ignoring the obvious similarities between the “calling of the Princes” and the Irish poem, we may here suggest that, apart from the aforementioned Byzantine sources (Theophanes Confessor and Constantine Porphyrogenitus), another main pattern for the formation of an ethnogenetic myth of the Rus’ by the author of the RPC derives from early medieval Western historiography. At this point, we can turn our focus on the Chronicle of Fredegar (c. 660), which is the main source of information for the short-lived hegemony of Samo (623-658). The Frankish Samo arrived with his retinue to the land of the Winedi “who are also called Slavs” (probably in present-day Bohemia) to trade with them, and soon thereafter these Slavs revolted against the Avars. After the successful outcome of the rebellion, the Slavs elected him as their ruler in recognition of his abilities. According to Fredegar, the Avars were wintering in the areas of the Winedi and, apart from their harvest, which they received as annual tribute, they also took their wives. The children who had been born by these Slav women were those who actually revolted against their fathers and shook off the Avar rule42. Considering the possible way of transmission and influences of

the *Chronicle* of Fredegar in the *RPC*, certain scholars assume that there is a direct connection between the two Chronicles with “intermediate” a lost Moravian source of the late ninth/early tenth century, or even that the dissemination of the first began with an abundance of ninth-century copies.\(^{43}\)

Although the description at first sight is not so similar to *Sóerchlanda Érenn uile*, the *Chronicle* of Fredegar was clearly familiar to the author of the *RPC*, as evidenced by the passage describing the oppression of the Slavs by the Avars. In his version, the author of the redaction replaces the *Winedi* with the Slavic tribe of *Dulebi*, who lived by the Bug River in Volhynia, and presents the Avars (*Obri*) as giants who deal with the consequences of the Divine Trial for what they committed against the Slavs:

> и мало єго не йша· си же добрѣ воєваху на Словѣнѣ· и примучиша Дулѣбъı· суща Словѣнъı· и насильє творѧху женамъ Дулѣбьскихъ· аще поѣхати будѧше

> вѣрнъ· не лѣжьте къемъ въ иконостасъ. Въ градѣ же и во еже бѣлое суща пристъвиѧ, "и по томъ бѣлыѧ вѣрныѧ, не стаетъ въ домѣ, а жити гдѣ вздумаѧ. Тогда же суща вѣрнаѧ, не стаетъ въ домѣ, а жити гдѣ вздумаѧ. Вѣрнаѧ, не стаетъ въ домѣ, а жити гдѣ вздумаѧ."


43. See CURTA, Slavs in Fredegar, 150.

44. ΛΔΟ, col. 11-12. *RPC*, 55-56: They made war upon the Slavs, and harassed the Dulebians, who were themselves Slavs. When an Avar made a journey, he did not cause either a horse or a steer to be harnessed, but gave command instead that three of four or five women should be yoked to his cart and be made to draw him. Even thus they harassed the Dulebians. The Avars were large of stature and proud of spirit, and God destroyed them. They all perished, and not one Avar survived. There is to this day a proverb in Rus’ which runs, “They perished like the Avars”. Neither race nor heir of them remains. ΠΒΛ, 14, 230-231. A. KOLLAUTZ, Nestors Quelle über die Unterdrückung der Duleben durch die Obri (Awaren), *Die Welt der Slawen* 27/2 (1982), 307-320. Fritze, Untersuchungen, 100. CURTA, Fredegar, 150. POHL, *Steppe Empire*, 138-139.
the customs of barbarian peoples, which the RPC applies to the tribes of Eastern Europe. Additionally, the ethnogenetic traditions that he presents form the necessary background for the beginnings of different tribes or peoples. The influences of Byzantine literature suggest that the author of the RPC was also inspired by the ideological framework of the Byzantines, who set as their ultimate aim the gradual integration of all peoples into the Christian οἰκουμένη. In the case of the RPC, one can understand as οἰκουμένη the territory of Kievan Rus’ at the time that its rulers, beginning with Vladimir, attempted to Christianize the tribes under their control. In this context, it is no mere coincidence that, when referring to the pagan Slavs, the RPC emphasizes customs that denote their barbarism and low cultural level, contrary to the Christian principles, in order to ideologically legitimize the integration of the Rus’ into the Christian οἰκουμένη by the Rurikids. Although the RPC may be regarded as a Rus’ origo gentis, the Christianization of the Eastern European tribes under the authority of the Kievan Princes is the turning point for their entry to civilization as well as their incorporation into the Christian οἰκουμένη.
ΠΡΟΤΥΠΑ ΤΗΣ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ
ΣΤΟ ΠΡΩΙΜΟ ΡΩΣΙΚΟ ΧΡΟΝΙΚΟ

Το Πρώιμο Ρωσικό Χρονικό, η μόνη πηγή αναφορικά με τις συνθήκες διαμόρφωσης της Ρωσίας του Κιέβου, εμφανίζει αρχετές επιφορές από τη βυζαντινή λογοτεχνία, καθώς και ορισμένες από τη Δύση. Πιθανόν όχι συμπτωματικά, όταν αναφέρεται στους παγανιστές Σλάβους, το Χρονικό δίνει έμφαση στα έθιμα που υποδηλώνουν βαρβαρότητα και χαμηλό πολιτισμικό επίπεδο και βρίσκονται σε αντίθεση με τις χριστιανικές αρχές. Η μελέτη εστιάζει στην πολυμορφία των ιστοριογραφικών προτύπων του Χρονικού, τα οποία αφορούν κυρίως: α) πρότυπα της συριακής εκκλησιαστικής ιστοριογραφίας (κοινοί τόποι για τους βαρβαρικούς λαούς και κατανομή του κόσμου από τους τρεις γιους του Νώε), τα οποία προέρχονται από τη βυζαντινή γραμματεία, β) τις ομοιότητες που παρατηρούνται μεταξύ του Χρονικού και των βυζαντινών πηγών ως προς την παράθεση εθνογενετικών μύθων, γ) την καταπίεση των Σλάβων από τους Αβάρους, η οποία αναφέρεται από τον Φρεδεγάριο. Η συνολική εξέταση των παραπάνω οδηγεί στο συμπέρασμα ότι ο συγγραφέας του Χρονικού ήταν σε θέση να μεταπλάσει και να προσαρμόσει στα δεδομένα της εποχής του τα ιστοριογραφικά πρότυπα που άντλησε από βυζαντινές και δυτικές πηγές, προβάλλοντας τη δική του εικοσή για τα ήθη ή την προέλευση διαφόρων φύλων και λαών της Ανατολικής Ευρώπης. Επίσης, σε ιδεολογικό επίπεδο, ο εκχριστιανισμός των Ρως είναι το καθοριστικό σημείο για τη μετάβαση τους στον πολιτισμό και την ενσωμάτωσή τους στη χριστιανική οικουμένη.