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M. S. DRINOV ON RUS' AND BYZANTIUM AS ENEMIES OF BULGARIA IN THE TENTH CENTURY

У статті досліджується сприйняття та оцінка М. С. Дриновим образів ворогів Болгарії у візантійсько-болгарсько-руському протистоянні. Особливу увагу звернено на ступінь впливу особистих суспільно-політичних поглядів науковця на тлумачення болгаро-візантійської війни 966 – 972 рр. та боротьби князя Святослава за панування на Балканах. Пропонується висновок про більш лояльне ставлення М. С. Дринова до Візантії як супротивника Болгарії, аніж до Русі. Візантійське панування, на думку вченого, могло б забезпечити подальший розвиток болгарського суспільства шляхом наслідування кращих досягнень візантійської цивілізації. Можливість опинитися під владою язичника Святослава відкинула б болгар назад у ще недавнє варварство, з якого їм вдалося вийти завдяки Імперії.

Ключові слова: М. С. Дринов, I Болгарське царство, Київська Русь, Святослав.

В статье исследуется восприятие и оценка М. С. Дриновым образов врагов Болгарии в византийско-болгарско-русском противостоянии. Особенное внимание уделяется степени влияния личных общественно-политических взглядов ученого на трактовку болгаро-византийской войны 966 – 972 гг. и борьбы князя Святослава за господство на Балканах. Предлагается вывод о более лояльном отношении М. С. Дринова к Византии как к врагу Болгарии, чем к Руси. Византийское господство, по мнению ученого, могло бы обеспечить дальнейшее развитие болгарского общества путем наследования лучших достижений византийской цивилизации. Возможность оказаться под властью язычника Святослава откинула бы болгар назад в еще недавнее варварство, из которого им удалось выйти благодаря Империи.

Ключевые слова: М. С. Дринов, I Болгарское царство, Киевская Русь, Святослав.

The article deals with M. S. Drinov's perception and evaluation of the enemies of Bulgaria in the Russo-Byzantine-Bulgarian confrontation of the tenth century. Particular attention is paid to the impact of Drinov's personal socio-political views on his interpretation of the Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 966 – 972 and Prince Sviatoslav's struggle for supremacy in the Balkans. The author concludes that Drinov treated Byzantium as the enemy of Bulgaria more loyally than Rus'. Byzantine rule, according to Drinov, was able to ensure further development of Bulgarian society via following the best achievements of Byzantine civilization. Submitting to pagan Svyatoslav would have thrown Bulgarians back into the recent barbarity, which they had managed to overcome with the help of Byzantium.

Key words: M. Drinov, the First Bulgarian State, Kyiv Rus', Svyatoslav.

Among the rich heritage of the Kharkiv University Professor Marin Stoyan Drinov (1838-1906), his doctoral thesis *The Southern Slavs and Byzantium in the Tenth Century* (Moscow, 1876) is highly esteemed by historians [1, с. 124; 7, с. 516, 555; 10, с. 239; 16, с. 821; 19, с. 387; 26; 27]. This study is one of Drinov's main intellectual achievements. It allows us to count him among both the Slavists and Byzantinologists of the Kharkiv University. Drinov ventured into Byzantine studies mostly in the context of exploring the medieval history of Southern Slavs, and he dealt primarily with the problems of military, political, ethnic, and church history of Byzantium [1, с. 119].

The Southern Slavs and Byzantium in the Tenth Century is not devoid of an emotional slant, and it demonstrates well the influence of the personal socio-political views of the scholar on his perception and interpretation of the events of the Southern-Slavic medieval history, in particular on the Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 966-972 and Prince Sviatoslav's struggle for control over the Balkans.

Drinov's view of the events of Bulgaria's medieval history was significantly influenced by his national identity as a Bulgarian. His deep patriotic feelings and his personal involvement in the struggle of Bulgarians for independence from the Ottoman Empire help explain a certain bias in the scholar's treatment of medieval conflicts in the Balkans. A characteristic trait of *The Southern Slavs and Byzantium in the Tenth Century* is the way Drinov transfers his heartfelt concerns for the fate of Bulgarians living under the yoke of Ottoman Turkey in the first half of the 1870s, when the work was written, onto the events of the tenth century. In the scholar's vision, the main oppressor of his native people in the middle ages was Byzantium, joined by Rus' and her ruler, the warlike Sviatoslav.

In historiography, there are several viewpoints concerning Drinov's identity as a historian. Bulgarian historians, as a rule, recall his leading role in the establishment of historical scholarship in independent Bulgaria and consider Drinov a Bulgarian scholar [see for instance 1, c. 119; 2, c. 117; 31, c. 9]. In Soviet historiography, Drinov was predominantly thought to have belonged to the Russian historical school [9; 15; 29]. Kharkiv scholars S. Strashniuk and S. Lyman offer evidence in favor of Drinov's close ties to the contemporary Ukrainian scholarship [20, c. 70], although in a different article S. Lyman calls him a Bulgarian and Russian Slavist [21]. The latter statement appears to be more prudent. It seems reasonable to identify a scholar who received his higher education in the Kyiv Theological Seminary and Moscow University and worked in Kharkiv University for more than thirty years as a representative of the Russian historical-philological school. At the same time, Drinov's achievements as the founder of historical scholarship in independent Bulgaria are obvious [see for instance 16, c. 821-822; 4, c. 3].

Drinov's authorial identity as a Bulgarian patriot is clearly evident in Chapter Four of his doctoral thesis, which deals with the struggle between the Byzantine Empire and the First Bulgarian Empire for control over the Danube and with Prince Sviatoslav's forays into the Balkans in 967 and 969. About this complex historical subject a known Russian historian S. A. Ivanov aptly notes that in many studies «the period appears as a collection of amorphous disparate facts» [8, c. 88]. Drinov, one of the first to turn to this conflict [37, c. 555], clearly acknowledges its difficult and uncertain character owing to contradictions in chroniclers' testimonies and to never-ending changes in the balance of power. The author speaks of the erroneous viewpoints of many of his predecessors on the events of the second half of the 960s in the Bulgarian lands and proclaims the traditional for positivist historiography goal of establishing the so-called «correct view» of the Russo-Byzantine war and its significance in Bulgarian history [6, c. 91-92]. He thus in fact claims his own neutrality in the evaluation of these events.

Drinov repeatedly offers in his work an image of Byzantium as Bulgaria's enemy when he turns to the events from the mid-ninth to the first third of the tenth century [19, 387-388; 6, c. 9-10, 18-19, 27-28, 70, 74, 78, 84]. Evaluating the relationship between Byzantium and Bulgaria through the duration of the peace treaty of 927, he notes the potential danger for the Bulgarians from the Byzantine Empire, notwithstanding the prolonged friendly relations between the two powers and the high status of Bulgarian ambassadors at the Byzantine Court [6, c. 68-69]. Drinov stresses the negative views of the Greeks prevalent among Bulgarians and the latter's dissatisfaction with the policies of Tsar Peter (927-968). This was especially so for the generation that formed during the reign of Simeon (893-927), who taught «to disbelieve the Greeks' words and to look at the Empire as a ghost» [6, c. 70].

As the main reasons for the breaking of the Byzantine-Bulgarian peace treaty of 927, which was in force for more than forty years, Drinov points to duplicitous actions by Byzantines. Among such actions were support of the Serbs, who broke with Bulgaria and became Byzantium's vassals, and the uncovering of Bulgarian state secrets by deceiving Tsar Peter (927-969). The internal weakening of Bulgaria owing to the unpopular pro-Byzantine policies of Peter, to the Bogomil heresy, and to the growth of opposition among the boyars made the state highly vulnerable in the face of warlike neighbors, and the Byzantine rulers had not abandoned plans to seize the part of the Theme of Thrace lost to Tsar Simeon [6, c. 69; 10, c. 240; 33, c. 175-176; 39, c. 90].

On the other hand, Drinov speaks positively about the Tsar and stresses his honest fulfillment of the agreements with the Byzantine government – namely, the military and diplomatic help to the Byzantines in their struggle against Prince Igor and the Arabs. Drinov believes that Tsar Peter was excessively credulous and that he discovered the Byzantines' treacherous designs only shortly before his death [6,

c. 70]. In his unequivocal characterizations of the «good Tsar» and «evil Byzantines,» Drinov does not take into account the competition between the three powers in the Northern and Western Black Sea littoral and disapproves of Emperor Nikephoros' quite natural and just desire to regain Thracia lost to Simeon.

Among the causes of the conflict that began in 966, Drinov also names: Bulgarians' refusal to break peace with Hungarians and to forbid them to cross the Danube into the Byzantine lands; an insult to the Bulgarian ambassadors during the reception at the Court of Emperor Nikephoros Phokas (963-969); and Byzantium's refusal to pay traditional tribute to Bulgarians [6, c. 92]. Tsarina Maria-Irina (927-963) had led the party of peace at the Bulgarian Court, and after her death in 965 Tsar Peter fell under the influence of warlike boyars who demanded from him decisive action against the Empire. It was this anti-imperial group of boyars that pressed Peter into sending an embassy to Constantinople with a demand to resume paying tribute to Bulgaria [34, c. 199; 38 c. 59; 30, c. 139].

S. Runciman supposes that the tribute was to be paid only during the life of Tsarina Maria-Irina as a dowry, the Bulgarian demands of tribute after her death were against the terms of the treaty and they quite justly caused the Emperor's dissatisfaction [34, c. 199]. Leo the Deacon, at the same time, does not even mention such a fact [17, c. 36], and S. A. Ivanov considers Nikephoros Phokas' insulting speech to the ambassadors an invention of the chronicler, noting that the payment of tribute to her allies was a traditional practice for the Byzantine Empire [17, c. 182, note 8].

With Sviatoslav's arrival in the Balkans, the First Bulgarian Empire acquired a new enemy. Trusting too much the testimonies of Leo the Deacon, whose *History* is his main (and often the only) source for the study of these events, Drinov more often finds Bulgarian sympathies to be on the Byzantine side. However, in the complex standoff between the three powers that began in the mid-960s, Bulgarians had to ally themselves intermittently both with the Empire and with Rus' [see for example: 35; 22; 24; 30, c. 140-141; 12, c. 105; 28, c. 80].

The Rus' ruler Sviatoslav's intervention into the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict was owing to the designs of Nikephoros Phokas. The Empire's strength had been depleted in the constant struggle with the Arabs, and so a reliable ally was necessary in order to wage war in the Balkans. Agreeing with M. Pogodin's view, Drinov explains the Emperor's choice by the Rus' superiority over Pechenegs in military power and skill [32, c. 52]; further, because of its distance from Byzantium, Rus' was probably not at that time a threat to the Empire. Moreover, the terms of the 944 treaty concerning military help to the Empire by the Rus', evidently confirmed by Princess Olga in 957, were still in force. But according to G. Litavrin and I. Sorlin, the request for an expedition against the Bulgarians, addressed to Sviatoslav, went beyond the terms of the Russo-Byzantine agreement of 944, which is evidenced by the fact that the Byzantine ambassadors gave Sviatoslav a large quantity of gold [22, c. 233; 40, p. 470]. Drinov also explains drawing Sviatoslav into the war with Bulgaria by Nikephoros' desire to strengthen his army, to put Tsar Peter into a difficult situation, and to eliminate the possibility of Bulgarian retaliation for the breaking of the peace treaty of 927 by the Empire. Furthermore, Nikephoros hoped to entirely subjugate Peter's country with the help of the Rus' [6, c. 97].

Shortly after Sviatoslav's invasion of Bulgaria the Emperor changed his plans. Betraying his agreement with Kyiv, Nikephoros established an alliance with Peter, and Sviatoslav began fighting for mastery over the Balkans; he even planned to invade the Empire's domains. In G. Obolensky's apt words, «Nikephoros' diplomacy created a monster that he was not able to tame» [30, c. 140; 41, p. 470]. Drinov explains the change in Nikephoros' plans by the military setbacks that Byzantines suffered in Southern Italy and by the country's exhaustion in the struggle against Arabs, which sparked a popular discontent with the policies of the government. All this forced the Emperor to seek a rapprochement with Peter. The latter, in his turn, agreed to restore peace, satisfied Nikephoros' requests, sent to Constantinople two brides for the Emperor's sons, and also transferred there his own heirs Roman and Constantine [6, c. 98; 37, c. 559; 34, c. 202-203, 348, note 46; 35, c. 78; 41, p. 467; 8, c. 89]. V. Chorniy offers a cogent explanation for this union between Byzantium and Bulgaria: he argues that the goal of it was to prevent the potential seizures of imperial domains by Sviatoslav and his claims on the Byzantine crown [38, c. 61]. Thus Byzantium and Bulgaria joined forces in order to expel Sviatoslav from the Balkans. Drinov approves of Peter's government's actions and considers the union between Bulgaria and its erstwhile enemy fully

justified. The army of Prince Sviatoslav now became a new, more dangerous threat to the Bulgarian state [6, c. 99-100].

Drinov criticizes the viewpoint of O. Chertkov and S. Solovyov that in the summer and autumn of 968 the Prince subjugated the entire Bulgaria and several Byzantine cities [6, c. 94-95]. Agreeing with O. Gilferding [3, c. 142], Drinov ascertains only the fact of the conquest of a section of the Danube where Little Preslav (Pereyaslavets) was located [6, c. 95]. This hypothesis about the scale of Sviatoslav's conquests in 968 is backed by modern scholars as well [e.g. 23, c. 233; 38, c. 6; 35, c. 139-140; 30, c. 139-140]. The war was temporarily interrupted because the Prince had to return to Kyiv in order to defend it from the Pechenegs in the spring of 969 (according to the chronology of P. Karishkovsky – M. D.) [13, c. 138]. Drinov does not make any conjectures about the possibility of a union between the Pechenegs and Byzantium or Bulgaria, but twentieth-century scholars have seen the nomads' assault on Kyiv as more than a coincidence [37, c. 558; 34, c. 204; 30, c. 140; 35, c. 139; 11, c. 179].

After the return of Sviatoslav to Kyiv in the autumn of 968, the peace between Peter and Byzantium persisted. Peter's sons lived at the Byzantine Court and they remained there after their father's death. Less than a year later Sviatoslav returned to the Danube with firm intentions to conquer Bulgaria. In the summer of 969 the Rus' took Pereyaslavets, and soon Sviatoslav captured almost all of Tsar Peter's domains between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains, seized the capital of East Bulgaria, Veliki Preslav, and took the Tsar and his family prisoners. Having left his *voyevodas* in Preslav, the Prince crossed the Balkan Mountains in the spring of 970 into the Thracian domains of Boris II [6, c. 100; 10, c. 242]. During this time Bulgarians were left virtually without help from Byzantium, whose forces were fighting for Antioch [17, c. 46]. Finding themselves in a hopeless situation and responding to the perceived Byzantine treachery, Bulgaria resorted to joining forces with the erstwhile enemy, the Rus' Prince [17, c. 58; 36, c. 122; 28, c. 86-87; 12, c. 105; 35, c. 165; 41, c. 479]. V. Chorny calls Tsar Boris II «an involuntary ally and virtually a hostage of Sviatoslav» in this situation. A split occurred within the ruling elite of Bulgaria: the boyars opposed to Byzantium made peace with the Rus' power, and the rest of the elite were in favor of an alliance with the Empire [38, c. 61].

To the image of Sviatoslav the conqueror Drinov adds the story about tortures inflicted on the twenty thousand inhabitants of the city of Philippopolis (now Plovdiv). Although this episode illustrates well the author's perception of Sviatoslav as a warlike cruel conqueror, Drinov considers the number of victims given by Leo the Deacon to be exaggerated [6, c. 100; 17, c. 199, note 62]. In their commentaries to the Russian translation of Leo the Deacon's *History*, S. Ivanov and G. Litavrin explain the large-scale terror in Philippopolis by the city's proximity to the Byzantine border and the wide-spread pro-Empire leanings, stronger there than in the north-east of Bulgaria [17, c. 199, note 62]. P. Karishkovsky supposes that before Sviatoslav's arrival Philippopolis was under Byzantine jurisdiction, and that the Rus' prince tortured and executed captive Greeks rather than Bulgarians [12, c. 103].

Drinov correctly explains Sviatoslav's successes in conquering Bulgarian lands and in reaching the borders of the Empire by the lack of help from Byzantium, the Emperor being at this time in Asia. Furthermore, the author notes the crisis of power in Byzantium, which ended in the murder of Nikephoros Phokas and the coming to power of John Tzimiskes (969-976) [6, c. 100]. After failed peace negotiations, a new phase of conflict began, which is known in historiography as the Russo-Byzantine war of 970-971 [e.g. 35, c. 146]. In fact, this was now a struggle between Byzantium and Rus' for the eastern Bulgarian lands. The government of Tsar Boris, who had lost his power, was unable to rally Bulgarians for struggle against the invaders. In relating these events, Drinov mostly refrains from unequivocal interpretations, considering both powers to be equally dangerous enemies to Bulgaria; however, he does mention the joining of Sviatoslav's army by Hungarians and by many Bulgarians, often voluntarily, and sometimes not [6, c. 101].

Drinov finds the results of the large battle at Adrianopolis in the summer of 970 to be in favor of the Rus', citing the *Primary Chronicle* [see for instance 25, c. 41] and criticizing the testimonies of Leo the Deacon. But Drinov's suppositions were not accepted by later historians; further, the dominant view is that the battle took place near the city of Arcadiopolis and ended in Byzantine victory [17, c. 202, note 88; 34, c. 209; 38, c. 62]. The subsequent plans of John Tzimiskes centered on capturing Preslav, but the offensive

was delayed for almost a year because of the Emperor's new expedition to Asia, while Sviatoslav remained in Bulgaria. For the time being the Emperor secured his domains from potential Rus' assaults with a peace agreement. Sviatoslav, whose army was exhausted by the long war, accepted lavish gifts and tribute from Byzantium; the tribute was paid for all of his men, alive and dead. The Prince returned to Pereyaslavets [6, c. 104; 35, c. 174].

Trusting Byzantine sources, Drinov describes the taking of the Bulgarian capital by John Tzimiskes in March 971 as a liberation from the Rus' yoke. Veliki Preslav was captured in one day, and the remainders of the Rus' army fled to Dorostolon, where Sviatoslav was at the time. Drinov explains that the Prince's defeat was due to the Rus' not guarding the passages through the Balkan Mountains nor expecting a Byzantine assault. The author also does not rule out help to Tzimiskes from the city's inhabitants [6, 105-106]. After the Byzantines captured Preslav, the areas only recently controlled by Sviatoslav began switching to their side [6, c. 107; 41, p. 486; 23, c. 234].

The last step in the seizure of eastern Bulgaria by the Greeks was a three-month-old exhausting siege of Dorostolon. The defeat of the Rus' army and a peace agreement according to which Sviatoslav had to withdraw troops from Bulgaria and not to attack Chersonesos [5] were the outcome of the five-year-old conflict between the three powers in the Balkans. Bulgarians did not take part in the negotiations – Tsar Boris II had already lost all power and submitted to Byzantium.

Drinov refrains from negative characterizations of Greek actions in conquering Bulgaria and stresses that the Emperor did not allow his troops to pillage occupied Bulgarian lands, even though there are known facts of the plundering of Orthodox churches and some towns and fortresses by the Byzantines [17, c. 72, 78]. In fact, the scholar agrees with the testimony of John Skilitza [36, c. 125-126] about Tzimiskes' intentions to liberate Bulgarians from the Rus' slavery and about his enmity only towards the Rus'. Noting the placement of Greek garrisons in large cities and the renaming of Preslav into Ioannopolis and Dorostolon into Theodoropolis [17, c. 81; 6, c. 107], Drinov passes in silence over the unpleasant for Bulgaria fact of the humiliating dethronement of Tsar Boris II. He also does not mention the triumphant entry of Tzimiskes into Constantinople [17, c. 82-83; 35, c. 176-177; 7, c. 598; 30, c. 141] after his return from Bulgaria. Thus we believe that Drinov tries to downplay Byzantine hostility towards Bulgaria.

As we can see, the «anti-Byzantine position» of Drinov, though a common knowledge in historiography [see for instance 4, c. 177; 19, c. 385], remains almost without confirmation in his depiction of the Russo-Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict of 966-971. The author refrains from negative characterizations of Greeks, considering the conquest of Bulgaria by the Rus' worse than Byzantine control. Drinov views Byzantines as a «lesser evil» for Bulgarians than the Rus'. This view is confirmed by the cited examples of the Rus' army's atrocities in Bulgaria, such as the execution of over three hundred boyars and twenty thousand civilian population. The author sympathizes with the Orthodox Emperors more than with the pagan Rus' Prince; at least the actions of the Byzantines in the Bulgarian lands are not depicted negatively, although it is unlikely that they refrained from pillage.

Turning the eastern areas of the Bulgarian state into a Byzantine province made them closer to the powerful Empire and was objectively a progressive development. The rule of the familiar Byzantine Empire, with its orderly system of government and shared Orthodox faith, appeared to Drinov a better outcome for Bulgarians. It was to assure a further development of Bulgarian society by following the lead of the brilliant Byzantine civilization. The possible submission to the rule of the cruel pagan Rus' Prince Sviatoslav, on the other hand, would have thrown Bulgarians back into the recent barbarity, which they had managed to escape thanks to the Empire.

Analyzing the context of Drinov's study thus shows that, according to the scholar, Bulgarians saw in Byzantium their near future and were determined to follow the Byzantine example in developing their statehood. Sviatoslav's Rus', on the other hand, presented to them an image of their recent barbaric past to which they by no means wanted to return. We can say that in his study *Southern Slavs and Byzantium in the Tenth Century* Drinov came very near to the key idea in the conception of the Byzantine Commonwealth, formulated almost a hundred years later by D. Obolensky [30]. This conception underscored the attractiveness of the Byzantine model for the ruling elites of the peoples that entered the imperial orbit. The elites' wish to copy the Byzantine civilization paradoxically went hand in hand with

hostility towards the Empire's universalist pretensions and with a desire to distance themselves from the Empire and to affirm their own independence. At the same time, when it was necessary to choose between Byzantium and a more backward semi-barbaric nation, the choice was unequivocally in favor of the Empire.

Referencies

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