



## Image of Late Antique Rome and the Popes in the *Chronicle* of George the Monk<sup>1</sup>

Obraz późnoantycznego Rzymu i papieży w *Kronice* Jerzego Mnicha

Rafał Kosiński<sup>2</sup>

---

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to analyse the picture of late antique Rome and the papacy as outlined in the ninth century in the pages of the *Chronicle* of George the Monk. As a result, it can be concluded that the Byzantine chronicler's interest in Rome drastically declines as Emperor Constantine begins to reside in Constantinople. With the return of Emperor Theodosius I from Italy to the Bosphorus, George the Monk pays little attention to events in the West, the only exception being the emphasised leading role of the Bishop of Rome within the pentarchy system, especially during the subsequent Councils. However, this applies only to the version of the so-called vulgate, while the version known from the manuscript Coislinianus 305 ignores almost completely the role of the pope in the ecclesial system of the empire.

**Keywords:** George the Monk (Hamartolos); Rome; Papacy in the fourth and fifth centuries; manuscript Coislinianus 305; the Baptism of the Emperor Constantine

---

George the Monk was an opponent of iconoclasm, and during the period of the iconoclastic dispute, icon defenders in conflict with the imperial court often looked to the pope, seeing him as a defender of orthodoxy independent of the emperor. Appeals for help and intervention were made by Eastern icon defenders to Popes Hadrian I (772-795), Paschalis I (817-824), and Eugenius II (824-827), among others<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, at the time of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, the main argument for declaring the decisions of the iconoclastic synod

---

<sup>1</sup> This article has been written under the research project financed by the National Science Centre (Poland). Decision number: 2022/47/B/HS3/00389. This is an extended version of my paper presented at the VII Ogólnopolska Konferencja Bizantynistyczna, which took place on 14-15 November 2024 in Lublin.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. dr hab. Rafał Kosiński, Faculty of History, University of Białystok, Poland; e-mail: r.kosinski@uwb.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0003-1245-6729.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Theodore the Studite's letters from 817 to Pope Paschal I (*Epistulae* 271 and 272 (ed. Fatouros, v. 2, p. 399-403), in which Theodore informs the Pope about the persecution of iconodules and asks him for support.

of Hieria (754) invalid was that this synod had not gained the support of the Pope<sup>4</sup>.

This article is an attempt to present what image of the papacy and Rome is drawn in the pages of George's *Chronicle*, which witnessed the last wave of Byzantine iconoclasm and its eventual collapse. In it, I will focus on the period of late antiquity, when relations between Rome and Constantinople remained intense and Christological disputes, in which the views of the emperor and the pope differed, frequent. Accordingly, this paper analyses the part of the *Chronicle* devoted to the period from the reign of Constantius Chlorus to the end of the reign of Anastasius.

## 1. Preliminary remarks

George the Monk's *Chronicle* is a summary of world history from its Creation to the death of Emperor Theophilus (829-842) and the beginning of the reign of his successor, Michael III (842-867). Despite this, the author has little interest in accurately reflecting past political events, for his main aim is to give a history of the spiritual development of the world, a description of God's miraculous work in the world, and in the imperial period events related to Church history become dominant for him, supplemented by theological commentary taken, usually in the form of a literal quotation or cento of quotations, from Scripture and the works of the Church Fathers<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> See *Refutatio definitionis synodi Hieriae*, ACO II 3/3, p. 608, 2-4: "οὐκ ἔσχε συνεργὸν τὸν τῆνικαῦτα τῆς Ῥωμαίων πάπαν ἢ τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν ἱερεῖς οὔτε διὰ τοποτηρητῶν αὐτοῦ οὔτε δι' ἐγκυκλίου ἐπιστολῆς, καθὼς νόμος ἐστὶ ταῖς συνόδοις" ("It did not enjoy the cooperation of the then pope of Rome or his priests, neither by means of his representatives or an encyclical letter, as is the rule for councils", tr. R. Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, Liverpool 2018, p. 442).

<sup>5</sup> On the *Chronicle* of George the Monk, see C. de Boor, *Praefatio*, in: *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, v. 1, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1904, p. V-LXXXIII; H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, v. 1: *Philosophie, Rhetorik, Epistolographie, Geschichtsschreibung, Geographie*, München 1978, p. 347-351; W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, Basingstoke 2013, p. 114-120; D.E. Afinogenov – A.A. Turilov – G.V. Popov, *Georgij Amartol*, in: *Pravoslavnaja enciklopedija*, v. 11: *Georgij-Gomar*, Moscow 2006, p. 48-56; R. Brendel, *Monachos, Georgios*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, v. 47, Nordhausen 2024, c. 1065-1109. At the turn of the second and third millennium, the debate about whether De Boor's published version of the vulgate was the original version of the *Chronicle* of George, or whether it was rather the version from the manuscript Coislinianus 305 was reopened

In the *Chronicle* of George the Monk, two versions can be distinguished, whose discrepancies, starting with the description of the end of Emperor Julian's reign, go beyond typical additions and corrections, indicating the existence of a systematic reworking of the work. One of these versions (version P) has survived only in the Coislinianus 305 manuscript, a card from the *Vindobonensis Theologicus graecus* 121 manuscript, and a fragment from Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*. A Serbian translation of this version, known as *Letovnik*, has also survived, probably dating from the second half of the fourteenth century. The second version (the vulgate), is present in all other Greek manuscripts. This version was widely used in Byzantium and forms the basis for other translations of the *Chronicle* into Slavonic. Carl de Boor concluded that version P was earlier and constituted a kind of draft of the work, while the vulgate was a later, refined version of the *Chronicle*. De Boor assumed that both versions were written by George the Monk. According to Marie-Aude Monégier du Sorbier, the vulgate is the older version, written by George himself, while the version found in the Coislinianus 305 manuscript is a later revision. Finally, Dmitri Afinogenov returned to De Boor's concept and considered version P to be the original, and the vulgate to be a later revision, but he attributed the authorship of the latter not to George, but to an unknown editor. Afinogenov dates the creation of version P to 846/847. The vulgate, on the other hand, is usually dated to around 871/872<sup>6</sup>.

When analysing the image of late antique Rome and the papacy presented in this work, it is impossible to ignore the problem of the existence of these two basic versions of the *Chronicle*, as the differences between the two versions in relation to the issue discussed here are significant, as can be seen in this paper. However, I would like to emphasise that the aim of this article is not to decide which of these versions is the original. The conclusions from the analysis carried out here may, however, serve in the future as one of the possible clues in an attempt to determine the relationship between the two versions<sup>7</sup>.

---

by Dmitri Afinogenov (*The Date of Georgios Monachos Reconsidered*, Byz 92 (1999) p. 437-447; *Le manuscrit grec Coislin. 305: la version primitive de la Chronique de Georges le Moine*, REB 62 (2004) p. 239-246).

<sup>6</sup> D.E. Afinogenov – A.A. Turilov – G.V. Popov, *Georgij Amartol*, in: *Pravoslavnaja enciklopedija*, v. 11: *Georgij-Gomar*, Moscow 2006, p. 48-56; R. Brendel, *Monachos, Georgios*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, v. 47, Nordhausen 2024, c. 1065-1109.

<sup>7</sup> I will conclude my analysis of the relationship between the two traditions of George the Monk's *Chronicle* in the introduction to the edition of both versions of

For the purposes of this article, I would just like to point out that Coislinianus 305, currently considered to be a copy of the original version of the *Chronicle*, is a corrupted manuscript and does not reflect the full version P, as Dmitri Afinogenov has already pointed out on the basis of a comparison of the aforementioned manuscript with the Slavonic translation of this version, *Letovnik*, as in the passage from the reign of Theodosius II, where the Coislinianus 305, quoting an anecdote about Ptolemy, mistakenly mentions the philosopher Socrates (p. 274<sup>v</sup>: Σωκράτην) in a place where *Letovnik* correctly refers to Sotades (p. 274<sup>v</sup>: Σωτατα)<sup>8</sup>. According to Afinogenov, *Letovnik* is a more complete and reliable source than the Coislinianus 305 manuscript for version P. Furthermore, the Coislinianus 305 ends abruptly on f. 340<sup>v</sup> during the reign of Emperor Constantine V, more precisely on the description of the Paulician sect<sup>9</sup>, so we cannot be sure to which year it was completed.

If we agree with Afinogenov's thesis that *Letovnik* represents a better text of version P than the Coislinianus 305 manuscript, we should note the fact, not emphasised by this researcher, that *Letovnik* on f. 241<sup>v</sup>, l. 13-244<sup>v</sup>, l. 27, departs completely from the narrative known from Coislinianus 305, and its text corresponds to the narrative of the vulgate present on pp. 550, 13-557, 24 of Carl de Boor's edition. This extensive passage concerns the reigns of Valentinian and Valens. It is completely omitted in the Coislinianus 305<sup>10</sup>. There are two possible explanations for this phenomenon: either *Letovnik*'s translator was familiar with both traditions concerning George's *Chronicle* and supplemented his translation of the version known from the Paris manuscript with this passage from the vulgate, or the text found in the Coislinianus 305 is an abridged version of a more extensive story. In the first case, *Letovnik* cannot be considered a reliable witness to version P; in the second case, the Coislinianus 305 provides a very corrupted copy of this branch of the tradition.

---

the *Chronicle* (including their Slavonic translations), which I am currently finalising and which, I hope, will be published in the near future.

<sup>8</sup> See D.E. Afinogenov, *Sotad v christianskom kontekste*, in: *V Meždunarodnaja Konferencija po Ellinistike Pamjati I.I. Kovalevoj*. Moscow 2019, p. 20-26.

<sup>9</sup> See R. Devreesse, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs*, v. 2: *Le fonds Coislin*, Paris 1945, p. 292-293. C. de Boor (*Praefatio*, in: *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, v. 1, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1904, p. LXI) was not convinced whether the manuscript continued on the following pages, as he noticed that the passage about the Paulicians had been brought to an end, which makes it unclear whether the editor ended his entire story there or whether several subsequent quaternions had been lost in the past.

<sup>10</sup> Until the reign of Emperor Julian, as De Boor noted (*Praefatio*, p. LXII), there were few significant differences between the two versions.

There are also a number of similar minor differences between *Letovnik* and the Paris manuscript<sup>11</sup>.

However, *Letovnik* cannot be considered a fully reliable witness to version P due to the many errors found in its pages. Suffice it to say that this translation states that the Council of Ephesus in 431 was convened against Nectarius (f. 273<sup>v</sup>: на Нектария), not Nestorius. On numerous occasions, the author of the translation failed to understand the meaning of the Greek text on which he based his work. Even in the above-mentioned anecdote about Socrates/Sotades, which Afinogenov used as an argument for the superiority of the Slavonic version over the Coislinianus 305 manuscript, the Slavonic author makes a mistake, failing to understand the Greek text, which refers to Sotades plucking lice in the sun (f. 274<sup>v</sup>: “έν ήλίω φθειριζόμενον”), while *Letovnik* says that the philosopher was basking in the sun (f. 274<sup>v</sup>: “φιλοσοφα на слнці грѣюща се”). In this case, it is Cosilinianus who gives the correct version<sup>12</sup>.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, contrary to De Boor’s claim<sup>13</sup>, in many places the vulgate renders the sources it quotes much more faith-

<sup>11</sup> For example, in his description of the rebellion of the inhabitants of Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Anastasius, *Letovnik* (f. 280<sup>r</sup>) reports that the population “паления многымъ двмомъ сътворише и оубиства прѣмнога съдѣлаше и ина такова страшна же и оужасна (burned many houses, committed many murders and dared to [commit] other very terrible and frightening [acts])”. The phrase about the rebels committing numerous murders (оубиства прѣмнога съдѣлаше) is absent in the Coislinianus 305, but appears in the vulgate (ed. de Boor, p. 620). However, some of these similarities between the texts of the *Letovnik* and the vulgate, as well as the differences between the *Letovnik* and the Coislinianus 305, may be due to the inaccuracy of the scribe or editor of the latter manuscript. For example, a scribe’s mistake may be the reason why the quotation from 1 Corinthians 10:25, both in the vulgate (ed. de Boor, p. 541) and in the *Letovnik* (f. 236<sup>r</sup>), is more complete than in the Coislinianus 305 (f. 241<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>12</sup> There are many more examples of *Letovnik*’s misunderstanding of Greek. For example, when describing the church in Chalkoprateia, he did not understand that in the sentence: “ὄς τὸν ἐν Χαλκοπρατείῳ ναὸν ἔκτισε τῆς θεοτόκου πρότερον ὄντα συναγωγὴν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ τὸ χερσαῖον τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως καταλύσας καὶ προσθεὶς ἄλλα διαστήματα δύο ὠκοδόμησεν ἕτερον τεῖχος δι’ ἡμερῶν ξ’” (f. 273<sup>r</sup>), the phrase “τὸ χερσαῖον τεῖχος” refers to the walls of Constantinople, so he supplemented the information about the Jewish synagogue with the phrase: “и нарицаемою Херсеи ) and called Chersei”.

<sup>13</sup> See de Boor, *Praefatio*, s. LXII. It should be emphasised, however, that De Boor’s remark concerns ecclesiastical writers (*excerpta ex scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*), not all sources. It seems, however, that De Boor’s opinion can be somewhat nuanced in this respect as well. Apart from the quotation from 1 Corinthians mentioned in the previous footnote, it should be noted that, for example, the quotation from Gregory of Nazianzus’ speech (*Oratio* 4, 30, ed. Bernardi, p. 126, 1) in the vulgate (ed. de Boor, p. 543) is more

fully and accurately than the Paris manuscript. This can be observed, for example, in the case of both versions' reproduction of Theodore Lector's *Epitome*. Apart from the information from the period between the reigns of Marcian and Anastasius, which I analysed a few years ago<sup>14</sup>, a similar phenomenon can be observed during the reign of Arcadius, for example in the anecdote about a Macedonian woman who sacrilegiously received communion. The version present in the vulgate is a literal repetition of the text of Theodore Lector's *Epitome* (*Epitome* 285, ed. Hansen, p. 87, 10-21), while the version present in the Coislinianus 305 manuscript is significantly shortened. This observation applies not only to the *Epitome*. For example, in the final story devoted to John Chrysostom, there is an anecdote about a certain bishop who was taken up to heaven in ecstasy to see the fate of the deceased John. The bishop's name, Adelphius, is absent from the pages of the Coislinianus 305 manuscript, but it appears in both the vulgate (ed. de Boor, p. 603) and the *Life of John Chrysostom* by George of Alexandria (*Vita Chrysostomi* 72, ed. Halkin, p. 272), from which it was most likely taken.

However, this does not mean, and I would like to emphasise this very clearly, that I definitively reject the hypothesis that the version P, preserved with numerous errors in the pages of the Coislinianus 305 manuscript, is the original version of the *Chronicle*. I am merely pointing out that this is a more complex issue, and before a comprehensive analysis of both versions, one should not categorically reject the attribution of the vulgate to George the Monk<sup>15</sup>, which is in accordance with the common belief

---

faithful than in the Paris manuscript (f. 241<sup>v</sup>). However, these are rather minor differences, and version P offers much more extensive insertions taken from the Holy Scriptures and the Cappadocian Fathers. In some quotations from patristic works, version P is also more faithful to the preserved versions of these works, as in the case of the letters of Isidore of Pelusium (Isidorus Pelusiota, *Ep.* 1537 and 1538 (ed. Éviéux, v. 2, p. 222-226). In this case, the quotation in Coislinianus 305 (f. 253<sup>v</sup>-254<sup>r</sup>) is more faithful than in the vulgate (ed. de Boor, p. 585-586).

<sup>14</sup> R. Kosiński, *The chronicle by George the Monk and its relation to Theodore Lector's work*, "Res gestae" 5 (2017) p. 46-72.

<sup>15</sup> Even Carl de Boor, who assumed that version P was earlier than the vulgate, believed that both were written by George the Monk. In his opinion, version P was the first, preliminary version of the *Chronicle*, its archetype written by George, which was then refined in a corrected version known as the vulgate, see C. de Boor, *Praefatio*, p. LXIX. It should be noted that the author of the *Chronicle* is completely unknown to us. All we know is that his name was George, he was a monk and he wrote in the ninth century, see Brendel, *Monachos, Georgios*, c. 1065. It therefore seems reasonable to analyse the content of both versions of the *Chronicle*, regardless of which one was written by "real" George.

prevailing in Byzantium, in which I follow Alexander Kazhdan and Warren Treadgold<sup>16</sup>. Finally, I would like to reiterate that this article does not claim to provide a definitive answer to the question of the interdependence of both versions, but only to draw attention to those issues of their relationship in relation to the topic I am analysing, and I will limit myself to these issues in this work.

## 2. Ambiguous description of Constantine's baptism

Although George the Monk places the description of Constantine's baptism in the section on the reign of his father, Constantius Chlorus<sup>17</sup>, these events take place after Constantius' death, and Constantine is already the reigning emperor in the pages of the story. One would have to conclude that the description of the baptism at the hands of Pope Silvester, so important to the opponents of iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries, both historiosophically and politically – it appears, after all, in numerous lives of Constantine written at the time, as well as in historiographical works headed by Theophanes' *Chronography*<sup>18</sup> – would be the most important event in Constantine's reign, which George the Monk locates in Rome. Meanwhile, in this, relatively comprehensive, for it occupies three pages of the Bibliotheca Teubneriana edition, the story of the emperor's illness and miraculous cure in the waters of baptism, George nowhere explicitly mentions that it takes place in Rome. Admittedly, this placement seems to be due to the wider context, the author also hints at an assembly of the Senate<sup>19</sup>, but this is the only information that

<sup>16</sup> A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850-1000)*, v. 2, ed. Ch. Angelidi, Athens 2006, p. 45; W. Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, Basingstoke 2013, p. 114, n. 120.

<sup>17</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, p. 485, 4-487, 20; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 219<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> On this issue see R. Kosiński, *A Few Remarks on the Description of the Baptism of the Emperor Constantine in the Chronicle of George the Monk, Actus Silvestri, and the Byzantine Hagiographical Tradition*, "Classica Cracoviensia" 27 (2024) p. 187-215.

<sup>19</sup> The aforementioned passus recounts how Constantine, ill with leprosy and concerned about the fate of the children who were to be murdered so that the emperor could recover from bathing in their blood, addresses the senate ("πρὸς τὴν σύγκλητον") with the words (ed. de Boor, p. 485, 17-21): "καλὸν μοι μᾶλλον ἔστιν ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας τῶν ἀναιτίων ἀποθανεῖν παιδίων ἢ ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνων σφαγῆς ὀμοτάτην καὶ ἀπάνθρωπον ζωὴν ἐπιλέξασθαι, καὶ μάλιστα τῆς ἐκ τούτων ὑγείας ἀμφιβαλλομένης" ("It is better for me to die to save innocent children than to choose a life of the cruellest and inhumanity by

guides the listener to the fact that everything takes place in the imperial capital. Also problematic is the phrase used by the author “εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὸ παλάτιον” (ed. de Boor, p. 485, 21-22). Indeed, the word τὸ παλάτιον means Palatine, the famous Roman hill, but in later Greek it also takes on a general meaning, simply denoting a palace<sup>20</sup>. George the Monk took the description of Constantine’s baptism from the *Actus Silvestri*, the life of Pope Silvester, who, according to the legend contained in its pages, was to baptise the emperor. In the Latin version of the *Actus Sylvestri*, published by Bonino Mombrizio<sup>21</sup>, there is a sentence “Et haec dicens iter quod arripuerat ad Capitolium deserens: ad palatium rediit”, which is rendered in the Greek translation of this work in the form: “Ταῦτα λέγων ὁ βασιλεὺς, αὐθις ἐπὶ τὸ παλάτιον τὴν πορείαν ἐποιήσατο”<sup>22</sup>. As it can be seen, the publishers regarded the word palatium not as a topographical term, but as an imperial palace, for unlike Capitolium, which in the Mombrizio edition begins with a capital letter, palatium begins with a lowercase letter. This was probably also how the word τὸ παλάτιον was understood in the ninth century in the East.

The only certain geographical designation we find in the legend of Constantine’s baptism in the pages of the *Chronicle* of George is the unspecified ‘Mount Serapios’, from which ‘Saint Silvester’ was summoned to the emperor (ἐκ τοῦ Σεραπίου (vel Σεραπείου) ὄρους, ed. de Boor, p. 486, 5; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 219<sup>r</sup>). However, the mountain probably told little to the listeners/readers of the *George Chronicle* in ninth-century Constantinople, as its location is also disputed today<sup>23</sup>. In the narrative that follows, Silvester is referred to as ‘bishop’ (but not

---

slaughtering them, especially since the health resulting from this [procedure] is questionable”. All translations of passages from George the Monk’s *Chronicle* are my own).

<sup>20</sup> See E.A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B. C. 146 to A. D. 1100)*, Leipzig 1900, p. 832 s.v. Παλάτιον – 1. Palatium, the Palatine hill; 2. Palatium, palace, the imperial residence.

<sup>21</sup> B. Mombrizio, *Sanctuarium seu vitae sanctorum*, v. 2, Paris 1910, p. 511, 25.

<sup>22</sup> F. Combefis, *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumpho vetustis Graecorum monumentis consignati*, Paris 1600, p. 275.

<sup>23</sup> It is not known whether this is Monte Soratte (Latin: Soracte), located about 45 km north of Rome. Louis Duchesne, publisher of the *Liber Pontificalis*, recognised that the original name of the mountain in the Silvester legend was Syraptim, but that it was subsequently corrected in the East to Soracte as late as the seventh century, see *Le Liber Pontificalis*, v. 1, ed. L. Duchesne, Paris 1886, p. CXIX. This is confirmed by both versions of the *Actus Silvestri* published by Wilhelm Pohlkamp concerning this passage (see W. Pohlkamp, *Kaiser Konstantin, der heidnische und der christliche Kult in den Actus Silvestri*, “Frühmittelalterliche Studien” 18 (1984) p. 369, n. 46): in A(1) there is a version ‘Soractem’ in version B(1) ‘Sirapti’. According to Pohlkamp, the B(1)

pope, although George is familiar with and uses the term)<sup>24</sup>, but without any indication of his seat. It should also be noted that Silvester is not referred to at all in the earlier chapters of the *Chronicle*, here he appears for the first time, and the phrase “πέμψον οὖν καὶ μετακάλεσαι τὸν ἅγιον Σίλβεστρον ἐκ τοῦ Σεραπίου ὄρους” (“Send therefore and summon Saint Silvester from Mount Serapion”) may mislead the audience about the city of which Silvester was bishop. The whole description is, as it were, suspended in space and, in a sense, also in time, due to the shifting of the story to the time of Constantius. The purpose of this last manoeuvre seems clear – the author wanted to attribute all Constantine’s activities, in his view glorious, to Constantine the Christian.

In the next chapter of the *Chronicle*, dedicated directly to Constantine, George includes two other tales taken from the *Actus Silvestri* (a total of more than eight pages of the Teubner edition, almost 20% of the entire chapter on Constantine), in the first the bishop defeats a dragon inhabiting a cavern on the Roman Capitol (ed. de Boor, p. 490, 18: “Ἐν δέ γε τῷ καπετωλίῳ Ῥώμης”), this time explicitly placing events in the capital<sup>25</sup>. In the case of the second story – the Pope’s extensive disputation with Jewish leaders – again, no information is included about where it took place<sup>26</sup>. The story, moreover, takes on a rather universal character, showing the superiority of Christianity over Judaism; the place of action is secondary for the author.

### 3. Rome as a pagan centre

Thus, as can be seen, in the *Chronicle* of George the Monk, Rome is mentioned explicitly only in the one of the stories dedicated to Silvester, which mentions the traditional cult (“Ἐν δέ γε τῷ καπετωλίῳ Ῥώμης (...) τινες τῶν ἐλληνιζόντων” – “In the Roman Capitol (...) certain pagans”).

---

version may have been created in the second half of the fifth century at the earliest, see Pohlkamp, *Kaiser Konstantin*, p. 371, n. 57.

<sup>24</sup> For example Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 575, 9-10: “ἐπὶ Δαμάσου πάπα Ῥώμης”; p. 612, 2-3: “ἦς ἠγοῦντο Λέοντος μὲν τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου πάπα Ῥώμης”; p. 612, 17: “τοῦ Ῥώμης πάπα Λέοντος”; p. 629, 4: “ἐπὶ Βιγιλίου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου πάπα Ῥώμης”; p. 726, 3-4: “Ἀγάθωνος πάπα Ῥώμης”; p. 748, 19: “ὕπὸ Γρηγορίου τοῦ πάπα”; p. 769, 15: “Ἀδριανοῦ πάπα Ῥώμης”.

<sup>25</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 490, 18-491, 11; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 221<sup>v</sup>-222<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 491, 12-499, 8; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 222<sup>r</sup>-225<sup>r</sup>.

Indeed, George seems keen to link Rome with paganism, which he does not mention a word in Constantinople. An example of this pagan Rome in the pages of the *Chronicle* is the description of the usurpation of Eugenius during the reign of Emperor Theodosius I<sup>27</sup>. Interestingly, this story, which demonstrates the author's considerable knowledge of the events described, is only present in the version of the vulgate; the manuscript Coislinianus 305 not only omits it, without a word about the pagan reaction in Rome, Arbogast, Eugenius or Nicomachus Flavianus, but moreover gives a completely erroneous story, according to which Theodosius at the river Phrygidus fought not against the Roman usurper, but against the Goths (f. 257<sup>v</sup>: “Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα κατὰ Γότθων εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην στρατοπεδεύσας”).

However, George the Monk does not forget the genetic connection between pagan Rome and Christian Constantinople, as we can see in his description of the latter city's foundation. In this description he includes the following information:

However, seeing that such a great city had few inhabitants, he chose illustrious people from Rome and other places and gave them the opportunity to live in the city, [moreover] he built them huge houses. He also built a palace, a hippodrome and two grand stands, as well as a forum in which he set up a column that was all of porphyry and made from a single block of stone. It was brought from Rome in a highly admirable manner<sup>28</sup>.

This not very elaborate passus begins a new era in the *Chronicle*, in which the Constantinople – New Rome (although this term does not fall anywhere in the *Chronicle*) will already play a dominant role.

#### 4. Rome as the first patriarchate

In accordance with the ecclesiology that emerged in the fifth century and was cemented during the reign of Justinian in the idea of

<sup>27</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 590, 22-591, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 499, 18-500, 7; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 225<sup>r</sup>-225<sup>v</sup>: “ὀλίγους δὲ τοὺς οἰκῆτορας πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τῆς πόλεως ὄρων ἀπὸ τε Ῥώμης τοὺς ἀξιολόγους ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπὸ τε τόπων ἐτέρων συναθροίσας καὶ οἴκους μεγίστους οἰκοδομήσας αὐτοῖς καὶ χαρισάμενος οἰκεῖν τὴν πόλιν ἐποίησεν. κτίσας δὲ καὶ τὸ παλάτιον καὶ ἵππικὸν καὶ τοὺς β' μεγάλους ἐμβόλους καὶ τὸν φόρον, ἐν ᾧ κίονα μονόλιθον καὶ ὀλοπόρφυρον στήσας, ὃν ἀπὸ Ῥώμης ἐκόμισεν ἀξιάγαστον σφόδρα”.

the so-called pentarchy<sup>29</sup>, George the Monk presents the participants of the councils or their representatives according to the hierarchy of their seats: Rome – Constantinople – Alexandria – Antioch – Jerusalem even when Constantinople did not yet exist and Jerusalem was a subordinate bishopric.

The reference to the Council of Nicaea, present only in the vulgate, is constructed in this way. It is otherwise also the only model example of this view:

The First Synod, held at Nicaea, took place in the twentieth year of the reign of Constantine the Great and brought together three hundred and eighteen holy fathers. It was presided over by the presbyters Biton and Bickention – envoys of Silvester, bishop of Old Rome, Metrophanes of Byzantium, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Macarius of Jerusalem against Arius<sup>30</sup>.

In the case of other councils, however, this model order required the author to make appropriate modifications, usually due to the fact that individual patriarchs were not present at the council or were themselves condemned by the assembled bishops. There is, for example, an interesting construction of the reference to the Council of 381, again known only from the vulgate, where the absent Pope Damasus is placed by the author before the mention of the participants in the Council:

<sup>29</sup> Emperor Justinian attempted to bring order to the structure of the Church by introducing a system of so-called pentarchy, i.e. five patriarchates, which were to encompass with their authority all areas of the Christian oikumene within the Roman Empire. The idea of one emperor and five patriarchs was already indicated in Novel 6 *Quomodo oporteat episcopos et reliquos clericos ad ordinationem deduci, et de expensis ecclesiarum* 8 of 1 April 535 (*Corpus Iuris Civilis*, t. 3, *Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell – G. Kroll, p. 46), which stated that the metropolitans should be subordinate to the patriarchs. The idea of a pentarchy was explicitly stated in the *proemium* of Novel 109 *De privilegiis dotis haereticis mulieribus non praestandis* of 7 May 541 (*Corpus Iuris Civilis*, t. 3, *Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell – G. Kroll, p. 518, 5-8: “ὁ τε τῆς ἑσπερίας Ῥώμης καὶ ταύτης τῆς βασιλίδος πόλεως καὶ Ἀλεξανδρείας καὶ Θεουπόλεως καὶ Ἱεροσολύμων, καὶ πάντες οἱ ὑπ’ αὐτοὺς τεταγμένοι ὀσιώτατοι ἐπίσκοποι” (“the Western Rome, this sovereign city, Alexandria, Theoupolis and Jerusalem, and all the most holy bishops under them”, tr. Miller/Sarris) and is also present in later legislation.

<sup>30</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 509, 3-8: “Ἡ δὲ πρώτη σύνοδος γέγονεν ἐν Νικαίᾳ συνελθόντων τῆς ἁγίων πατέρων ἔτει τῆς Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλείας κ’. ταύτης ἡγοῦντο Σιλβέστρου τοῦ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης τοποτηρηταὶ Βίτων καὶ Βικεντίων πρεσβύτεροι, Μητροφάνης τοῦ Βυζαντίου, Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀλεξανδρείας, Εὐστάθιος Ἀντιοχείας, Μακάριος Ἱεροσολύμων κατὰ Ἀρείου”.

The Second Synod of one hundred and fifty fathers was held in Constantinople during the <third> year of the reign of Emperor Theodosius, when Damasus was pope in Rome. It was presided over by Timothy of Alexandria, Meletius of Antioch, Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory the Theologian, against Macedonius (...) <sup>31</sup>.

Completing the list of participants with this seemingly merely dating insertion enabled George to obtain the arrangement of episcopal seats: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople, even though the council was not attended by papal legates. What is most puzzling about this arrangement is the placement of Gregory of Nazianzus in last place rather than second, which is inconsistent with the hierarchy of patrimonial capitals in the ninth century, however obviously consistent with the realities of the fourth century.

In a different way, George dealt with the pope's absence at the Council of Ephesus in 431:

The Third Synod was held at Ephesus, attended by two hundred fathers, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Theodosius the Younger, son of Arcadius. It was presided over by Cyril, [bishop] of Alexandria – who took the place of Celestine, [bishop] of Rome – and Juvenal, [bishop] of Jerusalem, against Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, who was also present at Ephesus and claimed that Holy Mary was not the Mother of God but the Mother of Christ <sup>32</sup>.

As it can be seen, George emphasises the first place due to Pope Celestine, followed by Alexandria and Jerusalem. Nestorius, whose doctrine was considered erroneous in the deliberations of the Council, could not be among the leaders of this assembly, before which, moreover, he refused to come. Similarly, the Bishop of Antioch, John, who, together with the Eastern bishops, refused to participate in Cyril's gathering, was omitted by the author.

<sup>31</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 575, 8-12: “Δευτέρα σύνοδος γέγονεν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει τῶν ρν' πατέρων ἔτει τῆς Θεοδοσίου τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλείας <γ'>, ἐπὶ Δαμάσου πάπα Ῥώμης, ἧς ἡγοῦντο Τιμόθεος Ἀλεξανδρείας, Μελέτιος Ἀντιοχείας, Κύριλλος Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος, κατὰ Μακεδονίου (...)”.

<sup>32</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 605, 11-17: “Τρίτη σύνοδος γέγονεν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ συνελθοῦσα τὸ πρότερον ζ' πατέρων ἔτει τῆς Θεοδοσίου τοῦ μικροῦ βασιλείας υἱοῦ Ἀρκαδίου ιγ', ἧς ἡγοῦντο Κύριλλος Ἀλεξανδρείας διέπων καὶ τὸν τόπον Κελεστίνου τοῦ Ῥώμης, Ἰουβενάλιος Ἱεροσολύμων, κατὰ Νεστορίου ἐπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως παρόντος καὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, λέγοντος μὴ εἶναι θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν Μαρίαν, ἀλλὰ χριστοτόκον (...)”.

The entry for the Council of Chalcedon, absent from the manuscript Coislinianus 305, is similarly constructed in the vulgate:

The Fourth Synod was held at Chalcedon, attended by six hundred and thirty fathers, in the first year of the reign of Marcian. It was presided over by bishops Paschasius and Lucentius – <legates> of Leo, the most holy Roman pope – and the presbyter Bonifacius, Anatolius [bishop] of Constantinople, Juvenal, [bishop] of Jerusalem, against the archimandrite Eutyches and Dioscorus<sup>33</sup>.

In enumerating the leading hierarchs of the Council, this passus also omits the Dioscorus deposited at Chalcedon, who should have been mentioned in the third place, nor does it mention the bishop of Antioch, Maximus, perhaps because he replaced Domnos, who was deposed at the Council of Ephesus in 449. This latter assembly of bishops is not mentioned at all in the *Chronicle*.

It should be stressed that all the passages discussed above are found only in the vulgate; these passages are not present in the version known from the manuscript Coislinianus 305, which reports only briefly on the Council of Ephesus in 431 (“At Ephesus took place the Third Council of two hundred fathers, against Nestorius”)<sup>34</sup> and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (At Chalcedon took place the Fourth Council of six hundred and thirty fathers against Dioscorus, [bishop] of Alexandria)<sup>35</sup>. The latter passus is also preserved in the vulgate. This difference in the presentation of the Councils in the two versions of the *Chronicle* has already been pointed out by Carl de Boor, who put forward the conjecture that they are a later addition, proving the originality of the text of the *Chronicle* of George in the version known from the Paris manuscript<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 611, 20-612, 6: “Τετάρτη γέγονεν ἐν Χαλκηδόνι σύνοδος συνελθόντων χλ’ πατέρων ἔτει τῆς Μαρκιανοῦ βασιλείας πρώτῳ, ἧς ἠγοῦντο Λέοντος μὲν τοῦ ἀγιοτάτου πάπα Ῥώμης <τοποτηρηται> Πασχάσιος καὶ Λουκίνσιος ἐπίσκοποι καὶ Βονιφάτιος πρεσβύτερος, Ανατόλιος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ίουβενάλιος Ἱεροσολύμων, κατὰ Εὐτυχοῦς τοῦ γεγονότος ἀρχιμανδρίτου καὶ Διοσκόρου”.

<sup>34</sup> Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 273<sup>v</sup>: “καὶ ἡ τρίτη σύνοδος τῶν διακοσίων πατέρων ἐν Ἐφέσῳ γέγονε κατὰ Νεστορίου”.

<sup>35</sup> Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 276<sup>v</sup>: “καὶ ἡ τετάρτη γέγονε σύνοδος τῶν χλ’ πατέρων ἐν Χαλκηδόνι κατὰ Διοσκόρου Ἀλεξανδρείας”.

<sup>36</sup> C. de Boor, *Praefatio*, p. LXIV-LXV. De Boor considered that the mentioned notes on the councils were taken by the author of the vulgate from some compilation of

As an aside, it is also worth noting a significant difference in the description of the Constantinopolitan Council of 553, which can be found in the part of the *Chronicle* not covered by this analysis. Not only is the text known from the manuscript Coislinianus 305 (f. 281<sup>r-v</sup>) significantly shorter, it focuses, moreover, on only one aspect of the council's decisions. In the vulgate (p. 629, 1-630, 5), after listing the participants in the assembly, the author provides information on the council's condemnation of Origen, together with a characterisation of the views attributed to him that were considered heretical, and then lists the so-called Three Chapters, i.e. the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa, condemned by the council, before returning again to the issue of the condemnation of Origenism by quoting Justinian's edict against them. In contrast, the text on the pages of the manuscript Coislinianus 305 informs us that the council was convened against the Origenists and Theodore of Mopsuestia, also quoting Justinian's edict. At first glance, Coislinianus 305 seems more coherent, since in the vulgate the characterisation of Origenism is separated from the content of Justinian's edict condemning it by a fuller sentence on the Three Chapters<sup>37</sup>. This impression is apparent, however, as the shorter version still has a residual version of this sentence, limited only to information about the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the silence of Ibas and Theodoret (“καὶ κατὰ Θεοδώρου Μομψουεστίας, διδασκάλου Νεστορίου”). Coislinianus 305 also lacks the characterisation of Origenism present in the vulgate. A detailed analysis of the nuances in the presentation of this council goes considerably beyond the scope of this article and will be discussed elsewhere. Here, let us merely note that, regarding the role played at this council by the Bishop of Rome, the vulgate also lists the leading participants in the council in the order of the pentarchy<sup>38</sup>, whereas the text

---

them, such as the *Acta Conciliorum*, and placed in the appropriate places in the earlier version of the *Chronicle*.

<sup>37</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 630, 1-5: “ἔτι δὲ καὶ κατὰ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Μομψουεστίας, διδασκάλου γεγονότος Νεστορίου τοῦ ἰουδαϊόφρονος, ἀνεθεμάτισε μετὰ τῆς λεγομένης Ἰβᾶ ἐπιστολῆς καὶ τινων συγγραμμάτων Θεοδωρήτου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου Κύρου συγγραφέντων κατὰ τῶν ἰβ' κεφαλαίων τοῦ μακαρίου Κυρίλλου” (“In addition, they also proceeded against Theodore of Mopsuestia, who was the teacher of the Judaising Nestorius, [whom] they condemned together with the so-called *Epistle* of Ibas and certain writings of Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, written against the Twelve Chapters of Blessed Cyril”).

<sup>38</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 629, 4-9: “Πέμπτη σύνοδος γέγονεν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ρξε' ἁγίων πατέρων ἔτει τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλείας κς' ἐπὶ Βιγιλίου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου πάπα Ῥώμης διὰ λιβέλλου τὴν ὀρθὴν πίστιν

present in the manuscript Coislinianus 305 does not mention them at all. This version satisfies itself with a short sentence (Codex Coislinianus, f. 281<sup>r</sup>): “Καὶ ἡ πέμπτη γέγονε σύνοδος τῶν ρξε΄ πατέρων ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει” (“The Fifth Council of 165 fathers was held in Constantinople”). It should also be mentioned that the author of the vulgate again skilfully obtains the hierarchical order by mentioning that the council took place under the pontificate of Pope Vigilius, who then approved the council’s provisions, even though in fact the pope not only did not participate in the council, but also denied its provisions for a long time, whose acceptance was eventually forced upon him by Justinian.

The aforementioned passages in which Rome is referred to as the seat of the Pope are therefore linked to the successive Councils. As a sort of supplement showing some of the authority of the Bishop of Rome that George perceives may be the passages concerning Pope Innocent, who, after the deposition, exile and death of the Bishop of Constantinople John Chrysostom, was to write to the Emperor Arcadius reproaching him for his injustice and to speak out boldly against the Augustan Eudoxia. In doing so, Innocent was very simply stripped of any epithet as Roman Pope (πάπας Ῥώμης Ἰνοκέντιος)<sup>39</sup>.

## 5. Arsenius

Another case in which the *Chronicle* of George devotes some space to Rome is the story of Emperor Theodosius I’s appointment of Arsenius<sup>40</sup> as tutor to his sons Arcadius and Honorius. According to this story,

κυροῦντος, ἧς ἠγοῦντο Εὐτύχιος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ἀπολλινάριος Ἀλεξανδρείας, Δόμνος Ἀντιοχείας, Στέφανος ἐπίσκοπος Ῥαφείας, Γεώργιος ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Τιβεριωτῶν πόλεως καὶ Δαμιανὸς ἐπίσκοπος Σωζοπόλεως, τοποτηρηταὶ Εὐτυχίου Ἱεροσολύμων” (“The Fifth Council of 165 holy fathers was held in Constantinople in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Justinian the Great, under the most holy pope of Rome, Vigilius, who approved the true faith by libellus. It was presided over by Eutyichius [bishop] of Constantinople, Apollinaris [bishop] of Alexandria, Domnus [bishop] of Antioch, Stephen bishop of Raphaia, George bishop of the city of Tiberias and Damian bishop of Sozopolis, [who were] representatives of Eutyichius [bishop] of Jerusalem”).

<sup>39</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 600, 15.

<sup>40</sup> Arsenius was a Roman deacon who came from a senatorial family and was well versed in Latin and Greek literature. According to the hagiographical accounts dedicated to him, he was summoned by Theodosius I to Constantinople to teach his sons Arcadius and Honorius. At the age of 40, Arsenius became a monk in the Egyptian desert, where he lived for another 55 years, dying at the age of 95, cf. A.H.M. Jones – J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, v. I, Cambridge 1971, p. 111 (Arsenius

the ruler was unable to find a suitable person in the East, so he was forced to turn to the unnamed Emperor Valentinian for help<sup>41</sup>. The latter, in turn, unable to cope with the task, turned to the (also unnamed) Pope for help<sup>42</sup>.

So the Emperor summoned the Pope and, having shown him a letter from the Emperor Theodosius, said: 'It is unacceptable not to grant such a request to one who rules with us. For it is a shame for our power not to find in the greatest Rome such a man'<sup>43</sup>.

It was not until the Pope identified a suitable candidate – a certain Arsenius, who was a celibate deacon. In the pope's opinion, he was

---

4) and *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, v. 2, ed. Ch. Pietri – L. Pietri, *Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313-604)*, Roma 2000, p. 196 (Arsenius).

<sup>41</sup> The story in the vulgate begins with the words 'in those days' (Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 567, 1: "Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις"), while the preceding passus is devoted to the restoration of Valentinian II to the throne after the defeat of Maximus. Although Dmitri Afinogenov (*K proishozhdeniju legendy o sv. Arsenii – vospitatele imperatorov Arkadija i Gonorija*, "Vestnik drevnej istorii" 1 (2004) p. 54) believes that the emperor in question could only have been Gratian, this ruler died on 25 August 383 (PLRE I, p. 401 (Fl. Gratianus 2)), while Honorius was born on 9 September 384 (PLRE I, p. 442, Fl. Honorius 3). Valentinian II was 13 years old at the time, for he was born in 371 (PLRE I, p. 934, Flavius Valentinianus 8). The vulgate, however, overlaps with one of the versions of the *Life of Arsenius* – BHG 167z – preserved in several manuscripts, including the Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1589 and Vatopedi 84, which are dated to the late ninth and early tenth centuries. However, since the Lives also begin with the phrase Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις, rather unusual at the beginning of an autonomous hagiographical work, it is possible that it represents a kind of excerpt from the *Chronicle* of George, as Afinogenov believed (*K proishozhdeniju legendy o sv. Arsenii*, p. 52). In contrast, a different opinion is expressed by Marie-Aude Monégier du Sorbier in her unpublished doctoral thesis: *Recherches sur la tradition manuscrite de la Chronique de George le Moine: la tradition directe*, Paris 1985, p. 495-500. However, this issue is beyond the scope of this article and will be analysed in another study.

<sup>42</sup> From the wording of this story, it is unlikely that the pope in question was Damasus, who died on 11 December 384, a little over three months after the birth of Honorius, so the reference is to Siricius, who sat on the episcopal throne in Rome from 15 December 384 to 26 November 399, i.e. for the rest of the reign of Theodosius I, cf. F.R. Gahbauer, *Siricius*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, v. 10, Bautz 1995, c. 530-531.

<sup>43</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 567, 25-568, 1: "ὁ οὖν βασιλεὺς προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν πάπαν δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ τὰ γράμματα τοῦ βασιλέως Θεοδοσίου εἰπὼν ὅτι ἀνένδεκτόν ἐστι μὴ ποιῆσαι τῷ συμβασιλεύοντι ἡμῖν τὴν αἴτησιν ταύτην. αἰσχρὴ γάρ ἐστι τοῦ ἡμετέρου κράτους μὴ εὑρεθῆναι ἐν τῇ μεγίστῃ Ῥώμῃ ἄνθρωπον τοιοῦτον".

the ideal candidate to teach all knowledge – both divine and human. On hearing this, Theodosius ordered him to be brought to Constantinople, to which, after much persuasion from the western emperor and the pope, Arsenius agreed.

In the description of the legend concerning Arsenius, the manuscript version of Coislinianus 305 is different, which is especially true of the description of finding in Arsenius the ideal candidate for the preceptor of the imperial sons<sup>44</sup>:

VIII 1.1. After Gratian, then, Theodosius the Great, who was Spanish in origin, reigned for sixteen years. 2. Having immediately crowned his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, he proclaimed the former emperor in Constantinople and the latter in Rome. 3. They were excellently educated by the blessed Arsenius, who then went to Jerusalem, where he embraced an ascetic and solitary life. 4. For this pious and illustrious man, of Roman origin, whose parents were of good birth and boasted of wealth, distinguished as he was in the other manifestations of life<sup>45</sup>, proved to be a noble fruit. 5. His house has been preserved until now – although not in its entirety – for how could it have survived so many years? However, even those remains stand out for their size, as they are divided into three hundred cells for the inhabitants. This suffices to show how illustrious, rich and famous he was<sup>46</sup>. 6. As such,

<sup>44</sup> Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 249<sup>v</sup>: “VIII 1.1. μετὰ δὲ Γρατιανὸν ἐβασίλευσε Θεοδοσίος ὁ μέγας καὶ Σπανὸς τῷ γένει ἔτη ις’. 2. ὃς εὐθὺς τοὺς δύο υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ στέψας, Ἀρκάδιον καὶ Ὀνώριον, τὸν μὲν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἀνηγόρευσε βασιλέα, τὸν δὲ ἐν Ῥώμῃ. 3. οὗς ὁ μακάριος Ἀρσένιος ἐκπαιδεύσας ἄριστα καὶ πρὸς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα παραγενόμενος τὸν ἀσκητικὸν τε καὶ μοναδικὸν ἀσπάζεται βίον. 4. οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ θεοφόρος καὶ περιβόητος Ῥωμαῖος μὲν τῷ γένει τυγχάνων, εὐγενῶν δὲ γεννητόρων καὶ πλούτῳ κομώντων, καὶ τῇ λοιπῇ περιφανείᾳ τοῦ βίου ἀποσεμνυόμενος, καρπὸς εὐκλεῆς ἀναδέδεικται. 5. οὗ ἡ οἰκία μέχρι καὶ νῦν περίεστιν οὐχ ὀλόκληρος, πῶς γὰρ ἂν τοσοῦτοις ἔτεσι διεσέσωστο; ἀλλ’ ἵχνη τινὰ καὶ τοσοῦτον μεγέθει διαφέροντα, ὡς ἐν τριακοσίαις κέλλαις διηρημένα τοῖς οἰκήτορσιν, ἐξαρκοῦντος τούτου ἐπιδηλῶσαι, ὅσος ἦν περιδοξὸς καὶ πολυόλβιος αἰοίδιμος. 6. τοιοῦτος δὲ ὢν, ὑπῆρχε καὶ τῇ παιδεύσει ὑπέρτερος, Ἑλληνικῇ τε καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῇ σοφίᾳ θαυμαζόμενος. 7. ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐξηκούσθη τῷ μεγάλῳ Θεοδοσίῳ τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ζητοῦντι πανταχοῦ παιδευτὴν ἐπιστῆσαι τοιοῦτον τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ υἱοῖς, ὡς πάντων πρῶτιστος ἄγεται διὰ βασιλικοῦ προστάγματος Ἀρσένιος ἐν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ, τεσσαρακονταετές ὑπάρχων”. The internal numbering is derived from the forthcoming critical edition of the manuscript.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Theodorus Studita, *Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ* 3, PG 99, 852AB: “εὐγενῶν γεννητόρων στέλεχος, πλούτῳ κομώντων καὶ τῇ λοιπῇ περιφανείᾳ τοῦ βίου”.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Theodorus Studita, *Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ* 3, PG 99, 852B: “οὗ ἐστία μέχρι τοῦ νῦν περίεστιν οὐχ ὀλόκληρος· πῶς γὰρ ἂν καὶ διεσέσωστο τοσοῦτοις ἔτεσιν; ἵχνη δὲ καὶ τοσοῦτῳ μεγέθει διαφέροντα, ὡς ἐν τριακοσίαις κέλλαις διαιροῦσα

he was outstanding in his learning, arousing admiration through his Greek and Roman wisdom<sup>47</sup>. 7. So when the great Theodosius heard about him, while seeking everywhere to appoint such a man as a tutor for his own sons, Arsenius was brought to Byzantium by imperial edict as the foremost among all of them, being then forty years old<sup>48</sup>.

In the version present in the Coislinianus 305 manuscript the beginning of the story of Arsenius was taken, largely verbatim, from the *Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ*, written by Theodore the Studite. The author then moves on to the story of the conflict between Arsenius and Arcadius, analogous to that presented by George the Monk in the vulgate. As can be seen from the above quotation, the differences between the two versions are significant, most notably in the manuscript version of Coislinianus 305 the role of both the western emperor and the pope in finding Arsenius is omitted – it was Theodosius himself, having heard of him, who brought him to the palace. There is no word about his role as a deacon in Rome, but it is emphasised that he came from a wealthy Roman family, and that his house still exists. It seems, therefore, that the author of this version deliberately combined the two narratives (the vulgate and Theodore the Studite) in order to remove the role played in the story by the Western Roman emperor and pope.

Given that the author of this version also omits the involvement of the popes from the residual information he included about the two councils, it can be concluded that its author limits information about the bishops of Rome to a minimum, which may suggest that it was written during the period of the dispute waged against the papacy by the patriarch of Constantinople, Photius, who explicitly emphasised only the symbolic superiority of the bishop of Rome over the patriarchs of the East<sup>49</sup>, and

---

τοῖς οἰκήτοσι. ἔξαρκούντος τούτου ἐπιδηλῶσαι, ὅσος ἦν περιφανῆς καὶ πολυόλβος ὁ ἀοίδιμος”.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Theodorus Studita, *Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ* 3, PG 99, 852B: “τοιούτους τε ὄν, ὑπῆρχε καὶ τῆ παιδεύσει ὑπέρτερος, Ἑλληνικῆ τε καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῆ σοφία θαυμαζόμενος”.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Theodorus Studita, *Laudatio S. Arsenii anachoretæ* 4, PG 99, 852C: “ἐπεὶ οὖν τὸ τηνικάυτα Θεοδοσίῳ τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλεύοντι ἐξηκούσθη τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ζητοῦντι παιδευτὴν τοιοῦτον ἐπιστῆσαι υἱοῖς αὐτοῦ Ἀρκαδίῳ καὶ Ὠνορίῳ, ὃς εἶη προὔργιέστερος ἀπάντων· ἄγεται ὁ Ἀρσένιος τῆ τοῦ κρατοῦντος ῥοπῆ ἐν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ, καὶ παραλαβὼν ἀμφοτέρους τοὺς παῖδας, ἀνήγεν αὐτοὺς ἐν τε ἡθεσιν καὶ παιδεύμασιν, ἀρίστους ἀποδεικνὺς ἀμφοτέρωθεν. Μέχρι δὲ τοῦ τεσσαρακοστοῦ ἔτους τῆς ἡλικίας(…)”.

<sup>49</sup> On Photius’ conflict with the papacy see F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948; H. Chadwick, *East and West. The Making of*

consequently affect the dating and determination of the relationship between the two versions of the *Chronicle*.

## 6. Conclusion

Rome, in the section describing the late antique Christian empire, appears in the pages of the *Chronicle* of George the Monk mostly as the seat of the pope, participating in events not necessarily taking place in the city on the Tiber. As the political centre of the empire moves to the East, the author's interest in Rome clearly wanes, only to lose interest in the city altogether with the reign of Theodosius I, the last emperor residing in the East, who went to Rome in person. George links Rome with Constantinople, which is born out of Rome and replaces it in playing a leading role in history. Along with the emperor Constantine's foundation of Constantinople, the heart of the empire in the *Chronicle*'s description thus moved to the East. The last political event taking place in Rome mentioned in the *Chronicle* of George the Monk is the triumph of Theodosius after his victory over the usurper Maxentius<sup>50</sup>.

---

*a Rift in the Church. From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence*, Oxford 2003, p. 153-192.

<sup>50</sup> Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 566, 15-22: “ἐν δὲ τῷ μέσῳ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ τελευτησάσης, Θεοδόσιος διὰ τὴν πίστιν τῆς βασιλείας τῆς χρηστότητος καὶ τῶν εὐεργεσιῶν Γρατιανοῦ μεμνημένος εἰς ἄμυναν πάσαις τῆς ἀνατολῆς δυνάμεσιν ἐξᾶρξας ἐξεδίκησε τὸ δίκαιον αἷμα καὶ τὸν Οὐαλεντινιανὸν ἀπεκατέστησεν ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν ἐκβαλὼν τὴν τυραννίδα. αὐτὸς δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην καὶ θριαμβεύσας τὴν νίκην εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν βασιλείαν ἐπανῆλθεν” (“In the meantime, after the death of his mother, Theodosius, remembering the benevolent faith and favour of the Emperor Gratian, led all the forces of the East in revenge, avenged the just blood, and, having ended his tyrannical reign, restored the imperial power to Valentinian. And he himself, after these events, came to Rome and, having triumphed, returned to his own empire [sc. to his own part of the empire]”). This description was omitted from the manuscript Coislinianus 305. Constantine also celebrated his victory over Maxentius in Rome, cf. Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, ed. de Boor, p. 488, 18-489, 2; Codex Coislinianus 305, f. 221<sup>v</sup>: “ὁ δὲ θεὸς Κωνσταντῖνος θεῶ τοῖς ἔργοις ἀνυμνήσας ἐπὶ Ῥώμην μετ’ ἐπινικίων εἰσελαύνει πάντων ἀθρώως αὐτὸν ἅμα κομιδῇ νηπίοις καὶ γυναιξὶ καὶ σὺν παντὶ δήμῳ Ῥωμαίων φαιδροῖς ὄμμασι καὶ ψυχαῖς οἷα λυτρωτὴν καὶ σωτῆρά τε καὶ εὐεργέτην μετ’ εὐφημιῶν καὶ ἀπλήστου χαρᾶς ὑποδεχομένων” (“Whereas the divine Constantine, having glorified God with deeds, entered Rome in triumph, when all together – little children, women and the whole Roman people – received him with joyful eyes and souls as liberator, saviour and benefactor, amidst shouts and unbridled joy”).

Throughout the fifth century, no more events take place in Rome. Nor is George interested in any calamities that befell the western capital in the fifth century. He does not report on the occupation of Rome by the Goths and Vandals, not a word about the occupation of Italy by Theodoric. From the late fourth century onwards, the city essentially functions only as the seat of the pope, which is linked to the participation of papal legates in successive councils.

The author of the version present in the manuscript Coislinianus 305 was guided by his own vision of the past, abridging the historical account and developing theological reflections. This anonymous author is generally not interested in events in the West.

## Bibliography

### Sources

- Actus Silvestris*, ed. B. Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu vitae sanctorum*, v. 2, Paris 1910  
= ed. F. Combefis, *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumphum vetustis Graecorum monumentis consignati*, Paris 1600.
- Iustinianus, *Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell – G. Kroll, *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, v. 3: *Novellae*, Berlin 1912, tr. D.J.D. Miller – P. Sarris, *The Novels of Justinian. A Complete Annotated English Translation*, v. 1-2, Cambridge 2018.
- Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1904 (Codex Coislinianus 305).
- Gregorius Nazianenzus, *Orationes*, ed. J. Bernardi, Grégoire de Nazianze, *Discours 4-5. Contre Julien*, Sch 309, Paris 1983.
- Isidorus Pelusiota, *Epistulae*, ed. P. Évieux, Isidore de Péluse, *Lettres*, v. 2: *Lettres 1414-1700*, Sch 454, Paris 2000.
- Refutatio definitionis synodi Hieriae*, ed. E. Lamberz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum II/3/3*, Berlin – Boston 2016, p. 602, 8-793, 12, tr. R. Price, *The Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787)*, Liverpool 2018.
- Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, v. 1-2, ed. G. Fatouros, Berlin 1992.
- Theophanis Chronographia*, v. 1, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1883.
- Vitae Chrysostomi*, ed. F. Halkin, *Douze récits byzantins sur Saint Jean Chrysostome*, Bruxelles 1977.

### Studies

- Afinogenov D., *K proishozhdeniju legendy o sv. Arsenii – vospitatele imperatorov Arkadija i Gonorija*, “Vestnik drevnej istorii” 1 (2004) p. 49-60.
- Afinogenov D., *Le manuscrit grec Coislin. 305: la version primitive de la Chronique de Georges le Moine*, “Revue des études byzantines” 62 (2004) p. 239-246.

- Afinogenov D.E., *Sotad v christianskom kontekte*, in: *V Meždunarodnaja Konferencija po Ellinistike Pamjati I.I. Kovalevoj*, Moscow 2019, p. 20-26.
- Afinogenov D., *The Date of Georgios Monachos Reconsidered*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" 92 (1999) p. 437-447.
- Afinogenov D.E. – Turilov A.A. – Popov G.V., *Georgij Amartol*, in: *Pravoslavnaja enciklopedija*, v. 11: *Georgij-Gomar*, Moscow 2006, p. 48-56.
- Brendel R., *Monachos, Georgios*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, v. 47, Nordhausen 2024, c. 1065-1109.
- Chadwick H., *East and West. The Making of a Rift in the Church. From Apostolic Times until the Council of Florence*, Oxford 2003.
- De Boor C., *Praefatio*, in: *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, v. 1, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1904, p. V-LXXXIII.
- Devreesse R., *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs*, v. 2: *Le fonds Coislin*, Paris 1945.
- Duchesne L., *Introduction*, in: *Le Liber Pontificalis*, v. 1, ed. L. Duchesne, Paris 1886, p. I-CCLXII.
- Dvornik F., *The Photian Schism: History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948.
- Gahbauer F.R., *Siricius*, in: *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, v. 10, Bautz 1995, c. 530-531.
- Hunger H., *Die Hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, v. 1: *Philosophie, Rhetorik, Epistolographie, Geschichtsschreibung, Geographie*, München 1978.
- Kazhdan A., *A History of Byzantine Literature (850-1000)*, v. 2, ed. Ch. Angelidi, Athens 2006.
- Kosiński R., *A Few Remarks on the Description of the Baptism of the Emperor Constantine in the Chronicle of George the Monk, Actus Silvestri, and the Byzantine Hagiographical Tradition*, "Classica Cracoviensia" 27 (2024) p. 187-215.
- Kosiński R., *The chronicle by George the Monk and its relation to Theodore Lector's work*, "Res Gestae" 5 (2017) p. 46-72.
- Monégier du Sorbier M.A., *Recherches sur la tradition manuscrite de la Chronique de George le Moine: la tradition directe*, Paris 1985.
- Pohlkamp W., *Kaiser Konstantin, der heidnische und der christliche Kult in den Actus Silvestri*, "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" 18 (1984) p. 357-400.
- Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, v. 2, ed. Ch. Pietri – L. Pietri, *Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne (313-604)*, p. 1-2, Roma 1999–2000.
- The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, v. 1: *A.D. 260-395*, ed. A.H.M. Jones – J.R. Martindale – J. Morris, Cambridge 1971.
- Sophocles E.A., *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*, Leipzig 1900.
- Treadgold W., *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, Basingstoke 2013.

