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**LATE ANTIQUE AND BYZANTINE CUISINE AND DIETETICS
A FEW COMMENTS ON CONSUMPTION, PREPARATION, CULINARY
TECHNIQUES, DIETETIC VALUES AND MEDICAL APPLICATIONS OF FISH
PRESERVES IN LATE ANTIQUE AND BYZANTINE LITERATURE**

Although one can venture common sense remarks on the subject of fish preserve consumption, available literary data make any assessment the role of fish preserves in the late antique and Byzantine diet virtually impossible. It can be only inferred that such food was generally considered to be a delicacy and was eaten by the reach. The less affluent could taste it only on special, festive occasions, but such instances were rather far and few between. It appears that fish preserves constituted no staple food whatsoever.

It should be also remarked that our main sources do not reflect salt fish consumption at the moment of their compilation. The *Deipnosophists* draw on information from the time of Homer on, however, they hardly ever make use of the data chronologically close to the III-rd century AD. Galen relies on Philotimus, Oribasius on Galen or Xenocrates, while Aetius of Amida and Paul of Aegina borrow their doctrines from Oribasius. The data cannot be rectified on the basis of Byzantine lexicography due to the dependence of Hesychios and the Book of Suda on ancient tradition, which is, to make it worse, related to the scope of information preserved in, on the one hand, the *Deipnosophists*, and on the other, the *Geoponics*. Consequently, the sources represent a fairly homogenous tradition which cannot not be used directly to draw unequivocal conclusions applicable to late Antiquity and Byzantium.

The sources give no detailed information on the way fish preserves were produced. Consequently, there is no precise evidence concerning the technology of production. Available information is general and of a limited value. The main source of data are medical treatises. Their authors claim that fish preserves were manufactured mainly from large fish and that it was salt which was made use of to prevent the meat from decay. There were a number of varieties of fish preserves which differed in their qualities. However, it seems that generally they tended to include some amount of liquid. These characteristics are reflected in numerous descriptions of waterproof containers in which the salt fish products were preserved.

Once the salt fish was taken from the brine, it was soaked in water. When salt was removed from the product, the meat could become the main ingredient of a number of dishes. Greek sources testify to all main techniques of preparing the meat. It could be cooked, grilled or stewed. There is no reliable description of the first method. Nonetheless, it can be suggested that the fish was cooked in salty water, which could also contain some extra ingredients, notably, fresh or dry herbs (fennel or leek) and olive oil. Meat was also grilled on the eschara. The meat prepared in the above specified ways was served with mustard, fresh herbs (mainly oregano) or with sauces, the recipes of which have been preserved in the *De re coquinaria*. Ancient and Byzantine cooks also stewed the meat, usually with some vegetables (for instance, asparagus) or fruit (for instance, wild water melon). All salt fish dishes were accompanied mainly with bread and sometimes with fresh raw vegetable salads or lentil soup.

Dieticians considered salt fish a valuable kind of food. It was regarded as relatively nutritious, contributing to digestion, though of a questionable aroma. It tended to dilute thick humours and was characteristic of desiccating qualities.

The last two characteristics were discussed at length in medical treatises and

widely profited from by ancient and Byzantine medical doctors while prescribing diets and preparing numerous medicines. Salt meat was recommended to prevent results of the existence of unwanted humours in the body and used to cure ulcers, sores and irritations of various kinds.

Mirosław J. Leszka

ILLUS ISAURIAN TOWARDS BASILISCUS' USURPATION

Hereby paper was dedicated to Illus Isaurian's part played in events connected with Sasiliscus' usurpation in years of 475–476.

At the stage of preparations to Basiliscus' usurpation, Illus acted as an intermediary between Basiliscus and Armatos and Verina. Zeno's debar from posts of authority went on without bloodshed, without armed fighting, with the main part played by Verina and Basiliscus. In those circumstances most of sources take no account of Illus' participation in those events.

Under the reign of Basiliscus, Illus, who was charged with a task of Zeno's removal, proved his abilities as an efficient politician. He was able to notice, that Basiliscus is unable to stabilize his reign. Having estimated the state of affairs Illus decided to go over Zeno's side and he supported Zeno in his return to authority, which enabled him to obtain the strong position at the Emperor's side. It doesn't seem that Zeno and Illus have ever had friendly relations with each other. Their relations were merely based on common political interest, at given moment.

Teresa Wolińska

BESSAS – A CAREER OF AN OSTROGOTH IN BYZANTIUM

Among the commanders of Justinian I of barbarian origin, Bessas was the one who certainly deserves special attention. He was born in Thrace, ca. 480 AD. His ethnicity is controversial because of contradictions in sources (Procopius, Jordanes). He was most likely of Gothic origin, which a Russian scholar E. C. Skshinskaya tried to prove in a convincing way. Bessas descended from the Ostrogoths who did not leave for Italy along with Theodoric Amal in 488. The family of Bessas was assimilated, still they did not forget their mother tongue.

Bessas' military career started early. During the reign of Anastasius (503 AD) he had fought in the Roman army against Persians. Then, under Justinian he continued his service in the Easi in Arzacene and Martyropolis. It was then that he showed his military talent, but it was also then that he was accused for the first time of private grabbing. In 535–540 he accompanied Belisarius in Sicily where he fought with his kinsmen. He took part in the siege of Naples (he was to negotiate the condition/of surrender in his native language), Nami campaign and commanded the defense of Rome. On that last post he showed both much personal courage and little farsightedness. It was then that the beginning of the conflict between him and Belisarius could be observed, and this was not even soothed by the fact of saving the life of the latter by Bessas. Later we shall find Bessas on the side of Belisarius' rival, Narzes. When Belisarius was called away from Italy, Bessas remained there but without any significant military success.

With Belisarius' return to Italy (spring 545), Bessas took over the command of the garrison of Rome. Procopius accuses him of taking this opportunity to

multiply his fortune, which he eventually lost when the Goths captured the city. According to the writer, Bessas was to be so engaged in collecting goods that he did not care for defense of city walls nor did he give support to the defenders. He would not pay enough attention to the rebellious spirits of his men and therefore did not prevent the downfall of Rome. After that he managed to escape and thus avoided captivity. It is not known what he was doing then, until 549 or early 550, when he was appointed *magister militum* of Armenia. He waged a war against the Abasgi, who were seeking agreement with the Persians and he defended Lasica from the latter. He was famous for the capture of Petra in 551. Alas, again according to Procopius he soon himself wasted the fruits of his victory, as he cared for contributions from the occupied territories rather than for blocking of the passages from Georgia, which enabled a raid of Persian commander, Mermeroes. Following further adversities, Bessas was deprived of command and property and sent to Abkhasia. Although we often read of the wealth he collected, nothing particular can be said about it.

Bessas' career was typical of his times. He chose a military career, which is not strange, because a civilian one would require good education he most probably lacked. Just like many other barbarian chiefs he saw his chance in the service for the Empire and decided to cut off his tribal ties. Although he did not forget his native language, he never hesitated to fight against his kinsmen and never tried to go on their side.

Bessas' estimation is unequivocal. He was certainly a brave soldier and successful commander. On the other hand many sources inform of him as a person who cared mainly for his personal profit even at the cost of his duties. This opinion, however exaggerated, must contain some truth. Although written by a historian who did not have the reasons to like a soldier opposing his favorite Belisarius, yet his opinion is confirmed to some extent by Agatias and Zacharias the Retor.

Małgorzata B. Leszka

FABIA-EUDOCIA – EMPEROR HERACLIUS' WIFE

Hereby paper was dedicated to Fabia Eudocia, Emperor Heraclius⁵ first wife. Fabia-Eudocia was the Byzantine Empress for somewhat less than two years. Not much is known about the Empress. However, it is known that she descended from wealthy and influential family from North Africa. As a wife of Heraclius she gave birth to two children: to a daughter Epiphania Eudocia and to a son Heraclius Constantinus. It seems that she may have won the good feeling of subjects' hearts, most of all of local inhabitants. Her possible popularity may have been to some extent, undoubtedly connected with appreciation for Heraclius at the beginning of his reign. It may have also been the result of sympathy because of her illness, which made it impossible for her to enjoy bringing up children and her position at Heraclius side. Fabia might have also managed to begin some charitable activities, which have always determined an essential aspect of every Empress' activity and influenced subjects' attitude towards her. It also seems that liking for deceased Augusta and good remembrance of her were shattered as the society didn't approve the following Heraclius' wife, his niece Martina.

Tomasz Kotala

IN THE MATTER OF THE DEATH OF BYZANTINE EMPEROR ROMANOS III ARGYROS (1028–1034)

The objects of investigation of present article are the events from 1034 year, which brought to death of emperor Romanos III Argyros and change the appointment of the imperial throne in Byzantium. The essential reports in this matter are delivered by chronicles of Michael Psellos and John Skylitzes which indicate on poisoning, as main cause of emperor's death. The other authors wrote directly about drowning the emperor in a palace pool, which had to bring to his decease at night from 11 to 12 April in 1034. Both remembered chronicles and the other mentioning about these events works pass the detailed symptoms of imperial disease peaceably. These symptoms were successfully subordinated to the definite kinds of poisons, which confirmed the report about poisoning of Romanos III. The investigation does not confine on this, it also explains the contradictions in the source base relating to poisoning/drowning. This turned out, that although we can to tell about the trial to murder the emperor during the time of bath only in the context of acceleration of his death, which and so would had happened inevitably as the result of the long-lasting passing the plant and metallic poisons. All these circumstances had their long-lasting cause in the conflict of Romanos III with his wife Zoe, who did not hesitate to bring to change on the imperial throne to bestow the imperial crown to young Michael the Paphlagonian, at whos side – as his wife – she wanted to stay on long as the empress of Byzantium.

Kamil Domaradzki

POLITICAL CAREER OF MICHAEL PSELLOS ON THE BYZANTINE COURT IN THE XITH CENTURY

The article presents political career of XIth centuryis intellectual, Michael Psellos. He owed his success on the Byzantine court not only to his knowledge and eloquence but also to his deviousness and ruthlessness. He held the highest court posts and offices which provided him a direct access to rulers and influence on their political decisions. Psellos had contacts with the most distinguished individuals of those times; he carried out domestic policy and, to a great extent, foreign policy of the Empire- he would put kings on thrones and faced unusually influential patriarch Michael Kerularios, Undoubtedly he was the most important political person in Emperor Isaac I Komnenos (1057–1059) times, who also became the ruler due to Psellos; but he also fell victim to his devious stratagem by renouncing the throne. Not all emperors, however, yielded to Psellos's political dexterity. For instance, Roman IV Diogenes (1068–1071) considered bin as a mischievous courtier and did not trust him. Michael Psellos's career broke about 1074/1075 during the rules of his dearest foster child, Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078), who, following the ruthlessness of his master mentor, eliminated Psellos of political game.

Kirił Marinow

SELECTED PROBLEMS OF TĀRNOVO'S FALL

This article is devoted to a few aspects of Tărnovo's fall, in the year 1393. These problems in the author's opinion have not lived to witness a satisfactory solution until now. In the first part of the article the author rejected an opinion, according to which patriarch Euthymius was the commander of the Bulgarian capital's defense. In the second part he answered the question, who, from the ottoman side, commanded the siege of Tărnovo? The analysis of the sources leads to conclusion, that Bayezid I, the then ottoman ruler, was at the head of the Turkish army, by the walls of the town. In the third part author expresses criticism of J. Andreev's theses, concerning the reasons for the offence and circumstances, in which Turkish expedition against Tărnovo came into effect. He formulates the thesis according to which the purpose of this expedition was to subjugate John Šišman and to prevent him from joining the coalition, which had been created by Zigmond of Luxembourg. In the fourth part the author confronts different information from the sources and different views of the scholars, concerning the number of the ottoman army, which besieged the town. Next, he arrives at a conclusion, that, there were probably around 30–40 thousands warriors. In the fifth part he refers to a question of a possible participation of the Vidin's tsar, John Sradmir, and the ruler of Velbuzd, Konstantin Dragas, in the ottoman expedition against Tărnovo. The sources don't allow to determine this issue unambiguously, although it's possible, that the armies of these rulers didn't take participation in the siege. The last part of this article refers to the problem of a possible relief for Tărnovo, organized by John Šišman, Author draws a conclusion, that contemporaneously existing sources don't allow to produce a thesis, in light of which the Bulgarian tsar really organized a military help for his capital, during the ottoman siege.

Rafał Korczak

THE INTERFERENCE OF OTTOMAN TURKS IN DOMESTIC BYZANTIUM UNDER THE MURAD I AND BAYEZID I

When in XIV to ages the Byzantine Empire had to level with the Ottomans, did not turn over to himself the matter that in the second half of this century it would become the vassal of his own eastern neighbour. An object of this article is the proof how far the Turks used their own superiority, to inform Byzantium his political not independence and to steer with the course of internal activities of the Constantinople mansion. Events about which the speech, happened on the monarch of John V Palaeologus (1354–1391) and the beginning of rule his son, Manuel II (1392–1425). The battle under Ankara broke this period of humiliations given to the Empire by two outstanding the Ottoman sovereigns: Murad I (1362–1389) and Bayezid (1389–1402).

In 1372/1373 Byzantium became a vassal of Ottoman Turks. In 1373 in Adrianople and Constantinople exploded parallel mutinies. Andronicus Palaeologus and Saudji together went against to their own fathers. After strangling of the rebellion, mutineers were blinded from the order of Murad. Turks had a very precise cognition, when he is going for the dynastic conflict in Byzantium which used to the interference into internal matters of the Empire. The last Palaeologuses, perfidious in the face themselves, scrupulous in the face the

Ottomans, administrated in Constantinople behind the consent Adrianopole, what placed them in the humiliating position. The authority is however so attractive honour that for her conquest were ready to tear family tieses, what sedulously used: first Murad I, promoting Andronicus IV against father to John V, and afterwards Bayezid, protecting John VII, being in opposition in the face his own grandfather of John V.