

ist er in der Form *Corippus* im Umlauf gewesen. Riedlberger will als die richtige Form *Gorippus* (die er in einigen hsl Kopien gefunden hat) festlegen und hat schon breite Zustimmung gefunden. Ich wäre da nicht so sicher. Sowohl *Corippus* als auch *Gorippus* entbehren einer klaren Etymologie; nichts in ihnen weist auf Afrika (weder punisch noch berberisch) hin (keine vergleichbaren Namen in Jongelinks Buch zu afrikanischen Namen in lateinischen Inschriften Afrikas). Riedlberger legt viel Wert auf einige Belege aus Dura-Europos aus dem Anfang des dritten Jahrhunderts, wo *Gorippus* als Cognomen eines Soldaten vorkommt (die Belege jetzt in der neuen Ausgabe *ChLA* VIII 355, 97, 11 und 40, 9; zur Erklärung vgl. auch *Excavations at Dura-Europos. Final Report*). Die Belege schrumpfen aber auf einen einzigen zusammen, denn an der zweiten Stelle (40, 9) ist der Name ergänzt, und einem Graffito im Mithräum von Dura erwähnt von E. D. Francis, in *Mithraic Studies. Proceedings of the First Int. Congress of Mithraic Studies* II, Manchester 1975, 435) kann man bislang nichts entnehmen; dass der Soldat aus Afrika stamme, was R. für möglich hält, leuchtet durch nichts ein. Ihm ist ferner entgangen, dass *Γόριππος* noch einmal in Kleinasien belegt ist, in Korykos in einer christlichen Grabinschrift (*MAMA* III 623). Die Zeugnisse aus Dura und Korykos können aber unmöglich zur Erklärung des Namens unseres Dichters herangezogen werden. Es ist vorzuziehen, die Frage nach der richtigen Form des Namens offen zu lassen.

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PAUL STEPHENSON: *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-81530-7 (hb), 978-0-521-15883-1 (pb). XVII, 164 pp. GBP 40, USD 64 (hb), GBP 15.99, USD 26.99 (pb).

Despite its obvious origin within the sphere of Byzantine studies, Paul Stephenson's *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* should prove worthwhile not only to Byzantinists and students of the political history of the Balkans, but anyone interested in the ways history can be and has been manipulated for political and nationalist ends. Stephenson sets out to undermine the traditional image of the warrior emperor Basil II (reigned 976–1025) as a bloody, relentless butcher engaged for decades in a systematic attempt to eliminate utterly neighbouring Bulgaria, Byzantium's traditional rival for control of the Balkan area. Instead, it is argued that Basil's annexation of Bulgaria proceeded at a much more gradual, opportunistic and sometimes even peaceful rhythm and that the emperor's supremely glorious or bloodthirsty (depending on one's ideological point of view) reputation was largely a propagandistic creation of later times.

The book is divided into eight chapters, but it can be seen as consisting essentially of two main sections. Firstly, chapters 1–3 provide an introduction to the historical Basil II and his Bulgarian campaigns. Here Stephenson's main argument is that, instead of a protracted war of attrition aiming at and ending in the total political and administrative incorporation of Bulgaria into the Byzantine Empire, Basil fought smaller campaigns for reasons of prestige, seizing his chance to occupy the rival realm only when the opportunity presented itself, and even then leaving the local power structures largely intact as local magnates were simply incorporated into the Byzantine system of provincial government.

The rest of the study is devoted to charting the posthumous development of Basil's image. In chapters 4–5 it is shown that there is no evidence either for a special emphasis on Basil's Bulgarian victories or the use of the brutal epithet Βουλγαροκτόνος "Bulgar-Slayer" in the art and literature dating from Basil's reign or the immediately following period. In contrast, chapter 6 demonstrates that the epithet is most likely a propagandistic creation of the Comnenian period, when the Byzantines found themselves confronted with a second Bulgarian Empire after 1185–6. Finally, chapters 7–8 explore the ways in which an idealized Basil the Bulgar-Slayer was made part of the nationalist myth and wartime propaganda in Greece in the early 20th century, especially during the Balkan conflicts with the modern Bulgarian state.

The book is well written and the main arguments are generally convincing, though the reader sometimes has the frustrating impression that, no matter how seductive the evidence presented by Stephenson is, there is simply not enough surviving material from the period to establish his suggestions as fact. To take just one example, the author has to conclude that we cannot know whether the period 1005–1014 consisted of constant warfare (as the older accounts would have us believe), or a formal truce between Basil and the Tsar Samuel (Stephenson's suggestion), or simply a relatively calm period punctuated by raiding on a smaller scale (Shepard's theory). What is established for certain is that Skylitzes' chronicle cannot be read as decisive proof in favour of the older view. Similarly, the bulk of chapter 4 consists essentially of a refutation of the interpretation of two well-known works of art (the emperor's portrait as an illumination in the psalter bearing his name and the so-called Bamberger Gunthertuch) as depicting Basil's Bulgarian triumph, but this does nothing of course to rule out the theoretical possibility that such a depiction simply hasn't survived. In contrast, when tracing the origins of the epithet "Bulgar-Slayer" Stephenson treads on firmer ground, as the material presented in chapter 5 seems to leave little room for an origin contemporary to Basil himself.

Such limitations stem, of course, from the fragmentary nature of the material available and are not due to the author. Despite relying on many *argumenta e silentio* and presenting ideas which can well be challenged, overall the study should be considered a success as it manages to demonstrate exactly how thin is the ice that many traditional accounts of Basil's reign and reputation tread on, offering a revised view which, if not indisputable, at least seems much more credible than the previous one.

Apart from being a compact, enjoyable read as well as an updated and critical historical account of a controversial Byzantine emperor's most famous (or infamous) campaign and later reputation, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* can also be recommended to a wider audience, now that the far right rears its head both in Greece and Europe in general, as a timely reminder of the perils of recreating history for political purposes. It is a tragic irony that the real Basil, later idolized as a champion of violent nationalism, seems to have actively promoted intermarriage among the Byzantine and Bulgarian aristocracies and incorporated the latter into the subjugated province's government, appearing not as a bloodthirsty conqueror but rather as a shrewd, pragmatically minded ruler with an interest in preserving the stability of his multicultural empire.

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