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## MODES OF NARRATIVITY IN THE *SHORT HISTORY* OF NIKEPHOROS OF CONSTANTINOPLE\*

Modes of narrativity applied in the *Short history* by Nikephoros of Constantinople are investigated on the basis of several key accounts which form a specific message of the author on the level of his entire work. This specific manner of literary presentation is particularly manifested in Nikephoros' original approach in portrayal of the Byzantine emperors and the patriarchs of Constantinople of the 7th and 8th centuries, thus embedding a specific idea of both imperial governance personalized in the reign of emperor Herakleios, and mutual relations between the Empire and the patriarchs of the Church of Constantinople, as presented in the accounts of patriarchs Sergios and Pyrrhos.

*Keywords:* Emperor, patriarch, *peace and tranquility*, narrative.

An obvious need for writing about the past at the end of the 8th century, which was the time when new models were established in relations between the Empire and the Church of Constantinople after the first wave of iconoclasm, leads one to think that the historiographical production, clearly emerging from within a narrow circle of men gathered around the patriarch Tarasios, had the need to search for and offer to their contemporaries models which they might imitate but which might also serve as recognition and legitimization of their own ideas.<sup>1</sup> This was to be gained by appropriate historical writing, and shaping of history through literary modes of narration.

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed summary and analysis of the byzantine literary revival around the year 800 in Byzantium see Ševčenko, *The Search*, 293, who views the future patriarch Tarasios and Nikephoros as

Three significant historians have emerged around the patriarch Tarasios, with their historical works marking the beginning of the process of renewal of Byzantine historiography at the end of the 8th century. It was George, the synkellos of Tarasios, with his *Chronicle* from the Creation until the age of Diocletian who „reinvented“ the writing of chronicles as a historical genre, and who was then succeeded by his friend Theophanes, who continued and brought his *Chronographia* until his own time, ending with the year 813.<sup>2</sup> And at last, there was Nikephoros of Constantinople, a layman and *asekretis*, who succeeded Tarasios on the patriarchal throne in 806, and followed him on several sessions of the Seventh ecumenical council in 787 and who wrote the *Short history*, a work which covers the historical past of Byzantium within the chronological boundaries between 610 and 769.<sup>3</sup> Already these introductory remarks offer valid ground for the analysis of Nikephoros' only secular work, the *Short history*, within this specific historical frame, taking into our consideration his close ties with some of the leading protagonists of historical events which shaped his own epoch. However, Nikephoros' *oeuvre* is more diverse, including literary works of theological form as well, all written in the turbulent times around the year 815, and the revival of second iconoclasm under the emperor Leo V. Although theological by their content and manner of narration, these works are not devoid of historical narration or details which were brought into the patriarch's apologetic system in order to prove his main ideas, and among them a stance that the iconoclast emperors - Constantine V more than others, were shown as not ideal rulers in comparison with at that time already established models, such as Herakleios', who's reign was compared with Constantine V's both in the *Short history* and theological works of patriarch Nikephoros. Such composition of Nikephoros' theological argumentation might imply that he even kept and transferred some of his *historical* ideas implemented in his *Short history* when he

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the real supporters of the literary revival at the end of the 8th century, and *Treadgold*, *Revival*, 1245 – 1266. For a historical evaluation of the relations between the Church of Constantinople and the Empire see: *Afinogenov*, *The rise of the patriarchal power*, 48 - 49. and *Афиноѳенов*, *Константинопольский патриархат*, 11 - 38 (Tarasios), and *Idem*, 39 - 58 (Nikephoros)

<sup>2</sup> *Kazhdan*, *Byzantine literature*, 205 et passim refers to the *sudden* history writing around the year 800 as one of the most interesting aspects in literary development at the outset of the 9th century, further analyzing the emergence of the historical writings of George Synkellos and Theophanes (cf. *Idem*, 206 - 208). However, the question about the original author of the *Chronographia* of Theophanes and the relation between Synkellos and Theophanes in the issue of authorship of this significant work of Byzantine literature was raised long time ago by *Mango*, *Who wrote the Chronicle*, 578 - 587 and since then presents an open question and a theme for further research which might shed new light on relations between the learned Constantinopolitan iconophile elites around the patriarch Tarasios and the process of making of historical works at the beginning of the 9th century. In that sense, *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. *M. Jankowiak*, *F. Montinaro*, *Travaux et Mémoires* 19, Paris 2015 present a most welcome contribution.

<sup>3</sup> Ignatios the Deacon praised Nikephoros for his spiritual virtue and the contribution to the victory of icon worship at Nicaea in 787, setting him in the circle of ecclesiastics and lay officials in the retinue of Tarasios at the beginning of the council. See *Nicephori*, 146.18 – 147.2; 147.6 – 15 and *Life of Tarasios*, 28.18 - 24. Both *Alexander*, *Patriarch Nicephorus*, 60. and *Pratch*, *Nikephoros I.*, 113. agree that Ignatios' reference to Nikephoros as the one who participated at the Council of Nicaea in 787 are reliable and trustful information.

later wrote his apologies of icon worship.<sup>4</sup> Thus, an analysis of Nikephoros' modes of narrativity implemented in his only secular work, written before his patriarchal office, can provide a key for proper reading and interpretation of his political ideas which were later on embedded in his spiritual writings.

The theme we are about to engage appears as a result of our previous historical analysis of Nikephoros' *Short history*, its content and historical contexts in which it was made and for which it might well be written.<sup>5</sup> Manner of representations of two significant groups often mentioned in the *Short history*, Byzantine emperors primarily, and the patriarchs of the Church of Constantinople in a little lesser amount, but still with a major role, ask for a fuller examination of modes of narrativity Nikephoros utilized in order to achieve his main objective - projecting past events of Byzantium's history: imperial actions in regard to the state order, and towards the Church, as presented in their mutual relations, with the aim of engaging his public to reexamine the contemporary modes of interaction between the Church and the Empire, at the outset of the first post iconoclastic period, around the year 787.<sup>6</sup>

There are reasons to suggest that the first iconodule orthodox revival, which reached its peak in the events at the Nicaean council of 787 and continued to develop afterwards until the aggressive reintroduction of iconoclasm in 815, was in fact at its beginning an endeavor of a narrow circle of educated state and church officials of iconodule posture, centered in Constantinople, having at its head the future patriarch Tarasios. These obviously felt the lack of historiographical continuity with the past works of Byzantine historical writings, but also deemed it useful for their cause to utilize the historical genre for their own ideological purposes in their contemporary ecclesiastical strife for proper and orthodox ecclesiology and belief. In these developments and circumstances initial stimulus for the making of *Short history* should be searched for. This historical context is significant for a proper analysis of Nikephoros' work, and more over, for a setting of proper questions which need to be asked in the course of its analysis.<sup>7</sup>

The brevity of the work, once considered a sign of Nikephoros' lack of historiographical abilities, and thus even depleted as a work of a young man lacking literary

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Antirrheticus III, PG 100, 524C - 525A. Patriarch Nikephoros' theological writings are diverse both by their content, volume, and time when they were written. For a summary of these literary works, with basic references on their character see: *Alexander*, Patriarch Nicephorus, 162 - 182; *Hunger*, *Literatur I*, 344 - 346

<sup>5</sup> *Marjanoviĥ*, «Кратка историја», 26 - 30 et passim.

<sup>6</sup> Based on the research of the inner structure of the *Short history* and the data presented in the vita of Nikephoros by Ignatios the Deacon, our opinion is that Nikephoros wrote his only secular work between the years 787 and 806, prior to his appointment to the patriarchal see of the Church of Constantinople. Cf. *Idem*, 46 - 55.

<sup>7</sup> However, see: *Pratsch*, Nikephoros I, 110 - 112, who argues against the idealized image of the future patriarch's family and its ardent adherence towards icon worship in the time of his father's imperial office at the court of emperor Constantine V, whom Nikephoros himself succeeded in the time of Leo IV as it is presented in the *Life of Nikephoros* by Ignatios the Deacon. Cf. *Nicephori*, 142. 17 - 143. 23.

quality, does not argue against the presence of obvious ideological posture in its content which reveals itself after close examination of Nikephoros' literary technique.<sup>8</sup>

Modes of narrativity implied by an author of any genre of Byzantine literature are closely connected to his main stimulus and reasons for his literary endeavor and thus for a historian they present a crucial task of deconstructing and presenting its inner structure and methods of his literary approach. Only after knowing these inner modes of making of a literary work does it become a useful and usable narrative source for handling in historical research.<sup>9</sup>

In a strict sense of the word, what we understand under the term *modes of narrativity*, are the manners of presentation of a story about an event with its structure and arrangement deliberately organized in order to shape a specific account of the episode narrated. This literary act of the writer can even be widened in the sense that its use is determined to accomplish a wider purpose - to render a specific idea of the author on the level of his entire work.

In the case of Nikephoros' *Short history*, which is a work without any introduction which might explain his literary motifs, and which ends seemingly abruptly, it is a necessity to try to recognize his ideological posture, and in order to be able to accomplish this task, an investigation and observation on his narrative technique is most welcome.

We shall limit our presentation to two most significant issues which appear as crucial and principal in Nikephoros' *Short history*, both by predominant space they occupy in the work, and by narrative elements which they envisage. These, are not, however, small portions of the *Short history*, since they make more than half of the works content. Namely, portrays of the reigns of emperors Herakleios and Constantine V open and conclude the narration of the *Short history*, and these two emperors, their portrays standing at the beginning and the end of Nikephoros' work already by this fact deserve particular attention.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mango, *Short history*, 8 - 12.

<sup>9</sup> However, Treadgold, *Historians*, 8 et passim (Cf. also Treadgold, *Trajan*, 589 – 621) bases his analysis of the Byzantine historians exclusively on attempts to reconstruct the amount of mutual correlation and dependence to older, more or less lost and unknown sources of the past. Thus his analysis of Nikephoros' *Short history* does not surpass the opinion originally given by C. Mango in his critical edition of the work, adding to the hypothesis new assumptions which leads towards a totally different approach to the analysis of the *Short history*, which, however, does not have to be an obstacle to the research of Nikephoros' modes of narrativity in regard of his structure editing and the final result of his work in the context of a historical narrative. On narrativity in historical writings in the Byzantine empire and with special attention to the *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena see Vilimonović, *Deconstructing the Narrative*, published in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> The reign of Herakleios is narrated in the first 27 chapters of the *Short history*, while the reign of Constantine V is presented in 24 chapters (from 64 to 88), plus there are two mentions of the future Constantine V, of his birth and wedding (chapters 56 and 63 which are preceding the main account of his reign), both having strong conceptual notion for the later forming of his imperial image. The two accounts make 53 chapters of the *Short history*, out of 88 which present the whole work.

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The account of Herakleios' reign is by far most complex in the entire *Short history*. The already mentioned lengthiness of the report is just one of the aspects we would like to highlight. Others are: a few dialogues (between Herakleios and the emperor Phokas, Herakleios and the city eparch Priscus, and Herakleios with the patriarch Sergios and the members of the senate in the presence of Priscus), a short oration delivered to Herakleios by the Persian general Shahin which is crucial for the understanding of Nikephoros' narrative and his shaping of the general idea of the work. As well, there are a few anecdotes, seemingly unusual according to the main course of the narration at the place where they appear, first of all the account of the burial of empress Eudokia, but as well very important at least from one aspect - the attempt of making of a negative picture of empress Martina in the *Short history*.

All these, and other aspects of the Herakleios narrative some of which we shall engage in our analysis, are reserved only for the account on Herakleios' reign and they seldom, if at all, appear in other parts of the *Short history*, except for the utilization of anecdotes in narration, which appear again in the account of Constantine V's reign. However, as we hope to demonstrate, these are in fact Nikephoros' cornerstones established for the purpose of building of a metanarrative, or a narrative which appears later in his work, and just shapes his accounts on various topics and personalities, who are then modeled in accordance with the already established criteria in the previous report on the reign of Herakleios.

The narration of the *Short history* begins with the account of a *pitch of misfortunes* which had befallen the Romans on account of the emperor Phokas' misgovernment. We then learn that the state can suffer from outside, as well as from within:

*When he (Phokas) had assumed power the situation of the Christians came to such a pitch of misfortune that it was commonly said that, while the Persians were injuring the Roman state from without, Phokas was doing worst damage from within.*<sup>11</sup>

It seems that Nikephoros always tends to disregard the external misfortunes, presenting them in his work as consequences of the tribulations which arise from within, that is, out of misgovernment of the emperors, which then arise as his main literary preoccupation to describe, directing it, however, in the course of narration towards his main idea - *peace and tranquility* terms which occur quite frequently in his work, with multifaceted meaning. Those emperors, who are capable of restoring peace in their state, either by waging successful warfare with the enemies, or by concluding peace treaties with them, are positively regarded in the *Short history*, including the iconoclast Constantine V as well. These ideas are subtly embedded in the narrative from the very beginning of Nikephoros' historical account.

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<sup>11</sup> Nikephoros, 1.1 - 6. All English quotations are according to the translation of the *Short history* by C. Mango.

When starting the account of Herakleios' reign Nikephoros introduces a short episode, seemingly incidental, regarding Herakleios' relationship with one Priscus, oddly named Krispos in *Short history*, who was Phokas' brother in law and the prefect of Constantinople, to whom Herakleios first offered the imperial dignity, and later made him commander of expeditionary forces in Cappadocia and sent him there.<sup>12</sup> We are then informed that the two met at Caesarea, when Priscus insulted the emperor in a sort of an act, or a play (τὸ δράμα). Furthermore, Nikephoros tells us that Herakleios understood this drama. In his translation of the *Short history* C. Mango indicates a *plot*, which may be true, since Nikephoros presents Herakleios' desire to confer with Priscus about *mutual striving on behalf of the state*. Then the key element of the narrative is presented: *But the other man, as if in mockery, said it was not proper for an emperor to abandon his palace and to be tarrying among distant armies*.<sup>13</sup> This is a crucial figure in which Nikephoros establishes his first model of an emperor, strictly in regard of the state order. Namely, it is a demand for an emperor to strive on behalf of the state, even if it means tarrying among distant armies. This is what the author wishes to emphasize. In this account a key image of Herakleios is established, and Nikephoros will attempt to maintain it throughout his work, shaping a picture of Herakleios as a bold and successful warrior, minimizing his unsuccessful Arab campaign later on. The comment of Priscus accentuates in a way exactly what the author condemns, highlighting the contrary idea of a necessity for an emperor to tarry with his army in the distant provinces of his empire if this is required by the events and for the sake of the state order. Nikephoros even provides a little sneering observation obviously intended to provoke his contemporary reader, that *the other man* (Priscus), *as if in mockery* expressed his opinion, telling us in that way that the opposite of an active imperial rule is nothing but a trivial act. This opposite example will later be provided in the short account of the reign of Philippikos Bardanes, who in his inactivity, allowed the enemy, a Bulgarian raiding company, to attack and sack the European part of the Empire.

*Now Philippikos, after celebrating the birthday of the City, and putting on an equestrian contest, banqueted with his friends and lay to sleep at midday. At this juncture a plot was hatched against him.* After naming the leaders of the plot, and the way they organized themselves, Nikephoros proceeds to the narrative of the deposition of the emperor, highlighting specific details which might emphasize his desired point in this narrative. A certain man called Rousphos broke in the imperial palace: [...] *and finding the emperor asleep woke him up and brought him into the area of Hippodrome, where he blinded him in the second year of his reign*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> PLRE IIIB, 1052 - 1057. As Krispos he is also mentioned in Zonaras, Kedrenos, Nikephoros Kallistos, *Patria Constantinoupoleos* and John of Nikiu. Priscus held military offices as magister militum per orientem, per thracias, and since 593 he held the title of patricius. Herakleios met him as city prefect in 610 and when he was removed from power he held the rank of comes excubitorum. He died a cleric in the Chora monastery, where he was confined after his downfall in 612.

<sup>13</sup> Nikephoros, 2.10 - 22.

<sup>14</sup> Nikephoros, 48.1 - 15.

Nikephoros uses appropriate terms in order to accentuate his point. Namely, taking advantage of no Byzantine military response, the Bulgarians advanced as far as the Long Walls and the Golden Gate of Constantinople: *At this juncture an armed Bulgarian band suddenly fell upon the inhabitants of the Thracian Bosphorus. They killed a great many people both among the local population and among those who had crossed over from Byzantium [...]. Taking advantage of this freedom of action (ἀδείας δὲ αὐτοῖς προσγενομένης), they fanned out toward the land walls of the City and advanced as far as the so-called Golden Gate. On their return from there they devastated many villages in Thrace.*<sup>15</sup> In his translation C. Mango gave a rather generalized account from which one could only find out that the enemy took the advantage of the opportunity, while Nikephoros' term ἀδεία hints more to the meaning of freedom of action, even action which emerges as a result of absence of retribution for the crime. This passive conduct of the emperor Philippikos will eventually lead to his downfall, although Nikephoros accentuates his monothelitism as well, in a general estimation of his rule, which is given at the beginning of his portrayal, namely, that *he governed the empire in an indecorous and negligent manner.*<sup>16</sup> But it seems that Philippikos' inactivity in solving state matters is the most defining characteristic Nikephoros attributes to him, since he proceeds to give an account of his downfall, when the conspiracy leaders suddenly seize the sleeping emperor in the palace and deprive him of his rule.

Thus, the account of Herakleios' dispute with Priscus sets the precedent for several later observations in context of the nature and quality of government and administration of the Empire by the later emperors as described in the *Short history*.

Other significant elements of Herakleios' government, which Nikephoros establishes and which had a major place in the narrative and for the forming of the idea of proper administration and governance of the Empire, are Herakleios' personal boldness in battle and the disregard of his own life for the sake of the Byzantine *politeia*, contrary to the Persian emperor Chosroes, who showed great neglect for his state which consequently lead him to his own downfall.<sup>17</sup>

The oration of the Persian general Shahin<sup>18</sup> is full of ideological notions of state order and peace, and the fruits which are brought forward by such government,

<sup>15</sup> Nikephoros, 46.1 - 48.20.

<sup>16</sup> Terms used in this narrative are quite effective. ῥαθυμέω, a verb Nikephoros uses in its adjective form ῥάθυμος, can carry a meaning of entertainment as well, and this conforms with the later description of his downfall after a banquet held with his friends.

<sup>17</sup> Nikephoros, 15.1 - 5. Nikephoros here introduces a very meaningful observation, namely, that the personal act of Herakleios, his παρρησία which lead the Romans who perceived his boldness against the Persians, and his neglect of his own life for the sake of the state made the Persian *archons* to conclude that Chosroes is not a suitable ruler for their own state. In other words, Nikephoros narrates a specific message; Herakleios by his own virtue defeats his Persian adversary, since: Οἱ δὲ Περσῶν ἄρχοντες ἐπεὶ διεγνώσκεσαν ὡς ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πολιτείας τῆς οἰκείας ζωῆς κατεφρόνησε, μετὰ Σειφροῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ Χοσρόου βουλευόνται Χοσρόην ἀνελεῖν, μέγα περὶ τῆς οἰκείας πολιτείας καταφρονήσαντα.

<sup>18</sup> PLRE IIIB, 1140

compared and contrary to the opposite, which consequently appears as misgovernment.<sup>19</sup> Herakleios is demanded to choose among two possibilities and what he chooses is his personal act of imperial administration and proper government of the Empire described and promulgated in the narration as a personal act of a ruler, for Herakleios chooses peace, resolving to send a Byzantine diplomatic mission to Chosroes, in order to stop the Persian invasion of Byzantine lands in the east. It is not without significance that the patriarch Sergios of Constantinople is mentioned as well in this account, to which we shall turn our attention later.<sup>20</sup>

The oration of Shahin, which the reader of the *Short history* encounters early, in the sixth chapter of the work, presents a significant element in Nikephoros' construction of the narrative, or rather a metanarrative which runs through his entire work. It is a literary paradigm which accentuates the idea of *peace* in the state of the Romans, and the positive government aspects which originate from this desired order. All later descriptions of imperial rules and governments of emperors which Nikephoros mentions, have this idea incorporated in their accounts, either as accomplishing this ideal, either as reversing it, which, as a result, significantly shapes their overall image in the *Short history*. Thus it is understandable why Nikephoros insists on emphasizing this particular aspect in the reign of emperor Justinian II, when he writes in the beginning of the account that Justinian *undid the measures which his father* (emperor Constantine IV) *had taken for the sake of peace* (τῆς εἰρήνης) *and good order of the state* (τῆς ἄλλης πολιτικῆς εὐταξίας),<sup>21</sup> proceeding immediately to the account of his reign which largely corresponds with the one presented in the *Chronographia* of Theophanes.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Howard - Johnston, *Witnesses*, 247 - 248. However, Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 57 et passim views this question of the emperors place in the Byzantine *politeia* as a highly defined responsibility among many to protect the Empire against the invaders from without as one which was already shaped in the old Roman republican ideological system. In this sense, then the idea which Nikephoros puts forward in his work as a main idea and a narratological motif can be viewed as a part of a long lasting Byzantine heritage inherited from Rome, and deeply rooted into the Byzantine system of values and political ideology.

<sup>20</sup> Nikephoros, 6. 27 - 43: *If you choose concord and peace, each one of you will be the happiest of men and will appear as long as he lives to be worthy of envy and admiration: your toil will become painless and your cares will yield to joy, If, on the other hand, you let go of this course and choose to banish peace, a great boon though it may be, believing it to bring you no benefit, and take up mutual hostility and enmity instead, you will become responsible for many wars, a discordant and hateful action, with the natural result that you will undergo much sweat and toil, suffer many casualties, and expand an enormous amount of money: in a word, the effect of the war will be to bring you great distress.* These were the words of the Persian general Shahin offered to Herakleios, but which have strong ideological notion which Nikephoros obviously introduces in his work.

<sup>21</sup> Nikephoros, 38.1 - 4 et passim.

<sup>22</sup> The issue of the historical background and origin of this narrative has long been a subject of scholarly research. It's obvious bias towards the emperor Justinian II has lead scholars to circulate various hypotheses in order to explain its inner structure and content, as well as, why did Theophanes and Nikephoros include it into their historical work in the form in which it appears in the *Chronographia* and *Short history*. Cf. Head, *Emperor Justinian II*, 14 - 18 et passim. From the aspect of our research on the topic of Nikephoros' modes of narrativity in his literary work, it seems possible to suggest that the account on Justinian's reign fitted in to his broader idea of a narrative on *peace* and *state order* which he includes in his work, but as a negative example. There are indications that Nikephoros did not indulge in to a literary presentation of Justinian's personality in the manner of Theophanes who appears to have insisted on emphasizing his cruel personality



It is a significant observation, that peace and tranquility are always the results of the deeds of Byzantine emperors mentioned in the *Short history*, or in other words, the ideals of peace and tranquility always come from the Byzantines; the Persian general Shahin offers peace to Herakleios, the Byzantine emperor accepts peace by sending envoys to Chosroes, but the Persian king is the one who rejects the Byzantine peace proposal. The means of gaining this ideal state order are various in the narration of the *Short history* and Nikephoros seems not to make any qualitative distinction between the means by which peace and calm are established. Furthermore, Nikephoros, unlike Theophanes, is ready to admit military victories by iconoclast emperors Leo III and Constantine V if they lead to the establishment of state order and peace, which in general shows a specific and not so dogmatized relation toward these emperors in context of the iconoclastic dispute. And on the other hand, it is not an inappropriate act for a Byzantine emperor to offer peace to the enemies of Byzantium after a military defeat, as was the case with the emperor Constantine IV, who received small amount of space in the work, but nevertheless, his is probably the most positive image among emperors of the *Short history* since he is the one credited for introducing peace and tranquility in his entire state having eliminated the monothelitic heresy in the Church by convening of the Sixth ecumenical council and by concluding peace with the Bulgarians.<sup>23</sup>

Nikephoros begins his description of the reign of emperor Constantine IV with the account of the seven year siege of Constantinople (671 - 677) by the Arabs which proved to be unsuccessful and even disastrous for the Arabs themselves, since their entire fleet was destroyed in the Mediterranean Sea. He then proceeds with explaining how the victorious peace treaty which was concluded with the Arabs affected and induced other nations, Avars and *the princes of neighboring nations further west* who sent ambassadors to the emperor asking for peace. This segment of Constantine IV's reign is ending with a deductive conclusion that as a result of these events, to which the emperor consented, *peace and tranquility* (εἰρήνη καὶ γαλήνη) *prevailed in both East and West*.<sup>24</sup>

After this segment of narration Nikephoros introduces a story about the Great Bulgaria and the events which lead the Bulgarians to settle on the Roman territory in the Balkans and devastate the regions in Thrace as a result of a defeat of the Byzantine army which was lead by the emperor himself, who was in the end *obliged to treat with them and pay them a tribute*. This was obviously an act which lead towards

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and character, whereas Nikephoros might have missed some specific details which Theophanes mentioned in regard of Justinian's cruelty, while on the other hand, he closely follows his source, and corresponds with Theophanes when narrating about the events of his rule and character of governance which lead to disorder in the Byzantine state. Cf. *Марјановић*, *Кратка историја*, 127 - 136.

<sup>23</sup> It is also very peculiar that Nikephoros refers to the heresy of monothelitism in the account of emperor Constantine IV as a schism, a term which might again allude to disorder inside an institution, this time in the Church, although he refers to it as heresy in other parts of his work. In such a way Nikephoros is again adjusting his mode of narration in order to deliver the desired message.

<sup>24</sup> Nikephoros, 34.1 - 37.

establishing peace in the Byzantine state, and Nikephoros does not hesitate to accentuate that peace comes after a Byzantine military defeat, which might be an attempt to equate two different models of exemplary and successful rulers - victorious iconoclast emperors, such as Leo III, and those who managed to introduce order in the Byzantine state by other means, like Constantine IV, which was an issue very deeply rooted in the Byzantine society at the time when Nikephoros wrote his work.

Of interest for us in this analysis is the fact that Nikephoros introduces sort of a digression in his main narrative by introducing a chapter on the original abode of the Bulgarians, explaining how they managed to emerge at the borders of the Empire. We read:

*In the days of Constantine who died in the West, a certain man by the name of Kobratos became master of these tribes. On his death he left five sons, upon whom he enjoined not to part company under any circumstances, so that their dominion might be preserved thanks to their mutual friendship. But they took little account of the paternal injunction and a short time thereafter they divided.*<sup>25</sup>

Basically, what we encounter in this narrative about the Bulgarians is the same idea expressed by Nikephoros in the account of emperor Constantine IV, and in the oration of Shahin in the description of Herakleios' reign, namely, that mutual friendship and understanding lead towards peace and accord among nations and countries. Both times we see that Nikephoros uses foreign nations, first the Persians, and then the Bulgarians, to express this idea and to implement it into his narration, but possibly with a very significant message, namely, that Byzantines are the ones who are destined to bring peace and to strive for peace, since both Persians, and Bulgarians were not capable of preserving it, thus sparking the Byzantine Persian, and Byzantine Bulgarian wars. Such conclusion stems from Nikephoros' course of narration. Namely, five sons of the Bulgarian κύριος Kobratos showed little interest towards his plea and as a result divided once unified dominion and parted their ways. Also, another narrative message of this seemingly digression is that such disregard of Kobratos' advice lead to confrontation with Byzantium which brought defeat and disaster to the Byzantines.

At the end of this relatively short account on Constantine IV's reign we see that the initial equilibrium in the story and the narrative on peace and tranquility which was established after the defeat of the Arab conquest of Constantinople and their fleet in the Mediterranean, was reestablished by the peace with Bulgarians which was concluded by emperor Constantine IV, who then proceeds to solve the schism which prevailed in the Catholic church by the emergence of the Monothelitic heresy, and deserves to die after spending the rest of his life in *tranquility and peace* (ἐν γαλήνῃ καὶ εἰρηνικῇ), this term being used two times in the account of his reign.

*The Roman Empire being thus at peace on all sides, the impious heresy of the Monothelites, which had begun in the days of emperor Herakleios, was gaining in strength and a schism prevailed in the Catholic church. On perceiving this,*

<sup>25</sup> Nikephoros, 35.5 - 13.

*Constantine convened an ecumenical council which confirmed the five preceding ecumenical synods as well the two wills and two natural energies of our Lord Christ, whom it proclaimed perfect in His divinity and His manhood, while condemning to anathema the leaders of the heresy (these are among others Sergios and Pyrrhos, but Nikephoros avoids to mention them by name). After thus spending the rest of his life in tranquility and peace, he died in the seventeenth year of his reign. His body was laid down in the imperial sepulchers at the Holy Apostles.*<sup>26</sup>

The account of the reign of Constantine IV serves as an introduction to the further narration on the reigns of subsequent emperors mentioned in the *Short history*, specially of his son, emperor Justinian II, who undid the measures which his father introduced for the sake of peace and order in his state, but also for the description of the turbulent years of turmoil and civil war which ensued before the first iconoclast emperor Leo III took the throne and managed to restore order. Leo III's reign was however with new consequences, especially in regard to the Church and the theological doctrines regarding icon worship, of which Nikephoros was aware in his work, but chose to speak about in a specific way, unlike Theophanes, with disapproval but without direct and personal condemnation of the emperor himself, accentuating his qualities as a ruler capable of reinstating peace and order in the Empire, and whose image as presented in the account of the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717 is most similar to the image of Herakleios, presenting an active emperor capable of leading his army in battle and being victorious over the enemies, saving the imperial city and restoring order in the state. But in order to accentuate this story, Nikephoros inserts in chapter 52 a short remark on the situation in the Empire as a result of frequent assumptions of power, emphasizing in particular that education was destroyed and the military organization crumbled, having as a result Arab raids on Byzantine lands.<sup>27</sup> Having set such a prelude, Nikephoros then proceeds to narrate about the circumstances in which Leo III assumed imperial power. Namely, when military and civil dignitaries became aware of the critical situation, and taking account of the emperor Theodosios III's lack of experience and his incapability to offer resistance to the Arabs, they persuaded him to abdicate from the imperial office. Then they elected the patrician Leo, the strategos of the Anatolic army, as emperor.

*When the military and civil dignitaries became aware of these matters, of Theodosios' lack of experience and his incapacity of offering resistance to the enemy (τὴν τοῦ Θεοδοσίου ἀπειρίαν, καὶ ὡς οὐχ ἰκανῶς ἔχει τὰ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους ἀντικαθίστασθαι), they pressed him with exhortation to abdicate the imperial office and assume without harm a private station. He accordingly withdrew after a reign of one year. Thereupon they held a ballot of who was to become emperor and elected the patrician Leo, who was at that time strategos of the so called Anatolic army.*<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Nikephoros, 37.1 - 14.

<sup>27</sup> Nikephoros, 52.1 - 13.

<sup>28</sup> Nikephoros, 52.13 - 24.

On the narrative level, this passage presents a renewed emphasis on several key ideals regarding the imperial rule, and is compliant with the modes already laid in the founding chapters of the *Short history* in the reign of Herakleios. The explicit disregard of emperor Theodosios III as an incompetent ruler, incapable of properly dealing with the crisis in the state, and specially in regard to the Arab raids, is given as a main reason for Leo III's election as emperor, implying already in this chapter his political ability, which will be displayed in the following chapters of Nikephoros' work. Regarding the narrative technique applied in this storytelling, all significant elements are present, from the danger which had befallen the Byzantine state, a threat of an unqualified ruler who must be replaced with a capable one, although he was, in the time when Nikephoros wrote his work, already labeled as a progenitor of a heresy among the iconodule circles. If we have in mind the opening chapter of the *Short history*, where emperor Phokas was marked as the one who brought misfortune to the state of the Romans, and thus needed to be succeeded by Herakleios, whose usurpation was thus presented as a legitimate act since he later managed to bring the state of imperial affairs into a much better level compared to the time when he took power in 610, such an introduction to the reign of Leo III does not leave any doubt towards a comprehension of Nikephoros' attitude towards Leo III as a competent emperor, capable to restore previously collapsed order in the Byzantine state.

The images of emperors in *Short history* thus present a complex and multileveled representation in the literary shaping of the narrative in the work of Nikephoros. This narrative mode is evident as well in regard to another significant aspect of the work, namely, the manner of representation of Byzantine, and specifically Constantinopolitan patriarchs and their relations to the emperors in *Short history* with a specific message designed to be transmitted via these representations to the contemporary reader of the late 8th or early 9th century, intended to engage his notions and ideas in a desired ideological milieu.

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In the same manner as he defined the role model of an emperor in regard to his imperial duties, foremost acting as a propagator of peace and good order in his empire, using the image of Herakleios to establish this model, Nikephoros applied the same mode of narrativity in regard to the images of patriarchs, using the images of patriarchs Sergios and Pyrrhos of Constantinople to establish a role model for the images of later patriarchs mentioned in the work, especially in regard to the question of their relations with the emperors, and not their heresy.<sup>29</sup> In that sense, all significant aspects of their relations with the emperors and their patriarchates are already established in the beginning of the *Short history*, later on just being adapted to various modes and specific accounts of later patriarchs. Patriarch Sergios of Constantinople is in few very strong narrative sequences of the account of Herakleios' rule represented

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<sup>29</sup> For general information on the patriarchal offices of Sergios and Pyrrhos see: *Dieten, Geschichte der Patriarchen*, 1 - 56, 57 - 76, 104 - 105.

as his close associate, and always in regard to various political issues and circumstances of imperial order. Moreover, Sergios is referred to in the *Short history* as emperor Herakleios' *friend* and *high priest* (ἀρχιερέυς καὶ φίλος).<sup>30</sup> In this sense Nikephoros also uses a peculiar term, mentioning Sergios as ὁ ἱερομύστης which makes an even more complex picture of this patriarch, since the term is used in the context of Herakleios' talks with Shahin when the patriarch supported him to act in accord with peace, implying his political influence on the emperor.<sup>31</sup> This specific image of a Constantinopolitan patriarch is even emphasized in the account of Pyrrhos' appointment to the see of the Church of Constantinople after Sergios' death, in a statement that the new patriarch was emperor Herakleios' *brother* while at the same time alluding that Pyrrhos was Sergios' *synkellos*.<sup>32</sup> Then in chapter 31, when Nikephoros narrates about the disorder which set in the capital as a result of empress Martina's ambition to rule with her sons after Herakleios' demise, follows a strange account of Pyrrhos' forced abdication which is given in a very negative context in regard of the *boorish citizens* of Constantinople who are referred to as κακόδοξοι, and who entered the church and desecrated the altar table searching for Pyrrhos and roamed the streets of Constantinople *in a lawless manner*, calling their act ταραχή καὶ στάσις.<sup>33</sup> Obviously Nikephoros depicts the patriarch's forced abdication, and wishes to present these events as a result of a disorder which the empress Martina aroused by her political ambitions, and the entire part of the *Short history* covering the chapters from 29 to the chapter 32 Nikephoros is building a narrative, a historical account which is intended to restore both the narratological sequence and a proper historical representation of events, in which the disorder which set in with the empress Martina had to be restored in order

<sup>30</sup> Nikephoros, 11. 1 - 23. Such designation of the patriarch Sergios the reader encounters in the eleventh chapter of the *Short history* where the incestuous marriage of Herakleios with his niece Martina is portrayed. While in the chapter 26 Nikephoros states that *Herakleios was devoted to Pyrrhos, whom he called his brother*. Cf. Nikephoros, 26. 1 - 6.

<sup>31</sup> Nikephoros, 7.1 - 5. et passim. The presence of the ὁ ἱερομύστης term in the account of Herakleios' talks with the Persians regarding their mutual relations is very peculiar, and possibly carries additional meaning in this story, and is probably not restricted to its basic ecclesiastical meaning.

<sup>32</sup> Nikephoros, 26.1 - 6: *In the 12th indiction Sergios, bishop of Byzantium (ὁ τοῦ Βυζαντίου πρόεδρος), died. Since Herakleios was devoted to Pyrrhos, whom he called his brother (ἀδελφόν τε ἐκάλει), because when he was being baptized in the holy bath the emperor's sister had received him in her arms, and knew him, furthermore, to have been on friendly terms with Sergios, whose quarters he had shared (καὶ ἅμα ὀκειωμένον Σεργίου καὶ συνδιατώμενον ἐγίνωσκε), he appointed this man archpriest of Byzantium.*

<sup>33</sup> Nikephoros, 31.14 - 34: *Now the more ruffianly and boorish part of the people armed themselves against Pyrrhos and came to the church, but did not find him, so at the time of vespers they entered the sanctuary, accompanied by a group of Jews and other unbelievers. They tore the altar cloth, shamefully defiled the holy spot and, having seized the keys to the doors, affixed them to a pole and so went round the City in lawless fashion. When Pyrrhos had been informed of this, he came to the church the following night and, after embracing the sacred objects, took off his pallium and placed it on the altar table, saying „Without renouncing the priesthood I abjure a disobedient people.“ So he went out quietly and found a secret refuge with a pious woman, then, seizing a favorable occasion, he sailed away to Carthage (πρὸς τὴν Χαλκηδὸνα in the Greek text). When some monks there heard of his arrival, their leaders were Maximos and Theodosios, who dwelt in Africa, they interrogated him concerning the Exposition made by the former emperor Herakleios and by Sergios, archpriest of the City, regarding the two wills and energies of Christ our Savior. So much for Pyrrhos.*

(τάξις), and all the issues which were opened with such events, both ecclesiastical - the abdication of Pyrrhos, and the imperial line of Herakleios' descendants from his first *lawful* marriage with the empress Eudokia, is restored. In this sequel of the work, in chapter 32 Nikephoros ads a short notice that Paul, the former *oikonomos* of the Great Church, was appointed the patriarch of Constantinople, and thus finally restores the narratological equilibrium which was previously disrupted.<sup>34</sup>

However, the manner of representation of patriarch Pyrrhos' overthrow hides a valuable answer to our analysis of the manners of narration in *Short history*, but through imposing of a reasonable question, namely, how could an orthodox iconophile author as Nikephoros, even if he was writing at a young age, make such a grave mistake and portrait a deposition of a heretical patriarch, as was Pyrrhos in reality, in such a negative manner on the account of the obviously antimonotheletic and orthodox citizens of Constantinople, and thus give a very favorable image of Pyrrhos? Furthermore, why did Nikephoros mention the interrogation of Pyrrhos by Maximos the Confessor in Africa regarding the issue of two wills and energies in Christ while not giving a final conclusion that Pyrrhos was a monothelete, if not for the sake of building of a specific image of patriarchs Sergios and Pyrrhos, where their obvious heresies were shifted to the second narrative plan, in order to accentuate their prominent role in the politics of the Empire and their close connections with the emperor Herakleios, thus again shaping *his* specific image of past events and Byzantine history of the 7th and 8th centuries.<sup>35</sup>

That Nikephoros may well have molded a specific picture of the first two patriarchs of his *Short history* in order to gain a specific image suitable for his general idea of an image of patriarchs, might be concluded from a parallel investigation of how Theophanes presented the same figures in his *Chronographia*. Very likely drawing his accounts of the two patriarchs and of the whole period of Herakleios' rule from the same source which Nikephoros utilized when writing his *Short history*, Theophanes demonstrates a completely different image of the two patriarchs, accentuating almost exclusively their heresy and seldom anything else.<sup>36</sup> While Nikephoros accentuates Sergios' political role in the events of Herakleios' rule, Theophanes omits all these issues, stressing only his monotheitism. Neither are Sergios' *friendship*, nor Pyrrhos'

<sup>34</sup> Nikephoros, 32.9 - 12.

<sup>35</sup> On several places Nikephoros demonstrates his knowledge on the key issues regarding the monotheletic controversy and who were the main propagators of this doctrine in the Church of Constantinople. However, when referring to the Sixth ecumenical council, he again remains silent about Sergios' and Pyrrhos' fate, and states only that *the leaders of the heresy* were anathematized. On the other hand it seems to us very unlikely that Nikephoros was a completely passive rewriter of his sources, totally absentminded, and without any intellectual engagement while writing his *Short history*, and such narration about the patriarchs is more complex than simple brevity which he as author has displayed in his work.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. for example Theophanis, 329.1 - 332.2. where both patriarchs, Sergios and Pyrrhos are decidedly referred to as monotheletes and as the ones who were anathematized by the council convened in Rome by pope Martin: καταλαβόντος δὲ καὶ Μαξίμου ἀπὸ Ἀφρικῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ καὶ τὸν πᾶπαν Μαρτίνου πρὸς ἕλληνας ἐξάψαντος, σύνοδον ἔργου ἐπισκόπων συναθροίσαντες Σέργιον καὶ Πύρρον, Κύρον καὶ Παῦλον ἀναθεμάτισαν, τὰς δὲ δύο θελήσεις καὶ ἐνεργείας Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐτράνωσαν καὶ ἐκήρυξαν [...]

*brotherhood* with emperor Herakleios mentioned in *Chronographia* in the part of the work which otherwise highly corresponds with the narrative of Nikephoros' *Short history*. If the accounts of Sergios' patriarchate, and specially Pyrrhos' abdication are read in context of Nikephoros' own time when the struggle for the appropriate ecclesiology of the Church of Constantinople towards the Empire was a high issue and a task to be solved in favor of the Church presided upon by patriarch Tarasios, then the manner of representation of the two heretical patriarchs in the *Short history* has far more sense than the accusation on behalf of the author that he was a careless and absentminded compiler of previous lost histories. On the other hand, these literary differences between Theophanes and Nikephoros in their historical works, and the disparity in depicting these two patriarchs might rather be a result of their different social and cultural status, and their position inside the ranks of the iconodule ecclesiastical circles than a deliberate discord, Theophanes being a monk, and Nikephoros a lay official at the time when he wrote his history.

That Nikephoros very likely followed this specific idea in representing the images of patriarchs of the 7th and 8th centuries as ecclesiastics regardless to their heretical beliefs, or rather, shifting their heresy to the second narrative plan, is also evident in the picture of the iconoclast patriarch Constantine II and the account of his public disgrace and execution by orders of the iconoclast emperor Constantine V. It is worth mentioning in this context that the patriarch Constantine II's death is incorporated in the part of the *Short history* where Nikephoros narrates about the ἀσέβεια of the emperor Constantine V and his persecution of the monk St. Stephen the Younger and several lay officials of the state who were accused of rebellion, and in generalized form concerning their icon worship.<sup>37</sup> Otherwise, persecution of iconophiles is not a major story in Nikephoros' work, as it is in Theophanes' *Chronographia*.<sup>38</sup> Positioning the account of patriarch Constantine II's public execution in the general narrative of the emperors *impiety* sends a specific message in regard to the issue and question of the place, role and significance of the patriarch of Constantinople who at that time was an iconoclast, but who's iconoclasm is very vaguely mentioned by Nikephoros, and very mildly in comparison to Theophanes' account in *Chronographia*. These point to the same narrative mode, or pattern applied in the beginning of the *Short history*, with the images of the heretical patriarchs Sergios and Pyrrhos, where the dignity of the patriarch, more than his personality in connection to his dogma is set forward as the most important aspect of their presence in the narrative.

The account of patriarch Constantine II's public disgrace and his execution by the orders of the emperor Constantine V lies in sharp contrast with the previously established image of *friendship* and *brotherhood* (φιλία καὶ ἀδελφότης) between the

<sup>37</sup> These are the chapters 80, 81 (martyrdom of St. Stephen the Younger). In the chapters 83 and 84 Nikephoros inserts the account of patriarch Constantine II's forced abdication, public disgrace and death, all supervised by the emperor Constantine V.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Theophanes' entrie for the year 741, the beginning of Constantine V's reign, where he opens his narration by surveying in advance his abominable deeds which were contrary to orthodox faith. Cf. Theophanis, 413. 2 - 414.2.

patriarchs Sergios and Pyrrhos and the emperor Herakleios. Regardless of the patriarch Constantine II's iconoclasm, Nikephoros presents an image of his disgrace by the emperor as a vice versa example of the established model of relations in the 7th century during Herakleios' reign.<sup>39</sup> After he has narrated about the patriarch's deposition by orders of the emperor, Nikephoros proceeds to display the patriarch's public disgrace and execution.

*Shortly thereafter he had Constantine fetched and sent him to the church riding in a cart. He had him accompanied by one of the imperial secretaries bearing the written charges against him; these (the secretary) read out before the gathered people, striking him on the face for every item of the accusation. In this way they brought him up to the ambo and deposed him, while the new patriarch read out these same charges in front of the sanctuary in a low voice. The next day (the emperor) conducted customary hippodrome games and directed that (Constantine) should be pulled along, seated on a donkey, facing toward the rear of the animal, and should be cursed and spat by the whole people. Not long thereafter he commanded that his head should be cut off in the Kynegion of the City and exposed aloft at the so called Milion, while his body was dragged by a rope through the streets of the City and cast in the tombs known as those of Pelagios.<sup>40</sup>*

This account is among the most vivid ones presented in the entire Short history and displays total fall and subjection of the Church of Constantinople under the will, or rather *impiety*, of the emperor. However, Nikephoros then proceeds to continue his narration in the next chapter with a totally different story, again placing the personality of the emperor Constantine V, who had previously executed the patriarch, into a different milieu. He tells that in the 5th indiction (766/767) the city reservoirs got empty due to harsh drought. Constantine decided to rebuild the old aqueduct of Valens which was destroyed during the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626. The emperor collected skilled artisans from the entire Empire, on whom he lavished many allowances *ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων χρημάτων*.<sup>41</sup> However, this image of a responsible emperor engaging in reconstruction of public buildings of the capital, is rapidly shifting in narration towards a new negative image of the emperor on account of his *φιλοχρηματία* which Nikephoros used to designate him as *ὁ μισόχριστος νεός Μίδας*. Although he previously mentioned lavish allowances for the artisans in the story about Constantine's rebuilding of the aqueduct of Valens, a point omitted in Theophanes' more detailed account on the

<sup>39</sup> According to Nikephoros, 72. 3 - 17; 81.24 - 27 the patriarch Constantine, a former monk and bishop of Syllaion was appointed by the emperor Constantine V in 754. at the Council in Hiereia, after which the former patriarch Germanos of Constantinople, John of Damascus and George of Cyprus were publicly anathematized. As patriarch he also publicly swore that he was not a worshiper of icons. See *Rochow*, Konstantinos II, 31 et passim who hypothesizes that Constantine may have been an iconoclast even before his patriarchal appointment, but that Nikephoros in his account of the event may have wanted to excuse the patriarch by telling the story in a conditional sentence, that it was said by some eyewitnesses that the patriarch swore an oath against icons: *φασὶ δὲ ὡς καὶ τὸν τηλικαῦτα τῆς πόλεως ἀρχιερέα θεασάμενοι ὑψώσαντα τὰ ζωποιοῖα ξύλα ὀμωμοκέναι μηδ' αὐτὸν εἶναι τῶν προσκυνοῦντων τὰς ἱεράς εἰκόνας.*

<sup>40</sup> Nikephoros, 84. 1 - 18.

<sup>41</sup> Nikephoros, 85, 1 - 12.



same topic, it appears that Nikephoros tinkers with this image of Constantine V as a responsible ruler in the matters of his social and civic endowments with the intention to highlight his exploitation of the public treasury. In fact, Constantine V *stored away all the gold. As a result, the taxed people, hard pressed as they were by the exaction of imposts, sold cheaply the fruit and produce of the earth [...]. This was considered by the senseless as a sign of the earth's fertility and the abundance of commodities, but by the wise as the result of oppression and avarice and as inhuman sickness.*<sup>42</sup>

Such acts of the emperor Constantine V are a part of his ἀσέβεια which in Nikephoros' narration is not limited to his iconoclasm, but he treats this term in a rather expanded sense, including his treatment of civil and church officials, patriarch Constantine II and his misuse of public treasuries in order to collect enormous sums of gold for himself. All these are consequently leading towards disturbance of order in the state of Romans, an idea proclaimed at the very beginning of the *Short history*. The need of striving for peace in the Empire of the Romans, for which greatest responsibility lie on the emperor himself is also accentuated and present in the account of emperor Constantine V's iconoclastic reign in its both positive and negative aspects - his successful war campaigns which forced the adversaries of the Empire to plead for peace being positive in Nikephoros' narratological system, while his persecution of *the pious* and the icons was destroying a very specific kind of peace, which we could call *ecclesiastical peace*.<sup>43</sup> This idea was even highlighted in Nikephoros' account of a vicious earthquake which destroyed *many buildings* in Constantinople, but among them Nikephoros chooses to name only the church of Holy Irene stating that it was totally demolished thus again invoking the idea of *peace*, which will be destroyed by Constantine V's lawless treatment of the Church of Constantinople, persecution of icons, imperial laymen but also the iconoclast patriarch Constantine II, while Theophanes in his account of the same event does not mention the destruction of Holy Irene in Constantinople.<sup>44</sup>

This use of anecdotes in the *Short history*, or rather stories which Nikephoros seemingly uncaringly imputes in his main storytelling appears to also have a specific narrative role, and they might appear as more complex, as in the case of the

<sup>42</sup> Nikephoros, 85. 12 - 21.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Hunger*, Literatur, 344 who noted the different imagery of emperor Constantine V and his successful military endeavors in Nikephoros' work, and in the Chronographia of Theophanes.

<sup>44</sup> Nikephoros, 63.1 - 10. In this chapter Nikephoros still narrates about the reign of Emperor Leo III, introducing for the first time the future emperor Constantine V with the story of his marriage with the Chazar princess and adding: *After a lapse of time an earthquake occurred at Byzantium (κατὰ τὸ Βυζάντιον) and likewise shook violently other towns and regions. In addition to many building, holy churches, and porticoes which it caused to fall down at once, some of them being overturned from their very foundations, it also threw down the sacred church which bears the name of St. Irene and stands very close to the Great Church (καὶ τὸν θεῖον νεὼν ὃν τῆς ἁγίας Εἰρήνης ἐπὼνυμον καλοῦσι κατέσεισεν, ὃς πλησιαιτάτα τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας ἴδρυται)*. Basically, Nikephoros here narrates about the events which occurred during the reign of Leo III but chooses to arrange his material in such a way so it attaches the future emperor Constantine V to these events as well, thus making a specific point through the connection with the story of the overthrowing of the church of St. Irene.

representation of the empress Martina, the second wife and niece of Herakleios, in which the anecdotal story of the death and funeral of the empress Eudokia stands in connection, with the intention of Nikephoros to express a significant message, which possibly might stand in correlation with certain contemporary issues of Nikephoros' own time.<sup>45</sup>

Nikephoros openly blames Herakleios' unlawful marriage with his own niece Martina, in that sense he even accentuates patriarch Sergios' condemnation of this marriage, which is the place in the narration when also the idea of patriarch's and emperor's *φιλία* is mentioned. On the other hand, early in the work he introduces the anecdote - story about the sacrilegious events which were attached to the funeral of the empress Eudokia, thus expressing a certain amount of affection towards her which might directly stand in connection with the narration about the events after Herakleios' death when the strife among Herakleios' descendants of Eudokia's and Martina's lineage appears, which was presented as a direct result of Martina's imperial ambitions to overcome and diminish the power and rule of Herakleios' first born son out of his marriage with Eudokia and his successor, the future emperor Constans II, from which internal friction and conflict resulted.<sup>46</sup> As the issue of the specific portrayal of Byzantine emperors and patriarchs in the *Short history*, the image of empress Martina is subtly embedded into the main narration of the work, but reveals itself only after a closer analysis of the mode of narration which Nikephoros applied during the course of its writing.

We cannot know to which extent Nikephoros' *Short history* is an original author's work in the sense of his dependence upon his sources and the manner of his interpretation of these sources. On the other hand, a creative approach to the sources which he had at his disposal is evident, especially when compared to Theophanes' writing. There are hints from comparisons with the text of Theophanes' *Chronographia* which largely corresponds with the passages of the *Short history* that Nikephoros paraphrased his sources, but even these correlations with the text in Theophanes' *Chronographia* are not providing us with evidence from which strong and convincing

<sup>45</sup> Certain hypotheses were given that under these words a subtle critique of empress Irene might appear, as Nikephoros' attempt to turn his attention to her own reign, which, as is known, had certain consequences for his own lay carrier and might be the reason for his abrupt ending of the narration of the *Short history* precisely when she steps on the historical scene with the short mention of her marriage with the future emperor Leo IV. However, this issue, of the seemingly abrupt ending of the *Short history* with the mention of empress Irene, and the obvious ideological purpose of the idea of *peace* which springs throughout his work, leaves space for other conclusions, far more literary engaged in the analysis of the work with a yet another attempt of a literary promotion of the main narrative ideas of the author.

<sup>46</sup> Nikephoros, 3.1 - 12. Nikephoros narrates that a certain servant girl leaned out from the upper floor of the building under which the burial procession of the empress Eudokia was passing and spat unguardedly into the air. Her secretion landed on the splendid vestment in which the empress' corpse was enveloped. Whereupon, those taking part in the funeral became incensed: they apprehended the girl and condemned her to death by fire, thus, in the manner of barbarians, attaching to the demise of the empress an unholy burial rite, sacrilegious men (οἱ ἀνόσιοι) that they were. This is the only instance where Nikephoros mentions the empress Eudokia, but later on in his work he obviously sympathized Herakleios' descendant from his marriage with Eudokia contrary to the sons Herakleios had from the second, unlawful marriage.

final conclusions that he simply rewrote his sources could be made. On the other hand, if perceived and analyzed as a finished literary work, a history, with its specific content, structure and narrative, all placed in a proper historical context of the time when it was composed, and in regard to its author's ideological stance and his involvement in the events of his own time, the structure, content and literary aspects of the *Short history* contain significant ideological bias or ideas in connection with some of the most significant issues of the late 8th century ecclesiastical strife which can be traced throughout his work. Nikephoros' sense to copy, or paraphrase his sources, previous historical works, now lost, or even his ability to shape the content and structure in a appropriate form - we will never know to which extent each of this processes is actually predominant in the *Short history*, gives his only historical work a far bigger value, and asks for a further investigation of his *Short history* and also a broader analysis of the circle of intellectuals from which he stems together with other significant individuals of his age.

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#### О НАРАТИВНИМ ТЕХНИКАМА НИКИФОРА ЦАРИГРАДСКОГ У КРАТКОЈ ИСТОРИЈИ

У Византији крајем 8. и почетком 9. века постојала је једна група учених људи, сабраних око цариградског патријарха Тарасија, која је након првог таласа иконоборства осетила очигледну потребу за обновом историје и историјског жанра. Том кругу људи, поред Георгија Синкела и Теофана Хронографа, припадао је и Никифор Цариградски који је још као лаик написао своју *Крајску историју*. Насупрот неколицини мишљења стручњака који су се бавили анализом *Крајске историје*, и става да се ради о делу и аутору који не показују нарочиту умешност у писању историје, покушали смо да анализирамо Никифорово дело узимајући у обзир историјске токове времена у којем је он писао. Наративна техника којом се Никифор служио приликом састављања *Крајске историје* омогућила му је да материјал којим је располагао искористи на начин којим би се њему савременим читаоцима пренела једна специфична порука о месту и улози византијских царева и цариградских патријараха у времену када је ово питање након првог таласа иконоборства било изузетно актуелно.

Никифор је на почетку дела, у првим поглављима посвећеним цару Ираклију успоставио најважније наративне мотиве и створио идеалан приказ византијског цара који је руковођен лично одважношћу али и спремношћу да се прихвати *мира* са Персијом показао одговоран и активан однос према сопственој држави и поретку који се у њој формира. У том смислу Никифор даје потребне примере које умеће на одређеним местима у оквиру главног наратива,

који се затим у *Краткој историји* појављују на различитим местима и у вези с описом владавине потоњих царева попут Константина IV, Јустинијана II, Филиппика Вардана, али и иконоборачких царева Лава III и Константина V, у складу са којим ће бити вреднована искључиво њихова световна политика и управљање Царством.

На исти начин Никифор ће поставити главне наративне елементе у вези с местом и улогом цариградских патријараха у њиховом односу према царевима, и то на основу приказа Сергија и Пира Цариградског, чија ће јерес монотелитизма код Никифора бити потиснута у други наративни план, а њихва «политичка» блискост са царем Ираклије, њихово *ѿријашељсѿви* и *брајсѿво* које су као врлине односно степен односа са царем бити узор за вредновање места и положаја патријараха из времена иконоборства, Анастасија и Константина II који ће, такође, одређеним наративним поступком, донекле бити лишени свог иконоборачког идентитета, и у одређеној слици бити приказани као патријарси који су трпели неправедан прогон од стране царева.