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The Bulgarian Tsardom in the Main Latin Sources of the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa (1189–1190)

(Abstract)

Information on the relations between the Bulgarian Tsardom, crusaders, Byzantines and Serbs in Latin sources on the crusade of Frederick Barbarossa contain exclusive data relating to the political history and the structure of the state of Peter and Asen in 1189–1190. Due to the uniqueness of these data, their value is of great importance for revealing a number of events and details from this particularly interesting and eventful period. Most of the researchers so far, however, seem to have neglected some of the details hidden in these sources and often show through their writings that they have been subject to the inertia of the historiographical tradition. The present study may also have certain shortcomings or controversial elements, yet it is an attempt on the one hand to thoroughly and punctually study the information about the Bulgarian state in the main written sources tracking the Balkan part of Frederick I's crusade, and on the other hand to chronologize, locate and analyze historical events and geographic indicators according to the context. In conclusion, the following assumptions are made: most of the attackers of the pilgrims in the region called Bulgarian Forest were probably representatives of criminal contingent; it is highly unlikely that the Bulgarian ruler sent envoys to the Western emperor in Niš; Peter probably asked the Staufer monarch to bestow on him the crown of the emperor in Constantinople in order

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to provide significant military assistance to help the crusaders conquer the Byzantine capital. The rebellion in Philadelphia and the crusaders' campaign undoubtedly played a role in the development of the Bulgarian-Byzantine conflict, postponing military activity for several months. Despite the efforts at a diplomatic level, the Bulgarian rulers didn't manage to take advantage of the presence of the pilgrims on the Balkan Peninsula and to gain lasting positives for themselves.

Keywords: Third Crusade, Frederick Barbarossa, Bulgarian Tsardom, Byzantium, Latin sources