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Once again on St. Ioannikios the Great and the Slavs of Bithynia

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This study focuses on three main topics, all related to St. Ioannikios the Great: a) the names of the saint's parents: Myritzikios (father, bearing a Slavic name) and Anastaso (mother, bearing a Greek name), which might indicate a mixed marriage. b) Ioannikios' family name Boilas, which was originally a title used by the Bulgars, later applied to Slavs by the Byzantines or, less probably, the Bulgars. As a title and a nickname, the term later evolved into a family name. c) The toponym "ta Marykatou" (Ioannikios' birthplace) is the Hellenized form of the Slavic personal name (in the genitive) Markota. All this evidence coincides with the population transfers of the Slavs from the Balkans to Bithynia.

Key-words: Slavs, Bithynia, St. Ioannikios the Great, Boilas, ta Marykatou

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Študija obravnava tri glavne teme, povezane s sv. Joanikijem Velikim: a) imeni svetnikovih staršev: Myritzikios (oče s slovanskim imenom) ter Anastaso (mati z grškim imenom), ki bi lahko bila pokazatelja mešanega zakona. b) Joanikijev priimek Boilas, ki je bil prvotno bolgarski naziv, so pozneje uporabljali Bizantinci ali manj verjetno Bolgari za Slovane. Naziv ali nadimek se je pozneje razvil v priimek. c) Toponim "ta Marykatou" (Joanikijev rojstni kraj) je helenizirana oblika slovanskega imena (v rodilniku) Markota. Omenjeni dokazi sovpadajo s selitvami Slovanov z Balkana v Bitinijo.

Ključne besede: Slovani, Bitinija, sv. Joanikij Veliki, Boilas, ta Marykatou

Since the mid-19th century, many studies have been focusing on the Slavic element in Asia Minor during the Middle Ages and this topic is still of great interest to scholars, despite the lack of sources and the fragmentary information available. In the present paper we discuss some of the personal names and place names related to the Asia Minor Slavs.

The *Life* of Saint Ioannikios the Great

Of particular interest to scholarship is the *Life* of Saint Ioannikios the Great (762-846) from Bithynia.[1] The *Life* has survived in two main versions, written shortly after the saint's death, as well as one more which was elaborated later, around the mid-10th c., by Symeon Metaphrastes. The first version of the *Life*, attributed to a certain Peter, is to be found in only one manuscript, dated in the 10th-11th c. (Paris. Coisl. 303), while the second, attributed to a Savvas, has survived in four manuscripts (Paris. gr. 1519, 11th c.; Vindob. Caes. Aug. 5, 11th c.; Vatic. gr. 807, 12th c. and Vatic. gr. 1256, 15th c.). According to scholars, Peter's version is the earliest, written not long after Ioannikios' death, probably after mid-June of 847 and certainly not later than 852-853. Savvas' version is dated in the 850's, but later than that of Peter.[2] Apart from said texts, Ioannikios' life is narrated by the anonymous author(s) of the so-called *Menologion of Basil II* (Vatic. gr. 1613, late 10th-early 11th c.; this version provides no information about his village or his parents), as well as by several *synaxaria* and other (later) sources, all of which seem to have drawn from the earlier *Lifes*. Below is cited the passage which is important to our study, in its various forms depending on the recension.

Text:

Βίος Αγίου Ιωαννικίου (Peter): ἐκ χώρας μὲν ἦν τῆς τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας· κώμη δὲ ὑπῆρχε τούτῳ ἐν ᾗ καὶ γεγέννηται τὰ Μαρυκάτου οὕτω προσαγορευομένη. Ὁ δέ γε πατὴρ αὐτοῦ Μυριτζίκιος ἐκέκλητο, ἡ δὲ μητὴρ Ἀναστασώ.[3]

Βίος Αγίου Ιωαννικίου (Savvas): Ὅς χώρας μὲν ἔφυ Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας, κώμης δὲ τῶν Μαρυκάτου [Vindob. Caes. Aug. 5: Βαρυκάτου]*, πρὸς τῷ βορείῳ μέρει*

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[1] *PmbZ* # 3389.

[2] Sullivan, *Life of St. Ioannikios*, p. 247; Efthymiadis, *Hagiographica*, p. 42. About the *Lives*, see also Mango, *St. Ioannikios*, pp. 393-404.

[3] *Βίος Αγίου Ιωαννικίου* (Peter), p. 386.

τῆς Ἀπολλωνιάδος λίμνης παρακειμένης. Ὁ τούτου δὲ πατὴρ ἐκέκλητο Μυριτζικὸς [Vatic. gr. 807 and Vatic. gr. 1256: *Μυριτζίκιος*] *καὶ ἡ μήτηρ Ἀναστασώ, ὡς οἶμαι, οὐκ ἀπεικότως* [Vindob. Caes. Aug. 5: *ἀπεικῶς*] *... Ὁ δὲ εἰρηκῶς ὡς χώρας μέν ἐστι Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας, κώμης δὲ τῶν Μαρυκάτου καὶ γένους τῶν Βοιλάδων* [sic]*, τήν τε κλῆσιν πέλει Ἰωαννίκιος.*[4]

Βίος Ἁγίου Ἰωαννικίου (Symeon Metaphrastes): *ᾧ πατρὶς μὲν ἡ Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχία, κώμη δὲ Μαρυκάτου καλουμένη πρὸς τοῖς βορειτέροις τῆς Ἀπολλωνιάδος κειμένη, γεννήτορες ἐπαληθεύοντες τοῖς ἔργοις τὴν κλῆσιν, Μυριτζίκιος καὶ Ἀναστασώ.*[5]

Συναξάριον: χώρας μὲν φὺς τῆς τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἐπαρχίας, κώμης τῶν Μαρυ-κάτων [al. cod. *Μαρυκάτου*]*, πλησίον Ἀπολλωνιάδος κειμένης λίμνης, πατρὸς μὲν Μυρισικοῦ* [al. cod. *Μυριτζίκη*]*, μητρὸς δὲ Ἀναστασοῦς.*[6]

About more than half a century ago, Sp. Vryonis studied the *Life* and reached the conclusion that the saint was of Bulgarian[7] (sic) origin. According to Vryonis, this assertion logically follows from three rather unquestionable facts: 1) Ioannikios' family name was Boilas; 2) his village of origin ("*κώμη τῶν Μαρυκάτου*") was located in the northwestern part of Bithynia (to the north of lake Apollonias), where Bulgarians (sic) and Slavs had been previously installed on the Emperors' orders; 3) the fact that Ioannikios was in military service for a long time coincides with the Emperor Justinian II's plan to employ the transferred population in the military (late 7th c.).[8]

Although the above mentioned considerations are not sufficient in order to label the saint as a descendant of either "Bulgarians" or Slavs installed in the area, a few years later, Ph. Malingoudis and H. Ditten provided further evidence on the (Bulgarian-Slavic - sic) origin of Ioannikios' family: the name of the saint's father, Myritzikios (Μυριτζίκιος),[9] is the Slavic name Mirĭčo (of the same root with e.g. Mircea), presented in the text in a Hellenized form with the diminutive ending -*ίκιος* (see Ἰωάννης > Ἰωανν-ίκιος). According to Malingoudis, the Slavic name was first transformed into Greek as *Μιριτζῆς. He further comments on this change by citing the Slavic name Mičo, attested in Greek medieval sources as Μυτζῆς.[10] The same applies, according to Malingoudis, to the name of Ioannikios' mother,[11] Anastáso (Ἀναστάσω – not to be confused with the Greek form Ἀναστασώ / Ἀνα-στασά, although both derived from the Greek name Ἀναστασία < n. ἀνάστασις < v. ἀνίστημι), because, as N. Andriotes showed in the early 1950's, Greek female names ending in non-stressed -*ω* are the Hellenized form of Slavic female names

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[4]   *Βίος Ἁγίου Ἰωαννικίου* (Savvas), pp. 333, 338.

[5]   *Βίος Ἁγίου Ἰωαννικίου* (Symeon Metaphrastes), col. 37B.

[6]   *Συναξάριον Ἁγίου Ἰωαννικίου*, p. 311.

[7]   In the present paper we make a distinction between the terms Bulgars (i.e. the so-called Old-Bulgarians or Proto-Bulgarians, the tribe which settled down in the Balkans in the 7th c. A.D.) and Bulgarians (i.e. the people that emerged as a South Slavic "ethnic" group from the fusion of the Bulgars with the Slavs and other people in the Balkans).

[8]   Vryonis, *St. Ioannicius*, pp. 245-248.

[9]   *PmbZ* # 5209.

[10]   Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλαβικά ὀνόματα*, pp. 495-496; Ditten, *Prominente Slawen*, pp. 102, 118. Beševliev, *Les inscriptions*, p. 229, on the contrary, writes that it was a Proto-Bulgarian name.

[11]   *PmbZ* # 342.

in vocative ending in -*o*.[12] However, a closer look at the original texts quoted above shows that the form used in all four of them (according to the manuscripts) is actually Ἀναστασώ and not Ἀναστάσω.[13] Although it is not quite clear why Malingoudis recorded the form Ἀναστάσω, we fully agree with his etymology for the name Myritzikios, which certainly strengthens the view of Ioannikios' Slavic origin.

We may conclude that Ioannikios was indeed the descendant of a Slavic family from the Balkans that had been installed in Bithynia in the times of either Justinian II or, less probably, Constantine V. It seems, though, that Kazhdan and Sullivan have reservations about Vryonis', Ditten's and Malingoudis' conclusions or at least this is what we understand from their words: "He was <u>probably</u> of Slavic origin" and "For the <u>likely</u> Slavic origin of the family see…" (emphasis added). Graebner, on the other hand, considers both parents' names to be of Greek origin.[14]

An early Slavic family named Boilas?

According to Savvas' version, Ioannikios originated from a family named Boilas. This could be possible, because the use of Boilas as a family name is attested already in the very late 8th c. The earliest reference comes from Theophanes, who wrote about Constantine Boilas, a *patrikios* and loyal follower of the empress Irene, active in the year 799.[15]

We agree with Graebner that Ioannikios' family was, by the time he or his parents were active, a Byzantinized one.[16] The narrative by Theophanes provides strong evidence for this. Two major questions, however, arise: 1) what was the meaning of the name Boilas? And, 2) were the bearers of this name of Proto-Bulgarian or of Slavic origin?[17]

There is nothing to add on the first question, as the topic has already been discussed extensively in scholarly literature. The name Boilas originated from the Old Bulgarian title *bojla*. A Hellenized form of this title is attested in sources not only referring to the family, but also to Bulgarian officials: according to the Old Bulgarian inscriptions, in 837, for example, *ichirgu-boilas* and *kana-boilas* (all of these being titles) were sent by *Khan* Persian against a Slavic tribe.[18] This information alone would lead us to the assumption that whoever bore the name

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[12] Ανδριώτης, *Ονόματα γυναικών*, pp. 29-33; Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλαβικά ονόματα*, p. 496.

[13] Beševliev, *Les inscriptions*, p. 229, gives the correct form, stating that she was of Greek origin.

[14] Kazhdan, *Ioannikios*, p. 1005; Sullivan, *Life of St. Ioannikios*, p. 243; Graebner, *Role of the Slavs*, p. 89.

[15] Θεοφάνης, p. 474; *PmbZ* # 3869.

[16] Graebner, *Role of the Slavs*, p. 89; Graebner, *Population transfers*, p. 50.

[17] I was not able to find Ph. Malingoudis' study, Zur Prosopographie der Boilades. *Münchener Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 2 (see Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλαβικά ονόματα*, p. 495, fn. 2).

[18] *PmbZ* # 11595-11596; Бешевлиев, *Първобългарски надписи*, pp. 67-72, with more information and commentary. About the titles, see the old but still valuable study by Menges, *Altaic elements*, pp. 93, 96-98, 103.

Boilas was of Bulgarian origin and that, in this context, Ioannikios' family must have been a Bulgarian one. There is, however, a key element in this story: the name Myritzikios. As Malingoudis and Ditten have convincingly proven, the name is of Slavic origin, presented in the texts in a Hellenized form. This would only mean that we are dealing with a mixed Slavic-Bulgarian family in Byzantine Bithynia, in the early to middle-8th c. Could this be possible?

There is no direct or indirect evidence in the sources that the Byzantines transferred Bulgarian population in Asia Minor (as they did with the Balkan Slavs) either in the late 7th or in the 8th c. Although scholars had previously suggested that the name Neboulos (Νέβουλος - Νεβοῦλος in Greek sources) is of Old Bulgarian origin,[19] it has been recently proven that the name was actually a Slavic one.[20] Neboulos was appointed by the Byzantines as a *strategos*, that is military commander of the army consisted of Slavs, recruited from the Slavic population that had been installed in Asia Minor by the Emperor Justinian II in 688/689. Later, in 692 (or 693), this Neboulos led a great part (about two thirds, which is, of course, an exaggeration) of the Slavic army under his command to defect to the Arabs.[21] Here follow the versions of the relevant passage.

Text:

Θεοφάνης: *ἐπελέξατο ἐκ τῶν μετοικισθέντων ὑπ᾽αὐτοῦ Σκλάβων καὶ ἐστράτευσε χιλιάδας λ᾽ καὶ ὁπλίσας αὐτοὺς ἐπωνόμασεν αὐτοὺς λαὸν περιούσιον, ἄρχοντά τε αὐτῶν Νέβουλον τοὔνομα... ὑποβαλὼν δὲ Μουάμεδ τῷ συμμαχοῦντι Ῥωμαίοις στρατηγῷ τῶν Σκλάβων, πέμπει αὐτῷ κούκουρον γέμον νομισμάτων, καὶ πολλαῖς ὑποσχέσεσι τοῦτον ἀπατήσας πείθει προσφυγεῖν πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ καὶ κ᾽ χιλιάδων Σκλάβων.*[22]

Νικηφόρος Πατριάρχης: *πολλὰ τῶν ἐκεῖσε Σκλαβηνῶν γένη τὰ μὲν πολέμῳ τὰ δὲ ὁμολογίᾳ παραλαβών, εἰς τὴν τοῦ Ὀψικίου λεγομένην χώραν διὰ τῆς Ἀβύδου διαβιβάσας κατέστησεν. ἐξ ὧν στρατεύει ἄχρι καὶ εἰς τριάκοντα χιλιάδας λαόν, οὓς ἐξοπλίσας λαὸν ἐκάλεσε περιούσιον, ἄρχοντα αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν εὐγενεστέρων ἐπιστήσας Νέβουλον* [Vatic. gr. 977: *Νεβοῦλον*] *τοὔνομα.*[23]

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[19] Graebner, *Population transfers*, p. 49; Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλαβικά ονόματα*, p. 495, fn.2; Ditten, *Slawen*, pp. 87-88; Ditten, *Prominente Slawen*, pp. 97, 119; Moravcsik, *Namenliste*, p. 134; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, p. 210 (with reservation); Beševliev, *Les inscriptions*, p. 229.

[20] Малингудис, *Лични имена*, pp. 684-686; Malingoudis, *Personennamen*, pp. 37-38; also, Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλάβοι*, pp. 147-148; followed by Seibt, *Slawenpolitik Justinians II.*, p. 129. See also *PmbZ* # 5233. Graebner's comment (Graebner, *Population transfers*, p. 50: "*Incorporation of the Slavs into the imperial framework of Asia Minor does not seem to have meant immediate dispersion among the local population. The evidence of the lead seal of Bithynia and the selection of Neboulos from among the same settlers indicates that they were settled as a body in one particular place…*") implies that Neboulos was of Slavic origin. This contradicts his previous statement in the same article (see above) and no explanation is provided for the new, alternative, theory.

[21] A similar case of defection is narrated by Theophanes for the year 664 or 665, when the Arabs, invading the "*Romania*", took five thousand Slavs on their side. It is open to discussion whether by "*Romania*" Theophanes meant the Balkans or Asia Minor, although scholars opt for the latter. See Charanis, *Slavic element*, p. 70, fn. 3 and Graebner, *Population transfers*, p. 41. Cf. Σούλης, *Βιβλιοκρισία*, p. 338.

[22] Θεοφάνης, pp. 365-366.

[23] Νικηφόρος Πατριάρχης, p. 92.

Κεδρηνός: *ὁ δὲ Μωάμεδ τῷ στρατηγῷ τῶν Σθλάβων κούκουρον γέμοντα νομισμάτων πέμψας, καὶ πολλαῖς ὑποσχέσεσι τοῦτον ἀπατήσας, πείθει προσφυγεῖν αὐτῷ μετὰ εἴκοσι χιλιάδων Σθλάβων.*[24]

Michael the Syrian: *Mohammed, émir de Djézireh, envahit le Beit Roumayê. Les Romains lui livrèrent bataille à côté de Césarée de Cappadoce. Les Esclavons prirent le parti des Taiyayê et s'en allèrent avec eux en Syrie, au nombre d'environ 7 mille.*[25]

What is of interest from the above story is that Neboulos was a Slavic leader and that there is absolutely no mention of Bulgars related to either the transfer or the defection.[26] More Slavs were transferred to Asia Minor (and particularly in northern Bithynia, at the Black Sea coast) under the reign of Constantine V (in 762), according to Patriarch Nikephoros.[27] Moreover, it is worth noting that in many cases the Slavs transferred to Asia Minor had previously fled from the Bulgars in the Balkans.[28]

If, therefore, there were no Bulgars in Asia Minor at that time, or at least not related to the Slavic population transferred there on imperial orders, how can we explain the Proto-Bulgarian word – that is Boilas / *bojla* – as the family name of Ioannikios who had a Slavic patronymic?

As mentioned above, this is one of the two earliest references to the word *bojla* used as a family name in Byzantine sources. In both cases the persons bear a Greek first name. Moreover, although it is possible to trace Ioannikios' Slavic descent, there is no clue about Constantine's origins. It can be suggested that either both persons were of Slavic origin, or one was of Slavic (Ioannikios) and one of Proto-Bulgarian (Constantine) origin.

When the Byzantines first met with the Bulgars, the latter were using, among other titles, that of *bojla* for some of their dignitaries (also for army leaders, but certainly not for tribe rulers).[29] Moreover, when the early Slavs first arrived at the Danube frontier of the Empire, as well as after having crossed it, they had no centralized political organization, or at least there is no evidence of this in the sources. Unlike their distant Eastern relatives, the Antae, who were most probably influenced by the neighboring Sarmatians, the Balkan Slavs had no supreme ruler. Divided into several tribes, their political system was still at a very primitive stage,

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[24] Κεδρηνός, p. 773.

[25] Michael the Syrian, p. 470.

[26] Although Beševliev, *Les inscriptions*, p. 229, writes that Sabinos, mentioned by Theophanes, was of Bulgarian origin, this person has been identified with a certain Shabib b. Yazid. See Mango – Scott, *Theophanes*, p. 512, fn. 3. Therefore, this name should not be linked to the Proto-Bulgarian one (e.g. that of Sabinos, who was *Khan* in the 760's). The term or name *Χαγάγ* (Chagan? Hajjaj?) mentioned in the same paragraph has not been explained yet. See also Turtledove, *Theophanes*, p. 64.

[27] Νικηφόρος Πατριάρχης, p. 148.

[28] Graebner, *Population transfers*, pp. 41, 43. Of the opposite view is Somogyi, *Byzantine coins*, p. 134, who believes that the Slavs benefited from such transfers and acted in cooperation with the Byzantine authorities, while forced displacement of population at that time was an exception.

[29] Sophoulis, *Bulgaria*, pp. 73-74.

with a tribal council (*vetje*). However, some individuals were able to distinguish themselves either as heads of these tribal councils or, most probably, as military leaders.[30] These persons were somehow in position to control their fellow tribesmen and for this reason their names have been recorded in the sources. It is true, though, that not a single Slavic word for a ruler, a tribal or a military leader etc. has survived from this era. When describing the tribal heads of the Slavs, the earliest Greek and Latin (and later Slavic) sources mention either Greek terms (ἄρχων, ἀρχηγός, ἡγεμών, ἐν τέλει, φύλαρχος, ταξίαρχος, ἐξάρχης / ἔξαρχος – this last one most probably was also used for a Goth leader of some confederation of Goths and Slavs in the Balkans), or Latin (*tsar* < *caesar*; *rex*; *dux*), and later German (*krol / kral(j)* < the name of the Great Karal; *knjaz / knez* < *kuninga*, cf. *König*, *king*), or even Central-Asian Turkic ones (e.g. *zhupan*; *bylja / bojar* < *bojla*), probably borrowed by the Slavs from the Bulgarian tribes and / or the Avars, or even from the so-called Western Turks. It is worth noting that this lack of central authority in the Slavic tribal society is attested even up to the 11th century. It is not necessary to mention here all the references to sources, which the reader can find in many studies and textbooks for the early Slavs.[31]

Byzantium's contacts with the early Slavs were always – or almost always – related to the Avars and the Bulgars. According to the sources, the Slavs were in most cases acting under the pressure and the orders of one of the above mentioned semi-nomadic people. Because of this, one would naturally expect either the Slavs themselves to adopt this special term, *bojla* (as indeed was later the case with this particular one, as well as with other words from various languages – see above), or other people to impose some terminology on Slavic speakers. However, there is no indication in the sources that the early Slavs had already adopted the term *bojla* during their early contacts with the Bulgars or that the Bulgars themselves applied this term to Slavs who were in their service.[32] We know for sure that some elite Slavs were employed by Bulgars, e.g. a certain delegate Dargamir, in the early 9th c. (812/813).[33] Yet, no Proto-Bulgarian title has been recorded in the sources to describe a Slav in this early period. It is thus unlikely that the Slavs were using this term for their leaders before or during their early encounter with the Byzantines. So, if we have to comment on the combination of the Proto-Bulgarian term *bojla* with a purely Slavic name, as in the case of Ioannikios' family, a possible explanation could be that the Byzantines borrowed this term from the ruling Bulgars and were using it in order to describe some prominent members of the Slavs, perhaps those who entered the service of the Byzantines. In this perspective, a Slav holding a high rank within his tribal society or one who had proven his military skills and entered the Byzantine army could have been called a "*bojla*" by the Byzantines.

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[30] On this topic see the discussion in Curta, *Slavic society*.

[31] See e.g. Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλάβοι*, pp. 47-57, with references.

[32] Sophoulis, *Remarks*, pp. 137-138 and Sophoulis, *Bulgaria*, p. 70, comments on foreign peoples in service of the Bulgars.

[33] Θεοφάνης, p. 497; *PmbZ* # 1235.

In our opinion, the title *bojla* was at first used by the Byzantines as a cognomen of the Bulgars, in order to distinguish the persons. Moreover, this high-ranking title was suitable for characterizing individuals of particular influence who joined the Byzantine army or were simply granted honorary titles (like that of *patrikios*) within the Byzantine court. We know, of course, that Bulgarian rulers and high officials were very often given such titles, and that some Slavs took offices in the Byzantine army, administration and clergy.[34] It is rather likely, thus, that the Byzantines were calling *bojla* not only the elite Bulgars, but also the elite Slavs. Once a Slav was called *bojla* by the Byzantines, it is possible that later this designation was transformed into a nickname and, eventually, into a family name. This is how, for example, in later times, the Greek family name *Strategos* was formed. It is hardly a coincidence that the family name Boilas was established approximately in the rule of the Emperor Constantine V, when, according to Kountoura-Galaki, the first surnames – originally nicknames, sobriquets – appeared. There is no doubt that the appearance of double names or surnames is closely related to major changes in the Byzantine society during the second half of the 8th and the first half of the 9th century.[35] Yet, we see no link between the iconoclasts, who are presented in the sources as bearing double names, and Ioannikios' family, who was indeed of iconoclast beliefs. The adoption of the name Boilas is related to the general tendency of the era, but not to the icon crisis.

As a conclusion, we may say that Ioannikios descended from a Slavic family or, at least, a mixed Slavic-Greek family (judging from the name of his mother).

A Slavic place name in Asia Minor

We would like now to turn the reader's attention to Ioannikios' place of origin. According to the sources, it was a village called *ta Marykatou*, located in northwestern Bithynia, to the north of lake Apollonias (modern Apolyont Gölü or commonly known as Uluabat Gölü). The passages quoted above mention the following forms: *Μαρυκάτου, τὰ Μαρυκάτου, τῶν Μαρυκάτου, τῶν Μαρυκάτων* (al. cod. *Μαρυκάτου*). Apart from these texts, the place name is registered in one more hagiographical source: the *Life* of Saint Paul the Younger, from the third quarter of the 10th century: "*Κατοῖκει δὲ ἔν τινι χωρίῳ ὅ τοῦ Πέτρου* [al. cod.: *μὲν*] *λέγεται* [al. cod.: *μεταλέγεται*]*, προσεχὲς δέ ἐστι τοῖς τοῦ Μαρυκάτου κατονομαζομένοις, ὅθεν ὁ θεῖος ἐν μοναχοῖς Ἰωαννίκιος ὥρμητο, ἐπεὶ καὶ* [al. cod.: *καὶ ὁ*] *λόγος διαπεφοίτηκεν οὐ μακρὰν εἶναι γένους αὐτὴν Ἰωαννικίῳ*".[36] And, finally, it is attested in the 11th century chronicle of Skylitzes: "*ἐν τῷ λεγομένῳ χωρίῳ τῶν* [al. cod.: *τοῦ*] *Μαρυκάτων* [al. cod.: *Μαρυκάτου*]".[37] Judging by the formation of Greek place names in

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[34] Some examples in Živković, *Forging unity*, pp. 36-37; Seibt, *Weitere Beobachtungen*, pp. 461-465; Seibt, *Slawenarchonten*, pp. 28-29, 33.

[35] Kountoura-Galaki, *Formation of surnames*.

[36] *Βίος Αγ. Παύλου του Νέου*, p. 21.

[37] Σκυλίτζης, p. 429 (year 1043).

Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the correct form should be *τὰ Μαρυκάτου*, a name composed of the neuter article in plural (*τὰ*, meaning, in most cases, *τὰ οἰκήματα*, that is the estates or the buildings) + a personal name in the genitive case (namely, the owner). This formation of place names was very common in Constantinople.[38]

In our opinion, the place name *ta Marykatou* reveals a personal name which does not fall into any category enlisted by Argyropoulou-Papadopoulou for the place names of Constantinople (Emperors / Empresses; relatives and friends of the imperial family; high civil and military officials; foreign rulers, dependents of the Byzantine Empire; other individuals who played key or important role in the history of the city) and this is not surprising, as we are dealing with a small and insignificant village in the countryside of Bithynia. The toponym in question speaks of a person who once owned land property at that place, either as a founder of the settlement, or as a landlord, or a prominent individual in the broader local community who happened to own some land in that particular place which was later evolved into a village. What is important to us is the original form and etymology of this personal name.

Normally, the masculine personal name in the nominative case should be *ho *Marykatos* (*ὁ *Μαρυκάτος*). No such name existed in Greek language or any other language related to the Byzantine Empire. It is certainly not an ethnic name (see e.g. Χωνιάτης – gen. Χωνιάτου, Λημνιάτης – gen. Λημνιάτου), because in this case we would expect a name *Marykiatos* – gen. *Marykiatou*, not attested in any language and, of course, not matching the form recorded in the sources quoted above. Judging from the form, the option to look for a female personal name (e.g. *Marika - Μαρίκα*, which is a modern form for *Maria,* attested in various languages, such as Greek, Polish, Romanian), is out of the question. Also erroneous is the form *οἱ Μαρυκάτου*, suggested by H. Ditten and translated as *"the people of Marykatos"* (*"die Leute des Marykatos"*).[39] The closest to this name is *Markos*, gen. *Markou* (*Μάρκος, Μάρκου*). All the documents quoted above, however, present a name which includes some letters which would (and should) never appear in any form of the name *Markos* except from one case: the Greek form *Markatos – Μαρκάτος*.

Male personal names bearing the ending *-άτος* are not uncommon in the Greek language. This ending, particularly widespread in the Ionian Islands, has been repeatedly studied already since the early 20th century.[40] According to Chatzidakis, the male personal and family names do not originate from place names in neuter, but from first names only, as patronymics (e.g. Μάρκος > Μαρκάτος, *"the son of Markos"*). This patronymic may later turn into a family name. As for the place names ending in *-άτον*, later in *-άτα*, but also ending in *-άτοι*, these may derive either from a family name or from any personal (first) name as a patronymic ending in *-άτος*. The only obstacle towards this interpretation is the development of

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[38] About this formation of place names, see Ἀργυροπούλου-Παπαδοπούλου, *Τοπωνύμια*, p. 181. About a place name involving the name Markos (see below) formed in a similar way – *τὰ Μάρκου* – on the island of Chios, see Koder, *Aigaion Pelagos*, p. 219.

[39] Ditten, *Prominente Slawen*, p. 102.

[40] Χατζιδάκις, *Πατρωνυμικά*; Χατζιδάκις, *Ἀπάντησις*, p. 28-31.

a vowel (-*υ*-) in the middle of the name. This phenomenon is not likely to appear in such names or words in Greek. There is, however, another option which may provide a plausible explanation: Slavic origin.

According to Malingoudis, the place name reflects a Slavic personal name *Mrkota* (= brunet, dark skinned), "*attested since the 13ᵗʰ century in South-Slavic dialects*". By this he means the Croatian name Mrkota, which, as F. Miklosich has pointed (without mentioning his source though) is first attested in a document of 1235 from Venetian Almissa, modern Omiš, under the form "*merçota*".[41] Mrkota is actually Croatian only, mostly used as a family name and rarely (in older times) as a given name.

Without rejecting Malingoudis' suggestion, we would like to propose one more explanation which, in our opinion, is even more plausible: that we are dealing here with a Slavic form of the name *Markos* - Mark. It is known that in Slovene the genitive for male personal names can be formed in two ways, one by using the ending -*a*, and one by using the ending -*ota*, e.g. Branko – Branka / Brankota, Miro – Mira / Mirota, as well as Marko – Marka / Markota.[42] The same, although less often, applies to Croatian, as well as to Serbian (but only for names ending in -*e*, e.g. Dare – Dareta). The genitive in -*a* is far more common and widely accepted in Slovene, while the genitive in -*ota* is considered more "archaic". This particular form of the genitive is a characteristic of the south-western Slavic branch and not of the south Slavs in general (in Bulgarian, for example, it would be Marko – Markov, and in Serbian Marko – Marka – or Marković, for the patronymic). Yet, the form *Markota* is still very much different from the name *Μαρυκάτου* attested in the Greek sources. The explanation we can offer is that one of the most common phenomena of the Greek language towards Slavic loanwords is the so-called *anti-metathesis* (interchange) of the vowels. This means that the Slavic form *Markota* would sound like **Markato* in Greek. Another very common phenomenon regarding the Slavic loanwords in Greek is the development of vowels between two consonants.[43] And this, in combination with the *anti-metathesis*, would turn the original Slavic name *Markota* into **Marikato*, or, in an even more Greek spelling (since the name should be in the genitive), **Marikatou*. The Slavic name of a landowner (genitive case) may have well produced a place name, which is presented in Greek texts in its Hellenized form. In other words, a Greek place name based on the name Mark would be "*τοῦ Μάρκου*" (Mark's, belonging to Mark) and its Slavic equivalent would be "*Markota*" (Mark's, belonging to Mark)[44]. Our hypothesis is based on the rules of

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[41] Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλάβοι*, p. 162 (with reference to Miklosich, Franz, *Die Bildung der slavischen Personen-und Ortsnamen*. Heidelberg, 1927, p. 78, which we were not able to check); Miklosich, *Bildung*, p. 80 (nos. 228, 231).

[42] The same rule applies to some Slovene nouns of male gender, e.g. *oče – očeta*. About the Slovene names, we would like to note here the exceptional *Miha – Mihata / Mihe / Miha*, the last one formed under the influence of other Slavic languages.

[43] Both phenomena recorded e.g. in Οικονόμου, *Σλαβικά δάνεια*, pp. 159, 161. They also apply to the name Μαρυκάτου < Mrkota suggested by Malingoudis (see above).

[44] Alternatively – but not related to our case – the genitive of the name Mark-o, that is Mark-ota, was used as a patronymic at first, later as a first name and, finally, as a family name

formation of place names and, therefore, we did not consider Slavic male personal names ending in *-ota* in the nominative (for example, the Bulgarian names Dragota, Radota, Slavota), because there is no similar form for the name Marko.

The explanation presented above is strengthened by the fact that the area where the village *ta Marykatou* was located was indeed inhabited by Slavic speaking population (see above about the population transfers in Bithynia). There is one final question which needs to be answered: did the Slavs transferred into Asia Minor belong to the western branch of the South Slavs or to the eastern? It seems that at that time the Slavic tribes in the southern Balkans were still geographically mixed[45] and, although a common Slavic language must have been the prevailing one, the formation of various languages and dialects was already in process. We cannot exclude the option that tribes which were at that time living in the Eastern Balkans later moved to the West, or that tribes from the Western Balkans were also present in the East (the same applies to the main branches of the Eastern and Western Slavs; we see, for example, linguistic traces of Eastern Slavs in the Balkans). There is no clue whether Justinian II, for example, campaigned against South-western or South-eastern Slavs (apart from the fact that the Slavs under attack were neighboring to the Bulgars),[46] and the name of Ioannikios' father is attested – in various forms – in several south Slavic languages. It is very likely, though, that the Slavs transferred by Justinian II were living in the area around the modern Bulgarian – Serbian border, which was under attack of the Bulgars in the early 680's, as well as that they did not belong to one single tribe. Even so, if our suggestion about the name Marko – Markota is correct, then, most probably, the village was named after a Slavic speaking person who belonged to what we call now south-western branch of Slavic languages (or, roughly speaking, a person whose language was related to what later evolved into either Slovenian or Croatian).

It would have been equally natural for a Slavic speaking person to name their land after their own name (or for more people to name a settlement after the founder or, perhaps, the most important among them), and for the Greek speaking neighbors to accept this place name and adapt it according to the rules of their native language.

(mostly in Croatia, now also attested in the USA). This evolution of names is very common in several languages, including Greek and Slavic (see e.g. the Bulgarian name Marko – Markov, the latter one used also as a family name).

[45] On this discussion, see e.g. Μαλιγκούδης, *Σλάβοι*, pp. 68-69, 82-85, 106-107, with references.

[46] See e.g. Komatina, *Bulgarian expansion*, pp. 59 ff.

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P O V Z E T E K

Ponovno o sv. Joanikiju Velikemu in Slovanih v Bitiniji

Pantelis Charalampakis

V študiji je predstavljeno nekaj imen in izrazov, ki so povezani z zgodnjimi Slovani v Bitiniji (severozahodna Mala Azija). Predvsem na podlagi besedil iz življenjepisov sv. Joanikija Velikega se strokovnjaki strinjajo, da je njegov oče Myritzikios nosil slovansko, medtem ko je njegova mati Anastasó nosila grško ime. Prisotnost mešane slovansko-grške družine v Bitiniji v drugi polovici 8. in prvi polovici 9. stoletja je zelo verjetna, saj so na tem področju bizantinske oblasti naselile številne Slovane, ki so jih preselile z Balkana. Razlaga Joanikijevega priimka Boilas je večja uganka. Zdi se, da so izraz *bojla*, prvotno protobolgarski naziv, uporabljali Bizantinci (oz. manj verjetneje Bolgari) za poimenovanje uglednih Slovanov v službi Bizantincev (ali samih Bolgarov). Izraz se je postopno razvil v nadimek in na koncu v bizantinski priimek. Malo verjetno je, da je bila Joanikijeva družina protobolgarskega izvora, saj nimamo dokazov za kakršnokoli prisotnost Bolgarov v Mali Aziji v tem obdobju. Nazadnje je obravnavana Joanikijeva rojstna vas "ta Marykatou". Kljub predlogom, ki pravijo, da se v imenu kraja odraža slovansko osebno ime Mrkota (= rjavolas, temne polti), ponujamo drugačno razlago: gre za izpeljanko iz slovanskega imena Marko v rodilniku: Markota. Predlog temelji na evoluciji slovanskih izposojenk in razvoju zemljepisnih imen v antični in srednjeveški grščini. Zato je zelo verjetno, da se je slovanska oblika Markota (rodilnik) spremenila v Markato (premet), nato Marikato (razvoj samoglasnika med soglasnikoma) ter končno Marikatou v skladu s pravili grške slovnice za tovrstna imena (v rodilniku). Člen (ta) pred izrazom Mari(y)katou dopolnjuje krajevno ime in pomeni "Markova posest (ali polja, ipd.)", tovrstna krajevna imena so bila zelo pogosta v srednjeveški grščini, tako v mestih kot na podeželju.