

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE LOST SOURCE OF JOHN SKYLITZES'
SYNOPSIS HISTORION IN THE CHAPTER ABOUT THE REIGN
OF MICHAEL IV

by

KAMIL BIAŁY

ABSTRACT: It was thought that Demetrios of Kyzikos was the author of the lost source of John Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion* in the chapters about the reigns of Romanos III and Michael IV. However, the analysis of the attitude of Skylitzes to the patriarch Alexios the Studite reveals that the author of the *Synopsis Historion* followed two contradictory sources in the aforementioned chapters. In the chapter about the reign of Romanos III it was indeed Demetrios of Kyzikos, which is supported by prosopographical evidence. However in the subsequent chapter on Michael IV, Skylitzes used a different source. This source cannot be identified with certainty due to the lack of evidence, but some traces suggest that it was John the Lydian, the last author whom Skylitzes mentions in the prooimion to his work.

One of the most frequently undertaken research themes concerning the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes is the question of the sources which the author used¹. This paper is part of the above mentioned research trend and its aim is to prove on the basis of existing source material that the source of John Skylitzes in the chapter on the reign of Michael IV could not be the lost chronicle of Demetrios of Kyzikos, as A. LAIOU claimed in her paper.

It should be noted that the study in question was not strictly devoted to the case of the lost sources of Skylitzes. A. LAIOU examined only Skylitzes' attitude to the imperial marriages and concluded that Demetrios of Kyzikos was the source for the author of the *Synopsis Historion* in the description of the two first marriages of empress Zoe². Although she does not state directly that Skylitzes used Demetrios' narrative more extensively, by examining the evidence

¹ I disagree with A. MARKOPOULOS' statement doubting that "the subject has anything new to yield", *From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10th–11th Centuries*, ByzZ CII 2009, p. 708.

² A. LAIOU, *Imperial Marriages and Their Critics in the Eleventh Century: The Case of Skylitzes*, DOP XLVI 1992, p. 172.