

The Chrysobullos of 1189 and the History of German and French Quarters of Constantinople

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to the analysis of information from emperor's chrysobullos issued in 1189 and also of other sources on the history of German and French emboli in Constantinople. Created most likely in the time of the Second Crusade these quarters had different fate and significance. German quarter was a symbol of alliance between Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire. It's economical role wasn't considerable. Correspondence between the rulers of these states shows that German warriors in the service of the Byzantine Empire were the very object of attention from both sides, especially their need in their own church. This could be

the church of S. Eirene at Perama. Close connections of the German merchants' close connections with Venice conditioned and facilitated transfer of embolus Alemannorum exactly to the Saint Marcus republic.

Embolus Francigenarum probably established in the accordance with the French king practically served the trading interests of Occitanian merchantry that paid duties to Aragon, not France. Obviously the main role here was played by Montpellier. It's count even succeeded to conclude a dynastic alliance with the Comneni. It was the break of this alliance that could cause the transfer of the embolus to Venice.

Frenchmen and Germans are among the least studied foreigners at Constantinople of the Comnenian time. The biggest puzzle here is the problem of German and French *emboli* in Constantinople. The only source telling us about their existence is the emperor's chrysobullos issued in June 1189.

Fragment from the Chrysobullos of 1189:

"That is why Our Clemency orders by the word of this Chrysobullos for Venetians to get everything, that is requested by their envoys, and the whole embolos Alemannorum et Francigenarum and their marine wharves, that are transferred to them in the presence of our Serenity clerks Constantine Pediadites and the most clear protonobilissimus Niceta Balianit by the practica of Constantine Petriota. This must be confirmed by the resolution of pansebastos sebastos and the retinue of Our Sublimity archichancellor master John Duka. Relevant secretaries have to be acquainted with this Chrysobullos.

Whole the annual income of the emboli is equal to 50 livres of hyperpyrons (14 kg of 20karat gold – O.L.) calculated for this transfer. Although said emboli with the maritime wharves by the words of [previous] chrysobulla had been transferred to Alemans and Francigens,

but as this benefaction was made not for all people of Alemans and Francigens, but only to a few outcasts and mostly unknown with undetermined and casual service for Romania, but from the other side they have the great income from these emboli and wharves, so Our Excellence prefers the service, proposed by the whole nation to the service of a few gathered from a dispersion".

This document was the last in the series of Byzantine satisfactions of Venice demands after the destruction of Venetian *embolus* at 1171. Previous orders granted to Venetians their privileges and also compensation for merchants' losses. But Byzantine had no possibility to close up the compensation question by its own resources. So emperor Isaac Angelos decided to transfer German and French *emboli* into Venetian hands. Greek text of the chrysobullos haven't survived. But its Latin translation was inserted in the First (12th cent.) and the Second (13th cent.) *Liber Factorum*, and also – in the *Liber Albus* by Andrea Dandolo¹.

Actuality of this research is conditioned by actual inexistence of historiography of the problem. The chrysobullos of 1189 was either ignored, either mentioned, but without deep analyze². The only question,

connected with the chrysobullos – was about the reasons of the said *emboli* liquidation. Common thing here was the argumentation of the chrysobullos itself: the *emboli* hadn't been used in full, they had been visited only by a few merchants, people infamous, without any benefit for Empire³. Additionally Kr.N. Ciggaar⁴ says that such a statement can reflect a depopulation of both *emboli* after the disorder of 1183 bringing Andronicus Comnenus to power. David Jacoby⁵ is surprised by the fact that Germany needed any wharf in Constantinople while its merchants came there by land, not by sea. But it is obvious that arguments from economical suitability are not the only adequate in internationally important action.

Charles Brand⁶ according to his concept of Byzantine-West confrontation gave an idea that transfer of the *emboli* to Venice was caused by Isaac hostility towards approaching German troops of Frederick Barbarossa and by danger from French crusaders. We have to agree, that this circumstance played significant role in the Isaac decision. But surely there were some more aspects.

One of them is very close dislocation of both *emboli* with the

Venetian quarter on the Golden Horn coast. We have to thank David Jacoby for their ascertainment⁷. While studying the Venetian quarter limits dynamics, D. Jacoby find out that new gaining at 1189 must have been made to the East from Venetian quarter and to the West from Pisan one.

But from the very beginning of its existence Venetian quarter at East was bordered with the Hebraica – the region of the compact settlement of Constantinople Jews. Hebraica was liquidated in the middle of 11th century by removing all the Jews across the Golden Horn to Pera⁸. And so German and French *emboli* were located in the borders of former Jew quarter of Constantinople.

A lot of years after the *embolus Alemannorum* liquidation memory about it preserved and the chart of 1207, concerning transfer of a few holdings, indicated: “The property, once being of *Alemanni*” lies in front of the church of Eirene of Perama⁹. This church stood at the edge of Pisan quarter behind the sea wall of Constantinople, at the seashore of the Golden Horn¹⁰. The chart of 1207 also underlined – *foris muri*. Niceta Choniata (Manuelis Comneni. VII, 3) listed building projects of emperor Manuel and specified

among them plans of renewal of the temple of saint Eirene on the seashore (προς θάλασσαν της αγίας Ειρήνης), built by Marcianus. Works were not finished successfully. But the question is appropriate: was or was not the project of saint Eirene of Perama church renewal connected with the promise to grant a church in Constantinople to the German knights? Besides, Bertha von Zulbach, German spouse of Manuel Comnenus, was rebaptised in eastern orthodox ritual in the name of Eirene. And the church of Eirene of Perama is the only trustful marker of the German quarter location. So, too much of coincidences.

Venetians’ and other Latin dwellers’ of Hebraica interests overpassed on the wharves of that region. Hebraica adjoined Constantinople sea walls at least near to Porta Ebraica and Porta S. Marci, situated somewhat more eastward. Porta Ebraica pointed the eastern border of Venetian quarter from 1082 till 1189. And Porta S. Marci were mentioned inside it at 1229 p.¹¹ Naturally they were situated to the West from Pisan quarter borders. Porta Ebraica is mostly identified as Istanbul Gates of the fish bazaar – Balik-Pazari Kapisi (Porta Piscaria)¹². Alexander van Millingen well-reasonably

approved why Porta Piscaria are the same Gates as Perama Gates¹³.

In this case Porta S. Marci must correspond to the Bahçe Kapisi (The Garden Gates) – next one in the East. The problem is in the fact, that Porta S. Marci were mentioned only once in the chart of 1229. It is known only that they were situated 77 feet to the East from Porta Ebraica¹⁴. Their name is certainly Latin and it is unclear were the Gates old one with the new name, or they were opened by Latins after the 1204¹⁵. It was situated approximately in the basement of modern Galata bridge.

But Alexander van Millingen states that Bahçe Kapisi are the same Gates as Porta Neoriou and one more – Gates of Hicanatissa was situated between the Perama Gates and Porta Neoriou¹⁶. Gates of Hicanatissa marked Amalfi quarter.

If the original borders of Venetian quarter were close to Hebraica, so the wharves of Saint Marcianus and Kuzugala given to Venetians here at 1148¹⁷ were once also the part of Hebraica. So Porta Ebraica was the only way to enter them from the city. It is obvious that both Venetians and Germans had use this gates for their needs.

Organization of the *embolus Alemannorum* has to be dated to the time of the marriage of Byzantine prince Manuel Comnenos and Bertha von Sulzbach, sister of German king Conrad wife, in 1146 or to the period of the Second crusade¹⁸. Then king Conrad three times visited Constantinople (September 1147, beginning of 1148 and winter 1148-1149). During the last visit Conrad had a negotiations with Manuel and confirmed Byzantine claims over Southern Italy¹⁹.

Organization of *embolus* had undoubtedly economical and political aspects. Plus in the case of German church existing there²⁰ *embolus* could be spiritual centre for German soldiers in Byzantine army. Scholars mostly never considered *embolus* to have some connection to militaries²¹. But German chronicler Otto of Freising speaks not about merchant for shure. King Conrad wrote in his first letter to emperor John Comnenus about "*Militibus quoque imperii nostri, Alemannis scilicet, qui apud te sunt...*". The same people are meant under "*caballariis nobilitatis*" and "*hominibus imperii nostri, Teutonicis videlicet, qui Constantinopoli morantur*" (Gesta Friderici. I, 25). On the other hand sources witness only about a few German merchants in Byzantine

capital. Considerable number among them were Jews and they had quite another place to stay – Pera. And church had to be built not for them as well.

Conrad promised to emperor Manuel military help in one of the letters in *Gesta Friderici* (I, 25): "Concerning five hundreds soldiers, asked by Your Nobility, We are responding to You, that We will give not only five hundreds but will send also two or three thousands, if it is necessary"²². According to Otto of Freising, when Manuel was already crowned, first of all he renovated confederation with Conrad against Sicilian king Roger being in war with both Empires (Chronica sive Historia de Duabus Civitatibus, VII, 28).

In few years the Byzantine military detachment of *Germanoi* appeared in Corfu involved in actions contra Sicilian garrisons (Nicetae Choniatae Historia Byzantina. Manuelis Comneni. II,6)²³. Altogether these evidences show us a picture of German detachment, sent by Conrad to the service of Manuel Comnenus. They should be the main users of newly created *embolus Alemannorum* and possibly a German church there.

It is obvious now that existing of the *embolus Alemannorum*

was conditioned by the alliance between the Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium. Naturally the open conflict among them in the time of the Third Crusade really could cause the *embolus* elimination²⁴. But there are some problems with it. At one hand the conflict had not yet started in June, when elimination took place. That time Frederick had been still in Hungary, on July 2 he was arrived at Branichevo, the first Byzantine fortification on the crusaders way and everything went according to previous agreements. On the other hand in June negotiations of Isaac Angelos with Salah ad-Din were held²⁵. The same time, June 20th, after the neutralization of Theodore Mankapha plot, Isaac put under arrest Frederick's ambassadors ahead with Archbishop of Munster. Frederick had to inquire about it while staying at Philippopolis, but we know nothing about his reaction on the *embolus* loss. In January 1190 emperor Isaac asked for peace and the conflict was arranged. Sources keep silence about renewal of German *embolus*, as they hadn't notice it's loss. May be it wasn't very important for Frederick?

The close economical relations between southern German merchants and Venice made

them actually use the one and the same infrastructure²⁶. Especially actual it became after the peace was concluded at Venice at 1177 by Frederick Barbarossa and the Pope Alexander III. Venice was connected with the transalpine lands by stable roads. Bernhardus Teotonicus was characterized as one the richest men in Venice by Gerard Rösch and a very important person in the German-Venice trade history²⁷. At last, 1228 is the year of the first mention of German emporium at the Venice territory – Fondaco dei Tedesci (*fonticum comunis Venetiarum, ubi Teutonici hospitantur*)²⁸, granted by the Republic of S. Marcus to German merchants being too numerous.

It is worth noticing that generally the structure of Italian *Fondaco* was very similar to the Byzantine *emboli* in two possible senses of the word (building complex, separated from other city territory and granted to some political partner for economical use – μητᾶτον; store premises and the victualling-house, trading place at the same time without any juridical status, *embolus* as it is). Italian word *fondaco* origins from Greek τὸ πανδοχεῖον meaning the tavern from the Ancient time of any kind. Sometimes it's functions were the same as that of hospice

(τὸ ξενοδοχεῖο). Greek term for it was known for Italian authors²⁹, but wasn't widespread as *fondaco*. The term *fondaco* in a sense of juridically separated on the base of international agreements trading quarter was the most widespread in 12th century and was used as for Christian quarters in the Muslim countries (Alexandria had the Pisan, Venetian, Genovese, Barcelonese, Florentine and Marseille *fondacos*), as for the locations of stranger merchants and goods inside the Western European world (Genovese *fondaco* in Castilian city of Almeria from the 1146)³⁰. So German *fondaco* in Venice had the same functions as German *embolus* in Constantinople and at the same vector of economical relations, but much closer to Germany.

So German merchants and other travelers frequently and traditionally used Venetian infrastructure for their journeys to Constantinople, including the period of German *embolus* existence in 1148-1189. Venetian and German *emboli* were bordered on each other. It is possible that interpenetration of their infrastructures had already begun before 1189. So integration of both the *emboli* was geopolitical and economically provided. That can explain, why Germans

never tried to recover the property after 1204, though Germans dwelled their even later³¹.

History of *Embolus Francigenarum* seems not to be an object of investigation at all. First of all we have to consider the meaning of it's name. Who were *Francigeni* of medieval Greek texts? They could be South Italian Normans being mostly in the war with Byzantium, but one can be sure, that trade prospered during calm years.

The biggest actor in this trade was the city of Amalfi. It's merchants were the first who obtained the quarter in Constantinople³². It was marked by the Gates of Hikanatissa and was bordered to Pisan quarter³³. So Amalfitan quarter must have been located in the same Hebraica region. It did exists in 11th century, but the date of it's ending is unclear. Though some scholars consider the best time for it's elimination to be 1147 – the most sever conflict between Byzantine emperor and the Sicilian kingdom, Amalfi suzerain from 1073. Was Amalfitan property given to Germans and Frenchmen? Or that were amalfitans, vassals of Normans of Southern Italy known also as Franks in Byzantium, who gave the name of *Francigeni* to *embolus*? It could be. But the case of French

kingdom and its subjects on the Mediterranean shore mustn't be disregarded.

If the French king had connection to this *embolus*, it might have been organized during the same Second Crusade. Odo of Deuil, French historiographer of that campaign, mentions meeting of Louis VII with ambassadors of Byzantine emperor in Regensburg in 1146. They read out the letter concerning conditions of French army stay in Byzantium. As traditional emperor Manuel demanded from the French king to swear that he would return to Byzantium all former Byzantine cities conquered by Muslims. Also he stressed that Empire itself was also making a war against Seljuks³⁴. Odo further speaks that emperor's legates made a lot of such promises to Louis that were not kept³⁵. Namely: "convenient market, comfortable exchange and other that seems useful for ours"³⁶. K.N. Ciggaar underlines that arrangements of 1146 were the first official contact between Byzantium and France on the state level after the significant pause³⁷.

There are reports of John Cinnamos and Odo of Deuil about visit of the king Louis to Constantinople in autumn of 1147. Though there were con-

frontation, mutual suspicions, but both authors tried to be optimistical in their description. Crusades hadn't receive Byzantine help in expected size, but anyway this visit of the autumn of 1147 is the best and only possible moment for French *embolus* to born (if it was really French).

Granting of the separated quarter to French merchants also was based in economical conjuncture. After the Mauritanian pirate base in Fraxinetum (not far from Saint-Tropez) destruction in 972, Occitanian merchants received save roads to the Mediterranean sea³⁸. Mainly they were merchants from Marseille, Arles, Saint-Gilles in Provence and Narbonne in Languedoc. The last city was connected by the busy road with Toulouse and further by Garonne – till Bordeaux.

But the most common Greek counteragents in Occitania were merchants from the young city of Montpellier. Greek ambassadors went to Paris in 1160-s through Montpellier, Saint-Gilles and Chartres. At the same years rabbi Benjamin from Tudela made visit to Montpellier and characterized it as a comfortable trading point. He qualified dwellers of the Greek land and generally Eastern Mediterranean among the merchants

frequent in Montpellier³⁹. Montpellier had begun to strengthen their positions in Levant already before the time of Crusades. William of Malmesbury (*De Regum Anglorum*. IV, 388) said that Ascalon citizens gave up their city namely to Raymond of Toulouse because Montpellier was at his possession and they knew quite well virtues of Montpellier merchants. Guillaume count of Montpellier followed Raymond's army and had a lot to do with it.

Guillaume VIII, count of Montpellier in 1172-1202, made more then usual to heighten his city in the international field. He put the trading treaty with Pisan consuls in 1178, the same with the bishop and viscount of Agde in 1185⁴⁰. At last Montpellier merchants altogether with their colleagues from Marseille, Barcelona and Saint-Gilles received privilege of free trade and consulate in Levant at the city of Tyre⁴¹. The privilege was given by Conrad of Montferat for their help in his struggle against Salakh-ad-Din who captured Jerusalem the same year. Some new liberties were granted to "*hominibus Montis Pessulani*" also by the chart of the Jerusalem king Guy of Lusignan given to Marseilles under Saint-John d'Acre October 25, 1190⁴².

The heightening of Montpellier in the international trade coincided with the reign of Manuel Comnenus. He died in 1180 and in 1189 the *embolus Francigenarum* was liquidated. Could there be some diplomatic aspect unseen from Byzantine documents. The *Libre dels feyts* written by James (Jaime) the king of Aragon (1218-1276), or may be somebody of his retinues before his death, is the most competent source on this question. King James was the grandson of Byzantine princes⁴³ Eudokia – the niece of the emperor Manuel and possibly the daughter of his brother sebastokrator Isaac⁴⁴ (James himself considered her to be Manuel's daughter). She was promised to the Aragon king Alfonso II, but by the time she arrived to Aragon dominions Alfonso abandoned the marriage, because he already had affianced Castilian princess Sancha.

German scientist Winfred Hecht turned to Pisan annals, composed by a contemporary jurist Bernardo Marangone (died c. 1188), and proved that possible fiancé of Eudokia was not Alfonso II but his younger brother Raymond Berenger the count of Provence. Annals of Marangone helped to ascertain some new facts. Byzantine embassy came to the French South in 1178 (two

years after Alfonso marriage with Sancha) and was the same embassy that carried French princess Agnes back to Constantinople. She was fiancée for the Manuel's son and heir Alex. So marriage of Eudokia was impossible not because of Alfonso but thanks to international context. The count of Provence had two suzerains – the Aragon king and the emperor of Holy Rome. At the time Frederick's positions in Provence became stronger and Manuel was his enemy. But Montpellier served the port for Aragon and was out of the Holy Roman Empire borders⁴⁵.

Guillaume VIII, count of Montpellier, Alfonso vassal and relative⁴⁶, famous for his wide and bold international policy, enforced Byzantine ambassadors to give Eudokia for him. Local historian A. Germain even supposed count of Montpellier to dream about Byzantine crown⁴⁷. King James underlined the great support received by Guillaume by Montpellier council consisting of knights and reach city patricians, who saw economical perspective of this alliance.

Eudokia gained glory among the Provençal troubadours, but her marriage was not happy. She didn't give a hair to Guillaume and finished her days in Agnan

abbacy not far from Montpellier. Nevertheless her daughter became the Pedro of Aragon wife. Montpellier in K.N. Ciggaar opinion had to gain significant benefits from dynastic alliance of such a level⁴⁸. Possibility of such alliance itself approved importance of Montpellier in the western vector of Constantinople policy.

But not less important is the preterition of Byzantine authors concerning this failure of emperor diplomacy. Mission was aimed on Aragon or Provence, not on the one of its smallest vassals. The happening took place not long before the death of Manuel plunging Constantinople to a chaos of two revolutions – 1183 and 1185. The universal empire was unable to give adequate answer for the Montpellier insult under these circumstances. So Eudokia was forgotten. Guillaume broke his marriage with Eudokia in 1187 – two years before the French *embolus* liquidation. So we can suppose that the liquidation was undercover and the only possible Isaac Angelus reaction on his cousin divorce and confinement. Other supposing that the *embolus Francigenarum* was first of all the Montpellier embolus.

But there are still a lot of questions. The count of Mont-

pellier was Aragonese vassal, not French. Are there connection of the *Francigeni* with Amalfitans? What is the connection of *embolus Francigenarum*, especially if being of Montpellier, with the *Campus Prouincialium et Hyspanorum*, divided between the Latin empire and Venice by order of Robert de Courtenay of February 20, 1224⁴⁹?

Thereby we can certify that possibility of *emboli Alemannorum et Francigenarum* organization appeared to be in 1140-s as a result of the new economical situation and diplomatic actions in the time of the Second Crusade. New *emboli* were situated between the Venetian and Pisan quarters on the ground known before as Hebraica and Amalfitan quarter. These *emboli* have existed through the 40 years or something longer. *Embolus Alemannorum* gave harbor not only to merchants, but may be even more – to German warriors who came on Constantinople emperor service. Period of *embolus* existing witnessed few political conflicts between two empires and this never promoted stable and intensive use of this institution. Sea routs of the German merchants lay through Venice already since the 10th century and this made for final transfer of the German quarter to the

Saint Marcus republic in a moment when Frederick Barbarossa army approaching threatened emperor by open conflict.

On the contrary *embolus Francigenarum* was trading institution first of all and so it gave harbor to merchants and goods from southern French cities actually being at the time vassals of the Aragon kingdom, not France. The main users of the *embolus* in that case were merchants from Montpellier playing the leading role in Occitania trade of the 12th century. Liquidation of this *embolus* was caused not only by the hostile relations between emperor Isaac and king Louis but also dynastic conflict between Guillaume VIII of Montpellier and the Comneni family, to whom the Angeli were the closest relatives. Also it is possible that *Francigeni* are Italian Normans and their *embolus* is the same as Amalfitan *embolus*. In that case France must not be the subject of investigation here at all.