

## SOME DATA OF THE EPIDEMICS IN BULGARIAN LANDS DURING 12<sup>th</sup> AND 13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

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Until 1186 Bulgaria was under the government of Byzantium and had the same political fate. The Second Crusade from Western Europe towards Near East (1147—1149) followed by the Third Crusade (1189—1195) went through the country. In 1204 the crusadors of the Fourth Crusade leading by the Venezian don Enriko Dandolo and the Flandrian count Balduin the First captured Konstantinopol.

During 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century from North to Balkan lands came many turk tribes: uzi, kumani, tatars. Even in 1298—1300 Bulgaria's king was the tatar intruder Tchaka. All that contributed to the possibilities of many epidemics the way we reported in our previous work concerning the first centuries of the history of Bulgaria.

We used the following historical documents and chronics of many authors: Byzantium chronicists Ana Komnina, Nikita Choniat, Joan Kinam, Teodor Skutoriot, Georgii Akropolit, Georgii Pahimer; chronicists of the Second Crusade: Odon from Dioy, archiepiscop Romoald, etc.; Third Crusade: presviter Magnus, History of the Crusades, History of emperor Fridrich the First by Ansbert, Richard from London; Fourth Crusade: Jofrua Vilarduen, Robert de Clari. All documents and books were in their original text except J. de Vilarduen (translated in German).

In the Spring of 1108 the normans besieged Drach but in their troops began an epidemic. There were no details about this epidemic. We presume that it was no plague because: it was Spring-time (usually no plague in Spring) and there was not any word mentioned in the Greek text about such disease or epidemics. It was perhaps only typhus. There were no data also about any epidemics during the Second Crusade. After that, in 1185, in Macedonia near the stronghold Mossinopol there was a bloody struggle between normans and byzantians. Amongst the normans there were many dead soldiers from an epidemic disease. As it was not mentioned again in the chronics by that time, we presume that its was most probably typhus again, because it was November — the usual season of typhus. Later, during the Third Crusade there was an epidemics with many dead soldiers and crusadors as a result of «bad» food. Similar details gave the historian of emperor Fridrich the First who wrote that during his march many of the infantrymen and poor people died from «unknown food». It was spring-summer period and most probably the epidemics were stomach-toxicoinfections or dysentery. Another author — presviter Magnus (1189) wrote in his chronics that «our soldiers marched through many corpses stenching awfully on the field» near Plovdiv. The town was captured at the end of a hot summer and it was very possible that a dysentery or similar intestinal epidemy had caused the death of thousands people. Again in Summer-time emperor Balduin (1204) beseiged Thessalloniki but unsuccessfully because

«amongst his soldiers appeared a disease which caused many dead cases»; there were again no details about the epidemics. We presume also a possible intestinal infection (typhus, dysentery, paratyphus, cholera). After the death of Kaloyan the byzantians attacked Bulgaria but their troops were captured by «a heavy disease» (Nikita Honiat — 1207) which could not let the soldiers continue their march. It was a probable typhus epidemic.

H. Tantilov suggested a plague infections amongst the tatars came to our lands during king Assen the Second and causing the death of the king's wife, son and brother Alexander, but we did not find any literature proves for that. Georgii Akropolit — the most famous byzantium chronicist by that time, gave no information about the reasons for death of the king's family members.

Investigating the aforementioned documents, books and chronics we conclude that during 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century, although in our lands there were Crusades and wars, also movement of many tribes and people from various directions, the number and duration of the epidemics is not so high. Regarding the scarce historical sources from Western Europe we suggest the following epidemics in Bulgarian lands by that time:

- 1) 1108 — probable typhus (Drach).
- 2) 1185 — probable typhus (Mosinopol).
- 3) 1189 — intestinal infection (Western Bulgaria).
- 4) Autumn 1189 — intestinal infection (Povdiv).
- 5) Summer 1204 — intestinal infection (Odrin).
- 6) Autumn 1207 — probable typhus.

#### **НЕКОТОРЫЕ ДАННЫЕ ОБ ЭПИДЕМИЯХ НА ТЕРРИТОРИИ БОЛГАРИИ В ТЕЧЕНИЕ 12 И 13 В.**

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#### **Р Е З Ю М Е**

Авторы рассматривают вопрос об эпидемиях на территории Болгарии в течение XII и XIII в. в. Проведен анализ возможных заболеваний, которые вызывали эпидемии среди крестоносцев, византийских, болгарских войск, среди местного населения, как и среди населения различных племен, переходящих в те времена через Балканский полуостров. Эпидемии, которые рассматриваются, известны по историческим документам.