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THE BYZANTINE GOLD AND THE METHODS OF THE AVARS

Abstract: The study records the ways in which the Avars attempted to extort money and valuable gifts from the Byzantines (558–626). Apart from paying an annual tribute, in cash or in kind, a variety of other methods is observed, such as the use of tricks, threats or extortion, the promotion of “acquired rights”, even the looting of churches or the pillaging of burials. Also is noted the attitude of the Byzantine emperors towards the claims of the Avars. The approach of the strongly emphasized in the sources desire of the Avars (as well as generally of the nomadic peoples) to obtain loot and subsidies focuses on three factors: (a) the prestige by the flow of wealth from Byzantium; (b) the safeguarding of internal cohesion and of survival; (c) the relevance to the morals of the Eurasian nomads. In this context, some principles of their value system, such as, for example, that they could not return with “empty hands” from the negotiations, their attitude towards the “foreigners” etc. are promoted.

Keywords: Byzantine diplomacy, Avars.

According to the observations of the historian A. Cutler, the gifts of the powerful rulers in the Middle Ages, including those of the Byzantine emperor, had a comprehensive role: they were expressions of the wealth of the political (imperial) power, its financial stocks (by way of capital accumulation) and also the expression of the imperial ideology. As for their value, the scholar places them in the category of luxury (elite) goods¹. In the Byzantine foreign policy, the various gifts of the emperor to foreign rulers aimed at strengthening relationships with them. In the case of barbarians, particularly the Germanic peoples during the early Byzantine period, the donations were often associated with the cession of land for settlement (the status of *foederati*)².

The Byzantine’s donations to the nomadic peoples included payments in order to avoid being attacked by the latter or to put them into their service, as well as precious gifts³. Besides that, the policy of rapprochement was completed by the “cultural diplomacy”, mostly through missionary activity⁴. In the case of the Avars, Byzantium

¹ Cutler A. Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies // DOP. 2001. Vol. 55. P. 247–278.

² Chrysos E. Gothia Romana. Zur Rechtslage des Föderatenlandes der Westgoten im 4. Jahrhundert // Dacoromana. 1973. Vol. 1. P. 52–64; Scharf E. Foederati: von der völkerrechtlichen Kategorie zur byzantinischen Truppengattung. Vienna, 2001.

³ For the presents of the Byzantine embassies see: Nechaeva E. Embassies — Negotiations — Gifts. Systems of East Roman Diplomacy in Late Antiquity. Stuttgart, 2014. P. 163–194.

⁴ Καρδαράς Γ. Μεταξύ Αττίλα και Βαϊτανού. Το Βυζάντιο και οι νομαδικοί λαοί από το 453 έως το 558 // Βυζαντινά Σύμμεκτα. 2014. Vol. 24. Σ. 67–110 (here: Σ. 82–83).

never tried to integrate them into the Christian *oikoumene*, while, on the other hand, the Avars received the greater part of the annual tribute and precious gifts that the Byzantine Empire had ever bestowed on a nomadic people. The treaty between Byzantium and the Avars in 574 was the first to provide payment of a concrete sum as an annual tribute, which amounted to 80 000 gold coins⁵. In the spring of 585 the annual tribute was increased to 100 000 gold coins⁶ and with the treaty of 598 — to 120 000⁷.

The annual tribute to the Avars continued to grow during the time of Phocas (in 604) and Heraclius, gradually increasing to 200 000 gold coins with the treaty of 623⁸. The total amount of money received through the treaties alone is estimated 6,5 million of *solidi*, not including the wealth that the Avars amassed from raids, ransoms for captives etc.⁹ According to John of Ephesus, the Avars imposed a tribute on certain Byzantine cities¹⁰. We also know that part of the annual tribute to the Avars was paid in kind¹¹. Apart from the tribute, various luxury goods entered the Avar khaganate as exchanges after negotiations or gifts from the emperors¹². Among them, for example,

⁵ The History of Menander the Guardsman / Ed. R.C. Blockley. Liverpool, 1985 [ARCA: Classical and Medieval Texts 17]. Fr. 25.1. P. 216–218 (further: Menander); *Turtledove H.N.* The immediate Successors of Justinian: A Study of the Persian Problem and of Continuity and Change in internal secular Affairs in the Later Roman Empire during the Reigns of Justin II and Tiberius II Constantine (A.D. 565–582). Los Angeles, 1977. P. 116; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. Ein Steppenvolk in Mitteleuropa, 567–822 n. Chr. München, 1988. S. 65; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι, ΣΤ΄–Θ΄ αι. Πολιτικές, διπλωματικές και πολιτισμικές σχέσεις. Αθήνα, 2010. Σ. 55.

⁶ *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae* / Ed. C. de Boor. Leipzig, 1887. The History of Theophylact Simokatta / Transl. by Michael and Mary Whitby. Oxford, 1986. 1.6.4. P. 52 (further: Simokatta); *Theophanes Confessor.* Chronographia / Ed. C. de Boor. Leipzig, 1883. The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813 / Trans. by C. Mango, R. Scott. Oxford, 1997. P. 253 (further: Theophanes); *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 82; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 72; *Liebeschuetz W.* The Lower Danube Region under Pressure: From Valens to Heraclius // East and West in Late Antiquity: Invasion, Settlement, Ethnogenesis and Conflicts of Religion / Ed. by W. Liebeschuetz. Leiden; Boston, 2015. P. 425–464 (here: P. 444).

⁷ Simokatta. VII.15.14. P. 273. *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 154–155, 207; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 91.

⁸ *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 181; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 120, 169.

⁹ *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 180–181; *Hardt M.* Nomadische Gier nach Gold: Jahrgelder, Burgundenuntergang und Awarenschatz vor dem Hintergrund einer mobilen Lebensweise // Der imaginierte Nomade. Formel und Realitätsbezug bei antiken, mittelalterlichen und arabischen Autoren / Hrsg. A. Weiß. Wiesbaden, 2007. S. 105–119 (here: S. 108–109); *Somogyi P.* Neue Überlegungen über den Zustand byzantinischer Münzen ins Awarenland (numismatischer Kommentar zu Csanád Bálints Betrachtungen zum Beginn der Mittelawarenzeit) // *Antaeus*. 2008. Vol. 29–30. S. 347–393 (here: S. 357); *Winter H.* Die byzantinischen und karolingischen Fundmünzen aus dem österreichischen Bereich der Avaria — eine Neubearbeitung // *Byzantine Coins in Central Europe between the 5th and 10th century* / Ed. by M. Wołoszyn. Kraków, 2009. P. 325–356 (here: P. 325–326); *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 168–171.

¹⁰ *Ioannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae. Pars tertia* / Ed. E.W. Brooks. Louvain, 1964 // CSCO. T. 106. SS. Vol. 55]. Cap. 45–49. P. 259, 25–27 (further: John of Ephesus): Et profecti urbes duas a Romanis expugnaverunt et cetera castra et incolis dixerunt: “Abite serite et metite, et dimidium tantum tributi a vobis sumemus”; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 169.

¹¹ Simokatta. I.3.7. P. 45: ... ὡσπερ ἄθλον εὐδοξίας δῶρα λαμπρὰ τοῖς βαρβάροις παρεῖχοντο ὀγδοήκοντά τε χιλιάδας χρυσῶν καθωμολόγουν ἀν’ ἔτος ἕκαστον τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐγκαταβάλλεσθαι δι’ ἐμπορίας ἀργύρου τε καὶ ποικίλης ἐσθήτος; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 180, 195; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 134.

¹² Menander. Fr. 8. P. 92: Ὅτι ἐπὶ Ἰουστίνου τοῦ νέου οἱ τῶν Ἀβάρων πρέσβεις παρεγένοντο ἐν Βυζαντίῳ τὰ συνήθη δῶρα ληψόμενοι, ἅπερ τῷ κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἔθνει Ἰουστινιανῶς ὁ πρὸ τοῦ βασιλεὺς ἐδίδου. ἦσαν δὲ καλῶδια τε χρυσῶ διαπεποικιλμένα, ἐς τὸ εἶργειν τι τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων ἐπινοημένα,

some luxury swords coated with gold or silver plate on the grip and the sheath, were quite prestigious¹³. In addition, special importance was placed on silk garments, which were either given to the Avars as gifts or in exchange, or purchased by the Avars in Constantinople¹⁴. It is worth mentioning that after the subjugation of the Avar khaganate in 796, all of its wealth fell to the hands of the Franks¹⁵.

In his comments on the work of Menander the Guardsman, R. Blockley records certain means and methods of the Avars towards Byzantium that we will try to approach in detail: “a series of demands and threats which were met with rebuffs and counterthreats... No such individuality attaches to Baian, who is the stock nomad chief from beginning to end: cunning, treacherous, ruthless and greedy... The sanctity of envoys means nothing to him, the blockade of Sirmium is an act of utter deceit, carried out despite Baian’s own solemn oaths, both Avar and Christian”¹⁶.

The greed for gold or any profit from negotiations is often emphasized in the Byzantine sources as part of the negative image of the nomads¹⁷. Regarding the Avars, it is promoted as an important motivation for their demands or actions. After the rise of Justin II to the throne in 565, the Avars asked him to add “something more” to the gifts that Justinian used to send them, as they had fulfilled their obligations towards the Empire¹⁸.

καὶ κλῖνα ὁμοίως καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἐς τὸ ἄβρότερον ἀναμμένα; Ibid. P. 261. N. 91; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 49; *Idem.* Herrschaft und Subsistenz. Zum Wandel der byzantinischen Randkulturen an der Donau vom 6.–8. Jahrhundert // *Awarenforschungen* / Ed. by F. Daim. Vol. I. Wien, 1992. S. 13–24 (here: S. 17–19); *Pallas-Brown R.* East Roman Perception of the Avars in the mid- and late sixth Century // *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity* / Ed. by S. Mitchell, G. Greatrex. L., 2000. P. 309–329 (here: P. 316–317); *Nechaeva E.* The “Runaway” Avars and Late Antique Diplomacy // *Romans, Barbarians and the Transformation of the Roman World. Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity* / Ed. by R.-W. Mathisen, D. Shanzer. Farnham, 2011. P. 175–181, according to whom the meaning of καλωδία... ἐς τὸ εἶργειν τι τῶν ἀποδιδρασκόντων ἐπινηνομήνα (cords to confine what was escaping) is metaphoric, linked to the historiographical model of the “fugitives Avars” as well as to their position in the hierarchy of the Empire. See also: *Hardt M.* Nomadische Gier. S. 112–113; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβαροί. Σ. 134–135.

¹³ *Kolias T.G.* Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung. Wien, 1988. S. 134; *Szentpéteri J.* Archäologische Studien zur Schicht der Waffenträger des Awentums im Karpatenbecken I // *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae.* 1993. Vol. 45. S. 165–246 (here: S. 176–177, 181–183); *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβαροί. Σ. 216.

¹⁴ See above, N. 11. *Pohl W.* Awaren. S. 180, 212; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβαροί. Σ. 135.

¹⁵ *Pohl W.* Awaren. S. 181–182; *Hardt M.* Nomadische Gier. S. 109–110; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβαροί. Σ. 191.

¹⁶ Menander. Fr. 18. P. 28.

¹⁷ *Das Strategikon des Maurikios* / Ed. G.T. Dennis, E. Gamillscheg. Wien, 1981 [CFHB 17. Series Vindobonensis]. XI.2. P. 360–362: Περίεργα δὲ καὶ κρυψιβουλα φαυλά τε καὶ ἄπιστα ὄντα καὶ τῇ ἀπληστία τῶν χρημάτων κρατούμενα, ὄρκον περιφρονοῦσι, μηδὲ συνθήκας φυλάττοντα, μηδὲ δόφοροι ἀρκοῦμενα, ἀλλὰ πρὶν τὸ δοθὲν δέξονται, ἐπιβουλήν μελετᾶσι καὶ ἀνατροπὴν τῶν δοκούντων; *Simokatta.* I.3.2.44: Οὐνοὶ δ’ οὗτοι, προσοικοῦντες τῷ Ἰστροφ, ἀπιστότατον ἔθνος καὶ ἀπληστώτατον τῶν νομάδων βιούντων; *Pohl W.* Awaren. S. 1–6, 16; *Pallas-Brown R.* East Roman Perception... P. 310; *Hardt M.* Nomadische Gier. S. 106; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβαροί. Σ. 25; *Kotłowska A., Różycki L.* The Role and Place of Speeches in the Work of Theophylact Simokatta // *Vox Patrum.* 2016. Vol. 36. P. 353–382 (here: P. 364–365).

¹⁸ Menander. Fr. 8. P. 94; *Flavius Cresconius Corippus.* In Laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris lib. IV / Ed. A. Cameron. L., 1976. P. 70 (303–307) (further: Corippus): annua praelargi patris solacia vestri sumere tempus adest. sanctus quae praebuit ille, vos etiam praebere decet. si foedera pacis intemerata tibi, si mavis pacta manere, debita quaerenti transmittes munera regi.

In the autumn of 584, the Byzantine envoys Elpidios and Komentiolos emphasized the generosity of the Empire towards the Avar greed for money¹⁹. In 595, close to Singidunum (Belgrade) general Priscus attributed the resumption of hostilities to the Avars' greed²⁰. The greed of the khagan is emphasized also by the Chronicle of Monemvasia before the Avar attack at the Lower Danube in 584²¹ as well as by Theodore Syncellus in regard to the siege of Constantinople in 626²². Linked to the nomadic morals is the fact that the Avar khagan or his envoys considered it shameful to return "empty-handed" to their land after negotiations with the Byzantines²³ or not to share the war loot of the Byzantines after operations against the Slavs of the Lower Danube²⁴.

The most important means of pressure the Avars used were threats and tricks, rather part of a "psychological war" in order to impose their conditions. According to Menander the Guardsman, during their embassy to Constantinople in 565, "the Avar envoys made this ambiguous speech, now pleading, now threatening, because they thought that by this means they would frighten and intimidate the Emperor, and as a result the Romans would be compelled to pay tribute to the Avars"²⁵. A very common threat was the declaration of war by the khagan combined with the rejection of demands. After the unsuccessful siege of Sirmium in 568, the khagan Baian failed to get exchanges and ordered the invasion of the Kutrigurs in Dalmatia²⁶. After a short while, Baian demanded and obtained 800 golden coins "so that he would not turn to pillaging during the period of the truce"²⁷.

¹⁹ Simokatta. I.5.12. P. 50: εἰ δὲ καὶ χρημάτων ἐράς, ἥδη σοι τοῦτο παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις διήνυσται· φιλότιμον γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος, καὶ θησαυρὸς αὐτῶ τὸ μεγαλοπρεπὲς καὶ φιλόδορον; *Pohl W.* *Awaren.* S. 82; *Καρδάρης Γ.Θ.* *Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι.* Σ. 72.

²⁰ Simokatta. VII.11.2. P. 263: ἐπιθεὲς τῇ πλεονεξίᾳ καὶ ὄρους; *Ibid.* VII.11.4. P. 264: ἄπληστος ὀφθαλμὸς αἰεὶ τι καινὸν νοσηλεύεται. Cf. *Kotłowska A., Różycki L.* *Speeches...* P. 370.

²¹ Cronaca di Monemvasia. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione e note / Ed. I. Dujčev. Palermo, 1976. P. 8 (65–67): Χαγάνος γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸν ἡγεμὼν, ἄλλοτε ἄλλην πρόφασιν ποιούμενος εἰς τὸ εὐρεῖν ἀφορμὴν πολέμου καὶ αἰτῶν ὑπέρογκα...

²² Syncellus X. P. 302: ... καὶ πλείονος ἀπιστίας ὑπέκκαυμα τῶ κυνὶ ἢ τῶν χρημάτων ἐπίδοσις γέγονε.

²³ See Menander. Fr. 8. P. 96 and Fr. 12.5. P. 134–136; Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626 / Ed. F. Makk. Szeged, 1975 [Acta universitatis de Attila József nominatae, Opuscula Byzantina III]. XXXVI. P. 313 (further: Syncellus): καὶ οὕτω μὲν ὁ δυτικὸς ἐχθρὸς, ὁ τοῦ σκότους υἱός, μετ' αἰσχύνῃς ἀνέστρεψεν ἀπρακτος...; *Pohl W.* *Herrschaft und Subsistenz.* S. 18; *Hardt M.* *Nomadische Gier.* S. 111.

²⁴ Simokatta. VI.11.17. P. 244–245: ἀγέραστος τῆς λείας μὴ μενέτω Χαγάνος. ἐπὶ τῆς ἐμῆς γῆς ἐπιβέβηκεν, περὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς ὑπηκόους ἐξήμαρτεν. ἔστω τὰ τῆς εὐπραγίας κοινά; *Pohl W.* *Die Awaren.* S. 117; *Curta F.* *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region,* c. 500–700. Cambridge, New York, 2001. P. 207–208; *Καρδάρης Γ.Θ.* *Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι.* Σ. 83.

²⁵ Menander. Fr. 8. P. 94. See also: *Ibid.* Fr. 12.8. P. 142–144 (568?): Ὅτι καὶ αὐθὶς ὁ τῶν Ἀβάρων ἡγούμενος ταῖς πρώην ἐχρήσατο ἀπειλαῖς. καὶ ἐπειδὴ κομπάζων καὶ μεγαλορήμων ἐσὸτι ὑπάρχων οἴος τε οὐκ ἐγένετο ἐκδειματῶσαι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους (οὗτοι γὰρ δὴ πρὸς οἷς οὐκ ὀρρωδία τις αὐτοῖς ἐνέσκηψε... ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἀπεφλαύριζον καὶ περιφρόνουσαν τὸν βάρβαρον, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ κομποδεστέρας ἐχρῶντο ταῖς ἀντιλογίαις); *Lung E.* *Barbarian Envoys at Byzantium in the 6th Century // Hiperboreea Journal.* 2015. Vol. 2.1. P. 35–52 (here: P. 47).

²⁶ Menander. Fr. 12.5. P. 136; *Pohl W.* *Die Awaren.* S. 60, 180, 205; *Ziemann D.* *Vom Wandervolk zur Grossmacht. Die Entstehung Bulgariens im frühen Mittelalter (7.–9. Jh.).* Köln; Weimar; Wien, 2007. P. 101; *Καρδάρης Γ.Θ.* *Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι.* Σ. 50.

²⁷ Menander. Fr. 12.6. P. 138; *Pohl W.* *Die Awaren.* S. 61; *Καρδάρης Γ.Θ.* *Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι.* Σ. 51.

The declaration of war was used in most cases during the reign of Maurice. The refusal of the emperor to accept the increase in the annual tribute from 100 to 120 thousands gold coins resulted in the Avars' attack against Singidunum, Viminacium and Augustae in the summer of 584²⁸. This same attitude of Maurice and the subsequent khagan's desire for revenge was also the cause of the first siege of Thessalonica in 586²⁹. In 592 the Slavic fleet was sent by the Avar khagan to attack Singidunum after Maurice's refusal to increase the annual tribute. However, after the bestowal of 2 000 gold coins and some gifts (a gilded table and one silk garment), the khagan withdrew the Slavs and raised the siege³⁰. But even after the conclusion of the treaties with Byzantium in the early seventh century, disastrous Avar raids took place, as the position of Byzantium in the Balkans was very weak³¹. According to Theodore Syncellus, before the treaty of 623, the khagan demanded half of its wealth in exchange for not destroying Constantinople³², while at the siege of the Byzantine capital in 626 the only thing the khagan could leave to the inhabitants was their *chiton* before handling them over to the Persians³³. On the other hand, a diplomatic trick, relevant to the Byzantine diplomatic protocol, was the argument offered by the Avar envoys that their khagan was "son" of the Emperor³⁴.

Another method the Avars followed in negotiations was the blackmailing of their opponent, accompanied by the demand for ransoms or the bad treatment of the Byzantine envoys. Before the siege of Sirmium in 568, Baian kept the envoys of Justin II, Vitalian and Comitas, in chains³⁵. The payment of ransoms was demanded in exchange for the freedom of three prominent Byzantine hostages in c. 635³⁶, who were sent to

²⁸ Simokatta. I.3.13–14.4. P. 46–47; Theophanes. P. 253; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 77; *Καρδάρας Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 71.

²⁹ Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans / Ed. P. Lemerle. Vol. I. P., 1979. Cap. 117. P. 134: Ως δὲ ἡστούχησε τῆς αἰτήσεως, ὀργῇ ἀκατασχέτω φλεχθεὶς καὶ τῷ παρακούσαντι μηδὲν ποιῆσαι δυνάμενος, τρόπον ἐπινοεῖ δι' οὗ μάλιστα τοῦτον ὀδυνῆσαι τὰ μέγιστα ὑπετόπαζεν...

³⁰ Simokatta. VI.3.9–4.3. P. 226; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 133; *Καρδάρας Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 80; *Liebeschuetz W.* Lower Danube... P. 445–446.

³¹ *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 237–245; *Kaegi W.E.* Heraclius: emperor of Byzantium. Cambridge, 2003. P. 95; *Ziemann D.* Entstehung... P. 123–127; *Καρδάρας Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 103–104, 111–114, 120–121.

³² Syncellus. X. P. 301: ... ἀλλὰ καὶ ταύτην ἠπεῖλει καταστρέψαι τὴν ἐν πόλεσι βασιλεύουσαν, εἰ μὴ πάντων τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ χρημάτων τε καὶ πραγμάτων τὴν ἡμίσειαν μοῖραν κομίσοιτο.

³³ Syncellus. XXI. P. 306–307; *Chronicon Paschale* / Ed. L. Dindorf. Bonn, 1832 [*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*]. P. 721 (*Chronicon Paschale* 284–628 A.D. / Transl. by M. Whitby. Liverpool, 1989) (further: *Chronicon Paschale*); *Kaegi W.E.* Heraclius. P. 137; *Ziemann D.* Entstehung... P. 129; *Luttwak E.N.* The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire. Cambridge (Mass.); London, 2009. P. 396.

³⁴ Menander. Fr. 12.6. P. 138 (in 568); Syncellus. XI. P. 302 (in 626); *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 62, 214; *Claude D.* Zur Begründung familiärer Beziehungen zwischen dem Kaiser und barbarischen Herrschern // Das Reich und die Barbaren / Ed. by E.K. Chrysos, A. Schwarcz. Wien; Köln, 1989. P. 25–56 (here: 25–28, 31).

³⁵ Menander. Fr. 12.4. P. 132. According to Menander, it was an action "in contravention of the universally recognised rights of ambassadors".

³⁶ Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. *Short History* / Ed. C.A. Mango. Washington, 1990 [CFHB 13. *Dumbarton Oaks Texts* 10]. Cap. 21. P. 70 (further: Nikephoros): Κατὰ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον Μαρία ἡ ἀδελοφῆ Ἡρακλείου χρήματα πρὸς τὸν χαγάνον Ἀβάρων ἐπεμψε καὶ τὸν υἱὸν Στέφανον ἀπέλαβε. τοῖς δὲ τοιοῦτοις δώροις ἡσθεὶς ὁ Ἄβαρας ἠρέθισεν Ἄνιανδὸν τὸν μάγιστρον, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς πέμψας δῶρα ἀπολήψεται καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους οὐσπερ κατεῖχεν ὀμήρους. καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. See: *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 272–273; *Καρδάρας Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 139.

the Avar khaganate after the treaty of 623³⁷. On the other hand, the refusal of ransom payments by emperor Maurice during the negotiations at Drizipera in 598 — initially one golden coin and later half per head (or even four *keratia*) — led to the slaughter of 12 000 Byzantine captives³⁸. During the siege of the Appiareia in 586/87 the Avars captured a soldier named Bousas and threatened him with death, if the inhabitants did not pay for his freedom. As no one did, Bousas promised his help to the Avars and taught them how to construct a war engine (a *helepolis*), with which the Avars captured Appiareia³⁹. The latter did not hesitate to organize an ambush against emperor Heraclius in 623, who was ready to meet the Avar khagan close to Heracleia in Thrace. However, the emperor managed to reach the Long Walls leaving in the hands of the Avars, among others, the costly gifts (e.g. splendid vestments) he had for the khagan, as well as his imperial vestments⁴⁰.

A well-known diplomatic tactic of the Avars were “acquired rights”, often with additional demands. The collapse of the Gepidic kingdom and the departure of the Longobards to Italy left the Avars as the sole rulers in the Carpathian basin. The Byzantines occupied Sirmium, the seat of the Gepids, an action considered by the Avars as invasion of their territory. At the negotiations outside of Sirmium in 568, and having already failed in their attack, the Avars demanded the surrender of the city and the former Gepid commander Usdibad “by right of conquest”⁴¹. The claims on that city continued until the capture of Sirmium in 582, when the Avars obtained in a lump sum the tribute of the last three years, namely the duration of the siege (579–582)⁴². The above “package of demands” was enriched during the embassies to Constantinople in 568 and 569 with the annual tribute that Byzantium used to pay to the Kutrigurs and the Utigurs before their submission to the Avars⁴³.

In order to promote their military capacities, the Avars claimed that they were stronger in war compared to other peoples, “the most powerful in the world and invincible”, and Byzantium should trust them as allies. Testimonies to such an argument are provided by Menander the Guardsman on the first Avar embassy to Justinian in

³⁷ Nikephoros 13. P. 58; *Pohl W. Die Awaren. S. 246; Kaegi W.E. Heraclius. P. 120; Ziemann D. Entstehung. P. 128; Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 120.*

³⁸ *Chronicon Paschale (On wonders; from the Great Chronographer) / Transl. by M. Whitby. P. 200; Theophanes. P. 280 (Mango, Scott. P. 404); Georgii Monachi Chronicon / Ed. C. de Boor. Leipzig, 1904. P. 659; Pohl W. Die Awaren. S. 155, 196; Schreiner P. Der brennende Kaiser. Zur Schaffung eines positiven und eines negativen Kaiserbildes in den Legenden um Maurikios // Byzance et ses voisins. Mélanges à la mémoire de G. Moravcsik à l'occasion du centième anniversaire de sa naissance / Ed. by T. Olajos. Szeged, 1994. P. 25–31 (here: 26–27); Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 92.*

³⁹ Simokatta. II.15.13–16.11. P. 101–103; Theophanes. P. 258–259. On the fall of Appiareia and the episode of Bousas, see: *Kardaras G. The Episode of Bousas (586/7) and the Use of Siege Engines by the Avars // Byzantinoslavica. 2005. Vol. 63. P. 53–65.*

⁴⁰ Syncellus. X. P. 301; *Chronicon Paschale. P. 712–713; Theophanes. P. 301–302 (in 617/18); Nikephoros. 10. P. 50–52; Kaegi W.E. Heraclius. P. 118–119; Luttwak E.N. Grand Strategy... P. 104; Ziemann D. Entstehung... P. 128. Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 119.*

⁴¹ Menander. Fr. 12.5. P. 134.

⁴² Menander, Fr. 25.2. P. 226 and 27.3. P. 240: *ἐπεζήτητε δὲ ὁ Χαγάνος καὶ τριῶν ἐτῶν παροχημένων χρυσίων, ὧν οὐκ εὐλήθει τι κατὰ τὸ σύννηθες, τῶν παρεχομένων αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ χρῆσθαι ὄπλοις...* See: *Pohl W. Die Awaren. S. 75; Ziemann D. Entstehung... S. 107; Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 68; Liebeschutz W. Lower Danube... P. 443.*

⁴³ Menander. Fr. 12.6. P. 138 and 12.7. P. 142. See: *Pohl W. Die Awaren. S. 58–61; Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 50–52, 59–60.*

558 as well as by Corippus on the Avar embassy to Justin II in 565⁴⁴. In the first case, the Avars “persuaded” Justinian who sent some presents (gilded cords — or chains —, couches, silk garments etc.) to turn them against certain peoples settled north of the Caucasus and the Black Sea⁴⁵. However, he did not offer them land for settlement and an annual tribute, namely the status of *foederati*⁴⁶. Regarding the gifts of Justinian to the Avars we also draw information from John of Ephesus, Victor Tonnennensis and Corippus⁴⁷. According to the words of the Avars themselves, the various annual presents from Constantinople (gold, silver and silken garments) were welcomed by the khagan, who “would not abandon his attempt to obtain gifts, under threats or through any other pressure at all”⁴⁸.

Beyond their particular value, the imperial gifts and the annual tribute increased the prestige of the khagan and, along with the loot from raids, contributed to the cohesion and survival of the Avar khaganate. W. Pohl points out that the steady flow of wealth at a “predatory state” rendered lucrative the occupation of warrior and prevented the social tensions. The situation changed when the Avars lost the annual tribute from Byzantium after their defeat at Constantinople⁴⁹. In P. Golden’s point of view, “unappointed and unelected, the *xan* reconciles his subjects to the new order through the acquisition and redistribution of booty gained from military campaigns, combined with plundering expeditions, usually directed against sedentary society or their nomadic neighbours. Thus, continuing, successful warfare, the acquisition of booty, in particular “prestige” goods, and their redistribution to followers and underlings, were essential to the maintenance of khagan authority”⁵⁰. Considering also totally the steppe peoples, “they wanted the spoils of war without strings. They were warriors for war’s sake, for the loot it brought, the risks, the thrills, the animal satisfactions of triumph ... After all, there is indeed a difference between just looting and between a military campaign, which also has a political objective”⁵¹.

Despite the great importance of donations, noteworthy is the fact that in some cases the Avars rejected the Byzantine gifts under the pretext that they could lead to their

⁴⁴ Menander. Fr. 5.1. P. 48; Corippus. P. 69–70 (271–307): rex Avarum Cagan debellans ultima mundi famosos stravit magna virtute tyrannos, innumeros populos et fortia regna subegit... See: Lung E. Barbarian Envoys... P. 47; See also: Maurice. XI.2. P. 360: Τὸ δὲ Ἀβάρων μοχηρότατον τε καὶ ποικίλον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς πολέμους ἐμπειρικώτατον.

⁴⁵ Menander. Fr. 5.2. P. 48–50; Pohl W. *Awaren*. S. 18, 49, 180; Hardt M. *Nomadische Gier*. S. 108; Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβάροι. Σ. 39–40.

⁴⁶ On a detailed approach of the issue, see Kardaras G. *The Avars: foederati of Byzantium? // Byzantská Kultúra a Slovensko, Zborník Štúdií / Edited by J. Bartík. Bratislava, 2007. P. 131–137.*

⁴⁷ John of Ephesus. Lib. VI. Cap. 24. P. 246 (22–26): Quorum legatos cum recepisset, eos auro et argento, et vestibus, et zonis, et ephippiis aureis ditavit, et ceteris rebus quas eis dedit et per eos principibus eorum misit, ita ut mirarentur et alios rursus mitterent; Victoris Tonnennensis episcopi Chronica a. 444–567 / Ed. Th. Mommsen. B., 1894 [Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 11]. P. 205 (563. 2); Corippus. P. 71 (347–349). On the Avar claims for gold, silver and gems see also: Suda Lexikon / Ed. A. Adler. Leipzig, 1933. Vol. 3. P. 270 (Λ 522): Οἱ δὲ Ἀβάροι χρυσὸν τε καὶ ἄργυρον καὶ λίθων τὰς ἐντίμους ἀπεφέρεσθαι ἤξιον. Pohl W. *Die Awaren*. S. 180; Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἀβάροι. Σ. 135.

⁴⁸ Menander. Fr. 25.2. P. 226. See: Pohl W. *Die Awaren*. S. 73, 212–213.

⁴⁹ Pohl W. *Die Awaren*. S. 183–185; *Idem*. *Herrschaft und Subsistenz...* S. 17–18.

⁵⁰ Golden P.B. *The Stateless Nomads of early Medieval Central Eurasia // МАИЭТ*. 2015. Т. 20. P. 333–368 (here: P. 333); see also Hardt M. *Nomadische Gier*. P. 111.

⁵¹ See: Szabó Ch. *Nomad Hordes or Nomad Armies? // Journal of Eurasian Studies*. October-December 2009. Vol. 1.4. P. 62–70 (here: P. 64–65).

lose of power and their subjection to the suzerainty of Constantinople, like other peoples in the past⁵².

Regarding these “fears”, Agathias clearly describes the “divide and rule” policy of Justinian towards the Kutrigurs and the Utigurs: “The scattered remnant of these Hunnic tribes has in fact been reduced to servitude in the lands of other peoples whose names they have assumed; so severe has been the penalty which they have paid for their earlier misdeeds... The barbarians were destroying one another whilst he without resorting to arms was, thanks to his brilliant diplomacy, the ultimate victor and was bound to profit whatever the outcome of the fighting”⁵³.

Menander the Guardsman, describing the first Avar embassy, praises the policy of Justinian, who turned the Avars against the Onogurs, the Saveirs Huns the Zaloi and the Antes: “This, in my view, was a very wise move, since whether the Avars prevailed or were defeated, both eventualities would be to the Romans’ advantage”⁵⁴.

The rejection of the imperial gifts was also due to the character of the *homo nomadicus*. In 584 the khagan twice returned to Maurice the gifts that he had earlier requested from him, namely an Indian elephant (“whether in terror or scorn of the marvel, I cannot say”, as Simokatta states) and later a gold couch “as though it were something cheap and common”. Instead of these presents, the khagan requested an additional 20 000 gold coins as annual tribute⁵⁵. In addition, having lost seven of his sons to the plague, the khagan initially refused the gifts from Maurice at Drizipera in 598, saying that “the gifts of enemies are not gifts and are worthless”⁵⁶. Furthermore, the twelve days the Byzantine envoy Harmaton waited for an audience with Baian is interpreted as “intentional behaviour still in use today in negotiations to humiliate the adversary and force him into submission”⁵⁷.

During the siege of Constantinople in 626 the Avar khagan, despite the gifts from the Byzantine envoys, refused any negotiations regarding his decision to attack and plunder the city⁵⁸. Finally, and outside the framework of negotiations, an extreme Avar method to obtain precious objects was the pillaging of graves or churches. Simokatta records the silver-filled grave of the martyr Alexander at Drizipera in 598⁵⁹, while the plundering of churches in the suburbs of Constantinople is described following the failed ambush against the emperor Heraclius in 623 (the church of the saints

⁵² See above, N. 48.

⁵³ Agathiae Myrinae Historiarum libri quinque / Ed. R. Keydell. B., 1967 [CFHB II. Series Berolinensis]. E 25. 5–6. P. 196–197; *Agathias*. The Histories. Corpus CFHB II A. / Transl. by J.D. Frendo. B.; N.Y., 1975. P. 162. See: *Ziemann D.* Entstehung... S. 100–101; *Syrbe D.* Reiternomaden des Schwarzmeerraums (Kutriguren und Utiguren) und byzantinische Diplomatie im 6. Jahrhundert // *Acta Orientalia*. 2012. Vol. 65.3. S. 291–316 (here: S. 298).

⁵⁴ Menander. Fr. 5.2. P. 50. See: *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 19; *Syrbe D.* Reiternomaden... S. 292; *Luttwak E.N.* Grand Strategy... P. 59.

⁵⁵ Simokatta. I.3.8–13. P. 45–46 (Whitby. P. 24); Theophanes. P. 253. See: *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 76–77, 212 (W. Pohl assumes that the disdain of the khagan towards the presents of the emperor indicated simultaneously a dispute of the latter’s supremacy); *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 70; *Liebeschuetz W.* Lower Danube... P. 443.

⁵⁶ Simokatta. VII.15.9–11. P. 272; Theophanes. P. 279–280; *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 154; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαραι. Σ. 91; *Kottowska A., Różycki L.* Speeches... P. 371.

⁵⁷ *Kottowska A., Różycki L.* Speeches... P. 372.

⁵⁸ See above, N. 33.

⁵⁹ Simokatta. VII.14.11–12. P. 270–271; Theophanes. P. 279. See: *Pohl W.* Die Awaren. S. 154; *Liebeschuetz W.* Lower Danube... P. 454.

Cosmas and Damian at Blachernae as well as that of the Archangel in the quarter of Promotus)⁶⁰.

The reaction of the Byzantine emperors towards the afore-mentioned Avar methods varied and depended on the “Avar policy” that each emperor decided to follow as well as on the timing of the negotiations. Justinian, who, as noted, followed a *Realpolitik* based on the “divide and rule” doctrine⁶¹, accepted the Avars’ proposal for alliance in 558 (the first Avar embassy to Constantinople)⁶². Different to this was the policy of Justin II (565–578), “an Emperor extremely hostile to the Avars”, who held a negative attitude towards the latter⁶³. Having first rejected any proposal for a stable alliance with them, threatening the Avars with war in 565⁶⁴, he followed the same tactic at the negotiations with the Avar envoys in 568 and 569⁶⁵. Probably, the only case of subsidies from Justin II to the Avars is linked to the latter’s attack against the Franks in 566. The payment of such subsidies is in fact confirmed by the response of general Bonos to the Avar envoys after their failed attempt to conquer Sirmium in 568⁶⁶. Strong reaction to the Avar demands for an increase in the annual tribute can also be observed during the reign of Maurice. The latter, despite the many treaties concluded with the Avars, followed an aggressive policy towards them mostly between 592 and 602⁶⁷. On the other hand, the weakening of the Byzantine presence on the Balkans after 602 obliged the emperors Phocas and Heraclius to purchase peace with the Avars paying a heavy annual tribute⁶⁸.

In some cases the Byzantine officers satisfied Avar exploitation demands⁶⁹ or they used diplomatic tricks and answers to avoid the offer of any subsidy. In 562 the Byzantines tried to delay the negotiations by sending an Avar embassy from the Danube area to Constantinople⁷⁰, while in 568, facing the demands of the khagan for some gifts in order to raise the siege of Sirmium, general Bonus replied that he had to have the

⁶⁰ Chronicon Paschale. P. 713 (Whitby. P. 165). See also above, N. 40.

⁶¹ The contemporary Byzantine authors (Menander, Procopius and Agathias) link the payment of tribute, instead of military operations against the northern barbarians, with the “old age” of Justinian: Menander. P. 22. See: *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 20. See also above, N. 53 (literature).

⁶² See above, N. 45–46.

⁶³ Menander. Fr. 12.1. P. 128; Fr. 12.6. P. 140: Ἀβάρων γὰρ τῶν νομάδων τε καὶ ἐπὶ πλῦθον καθεστάναι φίλους τῆς ὡς αὐτοὺς δυσμενεῖας βαρύτερον, ἄλλως τε καὶ φιλίας ὑπόουλον καθεστῶσης. κρεῖσσον ἐν τοῖς σώμασιν καὶ οὐχὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς φέρειν τὰ τραύματα. Ibid. P. 23–24. See also: Corippus. P. 70–72 (308–401); *Turtledove H.N. Successors...* P. 111; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 63; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι*. Σ. 28.

⁶⁴ Menander. Fr. 8. P. 94; Corippus. P. 71–72 (339–340, 395–398); *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 48–49; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι*. Σ. 43–44; *Liebeschuetz W. Lower Danube...* P. 441.

⁶⁵ See above, N. 43.

⁶⁶ Menander. Fr. 12.5. P. 134: ...λοιπὸν δέ, ὅτι καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν βουλῇ ἐποιήσατο χρήματά σοι ἐπιδοῦναι. τοιγαροῦν καὶ παρέσχε τοῖς κατὰ σὲ πρέσβεσιν. See: *Avenarius A. Die Awaren in Europa*. Amsterdam; Bratislava, 1974. S. 59; *Fritze W. Zur Bedeutung der Awaren für die slawische Ausdehnungsbewegung im frühen Mittelalter // Frühzeit zwischen Ostsee und Donau. Ausgewählte Beiträge zum geschichtlichen Werden im östlichen Mitteleuropa vom 6. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert / Hrsg. L. Kuchenbuch, W. Schich. B., 1982. P. 47–99 (here: P. 84); Schreiner P. Eine merowingische Gesandtschaft in Konstantinopel (590?) // Frühmittelalterliche Studien. 1985. Vol. 19. S. 195–200 (here: 200); *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι*. Σ. 60.*

⁶⁷ See: *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 129–162; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ. Το Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Ἄβαροι*. Σ. 78–100.

⁶⁸ See above, N. 8.

⁶⁹ See above, N. 35.

⁷⁰ Menander. Fr. 5.4. P. 52; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 44–45; *Lung E. Barbarian Envoys...* P. 43.

permission of the emperor to do it⁷¹. On the other hand, a permanent argument of the Byzantines was that the Avars “were fugitives who found refuge on Roman soil”⁷². Of equal underestimation was the characterization of Baian by Bonus as ὁμόδουλος (fellow slave)⁷³.

In order to mollify the aggressiveness and the protests of the Avars, the Byzantines offered them damages. In 578, when the marauding Scamars attacked an Avar embassy returning from Constantinople and stole horses, silver and other goods, the emperor Tiberius returned to the Avars a part of their losses⁷⁴. It is unknown if the same happened in 579, when an Avar embassy was murdered by Slavs in Illyricum⁷⁵. Also, in September of 594, a contingent of the Byzantine army attacked Bulgar troops belonging to the Avar khagan on the south bank of the Lower Danube. As the clash took place during a period of peace between Byzantium and the Avars, the Byzantine general Peter offered gifts and war booty to appease the Avars⁷⁶. A unique military trick is recorded by Simokatta, namely a misleading letter from Maurice about a — supposed — Byzantine attack in the Danube area in 592. The letter fell into the hands of the Avars when they were outside the Thracian fortress Tzurullon and their retreat was accompanied by some unrefused gifts⁷⁷.

The record of the above testimonies offers an overview of the Byzantine-Avar diplomatic relations, when the northern border of the Byzantine Empire was particularly vulnerable to Avar raids. Simultaneously, it describes Avar methods aimed at the acquisition of Byzantine gold, such as the rhetorical tricks, the threats, the blackmails, namely the holding of hostages or the declaration of war, the promotion of “acquired rights”, the plundering of churches or graves etc., methods linked also with the nomadic morals and customs. The annual tribute and all the kinds of luxury objects included in the Byzantine donations show that, apart from the powerful military forces required against the Avars, the maintenance of peace with the latter placed a particularly heavy burden on the imperial treasury. On the other hand, the value and diversity of the donations served the needs of the imperial ideology as well as the desire of the khagans for the concentration of wealth and, through this, their policy in the khaganate. Nonetheless, we have to note that the end of the Avar threat for Byzantium did not mean the end of the flow of Byzantine coins to *Avaria*. Under various conditions, such as the purchase of hostages, treaties or, mostly, trade activity, this flow almost coincides with the end of the Avar khaganate in the late eighth century.

⁷¹ See above, n. 26.

⁷² Corippus. P. 70 (320–322): quae fortia regna subegit, effera gens Avarum proprias defendere terras non potuit, sedesque suas fugitiva reliquit; Simokatta I, 5.12. P. 50; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 28, 82; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαροι. Σ. 28; *Nechaeva E.* «Runaway” Avars. P. 178–180.

⁷³ See above, n. 23; Menander. Fr. 12.5. P. 136; *Ibid.* P. 18. n. 75.

⁷⁴ Menander. Fr. 15.6. P. 150; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 65; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαροι. Σ. 55.

⁷⁵ Menander. Fr. 25.2. P. 224; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 72, 178; *Curta F. Slavs*. P. 92, 96.

⁷⁶ Simokatta VII, 4. 7. P. 252; Theophanes. P. 275; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 142, 228; *Καρδαράς Γ.Θ.* Το Βυζάντιο και οι Άβαροι. Σ. 84; *Ziemann D.* Entstehung... P. 118–119; *Liebeschuetz W.* Lower Danube. P. 449–450.

⁷⁷ Simokatta VI, 5.12–16. P. 229–230; Theophanes. P. 270; *Pohl W. Die Awaren*. S. 135; *Liebeschuetz W.* Lower Danube. P. 446–447.

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ВИЗАНТИЙСКОЕ ЗОЛОТО И МЕТОДЫ АВАРОВ

Аннотация: В исследовании описаны способы, которыми авары пытались присваивать себе деньги и ценные предметы византийцев в период 558–626 гг. Кроме наложения ежегодной дани для уплаты деньгами или товарами, были обнаружены и разные другие методы, такие как применение уловок, угроз или вымогательства, выдвижение «права на обладание» и даже ограбление храмов и могил. Также в работе подчеркивается отношение византийских императоров к аварским притязаниям. Подход, широко описанный во многих источниках, связанный со стремлением аваров (так же, как и кочевых племен вообще) к захвату добычи и денежных средств, основывается на трех факторах: а) престиж, который возрастал по мере притока богатств из Византии; в) обеспечение внутреннего единства и выживания; г) согласие с обычаями кочевников Евразии. На основе этого дается описание некоторых элементов системы ценностей аваров, например, того факта, что они не могли вернуться «с пустыми руками» с переговоров, их отношения к «иноземцам» и др.

Ключевые слова: Византийская дипломатия, авары

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