Abstracts

1) Theophanes and George Syncellus

Warren Treadgold (St. Louis),

“A Conjectural Biography of George Syncellus”

The paper will attempt to reconstruct the biography of George Syncellus from the scanty available evidence, reaching the following conjectural conclusions. George seems to have been born around 745 into a Christian family in Syria, possibly at Emesa. While his native language would have been Syriac, he must have received a good secondary education in Greek. After travels in Palestine, George became a monk at the Monastery of St. Chariton. He made frequent excursions from that monastery to Jerusalem, possibly on business with the Jerusalem patriarchate at a time when Christians were suffering from Muslim persecution.

Soon after the new iconophile regime took power in Byzantium in 780, George seems to have had the idea of translating the recent Syriac chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa into Greek and continuing it up to 780. Apparently George planned to take his work to Constantinople in the hope of interesting Irene and her advisers in the plight of the orthodox Christians of Syria. George evidently made the trip during a truce between the empire and the Caliphate between 782 and 785. In Constantinople George’s knowledge of history and devotion to icons appear to have won him the favor of Tarasius, who became patriarch in 784.

By the time of the Council of Nicaea in 787, George was probably a deacon and notary of the patriarchate and participated in the council in that capacity. Later George became one of Tarasius’ syncelli, so that as syncellus George accompanied Tarasius to the translation of the relics of St. Euphemia to Chalcedon in 796. George seems to have remained a syncellus even after Tarasius died in 806 and was succeeded by the patriarch Nicephorus.

George admired the patriarch Nicephorus but apparently disliked the emperor Nicephorus I and probably joined the plot to overthrow him in 808. Then the emperor seems to have banished George to the monastery of Megas Agros in Bithynia, where he became a close friend of its abbot Theophanes. George used his enforced leisure to begin revising and expanding his version of the chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa. George seems to have been allowed to bring his personal library along with him into exile, including his supplemented translation of Theophilus’ chronicle. He probably owned
a number of relevant books which he had had copied from the patriarchal library or acquired in other ways. He must also have had friends who could send him additional books from the capital.

After the death of the emperor Nicephorus and the deposition of his son Stauracius in 811, George was presumably allowed to return to Constantinople by the new emperor Michael I. George continued writing his history, also keeping a record of current events as they occurred so that he could add it to the end of his work. Probably soon after August 813, George fell mortally ill. On his deathbed, he persuaded his friend Theophanes to complete the unfinished chronicle by using the materials that George had prepared, no doubt including the books that George owned.

Andrzej Kompa (Łódź),

“Gnesioi philoi: George Synellus, Theophanes the Confessor and their oeuvre”

No general discussion of Theophanes’ Chronographia can be considered exhaustive if the unique bond that the chronicle shares with George Synellus’ Ekloge chronographias is not acknowledged. The study of the link between the two authors must go far beyond the vexed question of the authorship and can contribute to its solution in the future. Many, often contradictory, conclusions have been drawn in the recent years from the scanty biographical data found in the sources. Several questions concerning the relations between the two texts and the actual motive reason of their composition remain unanswered.

Further comparison of the two texts (style, content, narrative techniques) is still the most promising method to find explanations of these basic problems. It can provide a clue to clarify such matters as how to understand the continuity between the two chronicles, but also their dissimilarities; how to reconcile the common tradition articulated and exclaimed in Theophanes’ preface with the individual and specific aims that can be inferred from the content of the Chronographia; how to comprehend the crucial ‘genuine friendship’; how to measure the Byzantine character of building a Historia tripartita. As the discussion on the authorship seems now more complicated than ever, with almost every element now put in question, the limits of any further study should be sketched, so as to show the weaknesses and strengths of the major standing hypotheses.

The comparison between the Ekloge chronographias and the Chronographia is only justified where we can be sure that a passage comes from the author himself, not from his sources and shows different authorship. A thorough reading of the Chronographia illustrates its homogeneous character, yet all the limitations typical of the age, genre and milieu, whether one accepts or rejects the traditional attribution to St. Theophanes the Confessor.

Jesse Torgerson (Berkeley),

“From many authors, one chronicle? The manuscripts of the Chronicles of Synkellos and Theophanes”

The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor is studied as an entity distinct from the Chronography of George Synkellos. This paper argues that the manuscript evidence proves the chronicles (plural) were circulated, copied, and read as a chronicle (singular), and that based on this evidence we should consider reading and studying the chronicles as a single chronicle: the Chronicle of Synkellos-Theophanes.
Including Anastasius Bibliothecarius’ Latin translation of the *Chronicle*, there are eleven extant medieval manuscripts of Synkellos and Theophanes, all copied between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Only two of these manuscripts contain the chronicle of one author but not the other (Theophanes: Paris BnF Gr. 1710 of the tenth century; Synkellos: Paris BnF Gr. 1764 of the eleventh century). The remaining nine manuscripts indicate that the original and the most common arrangement divided the chronicle just before the Incarnation, within the portion of the text attributed to Synkellos alone. Alden Mosshammer noted manuscript evidence for this division in his critical edition (Ecloga Chronographica, Leipzig 1984), but neither he nor William Adler and Paul Tuffin (The Chronography of George Synkellos, Oxford 2002) followed up on the implications of this arrangement.

This paper will make a comprehensive presentation of the evidence that the *Chronicle* of Synkellos-Theophanes originally circulated in two codices. The first codex likely contained Synkellos’ chronicle for the period from the Creation of the world in Annus Mundi (AM) 1 to Pompey’s conquest of Jerusalem in AM 5434 (our 63 B.C.). The second codex covered the Incarnation and the post-Incarnation period, from AM 5434 to AM 6305 (A.D. 813/14). This second codex contained the conclusion of Synkellos’ chronicle for AM 5434 – AM 5776 (A.D. 283), Theophanes’ preface, as well as the entire chronicle attributed to Theophanes covering AM 5777 (A.D. 284) – AM 6305 (A.D. 813/14). The evidence for this division comes from the text of the chronicle itself, and from the manuscripts’ codicology and palaeography.

This argument, if accepted, allows us to more nearly approximate the way the chronicle was read in the ninth century. Furthermore, fully incorporating the Chronography of Synkellos into studies on Theophanes’ *Chronicle* paves the way for productively synthesizing the decades of research generated by Cyril Mango’s question: “Who Wrote the *Chronicle* of Theophanes?”

2) Transmission, transcription, translation

Filippo Ronconi (Paris),

« La première circulation du texte de Théophane : notes paléographiques et codicologiques sur les plus anciens manuscrits de la *Chronique* »


3
Federico Montinaro (Paris),

“Anastasius’ Greek manuscript”

The Greek manuscript that served as the model for Anastasius the Librarian’s translation of the Chronicle in the Tripartite history (completed by 874) is lost and its text can only be reconstructed from the latter’s Latin. Since Karl de Boor’s edition and study, scholars have nonetheless regarded it as of better quality than any of the surviving witnesses. It can fairly be assumed that Anastasius came into possession of the manuscript during his visit to Constantinople as the Frankish emperor Louis II’s ambassador and observer at the anti-Photian council of 869-870. Louis’ famous letter to Basil I of a year later, preserved in the 10th-century Chronicle of Salerno, may offer new and unexpected insights into some of the manuscript’s features and help date Anastasius’ translation work more precisely. In 1902, Arthur Kleinclausz attributed the composition of the missive to Anastasius, acting provisionally as Louis’ secretary. A few decades later, Nelly Ertl supported this view with a thorough comparison of the biblical citations found in the letter and in Anastasius’ other writings, pointing to a single author. Louis’ letter quotes in transliteration several Byzantine epithets for foreign rulers found in “Greek Annals” that visibly reached into recent times. If Anastasius indeed was behind the document, the “Annals” may hardly have been other than the Chronicle itself. Having provided further evidence in support of the attribution of Louis’ letter to the Librarian, the paper will put this hypothesis to the test and explore its implications for the Chronicle’s textual history.

Bronwen Neil (Brisbane),

“Anastasius’ transmission of the Arab conquest according to Theophanes”

In the Chronographia tripartita of Anastasius Bibliothecarius (d. 877-79), composed between 871 and 874, the Librarian took excerpts from three ninth-century Greek iconophile sources, the last of which was Theophanes’ Chronographia. Theophanes’ history of the Arab conquest stretches from Muḥammad’s death to the year 813. Anastasius compiled the Chronographia tripartita for John the Deacon (also known as John Immonides). The Latin version included brief excerpts of entries up to the death of Theodosius II, and longer ones up to the end of Justinian I’s reign, but Anastasius chose to translate the whole section covering the period from the accession of Justin I to 813 (Mango and Scott 1997:xcvii), thus transmitting Theophanes’ history of the Arab conquest in full.

Anastasius’ translation of the Chronographia of Theophanes was one of very few Latin histories to offer western readers an account of the Byzantine empire and its relations with the early followers of Islam (Neil 2009). Thus the Chronographia tripartita became the chief source on Islam available in western Europe between the ninth and twelfth centuries, when it was superseded by two polemical works of Peter the Venerable of Cluny, who used Anastasius as his main source. Anastasius’ Latin version contains several important details that are not transmitted in the Greek tradition, which will be considered in this paper.

As well as being unique in the western tradition, Anastasius’ translation is important because it was a very literal translation based on better Greek manuscripts than those that now survive. Boor’s 1885 edition of the Greek text was based on two late manuscripts, Vat. Barb. 553 (16th c.)
and Vat. Gr. 154 (12th c.), both highly fragmentary but preserving the best Greek tradition available (de Boor 1885/1:vii; 1885/2:1550). De Boor used three Latin manuscripts for his edition of Anastasius’ version (1885/2:60-340): Vat. Pal. 826 (9th/10th c., the oldest surviving witness of the Latin version); Cassinensis 6 (a. 1085); and Vat. Pal. 909 (10th/11th c.). He also mentions several others that he did not consult (de Boor 1885/2:423-25). A full list is presented by Brown, with two fragmentary additions recently discovered (Brown 1993:132-37). I will consider what contribution (if any) the new fragments make to our understanding of the tradition.

Juan Signes Codoñer (Valladolid),

“Theophanes and Constantine VII”

The transmission of the chronicle of Theophanes passed through successive stages that can now be better defined by means of a new dating and analysis of the oldest manuscripts. My purpose here is to reconsider the amount of the evidence that links the family of Constantine VII, and especially his mother, Zoe Carbounopsina, with a later stage of this transmission, at the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century. I will argue first for the appropriation of the text of the chronicle by the Macedonian dynasty already during the reign of Leo VI, a circumstance that promoted a new edition of the text, different from the one represented by the translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius and the Parisinus gr. 1710. The chronological tables at the beginning of each year were probably added at this point, perhaps in Constantinople by an oriental emigrant. Later, excerpts of Theophanes were copied in some of Constantine’s VII treatises, who further promoted the work of his famous forerunner by sponsoring its continuation. Part of the ethnographic material preserved in Theophanes, like the report on the origins of the Bulgarian nation copied under the year 6171, offers typological affinities to some historiographical reports collected by Constantine for the De administrando imperio, thus providing a clue for the ultimate sources of this kind of reports.

3) Theophanes and early Byzantine history

Roger D. Scott (Melbourne),

“The first half of Theophanes’ Chronicle”

The first half of Theophanes’ chronicle excites little interest since for most of it we also possess his sources. Yet that fact also allows us to see how he handles those sources, i.e. to see how he operates as an historian. Though for the most part Theophanes simply repeats his sources almost verbatim (Cyril Mango’s “dossier”), he also manipulates these sources in various ways to produce his own interpretation of history. That interpretation can be summed up as showing (not surprisingly) that God rewards pious orthodoxy and punishes heresy. The paper will examine how Theophanes achieves this while still remaining loyal to the wording of his sources that at times imply something rather different. So the paper will also look at problems Theophanes confronted in dealing with his sources, particularly in his account of Justinian.
Irina Tamarkina (Madison),

“Pulcheria and relics in the Chronicle of Theophanes: rewriting the past and arguing the present”

My paper explores how Theophanes’ depiction of Augusta Pulcheria as significantly involved in relic veneration speaks to his narrative of the past, contemporary religious debates and vision of female imperial power. Theophanes credits Pulcheria with participating in the translations of relics of three saints, an involvement with relics not recorded in more contemporaneous histories and Theophanes’ key sources.

I will argue that Theophanes achieves three goals by overemphasizing the role of Pulcheria in translations of relics. Firstly, he counteracts anti-Chalcedonian visions of the fifth-century history. Secondly, Pulcheria’s support of relics feeds into Theophanes’ concept of relics and their connection with the religious orthodoxy, issues that were debated in the time when the Chronicle was written. Thirdly, Pulcheria’s close association with relics emerges as a foil against which the shortcomings of the Empress Irene are implicitly criticized.

I argue that Pulcheria participation in the translation of the relics of St. Stephen to Constantinople in 427 constructs the debate with the anti-Chalcedonian version of the events of the early fifth century. Detailed study reveals that the episode might have come originally from an anti-Chalcedonian text, which glorified Theodosius II and relics of St. Stephen. Anti-Chalcedonian texts also created negative image of Pulcheria thus opposing pious emperor Theodosius to depraved Pulcheria. By inserting Pulcheria in the originally anti-Chalcedonian text, Theophanes depicts Theodosius and Pulcheria as acting together in promoting cult of St. Stephen. Theophanes effaces the contrast between Theodosius and Pulcheria and undermines anti-Chalcedonian claim on Theodosius as genuine supporter of their cause.

Theophanes lends support to his theory of the correlation between the religious orthodoxy of emperors and veneration of relics by depicting Pulcheria as participating in several other relics’ translations. I will demonstrate that this trend runs through the Chronicle: orthodox rulers actively venerate relics whereas emperors that supported heresies were disassociated from relics. Such reconstruction of the past reinforces Theophanes’ argument about recent iconoclasm. His Chronicle maintains that heretical iconoclastic emperors rejected veneration of relics and actively persecuted them, picture that oversimplifies and contradicts the reality. Thus, Theophanes rewrites historical past to illustrate his claim about the current religious controversy.

While overemphasizing Pulcheria’s role in relics veneration, Theophanes minimizes Irene’s role in promoting the cult of St. Euphemia. In contrast to other contemporary sources that credit Irene with the return of the relics of St. Euphemia in 796, Theophanes moves the account of this event to 765 and downplays Irene’s involvement. He creates pronounced contrast between Pulcheria and Irene, who were otherwise similar in their religious orthodoxy and generosity to the church. I suggest that by creating this contrast Theophanes implicitly criticizes Irene’s imperial ambitions that drove her to blind her son Constantine in 797.

My research demonstrates that by masterfully re-arranging information pertaining to cult of relics Theophanes’ narrative reshapes the past and uses the past for the debate on current issues of iconoclasm and the reign of Empress Irene.
Geoffrey Greatrex (Ottawa),
« Théophane et ses sources sur la guerre perse d’Anastase Ier (502-506) »

Théophane fournit des détails précieux sur la guerre perse du début du VIe s., dont certains ne figurent dans aucune autre source, p.ex. la liste des commandants présentée à A.M. 5997 (p.145-6), qui inclut des noms omis par Procope. Bien qu’on puisse relever certaines similarités avec les récits de Procope et du pseudo-Zacharie de Mytilène, le chroniqueur semble avoir disposé d’autres sources. Pour les événements du début de la guerre, notamment le siège d’Amida, on suppose que Théophane aurait puisé dans l’histoire d’Eustathe d’Épiphanaée, mais puisque son œuvre se termina par le siège, il faut envisager d’autres sources. Nous proposons donc d’examiner de plus près la version de Théophane afin de préciser d’où il obtient ses renseignements et de déterminer s’ils sont fiables.

Bernard Pouderon (Tours),
« Théophane, témoin de l’Épitomé, de Théodore le Lecteur ou de Jean Diacrinoménos ? »

S’il paraît incontestable que Théophane, dans sa Chronique, a utilisé Théodore le Lecteur, il est plus difficile de discerner si c’est directement, par la lecture de ses deux ouvrages, l’Histoire tripartite, formée d’une compilation d’extraits de Théodoret, Socrate et Sozomène, et l’Histoire ecclésiastique qui en prend le relais, ou si c’est indirectement, par l’intermédiaire de l’Épitomé anonyme d’histoires ecclésiastiques (début du VIe siècle), qui, dans sa majeure partie, abrège Théodore. Nous manquons en effet, de moyens de comparaison, puisque les deux ouvrages de Théodore ont disparu, à l’exception, notable, des deux premiers livres de l’Histoire tripartite, un texte, hélas ! non publié. Notre étude montre que Théophane a connu et utilisé l’Épitomé d’histoires ecclésiastiques, dont il reprend des marques de discours rapporté, évidemment absentes du texte originel de Théodore (et de ses sources) , mais que l’Épitomé ne peut pas être son unique source : soit Théophane a aussi eu un accès direct à Théodore, soit il a utilisé une version de l’Épitomé beaucoup plus complète et plus riche que l’actuelle. Nos recherches nous ont aussi conduit à nous interroger sur le passage sur la place que tenait l’Histoire ecclésiastique (perdue) de Jean Diacrinoménos : source d’une partie de l’Épitomé, la tradition manuscrite l’atteste, et G.C. Hansen en a bien rendu compte dans son édition de Théodore ; mais peut-être aussi source partielle de l’Histoire ecclésiastique de Théodore, par lequel elle serait passée fragmentairement dans la Chronique de Théophane.

Salvatore Cosentino (Bologne),
« La Chronographie de Théophane et sa perception du domaine économique »

La Chronographie de Théophane offre environ 143 témoignages qui sont inhérentes au domaine de l’économie. Ils sont répartis comme suit: 52 citations se réfèrent à la sphère des activités militaires (composition des armées et pertes au combat), 17 concernent la démographie, 60 fournissent des informations quantitatives sur les paiements en monnaie et concernent le domaine de la fiscalité, 14 attestations, finalement, ont à voir avec des biens, objets précieux ou des catégories d’artisans. La communication vise à analyser ces quatre domaines de données quantitatives par rapport à leur chronologie, contenu et relation avec les sources. Une attention particulière sera accordée aux termes monétaires (dans ce cas, l’utilisation de talanton) et les informations relatives à la politique budgétaire et économique des empereurs entre Léon III et Michel I.
4) Theophanes’ sources for the Dark Age

Marek Jankowiak (Oxford),
“Theophanes, a historian of the Dark Age”

The influence the Chronicle of Theophanes exercises on modern historiography is to a large extent due to its convenient chronological framework. But modern historians concentrated their attention rather on picking up Theophanes’ mistakes than on understanding the effort he – or his mentor, George Synkellos – invested in establishing the sequence of years. I will try to show that Theophanes’ chronology of the 7th century is fundamentally sound, and that his apparent mistakes reveal interesting information on his sources. I will also study two sections of the Chronicle – on the Monothelete controversy and on the first Arab siege of Constantinople – to illustrate how Theophanes dealt with his sources to create coherent, though often misleading, accounts of the key episodes of the 7th century. His editorial choices, ideologically motivated or imposed by his overambitious chronological system, still shape our vision of the 7th century.

Mikaël Nichanian (Paris),
“La place de Théophane dans l’historiographie des premières victoires arabes sur Byzance (634-636)”

Abstract not communicated
5) Around Theophilus of Edessa

Robert Hoyland (Oxford),

“Theophilus of Edessa as Theophanes’ Oriental source”

It has long been known that there is a considerable body of material on the history of the seventh- and eighth-century Near East that is common to the chronicles of Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818), Dionysius of Telmahre (d. 845) and Agapius of Manbij (d. ca. 950). All of this material was lumped together for convenience and labelled as “the eastern source”. In the 1990s Lawrence Conrad argued that the author of this “eastern source” was one Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785), who served as an astrologer in the Abbasid court, wrote astrological treatises in Greek, and translated a number of Greek texts into Syriac. I accept Conrad’s identification, but try to take it further by identifying the sources of Theophilus. In my opinion he took a Byzantine Christian chronicle composed in the region of Syria/Palestine (which was either written originally in Syriac or was written in Greek and then translated by Theophilus into Syriac), and added to it reports from a Syriac chronicle of ca. 730 and from Muslim histories. From the latter and from his own observation he was able to produce a substantial narrative account of the third Arab civil war (ca. 743-50), which culminated in the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty in Iraq.

Muriel Debié (Paris),

« Théophile d’Edesse, le fantôme de l’historiographie syriaque »

Un tour d’horizon des sources syriaques ayant emprunté à la chronique de Théophile d’Edesse montre combien l’allusivité des références devrait inciter à la prudence dans l’interprétation qui est faite de ce texte comme étant LA source orientale de Théophane. Entre approches sceptique et d’absolue confiance, une mise à plat des témoignages sur cet auteur pourrait contribuer à fournir les outils permettant de mieux cerner les contours de cette source évanescente.

Maria Conterno (Princeton),

“Theophilus, ‘the more likely candidate’? Towards a reappraisal of the question of Theophanes’ Oriental Source(s)”

After Lawrence Conrad’s works Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition: Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission (1990), and The Conquest of Arwād: a Source-critical Study in the Historiography of the Early Medieval Near East (1992), identifying with Theophilus of Edessa’s lost work the material shared by Theophanes, Michael the Syrian, the Chronicle of the Year 1234 and Agapius of Mabbug has become the easiest way of referring to this very multifarious mass of historical information. However, at least with regard to Theophanes’ Chronographia, there is still room for discussion about the origin of these items: if we accept the “Theophilus theory” as an exhaustive solution and we stop investigating the provenance of the material of patent or likely oriental origin to be found in the Chronographia (including the part of it that does not have parallels in the Syriac chronicles), we will underestimate the real range of this “intercul-
tural transmission” and overlook some precious evidence of cultural activity in both Syriac and Greek-speaking milieux in Syria-Palestine during the first two centuries of Islamic rule.

The aim of this paper will be to show how the results of a thorough survey of the involved texts lead to the conclusion that the material of oriental origin in Theophanes’ *Chronographia* cannot come exclusively from one “Common Oriental Source”, but derives most likely from more sources of different origin and nature, not all of them shared by the Syriac chronicles as well. The final assertion will be that the theory of the so-called “circuit of Theophilus of Edessa” does not provide a satisfying and conclusive explanation for the evidence emerging from the text analysis and therefore the question should remain open and be the subject of further investigation.

6) Theophanes and recent history

Lee Mordechai (Princeton),

“The last century of Theophanes’ *Chronicle*: A different approach”

Of all periods in the *Chronicle*, the sources Theophanes used for this last century are the least known. In the last several decades there have been more than a few attempts to understand the sources on which the author based his writing, and a number of largely hypothetical authors have been suggested. Another important discussion arose about whether it was Theophanes who edited most of the *Chronicle*, or whether he simply took most of the work, already in almost final form, from his acquaintance George Synkellos. In addition to both these questions, there is also the unresolved issue of the amount of material added by the author of the *Chronicle* to his compilation of sources, especially during the last decades of the chronicle, which coincided with his lifetime. None of these three questions has yet been answered conclusively, and it seems that there is a tendency to believe that they cannot be answered as such.

In my paper, I will present a different methodology for dealing with Theophanes’s *Chronicle*, which combines a statistical approach together with a close analysis of what is actually written in Theophanes’s Greek. This methodological approach, when applied to the *Chronicle*, will demonstrate that the last century of the text is presented in a significantly different way from that of the previous four. It will also call attention to several unexpected similarities between certain intervals of years in the last century, together with other surprising irregularities between other intervals.

I will show the effectiveness of a novel methodology by providing different perspectives on all three questions noted above, namely: (1) differentiating between several sources Theophanes used for composing the last century of his *Chronicle*; (2) providing new evidence towards the view that it was in fact Theophanes, and not George Synkellos, that composed the *Chronicle*; and (3) calling attention to several recurring themes and formulae in the *Chronicle*, which provide hints that Theophanes did add his own thoughts or ideas throughout.

Finally, I should stress that my methodology is not hypothetical, but uses the transmitted text itself and other related texts, such as the writings of Nikephoros or George Synkellos. By comparing these works to the *Chronicle* and analyzing the internal structure of the *Chronicle* itself, I believe we can learn much more about this extremely complex source.
Dmitry Afinogenov (Moscow),

“Style, structure and authorship of the hypothetical source of Theophanes for the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V”

The communication is devoted to systematization of data related to the hypothetical source of Theophanes which I call *Historia Leonis et Constantini*. The reconstruction, apart from Chronographia, is based on the texts of George the Monk and the Patriarch Nikephoros (Breviarium and Antirrheticus III). For the moment the following propositions could be put forward with a good degree of probability:

1. The text began with a short biography of Leo III before his accession, pieces of which are preserved in Theophanes, 391, 5-10 and maybe 395, 2-12.

2. The text ended with the death of Constantine V in 775. There are demonstrable stylistic differences between the account of the reign of Leo IV and the preceding entries on the Byzantine history.

3. The work consisted of chapters (κεφάλαια, 413, 10), which contained accounts of separate events and probably greatly varied in size. Some of the self-contained narrative pieces can be reconstructed with the help of George the Monk, who preserves the plot better than Theophanes, especially when the story covers several years.

4. The author preferred dating by indiction rather than by regnal year.

5. The author affected learned, educated style.

6. The declared aim was to describe the events in a “truth-loving” manner (φιλαλήθως, 413, 12). That explains the rather objective accounts of both emperors’ achievements despite the fierce anti-iconoclast bias.

7. The author had quite a vague idea of the affairs in the Arab Caliphate.

8. The most interesting and difficult task is to determine, where the author starts to record his eyewitness experience. It can be argued that it happens with the description of the plague of 748 at the latest.

There are possibly more distinctive characteristics of this source, undoubtedly created between 775 and 787 by a person who was born in 730s and apparently had access to official documents. To define such features remains objective of further research, but it is already clear that special attention must be paid to the author’s position in the political struggle in Byzantium in 760s to 780s.

James Howard-Johnston (Oxford),

“Theophanes on the recent past: the crisis of 781 and its antecedents”

The main part of the paper takes Theophanes’ notices about Byzantine-Arab fighting in the years 776-782 one by one, compares them with what is reported in other sources, and reconstructs history. Attention is paid to one particular category of source used by Theophanes – the official government news release. It is argued that the high quality of Theophanes’ material, both in terms of precision and lucid overview, derives primarily from this category of source.
Federico Montinaro (Paris),

“The Chronicle on Charlemagne’s coronation: when and whence?”

Charles the Great’s imperial coronation of Christmas 800 is recorded twice in the Chronicle attributed to Theophanes the Confessor, first extensively under the year 6289 (AD 796/797), then again very briefly under the year 6293 (AD 800/801). In fact, in the former record, the momentous ceremony is introduced as the culmination of a series of events triggered by a plot against pope Leo III and Leo’s taking refuge in France. Charles’ Roman coronation is presented, in the chronicler’s words, as an “exchange” with the then king of the Franks, intended to pay him back for his protection. Crucially, according to the chronicler the Roman ritual would have included the earliest performance of the imperial anointment in the West, an episode whose historicity has usually been rejected by modern scholars. The story of Leo III’s fortunes appears, with few but significant variants, in two sources of surprisingly different genre and provenance that have never been put side by side: the late 9th-century Latin Deeds of the Neapolitan bishops and the 12th-century Syriac Chronicle of Michael, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch. The aim of this paper is to assess the origin, nature and date of the common source, looking in particular at the emergence of the legend of Charlemagne’s anointment in Western historiography and the possible role of Anastasius the Librarian in one step at least of its transmission. The first entry on the coronation found in Theophanes’ Chronicle, it is finally argued, must, in its present form, postdate the early 840s and cannot therefore stem from the Confessor.

Panos Sophoulis (Athens),

“The Chronicle of Theophanes and the Byzantine-Bulgar wars of the early ninth century”

The Chronicle that goes under the name of Theophanes the Confessor is contemporary with the Byzantine-Bulgar wars of the late eighth and early ninth centuries, which constituted one of the most important episodes in the protracted struggle of these two powers for political mastery over the northeastern Balkans. The author, who may have witnessed personally some of the events he describes, provides a plentiful supply of material for piecing together a narrative of events. Even so, the Chronographia presents a number of important problems to the historian of Byzantine-Bulgar relations.

It is first and foremost a highly tendentious source, which presents history from a steadfast Orthodox light. As a result, some of the information relating to iconoclast emperors, most notably Constantine V who took a strong interest in Balkan affairs, must be treated with weary caution. What is more, Theophanes also offers a heavily biased account of the reign of Nikephoros I, an attitude best explained by that emperor’s fiscal measures against ecclesiastical institutions. In other cases the ideological program inherent in the narrative is difficult to identify, as is the case of Theophanes’ inconsistent approach towards Irene and her son Constantine VI, which could either be due to a combination of divided loyalties and hidden agendas, or simply to a mechanical amalgamation of source materials.

Another problem is the chronicler’s cursory treatment of Byzantium’s relations with the Bulgar state. The entries are usually brief and uninformative, there are gaping holes in the narrative, while the treatment of military matters is usually denuded of any sense of long-term strategy or geographical context.
An additional point that needs to be emphasized is the extent to which Theophanes’ presentation of events in the Balkans is influenced by imperial propaganda. Some extracts included in the last section of the *Chronicle* are evidently derived from official sources produced for public dissemination. This is particularly evident in the account of the battle of Versinikia (June 813), where Theophanes reproduces an official communiqué delivering propaganda in favour of Leo V.

Most of these difficulties can become intractable when the historian has no independent sources against which to assess Theophanes’ veracity. Fortunately, it is possible to compare Theophanes’ detailed account of the war in the years 811 to 813 with information contained in other written, contemporary sources which also report on the same events, most notably the so-called *Chronicle of 811* and the historical discourse conventionally titled *Scriptor incertus de Leone Armenio*. 