

Byzantium and the Pechenegs, 9th - 12th Century

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I. The topic of the thesis within the context of the medieval Southeast European history

The medieval history of Southeast Europe was characterized decisively by the Eastern Roman Empire which is also known as Byzantium. Although the heartland of this empire during its almost entire political existence was Asia Minor, the territories and peoples of the Balkan Peninsula have been exposed an enormous political, economic and cultural influence of Byzantium even if parts of them were not constantly under the direct Byzantine control.

The Byzantine Empire was enmeshed during its more than a thousand years long history in almost constant struggles with different internal or external enemies. The main reason for these permanent conflicts was the preservation of its territorial unit or otherwise the reconquest of lost territories in former times according to the political-religious ideology of the Empire. The contacts with the neighboring states or foreign nations in Byzantium's frontier zones had not only a military character, but also different cultural and economic characteristics. Among these many nations (or rather tribes - *ethne*), empires, kingdoms and different kinds of state formations with which Byzantium dealt politically, militarily, economically and culturally during its existence on the territories of three continents from the 4th until the 15th century AD, there were contacts especially on its northern, and since the 11th Century also on its eastern borders, with various nomadic steppe tribes. Some of these nomadic people came into touch with Byzantium on the way of their migration from east to west and represented sometimes a huge but also not sustained danger for the Empire (e.g. *Huns*, *Avars*, etc.), while others such as the *Bulgarians/Bulgars* and *Hungarians/Magyars* on the Balkan and the *Oghuzes* (known as *Seldjuks* and *Ottomans*) in Asia Minor succeeded to establish solid and stable state formations in neighboring territories with Byzantium or even on Byzantine ground which they conquered in fight against the Empire.

But there are many others nomadic tribes, which came into contact with the Byzantine policy and culture and which played for many centuries an important role in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A particular case of such contacts, which is actually the topic of the below summarized draft version of my PhD thesis, represents the relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Pechenegs from the 9th until the first half of the 12th Century AD.

II. Sources and current state of research

II.1. Primary sources: features and problems

As usual by dealing with historical issues related to the European Middle Ages, there are many significant problems with the primary sources as well. Unfortunately, we cannot rely on any historical records on the part of the Pechenegs, because in their case we are dealing with an illiterate steppe nomadic tribe. Therefore, the written sources, which are temporally and substantially related to the topic of this study and which give us general information about various aspects of the Byzantine-Pecheneg relations, are mainly Byzantine, i.e. mostly written in Greek¹. They are sometimes very detailed (mostly the accounts of the historiographical sources) but the critical examination of their content still entails several difficulties. The designation of the Pechenegs is a frequent problem that occurs in many Byzantine sources of this time and gives rise to some problems with correctly identifying the mentioned north-eastern people as the members of some Pecheneg tribes. In the best case they are mentioned with the Greek form of their common name i.e. *Patzinakoi* or *Patzinakai/Patzinakītai*. In many other cases, however, the Byzantine authors use some general terms with an anachronistic character such as *Skythai*, *Sauromatoi* or very often just *Barbaroi*. But these common designations were used in that time also for the *Cumans*, *Uzes/Oghuzes* and other nomadic tribes in north and northeast of the Lower Danube. Another problem which is connected with the Byzantine literary tradition and which makes the work of modern historians more difficult is the fact that the sources sometimes represent a mutual contradiction in their narratives and a significant dependence on historiographical and ethnographical *topoi*². Narratives about the Pechenegs and their ethnical presence and political-military activity in Eastern and Southeastern Europe can be found, of course, not

* The listed titles below are cited according to the general German citation and transliteration rules.

¹ A fundamental scientific work, which is related to the Byzantine Greek sources about the Turkic people, has been done by Gyula MORAVCSIK: *Byzantinoturcica I. Die byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkvolker* (= Berliner byzantinische Arbeiten 11), Berlin 1958 (Zweite bearb. Auflage); Same: *Byzantinoturcica II. Sprachreste der Türkvolker in den byzantinischen Quellen* (= Berliner byzantinische Arbeiten 11), Berlin 1958 (Zweite bearb. Auflage).

² A very detailed and important contribution about the Pecheneg image in the Byzantine sources is written by MALAMUT Elisabeth: *L'Image Byzantines des Petchénègues*. In: *BZ* 88 (1995) 105-147.

only in the Byzantine sources. There is also a number of Muslim (Arabian and Persian)³, Russian⁴, Latin (mostly Hungarian, but also German and Polish), Caucasian (Armenian, Georgian and Alanian) and even Scandinavian literary sources which mention or sometimes even report detailed about events connected to the political actions of the Pechenegs and to their settlements in East and Southeast Europe. Unfortunately the mentioned non-Greek sources related to the treated topic are often considered deficient in the earlier modern historiography. Some of them are particularly helpful in locating the settlements of the Pechenegs, but sometimes they also have a complementary role to some Byzantine narratives.

However, if the written sources are not sufficiently clear to make certain conclusions concerning specific historical problems, we could use scientific material and results from other classical studies in order to eventually supplement the already gained historical picture or at least to confirm it. Therefore, in addition to the reports from the written sources, I will also use in the present work some amounts of information gained by archaeological investigations⁵. Archaeological evidence provides important information about the general presence of the Pechenegs not only in the areas of the lower Danube region which are most relevant to my subject, but also generally in Eastern and Central Europe.

Because of their nomadic lifestyle the Pechenegs left much less remains of their material culture compared to the medieval sedentary populations. Nevertheless, it has been possible to modern researchers to connect certain types of archaeological remains with the Pechenegs which are mainly related to their burial ritual and its grave goods. In the first place this is due to Soviet archaeologists who have excavated systematically and purposefully in the south Russian steppe regions where the presence of the Pechenegs had been proven by the written sources⁶. Otherwise, the archaeological data, which has been won and published thereafter as

³ See GÖCKENJAN Hansgerd and ZIMONYI István (eds.): *Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter: Die Gayhani-Tradition (Ibn Rusta, Gardizi, Hudud al-'Alam, al-Bakri und al-Marwazi)* [= Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica 54]. Wiesbaden 2001.

⁴ Very important narratives of the Russian-Pecheneg relations from 10th to 12th C., which were also significant for the Byzantine Empire, are included in the so called *Ipat'evskaja letopis'* (= *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej* 2, serija «Russkie letopisi» 11). Rjazan' 2001.

⁵ Thereby I don't want to ascribe any real interdisciplinary character to my thesis, but rather to point out that materials from other scientific disciplines could also be used in order to enlighten better the respective historical problem.

⁶ Here should be mentioned some basic studies of the Russian archaeologist Svetlana A. PLETNEVA: *Pečenegi, torki i polvcy v južnorusskikh steppa*. In: *Trudy Volgo-Donskoj arheologičeskoj ekspedicii 1* (= *Materialy i*

a result of archaeological excavations on the territories of modern Rumania, Moldavia and Bulgaria provide even more important source material to explain other issues, such as the military and civil administration division of the Byzantine Empire during this period (e.g. on the basis of seal findings and coin caches), the state of the urban settlements and of the defense systems before and after the Pecheneg invasions from the first half of the 11th C. and also the coexistence between the sedentary Balkan population and the new nomadic invaders⁷.

II.2. Secondary sources and current state of research

The present study does not represent the first scientific attempt to examine systematically the several different aspects of the relationships between the Pechenegs and the Byzantine Empire. There are two extensive studies which have a focus on this issue and which undoubtedly have contributed much to clarify this important historical issue⁸. Next to many

issledovanja po archeologii SSSR 62). Moskau 1958, pp. 151-226; Idem: Kočevniki južnorusskikh stepej v epochu srednevekov'ja (IV-XIII veka). Voronež 2003, pp. 115-135; Idem: Otnošenija vostočnoevropejskikh kočevnikov s Vizantiej i archeologičeskie istočniki. In: SA 3 (1993) pp. 98-107.

⁷ Until the 70s of the 20th Century Romanian archaeologists have investigated systematically the majority of the mediaeval urban settlements and military bases in the area of north Dobruđa. See the following article and the earlier studies indicated therein: COMDURACHI Em./BARNEA Ion/DIACONU Petre: Nouvelles recherches sur le *Limes* byzantin du Bas-Danube aus Xe-XIe siècles. In: Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford 5-10 Sept. 1966, ed. by J. M. Hussey, D. Obolensky und S. Runciman. London 1967, pp. 179-193.

Otherwise, the Bulgarian archaeologists started to make systematic excavations on a wider territory in this context much later and achieved only since the last two decades a summarized but still not very extensive contributions to this issue. See i.e. BORISOV Boris D.: Demografskite problemi prez XI-XII vek v dnešnite bălgarski zemi (arheologičeski svidetelstva). In: TANGRA – Sbornik v čest na 70-godišnjinata na akad. Vasil Gjuzelev. Sofia 2006, pp. 391-408; ILIEVA Ljuba: Gradskoto stopanstvo v zemite meždju Dinav i Stara Planina prez perioda na Vizantijiskoto vladičestvo v Bălgarskite zemi (XI-XII v.). In: idem, pp. 559-577.

⁸ VASIL'EVSKIJ Vasilij G.: Vizantija i pečenegi. In: Trudy vol. 1. St. Petersburg 1908 (Reprint, Hague 1968); DIACONU Petre: Les pechénègues au Bas-Danube (= Bibliotheca Historica Romaniae 27). Bucarest 1970.

The study of the Romanian archaeologist P. Diaconu is a fundamental work related to the medieval settlements of the Lower Danube region during the 10th and 11th Century but his use of the written sources has been repeatedly criticized. See the following reviews of the Diaconu's book: BOŽILOV Ivan: Les pechénègues dans l'histoire des terres du Bas-Danube (Notes sur le livre de P. Diaconu, Les pechénègues au Bas-Danube). In: EB 7, 3 (1971) 170-174; KRESTEN Otto: Petre Diaconu, Les pechénègues au Bas-Danube (Bibliotheca Historica Romaniae. 27.) Bukarest 1970 – Rezension. In: MIÖB 80 (1972) 461-463; PRINZING Günter: P. Diaconu, Les

content deficiencies and of course to the issue of the current state of research it can be observed another problem related to this both studies. That is the fact that their authors do not treat the whole period of the Byzantine-Pecheneg relations and presuppose in this way certain incompleteness in the investigated subject.

Apart from that, there is a series of smaller scientific publications published until the 70s of last century which examine some different aspects of these mutual relations. Nevertheless, the both above-mentioned major works as well as the smaller publications until the mentioned period often have significant deficiencies which are on the one hand mostly related to using a narrow amount of archaeological and written sources, and on the other hand are often in connection with the problem of the mutual collision of historical objectivity and national interests of modern politics. Some of the historical problems of this topic which are related to the ethnic composition of the population in the lower Danube region in the 10th - 12th C. and also with the former administrative division of these territories at that time are very often influenced and affected by ideological and nationalist aspirations in the works of Bulgarian, Romanian and even Russian/Soviet scientists, especially in the first half of the 20th century (these appearances are sometimes noticeable even to this day). For this reason one must be very careful when dealing with the results of these scientific works and consider them with a reasonable dose of skepticism. But in the past two decades can be seen a positive trend in this context i.e. there is a renewed scientific interest in the history and generally in the presence of nomadic steppe peoples in medieval Eastern and Southeastern Europe which is represented not only by West European scholars and their studies but also by some Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian historians and archaeologists who are showing a significant attempt at historical objectivity and neutrality in considering and evaluating the sources and in the general assessment of historical developments⁹.

Although several aspects of the historical problem related to the Byzantine-Pecheneg contacts have been treated scientifically from different perspectives, many questions in this regard are still not solved sufficiently. This means that a comprehensive study, which treats the entire

pechénègues au Bas-Danube [Bibliotheca Historica Romaniae 27], Bucarest 1970 – Rezension. In: BZ 66 (1973) 103-106.

⁹ See for instance the following works of V. SPINEI: *The Great Migrations in the East and South East of Europe from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century*, Vol. 1: Hungarians, Pechenegs and Uzes. Amsterdam 2006; Same: *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century*. Leiden/Boston 2009.

period of their relationship, namely from the early 9th until the 12th Century, and which offers at the same time an appropriate overview of the presence of the Pechenegs in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, is still missing. Therefore this would be the aim of the project which is summarized here.

III. Emphases and main chronological division of the thesis

For a better understanding of the subject matter and of the issues related to it I will provide in the following chapter a general chronological overview of the project which is divided in three main periods. Immediately after each of them some of the main emphases and problems related to these periods will be listed separately.

III.1.a. The first major phase of the mutual relations: from the 9th until the late 10th Century (general historical overview)

The Byzantine Empire very probably entered into contact with the nomadic tribes of the Pechenegs already in the first half of the 9th century. Pecheneg tribes roamed maybe since the late 8th Century in the steppes between the Caspian and the Black Sea and then during their further migration to the south-west, which was actually a displacement caused by the westwards migration of other nomadic tribes, the core group of the Pechenegs got more and more into the zone of influence and political interests of the Byzantine Empire. These included in particular the steppe and coastal regions in the North of the Pontic Sea. The mutual contacts then intensified due to this geographical proximity. The Crimean peninsula, which represented the political and economic stronghold of the Byzantines in the North Pontic region, proved to be in this case the most important contact zone with the new rulers of large territories in the southern Russian steppe. The upholding of good relations with the Pechenegs was one of the priorities of the Byzantine foreign policy towards their northern neighbors during the 10th Century, because thereby their common neighbors could be contained in favor of the Empire (mainly according to the so-called *de administrando imperio* of Emperor Constantine VII, which is a very significant source for the early history of the Pechenegs in Eastern Europe). Nevertheless, since the late 9th Century up to the 70s of the 10th Century different Pecheneg groups aligned themselves with the Byzantine enemies' i.e. with the Bulgarians of Simeon I or with the Russians of Sviatoslav I of Kiev. But because of many

different factors there were rarely immediate Pecheneg-Byzantine clashes until the beginning of the 11th Century.

After the final conquest of Bulgaria by Basil II at the beginning of the 11th Century the political situation in Southeast Europa changed significantly. Byzantium and the Pechenegs had all at once a common border, and therefore the likelihood of direct conflicts grew. Nevertheless, it was surely difficult for the Byzantines to anticipate at that moment that the new neighbor to the north, with which they had so far been keeping relatively good political relations, could develop into such massive threat to the Empire. One contemporary Byzantine general a few decades later even described the Pechenegs as *the most terrible of all Roman enemies*.

III.1.b. Main emphases and problems of this period

- The problem of locating the original homelands (the so-called *Urheimat*) of the Pechenegs and of their probably not absolute ethnic belonging to the Turkic peoples. This problem involves also some aspects as e.g. the traditional lifestyle and culture of the Eurasian steppe peoples of that time.
- The causes for the Pecheneg emigration to the West and for their arrival in the northern Black Sea region and also their relationship to the other steppe tribes of these areas (Oghuzes/Uzes, Khazars, Hungarians, etc.).
- The problem of the extent of the territories under the control of the Pechenegs in the first half of the 10th Century and of the coexistence between them and their sedentary subjects and direct neighbors (This involves also an evaluation of the known Muslim sources regarding this issue and their comparison with the accounts of *de administrando imperio*).
- The different aspects of the role of the Pechenegs in the Byzantine foreign policy in the north (first half of the 10th Century).
- The period between 971 and 986 and probably the first common border in the lower Danube region between the Byzantines and the Pechenegs.
- The changing political relations of the Pechenegs with the Bulgarians and Russians until the beginning of the 11th Century.

- The problem of the extent of the territories under the control of the Pechenegs at the beginning of the 11th Century and of their penetration to the west.

III.2.a. The second major phase: from the beginning of the 11th until the battle of Lebonion in 1091 (general historical overview)

After the final subjugation of the Bulgarian Tsardom by the Byzantine Emperor Basil II at the beginning of the 11th Century the Byzantines shared for a long time a common border with the Pechenegs, whose tribes had penetrated now (or much earlier) to the lower Danube. As a result of systematic crossings of the Danube River by bigger Pecheneg groups since the mid-20s of the 11th Century, a series of pillages began within large areas of the Byzantine territories on the Balkan Peninsula.

Some twenty years after the beginning of the regular Pecheneg attacks on the Empire's territories the first settlement of the Pechenegs south of the Danube was approved by the Byzantine Emperor himself. Soon afterwards, new settlements of Pecheneg groups occurred on Byzantine territory, but this time they were forced to settle as subjugated people with the hope by the emperor that they would soon become peaceful taxpayers. The Byzantines took advantage of a method which they had applied and tested earlier several times in similar circumstances (many of these since the late antiquity). The settlement of conquered foreign tribes and groups of people had proven to be a successful model of the Byzantine policy of integration. In the following period, however, these settlement and integration policies failed almost entirely. A consequence of that fact was the emergence of a constant, almost autonomous and at the same time extremely hostile presence of large Pecheneg groups on the Byzantine territories south of the lower Danube.

Within a few years, the Byzantines suffered many heavy defeats, especially because of their military weakness, and a number of erroneous decisions. The emperor had thereafter only the opportunity to conclude a thirty-year long peace agreement (1053), by which he had certainly committed not only to pay tribute to the Pechenegs, but also to resign them former imperial territories in the district of *Paristrion/Paradounavon* (mostly in the so-called *Hundred Hills land*, in modern northeast Bulgaria). But the Pecheneg threat to the Byzantines did not end with that peace, as the nomads or at least some independently operating groups of them plundered continues the neighboring Byzantine territories.

The presence of the Pechenegs within the Byzantine Empire was not limited only in the *Hundred Hills land*, but stretched out far beyond its borders. It seems that the contacts of the nomads with the native population of the empire possessed not always a hostile character. In the 70 years of the 11th Century the existence of a semi-barbaric population can already be noticed mainly in the Danube cities and in their surrounding areas, which is often designated in the Byzantine sources as *mixobarbaroi*. It seems that this people were affected in some measure by the ethnic presence of the Pechenegs. The *Scythian* element of this population was apparently dominant, as they were largely ready to rebel against the already almost completely absent Byzantine power in their areas and to submit to a Pecheneg leader. Finally most of the Danube cities were in the hands of local Semi-barbarians until the early 90s and thus outside of the political charge of Constantinople.

The highly volatile internal and external political situation of the Byzantine Empire since the 70s of the 11th Century allowed the emergence of a number of socio-economically, ethnically and religiously motivated riots. In addition, there were also many military usurpation attempts in almost all corners of the empire. Pecheneg soldiers participated in some of these uprisings as professional warriors i.e. mercenaries who have been recruited mostly in large numbers by the rebels and usurpers. Apparently the Pechenegs were fighting on their side not only because of the promised wages, but also to use every opportunity to attack simultaneously the unprotected Byzantine territories and plunder them.

The accession of a young and warlike Emperor as Alexius I Comnenus in 1081 was certainly a great hope for most imperial subjects for the ending of the long-lasting outer and inner turmoil. Because in the first years of his reign the emperor was engaged the most time with fights against the enemies in the west and east of the empire, the Pechenegs used also in this case the opportunity and attacked the regions of Thrace and Macedonia whereby they entered even to the vicinity of the Byzantine capital. This time, the Byzantine army suffered some heavy defeats and Alexius was forced once again to buy the peace with the Pechenegs. However, the character of these peace treaties was more a kind of temporary truce, because large groups of the invaders were now staying permanently south of *Haimos* (Balkan mountain), including their children, women and household, and did not return to their northern territories. The emperor feared also a potential common siege of Constantinople by Pechenegs and Seljuks. This direct threat to the capital caused the emperor obviously to take extreme decisions to avert one for all the Pecheneg danger. Finally, the Byzantines succeeded together with a large number of Cuman mercenaries to defeat decisively the Pechenegs at the so-called battle of Lebunion (1091). Consequently there was again the problem with the

numerous Pecheneg prisoners of war. Alexius was probably taught by the bad experience, which his predecessors had once done with the Pechenegs and their settlement in large numbers around the western imperial territories (a similar scenario took place already in 1047). He took then one for himself surely very difficult decision: In just one night, he permitted that the most of the prisoners should be killed in a cruel manner. The few Pechenegs who survived the massacre were settled thereafter, according to the traditional Byzantine imperial policy, in depopulated territories.

III.2.b. Main emphases and problems of this period

- What were the triggers for the Pecheneg attacks over the imperial territories south of the Lower Danube since the late 20s of the 11th Century?
- How the Byzantine defense was organized on the so-called *Danube limes* and why did this defense system prove itself as ineffective against the penetration of the new invaders?
- What were the reasons for the failure of the imperial policy (also the question of the probable initial fail of the Byzantine attempts at Christianization among the Pechenegs)?
- In which regions and under which circumstances did the Pechenegs manage to maintain their independence?
- Do we have enough historical evidences to suppose that there was a Pecheneg independent political state formation in East Moesia/Paristrion, namely a *Patzinakia* within the Byzantine Empire between the 50s and early 90s of the 11th Century?

These already mentioned questions are very important but their probable answers are still not so precisely examined in the modern historiography.

- There are other important aspects related to the presence of the Pechenegs in the 11th Century south of the Danube, e.g. the demographic changes in some Balkan regions and settlements as a result of the Pecheneg invasions, the social relationship between the mounted nomads and the sedentary population in the affected Byzantine territories (this includes the problem of the so-called *mixobarbaroi* in the Danube regions) and also the problem of the general representation of the Pechenegs in the contemporary Byzantine sources.
- Why the Pecheneg threat after the battle of *Lebunion* had to be finally eliminated by adopting such extreme measures such as massacring the large number of the captives?

III.3.a. The Pechenegs inside the Byzantine Empire during the 12th Century and their last attempts at independent political presence in Southeast Europe

With the Battle of Lebnion also ends the so-called second main phase of Byzantine-Pecheneg relations. According to the most modern historians and especially to the opinions of the both scientists (VG Vasil'evskij Diaconu and P.), who have investigated most extensively this problem, after the mentioned battle ended also generally the independent political presence of the Pechenegs in Southeastern Europe.

It is not known what happened in the aftermath with the Pechenegs who still lived in Paristrion. Otherwise, the Semi-barbarians of the Danube cities seem to have been subjected by the Byzantines shortly after the 1091 or just forced to a peace relationship with Constantinople, as we have hints that the Byzantine administration could be restored at least in some of these areas until the late 90s of the 11th C.

Nevertheless, about 30 years after the aforementioned major defeat for the Pechenegs in South Thrace, there was a major new attack by nomadic steppe warriors on the Byzantine territories south of the Danube. In the winter of 1121/22 passed a large number of *Scythians/nomads* the Danube. The invaders, among whom there were not only warriors, but also women and children, apparently succeeded quickly to move into the Byzantine territories south of the Balkan Mountain. Their devastations forced the Emperor John II Comnenus (1118-1143) to organize quickly a military campaign against them. In the spring of 1122 a decisive battle occurred, in which the invaded nomads were defeated by the imperial troops. Nevertheless, for a long time this attack could not be clearly associated with Pechenegs because of the mutually contradictory of the Byzantine accounts of the resulted confrontation between the invaders and the Byzantine troops. Only a few years ago, some historians succeeded to refer to more comprehensive historical source material and thereby to enlighten much better many circumstances related to this Scythian-Byzantine conflict from the first years of the reign of Emperor John II Comnenus and also to assume the main group of the invaded nomads as Pechenegs¹⁰.

A part of the prisoners of war who survived this battle was settled according to the traditional Byzantine imperial policy in depopulated territories (some others among them were solved as slaves or incorporated into the Byzantine army), as well as happened three decades ago after

¹⁰ See i.e. BIBIKOV M. B.: *Vizantijskie istočniki po istorii drevnej Rusi I Kavkaza*. St. Petersburg 1999, pp. 199-227.

the battle of Lebounion (1091). The lower number of the subjugated Pechenegs seemed to be crucially for their successful acculturation and eventual assimilation into the Byzantine society. Their lack of appearance in the Byzantine sources from the mid-12th Century, however, confirms this hypothesis.

III.3.b. Main emphases and problems of this period

- The presence of Pecheneg auxiliary contingents in the Byzantine army after 1091 (i.e. the Crusaders passing through the Balkans encountered until the Third Crusade repeatedly smaller Pecheneg contingents).
- Which were the external and internal driving forces for the last attack of Pechenegs on Byzantine territory (i.e. urge by the Russians and/or Cumans)?
- The problem of the ethnic identification of the Scythians whose invaded the Byzantine Empire in 1121 (Pechenegs, Uzes, Cumans, or a mixture of representatives of these steppe tribes).
- The search for a more precise localization of the imperial territories, where the subjected Pechenegs has been necessarily settled after their defeats in 1091 and 1122.
- Which aspects of the integration and assimilation of this new empire's population can be noticed?
- Is it possible to find in Southeast Europe still existing place names, language relics and other kinds of remains (even Turkic-speaking minorities) which could be connected with the Pechenegs?

IV. Research methods

The pursued aim of the presented project is to represent chronologically the different developments and the changing nature of the relations between Byzantium and the Pechenegs during the period from the 9th until the 12th C. based on a critical analysis of the existing and available reports of the written sources (no matter in which language) and at the same time to discuss the above-mentioned questions (among many others not mentioned here), which result

from that critical analysis. After that, consistent conclusions should be drawn insofar as the extent of the source material allows. In order to carry out more accurate analyses with higher quality and defend them with better argumentation I will rely not only on the reports of the written sources considering some specific issues but I will also use at the same time data from publicized archaeological material. Using this approach, I will compare to what extent the statements of the two different kinds of sources (written and archaeological) agree with one another and in which points they could complement one another. The different opinions and interpretations of the single questions and eventual controversies which are represented in the modern historical literature should be used and closely discussed at the same time.

My preoccupation with the subject of this thesis did not start only after my successful application as a PhD student at the University of Mainz at the beginning of April 2012, but was partially approached in my MA thesis (“Byzantium and the Pechenegs during the 11th Century”). That is why some of the aforementioned issues have already been answered with varying degrees of success, which of course need a more *précis* elaboration which should be made in the subsequent period.