

BYZANZ
UND DAS ABENDLAND VII.
Studia
Byzantino-Occidentalia



BYZANZ UND DAS ABENDLAND VII.
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Tamás Mészáros

France and the French from the Perspective of a 15th-century Byzantine Historiographer*

In Memoriam Imre Szabics

Apodeixis, the encyclopaedically sweeping work by Laonikos Chalkokondyles, “the last Athenian historiographer,” has a significance in world history that elevates it way above the status of a summary of the decline of Byzantium and the rise of the Ottomans. In his magnum opus comprising ten books, composed some time in the last third of the 15th century, the author goes beyond his main theme and gives a detailed account of nearly all parts of the inhabited world for the period between 1298 and 1463. Although it is an academic commonplace that the chief model for Chalkokondyles in his treatment of world history was Herodotus (while in formal terms, the influence of Thucydides must also be accounted for),¹ we agree with the claim that, in addition to identifying the parallels in content and form, an exploration of the deeper layers of *imitatio* ought also to be undertaken.² Thus, we do not necessarily have the appropriation of the conceptual basis (Greeks versus Barbarian [Persian] or “heathen” [Turkish] people), the hardly accidental similarity between various stories, geographical descriptions, and characters, or textual borrowings in mind, but rather general features in the structure and, concomitantly, the broader world view, which connect Chalkokondyles more tightly

* The paper was supported by the project framework NKFIH K 134301 and NKFIH NN 124539.

¹ Cf. RÖDEL, F., *Zur Sprache des Laonikos Chalkondyles und des Kritobulos aus Imbros. Programm des K. humanistischen Gymnasiums Ingolstadt für das Schuljahr 1904/1905*. München 1905.

² MARKOPOULOS, A., Das Bild der Anderen bei Laonikos Chalkokondyles und das Vorbild Herodot. *JÖB* 50 (2000) 205–216, especially 210: “Hier sei vermerkt, daß bislang eher an der Oberfläche bleibende Positionen vertreten wurden, die in der Regel der Ansicht zuneigen, daß Chalkokondyles, da er ja viele fremde Völker beschreiben wollte, fast natürlich auf Herodot als historische Vorlage zurückgreifen mußte. Ich glaube jedoch, daß diese allzu vereinfachende Position heute keine ernsthaftere Unterstützung mehr beanspruchen darf; im Übrigen bedeutet sie indirekt auch eine Unterbewertung des Chalkokondyles selbst als Historiker.”

to his antique model than to most of his contemporaries. In order to illustrate this, it is most productive to analyze the numerous ethnographic excursions present in both authors, all the more so because the present-day representatives of Chalkokondyles philology also lend special attention to these descriptions (particularly in relation to their respective peoples), occasionally resulting – we believe – in a mistaken image of the author and his work.³

As our point of departure, we may summarize two regular features typical in both Herodotus' and Chalkokondyles' ethnographic excursions: (1) Chalkokondyles (like Herodotus) always inserts an ethnographic digression into his historical narrative where the history of the given people connects to the main narrative in one way or another (usually chronologically); (2) Chalkokondyles' (and Herodotus') ethnographic digressions are always built from identical mandatory elements (the description of the geographic environment, the presentation of the form of government and administration, the inventory of features and habits characteristic of the given people, a historical overview, and the description of other circumstances of natural geography). The excursions serve a dual function: first, they provide the reader with the information deemed indispensable for the exact understanding of the story; second, by temporarily interrupting the narrative, they delay the resolution of the historical event (battle, campaign, etc.) to be presented, thus increasing narrative suspense.

Since a limited selection must necessarily be made due to constraints in length, we respect the occasion by choosing Chalkokondyles excerpts pertaining to France and the French and briefly presenting them in order to revise some claims that have become unquestionably fixed in the collective consciousness.⁴ These claims invariably appear in Alain Ducellier's treatises

³ It is telling that a thematic Chalkokondyles anthology from quite a few decades ago would sample the text of the excursions: GRABLER, F., *Aus dem Geschichtswerk des Laonikos Chalkokondyles*. In: IVÁNKA, E. (ed.): *Europa im XV. Jahrhundert von Byzantinern gesehen*. Graz – Wien – Köln 1954. 11–97. Cf., for instance, DITTEN, H., *Spanien und die Spanier im Spiegel der Geschichtsschreibung des byzantinischen Historikers Laonikos Chalkokondyles*. *Helikon* 3 (1963) 170–195; DITTEN, H., *Bemerkungen zu Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Nachrichten über die Länder und Völker an den europäischen Küsten des Schwarzen Meeres (15. Jahrhundert u. Z.)*. *Klio* 43–45 (1965) 185–246; DITTEN, H., *Der Russland-Exkurs des Laonikos Chalkokondyles interpretiert und mit Erläuterungen versehen*. Berlin 1968; MORFAKIDIS, M., *La península Ibérica en la obra de Calcocondilas*. *Erytheia* 6 (1985) 69–82; ANGELOV, V., *Laonikos Chalkokondyles on Bulgaria and the Bulgarian History*. *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 3 (2012) 247–253.

⁴ The lecture that forms the basis of the present paper was originally delivered on November 26, 2019, at the session honouring the memory of Imre Szabics at the *Byzanz und das Abendland / Byzance et l'Occident VII* international conference (*Hommage à Imre Szabics*). In the French contexts of *Apodeixis*, it should be mentioned that the first printed version (in Latin translation)

relevant to our theme.⁵ Before we move on to the particular citations, we should at least list the theses in question (which we contest). Ducellier maintains that Byzantines are unversed in matters geographical, uninterested in other peoples, and look down with condescension on all parts of the world external to their own.⁶ If, despite all this, they do make utterances on any of the above topics, their accounts can only be deemed creditable with regard to their direct neighbours, not peoples farther away.⁷ Though Chalkokondyles' geographical descriptions and his accounts of individual peoples transcend the average standards, his report on the French reflects a biased, distorted, and Francophobic attitude.⁸ The cause of this prejudice is the hatred among the Byzantines towards the Franks because they conquered Constantinople and, generally, towards the "Latins."⁹

was followed, in 1577, by the French translation of the Latin text, while the original, Greek version of the work was only published after these two. The French translator was the famous diplomat-adventurer Blaise de Vigenère, who intended both to satisfy the emerging interest in the Turks among the European humanist thinkers and at least as much to comply with the expectations of his commissioners, primarily of Duke Louis Gonzaga of Nevers, advisor to the future Henry III; for this purpose, he deliberately distorted the fight against the heathens so as to provide some ideological parallelism for the religious wars waged against the Huguenots. A further French connection in the textual tradition is the presence of Jurisconsult Charles Annibal Fabrot among Chalkokondyles editors, who published the Greek text in 1650, in the so-called Paris corpus.

- ⁵ The eminent Toulouse-based historian passed away a few years ago. His most relevant paper in terms of our investigation is DUCELLIER, A., La France et les Îles Britanniques vues par un byzantin du XV^e siècle: Laonikos Chalkondylis. In: *Économies et sociétés au Moyen Âge: Mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy*. Paris 1973. 439–445. Cf. also DUCELLIER, A., La péninsule ibérique d'après Laonikos Chalkondylis, chroniqueur byzantin du XV^e siècle. *Norba: Revista de historia* 5 (1984) 163–177; DUCELLIER, A., L'Europe occidentale vue par les historiens grecs des XIV^{ème} et XV^{ème} siècles. *Byzantinische Forschungen* 22 (1996) 119–159.
- ⁶ Cf. DUCELLIER 1984 (n. 5) 163: "...cette ignorance byzantine des réalités géographiques provient sans aucun doute de ce 'complexe de supériorité' qui, à notre avis, caractérise l'empire grec médiéval: l'étranger ne vaut d'être connu que dans la mesure où il met en cause l'histoire même de Byzance, considérée a priori comme devant l'incorporer un jour dans le cadre d'un grand empire chrétien universel."
- ⁷ Cf. DUCELLIER 1984 (n. 5) 163: "On comprendra dès lors que les renseignements donnés par les auteurs byzantins sur les nations étrangères peuvent être excellents quand il s'agit de voisins immédiats (pays balkaniques, Empire turc, républiques italiennes), mais qu'ils sont à peu près inexistantes ou légendaires quand il s'agit de régions avec lesquelles Byzance n'a que peu ou pas de relations."
- ⁸ Cf. DUCELLIER 1973 (n. 5) 442: "le caractère des Français est vu d'une manière très noire"; 445: "il apparaît évident que les renseignements donnés par notre auteur sur l'Europe occidentale proviennent d'une source nettement anti française."
- ⁹ Cf. DUCELLIER 1973 (n. 5) 445: "... les Franks sont non seulement des envahisseurs qui n'ont

To dismiss the latter claim, it suffices to refer to perhaps the single solid point in Chalkokondyles' biography, that is, the fact that he had been a disciple of Georgios Gemistos Plethon.¹⁰ This, after all, means – in concord with the philological consensus – that Chalkokondyles, just like his master, did not consider himself a “Greek-speaking Orthodox Roman” (which would be the classic definition of a “Byzantine citizen”): he probably did not practice Christianity either but was a “Platonic neo-pagan” like Plethon.¹¹ In consequence, he is indifferent to all religious strife, he is indifferent to fault lines between Byzantium and the West, or Christians and pagans. He never approaches others – whether peoples or individuals – from a religious or theological perspective, and hence, even those sections of his work where he discusses Islam are unusually objective, devoid of any value judgment. It follows from this directly that Chalkokondyles does not share the Anti-Occidental sentiments attributed to all Byzantines (“better the Sultan's Turban than the Papal Tiara”), and least of all do we see traces of any hatred against the Western Christian peoples (Franks, Latins) due to the 1204 capture of Constantinople. As regards the latter, he cannot have any personal memory, but neither is there any precedent known to us in his family history that might explain such animosity. The preservation of the Greek identity, culture, and language, on the other hand, was of extraordinary importance for Chalkokondyles.¹² But his awareness of his own Greek identity never hindered him from following his role model Herodotus and approach his object with respect and sympathy even if that object was not Greek. Chalkokondyles himself could consistently and authentically represent the approach that strives to represent the world dispassionately, without and bias or prejudice.¹³

It is in the middle of the second book of *Apodeixis* (II,30–37), reporting the unsuccessful West European travels of Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos in

pas craint, en 1204, de diriger une croisade contre des Chrétiens, mais surtout les porteurs par excellence de cette ‘religion latine.’”

¹⁰ With regard to Plethon, see MASAI, F., *Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra*. Paris 1956; WOODHOUSE, C. M., *Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes*. Oxford 1986; SINIOSGLOU, N., *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon*. Cambridge 2011.

¹¹ KALDELLIS, A., *A New Herodotus. Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Emergence of the West*. Dumbarton Oaks 2014. 102: “Plethon was also a Platonic neopagan who rejected Christianity.”

¹² See DITTEN, H., Βάρβαροι, Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den letzten byzantinischen Geschichtsschreiber. In: *Actes du XI^e Congrès International d'Études Byzantines II. Ochride 10-16 septembre 1961*. Beograd 1964, 273–299.

¹³ KALDELLIS (n. 11) 101: “What Laonikos found in Herodotos was a non-Christian way of viewing cultural difference.”

1399, that Chalkokondyles presents France in the form of his “Celtic Excursus.” The ruler, begging for financial support and military aid in vain, arrives in the court of his French colleague (II,29): “When he [Manuel] reached the king of France, he begged him not to leave the royal city of the Greeks to be besieged by the barbarians, a city with such close ties to the kings of France. But as he discovered that the king was insane and under the close watch of his leading men in order to treat his illness, he spent a long time there.”¹⁴ This, then, is the particular historic scene: the depressing meeting with the insane Charles VI (1380–1422) serves as the backdrop for the digression and the presentation of the French.

The excursion consists of several parts. In Chapter 30, we read about the geographic location of the area, complemented, in Chapter 31, by the description of individual provinces (here the text is corrupted). Then comes the passage about Charlemagne’s campaigns against the Moors (Chapters 32–33) and, in Chapter 34, the general characterization of the French nation. The digression concludes with a few separate events from the Hundred Years’ War: the capture of Calais (Chapter 35), Poitiers (Chapter 36), and Agincourt/Azincourt, with the entrance of Joan of Arc (Chapter 37). The subsequent chapter turns to a description of England.

As mentioned above, scarcely any data are available concerning the life of Chalkokondyles; our last major source mentions him as a talented youth living in the court of Mystra.¹⁵ We do not know how much he lived after the fall of Constantinople¹⁶ and we can only guess where he spent his elderly days (if he lived that long at all).¹⁷ Thus, we cannot be sure whether he had any

¹⁴ ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τὸν Γαλατίας βασιλέα, ἐδεῖτο αὐτοῦ μὴ προέσθαι πόλιν βασιλίδα Ἑλλήνων ὑπὸ βαρβάρων πολιορκουμένην, προσήκουσαν ἀγχοτάτω τῶν βασιλέων Γαλατίας οἴκῳ. τοῦτον οὖν μεμνηότα εὐρῶν καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρίστων κατεχόμενον, ὥστε θεραπεύεσθαι τὴν νόσον αὐτοῦ, διέτριβεν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ συχνόν τινα χρόνον.

¹⁵ The relevant journal entry by Cyriacus of Ancona is from July 1447: *Cyriac of Ancona: Later Travels*. Edited and translated by E. W. BODNAR (with C. FOSS). Cambridge MA 2003. 298–303.

¹⁶ The passages about the conquest of Trapezunt (1461) were presumably inserted by another author already. Cf. GRECU, V., Zu den Interpolationen im Geschichtswerke des Laonikos Chalkokondyles. *Bulletin de la section historique de l’Académie Roumaine* 27 (1946) 92–94; KALDELIS, A., The Interpolations in the Histories of Laonikos Chalkokondyles. *GRBS* 52 (2012) 259–283.

¹⁷ In the secondary literature occur three possibilities: a) Chalkokondyles moved to Crete from Mystra due to Turkish expansion, and then, he lived there to his death (cf. DARKÓ, J., Zum Leben des Laonikos Chalkondyles. *BZ* 24 [1924] 29–39; DARKÓ, J., Michael Apostolios levelei Laonikoshoz. In: *Emlékkönyv Csengery János születésének hetvenedik évfordulójára*. Szeged

first-hand impressions of France, or even of West Europe at large, based on his own experiences. If not for the latter, for France, surely, the data provided in the excursus regarding France are almost certainly based on indirect sources, primarily hearsay, and, secondarily, various readings.

And yet, as regards the geographical information in the excursion, the account contains no exorbitant inaccuracy, even though the geographical terms and toponyms – not particularly informative for the author or his readers, anyway – are occasionally presented in archaic forms and were further deformed in the process of tradition. The data provided, the definition of borders, the sizes and proportions of the country, and the description of the cities and provinces correspond to real fact. Due to the limited scope, the presentation of the feudal order, of the importance of Flanders, as well as of the significance of sea trade is rough but still precise. We have found no trace of the geographic inaccuracies posited by Ducellier in general terms; in fact, we venture to say that the description is no less reliable than any similar excursion in Herodotus, and it is unjust to pass any generally condemning judgment on this basis in regard to the geographic awareness of either Chalkokondyles or the Byzantines at large.

Even more astonishing is the fact that the detailed account in the next two chapters of the Frankish–Arab clashes roughly coincides with the historic facts known to us. In addition, the text is more readable here than elsewhere: as though we were reading the prose summary of an offshoot of the *Chanson de Roland*. The events of the European intrusion and gradual expansion of the “Lybians” (Λίβυες) and their subsequent retreat to Granada are reported largely creditably, though it observes the practices of Greek historiography. Moreover, this passage focuses *expressis verbis* on the heroic behaviour of the French (“the French people ... performed illustrious deeds against the barbarians from North Africa”), there is no hint of any tendentiously biased approach.¹⁸ At any rate, the Italianate form of the valiant knights of Charlemagne (Κάρουλος) – Orlando (Ορλάνδος), Rinaldo (Ρινάλδος), and Oliviero (Ολιβέριος) instead

1926. 108–112; DARKÓ, J., Neue Beiträge zur Biographie des Laonikos Chalkokandyles. *BZ* 27 [1927] 276–285; b) Chalkokondyles stayed East, and wrote his work in the court of the sultan in Constantinople (KALDELLIS [n. 11] 1–15 és 243–248); c) we cannot exclude that Chalkokondyles moved to Western Europe (AKIŞIK, A., *Self and Other in the Renaissance: Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the Late Byzantine Intellectuals*. PhD dissertation. Harvard University 2013.)

¹⁸ II,32: τὸ δὲ γένος τοῦτο Κελτῶν λέγεται ... ἔργα πρὸς τοὺς ἀπὸ Λιβύης βαρβάρους ἀποδειγμένον λαμπρά.

of the French names Roland, Renaud, and Olivier – points to a presumably Italian source.

The longest part of the digression, the account of the Hundred Years' War follows the sequence of events equally roughly but accurately. The role and capture of Calais (1347), the report of the Battle of Poitiers (1356), and the presentation of the clash near Agincourt (1415) effectively correspond to real-life history. Neither do we find anything offensive towards the French in the fact that Joan of Arc is not mentioned by name, and Chalkokondyles is evidently ignorant of the circumstances of her death. He is clearly aware, on the other hand, that ousted from the territories of France, the English had kept Calais as a foothold for a long period of time. There is a sentence in the section on the Hundred Years' War that once again persuades Ducellier of the Francophobe attitude in Chalkokondyles (II,36):¹⁹ “Some say, however, that the French disapprove of fleeing from battle, and hold that one should die fighting. It is because of this that the French regard themselves as surpassing all others in bravery and distinction.”²⁰ Truth be told, even after reading this sentence several times over, we cannot quite see what element in it may be taken as insulting to the French,²¹ unless Ducellier assumes the author insinuates that it is not due to their unyielding character that the French accept death but out of a peculiar vanity, in order subsequently to be able to refer to their self-sacrifice and thus ensure a favourable assessment for themselves. In our sensibility, the text has no such intention; much rather, we would identify in these lines the praise of an attitude that evokes the heroic self-defence of the Spartans.

It is undeniable, however, that in other passages the tone is critical. But even behind the sporadic allusions to the excessive confidence or arrogance of the French people, we do not perceive any tendentious prejudice in the personal opinion of Chalkokondyles, but rather the indirect adoption and borrowing from other sources of the stereotypes of the French national character.²² On the

¹⁹ DUCCELLIER 1973 (n. 5) 444: “Et c'est l'occasion pour Chalkokondylis de lancer un nouveau trait contre la présomption insensées des Français.”

²⁰ Κελτοὺς δέ, φασὶ τινες, φεύγειν αὐτοὺς ἐν ταῖς μάχαις οὐ θέμις νομίζεται, ἀλλὰ μαχομένους αὐτοῦ τελευτῆσαι· καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου Κελτοὶ σφᾶς ἀξιοῦσι προέχειν τῶν ἄλλων γενναιότητι καὶ ἐπισημοτάτους εἶναι πάντων.

²¹ Ducellier's French translation of the Greek sentence reads, “Il n'est pas permis pour les Français fuir dans les batailles: ils doivent mourir sur le lieu du combat, maxime dont ils tirent grand orgueil pour se considérer comme le plus courageux du monde.”

²² For a general literature review of national characterologies with an extensive bibliography, see WEEDA, C., *Ethnic Identification and Stereotypes in Western Europe, circa 1100–1300. History Compass* 12/7 (2014) 586–606.

basis of our current knowledge, it is impossible exactly to define these sources, but it does not take long for anyone to find in the Latin literary tradition of the early Middle Ages passages of a similarly disparaging tone,²³ not to mention the potential oral sources, which are even more elusive. It is quite possible that Chalkokondyles was informed about the historical events in Western Europe by Cyriacus of Ancona (Ciriaco d'Ancona, Ciriaco de' Pizzicolti), whose aforementioned diary entries from the summer of 1447 confirm that he had spent a few days together with our author in Mystra, Peloponnesus. We cannot preclude, on the other hand, the possibility that another Chalkokondyles called Demetrios, whose spectacular career as a teacher of Greek spanned Padua, Florence, and Milan, had also been among the informers.

If the seemingly nonsensical or preposterous claims of its report are submitted to closer scrutiny, it transpires that the entire text of the Celtic Excursus consistently refers to some truth or consensus on the basis of which to make the given assertion. Let us take some examples. As regards the sentence about “Genova, considered as the gate to France,”²⁴ Chalkokondyles must evidently have associated from the city controlling the Mediterranean sea routes – including the marine traffic to and from France – to the etymology of *ianua* (Latin, “gate, door”) > *Genova*.²⁵ That he was well aware of the real location of Genova and France becomes clear in a subsequent part of the work, the so-called “Genova Excursus.”²⁶ The comment on Roland’s death (“Orlando was besieged and died of thirst”²⁷) may raise some eyebrows among those who know another version of the story. Nevertheless, the literary tradition has

²³ See, for instance, Salvianus, *De gubernatione Dei* 4,67: “gens ... Francorum infidelis”; 7,64: “Franci mendaces,” etc. The list of examples can be expanded *ad libitum*. Cf. MEYVAERT, P., “Rainaldus est malus scriptor Francigenus” – Voicing National Antipathy in the Middle Ages. *Speculum* 66 (1991) 743–763.

²⁴ Π,31: ἡ μέντοι Ἰανύη πόλις τις οὐσα τῆς Γαλατίας.

²⁵ Chalkokondyles knew Latin (and hence, presumably, also Italian). Cf. Cyriacus of Ancona’s account: ΒΟΔΝΑΡ (n. 15): “Et utique regia ipsa in aula mihi obviam occurrentem vidi iuvenem ingenium Nicolaum Χαλκοκωνδήλην Athenisensem, Georgi amicissimi nostri et viri doctissimi filium nequidem degenerem, quin et egregie Latinis atque Graecis litteris eruditum.”

²⁶ Cf. V,58: “Ἔστι δ’ ἡ πόλις αὕτη πρὸς τὸ ἄκρον τῆς Ἰταλίας κατὰ τὴν Γαλατίαν ... πρὸς δὲ ἐσπέραν ἀπαλαττομένης τῆς χώρας Ἰανυίων ἐπιβαίνειν ἔστι τῆς Προβεντίας, ἣτις Γαλατία ἐστὶ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Κελτῶν βασιλεῖ τεταγμένοι διατελοῦσιν. ὀνομάζεται δὲ διὰ ταύτης πόλις Ἰταλίας, ὡς αὐτίκα ἀπὸ τούτων ἐμβάλλει ἐς Γαλατίαν. “This city is near the edge of Italy, on the side towards France. ... If we leave the territory of Genova westwards, we step into Provence, which is a part of France, its inhabitants the subjects of the French king. It is called the gate of Italy because straight after it, one gets into France.”

²⁷ Π,33: Ὀρλάνδον μὲν ... ὑπὸ διψοῦς ἐκπολιορκηθέντα ἀποθανεῖν.

a variant where Roland does not fall heroically in the Battle of Roncesvalles but rather dies of thirst and hunger after crossing the Pyrenees,²⁸ which is commemorated by the idiom “to die like Roland” still used in English. Among the passages briefly summarizing the history of the Hundred Years’ War, the claim that one battle in which the English triumphed was fought “in the place called the plain of sorrow” also calls for an explanation.²⁹ This was the clash that took place near Azincourt/Agincourt on October 25, 1415. What probably happened was that the author (or, rather, his source) misunderstood the toponym and linked it to the non-existent Chagrincourt (*chagrin* evidently meaning “chagrin, sorrow, pain” in French).³⁰

Summa summarum: we have not detected in the text either the general lack of geographic information allegedly characteristic of the Byzantines or any religiously motivated anti-Western sentiment. Least of all could we trace any remorse felt over the injuries formerly inflicted by Frankish conquerors. Rather than “Francophobe attitudes,” we find it far more typical in these excerpts that the author strives to revive Herodotus’ historiographic traditions, whose methods and tools, ideal of objectivity, use of anecdotal elements, and as precise a communication of data as possible, Chalkokondyles had an express predilection for.

²⁸ Jean La Bruyère-Champier, doctor of Kings Francis I and, later, Henry II of France has the following to say in *De re cibaria* (16, 5): “Nonnulli qui de Gallicis rebus historias conscripserunt, non dubitarunt posteris significare *Rolandum* Caroli magni illius sororis filium, virum certe bellica gloria omnique fortitudine nobilissimum post ingentem Hispanorum caedem prope Pyrenaei saltus iuga, ubi insidiae ab hoste collocatae fuerint, *siti miserrime extinctum*. Inde nostri intolerabili siti et immiti volentes significare se torqueri, facete aiunt, *Rolandi morte se perire*.”

²⁹ Π,37: μαχέσασθαι τε τὴν μάχην ἐν τῷ λύπης πεδίῳ οὕτω καλουμένῳ.

³⁰ Cf. MILLER, W., *The Last Athenian Historian*. *JHS* 42 (1922) 46: “Under the name of ‘the plain of the grief’ he evidently conceals the battle of Azincourt, which he had heard pronounced and mistook for Chagrincourt.” We think it more likely that Chalkokondyles merely adopted and passed on the etymology he had heard from his source, for his French competence is both indemonstrable and improbable.

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