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GEOFFREY OF VILLEHARDOUIN AND WARFARE IN
LATIN ROMANIA IN THE EARLY 13TH CENTURY

PROF. IVELIN IVANOV, PHD

Faculty of History, „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“ University of Veliko Tarnovo

2 „Theodosi Tarnovski“ str. Veliko Tarnovo 5002, Bulgaria

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6283-7058>

i.ivanov@ts.uni-vt.bg

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Abstract. The article focuses on the legacy and work of Geoffrey of Villehardouin – one of the most prominent chroniclers of the Fourth Crusade, the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins in 1204, and the subsequent events in the lands of the former Byzantine Empire (Latin Romania) at the beginning of the 13th century. The author's task is to systematize basic information about the war and military affairs in the chronicle of Geoffrey of Villehardouin. The author analyzes Villehardouin's information in comparison with other written and archaeological data from the period, focusing on the following characteristics: the size of the troops, armament, the order of battle, the strategy and tactics of the Latins, their allies and mercenaries, as well as information about their enemies. Finally, the author affirms the reliability of *The Conquest of Constantinople* as a source on war and warfare in the studied period.

Keywords: Geoffrey of Villehardouin, The Conquest of Constantinople, Fourth Crusade, Latin Romania.

Created around 1210, the chronicle of Geoffrey of Villehardouin *The Conquest of Constantinople*¹, along with the eponymous work of the Picardy knight Robert de Clary, is a primary source of information on the Fourth Crusade (1198 – 1204). As is well known, this campaign ended with the capture of the capital of Byzantium by the crusaders in 1203 – 1204 which led to the creation of new Latin states in the Balkans. The merits of the chronicle as a historical work are determined mainly by the chronological order of the narrative, the clarity and considerable accuracy in conveying the events of the Fourth Crusade².

In this respect, the memoirs of the Marshal of Champagne differ from Robert de Clary's writings, which often mix reality with fiction, becoming entangled in minor details, albeit sometimes important for recreating the overall picture of the crusade. Geoffrey of Villehardouin had at his disposal, in addition to his memory and written notes, some documents and official acts. Most of the events documented by the chronicler are accurate but occasionally overlap with events that occurred at a later time. In the context of general observations, the question of the reliability of Villehardouin as a source of information on war and military affairs in the early 13th century can be raised. Here, the comparison approach shows that the chronicle of Robert de Clary describes in detail the disposition of the various troops, their participation in battles, and other characteristics of war.

Compared to Robert de Clary, Geoffrey of Villehardouin omits similar details, content to merely enumerate the leaders of units or provide information about the

¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*. Paris: Firmin Didot Frères Fils et Cie, 1872. ISBN 13. 978-2080711977. Online. Available from: <<https://archive.org/details/conquetedeconsta00villgoog/page/78/mode/2up>>. [viewed 2025-06-05] (VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872); MORRIS, C. Geoffroy de Villehardouin and the Conquest of Constantinople. *History*, 1968, vol. 53, no. 177, pp. 24–34. ISSN 00182648; JEANETTE, M.; BEER, A. Villehardouin Epic historian. Geneva: Droz, 1968. ISBN-10:2600038833; НИКОЛАЕВ, Всеволод. *Хрониката на Жофроа дьо Вилардуен. Завладяването на Цариград*. София, 1947; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Завладяването на Константинопол*. София: ДИ „Наука и изкуство“, 1985. ISBN 954-430-738-9.

² PENTEK, Zdislav. *Geoffroy de Villehardouin: rycerz i kronikarz IV wyprawy krzyżowej*. Antyk-wariatu Naukowego im. Jana Konstantego Żupańskiego, 1996; LONGNON, Jean. *Recherchers sur la vie de Geoffroy de Villehardouin*. Paris, 1939. ISBN 0-684-14121-3; АЛЪО (Дал АЛЪО), Франческо дал. Плячка и военна икономика през първите десетилетия на Второто българско царство: някои казуси. *Исторически преглед*, LXXXI (81), 2025, № 1, с. 35–52. ISSN 0323-9748; ПРИМОВ, Борислав. Жофроа дьо Вилардуен, Четвъртият кръстоносен поход и българите. *ГСУ-ИФФ*, 2, 1949, с. 1–145. ISSN 1312-9406. ISSN (Online) 3033-0262; ЙОРДАНОВ, Калин. Нов поглед към битката при Адрианопол (Военният ресурс на ранната Латинска империя и кампанията от април 1205 г.). *Mediaevalia*, I, 2011, № 2, с. 106–147. ISSN 1314-2755.

decisive episodes of the battle on which its outcome depends³. This does not diminish the importance of his chronicle, for the analysis of the events and descriptions presented provides valuable insight into war and warfare during the era in question. In the chronicle, we can find information about the organization of troops in the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent military actions⁴. The participants in *Villehardouin's account* can be divided into two groups: 1) ordinary pilgrims and 2) nobles and knights. In the second group, we note different hierarchical levels such as: *sire*, *chevetaigne*, *maistre*, *sénéchal*, *connétable*, *maréchal*, *amiral*, *megedux*, with a special place in this second subgroup occupied by the term *chevalier*. *Sire* is used mainly about *Boniface de Montferrat* and the Venetian doge Enrico Dandolo, which is indicative of their rank in the campaign and military actions. In §103 *chevetaigne* can be identified with the Latin *capitaneus* or a person who leads a group, a squad of vassals⁵.

Sometimes Villehardouin used the title *maistre*, which also showed the high status of these individuals in the military hierarchy of the Latin troops. Frequently found in the chronicle is also the title *sénéchal*⁶. *Marshal* and *constable* are also common. As for the term *chevalier*, it is used fairly frequently in Villehardouin's narrative, most often accompanied by definitions such as *bons* and *des meilleurs chevaliers del monde*. At the same time, it should be noted that the description of the knights is too schematic, which leads to the assumption that barons of the rank of Geoffrey of Villehardouin did not communicate directly and frequently with the knights. Focusing on the second subgroup, or minor crusaders, we can point to several terms used in the chronicle: *escuier*, *serjanz a cheval*, *serjanz a pié*, *arbaletier*, *archier*, *mineor*, *trenchiers*, *gent*, *people*, *home*. The *escuier*, or armor bearer, is found primarily in the description of the gathering of troops near Venice in 1201. The chronicler does not use it very often, probably because of the traditional disdain for the insignificant in medieval chronicles. According to Villehardouin's records, we can conclude that each knight had an average of two squires⁷. Next, the chronicler clearly distinguishes and separates *serjanz a cheval* from *serjanz a pié*. Both

³ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 84–85. (§ 148–153), 88–95 (§ 161, 167).

⁴ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 58–59. “*Et Johans de Neele chastelains de Bruges qui ere chevetaines de cel ost...*”; ЖОФРОА ДЬО ВИЛАРДУЕН. Цум. съч., с. 57.

⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 4–5, 256–257. “*Tyerris de Los, qui ere senechaus, fist l'ariere garde*”; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. Цум. съч., с. 40, 120. § 5 “*Joffrois de Joenvile, qui ere seneschaus de la terre...*”; § 430 “*Tyeris de Los, qui ere seneschaus, fist l'ariere garde*”.

⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 14–15 (§21) “*et nuef mille escuiers; et ès nés quatre mille et cinc cenx chevaliers*”.

categories refer to lower-status individuals who provided military service to major feudal lords and wealthy knights. Unlike *serjanz a cheval*, *serjanz a pié* did not have the means for a war horse or their seigneurs could not provide one. Geoffrey of Villehardouin also mentions crossbowmen on horses⁸ – *arbalestriers* and *archiers*⁹. Additionally, The Marshal of Champagne mentions specialized groups of *mineors*¹⁰. The rest of the common people can be found in the chronicle under the names *gent*, *homme* and *peuple*. These names encompass all the minor members, excluding footmen, and we can assume that some of them were even servants, cooks, and other service personnel. The chronicle also uses the term *ost* for the entire army, and sometimes this designation is identical to pilgrims (*li pelerin*). The following are descriptions of military units and formations: *bataille*, *avant-garde*, *arriere-garde*, *rote*, *front*, *estal*, *conpaignie*¹¹. With regard to the *bataille*, Villehardouin does not provide a precise count of soldiers that this military unit was composed of. Sometimes this battalion included knights, mounted sergeants, and other minor pilgrims.

Geoffrey of Villehardouin also uses the terms *avant-garde* and *arriere-garde*. According to the chronicler, the task of the vanguard was to secure the main column of troops, and the rearguard is mentioned in connection with death at the hands of the Bulgarians¹². Another military term related to the army is *rote* (company, military unit)¹³. The records indicate that the company was formed by knights and mounted sergeants. However, the numbers varied, with the chronicler sometimes recording 80 knights and twice as many mounted sergeants. We can conclude that the company numbered at least 50 to more than 200 armed men. We must clarify, however, that this was the number of knights and cavalry sergeants. Taking into account the armor bearers and other personnel, the total number of the company would have varied between 150 and 400 men.

⁸ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 262–263. “*Turcoples et arbalestiers à cheval*”; ВИЛЯРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 121. Villardouin describes the presence of Turcoples and mounted crossbowmen in the Latin troops that advanced to Estanemac in the summer of 1206. He notes, “*Geoffrey, the Marshal of Romagna and Champagne, took the Turcoples and crossbowmen on horseback and sent them ahead to gather intelligence about the castle*”. This indicates that the mounted archers, the Turcoples, were valuable to the Latin forces – an important lesson learned during the First Crusade.

⁹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 86–87 (§156) “*et li bon archier et li bon serjant et li bon arbalestie*”.

¹⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 208–209 (§353).

¹¹ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

¹² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 298–299 (§498) “*si s’assemblent à s’arriere garde*”.

¹³ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

Next, we can mention the term *front*. The first meaning of the term is a line of battle, but we can find another term – *estal* (position)¹⁴. Also, in the chronicle can be found the term *compaignie*, which refers to a military campaign, a march, as well as a military unit¹⁵. Next, we can note terms related to logistics, chariot, and camp. *Herberge* meant a place to set up the chariot, and *hostiels* (*ostel*) – a place to lodge (§ 167). Here, terms related to the protection of the camp, such as *lices* (palisade), *barres* (wall, embankment, fence), *merriens* (staked poles) stand out particularly clearly¹⁶. In describing the enclosure, Villehardouin also mentions three types of tents and shelters: *tentes*, *paveillons*, and *tre*. The encampment or camp also had a gate(*porte*)¹⁷. Regarding insignia in the army, the chronicler used two terms for flags: *gonfanon* and *banieres*¹⁸. The *gonfanon* was likely a general sign of the army, a type of religious banner, and the *banieres* was the standard of a certain military unit, which indicated the place of the leader and the command. These terms are also used in descriptions of the Bulgarian-Latin wars.

Another hallmark of the chronicle is the battle cries and shouts¹⁹. The battle cry and the cries of the comrades were unconventional and impressive to the Latins. Such battle cries were also recorded at the death of Boniface de Montferrat – the ruler of Thessalonica²⁰. Perhaps the shouts were heard far ahead, in the main column or in the vanguard, where Boniface was. What is the record of the calling or assembling of the Latin troops? According to Geoffrey of Villehardouin, in Silymbria, Emperor Henry I waited for his vassals who were positioned east, south, and southwest, and those from his northwestern territories joined the army as it marched through their domains. Villehardouin gives evidence of a fast and organized retreat of the army, following

¹⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 102–103 (§ 180) „que li Gré ne s'oserent venir ferir 'en lor estal“.; PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

¹⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 14–15, 258–259. (§ 23) “tant con nostre compaignie durra”, (§ 434) “Et lors s'en parti une compaignie de la bone gent de l'ost, par descorde qu'il eurent à Henri le frere l'empercour Baudoin“.; PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 227. According to Zdislav Pentek, it cannot be determined with certainty whether this is a specific, precise military term used by Villehardouin, or simply means l'ost.

¹⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 94–95; PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

¹⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 94–95. Probably, it was an account of the storming of Constantinople in 1203, but the same happened in the war with the Bulgarians. Villarduen's description testifies that the stable or camp at Adrianople in 1205 was defended in the same way, i.e. well.

¹⁸ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 210–211 “Et li Commain corent trosque à lor paveillons; et li criz lieve“.; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жоффоа дьо. *Цум. сьч.*, § 357.

²⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 298–299 “Et quant li marchis oï le cri, si sailli en un cheval 'toz desarmez, un glaive en sa main“.; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жоффоа дьо. *Цум. сьч.*, § 498.

the Battle of Adrianople on 14 April 1205. Information about this retreat can also be found in Niketas Choniates' chronicle²¹. It is also interesting to note Villehardouin's reference to a document issued by Regent Henry in 1205 which obliged French and Venetian knights to military service for up to 24 weeks every year²². Next, Geoffrey of Villehardouin describes auxiliary units such as militia, mercenaries, Armenians, Turks, as well as others adventurers. Armenians are noted in connection with the dramatic events of 1204 – 1205. Initially, in early 1204, they were allied with the Franks of Antioch and Tripoli against the Muslims, but when Henry of Flanders captured the city of Abydos on the Hellespont in November 1204 and attacked the Greeks of Asia Minor, the Armenians allied with him and helped him occupy Adramytion²³. In April of 1205, Henry left Adramytion to aid his brother Emperor Baldwin of Flanders in his war with the Bulgarians and brought with him 20,000 Armenians (apparently an exaggerated number), including women and children. Shortly after these Armenians settled in the area of Rodezstok, where they were eventually defeated by the Greeks²⁴.

Next among the auxiliary units in the Latin armies, we can note the Turcoples, whose presence in the Latin Empire and Morea was insignificant. Geoffrey of Villehardouin notes that as early as late 1204 or early 1205 Hugo of Tiberias and his brothers Raoul and Thierry arrived from the Holy Land in Constantinople with a large military contingent, including Turcoples²⁵. In 1206, Turcoples, probably the same ones who had arrived from Palestine, accompanied Villehardouin during his expedition to free Reniér de Trith from the besieged Estiennemac in the Duchy of Philippopolis in July 1206²⁶. In both episodes involving Turcoples, it seems most likely that other auxiliary troops were involved, probably recruited in Greece. Next,

²¹ НИКИТА ХОНИАТ. История. В: *Гръцки извори за българската история*. (ГИБИ). Т. 11. София, 1983, с. 76. ISBN 978-619-245-296-4; NICETAE CHONIATAE. *Historia*. Bonn, 1835, cap. 43, p. 812.

²² PENTEK, Zdislav. *Cesarstwo Łacińskie 1204–1261 Kolonialne państwo krzyżowców czy Neo-bizancjum?* Wydaw. Poznańskie, 2004, p. 100. ISBN 8371772696.

²³ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 184–185; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 98.

²⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 236–237; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 110–111; HENDRICKX, Benjamin. Les Arméniens d'Asie Mineure et de Thrace au début de l'empire latin de Constantinople. *Revue des études arméniennes*, 22, 1990–1991, pp. 217–223. ISSN 0080-2549; DEDEYAN, Gérard. La collaboration arméno-flamande pendant la quatrième croisade. In: *Mare et Litora. Essays Presented to Sergei Karpov for his 60th Birthday*. Rustam SHUKUROV (ed.). Moscow, 2009, pp. 659–677. ISBN 978-5-91674-028-8.

²⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 187–188; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 99.

²⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 262–263; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 121.

the chronicle of Geoffrey of Villehardouin testifies to the weapons and military technology of the Latins. However, I must point out that the information about personal weapons is extensive but incomplete. The earliest records date from the autumn of 1202, when the fleet was still in Venice. Describing a clash between Franks and Venetians in the conquered Zadar, Villehardouin mentions swords, long and short spears, and crossbows: “*Et fu si granz la meslée, que poi i ot des rues où il n’eust grant estor d’espées et de lances et d’arbalestes et de darz*”²⁷ The chronicler mentions these short spears for throwing (*darz*) on multiple occasions in his chronicle. As I noted, the crossbowmen were often on horseback. During the relief of Reniér de Trith in 1206 they were sent as Turcoples and mounted crossbowmen²⁸.

Aside from crossbowmen, Geoffrey of Villehardouin specifically testifies to archers. In battle, these archers typically acted before the knights, the sergeants, and the shield bearers²⁹. In the next place, describing events in June 1203, the chronicler also mentions the helmets: “*les helmes laciez et li cheval covert et enselé* (§ 155); *tuit armé, les hielmes lacies et les glaives es mains*, § 156)³⁰ Elsewhere in the chronicle, describing the Franks climbing and fighting on the walls of Constantinople in the first attack on the city in 1203, the chronicler describes them as armed with axes and swords: “*et se combatoient main à main as haches et as espées*” § 171–172)³¹. Geoffrey of Villehardouin uses two terms for sword-like weapons – *espee* and *glaive* (§ 237)³². Describing the death of the Latin ruler Boniface in a battle with the Bulgarians in 1207, the chronicler points out that before his death Boniface held in his hands “*un glaive*” (§498)³³. In summary, the main personal weapons in Villehardouin’s chronicle are the sword, the falchion, the long spear, the short spear, and the battle axe. As for the protective armor, Geoffrey of Villehardouin refers to helmets with a lace – *les hielmes lacies*³⁴. It is also interesting that the chronicler categorically distinguishes *les heaumes lacés* from *chapel de fer*, the latter being

²⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 50–51; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 54.

²⁸ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 262–263; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 121.

²⁹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 100–101 “*et li archier et li arbalestier par devant als*”; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 71.

³⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 86–87; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 66.

³¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 96–97; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 69–70.

³² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 138–139; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 83.

³³ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 298–299.; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 133. The term for this weapon may have been *faussar* – a weapon with a single-edged pointed blade, also known by the names falchion, falcata or fauchard, derived from *falx* – the Latin term for scythe.

undoubtedly the most common metal rod, covering only the top of the head. The chronicler also notes the gambeson as an individual protective suit and a shield³⁵.

Next, Villehardouin presents valuable information about the fleet. He describes several sailing vessels: *vuissiers*, *nés*, *nés de marcheans*, *galées*, *vaissials*, and *barges*³⁶. The *vuissier* was a deep-draft cargo ship built specifically to carry supplies, and mostly horses. It was this type of ship that played a decisive role in the military actions in Romania at the beginning of the 13th century, as it allowed the high mobility of the Latins and the rapid transfer of troops between Asian and European possessions in a short time. The next type of ship described by the chronicler – *nés de marcheans* was similar to *vuissiers*. Another term related to the Latin fleet is *nés* – a type of ship that was used in the storming of Constantinople in the summer of 1203 and the spring of 1204³⁷. Other Latin ships described were *galées* (galleys), which were the basis of Venetian naval power in the Middle Ages. They were used in military operations against the Nicaean Empire quite successfully (in 1207 fourteen Latin galleys operated against the Nicaeans). The chronicler also describes their crews – *marinier*. They played a sporadic role in the wars against the Bulgarians and the Nicaeans, taking part in the defense of coastal fortresses. Another type of ship in Geoffrey of Villehardouin's chronicle was *vaissiaux* – multi-masted, hard-to-manoeuvre warships with high fore and stern masts. They were used by the Venetians, and according to Villehardouin, in March – April 1207, there were 17 *vaissiaux* in the Latin fleet. Also, the chronicler describes Byzantine barges that transported Latin troops for the storming of Constantinople in 1203³⁸. The foregoing testifies to the diversity of vessels in the Latin army. It was the navy that was the backbone of the Crusader army's transportation and logistics.

Geoffrey of Villehardouin also provided valuable information on the opponents of the Latins in the lands of Romania, especially on the Bulgarians, Wallachians, Greeks and Cumans³⁹. The chronicler's information on the mobility of the troops of the Bulgarian ruler Kaloyan and some other fragmentary information leads to the

³⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 86–87, 280–281; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 66, 127.

³⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 94–95; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 68–69. “But before the battle broke up, a knight arrived from the retinue of Henry, the brother of Baldwin, the count of Flanders and Hainaut, whose name was Jostache de Marchais, who wore only a gambeson, an iron helmet, and a shield about his neck; and he did too much to drive back the enemies”.

³⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 14–15.

³⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 140–141; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 84.

³⁸ PENTЕК, Zdislav. *Cesarstwo Łacińskie...*, p. 224.

³⁹ ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 112, 115.

conclusion that a large part of the Bulgarian troops traveled on horses, but fought as infantry. According to Villehardouin, in the January 1206 campaign: "... *Et cele nuit méismes, li Commain et li Blac orent chevauchié par forfaire; et furent bien sept mil*"⁴⁰. This account refers to an attempt to take the fortress of Rusion by surprise, but this description strengthens the belief that some Bulgarians fought both on horseback and as infantry. The chronicler also testifies to the presence of *mineors* in the Bulgarian troops in the spring of 1206⁴¹. Another component of the armies of the Bulgarian rulers was the Vlachs. The Vlachs are often referred to as the soldiers of Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan, and Villehardouin describes Vlachs that repulsed a cavalry attack. They inhabited a city called *Eului*, located in the mountains and which the Bulgarian Tsar had recently settled⁴². Notably, this reference raises the question of whether Tsar Kaloyan used the Wallachians inhabiting the Balkan Mountain as a border militia.

One of the most interesting and controversial issues of war in the Middle Ages was the size of the army. Very often written sources of the period present contradictory or unrealistic figures, and this gives rise to justified criticism. What are the numbers of the troops in the chronicle? First, the record of the Fourth Crusade provides the basis for the following conclusions. In April 1201, the crusader leaders and Venice agreed to transport 4,500 knights, 9,000 squires and sergeants, and 20,000 infantry – a huge force of 33,000 for the time. The reality, of course, was different, and the Crusaders did not assemble in the originally planned numbers, with some going to other ports and others deserting. About a third of this originally agreed army didn't arrive, so if we adjust the initial estimate, we would calculate about 21833 crusaders actually in Venice in 1202⁴³. At the first siege of Constantinople in 1203, the knights of the Crusader army probably numbered about 4,900. Just one of the Crusader corps against Byzantine Emperor Alexius III in 1203 numbered 500

⁴⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 242–243; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 115.

⁴¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 258–259; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 131.

⁴² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 294–295; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 131; ГАГОВА, Красимира. Калоян – цар на България и Влахия. *Исторически преглед*, LV, 1999, № 3–4, с. 11. ISSN 0323-9748.

⁴³ HENDRICKX, Benjamin. A propos du nombre des troupes de la quatrième croisade et de l'empereur Baudoin I. *Byzantina*, 1971, no. 3, p. 31, 33, 34. ISSN 1105-0772. With some calculations based on contract and payment data, the author concludes that a total of about 21,500 Crusaders gathered in Venice to set sail. Hendrickx estimates that there were most likely between 11,167 and 21,750 Crusaders, but the exact number remains unclear. Making other calculations based on the account that in April 1202 a total of 50,000 silver marks remained to be paid, V. Hendrickx suggest a number of about 12,500. The author makes a third calculation, arriving at 8000, which seems implausible.

knights, 500 squires, and 2,000 sergeants⁴⁴. Next, Geoffrey of Villehardouin testifies that in the second attack on Constantinople in April 1204, the city was invaded by a total of about 20,000 Crusaders and Venetians. The chronicler also records the number of Crusaders in the second attack on Constantinople in April 1204. He wrote it was 20,000 in contrast to the city's 400,000 population⁴⁵. In May and June 1204, the new emperor Baldwin I had 1,400 knights and Hugo de Saint Paul had another 500 knights.

Referring back to the numbers of the Latin troops in Romania mentioned in the chronicle, it should be noted that some of the most detailed evidence is related to the battle of Adrianople on 14 April 1205. According to the chronicler, the Latin army included cavalry sergeants, infantry, and archers, all of whom are assumed to have been part of Enrico Dandolo's detachment⁴⁶. According to the chronicler, Emperor Baldwin I left Constantinople on 25 March 1205 with about 140 knights⁴⁷, and the next day he was joined by Marshal Geoffrey of Villehardouin with his detachment. We can assume that the number of Latin knights had risen to about 200. Subsequently, they were joined by the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo, who brought with him 140 knights⁴⁸. This way, about 340 knights arrived under the walls of Adrianople, but this was not the total number of troops⁴⁹. The number of the Latin army is also indicated by the fact that the siege actions were not associated with a full siege of the fortress, but only with a blockade of two of the city gates. To clarify the total number of Latin troops in the Latin Empire of Constantinople in April 1205, it can also be noted that in its retreat after the Battle of Adrianople, the defeated army encountered in Pamphilus approximately 100 knights and 140 cavalry sergeants who came from Asia Minor⁵⁰. Again, Villehardouin notes that in the spring of 1205, his nephew Anso de Courcel led a company of about 100 knights and about 500 mounted

⁴⁴ HENDRICKX, Benjamin. *A propos du nombre...*, pp. 35–36.

⁴⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 148–149; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 86.

⁴⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 204–208; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 105.

⁴⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 206–207; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 105.

⁴⁸ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 208–209; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 105.

⁴⁹ If we use some examples of the ratio of knights to non-knights in some battles in Western Europe from this period, we can assume that the total number of Latin troops at Adrianople ranged between 1400 and 2600 armed men. This assumption is based on two examples of knight-unknown ratios: a minimum ratio of 1:4 and a maximum of 1:7. These knight-unknown ratios were typical of warfare in Western Europe in the 12th–13th centuries.

⁵⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 218–219; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 108.

sergeants⁵¹. Geoffrey of Villehardouin also testified that immediately after the defeat at Adrianople there were five naves in Constantinople with about 7,000 armed men⁵². The chronicler also describes Henry's arrival without specifying the number of his troops. We can assume that he commanded no less than half the number of Emperor Baldwin's troops at Adrianople, i.e. between 700 and 1300 armed men.

Calculating the number of all the above-mentioned units, we can conclude that the total number of troops of the Latin Empire on the eve of the Battle of Adrianople in 1205 numbered between 4,000 and 6,000 armed men. This number certainly did not include all the Venetian units and garrisons. Besides Venetians, the Latin army also included Turcopoles. Therefore, we can assume that the full military resources of the Latin Empire numbered up to 7,000 warriors⁵³. Geoffrey of Villehardouin also points out that at the military council convened by Henry of Flanders on 23 June 1206 it was found that the Latin army numbered 400 knights, while the Greek envoys from the besieged Dimotika stated that Kaloyan was besieging the city with 40,000 armed men⁵⁴. Multiplying the number of knights between 4 and 7 times, we can reach an estimated total number of about 1,600 – 2,800 soldiers. Next, I can note that in November 1206 Emperor Henry I began military action against the Nicaean ruler Theodore Laskaris with 140 knights. If we assume that the total number of this detachment was about 600 men, this means that the majority of the Latin army remained in Constantinople and several nearby fortresses⁵⁵. Incidentally, the number of the Latin army in the spring of 1207 is also evidenced by Villehardouin's description. According to the chronicler, 14 galleys were equipped to help the Latins who were besieged by the Nicaean ruler Theodore Laskaris in the fortress of Ekiz. The most distinguished Venetians and the emperor's barons were transported in the galleys. This account leads to a reasonable estimate of about 1,000 to 1,400 armed men⁵⁶.

⁵¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 226–227; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 110.

⁵² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 222–223; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 109. A careful reading leads to the conclusion that the text refers to 100 knights and several hundred more men-at-arms and sergeants, i.e. about 500 – 700 warriors in total.

⁵³ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Cesarstwo Łacińskie...*, с. 100. According to the author, the Latin forces at Adrianople numbered 1,000 – 2,000 armed men.

⁵⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 254–255; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 120.

⁵⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 270–271; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 124. If we consider the lowest estimated number of 2,800 people, this means about 2,000 people remained in reserve.

⁵⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 286–287; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 129. The conclusion is that even in the critical situation around the fortress of Ekiz, between 1,000 and 2,000 armed Latins and mercenaries remained

The question of the objectivity of the written accounts concerning the numbers of the Latin troops is also relevant. According to the chronicler, on 17 April 1205, 7,000 infantry and 100 knights left Constantinople with five Venetian nefs⁵⁷. The figure given here is unreliable, since 7,100 people plus the crews of five ships cannot fit in these vessels, as that would mean an average of about 1,420 people per ship⁵⁸. At the siege of Nauplion in the Peloponnese in 1204, Guillaume de Champly also had about 500 warriors, 100 of whom were knights. In May 1205, their small corps defeated a local army of 4,000 Greeks and mercenaries sent from Epirus. Greek resistance in the Peloponnese continued until 1249 – 1250, which is indicative of the limited Latin resources⁵⁹.

An important information on the number of Latins is that of the Latin garrisons in Romania. According to Villehardouin, the count Renier de Trith was pushed out by the citizens of Philippopolis and fortified himself in the fortress of Stanimaka with a few knights⁶⁰. Marshal Geoffrey of Villehardouin also gives information on the numbers of the Latin garrisons at Rusion and Vise in the summer of 1205. According to the chronicler, about 140 knights and a large number of mounted sergeants were left at Rusion, and at Vise remained 120 knights and a large number of sergeants⁶¹. According to the chronicler, the Venetians left a garrison at Arcadiopolis, and Henry of Flanders retreated to Constantinople with the rest of the troops, knights, sergeants, and archers. Later, after the defeat of Rusion's garrison of 31 January 1206, Regent Henry sent a detachment of 50 knights to Selimbria⁶². According to Geoffrey of Villehardouin, in January 1206 the garrison of Rodesto included Venetians, who were joined by a company of 2,000 mounted sergeants from France, Flanders and other lands⁶³.

in Constantinople.

⁵⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 222–223; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 40.

⁵⁸ In reality, five naves could not accommodate more than 600 – 700 people, which leads to the conclusion that Villehardouin exaggerates almost tenfold.

⁵⁹ CURTA, Florin. *Southeastern Europe in the Middle ages 500 – 1250*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 375. ISBN 9780521894524.

⁶⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 238–239; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 104. Based on this information, we can assume that the total number of those besieged in Stanimaka was between 60 and 100 people.

⁶¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 250–251. Approximate calculations lead to a number of no less than 550 – 600 people.

⁶² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 244–246; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 116. We can assume that this reduced the number of troops in Constantinople by at least 200 – 350 soldiers.

⁶³ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 246–248; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 117.

In my view, this information should be taken with a grain of salt. On his return from a campaign in Bulgarian lands in November 1206, Emperor Henry left a detachment of 20 knights in Adrianople. The size of the Latin garrison is indicated by the one at Shivetus, near Nicomedia, which numbered 40 knights⁶⁴. I would summarize that the chronicler's accounts of the size of the Latin armies raise legitimate criticism but ultimately testify to a limited Latin military potential in 1205 – 1207. Next, the Marshal of Champagne provides valuable information on sieges and the siege war in Romania in the early 13th century. Starting with the siege engines, the chronicler describes *trebuchet*, *periere* and *mangonial*⁶⁵. In describing the attack on Zadar in 1202, he mentions “*perieres et de mangoniæ*”⁶⁶. Similar machines are also described in the war with the Bulgarians, as the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan besieged Adrianople with 34 *periere* machines⁶⁷. Villehardouin also describes archery machines operating from the decks of the *naves* and the *jussiers*, ladders on the naves for storming the city towers⁶⁸. In the second attack on the city in the spring of 1204, the Latins placed on the ships various machinery as well as ladders for the masts. On the eve of the Battle of Adrianople on 14 April 1205, Emperor Baldwin's small army besieged the rebellious Greeks at Adrianople. The Latins constructed from beams various types of machinery and placed miners who worked underground to undermine the city wall⁶⁹. Later, when Tsar Kaloyan besieged Serres with stone-throwing machines, Henry besieged Adrianople with various fighting machines and ladders⁷⁰. In the year 1206 Tsar Kaloyan again entered Romania and laid siege to Adrianople, deploying 33 large siege engines. In the chronicle we can find information about another effective siege weapon – *fire*. Fire was used in the first siege of Constantinople by the Crusader army in 1203, and in the second siege by the Crusaders in the spring of 1204⁷¹.

⁶⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 278–279; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 126. This leads to the assumption that the total number of the garrison was no less than 160 – 200 people.

⁶⁵ PENTEK, Zdislav. *Cesarstwo Łacińskie...*, p. 132.

⁶⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 42–43; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 52.

⁶⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 276–277; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 126.

⁶⁸ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 96–97; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 69.

⁶⁹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 208–209; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 105.

⁷⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 234–235; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 113.

⁷¹ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 100–101; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 70; VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 144–145; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроя дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 85; MADDEN, Thomas. *The Fires of the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople, 1203–1204: A Damage Assessment*.

References to machines can also be found in the siege of Seres in 1205 and are attested by both Villehardouin and Choniates⁷². Evidence of the use of stone throwing machines by the two chroniclers is conclusive proof of this practice. 16 large stone throwers and all sorts of war machines were placed during the siege of Dimotika in 1206. In a short time these machines broke the walls in four places, allowing the Bulgarians to storm through. All this testifies to the accurate and detailed observations of the Marshal of Champagne of siege and siege machines in the military operations in Romania and testifies to the reliability of the information about the siege war in his chronicle. Finally, I would like to dwell on some data about an inevitable characteristic of war: the victims and the prisoners. Indicative of the percentage of losses of the Latins in the initial stage of the war with the Bulgarians in 1205 is the description of the actions of Count Reniér de Trith in Philippopolis. According to the author, in a short time, the number of his knights fell from 120 to 15⁷³. There was also a high casualty rate in the siege of Serres and the second battle of the same fortress in 1205. Here we can compare the information with the chronicle of Niketas Choniates, according to whom all the participating knights and nobles were killed or executed. In contrast, the percentage of casualties among sergeants and gunners was lower. Geoffrey of Villehardouin also testified to heavy losses in July 1207, when four Latin detachments entered Bulgarian territory, but their way back was blocked. The knights were forced to make a hasty retreat and suffered heavy casualties, though the number of casualties remains unspecified⁷⁴. The account of the battle of Rusion also presents an exceptionally high rate of death toll among the Latins. According to Villehardouin there were 30 direct casualties, making up 1/3 or about 33% of the total number. No doubt, this speaks of extremely heavy losses in a very short period, literally within a fortnight. Geoffrey of Villehardouin testified that out of Thierry de Termonde's entire detachment of 120 knights, no more than 10 were saved, i.e. losses amounted to 90%⁷⁵. The question of the fate of some of the prisoners remains open, since only in some cases it is explicitly mentioned that there was execution of captured Latins. This extremely high rate of casualties, ranging from 33% to 90%,

Byzantinische Zeitschrift, 84/85, 1992, pp. 72–93. ISSN 00077704.

⁷² VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 232–233; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 113.

⁷³ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 204–206; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 104. Direct casualties were 30, which is 1/3 or about 33% of the total. Without a doubt, this speaks of extremely heavy losses in a very short period, literally within two weeks.

⁷⁴ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 294–295; ВАЛАНСИЕН, Анри дьо. *История на император Анри*. Превод от старофренски. Ивайло БУРОВ (прев.). София: Полис, 2009, с. 131–132. ISBN 978-954-796-029-9.

⁷⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 244–245; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цум. съч.*, с. 116. The losses were not only in killed, as according to Villehardouin, there were also captured Latins.

testifies to the fierce nature of the war, at least in the first phase of 1205 – 1207. In contrast to the foregoing, I would point to Villehardouin's account of the siege of the Latin garrison of Shivetus by the troops of Theodore Laskaris in March 1207. According to the chronicler, 34 of the Latin knights were wounded and one was killed. The chronicler also repeatedly testified to the capture of knights by the Nicaean ruler Theodore Laskaris. One of the highlights was the capture of Thierry de Loos and most of his men, but the later truce freed many Latin prisoners⁷⁶. This testifies to the different nature of the war compared to that against the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan. We can assume that the Bulgarian side imposed this violent nature, and the motives were political.

In conclusion, I would summarize that Geoffrey of Villehardouin was a well-informed witness of war and military affairs, particularly in terms of the military terminology, the leaders and the numbers of military units and garrisons. Two categories can be derived from this information. The first would be defined as highly reliable and well-documented, encompassing the composition, organization of the Latin troops, some auxiliary units, sieges, and the siege machines. The second category includes the number of troops, including casualties and prisoners, as well as the armament, and can be defined as more incomplete and unreliable. Therefore, despite this apparent volume of information, many questions remain unanswered, and ultimately, only a few definitive conclusions can be formulated. Nevertheless, we can identify *Villehardouin's chronicle* as one of the most important sources on war and military affairs in Romania in the early 13th century. Without these records, both the general and the detailed picture of the war would be far more vague and hypothetical.

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⁷⁶ VILLEHARDOUIN, Geoffroy de. *La conquête de Constantinople*, 1872, pp. 292–293; ВИЛАРДУЕН, Жофроа дьо. *Цит. съч.*, с. 130–131.

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ГОДИШНИК НА СОФИЙСКИЯ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
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ЖОФРОА ДЪО ВИЛАРДУЕН И ВОЕННАТА ДЕЙНОСТ
В ЛАТИНСКА РОМАНИЯ В НАЧАЛОТО НА XIII ВЕК

ПРОФ. Д-Р ИВЕЛИН ИВАНОВ

Исторически факултет, Великотърновски университет „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“

Ул. „Теодосий Търновски“ № 2, Велико Търново 5002, България

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6283-7058>

i.ivanov@ts.uni-vt.bg

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Резюме. Статията се фокусира върху наследството и делото на Жофроя дьо Вилардуен – един от най-видните летописци на Четвъртия кръстоносен поход, завладяването на Константинопол от латинците през 1204 г. и последвалите събития в земите на бившата Византийска империя (Латинска Романия) в началото на XIII век. Задачата на автора е да систематизира основна информация за войната и военното дело в хрониката на Вилардуен. Авторът анализира информацията в хрониката в сравнение с други писмени и археологически данни от периода, като се фокусира върху следните характеристики: численост на войските, въоръжение, боен ред, стратегия и тактика на латинците, техните съюзници и наемници, както и информация за враговете им. В заключение авторът подчертава надеждността на „Завладяването на Константинопол“ като източник за войната и военното дело през изследвания период.

Ключови думи: Жофроя дьо Вилардуен, завладяването на Константинопол, Четвърти кръстоносен поход, Латинска Романия.