

Remarks on the issue of *Sabartoi asphaloi*

Part 1. Sabarts and Asphals

The expression *Σάβαρτοι ἄσφαλοι* occurs twice in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*. As for its posterior constituent, the claim that the Emperor of Byzantium would use the plural of *ἀσφαλής* in the form *ἄσφαλοι* rather than the grammatically correct *ἀσφαλεῖς* is far from being probable. I submit that the expression is a double denomination like *Κουτρίγουροι Οὔννοι* or *Οὔννοι Σάβειροι*. In the view of Byzantine scripturists, it consists of two ethnonyms, *sabartoi* and *asphaloi*. These two peoples must have been related to each other by some ethnic, political, or other links, and Byzantine scribes coupled the two names on that basis, subsequently making it refer to a single group of people, the Hungarians. This interpretation of the mysterious expression may be the first step towards clarifying what ethnic groups might have been hidden behind the two names represented in the Greek alphabet.

Keywords: *Sabartoi asphaloi*, *De administrando imperio*, ethnonyms.

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