

Theophylact and the People of Ohrid: the Issue of the “Otherness”

Toni FILIPOSKI

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Faculty of Philosophy
Skopje, Macedonia

In the substantial written correspondence of Theophylact, Archbishop of the Ohrid Archbishopric, the people of Ohrid are directly mentioned on several occasions. This knowledge allows us to gain valuable insight into the relationship that existed between them and Theophylact. At the same time, it is important to note that, apart from the specific local dimension of significance this carries, the mention of the people of Ohrid frequently appeared as personification for the Macedonian population in general, which in Theophylact's letters is most often termed as Bulgarian.¹

¹ Without a doubt, in the Middle Ages, the terms “Bulgaria”, “Bulgarians” and “Bulgarian” did not carry an exclusive and constricted meaning concerning ethnicity, but rather, frequently carried current or former political (subject of state) and/or administrative connotations following the governance and significance of the *Romaioi*, as well as their state. This is how (formerly subject of state and currently administrative) the designation of the Macedonian population should be interpreted in Theophylact's letters. Cf.: С. АНТОЛЈАК, *Самуиловата држава (Samuil's State)*, Скопје 1969, 120-122; Љ. БАСОТОВА, „Летописот на поп Дукљанин како извор за македонската средновековна историја“, *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија V* (“The Chronicles of Father Dukljanin as a Source on Macedonian Medieval History”, *Monuments of the Medieval and Modern History of Macedonia V*), Скопје 1988, 180-184; X. МЕЛОВСКИ, *Москополски зборник – Пролошки житија на светци (The Moschopolis Corpus – The Hagiographies of Saints)*, Скопје 1996, 93-94; M. БОШКОСКИ, *Македонија во XI и XII век – надворешни упади на територијата на Македонија (Macedonia in the XI and XII centuries – Foreign Invasions on the Territory of Macedonia)*, Скопје 1997, notes 11, 23-27; P.

Soon after Theophylact arrived in Ohrid, disappointed by his surroundings, he wrote down his impressions of the people in a letter, and, making use of deep rhetoric and allusions to the theses of the Greek philosopher Empedocles, he revealed that in his eyes the people of Ohrid were without direction, having no respect for either God or people. He further revealed that he was condemned to live amongst such monsters, as well as that there was no hope that some positive forces would influence them to acquire the direction they so lacked.²

In the reply he wrote to the bishop of Vidin, Theophylact compared the current state of affairs in Vidin with that of Ohrid. Thus, he compared the attacks carried out by the Cumans on the town of Vidin with the return of the people of Ohrid, who were on their way back from Constantinople, after the accusations they had made there against the Archbishop. In comparison with the number of people present, as well as the malice they spread, the inhabitants of Vidin were mere children to the Bulgarian citizens (Βουλγάρους καστρηνοῦς), or, in other words, without underestimating the

STEPHENSON, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier (A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204)*, Cambridge 2000, 78-79. See Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Образуване на българската народност (The Formation of the Bulgarian State)*, Sofia 1971; IDEM, *Българинот в средновековието (светоглед, идеология, душевност) (The Bulgarians in the Middle Ages (outlook, ideology, spirituality))*, Varna 1985, 271-304, for more on the traditional interpretation, which, at the same time, represents an idealized understanding of the ethnonym “Bulgarians”, as well as the derivative “Bulgarian”, mainly advocated in the Bulgarian historiography. G. PAGE in, the relatively new study, *Being Byzantine - Greek Identity Before the Ottomans*, Cambridge 2008, deals with the complexity, as well as the seeming duality in the Romaioi/Byzantine “identity”, perceived, on one hand, as political, and on the other hand, as ethnic. In fact, it is indisputable that during the Middle Ages the Balkan ethnonyms altered their meanings, and carrying out a critical interpretation is certainly not an easy task, thus this may be why adequate attention and sufficient academic interest was not given to this area in Balkan Medieval studies.

² *Theophylacte D'Achrida Lettres* (Introduction, texte, traduction et notes par P. GAUTIER), Thessaloniki 1986, 146-147; *Византијски извори за историју народа Југославије (ВЛИИИ)*, III, (*Byzantine Sources on the History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia (BSHPY)*, III), Belgrade 1966, 264-265, 266, n. 29 (P. КАТИЧИЌ). Cf.: M. MULLIFITT, *Theophylact of Ochrid – Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop*, Variorum 1997, 126.

malice he was surrounded by in Ohrid, he, nevertheless, especially singled out the boorish Mocrenes (αγροίκους Μοκρηνοῦς) for their malevolence. He further added that following his lengthy stay in Ohrid, he felt as though he were in some valley of tears.³

It is interesting to note the mention of the term καστρηνοί (castrinoi), as well as the attempts which have been made for its interpretation. There are two main opposing points of view. According to the first, the term refers to the citizens/inhabitants of the town (kastron/castron). Thus, J. P. Migne translated and interpreted the term castrinoi as the inhabitants of towns smaller than Constantinople.⁴ Metropolitan Simeon was of the same opinion, and he interpreted the term castrinoi simply as inhabitants of Ohrid, i.e., Vidin.⁵ This interpretation was fully accepted by V. Zlatarski and V. Nikolaev.⁶

When translating the said letter, as well as the mention of the castrinoi, R. Katičić assigns the term the meaning of inhabitants, explaining that castron is a provincial fortified town.⁷ According to S. Antoljak, the inhabitants of the towns (castra) were called castrinoi, as Theophylact of Ohrid refers to them in his letters.⁸ P. Gautier uses the term "castrioties" as the trans-

³ *Theophylacte*, 322-325; ВШРУ, III, 269. Compare: M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 126; S. Iv. Maslev ((Гръцки извори за българската история, IX/1) (*Greek Sources on the Bulgarian History*), Sofia 1974, 77-78) makes analogies with letter M 17 sent to the bishop of Kerkyra, and, unlike the widespread belief present amongst scholars that letter F 16 should be dated to 1094, he dates it to the very beginning of the XII century.

⁴ *Theophylacti Archiepiscopi Bulgariae, Epistolae* ed. J. P. MIGNE, PG, CXXXVI, Paris 1864, 337, n. 37.

⁵ *Писмата на Теофилакта Охридски, архиепископъ български* (*The Letters of Theophylact of Ohrid, Archbishop of Bulgaria*), translated from Greek by Metropolitan Simeon of Varna and Preslav, Proceedings of BAS, XXVII/15, Sofia 1931, 18-19.

⁶ В. Н. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *История на Българската държава*, II (*The History of the Bulgarian State*, II), Sofia 1934, 271; В. НИКОЛАЕВ, *Феодалните отношения в покорената от Византия България отразени в писмата на Теофилакт Охридски, архиепископ български* (*The Feudal Relations in Byzantine-conquered Bulgaria Reflected in the Letters of Theophylact of Ohrid, Archbishop of Bulgaria*), Sofia 1951, 90.

⁷ ВИИИЈ (ВШРУ), III, 269 and n. 43 (Р. КАТИЧИЋ/R. KATIČIĆ).

⁸ С. АНТОЛЈАК, *Историја на македонскиот народ*, I (*The History of the Macedonian People*, I), Skopje 1969, 133.

lation equivalent for the Greek word *καστρινοί*, without making any further comments about it.⁹ I. Iliev, like the others, translates *καστρινοί* with the term “town-inhabitants”.¹⁰ M. Mullett translates *καστρινοί* as “townspeople” or “citizens”, without feeling the need to provide additional explanation concerning its interpretation.¹¹

The second point of view is mainly represented by a group of Russian, i.e. Soviet scholars in Byzantine studies, who, starting from V. G. Vasilevski, and moving all the way to G. G. Litavrin, assign the term *castrinoi* the meaning of a distinct feudal class of the population, who had in their possession their own private fortresses, and feudal lands and farms outside the towns, but who, at the same time, possessed living quarters in the form of opulent houses in the towns as well.¹² G. G. Litavrin played an especially significant role in rounding off this point of view, and according to him the term *castrinoi* signified the local landholding aristocracy, with which Theophylact came into conflict, and not the ordinary inhabitants of Ohrid.¹³

B. Panov fully accepts the theses put forward by G. G. Litavrin and the other Russian/Soviet scholars. First, he adds on to G. G. Litavrin’s ideas that when referring to the *castrinoi* in Ohrid, the term should, to a large extent, encompass the Macedonian feudal lords as well.¹⁴ In another paper he writes, he makes a rather unconvincing case of comparing the secular leaders of Ohrid, mentioned in one of Theophylact’s letters, with the castrinoi.

⁹ P. GAUTIER, *Theophylacte*, 324-325.

¹⁰ *Гръцки извори за българската история (ГИБИ) (Greek Sources on the Bulgarian History (GSBH))*, IX/2, Sofia 1994, 141 (И. Г. ИЛИЕВ).

¹¹ M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 126.

¹² For variations of this point of view, with appropriate bibliography, see Б. ПАНОВ, „Теофилакт Охридски како извор за средновековната историја на македонскиот народ“, *Средновековна Македонија*, 2, (“Theophylact of Ohrid as a Source on the Medieval History of the Macedonian People”, *Medieval Macedonia*, 2), Skopje 1985, 110, with notes; ИДЕМ, „Градската самоуправа во Охрид кон крајот на XI и почетокот на XII век“, *Средновековна Македонија*, 3 (“The Local Self-Government in Ohrid towards the end of the XI and the beginning of the XII century”, *Medieval Macedonia*, 3), Skopje 1985, 575, n. 55.; Cf.: Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Болгарци и Византици в XI-XII вв. (Bulgaria and Byzantium in the XI-XII century)*, Moscow 1960, 131.

¹³ Г. Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Болгария и Византия (Bulgaria and Byzantium)*, 131.

¹⁴ Б. ПАНОВ, „Теофилакт како извор“ (“Theophylact as a Source”), 111.

noi, i.e., the boorish Mocrenes, mentioned in a completely different letter. At the same time, he reiterates that they made up the local Macedonian feudal aristocracy, who, apart from the fact that they lived in castles in the surrounding area of Ohrid, also spent part of their time in the town itself.¹⁵

The said scholar makes mention of the castrinoi once more, this time in connection with the alleged existence of the municipality Council of the town of Ohrid. He presents the belief that the castrinoi also participated in the workings of the Council, and that they were very involved in the town administration, however, he offers no original evidence to substantiate this claim. In fact, according to him, the castrinoi were the most influential members in the Council, and apart from the powerful positions they held in the town, they also held powerful positions in the surrounding areas, where their castles were located. Actually, the "castrinoi Mocrenes" were, in fact, feudal lords from Ohrid who lived in the neighboring region of Mokra, where they had large farms and castra (fortresses). It is according to the term for these private fortresses that their owners were called castrinoi.¹⁶

We feel that the point of view which affords the castrinoi a wider and more general meaning of citizens/inhabitants of the towns of Vidin and Ohrid is closer to the truth. On the other hand, the thesis of constricting the meaning of the term to signify just one feudal class seems to be insufficiently supported, rather arbitrary, and under the influence of one ideology. Furthermore, it is important to note that the use of the compound castrinoi

¹⁵ Б. ПАНОВ, „Охрид во крајот на XI и почетокот на XII век во светлината на писмата на Теофилакт Охридски“, *Средновековна Македонија*, 3 (“Ohrid at the end of the XI and the beginning of the XII century in light of the letters of Theophylact of Ohrid”, *Medieval Macedonia*, 3), Скопје 1985, 554-555. In another one of his works, В. Панов („Охрид и Охридско во периодот на развиениот феудализам“, *Охрид и Охридско низ историјата*, I, (“Ohrid and the Surrounding Region during Full-Fledged Feudalism”, *Ohrid and the Surrounding Region throughout History*, I), Скопје 1985, 219) reiterates Theophylact's alleged claim that there were a number of castrinoi in the Ohrid region, who held farms in their possession. Apart from the palaces they had on their lands, they allegedly possessed lavish houses in the towns as well.

¹⁶ Б. ПАНОВ, „Градската самоуправа“ (“The Local Self-Government”), 574-575. There are no original facts that would substantiate the claims that the castrinoi participated in the workings of the Council.

Mocrenes¹⁷ instead of the original boorish Mocrenes¹⁸ should be qualified as unacceptable. In fact, the term *castron* allows for a double translation and interpretation both as town or fortress, depending on the period, as well as the context of the original information. Hence, we are at liberty to guess that the meanings of *castrinoi* and people of Ohrid (inhabitants of Ohrid) are in complete concord, i.e., they are synonymous.

In one of the letters we shall look at in more detail, the people of Ohrid are mentioned on two occasions. This is in connection with a dispute between Theophylact and the *paroikos* Lazar, noted in a number of letters that have been preserved. More precisely, on one occasion it is revealed that Lazar had his own helpers and supporters among the people of Ohrid, and on another, that the Church offenders over a large area in Macedonia, who had their farms and vineyards taken away, were misrepresented as being people of Ohrid.¹⁹

It is a well-known fact that the Church, having at its disposal limited judicial rights and powers, was able to order the confiscation of lands and vineyards from various offenders and transgressors. It is certain that some people of Ohrid were among these offenders, but perhaps that number was not as high as the *paroikos* Lazar wanted to portray. No matter how justified and fair these decisions might have been, they indubitably resulted in a growing mutual distrust and intolerance between Theophylact and the people of Ohrid.

In the letter where the people of Ohrid are directly mentioned for the last time, Theophylact rhetorically comments that they had no idea of what he spoke,²⁰ thus emphasizing their illiteracy and the fact that they did not understand Greek.

There are numerous other facts in Theophylact's letters where, even though the people of Ohrid are not directly made mention of, the negative qualifications and characteristics that have been noted for the most part re-

¹⁷ Б. ПАНОВ, „Градската самоуправа“ (“The Local Self-Government”), 575.

¹⁸ *Theophylact*, 324-325.

¹⁹ *Theophylact*, 484-485; *ВЛИИИЈ (BŠHPY)*, III, 274.

²⁰ *Theophylact*, 298-299; *ВЛИИИЈ (BŠHPY)*, III, 332. This reference that the people had no idea of what he spoke refers to the sermons and liturgies that Theophylact conducted in Greek, a language which the majority of people in Ohrid, and in Macedonia, in general, did not understand.

fer to them. Thus, on one occasion, Theophylact makes a generalization of how the paroikos Lazar behaves towards him, and notes that the reasons for such behavior may be traced to the Bulgarian human nature, which feeds on malice of any kind.²¹

In another letter, making use of deep metaphors, Theophylact makes three references to the people he was surrounded by (of course, primarily referring to the inhabitants of Ohrid), calling them foul toads, the offspring of the local lake of evil,²² an allusion to Lake Ohrid.²³ He further adds that the population smelled like goat skin; that his things reeked and rotted away during his lengthy stay in the town (Ohrid), and that he supposedly "slaved away" to the servants and the filthy barbarians who lived in abject poverty.²⁴ The ignorance, hostility, malevolence and barbarism that characterized the country and the people he was surrounded by are mentioned a number of times in the letters.²⁵

However, in all certainty, after he had spent a significant portion of his life in Ohrid, Theophylact admitted that he had not remained immune to the influences of his "barbarian" surroundings. In one letter, he writes that since he arrived in Ohrid, all of his things have reeked and rotted away, even those that had previously been beautiful and smelled nice. He adds that even though he was seen as being from Constantinople, he was also a Bulgarian by some miracle, he himself stinking like goat skin. He, further-

²¹ *Theophylacte*, 484-485; ВИИИИ (ВШРУ), III, 274.

²² *Theophylacte*, 146-149.

²³ ВИИИИ (ВШРУ), III, 265, n. 27 (Р. КЛТИЧИК).

²⁴ *Theophylacte*, 140-141; 144-145.

²⁵ *Theophylacte* (G 47 - I live among barbarians; G 48 - you shall grow weary of hearing barbarian names; G 13 - barbarian regions; G 86 - the people of the barbarian states; G 127 - he calls Lake Lychnidon the Acherusian Lake (a mythological lake in the lower world), and not Lake Ohrid (Cf.: ВИИИИ (ВШРУ), III, 289; ГИБИ (ГСВН), IX/2, 225 n. 27); G 34 - I have drunk from the cup of ignorance and ignorance has become a close friend and fellow citizen; G 25 - ignorance reigns here; G 37 - one has been condemned to live in no man's land, which breeds snakes and scorpions, from where nothing good can come out due to the evil that exists in the people; G 55 - a distant land where envy, hatred, and a number of other evils reign, where the voice of reason (literacy) is despised, and where one lives among savages (Cf.: ВИИИИ (ВШРУ), III, 333; ГИБИ (ГСВН), IX/2, 138).

more, expresses fear and requests help so that in the near future the rot and the stench should not begin to seem pleasant and lovely to him.²⁶ It should be pointed out that though the written words contain a heavy dose of irony and self-pity, they, nevertheless, manage to confirm, in a rather original manner, the unavoidable interaction that existed between Theophylact and the population, as well as the influences he was under in his “barbarian” surroundings.

The attitude of the people of Ohrid towards Theophylact may best be seen from several short facts. In one of the letters, Theophylact is described as a tyrant,²⁷ in all probability due to his vicious behaviour in attaining feudal privileges for the Archbishopric at the expense of the people of Ohrid.

We have already discussed the malevolence that enfolded Theophylact in Ohrid. According to what the paroikos Lazar has expressed, it seems that the people of Ohrid saw the Archbishop as a fat, very wealthy man, who lived like a satrap in multi-storey structures, and who summered and kept cool in his well-ventilated houses.²⁸ It was during this very oft-mentioned dispute that Theophylact felt that the people of Ohrid were involved in tarnishing his reputation and that they maligned him before the Emperor.²⁹

His great wealth, as well as his opulent lifestyle were reasons why most of the people of Ohrid held a negative opinion and attitude towards Theophylact, and what rankled them even more was the knowledge that that material status and wealth had been acquired directly at their expense.

Finally, we need to delve in slightly more detail at the reasons and the roots for the feelings of mutual intolerance that existed. The use of rhetoric, as well as the frequent use of metaphors in the letters, serves to weaken, to a point, these qualifications. It is important to note that they were, for the most part, over the top and thoughtless due to the need to keep to

²⁶ *Theophylacte*, 140-141. Cf.: ВЛННН (BШНН), III, 271; ГЛБН (GSBH), IX/2, 83; M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 274.

²⁷ *Theophylacte*, 500-501. Cf.: B. PANOV („Градската самоуправа“ (“The Local Self-Government”), 574-575), is of the opinion that Theophylact was considered to be a tyrant because he practiced autocracy in the town.

²⁸ *Theophylacte*, 486-487.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 500-501.

the form and the formal style of expression, which represented a trend in itself, rather than the need to express a genuine intensity of dislike.

Numerous attempts have been made in historiography to determine the correct interpretation of the negative qualifications that Theophylact noted down concerning the people of Ohrid, as well as the remaining Macedonian population, with completely contradictory and opposing points of view emerging.

The older scholars upheld a very one-sided and uncritical view concerning the numerous negative qualifications that Theophylact expressed towards the native population and their country. Theophylact's role and behavior were seen and represented along the lines of an intentional and deliberate Hellenicising of the Church of Ohrid, as well as an assimilation of the Macedonian, Bulgarian and other Slavic peoples, under the subjugation of Byzantium. B. Panov, in his wider analysis on this, lists the following amongst those who held such views: E. Golubinski, F. Racki, F. Uspensky, D. Cuhlev, V. N. Zlatarski, N. S. Derzhavin, V. Nikolaev, Gorjanov, H. Polenakovik, and others.³⁰

According to B. Panov, I. Dujcev expressed a slightly different belief that even though the population was seen as a barbarian one, it was, nevertheless, not subjugated to a deliberate and systematic denationalization by Theophylact's actions. In fact, he felt that the Byzantine government only wanted the barbarians to be loyal subjects to the Empire, to pay their taxes and to fulfill their duties. A rather similar opinion was expressed by G. G. Litavrin, according to whom the measures taken to strengthen the Byzantine power, the Byzantine way of life, the Byzantine laws, Greek being the official language in the state, and so on, ought not to be interpreted as a deliberate and systematic assimilation of the population.³¹

Then, there is another group of scholars that offers a completely different point of view. According to them, during the time of Theophylact, the Ohrid Archbishopric protected its followers from the injustices imposed by the secular government; it strengthened the "Bulgarian consciousness" in the Macedonian and Bulgarian population; it rebuffed the attempts of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to destroy the alleged

³⁰ Б. ПАНОВ, „Теофиллакт како извор“ (“Theophylact as a Source”), 299-301, as well as the works cited in notes 225-233.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 301-303, as well as notes 234-235.

“Bulgarian” character of the Church of Ohrid, and so on. As a strong argument in their case concerning Theophylact’s supposed benevolent and protective behavior towards the believers, this group of scholars stressed his penning the hagiography of the renowned Slavic scholar, St. Kliment Ohridski, as well as other works concerning him. A. Ishirkov and I. Snegarov make use of these claims, and many such others, to support their theses, while Metropolitan Simeon, D. A. Xanalatos, G. Delger and R. Katičić share these points of view with similar thoughts.³²

Bearing in mind the presented opposing views that exist concerning the reasoning behind Theophylact’s actions, B. Panov decides to accept the opinion supporting a deliberate and systematic assimilation of the Macedonian population, as well as a Greekicising of the Ohrid Archbishopric. At the same time, he makes an attempt to offer a detailed explanation and rationale for his point of view.³³

As opposed to B. Panov, who generally analyzed the theses put forward by the scholars from Eastern Europe (mainly Russia/the former Soviet Union and Bulgaria), M. Mullett deals with the same issue by making detailed analyses of Theophylact’s letters. Using the deliberately chosen, controversial sub-title “Theophylact of Bulgaria”, the said author, referring to and discussing the theses of a group of mainly western scholars in this field (D. Obolensky, I. Shevchenko, A. W. Epstein, J. Fine, A. Dostal, D. M. Lang, A. P. Kazhdan, and others), appears to be making attempts to relativise them, and it seems that she is seeking to justify the negative qualifications that appear in the letters using a variety of explanations (the use of rhetoric, irony, metaphors, emotions, and so on).³⁴

It certainly is a very challenging task to correctly delve into and interpret Theophylact’s behavior during his stay in the “barbarian” environment that Ohrid represented at that time. However, it is necessary to immediately do away with the possibility that the “harsh” words he penned in the letters in connection with the people of Ohrid and the remaining Macedonian population were motivated by some concrete ethnic antagonism and dis-

³² *Ibidem*, 303-305, as well as the works cited in notes 236-243.

³³ *Ibidem*, 306-330.

³⁴ M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 266-274.

like, and it is along those very lines that various older acceptable claims already exist.³⁵

R. Katičić was absolutely correct in assuming that the reasons for Theophylact's negative attitude towards the population, as well as his drastic style of expression, should not be looked for in some "national opposition", as F. Uspensky, Chalandon, Metropolitan Simeon, and, especially, V. Zlatarski were convinced of. In fact, according to him, there were two main reasons why the said scholars held such views: 1. they were under the influence of the conflicts caused by the rampant nationalism that was present in the region of Macedonia in the first decades of the XX century; 2. they analyzed Theophylact's letters independently of any other contemporary markers of Byzantine literature. It is precisely R. Katičić, who, analyzing the written materials of some other Byzantine Church officials from that time, who had also been forced to live in distant provincial towns, notes that they, like Theophylact, also had rather negative things to say concerning the local population, as well as the surroundings they had found themselves in. Their rhetorical and thoughtless style of expression is in full concord with that of Theophylact's on a number of occasions. At the same time, it is pointed out that the regions in question were inhabited by a Greek population. The following may be mentioned as examples of Byzantine Church officials who lived in areas populated by Greeks, and who used words like savagery, envy, rage, malice, barbarism, among others, to describe the people who surrounded them: the Archbishop of Cyprus, Nikola Muzalon (1110-1115), the Metropolitan of Corfu, Nikola (a contemporary of Theophylact), as well as the Metropolitan of Athens, Mikhail Choniates. At that time, the educated people were closely bound to Constantinople, and thus, for them, life in a provincial town was equal to exile and caused them great suffering. Furthermore, it should also be mentioned that the despair experienced at life in exile became an integral component of the educated man's behavior, refashioned in the literary trend of writing.³⁶ The analysis that has been put forward

³⁵ Cf.: И. ДУЈЧЕВ, "Въстанието во 1185 г. и неговата хронология", *Исторически известия за българска история*, 6 ("The Uprising in 1185 and its Chronology", *Historical Notes on the History of Bulgaria*, 6) (1956), 331; Г. Г. ЛИТАВИН, *България и Византия (Bulgaria and Byzantium)*, 363-375.

³⁶ R. KATIČIĆ, „Korespondencija Teofilakta Ohridskog kao izvor za historiju srednjovjekovne Makedonije” ("The Correspondence of Theophylact of Ohrid as a Source on the History of Medieval Macedonia"), *Зборник радова византо-*

completely excludes the alleged ethnic intolerance, which was for a long time presented as the main reason for Theophylact's negative qualifications concerning the Macedonian population.

More recently, I. Stefoska also provides a rather acceptable explanation in connection with Theophylact's negative attitude towards "barbarian" Ohrid. It seems that his behavior and style of expression may be understood if set in the context concerning the issue of the "Other", as well as that of the "Otherness", present in historical anthropology.³⁷

Writing about the political ideology of Byzantium, E. Arveler reaches the conclusion that the superiority complex of the Romaioi became especially apparent during the X-XI centuries. The Romaioi felt that they were the chosen people who expressed their superiority over all and any they considered to be foreign to their existence. This attitude was for the most part founded on the understanding of the "superiority" of the classical Greek culture as the source of Byzantine civilization.³⁸

It is precisely the testimonials present in Theophylact's letters that, though at times expressed humorously, graphically and metaphorically, serve to express and illustrate the Byzantines' superior attitude and contempt towards the "Other"³⁹, in this case, towards the people of Ohrid and the remaining Macedonian population.

It appears that Theophylact kept to the established cognitive conventions, making use of the stereotype of the "Other", based mainly on a moral estimation, which, by default, is of a negative character and is, as

лошког института (ЗРВИ), 8/2, Belgrade 1964, 183-184; *ВЛИИИЈ (ВШРУ)*, III, 266-267, n. 29 (P. КАТИЧИЌ/R. KATIČIĆ). Cf.: P. STEPHENSON, "Byzantine Conceptions of *Otherness* after the Annexation of Bulgaria (1018)", In: *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, Aldershot 2000, 245-246, 249; G. PAGE, *Being Byzantine*, 49.

³⁷ И. СТЕФОСКА, *Словените на почвата на Македонија (од VII до почетокот на X век) (The Slavs on Macedonian Soil (from the VII to the beginning of the X century))*, Skopje 2002, 85-86, as well as the works cited in n. 218.

³⁸ E. ARVELER, *Politička ideologija vizantijskog carstva (The Political Ideology of the Byzantine Empire)*, Belgrade 1988, 62-66. Cf.: A. P. KAZHDAN and A. W. EPSTEIN, *Change in the Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1985, 167-170.

³⁹ И. СТЕФОСКА, *Словените (The Slavs)*, 90-92. Cf.: P. STEPHENSON, "Byzantine Conceptions of *Otherness*", 245-257.

such, a priori attached to the "Other". Such written materials are, for the most part, traditional, standardized, simplified and generalized, and the dominant note that prevails in all of them is that of cultural superiority.⁴⁰

As such, we reach the conclusion that Theophylact's attitudes and behavior were completely in tune for an educated Romaioi, enjoying a powerful position in the Church, living in a provincial town surrounded by "barbarians". It simply has to do with a cultural gap, a gap between two worlds that realistically existed between the Romaioi and the Slavs, as well as between the Romaioi and all the other ethnic groups that did not follow the generally accepted beliefs the Romaioi held concerning spirituality and morality.

What remains is to conclude that the behavior of Theophylact of Ohrid was multi-layered and complex, and needs to be looked into deeper and analyzed more closely. Nevertheless, it appears that his priority, as a loyal subject to the Byzantine Emperor, was to subjugate the people of his Archbishopric, who mainly spoke the Slavic language, and to keep them under the submission of Byzantium. In order to achieve this, various means of governance were made use of, and at times, it was necessary to employ peaceful means, without the threat of violence. Theophylact was simply a man of two faces and two natures.⁴¹

It should not be forgotten that the mutual relationship between Theophylact and the people of Ohrid was, for the most part, predetermined by the inferior social status of most of the inhabitants of Ohrid in connection with the secular and clerical authorities, and especially due to the obligation they had in terms of paying enormous sums in taxes. On one hand,

⁴⁰ И. СТЕФОСКА, *Словените (The Slavs)*, 92. Despite the fact that the perceptions the Romaioi had concerning the barbarians were biased and interwoven with a note of superiority, it is important to note that in the Middle Ages qualifications of the type: racism, xenophobia, chauvinism, genocide, exclusivity, and so on, semantically speaking do not contain their modern-day meanings due to the fact that the latter have been acquired from later experiences. The states in the Middle Ages were, for the most part, tolerant towards the foreign element, otherwise it would be difficult for us to understand Byzantium as one supranational community of peoples in which every group had its own place (*Ibidem*, 88).

⁴¹ Д. ОБОЛЕНСКИ, „Геофилакт Охридски”, *Шест византијских портрета* ("Theophylact of Ohrid", *Six Byzantine Portraits*), Belgrade 2004, 94, 97.

Theophylact was in no position to fully implement the feudal rights and privileges he had been granted, while, on the other hand, the inhabitants found it very difficult to pay the high taxes and to fulfill their feudal duties. Taking all this into consideration, as well as how things were aligned, it becomes easier to understand why there was the existence of mutual discontent, intolerance, and antipathy towards the “Other”.

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