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SERBIAN MACEDONIA

An Historical Survey

(Including a Letter to the Editor of *THE NEAR EAST*.)

With Preface by
A. H. E. TAYLOR.



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PAVLE POPOVIĆ.

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SERBIAN MACEDONIA

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY.

LONDON :

1916.

Preface.

When Professor P. Popovic asked me whether I would write a few lines by way of preface to this historical sketch of Macedonia my inclination was decidedly to beg that he would excuse me who do not pretend to be more than a keen student of the Balkan problem, since such an introduction might seem to carry with it some savour of pretension. Yet it is the student who is most conscious of his past difficulties and of what is generally lacking in the knowledge of his fellows.

Professor Popovic's pamphlet brings out two facts which are too often ignored in the history of Macedonia.

The first is that there is no truth in the very commonly accepted idea that there was throughout the Middle Ages a continuous Bulgarian "Empire," and that Macedonia formed a constant part of the territorial content of this Empire. Though such an idea is not to be found, of course, in the writings of recognised English authorities it reappears constantly, explicitly or implicitly, in a good deal of writing for the Press and the Reviews. While it is true, as Professor Cvijic has pointed out in connection with this same problem, that these matters cannot be decided by sole reference to historical arguments and claims—as we might claim Calais, or the French Canada—yet, since so frequent an appeal is made to past history in Balkan affairs, it is well that that history should be correctly stated. Apart from matters of detail it will be found that the conclusions of this pamphlet are substantially supported by the writings of English historians of authority.

The second fact to which I have alluded is that the historical importance of the great archi-episcopal see of Ochrida in the ecclesiastical history of the Orthodox Church is something distinct from its position as the capital of the ephemeral "Western Bulgarian Empire."

While it is to be hoped that we have heard the last of the disastrous and not particularly honourable policy of betraying the interests of our friends to their enemies, yet even now there are not wanting those who would be willing to buy Bulgaria off by a sacrifice of Serb Macedonia, and it is noticeable, to judge by reports from Sofia, that there are Bulgarians who assume the naturalness of such a bargain, who argue that Bulgaria has got all she wanted, the underlying assumption being that the Entente would allow her to keep Macedonia as the reward for yet another act of perfidy. If such a bargain be struck it would be difficult to say which party to it would be most dishonoured, but I think that it would be ourselves. Our politicians need all the instruction that they can get on the affairs of the Near East, and this pamphlet will contribute to that instruction a valuable quota. Recent events have shown the necessity, in our own interests, of a strong Southern Slav State.

A. H. E. TAYLOR.

SERBIAN MACEDONIA.

An Historical Survey

To the Editor of THE NEAR EAST.

Sir,—I am not a politician, and if I venture to write these lines on a subject of such a highly political character as the Macedonian question it is rather from a historical point of view, and in my quality of historian—literary historian, if you will—that I propose to undertake the task.

It is astonishing how certain erroneous ideas become deeply rooted in public opinion, and continue to prevail, in spite of all evidence to the contrary. One of these popular ideas is that Macedonia is historically Bulgarian. Macedonia—according to popular belief—belonged to the Bulgarians for centuries, and if at times she came under the rule of some other nation—the Serbs, for example—this domination was of a purely ephemeral character.

There are, however, many ideas flattering to the national Bulgarian pride which were at one time generally accepted, but which have since been proved to be pure legends. It was believed, for example, that the ancient Slav language was the Bulgarian tongue. It is, however, generally recognised to-day that the former was another ancient Slav dialect. It was also thought that

the Slav writers of the tenth and eleventh centuries of the eastern portion of the Balkan peninsula were all Bulgarians. Recent investigations, however, have shown that several of them were not. In the course of this letter, I hope to disprove many more such erroneous ideas. I opine that the belief in a historically Bulgarian Macedonia is also a legend; and I hope that a trustworthy account of Serbian and Bulgarian domination and influence in Macedonia may bear out my contention.

I.—First Period (861-969).

*(The Bulgarians are in possession of Macedonia for
108 years.)*

There are four periods in Macedonian history which may be of interest in this connection. The first comprises the ninth and tenth centuries. When the Slavs colonised the Balkan Peninsula (fifth to the seventh century) two States were soon formed in the eastern part of the Peninsula, Bulgaria and Serbia. The first was in the east, and comprised the territory lying between the Danube and the Balkans; the original Bulgarian people were a Mongol tribe, who had become Slav on their first contact with the Slav tribes whom they found in the conquered country. The second was in the west, and extended from the upper reaches of the Drina to the Adriatic littoral in the south; the Serbian people there were pure Slavs. Macedonia stood between the two. Politically it was neither Serbian nor Bulgarian, but simply a Byzantine province. Ethnographically it was Slav, that is to say, of the same race as the Serbs or as the ancient Slavs of Bulgaria.

In the ninth century the Bulgarians conquered Macedonia. It was the Emperor Boris (852-889) who partially conquered it about the year 861. His successor, Symeon (893-927) took possession of the whole. The Emperor Peter (927-969) lost nearly half of the new conquests, and after his death the whole of Macedonia was lost to Bulgaria. Thus the Bulgarians possessed Macedonia from 861 to 969.

Nevertheless several historians affirm that Bulgarian rule in Macedonia lasted longer than this period. The reign of the Emperor Samuel in Macedonia (976 to 1014) and of his successors (up to 1018) was also, it is said, a Bulgarian reign.

I shall not attempt to discuss the question in detail. It is enough to say that recent historical investigations prove that the Empire of Samuel and his successors was an independent Macedonian empire, and not a Bulgarian one. Modern Serbian historians (Prokic, Postanak *jedne slovenske carevine*, Glas S. K. Akademije 76, 1908) maintain this with Byzantine chronicles in hand. The foreign historians, such as Jirecek, the greatest historian of the Serbs and Bulgars, seem to accept their assertions. It is, in fact, quite characteristic to point to the wide divergence of views between what Jirecek formerly wrote on the reign of Samuel (*Geschichte der Bulgaren*, 1870) and what he wrote quite recently (*Geschichte der Serben*, 1911). Here we have another of those legends already referred to, or, at least, one of those Bulgarian theories, gravely contested.

The new conception of the reign of Samuel is, moreover, very plausible. When Samuel founded his Macedonian empire (976) Bulgaria was already conquered by Byzantium (971). How, then, could an independent empire have been under the domination of a conquered province?

Therefore, the Bulgarians, during this first period, were in possession of Macedonia for 108 years (861-969).

II.—Second Period (13th-14th Centuries).

(The Serbian Reign lasts 112 years, and has a great influence on the Country. The Bulgarian Conquest lasts sixteen years, leaving no traces.)

The second period comprises the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Bulgarians freed themselves from the Byzantine yoke in 1186, and again conquered Macedonia from the Greeks in 1230, under the reign of Jean Asen II. They kept it till 1246, when the Greeks took it from them again. On two more occasions—the second time under Constantine Asen (1257-1277), when a Serb occupied the throne of Bulgaria—the Bulgarians, at war with the Greeks, made momentary raids into Macedonia. These, obviously, cannot be considered as having constituted a domination. Therefore, in the thirteenth century, the Bulgarians reigned in Macedonia for sixteen years. But then ended for all time their rule in Macedonia. “After Constantine Asen” (says Jirecek, in “Geschichte der Bulgaren,” 376) “no Bulgarian Emperor could extend his power over this province.” The Bulgarian episode in Macedonian history having been closed, we may now reckon the number of years that it lasted. The total is 124 years.

Now come the Serbs. Up to this time the Serbian State had had no part in Macedonian history. Owing to its geographical position, surrounded as it was by powerful rivals, it developed more slowly. It had no place in Balkan history as a great Power until after the other States had played their ephemeral roles.

It is wrong to suppose, as is generally done, that the Serbs only held Macedonia under the reign of Dushan (1331-1355). Macedonia formed part of the Serbian State long before. I am not thinking of King Urosh, who, in 1258, had Skoplje, Prilep, and Kichevo in his power—let us suppose that it was the same role as Constantine Asen played in Eastern Macedonia—but I am thinking of King Milutin (1282-1321), who really held Macedonia. In the course of a brilliant offensive against Byzantium he took, in 1282, Skoplje, Ovcepolje, Zletovo, Bregalnica, and a large part of Eastern and Western Macedonia as far as the district of Kustendji, which he held in 1300. His son, Stephan (1321-1331), went still further south and took Veles and Ishtip, approaching Strumnitza and threatening Ochrida. Emperor Dushan, the greatest of Serbian monarchs, had, as is known, the whole of Macedonia, not only with Prilep and Ochrida, but also with Strumnitza, Drama, Kavalla, and the district of Salonika, as well as Thessaly, Acarnania, Epirus, and Albania. His empire was kept intact under the reign of his son Urosh (1355-1371). In 1371 the Turks defeated the Serbs, and Macedonia became vassal to them, whilst the north was still a free State. Nevertheless, the kings and princes of Serbia, although vassals, still reigned in their Macedonian provinces. One of them, the celebrated King Marko Kraljevic, reigned there, with Prilep as his capital, until 1394. Two other princes, the brothers Constantine and Dragas Dejanovici, ruled over the provinces of Veles, Stip, Kratovo and Zletovo, and their rule likewise ended in 1394. South of their territory, in the region now forming part of Greek Macedonia, lay the domain of Prince Bogdan, whose reign continued until 1413, and perhaps longer. “It is absolutely certain that, to the south of the Kingdoms of Kraljevic and the Dejanovici,

the Serbian vassal Bogdan maintained himself till 1413 in the region between Salonica, Seres, and the Lake of Dojran," says M. Novakovic, the eminent Serb historian (*Srbi i Turci*, p. 192). And even later, up to the middle of the 15th century, the influence of the Serbian princely dynasties survived in Macedonia—at the time when the "Empress Mara," daughter of the Serbian despot, had her residence at Seres. These Serbian kings and despots, who reigned until 1394 and 1413, were however true kings of the Macedonian lands. They acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sultan, that is true, but in every other respects they were absolutely independent, and as regards internal affairs, their States were perfectly autonomous. Coins struck by them and bearing their effigies are still extant. So are their letters conferring donations to the Serbian monasteries, and these letters are conceived in the same tone and in the same form as those of their independent predecessors, the Serbian kings and Emperors of former days.

How long, then, did the Serbs actually rule over Macedonia? If we include the whole epoch from King Milutin till the Empress Mara (i.e. from 1282 to the middle of the 15th century), we may say that their rule extended over a period of about 170 years. If we only include Bogdan's reign (1413) we find a total of 131 years. However, the period of Mara and Bogdan relates to territories which lie beyond the borders of present day Serbian Macedonia, we will not go further than 1394, the end of the reigns of Kraljevic and the Dejanovici. That was the end of Serbian rule in Macedonia. Altogether the Serbs ruled over Macedonia for one hundred and twelve years (1282-1394).

Is this less than the duration of Bulgarian rule? Undoubtedly. But, firstly, the difference is very little,

and, secondly, it is not merely duration that has to be taken into account. In order to appreciate the true value of Serbian and Bulgarian rules in Macedonia we must consider the results, not only their duration. Supposing two men are given the same work to do, and a fairly long time to do it in; if one does it better in 112 hours than the other in 124, to which of the two would you award the palm? It is in this way that we must judge the value of these two historical facts. What is important is to see which of the two, Serbs or Bulgars, were more successful in assimilating the Slav element in Macedonia.

It is obvious that the Serbs have the advantage of the Bulgars in that they possessed Macedonia at a later period than the Bulgars. For a State to possess a province in the ninth century is not at all the same thing as possessing it in the fourteenth century. What were the Bulgars in the ninth century? Was the national sentiment of the mixed tribe, half Slav and half Mongol, as the Bulgars then were, sufficiently strong and attractive to assimilate the pure Slav element which they dominated? Certainly not. The Bulgars of these early ages were not more than simple conquerors. The Serbs, however, are in quite a different position. They held Macedonia for several centuries after the "golden age" of the Bulgars had passed in that country, and many changes took place during this long period. In contrast to the Bulgarians, the national conscience of the Serbs was, at this period, defined, crystallised, and definitely formed. In entering Macedonia the Serbs were fully conscious of being Serbs, and quite confident that their Macedonian brethren would soon be the same people as themselves. They introduced an exemplary administration. They made equal laws for the citizens of the old State and for those of the new province. They

brought an eminently national literature. They facilitated the development of commerce. In a word, they had at their disposal all the means afforded by the high State civilisation of the period for assimilating the Slav element in Macedonia, which was so much akin to them. This is the reason why the Serbians were more likely to succeed in Macedonia during their 112 years than the Bulgarians could have been even if they had had 200 years.

Moreover, Serbian rule in Macedonia has left far deeper traces than that of the Bulgar.

The Serbian kings and emperors founded monasteries—splendid specimens of ancient Serbian art—in numbers that Macedonia had not known till then. I have not time to enumerate them all. But it suffices to say that there are a quantity of them round about Kumanovo, around Skoplje, Slaviste, Lesnovo, Tetovo, Prilep, and Seres. The line stretches uninterruptedly as far as the Bulgarian frontier, as far as Mount Athos, as far as Albania. They are not isolated monasteries, but groups of monasteries, clusters of beautiful architectural works, miniatures of Mount Athos, which are scattered over the right and left banks of the Vardar. The Russian Archaeological Commission, during its researches in 1900, found that Serbian architecture was predominant in western, central, and eastern Macedonia. The president of the Commission, the Academician, Kondakoff, expressly stated that the style of the mediaeval art of the real Macedonia (as far as the Drama) was no longer Byzantine, but Greco-Slav, in other words, Greco-Serbian. "All that the Slavs have given to Macedonian architecture," he said, "is marked by undeniably Serbian influence." Here you have the remains of Serbian rule; but where are those of the Bulgarians?

Serbian literature has left in Macedonia traces no less deep than those of art. The literary monuments left by the Serbs are in a crushing majority compared with those of the Bulgars. The Russian savant, Grigorovich, during his journey to Ochrida in 1847, found Serbian manuscripts and inscriptions all round about this town, which the Bulgarians claimed as eminently theirs. "Traces of Serbian influence are to be found in all the manuscripts and inscriptions of the 14th and 15th centuries that Grigorovich saw at Ochrida and in the neighbourhood," says Jirecek, in summing up the investigations of the Russian savant (*Geschichte der Bulgaren*, 466). The Bulgarian, Jordan Ivanoff, was obliged to publish many Serbian manuscripts and inscriptions executed in memory of the Serbian kings in his book, entitled "Bulgarian Antiquities of Macedonia" (1908). If we were to count how many of the manuscripts, emanating from Macedonia, were Serbian and how many Bulgarian, I am sure that the advantage would be on the side of Serbian literature. If we were to reckon merely the manuscripts which are to be found in Bulgarian libraries, we could obtain an adequate idea. Three catalogues of this kind have been published, at any rate, as far as I am aware. The catalogue that Sprostranoff compiled of the library of the monastery at Rilo (1902) makes no mention of the origin of the manuscripts. The catalogue that the same author made of the library of the Holy Synod in Sofia (1900) does so in an inadequate manner. Thus, we cannot ascertain the number of the manuscripts of Macedonian origin in these catalogues, nor the proportion of the Serbian and Bulgarian languages in them. Nevertheless, there is not much to fear for our argument, since the general proportion is in its favour. The first catalogue includes nineteen items in the Bulgarian language, and, altogether, seventy in the

Serbian; the latter figure, it is true, includes ten items which are not, strictly speaking, "manuscripts," but printed books or modern manuscripts. The second catalogue comprises twenty-three Bulgarian manuscripts and eighty-nine Serbian ones, which fact does not prevent the author of the catalogue from saying in the preface that they are "the remains of *our* ancient literature." That is to say, the remains of Bulgarian literature. In the third catalogue, that of the National Library of Sofia (1910), which represents, as the author, Professor Coneff, says, "the largest and most important collection of manuscripts existing in Bulgaria," the origin of the manuscripts is carefully marked, and here we can find what we seek. Now, there are twenty-five manuscripts of Macedonian origin. But of these twenty-five manuscripts, twenty-two are Serbian, and only three are not. And, again, of those three, two are *Serbo-Bulgarian* and only one Bulgarian. Note again that these Serbian manuscripts—it is Coneff himself who says so—are from Skoplje, Veles, Ishtip, Strumnitza, Debar, Prilep, and Ochrida, and Bulgarian savants themselves assert it. No better proof could be afforded of the immense superiority of Serbian over Bulgarian literary activity in Macedonia.

The popular Serbian folk songs, which are the pride of our literature, and which the best English poets, from Walter Scott to Owen Meredith, have translated, are also a striking proof of how deep is the furrow the Serbians have dug on Macedonian soil. To those who know these songs it is clear that the Macedonian cycle ranks very high among them. It is not only the kings Milutin and Stephan and the emperors Dushan and Urosh, during whose reigns Macedonia formed part of the Serbian State, who are sung there; but also the little Serbian

despots, kings, and princes who governed certain Macedonian provinces are thus glorified. The principal heroes of the Serbian epopee are King Vukashin, who reigned in Prilep; the despot Ugljesa, who held Seres; the *voivode* Momcilo, whose country was between the Strumnitza and Thrace; the *voivode* Hrelja, whose capital was Strumnitza; "Ljutica Bogdan," which State lay between Seres and the Vardar; the "Bey Kostadin," i.e. Constantine Dejanovic, about whom we have spoken, with Ishtip, Kratovo, Zletovo, and Veles in his power; and the list might be still further extended. Finally, to mention only the most celebrated personage of the Macedonian cycle and of all Serbian folklore, the national hero of our poetic legend, the Roland of our epopee, Kraljevic Marko was also a Serbian king of Macedonia, with Prilep as his residence. Not only the Macedonian kings and princes, but the whole Macedonian country also is sung in this epopee, from Skoplje to Salonika, and from the Maritza in Bulgaria to Scutari in Albania. Where, then, was this epopee sung? It is so natural to think, and the most conscientious studies have shown, that the real cradle of Serbian folk-songs is Macedonia. But what people have sung it? Was it the Bulgarians who created this beautiful Serbian epopee?

III.—Third Period—(16th-18th Century).

(The Serbs enjoy National Autonomy for 210 years.)

The third period covers the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. During this time Macedonia was a simple Turkish province, just as Bulgaria was from 1397 and Serbia from 1459.

Nevertheless, the Serbs had during this same period a great national institution. It was the Serbian Patriarchate of Pec (Ipek). The Serbian Church, which, until the beginning of the thirteenth century, stood under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, was erected in 1219 to an independent Archbishopric, an autocephalous church, and was recognised as such by the Patriarch at Constantinople. In 1346 this Archbishopric was raised to the dignity of a Patriarchate, a dignity which was shortly afterwards (1375) recognised by the Patriarch of Constantinople. It lasted until 1459, i.e., until the end of the Serbian State. It was then subordinated to the Archbishopric of Ochrida, which was also independent of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. But in 1557 it was restored, and all its ancient rights were recognised by the Porte and by the Greek Church. This new Serbian Patriarchate lasted until 1767, when it was again suppressed and included in the Greek Patriarchate at Constantinople. Thus the new Serbian Patriarchate lasted 210 years.

This Patriarchate comprised many Serbian districts, and, among them, a large part of Macedonia, Tetovo, Skoplje, Kratovo, Kochani, Zletovo, Ishtip, and Radoviste were included therein, that is to say, the whole of northern Macedonia on both sides of the Vardar river. It is true that Southern Macedonia was not included, and that Ochrida, Monastir, Debar, Prilep, and Veles were beyond its spiritual jurisdiction, and remained under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ochrida. Nevertheless, a large part of Macedonia belonged to the national Serbian Church during 210 years of Ottoman rule.

The importance of the new Serbian Patriarchate is significant as regards Serbian claims on Macedonia. But it is above all important owing to the fact that Mace-

donia was attributed to the new Serbian institution in accordance with the principle of nationality.

It is only necessary to compare the new Serbian Patriarchate (1557-1767) with the ancient one (1346-1459) to see that it is in agreement with this principle and no other than Macedonia was given to the Serbian Church. The ancient Patriarchate comprised the countries belonging to the old Serbian State—that is to say, the Serbia of to-day (with Macedonia) and the districts to the south. It did not extend beyond the central part of the Balkanic peninsula, and all lands lying to the west, Bosnia, for instance, were beyond its frontiers. The new Patriarchate, however, did comprise this latter part. It did not only extend to Serbia (with Macedonia), but also to Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Slavonia, and even to Southern Hungary, in as far as it was populated by Slavs. All these countries were under Ottoman rule, and all of them were Serbs by nationality. When the Porte agreed to the restoration of the national Serbian Patriarchate she granted her, likewise, jurisdiction over the whole extension of Serbian nationality within the frontiers of the Turkish Empire. For the same reason, and in agreement with the same principle of nationality, the Porte recognised the Patriarchate's right over Macedonia.

As a matter of fact, when the Turks gave Macedonia to the new Patriarchate, were there any reserves expressed, or any doubts as to the national Serbian character of the whole country? Could they, perhaps, think that Macedonia was Bulgarian? Not at all. Imagine the state of affairs in Macedonia in those days. Forget what you know regarding the state of affairs in that country during the past few years, before the recent Balkan wars, when the intrigues of Bulgarian propaganda helped to complicate matters. In the sixteenth century the remains of

the ancient Serbian Empire were still quite noticeable in Macedonia, and the memories thereof were vigorous. In the preceding chapter we have seen how numerous and how powerful were the remains of the Serbian reign in Macedonia and how they were to be discovered on historic monuments, in literature, and in the minds of the people. At every step, in conquered Macedonia, the Turks saw Serbian monasteries, Serbian monks copying manuscripts, old Serbians singing to crowds around them of the glorious past of their country. On the other hand, they saw nothing similar which might have been Bulgarian. How, then, could they possibly have thought that Macedonia was Bulgarian? Evidently, when the Turks granted Macedonia to the Serbs by the restoration of the Patriarchate of Ipek, they thought they were doing the most natural thing in the world, and that nobody in the world could have the least intention of protesting.

It may be said that if the Turks granted the Serbs Northern Macedonia according to the principle of nationality, and refused to give them Southern Macedonia, this refusal must likewise have been due to the application of the principle of nationality; in other words, that Southern Macedonia was non-Serb. This is not so. If it was decided to exclude the districts of Ochrida, Bitolj, Debar, Prilep, and Veles from the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Ipek, the principle of nationality did not enter into this decision. It was quite a special case. The districts in question were under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ochrida, under which the Serbian national church had also been placed prior to the creation of a new patriarchate. When the latter was created, many of the districts belonging to the archbishopric were taken away in order to be included in the new institution. But if the districts mentioned above had been

taken away it would have meant the suppression, pure and simple, of the archbishopric itself. Nobody, however, would have consented to this at the period we are referring to. The Archbishopric of Ochrida was a very old institution dating from the ninth century, when St. Clement, one of the first Slav apostles founded it. The archbishopric's rights and traditions were fully respected by everyone. Read what Mr. Adrian Fortescue says in his excellent book, "The Orthodox Eastern Church" (1907), and you will see what the archbishopric was. The Serbs would never have asked for the suppression of this venerable ecclesiastical institution, even if to the advantage of their new church. During the period (fourteenth century) when the whole territory comprising the archbishopric's jurisdiction was in their political possession they respected the former's rights as though said territories did not belong to their State. Moreover, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, for reasons which we shall presently see, would not have permitted such a big extension of the Serbian Church to the detriment of the Archbishopric of Ochrida. Thus, if a certain part of Macedonia was not drawn into the Serbian Patriarchate of Ipek, it was not on account of the principle of nationality; it is no less true, however, that a large part of the country, in accordance with the above principle, was a province nationally Serb.

A second consideration showing the importance of the Patriarchate of Ipek in the 16th to 18th centuries, more particularly as regards Serbian rights over Macedonia, is that the patriarchate was a great national Serbian institution, and that it exercised a great influence on the Serbian people in Macedonia. Without doubt, it was not the equivalent of the ancient Serbian Empire, but nevertheless it approached it in significance.

Let us examine what this patriarchate really was. In the first place the clergy were Serbs. The patriarchs were Serbs. The metropolitans were Serbs, and the bishops, priests, and monks. Then, again, the official language of the patriarchate were Serbian. Everything which the patriarch ordered and wrote to the metropolitans, or the metropolitans to the bishops, or the bishops to the priests, was in the Serbian language. Again, all the efforts of the patriarch and of the higher clergy were directed towards the awakening of the Serbian national sentiment. They strove to preserve the remains of the glorious past of Serbia. They restored the old monasteries and their mural paintings representing the portraits of Serbian kings and queens. They collected old manuscripts, had them copied, and preserved them. They wrote new works, principally historical works on Serbia. They even gave a remarkable élan to the literary activity of the race which had lain dormant and lost in the century which followed the fall of the Serbian State. They resuscitated ancient divine services in honour of Serbian saints, of St. Sabbas, patron of the Serbian church, and of others. But apart from this restoration of the national past, they exercised a direct influence on the people. They paid canonical visits throughout their dioceses, and there was not a town or village in the Serbian districts which did not see its bishop, its metropolitan, and its patriarch. They spoke to people, reminded them of the glorious days of the past ages, and inspired them with the national sentiment.

Such a patriarchate was, therefore, a "sort of national organisation among the Serbs," as Fortescue (page 307) rightly observes. It was a sort of national autonomy in the form of an ecclesiastical autonomy. It was a Serbian

centre in the middle of a Turkish Empire. It was a highroad of Serbian nationality, wherein were protected and preserved the Serbian name and nationality. To-day, there is a Serbian patriarchate, the descendant of the ancient patriarchate of Ipek, in southern Austria-Hungary, in Karlovci, and it is also a highroad for Serbs in the centre of a Hungarian State. The Patriarchate of Ipek fulfilled the same rôle in Turkey, but to a greater extent, because, whereas in Hungary a Serbian empire never existed, in Turkey it did exist, and its remains were to be seen everywhere. The Patriarchate of Ipek was, therefore, in a great measure, a continuation of the ancient Serbian Empire, a restoration of a political organisation of other days, a new form of the national State of olden times. This it was, above all, from the national point of view. That is why we are right in considering it, from this point of view, as almost the equivalent of the ancient empire which it replaced.

Imagine now what a powerful influence this new phase of the empire in Macedonia exercised on the people! The people considered themselves Serbs in exactly the same way as they did when they lived in the Empire of Dushan! Everything which surrounded them was Serbian: the clergy, literature, language, divine services, and churches; and the people knew that all these were Serbian. Do you think that, in these circumstances, the people could not be Serbs?

So great is the importance of the Serbian patriarchate that we consider ourselves perfectly justified in adding the number of its years to those of the ancient Serbian State when fixing the balance of Serbian and Bulgarian rule over and influence in Macedonia. The Serbian epoch in Macedonia is, therefore, 322 years, whereas

the Bulgarian epoch does not go beyond 124 years. Moreover, the latter belongs to a primitive age, whereas the former is to be placed in relatively modern times.

Let us remark incidentally that the Patriarchate of Ipek comprised, exclusive of Macedonia, also a large part of the Bulgaria of to-day. The districts of Kustendil, Samokov and Razlog, with Rilo and Dupnica, were under the jurisdiction of our patriarchate, and were frequently visited by our patriarchs, especially the celebrated monastery of Rilo. These districts were granted to the Patriarch of Ipek beyond doubt in agreement with the principle of nationality, and when the history of the Monastery of Rilo is invoked, the reason becomes apparent. It was the *voivode* Hrelja who built the tower of the monastery; it was the Empress Mara with whose help the reliquaries of the patron of the monastery, St. John of Rilo, were transported thither; it was Vladislav Gramatik who has left us a wonderful description of this ceremony, and all these people were Serbs and not Bulgars.

IV.—The same Period.

(The Bulgars enjoy no Autonomy similar to that of the Serbs.)

You will tell me, perhaps, that the Bulgars had a similar autonomy, even a better one in Southern Macedonia; that the Archbishopric of Ochrida, to which I have referred, was for the Bulgars what the Patriarchate of Ipek was for the Serbs; that it was a national Bulgarian Church just as the other was a national Serbian Church; that the Archbishop of Ochrida had even the title of "The Archbishop of Iustiniana prima of Ochrida,

and of all Bulgaria ”; that, moreover, the Archbishopric lasted longer than the Patriarchate of Ipek, existing, as it did, without a break, from St. Clement (who died in 916) until 1767, when it was suppressed at the same time as the Patriarchate of Ipek.

Here, however, we have another of those legends to which we referred in our first chapter. This legend is absurd, however, as can be seen at a glance. If we know anything of history, the national Bulgarian Church was the Patriarchate of Tirnovo, but this Church is situate in Bulgaria, and not in Macedonia. Did the Bulgarians have two national Churches at the same time? As for the Archbishopric of Ochrida, if it was Bulgarian from the ninth to the eighteenth century, was it Bulgarian when Ochrida and the whole of Southern Macedonia was the political dominion of Byzantium (eleventh to thirteenth centuries)? In the fourteenth century this territory belonged to Serbia; did the Bishopric continue in spite of this to be Bulgarian? When the Serbian Church, in 1459, was included in the jurisdiction of the archbishopric, was it subjected to a Bulgarian Church? The Roumanian principalities, which, in the sixteenth century, were also under the spiritual power of the same archbishopric, were they also subjected to a Bulgarian church? The Greeks of Calabria, Apulia, Sicily, and Malta, who were also under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ochrida, were they also subjected to a Bulgarian Church? In which case, everybody must have been under the Bulgarian Church!

The fact is that the Archbishopric of Ochrida was not the Bulgarian national Church. The name “Bulgaria” remained, it is true, in the title of the archbishop, but it was all that was left of Bulgarian in the Church. It was only an old tradition, without any significance.

When Basil II., the Emperor of Byzantium, destroyed the Macedonian Empire (1018), he respected the autocephalous church of St. Clement, and left it the independence which it had enjoyed. But, excepting the first archbishop, who was a Bulgar—or, better still, a Slav—all the others, or almost all, from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries, were Greeks and not Bulgars. The metropolitans and the bishops were also Greeks. The whole character of this Church was Greek, and nothing but Greek.

But let the historians speak about this Church.

The earliest historian of the Archbishopric of Ochrida, Zacharias of Lingenthal (*Beitraege zur Geschichte der bulgarischen Kirche*, Petrograd 1864) speaks only briefly of the nationality of that Church. It was a matter which was not yet sufficiently discussed at the time when he wrote. But even he already remarked that the Church of Ochrida was to a great extent Greek. He calls it “the *Graeco-Bulgarian Church*” (p. 16). Speaking of the first successor of the Slav Archbishop appointed by Basil II., he says—with the documents before him—that he was “the first Archbishop of Greek nationality,” and adds: “From that time (i.e. the beginning of the 11th century), the Archbishops were not chosen exclusively from the bosom of the Bulgarian clergy, but *far more often from among the Byzantine clergy*” (p. 22).

In his “*History of the Orthodox Bulgarian, Serbian, and Roumanian Churches*” (Moscow, 1871, page 142-143) the Russian historian Golubinsky reviewed the fate of the Archbishopric of Ochrida in the Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Turkish periods. “Almost from the

very moment when it passed into the power of the Greeks at the epoch of Basil II., in 1019," says he, "and until the end of its very existence, the Archbishopric of Ochrida *was entirely a Greek church and not a Bulgarian church.*" He admits that during the short Bulgarian period in the thirteenth century the archbishopric might have been Bulgarian, and then continues: "It is positively and authentically certain that during all that time, excepting the ten or fifteen years of the reign of Jean Asen II. (1230-1240 or 1245) the archbishops were constantly Greeks and not Bulgars, and the archbishopric was constantly under the power of the Greeks and not of the Bulgars." During the Serbian period (fourteenth century) "the Greek character" of the institution "was not violated." As regards the Turkish period (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries), he says: "The Turks . . . finding that only the Greeks administered the Archbishopric—and I include," adds he, "therein the person of the Archbishop *as well as the Metropolitans and the Bishops*—allowed matters to rest as they had found them, and from this time until the end of the period the Greeks remained masters of the Archbishopric." He admits, it is true, certain exceptions during this latter period. "It is very probable that during this period the Archbishops, as well as the Metropolitans and Bishops, were not one and all Greeks, and the archiepiscopal chair, as well as those of the Metropolitans and Bishops, were occupied, doubtless rarely, by Bulgars." But if he says so, he immediately limits his statement by adding: "But above all, these Bulgarian unities were lost among ten unities of Greeks; they are only negligible quantities, who cannot change the general aspect of the situation in favour of the Bulgars . . . in any case, these Bulgars could *only* be Hellenophil Bulgars, that is to say, Hellenised Bulgars, who had renounced their nationality."

The most recent historian of the Church of St. Clements is Henry Gelzer, who wrote the best and most detailed study on the Archbishopric (or Patriarchate), and who also emphasises its Greek character. "In the period of which we are speaking," he says, in reviewing the Turkish period, "the Archbishopric of Ochrida, with its suffragan churches, was, contrary to that of Ipek, entirely Greek. ("Das Patriarchat von Achrida," 1902, p. 34.) As for the Bulgarian period (1230-1246), where Golubinsky admits exception in favour of the Bulgars and the possibility of there having been two Bulgarian archbishops (p. 124), Gelzer, with more recent documents to support him, doubts this, and says: "Golubinsky mentions two archbishops who may have been Bulgars, *but that also is quite uncertain*" (p. 19).

Jirecek is not exactly a historian of the ^{archbishopric} of Ochrida, but he is always very well informed, and he says: "Only Greeks were nominated archbishops of Ochrida" (Geschichte der Serben, 1911, p. 219). In his "History of the Bulgars," he says, however: "From the 12th century onward Ochrida was the bulwark of Hellenism in the Slav Macedonian territory. Already the immediate successor of John of Debar (The Slav Archbishop appointed by Basil II.) was a Greek, and from that time (the beginning of the 11th century) the Bulgars were *excluded* from the Archbishopric" (Geschichte der Bulgaren, 1876, p. 211).

Even the most Bulgarophil of all historians, Marin Drinoff, who published in Bulgarian a "History of the Bulgarian Church" (1869, p. 128), and who was a Bulgarian, does not dare to deny this character, so constantly and so completely Greek, of the Archbishopric, and contents himself by mentioning the matter with evasions and in a very vague and restricted manner.

“ In the *fifteenth*, and also as late as *the middle of the sixteenth century the priests and higher clergy* were pure Bulgars.” That is, after all, all that he has to say regarding the national character of the Archbishopric of Ochrida.

I think the matter is quite clear. But in order not to leave in doubt the non-Bulgarian character of the Church in question, it is our duty to analyse the part which the Serbs themselves played therein. Drinoff asserts that during a certain period, which, after all, is not long, the priests belonging to the Archbishopric (as regards the “higher clergy,” we have seen what that means) were “pure Bulgars.” Without a doubt the priests and monks of the archiepiscopal diocese were also pure Serbs, above all in the period referred to. It is natural to suppose that the Serbian priests and monks who were surprised in the churches and monasteries of the Serbian emperors of that diocese by the fall of the Serbian State remained where they were, and continued their functions under the new ecclesiastic jurisdiction, to which they belonged from that moment. Until the restoration of the Patriarchate of Ipek (middle of the sixteenth century) they could remain there, and even longer. As regards the higher clergy, it was Serbian as much as it was Bulgarian. In a previous quotation from Golubinsky, where he says that the archiepiscopal chair, as well as those of the metropolitans and bishops, were occupied by Bulgars, he adds that they were occupied “*by Serbs also*” (p. 143). Gelzer also says that “the episcopal chairs were occupied by Bulgars and *Serbs*” (p. 16). We have authentic proof that two Serbs occupied the archiepiscopal chair of St. Clement. They were Symeon, who did so in 1550, after having been metropolitan at Raska (see *Ruvarac*, *Raski episkopi i mitropolitni*, Glas S.K. Akademije, 62, 1901, p. 26), and, in

1574, a nephew of the first Serbian patriarch of the Serbian period (see *Ruvarac*, Nochmals M. Sokolovic, *Archiv f. slav. Philologie* X., 1887, p. 49).

The Archbishopric of Ochrida was, therefore, a Greek Church, purely and simply Greek. With very few exceptions the archbishops were Greek, Greek the metropolitans, and Greek the bishops. Greek was also the official language of the Church; the correspondence of the Archbishopric, published by Gelzer, is Greek, and all historians say so, including Drinoff. The Archbishopric was never Bulgarian, from its beginning to its end. Whenever there was the slightest change in its general Greek character it was more in favour of the Serbs than of the Bulgars. And in order to add a word to what was stated in the preceding chapter regarding the reasons why the diocese of Ochrida and others were not incorporated in the new patriarchate of Ipek, one reason must be found in the Greek character of the Church of Ochrida, protected as it was by the Greek Church at Constantinople.

The Bulgars, therefore, did not have their national Church in Macedonia during the sixteenth to eighteenth century, whereas the Serbs did. Ochrida was not for the former what Ipek was for the latter. In order to terminate this long analysis I shall refer to a parallel drawn with regard to Macedonia by Gelzer between the Serbian Church and the Bulgarian Church. "In Ochrida the state of affairs, from a national point of view, was *essentially different* from that at Ipek. In the latter the national Serbian spirit had been exclusively maintained from the patriarchial chair down to those of the bishops. The contrary happened in the case of the Bulgars. Their national patriarchate was that of

Tirnovó, whereas *Ochrida was, in reality, always in the hands of the Greeks*” (p. 150).

And if you wish me to quote an English historian, I refer to Professor Nevill Forbes (“The Balkans, a History, 1915, p. 104). He says: “The patriarchate of Pec was revived (1557). The revival of this centre of national life was momentous; through its agency the Serbian monasteries were restored, ecclesiastical books printed, and priests educated, and, more fortunate than the Bulgarian national Church, which remained under Greek management, it was able to focus the national enthusiasms and aspirations and keep alive with hope the flame of nationality amongst those Serbs who had not emigrated.”

V.—Fourth Period (Recent Epoch).

(The Serbs Liberate Macedonia.)

Where, then, is the Bulgarian epoch of Macedonian history? We have conscientiously searched for it through the centuries, but, with the best faith in the world, we can only find 108 years in the primitive age and sixteen years in the thirteenth century. Perhaps this Bulgarian epoch is to be found in recent history?

It is not necessary for me to insist on the past fifty years of political struggles in Macedonia which preceded the recent Balkan wars. This period, during which the Bulgars attempted, at the cost of all possible machinations, intrigues, ignominies, and crimes, to denationalise our people in Macedonia, and to impose on them the

Bulgarian nationality (happily without result), is sufficiently known in the current political literature of Macedonia. I recommend to my English readers the excellent pamphlet recently published by Mr. Crawford Price, "The Intervention of Bulgaria and the Central Macedonian Question," where he will find a brief, but very truthful, exposé of the question. Personally, I shall refer only briefly to the great historical happenings of the recent Balkan wars.

It is very characteristic, and of interest to those who seek the logical chain of historic events, to note that it was the Serbian Army and not the Bulgarian Army which freed Macedonia from the yoke of Turkish domination. Throughout Serbian Macedonia, from Ishtip in the east to Ochrida in the west, it was always the Serbian soldier who came to free his Macedonian brother, and not the Bulgarian intruder, who had nothing to do there. Only one Bulgarian division put its foot on Macedonian soil during the war of 1912—it was the division of Rilo which passed through Ishtip—and then it only arrived after the Serbian Danube division had received the bread and salt of the population, the traditional offering of the Slavs to their liberators. It is, therefore, into Serbian hands that the Turks gave Macedonia, just as it had been from Serbian hands that the Turks had received it. This is the real logic of historical laws.

* * * *

No, certainly, Macedonia is not Bulgarian. With the exception of a short period in far-away ages, she was always Serb as long as she was Slav. She is likewise Serb to-day. She is, moreover, indispensable to the Serbian State, a circumstance which is generally ignored.

In an admirable essay on Alexander the Great, Edward Freeman characterises this great man not as a conqueror, but as the champion of the West against the East. I believe that the same idea can be applied to the Serbian people. The Serbs are not conquerors. They are simply the champions of the West against the East. Protecting the interests of the West, they fought for centuries against Byzantium, against Turkey, against Bulgaria, which, all of them Oriental States, attempted to invade the West. In this we see the historic mission of the Serbian people.

In order to accomplish this mission, the Serbian State must necessarily possess its ancient and actual Macedonian dominion. For it is there that the strength of the Serbian State lies. Consult history and you will see that Serbia was only strong when she possessed Macedonia, and that the loss of the latter caused the dismemberment of the powerful organism of the ancient Serbian Empire. Macedonia is for Serbia what the hair of his head was for Samson; cut it off and the strength is gone. It is from Macedonia that Alexander the Great accomplished his mission in the history of the world; it is with Macedonia that Serbia will accomplish her mission in the history of the Balkans. Give Serbia all the western provinces of the Peninsula—Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia, and the Slovene countries—and she will not be able to hold them if you refuse to give her Macedonia. There are very few people who realise that the possession of Macedonia by Serbia is in the interest of all the Southern Slavs. The people to whom are given Spalato, Agram, and Laibach must also be given Kriva Palanka, Ishtip, and Radoviste. It is the Vardar river which defends the Isonzo. It is in order to dominate this Macedonian river that the Serbs have struggled throughout their

history, in times of their prosperity as well as in the hours of their need. The first Serbian princes of ancient Raska moved in the direction of the Vardar in their offensive against the Byzantines; the last Serbian rebels of the Pashalik of Belgrade strove to drive the enemy who had taken their dear river from them. Every drop of water of the Vardar was paid for by a drop of Serbian blood.

The Government of my country has declared itself to be prepared to make the indispensable sacrifices in Macedonia. As a simple Serbian citizen, I do not wish to object to what those competent and responsible believe it to be their duty to do. But when I think of the sacrifice, I am haunted by a memory.

During the recent Balkan wars there lay in hospital a seriously wounded Serbian officer, who was told by the surgeons that the only means of recovery were the application to his wound of a living piece of human flesh. One evening, a Serbian soldier, who also was wounded and lay in the same hospital, heard of this curious case. He meditated over it for a long time during the night, and, in his simple and modest soul, he decided to sacrifice himself for his officer. The following morning he declared that he was ready to undergo the operation. The surgeons performed it and the officer was healed.

Serbia is willing to make the same sacrifice. The only difference between her case and that of the soldier is that the latter sacrificed himself for his officer, whose first duty it was to defend him, whereas Serbia is sacrificing herself for her enemy, whose first task it will be to attack her.—I am, etc.,

PAVLE POPOVIC.

September 10th, 1915.

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