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## In the Shackles of the Evil One: The Portrayal of Tsar Symeon I the Great (893-927) in the Oration 'On the Treaty with the Bulgarians'

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Kirił Marinow (Łódź)

**IN THE SHACKLES OF THE EVIL ONE  
THE PORTRAYAL OF TSAR SYMEON I THE GREAT  
(893–927) IN THE ORATION  
*ON THE TREATY WITH THE BULGARIANS***

In this beast there dwelt an innate barbarity and savagery, traits completely alien to Roman blood. And no wonder: his mother came from beyond the Danube.<sup>1</sup>

Lactantius about Galerius, Diocletian's Caesar

Symeon I, the third son of Boris-Michael (852–889), ruler of Bulgaria who was officially baptised in the mid-ninth century, in his youth was educated in Constantinople. He knew the language and Greek/Byzantine culture, and probably was destined to become the head of the Bulgarian Church. However, fate decided that he became the ruler of Bulgaria after his older brother Vladimir (889–893), who betrayed his father's political and religious policies and was overthrown by Boris. Symeon ruled between 893–927, as the first Bulgarian ruler assuming in 913 the title of tsar, or emperor (Gr. βασιλεύς). He was the builder of the new, Christian capital of Bulgaria – Veliki Preslav. As a patron of culture, and being himself an author, he was said to have loved books above all else and wrote many of them personally, as well as played music and sung like the biblical king David (as a contemporary Bulgarian comparison would have it)<sup>2</sup>. The Bulgarian ruler was to be an extraordinarily pious man, leading a humble, even ascetic life. During his reign, the more complicated Glagolitic script was replaced by the Cyrillic alphabet, created in Preslavian literary circles, and from that time onward became the official literary language of the Bulgars. Assessing Symeon I's rule, modern historians write about the *golden age* of mediaeval Bulgarian literature and the creation of the so-called Preslavian Literary School. The tsar turned out to be also an excellent military leader, extending Bulgarian borders to reach three

<sup>1</sup> *Lucii Caecilii liber ad Donatum Confessorum de mortibus persecutorum*, 9, 2, ed. S. BRANDT, G. LAUBMANN, [in:] *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti opera omnia*, pars II, fasc. 2, Praga-Vindobonae-Lipsiae 1897, p. 182, 18 – 183, 2 [= CSEL, 27, fasc. 2].

<sup>2</sup> Л. МИЛЕТИЧ, *Цар Симеон, споменат в един среднобългарски ръкопис*, БП 4, 1898, p. 159.

seas – the Black Sea, the Adriatic and the Aegean. During his reign, Bulgaria was a power on a European scale, he therefore had valid reasons to assume the previously mentioned title of the basileus of the Bulgarians (*βασιλεὺς τῶν Βουλγάρων*), to which, because of his political-ideological aspirations and territorial gains at the expense of the Eastern Roman Empire, he eventually added the expression *καὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων*, or *and (of) the Romans*. He also styled himself as simply the emperor of Romans. He is universally regarded as the greatest ruler of mediaeval Bulgaria, which is reflected in honouring him, the only Bulgarian ruler to be honoured so, with the epithet the Great.

Symeon I's rule posed a significant challenge for Byzantium, especially since during the second half of his reign the empire was going through difficult times, due to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus' (913–959) minority and the government of subsequent regencies, which were implementing conflicting policies towards the northern neighbour. The first clash with the Bulgarian ruler took place already during the reign of emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912), specifically in the years 894–896, and was linked to the violating by the Byzantines of the rights of Bulgarian merchants to display their goods in Constantinople<sup>3</sup>. Undoubtedly, this was negatively affecting not only the economic interests of the Bulgarians, but also the prestige of their ruler, who had to respond to this. Lasting for two years, the war ended with Symeon's victory and the commitment of the Byzantine side to restore the Bulgarian marketplace in the capital city of Byzantium (this happened in 899 at the latest). This first conflict, followed by two decades of relatively good Byzantine-Bulgarian relations (the scholarly discussions bring into question only the actions undertaken by Symeon during 902 and 904), did not seem to presage a real shock that awaited the Byzantines. In retrospect, however, it could be described as a prelude to the great drama of 913–927.

It all began in late 912 or early 913, when the emperor Alexander (912–913) insulted the Bulgarian envoys who came to Constantinople to confirm the peaceful relations of the Bulgarians with the new Byzantine ruler. In retaliation, during the summer of 913, Symeon arrived with his army at the walls of the Byzantine metropolis. The emperor Alexander was already dead by then, and the reign over the empire came into the hands of the minor Constantine VII, son of Leo VI, who was in regency's custody. Some scholars believe that the reason for the Bulgarian ruler's action was not Alexander's scandalous behaviour towards his ambassadors (which would have been merely a convenient pretext for organizing the expedition), but desire to take over the power in Byzantium. From an ideological point of view, both Constantine VII's minority and the recent turmoil surrounding his rights to the throne (arising from the fact that he came from Leo VI's fourth marriage, not recognized by the Church) favoured Symeon. Regardless of whether this assumption is correct, an assault on Constantinople did not take place, and during a formal meeting between Symeon and the leader of the regency board, patriarch Nicholas I Mysticus (901–907, 912–

<sup>3</sup> The Bulgarian market was moved to Thessalonika.

925) the Bulgarian ruler most likely gained the right to using the title of basileus. One of his seals from this period bears the legend Σιμεών βασιλεύς<sup>4</sup>, most likely, however, in an ethnic meaning, that is, basileus of Bulgarians (βασιλεύς τῶν Βουλγάρων, although the scholarly opinions on this matter are divided). He also gained an assurance of peaceful relations with the empire, which was to be guaranteed by the marriage of Constantine VII with one of the daughters of the Bulgarian monarch. Some scholars believe that the last provision could open the way to the real influence on ruling the empire, as thanks to this marriage he gained the right to an honourable and very important title of basileopator (βασιλεοπάτωρ), i.e. *father of the emperor*. This position had a particular importance due to the minority of the Byzantine heir to throne. This view, however, is not convincing to all of the specialists in the field, who, firstly, doubt that the Bulgarian ruler was seeking to gain this title at all and secondly, that as a man from outside of Byzantium and its imperial court circles, had real chances of attaining this honour.

The following year, however, the Constantinopolitan patriarch was removed from the regency, and Zoe Karbonopsina, the recalled from exile mother of Constantine VII, has taken its lead, which led to a change in the political course towards Symeon. The treaty between Nicholas Mysticus and Symeon from 913 was declared void. Faced with this, the Bulgarian tsar began military operations against the empire, which, with varying intensity, lasted for ten years. The most famous Byzantine-Bulgarian battle of this period took place in 917, when the Empress Zoe organized a great expedition against the Bulgarians. Unfortunately for the Byzantines, on August 20 it ended with a debacle of the imperial army by the river Acheloos (near the seaside Anchialos). After this victory, Symeon began systematic raids on the Byzantine territories, taking control over huge swathes of the empire – in Thrace, Macedonia and Greece proper.

Failures of the regency's policies under the leadership of Empress Zoe facilitated elevating to the imperial throne on 17 December 920 (as co-emperor – συμβασιλεύς – of Constantine VII) of the ambitious Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944), commander of the imperial fleet. Lekapenos gained power in the way that, in all likelihood, Symeon himself was hoping for in 913. In 919, supported by the political opposition and troops loyal to himself he attained the position of heteriarch, or the commander of the imperial guard. The following year in May he betrothed his daughter Helen to the under-age ruler, gaining the title of basileopator and forcing Karbonopsina into retiring from political life, and subsequently on 24 September 920 he received the dignity of caesar. At this point only one step was separating him from declaring himself the emperor, and afterwards, on 20 May 921, declaring his eldest son, Christophoros, co-ruler. The Bulgarian ruler contested taking over the power by Lekapenos and continued raids on the empire. It was only on 9 September 924 that, next to the Byzantine capital, Symeon and the new emperor have met. Some scholars believe that the result of this was an agreement, under which the Bulgarian tsar promised to refrain from

<sup>4</sup> Й. ЮРУКОВА, В. ПЕНЧЕВ, *Български средновековни печати и монети*, София 1990, р. 29–30.

further military actions against Byzantium. And indeed, until his death he did so, focusing instead on fighting the allies of Byzantium – Serbs and Croats. Others believe that these talks were to be a prelude to reaching a final peace agreement between the warring states. According to others, the meeting did not lead to any conclusions. Regardless of whether an agreement was made, it remains a fact that Symeon died on 27 May 927, during preparations for another expedition on Constantinople, leaving no doubts as to his intentions towards peace with his southern neighbour<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The literature on Symeon I and various aspects of his reign is extremely abundant. Below I am therefore presenting a selection of works – С. ПАЛАУЗОВ, *Векът на българския цар Симеон*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Избрани трудове в два тома*, vol. I, *Изследвания по история на България и европейския югоизток през средновековието*, ed. В. Гюзелев, Х. Коларов, София 1974, p. 87–202 (the first Russian edition is from 1852); М. ДРИНОВ, *Южные славяне и Византия в X веке*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Избрани съчинения в два тома*, vol. I, *Трудове по българска и славянска история*, ed. И. Дуйчев, София 1971, p. 435–495 (first published in 1875); К. ИРЕЧЕК, *История на българите. С поправки и добавки от самия автор*, ed. П.Х. Петров, София 1978, p. 179–196 (first edition from 1876); В.Н. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *История на Българската държава през средните векове*, vol. I, *Първо българско царство*, pars II, *От славянизацията на държавата до падането на Първото царство (852–1018)*, София 1927, p. 278–515; S. RUNCIMAN, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, London 1930, p. 133–177; Г. ОСТРОГОРСКИ, *Die Krönung Symeons von Bulgarien durch den Patriarchen Nikolaos Mystikos*, ИБАИ 9, 1935, p. 275–287; К. ZAKRZEWSKI, *Historia Bizancjum*, Kraków 2007, p. 180–182, 186–190 (reprint from 1938); П. МУТАФЧИЕВ, *История на българския народ (681–1323)*, ed. В. Гюзелев, София 1986, p. 177–199 (first edition from 1943); G. SERGHERAERT, *Symeon le Grand (893–927)*, Paris 1960; М. ВОИНОВ, *Промяната в българо-византийските отношения при цар Симеон*, ИИИ 18, 1967, p. 147–202; G. SANKOVA-РЕТКОВА, *Der erste Krieg zwischen Bulgarien und Byzanz unter Simeon und die Wiederaufnahme der Handelsbeziehungen zwischen Bulgarien und Konstantinopel*, BF 3, 1968, p. 80–113; G. OSTROGORSKI, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, trans. H. EVERT-KAPPESOWA et al., Warszawa 1968, p. 221–222, 224–229; S. RUNCIMAN, *Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, Cambridge 1969, p. 50–57, 81–101; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Към хронологията на българо-маджарската война при цар Симеон (894–896)*, ВСб 40.6, 1971, p. 20–33; И. ДУЙЧЕВ, *Из писмата на патриарх Николай Мистик*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Българско средновековие. Проучвания върху политическата и културната история на средновековна България*, София 1972, p. 146–152; А. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, *Ἡ συνάντηση Συμεών καὶ Νικολάου Μυστικοῦ (Ἀύγουστος 913) στὰ πλαίσια τοῦ Βυζαντινο-βουλγαρικοῦ ἀνταγωνίσμου*, *Θησαυρόνικη* 1972; R. BROWNING, *Byzantium and Bulgaria. A Comparative Study accross the Early Medieval Frontier*, London 1975, p. 56–69; E. CHRYSOS, *Die „Krönung“ Symeons in Hebdomon*, *Суг* 3, 1975, p. 169–173; Й. АНДРЕЕВ, *Нарышковая надпись князя Симеона и административное устройство болгарского государства в конце IX и начале X в.*, *ЕВ* 14.3, 1978, p. 121–131; I. BOŽILOV, *A propos des rapports bulgare-byzantins sous le tzar Syméon (893–912)*, *ВВг* 6, 1980, p. 73–81; ИДЕМ, *Цар Симеон и Златният век на средновековна България*, ИП 36.1, 1980, p. 5–22; ИДЕМ, *България при цар Симеон. Външнополитически отношения*, [in:] *История на България в четиринадесет тома*, vol. II, *Първо българско царство*, ed. Д. Ангелов, София 1981, p. 278–296; ИДЕМ, *Златният век на цар Симеон*, [in:] *История, изкуство и култура на средновековна България*, ed. В. Гюзелев, София 1981, p. 59–72; Д. АНГЕЛОВ, С. КАШЕВ, Б. ЧОЛПАНОВ, *Българска военна история от Античността до втората четвърт на X в.*, София 1983, p. 254–278; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): Златният век на Средновековна България*, София 1983; J.V.A. FINE JR, *The Early Medieval*

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After the fiasco of attempts to continue the expansionistic policies of Symeon, his son Peter I (927–969) concluded a peace with Byzantium in 927. For the sake of creating a lasting agreement, the empire was willing to go for considerable concessions. It was to pay the Bulgarians an annual tribute. In order to enhance the restored interstate relations, a marriage between the Bulgarian ruler and Maria, granddaughter of Romanos Lekapenos, was arranged. The importance of peace can be seen in

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the new name that Maria took – Irene, or *peace* in Greek. The fact that a foreign ruler married a woman from the imperial family was also a sensation, and for which many years later Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus himself was berating Lekapenos<sup>6</sup>. This indicates just how much the empire cared about concluding this peace. Under its terms, also the imperial title of Peter was recognized, even though it was consistently denied to Symeon after 914<sup>7</sup>.

During the period of aforementioned conflicts, representatives of the Byzantine court corresponded with Symeon. First, in the years 894–896, it was Leo Choirospactes<sup>8</sup>, a diplomat and envoy of the emperor Leo VI. His subsequent interlocutors were Nicholas Mysticus, who was writing to him since 912/913 until his death in 925<sup>9</sup>, and the emperor Roman Lekapenos, or rather writing in his name Theodor Daphnopates (890/900–after 961), the then chief of the imperial Chancery (πρωτοασκηρητης)<sup>10</sup>. Correspondence of these dignitaries, in addition to hagiographic works and the works of Byzantine historians, allows reconstructing the assess-

<sup>6</sup> КОНСТАНТИН БАГРЯНОРОДНЫЙ, *Об управлении империей. Текст, перевод, комментарий*, 13, ed. Г.Г. Литаврин, А.П. Новосельцев, Москва 1991, p. 60, 146 – 64, 194 [= ДИИНСССР].

<sup>7</sup> Д. СТОИМЕНОВ, *Към договора между България и Византия от 927 г.*, Век 1988, 6, p. 19–22; В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, *Значението на брака на цар Петър (927–969) с ромейката Мария-Ирина Лакапина (911–962)*, [in:] *Културните...*, p. 27–33.

<sup>8</sup> И. КУЗНЕЦОВЪ, *Писмата на Льва Магистра и Романа Лакапина и словото „Ἐπί τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει“* като изворъ за историята на Симеоновска България, СЧУНК 16–17, 1900, p. 184, 190–196, 197, 207–220. About Leo vide e.g. G. KOLIAS, *Biographie*, [in:] *Léon Choero-spactès, magistre, proconsul et patrice. Biographie – Correspondance*, ed. et trans. G. KOLIAS, Athens 1939, p. 15–73; М.А. ШАНГИН, *Византийские политические деятели первой половины X века*, [in:] *Византийский сборник*, ed. М.В. Левченко, Москва–Ленинград 1945, p. 228–248; А. КАЗHDAN, *Choirospactes, Leo*, [in:] *ODB*, vol. I, p. 425–426.

<sup>9</sup> И. КУЗНЕЦОВЪ, *op. cit.*, p. 183–190, 197–198, 200–202, 204, 209, 223–230, 235–238, 243, 244; Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Методы византийской дипломатии в отношениях с Болгарией по данным писем Константинопольского патриарха Николая Мистика*, ВИС 1, 1963, p. 60–69; NICHOLAS I PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, *Letters*, ed. et trans. R.J.H. JENKINS, L.G. WESTERNIK, Washington 1973 (cetera: NICHOLAS); А.П. КАЖDАН, *Болгаро-византийские отношения в 912–925 гг. по переписке Николая Мистика (опыт пересмотра хронологии писем)*, ЕВ 13.3, 1976, p. 92–107; L. SIMEONOVA, *Power in Nicholas Mysticus' Letters to Symeon of Bulgaria (Notes on the Political Vocabulary of the Tenth Century Byzantine Statesman)*, Bsl 54, 1993, p. 92–93. On the subject of the patriarch vide e.g. А. КАЗHDAN, *Nicholas I Mystikos*, [in:] *ODB*, vol. II, p. 1466–1467; IDEM, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, ed. Ch. ANGELIDI, Athens 2006, p. 66–75.

<sup>10</sup> В.Н. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *Писмата на византийския императоръ Романа Лакапина до българския царъ Симеона*, СЧУНК 13, 1896, p. 282–322; И. КУЗНЕЦОВЪ, *op. cit.*, p. 196–197, 205; Е. АЛЕКСАНДРОВ, *Дипломатическая переписка царя Симеона с императором Романом Лакапином*, Pbg 14.2, 1990, p. 16–22. On his subject vide e.g. М. СЮЗЮМОВ, *Об историческом труде Θεοδора Дафнопата*, ВОб 2, 1916, p. 295–302; H.-G. BECK, *Kirche un Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München 1959, p. 552–553; THÉODORE DAPHNOPATÈS, *Correspondance*, ed. et trans. J. DARROUZÈS et L.G. WESTERNIK, Paris 1978 (cetera: DAPHNOPATES), p. 1–11; А. КАЗHDAN, *Daphnopates, Theodore*, [in:] *ODB*, vol. I, p. 588; М. SALAMON, *Dafnopata Teodor*, [in:] *Encyclopedia kultury bizantyńskiej*, ed. O. JUREWICZ, Warszawa 2002, p. 133.



ment of the reign of this Bulgarian ruler by the representatives of the ruling circles in Byzantium. A prominent place among the Greek sources depicting the figure of the tsar has also the oration *On the treaty with the Bulgarians* (Ἐπὶ τῆ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει)<sup>11</sup>, which was delivered at the Byzantine court in connection with conclusion of the peace treaty of 927, or soon after this event<sup>12</sup>. In scholarship, there were several suggested attributions of this oration to well-known figures of the Byzantine court and ecclesiastical circles of the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Among them were named such figures as Nicholas Mysticus himself, Niketas Magister or Arethas of Caesarea, one of the animators of the intellectual life of this period. The most likely, however, hypothesis is that the author of the speech was the aforementioned Theodore Daphnopates, an eminent figure in the intellectual environment of the Byzantine capital of the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and the emperor Romanos Lekapenos' personal secretary<sup>13</sup>.

The scholars have undertaken the task of reconstructing the image of Symeon I in the Byzantine written sources before<sup>14</sup>. Despite that, the oration *On the treaty with*

<sup>11</sup> I am using the following critical edition of the text – Ἐπὶ τῆ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει (cetera: Συμβάσει), [in:] I. DUJČEV, *On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians*, DOP 32, 1978, p. 254–288.

<sup>12</sup> R.J.H. JENKINS, *The Peace with Bulgaria (927) celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates*, [in:] *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. WIRTH, Heidelberg 1966, p. 289; 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος „Ἐπὶ τῆ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει”, Βυζ 8, 1976, p. 347–349.

<sup>13</sup> R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 301–302; P. KARLIN-НАУТЕР, *The Homily on the Peace with Bulgaria of 927 and the 'Coronation' of 913*, JÖB 17, 1968, p. 39; I. DUJČEV, *op. cit.*, p. 241–242, 243, 249, 252–253. Cf. Ф.И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *Неизданное церковное слово о болгарско-византийскихъ отноше́нiяхъ въ первой половинѣ X вѣка*, ЛИФО.ВО 4, 1894, p. 99–100; 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος..., p. 351–360.

<sup>14</sup> И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): Златният век...*, p. 151–166; П. АНГЕЛОВ, *България и българите на предците на византийците*, София 1999, p. 182–199; J. BONAREK, *Romajowie i obcy w kronice Jana Skylitzesa. Identyfikacja etniczna Bizantyńczyków i ich stosunek do obcych w świetle kroniki Jana Skylitzesa*, Toruń 2003, p. 138–146; M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek władców Pierwszego Państwa Bułgarskiego w bizantyńskich źródłach pisanych (VIII–pierwsza połowa XII wieku)*, Łódź 2003, p. 89–123. Vide also Л. СИМЕОНОВА, *Образът на българския владетел във византийската книжнина (средата на IX–началото на XI в.)*, [in:] *Представата за „другия” на Балканите*, ed. Н. Данова, В. Димова, М. Калицин, София 1995, p. 20–31. More on portrayal of Bulgarians vide e.g. V. GJUZELEV, *Bulgarien und die Bulgaren in der mittelalterlichen Dichtung (7.–15. Jh.)*, BHR 9.3, 1981, p. 42–72; P. SCHREINER, *Das Bulgarienbild im Europäischen Mittelalter*, EB 18.2, 1982, p. 58–68; T. MORIYASU, *Images des Bulgares au Moyen Age*, [in:] *Studia Slavico-Byzantina et Mediaevalia Europensia*, vol. I, *Studies on the Slavo-Byzantine and West-European Middle Ages. In memoriam Ivan Dujčev*, ed. P. ДИНЕКОВ et al., Sofia 1988, p. 41–43; П. ЖАВОРОНКОВ, *Болгария и болгары в изображении никейских авторов: традиция и трансформация взглядов*, [in:] *Studia Slavico-Byzantina...*, p. 75–78; P. ANGELOV, *The Bulgarians through the Eyes of the Byzantines*, BHR 22.4, 1994, p. 14–33; Г.Г. ЛИТАВИН, *Константин Багрянородный о Болгарии и болгарях*, [in:] *Сборник в чест на акад. Димитър Ангелов*, ed. В. Велков, София 1994, p. 30–37; J. SHEPARD, *A marriage too far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria*, [in:] *The empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the turn of the first millennium*, ed. A. DAVIDS, Cambridge 1995, p. 131, 134, 136–137, 138–139; P. STEPHENSON, *Byzantine Conceptions of Otherness after the Annexation of Bulgaria (1018)*, [in:] *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider. Papres from*

*the Bulgarians*<sup>15</sup> has not been yet subject to a detailed analysis, although the general conclusions put forward by scholars on its basis are essentially correct and coincide. The lack of in-depth examination was most likely influenced by the specificity of the text itself, difficult to interpret as the author did not express his thoughts in a straightforward manner, but rather by referring to the characters and themes of the Holy Scripture and classical literature<sup>16</sup>. It has been pointed out, however, that this does not mean that we are unable to understand the message of the Byzantine rhetorician. Even more than that, because it is possible to attempt an unravelling of even the most subtle allusions<sup>17</sup>. Following the last claim, the aim of this paper is to uncover the views of the oration's creator on the Bulgarian tsar Symeon I.

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I would like to point out that the name of Symeon never once appears in the text, although in several of the passages he is without any doubt identifiable. In some of the other places, the orator talks about the Bulgarian ruler in a more veiled manner, and a number of passages could, hypothetically, be indirect references to him. The image that I intend to present below is composite in nature and is based on a thorough analysis of the account. It is, however, an interpretation. Many of the statements that are presented below have not been expressed directly by the Byzantine rhetorician, but without a doubt, they are a logical consequence of his statements, suggestions and clues provided in the speech. I think that many of them were intelligible, probably with much more clarity, to his immediate audience or Byzantine readers, than they are to us today<sup>18</sup>. I have therefore sought, even though it is extremely difficult and burdened with the danger of overinterpretation<sup>19</sup>, to follow the thoughts of the orator, to attempt reconstruction of his vision of Symeon. I emphasise that these observations do not aspire to exhaust the topic, as a full analysis of all references and allusions to Symeon I expressed by the orator would have considerably exceeded the framework of this, already quite voluminous, paper.

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*the Thirty-second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998*, ed. D.C. СМΥΤΗΕ, Variorum 2000, p. 245–257; J. BONAREK, *op. cit.*, p. 128–156, 169–171, 175–176.

<sup>15</sup> Т. ТОДОРОВ, „Слово за мира с българите” и българо-византийските политически отношения през последните години от управлението на цар Симеон, [in:] *България, българите и техните съседни през вековете. Изследвания и материали от научната конференция в памет на доц. д-р Христо Коларов, 30-31 октомври 1998 г., Велико Търново*, ed. Й. Андреев, Велико Търново 2001, p. 141–150.

<sup>16</sup> *Vide* on this subject the comments of Ф.И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 50–51, 52–53, 94, 100–101; I. ДУЖЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 251; M.J. LESZKA, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>17</sup> R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 288–289.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 299, 302–303.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. comments by M.J. LESZKA, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Here Symeon, like Adam in Eden, succumbed to the Evil One's promptings. He was deluded and deceived, enticed by the vision of the passing glory (δόξης προσκαιρου) and some unnecessary and improper wreath or crown (στεφάνου... περιττού τινος και ακαίρου)<sup>20</sup>. One could say that the Evil One showed Symeon the grandeur, glory and might of the Byzantine Empire and convinced him that this power and splendour could come into his possession, if he would only will it. At once the reader associates this with the temptation of Jesus, whom Satan offered power over the kingdoms of the Earth, in return for a bow. He however resisted the temptation<sup>21</sup>. Unfortunately, Symeon did not do so, and seized on the godless thought of conquering Byzantium and winning the imperial title. I would add that this is perhaps because he did not recognize the one who was suggesting to him these thoughts and aspirations. He did not realize whose goals he was really pursuing. Either way, like disobedience of the first man allowed death and sin to enter the world<sup>22</sup>, so did (because of Bulgarian ruler's improper desires) the oecumene, or the inhabited world, become an easy prey for the Devil<sup>23</sup>. For, having listened to him, Symeon began to fulfill his desire, and thus became a tool in Satan's hands.

Elswhere in his oration, reflecting on the deeper causes of the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict, Daphnopates once again returned to the question of what caused the actions of Symeon himself. He concluded that either the goodness has reached its peak and the time of evil has come so that the balance in the universe could be preserved, or that it was the result of human transgressions, which made themselves known before the Creator<sup>24</sup>. It remained a fact for him, however, that

at once the river of ambition [or: the love of glory – K.M.], the whirlwind [or: hurricane – K.M.] of primacy, downpour, hail – these and others, even more powerful phenomena that shake Haemus and Ister – burst into the archon's soul (αὐτίκα γὰρ ὁ φιλοδοξίας ποταμὸς, ὁ τῆς προεδρίας τυφὼν, ὁ ὑέτος, ἡ νιφάς – οἷα καὶ μάλιστα τὸν Αἰμόν τε καὶ τὸν Ἴστρον κλονεῖ – τῇ τοῦ ἄρχοντος προσεῖρήνη ψυχῇ).<sup>25</sup>

On the margin of this passage (specifically the mention of a *whirlwind*) a later copyist added an obvious identification – Συμεών<sup>26</sup>. Moving on to the interpretation

<sup>20</sup> Συμβάσει, 3, p. 258, 64–68. Cf. commentary in Φ.Ι. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 110–112; R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 298; Ἄ. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, Ὁ Ἀνώνημος..., p. 384, an. to p. 365, v. 12–16.

<sup>21</sup> Mt 4, 8–10.

<sup>22</sup> Rom 5, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Συμβάσει, 3, p. 258, 64–68. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 5, p. 28, 55–57; 24, p. 170, 60–61; 26, p. 182, 23–26.

<sup>24</sup> Συμβάσει, 12, p. 272, 302–274, 307.

<sup>25</sup> Συμβάσει, 12, p. 274, 307–310. I am offering here a translation only minutely different from the one by R.J.H. JENKINS – *ibidem*, p. 275.

<sup>26</sup> Φ.Ι. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 78, an. 3. Cf. Συμβάσει, p. 272; Ἄ. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, Ὁ Ἀνώνημος..., p. 394, an. to p. 372, v. 25–27, who refer this annotation to this whole passage, which

of this passage, it is essential to first state that Haemus mountains (i.e. modern day mountain ranges of Stara Planina, or Balkan mountains, and Sredna Gora) and Ister (the lower Danube) have been mentioned here as the most characteristic and dominant geographical features of the Bulgarian state, separated by the Danubian Plain, the territorial core of early mediaeval Bulgaria. The author clearly states that weather conditions specific to this area, as well as to Haemus mountains and the great river's valley, had an influence on Symeon. It could be said that it was the intensity and ferocity of the atmospheric phenomena of the land in which he was born and grew up, in which the Bulgarian ruler eventually reigned and lived, that shaped his violent personality. It should be also noted, that Christianity condemns yielding to the elements of this world, which were worshiped by pagans as deities<sup>27</sup>, and following one's passions, as it was regarded as a return, of sorts, to the pagan lifestyle. Recalling of this image was to indicate that by yielding to the said phenomena, the Bulgarian ruler was in fact serving them and by this, in a sense, was making them his gods. Therefore if the gods (here taking form of the elements of nature), to whom Symeon was yielding, were violent, arrogant and ambitious, then he must have resembled them in his attitude and behaviour. The author of the oration leaves no doubt as to the fact that the one created in the image and likeness of the Most High, by turning away from the way of peace and towards the conflagration of war, by raising sword against his brethren, becomes once again a follower of the ancient Hellenic gods – warlike, quarrelsome, insidious, etc.<sup>28</sup> Without a doubt, the previously mentioned by the Byzantine orator atmospheric and natural phenomena symbolize the world of such emotions, passions and violent urges. Symeon however, although he should be guided by reason, by what was called the *mind of Christ*<sup>29</sup>, which allows to distinguish between good and evil, God's will, was subject to mundane elements. Succumbing to the passions also negatively characterised many of the ancient Greek thinkers, at least some of whom would have been known to Daphnopates. The ruler of Bulgaria lacked what Hellenes called σωφροσύνη, or temperance, self-mastery, prudence, inner peace and balance, characteristics of a harmonious and internally whole man (Gr. σωφρονικός – a man naturally self-controlled, moderate, moral). Mental balance, virtue, decency, prudence were therefore alien to him, and the lack of these characteristics, so dear to the Greeks, also suggested an excessive form of government – tyranny<sup>30</sup>. Σωφροσύνη

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generally does not change the meaning of this postscript.

<sup>27</sup> Rom 1, 18–32; Col 2, 20; Iudae 12–19.

<sup>28</sup> Συμβάσει, 9, p. 270, 262–267.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor 2, 6–16. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 5, p. 28, 49–54.

<sup>30</sup> On the subject of σωφροσύνη and similar terms *vide* e.g. one of Plato's dialogues – PLATO, ΧΑΡΜΙΔΗΣ [ἡ περὶ σωφροσύνης πειραστικός], [in:] IDEM, *Charmides, Laches, Lysis*, ed. C.F. HERMANN, Lipsiae 1897, p. 1–30; PLATON, *Charmides*, [in:] IDEM, *Ion. Charmides. Lizens*, trans. W. WITWICKI, Kęty 2002, p. 33–34 (from the introduction by W. Witwicki), 37–80 (text with dialogue and comments) and *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. LAMPE, Oxford 1961 (cetera:

was therefore an opposite of yielding to desires and passions, to unbridled temperament, which in the Greek world were considered to be features of the barbarians and the less well born.

In the above passage particularly interesting are the statements about *the love of glory* and about *the whirlwind of primacy*, which were supposed to have shaken and taken over the soul of the Bulgarian. They indicate, according to the rhetorician, that Symeon was filled with pride that made him demand for himself precedence over other rulers, at the same time negating the unique position that the Byzantine emperor had among them. Daphnopates further states that as a result of Symeon's yielding to the aforementioned elements there was a great earthquake (ὁ σεισμός) that was felt even by those who lived past the Pillars of Hercules (that is, Gibraltar – ἐπέκεινα Γαδείρων). Symeon was to victoriously raise high the captured wreath (or crown) and throne (τὸ στέφος καὶ ὁ δίφρος; in other words: to proclaim himself basileus), which according to the orator deprived Europe of the crown and brought destruction to many. Daphnopates calls his actions apostasy (ἡ ἀποστασία), as his proclamation and other things (the author does not specify what things, but he could mean further titles, or deeds that took place after elevation to the imperial dignity) brought about profanation of the sigil, or sign (ἡ σφραγίς). According to Daphnopates, thus evil was born, and Symeon appropriated the harvest (or fruit) of his progenitor (τὰ γεννήματα τοῦ τεκόντος ἐξιδιάζεται), he rejected on the one hand his father, and on the other the spirit (καὶ ἀθετεῖ μὲν τὸν πατέρα, ἀθετεῖ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα) who is the deposit/pledge of his sonship (διοὺ ὁ ἀρραβὼν τῆς υἱότητος)<sup>31</sup>.

The interpretation of this passage may be manifold, and none of the possibilities rule out the others, as they contain related and interconnecting thoughts. Let us, however, go back to the beginning. Symeon's pride has led him to wishing to be equal to the Byzantine emperor, more than that, he wanted to replace him, supplant him and his highest place among the other rulers of oecumene. In my opinion, the Haemus mountains do not appear here by chance at all, as in the Byzantine eyes they were the symbol of Bulgarian haughtiness<sup>32</sup>. Their peaks, in conjunction with the Bulgarian

PGL), p. 1247; *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, rec. H.S. JONES et al., Oxford 1996 (cetera: LSJ), p. 1751–1752 (here further references to the ancient sources); *Słownik grecko-polski*, vol. IV, P-Ω, ed. Z. ABRAMOWICZÓWNA, Warszawa 1965 (cetera: SGP), p. 270–271; *Słownik grecko-polski*, vol. II, Α-Ω, ed. O. JUREWICZ, Warszawa 2001 (cetera: *Słownik*), p. 377–378.

<sup>31</sup> Συμβάσει, 12, p. 274, 310–316.

<sup>32</sup> On this subject vide K. MARINOW, *Hemus jako baza wypadowa i miejsce schronienia w okresie walk o restytucję państwowości bułgarskiej pod koniec XII i na początku XIII wieku*, [in:] *Cesarstwo Bizantyńskie. Dzieje. Religia. Kultura. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi przez uczniów na 70-lecie Jego urodzin*, ed. P. KRUPCZYŃSKI, M.J. LESZKA, Łask–Łódź 2006, p. 183, 186, 192, 194, 197; IDEM, *Dzicy, wyniosli i groźni górale. Wizerunek Bułgarów jako mieszkańców gór w wybranych źródłach greckich VIII–XII w.*, [in:] *Stereotypy bałkańskie. Księga jubileuszowa Profesor Ilony Czamańskiej*, ed. J. PASZKIEWICZ, Z. PENTEK, Poznań 2011, p. 35–45.

ruler's aspirations, must have brought to the minds of Daphnopates' listeners famous passage from Isaiah 14, referred by Byzantine exegetes to rebellion of Lucifer against God. Besides, the Day Star, Son of Dawn, is mentioned there directly:

How is fallen from heaven, the Day Star, which used to rise early in the morning! He was been crushed down into the earth who used to send light to all the nations! You said in your mind, „I will ascend to heaven; I will set my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on a lofty mountain, upon the lofty mountain toward the north; I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” But now you will descend into Hades and into the foundations of the earth.<sup>33</sup>

Does it not harmonize with the further information about Symeon arbitrarily declaring himself basileus, elevating his crown and throne high up? Was the lofty mountain, in which the new emperor of Europe resided, not to be Haemus?! I need to add that exactly the same reasoning, connecting the haughty Bulgarian rulers, who opposed the Byzantine autocrats, with the Haemus mountains that they inhabited, appeared in Byzantine historical sources describing the rebellion of Asen brothers, in the late twelfth century<sup>34</sup>. Just as pride was born in Lucifer's heart, so did it burst into Symeon's soul. Thus he imitated with his behaviour the Prince of Darkness himself. The correctness of this reasoning is confirmed by the fact that in another passage of his speech, the rhetorician directly references the revolt and Lucifer's fall, concluding that he was cast out of heavens to serve as a warning to all others like him<sup>35</sup>. The allusion to Symeon is therefore more than clear. However, this was not enough for Daphnopates, therefore he reached for yet another procedure. The previously mentioned whirlwind, in Greek *ὁ τυφών* (identified by the copyist, as I have mentioned, directly with the Bulgarian ruler), is the word referring to a character from Greek mythology. Typhon, a monstrous creature, half human, half animal, the youngest son of Gaia and Tartarus<sup>36</sup>, and thus a god of darkness, or abyss (which was not without significance to the Christian audience of the oration), with his height and strength surpassed all the other descendants of Earth. From his shoulders grew a hundred dragon heads, and from the waist down he was wrapped around by two giant snakes. Erect, he reached the stars, his arms encircled the whole earth. Winged, he breathed fire, shook the earth, and with his fiery spit he destroyed fields, houses and temples.

<sup>33</sup> Isa 14, 12–15 (English translation – *Isaias*, trans. M. SILVA, [in:] *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, ed. A. PIETERSMA, B.G. WRIGHT, Oxford 2007 [cetera: NETS], p. 835).

<sup>34</sup> More on this subject *vide* K. MARINOW, *Hemus...*, p. 181–199, especially p. 189–190, an. 33.

<sup>35</sup> Συμβάσει, 8, p. 268, 215–217.

<sup>36</sup> According to a different legend, he was a son of Hera, begotten without the participation of a male element; or an offspring of Kronos, born from an egg he fertilised – P. GRIMAL, *Słownik mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej*, trans. M. BRONARSKA et al., intr. J. ŁANOWSKI, <sup>3</sup>Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1997, p. 355; K. KERÉNYI, *Mitologia Greków*, trans. R. RESZKE, Warszawa 2002, p. 30.

Along with Echidna, half woman, half snake, he was also to beget other mythical monsters, including Chimera, Lernean Hydra and Cerberus, and according to some of the ancient authors also Scylla; these also appear in the oration<sup>37</sup>. Identified with the destructive forces of nature, the cause of hurricanes<sup>38</sup>, a fire breathing monster, according to one of versions of the Greek myth he also rebelled against the established order and acted against the Olympic gods, trying to overthrow them and take their place<sup>39</sup>.

Thus, according to our orator, this pagan god and rebel literally came in the form of storms that pulled at the ruler's emotions, and in reality, as a demon, entered Symeon (using the language of the Church: possessed him)<sup>40</sup>. It is no wonder then that the effects of tsar's activity were identical to those done by the legendary beast. The first of these was, mentioned by Daphnopates, a powerful earthquake, felt even beyond the boundaries of the inhabited world. Further, as mentioned by the orator himself, and what more than once Nicholas Mysticus underlined in his correspondence with the Bulgarian tsar, Symeon's troops destroyed farmlands in Byzantine territories, as well as houses, Christian temples and monasteries<sup>41</sup>. In other words, the condition in which Symeon found himself after Typhon entered his soul was the exact opposite of the state of the Roman emperor. According to the political ideology that was being developed in the empire, the Byzantine ruler began to be styled not only emperor *from God* (ἐκ Θεοῦ, i.e. of divine appointment, choosing) but the emperor *in God* (ἐν Θεῷ), which well explains the related term ἐνθεος, or *inspired by God, filled with God, possessed by Him*. It therefore defined the Byzantine monarch as the person who took God into himself. The formula indicated mystical activity of God in the emperor's person and thereafter, through the ruler's person, it was making itself known through his actions<sup>42</sup>. According to

<sup>37</sup> Συμβάσει, 21, p. 284, 469.482.488.

<sup>38</sup> Including typhoons, or tropical cyclones, name of which comes from the English transcription of his name – V. ZAMAROVSKÝ, *Bogowie i herosi mitologii greckiej i rzymskiej*, trans. J. ILLG, L. SPYRKA, J. WANIA, Warszawa 2003, p. 456.

<sup>39</sup> J. PARANDOWSKI, *Mitologia. Wierzenia i podania Greków i Rzymian*, <sup>24</sup>Warszawa 1990, p. 43–44; R. GRAVES, *Mity greckie*, trans. H. KRZECZOWSKI, intr. A. KRAWCZUK, <sup>5</sup>Warszawa 1992, p. 126–128 (36.a–36.4); P. GRIMAL, *op. cit.*, p. 355–356; K. KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 29–31; W. MARKOWSKA, *Mity Greków i Rzymian*, Warszawa 2002, p. 21–22; Z. KUBIAK, *Mitologia Greków i Rzymian*, Warszawa 2003, p. 77–79; V. ZAMAROVSKÝ, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

<sup>40</sup> *Vide e.g.* Mt 12, 45; Mc 5, 2.15; Lc 8, 30; 13, 16; Io 13, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Συμβάσει, 2, p. 256, 40–44; 3, p. 256, 47–53; 7, p. 264, 174–177; NICHOLAS, 14, p. 94, 59 – 96, 77; 24, p. 170, 57–60; 26, p. 182, 22–27.

<sup>42</sup> X. ХУНГЕР, *Империя на ново средище. Християнският дух на византийската култура*, trans. Г. Инджиева, ed. В. Пюзелев, София 2000, p. 91–97; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Византийският...*, p. 122–123. Cf. NICHOLAS, 5, p. 30, 77–80: *The evil man from the evil treasury of his heart bringeth forth evil. The good man from the good treasury of his heart bringeth forth good* (cf. Mt 12, 35; Eng. trans. – NICHOLAS, p. 31).

the analysed message, Symeon was, in turn, *in Typhon*, or rather, Typhon was in him, therefore the Bulgarian ruler was possessed (once again ἐνθεός<sup>43</sup>) by that pagan deity. Undoubtedly this discredited him in the context of the title of the Christian emperor of the Romans that he assumed.

Three more times in the text we will find an allusion to Symeon's-Typhon's activity. Mentioning the Byzantine expedition against Symeon and the defeat of the Byzantine army in the 917 battle of Acheloos, the rhetorician notes that in this way Zoe's regency ignites a fire (ὕπανάπτει τὸ πῦρ), flames of which shone to the times contemporary to when the oration was composed<sup>44</sup>. This statement is, of course, supposed to point to the catastrophic move of the Byzantine government that not only infuriated the Bulgarian ruler but, after he achieved a spectacular victory and weakened the Empire's military forces, allowed him the freedom of action in the Balkan Peninsula. As a result of this, the previously mentioned fire was started, which was eventually extinguished by the diplomatic efforts of Romanos Lekapenos, and the peace treaty of 927. The latter statement is to indicate how severe and long lasting were the effects of the destructive activity of the Bulgarian tsar.

Daphnopates identifies Symeon with fire in general, of course in the context of its destructive force. He specifies that fire is difficult to consume/destroy with fire (δὲ πυρὶ τὸ πῦρ δυσανάλωτον), and for that reason God raised Moses from water (ἐξ ὕδατος ἀναλαμβάνει Θεὸς τὸν Μωσῆν)<sup>45</sup>. Without a doubt, hiding behind the biblical archetype, that is Moses, who having risen from water was to extinguish the flames kindled by Symeon-Typhon, is emperor Romanos Lekapenos. The copyist left no doubt in this matter, who next to the name of Moses noted – Ῥωμανόν<sup>46</sup>. Comparison between the Old Testament prophet, leader and the lawgiver of Israel and the emperor is particularly telling in this passage. The biblical tale of raising Moses from water<sup>47</sup> undoubtedly brought to the listener's, and later readers', minds a link to the military career of Romanos himself, who for a number of years served as a droungarios of the imperial fleet. The new emperor was therefore literally summoned from the water to the empire's rescue<sup>48</sup>. It should be added that also in the myth about Zeus', conqueror of Typhon, birth there appears a motif associated with water, in which Rhea wanted to bathe her son<sup>49</sup>.

Concluding his statement about the talks between Symeon and Romanos Lekapenos in 924, the author stated that like the most savage of beasts (τὰ τῶν θηρίων

<sup>43</sup> On the meaning of this word *vide* LSJ, p. 566; SGP, vol. II, E-K, ed. Z. ABRAMOWICZÓWNA, Warszawa 1960, p. 141; *Słownik*, vol. I, A-K, ed. O. JUREWICZ, Warszawa 2000, p. 307.

<sup>44</sup> Συμβάσει, 14, p. 276, 343–347.

<sup>45</sup> Συμβάσει, 15, p. 276, 348–349.

<sup>46</sup> Συμβάσει, p. 276; Ἁ. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, Ὁ Ἀνώνημος..., p. 399, an. to p. 374, v. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ex 2, 1–6.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 298, 301.

<sup>49</sup> J. PARANDOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 40.



ὠμότερα)<sup>50</sup>, when they cannot reach those who are shooting at them, they begin to fight against the darts (τὰ βέλη, also: javelins), so did he (that is, Symeon), chased off along with his hostility, hurled his bile (or anger) in the forest thickets (τοῖς δρυμοῖς τὸν χόλον ἀπέσκηψε)<sup>51</sup>. Indirectly, this comparison is to underline the powerlessness of the Bulgarian ruler in relation to the Roman emperor, who has driven him away – the savage Bulgarian, unable to effectively carry out his hostile plans towards the Byzantines, is venting his anger on the defenseless nature. This mention should most likely be linked to the source information relating to the cutting of trees by Symeon's army during devastating and burning of Thrace and Macedonia in 924, shortly before the meeting with Romanos Lekapenos<sup>52</sup>. However, due to its placement by the rhetorician after the information about concluding negotiations between the two rules, a different interpretation is possible. In the context of an earlier reference, in which the Bulgarian ruler was named a wild hog, living in the woods<sup>53</sup>, these words can mean that he only showed his anger in Bulgarian territories (in the forests in which he dwelled), which again emphasizes his powerlessness. This time the bile thrown from inside is synonymous with the fire, thrown from the jaws of Typhon. Besides, according to the myth, Zeus also cast at the monster darts of rays (lightning bolts, so also τὰ βέλη), forcing him to flee, and eventually casting him down into the abyss<sup>54</sup>.

It is noteworthy that Typhon appeared in Daphnopates' text in conjunction with the aforementioned Haemus mountains. Moreover, the whirlwind, or hurricane, that he causes is one of the phenomena that, according to the orator, rage among these mountains. There is no doubt that Daphnopates intended this procedure. The learned Byzantine rhetorician was referring in this passage to one of the versions of the myth of Typhon, according to which, during the epic fight with Zeus, the monster reached Thrace and began to hurl the local mountains at the pursuing enemy. Wounded by the Olympian god, he sprinkled with his blood the mountain range, which from that time onward was called Haemus (in classical Greek Haimos – Αἴμος,

<sup>50</sup> Symeon, in yet another passage, is called a *savage/wild animal* (τὸ θηρίον) or, what is more telling, a *predator, monster, beast hostile to man* – Συμβάσει, 15, p. 276, 359. It is worth pointing out that this expression was also used as a curse, meaning *vile beast* – LSJ, p. 800; SGP, vol. II, p. 463; *Słownik*, vol. I, p. 449. To provide a full overview, I am also providing synonyms: θῆρ, θηρὸς – *wild animal*, in plur. *mythical animals, monsters, mythological figures* (cf. the question of Typhon) – LSJ, p. 799; SGP, vol. II, p. 461; *Słownik*, vol. I, p. 449. It is not impossible, that in this oration the author is using the expression τὸ θηρίον (also in plur.) in its ecclesiastical meaning, and therefore referring to e.g. pagan deities, demons appearing under appearances of animals, Antichrist, the Satan himself and his angels – PGL, p. 651–652.

<sup>51</sup> Συμβάσει, 16, p. 278, 369–371.

<sup>52</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, VI, 15, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonnæ 1838 (cetera: THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS), p. 405, 17–20. Cf. P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *op. cit.*, p. 39; 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος...', p. 401, an. to p. 377, v. 25–28.

<sup>53</sup> Συμβάσει, 14, p. 276, 343–346.

<sup>54</sup> W. MARKOWSKA, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

from Gr. αἷμα, that is *blood*)<sup>55</sup>. It is possible that a more veiled reference to Haemus mountains as the place of Symeon's whereabouts is in a passage, which discusses the calamitous Byzantine expedition against Bulgaria in 917. Daphnopates states there that the Byzantines went to hunt wild boars in a forest (κατὰ τοῦ ἐκ δρυμοῦ μονίου)<sup>56</sup>, and it is otherwise known that the Stara Planina mountain range was particularly densely forested during antiquity and middle ages<sup>57</sup>. In addition, the Delphic Python (Snake), occasionally identified with Typhon, the embodiment of the destructive Northern Wind (shown with the tail of a serpent) that fell on Greece from Haemus mountains<sup>58</sup>. This fact can also be indirectly connected with Symeon, who from Stara Planina attacked and ravaged Byzantine territories.

Regardless of whether the latter supposition is correct, considering the above metaphor about Symeon-Typhon, one should remember about the main point – defeated by Zeus, the monster was cast into Tartarus, or buried under Mount Etna (according to a different version of the myth)<sup>59</sup>. Similarly to the aforementioned Lucifer, who was cast down from the heaven into the abyss of Sheol. Typhon's rebellion was the last opposition against the rule of the divine inhabitants of Olympus. The victory of the latter was a *triumph of perfection, nobility and intelligence over the brute and savage bestial strength*<sup>60</sup>. In a sense, Symeon-Typhon therefore represents in the Byzantine rhetorician's oration the old, pagan order, rebelling against the new, Christian one. In other words, anyone who goes against the hierarchy established by the Most High, automatically becomes a tool of demons, again yields to the old, unruly and greedy gods, who want to destroy the divine order and restore the old rule of darkness.

One should note, that this was not the only such characterisation of a Bulgarian ruler in Byzantine literature. John Geometres, a former soldier and a Byzantine poet

<sup>55</sup> J. PARANDOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 44; R. GRAVES, *op. cit.*, p. 127; P. GRIMAL, *op. cit.*, p. 355; K. KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Z. КУБІАК, *op. cit.*, p. 78–79. On the subject of such etymology of the name of the Haemus mountains *vide e.g.* Д. ДЕЧЕВ, *Хемус и Родопи. Принос към старата география на България*, ГСУИФФ 21.10, 1925, p. 1–36.

<sup>56</sup> Συμβάσει, 14, p. 276, 343–346.

<sup>57</sup> On this subject *vide e.g.* Л. ДИНЕВ, Л. МЕЛНИШКИ, *Стара Планина*, София 1962, p. 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 37–39; Г.Д. ДАНОВ, *Средна Гора. Пътеводител*, София 1971, p. 12, 13–14, 23; Н. MARUSZCZAK, *Bulgaria*, Warszawa 1971, p. 160; В. НИКОЛОВ, М. ЙОРДАНОВА, *Планините в България*, София 2002, p. 10, 19–24, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44.

<sup>58</sup> R. GRAVES, *op. cit.*, p. 83, n. 2, p. 127, *przyp.* 1; Z. КУБІАК, *op. cit.*, p. 77. In some of the Byzantine sources Bulgarians were presented as vipers inhabiting Haemus, and Asen, one of the leaders of the anti-Byzantine rebellion of 1185 was compared to a hail and storm cloud, which from that very range fell down on the empire – К. МАРИНОВ, *Hemus...*, p. 190, 193–194, 195.

<sup>59</sup> J. PARANDOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 44; R. GRAVES, *op. cit.*, p. 127; P. GRIMAL, *op. cit.*, p. 355; K. KERÉNYI, *op. cit.*, p. 30; W. MARKOWSKA, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Z. КУБІАК, *op. cit.*, p. 78–79; V. ЗАМАРОВСКЎ, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted after J. PARANDOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, likened tsar Samuel (997–1014), a Bulgarian ruler and one of the so-called Komitopouloi, precisely to Typhon:

Upon high, a comet lit the sky, below cometes [comes – i.e. Samuel – K.M.] burned (πυρπολεῖ) the West [i.e. the Balkan provinces of the Byzantine Empire – K.M.] [...] This terrible Typhon among the villains, burns everything (τὰ πάντα πιμπρᾷ).<sup>61</sup>

Comparison between Samuel and Typhon also brings with it justified mountain connotations, as the Bulgarian ruler inflicted upon the emperor Basil II (976–1025) a severe defeat in the most important gorge of Haemus, through which passed the famous military road (via militaris) connecting Belgrad with Constantinople; this memorable battle took place at so-called Gate of Trajan<sup>62</sup>, on 17 of July 986<sup>63</sup>. The conclusion is all the more justified, because the aforementioned John Geometres dedicated another of his poems to the defeat of the Byzantine at this pass. He cursed in it the treachery of the mountain peaks, among which the emperor feared to face the Bulgarians (including, of course, Samuel)<sup>64</sup>. To conclude, I would like to remind that already in antiquity the Greeks referred to gigantomachy, including the myth about the battle between Zeus and Typhon, as the symbolic representations of their armed struggle against the aggressive and barbaric Asia<sup>65</sup>. Undoubtedly, both of the Byzantine authors, Daphnopates and Geometres, alluded to this image while presenting the struggles of the Eastern Roman Empire against the Bulgarian tsars, who in their opinion were also violent barbarians.

The result of the actions of Symeon described above could only have been the plagues described by the rhetorician – earthquakes (one should keep in mind that this is only a metaphor), depriving Europe of the only true imperial title, inherent to the basileus of Romans (from Byzantine point of view, a real result in the ideological dimension) and, in a most real sense, bringing about the deaths of many people, in other words consequences of war<sup>66</sup>, which Symeon undertook to bring about his *dreams of power*, to quote one of the scholars<sup>67</sup>. Demands and actions of Symeon Daphnopates calls with a very important and powerful word – ἡ ἀποστασία (apostasy), concerning

<sup>61</sup> *Ioannis Geometrae carmina varia argumenti sacri vel historici* (cetera: GEOMETRES), [in:] PG, vol. CVI, col. 920 A. *Vide* also G.N. NIKOLOV, *Bułgarzy i ogień grecki (VII–XI w.)*, [in:] *Byzantina Europaea. Księga Jubileuszowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi*, ed. M. KOKOSZKO, M.J. LESZKA, Łódź 2007, p. 453.

<sup>62</sup> Modern day Ihtiman pass in the Sredna Gora range.

<sup>63</sup> On this subject *vide e.g.* П. МУТАФЧИЕВ, *Старият друм през „Траянови врата”*, СБАН.КИ-ФФО 55.27, 1937, p. 101–125.

<sup>64</sup> GEOMETRES, col. 934 A.

<sup>65</sup> J. PARANDOWSKI, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 298; Ἀ. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΑΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, *Ἄνώνυμος...*, p. 394, an. to p. 372, v. 28.

<sup>67</sup> M.J. LESZKA, *Symeona, władcy Bułgarii, sny o potędze*, TK 64–66.4–6, 2001, p. 6–10.

not only matters of faith, but also being a *terminus technicus* indicating usurpation of imperial power. Symeon was thus in his eyes a usurper, and one that ultimately failed, and therefore acted against God's will<sup>68</sup>. In the text it is clearly stated that during a feast organized by him, Symeon demanded the respect for himself as a Byzantine emperor, and being titled basileus of Romans<sup>69</sup>. The personal attitude of the orator and the evaluation of what happened is equally clear – it is evil (τὸ κακόν)<sup>70</sup>. He states that the Bulgarian appropriated a good that is the title of basileus, and especially of basileus of Romans. A good which he should not have, as a little further in the text the rhetorician clearly states that it is not permissible for a non-Roman to rule over Romans (εἰ μὴ Ῥωμαῖον Ῥωμαίοις ἀπόμοτον)<sup>71</sup>. Daphnopates is willing to grant Symeon only the customary title given by the Byzantines to Bulgarian rulers, namely that of archon of Bulgarians (ἄρχοντας Βουλγάρων), which can be seen in the passage quoted above. This assertion is also confirmed by the correspondence he was conducting between the Bulgarian ruler and emperor Romanos Lekapenos, in which Symeon is being consistently styled archon of Bulgaria, similarly as by the vast majority of Byzantine authors<sup>72</sup>. Especially since Symeon styled himself in such way on his seals until the beginning of the second decade of 10<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Χριστὲ βοήθη Συμεὼν ἄρχοντα Βουλγαρίας)<sup>73</sup>. This means that the Byzantine author did not accept the changes that occurred in the titlature of the Bulgarian ruler after this period. In case of the said sign (ἡ σφραγίς), it can indicate specifically seals of Symeon himself, on which he first styled himself emperor of the Bulgarians, and afterwards emperor of the Bulgarians and Romans, and even Romans alone (e.g. Συμεὼν ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς Ῥομέων/Ῥωμαίων)<sup>74</sup>. In this way he would have been defacing them, assuming titles that did not befit him. He would have depreciated them by placing on them an obvious untruth. The Byzantine symbols of imperial power that were placed on these seals were also defiled<sup>75</sup>. It is very likely,

<sup>68</sup> On the subject of interpreting usurpations by Byzantines *vide* e.g. M.J. LESZKA, *Uzurpacje w Cesarstwie Bizantyńskim w okresie od IV do połowy IX wieku*, Łódź 1999, p. 39–56, 73–80.

<sup>69</sup> These are most likely reminiscences of the events in Constantinople in 913 – R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 299; P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Cf. Ф.И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 115–117.

<sup>70</sup> Συμβάσει, 12, p. 274, 314. Cf. *ibidem*, 4, p. 260, 93; 9, p. 270, 268; 12, p. 272, 303; 21, p. 284, 478. 480; 21, p. 286, 496. 500.

<sup>71</sup> Συμβάσει, 13, p. 274, 320–321.

<sup>72</sup> Г. БАКАЛОВ, *Средновековният...*, p. 163, 166; M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 112, 120–121. Exceptions to this rule were Theophanes Continuatus, Pseudo-Symeon and Theophylact of Ohrid, who graced him with the title of basileus. P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *op. cit.*, p. 29, 38, sees the question of titling Symeon in the oration somewhat differently. Cf. R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>73</sup> И. ЙОРДАНОВ, *Корнус на печатите на средновековна България*, София 2001, p. 40–45; Г. БАКАЛОВ, *Средновековният...*, p. 149. Even in the Old Bulgarian note from 907 Symeon is styled a knyaz, or prince (кнѣзь) – Б. ХРИСТОВА, Д. КАРАДЖОВА, Е. УЗУНОВА, *Бележки на българските книжовници X–XVIII век*, vol. I, X–XV век, София 2003, p. 25, nr 1.

<sup>74</sup> И. ЙОРДАНОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 48–55; Г. БАКАЛОВ, *Средновековният...*, p. 162.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

however, that the sign mentioned in the text simply indicates the Sign of the Cross<sup>76</sup>, the most important symbol of Christianity. In this way, the Bulgarian ruler's rebellion against the Byzantine emperor would have become indirectly, and even directly, a rebellion against God himself. Once redeemed by confession of faith and baptism, now Symeon would have turned away from Christ, denying established by order. The order, in which according to the Byzantine political doctrine the highest position among the rulers of the world was once and for all reserved for the Eastern Roman emperor. Therefore, in a sense, the previously mentioned accusation of apostasy could also apply to this stance of the Bulgarian ruler, this time in its basic, ecclesiastical meaning, which is rejection of the order created by God, opposition to the revealed truth<sup>77</sup>. At least, such truth as was recognized by the Byzantines. The result of all this is that the Bulgarian ruler appears as someone who reached for goods that did not belong to him; as someone who demanded for himself what brought about by Byzantine rulers, the fruit of their labours. He demanded the power over the empire that was entrusted to them, and whose greatness, wealth and glory were their exclusive heritage; the position in the Christian world that belonged to them. Significantly, in this way Symeon became a thief, and one who robs his own parent.

Particularly telling in this context is the last fragment of the cited above passage, which is a clear reference to the so-called spiritual sonship of Bulgarians, especially of the Bulgarian ruler towards the Roman emperor<sup>78</sup>. In one of the earlier passages, characterising the Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict, the orator stated that these were not foreigners who turned against those belonging to a different tribe, nor those speaking a different tongue against those of a different tongue (μη ἀλλογενεῖς ἀλλοφυλοῖς μηδὲ ἀλλογλώσσοις ἀλλόγλωσσοι), but sons against fathers and brothers against brothers and fathers against sons (υἱοὶ δὲ πατράσι καὶ ἀδελφοῖς ἀδελφοί, καὶ πατέρες υἱοῖς ἀντέστημεν)<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΑΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο 'Ανώνυμος λόγος..., p. 394, an. to p. 373, v. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 5, p. 30, 69–73.

<sup>78</sup> F. DÖLGER, *Der Bulgarenherrscher als geistlicher Sohn des byzantinischen Kaisers*, ИИД 16–18, 1940, p. 219–232; IDEM, *Средновековното „семејство на владетелите и народите“ и българският владетел*, СБАН.КИФ 62, 1943, p. 181–222. More on this subject vide G. OSTROGORSKY, *The Byzantine emperor and the Hierarchical World Order*, SEER 35, 1956, p. 1–14; Г.Г. ЛИТАВРИН, *Политическая теория в Византии с середины VII до начала XIII в.*, [in:] *Культура Византии вторая половина VII–XII в.*, ed. З.В. Удальцова, Г.Г. Литаврин, Москва 1989, p. 59–88; Г. БАКАЛОВ, *Ранновизантийската доктрина за властта*, [in:] *Studia protobulgarica et mediaevalia europensia. В чест на професор Веселин Бешевлиев*, ed. К. Попконстантинов, Велико Търново 1993, p. 13–22; X. ХУНГЕР, *op. cit.*, p. 89–149; Ж. ДАГРОН, *Императорът и свещеникът. Етнод върху византийския „цезаропанизъм“*, trans. Ц. Кръстева, София 2006, p. 216–244; D. FEISSEL, *Cesarz i administracja cesarska*, [in:] *Świat Bizancjum*, vol. I, *Cesarstwo Wschodniorzymskie 330–641*, ed. C. MORRISON, trans. A. GRABOŃ, Kraków 2007, p. 97–109; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Византийският...*, p. 116–178; M.J. LESZKA, T. WOLIŃSKA, *Cesarz, dwór i poddani*, [in:] *Konstantynopol-Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyńskim*, ed. IDEM, Warszawa 2011, p. 240–247.

<sup>79</sup> Συμβάσει, 3, p. 258, 55–57. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 11, p. 78, 106–113; 14, p. 96, 80–83; 24, p. 170, 51–54.

Of course, the paragraph does not talk about the subjects of the Constantinopolitan emperor and those of the Bulgarian ruler having a common ethnic origin. Such reasoning was, moreover, alien to the contemporary way of thinking. Daphnopates wanted merely to stress that both the Byzantines and the Bulgarians were of a common faith, belonged to one, Christian, nation<sup>80</sup>. The orator also did not mean that they spoke the same language on a daily basis, although Greek was known at the Bulgarian court, but that they used the same language of faith, that they were of one thought in the matters of religion, praised God with one voice, in harmony. The proof of this is in the last part of the mentioned passage, in which it is claimed that the Bulgarians were Byzantine sons in faith. This kinship, after all, can be understood only in a spiritual, not physical, sense. Using the method of expression typical of the Apostle Paul it can be said that the Byzantines *bore in faith*<sup>81</sup> their northern neighbours, as they were the ones who brought them the light of the Gospel<sup>82</sup>. They were, and still are, their teachers and guides in Christ<sup>83</sup>. Of course, the words about the brotherhood primarily concern the question of faith, the shared Orthodox faith of the Byzantines and Bulgarians. The Bulgarians are therefore both sons and brothers in faith to the Byzantines. They form one house of faith – new Israel, leadership in which, however, is exercised by the Byzantines, because of their seniority. To be capable of taking care for the Bulgarians, they must have an appropriate, and accepted by the latter, authority. Therein lies the problem, because in the light of the order listed by the Byzantine rhetorician, it were the sons who have first risen against the fathers. Of course, the first to do that was Symeon, by rejecting the dominion of his spiritual father, that is, the Byzantine emperor. Then, he drew his subjects into his apostasy. In this way the Bulgarians have become rebels, infringing the established by God order of family relations. Symeon, by rejecting the spiritual fatherhood of the emperor rejected, in fact, God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of Divine sonship<sup>84</sup>. In doing so, he ceased to be a spiritual son, both of the emperor and of God, and therefore, as a consequence, he ceased to be a member of the household of faith, a member of God's family, headed by the Byzantine ruler<sup>85</sup>. He also offended against the fourth commandment, which speaks of honouring the parents<sup>86</sup>, in our case even spiritual ones. I must add that in one of the letters of emperor Romanos Lekapenos to Symeon (written *de facto* by Daphnopates), the Bulgarian ruler is being reprimanded for breaking the peace and going against Byzantium, as in doing so he betrayed the

<sup>80</sup> Eph 2, 11–22; Col 3, 11; 1 Petr 2, 7–9; Αποκ 1, 5–6. Cf. Φ.Ι. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 98–99, 112.

<sup>81</sup> 1 Cor 4, 15.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο 'Ανώνυμος λόγος..., p. 383–384, an. to p. 365, v. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 11, p. 78, 109–113.

<sup>84</sup> Rom 8, 14–15.23; 2 Cor 2, 21–22; 5, 5; Eph 1, 13–14. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 24, p. 170, 53–54. *Vide* also 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο 'Ανώνυμος..., p. 394–395, an. to p. 372, v. 2–4.

<sup>85</sup> *Vide* ΔΑΦΝΟΠΑΤΕΣ, 6, p. 73, 55–62.

<sup>86</sup> Ex 20, 12; Deut 5, 16; Mt 15, 4; 19, 19; Mc 7, 10; 10, 19; Lc 18, 20; Eph 6, 1–3.

will of his real father (in both physical and educational sense)<sup>87</sup>, that is Boris-Michael. He would have also disobeyed his suggestions, he would have (of course from the Byzantine perspective) abandoned the legacy of continuing peaceful relations with the southern neighbour.

Talking about the sonship of the Bulgarians is a reference to the Byzantine concept of hierarchy of rulers and nations, established on earth (Gr. τάξις). Although this element has no direct connection with the biblical texts, it should have some attention devoted to it, as it is closely associated with the question of the above mentioned sonship in faith. At the head of this hierarchy was the Roman emperor, and below him, at different rungs of the hierarchical ladder, were other rulers and nations over whom the basileus exercised spiritual custody, and who owed due respect to him. In this regard, too, the Bulgarian ruler was the emperor's son. Adherence to this τάξις guaranteed stability and blessing of the oecumene, since this order was modelled on the heavenly hierarchy, and was therefore sacred. As such, it was untouchable, unchangeable. Infringing upon it was, in Byzantine thinking, a sacrilege, an act of violence against God's regulations.

As a result of all this, namely the stance adopted by Symeon, striving towards realisation of his ungodly desires, was a conflagration of war, which swept through the Byzantine territories. Daphnopates in many words and very vividly described the misery caused by the war that lasted for many years. He describes the time of war as night, dusk, winter, sickness, exile, wandering, storm and waves of the sea, bitter experiences, crying, sadness, evil, death. Whereas as its opposites he names dawn, day, summer, peace and goodness, and even resurrection<sup>88</sup>. In the light of the arguments presented above on the subject of portrayal of Symeon it can be said that the victims of the war that he waged became οἱ τυφώνιοι – people burnt alive as a sacrifice to Typhon-Symeon. Recalling Byzantine prisoners who were captured in Bulgaria during the war the author states that they lived in remote and waterless, distant lands, deprived of freedom and rule, doomed to the yoke of slavery (τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ ἐξουσίας, τὸν τῆς δουλείας κατακριθέντες ζυγόν)<sup>89</sup>. From the correspondence between emperor Romanos Lekapenos with Symeon we know that some of the prisoners were sold by the Bulgarians into slavery<sup>90</sup>, which undoubtedly was the basis for accusing Symeon of detestable treatment of the Christian captives. It is however also possible that the author of the oration had in this passage meant only the territory of Bulgaria, in which case the statement about the lack of rule exercised over the Romans could be

<sup>87</sup> DAPHNOPATES, 6, p. 73, 55–58.

<sup>88</sup> Συμβάσει, 2–3, p. 254, 22–258, 81; 5, p. 260, 104–110; 6, p. 264, 152–158; 7, p. 264, 171–174 (on a basis of contrast with the situation after establishing of peace); 8, p. 266, 199–202; 12, p. 272, 302–274, 316; 14, p. 276, 343–347; 18, p. 280, 402–413 (on a basis of highlighting the changes after establishing of peace); 20–21, p. 280, 431–286, 498 (here e.g. examples from history, showing to what a war leads).

<sup>89</sup> Συμβάσει, 5, p. 260, 105–108.

<sup>90</sup> DAPHNOPATES, 5, p. 59, 47 – 61, 49.

applied directly to the Bulgarian tsar's rule. The authority imposed on the Byzantine prisoners in such circumstances could not have been a real, legal rule, one that would actually cared about them, an authority granting the right to adopting the title of the *emperor of the Romans*, but would have only be a yoke of slavery. For the Romans who were under his reign he was a tyrant, rather than an emperor. In fact, Symeon was indirectly accused of tyranny by Nicholas Mysticus<sup>91</sup>. Besides, the designation of tyranny was directly linked with accusation of apostasy, that is usurpation<sup>92</sup>.

In the source, the Bulgarian ruler is also referred to as pharaoh, holding the chosen people captive; an evil ruler, whose heart was hardened by God himself to such an extent that he was no longer able to reform. This last statement is to emphasise the finality of God's provision, according to which the Creator has allowed Symeon to do evil until the end of his life, so that the cup of his sins would overflow and that God's just judgements would be fulfilled upon him. And although the Bulgarian ruler oppressed the people of God with the consent of the Most High, it did not mean that he will not be severely punished for his actions, similarly to the pharaoh from the Old Testament story about the exodus of Israelites from Egypt. This was happening so that the punishment imposed on Symeon was more severe. It is not without significance that Egypt, according to the message of the Old and New Testament, symbolised a land of injustice, captivity and darkness, and its ruler was considered the personification of Satan. The fact that it was God himself who hardened Symeon's heart emphasised the ruler's persistence in adhering to evil, the stance and state of mind that no rational arguments can change. And yet so many of them were used by the Byzantine diplomacy, as it tried so eminently to influence the Bulgarian, to speak to his reason, to move his Christian conscience<sup>93</sup>. It is possible that Daphnopates' assertion is somewhat representative of the frustration and resignation of the Constantinopolitan court, which lost the faith in the meaning of any discussion with Symeon<sup>94</sup>. It is certain, however, that it expresses the sudden flash of insight of the Byzantines who understood that the matter of Symeon is no longer, or rather never was, in their capacity, but that it was a matter of divine judgements. And if so, then there was no reason to worry, since knowing the end of the biblical pharaoh, who was opposing God, it is not difficult to guess what end awaited the Bulgarian monarch. Just as pharaoh opposed God's decision that allowed Israelites to depart from Egypt, so did Symeon went against laws, rules and hierarchies that the Most High established on earth. If so, then God himself will oppose him, and there-

<sup>91</sup> NICHOLAS, 5, p. 28, 58 – 30, 94; 11, p. 78, 100–102, 113–120. Commentary in L. SIMEONOVA, *op. cit.*, p. 92–93; M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 106–107.

<sup>92</sup> *Vide e.g.* И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Асеневици: Renovatio imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum*, [in:] IDEM, *Седм...*, p. 142–148.

<sup>93</sup> The diversity of Byzantine diplomatic efforts is mentioned by the rhetorician himself – Συμβάσει, 15, p. 276, 356–361. Cf. comments by R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>94</sup> So thinks M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 112–113.



fore the Bulgarian will be in fact fighting not against the Byzantines, but against God himself. This interpretation is supported by a passage from a letter of Lekapenos to the Bulgarian tsar, in which the emperor states as follows:

(...) I know that and I am entirely sure, having heard it from pious and holy men, that even if you wanted to make peace, you could not manage it – to such an extent God has hardened your heart, in order to prove on you his power.<sup>95</sup>

Of course, writing this letter during the Bulgarian ruler's life, Daphnopates could not have been certain that Symeon would not change his attitude. More than that, he might have used this, clear to his interlocutor passage, to inspire in him the desire to prove that he is not a puppet in the hands of Fate and that he can change his attitude, to prove that he is still his own master, a free man, in whom the Most High still has liking. During the writing and delivering the oration *On the treaty with the Bulgarians*, however, he already knew that Symeon remained faithful to his chosen path. He could therefore freely compare him to the infamous character of the Egyptian pharaoh from the pages of the Scripture.

Symeon is also characterised as Goliath, who, full of pride and surrounded by the army, arrives to talk with David, here the emperor Romanos Lekapenos<sup>96</sup>. In short, orator wants to highlight that Symeon was haughty and sure of himself, as he placed trust in his own power and the strength of his army. So did the biblical Goliath, who not only insulted the Israeli warriors while boasting his might, but in reality also defied God himself (as David was to say: *who reproached the ranks of the living God*<sup>97</sup>). Against him and his solely human (and at the same time pagan) might stood David alone, who put his trust only in God Almighty; and that is why he won<sup>98</sup>. According to the Byzantine rhetorician, the victory lay in that, despite the initial self-confidence, haughtiness and verbosity, Symeon humbly listened to what the Byzantine emperor had to say. He agreed to continue the peace talks and on the following day, having not achieved what he really wanted, he left<sup>99</sup>. While mentioning the negotiations, Daphnopates allowed himself to evaluate the behaviour and linguistic skills of the Bulgarian tsar, indicating that he was talking a lot like a barbarian, and even more in broken Greek (*καὶ πολλὰ μὲν βαρβαρίζων, πλείω δὲ σολοικίζων*)<sup>100</sup>. There is no doubt that

<sup>95</sup> ΔΑΦΝΟΠΑΤΗΣ, 5, p. 67, 149–152.

<sup>96</sup> Συμβάσει, 16, p. 278, 366–367.

<sup>97</sup> 1 Reg 17, 36b (Eng. trans. – 1 *Reigns*, trans. B.A. TAYLOR, [in:] NETS, p. 261). Cf. 1 Reg 17, 45b.

<sup>98</sup> 1 Reg 17, 1–54.

<sup>99</sup> Συμβάσει, 16, p. 276, 362 – 278, 369. Cf. THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, VI, 15, p. 408, 2 – 409, 8, and the interpretation of the text by R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>100</sup> Συμβάσει, 16, p. 278, 367–368. Commentary in P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *op. cit.*, p. 39; 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΑΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο 'Ανώνυμος λόγος..., p. 401, an. to p. 377, v. 24; I. DUJČEV, *op. cit.*, p. 248, 294, an. to v. 368.

this passage was an expression of the Byzantine orator's dismissive attitude towards the Bulgarian tsar's learning (all in all a pupil of the Constantinopolitan school located at the Magnaura palace<sup>101</sup>); besides, it once again emphasised his barbarity.

According to Daphnopates, Symeon is one of the western wolves (τοὺς ἐσπερίους λύκους)<sup>102</sup>, the name with which the orator calls the Bulgarians<sup>103</sup>. According to him, these predators are more fervent and bold from the eastern wolves (probably meaning Arabs). The Bulgarian ruler is also the sower and keeper of weeds (τὸν τῶν ζιζανίων σπορέα καὶ φύλακα)<sup>104</sup>. In the latter case, the expression used is directly related to the parable from the Gospel according to Matthew. According to it, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a field, in which the owner has sown good seed, hoping for a good and abundant harvest. Under the cover of darkness, however, the owner's enemy arrives and sows weeds (τὰ ζιζάνια) among the wheat. As a result, the servants of the owner cannot remove the weeds without damaging the wheat. For this reason, wheat and weeds grow together until harvest, because then they will be easier to separate. On the day of harvest, first the weeds are gathered and burnt, then the wheat is gathered and stored in the granary<sup>105</sup>. The explanation of this parable reveals at a glance the message that the Byzantine orator wished to include in his work, hence I am quoting it in full:

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man [i.e. Jesus Christ – K.M.]; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.<sup>106</sup>

Thus Daphnopates compares the Bulgarian tsar to the Devil, who tries to thwart and frustrate God's perfect plans. He puts him in a stark opposition to the *sons of justice*. Symeon is therefore a son of night, since that is when he sneaks on someone else's field and under the cover of darkness performs his criminal deeds. The phrase about the keeper of the weeds means that he cares for the *proper* growth and development of his grain, that is, all depravity and iniquity. He is polluting and

<sup>101</sup> More on Symeon's education – X. ТРЕНДАФИЛОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 19–49.

<sup>102</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 168–169.

<sup>103</sup> R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 297. Cf. 'Α. ΣΤΑΥΡΙΔΟΥ-ΖΑΦΡΑΚΑ, 'Ο 'Ανώνυμος λόγος..., p. 389, an. to p. 368, v. 15–18.

<sup>104</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 171–172.

<sup>105</sup> Mt 13, 24–30.

<sup>106</sup> Mt 13, 37–43 (Eng. trans. – *The Gospel according to Matthew*, [in:] *The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Anglicized Edition*, ed. B.M. METZGER, <sup>2</sup>Oxford 1995, p. 14).

poisoning the good sowing of the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations, which was made at the time of accepting of the official baptism by Boris-Michael and establishing of a solid peace between the two states. Thus, he is destroying God's work. This is however not only an annihilation of the existing political agreement; Symeon was primarily presented as a destroyer of the house of Jacob, the house of God, and thus the unity of the spiritual Israel, of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church community<sup>107</sup>; as a false prophet, sower of lies and discord. He was the cause behind the split between the brothers in the faith, the Byzantines and Bulgarians. Moreover, anyone who causes division and scandal in the House of Lord, the remaining faithful should avoid, and leave him, because he does not serve Christ, but his own desires. It is a man who yields to his senses, devoid of the Spirit of God<sup>108</sup>. The passages in which the orator condemns those who are lovers of war are indirectly referring to him. It can therefore be concluded that Symeon is a sower of discord<sup>109</sup>, murderer, fratricide<sup>110</sup>, and committed sacrilege (the rhetorician mentions burnt icons, scattered relics of saints, which fell prey to dogs and crows, and priests abducted into slavery straight from the altar, etc.)<sup>111</sup>. Daphnopates explicitly writes about his lies, hiding his true intentions<sup>112</sup>, not fulfilling agreements and instability in his proceedings (the orator calls Symeon – ὁ πολύτροπος – evasive, sly and inconsistent)<sup>113</sup>.

The Bulgarian tsar was also called new Ader (ὁ νέος Ἄδερ)<sup>114</sup>, or the biblical Hader/Hadad, and thus the first adversary (lit. satan<sup>115</sup>), who went against king Solomon, representing in the text the Byzantine emperor. At least, this interpretation is accepted by all of the oration's commentators<sup>116</sup>. Now, according to the biblical ac-

<sup>107</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 171–174; 22, p. 288, 526–528. Also in the literal sense – as a destroyer of churches and monasteries, which was already mentioned.

<sup>108</sup> Rom 16, 17–18; Iudae 17–19.

<sup>109</sup> Συμβάσει, 8, p. 266, 199.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 11, p. 78, 115–120.

<sup>111</sup> Συμβάσει, 3, p. 256, 47–53. Vide also DAPHNOPATES, 7, p. 83, 40–43.

<sup>112</sup> Συμβάσει, 13, p. 274, 317–325.

<sup>113</sup> Συμβάσει, 15, p. 276, 360–361.

<sup>114</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 172.

<sup>115</sup> 3 Reg 11, 14. Both in the original Hebrew of the OT and in the used in Byzantium *Septuagint* (for critical editions of the text – *Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum*, vol. I–XXIV, Göttingen 1931–2006; *Septuaginta, id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, vol. I–II, ed. A. RAHLFS, Stuttgart 1935), in this place can be found the term directly indicating God's main adversary. The same word was used in the passages where there is no doubt that Satan is meant (in the *Septuagint*, the related διάβολος was used) – vide e.g. Iob 1, 6.9.12; 2, 1.2.4; 1 Par 21, 1 – *NLT Study Bible*, <sup>2</sup>Carol Stream 2008 (cetera: NLT), p. 596, 713, 856–858. Hebrews also used this word as a specialist term for an adversary and a prosecutor at a royal court, alluding thusly to his demonic character (NLT, p. 857). For Daphnopates however this term must have unequivocally been related to the Devil.

<sup>116</sup> Ф.И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 68, an. 1; I. ДУЏЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 264, an. 60; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): Златният век...*, p. 158; П. АНГЕЛОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 190; M.J. LESZKA,

count, Hadad was a ruler of the hostile kingdom of Edom, and he dedicated his reign to the fight with Israel. This stemmed from the fact that Edom was previously conquered by Israel, and all its men were slain. Hailing from the royal family, Hadad, then a little boy, along with a handful of courtiers escaped and took refuge in Egypt. Sometime later, instigating rebellion (most likely with the support of the Egyptians), he regained power in Edom and dedicated himself to fighting with Solomon, rejecting his previous sovereignty<sup>117</sup>. The biblical author summed this up in the following words: *And Hader returned to his land. This was the evil which Hader did, and he was indignant with Israel, and he reigned in the land of Edom*<sup>118</sup>. In this way Israel lost, at least for a time, the control over territories previously won by king David. Interestingly, however, the biblical text states that God himself has roused Hadad, to make him a tool of punishment for Solomon's derogations<sup>119</sup>. This does not, however, absolve Hadad himself, who was after all a rebel, pagan and a worshipper of demons (and, as is clear from the text, who was likened to Satan), whom Yahweh merely used, utilising his personal hatred towards the Israelis, for the punishment of the unfaithful servant (Solomon). Besides, the statement that God has roused Hadad should not be understood literally. In fact, his desire for revenge and hatred for Israel had a demonic base, and it was the Satan who directed his actions. Stating that God was behind this, the biblical author merely expressed his deep conviction that even the Devil can only act with the consent of the Most High. In other words, the phrase that God roused or stirred him meant, in this case, that he allowed Hadad to give in to the evil purpose<sup>120</sup>. It is also worth pointing out that, like the biblical author judged Hadad's actions (ἡ κακία – lit. vice, moral evil), so did Daphnopates described Symeon's actions as evil. Therefore even if Symeon-Hadad was supposed to take the role of *scourge of God* against the Byzantines, because of their sins (or rather because of the sins of the Byzantine governments from before 920), then he should not transgress beyond the boundaries of this, appointed to him by the Most High, task – making the inhabitants of the empire repent. For Daphnopates, this repentance clearly came in the shape of Romanos Lekapenos' ascension to the throne.

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*Wizerunek...*, p. 121, an. 161.

<sup>117</sup> I. Bozhilov's assertion that Ader/Hadad first unsuccessfully rebelled against Solomon and then fled to Egypt is therefore not correct (*Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): Златният век...*, p. 158). First, during the period just before the escape he was a little boy, he was therefore not likely to be the leader of the rebellion; besides during the time of his escape to the west, the ruler who reigned in Israel and raided Edom was David, father of Solomon. Therefore Hadad's rebellion should be associated with his return from Egypt to Edom, at the time when Solomon was already the king of Israel – A. TSCHIRSCHNITZ, *Dzieje ludów biblijnych*, Warszawa 1994, p. 147–148, 240.

<sup>118</sup> 3 Reg 11, 22b–25 (Eng. trans. – 3 *Reigns*, trans. P.D. McLEAN (Kaige), B.A. TAYLOR (OG), [in:] NETS, p. 308). *Vide* also 2 Reg 8, 13–14; 1 Par 18, 12–13.

<sup>119</sup> 3 Reg 11, 1–25.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. e.g. 2 Reg 24, 1 and 1 Par 21, 1, which, discussing the same events, point to a different originator.

But we cannot rule out yet another identification of Ader, namely, the one linking him with the biblical Ben-Hadad II, king of Aram (865–842 BCE)<sup>121</sup> and a long-time enemy of Israel during the reign of kings – Ahab (871–852 BCE), Ahaziah (852–851 BCE), Joram (851–845 BCE) and Jehu (845–818 BCE). Comparison of Symeon to this character is very clear. Here is the ruler of a foreign, pagan country, who went against the kingdom of Israel (i.e. the northern Jewish state, after the division) twice and besieged Samaria, the capital of this state<sup>122</sup>. Importantly, during the first expedition against Ahab, king of Israel, he demanded for himself Ahab's silver, gold and his most beautiful wives and children. In addition, he ordered the king to give back to Arameans all of the valuables that belonged to his subjects. Upon Ahab's refusal, he sent out an armed expedition against Israel. The invasion of the enemy king, however, was repulsed; what is more, the king himself was taken into captivity, from which he was soon released<sup>123</sup>. Returning to the thought earlier expressed by Daphnopates, Ben-Hadad, like Symeon, stretched out his hand for the good that did not belong to him, for the harvest/fruit of the kings of Israel. Just as in the case of Symeon (of course, in the rhetorician's opinion), the pride of the king of Aram was thus emphasised. Sometime later, he organised an expedition to Samaria and subjected it to a long lasting siege. However, Yahweh himself interceded for his people, and miraculously chased off the Aramean army, without the Israelis needing to fight<sup>124</sup>. It cannot be ruled out that it was this particular episode that the Byzantine orator was thinking of when he said that it is impossible to know the means of the one<sup>125</sup>, who without the use of force (lit. *iron, weapons*) during the whole life overruled and kept back Ader, that is, Hadad-Symeon (δύχα σιδήρου διὰ βίου τὸν Ἄδερ ὑπεκράτει τε καὶ ἀνέστελλεν)<sup>126</sup>, preventing him from achieving his wicked goals.

<sup>121</sup> *Septuagint*, in accordance to the Hebrew wording of his name, describes him as the *son of Ader*. Naming him in such way it underlined the fact that as the *son of Ader/Hadad* (Hadad – here a pagan deity), Ben-Hadad was in his behaviour the same as his *parent*. On the subject of Ben-Hadad II himself *vide* A. TSCHIRSCHNITZ, *op. cit.*, p. 68–69, 161, 249.

<sup>122</sup> Some of the modern biblical scholars think that in fact the second siege of Samaria and victory over Joram at Ramon Gilead was the deed of Hazael, Ben-Hadad's successor – *vide* A. TSCHIRSCHNITZ, *op. cit.*, p. 161. Regardless of whether this opinion is correct, Byzantine readers of the Bible could not have possessed such knowledge and linked these events with Ben-Hadad.

<sup>123</sup> 3 Reg 21 (20), 1–43.

<sup>124</sup> 4 Reg 6, 24–7, 20.

<sup>125</sup> It is difficult to understand from the text of whom the rhetorician is thinking – Θ.Ι. Успенскій, *op. cit.*, p. 115–117. R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 299–300 thought that he meant the patriarch Nicholas Mysticus, while P. KARLIN-HAYTER, *op. cit.*, p. 30–31, that it was emperor Leo VI, which I find more convincing. Ultimately, however, the one who stopped Ader was God, an indication of which might be the statement that it is not possible to know the means with which Ader was being kept back. Cf. *Leonis VI Tactica*, XVIII, 40, ed. et trans. G. DENNIS, Washingtoniae D.C. 2010, p. 452, 210–221 [= CFHB, 49].

<sup>126</sup> Συμβάσει, 13, p. 274, 324–326.

Symeon is also a contemporary Holophernes (ὁ καινός Ὀλοφέρνης)<sup>127</sup>, the commander of armies of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE)<sup>128</sup>, who in the Old Testament account was presented as the ruler of Assyria. On the ruler's order, Holophernes gathered a massive army, with which he moved against all of the lands in the west, mercilessly conquering, plundering, ravaging these lands and murdering their inhabitants. Moreover, all of this happened because they did not acknowledge Nebuchadnezzar as the only true deity. For that reason, destroying local temples was of particular significance to Holophernes. All of the lands were in his power. At the news of this, the Israelites *became most exceedingly frightened by his visage and distressed for Ierusalem and the shrine of the Lord their God*<sup>129</sup>. They have therefore turned to God for help in prayer, they also started to prepare for defence. Despite the warning that should not go against the Israelites, since they lived in inaccessible mountains and their God, who hated iniquity (an allusion to the Assyrian's actions), kept watch over them, Holophernes undertook an expedition against Israel. He did not, however, went further in his march than the mountain town of Betulia; under its walls God's punishment reached him. Judith, a pious Israelite, who pretended to have fled from the besieged settlement, cut off his head<sup>130</sup>. The biblical author presents the Assyrian general as a worshiper of the pagan gods (or rather, of a man – king Nebuchadnezzar), a cruel, boastful and confident man, devoid of honour and reverence to the true God. An evil man, who suffered a deserved punishment for his actions<sup>131</sup>. Undoubtedly, throughout this whole story many similarities with Symeon can be found. For Daphnopates, Bulgarian ruler appears as a contemporary cruel conqueror, who wanted to impose his will on Byzantium with brute force. He is a contemporary barbarian, who raised his hand against the chosen people, the *new Israel*, that is, the subjects of the Byzantine emperor. It is again indicated, that he is primarily a destroyer of temples, including the most important one – the temple of the Lord, no doubt understood as the whole community of the Church. But, like in the Assyrian's case, even such a great conqueror as Symeon was to be eventually punished<sup>132</sup>. It is noteworthy that the Bulgarian ruler was also warned that by waging an unjust war against the most Christian empire, he will bring upon himself an inglorious end<sup>133</sup>. The story associated with the death of Holophernes undoubtedly is a reference to the legend, widespread in the Byzantine capital, about the death of the Bulgarian ruler. According to it,

<sup>127</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 172–173. On the margin of the manuscript, by the mention of the new Ader and the contemporary Holophernes, there is a note: Συμεών ὁ Σκόθης – ibidem, p. 264.

<sup>128</sup> I. ДУЖЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 264, an. 61; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): Златният век...*, p. 158.

<sup>129</sup> Iud 4, 2 (Eng. trans. – *Ioudith*, trans. C. BOYD-TAYLOR, [in:] NETS, p. 446).

<sup>130</sup> Iud 2–3, 5–7, 10–13.

<sup>131</sup> M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 122, an. 162.

<sup>132</sup> П. АНГЕЛОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 190–191.

<sup>133</sup> ДАРΗΝΟΡΑΤΕS, 5, p. 61, 51–57; 7, p. 85, 68–74.

when John the astronomer saw the emperor Romanos [Lekapenos – K.M.], he said to him thusly: *Sire, the statue set in the arc on the (hill) Xerolophos, looking towards the west, is (a likeness of) Symeon; if you were to cut off its head, then at the same time Symeon would die.* The emperor Romanos ordered at night the statue's head to be cut off, and at the time Symeon died in Bulgaria.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, as was in the case of Ader, God himself saw it to remove Symeon, who was an obstacle for concluding a strong peace treaty between the Byzantines and Bulgarians, and of rebuilding the unity of the spiritual Israel<sup>135</sup>.

It appears that a different passage of the speech may be an indirect reference to Symeon. In it, the rhetorician is considering the question of enmity (της ἐχθρας) and its implications. In earlier parts of his work the author did not leave his listeners, and later readers, any doubt that the Bulgarian tsar was hostile towards Byzantium, and that the war was the meaning of his existence. And here, Daphnopates states:

And who (unless he were more foolish than Korybos) would not think her [i.e. the hostility – K.M.] hateful, deathly, more monstrous than Hydra's or Scylla's own self, more monstrous than all monsters? Unsocial, lawless [also: wicked, godless – K.M.], a proper madman, replete with drunken torpor and folly, is he who loves division and wars (και τις ει μη Κορύβου ἡλιθιώτερος οὐκ ἀποτρόπαιον αὐτήν, οὐκ ὀλέθριον, οὐ τῆς Ὑδρας αὐτῆς, Σκύλλης αὐτῆς, οὐ πάντων ἀτόπων ἀτοπωτέραν ἠγησοίτο; ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος καὶ παράκοπος ὄντως καὶ κάρου καὶ παροινίας ἀνάπλευς, ὁ διχοστασίας καὶ πολέμων ἐρών).<sup>136</sup>

The fact that hostility and love of war have been characterised as more hideous than the offspring of Typhon and Echidna is noteworthy. They are thus the manifestation of the most monstrous activity of Symeon-Typhon. It should be therefore understood that the war started by the Bulgarian monarch, and the goals which he wanted to attain with its help, deserve condemnation which cannot be expressed in words. The orator implies that neither he himself, nor any other civilised man, is able to give a rational explanation for such passion for the horrors of war. He therefore concludes that its eulogist can only be someone outside the margin of society, a man disrespecting divine laws, even deranged, intoxicated, either with alcohol, or in spirit, in this case without a doubt under demonic influence. In other words, a man not acting according to reason. Daphnopates further in the text states that this passion is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and the pagan wisdom<sup>137</sup>. The love of discord and war were not acci-

<sup>134</sup> THEOPHANES CONTINUATUS, VI, 21, p. 411, 17 – 412, 1. The thread of this legend was recently analysed by B. ВАРКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 79–80.

<sup>135</sup> Συμβάσει, 7, p. 264, 171–174.

<sup>136</sup> Συμβάσει, 21, p. 284, 466–472 (translation after R.J.H. JENKINS – *ibidem*, p. 285).

<sup>137</sup> Συμβάσει, 21, p. 284, 472–473. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 11, p. 78, 103–106.

dentally called in this text with a word ἔρωϛ, used in the Greek literature to mean physical love, lust or desire<sup>138</sup>. Something that was earthy, violent, unclean, so to speak, filthy – because the love of war could not be a merit of a real Christian. In this way the rhetorician once again stresses, that such people as the Bulgarian ruler are driven by low, primitive inclinations, that they derive animal satisfaction from creating a split between Christians and from the spilling of Byzantine blood. Again, this points to the rudeness of Symeon's nature, who does not, or does not want to, understand that a war, especially with his brother in faith, is evil. When Symeon was finally persuaded, and agreed to the peace talks (924), by the new Moses and saviour of the Byzantine empire, who freed the empire from the Egypt's yoke (i.e. from the Bulgarians, or rather from Symeon), that is, by the droungarios of the fleet, the new emperor Romanos Lekapenos, with God's will he did not live to see the advent of permanent peace (927). The author explains this fact by referring to the story of the Old Testament king David and his desire to build a temple for Yahweh. Unfortunately, God could not have allowed him to do so, because in youth David's hands were stained with blood, which precluded his participation in this honourable endeavour<sup>139</sup>. Only the pure, undefiled hands can be used for building a sanctuary of peace, in which the Most High would accept praise and thanksgiving. Because of this, like Solomon, son of David, completed this task, so did in 927 Peter, son of Symeon, conclude the peace with Byzantium; Symeon, as a man who spilled a lot of brotherly, Christian blood, could not erect a shrine to the Lord<sup>140</sup>. It remains to guess whether the figures of David and Solomon were mentioned only because of the simple similarity of situation (the son completes the work that the father could not), or whether the orator was directed by a deeper motivation. Is it only a simple reference to David, as the typical for the era archetype of the ruler, and therefore an acknowledgement from the Byzantine orator for the obvious fact, that Symeon was simply a monarch? Or is there hidden behind this an explicit reference to the way in which Symeon was being presented at his own, Preslavian, court? And if so, could Daphnopates really have had the knowledge that the Bulgarian tsar was being praised as the new David and compared, of course in a positive meaning, by those surrounding him to the great Old Testament king? If so, then in this passage of the oration he undoubtedly allowed himself to indulge in a rather mordacious emphasising of the darker sides of the well-known Israeli ruler's reign, which fitted well with the general picture of Symeon which he tried to create in his work. If it was therefore God himself who made it impossible for the tsar to conclude peace, then this fact

<sup>138</sup> LSJ, p. 695; SGP, vol. II, p. 313–314; *Słownik*, vol. I, p. 385.

<sup>139</sup> *Vide* e.g. 2 Reg 16, 5–11; 3 Reg 5, 17–19; 8, 15–19; 1 Par 22, 7–10 Cf. also R.J.H. JENKINS, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>140</sup> Συμβάσει, 16, p. 278, 371–378. Cf. Ф.И. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *op. cit.*, p. 102.



emphasised once again just how defiled a man was the Bulgarian ruler. It could be said that in his belligerence he went so far that he was unable to return to the way of peace. Additionally, according to the orator, God personally made sure that he could not repent, which was clearly to be a warning for the future enemies of Byzantium, who should remember on whose side the Most High is, and what are the consequences of going against the empire. Undoubtedly. However, by weaving into his statement the analogy with David, whom God forbade to build the temple, Daphnopates tried to explain to himself and to his listeners Symeons obduracy in the matter of concluding the peace<sup>141</sup>.

What was the ultimate end of Symeon according to the Byzantine orator is not difficult to guess. In pursuing the vanities of this world (the crown, Byzantine throne and their transient, earthly glory<sup>142</sup>), he loses from sight the really important, eternal matters. He ends like rebellious Lucifer, cast out from the place of haughtiness and pride, like Typhon, defeated by Zeus and cast into Tartarus. In our source, these are only suggestions that can be plucked out from the context of the whole oration. Whereas in the letters from Lekapenos to Symeon, Daphnopates is clearly warning the tsar about the consequences of persisting in the rebellion and continuing war. Through the lips of the Byzantine ruler he reminds him of the Last Judgement and the punishment of wicked deeds<sup>143</sup>. In turn, from the content of the oration, it appears that Symeon can be counted among those who love discord and war. He can be included among the killers, who likened themselves, as Daphnopates wrote, to Cain and Lamech, and so the archetypes of the wicked men, in the Scripture called directly the children of the Evil One<sup>144</sup>. And with them, among those who found themselves on the left hand side of the Christ's throne of judgement, in the place of the goats, among those who have been crossed out from the Book of the Redeemed (*ἀπαλειφή δὲ τῆς βίβλου τῶν σωζομένων*)<sup>145</sup>, to go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels<sup>146</sup>. In the context of Symeon's fall one could mention other characters named by the rhetorician – the haughty Xerxes, Eteocles and Polinices, sons of Oedipus who fighting for the control over Thebes killed each other, Cyrus the Younger, who was not satisfied with his own inheritance, Antaeus murdering his own guests and the greedy Alexander the Great, the great conqueror and murderer of his loved ones. All of them, for their love of hostility and war, received a *worthy* pay – an ignominious end<sup>147</sup>.

<sup>141</sup> One of the letters of Romanos Lekapenos testifies about this obduracy – ΔΑΦΝΟΠΑΤΕΣ, 5, p. 67, 135–136.

<sup>142</sup> *Vide* e.g. Isa 40, 6–8; 1 Petr 1, 24.

<sup>143</sup> ΔΑΦΝΟΠΑΤΕΣ, 7, p. 83, 44 – 85, 74. Cf. e.g. NICHOLAS, 11, p. 78, 94–100.

<sup>144</sup> Gen 4, 1–24; Sap 10, 3; Mt 23, 35; 1 Io 3, 12–13; Iudae 11.

<sup>145</sup> Συμβάσει, 9, p. 268, 240–270, 269.

<sup>146</sup> Mt 25, 31–46.

<sup>147</sup> Συμβάσει, 20–21, p. 282, 448–284, 468. *Vide* also И. БОЖИЛОВ, Цар Симеон Велики (893–927):

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The year 927 brought about the conclusion of a lasting peace between Byzantium and Bulgaria. Peace, which ended many years of armed struggle between the two states. The war that tsar Symeon waged against his southern neighbour shook the Byzantines. Military successes of the Bulgarian ruler, his aspirations to impose his rule on the empire, cut to the quick the deep conviction of the Constantinopolitan rulers and their subjects that only the Eastern Rome had right to preside over the Christian world. In the eyes of the Byzantines, Symeon's aspirations seemed to be a violation of the sacred order (τάξις) established on earth by God, and imitating celestial order. The order, according to which the Bulgarian ruler owed subjection and respect to Constantinopolitan basileus. Anyone who rejected this order was, in fact, spreading anarchy (ἀταξία), and so became like barbarians, and even more – demons<sup>148</sup>. This is despite the fact that in the personal dimension he seemed to be a devout Christian. Unlike him, the Byzantines did not allow a possibility of making a breach in the political doctrine that they adopted. In keeping with their worldview, the aspirations of the Bulgarian tsar to the presidency over Christian oecumene meant that he was treated stereotypically – as unworthy of the highest honours barbarian and a rebel. Unrestrained in his desires, not guided by reason, but by the typical elements that tugged at every barbarian's soul. At least such is the portrayal of Symeon that we can find in the oration *On the treaty with the Bulgarians* that was presented in front of the court of the emperor Romanos Lekapenos by Theodore Daphnopates, his personal secretary. The Bulgarian ruler was then already dead, and celebrating the just concluded peace agreement rhetorician could blame on him all of the responsibility for the calamities of the long-lasting war and present him as a usurper and an enemy of truth, a servant of Satan.

**Abstract.** The year 927 brought a peace treaty between Byzantium and Bulgaria, which ended many years of military struggle between both the states. On this occasion Theodore Daphnopates delivered a speech praising the newly concluded agreement. The blame for the accursed war was to put on (already dead) Symeon I (893–927), the then Bulgarian ruler, and his ungodly aspirations to the crown of the Byzantine Empire. It was his personal ambitions that were a real infringement on the God's earthly order, and it was only and exclusively Symeon, who led to the appearance of a crack on the *House of the Lord*. The Bulgarian ruler

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*Златният век...*, p. 159–160; П. АНГЕЛОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 191; M.J. LESZKA, *Wizerunek...*, p. 122, an. 165.

<sup>148</sup> H. AHRWEILER, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1975, p. 129–147; P. STEPHENSON, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier...*, p. 35; C. MANGO, *Introduction*, [in:] *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. IDEM, Oxford 2002, p. 16; И. БОЖИЛОВ, *Византийският...*, p. 177–178.

is referred to as pharaoh, holding the chosen people captive. Symeon is also characterised like various ungodly personages from the Old and New Testament, i.e. Goliath, Ader, Holophernes or even the Devil himself. It can therefore be concluded that Symeon was a usurper, tyrant, sower of discord, murderer, fratricide, and one who committed sacrilege. Daphnopates explicitly writes about his lies, hiding his true intentions, not fulfilling agreements and instability in his proceedings. So, by means of a variety of hints to ancient history, literature and the Bible the speaker present Symeon as a usurper and an enemy of truth, a servant of Satan.

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