

II

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War and Peace in the House of the Lord: A Conflict among Orthodox Christians and its Overcoming according to the Homily ‘On the Treaty with the Bulgarians’



The second and third decade of the tenth century was among the stormiest in the history of Byzantine-Bulgarian relations. The Bulgarian ruler Symeon I (893–927) took up the title of tsar (emperor) and began an ambitious policy of conquering the Balkan territories of the Empire and seizing the capital city on the Bosphoros (it is thought that he attempted to create a new political order, referred to as *Pax Symeonica*). In doing so, he was taking advantage of the tense internal situation of the Empire: the problems regarding legitimisation of power and Constantine VII not yet being of age (as well as the fiasco of current foreign policy), humiliation of Bulgarian envoys by emperor Alexander (912–913) and breaking off of the Byzantine-Bulgarian agreement of 913 by Zoe Karbonopsina (died after 920). While the tsar succeeded to a great extent in seizing Byzantium’s Balkan possessions, his other goal remained out of the scope

of his means¹. Finally in October 927 the long awaited peace treaty was concluded. Byzantium, exhausted by the long war recognised the imperial title of Peter I (927–969), Symeon's son and heir, and agreed to pay a tribute to the Bulgarians. State borders were delimited, war prisoners exchanged and autonomy of the Bulgarian Church recognised. In order to reinforce the peace agreement, for the first time in the history of the Empire a woman from the imperial family – Maria (911–?963), a granddaughter of emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944) – was married to a foreign ruler. She was thought to have taken up the name of Irene (Gr. Ειρήνη, that is *Peace*) to emphasise the importance of the concluded treaty and particular relations that would link both countries². On that occasion a special oration *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians* (Ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει)³ was delivered. The speech was written most

¹ See e.g. I. Božilov, *L'ideologie politique du tsar Symeon: Pax Symeonica*, BBg 8, 1986, pp. 73–89; J. Sheppard, *Symeon of Bulgaria – Peacemaker*, ГСУ.ЦСВПИД 3, 1989, pp. 9–48; И. Божилев, *Цар Симеон Велики (893–927): от “варварската” държава до християнското царство*, [in:] idem, В. Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България VII–XIV век*, София 1999, pp. 229–270.

² S. Penkov, *Bulgaro-Byzantine Treaties during the Early Middle Ages*, Pbg 5.3, 1981, p. 49; В.Д. Николаев, *Значение договора 927 г. в истории болгаро-византийских отношений*, [in:] *Проблемы истории античности и средних веков*, ed. Ю.М. Сапрыкин, Москва 1982, pp. 89–105; Д. Стоименов, *Към договора между България и Византия от 927 г.*, Век 17.6, 1988, pp. 19–23; E. Aleksandrov, *The International Treaties of Medieval Bulgaria (Legal Aspects)*, BHR 17.4, 1989, pp. 41, 42, 44, 48; Е.К. Κυριακής, *Βυζάντιο και Βούλγαροι (705–1005 αι.). Συμβολή στην εξωτερική πολιτική του Βυζαντίου*, Αθήνα 1993, pp. 158–159, 214–216; В. Гюзелев, *Значението на брака на цар Петър (927–969) с ромейката Мария-Ирина Лакапина (911–962)*, [in:] *Културните текстове на миналото. Носители, символи и идеи*, vol. I, *Текстовете на историята, история на текстовете. Материали от Юбилейната международна конференция в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д.и.н. Казимир Попконстантинов, Велико Търново, 29–31 октомври 2003*, ed. idem, София 2005, pp. 27–33; S. Pirivatrić, *Some Notes on the Byzantine-Bulgarian Peace Treaty of 927*, Bslov 2, 2008, pp. 40–49.

³ Critical edition of the text – *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*. On this literary peace of work cf. Θ.И. Успенский, *Неизданное церковное слово о болгарско-византийских отношениях в первой половине X в.*, ЛИФОИНУ.ВО 4, 1894, pp. 48–123; И. Кузнецов, *Писмата на Льва Магистра и Романа Лакапина и словото “Ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει” като изворъ за историята на Симеоновска България*, СЧУНК 16/17, 1900, pp. 179–245; R.J.H. Jenkins, *The Peace with Bulgaria (927)*

probably by Theodore Daphnopates (890/900 – after 961), an eminent representative of Constantinopolitan intellectual elite of the first part of 10th century and emperor Romanos's secretary⁴. By making references not only to ancient history and literature but to the Bible as well, the orator explained the reasons which had led to antagonism between the two countries, wept over tragic results of military operations through the years of war and emphasised the significance of the concluded peace.

Celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates, [in:] *Polychronion. Festschrift F. Dolger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Wirth, Heidelberg 1966, pp. 287–303; P. Karlin-Hayter, *The Homily on the Peace with Bulgaria of 927 and the 'Coronation' of 913*, JÖB 17, 1968, pp. 29–39; Α. Σταυρίδου-Ζαφράκα, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος "Επὶ τῇ τῶν Βουλγάρων συμβάσει", Βυζ 8, 1976, pp. 343–408; I. Дујчев, *On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians*, DOP 32, 1978, pp. 217–253; 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 съседи 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, pp. 141–150; K. Marlow, *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'*, SC 1, 2011, pp. 157–190; idem, *Myth and Meaning. Standards of Byzantine Erudition and Its Role in Byzantine Rhetorical Works*, [in:] *Standards of Everyday Life in the Middle Ages and in Modern Times*, vol. III, ed. K. Mutafova et al., Veliko Tŕnovo 2014, pp. 151–164; idem, *Византийската имперска идея и претенциите на цар Симеон според словото "За мира с българите"*, КМС 25, 2016, pp. 342–352.

⁴ R. J. H. Jenkins, *The Peace with Bulgaria...*, pp. 301–302; P. Karlin-Hayter, *The Homily...*, p. 39; I. Дујчев, *On the Treaty...*, pp. 241–242, 243, 249, 252–253; С. Н. Малахов, *Концепция мира в политической идеологии Византии первой половины X в. Николай Мистик и Феодор Дафнопат*, АДСВ 27, 1995, p. 20; J. Sheppard, *Byzantine emperors, imperial ideology and the fact of Bulgaria*, BMd 2, 2011, p. 549. On Daphnopates see e.g. М. Сюзюмов, *Об историческом труде Θεοδора Дафнопата*, ВОб 2, 1916, pp. 295–302; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München 1959, pp. 552–553; Theodore Daphnopates, pp. 1–11; A. Markopoulos, *Théodore Daphnopatès et la Continuation de Théophane*, JÖB 35, 1985, pp. 171–182; A. Kazhdan, *Daphnopates Theodore*, [in:] ODB, vol. I, p. 588; M. Salamon, *Dafnopata Teodor*, [in:] *Encyklopedia kultury bizantyńskiej*, ed. O. Jurewicz, Warszawa 2002, p. 133; A. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature*, vol. II, 850–1000, ed. C. Angelidi, Athens 2006, pp. 152–157; Th. Antonopoulos, *A textual source and its contextual implications: On Theodore Daphnopates' sermon on the birth of John the Baptist*, B 81, 2011, pp. 9–18; W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*, New York–Basingstoke 2013, pp. 188–196.

He also built up the image of a suffering man who had become a witness to the violence during war operations. That particular way of expression, certainly easy to understand by the educated part of Byzantine audience⁵, covered significant ideological and political contents. In this short text I will present and characterise some examples of the attitudes and emotions which accompanied the Byzantine author he had experienced (or at least said he had), being a witness and hearing the relations of atrocities of a fratricidal war (concerning only the fragment of the oration in § 2–3). I also would like to focus on two main biblical themes which were present in the abovementioned homily and try to identify the ideological background of the relationship between the Byzantines and Bulgarians.

1. War and its Influence

1.1. The Effects of Violence

The author said that agriculture, the foundation of Byzantine life, was abandoned. Fields were deserted, as the ploughmen had perished in the war. The old order was destroyed with fire and axe. The land (including some forests) was devastated to such an extent that the people (including the author) did not know where they were nor where they should head to⁶. The war resulted in destroyed walls, burnt down temples, holy icons consumed by fire, ruined sanctuaries, priest kidnapped straight from the altar during the services, church ornaments plundered; the elderly had been tortured, the youth deprived of their lives long before their time, virgins had been shamelessly violated, families separated, and holy relics scattered to become prey of dogs and ravens⁷.

⁵ Cf. R.J.H. Jenkins, *The Peace with Bulgaria...*, pp. 299, 302–303; K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, p. 165.

⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.40–44; 16, p. 278.369–371.

⁷ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 256.47–53.

Life was consumed by death and the Earth became again invisible and unformed (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος; after the Book of Genesis)⁸, like before the Creation. So, in the light of the discussed text, the fratricidal war destroyed God's Creation – nature (i.e. natural environment), everyday circle of human activities and unity in Christ between Byzantines and Bulgarians⁹. It led to destruction and desecration of all holiness, of what was most sacred to any man of those times.

1.2. The Author's Reaction, Feelings, Thoughts and Attitude to War

His response to war was silence (ἡ σιγή; in the text συνσίγη)¹⁰ – the effect of trauma and misfortunes he witnessed, of the indescribable atrocities. Facing the tragedy of war the only thing one could do was to keep silent, just like the deaf-mute son of Croesus, king of Lydia (after Herodotos)¹¹, just like the brass bowls of the oracle in Dodona, no longer moved by wind and remaining mute, so that no one could tell the future any more. The only thing one could do was to become even more voiceless (ἄφωνος)¹² than the fish. The author opposes the complete soundlessness with the shout of Stentor, the Achaean herald, whose voice as strong as that of fifty men (after Homer)¹³.

⁸ On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 2, p. 256.40–41; Gn 1, 1–2: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος (Septuaginta, vol. I, p. 1; all biblical references to the Old Testament's texts are cited after Alfred Rahlfs edition – Septuaginta, vol. I/II).

⁹ K. Marinov, *In the Shackles...*, pp. 176–178, 182. More on the topic – the question what was war in author's opinion and the aforementioned biblical references to the Book of Genesis – see i d e m, “А земята отново беше станала безвидна и неоформена”. Щрихи към образа на войната в словото “За мира с българите”, Епо 26.1, 2018, pp. 201–213.

¹⁰ On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 2, p. 256.29. Cf. On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 3, p. 258.68–69; 8, p. 266.200.

¹¹ On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 2, p. 256.29–30; 9, p. 270.261–262; Herodotos, I, 6. 34. 38. 47. 85, pp. 8, 40, 46, 52–54, 106–108.

¹² On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 2, p. 256.30.

¹³ On the Treaty with the Bulgarians, 2, p. 256.28–30; Homer, V, p. 264.784–792.

And so his silence was as overwhelming and telling as the shout of that herald. The cited fragment, however, goes deeper than that. Upon seeing his father's life threatened, the mute son of Croesus ultimately uttered a shout. In this way the author would let know that his silence is indeed a kind of a shout, incomparably more significant than the normal mourning, as it was comparable to that of Stentor himself, or to that of Croesus' son. He wanted to say that his soundless voice spoke more loudly than any words and more clearly describes the tragedy of war.

War violence evokes the torment of soul (ἄλγος τῆς ψυχῆς; in the text: συνήλγησα)¹⁴ and streams of tears (ποταμούς δακρύων)¹⁵ in the orator, because he witnessed the death of his next of kin and of many other people. It brings sorrow (τὸ ὄδυρμα)¹⁶ for those who were lost. The author compares his suffering to that of biblical patriarch Jacob when he learned of the death of Joseph, one of his beloved sons. Yet, Jacob was deceived, as his son did not die but was sold and found himself in Egyptian captivity. And finally, after many years, despite the terrible pain after the loss of his son, Jacob could again enjoy the beloved one¹⁷. That joy was not given to our orator, though, as he saw with his own eyes the bodies of his beloved relatives, the innocent, the harmless, quartered and tainted with blood (τοὺς ἀθώους, τοὺς ἀναιτίους διατετμημένους ὁρῶν καὶ μεμολυσμένους ἐν αἵματι)¹⁸. No doubt that the author parallels the blood-covered robes of Joseph and blood-tainted bodies of those killed in war. While, however, Jacob thought of his son's death through indirect evidence (the robe), our orator tells of the undeniable, direct, clear evidence of human death. Jacob was deceived, the orator wasn't. His suffering was not soothed, just like that of Jacob's was. This is the war's everyday: the death of your kin, innocent, casual victims, brutally killed¹⁹ – the text suggests that also their dead bodies were treated without dignity – quartered, and left abandoned, exposed to public view, a sight that no one should see. Seeing such images was the fate of those who have

¹⁴ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.31.

¹⁵ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.31.

¹⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.33.

¹⁷ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.30–33.

¹⁸ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.34–35.

¹⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.33–35.

survived. They had to watch and fill their eyes, thoughts and memory with the images of the bloody harvest of war²⁰. These words may suggest that the victims were tortured before they died, or their bodies had been profaned.

The war generates turmoil and trouble in one's spirit (in the text: *συγκεχυμένως τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ συντεταραγμένως*)²¹, makes one shattered and emotionally restless. Just like the prophet Jeremiah, the orator complains of the tragic fate of God's people, as he has seen *the daughters of Zion*, the honourable, the unattainable, as stars, with the eyes that cast radiant glances, deprived of their former dignity, stripped of their jewellery, lying dead (*τὰς τιμίας, τὰς ἀπειδεῖς, τὰς οἷον ἀστέρας καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς διαστραπτούσας τοῖς πέρασι, τὴν προτέραν περιηρημένας εὐπρέπειαν, ἀπημφισμένας τὸν ἑαυτῶν κόσμον καὶ κειμένας πτώμα*)²² and worthy of the tears of the prophets and of pagan philosopher Heraclitus²³. Those daughters of Zion may represent, on the one hand, simply the women respected and admired in the time of peace, full of dignity and clear-eyed. And now the war has brought death and destruction to them – it has deprived them of dignity, inviolability and beauty. They have been stripped of their decorations and of the honour that once belonged to them. They are no longer untouchable; they have become victims of a brute force that felled them and profaned their bodies. Their eyes no longer shine, their glances no longer add splendour and warmth to their neighbourhood, as they have turned into gloom and darkness. On the other hand, the expression *daughters of Zion* (*τὰς τῆς Σιὼν θυγατέρας*)²⁴ has wider biblical connotations and can signify the whole community of those who believe in True God. In this context they would

²⁰ Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.70; 21, pp. 284.489–286.494.

²¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.35–36.

²² *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.37–39.

²³ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.39–40.

²⁴ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.36; 4 Reg 19, 21; Ps 9 (10), 15; 72 (73), 28; Mih 1, 13; 4, 8. 10. 13; Soph 3, 14; Zah 2, 10; 9, 9; Is 1, 8; 3, 16–17; 4, 4; 10, 32; 37, 22; 52, 2; 62, 11; Jer 4, 31; 6, 2. 23; Lam 1, 6; 2, 1. 4. 8. 10. 13; 4, 22 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, p. 738; *Septuaginta*, vol. II, pp. 7, 77, 512, 515, 541, 547, 554, 566, 570, 571, 581, 615, 650, 664, 666, 667, 757, 759, 760, 765). The synonymous expression daughters of Jerusalem (*αἱ θυγατέρες Ἱερουσαλήμ*) was also used in the oration – *On the treaty with the Bulgarians*, 1, p. 254.3. On the similarities of these expressions see e.g. Mih 4, 8; Soph 3, 14; Zah 3, 14; 9, 9; Lam 2, 13 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, pp. 515, 541, 547, 554, 760).

represent the Chosen People, and the Holy Church in the union with God, its children and servants. The fate they have met – being deprived of previous glory and murdered – is an unimaginable crime on the one hand, and a terrible punishment on the other. That part emphasises once again the torments of the author himself, who has witnessed the tragic vicissitudes of those women. The fate worthy of the tears of biblical prophets, first of all of Jeremiah²⁵, as well as of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus, whose figure in Byzantium was proverbial²⁶.

Awareness of the atrocities of war and of the two Christian nations standing against each other made the author's blood run cold (in the text: ἐπαχνώθη μοι φίλον κῆρ; after Hesiod)²⁷ and his heart passed through the iron (in the text: καὶ σιδηρον διήλθε... καρδιά μου; after the Psalmist and the Evangelist)²⁸, and led him to the condition in which he did not want to live any longer, nor to see the sunlight. In other words, due to the violence he observed for too long, the orator wished to abandon that terrible place that the earth had become. His mind and heart were contaminated with knowledge of the things he should never have learned and that should never have happened. Pain drained the whole life out of him. Even his wisdom and faith did not provide him consolation. Merely remembering the past tragedy of war would make the orator pale, faint and unable to put his grief aside (in the text: ἐγὼ... σκοτοδινῶ καὶ ἡλλοίωμαι καὶ τοῦ πάθους οὐκ ἐπανέρχομαι)²⁹.

²⁵ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.35. Cf. Ier 1–52; Lam 1–5 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, pp. 656–748, 756–766).

²⁶ I. D u j č e v, *On the Treaty*..., p. 256 (fn. 24), 290, note to v. 39–40. See also N i k e p h o r o s G r e g o r a s, VIII, 14, p. 375.6–9; XX, 1, p. 957.2–4. A. Σ τ α υ ρ ί δ ο υ - Ζ α φ ρ ά κ α, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος...', p. 382, note to v. 16, thinks about the elegiac and epigrammatic poet Heraclitus of Halicarnassus, but see e.g. A. K a l d e l l i s, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge 2007, p. 253.

²⁷ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.58; H e s i o d, p. 28.360: τό γ' ἐπάχνωσεν φίλον ἦτορ.

²⁸ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.58–59; Ps 104 (105) (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, p. 114: σιδηρον διήλθεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ), 18; Luc 2, 35 (*NTG*, p. 186: καὶ σοῦ [δὲ] αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία; all biblical references to the New Testament's texts are cited after Nestle–Aland edition – *NTG*).

²⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.45–46.

The miseries of war made him feel like hibernating animals, which, confined to their holes, expend all their substance, waiting for spring, i.e. better times. Just like them, the orator was consuming himself from within³⁰. Due to grief he failed to take part in synods and secular meetings; he did not attend services, missed conversations and did not visit imperial palaces or private homes alike. Similarly, he did not enjoy the homilies, displays, or the company of wise men and scholars. All things which should have made the life more meaningful – faith, learning, imperial ceremonies – ceased to be of any value to him³¹. He was shaken and bewildered, troubled by the delights of yesterday, which previously gave him happiness³². Thus he emphasised the magnitude of the trauma that became his lot because of the war. The natural course of life, stability and repeatability was ruined by the overwhelming violence. How to enjoy life if life itself was destroyed by war? How to seek consolation in faith, if the Christians themselves destroyed their common House of Faith? If priests were kidnapped from in front of the altar and killed, temples and monasteries were ruined, and God's laws broken by His children? How to work when all around is in the turmoil of war? This is what the orator tried to convey to his listeners³³.

1.3. Some Conclusions on Rhetorical Authenticity

In the oration there are more direct or indirect references and suggestions which characterise the attitudes, emotions and reactions of the orator himself and of other people who faced the evil that (in author's opinion) was the war between the two countries³⁴. Still, even the above selection lets

³⁰ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.71–73.

³¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.73–76.

³² *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.76–79.

³³ Other fragments concerning the evils of war – *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 260.104–110; 6, p. 264.152–158; 7, p. 264.171–174; 8, p. 266.199–202; 12, pp. 272.302–274.316; 13, p. 274.336–339; 14, p. 276.343–347; 17, p. 278.383–391; 18, p. 280.402–413; 20–21, pp. 280.431–286.498.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 260.105–110; 6, p. 264.154–155; 8, p. 266.199–202; 12, p. 272.305–306; 21, p. 284.493.

answer the question whether that characterisation can be taken at face value and not only for the author's *licentia poetica*.

Firstly – practically all the information of the wartime destruction can be confirmed in historical sources (chronicles, epistolographies and hagiographies)³⁵. Even those regarding devastation of nature are confirmed, as there is evidence of cutting off and burning the forests surrounding the Byzantine capital city by Symeon's troops³⁶.

Secondly – it is evident that our source fits perfectly in the long tradition of the Byzantine rhetoric art, thus constituting one of its best achievements. Consequently, it was built up according to the rules of that art³⁷. The author certainly makes his experiences exaggerated and overstated, with strong and expressive comparisons and juxtapositions. He makes use of well-known schemes of visualising of human suffering, facing the atrocities of war. He uses *μίμησις* (the art of imitating ancient writers, taking from their experience and skills)³⁸. It should not mean, though, that we should treat his work only as another commissioned text with the above issues nothing more than erudite oratorical art³⁹. That is because

³⁵ Continuator of Theophanes, VI, 7. 8. 10. 13. 15, pp. 386.23–387.2, 402.4–6, 402.22–403.1, 404.18–405.7, 405.17–20, 406.15–18; Nicholas Mystikos, 14, pp. 94.59–96.77; 24, p. 170.57–60; 26, p. 182.22–27; *Life of St. Mary the Younger*, 23–24, 25, pp. 700D – 701A, E.

³⁶ Continuator of Theophanes, VI, 15, p. 405.20. Cf. P. Karlin-Hayter, *The Homily...*, p. 39; Α. Σταυρίδου-Ζαφράκα, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος...', p. 401, note to vs. 25–28.

³⁷ Θ.И. Успенский, *Неизданное церковное слово...*, pp. 52–54, 94, 100–101.

³⁸ On mimesis in Byzantine literature see e.g. H. Hunger, *On the Imitatio (μίμησις) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature*, DOP 23/24, 1969/1970, pp. 15–38; W. Tronzo, *Mimesis in Byzantium. Notes toward a history of the function of the image*, A Ae 25, 1994, pp. 61–76; I. Nilsson, *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasures. Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine & Hysminas*, Uppsala 2001; eadem, *Static imitation or creative transformation? Achilles Tatius in Hysmine & Hysminas*, [in:] *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*, ed. S. Panayotakis, M. Zimmermann, W. Keulen, Leiden 2003, pp. 371–380; H. Cichocka, *Mimesis i retoryka w traktatach Dionizjusza z Halikarnasu a tradycja bizantyńska*, Warszawa 2004; eadem, *Mimesis and Rhetoric in the Treatises by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Byzantine Tradition (selected problems)*, JÖB 60, 2010, pp. 35–45.

³⁹ Cf. wider opinion on Byzantine literature – A. Kazhdan, G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*, Washington

the speaker was extremely well educated and possessed a very extensive literary knowledge of ancient history, biblical texts, ecclesiastical authors, mythological reminiscences, popular sayings and apocryphal literature. The text reveals great individuality and innovativeness as a literary work, an ideological tractate and a historical source⁴⁰.

The war between Byzantium and Bulgaria, waged in the times of Symeon I, caused great pain to the inhabitants of the Rome of the East. Hence the significance they gave to the peace treaty and substantial concessions towards the Bulgarians by the rulers of Constantinople. No doubt that the orator stressed the evil of war to emphasise the significance of peace⁴¹. On the other hand, the nature of the accompanying feelings is collective, i.e. through his own example he tries to reflect the feelings of the whole community. And although that image was in many aspects a *cliché* of the Byzantine literature (multiplying the images of suffering, present in other similar works), it referred to the deeply ingrained patterns of such feelings, based on the experience of many generations of Byzantines themselves and of the humankind in general. Therefore, despite being in some ways a customary *topos*, it reflects the possible or perhaps actual human experience of encountering violence.

The orator suffered as much as the well-known literary and historical figures (Jacob, Jeremiah, Heraclites); to draw attention to his feelings he quoted or paraphrased classical writers: Homer, Hesiod and biblical authors, particularly psalmists. To emphasise his condition he uses the Greek prefix *συν-* which means *together* or *along with* to most of his actions or emotions he experienced, thus stressing the commonality of the suffering of the quoted persons⁴². In this way their suffering also became his suffering. In other words: the whole world would feel the calamities

DC 1982, pp. 114–115. Contrary R.J.H. Jenkins, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Literature*, DOP 17, 1963, pp. 39–52.

⁴⁰ Θ.Ι. Успенский, *Неизданное церковное слово...*, pp. 52, 54, 95, 120; R.J.H. Jenkins, *The Peace with Bulgaria...*, p. 297; Α. Σταυρίδου-Ζαφράκα, 'Ο Ἀνώνυμος λόγος...', pp. 346–347; I. Duǵev, *On the Treaty...*, pp. 222, 228, 237.

⁴¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 4, pp. 258.82 – 260.99; 11, p. 272.282–287; 20, p. 280.431–433; 21–22, pp. 286.498 – 288.540.

⁴² *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 256.29 (συνεσίγησα).31 (συνήλγησα).35 (συγκέχυμαι).36 (συντετάραγμα).

of war along with him; he exemplifies his experience and emotion by reference to popular figures, known to his listeners; he plays with hyperboles and words.

Thirdly – as we know that the author of the discussed work, most probably Theodore Daphnopates, was personally involved in the events (as the secretary and real author of emperor Roman Lekapenos's letters to the tsar of Bulgaria)⁴³, we may not discount the possibility that the text presents his own experiences of the war. What is more, the text contains clear allusions to the issues he dealt with himself (studies, dialogues with other scholars), and on which the war put its tragic stamp as well.

2. The Motif of Peace

2.1. The New Israel or the Body of Christ

The Orator quotes the biblical transmission about the division of Israel after King Solomon's death into the House of Judah (including the tribe of Benjamin with its capital in Jerusalem) and the House of Ephraim (with the remaining ten tribes and the capital in Samaria)⁴⁴. The biblical text conveys information that the split was the result of Solomon's sins, who under the influence of his numerous wives and women from different countries and cultures practiced idolatry, thus disobeying Yahweh's will⁴⁵. Still, according to the Old Testament writer, God let it be known that

⁴³ В.Н. Златарски, *Писмата на византийския императоръ Романа Лакапена до българския царъ Симеона*, СЛУЖБ 13, 1896, pp. 282–322; И. Кузнецовъ, *Писмата...*, pp. 196–197, 205; Е. Александров, *Дипломатическая переписка царя Симеона с императором Романом Лакапином*, Рбг 14.2, 1990, pp. 16–22.

⁴⁴ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.62–64; 7, p. 264.171–174.177–179. Cf. also the allusions in *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 8, p. 266.208–209; 10, pp. 270.270–272.281; 13, p. 274.326–330; 17, p. 278.387–390; 22, p. 288.525–528. Cf. J. Shepard, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 549.

⁴⁵ 3 Reg 11, 1–13; 12, 1–21; 2 Par 10, 1–19 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, pp. 656–657, 660–661, 826–827).

the division would only be temporary and Jerusalem would remain the City of Israel, because of the promise He had given to King David⁴⁶. Thus, according to the author, Byzantium was House of Judah, whereas Bulgaria was that of Ephraim. And despite that division, Byzantium remained the true Israel, the House of Jacob, in which the respect to Yahweh had survived and would continue (even if some of its rulers were not obedient to God). Similarly as in the biblical history of Israel and Judah, where the former soon quit the true adoration of God⁴⁷.

Then, by paraphrasing the words from the Book of Prophet Malachi⁴⁸, the rhetorician made it clearly understood that those who acted against each other were no strangers, but that sons acted against their fathers and brothers against brothers, and finally fathers against sons⁴⁹. He therefore made a clear reference to the so-called *spiritual sonhood* of the Bulgarians, and particularly of the Bulgarian ruler to the emperor of 'Ρωμαιοί⁵⁰, as the Bulgarians were Byzantines sons in faith⁵¹. Using the expressions typical of St. Paul's writings, the Byzantines *had given birth in faith*⁵² to their northern neighbours, as they had carried the light of the Gospel to them. They had therefore become their religious teachers and leaders.

The words about the brotherhood regarded chiefly their faith, the common Orthodox denomination of the Byzantines and Bulgarians. The latter would be at the same time the spirituals brothers and sons of the former. They built a single house of faith – a new Israel, in which

⁴⁶ 2 Reg 7, 1–29; 1 Par 17, 1–27; 23, 25 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, pp. 577–579, 789–791, 799).

⁴⁷ Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 11, p. 272.287–301 (God of Israel is God of the Byzantines); 15, p. 276.348–351 (Byzantium is an Israel, a House of Jacob). Cf. 3 Reg 12, 25–33; 2 Par 11, 5–17 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, pp. 664–665, 828).

⁴⁸ Mal 3, 23 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, p. 565); cf. Matt 10, 21–22a; Luc 12, 51–53 (*NTG*, pp. 28, 240–241). It's worth noting that quite similar expression was used also by Thucydides, III, 81.5, pp. 140–142.

⁴⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.55–57; 21, p. 284.478–479.

⁵⁰ Cf. F. Dölger, *Der Bulgarenherrscher als geistlicher Sohn des byzantinischen Kaisers*, ИИД 16/18, 1940, pp. 219–232; idem, *Средновековното "семејство на владетелите и народите" и българският владетел*, СБАН.КИФ 62, 1943, pp. 181–222.

⁵¹ Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.55–57; 11, p. 272.296–299.

⁵² 1 Cor 4, 15 (*NTG*, p. 525).

the Byzantines are – as elder and more experienced brothers – the spiritual leaders⁵³. Still, to be able to care for the Bulgarians, they needed to have the authority, which was accepted by the latter. That seemed to be the major problem, as in the light of the precedence enumerated by the Byzantine Orator, they were the sons who had first acted against the fathers, and became rebels who had violated the family relations once established by God himself. By throwing away the spiritual fatherhood of the emperor, Symeon, the ruler of Bulgaria at that time (his name is not mentioned even once, but there is no doubt that some excerpts refer to him), rejected God the Father and the Holy Spirit, along with the promise of divine filiation⁵⁴. And it was solely due to the disobedience of the Bulgarians that the Byzantines turned against them. That fact destroyed unity and wounded the Body they created together in Christ⁵⁵, and made proper functioning of the Church impossible, thus making it weak and useless in the pursuit of God's work⁵⁶.

According to the Orator's logic, the Bulgarians should not have acted like that, even though the Byzantines have sinned against God, as God's choices are eternal⁵⁷ and the fact that the Byzantines were the chosen nation was in no doubt. Byzantine apostasy would then be only of temporal nature, as God's grace had not forsaken the Empire.

The idea of Bulgarian filiation also refers to the Byzantine concept of hierarchy of rulers and nations of the world (known as τὰς ἐκκλησιῶν)⁵⁸. And

⁵³ K. Marínov, *In the Shackles...*, p. 177; J. Shepard, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 549.

⁵⁴ Cf. Rom 8, 14–15, 23; 2 Cor 1, 21–22; 5, 5; Eph 1, 13–14 (NTG, pp. 496–497, 556, 591); K. Marínov, *In the Shackles...*, p. 177.

⁵⁵ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 7, p. 264.164–165; 22, p. 288.525–528. Cf. 1 Cor 12, 12–27 (NTG, pp. 542–543); A. Николов, *Политическа мисъл в ранносредновековна България (средата на IX – края на X век)*, София 2006, p. 238.

⁵⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 12, 21–26 (NTG, pp. 542–543).

⁵⁷ Cf. e.g. Rom 9, 1–11, 36, especially 11, 26–29 (NTG, pp. 498–506).

⁵⁸ Ф. Дьолгер, *Средновековното...*, pp. 181–222; A. Grabar, *God and the "Family of Princes" Presided over by the Byzantine Emperor*, HSS 2, 1954, pp. 117–123; G. Ostrogorsky, *The Byzantine emperor and the Hierarchical World Order*, SEER 35.1, 1956, pp. 1–14; H. Ahrweiler, *L'ideologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*, Paris 1975, pp. 136–138. The author uses the word τὰς ἐκκλησιῶν referring to the angelic hierarchy in Heavens – *On the treaty with the Bulgarians*, 8, p. 266.211. On ecclesiastical and celestial hierarchy in Byzantium cf. T. Stępień, *Przedmowa*, [in:] Pseudo-Dionizy Areopagita,

although that part is not directly related to the Bible, it is worthy to stop by for a while, as it closely refers to the question of filiation in faith. At the apex of that hierarchy stood the Byzantine emperor, with other rulers along with their nations thereunder, over whom the βασιλεύς took spiritual care, and to whom they owed their respect. In this aspect, too, was the Bulgarian ruler a spiritual son of the emperor. The Byzantines were deeply convinced that obeying the τάξις guaranteed stability and blessings to the Christian οἰκουμένη, as that order reflected the heavenly one, and was therefore sacred. Any disobedience was considered a sacrilege, an act of violence against the divine regulations⁵⁹.

Only the reconciliation between both nations and the restoration of unity and friendship between Jerusalem and Samaria⁶⁰ in 927, that is between Byzantium and Bulgaria (here the Orator again made references to the Bible⁶¹), restored the τάξις and allowed the surging of God's blessings upon both countries⁶². That act was also (and primarily) an act of reunification of the House of God, the Church, into a single flesh, the Body of Christ⁶³. It allowed the Byzantines and Bulgarians to call themselves God's children once again, descendants of the Holy Spirit, disciples of the New Order, and brothers⁶⁴. With the peace concluded God himself destroyed the barrier of hostility which, because of their conduct, had been built between Him and His Church, and by the Byzantines and Bulgarians⁶⁵.

Pisma teologiczne, transl. M. Dzielska, introd. T. Stępień, Kraków 2005, pp. 26–50; G. Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory. For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, transl. L. Chiesi (with M. Mandarini), Stanford 2011, pp. 152–157.

⁵⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 12, p. 274.312–316; C.H. Маlаxов, *Концепция мира...*, pp. 21, 22, 28; K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, p. 178.

⁶⁰ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 6–7, pp. 264.155–266.190; 8, p. 266.199–204; 17, p. 278.387–390; 22, p. 288.525–528.537–540. Cf. J. Shepard, *Byzantine emperors...*, pp. 549–550.

⁶¹ Zah 9, 9–10; Is 11, 11–13; Ez 37, 15–28 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, p. 554, 581–582, 839–840).

⁶² *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 9, p. 268.240–241; 19, p. 280.426–427. Cf. J. Shepard, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 550.

⁶³ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 7, p. 264.164–165; 18, p. 278.397–398; 22, p. 288.525–528; C.H. Маlаxов, *Концепция мира...*, p. 26.

⁶⁴ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 7, p. 264.164–167; 10, pp. 270.270–272.281.

⁶⁵ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 6, p. 264.155–158; 17, p. 278.379–382.

One should praise God for that reconciliation⁶⁶. The fruits of that unification were blessings of all kinds – joy, unity, friendship, love, concord, harmony, companionship and fraternity, the reconstruction of destroyed territories, earth turning green once again, abundance, wealth and power⁶⁷. In this context the writer recalled biblical images regarding abundant life and the future happiness in the Kingdom of God⁶⁸. Finally, he concluded that the reunification of the Byzantines and Bulgarians would bring sorrow to the real enemies of Christians, to the sons of Hagar (that is, the Arabs)⁶⁹.

2.2. God is Peace among Christians

It is obvious that the freshly concluded peace had to be the main theme of the oration⁷⁰. How much that peace was desired by the Empire can be seen from the part that refers directly to the personified figure of Peace,

⁶⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 1, p. 254.2–9; 5, p. 260.110–115; 6, pp. 262.149–264.152; 7, p. 264.162–164.166.177; 7, p. 266.184–191; 15, p. 276.351–352; 18, p. 278.391–394; 18, p. 280.409–411.

⁶⁷ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 7, p. 264.174–177; 8, p. 266.204–209; 18, pp. 278.398–280.413. Cf. C.H. Махлахов, *Концепция мира...*, p. 22; J. Sheparд, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 550.

⁶⁸ Cf. e.g. Deut 30, 3. 9–10; Am 9, 13–15; Joel 2, 19. 21–26; 4, 18; Zah 8, 11–13; Is 30, 23–26; 35, 1–10; 40, 31; 41, 17–19; 60, 4–10. 13. 17; 61, 1–6; 62, 7–9; 65, 17–25; 66, 10–13; Jer 37, 1–3. 8. 18–19; 38, 1. 4–5. 8–9. 12–14. 21. 24–25. 27–28; 40, 7–13; Ez 34, 11–16. 25–29; 36, 8–12. 24. 30. 33–38 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, p. 342; vol. II, pp. 511, 521–522, 524, 552–553, 605–606, 611–612, 620, 621, 647–648, 649, 653–654, 655, 718–722, 726–727, 832–834, 835–838).

⁶⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 7, p. 264.174–177; 17, p. 278.383–387; 18, pp. 278.398–280.413.

⁷⁰ About understanding peace in Byzantium see e.g. A. Ilieva, *The Byzantine Image of War and Peace: the Case of the Peloponnese*, BF 19, 1993, pp. 182–192; C.H. Махлахов, *Концепция мира...*, pp. 19–31; R.F. Taft, *War and Peace in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy*, [in:] *Peace and War in Byzantium. Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis, S.J.*, ed. T.S. Miller, J. Nesbitt, Washington 1995, pp. 17–32; Th. Halton, *Ecclesiastical War and Peace in the Letters of Isidore of Pelusium*, [in:] *Peace and War...*, pp. 41–49; J.A. Munitiz, *War and Peace Reflected in Some Byzantine Mirrors of Princes*, [in:] *Peace and War in Byzantium...*, pp. 50–61; J. Chrysostomides, *Byzantine Concepts of War and Peace*, [in:] *War, Peace and World Orders in European History*, ed. A.V. Hartmann, B. Heuser, London–New York 2001, pp. 91–101; P.M. Stassle, *Krieg und Frieden in Byzanz*, B 74, 2004, pp. 110–129.

being asked why the Byzantines and Bulgarians had to wait for it/Him for so long. The answer might have been in God's aversion to the hatred that had arisen between the brotherly nations, or at least that was the interpretation that the Orator accepted⁷¹. The orator emphasised that the objective of his oration was to glorify the concluded peace treaty and its importance, and reminded of the tragedies of the past and reinforcement of peaceful relations in the future⁷². A large part of the work, paragraphs 5 through 10, were the author's lectures on the importance of the peace treaty⁷³. That theme could be found in some other parts as well⁷⁴. How should they be understood?

In the author's opinion a war is a disharmony, a disturbance of the divine order in which peace should always reign. What is based on peace is persistent and eternal, just like the divine hierarchy itself⁷⁵. Unity and peaceful coexistence mean, therefore, following God's way⁷⁶. In order to support this proposition the rhetorician quoted some examples from the animal world, of a peaceful coexistence of various species⁷⁷. He also pointed out examples from the everyday life of merchants (common business

⁷¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 254.22–25.

⁷² *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 4, pp. 258.82 – 260.99; 11, p. 272.282–287; 17, p. 278.382–383; 20, p. 280.431–433; 21–22, pp. 286.498 – 288.540.

⁷³ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5–10, pp. 260.100 – 272.281.

⁷⁴ Cf. e.g. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 15, p. 276.351–356.

⁷⁵ Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 8, pp. 266.192 – 268.239.

⁷⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 21, p. 286.501–505. Cf. Matt 5, 9; Marc 9, 50; Luc 1, 79; 10, 5–6; Rom 12, 18; 15, 33; 1 Cor 7, 15; 14, 33; Eph 2, 15, 17; Col 1, 20; 1 Tess 5, 13; Hebr 12, 14; 1 Petr 3, 11; 2 Petr 3, 14 (*NTG*, pp. 10, 143, 183, 225, 507, 529–530, 547, 593, 614, 628–629, 681, 702, 714). For God is also the donor of peace – Lev 26, 6; Num 25, 12; Iudices 6, 23 (A–B); 3 Reg 2, 33; 1 Par 22, 9; 23, 25; 2 Par 14, 4–6; 32, 22; Ps 28 (29), 11; 36 (37), 11; 54 (55), 19; 84 (85), 9; 118, 165; 147, 3; Nah 1, 15; Agg 2, 9; Mal 2, 5–6; Is 48, 18; 54, 10; 57, 19; Ier 26, 27; 36, 11; 40, 6–9; Ez 34, 25; 37, 26; Dan 10, 19 (C–θ); Luc 10, 5; 24, 36; Io 16, 33; 20, 19, 21, 26; 1 Cor 1, 3; 2 Cor 1, 2; Eph 1, 2; 6, 23; Gal 1, 3; Col 1, 2; 2 Tess 1, 2; 1 Tim 1, 2; 2 Tim 1, 2; Tit 1, 4; Philem 1, 3; 2 Petr 1, 2; 2 Io 1, 3 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, pp. 205, 261, 431, 629, 797, 799, 832, 862; vol. II, pp. 27, 36, 56, 92, 140, 160, 530, 543, 562–563, 632, 640, 643–644, 698–699, 718, 726–727, 833, 839–840, 927; *NTG*, pp. 225, 290, 359, 373–374, 518, 554, 578, 590, 602, 612, 630, 634, 643, 650–651, 654, 708, 727). Cf. С.Н. М а л а х о в, *Концепция мира...*, pp. 22, 26, 28; J. S h e p a r d, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 550.

⁷⁷ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 8, p. 268.226–239; 13, p. 274.331–332.

and common voyages), of sailors (they had to work together to overcome unfavourable weather) or even of drivers from the Constantinopolitan Hippodrome (the horses that pulled them rode together)⁷⁸.

The author then warns that everyone who has spread discord, who loves war, becomes again a pagan, a barbarian, a Scythian, a madman, a wild beast and a wolf⁷⁹. In fact, by choosing to pursue the miserable glory of this world (an allusion to Symeon's desire of the Byzantine crown), one loses the glory of eternal salvation and becomes a mere tool in Satan's hands⁸⁰. Instead of being a subject of Christ, he surrenders himself to this world's elements and allows a desire to rule his soul. In this way he follows the ancient Hellenic gods – militant, quarrelsome and deceitful⁸¹. By bringing up the figure of Symeon the author seems to suggest that ungodly desires have entered into him, just like the devil entered into Judas⁸².

When Symeon, induced by the new Moses and saviour of the Byzantium, who had liberated the Empire from the Egyptian (that is Bulgarian) yoke, that is the *δρουγγάριος* of the navy, the new emperor Romanos Lekapenos, eventually agreed to conclude peace (in 923), by God's will he did not live long enough to see its permanent inauguration (927)⁸³. The author explained that fact by referring to the history

⁷⁸ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 19, p. 280.420–426. Cf. J. Shepard, *Byzantine emperors...*, p. 550, fn. 23.

⁷⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 262.138–142; 7, p. 264.163–171; 9, pp. 268.241–270.255, 262–267; 13, p. 274.330–332; 14, p. 276.343–346; 15, p. 276.359–361; 16, p. 278.369–371; 21, p. 284.466–472. Cf. C.H. Μαλαχὸς, *Κοινοδοξία τοῦ κόσμου...*, pp. 23, 26; K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, pp. 167, 173, 171–172, 174, 180–181, 185 (fn. 127), 186–187, 189.

⁸⁰ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.64–68; 9, p. 270.256–262; 13, p. 274.321–323; Cf. K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, pp. 166, 188.

⁸¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 9, pp. 268.247–270.250; 9, p. 270.262–267; 12, p. 274.307–310. Cf. C.H. Μαλαχὸς, *Κοινοδοξία τοῦ κόσμου...*, pp. 22–23; K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, pp. 166–168.

⁸² Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 3, p. 258.64–68; 19, p. 280.417–420; about Judas – Luc 22, 3; Io 13, 26–27 (*NTG*, pp. 274, 348–349).

⁸³ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 15–16, pp. 276.348–278.378; K. Marinow, *In the Shackles...*, p. 187.

of King David and his wish to build a temple for Yahweh. God could not agree, as David's hands had been stained with blood since his young age, which excluded him from that honourable enterprise, as only the pure and unstained ones could contribute to building a temple in which the Almighty might be praised and adored. And just like David's son, Solomon had completed that task, it was Symeon's son, Peter that could conclude peace, as the former had shed too much brotherly Christian blood to be entitled to build a temple for the Lord⁸⁴.

The Byzantine author emphasised that after the peace treaty had been signed, one should not look back and return to the old way of conduct. A new life commenced and God gave a breath of His Spirit. The unity of the new spiritual Israel was therefore restored (the orator made a reference to the Book of Ezekiel)⁸⁵. The rhetorician went even further, saying that the concluded peace was a true resurrection of the House of Jacob⁸⁶.

It should be remembered that at the time of baptising the Bulgarians the Byzantines believed that an era of lasting peaceful relations with the northern neighbours was at hand (and many years of peace seemed to confirm that); however the reign of Symeon completely destroyed that illusion⁸⁷. Still, we can think that the orator's words about reconstruction and resurrection of the House of Jacob cited above may indicate that the peace of 927 restored the faith in peaceful coexistence of Bulgaria and the Eastern Rome.

⁸⁴ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 16, p. 278.371–378; Т. Тодоров, "Слово за мира с българите"..., pp. 142–144; А. Николов, *Политическа...*, pp. 237–238; K. Marinov, *In the Shackles...*, pp. 187–188. The mentioned biblical story – 2 Reg 16, 5–11; 3 Reg 5, 17–19; 8, 15–19; 1 Par 22, 7–10 (*Septuaginta*, vol. I, pp. 598–599, 687–688, 646–647, 797).

⁸⁵ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 260.108–110; 18, p. 278.394–396. Cf. Ez 37, 1–28.

⁸⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 260.110; 18, p. 278.396.

⁸⁷ M.J. Leszka, *Stracone złudzenia. Religijny kontekst stosunków bizantyńsko-bułgarskich w latach 863–927*, [in:] *Religijna mozaika Bałkanów*, ed. M. Walczak-Mikołajczakowa, Gniezno 2008, pp. 32–39. Similarly, though more generally, already C.H. Маляхов, *Концепция мира...*, p. 26.

According to the orator, the peace was not granted by earthly rulers but by God himself. Furthermore, it was God Christ himself who was that gift, as the Bible said that God *was* peace⁸⁸. This conclusion is indirectly confirmed by other parts of the oration as well – by praising peace in the initial words the author clearly points out God's nature and says that He showed mercy when a calamity befell His people; he heard their prayers⁸⁹. The author then turns to the peace itself, asking why it has waited so long to appear⁹⁰. If the Almighty Himself is peace, how could then a most precious gift like that be rejected?

The oration contained also some more or less veiled warnings not to disregard the freshly concluded agreement⁹¹. Their mood and the way they are composed make the reader (and most probably listeners) associate them with the Epistle to the Hebrews⁹², in which is written that if salvation “at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” (and not by prophets, as it took place in the Old Testament), so great salvation may not be neglected. It also shows how important the treaty of 927 was for the Byzantines.

To sum up, by using parallels with the Bible the Orator expressed the following views of both religious and political nature:

⁸⁸ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, pp. 260.117–262.144, in particular p. 262.126–133. Cf. *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 21, p. 286.501–506. Cf. also C.H. Ма л а х о в, *Концения мипа...*, pp. 21, 22. On Christ – Peace: Eph 2, 14; Is 2, 3–4; 9, 5–6 (the newly born child will be a child of peace; it was identified with Christ in the Byzantine exegesis); Mih 5, 2–5 (the Israel's ruler to be born in Bethlehem will be peace); cf. Io 14, 27; 16, 33; 20, 19–21; Hebr 7, 1–3; about the God of peace – Rom 15, 33; 1 Cor 14, 33; Philip 4, 9; 1 Tess 5, 23; 2 Tess 3, 16; Hebr 13, 20 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, pp. 516, 568, 578, 581; *NTG*, pp. 353, 359, 373, 515, 547, 593, 611, 629, 634, 666, 684).

⁸⁹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 1, p. 254.2–8.

⁹⁰ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 2, p. 254.22–25.

⁹¹ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 262.142–144; 10, pp. 270.270–272.281; 21, p. 286.498–522.

⁹² Hebr 2, 3 (*NTG*, p. 659).

- 1) Byzantium is a new Chosen People, a new Israel;
- 2) when baptised, the Bulgarians had been planted as a twig of the true Root of Jesse⁹³. From then on along with the Byzantines they made up the Body of Christ and House of Jacob⁹⁴;
- 3) the Byzantines are the fathers and teachers in faith for the Bulgarians, and as long as the latter keep unity with the Empire, they enjoy God's blessings and their country flourishes; they are part of the hierarchic order created by God on earth and they may enjoy guidance and care of the Empire;
- 4) Symeon and his ungodly desire to attain the Byzantine crown, who thus disturbed the divine order, was blamed for all the misery of the war (along with the Byzantine regency of 913–919)⁹⁵;
- 5) the peace of 927 was God's work, to disregard it would be a mortal sin; one should also see that peaceful coexistence survived, as peace is an eternal attribute of God, hence by concluding eternal peace⁹⁶ the Byzantines and Bulgarians are like the Almighty and therefore become the proper image of God;
- 6) the sons of Hagar, that is the Arabs, are the real enemies of Byzantium and Bulgarians.

⁹³ On the term itself see Is 11, 1. 10; Rom 15, 12; Apoc 5, 5; 22, 16 (*Septuaginta*, vol. II, p. 581; *NTG*, pp. 512, 746, 788). About 'grafting in' pagans into the olive tree of Israel (here Byzantium or broadly understood Church) – Rom 11, 13–24 (*NTG*, pp. 504–505).

⁹⁴ The orator directly uses this biblical name – *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 15, p. 276.351; 18, p. 278.396.

⁹⁵ K. M a r i n o w, *In the Shackles...*, p. 189. According to the Orator the indolent policy of regencies that had administered the Empire before Romanos Lekapenos entered the throne also contributed to the ravage of war – *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 13, p. 274.317–323.330–338; 14, p. 276.339–347; 15, p. 276.348–351.

⁹⁶ *On the Treaty with the Bulgarians*, 5, p. 262.142–144; 22, p. 288.537–540.

From the sociological and anthropological point of view the abovementioned standards of coexistence between the Byzantines and Bulgarians would have influenced their everyday life in its entirety. The newly concluded peace has reinitiated the chronological, repeated circle of normal life, the kind of life originated, established and blessed by God. The way of life in which the peace was the basis of human everyday life, and war was a disturbance, violence which destroyed the holy order of the continuously repeating circle of time, the circle which guaranteed safety. Finally, although the ideas presented above represent the particular view of a single (albeit excellent) Byzantine author, their importance is much greater because of the author's appearance with the homily at the imperial court, as an official representative of the Byzantine chancellery. We can therefore consider his thoughts to have been a way of thinking accepted by the official power.

* * *

To conclude, I would like to stress that considering the long reign of Peter I and the peace with the Empire that lasted throughout all that time (with the exception of the problematic raid of Nikephoros II Phokas to the Bulgarian border in 967)⁹⁷, one can say that from the point of view of the Byzantine rhetorician, his oration was entirely successful.

Ironically, only two years after Peter's death, in 971, the Byzantines put an end to the existence of the Bulgarian state (or to be precise, to its eastern part with the capital in Great Preslav)⁹⁸, thus themselves destroying the gentle ideas presented in the oration of the renowned Byzantine rhetorician and writer.

⁹⁷ On this subject, see K. Marinov, *Hemos comme barriere militaire. L'analyse des ecrits historiques de Leon le Diacre et de Jean Skylitzes au sujet de la campagne de guerre des empereurs byzantins Nicephore II Phocas en 967 et de Jean I Tzymiscès en 971*, BMD 2, 2011, pp. 444–455.

⁹⁸ On this subject see e.g. И. Божилев, *България при цар Петър (927–969)*, [in:] idem, В. Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България...*, pp. 299–300.