

## MACEDONIA

The name "Macedonia" is etymologically uncertain. Most often it is connected to its legendary eponym. In its most ancient literary reference ("*Katalògon Gynécon*" by the Greek poet *Hesiod*) Macedon is Zeus's son from Thuja, the daughter of Neokalyon. Other authors sort out different mythological names as being the forefathers of the ancient Macedonians. *N. P. Andriotis* derives the name Macedon from the ancient Greek "makos" (height) with the suffix "d" and ending "nos", connecting it to the physical characterization of the ancient Macedonians as tall mountain people, or to the region north of Mount Olympus (Pieria and Chasian mountain ranges) as "highland". It could be a name given by a neighboring ethnos from the flatland which gradually grows into an ethnic designation.

The research by *N. Hammond* and the latest archeological findings clarify that the nucleus of the ancient Macedonian Kingdom is the region between the lower Haliakmon (Bistritza) river, the Likostomon (Tempe) mountain and the Aegean Sea (Belo more). With the time, eastern regions inhabited by Thracian tribes along the river Strimon (Struma) have been added to the Macedonian lands.

During the reign of *Phillip II* (359-336 BC) Macedonia extends to the Adriatic Sea, to Mount Olympus, to Haemus (Stara planina) mountain and the Black Sea. He subjugates the territories Epirus, the Dardani, Thracia and Elada.

*Alexander III of Macedon* (Alexander the Great) creates a short lived world Empire stretching between the rivers Morava and Indus (in modern India). During his time the name Macedonia changes from purely ethnic notion to a statehood with a rather different but elusive content.

In 146 BC, after three violent wars, Macedonia is conquered by Rome and declared a Roman province, the first on the Balkans. Since 395 AD Macedonia is part of the Eastern Roman Empire, called Byzantium. Within it Macedonia is a name of administrative entities, different in size and scope, but already in I c. AD Macedonia lost its original ethnic meaning related to the state of the ancient Macedonians.

The settlement (V-VI c. AD) of the south-eastern group of Slavic tribes on the Balkan Peninsula, as a main component of the Bulgarian ethnicity, and the subsequent formation of the Bulgarian state around 681 brings major ethnic and political changes in South Eastern Europe. Ancient Macedonia becomes a hub for the spreading of the Slavs into the vast territories of the Peninsula and adopts the name "Sclaveni" (Sklavinia in Greek or Sclaviniae in Latin) meaning land of the Slavic tribes. The Empire loses its authority over the Balkans' interior. From the previous Diocese Macedonia, which in VI c. AD encompasses all the ancient Macedonian lands, continental Greece and many Aegean islands, Byzantium manages to keep control solely over Thessaloniki (Solun) and its surroundings, the Attica Peninsula and the Eastern Peloponnese region. Significant numbers of the population of the Diocese Macedonia migrates to the remnants of the Empire heartland or seeks refuge in Italy,

Asia Minor and the region around Constantinople (Tzarigrad). Only in VIII c. AD Byzantium is able to re-conquer parts of Thrace. Beginning of IX c. it takes an offensive in the European possessions and introduces its new military-administrative system, the “theme” organization of district entities, aimed at subscription into the army of settlers of various ethnic origins.

In order to defend the capital Constantinople from the Bulgarians, besides the theme Thrace already established since ca. 681 AD, Byzantium creates a new military-administrative district south of Haemus (Stara planina) named Macedonia with a main city Adrianople (Odrin). It stretches along the valley of the Evros (Maritsa) river, the Aegean lowlands and the Rhodope Mountains, the lower Strimon (Struma) and Nestos (Mesta) rivers and the Black Sea littoral between the capes Aemona and Tineada. Judging by its given name “Macedonia”, the core and most reliable part for the Byzantine army is the population recruited in the former ancient Macedonia. So the name Macedonia after IX c. AD designates the majority of ancient Thrace.

On the other hand, the ancient Moesia and Scythia (the north-western Black Sea region and North Dobrudja) according to its new inhabitants started to call themselves Bulgaria, and ancient Macedonia (from the mid-VIII c. to the mid- IXc.) – Sklavinia. From the advent of the Bulgars of Pannonia led by Kouber in the second half of the VII c. into the Bitola- Prilep valley and parts of the Thessaloniki (Solun) region, this part of ancient Macedonia is called Bulgaria. After the definitive voluntary adhesion of Sklavinia to the Bulgarian state in IX c. and the beginning of X c. the name spreads to the rest of the former province of Macedonia. The collective name “Sklavinia “ as well as numerous names of Slavic tribes vanish from the geographic map. The population of the ancient Roman province Macedonia starts to call their fatherland “Lower Land” or “Lower Bulgaria” and the part of it (with its capital Thessaloniki) still ruled by Byzantium – Thessaly.

Following the ethnic changes and the military-administrative reorganizations of 800 AD the only Macedonia that still exists is the theme around the valley of Evros (Maritsa) river in Thrace. Because of its diverse ethnic demography and its military population, but mostly due to the Slavic domination over the rest of the ethnic elements in the region, the connection to the ancient Macedonian ethnos gradually disappears; its Hellenized elements melt with the “genuine” Greeks who came at the same time from the former ancient Macedonia, identifying themselves with the general term “Romans”. Thus, during the Middle Age the name Macedonia definitely stops to relate to a concrete ethnicity, because the descendants of the non-hellenized ancient Macedonians who remained in their ancestral lands gradually melted too into the Slavic masses. Macedonia still existed as an administrative and geographical term, a district name of part of ancient Thrace.

Almost a millennium the name Macedonia was completely forgotten from the locals, from the rest of the Balkan populations, but also from all peoples that came in contact with them. For a century or two it has been used only by conservative Church authorities or sometimes by some Byzantine writers to remind of the past glory of ancient Macedonia, Hellas and Rome or when it is necessary to uplift the self-esteem of the Roman population of the Empire.

In the old-Bulgarian literature (from IX c. and later) under the name Macedonia is understood the then existing theme Macedonia (in the lands of ancient Thrace). In Bulgarian literary documents, translated and original, the influence of the Byzantine style and its conservatism is strongly felt. It is so with reference of the tradition of Roman regional and provincial names, especially related to the administrative organization of the dioceses. In the *Second Saint's Life of St. Nahum of Ochrid* the term "Lichnida land" is used instead of Macedonia. This definition relates to *Tsar Constantine-Assen's Charter*, an old-Bulgarian translation of the *Manassius Chronicle*, in which the "Lower Land of Ochrida" is mentioned. In Bulgarian medieval documents the name Macedonia comes up merely as a name of a theme or geographical region. It is clearly shown in writings from XIII and XIV c., and even later, from XV and XVI c. The story about the rampaging of Macedonia following the battle of Tchernomen in 1371 told by *Issaia of Serres*, Macedonia is referred as the theme of Thrace around Adrianople (Odrin). A Bulgarian chronicle of XV c. tells the same story: "The Turks captured the town of Gallipoli and the surrounding villages, conquered Macedonia and started to fight war as them pleased..." Similar examples are found in Serbian literary medieval monuments. The so called *Synodics of Dechani of the Orthodox Sunday* refers to "damnation against the heretics...also in Bulgarian Macedonia in Philippopolis and surroundings." Hereby is meant the northern part of the former Byzantine theme with main city Plovdiv, one of the regions in which the Bogomil's heresy is wide spread. In the writings of numerous western-European travellers Odrin (the present day Edirne in Turkey) and Plovdiv are named as the main cities in Macedonia.

The regional name of Macedonia used for the territories designated as such during the Antiquity slowly makes its way among the population of south-western Bulgaria (Lower Land). In the process of the national liberation it finally prevails and determines its scope at the end of XIX c. and the beginning of XX c. as the name of the western Bulgarian land still under the rule of the Sultan.

Part Two follows.

A handwritten signature in Cyrillic script, reading "проф. о. Б. Чифлианов". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial letter 'Б'.

Professor Reverend B. Tchiflianov

