

MONUMENTA



Годишник на Истражувачкиот Центар за Културно Наследство | Број 2–3, година 2018



Издавач
МАКЕДОНСКА АКАДЕМИЈА НА НАУКИТЕ И УМЕТНОСТИТЕ

ГЛАВЕН УРЕДНИК
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CONTRIBUTIONS SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF THE ARCHBISHOP – MARTYR VARLAAM OF OHRID

Abstract

This paper attempts to clarify some facets of the personality of an almost unknown archbishop of Ohrid, namely the holy neomartyr Varlaam, who suffered in the city of Veles in 1598. The occasion of the martyrdom is considered in the context of historical circumstances reconstructed on the basis of direct and indirect historical sources. This paper also attempts to answer the question: Why did the cult of St. Varlaam of Ohrid vanished?

Key words: *Varlaam of Ohrid, Neomartyr, Archbishop, John Vishensky*

Апстракт

Со ова истражување се прави обид да се расветлаат некои сегменти од личноста на еден речиси непознат Охридски архиепископ. Станува збор за светиот новомаченик Варлаам, кој пострада во градот Велес во 1598 г. Поводот за мачеништво се разгледува во контекстот на историските околности реконструирани врз основа на директните и индиректните историски извори. Исто така се прави обид да се одговори на прашањето: зошто изгаснал култот на свети Варлаам Охридски?

Клучни зборови: *Варлаам Охридски, новомаченик, архиепископ, Јован Вишенски*

The Ohrid Archbishopric has not ceased to play a significant role in the life of the Christians on the Balkans even after the fall of its dioceses under Ottoman rule. On the contrary, after this event it assumed a central role in the life of the Christians in this region, who built their identity upon it, finding a real support and bulwark in their regional church. Thus, during this period the arch-pastors of the local church took on the role of ethnic representatives, i.e. representatives of the Christians in general, in the face of Ottoman rule. Therefore, the arch-pastors bore a heavy burden - to be the pillars of faith that would support the Christian people, to preserve their faith and not to fall to the flatteries and promises of the heterodox power.

The Christians on the Balkans in this specific period were in an extremely challenging position; courageously observing the Christian faith in words and deeds, the clergy was often targeted by the heterodox power, as well as by the

local Mohammedan rulers and the independent Kachak gangs. Thus, no small number of those priests and arch-pastors suffered martyrdom defending their faith and their people.

The holy Varlaam, the Archbishop of Ohrid, is included among those brave men and was the last in line of Archbishops of the Archbishopric of Ohrid until its abolition in 1767, about which we know that they have been engarlanded with the holy wreath and, pleasing God, have been placed in the heavenly choir. Governing the Ohrid church, during the difficult period of the Ottoman rule, this holy arch-pastor completely devoted himself to the service of God and to his nearest ones. He crowned his arch-pastoral work with the wreath of martyrdom, bravely suffering for the Christian faith.

In contrast to other famous hieromartyrs from this period, whose cult is preserved until the present time, the name of this Archbishop of Ohrid is known only to a narrow circle of historians and hagiologists.

The time of St. Varlaam and the reason for his martyrdom

The data about the service of the holy bishop and martyr of Christ Varlaam as archbishop are really scarce. There is no information about his life before he was appointed as Archbishop. It is known for certain that he assumed the Archbishop's throne after the first service as Archbishop of the Archbishop Athanasius,¹ and that his service as an Archbishop did not last long.

The period in which the holy Varlaam was Archbishop was one of the most difficult periods for Christians during the overall Ottoman rule over the Balkans. Thus, in the second half of the 16th century, the situation of Christians under the Ottoman rule began to deteriorate significantly. The cruelty of the sultans increased day by day² and moral corruption was a fundamental characteristic of the Ottoman administration and army³ especially after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579.

Although numerous cases of Ottoman violence against the orthodox clergy and church dignitaries are known, the official Ottoman rule rarely resorted to physical liquidation of the heads of the churches i.e. patriarchs and archbishops. Thus, out of all the archbishops who have ascended the throne of Ohrid during the Ottoman rule, this is the only case of martyrdom of an archbishop. One of

¹ И. Снегаров, *История на Охридската архиепископия* II, София 1995, 194.

² This situation is reflected very well by the memoir of Pavel Dzordzic, citizen of Dubrovnik, sent to emperor Rudolf II on February 22, 1597. See: Н. Милев, *Един неиздаден документ за българската история (1597)*, Известия на българското историческо дружество, бр. 4, 1915, 89-99.

³ И. Снегаров, *op. cit.*, 74.

the main reasons for that was certainly the fear of mass reaction and mutiny of the Christian population, therefore there had to be a very serious reason for such an act.⁴

However the period when Varlaam served as Archbishop saw a series of mutinies and rebellions occurred, organized by the clergy, which might be the main reason for his martyrdom. Indeed, the letter of the Ohrid Archbishop Joachim⁵ to Don Juan de Austria dated June 1, 1576, which is preserved in Spain in the Archives of Simancas,⁶ reveals that the Archbishop Joachim was preparing a rebellion in western Macedonia and Epirus.⁷ According to some documents published by Makushev only a few years before commencing his service as archbishop and the martyrdom of Varlaam in 1595 a strong rebellion arose in Himara, which attracted the attention of Venice. At the head of the rebellion stood "the Archbishop of the citizens of Himara" who led the rebellion dressed in red. Although Makushev thinks that it was the Archbishop of Bari,⁸ that interpretation cannot be accepted, because Himara was under the rule either of the Archbishop of Ohrid or of the Bishop of Ioannina, and not under the rule of the Archbishop who had his seat in Italy. According to the opinion of Milev, the rebellion was headed by Athanasius⁹ the Archbishop of Ohrid, who later on entered into negotiations with Venice to raise a new rebellion. However most probably it was his predecessor Joachim, whose service as an Archbishop probably ended with the suppression of the 1595 rebellion. The testimony of the contemporary of these events, Dr. Gerlach, about the difficult position of the clergy of Ohrid in that period is significant. Touched by the financial condition of the Orthodox Church in the Balkans, and especially the intense miseries which the Ohrid Church had suffered, Dr. Gerlach confirmed that with an impressive note in his diary: "On October 4th I gave 10 aspras to a priest, to whom the sipahi took everything he

⁴ A later example is the murder of the Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V, which was a cause for the uprising on Chios in 1821, which was supported by the monkhood from Mount Athos. Thus, after the Paschal liturgy, on April 10, 1821, the Patriarch was captured, and on the very same afternoon he was hung from the front gate of the Patriarchate. (Γ.Π. Αγγελόπουλος, *Τὰ κατὰ τὸν Πατριάρχη Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Γρηγόριον τὸν Ε', τόμος Α'*, Εθνικὸν Τυπογραφεῖον 1865, 18-19).

⁵ According to the testimony of his contemporary Dr. Stefan Gerlach, the Archbishop Joachim was born around 1527. Gerlach in his work "Diary of a trip to the Ottoman Porte in Constantinople" wrote: "On April 4, 1577 I was in the patriarchate, where I saw the Archbishop of Ohrid and all of Bulgaria, a man of fifty, with a simple monk's clothing" (С. Герлах, *Дневник на едно пътуване до Османската порта в Цариград*, София 1976, 187).

⁶ Archivo General de Simancas, Sección Estado, lejos 1074 (numerous 109).

⁷ For more on this see: I.K. Χασιώτη, *Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αχρίδος Ιωακείμ και οι συνομοτικές κινήσεις στη Βίρειο Ηπειρο (1572-1576)*, Μακεδονικά 6 (1965), 237-253.

⁸ V. Makushev, *Monum. histor. Slavorum meridionalium*, I, Warsaw 1874, 268-270.

⁹ For more on Athanasius, see: Н. Милев, *Охридският патриарх Атанасий и скитанията му в чужбина*, Известия на Историческото дружество, бр. 5 (1922), 113-128.

had, he had to leave his wife and two children and subsist by cutting trees. He is under the authority of the Archbishop of Ohrid".¹⁰

In 1598, the year of the martyrdom of Varlaam, a rebellion arose in Trnovo,¹¹ which was organized mainly by clerics. One of the main organizers was the Metropolitan of Trnovo Dionysus Rallis,¹² well-known for his diplomatic activity in order to attract like-minded persons mostly from the Orthodox world. In 1592, Metropolitan Dionysius, accompanied by Kalistrat the Metropolitan of Grevena who belonged to the diocese of the Ohrid Archbishopric, took to Moscow a decree and letters addressed to the Russian tsar Theodore Ivanovich (son of the Emperor Ivan the Terrible), to the queen and the patriarch Job of Moscow, in which he sought help for the homogeneous Slavic Christian population in the Balkans.¹³

After the failure of the rebellion, which despite pleas remained without help from Russia, over 60 000 Christians migrated north of the Danube, many people were killed and many villages were ravaged. Later in 1617, the Metropolitan Dionysius sent a letter to the Austrian Emperor Rudolf, in which he wrote the following: "With my faithful servants, I personally have collected around 1000 Christians in the "Sedmogradska" (seven-city) war but our enemy, the Turk, attacked with great force, and broke the army (the rebels), and took from me my bishop's dignity and I had to escape".¹⁴

It is known that in that period (1596-1599) the predecessor of the holy martyr Varlaam, the Archbishop Athanasius, was traveling with the Metropolitan of Pelagonija Jeremiah asking for help from the European officials to raise a rebellion of the Balkan people for their liberation from Turkish slavery.¹⁵ This fact has led some researchers to reflect that perhaps Varlaam too acted similarly in his area, among his followers, and some researchers interpret the event with the Archbishop Varlaam as a consequence of a rebellion that arose in the city of Veles,¹⁶ which of course is

¹⁰ С. Герлах, *op. cit.*, 154.

¹¹ Г. Бакалов, *История на българите*, София 2007, 296-313.

¹² For the actions of the Metropolitan Dionysius Rallis see further: А. Вакаλόπουλος, *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού*, τ. 3, Θεσσαλονίκη 1968, 335-337.

¹³ Г. Бакалов, *op. cit.*, 213.

¹⁴ Ц. Георгиева, Д. Цанев, *Христоматия по история на България III*, Наука и изкуство, София 1988, 192-198.

¹⁵ "Not less impressive from the activity of Rali was the energetic political activity of his contemporary, the Archbishop of Ohrid, Athanasius. Encouraged by the outbreak of uprising between the gate and the Christian "Holy league" (1593-1606, Athanasius had started negotiations with the Venetians in 1596, with an appeal to support the prepared uprising in Albania. Athanasius went to Italy, where he tried to develop rapport with the Viceroy of Naples and the Pope. Athanasius was convinced that at the slightest sign, all of Serbia and Bulgaria would be prepared to join with the rebelled Christian brothers from Albania". Г. Бакалов, *История на българите*, София 2007, 212-213; For Athanasius see more: Н. Милев, *Охридският патриарх Атанасий*, 113-128.

¹⁶ „Probably an uprising broke out, perhaps in Veles, to which the Archbishop Varlaam who was in the city at that time became a victim” И. Пастухов, *Българска история II*, София 1943, 483.

not confirmed by any source. According to Minoski,¹⁷ there is a possibility that the Archbishop Varlaam was a victim of conspiracy of the pretenders to the archbishopric throne, bearing in mind that in the same period another Archbishop of Ohrid appeared beside Athanasius and Varlaam – Nektarius,¹⁸ who in 1598 is mentioned in the historical sources as a collector of alms in Moldova.¹⁹

If we examine the history of the Patriarchate of Pec, it is interesting that the Serbian Patriarch John Kantul (1592-1614), who manifested revolutionary activities, was a contemporary of the Archbishop Varlaam. Therefore, in 1598 the rebellion in Belgrade arose. Fifteen years after this rebellion, the Patriarch John was killed by the Turks, and he was revered as martyr²⁰ by his contemporaries.

The situation of the Christian population and especially of the clergy was no friendlier to the south of the Balkans either, especially after the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.²¹ Thus, according to the sources the wrath of the Sultan²² erupted on the clergy and nobility in southern Macedonia,²³ central Greece,²⁴ the Peloponnese²⁵ and the Aegean islands,²⁶ which led to numerous rebellions.

The historical conditions and turbulent occurrences in the Balkan part of the Ottoman Empire in that period as well as the role of the clergy and also of the headmen of the local churches in the organization of the liberation movements led to numerous martyrs, even from the ranks of the high clergy who defended the Orthodox faith zealously and clamoured for the liberation of its flock from the heterodox slavish

¹⁷ М. Миноски, *Непознато живиње на Варлаам Охридски како извор за насиланије во Македонија во 1598 година*, Гласник на ИНИ 1976, Т. XX No. 3, 188 – 189.

¹⁸ The Moldavian Duke Jeremiah Mogila recommends to the great Chancellor and Hetman of the Polish Crown, Jan Zamoyski by letter dated 14 August 1598, the Archbishop of Ohrid Nektarios who wanted to go to Moscow after spending more than one year in Moldova. In that letter the Duke Jeremiah does not forget to indicate the circumstances that forced the Archbishop to abandon his seat and seek refuge in other countries: the churches were ravaged by rogues, and he himself did not feel safe. Cf. E. Hurmuzaki, *Suplimentul 2*, т. 1 (1510-1600), I. Bogdan (ed.), Bucuresti 1893, 478.

¹⁹ И. Снегаров, *op. cit.*, 194

²⁰ Сава Шумадијски, *Српски јерарси од деветио̄го до двадесетио̄го века*, Београд-Подгорица-Крагујевац 1996, 242.

²¹ For more on this battle, see: A.C. Hess, *The Battle of Lepanto and Its Place in Mediterranean History, Past and Present*, No. 57 (1972) 53–73; A. Konstam, *Lepanto 1571: The Greatest Naval Battle of the Renaissance*, Oxford 2003.

²² On the policy and the character of the Sultan Selim II (1565-1574) see: N. Jorga, *Gaschichte des osmanischen Reiches nach den Quellen dergestellt*, т. 3, Gotha 1910, 137.

²³ On the events in Thessaloniki and Mount Athos and Serres see: E. Charrière, *Négociations de Levant ou correspondances, memoires et actes diplomatiques*, т. 3, Paris 1853, 262; П. Ζερλένης, *Θεσσαλονικέων μητροπολιται (1520-1578)*, Byzantinische Zeitschrift, т. 12, (1903), 139-140; V. Lamansky, *Secrets d'Etat de Venise, Saint-Petersbourg* 1884, 88; А. Βακαλοπούλου, *Η Θεσσαλονίκη στα 1430, 1821 και 1912-1918*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1947, 30-31; Π. Πέννα, *Σερραϊκά Χρονικά*, τευχ. Α' (1938), 13, 16-17.

²⁴ Κ. Σάθας, *Χρονικόν Γαλαξιδίου*, Αθήνα 1865, 187-189, 212-214.

²⁵ Σ. Θωμοπούλου, *Ιστορία της Πόλεως Πατρών*, Πάτρα 1950, 416-417, 445.

²⁶ E. Charrière, *op. cit.*, 262.

yoke. The characteristic rebellion among the Christians in this period is explained by the extremely unbearable position of the Christians and the unprecedented unruliness which was a feature of the empire during the reign of Sultan Muhammad III (1595-1603) and his son Ahmed I,²⁷ during whose reign the holy martyr Varlaam was killed.

Sources of the martyrdom of the Archbishop Varlaam

The news of the martyrdom of the Archbishop echoed throughout the Orthodox world and it was impossible for this event to remain unnoticed in several sources that date from different periods.

The oldest preserved source for the martyrdom of the holy Archbishop is one inscription made in the Prologue of the church Holy Mother of God Perivleptos in Ohrid from the second half of the 16th century. This inscription made by an anonymous author says:

† БѢ ЛѢТО. 7398. (7106) МѢЦА МАЙСѢ. КН. ДАНЪ АРХІЕПІСКѢПОУ
 ѠХРІСКОМЪ КРЪ БАЛАМОУ ГЛАВЪ ЕМОУ ѠСѢКОШЕ ТѢРЦИ В ГРАДОУ ОУ
 БЕЛѢСѢ КѢИ СТВОРИХА ВЕЛІАНЪ МОУКА. А НѢМЪ ВѢЧНА ЕМОУ ПАМЕТЪ. :

(In the summer 1598, on the 28th day of May, the Turks beheaded the Archbishop of Ohrid sire Varlaam, in the city of Veles and caused a great suffering, and to him – memory eternal).

Today this Prologue is kept in the library of BAN,²⁸ and was published for the first time in 1908 by Professor Jordan Ivanov in the first edition of the book "Bulgarian antiquities from Macedonia" („Български старини из Македония”).²⁹ This short text does not give detailed information, but represents a significant testimony for the martyrdom of the Archbishop. Certainly, as an inscription in the margins it had to be substantial but concise, transferring in that manner the testimony of the event. Snegarov writes about this inscription stating: An unknown writer (probably a citizen of Ohrid) wrote in Slavic about the death of Archbishop of Ohrid Varlaam in one prologue of the Ohrid cathedral church "St. Clement".³⁰ Minovski too locates the occurrence of this inscription at the time of the martyrdom of the Archbishop Varlaam.³¹

²⁷ For more on these Sultans see: D. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, Cambridge 2000, 90; C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire*, New York 2005, 175; J.P. Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries*, New York 1977, 288; G. Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*, Los Angeles and Berkeley 2003, 271.

²⁸ BAN — Archive, № 73, л. XIV а.

²⁹ Й. Иванов, *Български старини из Македония*, София 1908, 216.

³⁰ И. Снегаров, *op. cit.*, 280.

³¹ М. Миноски, *op. cit.*, 183.

Snegarov once more noted the martyrdom of the Archbishop Varlaam and wrote: "During the 16th century the condition of the Christians in Turkey became unbearable. The sultans competed with each other in dissolute life and ferocity. Muhammad III (1595-1603) had executed 21 of his siblings and 10 of his father's concubines. His son Ahmed I desired bodily pleasures and did not have a firm hand to bring order to his country, as a result of which several years after his death, Turkey was hit by dynastic struggles and ethnic disorder. During his reign, the Archbishop of Ohrid, Varlaam was beheaded in Veles in 1598".³² In his notes, Snegarov points to the disorder which predominated during the reign of Sultan Muhammad III, and he denotes the martyrdom of the Archbishop as a consequence precisely of this situation in the country.

In 1946, the Russian scientist Eremin mentioned an unknown text that originates from the Balkans, in which the transfer of the relics of St. Varlaam from Veles to Ohrid is described,³³ and in 1955 he published a work of the Ukrainian writer John Vishensky in which this text³⁴ is published.

The author of this text, the monk John Vishensky,³⁵ was born in Galicia (region between Hungary, Poland and Ukraine), in the city of Vishnja. He had a Slavic origin, and was born around 1545/1550 and passed away around 1630. He was a monk on Mount Athos, in the Zograf monastery (that at that time was a powerful monastery), and from there he had written many important works, and sent a lot of letters to several people. For us the most important is the description of the holy Varlaam, the Archbishop of Ohrid, which is included in his book "Книжка" (Booklet) for which it is believed that John himself had transcribed it from a local original, soon after this event had occurred.

It is about one incomplete hagiography which is entitled "Novelty or news about the discovery of the body of the killed Varlaam, Archbishop of Ohrid, how it was found and how afterwards his holy body was transferred to Ohrid." Opinions of the researchers are divided with respect to the authorship of this

³² И. Снегаров, *op. cit.*, 74.

³³ И.П. Еремин, *Неизвестный памятник болгарской литературы конца XVI в.*, Научный бюллетень Ленинградского Государственного университета, № 11-12 (Славистические заметки), изд. ЛГУ, Ленинград 1946, 33-34.

³⁴ И.П. Еремин (ред.), И. Вишенский, *Сочинения, Новина или вест о обретенни тела убитаго Варлаама, архиепископа охридскаго, во граде Велесе за истинну пострадавашиаго и в реку, зовомуу Вардар, вверженнаго*, Москва-Ленинград 1955, 125-129, 311-313.

³⁵ About Vishensky see: И. Франко, *Иван Вишенський и его произведения (Монография)*, Львов 1895; И Грушевский, *История украинской литературы в 6-ти томах*, т. 5, книга 2: Первое Возрождение (1580—1610 г.), Киев 1995, 91-163, 234-266; П. Житецкий, *Литературная деятельность Иоанна Вишенского*, Киевская старина, т. XXIX, Киев 1890, 494-532.

text. As such Zhytetsky³⁶ and Ivan Franko³⁷ believe that it is an original work of Vishensky. However, Franko adds that below the text there is not the signature of Vishensky. That, and the linguistic expressions characteristic of the Macedonian dialect that can be found in the text led Minovski to believe that Vishensky was not the original author of this text, and that his source was the whole hagiography that is completely unknown today, which Vishensky had found on Mount Athos.³⁸ This possibility is very probable, knowing that this monastic territory was freer in the fostering of the neomartyr's cults of which many martyrological collections are witnesses. These collections are preserved on the Mount Athos, and some of them are the only sources on the suffering of a particular new neomartyr. Special centers functioned on Mount Athos that encouraged the neomartyrdom, particularly among those penitents who had previously renounced Christ.³⁹ However the existence of a comprehensive hagiography of Valaam is not necessary, bearing in mind that the martyrologies usually give only basic biographical information, and the emphasis in them is on the martyrdom of the saint. Thus, this opinion of Minovski remains based only on assumptions.

Martin Drinov writes about saint Varlaam in his book „Избрани съчинения“ ("Selected Works"), and more recently, Manjo Stoyanov in „Църквата и съпротивата на българския народ срещу османското иго“ ("The Church and the Bulgarian's people resistance meet the Ottoman oppression"). Trendafil Krstanov writes about him in his works „Новина за намиране мощите на обезглавения от турците охридски архиепископ Варлаам в края на XVIв“ ("The novelty of finding the relics of the beheaded Archbishop Varlaam by the Turks at the end of the 16th century"). In: „Турските завоевания и съдбата на балканските народи, отразени в исторически и литературни паметници от XIV-XVII century“ ("Turkish conquest and the fate of the Balkan peoples, reflected in historical and literary monuments of 14th-17th century") (V. Tarnovo, 1992),⁴⁰ and „Нови данни за български мъченици от XV-XIXв.“ ("New data on Bulgarian martyrs of 15th-19th century"). In "Духовна култура", кн. 2/1995 ("Spiritual culture", no. 2/1995), and finally, the nun Valentina Drumeva in „Разкази за българските светци“ ("Stories of Bulgarian saints").

³⁶ П. Житецький, *op. cit.*, 505.

³⁷ И. Франко, *op. cit.*, 80-81.

³⁸ М. Миноски, *op. cit.*, 181-183.

³⁹ Cf. Σ. Πασχαλίδης, *Το υμναγολογικό έργο των Κολλοβάδων: συμβολή στη μελέτη της αγιολογικής γραμματείας κατά την περίοδο της Τουρκοκρατίας*, Θεσσαλονίκη 2007, 109-114.

⁴⁰ Т. Крстанов, *Турските завоевания и съдбата на балканските народи, отразени в исторически и литературни паметници от 14-18в.*, В. Търново 1999, 161-171.

The cult of St. Hieromartyr Varlaam

Although the duty of Varlaam as an Archbishop lasted only briefly, the news of his martyrdom spread quickly, as we have mentioned above, and it was therefore natural to begin to develop his cult. However, as the monk of Zograf, John Vishensky, had noted down in his account, directly after the suffering, the Turkish government took care to extinguish every memory of the Blessed Martyr in every possible way. This text most picturesquely and precisely, in the spirit of hagiographical works, described the events that followed after the assassination of the Archbishop. It recounts: "After the killing and throwing the body into the river Vardar of the Blessed father at that time, because of the persecution and slander against the rest of the Christians, no one dared to follow his body to retrieve it from the water, but it spent a week in the water, until this fuss and the furious Turkish hearts enraged by the devil had calmed".⁴¹

However, miraculously, as Vishensky continues in his story, the body of the holy Archbishop was found and buried in a church in the vicinity of the city of Veles. All these events were followed by the manifestation of many miracles, which had followed the later transfer of his holy relics to the city of Ohrid – the center of the Archbishopric. As Vishensky had noted, the relics of the holy martyr were uncorrupted, myroblete and represented a source of healing.⁴² These developments, of course, contributed to the quick spread of the cult of the Archbishop Varlaam, which led to the news of his martyrdom being noticed by some sources, as we have mentioned above, despite the major Turkish repression.

What is particularly confusing is the gradual extinguishing of the cult of this holy arch-pastor and martyr and the loss of his holy relics, which were anyway central to his worship.

We found the last proof concerning the cult of the Archbishop Varlaam in the same Prologue No. 11 from the church Holy Mother of God Perivleptos which features the oldest inscription about Varlaam.⁴³ The notes which date to February 9, 1869 are signed by Hristo K. Uzunov from Ohrid, the grandfather of Hristo Uzunov - the famous revolutionary who was named after his grandfather. From these notes it is obvious that in 1869, i.e. 271 years after the martyrdom of the holy Archbishop and hieromartyr Varlaam, the citizens of Ohrid had still

⁴¹ И.П. Еремин (ред.), И. Вишенский, *Сочинения, Новина или вест о обретенни тела убитаго Варлаама*, 311.

⁴² Ibid, 312.

⁴³ "The left page opposite to this note [the old note] (on f. XIIIb) bears a note from a recent period: See the note as opposed to the Beheading of the Archbishop of Ohrid Varlaam to 1869 after the Nativity of Christ makes 281, the Chr. K. Uzunov Bulgarian from Ohrid. Month February 9" Хр. Кодов, *Отис на славянските ръкописи в Библиотеката на Българската академия на науките*, София 1969, 146.

preserved his memory. In this inscription Uzunov counts how many years have passed from the martyrdom of Varlaam until 1869.

According to the account of Vishensky, after the transfer to Ohrid, the relics were placed in the "temple of the Ohrid Archbishopric".⁴⁴ Considering the fact that during the Ottoman conquest the cathedral church of "St. Sophia" was turned into a mosque,⁴⁵ and the church "Perivleptos" was appointed as cathedral church of the Archbishopric, there is a very good possibility that the relics of St. Varlaam were placed there. But there is no other record for that inside the church, except the one preserved in the Prologue⁴⁶ in which the martyrdom is written down, but it does not say anything about the relics.

It is likely that in the turbulent time of revolutionary activities and rebellions which followed after the testimony of Uzunov, or perhaps during the period of some occupational conquest in a later period, the relics were transferred from this church and thus "forgotten", and the possibility that they were handed over for destruction by the heterodox government cannot be rejected either, keeping in mind that precisely the relics were a pillar upon which the cult of St. Varlaam was founded.

As for the iconographic representation of the Archbishop Varlaam, up to now older representations have not been found. There is a recent icon of the holy arch-pastor which is kept in the monastery "St. Paraskeva" in the village Velgoshti – near Ohrid. On this icon St. Varlaam is represented as an old man with a white tapered beard, long hair⁴⁷ and skouphos with a veil (panakamilavka) with a cross on it. In his right hand he holds a cross and in his left hand he holds a closed copy of the holy Gospel. There is the following inscription on the back of the icon: "To the St. Paraskeva and to the citizens of Ohrid from Christians of the town Shumen - Bulgaria. Resurrection of Christ, Shumen 2005". According to the data that they left in the monastery, the Christians from Shumen who gave this icon made it after a vision of the saint, who requested them to take the icon to the aforementioned monastery.

The good fortune of the saint's icon dwelling in this monastery is an indication that Saint Varlaam, despite the loss of his holy and myroblete relics, has undoubtedly been protecting the Holy See of Ohrid and the regional Church which he once oversaw for more than four centuries.

⁴⁴ И.П. Еремин (ред.), И. Вишенский, *Сочинения, Новина или вест о обретенни тела убитаго Варлаама...*, 313.

⁴⁵ Ц. Грозданов, *Живойисой на Охридската архиепископија: ситуација*, Скопје 2007, 272.

⁴⁶ Ђ. Иванов, *Български старини из Македонија*, София 1908, 216.

⁴⁷ It is not known whether this icon is a copy of some older prototype and does it recapture the real image of the Archbishop, or it is made in compliance with certain known characteristics, as it is for an example the age and etc.

Виктор Негески

ПРИЛОЗИ КОН РАСВЕТЛУВАЊЕ НА ЛИКОТ И ДЕЛОТО НА АРХИЕПИСКОПОТ МАЧЕНИК ВАРЛААМ ОХРИДСКИ

Резиме

Периодот на архиепископството на Варлаам Охридски е проследен со низа бунџи и востанија организирани токму од духовници, што можеби е и главниот повод за неговата маченичка смрт. Така, од писмото на охридскиот архиепископ Јоаким до Don Juan de Austria од 1 јуни 1576 г., зачувано во шпанскиот архив Simancas, дознаваме дека архиепископот Јоаким подготвувал востание во западна Македонија и во Епир, кое избувнало во 1595 г. во Химара, само неколку години пред архиепископството и мачеништвото на Варлаам. Во 1598 година – годината на мачеништвото на Варлаам – избувнало востание и во Трново, кое било организирано од трновскиот митрополит Дионисиј Рали.

Се знае дека претходникот на светиот маченик Варлаам, архиепископот Атанасиј, токму во тоа време (1596–1599), заедно со пелагонискиот митрополит Еремија, странствувал и барал помош од европските државници за кревање востание на балканските народи за ослободување од османлиското ропство. Токму овој факт навел некои истражувачи на размислување дека можеби и Варлаам дејствувал во иста насока на домашен терен, меѓу својата паства, а некои истражувачи настанот со архиепископот Варлаам го толкуваат како последица на востание што избувнало во градот Велес, или на заговор од претендентите за архиепископскиот престол. За тешката состојба на охридскиот клир во тоа време значајно е и сведоштвото на современикот на овие настани, д-р Стефан Герлах.

Најстар зачуван извор за маченичкото скончание на светиот архиепископ е еден запис направен во Прологот на црквата Богородица Перивлепта во Охрид од втората половина на XVI век. Во 1955 година рускиот научник Еремин објавува едно дело на украинскиот писател Јован Вишенски, во кое се наоѓа и расказот „Новина или вест за пронаоѓањето на телото на убиениот Варлаам, архиепископ охридски, како беше пронајден и како потоа неговото преблажено тело се пренесе до Охрид“. Овие две сведоштва, од кои второто

има житиен карактер, се единствените извори современи на мачеништвото на архиепископот Варлаам.

Она што особено збунува е постепеното гаснење на култот на овој свет архипастир и маченик, и губењето на неговите свети мошти, кои секако, биле центар на неговото почитување. Последните сведоштва за култот на архиепископот Варлаам ги среќаваме во истиот Пролог No. 11 од храмот Богородица Перивлепта, во кој е направен и најстариот запис за Варлаам. Овој запис го оставил охриѓанецот Христо К. Узунов, дедо на истоимениот револуционер, и го носи датумот 9 февруари 1869 г. Од овие белешки станува јасно дека во 1869 година, односно 271 година по маченичкото скончание на светитот архиепископ и свештеномаченик Варлаам, охриѓани сè уште го чувале неговиот спомен.

Според повеста на Вишенски, по пренесувањето во Охрид моштите биле положени во „храмот на Охридската архиепископија“, веројатно храмот Богородица Перивлепта. Она што е најверојатно е дека во бурното време на револуционерни движења и востанија, кое следува по сведоштвото на Узунов, или можеби во периодот на некое окупаторско завојување во подоцнежниот период, моштите биле пренесени од овој храм и така „заборавени“, а не е исклучена можноста да биле предадени на уништување од страна на иноверната власт, имајќи предвид дека токму моштите биле столбот околу кој се градел култот на свети Варлаам.

Што се однесува на иконографското изобразување на архиепископот Варлаам, постои една понова икона на светиот архипастир, која се чува во манастирот Света Параскева во с. Велгошти – Охридско.



Fig. 1. The icon of St. Varlaam of Ohrid from the monastery "St. Paraskeva" in Velgoshti