

UNIVERSITATEA „OVIDIUS” DIN CONSTANȚA
FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE ȘI ȘTIINȚE POLITICE

”OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANȚA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCES



**ANALELE UNIVERSITĂȚII „OVIDIUS” DIN
CONSTANȚA. *SERIA ISTORIE***

**ANNALS OF THE ”OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF
CONSTANȚA. *HISTORY SERIES***

VOL. 16 / 2019

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www.auocsi.wikispaces.com www.ispovidius.ro

ISSN -1841-138X

Tel./Fax: 0241/671448
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THE MANY NATIONALITIES OF HRISTOFOR ŽEFAROVIĆ

Vančo GJORGJIEV, Vojislav SARAČINSKI*

Abstract: Less than a century after the death of Hristofor Žefarović (1690–1753), a renowned artist, author, merchant, heraldist and supporter of the “Illyrian idea”, Balkan historiographies began trying to determine his ethnicity – or, rather, his nationality – under the influence of national ideologies for which they sought legitimacy. However, the question of the attested identity markers of Hristofor Žefarović presents a complex methodological problem that cannot (and should not) be treated unilaterally, on the basis of fragmentary and selective pieces of information brought out of context.

A thorough analysis of the extant sources, containing an extensive set of contextual identity markers, shows that – at this time, and until a better and more explicit source comes to light – modern historiography is objectively unable to determine the ethnicity of Hristofor Žefarović in modern terms. Furthermore, it is questionable whether this kind of conclusion can be reached at all, as our sources testify to a remarkable fluidity in ethnical markers and norms of self-determination in the times of Žefarović, which would be nearly outrageous under the terms of modern-day politics. Consequently, from a methodological viewpoint, the case of the ethnicity and self-identification of Hristofor Žefarović cannot be defined in any other way, except as putting the past in function of building contemporary national ideologies.

Keywords: Hristofor Žefarović; Ottoman Macedonia; ethnicity; identity markers; self-identification

Hristofor Žefarović (1690–1753) was a renowned painter, iconographer, copperplate engraver, author, merchant, heraldist, and a keen supporter of the “Illyrian idea”,¹ hailing from Ottoman Macedonia. Less than a century after his death,² under the influence of national ideologies for which they sought legitimacy, Balkan historiographies began scraping the barrels of their allegedly

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¹ On the early pan-Slavic movement and the origins of the “Illyrian idea”, v. I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Cornell University Press, 1988.

² V. Д. Давидов, *Српска стематологија, Беч 1741*, Прометеј, Нови Сад, 2011, 27–29.

glorious past and trying to determine the ethnicity – or, rather, the nationality – of Žefarović. It takes a mere glance over the existing scholarship on this issue to find claims of him being a Bulgarian,³ a Serb,⁴ an Aromanian⁵ and, finally, a Macedonian.⁶ Modern scholarship has apparently done its best to create a historical figure with four parallel ethnicities, and four different identities.

We shall endeavor to look at some details of this little historical irrationality not by refuting these colorful claims – as they, by their own nature, stand very poorly against methodological criticism – but, instead, by trying to *explore and bring to light the actual identity markers at the time*, both in Ottoman Macedonia and abroad. This will serve the thankless task of underlining the absurdity of the attempts to determine the ethnical identity of Žefarović, as well as the futility of the one-sided romantic quests for identity markers in this period.

It is a common fact that the Ottoman Empire kept records of its tax-paying subjects listed by their religious affiliation; they were generally divided into two broad groups – of ‘orthodox Muslims’ and ‘infidels’.⁷ The former included all subjects of Islamic faith, while the latter encompassed the followers of all other faiths, with the Eastern Orthodox population being dominant in Ottoman Macedonia. Two groups of subjects were listed separately: the Jews, who would normally belong to the category of ‘infidels’, and the Roma, who, depending on their religion, could enter both the ‘orthodox’ and the ‘infidel’ category. Despite this very broad division, a detailed analysis of the census records shows that many subjects were listed by their patronymics or nicknames, which, in fact, revealed their ethnical or linguistic affiliation. Thus,

³ V. Д. Руварац, *Први књижевни песници у српскога народа*, „Стражилово“ IV, Нови Сад, 1888, 121; Н. М. Петровский, *Къ биографиѣ Христофора Жефаровича*, „Извѣстія отделения русскаго языка и словесности Императорской Академіи наукъ“, том XV, вып. II, СПб., 1910, стр. 297–302; В. Захариевъ, *За графическите искусства*, „Държавна художествена академия, Годишникъ 1896-1926“, София, 1927; Y. Ivanov, *Christophore Gefarovitch*, “La Bulgarie”, 6.X.1927; Й. Ивановъ, *Българетъ въ Македония. Издирвания и документи за тѣхното потекло, език и народностъ*, София, 1915, 68.

⁴ V. J. Скерлић, *Српска књижевност у XVIII веку*, Београд, 1909, 247; J. Скерлић, *Историја нове српске књижевности*, Београд, 1921, 44; П. Колендић, *Џефаровић и његови бакрорези*, „Гласник историског друштва у Новом Саду“, св. 8, књ. IV, Сремски Карловци, 1931, 35–45.

⁵ V. A. Матковски, *Грбовите на Македонија*. Мисла, Скопје, 1990, 59; 121; A. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, Мисла, Скопје, 1985, 56, 111, 132; П. Колендић, *Џефаровић и његови бакрорези...*, 37; Д. Ј. Поповић, *О Цинцарима*², Прометеј, Београд, 1998, 27–28.

⁶ V. St. Stanojević, *Žefarović Hristofor (Zefarovic, Zefarov, Zefar)*, “Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka”, t. IV, Zagreb, 1929, 1321; A. Матковски, *Грбовите на Македонија*, 121.

⁷ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1981, 83.

on the territory of Ottoman Macedonia, in the form of a patronymic or a nickname, one may find the ethnonyms *Arnaut/Arbanas* [Albanian],⁸ *Vlach* [Aromanian],⁹ *Armenian*,¹⁰ *Serb*,¹¹ *Greek*,¹² *Frank/Frankish* [describing either Ragusan Catholics or Europeans in general],¹³ then *Arab*, *Kurd* and *Circassian*,¹⁴ as well as *German*, *Latin*, *Tatar* and *Kuman*.¹⁵ Macedonian orientalist Aleksandar Stojanovski lists only one example of the terms *Bulgarian*¹⁶ and *Sbkllav* (Albanian for *Slav*) in the form of a nickname.¹⁷

These patronymics and nicknames become more common during the XV and XVI centuries. Still, one needs to be aware that these represent incidental cases, and not common practice. Were we to focus on the patronymics and nicknames that are, in a sense, typical for the region, these incidental cases show that the dominant ethnonyms are *Serb*, *Arbanas* [Albanian], *Vlach* [Aromanian] and *Greek*, while *Bulgarian* and *Sbkllav* [Slav] remain rare. It is an entirely different matter, however, to be able to explain under what circumstances these terms came to be dominant, and to what extent they can present a serious indicator of the ethnicity not only of the bearer himself, but, even more, of the majority or plurality of the populace.

The identity markers in Ottoman Macedonia attain another level of confusion in the ‘books of travel’, the popular travelogues of the era. For example, French traveller, naturalist, writer, and diplomat, Pierre Bellon, who crossed Ottoman Macedonia in 1547, writes that the area around the mines in Siderokausia / Sidrekapsi was inhabited by “[...] a ragbag of peoples speaking all kinds of languages – Slavonic, Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian”; he goes on to underline that “[...] the miners working there at this time are mainly Bulgarians”, while “the villagers from the settlements nearby, the ones who come to the

⁸ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 83; A. Стојановски, *Македонија под турска власт (статии и прилози)*, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 2006, 115, 161, 162; A. Стојановски, *Македонија во турското средновековие*, Култура, Скопје, 1989, 197.

⁹ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 84; A. Стојановски, *Македонија под турска власт*, 114, 117, 161-162.

¹⁰ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 85; A. Стојановски, *Македонија во турското средновековие*, 417.

¹¹ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 85; A. Стојановски, *Македонија под турска власт*, 114, 137, 162; A. Стојановски, *Македонија во турското средновековие*, 197.

¹² A. Стојановски, *Македонија под турска власт*, 163, 266-267.

¹³ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 85; A. Стојановски, *Македонија во турското средновековие*, 417.

¹⁴ A. Стојановски, *Градовите на Македонија од крајот на XIV до XVII век*, 88-89.

¹⁵ A. Стојановски, *Македонија во турското средновековие*, 417.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 197.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 416.

market, are Christians and speak Serbian and Greek”.¹⁸ A similar pastiche is to be found in other places as well, with Bellon noting that “all the inhabitants of Trikala [*sic*]¹⁹ and Serres speak Greek and Serbian”.²⁰

No less confusing are the accounts of the Ottoman travellers in the XVII century. According to the Ottoman polymath Hâcci Halfa / Kâtip Çelebi, the *rayah* (i.e., the Christian population) of Bitola²¹ and Ohrid²² was Bulgarian, while the *rayah* of Kastoria consisted of Serbs and Aromanians.²³ The renowned Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi states that the *rayah* in Prilep consists of Serbs and Bulgarians who speak the Bulgarian language,²⁴ while the *rayah* in Štip, being made up of Serbs and Bulgarians, speaks Serbian and Bulgarian.²⁵ Çelebi goes on to note that the Christian populace of Avret Hisar consists of Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs,²⁶ while neighbouring Dojran has a *rayah* of Greek and Bulgarian infidels.²⁷ The Lower City of Serres was allegedly full of Jewish, Greek, Armenian, Latin, Bulgarian and Serbian thugs;²⁸ in Struga, Çelebi noticed many Bulgarian and Greek infidels,²⁹ while the lower *şehir* of Ohrid consisted of seven neighbourhoods of Greek, Bulgarian and Latin infidels.³⁰ The same author counted 15 neighbourhoods of Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and Latins in Ber (Veroia),³¹ in Salonica, the 56 Jewish and 28 Muslim neighbourhoods were standing beside ten neighbourhoods of Armenian, Greek, French, Serb, Bulgar and Latin infidels.³²

On the contrary, in his travelogues covering the years up to 1770, François de Tott – a French general of Hungarian descent, tasked with

¹⁸ Б. А. Цветкова, *Френски пътеписи за Балканите, XV-XVIII в.*, Наука и изкуство, София, 1975, 96; cf. А. Матковски (ур.), *Македонија во делата на странските патописци 1371-1377*, Мисла, Скопје, 1991, 128-129. Both translations convey an identical message, with the exception of some minor differences of style and punctuation.

¹⁹ An obvious *lapsus memoriae* or *calami*; with Trikala being located in Thessaly, one should most probably read “Drama” instead.

²⁰ Б. А. Цветкова, *Френски пътеписи за Балканите, XV-XVIII в.*, 98; cf. А. Матковски (ур.), *Македонија во делата на странските патописци 1371-1377*, 145.

²¹ А. Стојановски, *Македонија под турска власт*, 306.

²² *Ibidem*, 308.

²³ *Ibidem*, 307.

²⁴ Evlija Çelebi, *Putopisi. Odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama. Prevod i komentar napisao Hazim Šabanović*. Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1967, 303.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 343.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 127.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, 129.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 156.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 550.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 557.

³¹ Евлия Челеби, *Пътеписи. Превод от османотурски, съставителство и редакция на Страшимир Димитров*, Институт за балканистика при БАН, София, 1972, 220.

³² Евлия Челеби, *Пътеписи*, 197.

reorganising and modernising the Ottoman army – notes that he himself employed 1500 Macedonians, ‘Turkey’s own Auvergnats’,³³ with the aim of ‘renovating and building European-style castles’.³⁴ To further complicate things, Tott – an author of a first-hand account – has these Macedonians still singing songs about Alexander the Great.³⁵

Considering the problem of the Slavic-speaking Christian populace, most frequently marked in the travelogues of this period as ‘Serb’ and ‘Bulgarian’, and speaking Serbian or Bulgarian, it obviously sometimes happens that both Serbs and Bulgarians are noted as living in the same settlement *speaking one and the same language*, or both languages simultaneously (as in Prilep and Štip, *v. supra*), which cannot be correct. This, as well as the incidental pieces of information from Ottoman census records, shows that the identity markers are most probably due to *inertia in reporting, based on pre-Ottoman state formations*, and have little to do with whatever self-identification was current at the time.

Renaissance humanism gave a strong incentive for a revival of the cultural, literary and ethical legacy of classical antiquity; duly followed the novel interest for the kingdoms and heroes of old, including Macedonia and Alexander the Great. In 1490, intellectuals from the city of Rome saw a new edition of Claudius Ptolemy, the famous II century BC geographer, containing approximately correct borders of the region of Macedonia. This map served as a basis for further maps and atlases: in 1589, the first modern map of Macedonia, created by Gerardus Mercator, was printed in Duisburg.³⁶ Complemented by a rising interest in ancient and medieval traditions – namely, the Alexandriad – Macedonia’s name and ancient history became all the better

³³ F. b. d. Tott, *Mémoires du baron de Tott: sur les Turcs et les Tartares*, Amsterdam, 1784, 192: “Je rassemblai et fis barraquer auprès des travaux quinze cent Macédoniens, qui font les Auvergnats de la Turquie.”; *cf.* 194: “[...] les bras infatigables des Macédoniens surmontèrent ces difficultés”. The Auvergnats were traditionally known by their diligence and work ethic.

³⁴ A. Матковски (ур.), *Македонија во делата на странските патописци 1371-1377*, 832.

³⁵ F. b. d. Tott, *Mémoires du baron de Tott*, xxii: “Les Macédoniens anciennement conquis n’ont pu réellement l’être que dans leurs plaines, et leurs montagnes ont dû leur offrir le même asyle contre la tyrannie des Romains, qu’elles leur offrent encore aujourd’hui contre celle des Ottomans. Nulle révolution n’a donc altéré chez ces montagnards les influences du climat. Depuis le héros de la Grèce, aucune époque intermédiaire, cultivateurs infatigables & non moins braves que laborieux, toujours unis pour la défense de la cause commune et chacun d’eux se suffisant à lui-même pour venger une injure personnelle, ils chantent encore les victoires d’Alexandre avec la certitude d’en remporter sur le premier ennemi qui se présentera.” *Cf.* A. Матковски (ур.), *Македонија во делата на странските патописци 1371-1377*, 833.

³⁶ Reprinted posthumously in 1595 as *Atlas Sive Cosmographicae Meditationes de Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati Figura*. On this, *v.* D. Woodward (ed.), *The History of Cartography. Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1987. *Cf.* A. Матковски, *Грбовите на Македонија*, Мисла, Скопје, 1990, 54.

known to western scholars and travellers. With the Republic of Ragusa – the only free south Slavic enclave and protagonist of the Illyrian idea – serving as a vehicle of transmission, this knowledge spread widely into Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia, but also among Macedonian traders and literates. *This may have served as the starting point of their self-identification with the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonians’,* but also as the main incentive for using these terms for marking others, as well.

From what we were able to gather, the ‘Macedonian identification’ had a very early adopter in Giulio Clovio Croata,³⁷ a renowned Croatian/Italian illuminator, miniaturist, and painter, whose artistry earned him the nickname “Michelangelo of the miniature”. As he was born in Croatia, the Italian painter was often called *Grovato* by his peers; however, in all probability due to the Macedonian origin of his ancestors, he signed some of his paintings with the nickname *Macedo*, i.e., “the Macedonian”.³⁸

From the XVI century on, some of the Archbishops and Patriarchs of Ohrid began incorporating the term ‘Macedonia’ in their intitulation,³⁹ a practice which was followed by other individuals and institutions from abroad when addressing the Archbishops of Ohrid, or the Archbishopric itself.⁴⁰ Some common formulas at that time were *Μακεδονίας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν πατριάρχης, ἀρχιεπισκοπῆ τῆς ἁ Ἰουστινιανῆς Ἀχρῖδῶν καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας, Σερβίας, Ἀλβανίας, δευτέρας Μακεδονίας, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν, πατριάρχος τῆς πρώτης Ἰουστινιανῆς Ἀχρῖδῶν καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας, Σερβίας, Μακεδονίας, Ἀλβανίας*, etc.

Until the final years of the XVIII century, the terms ‘Macedonia’, ‘Macedonians’, and ‘Macedonian people’ had already been accepted and were being fully used not only by people from Ottoman Macedonia, but by some European rulers as well. A rather striking example is the letter of Emperor Leopold I concerning the protection of ‘the Macedonian people’ (*gens Macedonica*), issued on the request of two ‘Macedonians’ (*Macedones*), Marko

³⁷ Also known as *Georgius Iulius Croata* or, in Croatian, *Juraj Julije Klović* (1498-1578).

³⁸ On Clovio’s origins and descent, his contemporary Giorgio Vasari – a rather famous Italian painter and architect himself – wrote in 1568 that his ancestors had previously come from Macedonia (*i suoi maggiori [...] furono venuti di Macedonia*, 6.213). Under the influence of what Vasari wrote, the better part of the secondary and tertiary literature – lexicographical works, in particular – mention Clovio’s Macedonian descent: the 1911 Britannica (*...his supposed Macedonian ancestry...*), the Catholic Encyclopaedia (*...his family appear to have come from Macedonia...*), as well as the Columbia Encyclopedia (*...because of his Macedonian origin...*). J. W. Bradley, apparently using Vasari’s text, also notes that “...a Macedonian ancestry is alluded to as denoting a position of some consideration...”

³⁹ И. Снегаров, *История на Охридската архиепископия-патријаршия, том 2, второ фототипно издание*, Академично издателство Проф. Марин Дринов, София, 1995, 379, 382; А. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, Мисла, Скопје, 1985, 161.

⁴⁰ И. Снегаров, *История на Охридската архиепископия-патријаршия, том 2*, 382; 385; 388.

Krajda from Kožani and Demetrius George Popović, both born in ‘Macedonian Salonica’ (*in Saloniki macedonica natos*).⁴¹

A question deserving special attention is the identification and self-identification of people of Macedonian descent in the time of Žefarović on the territory lying between the Habsburg monarchy and the Russian empire. It is common knowledge that after the Great Turkish War (1683-1699), and the withdrawal of the Austrians from the interior of the Balkans, the Austrians were followed by a large number of eastern orthodox Christians from Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Bulgaria, who set out to the north. They eventually settled north of the Sava and Danube, primarily in the borderlands of the Habsburg monarchy, where they were tasked with securing the border as a *cordon sanitaire* against incursions from the Ottoman Empire. Feeling pressured by Catholicism and the influence of German and Hungarian, a part of this Orthodox, Slavic-speaking population soon began migrating towards Orthodox, Slavic Russia, which, at the same time, had to find a practical way of colonising the newly-conquered territories in the Ukraine. This migration, encouraged by Russia as well, gained special momentum during the reign of Empress Elizabeth of Russia (1741–1762); the main organiser of the immigration process was the Russian representative in Vienna, count Mikhail Petrovich Bestuzhev-Ryumin, assisted by the Austrian (later Russian) officer of south Slavic descent, Jovan Samuilović Horvat de Kurtić.

In 1750, count Bestuzhev-Ryumin sent information to the Russian authorities, noting that “the Orthodox peoples – Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians and Vlachs, offer their service with blood and weapons to Her Imperial Majesty”.⁴² A written request from the immigrants, which was passed through Horvat to Bestuzhev, and further on to the Russian authorities, lists “the terms under which the Orthodox Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians and Vlachs accept to serve Her Imperial Majesty, their motherly patron”.⁴³ Commenting on the terms of the immigrants, who mainly intended to enter

⁴¹ “Notum hisce facimus exposuisse nobis”, writes the Monarch, “ambos Macedones Marcum Craida Cosanae et Demetrium Georgium Popowik in Saloniki Macedonica natos, qualitarum gens Macedonica intuitu iustissimae causae nostrae et fervore atque zelo erga servitia nostra serio cum affectu inclinēt [...] praefatam gentem macedonicam universam in genere et specie in gratiam nostram suscipimus et acceptamus [...] Protectionales pro gente Macedonica ad partes caesareae maiestatis transeuntes, etc.” Viz. J. Радонић, *Прилози за историју Срба у Угарској у XVI, XVII и XVIII веку*, I, Матица Српска, Нови Сад, 1908, 52-53; further publication by X. Андонов-Пољански (ур.), *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ за самостојност и за национална држава, том први*, УКИМ, Скопје, 1981, 158-159. The original Latin text was published by A. Матковски, *Отпорот во Македонија, т. 4*, Мисла, Скопје, 1983, 533.

⁴² Г. Занетовъ, *Българскитѣ колонии въ Руссия*, „Периодическо списание на Българското книжовно дружество въ Сръдецъ“, г. VIII, кн. XXXVII-XXXVIII, 1891, 381.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 182; A. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 169.

military service, Bestuzhev notes that “even in times of peace, the regiments of Serbs, Macedonians and Bulgarians – Orthodox peoples of our very race – are known by their courage to the entire world”.⁴⁴

After the arrival of the first group of immigrants, led by Jovan Horvat, and the establishment of the first *bussar* (mounted) regiment in the Ukraine, on the orders of Empress Elizabeth of Russia, the Senate issued several decrees, not only allowing further immigration of Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians and Vlachs, but also recommending the creation of separate regiments by nationality.⁴⁵ The immigrants led by Horvat – Macedonians included – were settled in a region aptly named New Serbia (*Новосербија*).

In 1753, Russia accepted a new and even larger group of immigrants from Austria, led by Jovan Œević and Rajko Preradović.⁴⁶ On 29 May, 1753, the latter received an imperial decree (or *ucase*) instructing “all Serbian, Macedonian, and other Orthodox men”⁴⁷ to settle a region to the east of where Horvat was, namely the newly-formed Slavoserbia (*Славо-Сербија*),⁴⁸ where they would be organised in two regiments. This case is of special interest, as the archival records of the mixed regiment of Œević list 74 men as belonging to the ‘Macedonian nation’ (*македонској нацији*).⁴⁹ The record of foreign immigrants in New Serbia in December 1754 lists “277 male Serbs, 124 Macedonians, 57 Bulgarians, 1675 Vlachs, 32 Germans and 79 Hungarians”.⁵⁰

We have already seen that the Russian authorities, aiming to strengthen their positions on the south border facing the Ottoman Empire, set out on an intense colonisation of ethnically different populations, which were then organised in separate military regiments. In the mid-XVIII century, the sources already mention a Serbian, Hungarian, Georgian, and Moldovan regiment. In May 1759, a decree was issued ordering the formation of a Macedonian and a Bulgarian *bussar* regiment. The official name of the Macedonian regiment was ‘Macedonian hussar field regiment’ (*Македонскии хусарскии полевий полкъ*),⁵¹ meaning that it was an operative regiment of mounted soldiers that was not placed in a garrison, but sent to different fronts as the need arose. In a fashion similar to the other regiments, the Macedonian regiment also consisted of Serbs, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and others; nevertheless, its numbers were mainly filled by newly-settled Macedonians, as was the case of a nobleman of

⁴⁴ Г. Занетовъ, *Българскитъ колонии въ Руссия*, 182.

⁴⁵ А. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 172-179.

⁴⁶ Referred to in Russian sources as *Иван Егорович Шевич* and *Родион Степанович (де) Прерадович*. V. *Русский биографический словарь в 25 томах*, СПб.–М., 1896–1918, s.v.; M. Kostić et al., *Nova Srbija i Slavensrbija*, Stojkov, Novi Sad, 2001.

⁴⁷ А. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 180, 191.

⁴⁸ Г. Занетовъ, *Българскитъ колонии въ Руссия*, 188.

⁴⁹ For more details on this, v. А. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 183-187.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 214.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 259.

the Hungarian crown, Macedonian Alexander Dimitriev.⁵² The Macedonian regiment had a seal, a specific uniform, a coat of arms, and a flag. The Macedonian presence in the Ukraine left a mark on the toponymy, as shown by several placenames like, among others, *Makedonivka / Makedonovka, Makedonka, Makedoniv, Makedony*, then *Skopievka, Kumanovo, Malaya Karatovska* and *Noviy Polog*.⁵³

The Macedonians, as a separate ethnicity, are further acknowledged by the Montenegrin Metropolitan bishop of Cetinje, Vasilije Petrović. During his stay in Russia, in 1757, he sent written information to count Mikhail Illarionovich Vorontsov – who was at the time Vice-Chancellor of the Russian Empire – noting that, except Montenegro, Turkish oppression was also felt by several neighbouring peoples, namely the Albanians, Macedonians (*Македоняне*), Bosnians, Serbs and Bulgarians.⁵⁴ The following year, the Metropolitan was granted a formal interview with the Great *Kniaz* and Herzog Peter Fyodorovich and his aunt, Empress Elizabeth of Russia. During both interviews, the Metropolitan repeatedly pointed out that Turkish oppression was also felt by the neighbouring Albanians, Macedonians (*Македонянь / Македоняни*), Serbs, Bulgarians and Bosnians.⁵⁵

It is quite interesting to pursue the identification and/or self-identification of people hailing from Ottoman Macedonia, but living in Central Europe during this time. Risto Kovijanić, a researcher of the cultural and educational developments of Serb emigrées in Habsburg Slovakia in the XVIII and XIX centuries presents extensive archival material from the local educational institutions, noting the presence of a solid number of pupils self-declaring as having Macedonian origin.⁵⁶ Besides the numerous Serbs recorded, archival documents record a number of people “who are usually referred to as

⁵² Dimitriev is mentioned in an order issued on 3 March, 1759, amidst the preparations for the formation of the Macedonian regiment: “О определеній въ Македонский полкъ выехавшихъ изъ Цесаріи въ вѣчное подданство народѣмъ македонской націи шляхтичевъ Александаръ Димитриев...”. *Viz. Ibidem*, 263.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 283-284.

⁵⁴ “[...] окружни народи христіански, котори въ в тоурском подданстве: албанези, македоняне, босняки, Сербия, Болгария... от несноснаго оутеснения тоурецкого вчאותся”; *Ibidem*, 208, quoting Д. Вуксан, *Преписка митрополита Василија, митрополита Саве и црногорских глаvara 1752-1759 г.*, „Споменик СКА“ LXXXVIII, други разред 69, Београд, 1938, 49, док. бр. XXXII.

⁵⁵ “[...] христіянские народи в’ тоурецкомъ подданствоу: Албанезы, Македоняни, Сърби и Болгари, Бошняки и въ поданствѣ венецкомъ Далматы”; А. Матковски, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 208; Д. Вуксан, *Преписка митрополита Василија*, 55, 57.

⁵⁶ в. Р. Ковијанић, *Срби који су учили у Словачкој (XVIII-XIX век) [1]*, „Зборник Матице Српске за књижевност и језик“ књ. XIX, св. 3. Нови Сад, 1971, 471–503; Р. Ковијанић, *Срби који су учили у Словачкој (XVIII-XIX век) [2]*, „Зборник Матице Српске за књижевност и језик“ књ. XX, св. 1. Нови Сад, 1972, 47–91.

‘Macedonian’ in the enrolment records⁵⁷. A number of these pupils are noted to be Orthodox Christians ‘from Macedonia’ (*ex Macedonia*); others are referred to as *Graecus*; *Graecus, Macedo*; *Macedo, Graecus*;⁵⁸ there are several cases of *Ocridensis, Macedo*; *Ocrida, Macedo*; *Sera, Macedo*; *Veria, Macedo*; *Macedo, Rascianus* [*Rascinus*; *Serbus, Servensis*], with a rare occurrence of a *Rosyanin, Hungarus* or *Vlachus*.⁵⁹ It is quite puzzling that – at least according to the information collected by Kovijanić – none of the Macedonian students identified, or was listed, as a Bulgarian.⁶⁰

This short retrospective of identity markers, with a special accent on individuals who self-identified and/or were acknowledged as ‘Macedonians’, ‘belonging to the Macedonian people’, or even (quite atypically for the period) to a ‘Macedonian nation’, did not aim at pointing out the presence of a Macedonian identity marker in the sources – regardless of the fact that several historiographies ignore or negate this – but, rather, had the purpose of pointing out *its parallel coexistence with all the other markers*. As things stand, while the system of traditional *millets* in Ottoman Macedonia and the Ottoman Empire as a whole demanded that the subjects be officially recorded by their religious affiliation and, thus, unintentionally hid their ethnicity, elsewhere, particularly in the Habsburg Monarchy and Russia, the terms ‘Macedonians’, ‘Macedonian people’ and ‘Macedonian nation’ *were in common use alongside similar terms describing other Balkan peoples* – the Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Aromanians, etc.

Bearing this in mind, it becomes fairly obvious that the question of the attested identity markers of Hristofor Žefarović presents a complex methodological problem that cannot (and should not) be treated unilaterally, on the basis of fragmentary and selective pieces of information brought out of context.

In his ‘Stemmatography’, dedicated to the Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta, Hristofor Žefarović declares himself to be ‘an Illyrian-Rascian universal *zograph* (painter)’ (*иллирско расџанскии общији зографъ*). Since ‘Illyrian-Rascian’ is not a valid ethnonym, this self-identification of Žefarović should be understood as professional and ideological in character, rather than being a marker of ethnical identification. Nevertheless, this probably served as a basis for the alleged Serbian descent of Žefarović. On the other hand, the basis

⁵⁷ P. Koviјaniћ, *O Pavlu Julincu [I]*, „Зборник Матице Српске за књижевност и језик“ књ. I, св. 1. Нови Сад, 1953, 38–48; cf. P. Koviјaniћ, *Подаци о Јовану Авакумовићу*, „Зборник Матице Српске за књижевност и језик“, књ. III, св. 3. Нови Сад, 1955, 161–164.

⁵⁸ On the wide array of meanings of the term ‘Greek’ at this time, v. L. M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Princeton University Press, 1997, 59 *sqq.*; T. Stojanovich, *The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant*, “The Journal of Economic History” vol. 20, no. 2, 1960, 234–313.

⁵⁹ P. Koviјaniћ, *passim*; cf. A. Matkovski, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 131–132.

⁶⁰ A. Matkovski, *Македонскиот полк во Украина*, 132.

for the alleged Bulgarian descent of Žefarović is a fragment of a eulogy of Žefarović written by Pavle Nenadović, the secretary-turned-Metropolitan of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci. After calling Žefarović ‘an Illyrian-Rascian universal *zograph* (painter)’, Nenadović goes on to call him ‘a zealot of the Bulgarian fatherland and a lover of the Illyrian empire’ (*ревнителю отчества Болгарскагв и любителю царства Иллирїческагв*) – notwithstanding the fact that Žefarović himself spoke of ‘our Serb fatherland’ (*отчество сербско наше*), adding to the overall confusion.⁶¹

Scholars aiming to support the thesis of the alleged Bulgarian ethnic origin of Žefarović usually make use of a ‘testament’ attributed to him;⁶² this is mainly done by selectively using information from the short bibliographical note “[A contribution] to the biography of Hristofor Žefarović” (*Къ биографїи Христофора Жефаровича*).⁶³ The author studies a number of documents from Case № 326 in the archives of the Holy Synod, with the title: “1754, 7th day of September. According to the report of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs on the personal belongings of the Bulgarian priest Zefarovič, left in Moscow under the protection of the synodal guardian of the sacristy”.⁶⁴ Despite the fact that the case documentation names Žefarović as a ‘Bulgarian priest’, the testament itself, written in Greek, contains no clues on the ethnic self-identification of the testator. In the interest of veracity, one should underline that, on the basis of the documentation presented, the author of this bibliographical note pedantically noted the ethnicity of each and every individual in the inheritance procedure – except Žefarović.

Furthermore, the report of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs addressed to the Holy Synod quotes a letter of count Kaiserling – at the time serving as the special Russian representative in Vienna – who speaks of Žefarović as ‘a priest of Greek denomination’;⁶⁵ all the same, a Greek merchant by the name of Eustratius Hadjiev Yuryev, an interested party in the inheritance procedure, calls Žefarović ‘the Bulgarian Hristofor Zefirov’.⁶⁶ According to a report from 27 February, 1756, issued by the Synodal Office in Moscow, which was in charge of the procedure, “Ivan Petrov, a member of the Bulgarian nation” (also named as “the Bulgarian Ivan Petrov”), bearing power of attorney, came to

⁶¹ St. Stanojević, *Žefarović Hristofor (Zefarovic, Zefarov, Zefar)*, “Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka” t. IV, Zagreb, 1929, 1321.

⁶² в. Й. Ивановъ, *Българетъ въ Македония*, 68.

⁶³ Н. М. Петровский, *Къ биографїи Христофора Жефаровича*, „Извѣстія отделе́нія русскаго языка и словесности Императорской Академіи наукъ”, том XV, вып. II, СПб, 1910, 297–302.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 298.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 300.

Moscow from Vienna in order to finish the procedure and took whatever Žefarović had left behind.⁶⁷

The scattered pieces of information stemming from the inheritance case of Žefarović are full of contradictions, as even the author of this short note duly remarks. There is also the question of the nephew Daniil Zefarović,⁶⁸ the son of Hristofor's sister, who had been named as heir under guardianship. As was tradition, this Daniil, as a sister's son, should not have borne his uncle's surname; furthermore, there is the possibility that this is the same Daniil Zefarović who became an Austrian subject in 1782, and entered lower Austrian nobility in 1791, with a diploma, stating that he is a descendant of 'an old *Greek* family'.⁶⁹ Be that as it may, the testament of Žefarović contains no exclusive information on his ethnicity and self-identification. Žefarović is merely said to have been Bulgarian by a Greek merchant with a non-Greek name, Eustratius Hadjiev Yuryev; hence, the ethnical marker in the title of the inheritance case.

And finally, some thoughts on the alleged Aromanian and Macedonian descent of Hristofor Žefarović. A thorough examination of the extant sources has shown that the story of his Vlach descent, conceived by some authors as an undisputed fact,⁷⁰ has no foundation except for the fact that Žefarović was a fluent speaker of Greek. Ironically, Žefarović is defined as a Macedonian for the first time in the IV volume of the "Serbo-croato-slovenian People's Encyclopaedia" (*Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka*),⁷¹ in an unsourced, descriptive, and typically encyclopaedic article by St. Stanojević.

As our little diatribe on the many alleged ethnicities of Hristofor Žefarović nears its end, three conclusions come to mind. First, at this time, and until a better and more explicit source comes to light, modern historiography is objectively unable to determine the ethnicity of Hristofor Žefarović in modern terms. Second, it is questionable whether this kind of conclusion can be reached at all, as our sources testify to a remarkable fluidity in ethnical markers and norms of self-determination in the times of Žefarović, which would be nearly outrageous under the terms of modern-day politics. And, most important, from a methodological viewpoint, the case of the ethnicity and self-identification of Hristofor Žefarović cannot be defined in any other way, except as putting the past in function of building contemporary national ideologies. A

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 301.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ *Imprimis* A. Matkovski; please refer to his works cited in note 4.

⁷¹ St. Stanojević, *Žefarović Hristofor (Zefarovic, Zefarov, Zefar)*, 1321: "The coats of arms of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci, of renewed Serbia and the flag of the First Uprising, as well as the coat of arms of today's Bulgaria are taken from the book of this Macedonian (*ovog Makedonca*), who referred to his homeland as "our Serb fatherland" (*otečestvo serbsko naše*)".

cultural activist from Ottoman Macedonia, and a keen supporter of the Common Illyrian (i.e., south Slavic) cause, whose “Stemmatography” greatly influenced the national romanticism of South Slavic peoples in the mid-XVIII century, became an instrument of the national ideologies of modern Balkan states through history and literature.