

DIETHER RODERICH REINSCH

KRITOBULOS OF IMBROS — LEARNED HISTORIAN,
OTTOMAN *RAYA* AND BYZANTINE PATRIOT

Kritobulos of Imbros, the author of a historical work covering the period from 1451 to 1467, describes the deeds of the Sultan Mehmed Fatih. The work, written between 1465 and 1467 is an autograph of the author. Apart from a knowledge of literature (Thucydides), one can discern in this work a definite interest in medicine. K. was sultan's governor of Imbros for almost ten years. At the same time he was a patriot in the sense that he expressed solidarity with the unfortunate inhabitants of Constantinople.

Kritobulos of Imbros, ὁ Ἰμβριώτης, as he calls himself in learned manner, is known to us as the author of a historical work of some 200 printed pages covering the period from 1451 to 1467. It describes the deeds of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed Fatih, the Conqueror, in particular the war against the remnants of the Byzantine Empire and the capture of the capital Constantinople on the 29th of May 1453. The historical work has come down to us in a single manuscript which to this day remains in Constantinople — Istanbul, in the library of the Topkapi Saray.

This manuscript, 160 pages of paper manufactured in Venice, was dated as originating from the 16th century by its first publisher and by some other scholars who had been studying it. In reality, however, it dates from the years 1465 to 1467 (as the paper's watermarks prove) and is an autograph of the author. Proof of this fact are the many corrections and sometimes substantial additions in the margins of the text. The corrections and additions are such that they can only have been made by the author himself. We also know the characteristics of Kritobulos' handwriting from a manuscript containing the historical works of Thucydides, which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. There Kritobulos wrote on an endpaper a well-known epigram in praise of Thucydides and above the epigram another contemporary writer (we now know that it is the handwriting of Georgios Amirutzes) wrote the words "this is the writing of Kritobulos" (τοῦ Κριτοβούλου γράμματα).

We do not know who would have read the history of Kritobulos and whether anybody ever did before the middle of the 19th century. Up to this time there is no copy, no translation into another language, nobody even mentions the work of

Kritobulos. It seems to have been lying there throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries in its oriental cover which it kept until 1929 — when it was newly bound. It is for this reason that Kritobulos remained unknown in the West and was not printed anywhere. The slumber did not come to an end until August 1859 when the German philologist and theologian Constantin Tischendorf stopped off in Constantinople on the way home from the Sinai. He was on good terms with Alexander Lobanov, the envoy of the Russian Tsar Alexander the Second, who for his part was very well connected at the Court of the Sultan. And it was on account of Lobanov's good offices that Tischendorf had the chance to see the codex with the work of Kritobulos. But not only that — Tischendorf was able to remove Kritobulos' apparently unattached accompanying letter dedicating his work to the conquering Sultan and take it to Germany with him. All this Tischendorf himself reveals in the preface to a book he published in 1860. He also published the said letter of dedication there — fortunately for posterity, because the original which he brought with him from Constantinople remains lost to this day.

A few years after Tischendorf's re-discovery of Kritobulos the history was printed twice — but published only once in an edition by Carl Müller for the *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, Paris 1870. The other printed edition was by the polymath Philipp Anton Dethier from Kerpen in the Rhineland (today more famous for being the birthplace of Michael Schumacher than that of Dethier) and was intended for inclusion in the *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* but not released by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences because of the somewhat faster Parisian competition and also because a great number of serious mistakes had been identified in Dethier's edition. Kritobulos' text was published in a second edition in 1963 in Bucharest by Vasile Grecu; Grecu, however, had neither a microfilm at his disposal nor did he consult the *codex unicus* himself. A modern critical edition was finally published in 1983 in Berlin as part of the series *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*.

The historical work of the Saray codex is however not Kritobulos' only literary legacy. We also have a prayer to Christ (handed down in 10 codices) and a poem of 18 Dodekasyllaboi in praise of Saint Augustine (handed down in 16 codices). A homily on the Passion of Christ and a letter together with the codex containing them were destroyed by the great fire in the Escorial in Madrid in 1671.

Kritobulos' two surviving opuscula are of value to us for two reasons: Firstly, the scribes of the two oldest codices containing these small works and the remaining scripts handed down in these codices show us that Kritobulos belonged to a circle of people around Georgios-Gennadios Scholarios, the first Greek-orthodox patriarch of the Turkokratia, as well as the brothers Markos and Ioannes Eugenikos. Scholarios is generally acknowledged to have strongly recommended the study of the Latin language and the theological literature written in Latin to the orthodox theologians, and he had devoted himself intensively to the writings of Latin theologians whose works he translated. Thus Kritobulos' verses on Saint Augustine fit exactly into the intellectual climate of Gennadios' circle. Secondly, we can infer Kritobulos' actual name from the codices containing his opuscula. In one of the two manuscripts still dating from the 15th century we read in the titles Κριτοπούλου τοῦ Ἰμβρίου and

Κρητοπούλου Μιχαήλ τοῦ Ἴμβρίου and in the other τοῦ λογιωτάτου κυροῦ Μιαιήλ τοῦ Κριτοβούλου. The name Kritobulos and the birthplace Imbros connect the author of the prayer and the verses on Sant Augustine with the author of the historical work. There is no doubt whatsoever that both are one and the same person. As for the version of the name Κριτόπουλος Nikolaos Andriotes held the view in an essay he wrote as early as 1929 that this version Κριτόπουλος was the original form which our historian — with a slight change — turned into the more Attic sounding Κριτόβουλος. We encounter the family name Κριτόπουλος from the end of the 13th century, whilst Κριτόβουλος is not Byzantine at all, but purely classical. (The name appears in Herodotus, Plato and as learned paronym in a philosophical dialogue by Nikephoros Gregoras.) Such a change of name was quite fashionable in Greek intellectual circles of the time — think of Nikolaos Chalkokondyles, who became Laonikos Chalkokondyles, or Georgios Gemistos who called himself Georgios Plethon, and we know it was common practice in the West, too: Schwarzerd became Melanchthon, Reuchlin became Kapnion and so on.

We do not know when Kritobulos was born. The political role he played in the years from 1453 to 1466 presents him to us as a mature adult, but even in the year 1467/68 he was still thinking of starting on a further historical monograph: the history of the Ottomans. I think we cannot be much mistaken in assuming that Kritobulos was born around 1400 to 1410. At the beginning of the first book of his work he introduces himself as “Kritobulos, inhabitant of the island, first among the people of Imbros” (Κριτόβουλος ὁ νησιώτης, τὰ πρῶτα τῶν Ἴμβριωτῶν). This expression, together with the political role he played, shows us that his family must have belonged to the leading notables of the island. In the autumn of 1444 the learned merchant, historian and collector of manuscripts Ciriaco di Filippo de’ Pizzecolli from Ancona travelled around the Northern Aegean and visited amongst others the island of Imbros. In his diary entry of 28th of September 1444 he says: “Together with the learned noble Imbriot, the ‘gift of Hermes’, Michael Kritobulos we rode by land from the East coast of Imbros to the Western part of the island to the town of Imbros itself” (*ad diem quartum Kalendas Octobres es orientali Imbri litore una viro cum docto et Imbriote nobili Hermodoro Michaele Critobulo ad occidentalem eiusdem insulae partem ad Imbron ... terrestri itinere equis devecti ... venimus*). The “hermodoro” must not confuse us; it is not an additional name of Michael Kritobulos. The learned Ciriaco just wanted to express that to him Kritobulos was “the gift of Hermes” — a lucky encounter. In a letter which Ciriaco sent to his friend Scholarios on the next day, 29th September 1444, the name of Michael Critobulos appears without the embellishing epithet: *una tuo cum amicissimo viro et Imbriotum doctissimo, Michaele Critobulo*. The friendship between Scholarios and Kritobulos referred to here probably stems from the years spent studying together in Constantinople. In his historical work Kritobulos mentions Scholarios, calls him “a very wise and admirable man” (ἄνδρα σοφὸν πάνυ καὶ θαυμαστόν) and relates that the Conqueror Sultan valued his wisdom, intelligence and his moral character; he himself praises his friend on this occasion once more for his intellectual power and his charm.

We have no concrete information about the studies of Kritobulos, but they must have been both extensive and intensive. Apart from a knowledge of literature, which is very obvious in his work and to which I shall refer again later, we can discern a definite interest in medicine: where in his work Kritobulos describes the plague, which visited Constantinople in the year 1467, his account is full of medical terminology which he could neither have found in Thucydides nor in the works of any other historian, for example, cerebral ventricles, pia mater, meninges, a fit of lethargy, meningitis, inflammation of the blood, accelerated pulse, numbness of the extremities (κοιλίαι τοῦ ἐγκεφάλου, ὑμένες, μήνιγγες, καταφορά, φρενίτις, ἐξόπτησις τοῦ αἵματος, παλμοί, νρωσις). Another example of our author's particular propensity towards medicine is the special praise which Kritobulos reserves for the emperor's personal physician, the Jewish doctor Jakup of Gaeta.

Kritobulos began to write down his historical work in the summer of 1453 at the latest. We can deduce this from a passage in the middle of his first book. There Kritobulos mentions the names of Ottoman commanders who took part in the siege of Constantinople and the sections of the walls which the Sultan had assigned to them for their operations. There we read amongst other things: "To Īshak, the then Commander-in-Chief of Asia and to Mahmut, Vizier at the time, he assigned the section from the Myriandron Gate (Mevlevihane Kapısı) to the Golden Gate". Īshak was Commander-in-Chief of Asia (beylerbeyi) until the summer of 1453. The fact that Kritobulos writes "the *then* Commander-in-Chief of Asia" means that Kritobulos wrote these words when Īshak no longer held this position, i.e. after the summer of 1453. Mahmut, on the other hand, was only Vizier up until the summer of 1453 after which he became Grand Vizier, but the words "at the time" have been added later in the margins of the manuscript. This means that the text was written without the addition in the summer of 1453, when Mahmut was still only Vizier. Later, however, when Kritobulos revised the text again, Mahmut had risen to the position of Grand Vizier. The revision took place after the autumn of 1466 as we can infer from reliable evidence and since Mahmut had already been Grand Vizier for 13 years, he could, of course, not be referred to as plain κόμης, Vizier, of the Sultan and Kritobulos added the explanatory sentence in the margins.

At that time, in the summer of 1453, as the last act in the drama of the Byzantine Empire's demise unfolds, Kritobulos also enters the political stage. The only source for the events in which Kritobulos was personally involved is his own work. The capture of Constantinople caused panic among the Northern Aegean islands which were still Byzantine territory (Imbros, Lemnos and Thasos). The people and those in charge (the ἄρχοντες) feared an attack by the Ottoman fleet on its return to the Gallipoli base on the Hellespont. More than 200 families had already fled from Lemnos in a hurry. Kritobulos describes how he took the initiative in this situation, sent a delegation to the Ottoman admiral Hamza and one to the Sultan himself and thus ensured that the islands were not put under siege but left as feuda to the noble Genoese family of Gattilusi: the Lesbos branch of the Gattilusi was given Lemnos and Thasos, the Ainos branch (in Enez on the Maritsa delta) Imbros.

When later, in the winter of 1465/66, the Sultan confiscated these fiefdoms, he sent his admiral Yunus-bey to Imbros with the order to take over the island from the Gattilusi's officials. Yunus comes to the island, negotiates with our Kritobulos and makes him governor. He still holds this position in 1457 when, in the summer of this year, one of the Pope's fleets appears in the Aegean, takes over Lemnos, Thasos and Samothrake from the Ottomans and makes clear its intention to take over Imbros as well. Kritobulos, however, makes such clever diplomatic moves that Imbros is left in peace. And not only that. In the year 1458/59 he manages to snatch Lemnos back from the Italians. He personally goes to the Sultan in Adrianople (Edirne) and at the same time writes to Demetrios Palaiologos, the brother of the last Byzantine emperor, who, as Ottoman vassal, had parts of the Peloponnes under his command, suggesting that he should ask the Sultan for Imbros and Lemnos as well. The Sultan agrees and Kritobulos, at the head of a cavalry unit, takes over the island's fortresses without a drop of blood being spilt. He remains governor of Imbros, but now on behalf of Demetrios Palaiologos.

We know very little else of his life. He leaves Imbros probably in the summer of 1466 when the Venetians take over the island. During the great plague of the summer of 1467 he was most probably in Constantinople and witnessed the epidemic there. He dedicated the first and substantial part of his historical work to the Sultan in the autumn of 1466, and a revised and extended final version in the autumn of 1467/68. From the autumn of 1468 we have a letter which Georgios Amirutzes wrote to Kritobulos concerning two literary works by Theophanes of Medeia (secular name: Theodoros Agallianos). Kritobulos thought very highly of Georgios Amirutzes, who was a well respected scholar of his time with the epithet "the philosopher". He informs us that, at the request of the Sultan, Amirutzes integrated all maps which were part of the work of Ptolemy, the geographer of the ancient world, into one large map, and that together with his son he translated the complete works of Ptolemy from the Greek into Arabic. Both manuscripts, that of the Greek original and that of the Arabic translation, are still in İstanbul today. Amirutzes and Agallianos, incidentally, were part of the circle around Scholarios and the brothers Eugenikos.

After that we do not hear anything else from Kritobulos. In the proem to his history he had announced that he would write another work on the rise of the Ottomans. However, it was not Kritobulos who wrote this book, but Laonikos Chalkokondyles, who, incidentally, seemed to have known Kritobulos' work; it looks as though he borrowed certain phrases from it.

The legends which keep coming up in bibliography, in particular in handbooks, that Kritobulos was the Sultan's secretary and that at the end of his life he had become a monk on Mount Athos, are pure fantasy and there are no clues to this, whatsoever, in any of the sources.

What did Kritobulos write about in his history? After the proem in which he deals with the usual literary topics of the genre (assuring the reader of accuracy and truthfulness) borrowing from Thucydides and Herodotus, he begins his narrative

with the death of Murat the Second. According to Kritobulos, his son and successor Mehmed saw himself right from the start as a second Alexander with the objective of world domination. The first step in that direction was to capture Constantinople. Kritobulos proceeds to describe in great detail the building of the fortress Rumeli Hisari and the Sultan's palace in Adrianople. The rest of the first book which makes up a third of the work deals exclusively with the capture of Constantinople and well-known key events: The casting of the great cannons, transporting the Turkish ships overland from the Bosphorus to the Golden Horn, the wounding of Giustiniani, the death of the Emperor Constantine and so on. No other historian of the Halosis has ever described it in more vivid colours and in greater detail. It is for this reason that Edmond Pears in his classic book "The Destruction of the Greek Empire and the Story of the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks", London 1903, used Kritobulos as the main source for his narrative and not Dukas, for whom many have such a high regard, most probably because Dukas' work contains edifying legends (such as the death of Lukas Notaras), and because he employs such wonderfully derogatory names for the conquering Sultan. Pears says of Kritobulos: "His Life of Mahomet is by far the most valuable of the recently discovered documents, and, as will be seen, I have made use of it as the nucleus of my narrative of the siege".

The other important events in Kritobulos' account are the various campaigns of the Sultan in the Balkans (Serbia, Albania, Bosnia), on the Peloponnes, in Trebizond and the Aegean Islands. But time and again Constantinople, too, is the scene of events, since the Sultan established his new capital there by rebuilding and repopulating the city. To become the capital of the Ottoman Empire the city needed to be repopulated, the economy stimulated, a new residence and new administrative buildings built. This was an important topic for Kritobulos, as the central idea of his work was the transition of power (*translatio imperii*) from the Byzantine Greeks to the Ottoman Turks. The work ends with the five year war against Venice and the Sultan's second Albania campaign and in between the detailed description of the plague of 1467.

For his narrative Kritobulos, following Byzantine literary convention, used the only suitable linguistic register of the Greek language for such an undertaking, i.e. the so-called "Atticistic Greek", the written language which had mainly developed in the first post-Christian centuries during the so-called Second Sophistic. Like all learned Byzantines Kritobulos had to learn this language, studying it intensively for a long time, and he learnt it well. Any deviation from the general canon in his text does not go beyond the scope of the best works of Byzantine historiography.

Datives like γυνῆ instead of γυναικί or νόκταις instead of νυξί are rare examples of the influence of a lower register, but they are examples of datives as well, datives which were hardly ever used anymore in the spoken language. Contemporary hellenized Turkish names ending in -ης are also very often declined in the traditional way according to the rules of the Ionian dialect, for example Μαχουμούτης, Μαχουμούτεω, Μαχουμούτεϊ. The syntax is the classical one with participles, infinitives etc., the vocabulary is conservative-archaistic. New loan words from the Byzantine era are rare. We note ἀμήρισσα, γενήτζαπος, δούξ, καῖσαρ, κόμης, μαίστρος, πασίας, φραγγέλλιον; an archaism of his own creation is the word

τοῦφαξ in the sense of “gun” from the Turkish tüfek (which became the Greek τουφέκι) and τουφακοφόρος (the gun carrying soldier). As a rule, Kritobulos’ style is straight forward and generally stays within what the ancients called the μέσος χαρακτήρ. Some paragraphs, however, required a higher register in the author’s opinion: they are the letter of dedication to the Sultan, the proem, the Sultan’s campaign speeches before the capture, the description (Ekphrasis) of the construction and action of the Great Cannon, the threnody about the capture, some battle scenes and the description of the plague. Like Ioannes Kantakuzenos before him and his contemporary Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Kritobulos uses stylized phrases, even complete scenes, to describe less important military events.

The language and style of Kritobulos have been judged very differently in modern research. The first editor, Carl Müller, places him above his contemporary colleagues Sphrantzes, Dukas and Chalkokondyles. Karl Krumbacher (influenced by the intellectual world of Philhellenism and lover of “vernacular poetry”) condemns his “garrulousness” and “limited vocabulary”, whilst Nikolaos Tomadakes in his book *Περὶ ἀλώσεως τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, Athens, 1953, second edition 1969, makes the following comment: “Tradition demanded the use of the ancient language, which Kritobulos seemed to have mastered extremely well and did not use like a pupil at all, but with great inner emotion and mental strength”.

A generally good usage of the atticistic literary language, however, is only the foundation. Based on this Kritobulos masters the fine art of literary *imitatio* to an astonishing degree, an art which educated Byzantines pursued with passion and dedication. Perhaps we understand this phenomenon better today than people in earlier epochs, who were more concerned with originality and did not yet know the concept of intertextuality.

Every reader of Kritobulos immediately notices that one of the sources of inspiration for mimesis is Thucydides, both in respect of the language and the general structure of the work. Like Thucydides, Kritobulos divides his account into calendar years and within the years into the four seasons. After the example of Thucydides the big speeches which the author attributes to the Sultan, contain on the one hand elements which serve to analyse the political and military situation, and on the other hand inform the reader of the motives guiding the orator. Apart from many expressions and phrases which Kritobulos uses to give his account a generally Thucydidean flavour there are paragraphs in which he uses complete scenes from the works of Thucydides to serve a special purpose in his text.

Thus, the Sultan’s big campaign speech to his generals and officers, for example (which covers 9 printed pages in that edition) contains at the start text borrowed from two speeches by Pericles (from the so-called Epithaphios and from his defense speech, the Apology). And later, when the Conqueror praises the courage of his ancestors who, with incredible strength, had overrun the whole of Asia Minor and great parts of Europe, he uses — freely adapted, of course — the words with which the Corinthian envoys had characterized the courageous and steadfast Athenians before the Assembly of the Peloponnesian League. A highly suitable choice!

The Sultan delivers a second speech in the military camp outside Constantinople to his commanders and his Life-guard. Here, as well as using the speech by Alexander the Great before the battle of Gaugamela in Arrian's *Anabasis*, Kritobulos also goes back to two campaign speeches in Thucydides, that of the Athenian admiral Phormion before the naval battle of Naupaktos, giving his soldiers instructions, and Brasidas' speech before Amphipolis in which he, too, wants to encourage his soldiers and assures them that he himself would fight side by side with them. There Brasidas turns directly to his sub-commander Klearidas and it is precisely these words Kritobulos alludes to when he makes the Conqueror turn directly to his Viziers Halil and Sarudscha. The whole structure of Brasidas' speech can be found in Kritobulos' text. Thus Kritobulos draws not only on the great and successful Athenian Admiral Phormion and the outstanding Spartan General Brasidas, but also on Alexander the Great himself in the account of Arrian, in order to convey Mehmed's abilities as a soldier and strategist. There is a further passage where Kritobulos quotes the words of the bold Spartan. At the height of the battle of Constantinople, when Giustiniani was wounded and his companions carried him away and left the breach in the wall by the Romanos Gate without any defense, the Sultan — in Kritobulos' account — notices this and calls out: "We have it, friends, we have the city. The men are running away from us. They can no longer withstand. The wall is divested of its defenders" (ἔχομεν, ὦ φίλοι, τὴν πόλιν, ἔχομεν ἤδη. φεύγουσιν οἱ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς. οὐκέτι παραμένειν ἀνέχονται. γυμνὸν τῶν προμαχομένων τὸ τεῖχος).

Brasidas' conduct and words at Amphipolis provide the model for the account of the complete scene. When the Athenian commander Kleon had to withdraw partially his soldiers, Brasidas grasps the situation in a flash, i.e. that Kleon had to show his enemies his weak side (τὰ γυμνά πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους δούς) and he calls: οἱ ἄνδρες ἡμᾶς οὐ μενοῦσιν. Note the word for word quotations, albeit in a completely new context.

The famous account of the siege of Platää by the Spartans under the leadership of Archidamas was the object of *imitatio* for many Byzantine historiographers, and Kritobulos too has used it to serve his purposes. But unlike his colleagues he uses the subject matter of the original in two completely different contexts. Kritobulos uses Archidamos' *failed* attempt to set fire to the castle of Platää to describe the *successful* capture of the castellum on the island of Prinkipos by the Turkish admiral Baltoğlu, whilst he employs the strategems of the defenders of Platää in order to depict the fighting for the walls of Constantinople. He chooses his material with great mastery and adapts the quotations to the new circumstances, even to techniques of contemporary warfare.

In the fifth and last book of his work, where he describes the great plague, Kritobulos like others before him (i.e. Prokopios and Ioannes Kantakuzenos) refers back to the description of the epidemic which Thucydides gave in the second book of his *Peloponnesian War*. Apart from some very obvious quotations, however, Kritobulos' account (unlike Thucydides he is definitely describing the bubonic plague) is completely independent from this model.

In general, Kritobulos' language is strongly coloured by Thucydides, in particular as regards the military sector. It is wrong, however, to call Kritobulos a "slavish imitator" of Thucydides — as has repeatedly happened in former research; his *imitatio* is anything but slavish. I totally agree with the opinion of Nikolaos Andriotes who defended his compatriot against such reproaches with the following words: "His admirable knowledge of the ancient world and his highly developed linguistic sensibility have kept him from betraying his model, and his undoubted literary talent has enabled him to create passages which here and there can be regarded as entirely equal to the great model."

The learned game of *imitatio* does not, however, end here. Apart from Thucydides, Kritobulos in his proem goes back to Herodotus (which was traditional practice); in addition he borrows from Herodotus another two small geographical excursions, i.e. when he describes the course of the Danube and when he describes the course of the Euros. The Turkish names in hellenised form as for example Μεχμέτης, Μαχουμούτης etc. he declines as the hellenised Persian names are declined in Herodotus (Ξέρξης, Ξέρξεω — Φαρνάκης, Φαρνάκεω etc.).

Where, finally, Kritobulos describes the sufferings of his people, he draws a comparison between his attitude as Roman-Byzantine towards the Ottomans and that of Flavius Josephus as a Jew towards the ancient Romans by quoting the words of Josephus. That, too, was well chosen, for Josephus and Kritobulos were indeed in very similar situations. In both cases an overpowering conqueror had defeated the author's own people and their capital. Both authors recognise the superiority of the victor and his right, too, based on inevitable historical evolution, and both describe events which end with the subjugation of their own people.

Thus the German philologist Heinrich Lieberich, who had no liking for Kritobulos' attitude, wrote in the year 1900 (when the German Empire had only recently been founded and the "wars of liberation" against French rule were still alive in the historical memory): "One cannot but help admiring the literary knowledge of the Greek who always seemed to find the most suitable proem for his purposes".

The deepest traces in the work of Kritobulos, however, were not left by Thucydides, but by Arrianos with his work *Anabasis Alexandri*. Here, too, the choice of model is made with a very specific purpose in mind. With this clever literary move Kritobulos equates the Conqueror with Alexander the Great. He did so, too, *expressis verbis* in his letter of dedication, where he describes Mehmed's deeds as "in no way less important than those of Alexander the Great". This comparison was not Kritobulos' invention. On the contrary, the Sultan saw himself thus. He knew Alexander, of course, from Arabic and Persian poetry and also from the Turkish İskendername of the Ottoman poet Ahmed. The comparison was therefore not altogether mistaken. Mehmed, at 19 absolute ruler of a great empire in the Eastern Mediterranean, which was ever more expanding, had now at 22 conquered the more than a thousand year old empress of all cities and had thus become the successor to the Byzantine emperor with all the rights and titles that entailed. The comparison with

Alexander the Great was not at all unreasonable. I have to pass over the details but I can assure you: Kritobulos' text is completely imbued with the *imitatio* of Arrianos.

I hope it has become clear from the little I have been able to present here, that Kritobulos was extremely well-read and that he was a great master in using this knowledge of literature to embellish the text of his historical work, and by means of subtexts to extend the dimensions of the meaning under and behind the surface.

For Kritobulos the Sultan was the natural successor to the Byzantine Emperor, natural according to the laws of history as had been worked out by the theoreticians of the Hellenistic time. According to this theory world history consisted of a succession of great empires and ruling peoples. In the beginning it was the Assyrian-Babylonians, followed by the Egyptians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks and Romans, and now — according to Kritobulos — it was the turn of the Ottoman Turks. This theoretical approach was not Kritobulos' invention, but was a notion widely held in intellectual circles of the time. Enea Silvio Piccolomini, for example, the future Pope Pius II, writes the following: *Omnium rerum vicissitudo est, nulla potentia perpetuo manet. Fuerunt Itali rerum domini, nunc Turchorum inchoatur imperium*. It also serves to explain why Kritobulos did not use the Arabic-Turkish title "Emir" or "Sultan" for the Conqueror, but calls him "Emperor" (βασιλεύς or rather μέγας βασιλεύς) i.e. uses the traditional title of the Byzantine emperor, once even "King of Kings" (βασιλεὺς βασιλέων), referring to the old Persian title of "Shahinshah" — this again is in accordance with the notion of the time identifying the contemporary Ottoman Turks with the ancient Persians (or the Trojans, even). Kritobulos regarded himself as a subject of the Sultan, just as before he had been a subject of the Byzantine Emperor. At the beginning of his letter of dedication to the Sultan he calls himself the Sultan's "humble slave" (δοῦλος εὐτελής) and "Your slave of slaves" (δοῦλος τῶν δούλων τῶν σῶν), very much in accordance with Ottoman etiquette — for German professors at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, a sign of abysmal personal servility and outright treasonable sycophancy. Kritobulos was a *raya* in the technical sense of the word. Many researchers from the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, however, saw in him a traitor to the national cause and a *raya* in the offensive sense of the word, because they themselves were limited by their ideological horizons and overlooked the fact that the notion of ἔθνος (nation) had a different meaning in the fifteenth century than after the eighteenth century.

Other scholars, in particular the Marxists, saw Kritobulos as a betrayer of the people, guided by class interest alone. This idea may be justified when applied to those Byzantine nobles and higher clerics, who collaborated with the conquerors and entered into the Sultan's service (such as Georgios Amirutzes, Theophanes of Medeia, Georgios Scholarios, Demetrios Palaiologos, Lukas Notaras and others) and who were indeed keen to keep their previously enjoyed privileges alive under the new ruler. Whether they managed to do so in the end is another matter. One has to consider, though, what alternative solutions there would have been for the people of

the Aegean islands. They could have tried to place themselves under the protection of Venice or the Pope, but in view of their geographical position and the strong Ottoman fleet cruising the Aegean, this protection would have been anything but safe. Furthermore, the Roman tax system was harsher than that of the Ottomans and the scope for religious tolerance was considerably greater under Ottoman than under Roman rule, as the experience of 1204 and the conditions in the Venetian colonies would have shown them. The people, in any case, did not want the Romans. In the work of Dukas we read of the rebellion of the Lemnians against Niccolò Gattilusio with the intention of handing over the island to the Ottomans, and we learn from Kritobulos that people of Lemnos had collected a thousand ducats in order to get the occupying forces of Palaiokastron to leave and to hand over the island to the Turks. Kritobulos himself, with his clever political skills, saved the people of Imbros from the dangers of foolish heroism.

Kritobulos was a *raya* of the Sultan, but at the same time he was a patriot in the sense that he expressed solidarity with the unfortunate inhabitants of Constantinople and the victims of the war. Although he praises his hero, the Sultan, he does not hide his sympathy for the sufferings of the common people, nor his admiration for the brave and tragic death of the last Byzantine emperor. In reading the text we must not, of course, forget its general tendency to exaggerate the protagonist's merits and to minimize his faults. It is wrong, however, to do what some modern critics of Kritobulos have done, i.e. to maintain that his slavish attitude was apparent in everything he did and that he was a completely uncritical sycophant and flatterer of Mehmed. It is not true that Kritobulos would have concealed anything which could have cast a shadow on the conduct of his hero Mehmed. He does not, for example, gloss over the Conqueror's extreme cruelty, when the unfortunate defenders of the Fortress of Therapion (Tarabya) were impaled, nor similar events which could easily have been left out. The description of the sacking of Constantinople, the lament about the fall of the city, the obituary for the emperor Constantine and the obituary for Lukas Notaras do not support such one-sided negative criticism. Nevertheless, Kritobulos himself was aware of the contradiction that, on the one hand, he glorified the Sultan but, on the other hand, was part of the suppressed *genos*. "Genos", not "ethnos", is the word which he also uses for the Turks and others, and it is with his "genos" he identifies explicitly at the beginning of his work, when he speaks of "our *genos*" and "us" and "our misfortune". The word *γένος* has a wide meaning covering "family" as well as "clan" and even "religious community". Throughout a whole chapter entitled "Apology", Kritobulos asks his readers to understand that he is dealing with the misfortune of his own people, and he defends his *γένος* which had not been able to escape from the iron laws of history. "In no way", he says, "is it the fault of the *γένος*, perhaps those at the top could possibly be blamed for bad leadership. They alone may be held responsible, but the *genos* must not be blamed" (οὐκ ἔστι τοῦτο τοῦ γένους ἀμάρτημα, ἀλλὰ τῶν κακῶς τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔδει χρησαμένων τοῖς πράγμασιν. οὐς καὶ δίκαιον μόνους εὐθύνειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦ γένους κατηγορεῖν).

As a politician Kritobulos was not a “man of blood”, but a man of conciliation and, as the Byzantines called it, of οἰκονομία, i.e. prepared to abandon high principles in favour of political compromise. He used diplomatic cunning to solve the crisis in Imbros, when the Pope’s fleet suddenly appeared; he prepared the handing over of Lemnos carefully and cautiously so that the fortresses’ commander would open the gates without blood being split. When the young commander of the fortress of Palaiokastron refused to hand over the castle, he made this clear to Kritobulos with an arrogant gesture, which Kritobulos comments on ironically. The young man sent him a piece of paper on which there were no words but just a sword painted in blood. But when Kritobulos appeared in front of the castle with 400 men on horseback and 300 foot soldiers, the young man’s bravado, according to Kritobulos’ account, disappeared rapidly.

Our historian’s conduct is consistent with his general attitude towards war. When describing the Ottoman war council, he analyses (with quotations from Thucydides and Flavius Josephus) the motives of the participants. Those in favour of the war were, according to him, driven by ambition, thirst for glory and the pursuit of profit, or by a desire to ingratiate themselves with the Sultan, or simply because they did not know what war meant. Kritobulos describes a bloody battle with words which show abhorrence rather than enthusiasm: “drunken from the battle ..., almost forgetting their human nature ..., they were like Furies”. The inhabitants of the fortresses on the Peloponnes who did not surrender to the Sultan and paid a heavy price for this, he reproaches for being irresponsible.

Kritobulos showed no heroism, but he was a patriot nevertheless, both in the narrower sense of the word, by looking after his compatriots on Imbros and in the wider sense by showing sympathy for his γένος and for his emperor. For Kritobulos the transition from the Byzantine Emperor to the Ottoman Sultan did not mean the opening up of an abyss of enmity, neither did it mean building a bridge of friendship and mutual understanding between Ottomans and Byzantines, between Turks and Greeks. To this day, a permanent bridge of understanding remains unbuilt.

Диџер Родерик Рајни

КРИТОВУЛ СА ИМБРОСА: УЧЕНИ ИСТОРИЧАР, ОСМАНСКИ РАЈЕТИН И ВИЗАНТИЈСКИ РОДОЉУБ

Историјско дело Критовула са Имброса, које је посвећено подухватима султана-освајача Мехмеда Фатиха у времену између 1451. и 1467. године, настало је као пишчев аутограф 1465–1467. и сачувано у том облику: *Istanbul, codex Seragliensis 6*. Овај кодекс открио је у библиотеци Сараја 1859. године Кон-

стантин Тишендорф (Tischendorf) који је из њега извадио и однео у Немачку један препис Кривовуловог писма посвећеног султану и публиковао га 1860. године. Читаво дело први пут је 1870. издао Карл Милер (Müller) у *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, док се издање које је за *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* био припремио Филип Антон Детиер (Dethier) није појавило. Модерно критичко издање појавило се 1983. у *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae (CFHB), series Berolinensis*.

Од Кривовула су сачувани, осим историјског дела, још једна молитва и једна песма посвећена Августину. Они нам показују припадност Кривовула (са световним именом Михаило Кривопул) кругу интелектуалаца око Георгија Схоларија, Георгија Амируца и браће Марка и Јована Евгеника.

Кривовул је био рођен отприлике 1400–1410. на Имбросу; његова породица припадала је угледницима на острву. Тириако ди Филипо де Пицеколи, који је у јесен 1444. посетио Имброс, говори о њему у свом дневнику као о „*vir doctus*“, „*Imbriotes nobilis*“, и у једном писму Схоларију као о „*Imbrium doctissimus*“. Његове књижевне студије (вероватно у Цариграду), судећи по његовом делу, морале су бити широке и интензивне, али он показује и продубљена знања у области медицине.

Рад на својој историји започео је Кривовул најкасније у лето 1453; готово дело (до сњиге IV, глава 8) посветио је у јесен 1466. султану Мехмеду, заједно са у Истанбулу насталом верзијом посветног писма, а затим је дело у прерађеном и допуњеном облику још једном и коначно, заједно са верзијом посветног писма коју је публиковао Тишендорф, предао султану у јесен 1467. године.

Постоји једно писмо Георгија Амируца из 1468, упућено Кривовулу, а затим се о њему више ништа не чује. Раширене тврдње у приручницима да је био султанов секретар и, коначно, монах у једном атонском манастиру немају никакву изворну подлогу.

Кривовул у свом делу представља дела Мехмедова од његовог доласка на престо по смрти Мурата II. Скоро читава прва књига описује припреме за опсаду и саму опсаду Цариграда са познатим кључним догађајима: изградња тврђаве Румели Хисар, ливење великог топа, преношење бродова у Златни рог, рањавање Ђустинијанија, смрт цара Константина, пљачкање града. Остале књиге третирају разне султанове походе по Балкану (Србија, Албанија, Босна, Пелопонез), на Трапезунт и у Егеју, избијање епидемије куге у Цариграду и рат против Венеције. Кривовул непрекидно описује и разне градитељске потхвате Мехмедове у Цариграду и настојања да се град поново насели, да би могао да преузме улогу престонице царства под новим господарима.

За уобличавање дела Кривовул употребљава језички и стилистички регистар атицизма. Позајмице су врло ретке, речник је у целини узев конзервативно-архаичан. Извесни одсеци дела су реторски нарочито стилизовани: посветно писмо, увод, говори султана као војсковође, утисак о ливењу топа, оплакивање освајања Цариграда, поједине сцене битака и опис куге.

Нарочито рафинирана је игра литерарног *мимисиса* (подражавања антици), коју Критовул врло свесно и са циљем спроводи. Један од његових извора инспирације је Тукидид; независно од опште концепције (подела по годишњим добима, говори протагониста, општи колорит језика), Критовул користи одређене сцене код Тукидида да би свом казивању дао другу смисаону димензију (нпр. Периклови говори, говор посланика Коринта пред скупштином Пелопонеског савеза, говори војсковођа Формиона и Брасиде). При томе је подтекст увек тако постављен да се појачава значај; често изражени пејоративни суд да је Критовул „ропски подражавалац“ Тукидида показује се као погрешан. Али Тукидид је само један део ове литерарне игре. Херодот је такође кумовао у појединим одломцима и, уопште узев, код деклинације турских имена (Турци као наследници Персијанаца). За представљање сопствене улоге у односу према свом народу, сада већ потчињеном Османлијама, Критовул се ослања на Јосифа Флавија. То је врло добар избор, јер су се оба аутора налазила у међусобно упоредивим ситуацијама — Јосиф као Јеврејин према Римљанима који су заузели Јерусалим, Критовул као грчки Византинац према Османлијама који су заузели Константинопољ. Обојица су се приклонили историјској нужности и преношењу власти на освајача. Али најдубље сродство са једним књижевним узором појављује се у вези са Аријановом *Anabasis Alexandri*. Овде се циљ састоји у томе да се кроз имитацију Аријана димензија Александра Великог прида Мехмеду; једна сасвим објашњива идеја коју је сам Мехмед сасвим прихватио, јер је са царским престолом у Цариграду преузео и тежњу за екуменском империјом.

Мехмед је за Критовула био природни наследник византијских царева, будући да је ток историје према хеленистичком моделу, на који се Критовул ослања, био сачињен од низа великих царстава (од асирско-вавилонског, преко персијског до римско-византијског), у коме сада управо наступа османски тренутак. Ова идеја је представљала опште уверење међу интелектуалцима његовог времена. Критовул стога доследно употребљава за султана титулу византијског цара (василевс или велики василевс) и само једном му придаје староперсијску титулу шахиншах. Себе сматра немуслиманским подаником султана (рајетин), као што је раније био поданик византијског цара. Због тога је Критовул са идеолошког хоризонта XIX и прве половине XX века био сматран издајником своје отаџбине. Марксистички истраживачи су га пре свега третирали као издајника свог народа. У томе има утолико тачности што је Критовул, као и други угледни Византинци, лаици или клирици (као нпр. Георгије Амируц, Теофан из Медије, Георгије Схоларије, Димитрије Палеолог, Лука Нотарас), био заинтересован и покушавао да сачува свој привилегован положај и под турским султаном. Али ни у ком случају не може се рећи да је он издао свој народ и оставио га на цедилу.

На овом месту згодно је преиспитати, као карактеристичан пример, какве су алтернативе стајале пред становништвом Лемноса. Пред снажном османском флотом у Егеју није се могла очекивати никаква сигурна заштита Венеције или папе. Али пре свега су подношљив порески систем и тадашња верска толеранција Османлија говорили у њихову корист, а против Латина. Лемноски пук није

желео Латине и пре је желео да острво преда Османлијама. У одговарајућим дипломатским преговорима са Османлијама и Латинима, Критовул је, као гувернер Имброса, не само заштитио своје острво од насилног освајања, него је и Лемнос узео Латинима без проливања крви.

Критовул је такође и родољуб у формулисању своје солидарности са патњама становника Цариграда и жртвама рата. Он додуше слави султана као свог хероја, али истовремено налази топле речи за храбру и трагичну смрт последњег византијског цара. Био је сам свестан своје унутрашње подвојености на тим основама и ту је околност довољно јасно исказао у једном апологетском поглављу, у коме се на прикладан начин враћа Јосифу Флавију.

Као политичар Критовул није био „човек крви“. Ослањао се на дипломатска средства и са фином иронијом описује псеудо-херојство једног младог команданта тврђаве на Лемносу. За ратничко одушевљење није имао разумевања. Као мотиве за агресивност међу османским официрима Критовул види амбицију, славохлепље, материјални интерес, улизиштво према султану и игноранцију према стварном лицу рата. Ратници за време битке показују му се као фурије које заборављају своју људску природу. Критовул није био ни херој ни мученик, него патриота који је деловао у непосредном животном интересу својих земаљака.