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**Abstract**

of a doctoral dissertation

**The Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians (14<sup>th</sup> – mid  
15<sup>th</sup> century)**

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The dissertation contains 253 pages and consists of content, introduction, review of the researches and the historical sources, five chapters, conclusion, two appendices, bibliography and used abbreviations of periodicals.

## **Introduction**

The main purpose of the dissertation is to research the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the 14<sup>th</sup> – mid 15<sup>th</sup> century. The choice of topic is due to lack of complete or partial research of the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the Middle Ages. The present study is limited to these narrower chronological frameworks, because a study of the entire period of these relations would be too extensive. The period of the Late Middle Ages was chosen for the research, as the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the Early Middle Ages, in the period of the restoration of Bulgarian state and in the 13<sup>th</sup> century are well studied so far. On the other hand, it is known that the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in Bulgarian historiography continue to be problematic and insufficiently well studied. In this line of thought, the dissertation aims to contribute to the elucidation of this period of the Bulgarian history. Among other things, the connections and contacts between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the chosen period are very close and active, which makes the present work suitable for research.

The thematic-chronological principle was used in the formation of the work. The research is divided into five main chapters, preceded by a review of the historical researches and sources. At the end of the work in separate appendices is researched the dispute between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ohrid Archbishopric for the Diocese of Vidin and Sofia from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it is being prepared a list of the patriarchs of Constantinople until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

### **I. Chapter One – A Brief History of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from its Founding to the Conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks (1<sup>st</sup> century – 1453)**

The first chapter deals with the history of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the emergence of the Christian community in Byzantium to the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. This chapter is introductory and is not a personal research. Its main task is to trace the development of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and at the same time an attempt is being made to mark the main moments of its relations with the Bulgarians until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

## **II. Chapter Two - The Relations between the Bulgarian Church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century to the Liquidation of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo**

The aim of the second chapter is to study the relations between the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It examines the most active relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the 14<sup>th</sup> – mid 15<sup>th</sup> century and it is the most extensive chapter in the dissertation. The relations between the two churches in the 14<sup>th</sup> century are considered in two different directions – on the one hand of opposition, and on the other hand of interaction, mutual respect, struggle against heresies, spiritual ties, etc.

### **II. 1. Struggle for church dioceses**

Considering the relationship between two ecclesiastical institutions, the struggle for supremacy in ecclesiastical dioceses is always important. In the context of the opposition between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in the 14<sup>th</sup> century such disputes were not insignificant.

Politically, as a result of the war between Bulgaria and Byzantium in 1304–1307, the larger Black Sea fortresses south of the Balkan Mountains such as Nesebar, Pomorie, Sozopol, Ahtopol became Bulgarian possessions and, with the exception of brief interruptions, remained Bulgarian property until the campaign of Amedei VI of Savoy from 1366–1367, when they were finally handed over to Byzantium. In church terms the situation was more complicated. Although some southern Black Sea dioceses are missing from the documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople for certain periods (for example, the Metropolitan of Nesebar is not mentioned in the documents of the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the period 1311-1367, but after 1367 the metropolitanate is mentioned many times in these documents ), the presence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople there is huge, as evidenced by the register of the Byzantine Church. Added to this is the mention of the South Black Sea dioceses in the notifications of the Constantinople Patriarchate in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Information about the presence of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in these dioceses is scarce and whether in certain periods of the 14<sup>th</sup> century they were part of the Bulgarian Church is more in the realm of hypotheses.

The situation is similar with the Varna diocese. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, until the end of the second decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, no documents are known about it. It is mentioned as a subordinate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the years 1321, 1325, 1327. In the period 1327-1340 the sources do not mention the Metropolitan of Varna, but in the years 1340-1347 the Metropolitan of Varna reappears many times in the documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In the period 1347–1369 the Metropolitan of Varna did not attend the meetings of the Synod in Constantinople, but this is not reliable proof that the Metropolitan of Varna was not part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is noteworthy that the Synod of the Bulgarian Church does not mention the Metropolitan of Varna, as well as the absence of the metropolitan from the Council of Tarnovo in 1359. From 1369 onwards, the documents of the Byzantine Church invariably include the Metropolitan of Varna, although until the end of the 80s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century it continued to be part of a Bulgarian political formation – that of the Dobrudzha despotate.

The review of the source material shows a huge presence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the dioceses on the Black Sea coast. Whether they were part of the Tarnovo Patriarchate for certain periods remains in the realm of hypotheses without reliable information in the sources, and it can be said with certainty that after the campaign of Amedeus VI of Savoy in 1366–1367 they finally and irrevocably passed under the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The assumption that the dioceses on the Black Sea coast were ecclesiastically under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the 14<sup>th</sup> century seems strange, as politically for long periods they were part of Bulgarian political formations. In this line of thought, it is possible that the established principle in the Middle Ages "Cuius regio, eius ecclesia" was not respected. Moreover, it was especially valid when there were dogmatic or canonical differences between two church subjects.

Regarding the diocese of Silistra, it is believed that with the restoration of the Bulgarian kingdom at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was annexed to the Tarnovo Archbishopric–Patriarchate. In the Synod of the Bulgarian Church are noted "the metropolitan metropolitans Cyril, Averky, Theodulus, Joseph, Dionysius, Kalinik". The metropolitan throne is mentioned in the notes from the time of the Byzantine emperors Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282–1328) and Andronicus III Palaeologus (1328–1341), but it is believed that this rather reflects to tradition than real ecclesiastical authority, or that most of these documents are simply automatic

transcripts of the lists from the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is believed that around 1359 the diocese of Silistra was part of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo. In 1370, Silistra was probably already in the possession of the Dobrudzha despotate, and the diocese was subordinated to the Metropolitan of Varna and thus to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and this position was maintained after that.

Despite the lack of direct information in the sources, many researchers believe that until the end of the 50s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the lands which were north of Danube river (in Romania nowadays), and especially Wallachia, were subordinated to the Tarnovo Church. In fact, this statement seems quite logical given Bulgarian traditions and influence in these lands until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Bulgarian language continued to be used in worship and public administration of Wallachia and Moldova. After the beginnings of organized political life in Wallachia around 1330, the newly formed voivodship sought ways to increase its prestige and status and turned to Byzantium to obtain a church organization under its auspices. For Constantinople, this was probably a good opportunity to deal with the presence of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in these lands. Thus, in 1359, at the request of the Wallachian voivode Nicolae Alexandru (1352–1364), the Patriarchate of Constantinople ordained Metropolitan of Vichina Yakint as head of the church of Ungrovlachia, i.e. of the Wallachian Voivodeship, and after his death another metropolitan was to be elected, whose ordination had to be performed by Constantinople. In this way a separate Wallachian diocese was created, which was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, the messages of Patriarch Euthymius (1375-1393) to Nicodemus of Tisman and Metropolitan Antim of Wallachia are an important testimony about the authority of the Bulgarian Church in Wallachia, the continuing Bulgarian influence in these lands, and the high position of the Patriarch of Tarnovo in the Eastern Orthodox world in this period.

Some information in the sources suggests that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Metropolitanate of Philippopolis went from the diocese of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to the diocese of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and vice versa for several times. Some authors assume that this happened briefly in the period 1322–1323, when the city was in Bulgarian hands and probably the metropolitanate passed under the jurisdiction of the Tarnovo Patriarchate. It can be said with greater certainty and for a longer period of time that the metropolitanate was subordinated to Tarnovo after 1344, as the area around Philippopolis, together with eight other fortresses in Thrace, were annexed to the possessions of tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–1371). This gives grounds to

assume that after the Metropolitanate of Philippopolis entered the borders of the Tarnovo Tsardom, it is quite possible that it was subordinated to the Tarnovo Church. Confirmation of this seems to be found in the life of Theodosius of Tarnovo where in connection with the Council of Tarnovo in 1359, the Metropolitan of Philippopolis Manuel is mentioned. This information, of course, cannot be a reliable indicator that the diocese was part of the Tarnovo Patriarchate, because it is possible that Manuel attended the council in Tarnovo for other reasons. It should also not be forgotten that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Philippopolis was invariably present in the notices of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Around 1371 there is an evidence that the Metropolitan of Philippopolis was already under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Regarding the Vidin diocese, it is also assumed that during the liberation movement of the Assenevtsi the Vidin diocese was included in the diocese of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo. However, in the notices from the time of Andronicus II Palaeologus and Andronicus III Palaeologus, Vidin is mentioned as subordinate to Byzantium. This information is used by some researchers to prove the affiliation of the Vidin diocese to the diocese of the Patriarchate of Constantinople during the separatist Shishman and his son Michael III Shishman (1323-1330), but we must not forget that such uncertain source data should be approached critically and it cannot be a reliable indicator of making definite statements. From the late 40s or early 50s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century there is information about the subordination of the Vidin diocese under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, as in a gospel it is written that it was completed in Vidin, the names of tsar Ivan Alexander, tsar Ivan Sratsimir (1352/53–1396) are mention and it is added that the church pillar was then ruled by patriarch Theodosius. On the other hand, we must note the absence of the Metropolitan of Vidin from the Council of Tarnovo in 1359. After the Hungarian occupation of Vidin (1365-1369), the Metropolitan of Vidin Daniel had to move to the Wallachian lands and then he is mentioned in some documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the beginning of the 70s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This shows that from this period the Patriarchate of Constantinople probably made attempts to change the church status of Vidin. It is not clear what happened to Daniel's place in Vidin, as it may have been occupied by someone else and Daniel may have tried to regain it with the help of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In this line of thought, it is interesting the end of the one document of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from 1381, where it is said that the throne of Vidin was not empty, and there was a bishop who "... is not recognized as Metropolitan of this church, because he is from another diocese and has no right in this church, because he is there by

mercy". Thus the secession of the Vidin diocese from the Patriarchate of Tarnovo can be most widely placed in the period 1371–1381. From 1381 it is known for sure that the diocese was subordinated to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as it can be understood from the decision of the Synod of the Byzantine Church in July of the same year for the ordination of Cassian as Metropolitan of Vidin. As can be seen from the documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople related to the Vidin Diocese from this period, the secession of the metropolitanate from the Tarnovo Patriarchate was at the request of tsar Ivan Sratsimir himself. Thus the Vidin tsardom became independent of Tarnovo and in ecclesiastical terms. In 1386, the Metropolitan of Vidin acquired rights over the Diocese of Sredets, which had previously been in the diocese of the Tarnovo Patriarchate, and then, through the Vidin Metropolitanate, was submitted to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Vidin's connection with the Patriarchate of Constantinople continued afterwards. In 1392, after the resignation of Metropolitan Cassian and the exchange of letters between tsar Ivan Sratsimir and the Byzantine Church, Joasaph was elected for metropolitan. At the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century a dispute arose between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ohrid Archbishopric over the Dioceses of Vidin and Sofia.

The undisputed winner in the struggle for ecclesiastical dioceses between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, according to the review of the available sources in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, was the Patriarchate of Constantinople which managed to seize a large number of dioceses in the border areas of the Tarnovo Tsardom and the Patriarchate of Tarnovo. The reasons for this must be sought above all in its aggressive and expansionist policies and its desire for dominance in the Eastern Orthodox world. To this must be added the development of separatist possessions in the Bulgarian lands and the decline of the Tarnovo Tsardom. On the other hand, this so-called expansion of the Byzantine Church seems normal, having in mind the rise of the Tarnovo Patriarchate in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and its increased authority, to which the Patriarchate of Constantinople could not remain indifferent.

Objectivity requires noting that the fact that certain dioceses for certain periods are in the documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and even that there are titular metropolitans at that time, may not always correspond to the real situation. It is possible that there is a titular, but he lives in Constantinople and is part of the Synod there, and at the same time there is a real metropolitan of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, but not enough sources are preserved to prove this, or



vice versa. Sometimes in the Middle Ages dioceses were not considered in national-political aspect and it is possible that a territory is ruled politically by one state, but is part of the diocese of another church. On the other hand, it is possible that in the cases under consideration some of them could be a question of diocesan fragmentation in the pursuit of autocephaly, rather than a triumph of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The question of ecclesiastical dioceses therefore remains controversial.

## **II. 2. The rise of the Serbian archbishopric in patriarchate and the relations between the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Serbian Church**

The Bulgarian Church was not indifferent to the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the ecclesiastical dioceses. In the middle of the century, the Patriarchate of Tarnovo twice challenged the authority of the Byzantine Church. This happened first in 1346, when the Patriarch of Tarnovo Simeon participated in the coronation of Stefan Dusan (1331-1355) as tsar and the consecration of the Serbian Archbishop Ioaniki (1338-1354) as patriarch. With this act the patriarch contributed to the establishment of the authority of the Bulgarian Church in the Balkans, and at the same time it was a clear act of provocation to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Around 1352/1353, the Serbian Church was anathematized by the Byzantine Church which considered the act uncanonical, as it took place in the absence of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the other Eastern Patriarchs.

## **II. 3. The intervention of the Patriarch of Tarnovo in the affairs of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the relations between the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Russian Church in 1352–1354**

Even more obvious was the provocation of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in the period 1352–1354, when it ordained Theodoret as Russian metropolitan. He first asked the Patriarchate of Constantinople to do so, but the then Patriarch Callistus I (1350–1353; 1355–1364) refused, and then Theodoret fled to Tarnovo and was ordained by the Bulgarian Patriarch. This was a clear challenge to Constantinople, as the Russian Church at that time was still spiritually subordinate to the Byzantine Church, and the Bulgarian patriarch intervened in its affairs. This position was a continuation of the opposition to the Patriarchate of Constantinople expressed in 1346.

## **II. 4. The message of the Patriarch of Constantinople Callistus I from 1361 to the clergy of Tarnovo**

This subchapter researches the extremely important and valuable message of Constantinople Patriarch Callistus I to the Tarnovo clergy from 1361. With it, Callistus I accuses the Bulgarian Church in several ways – in the sacred services the patriarch of Tarnovo does not mention the names of the four patriarchs (of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem); the patriarch of Tarnovo was not "completely autocephalous" and the right to be called patriarch was given to him "by condescension"; the Bulgarian priests did not baptize according to the canons with three immersions, but only with one; the Bulgarian Church prepared its own sacred oil from the relics of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica and St. Varvar and did not use the sacred oil prepared by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The whole message strongly discredits the Bulgarian Church, probably because of its increased authority, as is clear from the accusations themselves.

## **II. 5. The rise of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo. The Bulgarian Church in its own way of development**

In this subchapter is expressed the opinion that in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries the Patriarchate of Tarnovo has expanded its influence and has followed its own path of development, different from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The rise of Tarnovo and the Bulgarian Church began in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, when Constantinople was conquered by the Latins, which led to a decrease in the influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople for more than half a century in the Orthodox East. In the Bulgarian biographical and historical literature of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, prevails the notion that after the conquest of Constantinople by the Latins, the Bulgarian tsars became the biggest supporters and defenders of Orthodoxy. The systematic and purposeful transfer of the relics of famous saints from different parts of the Balkan Peninsula (Ivan Rilski, Ilarion Maglenski, Petka Epivatska, John Polivotski, Philothea Temnishka, etc.) in Tarnovo was not only related to the piety of the Bulgarian tsars, but there were others motives, such as to displace Constantinople from its ecclesiastical role and place in the history of Orthodoxy, to raise the prestige of the Bulgarian Church, to turn Tarnovo into a place of worship and a major ecclesiastical and religious center, etc. The authority of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in the Orthodox East grew even more as a result of its consistent anti-union stance, which it pursued after the Lyon Union in 1274. It is no coincidence that in the note to the Gospel of Tarnovo from 1276/1277 the Patriarch of Tarnovo

Ignatius is called "the pillar of Orthodoxy". The participation of the Patriarch of Tarnovo in the coronation ceremony of Stefan Dusan, as well as his interference in the affairs of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the ordination of the monk Theodoret as "Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia" also shows the growing authority and influence of the Bulgarian Church. The message of Callistus I and the expansion of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the ecclesiastical dioceses in the 14<sup>th</sup> century must also, on the one hand, be interpreted as opposition against the growing authority of Tarnovo. All this coincided and went hand in hand with the development of the idea of Tarnovo as "Third Rome" and "Second Constantinople". It should be noted that while the titles of the patriarchs of Tarnovo until the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century contained only the definition of "patriarch", in the last third of the century it became a replica of the title of the Byzantine patriarch, and in some cases to the title was added "archbishop of the glorious city of Tarnovo" and "Patriarch of All Bulgarians". For its part, the Bulgarian translation of the Manasseh Chronicle from the 14<sup>th</sup> century was related to the protection of Eastern Orthodoxy from Catholicism and heresies and aims to trace the growth of the Bulgarian Church, on the background of the rivalry between Rome and Constantinople. The praise of Tarnovo as the "new Constantinople" in the Bulgarian translation of the Manasseh Chronicle emphasizes the role of the Bulgarian capital as a symbol of the Orthodoxy and state unity, and the consistent and firm policy of the Bulgarian rulers of the Assen dynasty after 1204 in defense of Orthodoxy is against the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Thus, after 1204, Bulgaria and Tarnovo rose and established themselves as the main center of Orthodoxy, and in the time of Ivan Alexander the Bulgarian Church had long ago established its autocephaly.

Some of the archbishops and patriarchs of Tarnovo had a great theological literacy, developed literary activity and had a well-deserved authority in the Eastern Orthodox world, and among them stands out the name of Patriarch Euthymius. His reformist activity found application not only in the Bulgarian lands, but it was quickly spread to Serbia, Wallachia and Russia. Evidence of his high authority is the fact that he was consulted on various issues by high-ranking clergy outside Bulgaria. In addition, many Bulgarian clergymen held high positions in the Eastern Orthodox world outside the territories inhabited by Bulgarians - Cyprian and Gregory Tsamblak realized as senior clergymen in the Russian lands; Ephraim was twice Serbian patriarch in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century; the Bulgarian Joseph was the patriarch of Constantinople for a long period in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, etc.

Some information in the sources suggests that in the Orthodox Christian world the Bulgarian Church was following its own path of development. This assumption should be understood not from a canonical point of view, as the Bulgarian Church was associated with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and resembled its organization, but rather from the point of view of a number of peculiarities in the development and behavior of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. At the end of 1366 – the beginning of 1367 for example when the Byzantine emperor observed the forcible Catholicization of the Bulgarian population in Vidin, he said the following words: "It is well for the king to re-baptize these Slavs, because they follow neither the Latin nor the Greek form of the faith." One of the Constantinople monks who accompanied the emperor, in turn, told the Catholic clergy that "Bulgarian bishops are not real priests, but dogs, and baptize incorrectly". Researchers note that over time the Bulgarian Church gradually moved away from the Byzantine model on which it was established, as the Patriarchate of Tarnovo pursued a policy of "Bulgarization" of the church life, expressed in several directions: the use of Bulgarian in worship and literature; imposing a Bulgarian cycle on the church calendar, which was dominated by the celebration of Bulgarian saints; changing the program of painting the churches by overlapping the images of Bulgarian national saints (Ivan Rilski, Joakim Osogovski, Ilarion Maglenski, Petka Tarnovska, Prohor Pchinski); independence in making the sacred oil, etc. In the Christian faith and church practice of the Bulgarians there was a mixture of Eastern Orthodox Christianity well known in Constantinople and Mount Athos, along with reforms by the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, as well as elements of ingrained folk Christianity, which preserved a number of pagan rites. Thus, with time, the Patriarchate of Tarnovo largely "nationalized" the faith, and the systematic introduction of Bulgarian elements in church life led to the formation of the "Bulgarian form of faith", which differed from the Greco-Byzantine and Roman Catholic.

Thus, obviously, the Patriarchate of Tarnovo was on its own path of development, and this, together with its increased authority and influence, often opposed it to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

## **II. 6. Spiritual interaction between the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Common struggle against heretical movements**

This subchapter examines the opposite side in the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in the 14<sup>th</sup> century – that of rapprochement, mutual respect, struggle against heresies, spiritual ties, interaction, etc.

One example of the struggle of the two churches against heretical teachings and of convicted heretics of both churches is associated with Bogomilism. At a council in Tarnovo (probably in 1350) Cyril Bosota and Lazarus were convicted, and before that they were convicted and expelled from Mount Athos at a general meeting in 1344. Another doctrine that was defined as heresy and condemned by The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Tarnovo were Varlaamites. It was finally condemned in Constantinople at councils in 1347 and 1351, and in Bulgaria at the council in Tarnovo in 1359. Another heretic, condemned by both churches was Theodosius Fudul, who is mentioned in Bulgarian and Byzantine sources from the second half of 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The closest spiritual ties between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Tarnovo in the 14<sup>th</sup> century were realized thanks to the hesychastic doctrine, which became the official doctrine of both churches in the second half of the century. The interaction in this direction between Bulgaria and Byzantium began even before hesychasm was declared an official doctrine in Byzantium and took place first on Mount Athos and later in Paroria, where the reviver of the hesychasm – Gregory Sinait founded his monastery, and there settled also a lot of Bulgarians. After his death around 1346, Theodosius of Tarnovo became the largest spreader of hesychasm in the Bulgarian lands. At the end of his life, Theodosius of Tarnovo went to Constantinople, where he visited the Patriarch of Constantinople Callistus I. Theodosius traveled with four of his students, including the future Patriarch of Tarnovo Euthymius and the future All-Russian Metropolitan Cyprian. Initially, Theodosius resided in the Patriarchate as a guest of Callistus I, and later, with the assistance of the Patriarch, in the monastery "St. Mamant ", where he died on November 27 1363. Patriarch Callistus I then wrote a biography of Theodosius.

The Hesychasts sought to unite Orthodoxy in the Balkans. Both in Byzantium and in Bulgaria, prominent hesychasts were closely associated with the court and the aristocracy, actively participated in church and political life, sought to occupy high positions in the church hierarchy and sometimes reached the patriarchal throne. The most prominent follower and student of

Theodosius Tarnovski is the Bulgarian Patriarch Euthymius. The patriarchs of Constantinople, Isidore I (1347–1350), Callistus I, and Philoteus Cochin (1353–1354; 1364–1376), were also zealous hesychasts. Thus we can speak of a hesychastic circle formed by clergymen from the Bulgarian and Byzantine lands. It is interesting to note that around 1375 some Eastern Orthodox churches and important metropolitan chairs were headed by high-ranking clergymen who were strongly influenced by Hesychast teachings – Philoteus Kokin (Patriarch of Constantinople), Euthymius (Patriarch of Tarnovo), Ephraim (Serbian Patriarch), Cyprian (Metropolitan of Kiev), Theodosius (Metropolitan of Trabzon), and three of them (Euthymius, Ephraim and Cyprian) were of Bulgarian origin, and this can be assumed for Theodosius.

Interesting information about the spiritual relations between Bulgaria and Byzantium can be also found in the conversation of John Kantakouzenos with the papal legate Paul in Constantinople in 1367, when during the negotiations for church union John Kantakouzenos expressed the opinion that the church issues should be discussed at a meeting attended by all Eastern Patriarchs, including the Patriarch of Tarnovo. Shortly afterwards, Kantakouzenos noted that the schism between Orthodox and Catholics had reached a monstrosity, expressed in the forced conversion of Orthodox to Catholicism, citing the example of what the Hungarians had done in the Vidin kingdom. After the papal legate accepted the terms for convening a council, Patriarch Philloteos Kokkinos sent letters about him to the heads of the eastern churches, one of which is preserved to the Ohrid archbishop, but it is believed that a similar letter was sent to the patriarch of Tarnovo.

Some information in the sources shows that in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century there was mutual respect and esteem between the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and Constantinople. In one document of the Patriarchate of Constantinople we learn that the Patriarch of Constantinople addressed the Patriarch in Tarnovo in the following way: “How do you write to the Patriarch of Tarnovo? Holy Patriarch of Tarnovo and of all Bulgaria, beloved brother in the Holy Spirit and co-worker of our humility!”. This speaks of equality between the two church patriarchs. On the other hand, in one Bulgarian source from the 80s of 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarch of Constantinople was registered before the Patriarch of Tarnovo. This should be understood as a recognition of the hierarchy in the Eastern Orthodox world and respect for the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

## **II. 7. The Liquidation of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo**

The last subchapter of the second chapter researches the problem of the liquidation of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo and its demotion to the rank of metropolitanate within the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The sources related to this event are considered, as well as an overview of the opinions in historiography about the period in which it happened, as well as the reasons that led to this.

Despite the different opinions in historiography related to the reasons for the liquidation of the Tarnovo Patriarchate, one of which defends the view that the actions taken by the Patriarchate of Constantinople to administer the diocese of Tarnovo after the conquest of Tarnovo are a sign of its care for the Bulgarian Church, it should be kept in mind that these actions of the Byzantine Church are a direct and logical consequence of its policy of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries related to the attempts to impose jurisdiction and influence in the Orthodox world. This was an ambitious and expansionist program, contrasting with the decline of Byzantium during this period. In fact, the events of the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and the liquidation of the Tarnovo Patriarchate are a logical conclusion to the relations between the Bulgarian and Byzantine churches in the previous era. They took place in a very short historical period and almost immediately after the conquest of the Bulgarian lands by the Ottomans, without even an official act being issued by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Bulgarian Church was not rebuilt until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in this line of thought it had a different fate than the Ohrid Archbishopric and the Pec Patriarchate for instance. They had a longer life, which continued in certain periods after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. V. Gyuzelev rightly notes that the liquidation of the Patriarchate of Tarnovo laid the foundations of the "Bulgarian church question" and the Bulgarian-Greek church dispute of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **III. Chapter Three - The Relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the Context of the Political and the Ecclesiastical Life in the Balkans (40s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century – the End of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The third chapter aims to study the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the context of the political life in the Balkans in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The information considered in this direction in the sources does not claim to be exhaustive, and the

events presented in here are rather random, sporadic and isolated from each other and it is difficult to be found any trends in their analysis.

### **III. 1. Participation of the Patriarch of Constantinople John XIV Kalekas in the negotiations for the transfer of Shishman to the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Alexander in 1341**

In 1341, the Patriarch of Constantinople John XIV Kalekas (1334–1347) took part in the disputes over the transfer of Shishman, one of the sons of the Bulgarian Tsar Michael III Shishman, who appeared in Constantinople as a fugitive. The patriarch initially suggested that the Byzantines could get out of the situation, justifying that they could not betray Shishman because he had taken refuge in “Hagia Sofia”. However, John XIV Kalekas later relinquished this position.

### **III. 2. Synodal decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, confirming the treaty concluded between emperor John V Palaeologus and tsar Ivan Alexander**

In 1352, the Ottoman Turks managed to capture the fortress of Tsimpe on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and in 1354 they captured the important fortress of Gallipoli, thus firmly established themselves in the Balkans. According to most authors, this provoked Bulgaria and Byzantium to look for a way to get closer connections between them. Thus, in 1355, a peace treaty was concluded between tsar Ivan Alexander and John V Palaeologus (1341–1391), which was supported by marriage between their children. On this occasion, a special synodal decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople was prepared. It was signed by Patriarch Callistus I and fifteen metropolitans. This means that the patriarch and the synod declared themselves in the agreement and threatened various church punishments in case of breach of the contract. From the section "We discussed and judged on this common connection and benefit for Christians – Byzantines and Bulgarians, and harm to the wicked" it is clear that the alliance between Bulgarians and Byzantines had an anti-Ottoman orientation. Subsequent events, however, show that this promising statement remained only on paper.

### **III. 3. Expulsion of the Bulgarian monk Gennady from the Great Lavra "St. Athanasius" on Mount Athos by the order of the Patriarch of Constantinople Callistus I.**

In a letter of Patriarch Callistus I from 1355 or 1359 addressed to the monks of the Great Lavra "St. Athanasius" on Mount Athos is revealed interesting information about a Bulgarian monk named Gennady the Bulgarian. It can be understood from the letter that on the orders of



Patriarch Callistus I he and other monks were expelled from the monastery because they caused disagreement in the monastery fraternity and forgot their monastic duties. It is possible that the reasons for the expulsion of Gennady were not related to his nationality, and the decision of Callistus I was motivated entirely by religious and dogmatic arguments, as monks of different nationalities are mentioned in the letter (τὸν παπᾶν Γεννάδιον τὸν Ἰσαυρον, Κοσμᾶν τὸν Ἀλανίτην). It is possible that this rift was also of a personal nature.

#### **III. 4. The journey of the Patriarch of Constantinople Callistus I to Siar (Serres) in 1364 to Elena – the sister of tsar Ivan Alexander**

The relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians intertwined in Siar (Serres) in 1364. The then Patriarch Callistus I traveled to the city, where he met with the independent ruler of Bulgarian origin Elena. According to John Kantakouzenos, the goal of Callistus I was to reach an agreement with Elena to end the bad relations between Byzantium and its principality, as well as a common struggle against the Ottoman invaders. In all likelihood, such an agreement was possible given the end of the schism between the two churches, and therefore this political task was probably entrusted to Callistus I. In the course of the negotiations, however, Patriarch Callistus I died unexpectedly and they were terminated. Elena's warm welcome to Callistus I testifies that she was no stranger to the idea of ending the ecclesiastical schism between the both churches, and that she agreed with the Byzantine position on the Serbian royal title and The Serbian Church.

#### **III. 5. The letter of the Patriarch of Constantinople Philoteus Kokin to tsar Ivan Alexander**

In 1364 the last Bulgarian-Byzantine war broke out. It was for the possession of Mesembria – John V Palaeologus besieged the city, but after unsuccessful actions he had to withdraw. A letter from the Patriarch of Constantinople Philoteus Kokinos, who took the patriarchal post after the death of Callistus I, dates from the same period. The letter is addressed to Ivan Alexander and is believed to have been written between October and December 1364. In it, the Patriarch of Constantinople insisted to Ivan Alexander that the peace between Bulgaria and Byzantium should be observed.

### **III. 6. The attitude of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to the Bulgarian rulers in "Ἐκθεσις νέα"**

In the so-called "Ἐκθεσις νέα" compiled between 1385 and 1388, in addition to the attitude of the Byzantine Church to the Patriarchate of Tarnovo, there is information about the ways in which it addressed the Bulgarian rulers – despot Dobrotitsa (1360-1385), tsar Ivan Sratsimir and tsar Ivan Shishman (1371–1395). The document reads as follows: "As the patriarch of the despot wrote when he was not the son of Vasilevs:" Blessed despot, in the Holy Spirit the most desired son of our modesty. " If a man is a Byzantine and a nobleman, then his name is not given; if he is a barbarian, such as Dobrotica and the despots of Wallachia and those of Albania, the name is given. " ... As the patriarch and metropolitan wrote to the ruler of Vidin and emperor Kamtsimir: "The most pious and Christ-loving autocrats omnipotent and master of Vidin and all of Bulgaria, in the Holy Spirit master and son of our modesty and humility." ... As the Metropolitan wrote to the lord and emperor of the Bulgarians Shishman: "Almighty, pious, Christ-loving, too high emperor of the Bulgarians, in the Holy Spirit the most kind and most desirable to my Lord and my son".

In the political aspect, "Ἐκθεσις νέα" shows very well the political and geographical picture of the Bulgarian lands and the "three Bulgarias", to which the Bulgarian tsardom had disintegrated. As can be seen, the addresses to tsar Ivan Sratsimir and tsar Ivan Shishman consist of titles and epithets. It is noteworthy that according to the text, the Patriarch of Constantinople did not write letters to the tsar of Tarnovo, as it said only "as the Metropolitan writes", but omitted "as the Patriarch writes", as in the case of Vidin. Iv. Bozhilov pays attention to the fact that the two rulers in this document and in the eyes of the Byzantines of this period are equal, although the text first mentions the ruler of Vidin. G. N Nikolov and other authors emphasize another part of the document – the title of the two Bulgarian rulers. In the text about tsar Ivan Shishman it is written that he is emperor/tsar of the Bulgarians (... βασιλεῦ τῶν Βουλγάρων ...), but he is not an autokrator. In tsar Ivan Sratsimir's it is the opposite – he is titled as an autokrator of Vidin and all of Bulgaria (... αὐτοκράτορ ... Βυδίνης καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας), but not as emperor/tsar. Thus the compiler of the text "escaped" because, according to the Byzantine doctrine, only the Byzantine emperor could be emperor (Basileus) and autokrator, and it was unlikely that a Byzantine emperor or patriarch of Constantinople would turn to another Balkan ruler in this way.

### **III. 7. Nicholas the Bulgarian and his oath to the Patriarch of Constantinople**

A document of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from July 1391 contains interesting information about Nicholas the Bulgarian. It is clear from the text that this Bulgarian did not know when and under what circumstances he converted to Islam. It is only mentioned that he did everything "out of sorrow and with the help of the evil devil" (ἀπὸ λύπης, συνεργία τοῦ πονηροῦ δαίμονος). In July 1391 he solemnly returned to the bosom of Orthodoxy with a special written promise (ὑπόσχεσις). The fact that such a document was registered in the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople shows that Nicholas was probably a famous and influential person. Thus, along with the forced conversion to Catholicism, Islamization also has a negative impact on the malicious process that has led to the violation of the ethno-religious unity of the Bulgarian nation.

### **IV. Chapter Four - The Relations of High-ranking Bulgarian Clergy with the Patriarchate of Constantinople Outside the Bulgarian Lands in the Second Half of the 14<sup>th</sup> – Middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century**

The task of the fourth chapter is to study the relations of high-ranking clergymen of certain or presumed Bulgarian origin with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, who developed most of their activities outside the Bulgarian lands in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> – mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **IV. 1. Clergymen of certain Bulgarian origin**

One example in this regard is the Serbian patriarch Ephraim (1375–1380; 1389–1392). He was born around 1311/1312 and was from the "possessions of the Bulgarian tsardom, from the Tarnovo side". At an early age he went to Mount Athos, but in the 40s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century he settled in the region of Philippopolis. Ephraim later left for Serbia. There he enjoyed the patronage of tsar Stefan Dusan, Queen Elena and the Serbian Patriarch Sava IV (1354–1375). A turning point in Ephraim's life was the death of Sava IV in 1375. During this period, negotiations took place between the Serbian and Byzantine churches to eliminate the schism between them. However, the death of Sava IV led to the need to convene a council to elect a new church head and the Bulgarian Ephraim was elected. This happened on October 3 1375. Ephraim thus became the first Serbian patriarch to be recognized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. After four or five years on the patriarchal throne, Ephraim appealed to Prince Lazarus to be released from the patriarchal seat due to "old age and infirmity." The Serbian ruler, although reluctant, agreed and accepted the request,

erecting Spyridon (1380-1389) in the cathedral. After Spyridon's death, however, Ephraim stood out again as a lifeline for the patriarchal throne. It is believed that the reason for the re-election of Ephraim as Serbian patriarch is related to the bad relations between Pec and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, probably deteriorated during the time of Patriarch Spyridon, and this time Ephraim had to play the role of conciliator between the two churches. Shortly afterwards, in the early 90s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Ephraim retired from the patriarchal place and then died in 1400. He was soon canonized a saint.

The Bulgarian Cyprian also maintained very close ties with the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is believed that he was born around 1330 in the Bulgarian lands and was originally a graduate of the spiritual centers of Tarnovo. He later probably resided in the Kilifarevo Monastery, where he mastered the ideas of hesychasm. It is believed that in 1363 he went with Theodosius of Tarnovo and other his students to Constantinople, and then went to Mount Athos, where he probably became close to Philoteus Kokkinos. In 1373, Cyprian was sent by Philoteus Kokkinos to the Russian lands to end hostilities in these areas. In 1375, Cyprian was ordained Metropolitan of Kiev with the stipulation that after the death of Moscow Metropolitan Alexei (1354-1378), the Bulgarian would become Metropolitan of All Russia. After Alexei died in February 1378, Cyprian began to work for the post of All-Russian Metropolitan. However, his intentions contradicted the aspirations of the Moscow prince Dmitry Donsky (1359-1389), who had another favorite for the metropolitan throne in Moscow – Mitya. Thus for Cyprian began many years of hardship and struggle, and after several visits to Constantinople in search of his rights, it came to the election of the Bulgarian as All-Russian Metropolitan in 1389. In the 90s of 14<sup>th</sup> Cyprian needed help of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to deal with various issues in Novgorod, Suzdal and Galicia. A letter from Anthony IV to Cyprian has been preserved since 1397, stating that they both agreed to enter into a union with the Roman Church for political reasons, but the patriarch replied that this was not possible at the time. In 1398, Cyprian helped raise a significant amount of money, which was sent to Constantinople when Byzantium sought help against the Ottoman siege of the Byzantine capital (1394-1402). From 1400, a charter of the Patriarch of Constantinople Matthew I (1397–1410) to Cyprian is preserved, calling on him “as a man who loved the Byzantines” (ὡς φιλορρώμαιος ἄνθρωπος) to start a new campaign to raise money against the Turks. The All-Russian Metropolitan of Bulgarian origin Cyprian died on 16 September 1406.

Another high-ranking Bulgarian clergyman who developed his activities outside the Bulgarian lands and had ties to the Patriarchate of Constantinople was Gregory Tsamblak. It is believed that Gregory Tsamblak was born around 1365. He began his education in one of the Tarnovo or Athos monasteries. It is unknown when Tsamblak went to Constantinople. N. Doncheva-Panayotova linked this to the occupation of the patriarchal throne by Anthony IV in February 1389, who was in favor of Tsamblak's uncle Cyprian. The author suggests that during this period it is possible that Gregory Tsamblak held some office in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. She also admits that in 1397 Tsamblak went to the Serbian lands, where he became abbot of the Decani monastery, and according to her, his election to this post would have been difficult without the help of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. However, he later returned to Constantinople. In the summer of 1401, Gregory Tsamblak was sent by the Patriarch of Constantinople Matthew to Moldavia to help reconcile with the Moldavian Bishop Joseph, who converted to Catholicism and rejected all dependence on Constantinople. It remains unknown how his mission ended. After the death of Cyprian in 1406, the Lithuanian prince Vytautas (1392–1430) resumed political and ecclesiastical separation from Moscow. Initially, after Cyprian's death, Vytautas tried to nominate his own candidate for metropolitan, but he was not approved by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which imposed its own confidant, the Greek Photius. In the autumn of 1414, however, Vytautas convened a council and proposed that Gregory Tsamblak be elected Metropolitan of Kiev. To this end, he was sent to Constantinople to head an embassy, but to no avail. Patriarch Euthymius II of Constantinople (1410–1416) not only refused to ordain Gregory Tsamblak, but deprived him of his dignity and excommunicated him from the Church. In November 1415, Vytautas convened a council and Gregory Tsamblak was ordained Metropolitan of Kiev. As this happened without the consent of Constantinople, the new Patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II (1416-1439) for the second time in 1416 excommunicated Tsamblak and anathematized him. On February 25, 1417, the Bulgarian delivered his speech at the Council of Constance (1414–1418), in which he called for a union between the Eastern and Western Churches so that resistance against the Ottoman conquerors could be organized. In the end, after the Council of Constance, no union was reached, and shortly after the Council, Gregory Tsamblak died.

## **IV. 2. Clergymen of presumed Bulgarian origin**

In some of his studies Pl. Pavlov admits that other Serbian church leaders in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, apart from Ephraim, may have been of Bulgarian origin. One of them was the Serbian archbishop and the first Serbian patriarch, Ioaniki, who headed the Serbian church from 1338 to 1354. During his time, the Serbian archbishopric was elevated to a patriarchate in 1346, which was not approved by Constantinople and followed by a schism between the two churches. Ioannicius died irreconcilable with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The next Serbian church leader, for whom Pl. Pavlov admits that it is possible that he is of Bulgarian origin, is Sava IV. He was Serbian patriarch from 1354 to 1375. During the time of Sava IV in the 70s of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, negotiations began with the Patriarchate of Constantinople to remove the schism with the Serbian Church, but he did not live to see the two churches reconciled and was inherited from the Bulgarian Ephraim. Between the two patriarchs of Ephraim, the Serbian Church was headed by Spyridon (1380-1389). According to late Serbian namesakes, he was a native of Nis. This, together with the possibility that he was a student of Ephraim, as well as the fact that before he took the chair in Pecs he was the Metropolitan of Melnik, give grounds to Pl. Pavlov to make the assumption that it is possible that Spiridon is of Bulgarian origin. It is believed that during the time of Spyridon the relations between Pec and the Patriarchate of Constantinople deteriorated, because, occupying the cathedral in Pec, he fell into a canonical violation – this was the so-called triepiscopate, because before he was metropolitan of Melnik, Spyridon was already a bishop. This violation of the canons provoked protests from the Byzantine Church. It is believed that the problem between the two churches was overcome during the second patriarchate of Ephraim.

According to a hypothesis of Pl. Pavlov, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Eastern Orthodox saint Theodosius, a prominent Athos monk and at the end of his life also Metropolitan of Trabzon, is of Bulgarian descent. He is known to have left for Constantinople at the age of 18, where he was in close contact with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. He is believed to have been ordained a deacon and later a priest by the Patriarch of Constantinople himself. He later went to Mount Athos, where he spent many years. Around the middle of the century there was an accident – during fishing Theodosius and other monks were captured and taken to the Ottoman capital Bursa. They were then liberated and set out for Mount Athos through Constantinople, where Theodosius was received by the Patriarch of Constantinople (Isidore I or Callistus I). Subsequently, with the

insistence of the patriarch, Theodosius was elected abbot of the Constantinople monastery "Manganon". In 1369 or 1370, Patriarch Philoteus Kokinos elected Theodosius Metropolitan of Trabzon. This shows that in fact Theodosius held high positions in the ecclesiastical circles of Byzantium, after he was entrusted with such a high post. There is a little information about Theodosius' activity as Metropolitan of Trabzon and his relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is believed that around 1388-1391 Theodosius was no longer alive. After his death, Theodosius was canonized a saint.

According to some researchers, in the 30s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century a clergyman of Bulgarian origin was ordained Metropolitan of Moldova. His name was Damian and not much is known about his life. The Patriarch of Constantinople of Bulgarian origin Joseph II called him a man "... from my cell and my family". He is known to have been a companion of the famous St. Mark of Ephesus (one of the leaders of the strong anti-Union Orthodox opposition in Byzantium) and is believed to have been a disciple of Joseph II. It is unknown where he was before 1437. In that year he was ordained by Joseph II as Metropolitan of Moldova, which in itself is indicative that he is not an accidental figure. Shortly after his election as Metropolitan, Damian led the Moldovan church delegation to the Ferraro-Florentine Council and took part in the discussions around the so-called filioque, maintaining the Orthodox view of nature St. Spirit. In the end, however, Damian signed the union. According to some authors, he returned to Moldova after the council, where he continued to be a spiritual leader until his death, while others said he did not return because he feared anti-Union sentiment. In 1445 Damian again stated his final position on the question of the nature of St. Spirit. He died in 1447, and according to some authors, Mark of Ephesus sent Archdeacon Theoctist as Metropolitan of Moldova, who also participated in the Council of Ferrara-Florence and who is also believed to be of Bulgarian descent and a student of Joseph II. In 1453, Theoctist was ordained metropolitan, but not by Constantinople, but by the Serbian patriarch Nicodemus (1445-1455). According to another opinion, Theoctist was ordained by the Archbishop of Ohrid. Theoctist remained Metropolitan of Moldavia until his death in 1478.

Some information in the sources gives reason to many Bulgarian researchers to believe that Isidore of Kiev, who is one of the most remarkable personalities of the European 15<sup>th</sup> century, is of Bulgarian origin. He was a Russian metropolitan, then papal cardinal and Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Not much is known about the early years of Isidore's life. It has been suggested

that he was born between 1380 and 1390 in Thessaloniki or the Peloponnese. Around 1409 he became a monk in a monastery in Monemvasia on the Peloponnese. In the late 20s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Isidore wrote two letters to the Bulgarian Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, concerning a dispute over dioceses between Monemvasia and Corinth. In 1433–1436 he was abbot of the monastery “St. Dimitar” in Constantinople. In 1433, Isidore was sent by Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1425–1448) and Patriarch Joseph II to the Council of Basel to receive the support of the papacy in the fight against the Turks. There he delivered a speech to Emperor Sigismund I (1387–1437) and advocated unity between Catholics and Orthodox. In late 1436 or early 1437, Isidore was ordained Metropolitan of All Russia by Patriarch Joseph II and headed for Moscow. He was probably elected because of his Uniate policies. As Metropolitan of All Russia, Isidore attended the Ferraro-Florentine Council, where he was one of the most notable figures and an advocate for the union. He left for Florence on 8 September 1437, promising not to betray the Orthodox faith, as Prince Vasily II of Moscow (1425-1462) was against the union. In the end, however, Isidore signed the union and probably had the task of implementing it in Russia. Due to Isidore's unreserved support for the union, in December 1439, Pope Eugene IV (1431–1447) appointed him papal cardinal and legate to Lithuania, Livonia, all of Russia, and the Polish districts within the metropolitan diocese of Kiev. Arriving in Moscow in March 1441, after pronouncing the pope's name at the Assumption Council and announcing the union, Isidore was arrested and sent into custody. However, he managed to escape and after many difficulties arrived in Rome, where Pope Eugene IV rewarded him and brought him even closer to himself. It is believed that in the period from 1444 to 1451, with some interruptions, Isidore was engaged in promoting the union on the Balkan Peninsula. However, as the union in Constantinople was not officially announced, in 1452 Isidore arrived in the city with 200 soldiers to check that the union's clauses were being observed and to stimulate the proclamation of the official act. Finally, on 12 December 1452 in “Hagia Sofia” the union between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Roman Church was proclaimed by holding a liturgy according to the Latin rite. During the conquest of Constantinople, Isidore, disguised as a slave, managed to escape from the city. In 1458, for his merits, Isidore was elected Latin patriarch of Constantinople, which he remained until the end of his life in 1463. During large periods of his life he was accompanied by his archdeacon Gregory the Bulgarian. He was with Isidore at the Ferraro-Florentine Council, and then in Rome, as well as in Constantinople during the conquest of the city. In 1458, Gregory the Bulgarian was elected



Metropolitan of Kiev after Isidore relinquished this rank. In 1470, Gregory renounced the union, left the papal jurisdiction and submitted to the patriarch of Constantinople. He died in 1474.

## **V. Chapter Five – The Participation of Bulgarians in the Life of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the First Half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century**

The task of the fifth chapter is to study the activities of the Bulgarians who took part in the life of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The emphasis is mainly on the Patriarch of Constantinople of Bulgarian origin Joseph II, Metropolitan Ignatius of Tarnovo, the spiritual representation of the Bulgarian lands at the Ferraro-Florentine Council, and other clergymen of certain or presumed Bulgarian origin who participated in this council.

Joseph II took over the patriarchal cathedral in Constantinople in 1416, and most scholars agree that during his patriarchy he tried to form a union with the West to send aid against the Turks. However, initially, in the 20s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Joseph II and the Byzantine emperors had the idea of concluding a union at an Ecumenical Council, insisting that it has to be held in Constantinople and that controversial issues should be considered there. In the 30s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, the situation changed, as Constantinople was on the verge of complete conquest and the question of union entered its decisive phase. Although both Joseph II and John VIII Palaeologus agreed on a union with the West, controversy arose between them: Patriarch Joseph II preferred to conclude a union with the pope, while initially for a period the emperor preferred to deepen contacts with the Basel Council. In the end, Byzantium continued negotiations to convene a council and conclude a union with the Roman Church.

At the end of 1435 or the beginning of 1436, a council of the Eastern Churches was convened in Constantinople, dedicated to the planned union with the Roman Church, and a decision was made as to what the spiritual representation was to go to Italy. A decision was made to leave the Bulgarian lands for Metropolitan Ignatius of Tarnovo, Callistus of Silistra, Matthew of Melnik, Dositheus of Drama, Sophronius of Pomorie and Dionysius of Sofia. In November 1437, the Eastern Orthodox delegation, led by Emperor John VIII Palaeologus, Patriarch Joseph II and 22 metropolitans and bishops, sailed for Venice and from there to Ferrara. Metropolitan Ignatius of Tarnovo was assigned various functions in the preparation of the council and the course of negotiations. In August 1438 a Russian delegation arrived in Ferrara, which included Isidore and Gregory the Bulgarian.

At the council there were all kinds of fierce debates on dogmatic-religious, ritual and church-canonical issues – about the Creed, the filioque, the Purgatory, the Eucharist, baptism, the primacy in the Christian church, etc. In early 1439, the council was moved to Florence, where controversy continued. Joseph II managed to persuade ten of the metropolitans to accept the views of the Roman Church, and then spoke personally with Metropolitan Ignatius of Tarnovo, Metropolitan Joasaph of Amasya and Metropolitan Damian of Moldavia, calling them "people from my cell and my family." This reveals their common Bulgarian origin, and to this Bulgarian group participating in the council, some researchers also add Theoctist (Damian's successor to the Metropolitan Cathedral in Moldova), Isidore and his assistant Gregory the Bulgarian, and the future Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory III Maim (1443– 1451). Thus, it is believed that the activity of the hierarchs of Bulgarian origin at the Ferraro-Florentine Council can be seen as a continuation of the activity of Cyprian and Gregory Tsamblak.

There are differing opinions about the death and behavior of Joseph II shortly before his death. According to most researchers, a few days before his death, Joseph II announced that the Eastern Orthodox would not introduce the filioque into their Creed, but would unite with the Latins, preserving their ancient customs, and so Joseph II embodied the so-called "Middle way", which was for unification with the West, but based on the conciliar principle. This group of researchers also believe that one day before his death, Joseph II left a note stating that he believed in what the Roman and Apostolic Churches preached and recognized the Pope as the "Father of the Fathers." He died on 10 June 1439 and was buried in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

Eventually, on July 6, 1439, the union was signed. Among the metropolitans of the Bulgarian lands who signed the union were Tarnovo, Silistra, Melnik, Drama and Pomorie. The absence of Metropolitan Dionysius of Sofia is notable in this group, but he is known to have died in April 1438 due to the plague epidemic.

However, the signed union did not lead to unity in the East and the West. Upon his return to Constantinople, John VIII had to deal with resistance from opponents of the union, led by Mark of Ephesus. It is unclear how the Bulgarian clergy treated the union and Ignatius. It is believed that he probably had difficulties with the anti-Union part of the Bulgarian episcopate and had to restore church life in his diocese, which was disrupted by the Ottoman invasion, and to establish its place

in the system of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is possible after his return to Tarnovo, the cathedral church "St. St. Apostle Peter and Paul" in the city should have been frescoed in the spirit of Uniate politics. In all probability, later, in 1445, Ignatius sided with the opponents of the union by signing a declaration against it, written by the future patriarch Gennady Scholarius. This is confirmed by another piece of information. This is another signature of Ignatius under a synodal act of the Patriarchate of Constantinople of 18 January 1452, which confirms the election of Jan Rokitzan bishop of Prague. The reason for this letter was related to the desire of the moderate wing of the Hussites in the Czech Republic for the new bishop of Prague to be consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople. Therefore, in the winter of 1451–1452, the Utraquist legate Peter Platris arrived in Constantinople and converted to Orthodoxy. Negotiations with the Czech ambassadors were led by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as at that time the Uniate Patriarch Gregory III Maim was forced to flee to Rome. Peter Platris was presented with a synodal letter, signed by Macarius of Nicomedia as patriarchal deputy, and immediately followed by the signature of "the humble Metropolitan of Tarnovo Ignatius". The letter proposed a new union of Utraquists, as opposed to the previously rejected Florentine Union. Thus, although he signed the union, Ignatius did not become its ultimate defender, but changed his position. It is also evident that he held an honorable place in the circles of the Constantinople Patriarchate and adhered to its policy. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Ignatius became one of the main figures on whom the new Patriarch of Constantinople Gennady Scholarius, who was known for his anti-Latin positions, relied. In 1454, Ignatius was tasked with the responsible task of normalizing relations with the Russian Church. Ignatius is believed to have died in 1464.

### **Scientific contributions**

1. The dissertation is the first study in which the relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the 14<sup>th</sup> – mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

2. The role of the Bulgarians in the history of the Constantinople Patriarchate during the period under consideration is revealed.

3. In parallel with the history of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from its founding to 1453, an attempt was made to mark the main moments of its relations with the Bulgarians until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

4. There is a place where the opinion is expressed that in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries the Bulgarian Church has followed its own path of development and has increased its authority in the Orthodox world, which, among other things, opposes it to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

5. The moments of opposition between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians during the period under consideration are presented, but on the other hand also those of interaction and rapprochement between them.

6. The relations of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with the Bulgarian states and the Bulgarian Church during the research period are presented, as well as with individual clergymen and persons of certain or presumed Bulgarian origin are also considered.

7. The participation of Bulgarians in the life of the Constantinople Patriarchate in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century is studied, with the emphasis on the Patriarch of Constantinople of Bulgarian origin Joseph II, whose life and work continue to be insufficiently studied in Bulgarian historiography.

### **Publications related with the topic of the dissertation**

1. A Description on the Relations between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarians in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. – History, 2022.

2. The Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia Cyprian and his Relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. – Anamnesis, XVI/6 (2021), p. 1–14.