

VII

Mirosław J. Leszka
Jan M. Wolski

The Church



I. The Status of the Bulgarian Church and its Organisation

Mirosław J. Leszka

By Boris I's decision, Bulgaria, most likely in 866, became a part of the Christian *oikoumene*. The Byzantines, however, from whom the Bulgarians received baptism, have not been willing to meet Boris' demands that the new Church is granted autocephaly. This forced the Bulgarian ruler to take action which would lead him to achieve independence for the Bulgarian Church organisation. After several years of struggle, in which he involved Rome, Boris managed to gain significant concessions from the Byzantines in 870.

An archbishopric, and along with bishoprics subordinated to it, was created on Bulgarian soil¹. Bulgarian Church received the status

¹ In *Continuator of Theophanes* (V, 96, p. 312) we find a passage presenting the moment of creation of the Bulgarian Archbishopric and the arrival of the Greek clergy in Bulgaria: *By repeated exhortations, splendid receptions, and magnanimous munificence and donations, however, the emperor persuaded the Bulgarians to accept an*

of a 'metropolitan autocephalic archbishopric'², and its dependence on Constantinople was limited to dogmatic matters and, at least at the beginning, an influence on the choosing of the new occupant of the archiepiscopal see³. *Kleterologion* of Philotheos, from the end of the ninth century, clearly attests to the exceptional rank of the Bulgarian Church; according to its author, the Archbishop of Bulgaria occupied the 13th place in the Byzantine hierarchy, just behind the *synkellos* of the patriarch of Constantinople⁴.

archbishop and to allow their country to be covered with a network of bishoprics. Owing to these prelates and also to devout monks whom the emperor summoned from the mountains and dens of the earth and dispatched to that land, the Bulgarians abandoned their ancestral customs and became, one and for all, captives of Christ (transl. I. Š e v c e n k o, p. 313). Vassil Guuzelev (В. Г ю з е л е в, *Студийският манастир и българите през средновековието (VIII–IX)*, ЗРВИ 39, 2001/2002, p. 59) thinks that among the monks who arrived at that time in Bulgaria were representatives of the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople who may have had Bulgarian and Slavic roots. This monastery had, it is thought, strong links with Bulgaria even before its official Christianisation. Its representatives may have participated in the first Byzantine mission to Bulgaria (863/864).

² W. S w o b o d a – *Testimonia*, vol. III, p. 363, fn. 2. This view is accepted by i.a.: В. Г ю з е л е в, *Княз Борис Първи. България през втората половина на век*, София 1969, pp. 413–414; i d e m, *Устройство на българската църква*, [in:] *История на България в четирнадесет тома*, vol. II, *Първа българска държава*, ed. Д. А н г е л о в, София 1981, pp. 230–231; E. P i l t z, *Kamelaukion et mitra*, Stockholm 1977, p. 109.

³ On the subject of status of the Bulgarian Church during the times of Boris-Michael, see: W. S w o b o d a, *L'origine de l'organisation de l'Eglise en Bulgarie et ses rapports avec le patriarcat de Constantinople (870–919)*, ВВг 2, 1966, pp. 67–81; Г. Г. Л и т а в р и н, *Введение християнства в Волгарии (IX – начало X в.)*, [in:] *Принимание християнства народами централной и юго-восточной Европы и крещение Руси*, ed. i d e m, Москва 1988, pp. 30–67; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство и управление на българската православна църква (IX–XIV век)*, ²София 2017, pp. 40–46; L. S i m e o n o в а, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross: Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy 860s–880s*, Amsterdam 1998, pp. 268–269; В. Г ю з е л е в, *Бележки върху йерархическия статус на Българската църква и нейния върховен предстоятел през първия век от покръстването 865–971*, [in:] *Религия и църква в България. Социални и културни измерения в православието и неговата специфика в Българските земи*, ed. Г. Б а к а л о в, София 1999, pp. 98–107; И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия XI–XII век. Списъкът на българските архиепископи*, София 2011, pp. 17–32; M. J. L e s z k a, K. M a r i n o w, *Carstwo bulgarskie. Polityka – społeczeństwo – gospodarka – kultura. 866–971*, Warszawa 2015, pp. 43–52.

⁴ P h i l o t h e o s, p. 187. Other metropolitans and autocephalic archbishops are only found in the 58th place (W. S w o b o d a, *Bulgaria a patriarchat konstantynopolitański*

With time, however, the formula of the Bulgarian Church's status became worn out. The dependence on Byzantium, even limited one, undoubtedly weighed on the Bulgarians. The one who finally severed any form of control over Bulgarian Church by Constantinople was, according to some of the contemporary scholars, Symeon (893–927). Not only is he being attributed with this move, but he is also hailed as the one who had led to, at the very least, having its head proclaimed a patriarch (if not credited with the outright transformation of the Bulgarian Archbishopric into a patriarchate⁵. This view, however, has no basis in the source material⁶. Despite this, it would seem that this claim cannot be entirely ruled out. Symeon, having proclaimed himself in 913 a basileus of the Bulgarians,

w latach 870–1018, [in:] *Z polskich studiów slawistycznych*, vol. IV, *Historia*, Warszawa 1972, p. 49).

⁵ Cf. my considerations in the work *Symeon I Wielki a Bizancjum. Z dziejów stosunków bułgarsko-bizantyńskich w latach 893–927*, Łódź 2013, pp. 248–258.

⁶ In this matter scholars often refer to the fragment of a letter by Kaloyan, the Bulgarian ruler, to Pope Innocent III. It speaks of the teachings of Greeks, who claim that without the patriarchate the existence of the Empire would not be possible (*quia imperium sine patriarcha non staret* – I n n o c e n t III, p. 334. The use of this source – written about 300 years later after Symeon's reign – to substantiate the hypothesis of the creation of the Bulgarian patriarchate is methodologically erroneous. I fully accept in this regard the view expressed by Wincenty S w o b o d a: (*Bulgaria...*, p. 55: *tak więc dotychczasowe stanowisko nauki w sprawie patriarchatu bułgarskiego za panowania Symeona jest – jak sądzimy – rezultatem powziętego z góry, na podstawie (...) przekazu z początków XIII w., założenia, które przewidywało, iż logicznym następstwem proklamacji cesarstwa (carstwa) w Bułgarii było obwołanie patriarchatu bułgarskiego* [Therefore the present position of the scholarship on the question of the Bulgarian Patriarchate during Symeon's reign is – we think – the result of an assumption made in advance on the basis (...) of an account from the early 13th century, which predicted that the logical result of proclaiming an Empire (Tsardom) in Bulgaria would be the proclamation of the Bulgarian Patriarchate]. Recently, this argument was used by Ivan Bozhilov (И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 45), who also indicated that a patriarch was necessary to perform the imperial coronation of Symeon. He reaches in this context for the example of Stephan Dushan, who first proclaimed himself a tsar (1345), and subsequently took care to ensure that the Archbishop of Serbia became its patriarch (1346), in order to perform the imperial coronation (p. 46). We again find that in order to substantiate the discussed view, there is a reference to events from a much later period. On the circumstances of the imperial proclamation of Stephan Dushan, see: G.Ch. S o u l i s, *The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331–1355) and his Successors*, Washington 1984, pp. 27–32.

may have elevated the prestige of the Bulgarian Archbishop by proclaiming him a patriarch⁷. Without the acceptance of Constantinople to this act, it would have only had local significance⁸. It would, however, also have been the most visible sign of breaking off any form of dependence on Constantinople in the ecclesiastical sphere.

Many scholars associate the Byzantine agreement to the changes in the situation of the Bulgarian Church with the peace treaty of 927. None of the sources containing the information about the autocephaly of the Bulgarian church and the elevation of the Bulgarian archbishop to the position of a patriarch (I am referring here to the *List of Bulgarian archbishops*⁹, Michael of Devol's *Gloss to the Synopsis of Histories* by John Skylitzes¹⁰ as well as to the text *On Justiniana Prima's canonical position*¹¹) link these facts with the treaty of 927. The three sources mentioned

⁷ M.J. Leszka, *Symeon...*, pp. 130–132.

⁸ The patriarchal title for the Bulgarian Archbishop, and the prospective establishment of the patriarchate, required an external agreement (from the Byzantine emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople, and the Church Council).

⁹ *List of Bulgarian Archbishops*, p. 102.18–23; *Damian, in Dorostolon, the present Dristra. During his reign Bulgaria was honoured with autocephaly* [or attained autocephaly – M.J.L.] *and the Byzantine Senate, following Romanos Lekapenos' orders, granted him the title of patriarch. He was then deposed by John Tzymiskes*. For more on the source see: W. Swoboda, *Bulgaria...*, pp. 57–58; В. Тъпкова-Займова, *Дюканжов списък*, Pbg 2.4.3, 2000, pp. 21–49; И. Божилков, *Българската архиепископия...*, pp. 93–101.

¹⁰ John Skylitzes, p. 365.8–11. Michael of Devol writes that emperor Basil II confirmed the autocephaly of the Bulgarian bishopric, which it had enjoyed already during the reign of the old Romanos (I Lekapenos). This information was recorded at the beginning of the 12th century. On the notes which bishop Michael of Devol added to John Skylitzes's work see: J. Feluga, *John Scylitzes and Michael of Devol*, [in:] idem, *Byzantium on the Balkans. Studies on the Byzantine Administration and the Southern Slavs from the VIIth to the XIIth Centuries*, Amsterdam 1976, pp. 337–344.

¹¹ Cf. *On Justiniana Prima's canonical position*, p. 279.37–42. The source states that the Bulgarian Church was autocephalous and that the privileges it enjoyed were not derived only from Basil II and Romanos I Lekapenos, dating back to the period during which the agreement with tsar Peter was signed. They also had their origin in the old laws. On the source see: G. Prinzling, *Entstehung und Rezeption der Justiniana Prima-Theorie im Mittelalter*, BbG 5, 1978, pp. 269–278; Т. Кръстанов, *Испански бележки за translatio на Justiniana Prima с българската църква преди 1018 г.*, ШУЕКП.ТКИБ 6, 2004, pp. 80–84; idem, *Титлите екзарх и патриарх*

above connect the autocephaly with emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944). In the last of these texts, the issue is placed in the context of an agreement of which Peter was to be a party. The conferment of the title of a patriarch on the Archbishop of Bulgaria is referred to only in the *List of Bulgarian Archbishops*, where it is linked with the autocephaly. Thus, these religious issues can be assumed to have been dealt with in a peace treaty signed during the reigns of Peter and Romanos I Lekapenos. It so happens that the 927 treaty is the only such document that we know of. According to some scholars, this is at odds with the information to be found in the so-called *Beneshevich's Taktikon*, a source contemporary with Romanos I Lekapenos's reign but variously dated – either to 921/927 or to 934/944. In this source, the head of the Bulgarian Church is referred to as Bulgaria's Archbishop (ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Βουλγαρίας)¹². Thus, it appears that dating the *Taktikon* to 934/944 – as per its publisher Nicolas Oikonomides – would be tantamount to excluding 927 as the date of Constantinople's recognition of the Bulgarian Archbishop as a patriarch¹³. However, other scholars claim that the *Taktikon's* characterisation of the issue in question may be inaccurate, and it seems that they are closer to the truth¹⁴.

в българската традиция от IX до XIX в. Св. Йоан Екзарх от Рим и патриарх на българските земи, [in:] *Държава & Църква – Църква & Държава в българската история. Сборник по случай 135-годишнината от учредяването на Българската екзархия*, ed. Г. Ганев, Г. Бакалов, И. Тодев, София 2006, pp. 79–80. The source claims that the Bulgarian Church inherited *Justiniana Prima's* church laws. The issue of *Justiniana Prima's* archbishopric established during the reign of Justinian I was recently discussed by: S. Turlej, *Justiniana Prima: An Underestimated Aspect of Justinian's Church Policy*, Kraków 2016.

¹² *Beneshevich's Taktikon*, p. 245.17.

¹³ Cf. Б. Николова, *Устройство...*, p. 49.

¹⁴ N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, Paris 1972, pp. 237–238. Cf. И. Божилов, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 40; Г. Атанасов, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър. Доростолската епархия през късната античност и Средновековието IV–XIV в. История, археология, култура и изкуство*, Варна 2007, pp. 150–154). See also: В. Тъпкова-Займова, *Превземането на Преслав в 971 г. и проблемите на българската църква*, [in:] *1100 години Велики Преслав*, vol. I, ed. Т. Тотев, Шумен 1995, p. 178; S. Pirivatrić, *Some Notes on the Byzantine-Bulgarian Peace Treaty of 927*, Bslv2, 2008, pp. 44–45.

As should be apparent from the discussion above, the sources we have at our disposal do not allow us to state categorically that the questions of autocephaly and the title of the patriarch were dealt with in the 927 peace negotiations. Still, given everything we know about the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations during the reign of Romanos I Lekapenos, it is logical to assume that this was the case. What can be said based on the surviving sources is that the issues were covered by an agreement signed by Peter and Romanos I Lekapenos, that is, in the period between 927 and 944. The point is that, as I mentioned above, we do not know of any other arrangement made by these two rulers save for the 927 treaty. Lately, Todor R. Todorov put forth the idea that the events in question may have taken place soon after Theophylaktos Lekapenos' rise to the position of patriarch of Constantinople (933)¹⁵. Todorov links these facts with the presence of papal envoys in Constantinople and Maria's visit to Romanos I Lekapenos' court. To the Bulgarian scholar, the Bulgarian Archbishop receiving the right to bear the title of a patriarch was *the last wedding gift for the couple ruling in Preslav*¹⁶. This is an interesting hypothesis, but underlying it is the controversial view, to be found in Bulgarian scholarly literature, according to which the Bulgarians were planning to seize control of Constantinople and build a Slavic-Greek empire; this plan was known as the great idea of 10th-century Bulgaria¹⁷. According to Todorov, the project was championed by Symeon I and abandoned by Peter in 931, after the death of Christopher – Peter's father-in-law as well as Romanos I Lekapenos's son and co-ruler. This fact meant that neither Peter nor his sons, whom he had by Maria, could lay claim to Christopher's power. Without engaging in a polemic with this view, it is worth noting that to accept it is to make Peter fully responsible for

¹⁵ Т. Тодоров, *България през втората и третата четвърт на X век: политическа история*, София 2006 [unpublished PhD thesis], pp. 213–214.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 215. Papal legates were present in the city in connection with their participation in the elevation of Theophylaktos Lekapenos to the patriarchal throne, but they may have also brought Rome's consent to the change in the status of the Bulgarian bishop.

¹⁷ For a polemic with this view cf.: M.J. Leska, *Symeon...*, pp. 236–247.

the elevation of the Bulgarian archbishop to the position of patriarch against the intention of his father, Symeon.

Regardless of whether we accept the option of year 927 (which appears to be the more likely) or the 930s, it needs to be clearly stated that it was Peter who was ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Archbishop of Bulgaria became a patriarch¹⁸. This was undoubtedly a success of the – relatively young after all – Bulgarian Church, and it is of no significance here whether it was an expression of Preslav's abandonment of the attempts at subjugating Constantinople or not.

From the above considerations, it is clear that during Peter's reign the Bulgarian Church was led by a hierarch bearing the title of a patriarch. From the *List of Bulgarian Archbishops* one should conclude that this person was Damian¹⁹, who according to this source was deprived of the title

¹⁸ It does not seem to be possible to positively verify the view that the granting of the patriarchal title to the Archbishop of Bulgaria also meant the creation of the Bulgarian patriarchate. It needs to be remembered that the fact that the head of the Bulgarian Church had the title of a patriarch did not necessarily imply the existence of the patriarchate. The patriarchal title could have been granted by an emperor to particular person, and belonged exclusively to that person (and the emperor had the right to make such a decision); the creation of a new patriarchate, in addition to other necessary conditions, should have been done by the Council. Cf. W. S w o b o d a, *Bulgaria...*, pp. 56–60; I. Γ α ρ ν α ν ί δ ο υ, *Η διαμόρφωσις τοῦ ἀυτοκεφαλίου τῆς Βουλγαρικῆς ἐκκλησίας (864–1235)*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1976, pp. 83–94. The idea of granting of a patriarchal title *ad personam* is strongly opposed by some of the Bulgarian scholars (e.g. И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 38; Г. А т а н а с о в, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър...*, pp. 152–153); Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 50–51 (see there for more literature on the subject). For more information on the mechanisms of creating patriarchates – E. P r z e k o r, *Wschodnie patriarchaty starożytnie (IV–X w.)*, Warszawa 1984 (esp. pp. 43–62).

¹⁹ On Damian cf.: W. S w o b o d a, *Damian*, [in:] *SSS*, vol. VIII, pp. 13–14; Г. Г. Л и т а в р и н, *Христианство в Болгарии 927–1018 гг.*, [in:] *Христианство в странах восточной, юго-восточной и центральной Европы на пороге второго тысячелетия*, ed. Б.Н. Флоря, Москва 2002, pp. 141–142; Г. А т а н а с о в, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър...*, pp. 158–160; i d e m, *Първата българска патриаршеска катедра в Дръстър и патриарх Дамян*, [in:] *Изследвания по българска средновековна археология. Сборник в чест на проф. Рашо Рашев*, ed. П. Георгиев, Велико Търново 2007, pp. 179–196. Cf. also S. A n g e l o v a, G. P r i n z i n g, *Das mutmassliche Grab des Patriarchen Damian: zu einem archäologischen Fund in Dristra/*

in 971 by John Tzymiskes. Some of the scholars doubt whether Damian bore the title of a patriarch for over forty years; it cannot, however, be ruled out. Damian may have simply enjoyed a long life. This matter, at first glance, is made more complicated by *Boril's Synodikon*²⁰, in which one may find the names of other patriarchs, specifically: Leontios, Dimitar, Sergios, Gregory. They are referred to as patriarchs of Preslav. We should be aware, however, that this is a relatively late tradition (thirteenth century), and what is worse, the earliest manuscript of the *Synodikon* comes from the fourteenth century (Palauzov). The information that the aforementioned Church dignitaries were patriarchs of Preslav was added on the margin of the manuscript. Notably, the list of the Preslavian patriarchs in the *Synodikon* is partly concurrent with the list of the Preslavian metropolitan Bishops – Stephen, Dimitar, Leo, Gregory [my underscore – M.J.L.]²¹. I have to share the sceptical view of Wincenty Swoboda regarding the value of *Synodikon's* information about the Preslavian patriarchs. It cannot be ruled out that it is an interpolation included to raise the rank of the patriarchate of Tarnovo, created in 1235, which called itself the continuator of the traditions of the patriarchate of Preslav²². It is worth noting that the name of Damian does not appear in the *Synodikon*. In this situation, it would seem that any attempts at fitting the latter into the most doubtful list of the patriarchs of Preslav are doomed to failure²³.

Silistria, [in:] *Средновековна християнска Европа. Изток и запад. Ценности, традиции, общуване*, eds. В. Г ю з е л е в, А. М и л т е н о в а, София 2002, pp. 726–730. Authors identified the remains found in the patriarchal church in Dristra as those of Damian. A legitimate criticism of this view – Г. А т а н а с о в, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър...*, pp. 158–160; i d e m, *От епископия към самостоятелна патриаршия на Първото българско царство в Дръстър (Силистра). Историята на патриаршеския комплекс*, София 2017, pp. 64–65.

²⁰ *Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, 36a, p. 168.6–8.

²¹ *Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, 37a, p. 170.2. cf. The remark of W. S w o b o d a (*Bulgaria...*, p. 62), who points to the three concurrences, since in both the case of the patriarchs and the metropolitan bishops he mentions Leo.

²² W. S w o b o d a, *Bulgaria...*, p. 63.

²³ Some scholars see e.g. in the Preslavian patriarchs those of the Bulgarian Archbishop who bore the patriarchal title prior to 927 without the agreement of Constantinople (e.g. И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 50).

It would appear logical that, before becoming the patriarch, Damian would have been the Archbishop of Bulgaria²⁴. His see as both the Archbishop and the patriarch was Preslav. It is possible that for a brief period, already after Peter's death, he moved to Dristra²⁵. We do not know the details regarding the chancery working for the Archbishop/patriarchs. It is thought that it was similar to the one had by the patriarch of Constantinople. These suppositions are only very modestly confirmed by the extant sources. Within them, we find traces of the activity of such dignitaries as *synkellos*²⁶, *chartophylax*²⁷ and *exarch*²⁸. We also know of the existence of a dignitary who was referred to as the 'tserkovnik of all the Bulgarian churches'²⁹, whose Byzantine counterpart would have most likely been the Archon of the Ecclesiarchs; as with an exarch, we are unable to say much about his role and position in the Bulgarian Church³⁰.

²⁴ On Damian's predecessors in the role of the Archbishop – M.J. L e s z k a, K. M a r i n o w, *Carstwo...*, p. 255.

²⁵ The view that the Bulgarian patriarch's see was in Dristra (e.g.: П. М у т а ф ч и е в, *Съдбините на средновековния Дръстър*, [in:] i d e m, *Сборник от студии*, София 1946, pp. 293–305; Г. А т а н а с о в, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър...*, p. 155sqq; i d e m, *От епископия...*, p. 59sqq; see also I. Д у ј ч е в, *Il patriarcato bulgaro del secolo X*, [in:] i d e m, *Medioevo bizantino-slavo*, vol. III, *Altri saggi di storia, politica e letteraria*, Roma 1971, p. 262, fn. 1) does not appear to be correct. Arguments against this hypothesis: И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, pp. 48–49; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 135–136.

²⁶ This dignitary was considered to have been an archbishop's deputy in the matters of organisation. We know of George, a Bulgarian *synkellos*, most likely active at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries. Cf. В. Г ю з е л е в, *Устройство...*, p. 231; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, p. 206.

²⁷ Chartophylax was the head of an archbishop's chancery. Chartophylax Paul contributed to the creation of the church of St. John in Preslav, which we know from an inscription. Cf.: В. Г ю з е л е в, *Устройство...*, p. 231; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 205–206.

²⁸ The question of what was the role of an exarch in the structure of the Bulgarian Church has been intensely debated, and is still far from having a clear answer. On this subject: В. Г ю з е л е в, *Устройство...*, p. 231; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 202–205; Т. К р ъ с т а н о в, *Титлите екзарх...*, pp. 73–86.

²⁹ Gregory Presbiter, p. 117.

³⁰ The existence of the position of an archon of the ecclesiarchs in the Byzantine Church is confirmed by the *Novella of 935* (p. 246) issued by Romanos Lekapenos. Unfortunately, we find no new information about this position/title therein. The

There have been functioning episcopal structures within the framework of the Bulgarian Church³¹. We do not, however, have full knowledge of where these bishoprics had been in Peter's times, nor how many of them there were. The process of building episcopal structure began, of course, during Boris-Michael's times. Theophylaktos, the Archbishop of Ohrid, wrote thusly in the *Life of Clement: this prince* [Boris – M.J.L.] *encircled the Bulgaria subject to him with seven conciliar temples* (καθολικοῖς ναοῖς)³². The latter are understood to have been cathedral churches, and claims are made that during Boris-Michael's reign seven bishoprics have been created, and as a result of this, attempts are being made to find their locations. It would seem however that the aforementioned number should be treated with care, with awareness of its symbolism. In this context, it may be understood as information about the creation of an adequate to contemporary needs number of cathedral churches³³. What

ecclesiarchs/ecclesiastics were responsible for maintaining the order of the liturgy, and we most commonly find them in monasteries (A.-M. Talbot, *Ekklesiarches*, [in:] *ODB*, vol. I, p. 682; M. Živovjinić, *Crkvenjaci na Svetoj Gori i njihove dužnosti*, IČ 56, 2008, pp. 69–86; see also: *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, ed. J. Thomas, A. C. Heron, G. Constable, Washington 2000, pp. 98, 225, 339, etc.). Protoiereus George, a prominent writer and a translator, was said to have fulfilled the role of a tserkovnik between 895 and 918 (B. Гюзелев, *Устройство...*, p. 231; Т. Славова, *Други преводачи и преписивачи от книжовния кръг около цар Симеон*, [in:] *ИБСА*, p. 251). Some scholars believe that the term 'tserkovnik of all the Bulgarian churches' should be understood as exarch, or some other high Church dignitary, cf. Й. Андреев, *Григорий*, [in:] *идем, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, Кой кой е в средновековна България*, София 2012, p. 153; see also: Е. Георгиев, *Разцветът на българската литература в IX–XI в.*, София 1962, p. 300.

³¹ On the subject of the bishoprics that existed within the framework of the Bulgarian metropolis, the scholars' opinions are divided. Among the more recent works devoted to this subject one should take particular note of the works of Todor Sabev (Т. Сѣбев, *Самостояйна народностна църква в средновековна България. Християнизаторски процес, основане и възход, автокефалия и междуцърковно положение, църква и държава*, Велико Търново 2003, pp. 254–260), and Bistra Nikolova (Б. Николова, *Устройство...*, pp. 55–155), where the reader will find further bibliographic suggestions.

³² Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Life of Clement*, XXIII, 67.

³³ M.J. Leszka, K. Marinow, [rev.:], *Uczniowie Apostołów Słowian. Siedmiu Świętych Mędzów...*, WP 18, 2011, p. 195; K. Marinow, *Още веднъж за нар. XXIII.67 от Пространното житие на Климент Охридски* (in press).

was this number? This question needs to be left unanswered. It might appear that the information regarding the participants of the Photios's council of 879 could be helpful in this regard. Among these, the scholars seek the bishops of the Bulgarian Church. The problem herein lies in the fact that it is certain that not all of them had been present (e.g. the Archbishop of Bulgaria himself), and that some of the bishoprics that are being associated with the territory of the first Bulgarian state were undoubtedly not a part of the Archbishopric of Bulgaria (e.g. Ohrid)³⁴. It seems that among the first Bulgarian bishoprics one should count the ones that had their sees in: Belgrade³⁵, Morava (Branichevo)³⁶, Devol³⁷, Bregalnitsa³⁸, Dristra³⁹. One should of course remember that the first

³⁴ On the subject of these difficulties: И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, pp. 29–30; cf. С. Н а н и с к, *Nowe chrześcijaństwo w świecie bizantyńskim: Rusini, Bułgarzy i Serbowie*, [in:] *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, vol. IV: *Biskupi, mnisi i cesarze 610–1054*, transl. M. Ż u r o w s k a et al., ed. G. D a g r o n, P. R i c h é, A. V a u c h e z, Polish ed. J. K ł o c z o w s k i, Warszawa 1999, p. 745.

³⁵ Its first bishop was most likely Sergios, of Slavic origins; cf. Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, p. 55.

³⁶ From the documents of the 879 council of Photius we know the name (and name alone) of its Bishop – Agaton. The centre of the bishopric was most likely moved after 879 to Branichevo; cf. Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 67–70.

³⁷ We know the name of one of its later Bishops, Mark, the student of St. Clement, who in the *First Life of St. Naum* (p. 307) is called the fourth bishop of the *Slavic people* (вЪ СЛОВЕНСКІ ЕЗЫКЪ) in Devol; cf. Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, p. 115. The Devol bishopric was referred to by Theophylaktos, the Archbishop of Ohrid, as one of the seven 'Council temples' established by Boris (Т h e o p h y l a k t o s o f O h r i d, *Letters*, 22, p. 103).

³⁸ It was created prior to 885. Some scholars think that it was previously called Ovche Pole, and was represented at the council of 879 by Leo of Probaton. This, however, appears unlikely; cf. Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 89–93; И. Б о ж и л о в, *Българската архиепископия...*, pp. 29–31. The first mention of its existence comes from Theophylaktos, the Archbishop of Ohrid (*Martyrdom of the fifteen Tiberiopolitan martyrs*, 37, p. 69). It was most likely under the leadership of Slavic clergy from the very beginning. Later, its centre moved to Moravitsa (on this ecclesiastical centre – К. Т р а й к о в с к и, *Средновековните цркви в градот Мордовисдоџ во Македонија*, ГСУ.НЦСВПИД 97 (16), 2007, pp. 121–126; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, pp. 93–95.

³⁹ The bishopric with the see in Dristra (the Roman Durostorum) had ancient roots (more on this subject: Г. А т а н а с о в, *Християнският Дуросторум-Дръстър...*, pp. 15–112). Its first bishop, appointed as early as 870, was Nicholas. Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 139–147; i d e m, *Епископ Николай и формирането на Доростолската (Дръстърската)*

episcopal see (until 870) was Pliska. Of the more important bishoprics that have been created or added later, one should list the ones with their centres in: Sredets (Sofia)⁴⁰, Skopje, Strumitsa (Tiberiopolis?), Ohrid, and the ones associated with the person of St. Clement, the Bishop of Dremvitsa and/or Velika⁴¹. It needs to be clearly stated that the internal structure of the Bulgarian Archbishopric was undergoing changes, caused by the pastoral needs, as well as by the changes in the shape of the country's territory. We are not able to precisely delineate these changes, however to give the Reader at least some idea of the network of the bishoprics, we will cite the information from Basil II's times, according to which the Archbishopric of Ohrid, covering the lands that were a part of the Archbishopric of Bulgaria, included over thirty bishoprics⁴².

It is not impossible that the method used for creating of bishoprics was based on the rule according to which the ecclesiastical structures were tailored to fit the administrative structures of the state. Perhaps the original episcopal sees were created in the locations that had been the centres of the comitates⁴³.

Our knowledge of the Bulgarian bishops in this regard is as scarce as that of their superiors. It would seem that during Peter's times, the bishops

епархия през 870 г., [in:] Християнската култура в средновековна България. Материали от национална научна конференция, Шумен 2–4 май 2007 година по случай 1100 години от смъртта на св. Княз Борис-Михаил (ок. 835–907г.), ed. П. Георгиев, Велико Търново 2008, pp. 104–119; see also: Б. Николова, Устройство..., pp. 106–111.

⁴⁰ Б. Николова, *Устройство...*, pp. 63–65.

⁴¹ Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Life of Clement*, XIX, 60. The debate regarding this bishopric has been ongoing for a long time. It was recently summarised by Iliya G. Iliev (И.Г. Илиев, *Св. Климент Охридски. Живот и дело*, Пловдив 2010, p. 103), who, taking into account the research of his predecessors, concluded that the title which Clement received – most likely in 893 – could have been *the Bishop of the Dragovits in the Velika region*, and its eparchy encompassed the area around Vardar, called in the mediaeval period Velika, in the north-western part of the Thessalonike Plain. It was most likely created in 893 or in the early 894 (*ibidem*, p. 96). It was recently written about by A. Delikari, *Kliment Velički oder Kliment Ochridski? Die Diskussion über Seine Bischofstitel und seine Jurisdiktion*, Pbg 37.3, 2013, pp. 3–10.

⁴² Cf. W. Swoboda, *Organizacja Kościoła (Bulgaria)*, [in:] SSS, vol. III, p. 494; И. Божилков, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 89.

⁴³ Б. Николова, *Устройство...*, p. 146.

were Slavs. Traditionally, the aforementioned St. Clement is thought to have been the first Bulgarian bishop. He was undoubtedly an exceptional person, however it is difficult to say how representative he was of the contemporary Bulgarian episcopate. The case is similar with another, relatively well known to us bishop – Constantine of Preslav. We do not know where he served as bishop. Scholars most often point to Preslav or to Pliska. We know his works better, since he was a writer and a translator⁴⁴.

Some of the other bishops are known to us only by name, and they served prior to Peter's reign. These were: Isaiah (?)⁴⁵ and the previously mentioned Nicholas of Dristra, Sergios of Belgrade, Mark of Devol and Agaton, the Bishop of Morava.

Presbyters. The primary group of the Bulgarian clergy were the priests (presbyters), much like was the case with other Churches. Also in this case our knowledge is not particularly abundant. They were certainly recruited from among the local populace, although in the years immediately following the baptism there had been among them both Greeks and the Latin clergy. They had not always been well prepared for their service. Theophylaktos, in the *Life of St. Clement*, wrote: *many of the Bulgarian priests were not doing very well with the Greek language*⁴⁶. This prompted the bishop to prepare *for all holidays orations that were simple and clear*,

⁴⁴ For information about this hypothetical biography of Constantine, see i.a.: Е. Георгиев, *Разцветът...*, pp. 161–168; Е. Зъков, *К биографии Константина Преславского*, СЛ 2, 1977, pp. 74–101; И. Лазаров, *Константин Преславски*, [in:] Й. Андреев, И. Лазаров, П. Павлов, *Кой...*, pp. 394–396.

⁴⁵ The seal with this bishop's name does not have a certain date. There are multiple suggestions. One of these proposes years 864–866. Isaiah would have been therefore a member, or even the leader, of the mission sent from Constantinople (И. Йорданов, *България при Борис I (852–889, †907). Приносът на сфрагистика*, [in:] *Християнската...*, p. 47). Recently, Ivan Bozhilov (И. Божилов, *Българската архиепископия...*, p. 27) proposed dating it to the period between 870–893, and considered it possible that Isaiah may have been a Bulgarian archbishop. Both Ivan Jordanov, and Ivan Bozhilov treat their suggestions as conjectures. The inscription on the seal is most commonly read as: *Lord, support Isaiah, the Bishop of Bulgaria* (επισκόπο Βουργαρήας). On the subject of this seal and other suggestions for its dating – И. Йорданов, *България при Борис...*, pp. 44–47.

⁴⁶ Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Life of Clement*, 66.

*not including anything deeper and contrived, but such, that they could be understood by even the most simple among the Bulgarians*⁴⁷. It is also known that Clement took care to prepare the cadre for conducting pastoral activity in the areas entrusted to him⁴⁸. It is worth noting that Clement's activity began twenty years after Bulgarians officially accepted Christianity, on the territories that have been only superficially Christianised. One might suspect however that the situation was similar in the rest of the Bulgarian state. The level of education among the parochial clergy was likely better in larger centres. There was a group of well-educated people among the priests, and the names of some of them have been preserved to our times, with Cosmas the Priest, the author of an oration against the Bogomils, in the lead. Notably, in his treatise Cosmas not only fought against the heretics, but also pointed our errors to both the bishops and the clergy. His remarks did not relate to education, however, but to excessive laziness and devoting attention to temporal matters. Such accusations have been levelled at the clergy in a variety of places and times. However, in some sense Cosmas' remarks towards the clergy may be considered to be an indication that the Bulgarian Church reached a certain level of development. It became a lasting element of the contemporary society, and closed the period that could be called missionary.

Deacons. We know even less about the representatives of the lowest level of Bulgarian clergy. In a letter by Pope Hadrian II to Ignatios, the patriarch of Constantinople, we find information that the Byzantine mission ordained lay people, unprepared to serve the role, to be deacons. The Pope condemned this practice, as contrary to the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, and to the provisions of the recent Council⁴⁹. This practice should not cause particular surprise. One might think that the group of the Byzantine clergy who had undertaken missionary activity

⁴⁷ Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Life of Clement*, 66.

⁴⁸ Theophylaktos of Ohrid, *Life of Clement*, 57–59. The number of Clement's students – 3500 – appears to be exaggerated; however his teaching activity is undisputable.

⁴⁹ Hadrian II, XLII, p. 762. The letter was written in 871.

needed men who could support its activity as soon as possible. For this reason, at least some of the candidates who were included in the ranks of clergy had joined them in contravention of the accepted procedures. On the other hand, it needs to be remembered that this accusation was made by the Papacy, which had just lost its influence in Bulgaria. It must have caused bitterness and sometimes unfounded criticism of the Byzantine rivals. The letter itself was written in 871.

Perhaps the only deacon we know of, even though he remains anonymous, is the one mentioned in a tomb inscription from Dristra (now being preserved in a museum in Ruse). It reads:

Here lies the monk and archdeacon of Bishop Nicholas, his uncle. He passed away in the year 6379, 4 indiction, on October 5th, Friday, at the time of Michael, the renowned pious and God-abiding archon⁵⁰.

2. Monasticism

Jan M. Wolski

The monastic movement was developing within the Bulgarian Church from its very beginning, marked by Boris' baptism in 866⁵¹. Monasticism, as one of the more important institutions of the new religion, enjoyed the rulers' support. There were numerous reasons for founding monasteries. One of these was the personal devotion of a ruler, which at the same

⁵⁰ Transl. – Г. А т а н а с о в, *От епископия...*, p. 135. Year 870. After the inscription's discovery, it was believed it came from the village of Cherven. However, further study indicated that it should be associated with Dristra (on this subject: Г. А т а н а с о в, *Епископ Николай...*, pp. 104–105). Nonetheless, some of the modern scholars still believe that the inscription originated in Cherven (e.g. Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Устройство...*, p. 166).

⁵¹ Dispersed centres of monastic life have likely existed on Bulgarian territory even before this date, see I. Д у ж е в, *La réforme monastique en Bulgarie au Xe siècle*, [in:] *Études de Civilisation médiévale (IX^e–XII^e siècles)*. *Mélanges offerts à Edmond-René Labande par ses amis, ses collègues, ses élèves*, Poitiers 1974, p. 256.

time also had a public dimension⁵². The monarch ought to have been pious, and the conventional expressions of godliness served to legitimise his rule. A dense network of monasteries likely had a positive influence on the Church's functioning. Monastic centres served as hubs of ministry, literacy, and schools for the cadre, much needed in the country that recently adopted Christianity⁵³.

The written sources, granting us a limited view of how Christianisation progressed in Bulgaria, confirm the considerable participation of monks in the process⁵⁴. The significance and place of the monastic movement in the contemporary political, religious and cultural life are highlighted by the fact that among the exceptional figures from Bulgaria's ninth and tenth-century history we find numerous monks. These were predominantly writers and their patrons: George the Monk, Dox, Hrabar, Theodore Doxov and Peter the Monk⁵⁵. Members of the ruling family also entered monasteries: the aforementioned Dox (Theodore Doxov may have been his son), the brother of Michael-Boris, and Eupraxia and Anna, the daughters of the Bulgarian khan. Some time in a monastery was also spent by the subsequent rulers of Christian Bulgaria. The later tsar Symeon lived in a monastery in his youth; the final years of Michael-Boris and the last few months of tsar Peter's life were also spent in a monastic environment⁵⁶. Michael and John, Peter's brothers, should be listed separately, as they found themselves behind monastic walls under duress, and only left them to attempt reaching (as we know – without success) for the crown.

⁵² Cf. R. Morris, *Monks and laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118*, Cambridge 1995, pp. 139–142; С. Аризанова, *Българите в агиографията от XIII–XIV век*, Пловдив 2013, p. 335.

⁵³ Cf. С. Ваклинов, *Формиране на старобългарската култура VI–XI век*, София 1977, p. 178.

⁵⁴ Continuator of Theophanes, 96, ed. I. Ševčenko, p. 312; *Miracles of St. George*, p. 143.

⁵⁵ I. Дујчев, *La réforme...*, pp. 260–261; Р. Павлова, *Петър Черноризец. Старобългарски писател от X век*, София 1994; А. Стойкова, *Черноризец Храбър*, [in:] *ИБСА*, pp. 248–251; Т. Славова, *Други преводачи...*, pp. 251–254.

⁵⁶ В. Гюзелев, *Княз Борис Първи. България през втората половина на IX век*, София 1969, pp. 453–454; Г.Н. Николов, *Български царици от Средновековието в "ангелски образ"*, ГСУ.НЦСВПИД 12, 2003, pp. 299, 302–303; M. J. Leszka, *Symeon...*, Łódź 2013, pp. 34–41.

The list of known archaeological remains of monasteries from the ninth and tenth centuries is not long. The capital Preslav and its immediate environs is the largest known centre of coenobia, having housed at least three monasteries: of synkellos George (formerly called the Mostich monastery)⁵⁷, and monasteries in Chereshto⁵⁸ and Valkashina⁵⁹. Other suggested (and subject of controversy) locations are: Tuzlalaka⁶⁰, Patleyna⁶¹, Avradaka⁶², Golden Church⁶³ and Zabuite⁶⁴. Identifying them

⁵⁷ Р. Костова, *Манастирът на Мостич и въпросът за манастирите основани от частни лица в България през Х в.*, ИАИ 39, 2006, pp. 271–285; К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Манастирът на Георги, Синкел български в Преслав: Историята на една българска аристократична фамилия от Х в.*, Пр.Сб 7, 2013, pp. 42–63.

⁵⁸ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири от Велики Преслав*, София 1980, pp. 107–109; Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири в светлината на археологическите проучвания*, СЛ 22, 1990, p. 11; С. Бояджиев, *Ново тълкуване на раннобългарския манастир в местността “Черешето” във Велики Преслав*, ПКШ 5, 2000, pp. 76–85; Б. Николова, *Монашество, манастири и манастирски живот в средновековна България*, vol. I, София 2010, pp. 52, 106–107, 183. The monastery was partly investigated during archaeological works in 1905, subsequently its remains were destroyed.

⁵⁹ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 123–125; *Материали за картата на средновековна българска държава (територията на днешна Североизточна България)*, ed. Р. Рашев, П. Георгиев, И. Йорданов, П. Пре 7, 1995, p. 187. The monastery was partly investigated in 1948–1949, for the results see: Л. Огненова, С. Георгиева, *Разкопки на манастира под Вълкашина в Преслав през 1948–1949*, ИАИ 20, 1955, pp. 373–411.

⁶⁰ Т. Тотев, *Манастирът в “Тузлалъка” – център на рисувана керамика в Преслав през IX–X в.*, София 1982; Р. Костова, *Манастирът в Тузлалъка, Преслав: нов поглед*, Архе 43.2, 2002, pp. 13–15.

⁶¹ С. Бояджиев, *Църквата в Патлейна в светлината на нови данни*, Архе 2.4, 1960, pp. 22–33; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 140–143; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 80–82, 183.

⁶² В. Иванова, *Разкопки на Аврадака в Преслав*, РП 3, 1949, pp. 13–61; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 125–136; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 79–80, 90–91, 99, 142, 183.

⁶³ *Материали за картата...*, p. 184; Р. Костова, *Още веднъж за Кръглата църква и т. нар. родов манастир в Преслав*, [in:] *Studia protobulgarica et mediaevalia europensia. В чест на чл. кор. проф. Веселин Бешевлиев*, ed. К. Попконстантинов, София 2003, pp. 284–303.

⁶⁴ Т. Тотев, *Дворцовият манастир в Преслав*, София 1998; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 49–52, 60, 130–131, 138, 183.

as monasteries is premature. Somewhat further, ten kilometres to the north-east, near the village of Khan Krum, lies one other archaeological site hiding remains of monastic buildings⁶⁵. Two coenobia from the discussed period were discovered in the vicinity of Pliska: in Kalugertsia⁶⁶ and in Sini Vir⁶⁷. Further monasteries were located within a 25 km radius from the old Bulgarian capital: in Ravna and Chernoglavtsi⁶⁸. The capital city itself has likely hosted at least one fraternity, although the most commonly suggested location for it – by the Great Basilica – is uncertain⁶⁹.

The list of monastic foundations in north-eastern Bulgaria is completed by Karaach Teke located five kilometres to the east from Varna's centre⁷⁰, and by the rock monasteries: in Krepcha⁷¹, Murfatlar (in Danube's

⁶⁵ В. Антонова, Д. Аладжова, П. Петрова, *Нови археологически проучвания при с. Хан Крум, Шуменско*, ГМСБ 7, 1981, pp. 65–76; *Материали за картата...*, p. 287.

⁶⁶ Т. Балабанов, *Проучване на старобългарския комплекс "Кирика" край с. Калугерица*, ПБА 1, 1992, pp. 68–73; *Материали за картата...*, p. 214; Г. Майсторски, И. Бабаджанов, П. Георгиев, *Средновековен манастирски комплекс в м. Кирика – НИАР "Мадара"*, [in:] *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2015 г.*, ed. А. Анаджов, София 2016, pp. 730–732.

⁶⁷ П. Петрова, *Църквата при с. Сини вир, Шуменско*, [in:] *Археологически открития и разкопки през 1988 г.*, Кърджали 1989, p. 135; *Материали за картата...*, p. 277.

⁶⁸ П. Георгиев, *Манастирската църква при с. Равна, Провадийско*, ИНМВ 21, 1985, pp. 71–97; Т. Балабанов, *Старобългарски манастир при с. Черноглавци (предварително съобщение)*, ИИМШ 8, 1996, pp. 263–272; П. Георгиев, *Манастирът от X век при с. Черноглавци, Шуменска област*, ГСУ.НЦСВПИД 12, 2003, pp. 71–79; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 188–255, 259–262; К. Роркостантинов, Р. Костова, *Architecture of conversion: provincial monasteries in the 9th–10th centuries, Bulgaria*, ТГЭ 53, 2010, pp. 118–132.

⁶⁹ Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири...*, pp. 4–7; П. Георгиев, С. Витлянов, *Архиепископията – манастир в Плиска*, София 2001; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 13–40.

⁷⁰ К. Роркостантинов, Р. Костова, *Architecture of conversion...*, pp. 118–132; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 258–259; К. Попконстантинов, В. Плетьов, Р. Костова, *Средновековен княжески манастир в м. Караачтеке – Варна*, [in:] *Археологически Открития и Разкопки през 2010 г.*, ed. М. Гюрова, София 2011, pp. 497–500.

⁷¹ Р. Костова, *Скалният манастир при Кречча: Още един поглед към монашеските практики в България през X в.*, [in:] *Проф. д.и.н. Станчо Ваклинов и средновековната българска култура*, ed. К. Попконстантинов, Велико Търново 2005, pp. 289–305.

delta)⁷², Ruyna, valleys of the rivers Suha, Kanagyol, and others⁷³. Two further monasteries operated on the south-western borderlands of the country: the monastery of Clement in Ohrid and Naum by the southern shore of the lake Ohrid⁷⁴ and at least one in Rhodope Mountains (near Batak)⁷⁵.

The material remains of the monasteries present them to us as centres of literary, educational and pastoral activity. The most interesting in this regard is the Ravna monastery. Within its walls, numerous styluses and elements of book bindings have been found, and the surviving ruins are covered in around three hundred inscriptions and over three thousands of drawings⁷⁶. Diverse epigraphic and iconographic materials lift the veil of secrecy hiding the colourful life of the monastery and its surroundings. The majority of drawings from Ravna depict crosses. A large part of these were made on the church (which is the best-preserved structure). Second in number are the graffiti depicting animals: horses, deer, peacocks, eagles and others. The localisation of these indicates that the majority of them were made not by the monastery's permanent residents, but by visitors: pilgrims and the local people making use of the spiritual ministry of the monks⁷⁷. The inscriptions were made in five alphabets: runic, Greek,

⁷² Г. А т а н а с о в, *Още за датировката и монашеската организация в скалната обител до Мурфатлар (Басараби)*, [in:] *Великотърновският университет "Св. св. Кирил и Методий" и българската археология*, vol. I, 2010, pp. 467–485.

⁷³ I d e m, *За хронологията и монашеската организация в скалните обители през първото българско царство*, [in:] *Светогорска обител Зограф*, vol. III, ed. В. Г ю з е л е в et al., София 1999, pp. 281–299.

⁷⁴ Dj. S t r i č e v i ć, *Églises triconques médiévales en Serbie et en Macédoine et la tradition de l'architecture paléobyzantine*, [in:] *XII^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines. Ochride 1961. Rapports VII*, ed. Dj. B o š k o v i ć; Dj. S t r i č e v i ć; I. N i k o l a j e v i ć-S t o j o k o v i ć, Belgrade–Ochride 1961, pp. 78–85; R. K o s t o v a, *St. Kliment of Ohrid and his monastery. Some more archeology of the written evidence*, SB 25, 2006, pp. 593–605; П. К у з м а н, *Археолошки сведоштва за дејноста на Свети Климент Охридски во Охридскиот регион*, *Slov* 5,2, 2016, pp. 136–178.

⁷⁵ К. М е л а м е д, *Светилище и некропол до раннохристиянския манастир край с. Нова махала, Баташко*, *Архе* 35,2, pp. 36–46.

⁷⁶ К. П о п к о н с т а н т и н о в, *Равненски манастир*, [in:] *КМЕ*, vol. III, p. 423; Р. К о с т о в а, *Манастирските училища през IX–X в. в България (по материали от манастира при с. Равна)*, *КМС* 17, 2007, pp. 513–529.

⁷⁷ Р. К о с т о в а, *Център и периферия в Равненския манастир (по рисунки-графити)*, [in:] *Светогорска обител Зограф*, vol. II, ed. В. Г ю з е л е в, София 1996, pp. 224–227; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Монашество...*, pp. 213–214.

Latin, Glagolitic and Cyrillic⁷⁸. The names of the undersigned, as well as the multitude of languages, attest that the visitors to, and likely also the inhabitants of the monastery came from different ethnic groups. The way in which the inscriptions were made and the nature of the texts betray differences in the level of education of the writers. Some of them have left only misspelt signatures – one may assume that this was the extent of their literary skills. Some, in turn, were able users of two languages, which is attested by bilingual, Bulgarian-Greek inscriptions. A considerable number of the graffiti from Ravna is directly associated with the educational activity of the monastery – these are the ABCs, fragments of the Psalms (which were being committed to memory at an early stage of education) and decorative initials. We also find prayers (*God have mercy on Thecla*⁷⁹) and circumstantial inscriptions (*I arrived on Monday at noon, I entered the church and wrote*⁸⁰). Inscriptions, writing implements and other remains confirming literary and ministerial activity of the monks have been found in numerous other monasteries, for example in Karaach Teke or Murfatlar⁸¹.

The numerous pilgrims arriving at monasteries, as we may guess, most often asked for spiritual consolation, prayer for divine assistance in their concerns or advice in life matters. The sick may have been drawn to the monasteries by the fame of the miracles performed by the saints, many of whom in the Eastern Christian tradition had a monastic background. In the Old Bulgarian *A Certain Father's Words to his Son for Profit to his Soul*, we read about monasteries:

⁷⁸ К. Попконстантинов, *Равненски...*, р. 423.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, р. 425.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, р. 426.

⁸¹ К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, В. Плетьнов, *Манастирите при Равна и Караачтеке до Варна в манастирската география на България през IX–X в.*, AMV 3,2, 2005, pp. 107–121; G. А т а н а с о в, *Influences ethno-culturelles dans l'ermitage rupestre près de Murfatlar, à Dobrudza*, Bsl 57,1, 1996, pp. 112–124; Р. К о с т о в а, *Скалният манастир при Бесараби в северна Добруджа. Някои проблеми на интерпретация*, [in:] *Българите в Северното Причерноморие. Изследвания и материали*, vol. VII, Велико Търново 2000, pp. 131–152; I. Н о л б е а н и, *The Byzantine Monasticism in Scythia Minor-Dobruja in the IVth–XIth Centuries*, EBPB 5, 2006, pp. 243–289; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Монашество...*, pp. 344–404.

I will show you, my son, a true haven, [where you can take shelter]. It is the monastery, a house of saints. Go there, and you shall receive consolation, tell of your grief, and [the monks] will disperse your sorrows, for they are sons of lightheartedness and can raise one's spirits. If you have something in your house that they need, bring it to them, for everything that [you give them] you give into God's hands and you shall not be left without a reward!⁸²

The gifts of the petitioners may have been an important position in a monastery's budget⁸³. As we may guess, monks were called not only for resolving spiritual matters, but also those of more material nature. Cosmas the Priest, an author from the tenth-eleventh century, scolded monks who *set houses of the others in order, while thoughtlessly abandoning their own* – likely meaning their excessive involvement in the matters of life of the faithful, not befitting the calling of those who renounced the 'world'⁸⁴.

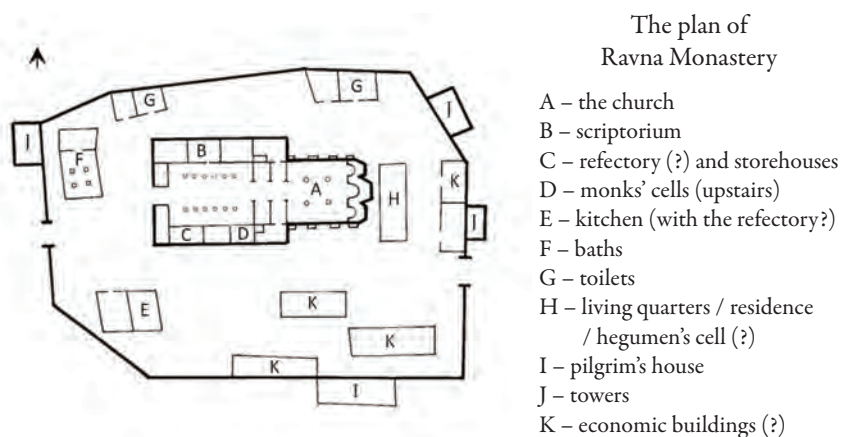
The kind, size and layout of the buildings of the monastery were strictly subordinated to their function. The central place was occupied by the church, the main focus of the monks' communal life. In the immediate vicinity of the church were the refectory, or the dining room, and the kitchen. Next to these were the monks' cells. They were most often located in a line alongside the wall encircling the entire complex. Within the walls, we would also expect to find the workshops and storehouses, their number and size depending on the type of economic activity taking place in the monastery. The Ravna monastery is one of the more interesting and better-known complexes of this type from the Old Bulgarian period, and for this reason it will serve us as an example⁸⁵.

⁸² *Izbornik 1076*, ed. Молдован, pp. 183–184.

⁸³ Interesting observations on the value of individual gifts for the monasteries based on byzantine hagiography can be found in D. Krausmüller, *Take No Care for the Morrow! The Rejection of Landed Property in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantine Monasticism*, *BMGS* 42, 2018, pp. 45–57.

⁸⁴ Ю.К. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвитер в славянских литературах*, София 1973, p. 365.

⁸⁵ Plan after: К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Architecture...*, p. 118, fig. 2; the legend was created on the basis of the above publication, and of: Р. Костова, *Център...*, pp. 222–223; Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 190–200.



The outer wall encircled an area of near 1 ha. This makes the Ravna monastery one of the largest preserved mediaeval Bulgarian complexes of this type. There were three entrances leading to the interior – the two more important ones: eastern and western, and a smaller gateway (not marked on the plan), which was located within the southern wall, near building I. A part of the complex – associated with the most important events of the daily life of its inhabitants – was separated, and constituted the inner courtyard, encompassing the area closed off by the buildings A–D. These were: the church, refectory, scriptorium and the living cells. The separation of this inner courtyard makes the architectural assumptions of the Ravna monastery exceptional. The nearest analogies may be found in the arrangements of the early Byzantine Syrian monasteries⁸⁶. The atypical layout however still follows the universal principle which required the living cells, the church and the refectory to be built in the immediate vicinity of each other. The way in which the monks moved between these buildings was laid out in *typica*, or monastic rules, and was associated with the specific details and frequency of their prayers⁸⁷. The separation of the sacred space in the Ravna monastery, visited by

⁸⁶ К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Architecture...*, p. 118.

⁸⁷ Cf. Б. Николова, *Монашество...*, pp. 90–91; S. Popović, *The Byzantine Monastery: Its Spatial Iconography and the Question of Sacredness*, [in:] *Hierotopy. Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. A. Lidov, Moscow 2006, pp. 150–185.

numerous pilgrims and inhabitants of the surrounding settlements, made it easier for the monks to maintain the focus that was demanded of them. The Ravna complex stands out from the other monasteries also due to having more than one entry in the outer wall⁸⁸.

The baths and the toilets, located away from the main buildings, likely served both the monks and their visitors. Monks' bathing was strictly regulated; the rules rarely permitted bathing more than three times a year⁸⁹. The role of the other buildings in that part of the complex, including building H, remains unexplained. The Ravna monastery was fortified, which is attested by the existence of the three towers (J).

The creation of the majority of the discovered monasteries from the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom is associated with the reigns of Boris and Symeon. This is true of the complexes in Sini Vir, Ravna, Karaach Teke, Krepcha, Murfatlar, Chernoglavtsi, by the Kanagyol, and of both of the Ohrid foundations. Some of the monasteries (Cheresheto, Valkashina, Khan Krum) have not been precisely dated in the literature of the subject. Among the monasteries, I mentioned only the monastery of synkellos George is considered to have been created during Peter's reign. The six decades from the adoption of Christianity until Peter's ascension to the throne have seen at least nine foundations, the forty years of his reign – one. Although the information that we have at our disposal paints only a partial picture of the Old Bulgarian monasticism (the dates are uncertain, and a part of the monasteries from that period likely remains undiscovered), we can observe a clear drop in the frequency of foundation activity. We may assume that at the time when Peter started his reign, the network of monasteries in the Bulgarian state has been completed, in the sense that it fulfilled the tasks given to it by the Church and state authorities, and therefore did not require further intensive development. In this context, the fact that the only monastic foundation from Peter's reign was a private initiative, gains additional significance.

⁸⁸ K. Popkonstantinov, R. Kostova, *Architecture...*, pp. 121–122, 126.

⁸⁹ See, e.g. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, ed. J. Thomas, A. Constantinides Hero, G. Constable, Washington 2000, pp. 460, 925 et al.

Certain facts associated with Peter's life, his cult and the image he left in the minds of the mediaeval Bulgarians appear to suggest that he had a positive attitude towards the monks and that he created suitable conditions for the flourishing and enhancement of monasticism as a public institution⁹⁰. It is in this way that this ruler's reign is sometimes characterised in the modern historiography. In the lack of direct information on this subject, other historical and historical-literary facts are brought up in a way that is intended to lend credence to such image of the era⁹¹. The reduction in philosophical and theological interests of the contemporary literary authors and the development of ascetic literature are highlighted. The ruler may have influenced change, as he was involved in literary activity himself (as a bold, but widespread in Bulgarian mediaeval studies hypothesis has it⁹²), passed away, like his grandfather, in a monastery, and was canonised soon after his death. As commonly known facts indicate, tsar Symeon stimulated literary activity and co-defined its character. When the tsar-author was replaced by the tsar-saint, one could assume, speculating a little, that there has come a right climate for monasticism to flourish. Was that indeed the case? The assessments regarding the development of the monastic network make us adopt a cautious attitude in this

⁹⁰ On the subject of historical memory and cult of Peter, see: И. Б и л я р с к и, *Небесните покровители: св. цар Петър*, ИБ 5,2, 2001, pp. 32–44; i d e m, *Покровители на Царството. Св. цар Петър и св. Параскева-Петка*, София 2004, pp. 5–43; i d e m, М. Й о в ч е в а, *За датата на Успението на цар Петър и за култа към него*, [in:] ТАНГРА. Сборник в чест на 70-годишнината на академик Васил Гюзелев, ed. М. К а й м а к о в а, Г. Н и к о л о в, София 2006, pp. 543–557; Д. Ч е ш м е д ж и е в, *Култът към българският цар Петър I (927–969): монашески или държавен?*, [in:] *Азубав према образовању и вера у Бога у православним манастирама, 5. Међународна Хилендарска конференција. Сборник изабраних радова 1*, ed. Р. М а т е ј и ć et al., Beograd–Columbus 2006, pp. 245–257; Б. Н и к о л о в а, *Цар Петър и характерът на неговия култ*, Рbg 33,2, 2009, pp. 63–77; М. К а й м а к о в а, *Култът към цар Петър (927–969) и движещите идеи на българските освободителни въстания срещу византийската власт през XI–XII в.*, ВМд 4/5, 2013/2014, pp. 417–438.

⁹¹ Cf., e.g. П. Д и м и т р о в, *Характер и значение на следсимеоновата епоха*, [in:] i d e m, *Петър Черноризец*, Шумен 1995, pp. 7–16; М. Й о в ч е в а, А. М и л т е н о в а, *Литературата от 927 г. до края на българското царство. Политико-религиозни, литературни и културни процеси*, [in:] ИСБЛ, pp. 255–260.

⁹² Й. И в а н о в, *Български старини от Македония*, София 1970, pp. 385–386; П. Д и м и т р о в, *Петър Черноризец*, [in:] i d e m, *Петър...*, pp. 40–43.

matter, however they do not fully answer the question. We cannot, after all, rule out that the monks developed their dynamic activity within the framework of an existing organisational structure. Any conclusion regarding a possible flourishing of monasticism during Peter's reign is highly risky since we have too few data regarding the functioning of contemporary monasteries and the periodisation of their development. However, since the welfare of the monasteries in that period was supposed to depend on the ruler's favour, let us pause for a moment to examine this issue. Can we say that Peter's attitude towards the monastic movement was somehow exceptional? At first, we might want to give a positive answer to this. Peter stands out thanks to the remarks about his contacts with the monks (requests for prayer, attempts to meet them, sending of precious gifts) that were noted in literary works: the lives of John of Rila and Paul the Younger (of Latros). A deeper reflection on the nature of these testimonies should prevent us from making unequivocal conclusions on their basis⁹³. First and foremost, one should not forget that the information about the tsar contained within these texts is a part of a literary portrayal of a saint. For the hagiographer, the ruler's person (as well as factual accuracy) were secondary⁹⁴, as it served to build up the prestige of the work's protagonist. The presence of a specific monarch in a narrative of a hagiographic nature is somewhat incidental, and we should not automatically associate it with real events. While the episode brought up in the Lives of John of Rila does not fall outside of the framework of a topos, and its historiographic value is impossible to determine⁹⁵, the correspondence between the tsar and Paul the Younger escapes somewhat the confines of the usual tropes. Paul's hermitage was located in Asia Minor, near Miletos. The ascetic was a subject of the Byzantine emperor (with whom he, notably, also exchanged correspondence). The information about the contacts with the Bulgarian tsar, and of his requests for prayer for the salvation of his soul⁹⁶,

⁹³ Cf. M. J. Leszka, *Rola cara Piotra (927–969) w życiu bułgarskiego Kościoła. Kilka uwag*, VP 36, 2016, pp. 435–438.

⁹⁴ Cf. R. Morris, *Monks...*, p. 72.

⁹⁵ The same applies to the Peter's epithets from the *Service of St. Tsar Peter* (pp. 392–393): *СТВРЪЖДЕНИЕ ЦРКВАМЪ, ЧРЪНОРИЗЪЦЪ ЛЮБА*.

⁹⁶ *Life of St Paul the Younger*, p. 72.

exceed the demands which hagiographer had to meet in service of his art, and as an addition to the canon, appears to be more credible. On the other hand, the ambition of the author, clearly delineated in the Life, to show that the fame of his protagonist reached very far (all the way to Italy and Scythia, although the identification of the latter toponym is debatable⁹⁷) may have had a negative impact on his truthfulness. Among those seeking contact with Paul, the author also listed the bishop of Rome. This ‘grandeur’ raises some doubts as to the text’s veracity. At the same time, I am certain that selecting Peter as the saint’s correspondent could not have been accidental. Whether there have been real letters that resulted in the hagiographer making his choice, or news of a particular attitude of Peter towards the monks, or some other reason entirely – we are not able to say for certain. Even if we succumbed to the temptation of positively verifying the truthfulness of the hagiographers, let us not forget that a ruler seeking the blessing of a famous saint was nothing unusual. Examples from the neighbouring Byzantium, and from the later period in Bulgaria’s history, are numerous⁹⁸. True, from the history of contemporary Bulgaria there was only one such example, Peter himself contacting the Saints John and Paul, however, the reasons behind it should not be sought in the ruler’s personal character. No saint has appeared in Bulgaria during the reigns of Michael-Boris and of Symeon, while Paul the Younger,

⁹⁷ *Life of St Paul the Younger*, pp. 71–72; *FGHB*, vol. V, p. 230.

⁹⁸ Cf. P. Charanis, *The Monk as an Element of Byzantine Society*, *DOP* 25, 1971, p. 84. Byzantine monks who maintained contacts with the court and the emperor in the tenth–eleventh centuries are listed by Rosemary Morris (*Monks...*, pp. 84–85), these were: Michael Maleinos, Atanasios the Athonite, Paul the Younger, John the Athonite (the only one in this group who was not made a saint), Christodoulos. Numerous examples of relations between a holy monk and an emperor, from the early Byzantine period, can be found in the work of Rafał Kosiniński, *Holiness and Power. Constantinopolitan Holy Men and Authority in the 5th Century*, Berlin–Boston 2016. From the period of late mediaeval Bulgaria we have two examples of holy monks extending spiritual care over the tsar: Joachim and Theodosios of Tarnovo (X. К о д о в, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в библиотеката на Българската Академия на Науките*, София 1969, p. 46; С. К о ж у х а р о в, *Неизвестен летописен разказ от времето на Иван Асен II*, *ЛМ* 18.2, 1974, p. 128. В. З л а т а р с к и, *Житіе и жизнь преподобнаго отца нашего Феодосія иже въ Тръновѣ постничьствовавшиаго списано светѣишимъ патріархымъ Квинстантіна града къръ Калистимъ*, *СНУНК* 20, 1904, p. 17).

who was active during Peter's reign, with his international renown is an exceptional character.

An indirect testimony of a ruler's favour towards monastic communities, which dictated their welfare, might be tsar's seals, found in monastic ruins. Directly, they are only a proof of 'official' contacts between the monarch and the monks. However, we may guess that they were associated with material support provided for the community, and with entrusting monks with certain tasks (prayer, pastoral care, etc.). Association with the ruler was undoubtedly beneficial for the monks. According to hagiographers, tsar Peter, after unsuccessfully attempting to meet the hermit John, offered him gold, and the majority of the ruler's documents from the later period that were issued for monasteries of which we are aware were donation acts. The seals that have been found in the monasteries were thusly interpreted in the literature of the subject. Therefore the monastery in Karaach Teke, where lead seals of Boris and Peter were uncovered, is being called the 'ducal' and considered to be a tool of the educational and Christianisation campaign initiated by the court⁹⁹. Let us examine the data about the seals of the rulers of the First Bulgarian Tsardom that have been found in the ruins of the monasteries. It is, unfortunately, very scant: Boris – 2 seals (Karaach Teke, Sini Vir)¹⁰⁰, Symeon – 2 seals (Ravna)¹⁰¹, Peter – 1 seal (Karaach Teke)¹⁰². These statistics do not distinguish Peter

⁹⁹ К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, В. Плетьнов, *Манастирите при Равна и Караачтеке...*

¹⁰⁰ К. Шкорпил, *Печат на княз Михаил-Борис*, ИВАД 7, 1921, pp. 108–116; П. Петрова, *Църквите при с. Сини вир, Шуменско*, [in:] *Археологически открития и разкопки през 1987 г.*, ed. В. Велков, Благоевград 1988, p. 190; И. Йорданов, *Корпус на средновековните български печати*, София 2016, pp. 46–47.

¹⁰¹ И. Йорданов, *Корпус...*, pp. 62–63. Symeon's seal found in the monastery of George the synkellos (*ibidem*, p. 69) has already been on the site before it became the abode of a monastic brotherhood founded during Peter's times.

¹⁰² К. Попконстантинов, В. Плетьнов, Р. Костова, *Средновековен княжески...*, p. 497. In the calculations above I omit the seals found in locations which cannot be identified with certainty as monastic sites. Such is the case with, e.g. the seals found in the complex next to the Golden Church (И. Йорданов, *Корпус...*, p. 96), and with the seal found in the vicinity of the village Rizhevo Konare near Plovdiv. In the latter case the monastic nature of the buildings in which the seal was found has been established by its discoverers on an undisclosed basis (В. Станков, *Ново-*

in any way. We have no reliable testimonies that would confirm either a particularly lively development of monasticism in his times or his special relationship with this institution. Jonathan Shepard speculated that Peter's appellation βασιλεύς εὐσεβής known from seals might have indicated his generosity towards monasteries and other religious institutions (and his zeal in combating heresy), although he also noted that the epithets of this kind were also repeated on contemporary coins and seals from Byzantium (e.g. those of Constantine VII¹⁰³), and we may, therefore, add that they would not have necessarily indicated the characteristics of a particular ruler¹⁰⁴. The acceptance of such titles however certainly shows that Peter wanted to be seen as pious. Does that make him stand out in any way? Certainly not. The image of Peter's times as a period of flourishing of monasticism, which we may sometimes find in both academic and popular literature, is not supported by any trustworthy literary sources. At its base, there is a historiographic tradition, which originated in the nineteenth century.

The question of the cultural outlook of Peter's era (favourable to monastic asceticism), reflected in the literary works created at the time (both translated and original) also requires careful verification. This is because the dating of the works on which we could base the descriptions of the 'spirit' of the times¹⁰⁵ to Peter's reign is debatable. I am thinking here of the writings of Cosmas the Priest, whose works are supposed to indicate that the monastic movement has reached its maturity¹⁰⁶, and

открит печат на Петър I (927–969), ППРе 9, 2003, pp. 315–317; И. Йорданов, *Корпус...*, p. 113).

¹⁰³ Г. Атанасов, *Държавната идеология на християнска България, инсигни и титулатура на нейните владетели*, [in:] *idem*, В. Вачкова, П. Павлов, *Българска национална история*, vol. III, *Първо българско царство (680–1018)*, Велико Търново 2015, p. 779.

¹⁰⁴ J. Shepard, *A Marriage Too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria*, [in:] *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium*, ed. A. Davids, Cambridge 1995, p. 143.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. e.g. П. Димитров, *Характер и значение...*; А. Николов, *Политическа мисъл в ранносредновековна България (средата на IX – края на XI век)*, София 2006, pp. 245–250.

¹⁰⁶ П. Димитров, *Характер и значение...*, pp. 11–15.

of works of Peter the Monk, the most important Old Bulgarian ascetic writer. Regarding Cosmas the Priest, let us be satisfied with a conclusion that there are various suggestions in the scholarly literature as to when his literary activity can be located – from the beginning of the tenth until the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, with the extreme boundaries being excluded as weakly supported. The safest chronological range would be from the mid-tenth until mid-eleventh century¹⁰⁷. Let us note that with using such dating the value of the *Sermon against the Heretics* as a source for the history of monasticism during the reign of tsar Peter is not obvious, as the work itself may have been created many years after the ruler's death. The dating of Peter the Monk's works is far more important for us, as it presents a certain mechanism that is distorting the image of the era. The fullest and still current academic description related to the works of this author is a monograph of a renowned Bulgarian philologist Rumyana Pavlova, from 1994¹⁰⁸. She obviously made an attempt at locating the

¹⁰⁷ Kosma Prezbiter, *Mowa polemiczna przeciwko heretykom (fragmenty)*, ed. and transl. M. Skowronek, G. Minczew, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed., transl., commen. G. Minczew, M. Skowronek, J.M. Wołski, Łódź 2015, pp. 67–68. The summary of the debate about the dating of this work, which can be found in the work of Yuriy Begunov (Ю. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвумер...*, pp. 195–221), despite the half a century that passed since it was written remains current. The conclusion that the Russian scholar reached, in turn, is specific and uncertain in equal measure. The period of 969–970 (p. 221 or prior to 972 on p. 217) he delineated (with a qualification: *most likely*), is based on debatable premises. *Terminus post quem* is determined by the view that the phrase: *В АѢТА ПРАВОСЪКОНАДО ЦАРА ПЕТРА* was in the original edition of the *Sermon*, and could have been only composed after the ruler's death. Begunov argued for the *terminus ante quem* by saying that the *Sermon* was written at the time when the Bogomilism was still in opposition to the state, his argument an arbitrary: *ясно е!* The presupposition of this statement (that the successors of Boris II or the Byzantine government accepted Bogomils, or were favourable to them) is absurd. The remaining arguments (interpreting remarks of Cosmas about John the new presbyter, mentioned in the *Sermon* war damages, referring to Bogomilism a new heresy, etc.) are of similar quality. It is difficult to find better arguments. Our dating of *Sermon* is based purely on the clues left by the author, and these are few and unclear. Without new data, a satisfactory resolution of this question is impossible. The stubborn seeking of certainties and particulars by scholars where there are none is inexplicable.

¹⁰⁸ Р. ПАВЛОВА, *Петър Черноризец...*

activity of her protagonist in time and announced its results in the title itself: *Петър Черноризец. Старобългарски писател от X век*. A robust linguistic analysis presented in the volume allowed its author to conclude that Peter was an Old Bulgarian author (ninth-eleventh century)¹⁰⁹. It would be difficult to demand a greater accuracy from linguistic research from regarding works from such distant times and with such limited comparative material. Narrowing down Peter's activity to the times of the tsar of the same name was accomplished by reaching for arguments of a different nature – as Peter's homilies *exude a spirit of a post-Symeon era*. The author finds in his sermons numerous thematic analogies to the works of Cosmas the Priest and other texts dated to the tenth century¹¹⁰. The way in which the Bulgarian scholar created these thematic analogies between the analysed texts raises serious doubts. She has pointed to Christian religious truths such as: the Biblical vision of the beginning of the world, the meaning of the sacraments, icons, the sign of the cross, of a church as a house of God, the cult of saints, a particular devotion to the Mother of God, condemnation of violence etc.¹¹¹, which are after all common not only to the tenth-century Bulgarian authors¹¹². Moreover, there is nothing in the execution of these themes that would indicate the existence of close parallels between the fragments compared by Rumyana Pavlova. The one thing that is the most concerning in the Bulgarian scholar's argument is the reference to the 'spirit of the post-Symeon/Peter's era'. This historiographic concept, after all, is largely based on the works of Peter the Monk¹¹³. It needs to be said that its basis – if we exclude the works of this author – is minute. The second supporting pillar of this idea is

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 124–223.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 30–45.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 44–45.

¹¹² Cf. Й. А н д р е е в, *Кем был черноризец Петър?*, Вbg 6, 1980, pp. 54–55.

¹¹³ Cf., e.g. П. Д и м и т р о в, *Характер и значение...*; И. Б о ж и л о в, *България при цар Петър (927–969)*, [in:] И. Б о ж и л о в, В. Г ю з е л е в, *История на България в три тома*, vol. III, *История на средновековна България VII–XIV век*, София 1999, pp. 281–283; М. К а й м а к а м о в а, *Култът...*, pp. 422–423. In the older works, the problems with dating the works of Peter the Monk were usually overlooked, as he was identified with tsar Peter, see: Й. А н д р е е в, *Кем был черноризец...*

the *Sermon* of Cosmas the Priest, whose direct link to Peter's era should not be accepted as certain.

The activity of John of Rila, the only monk from the period of the First Bulgarian Tsardom whose life was described in more detail, falls during the reign of Peter. At the same time this hermit was (and remains to this day) one of the more venerated Bulgarian saints¹¹⁴. More than ten texts associated with his cult have been written during the mediaeval period. The oldest ones are the Greek Life, and the canons by Skylitzes (dated variously to 1165–1183, preserved in Bulgarian translation), a folk Life (uncertainly dated to between twelfth and fifteenth century) and two prologue Lives from the thirteenth century¹¹⁵.

John of Rila certainly also occupies an important place in the historical imagination of Bulgarians as a master of spiritual life, a protector of the state, and the supposed founder of the monastery which became one of the most important pilgrimage centres of Bulgaria. He is also treated as a symbolic character by Bulgarian medievalists. Petar Mutafchiev saw in him *a kind of an incarnation of the spirit of the age*¹¹⁶. In his monograph, Ivan Duychev highly valued the significance of the character of the saint of Rila, and of the monastery bearing his name, for the development and preservation of Bulgarian culture, from the mediaeval period until his day without a break, and concludes his argument with the following creed: *the community [of Rila] shall preserve its significance in the spiritual life of our nation forever, for at its base lies a lofty moral and spiritual effort [orig. подвиг]*¹¹⁷. Vassil Gyuzelev placed John in the ranks of the most venerated saints who, as he claims: *set the foundations of life of the particular church*

¹¹⁴ В. Г ю з е л е в, “Велико светило за целия свят” (Св. Иван Рилски в измеренията на своето време), [in:] *Светогорска обител Зограф*, vol. III, pp. 13–15.

¹¹⁵ Б. А н г е л о в, *Повествователни съчинения за Иван Рилски в старобългарската литература*, ЕЛ 32.1, 1977, pp. 66–71; И. Д о б р е в, Е. Т о м о в а, *Болгарский святой Иоанн Рылский (культ и агиография)*, [in:] *Слово: към изграждане на дигитална библиотека на южнославянски ръкописи*, ed. Х. М и к л а с, А. М и л т е н о в а, София 2008, pp. 142–153.

¹¹⁶ П. М у т а ф ч и е в, *Поп Богомил и Св. Иван Рилски. Духът на отрицанието в нашата история*, ФП 4.2, 1934, p. 106.

¹¹⁷ И. Д у й ч е в, *Рилският светец...*, p. 376.

and determine the trends of its development¹¹⁸. Ivan Bozhilov, in turn, wrote about John: *He is a personality without which [Bulgarian] Christianity and Church cannot be imagined*¹¹⁹. The ease with which the quoted scholars linked modernity with the tenth century and the emphasis with which they wrote about this hermit is, it seems, the effect of interpolating to an earlier period the significance which the community of Rila and its patron gained in the modern, or late mediaeval at the latest, period. The content of hagiographic tales about John does not allow describing him as anything other than a semi-legendary figure. The radical anchoritism, ascribed to him, and previously to the Desert Fathers and many other saints, as far as we can verify it in sources other than hagiographic, turns out to be a literary fiction¹²⁰. The earliest confirmed traces of John's cult come from mid-twelfth century. We have no basis to question the historicity of the hermit of Rila. However, in the form that he is known to us, he is more of an ideologeme than a real person¹²¹. In this way, John of Rila undoubtedly turns out to be an 'incarnation of the spirit of the era'.

John lived the life of a hermit within Rila's mountain range. He came from the village of Skirno, located ca. 50 km to the west of the cave in which he spent most of his life. His family was relatively wealthy. After the death of his parents he gave his fortune away and started seeking a place that would be suitable for quiet prayer and mortification – his later life is known from hagiographic relations¹²² and, what should not come as a surprise, resembles the lives of other famous anchorites. He gained

¹¹⁸ По правило жалонират живота на съответна църква и определят тенденциите на развитието ѝ – В. Гюзелев, *Велико светило...*, р. 13.

¹¹⁹ И. Божилков, *Българското общество през 14. век. Структура и просопография*, София 2014, р. 250.

¹²⁰ Сф. Д. Папахрисанту, *Атонско монаштво. Почеци и организација*, Београд 2003, р. 31.

¹²¹ Сф. И. Божилков, *Българското общество...*, pp. 228–229.

¹²² The older works also referenced the *Testament* of John of Rila. Research done by Bistra Nikolova (Б. Николова, *Заветът на св. Иван Рилски. За митовите и реалите*, СЛ 35/36, 2006, pp. 144–166), who examined the history of the first public presentation of the text in the latter half of the nineteenth century, clearly show that it was a late forgery, although it should be noted that her conclusions are not universally accepted.

considerable fame as a hermit – tsar Peter himself was said to have sought a meeting with him. Traditionally, his death is dated to 946. A monastery later developed in the vicinity of his hermitage and continues its existence to this day. In the *Life* by Joachim of Osogovo, written between twelfth and fifteenth century, John is presented as a model of hermit life for his successors, the holy hermits who led ascetic lives in the area: Prohor of Pchinya (eleventh century), Gabriel of Lesnovo (eleventh century) and Joachim himself (eleventh/twelfth century)¹²³.

An interesting testimony to the state of the Old Bulgarian monasticism was given by Cosmas the Priest. The second part of his *Sermon* includes an admonishment directed at the clergy, coenobites and anchorites. Cosmas criticised them for dissolution, haughtiness, laziness, ignorance, lack of restraint in eating, and for consuming alcohol¹²⁴. He rebuked those who entered a monastery while leaving their family without means of support with particular severity. It can be seen from the text of *Sermon* that the motivations driving people to accept a monk's frock were complex. It happened that aside from religious matters, the deciding factors could have also been of material nature: the life in a monastic community ensured peaceful and relatively plentiful life¹²⁵.

3. Bogomilism

Jan M. Wolski

Heresies and schisms mark the history of the community of believers of Christ from its very beginning. The first evidence of fierce controversies and divisions can be found as early as in the New Testament¹²⁶. An

¹²³ Й. Иванов, *Български старини...*, pp. 406–407.

¹²⁴ Ю.К. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвитер...*, pp. 351–352, 361.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 356–357.

¹²⁶ E.g. 1 Cor 11, 18–19; 1 John 2, 18–27; 4, 1–6; for a useful introduction into the abundant literature of the early Christian 'heresies', one may turn to: R.J. Decker, *The*

instructive image of the situation is presented in such works as *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis, written in the latter part of the 370s, in which the author mentioned as many as sixty Christian sects. One should not become attached to the number itself, but it may serve as a symbol of a real multiplicity¹²⁷. The phenomenon of religious division in its most acute form, i.e. heresy, was also known in mediaeval Bulgaria. Several decades after Christianisation (in Peter's times) it became a cradle of Bogomilism – a religious movement the history and creed of which are known to us only partially. Its influences may be found across the Mediterranean world – in the Byzantine Asia Minor, in the western Balkans, in Italy and in France¹²⁸. Let us however move back in time a little and examine the religious situation in Bulgaria during the period preceding the appearance of the priest Bogomil and his co-religionists. The Bulgarians accepted Christianity from Byzantine clergy. It is therefore obvious (and attested by the sources) that the missions active in the country following this momentous act propagated orthodoxy and practices specific to the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. The subsequent negotiations with the Roman Church and the presence of the clergy arriving from the West likely did not have a significant impact on the formation of the religious culture of Bulgarians. For us, other details of the early Christianisation of Bulgaria will be of more interest. From the letter of Nicholas I from 866, containing answers to 115 questions of the newly baptised Bulgarians, we learn that among the missionaries spreading the new faith were representatives of different creeds:

Bauer Thesis: An Overview, [in:] *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts: Reconsidering the Bauer Thesis*, ed. P.A. Hartog, Eugene 2015, pp. 6–33.

¹²⁷ See: G. Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius*, Waterloo 1981; R. Lyman, *Heresiology: the invention of 'heresy' and 'schism'*, [in:] *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. II, *Constantine to c. 600*, ed. A. Casiday, F. W. Norris, Cambridge 2007, pp. 296–314.

¹²⁸ The history and sources of the 'great heresy', i.e. Christian dualist movements, and the place of Bogomilism in their development were discussed in: M. Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, transl. I. Lewitová, Praha 1974; Y. Stoyanov, *The Other God. Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*, London–New York 2000.

you assert [Nicholas addressed the Bulgarians] that Christians from many places have come to your land, that is, Greeks, Armenians, and from other places, and are saying all sorts of different things as they please. For this reason you ask us to tell you definitely whether you should obey all those preachers with all their different position, or whether you should do something else.¹²⁹

The list of the heretics active in the contemporary Bulgaria likely included not only the Monophysite Armenians and the dualist Paulicians (both of these faiths may be included under the abovementioned ‘Armenians’)¹³⁰. It is likely that the preachers claiming to be Orthodox, mentioned twice in the papal letter, were in fact non-orthodox (although we do not know their exact creeds)¹³¹. According to the sources, Bogomilism was close to the Paulician beliefs (in the contemporary world it was often referred to as Manichaeism), and was supposed to have appeared more than sixty years after the events mentioned by the Pope. Heretical missions did not cease in the meantime. We know of one of them, organised by Paulicians from Tephrike (now Divriği) around year 870. Slavic Manichaeans (Paulicians? Proto-Bogomils?) were mentioned by John the Exarch in the beginnings of the eleventh century. We may therefore surmise that the non-Orthodox missions were effective¹³². It is difficult to unequivocally say whether their activity influenced the appearance of Bogomilism, however the sources do suggest such a course of events. A direct statement to this effect can be found in an official document of the Bulgarian Church – a synodikon – from 1211:

Our most cunning enemy [i.e. Satan] spread all over the Bulgarian land the Manichean heresy, mixing it with the Messalian [...] To the priest

¹²⁹ Nicholas I, p. 599 (transl. K. Petkov, *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth. The Records of a Bygone Culture*, Leiden–Boston 2008, pp. 30–31).

¹³⁰ On the Paulician mission in Bulgaria see below.

¹³¹ Nicholas I, pp. 575–576, 599–600.

¹³² Г. Минчев, М. Скворонек, *Сведения о дуалистических ересях и языческих верованиях в Шестодневе Иоанна Экзарха*, SCer 4, 2014, p. 100.

Bogomil who, under the Bulgarian tsar Peter, adopted this Manichean heresy and spread it in the Bulgarian land adding to it that our God Christ was born of the holy Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary only in appearance, and the flesh He took on He took up and left it in the air, to him and his past and present disciples called ‘apostles,’ anathema!¹³³

It is one of the few stories of the beginnings of the Bogomil movement that we can find in mediaeval writings. Despite its small volume, it contains a wealth of important information. Bogomil appears as a religious reformer who, having adopted a mixed Paulician-Messalian creed, enriched it with docetist elements (i.e. the claim of the appearance, or incompleteness of the incarnation – *the flesh He took on He took up and left it in the air*), and thus created a new heresy. Let us carefully examine the elements of this tale, since nearly all of them attracted contradictory comments from historians.

Among the sources of the Bogomil heresy, according to the *Synodikon*, the most commonly mentioned is Paulicianism, referred to in the quoted passage as ‘Manichaeism.’ This dualist movement originated in the seventh century in Armenia. The representatives of this creed were present in Bulgaria since at least eighth century. We know that the Paulicians were resettled to the Byzantine-Bulgarian borderland in years 747 and 757, on the orders of the Byzantine emperor Constantine V¹³⁴. Soon afterwards, due to border changes, also found themselves in the Bulgarian state. Paulicians conducted missionary activity, promoting their dualist vision of the world in which there were two gods – a good and an evil one¹³⁵.

¹³³ *Synodikon of Tsar Boril*, p. 121 (transl. K. Petkov, *The Voices...*, p. 250; with minor change – J.M.W.).

¹³⁴ S. Runciman, *Medieval manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge 1947, pp. 39, 64–65; D. Dragolović, *The History of Paulicianism on the Balkan Peninsula*, Balc 5, 1973, p. 235. For information on other waves of resettlement see: Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството*, София 1993, pp. 84–85; А. Данчева-Василева, *Павликяните в Северна Тракия през Средновековието*, ИБ 7.1/2, 2003, pp. 176–177; P. Czarnicki, *Geneza i ewolucja dogmatu teologicznego sekty bogomilów*, ZNUJ.PH 134, 2007, pp. 27–28.

¹³⁵ D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*, Cambridge 1948, pp. 60–62, 80–82; Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, pp. 86–88; for a critique of the

We find its echoes in the Bogomil theology. Paulicians retained their distinct creed for a long time. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of them adopted Catholicism, and the modern day name *pavlikyani* denotes Catholics inhabiting primarily the vicinity of Plovdiv¹³⁶. Scholars found in Bogomilism influences of many other beliefs, e.g. Messalianism, proto-Bulgarian paganism, Manichaeism (still alive in the Central Asia), late antique Gnosticism or Marcionism¹³⁷. The nature of the associations between Bogomilism and these currents of the non-orthodox currents of Christianity, and the other beliefs, is controversial. Perhaps the Bulgarian heretics merely shared a coincidental similarity with them; perhaps they were inspired by their writings. According to the modern knowledge of the history of the abovementioned religious movements one needs to exclude the view of a direct influence of their believers on the teachings of Bogomil. Let us note that this is also true of Messalianism, which casts doubt on the credibility of the *Synodikon* and other sources similar to it from that period. Messalianism had likely been eliminated from the Byzantine Church as early as in the fifth century, and its later ‘appearances’ are the result of authors referring to the new movements – which called for dedication to lives of self-denial and prayer – by that old name¹³⁸.

Specifying the sources of Bogomil dogmas, indicating what inspired them, noting the external influences (while keeping in mind that many of the elements of the Bogomilist beliefs were entirely original) does not exhaust the question of the movement’s origins, nor of the reasons behind its supposed popularity. The literature of the subject, in the context of considering the development of Bogomilism, points to the low moral standards of the clergy. It is explicitly confirmed by Cosmas the

dominant views regarding the history and beliefs of Paulicians, see: N. G a r s o i a n, *Byzantine Heresy. A Reinterpretation*, DOP 25, 1971, pp. 85–113.

¹³⁶ М. Й о в к о в, *Павликяни и павликянски селища в българските земи XV–XVIII век*, София 1991; А. Д а н ч е в а - В а с и л е в а, *Павликяните...*, pp. 192–193.

¹³⁷ See i. a. Д. А н г е л о в, *Богомилството...*, pp. 79–100; S. R u n c i m a n, *Medieval manichee...*, pp. 118–124; Y. S t o y a n o v, *The Other God...*, pp. 125–166.

¹³⁸ Cf. A. R i g o, *Messalianismo = Bogomilismo. Un’equazione dell’eresiologia medievale bizantina*, OChP 56, 1990, pp. 53–82; K. F i t s c h e n, *Did ‘Messalianism’ exist in Asia Minor after A.D. 431?*, SP 25, 1993, pp. 352–355.

Priest in his *Sermon against the Heretics*. This is a very valuable source pertaining to the earliest history of Bogomilism, although the date of its creation remains a subject of a dispute. The view that the *Sermon* was written in the latter half, or near the end of, the tenth century dominates in the scholarship¹³⁹. Cosmas criticises the clergy for neglecting the religious education of the people, and instead dealing with ‘earthly’ matters¹⁴⁰. Were we to draw from this far-reaching conclusions, we could see in Bogomilism an attempt at returning to the ‘apostolic ideals’, which were not being fully realised by the contemporary Church¹⁴¹. Modern scholars also saw in Bogomilism an expression of resistance of the Slavic faithful towards the Byzantinisation of the Church and state¹⁴², and an expression of rebellion against considerable stratification of the society, legitimised by the clergy calling for obedience to the authorities and the boyars (according to scholars inspired by Marxism, Bogomilism was supposed to have been an element of class struggle)¹⁴³. Consistent condemnation of wealth by the Bogomils and their anti-ecclesial attitude bolstered such interpretations¹⁴⁴. Clergy’s faults and the aforementioned socio-political processes form a context which, once examined, allows us to better imagine the circumstances in which the heresy appeared. To consider one of these elements as the reason for which Bogomil started a new movement would have been careless at best, given the scarcity

¹³⁹ S. Runciman, *Medieval manichee...*, pp. 93–94; Ю. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвитер в славянских литературах*, София 1973, pp. 200–221.

¹⁴⁰ Cosmas the Priest, p. 388.

¹⁴¹ Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, pp. 67–72; J. Spruga, *Wspólnoty bogomilskie jako próba powrotu do form życia gmin wczesnochrześcijańskich*, ZNUJ.PH 84, 1987, pp. 9–11, 20–21.

¹⁴² В.Н. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове*, vol. 1/2, *От славянизацията на държавата до падането на Първото царство*, София 1927, pp. 536–537; И. Дуичев, *Едно пренебрегнато известие за богомилите*, [in:] idem, *Проучвания върху средновековната българска история и култура*, София 1981, p. 203.

¹⁴³ Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството в България*, София 1961, pp. 49–60. This Bulgarian scholar presented a different view in his later works (idem, *Богомилството...*, pp. 67–72).

¹⁴⁴ S. Bylina, *Bogomilizm w średniowiecznej Bułgarii. Uwarunkowania społeczne, polityczne i kulturalne*, ВР 2, 1985, pp. 136–137.

of surviving source records and the poor level of knowledge about the phenomena themselves.

One of the first attestations of Bogomilism's existence is the *Letter to Tsar Peter* written by the patriarch of Constantinople, Theophylaktos Lekapenos. It was composed as the Bulgarian ruler's alarmed reaction to the spreading of non-orthodox teachings. Peter ordered the writing of the letter to the patriarch to learn how one should act towards the adherents of a heresy. The correspondence in this matter consisted of at least four letters, of which only the second of Theophylaktos' replies has been preserved¹⁴⁵. In the letter, the patriarch characterised the new belief in the form of anathemas, with which the heretics, when being accepted to the Church's bosom, were to have renounced their 'errors'. Based on the information he received from Bulgaria he concluded he was dealing with a Paulician splinter group¹⁴⁶. The anathemas were formulated with the help of polemical treatises aimed at these heretics, and therefore they are of limited utility in expanding our knowledge of Bogomilism itself¹⁴⁷. It would seem that only two of these did not relate to Paulicians, but reflected the specificity of the beliefs of the Bulgarian heretics¹⁴⁸. Discussing them will serve us to present the beliefs and practices of the Bogomils.

- I. The Bogomils shared with the Paulicians the underlying conviction about the dual nature of the universe. The material world was evil, and was subject to the Evil One's power, while the spiritual world was governed by the good God. While the Paulicians were radical dualists, and according to them the division of the world was eternal, the Bulgarian heretics were among the moderate dualists and believed that the good God was the first principle of the universe.

¹⁴⁵ Theophylaktos Lekapenos, p. 311; cf. G. Minczew, *Remarks on the Letter of the Patriarch Theophylact to Tsar Peter in the Context of Certain Byzantine and Slavic Anti-heretic Texts*, SCer 3, 2013, pp. 115–116; M.J. Leszka, *Rola...*, pp. 433–435.

¹⁴⁶ Theophylaktos Lekapenos, p. 312.

¹⁴⁷ A. Solovjev, *Svedočanstva pravoslavnih izvora o bogomilstvu na Balkanu*, GIDBiH 5, 1953, pp. 3–5; G. Minczew, *Remarks...*, p. 117.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. B. Hamilton, *Historical Introduction*, [in:] J. Hamilton, B. Hamilton, Y. Stoyanov, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c. 850–c. 1450*, Manchester–New York 1998, pp. 26–27.

It is the moderate Bogomilist vision, rather than Paulician, of the cosmological myth that the second anathema from Theophylaktos' letter is presenting (or rather signalling)¹⁴⁹. In the later period (no later than mid-twelfth century) part of the Bogomil communities adopted, perhaps under Paulician influence, radical dualism. A relatively large and detailed review of the beliefs of the Bulgarian heretics can be found in the *Sermon against the Heretics* of Cosmas the Priest. We learn from it that they, i.a., rejected the Old Testament (the material world was created by the evil God, identified with the God of the Old Testament), sacraments (baptism and the Eucharist), worship of icons and of the Cross¹⁵⁰.

2. The fourth of the anathemas formulated in the *Letter to Tsar Peter* is aimed against all those who condemned marriage and claimed that *everything that serves to multiply and preserve mankind* comes from Satan¹⁵¹. Promoting of sexual abstinence is confirmed by numerous sources, including the *Sermon* by Cosmas. It also sketched a broader picture of the ascetic practices of the heretics – they were said to have abstained from alcohol, meat, denied themselves any comforts, and devoted themselves to deleterious fasting and lengthy prayers¹⁵². It appears that all of these elements of the Bogomilist ethos may have constituted (in the eyes of the author of the mentioned above fragment from the *Synodikon of Tsar Boril*) the legacy of Messalians, known for their austere, monastic lifestyle¹⁵³.

¹⁴⁹ Theophylaktos Lekapenos, p. 313, cf. B. Hamilton, *Historical...*, pp. 26–27.

¹⁵⁰ Cosmas the Priest, pp. 304–313.

¹⁵¹ Theophylaktos Lekapenos, p. 313.

¹⁵² Cosmas the Priest, pp. 300–303.

¹⁵³ For more on Messalians, see: Д. Драгојловић, *Богомилство на Балкану и у Малој Азији*, vol. I, *Богомилски родоначалници*, Београд 1974, pp. 25–123; A. Guillaumont, *Messaliens. Appellations, histoire, doctrine*, [in:] *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, ascétique et mystique*, vol. X, ed. M. Viller et al., Paris 1979, pp. 1074–1083; D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks. Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley Los Angeles London 2002, pp. 83–125; R. Kosiński, *Religie*

The Bogomils most likely did not create a unified ecclesiastic organisation during the discussed period. A specific kind of ‘anarchism’ of the original Bogomils is further emphasised by the anti-state themes present in their teachings, and the condemnation of violence. The organisational consolidation occurred during the later period. We learn of it from the twelfth century Latin sources, which tell of conflicts between the heretical communities about the apostolic succession between the sections of the movement. From these accounts emerges an image of local Churches, aware of their distinctness and significance, and cultivating their own traditions¹⁵⁴.

Although sources indicate that Bogomilism first appeared during tsar Peter’s times (as attested by the dating of the *Letter* of Theophylaktos and passages from *Synodikon of Tsar Boril* and the *Sermon* of Cosmas), some scholars doubt that. Perhaps the dualists mentioned in the *Hexameron* of John the Exarch, written ca. 907, were in fact early Bogomils, and not Paulicians¹⁵⁵.

As has been mentioned, nearly all the elements of the tale concerning the beginnings of Bogomilism included in the *Synodikon of Tsar Boril* cause controversies among the experts of the subject. We have also seen that the information regarding the origins of Bogomilism (ties with Messalianism) and the time when the heresy arose are being questioned. What remains is examining the question of the historicity of Bogomil. The doubts regarding his existence are based on the explanations of the origin of the name of the heresy that do not associate it with the hypothetical founder’s name. One of the alternative versions of the etymology of the name ‘Bogomils’ is found in Euthymios Zigabenos, a Byzantine heresiologist from the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He

cesarstwa rzymskiego w V stuleciu, [in:] *Świat rzymski w V wieku*, ed. R. Kosiński, K. Twardowska, Kraków 2010, pp. 403–405.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, pp. 354–356.

¹⁵⁵ Е. г. Й. Иванов, *Богомилски книги и легенди*, София 1970, p. 20; В. Киселков, *Съществувал ли е поп Богомил*, ИП 15.2, 1958, p. 63. Critically about this position: M. Looz, *Le prétendu témoignage d'un traité de Jean Exarque intitulé 'Šestodnevi' et relatif aux Bogomiles*, Bsl 13, 1952/1953, pp. 59–67; Г. Минчев, М. Сковронек, *Сведения...*

claimed that it meant those who called for God's love¹⁵⁶. It would then correspond to the Greek 'euchites' ('praying one'), which was a translation, from Syriac, of the name 'Messalians'. According to Euthymios, the Messalian heresy was one of the sources of the Bogomil theology¹⁵⁷. A different, more plausible etymology is suggested by Cosmas the Priest in his *Sermon*, in which he sneeringly twists the name of the sect's founder: *It happened in the years of the orthodox tsar Peter that a priest appeared in the Bulgarian land, by the name of Bogomil ('loved by God') or, in truth, Bogunemil ('not loved by God')*¹⁵⁸. In this manner, according to some scholars, the name 'Bogomils' would have meant not so much Bogomil's followers, but 'people who are pleasing to God'. On the basis of analogy with the Cathars, who called themselves as 'good people', supporters of this hypothesis claim that the epithet 'pleasing to God' was used by the heretics themselves, in order to distinguish themselves or their leaders from the members of the official Church¹⁵⁹. There is neither space here nor the need to relate the entire dispute over the historicity of the priest Bogomil¹⁶⁰. It does stir considerable interest among the scholars and is engaging from the methodological point of view. It shows at the same time how scant and fragmentary the information about the Bogomilist heresy that actually is. Even if we were to accept that Bogomil did exist, according to the testimony of the *Synodikon* and Cosmas the Priest, we will be forced to admit that the person of the heresy's founder (its restorer?, propagator?, one of the founders?) is, beside the name, a complete unknown.

Bogomilism played a significant role in the history of Bulgaria, it appeared in its history from the end of the ninth century, throughout the period of Byzantine domination in the Balkans (10th-12th centuries) and during the period of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom (12th-14th centuries). The birth and development of this movement forced the Church and the

¹⁵⁶ Z i g a b e n o s, col. 1289.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. В. К и с е л к о в, *Съществува...*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁸ C o s m a s t h e P r i e s t, p. 299 (transl. К. П е т к о в, p. 68).

¹⁵⁹ В. К и с е л к о в, *Съществува...*, p. 59; Г. М и н ч е в, *За името Θεόφιλος/Боголюб/Богомил в някои византийски и славянски средновековни текстове*, Рбг 37.4, 2013, pp. 51-52.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Д. А н г е л о в, *Богомилството...*, pp. 101-104.

state government, which cared for the religious unity among its faithful and subjects, to react. Actions were taken in order to reduce the influence of Bogomilism on the populace. The letter of Theophylaktos, the patriarch of Constantinople, to tsar Peter, is a trace of this; it recommended religious persecution (we do not know whether it was undertaken, and if so, to what extent). Another such trace is the *Sermon* of Cosmas the Priest, which called for moral renewal among the clergy, and for increased effort in teaching the people in their pastoral care. Ultimately, these actions proved insufficient. The effects of the Bogomilist movement spread far beyond Bulgaria's borders. It enveloped the entirety of the Balkans, Byzantine territories in Asia Minor, and Western Europe, where Bogomils influenced the development of Catharism¹⁶¹.

Scholars such as Konstantin Jireček or Petar Mutafchiev saw Bogomilism as an anti-state and pacifist movement, which was the cause of weakness and repeating crises of the Bulgarian state¹⁶². It would seem however that they overestimated both the popularity of the movement and the influence of its ideals on the people's behaviour. These hypotheses resemble the now discarded interpretations of the scholars of late antiquity who perceived the growing popularity of the monastic life as one of the reasons for the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West¹⁶³.

¹⁶¹ The Bogomilism's influence on the early dualist movements in mediaeval Western Europe is questionable, whereas after the mid-twelfth century it is attested to by numerous sources. See J. B. Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1965, p. 191sq; R. I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy*, London 1975, pp. 72–73; idem, *The Origins of European Dissent*, Oxford 1985, pp. 41–42, 164–196; Д. А н г е л о в, *Богомилството...*, pp. 300–305, 352–369, 402–420; B. Hamilt on, *Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy*, [in:] *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages. Essays on the Work of R. I. Moore*, ed. M. Frassetto, Leiden–Boston 2006, pp. 93–114; M. Dobkowski, *Kataryzm. Historia i system religijny*, Kraków 2007, pp. 15–20; P. Czarnеcki, *Trzecia droga dualizmu – doktryna religijna włoskiego Kościoła katarskiego w Concorezzo*, SRel 43, 2010, pp. 93–112; idem, *Kontrowersje wokół herezji XI wieku*, SRel 49.2, 2016, pp. 99–117.

¹⁶² П. М у т а ф ч и е в, *Попъ Богомилъ и св. Ив. Рилски. Духътъ на отрицанието въ нашата история*, ФП, 6.2, 1934, pp. 1–16; К. Иречек, *История на българите с поправки и добавки от самия автор*, София 1978, p. 210.

¹⁶³ E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. VI, ed. J. B. Bury, New York 1907, pp. 163–165, 179, 290–292.