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MEDIAEVAL BYZANTINE AND BULGARIAN RULERS; KINGS AND PRINCES FROM CENTRAL AND WEST EUROPE IN THE FATE OF THE SAINTS FROM THE BULGARIAN PANTHEON

(Summary)

The article analyses the evidence about the relations between secular figures – emperors, tsars, kings and princes – and several saints who were worshiped among the Bulgarian Christian community. The main goal is to ascertain the historicity of the evidence about those relations, the reasons for the appearance of such hagiographical narratives, and their sources. Judging by the lives of Constantine Cyril the Philosopher and Methodius all their activities were guided or supervised and motivated by the Byzantine emperor, the German emperor Luis and King Carloman, or the central European Slavonic princes. There is circumstantial evidence that questions the trustworthiness of a number of narratives in the life of Cyril the Philosopher or correct some of them, while similar evidence from the life of Methodius and elsewhere complement each other and often confirm each other. As far as the lives of Naum and Kliment are concerned, there is no evidence that directly ascertains their relations with the court in Preslav, regardless of the statement that their career was completely dependent on the wishes of the Knyaz (Prince) Boris and Tsar Symeon. In this case it is practically impossible to find out to what extent this is true and how much of it is due to the common hagiographical cliché, i.e. relation ruler-saint. The role of the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes and the Bulgarian tsar Petar in the lives of the hermits John of Rila, Prohor of Pčinja, Gavrail of Lesnovo, Ioakim of Osogovo is completely in the sphere of the hagiographical

legend which appears in many saint's lives in the form of the legendary plot about the ruler-hunter or the ruler-patron. As far as the saints from the thirteenth and fourteenth century are concerned, only the evidence in the life of the Patriarch Ioakim I and his relations with the Tsar Ivan Asen II find circumstantial and direct confirmation in the historical sources. The historicity of the relationship between the ruler and the saint from the life of Theodosius of Tarnovo and the narrative about Euthimius can only be ascertained through circumstantial considerations which come from the fact that their authors showed marked interest in the historical narrative in other hagiographical writings of theirs. There are two main reasons for the appearance of real and made-up stories about relations between saints and rulers in saints' lives: purely stylistic, which is characteristic of the genre and creates "historical" fiction, and adherence to historical facts chosen by the author.