
Bistra Nikolaeva Nikolova**HOW LEGITIMATE WAS THE BULGARIAN PATRIARCHATE IN
THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES**

(Summary)

There is some wavering among the historiographical guild whether during the early Middle Ages Bulgaria had its Patriarchate and to what degree it was legitimate. Bulgarian Archbishopric was established in 870 by council, i. e. canonically. There was an archbishop at its head. Institutionally it was dependent on the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which considered its diocese as part of its own and its rank and the range of its territory was determined by the emperor in accordance with the rules in the empire defined by the relations between the Church and secular power. In the period 934–944 the Bulgarian church became autocephalous. It is more complicated to define the status title of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical head due to lack of contemporary sources. Here, as the main source for the existence of autocephalous Bulgarian Patriarchate the list of Du Cange is used. The analysis of its contents, structure, objectives and the ideas it contains prove that the center of his intentions is, on the one hand, to display that the Ohrid Church is continuation of Bulgarian church from before 1018, on the other hand, to indicate the status of the latter as autocephalous. And here the text of Du Cange brings something which does not appear in other sources. In his intention to highlight the highest status of the Ohrid Archbishopric added that besides autocephalous status, Bulgarian church during the reign of Tsar Peter gained patriarchal status. On the background of the analysis of the status, rank and title of the Constantinople patriarchy, the Patriarchate of the First Bulgarian Kingdom occupied significantly lower level as a local one. Its appearance did not infringe the Pentarchy nor did it encroach upon the universal, apostolic nature of the

Church of New Rome. However, it was the first Patriarchate of the newly converted peoples from the area of the Eastern Orthodox nations.