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ДИМО ЧЕШМЕДЖИЕВ, *Етюди върху български средновековни култове* [DİMO ČEŠMEDŽIEV, *Studies of Medieval Bulgarian Cults*], Фондация Българско историческо наследство, Пловдив 2019, пр. VIII, 177.

Dİmo Češmedžiev is a researcher established both in Bulgaria and internationally in the arena of scholars studying medieval Bulgaria. One of the main currents of his academic research is devoted to the veneration of saints. The majority of his publications focus on this subject, including the presented book¹. In the preface, the author declares that it comprises *част от един по-голям проект, който включва проучването на всички български култове през Средновековието* [part of a larger project whose aim is to study all the Bulgarian cults of the Middle Ages] (p. VII). The book features ten studies devoted to the veneration of Constantine the Great, Patriarch Joachim, Michael the Warrior, Filoteia Temnishka, Parascheva of Tărnovo (3 texts), Patriarch Euthymius (2 texts), and finally, the position of Metropolitan Cyprian on the veneration of Bulgarian and Serbian saints.

In the text *Notes on the veneration of Constantine the Great in medieval Bulgaria* (Бележки върху почитанието на Константин I Велики в средновековна България, p. 1–16) D. Češmedžiev lays out the genesis and the development of the veneration of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (306–337),

¹ Е.г. *Към въпроса за култа на княз Борис-Михаил в средновековна България*, ИП 55, 3/4, 1999, p. 158–176; Кирил и Методий в българската историческа памет през Средните векове, София 2001; *Notes on the Cult of the Fifteen Theroiopolitan Martyrs in Medieval Bulgaria*, SCer 1, 2011, p. 143–156; Цар Петър във византийските извори, [in:] *Кръгла маса. “Златният век на цар Симеон: политика, религия и култура”*, ed. В. СТАНЕВ, София 2014, p. 103–110; *Култовете на българските светци през IX–XII в. Автореферат*, Пловдив 2016.

pointing out that his popularity in Bulgaria was affected by how he was perceived in Byzantium. Hence, when this figure of the fourth-century ruler inspired interest in the empire, it did so in the Bulgarian State as well (and vice versa). What the reviewers found particularly interesting was an answer to the question why it was Tsar Peter (927–969), and not his great predecessors Boris-Mihail (852–889) or Simeon I (893–927)², who was first linked to the veneration of Constantine the Great.

The subsequent fragment of the book, *St. Patriarch Joachim and his veneration in Bulgarian Middle Ages* (Светият патриарх Йоаким и неговия култ в Българското средновековие, p. 17–28) examines the life of Joachim I, the first patriarch in the Second Bulgarian Empire. Additionally, it analyzes the source material regarding his veneration, suggesting that he was the only medieval Bulgarian hierarch of the Church who is known to have been officially canonized.

The third text, *St. Michael – the mysterious warrior of medieval Bulgaria* (Св. Михаил – загадъчният воин на средновековна България, p. 29–46), centers around Michael the Warrior, who was celebrated on November 22nd. This figure is so mysterious that it is difficult to establish whether he really existed. His cult had not been confirmed until the 13th century, when

² Tsar Peter and his rule, including the issue of his cult, have recently been the subject of our research. It has produced two books co-authored by us: *The Bulgarian State in 927–969. The Epoch of Tsar Peter I*, ed. M.J. LESZKA, K. MARINOW, Łódź 2018 [= BL, 34]; Z.A. BRZOWSKA, M.J. LESZKA, K. MARINOW, *Piotr I Święty, car bułgarski (ok. 912–969). Maria Leokapena, caryca bułgarska (ok. 912–963)*, Kraków 2018.

his relics were moved from Potuka to Veliko Tŕrnovo, right before or after the Battle of Adrianople (1205).

The next section of the book, *Filoteia Temnishka – a mysterious saint of Tŕrnovo* (Фило-тея Темнишка – мистериозната тŕрновска светица, p. 47–58), discusses the figure of Filoteia of Pamphillia, known as Temnishka, and analyzes the sources connected to her veneration in Bulgaria. Similarly to Michael the Warrior, the state of knowledge about Filoteia is incredibly modest. It is unclear in what period she was alive. Her relics arrived in Tŕrnovo during the rule of Tsar Kaloyan. Following the Turkish conquest, they were transferred to Vidin, and were eventually relocated to Wallachia. She was celebrated on May 28th, and after her relics had been moved to Wallachia, on December 7th.

The fifth text, *Commentary on the veneration of St. Parascheva of Tŕrnovo in Bulgarian Middle Ages* (Бележки за култа на св. Петка Тŕрновска в Българското средновековие, p. 59–66), examines the figure of Parascheva/Petka of Tŕrnovo, the most popular saint of the Bulgarian pantheon, whose veneration has undoubtedly exceeded beyond the Bulgarian territory. Petka is a historic figure, who lived in the last decades of the 10th century and the early 11th century. The author reflects on the multifaceted nature of her veneration and her ties to the cult of Virgin Mary.

The study entitled *The orthodox church with the relics of St. Petka in Tŕrnovo* (Църквата с мощите на св. Петка в Тŕрново, p. 67–78) ponders which of the Veliko Tŕrnovo churches holds the relics of St. Petka. Interestingly, the sources that mention the transfer of Petka's relics to Tŕrnovo (during the rule of John Asen II) include no information about in which church they were laid, aside from referring to it as imperial or palatial. D. Češmedžiev presents the views of Bulgarian scholars, indicating that they have not developed a unanimous position on this issue. Their suggestions included, e.g. churches no. 2 and 5 in Tsarevets.

The subsequent part of the book, *An old church of "St. Petka" in Plovdiv* (Старата църква «Св. Петка» в Пловдив, p. 79–90), reviews preserved information on the medieval

“old” temple of St. Petka and reflects on its location (p. 79–121).

The following, vast study, *The cult of St. Euthymius – the last patriarch of Tŕrnovo* (Култът на св. Евтимий – последния тŕрновски патриарх, p. 91–120), is devoted to the cult of Patriarch Euthymius of Tŕrnovo. The author presents the figure of Euthymius and characterizes the sources that formed the foundation for his veneration, starting from Grigorij Camblak's *Eulogy*. D. Češmedžiev observes that it is not certain when and where the cult of Euthymius started. Most of the chapter discusses the location of the patriarch's burial site, concluding that it is possible that he was interred at the Bachkovo Monastery where he had died in the early 15th century.

In the text *Legends of Patriarch Euthymius* (Легенди за Патриарх Евтимий, p. 121–126) the author characterizes the legends devoted to Euthymius (regarding, e.g. the last years of his life and his burial site), commenting that most of them come from the Rhodopes. In the conclusion, he formulates a postulate to thoroughly examine the body of the legends that refer to Euthymius.

In the final study, *The Metropolitan Cyprian and the cults of Bulgarian saints* (Митрополит Киприан и култовете на българските светци, p. 127–139), D. Češmedžiev considers the issue of the presence of Bulgarian saints in the synaxarion of the Rus' Metropolitan Cyprian. It commemorates such saints, as Petka of Tŕrnovo (October 14th), Ivan of Rila (October 19th), and Hilarion Moglenski (October 20th). It also includes the Serbian saints Sava (January 14th) and Simeon (February 13th). The author reflects that this source is interesting in the context of the Bulgarian-Rus' relationships as it reveals the evolution of the veneration of Bulgarian saints in Rus' and is an expression of what is referred to as “the second South-Slavic influence” in Rus'.

The presented work is supplemented with a preface (p. VI–VII) and bibliography (p. 139–177).

It must be clearly emphasized that the book draws from a complete corpus of sources that have been subjected to a thorough analysis.

It was written using rich literature of the subject, whose findings are skillfully interwoven into the author's reflections. On the one hand, the presented work recapitulates previous research; on the other, it points to its new directions. The book will undoubtedly become an exit point for further discussion devoted to the veneration of saints in medieval Bulgaria.

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