

SUMMARIES

On the spiritual front from Ilinden to the Balkan War. The Bulgarian Exarchate and its institutions (1903 – 1912). Sofia 2021

Macedonia's fate after the Berlin congress – to remain as a province within the Ottoman empire, with all the negative consequences, predetermine the crucial role that the Exarchate has on the lives of the Bulgarian population in the region. It is an official and recognized institution, which represents and protects the rights of the Bulgarian nationality in the European vilayets of the empire. Even though the issues regarding the Exarchate have seen an increase of interest in recent years, there are still issues that have not been researched. The Exarchate and its local institutions are left in the periphery of historical research, which in itself is stimulus for my academic interest on the subject. The current treatise is an effort to draw out a clear look at the state and activity of the Exarchate and its institutions in Macedonia as well as its relationship with the leading political factors in the Ottoman Empire in the period 1903 – 1912. The aim is to follow and analyze the Exarchate's reactions towards the important events and issues of the decade. How the Bulgarian church and its local bodies handle the challenges, what action do they take, to further their mission in defense of the Bulgarian cause in the European vilayets of the empire.

Structurally the book includes a preface, introduction, three chapters and an epilogue. The background of the subject is presented in an introduction, which examines the main characteristics and development of the issue in the previous period – from the Berlin Congress (1878) to the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising (1903)

The first chapter examines the situation in the exact aftermath of the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising. It is a great trial for the Exarchate and its local institutions, which begin a swift recovery from the inflicted damage and active participation in the campaign, organized by Bulgaria, to help those injured and affected by the Uprising in the vilayets. Special notice is given to the involvement of the Great powers in solving the Macedonian issue, through the implementation of the Mürzsteg reforms program by the end of 1903. How the exarchical institutions fit into the post-uprising situation and what is their place in the orbit of the European reformers are questions that this monograph seeks to answer. The Bulgarian-Turkish relations immediately after the uprising are also observed, as well as the negotiations that led to the signing of the treaty between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire in 1904.

The second chapter explores the period up to the Young Turks coup in 1908. Those are years of great challenges for the Exarchy and its local institutions – to maintain the acquired rights and privileges in an atmosphere of distrust and sabotage from the authorities, as well as active and armed foreign propaganda. Special attention is paid on the church-education sphere, which is a priority of the Exarchy, with an emphasis on the introduction of the principle of maintaining the church status quo and resolving the so called “controversial” churches and schools between the Exarchate and the Patriarchate. The readers attention is drawn on the complicated relations between the two national pillars in Macedonia – the Exarchate and IMORO, and the reflections they have on the course of the national cause. Specific situations of conflict are mentioned, the reasons for them, and the negative consequences they bring.

The third chapter examines the period of the Huriyet after the Young Turks coup, a time of brief hope and then great disappointment.

The emphasis is put on the position of the Exarchate and its following actions to protect and strengthen its position as an institution and to expand its exarchical rights in the new political conditions. Special attention is placed on the organizational changes in the exarchical department in the provinces - the creation of new dioceses and the transformation of church municipalities into prelate vicarages; the restoration of collective bodies of governance in Istanbul – Synod and Exarchal council; reforming the school inspectorate; the support of legal and medical practice etc. Focus is put also on the relationship with the new government, which doesn't hide its aspiration “ottomanize” the empire and soon shows its intentions to suspend the rights and privileges of the Bulgarian church municipality and the other non-Muslim municipalities, and destroy their autonomy.

The epilogue summarizes the main conclusions of the researched topic and also gives a panoramic view of the emphases of the current monograph.

The principle of maintaining the church status quo and its implementation in Macedonia in the period 1904-1905

After the Ilinden Uprising in 1903 the principle of maintaining the church status quo was introduced in Macedonia. Its initiator was Hilmi Pasha, the chief inspector of Rumelian regions. The essence of the principle consisted in preserving the spiritual authority of the

villages of the period until the uprising. Evidence suggested that the government strictly adhered to this decision intended to prevent the unification of the Bulgarian element in the province. Guided by this idea, managers applied the principle to the detriment of the Bulgarian population, ignoring it at times, where it is advantageous from a strategic perspective. This way the authorities offered clear support of the Greek Patriarchate at the expense of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Maintaining the church status quo proved not to be a matter of principle, but a strategic move. Since 1903 a process was observed of returning to their home church - the St. Exarchate in many villages which during the uprising recognized forcibly the Greek Patriarchate. Their number - more than two hundred, is indicative of the importance of this process. Alarmed, the Chief Inspector took measures to restrict or stop this movement of withdrawing from the Patriarchate by the villages, which was expressed in rejection of supplications for renouncement of the Greek Patriarchate. At the same time he sanctioned the newly withdrawing villages by closing their churches and schools or delivering them to the minority of Greeks adherents, and also forbidding priests and teachers to practice their profession. Harassment of these villages was not an accident, but common practice carefully prepared and implemented according to plan, which became a central feature of governance in Macedonia in the first years after the Ilinden uprising.

The issue of contentious churches and schools in Macedonia 1904–1910

The issue of contentious churches and schools in Macedonia 1904–1910 Rositsa Lelyova The years after the Ilinden Uprising put to the test the overall work of the Exarchate in Macedonia. One of the levers by which the Ottoman authority tried to sabotage the process of consolidation of the Bulgarian element in the provinces was the principle of preserving the ecclesiastical status quo. After the uprising many villages started leaving the Patriarchate and passing under the jurisdiction of the Exarchate. That was an increasing trend which pushed to the fore the question of the ownership of churches and schools. For many years the problem remained unsolved by the government, whose policy was to maintain the idea of confrontation between patriarchists and exarchists. And after the Young Turk revolution of July 1908 the issue remained on the agenda, and the government continued to apply the familiar tactic of delay and transfer of responsibility in this case to the parliament. The decision was taken as late as the summer of 1910 with the adoption of the Law of contentious

churches and schools. Although its provisions did not fully meet the legitimate expectations of Bulgarians, they regulated a solution to a problem which albeit artificially created and maintained by the government was quite pressing for the population in the provinces.

The chairmen of the Bulgarian church municipalities in Macedonia – individuals with a mission

More than once in Bulgarian historiography the question about the role of the individual in history, about its influence on different events and processes and about its significance as a factor, has been raised. It is without doubt that individuals have their important place in Bulgarian history. Some of them, however, remain anonymous and their role almost isn't noticed. Such is the case with the many municipal chairmen in Macedonia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The reason for this is very prosaic - people who are not part of, for example, the party-political elite in Bulgaria, or among the activists of the revolutionary movement in Macedonia and Edirne and whose activities are far from attractive, but are largely related to the everyday life of people, often go unnoticed. But this fact does not diminish their activity and does not lessen their significance. The purpose of the examination is to outline the role of the chairmen of the Bulgarian church municipalities in the overall organization and conduct of the church-national and educational work in Macedonia, to emphasize the importance of the post of chairman and the responsibilities it brings. The development of the church-educational work in different towns of Macedonia, its successes or failures are directly related to the personality of the chairman. Often a successful year for a town municipality is a consequence of his activity and personal qualities. Bright positive examples in this regard are the presidents of the Bulgarian municipalities in the final decade of the 19th century in Prilep (priest Spas), in Gorna Dzhumaya (Archimandrite Nikolay Gologanov), in Kavadarsti, and later in Kukush (hieromonk Metodiy Shterev) and others. These are the people in whose hands is placed the difficult and responsible mission - to preserve the Bulgarian cause in the vilyaets.

Bulgarian municipalities in Macedonia

– between the ottoman reign and the European reformers

The Ilinden-Preobrajanie rebellion 1903 activates the Balkan policy of the Great powers and accelerate their role in solving the Macedonian issue. This reflects in the Mursheg reform program from the end of the same year. Civil agents from Austro-Hungary and Russia and police officers from several European cities settle in the municipalities. In the new circumstances the Bulgarian municipalities, hoping to improve their position in Macedonia, begin to rebuild the structure that was demolished by the rebellion and to activate their educational activities performed by the church. Regretfully the big expectations do not fulfill. The conflict with the local authorities do not settle down and the foreign propaganda accelerate. The principle of retaining of the status of the church was involved which is acting against the interest of the Bulgarian population. Quite logically the Bulgarian municipalities turn for help to the civil agents regarding them as a support from Europe which was engaged in improving the situation in the vilayets. Thus the most popular legal institutions in Macedonia continue to defend their rights relying on the support of the European reformers.

The Constantinople newspaper “Vesti”- an archive of memory for the Bulgarian town municipalities in Macedonia.

The Bulgarian municipalities in Macedonia have broad competencies in the sphere of church and education, while the first information about specific municipal deeds and initiatives, information about the chairmen and other members of the municipalities, as well as events which directly or indirectly concern these Bulgarian institutions, can be found in the public space in the pages of the press, and, in particular, within the pages of the Exarchate’s press – the newspaper “Vesti” (earlier “Novini”), which is printed in Constantinople. There is nothing odd about that, considering the municipalities’ status as legal public organizations, it is only natural that the information concerning them would be printed in the Exarchate’s newspaper, whose readers are mostly Bulgarians outside the borders of the Principality. However, it should also be noted that the Exarchate was a legal institution in the Ottoman Empire, which predetermines the moderate style of writing the newspaper, with a clear loyalty

to the authorities. The municipalities, of course, remain in people's memories mainly with their activities, with their specific actions regarding the church, school and social life, however with all of that, the newspaper "Vesti" popularized these activities and provided the possibility to be read not only by the contemporary people, but also by the following generations, so they can create real view of the past.

The municipal deed in Thessaloniki 1904-1906 through the eyes of Evtim Sprostranov

The first years after the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising (1903) were a period of severe trials for the Exarchate's deed in Macedonia. As early as after the Congress of Berlin (1878), when Macedonia remained within the Ottoman Empire, Thessaloniki emerged as the center of the Exarchate's church-school work, and the Thessaloniki municipality - as central to the rest. Its importance increased after the uprising, as this city was the seat of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian civilian agents - Mueller and Demerick, who settled here as a result of the implemented Mürzsteg reforms. The close proximity to the European reformers emerged as an important advantage due to the opportunity to take concrete steps to solve problems and improve the situation of the Bulgarian population. Taking into account all this, it is clear how important the joint, coordinated and harmonious relations between the individual representatives of the Bulgarian institutions are.

Evtim Sprostranov's two-year stay in Thessaloniki as an inspector of Bulgarian schools is full of emotions, as well as events important for the future development of the national cause in Macedonia. Unfortunately, the much-needed understanding and harmony with the head of the spiritual institution in the city, of which he is a direct official, is not achieved. Although church-school activity should be their joint work, it becomes an arena of collision and insurmountable conflict on both a professional and personal basis. The carefully written 4 notebooks, which remained an unpublished part of the diary, take us to the "kitchen" of municipal life in Thessaloniki in the first post-Ilinden years and really reveal the atmosphere in which the Exarchate's activity takes place in this important vilayet center.

The maintenance of the church status quo in Macedonia after the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising – a question of principles or a tactical move?

After the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie rebellion in 1903 in Macedonia the principle of preserving the status quo of the church was adopted. Its initiator is the Chief Inspector of the Ruemellien regions, Hilmie pasha. The nature of the principle manifests in the preservation of the clerical authorities in the villages until the time of the uprising. The facts show that the authorities stick strictly to this decision, whose goal is to prevent the unification of the Bulgarian element in the regions. Led by this idea, the government applies this principle to the detriment of the Bulgarian population, although often violate it, when it's strategically beneficial to them. This way the authorities express an obvious support to the Greek patriarchate to the disadvantage of the Bulgarian exarchate. The preservation of the status quo of the church appears to be a strategic move rather than a matter of principle.

Bulgarian church municipalities in Macedonia (1878-1903) – status and structural and organization questions

After the Berlin Congress (1878) the Bulgarian town municipal network in Macedonia was recovered and expanded. The municipalities became the largest legal public organizations, connected with the church, the enlightenment, the social and the national life of Bulgarians in the Vilayets. They act within the hard conditions of the Ottoman politic-administrative system. The new reform project: Law on the Vilayets in European Turkey (1880), project dated 22. IV.1896, exercised influence upon the self-governing institutions and upon the situation of the Bulgarian population. Even after 1878 the Bulgarian municipalities in Macedonia kept their functions of bodies of the local self-governance, which under the control of the state authority. On the other hand, they are still considered religious communities. As such they are subject of the Bulgarian exarchate established in 1870. The manner of governance retained its traits. The Turkish arbitrary rule and the Greek intrigues reach enormous scales and became a natural environment of the municipalities. One of the main problems of the Bulgarian self-governed bodies was defined – the ignoring of their rights and privileges and their lack of recognition by the authorities. This is particularly

characteristic in the eparchies, where no exarchic bishops could be found – until 1890 – everywhere in Macedonia.

The Bulgarian town municipalities have strongly outlined structures and organization. In 1880 the program of the Exarchate came out, which concerned the organization and the activity of the municipalities, their obligations and competence. Two years later – 1882, Naum Sprostranov developed a draft statute of the municipality of Thessalonica, which was designed according to the requirements of the Exarchate and approved by it. It does not contain geographical restraints or specificities, therefore, it was planned for joint application (also in the other municipalities in the region). The chairperson has his leading place for the town governance of the activities which fall under their jurisdiction. Church and school boards were formed which had specific functions. The voting system of municipalities is interesting, which until 1896 was not firmly regulated and commonly valid. The institutions supported permanent relationship with Exarchate and turned to it for cooperation in connection with different issues. They established mutual contacts. It was important for the success of the church and the school activity in the vilayets is also the cooperation between the municipalities and the population – the supportive attitude of the instructions, which present the people, on the one hand, and the adherence to the municipal decisions, on the other hand.

Bulgarian exarchate local institutions in Macedonia in the period after Ilinden and their relations with the Ottoman authorities

Ilinden Uprising of 1903 was a test for Bulgarian Exarchist local authorities in Macedonia, for their maturity and ability to survive in extreme conditions. Not that the situation before the uprising was mild and stimulating the development of Christians in the empire, but the revolutionary events of the summer of 1903 mobilized authorities to focus their efforts to “tame” with cruelty the restive Bulgarians and prevent the consolidation of the largest nationality in the region – the Bulgarian one. Despite the blow that they suffered, the municipalities managed to recover and strengthen the distraught municipal network in the provinces, so that they continue to successfully fulfill their church school and social functions. This article traces the ways in which the Exarchist local institutions fitted into the post Ilinden atmosphere and the attitude of the Ottoman authorities towards them. Despite all the

difficulties and obstacles encountered, they continued to assert their rights and privileges with patience and diplomacy. The article discusses the changes that occurred under the constitutional parliamentary regime. Albeit with no official sanction from the authority the Exarchate expanded its office and continued to work hard on the organization of the exarchist network defending its reputation as an institution, and the overall ethnical case in Macedonia and Odrin region.

Relations between local Exarchic authorities in Macedonia and IMRO in the late nineteenth – the first decade of the twentieth century

The issue on the relations between the Bulgarian Exarchate and its local institutions (Metropolis, vicarage and municipalities) and the Internal Revolutionary Organization in the late 19th – early 20th century certainly arouses interest and numerous questions in historiography. Is it possible to draw a rigid line of demarcation between these two trends in Bulgarian national liberation movement in Macedonia or are they the two sides of the same coin, with a common goal, but with a different approach for its implementation? If the second statement is true, what were the reasons for the harsh collision and sharp attacks between the supporters of the two lines and why was it so difficult to reach unity in the name of nationwide mission? Definitely the evolutionary, cultural and educational line drawn consistently and patiently by the Exarchate was conceived long before the revolutionary one, embodied by the Internal Organization, which is only natural. It is an undeniable fact that the first step towards political liberation is the rise of the population cultural and ethnical awareness. Not accidentally, the activists of the revolutionary organization were mainly teachers. It would be wrong to underestimate one line in the national liberation movement at the expense of the other, to ignore Exarchal activity as obsolete and incapable of actual achievements, or to regard it as an obstacle to the new active revolutionary methods. Precisely such an attitude led to conflicts that caused serious damage to the Bulgarian cause in the provinces. Certainly fair criticism of the passivity of exarchist authorities in many cases was appropriate and timely, and did not tolerate objections. The problem lies in the inability of Bulgarian leaders to unite their efforts to work together and to respect their rights. And this was detrimental to the success of the national liberation movement, especially after the Ilinden Uprising. The purpose of this article is to present the complex relations between

exarchist authorities and revolutionaries without saving some unpleasant facts, seeking answers to the above mentioned questions by analyzing extensive documentary material on the topic.

Bulgarian education in Macedonia at the end of XIX - early XX century – challenges and problems

After the Berlin Congress in 1878 Macedonia remained within the Ottoman Empire and was forced to take all the negative outcomes of this situation, including the sphere of education. The Exarchy and its organs, represented by church municipalities (and later Metropolises and vicarage) undertook the important task of recovery, expansion and development of school network in the area. Education was a priority for Exarchy activity not only because it completely fell within its remit as a recognized institution in the empire, but also because of the fact that it was the key to preserving and strengthening the Bulgarian spirit in the provinces as well as strengthening of the national consciousness. School privileges of 1894, according to which Bulgarian municipalities were recognized as official representatives of the Exarchy on school matters in places where there were no bishops, were indisputable success of the Exarchy. Regardless of this recognition, however, the authorities did not abandon its current policy to hinder the normal development of the educational work of the largest Christian community in the area. This process was enhanced especially after the Ilinden Uprising of 1903, when namely the intellectuals and educational institutions, in particular teachers and schools bore the burden. The closure of schools and the obstruction of teachers to fulfill their obligations were part of the restrictions. The introduction of the principle of preserving the status quo of the church in 1904 and the emergence of the issue about controversial churches and schools had negative impact on the overall development of educational work in Macedonia. Unfortunately, despite the high expectations, the new constitutional regime after 1908 increased the pressure on the Bulgarian educational institutions. A striking example of this was the attempt to suspend the privileges of the schools dating from 1894, by separating schools from local authorities and by establishing state control over them. In these circumstances Bulgarian education in Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth - early twentieth century was a real challenge for the Exarchy and its subordinate parishes.

Conflicts and problems in the Bulgarian municipal institutions in Macedonia in the final quarter of the XIX century

The largest legal, elected public institutions of the Bulgarians in Macedonia - the municipalities, have been established over the years as a major pillar for the preservation of the Bulgarian cause in the vilayets. Their broad competencies in the educational, church and social spheres, the legally regulated contacts with the authorities and with other political factors in the Empire, deservedly turned them into leading institutions for the population. Unfortunately, they (like all public institutions) were not insured against internal conflicts and intrigues.

Unfortunately in many municipalities occur conflicts and problems, which have a negative impact on the church-national deed in Macedonia. In some cases the conflicts escalate and even lead up to the split of the municipalities. The internal strife becomes one of the characteristics of the self-governing institutions and brings the negatives of the division and confrontation. Considering their primary mission – to protect the interests and to consolidate the Bulgarian population in the Vilayets – the important task, which stands before the municipalities and the Exarchate is the swift and reasonable solution of the internal conflicts and discords.

Affirmation and extension of the Bulgarian Exarchic diocese in Macedonia after the Berlin congress

After the Berlin congress of 1878 Macedonia remained within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, forcing the Bulgarian population to live outside the boundaries of their motherland, with all the negatives that are due to it. San Stefano Bulgaria remained an unaccomplished ideal, the striving towards which would not cease in the upcoming decades. The main issue became the preservation and consolidation of the Bulgarian national identity within the vilayets. This was also a primary task for the Bulgarian Exarchate, established in 1870 and its local institutions – bishoprics and church municipalities. A primary role in this

important mission played the Bulgarian clergy in Macedonia. Unfortunately Macedonia continued to keep its status as an Ottoman province, so the struggle for the affirmation of the Bulgarian nation and the defense of its rights remained the primary objective. With the foundation of the Exarchate the Bulgarian nation was officially recognized within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. In reality, the Sultan's firman was only partially applied. This provoked the consecutive actions of all of the Exarchate's institutions for its application. With a lot of patience and diplomacy, Exarch Joseph conducted a policy for the stabilization of the Exarchate in Istanbul and, at the same time, for the consolidation and extension of its diocese in Macedonia and the region of Adrianople Thrace. He was assisted in this activity by the self-governing Bulgarian institutions. The appointment of Bulgarian bishops in the Macedonian eparchies was a priority, though accompanied by multiple difficulties on the side of the Ottoman authorities. In Macedonia the Bulgarian Exarchate had recognized bishops in three separate eparchies – in Skopje, Ohrid and Veles, which remained without bishops after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. Exarch Joseph remained de facto alone in Istanbul (Tsargrad) and began a hard-fought battle for the restoration of the Exarchate department in the vilayets. Initial success was achieved in 1890 with a Sultan's decree for Bulgarian bishops in the Skopje and Ohrid eparchies. It was a result of the combined efforts of the Exarchate, the Bulgarian town municipalities and the Bulgarian government. In 1894 the successive and purposeful approach of the Exarchate and its local church institutions, again with the active interference of Bulgarian diplomacy gained new success – the enactment of decrees (berats) for Bulgarian bishops in Veles and Nevrokop. Three years later, in 1897, three consecutive decrees (berats) were enacted for Bulgarian bishops in the Bitola, Debar and Strumica eparchies. Thus in 1898, twenty years after the Congress of Berlin, the Exarchate affirmed and extended its diocese in Macedonia, boasting with bishops in 7 eparchies: Skopje, Ohrid, Veles, Nevrokop, Bitola, Debar and Strumica. In Adrianople it had one bishop, however without a decree (berat). Eparchy and kaza governing bodies were created. They were headed by eparchial pontiffs and general vicars. They assumed control of the church and municipality deeds in their departmental regions. In the other Macedonian eparchies (Kostur (Kastoria), Lerin, Voden, Thessaloniki, Kukush (Kilkis), Seres, Melnik and Drama) the chairmen of the Bulgarian municipalities were de facto general vicars. They were recognized as responsible for the arrangement of the educational work and were officious in regard to the church deeds. At the same time Exarch Joseph increased his influence and authority over the population. In the following years up to the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903 and then until the Balkan War of 1912, the Exarchate and the Bulgarian municipalities continued their activity for expanding the Exarchate's diocese, unfortunately without the wanted result. Nevertheless

their achievements thus far were noteworthy. Their value is measured by the importance of the long-standing, successive actions of the Bulgarian church institutions for the preservation and consolidation of the Bulgarian nation within the vilayets.

Organizational changes in the Bulgarian Exarchate after the Young Turk revolution (1908-1909)

Following the introduction of the constitutional parliamentary regime in the Ottoman Empire post-July 1908, the Exarchate attempted to make use of the new situation in order to protect its rights and privileges that had been violated by the former authorities. The first step taken in that direction was the constitution of its governing bodies in Constantinople – the Synod and the Exarchate Council. The legal justification of this decision is contained in a number of founding documents: the Sultan's firman for the establishment of the Bulgarian church of 28 February 1870; the Statute for the management of the Bulgarian Exarchate, which was accepted in 1871 also in the Ottoman constitution itself. The establishment of the collective governing bodies of the Exarchate had a great significance for the Exarchate's activities in the vilayets as a whole.

The Exrchate's jurisdiction in the Eparchy of Debar during the First World War through the eyes of Archimandrite Cyril

After the inclusion of Bulgaria in the First World War in the autumn of 1915, the restoration of the Exarchate's jurisdiction began in the newly liberated lands in Macedonia. The process could not be postponed and developed rapidly, as before the Balkan Wars the Exarchate had a well-formed and developed network of its institutions - Metropolias, hierarch vicars and church municipalities, which passed the test of time. The Eparchy of Debar is one of those to which a Bulgarian metropolitan bishop was sent with a berat as early as the end of the 19th century (1897) and which has been developing active church and school activities for many years. As early as during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) the Exarchate suffered a

crushing blow from the Serbian and Greek authorities, who expelled the Bulgarian bishops from the Macedonian Eparchies and destroyed the Exarchate's church-administrative structures built with so much effort and perseverance. This also happened with the Metropolia of Debar, which was closed by the Serbian authorities, and in June 1913 the Metropolitan of Debar, Kozma, was forced to leave his Eparchy. The restoration of the Exarchate's church-administrative administration in the Eparchy of Debar began in early 1916. As early as the end of 1915, Metropolitan Kozma of Debar was invited by St. Synod to return to Macedonia and take over the management of the Eparchy again. Unfortunately, in January 1916 in Kichevo, on his way to the city of Debar, Kozma Prechistanski died. On March 8, 1916, the Synod appointed Metropolitan bishop Boris of Ohrid as vicar of the Eparchy of Debar. Boris of Ohrid complied with his recommendations and satisfied the request of the people of Debar, proposing Archimandrite Cyril as his protosingle in the Eparchy of Debar. On April 26, 1916, Archimandrite Cyril arrived in Debar. In his memoirs written in the 1920s, Cyril of Rila described very vaguely the two years (from April 1916 to December 1918) during which he was de facto governor of the Eparchy of Debar. On the other hand, the protocols of St. Synods give us a more detailed picture of the situation in the Eparchy. With the internment of Archimandrite Cyril by the Serbian authorities in the Studenica Monastery in Old Serbia, the Exarchate's administration of the Eparchy came to an end. For the second time, in just a few years, the Exarchate suffered a crushing blow, losing its Macedonian Eparchies again.

The Bulgarian Exarchate after the Young Turks coup - the fight on the silent front continues

The establishment of the constitutional-parliamentary regime in the Ottoman empire in July 1908 sees the Bulgarian population in the vilayets enthusiastic and hopeful for improvement of their situation. The Exarchate also tries to use the new situation to protect its right and privileges which were trampled during the old regime. The basis on which it is grounded is the constitution itself. The mission of the Exarchate in Macedonia and Edirne after the Young Turks coup remains the same – to preserve the national identity of the Bulgarian population and to insure them the opportunity to develop as a full-fledged municipality. In order to achieve that goal, the Exarchate continues to steadily and successively conduct its church-educational activities and continues to work in the field of

diplomacy.

It undertakes a number of steps towards the recovery of its legal rights. The first step is the creation of its governing bodies in Istanbul – the Synod and the Exarchal council. The second step is the creation of seven new bishoprics with the governing eparchies and the transformation of church municipalities into archiepiscopal vicarages. Although without official berats for bishops, the installation of governing bodies within these eparchies does commence. In this way the Bulgarian Exarchate widens its authority and both its diocese.

The artificial question about the disputable churches and schools, created by the regime after the Ilinden–Preobrazhenie Uprising, continues to be a mainstream issue even in the new constitutional rule. The resolution of the said issue is a main priority of the Exarchate, with which they aim to protect the interest of the Bulgarian population.

The neglect of the exarchial institutions is also typical for the period of the Hürriyet and aims to sabotage the strengthening and consolidation of the Bulgarian nationality in the vilayets. Therefore one of the main goals of the Exarchate remains the hard protection of the rights and privileges which it has as an institution, which de facto is a defense of the rights of the Bulgarian church municipality in the Ottoman empire.

The Müritz reforms in Macedonia – hope or disappointment

The issue of reform in European Turkey is not new in European diplomacy. However, the experience so far in this regard is not encouraging for the Bulgarian population in Macedonia, which remains deceived in its hopes for actual change. The Austro-Hungarian reform project of February 1903, which was given the ironic nickname “Padarski” (“Watchman's”), marked the beginning of the “official intervention of European forces in the Macedonian reform work”. The Ilinden-Preobrazhenie uprising was the collapse of the Vienna reforms program. Its suppression again raised the question of the necessity of introducing substantial and effective reforms in the Ottoman Empire. The resurgence of the Balkan policy of the Great Powers and their intensified intervention in resolving the Macedonian question were reflected in the elaboration and imposition by Austria-Hungary and Russia of the Müritz reform program at the end of 1903. Austro-Hungarian and Russian civilian agents (Mueller and Demerick) and gendarmery officers from several European countries under the direction gen.

De Giorgis were situated in the vilyaets. The project outlines judicial, administrative and financial reforms, territorial changes in the administrative units, as well as the allocation by the Turkish government of funds for the reconstruction of the houses, churches and schools of the Christian population, for aid and assistance in the return of refugees, etc. The simple reforms, deprived of the possibility of real control over the Ottoman government and the subordinate rather than leading role of the reformers, would obviously make it difficult to improve the situation of the Bulgarian population in the region. However it didn't lose hope. The Exarchate and the Bulgarian church municipalities continue their activity in the vilyaets in the conditions of an intensified European presence in the face of the reformers, from whom they expect support and protection. To what extent, however, the expectations are justified is a reasonable question, which arises on the basis of numerous reports of problems in the church-educational, economic and national plan, which not only do not decrease, but even intensify during the reform years. The idea is to see how effective such a European reform project can be, which has failed to secure guarantees of implementation in a less than "friendly" environment.

Problems and Challenges for the Bulgarian Exarchate and Its Local Authorities in the Years of “the Hurriyet”

Problems and Challenges for the Bulgarian Exarchate and Its Local Authorities in the Years of “the Hurriyet” Rositsa Lelyova* Abstract: The Young Turks coup during the hot political summer of 1908 shattered the Ottoman Empire. Constitutional-parliamentary rule was introduced and the early era of the ‘hurriyet’ (freedom) was actively promoted. Understandably, the Bulgarian population was enthusiastic about the change, cherishing hopes and expectations for positive reforms in all spheres of life. Without unnecessary euphoria, but with a clear awareness that it should take advantage of the new situation, the Bulgarian Exarchate took active steps to protect its rights and privileges that had been violated by the old authorities. The basis on which the Exarchate relied was the constitution itself. The steps it took were in several directions: 1. Establishment of the collective governing bodies in Constantinople – the Synod and the Exarchate Council. This was the first success of the Bulgarian Exarchate after the Young Turks coup. Without explicit interrogation and permission from the Sublime Porte, under the legal protection of the constitution, after 30

years of effort, the Exarchate regained its legal right. Henceforth followed the difficult path of defending what had been won. 2. Reorganization of the churchadministrative division of the exarchate department in the vilayets – establishment of new bishoprics (though without berats recognising the appointments of the new metropolitans) and vicarates (former ecclesiastical communities) to enhance the influence and authority of the Bulgarian Church in the vilayets. 3. Reformation of the school inspectorate, which was under the rule of the Exarchate; support of doctors and jurists to raise the level of the Bulgarian population in cultural and political terms, etc.

**The Bulgarian Town Municipalities in Macedonia
(1878 – 1903), Sofia 2016, 370 p.**

After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Macedonia remained a province within the Ottoman Empire, suffering all the negative consequences. In these conditions, the Bulgarian town municipalities are established as the most massive, legal public institutions related to various aspects of life of Bulgarians in the vilayets - church, educational, social and national. They are under the direct jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate, established in 1870, which is the supreme figurehead and organizer of the entire church and national activity in Macedonia and are in constant contact with it, united by the common mission – preserving the Bulgarian cause in the still not liberated province.

This topic has not been the subject of a comprehensive study in Bulgarian historiography so far, which is why the current book aims to fill in the blanks, giving the reader the opportunity to get acquainted in depth with the essential characteristics, competencies and activities of these extremely important for Bulgarians in Macedonia local Exarchate authorities.

Upset during the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the town municipal network quickly rebuilt its structures. The institutions form their composition and organization and start active work in their subordinate region, in accordance with their broad competencies. The current study traces these processes, outlining the background against which they develop - the administrative structure of the province, the political, demographic and socio-economic situation of the Bulgarian population. The status of the municipalities was clarified and their relations with the political factors in the Ottoman Empire were traced. Attention is also paid to the problems and contradictions in the municipal governance, as well as to the contacts of the

municipalities with the Internal Revolutionary Organization. The multi-layered activity of the municipalities in the church-national, educational and social field, which outlines their main role in the process of preservation and consolidation of the Bulgarian element in the vilayets, is examined in detail. Through it, as well as through the resistance of the municipalities against foreign political propaganda, they took their rightful place as important public organizations, called upon to preserve the national identity of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia in the difficult conditions of the Ottoman political rule.