

Political reasons for Danube Bulgarians Accepting Christianity

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Makale Gönderim Tarihi
12.04.2020

Makale Kabul Tarihi
06.06.2020

Abstract

Onogur-Bulgarians, belonging to the belief of Gök Tengri (Sky-God), came to the Danube and established a state there in the 7th century under the leadership of Asparuh. The indigenous Slavic population in the lands that the Bulgarians passed from and dominated was a pagan belief. The fact that both ethnic groups belonged to a different belief system did not prevent them from living side by side in peace. As a result of the nomadic Bulgarian Turks' resident life since the Omurtag period and their marriage to the Slavic population, the Slav and Slavic speaking population increased. On the other hand, in the Balkans, the closest neighbors of Bulgarians, Moravia and the Franks, accepted Christianity and strengthened politically, making it difficult for the Bulgarian Khan to control the settled population in the border area. The endless tensions with the Roman church of the Byzantine Empire in the south of Bulgaria, and the effort to see themselves superior to the others, continued for a long time. This fight between the two forces did not escape the eyes of the Bulgarians who were militarily strong. In this study, the political reasons of Bulgarians' acceptance of Christianity in the 9th century and the declaration of Christianity as the official religion of the state will be analyzed.

Keywords: Danube Bulgarians, Christianity, Boris, Byzantine, Church.

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Tuna Bulgarlarının Hristiyanlıęı Kabul Etmesinin Siyasi Nedenleri

zet

Asparuh nderlięinde Gk Tengri inanışına mensup olan Onogur-Bulgarlar'ının Tuna'ya gelmeleri ve burada devlet kurmaları yaklaşık VII. yzyıla denk gelmektedir. Bulgarların gelmiş oldukları topraklarda ve hâkimiyeti altına aldıkları yerli Slav nfusu pagan inaniřa mensuptur. Her iki etnik grubun farklı inaniř sistemine mensup olmaları, onların uzun sre yan yana barıř iinde yařamalarına engel olmamıřtır. Gebe olan Bulgar Trkleri Omurtag dneminden itibaren yerleřik hayata gemeleri ve Slav nfusuyla evlenmeleri neticesinde Slav ve Slavca konuřan nfusun oęalmasına neden olmuřtur. Dięer taraftan Balkanlarda, Bulgarlara en yakın komřuları olan Moravya ve Franklar'ın Hristiyanlıęı kabul ve siyasi anlamda glenmeleri, Bulgar Hanlarının sınır blgesinde yerleřik nfusu kontrol altına almalarını zorlařtırmıřtı. Bulgaristan'ın gneyindeki Bizans İmparatorluęu'nun Roma kilisesiyle bitmek bilmeyen gerginlikleri ve her ikisinin de dięerine gre kendini stn grme abası uzun sre devam etmiřtir. İki g arasında devam eden bu kavga yanı bařında askeri anlamda gl olan Bulgarların gznden kamamıřtır. Biz bu alıřmada IX. yzyılda Bulgarların toplu halde Hristiyanlıęın kabul ve devletin resmi din ilan edilmesi ile ilgili siyasi nedenlerini ele alınarak deęerlendireceęiz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tuna Bulgarları, Hristiyanlık, Boris, Bizans, Kilise.

In the Byzantine records at the beginning of the 7th century,¹ the state established by Bulgarians in the north of the Black Sea was recorded as "Great Bulgaria" or "Onogur-Bulgarian State". Organa Khan is in the first place among the monarchs belonging to the Doulo²

¹ İ.S.ıurov. *VizantiyskiyeİstorieskiyeSoineniya: "Hronologiya" Feofana," Brevariı" Nikifora*, Nauka. Moskova, 1980 s.159

²According to OmeljanPritsak, the Doulo dynasty is the famed T'u-ko (Tu-ku) family, which has been cultivating Hun tanhuns since Asian Hun Tanhu Mo-tun (209-174 BC). o-klak, duo-klo = Doulo) For this reason, the Bulgarian khans belonging to the Dulo family are connected to the same root as the Huns of Asia., İbrahim Kafesoęlu, *TrkMillikltr*, tken, İstanbul 2017, s. 195-196

family in the Bulgarian Khan List. Organa's nephew, the Bulgarian leader Kovrat, entered into an alliance agreement with Byzantium, probably due to the effort of the Byzantine emperor who faced the Avar-Sassanian alliance.³ Between 618-619 AD, there were various views on the baptism of Bulgarians and their leaders in Byzantium.⁴ In sources, there is little or no information about Kovrat's childhood and youth. In the 7th century, Kovrat formed an alliance with Byzantium and established an independent state.⁵ However, the “Great Bulgaria” he founded was short-lived and disintegrated shortly after his death. Theofanis “Chronology in Byzantine sources contains information about his death as follows:

“During the reign of Constantine, Krovat, the ruler of Bulgaria and the Kotrags, passed away. Krovat left five sons after him. Krovat testified that his sons should not be separated from each other and that they would be strong by saying that there was power in unity in his will. Sometime after Kovrat's death, his sons did not keep his

³ Peter Golden, *Türk Halkların Tarihine giriş*, çev. Osman Karatay, Ötiken, İstanbul 2016, s.255

⁴Patriarch Nikephoros talks about the peace talks between Byzantium and Persians in his section where he wrote the events of 619 years. In the “Chronicle Te of Theophanes, he mentioned the peace treaty between Emperor Herakleios and Hüsrev for the same year. Patriarch Nikephoros spoke of the Christian acceptance of the “Huns kab after the failed treaty with the Persians. He then added that the Byzantines had made a peace agreement with the Avars and that the Avars did not comply with this agreement. The Theophanes record also mentions the peace treaty with the Avars, but the Huns have no record of accepting Christianity. Nikephoros may have used the term “Hun” was only for Bulgarians of “Greater Bulgaria” (see Breviary 679/680). The Huns are unlikely to be Avars, because the empire is in constant conflict with the Avars at the beginning of the 6th and 7th centuries, and other sources do not mention the Avars' acceptance of Christianity. Nikephoros called the Avars "Hun" as opposed to Theophanes. Nikiforius commented that the “Hun’ Huns ’, who published the chronicles, were Turks, but this was a claim that had no strong argument and could not go beyond guesswork. The analyzed ver Breveriya may refer to the Great (Magna) Bulgarian Huns of Kubrat (Jean de Nikiou, p.460). Nikiou bishop Ioannis is concerned with the Bulgarian acceptance of Christianity in Constantinople. This prediction was supported by V. Zlatarskiy (ZlatarskiyIstoriya CI, p.141-144, Pritsakür Fürstenliste ”p.35), but by A. Burmova (GretskiIzvoriza Bolgarskatalstoriya C.III, p.291) opposed these claims. On the other hand, D. Moravschik commented on the Nik Hun siz which the Huns mentioned by Nikephoros.

⁵ Istvan Zimonyi, *Türkler Ansiklopedisi, Bulgarlar ve Ogurlar*, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara.2002, s.1061

father's will and separated from each other. Only his eldest son Batbayan remained in the land of his ancestors. His second son, Kotrag, crossed the Tanayisriver and settled here. The fourth and fifth sons crossed the river Istr, also known as the Danube, one of them accepted the rule of the Avars in Panonia with his army, and the other came to Pentapol, near Ravenna, to accept the rule of the Christian monarch there. Asparuh, the third son of Kovrat, crossed the Dnepr and Dnestr rivers and reached the Danube, settling in the area between his older brother and his younger brother....”⁶

The state which Asparuh (679-702) founded in the south of Dobruca by breaking the defense of Emperor Constantine the Fourth and soon developed in terms of military and political aspects was considered “small” when compared to that of Itil Bulgars. However, this state was the longest lasting political formation established by Ogur Turks. It is understood that the state was established on solid foundations because of its existence between two great powers such as Byzantine and Avar empires. The Bulgarians who came to this region seemed to connect the Slavic masses in the Balkans under one frame. It is widely accepted that Bulgarians have taught the Slavic people the concepts of homeland, state and nation⁷and then equipped them with the ability to protect themselves against Byzantium by organizing them.⁸

Religious Beliefs of Slavic Population

Although there is very limited information about the beliefs of Slavic tribes in the Balkans, the first written records of Slavs' beliefs belong to Priskus in the 4th century.

The Byzantine observer regarded the Slavs (Sklavins) on the left bank of the Danube and the Ants in the Eastern European plains as a single nation without discrimination between these peoples. Priskus wrote this:

“Slavs are part of the population of the established Bulgarian State. They believe in the forces of nature. They believe in water, rivers and water nymphs living in these rivers. They sacrifice sacrifices

⁶ İ. S. Çıçurov. *Vizantiyskiye İstoriçeskiye Soçineniya*, s.60-61

⁷ Géza Fehér, *Bulgar Türkleri Tarihi*, TTK, Ankara 1984, s.45.

⁸ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, Ötüken, İstanbul, 2017, s.196,197

to the nymphs or other forces of nature they imagine. They look for scars to find out whether there will be salvation from heavy illnesses or whether they will be victorious when going to war. When their wishes are fulfilled, they sacrifice the forces of nature they believe in. The animals they sacrifice are generally ox. One of the most important gods (superior to all) is considered the lightning god.”⁹

The most prominent work regarding the religious beliefs of Slavs is St. Gregory's¹⁰ “Slovaobidolah” (letters on idols). The work gives information about the worship of the idols of Slavic society and the tasks and activities of the beings in this belief system. Although the original work does not come to the present day in its first form, it provides information about the Slavs' belief system with the translation of the work and the addition of clergy in later centuries.¹¹ Since ancient times, Slavs have carefully interpreted and interpreted the events and changes in nature. They have separated the surrounding nature, the positive and negative conflicts, the good and the evil spirits. Beregin, which thinks of the goodness of people with good spirits, is a soul that is beautiful in appearance and has no place for evil in its nature. The Slavs prayed for this good spirit for blessings and rain on time. Beregin's are actually well-intentioned nymphs. The fertility of the harvesting period after cultivation of this spirit crop was also considered responsible for the rainfall in time to the soil. The evil spirit “Upir” (or Vampires) was believed to be scary and ugly, to be the revived state of evil, and to bring evil to humans.

⁹*Gretskilzvoriza Bolgarskata İstoriya*, Cilt. II, Bulgaristan İlimler Akademisi, Sofya 1959,s.126-127

¹⁰St. Gregory was born in 325 AD in Cappadocia. He studied religious education in Alexandria, Kayseri, oratory, literature, geometry and astronomy in Athens. While studying in Athens, he made friends with Flavius Claudius Julianus, who would become the Roman Emperor from 361 to 363. St. Gregory's work consists of 243 letters, 507 poems and 45 words. All of Gregory's works have been collected in the Russian language “Tvorenıya Svetih Otsovve and published by the Moscow Academy of Religion. The term “Slovaobidolah”, other name “Slovo Svetogo Georgiya (Bogoslovtsa) izobretennogo v toltseh o tom, kakopervoyepoganısuşeyazıtsklanyalısidolamıtremıimklalı:toi nıne tvoryat”) Leonid Morgun, *Entsiklopediya Svyatih*, Osten-Grup,2019,s.165; Carl Ullmann, *Gregorius von Nazianz,der Theologe*,Darmstadt,1825.

¹¹ Y. V. Aniçkov, *Yaziçestvo i Drevnyaya Rus*, M.M. Stasyulviç yayınevi, S.Peterburg 1914,s.66

On the one hand, the Slavs sacrificed vampires not to bring evil, while on the other hand the good spirit, Beregin (water nymphs), gave gifts under the name of “Treba” in order not to spare his goodness.¹²

Since rain water that descended from the sky to the earth accumulated in lakes, rivers and wells, they attached importance to such places. They believed that there were “Beregins”, good spirits, in their water resources. They expected the rain to fall on time by means of these water sources.

Slavs believed that there were a number of hidden forces in nature such as stone, rock, river, water source, cave, tree, forest and sea. They imagined some inanimate objects by imagining and equipping them with certain abilities, believing that they have existed since the creation of the world and were sacred.¹³

As Slavs changed their way of life from hunting and fishing to farming and animal husbandry, the cult of “Rod” emerged.¹⁴The two important goddesses of the Rod cult, “Rojenitsi”, are related to the fertility of the soil and the fertility of the animals.¹⁵In that year, they gave various gifts for the harvest to be fruitful and the animals to be fertile, and expected goodness and fertility from their gods.

As Priskus mentioned in the later periods, the god of “Perun”, the god of the gods, is the god of flash and lightning. It was believed that this god lived in the heavens and owned the sky fire and was the ruler of all beings.¹⁶ The god of os Volos, responsible for the earth and the earth, was the god that protects the animals from evil.

Religious Beliefs of Ancient Turks

God was the first creator of the universe. God was a great being who was interested in the life of the Turkish people. In wars, victory

¹² O. M. Rapov, *Russkaya Tserkov v IX –pervoytreti XII. v.,Prinyatiye Hristyanstva*, Russkaya Panorama yayınevi, Moskova, 1998. C. 31

¹³ Ye. Levkeyevskaya, *Mifi Russkogo Narada*, Astrel ACT, Moskova 2004. s. 72–73.

¹⁴B. A. Ribakov, *Yaziçestvo Drevnih Slovyan*, Nauka, Moskva, 1994, s20

¹⁵ S. V. Maksimov, *Neçistaya, nevedomaya i kresnayaSila*, R.Golike, A.Vilborg, S.Peterburg1903,s.500

¹⁶ B. A. Ribakov, *Russkaya Tserkov v IX –pervoytreti XII. v.,Prinyatiye Hristyanstva*, Russkaya Panorama, Moskva.1998, s23

was achieved upon the will of God. God intervened in the life of the Turks and people in general. The khanate came from him and was given to him by the Turks. God, who punished those who did not obey his command and will, took back the blessing and fortune he had forgiven from the unworthy. The great god maketh the dawn and revived the plants. He would have taken it back, as God had given him. Death also depended on his will. The ultimate source of spiritual power was God.

Mahmud of Kashgar stated that Turks called “Tengri-God” to everything that looked great to them like a mountain or a big tree, but the word God was used only to refer to Sky-God.¹⁷ Sky God was an objective entity that encompassed all the stars, the moon and the sun, all of the celestial bodies - the God of the Sky.¹⁸

St. Constantin Cyrill (Kyrillos), who was sent from the Byzantine to the Balkans, stated that the Turks believed in one God. The Bulgarian Turks believed in the only creative god. The beliefs related to the sema in ancient religions (Babylon Shamas, Arso in Palmir, Azizo, Baolsamin, Amon-ra in Egypt, Ahura in Ireland, Varuno in Hindu, Mithra in Rome, etc.) have always represented the Sun and Moon, but these have remained secondary in the Turkish religions. The sky itself was considered God.¹⁹

Although the Turks and Slavs belonged to different beliefs, they understood each other very well. Archaeological findings support this. On the one hand, while Slavs have a tradition of cremation, on the other hand the customary burials of Bulgarians and Turks continued to exist side by side for a long time.²⁰ It will be difficult to say that the same tolerance applied to the Christian population. The Christian population in the Balkans was under great pressure both in the times of Krum Khan and Omurtag Khan. In particular, one of the treatment of the prisoners taken during the Byzantine expedition was to be

¹⁷ Harun Güngör, *Eski Türklerde Din ve Düşünce*, Türkler, C.3, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara 2002. s.262

¹⁸ Doğan Avcioğlu, *Türklerin Tarihi*, Cilt. I, Tekin Yayınevi, İstanbul 1995, s.352

¹⁹ Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, s.300

²⁰ J. Vejarova, *Slavyane i Prablgaripo Daniina Nekropolite ot VI-XI. v na Teritoriya tana Blgariya*, Bulgaristan İlimler Akademisi, Sofya 1976, s.409-415

forced to abandon the Christian faith in order to survive. It was seen that Christians were forced to eat meat during fasting periods and those who did not obey the order were punished and tortured.²¹

The Bulgarians considered to be the members of the Christian religion to be Byzantine and foreign. Christians were perceived as external enemies by Slavs and Bulgarians, and it is known that oppressions such as changing religion are frequently applied to the prisoners during Krum (803-814), Omurtag (814-831) and Malamir Khan (831-836) periods.²²

The Slavic and Turkish belief system continued to exist in Bulgaria without interference and mutual respect. A short example is that the rituals or religious rituals are performed separately: the Bulgarian army consists of two types of troops, one of which is horsemen and the other is a pedestrian group. The group of pedestrians proceeded under the flags of Slavic knights (tribal chiefs) and the other consisted of Bulgarian Turks. Both groups pray and sacrifice their Gods for the successful and successful war.²³ It is possible to see such an example in Avar Khanate. Although it is known that the Avars wanted absolute surrender on the peoples they dominated, they gave the Slavic people the opportunity to make their religious rituals separate from the Avars²⁴. These examples show us that the Turks do not interfere with the religious beliefs of the peoples they live with and show respect to the contrary. In addition, the Sky-God religion has been a decisive factor in coming to a certain level in the State and state affairs, which are sacred to the Turks. The religious factor played an important role in the Han palace rather than the ethnic one.²⁵

²¹*GretskiizvorizaBlgarskatalstoriya*, Bulgaristan İlimler Akademisi, C.III. Sofya 1954 s.282-284

²²G.G.Litvarin,*PrinyatiyeHristyanstvaNarodamiTsentralnoy i Yugo-VostochnoyYevropı i KreşeniyeRusi (VvedeniyeHristyanstva v Bolgarii(IX-naçaloX.v))*, Nauka, Moskova, 1988, s.37

²³*GretskiizvorizaBlgarskatalstoriya*, Bulgaristan, C.III. Sofya 1954 s52

²⁴*GretskiizvorizaBlgarskatalstoriya*, Bulgaristan, C. III s.41-51

²⁵G.G.Litvarin,*PrinyatiyeHristyanstvaNarodamiTsentralnoy i Yugo-VostochnoyYevropı i KreşeniyeRusi (VvedeniyeHristyanstva v Bolgarii(IX-naçaloX.v))*, s.37

The Era of Krum Khan (803-814)

In the mid-8th century, in the Bulgarian state, internal struggles, the murder of some members of the dynasty and then internal unrest began. Knowing this opportunity, Byzantium organized consecutive flights to Bulgaria and caused destruction in the country. At the beginning of the 9th century, a famous Bulgarian ruler named Krum (803-814) came to power in the years when the Avar Khanate was taken to a complete collapse by the Franks in Central Europe.²⁶

The Byzantine emperor Nikophoros I wanted to exert pressure on the Krum Khanate in 811. Nikophoros I organized an expedition and destroyed the khanate's capital, Preslav. However, the rapidly developing war resulted in the defeat of Nikophoros I, the destruction of his army and his death on the battlefield. For the first time since four and a half centuries, the Byzantine emperor perished in the hands of the enemy. Afterwards, Krum Khan, who defeated Mikhael, who marched on the Bulgarians at the head of the empire, with the troops brought from the Eastern provinces of the empire, had almost the right to eliminate Byzantium and and *He Sworn to Hang His Golden Spear to the Gilded Gate*. Krum occupied the city fortresses of Sofia, Nis and Belgrade, thus controlling the largest trade and military transport route between Central Europe and the Near East. Krum²⁷, who was a devout warrior and enlightened organizer who brought Southern Hungary and Transylvania into the khanate, took many prisoners here during the campaigns of Byzantium on Eastern Thrace between the years 811-813. These prisoners, taken on Krum's orders, were placed with their families in Siret, Prut and South Bessarabia. In later periods, as the Bulgarians called it, it was known as "the Bulgaria beyond the Danube". It is understood that the lack of a settled population in these lands where the prisoners settled made Krum to take such a decision. From the 8th century onwards, the northern parts of Bulgaria and the left part of the Danube were called "beyond the Danube".²⁸ In the "Hungarian Annuals", the Bulgarian Khan was

²⁶Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, s.197

²⁷Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, s. 198

²⁸Zlatarskiy, *İstoriyana Bilgarskatadırjavaprezsrednitevekov* ,s.357-358

mentioned as the ruler of the Ruten and Polish lands between Tissa and the Danube, placing Slavs and Bulgarians there.²⁹

Krum reached Edirne via Plovdiv in 813 and besieged Istanbul in the spring of 814. On the 13th of April 814, during the most frantic period of the attacks, he suddenly died by bleeding out of his mouth and nose.³⁰

Omurtag Era (814-831)

After Krum Khan, his son Omurtag Khan replaced him. The Bulgarian State experienced its most brilliant period during his reign. As soon as he ascended the throne, he signed a 30-year trade agreement with the Byzantine Empire. However, when the attempts of reconciliation with the Frank Empire did not yield any results, he had to resort to arms, unwillingly. By taking the Danube-Sava-Drava basin, he secured his state by reopening the largest saltwater in the Maros river valley, which has been abandoned since the Roman era. Omurtag Khan's time, which gave the state a great source of wealth, has been the most brilliant era of the Danube Bulgarians throughout their history. Cities were founded, palaces were built, there was an extensive construction and reconstruction, waterways and ablution places.

In the Bulgarian State, the nomadic population of the Bulgarian Turkish tribes living half-connected to the center and the Slavic tribes living under the center eliminated the double rule during the Omurtag period. Instead, 10 regional systems connected to the center were established. After that, the administrators who would manage the districts would be appointed by the central Plysky from the Khan's immediate surroundings. The uprising of the Slavic tribal leaders who opposed this change came to an end³¹ with their being brought into

²⁹Latinskiǐzvoriza *Blgarskata İstoriya*, Bulgaristan İlimler Akademisi, C.II, Sofya 2001,s. 13,25

³⁰Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, s. 198

³¹ P. Mutafçiev- V. Mutafçieva, *İstoriyana Bılgarskiyanarod ot naçenkitenaçoveşkiyajivotponaşıtezemi do bılgarskotovızrajdane*, Al. Prof. Marii Drinov, Sofya 1995, s. 104.

positions and tasks to satisfy them, and the Omurtag reform succeeded.³²

During the period of Omurtag, Bulgaria remained under the influence of Byzantine culture and the ethnic pressure of the Slavic majority began to be felt. The marriages of the Turkish element to the indigenous Slavic people increased, as a result of the administrative technique, the crowded indigenous language spread in the upper layer and the Turks continued to rapidly become Slavic. This situation accelerated after Omurtag Khan and increased rapidly in Malamir (831-836) and Persian Khan (836-852) periods.³³ It is seen that the people of Turkish origin have become Slavic since Krum Khan. Slavs were adopted with the increase of marriages with Slavs after the adoption of Bulgarian Turks who lived in *Konargöçer* life and cultural values of Turks changed.³⁴ A small number of noble families of Turkish descent have given and received girls among themselves and have spoiled themselves as a close blood connection was established.³⁵

In spite of this, although the Slavic belief system addresses the majority of the population, it was by no means perceived as the official religion of the state. Slavic belief system was not noble and had no place in political life. In order to be a ruler in the palace, it had to be a member of Ski-God (Gök Tengri) faith. The GokTengri faith was supported by the palace and high-level bureaucrats, but the spread of the Slavic faith among the people could not be prevented.³⁶

³² G. Litvinov, *Rannefeodalniye Gosudarstvava Balkanah, VI-XII.v"*, Nauka, Moskova 1985, s.159

³³ Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü*, s. 199

³⁴ P. Mutafçiev-V. Mutafçieva, *İstoriyana Bılgarskiyanarod ot naçenkitenaçoveşkiyajivotponaşıtezemi do bılgarskotovızrajdane*, s.101-103

³⁵ *Latinski İlzvoriza Bılgarskatalstoriya*, C.II, Sofya 1958 s.90

³⁶ G.G. Litavrin, *Prinyatiye Hristyanstva Narodami Tsentralnoy i Yugo-Vostoçnoy Yevropı i Kreşeniye Rusi*, Nauka, Moskova.1988,s.39

Boris Era(852-889)

Presyan's son Boris³⁷ Khan followed the policy of neighboring states with his multidimensional perspective and analytical thinking and took important steps regarding the future of Bulgaria.

Boris assumed the administration of the Bulgarian State at a very critical time. From the first half of the 9th century, Moravian Knezlik, one of the Slavic knezliks, began to strengthen on the eastern borders of the Frankish State (today's Czechia, Slovakia and Northern Hungary). Around 830 Moyimir, one of the Moravian knights, succeeded in establishing the Slavic State. During the Rostislav period after Moyimir, Moravia was strengthened and in the 9th century the Moravian State was established by ending the sovereignty of the Frankish in the region. Knez Rostislav had succeeded in gaining the support of Bulgarians against the Frankish State, but Rostislav's attempt was unsuccessful because on the one hand, the Croats, who

³⁷TalatTekin gives the following information to Boris in his book *Danube Bulgarians and Languages: Boris, who was baptized in 866 (The Year of the Dog), was probably the Danube Bulgarian or Bulgarian Turkish. Boris's name is referred to as Boriis with "BOP tarihCHC" or "B'OPÎCHC" with the Greek affixes in Byzantine history. The same name has been found in these sources as Ω Β'ΩΓΩΠIC-Bogoris,, ΒΟ ΒΟΓΑΠIC-Bogaris,, or even bozul GOBAPIC, Go Gobarisiyice (Menges. KH "Altaic elements in the Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions" Bysantion.21, Brussels 1951) , p.115).*

This name is written in the Old Church Slavic "БОРИСъ-Boris".

Menges proposed two Turkish etymologies for the name Boris. The first is the etymology that the word might have come from the Old Turkish Bars, which means "tiger". The word Bars, as it really is in Tatar and Kazakh, may have entered the shape of a peace with its famous participation and then rounded off by the influence of the first syllabic vowel, and finally the form of "Boris".

The second possibility is that the name Boris comes from the old Turkish word "böri" meaning the wolf. However, this etymology has some difficulties. Boris name comes from the word riBöri<(* Böriri), explaining the -s consonant at the end as an Altaic uncertainty attachment (Menges. K.H "Altaic elements in the Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions" Bysantion.21, Brussels 1951, p.116).

However, it is doubtful that there is such a case in Altai. In this case, Mendesh's etymology which brought Boris from Old Turkish Bars seems to be the most robust etymology for now. However, in this case, Bogoris and Bogaris forms in Byzantine sources should be explained. The figures in the Byzantine sources can be explained by the effect of the emphasis on the first syllable and the fact that the vowel was long felt and as a result this vowel was written in ogo sound group: Boris>Böris>Bogoris.

Talât Tekin, *Tuna Bulgarları ve Dilleri*, TDKY, Ankara 1957,s56-87

were vassals of the Frankish, on the other hand, the Byzantines mobilized the Serbs against the Bulgarians. To get out of this difficult situation, Boris abandoned his alliance with Moravia and signed a peace agreement with the Frankish king. The Great Moravian ruler, Rostislav, succeeded against the Franks by making an alliance³⁸ with the Byzantine emperor Michael III, and attracted the other Slavs in the region to his side. Although the rebellion against the father of the son of Frank King Ludwig's son Karlman, he wanted to be independent ruler of the lands of the Eastern Alps, while creating a situation in favor of Rostislav, the strengthening of Moravia was against the Bulgarians. The increase in Moravian influence over the Slavs beyond the Danube meant that the Bulgarians' influence there was diminished.³⁹ Rostislav himself was disturbed by the Bulgarian-Frankish alliance and sent an envoy to the Byzantine palace. He wanted to warn Byzantine about the Bulgarian-Frankish alliance and to encourage him to take action against Bulgaria.⁴⁰

On the one hand, the strengthening of Moravia, the Byzantine ally, and on the other hand, the fact that Byzantium had achieved certain successes on the Arabs in these years caused Boris to worry.⁴¹ As a result of these alliances, Boris will find himself in the midst of rivalry between the two powerful Christian states, the Byzantine and the East Franks.⁴²

In 863 Boris expressed to the Frankish king in Tulin that he wanted to accept Christianity. The Franks immediately informed Boris's request to accept Christianity by letter to Pope Nicholas I in Rome.⁴³

Due to the long-standing controversy between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, the Bulgarians' attempt to respond to this news

³⁸Zlatarsky, *İstoriyana Bilgarskata dirjavaprez srednite vekove*, s.31- 33.

³⁹Mutafçiev, Mutafçieva, *İstoriyana Bilgarskiyanarod ot naçenkitenaçoveşkiyajivotponaşıtezemi do bilgarskotovizrajđane*, s. 111-112.

⁴⁰L'Histoire Bulgare dans les ouvrages des savants européens, Bulgaristan İlimler Akademisi Sofya 1969, s. 32.

⁴¹Georg Ostrogorskiy, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, TTK, Ankara.1995 s.212

⁴²Zlatarskiy, *İstoriyana Bilgarskata dirjavaprez srednite vekove*, C.1,s.31-32

⁴³*Latinski izvoriza Bilgarskata İstoriya*, C.II, s.62,287

came to Istanbul. The Byzantine attempted to break the Bulgarians out of the Frankish alliance.

In 863, when the Franks and their allies entered the Moravian territory, a good opportunity emerged for Mikhail III, who seized the opportunity to enter Byzantine Bulgarian territory. Action was taken from the South-East of Bulgaria and its navy was seen on the Black Sea coast. The timing of Byzantium was correct because the border security of the Bulgarians who went to the aid of the Frankish king had been weakened. The same year, the spread of earthquakes, hunger and disease in the Balkans⁴⁴, and the fact that these disasters lasted about a month and a half, weakened the Bulgarians in terms of resistance and population. The reasons for the conflict between the Byzantines and the Bulgarians who entered the Bulgarian territory are not mentioned in the sources. As a matter of fact, a peace agreement was signed between the parties. Byzantium dominated the Black Sea coast of southern Bulgaria, a mixed Slav-Greek population. Under the treaty, Bulgaria has not lost much, but even won land. The Zaghra region was left to the Bulgarians, the alliance with the Franks was immediately terminated and an alliance with the Byzantium was established. Bulgaria had received Christianity from Byzantium and Christianity gained official religious status throughout the country.⁴⁵ Michael III became Boris's godfather with Boris and his family adopting Christianity in Plisky the following year.⁴⁶

After the adoption of Christianity, Boris began correspondence with Byzantium on the status of the church. In the correspondence, the Byzantine slow takeover of the Bulgarian Church has created discontent among both Boris and the people. In 865 (in some sources 866), the Bulgarian aristocratic families opposed to Boris and his policy, the 10 regional governors and the people who supported them rebelled. The uprising in the city square in the capital Plisky turned into an armed conflict. This uprising was quickly suppressed by Boris. Boris's decisions about Christianity were irreversible and certain. 52

⁴⁴ D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth, Eastern Europe 500-1453*, Praeger Publishers, London 1971, s. 117.

⁴⁵ Zlatarskiy, *Istoriya na Blgarskata Rjavo prez srednite vekove* s.31-32

⁴⁶ *Gretskilzvoriza Blgarskata Istoriya* C 4. S. 335; C 5. s.157; C. 6. s. 137, 238

Bulgarian aristocratic families were executed including their minors and the elderly, and ordinary people were forgiven. The public was angry that Boris had bloody suppressed the uprising. This event caused some families who had previously accepted Christianity to leave Christianity and some of the people rejected Christianity.⁴⁷ Boris then turned his direction towards Rome.

Papacy and Byzantine

During the reign of the young emperor Mikhail III (856), Byzantium suffered a period of great political and cultural jumping, and it was with the government coup that Michael came to the throne. In fact, Mikhail was weak and had a changing personality of the palace that submitted to the direction and leading of others. Major cultural and political changes during the period of Mikhail emerged thanks to his uncle Bardas and patriarch Photios. On 25 December 858 after Mikhail ascended the throne, Patriarch Ignatios was forced to resign and Photios arrived. The Byzantine church carried out the biggest coup ever. The struggle of the new patriarch with Rome was more important than the internal struggle. On the one hand, Byzantine entered a new era with the Roman church while dealing with civil war. The relations between the two church centers have been laden with new developments.⁴⁸

In Rome, Nicolaus I came to the papal throne: a bold politician whose life's purpose was to consolidate Rome's attempt to intervene in the Byzantine church where he wanted to intervene as the supreme judge. Nicolaus I took the side of Ignatios, who was forced to resign. He also did not want to know Photios, pointing to the patriarch of Photios in a way that was not in accordance with church law. The election of Photios to the patriarchate was indeed unlawful, but there were examples that had been similarly chosen and accepted by Rome. Although the Legat's⁴⁹ had accepted the decisions of a council that confirmed the dismissal of Ignatios and the election of Photios in

⁴⁷*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.283,81,112

⁴⁸*Ostrogorskiy Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, s.203

⁴⁹Legat (Lat. *legatus, legare*) 1. In ancient Rome, the Senate appointed ambassador or authority

2. Papa Legates - The title of the highest diplomatic representatives of the Vatican.

Istanbul, he rejected the representatives of Istanbul and made a decision to contradict and the dismissal of Photios was declared (863).

Facing this, Photios accepted the struggle. For centuries, the patriarch of Istanbul had established a strong and determined state administration, which had built its strength and reputation, completed the internal struggles. The Byzantine era, which he thought was in need of Roman support, was over.⁵⁰

Boris was aware of these developments. It was in Boris's hands to use this complicated situation between the two churches and he immediately sent the delegation to Rome in 866, thinking that the Pope would be pleased. Another ambassador set out for the Frank German to Louis German.

The first thing Boris sent with the delegation he sent to Rome was the questions regarding the logic and the inner workings of the Christian religion, as well as questions about religion and knowledge, church, logic, and church teachings for those who had just met Christianity.⁵¹The necessary information about the questions asked by the delegation to the Pope is given in the source known as "The Pope's 106 Answer to Boris".⁵²

Boris's questions focused on three important elements: What will be the legal dimension of the Bulgarian church from now on? Boris intended to establish an independent Bulgarian church, so could an independent Bulgarian patriarch be formed? In such a case, who will be appointed by the Patriarch of Bulgaria and will the leadership in the name of the universal church be in Rome or Byzantium? How the people who have just changed their order should, rights and religion against the people of the pagan country should be treated against

⁵⁰Ostrogorskiy, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, s.210-212

⁵¹*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.48, C. 2,s.196

⁵²"*The Pope's Responses to 106 Questions of Boris-Responsa Nicolai Papae ad consulta Bulgarorum*" was written by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. It is one of the most important sources of Bulgarian Bulgarians in the history of Bulgaria; Tamas Notari, *Some Remarks on the Responsa Nicolai papae I. ad consulta Bulgarorum*, Acta University, Sapientiae, Legal Studies, 4, 1 (2015),s.53-58

innovations? Boris also asked the Pope to send a book called Christian laws and the clergy to explain the Christian religion to its people.⁵³

Pope Boris gave the answers implicitly in his own style. But at this stage it was enough to make some calculations for Boris. Although the Papacy emphasized its superiority over the Istanbul Patriarchate, it avoided clear statements about Byzantium. So much so that he tried to persuade Boris that he should love his spiritual father (referring to his godfather) rather than his own father and that there should be absolute surrender to him.⁵⁴

Boris first of all wanted an independent church and the establishment of the Bulgarian patriarchate. The Pope answered this question by stating that the Bulgarian Patriarchate cannot be established for the time being, and that the Istanbul Patriarch, whom the implicit Bulgarians accept as Christianity, is not superior to the Papacy, and even that the Istanbul Patriarchate was established by order of the rulers rather than by the rules. Instead of the patriarch of Bulgaria, a bishop could rule for now, and over time the Christian population multiplied that the archbishop was appointed. The Bulgarian church has informed the clergy that the current appointment can only be made by Rome.⁵⁵

One of the questions of Papaya in 866 (without directly referring to Byzantium) was the question of what should be done if any Christian country is in peace with the Bulgarian State and breaks the peace treaty and attacks against Bulgaria. The Pope guessed who Boris meant and said that it was unacceptable that a Christian state attacked another, that it was a tremendous sin, and that the country that had been attacked should defend itself. He replied that the decision on whether the attacked party would enter the war would be taken by the senior clergy in the country.⁵⁶

Boris knew already that a defense position should be taken in the event of any country attack, and it has never been difficult to predict.

⁵³*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.59

⁵⁴*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.66.122.123

⁵⁵*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.110-119

⁵⁶*Latinski izvoriza Blgarskata istoriya*, C.II, s.113-114

But it was unacceptable that the final decision as to whether or not the country should enter the war depends on the decision of the church priest.

Byzantine emperor Mikhail III was aware of Boris's correspondence with Rome. He sent a letter to Boris to criticize the Roman Church's principles of method, movement and religion. As soon as Boris received this letter, he asked the Pope ambassadors, who were preparing to go to Rome, to receive this letter from Byzantium. The clergy, who would explain the religion coming from Byzantium and baptize the people, were sent back and the duty of Christianization of the people was given to the Papacy. While there was already contention between the Roman and Byzantine churches, this had the effect of pouring oil on fire.

After all this correspondence, Rome sent a delegation of goodwill ambassadors to Byzantium in 867. The delegation was not taken within the Byzantine borders. Subsequently, the group was forced to return to Rome when negotiations between the two countries did not yield any results.⁵⁷

After these developments, Boris turned his political compass back to Byzantium in order to better understand theocratic doctrine.

Between 863 and 867 ambassadors from Rome organized churches in the Bulgarian country and trained clergy to serve. The papacy decided that the rituals imposed on the Bulgarians by the Byzantine Patriarch without the approval of the Papacy were not valid, and soon faced a new problem as to whether the Christian rituals that the clergy sent by the Byzantines to spread Christianity were legal. In this case, the “miropomazaniye” ritual⁵⁸ practiced by Byzantium was reorganized again by the Pope ambassadors.⁵⁹

⁵⁷*Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya, C.II, s. 185*

⁵⁸Miropomazaniye-is a sign that is given to the person in the name of the Holy Spirit. The name of the mixture is Miro (chrisma). The Miro blend consists of the highest quality of blessed olive oil and fragrances. Immediately after becoming a baptist, the person is applied to clean and dry skin (around the face) in the form of a cross. According to Christian belief, during the baptist ceremony, the holy spirit came down and the connection with Miro (chrisma) and the holy trinity was further strengthened. Miro is the sacred gift that helps to strengthen one's spirituality and helps strengthen

Photios is not pleased at all⁶⁰, and soon the failure of Patriarch Photios over the Bulgarian church led to his dismissal. Ignatius was replaced. In Rome, on the death of Pope Nicholas I, Adrian II was brought to the papal throne.

The first conflict between Boris and the Papacy first emerged in 867. The reason for this was the question of the appointment of the bishop to Boris's Bulgarian church as soon as possible. The Papal candidate proposed by Boris was repeatedly rejected by the Papacy, and then in 868, the newly appointed Pope Adrian II, rejected Boris's nomination again and sent his own candidate to the Bulgarian church. Boris's first task was to send this bishop back to Rome immediately and to contact Constantinople again.⁶¹

Between Papacy and Boris, their views on the legal status of the church and its place within the state differed. Boris's thought, at worst, was an outwardly patriarchate (archbishop) who, unfortunately, did not see such subtlety while waiting for the courtesy of the Khanate to be observed. The Pope's idea was to tie the Bulgarian church to himself and to use the Bulgarians in the Balkans to fight against Byzantium in line with their political interests.⁶²

From 868-869, Boris learned of the political objectives of Rome through the papal legates in Bulgaria. When he wanted to tear his ties off with Rome, the papacy realized his failure and informed Boris that he was left his own decision as to who the candidate of the abbot would be. But Boris had already made his final decision and turned to Byzantium.⁶³

it in spiritual life. Miropomazania is a sacred gift that one strives for heaven for the other world, except for his worldly grief. Miro (chrisma) is once a person as well as a baptist once in his life. For the second time in exception, it is only a ceremony for the tsar or kings to ascend to the throne (τὸ χρίσμα τῆς βασιλείας) or to celebrate the throne of the Orthodox Church. F. A. Brokgauz, I.A. Yefron, *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, St.Petersburg,1890, Miropomazaniye Clause.p.390

⁵⁹Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya, C.II, s.170

⁶⁰Gretskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya, C.IV, s.101-105

⁶¹Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya, C.II, s.185-195

⁶²V. Guzelev, *Knez Boris Perviy*, Nauka i ĭzkustvo, Sofya 1969 s.236-237

⁶³Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya, C.II, s.194-195

Meanwhile, in 869, a meeting was called by a delegation from the eastern Christian hierarchy of Rome in order to find a solution to the struggle between Rome and the Byzantine church. But the meeting was postponed to March 870. The topic of the meeting, which included Boris's ambassadors, was to whom the Bulgarian church would depend. In this region, the last word on religion would have been put to vote. Before the vote, the participants were asked questions beforehand. The question was unanimously answered which was about who belonged to this land before the Bulgarians arrived in the Balkans. The Pope ambassadors were also reminded that it was disrespectful to the empire to put their own order and rules in their churches in the former territory of Byzantium.⁶⁴

Boris could not find what he was looking for about an independent Bulgarian church in a meeting held in 870. At the meeting, the final decision was made that only the Byzantine chief priest of the Bulgarian church would be appointed from now on. Boris's struggle for the independent church would continue.⁶⁵

After the death of Constantinople Patriarch Ignatius in 877, Photios (877-887) was appointed. Yohan III (872-882), who knew politics well, came to the Roman Papal throne. After taking over, Yohan tried to maintain the theocratic policy of the previous popes.

In the meantime, the Arabs made daring attacks on the coasts of Sicily and Italy. Rome's lack of military forces in the region forced them to sit down with the Byzantine agreement to take advantage of Byzantine military power.⁶⁶

The Byzantine emperor Vasilios I also planned to have good relations with the pope. He needed the pope's approval to bring Photios back to his patriarchate. For this reason, a meeting of Byzantine churches (sobor) was held in 879-880 and an invitation was sent to Rome. The Pope accepted the invitation and asked Photios to fall under the papal jurisdiction of the Bulgarian church⁶⁷ and at the

⁶⁴Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataĭstoriya, C.II, s.188-192; C.II. s. 188-195, 200

⁶⁵Guzelev, Knez Boris Perviy, s.246-256

⁶⁶Ostrogorskiy, Bizans Devleti Tarihi, s.221-223

⁶⁷Gretskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataĭstoriya, C.IV, s.115-116

same time he did not stop the continuous correspondence with Boris.⁶⁸

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First, the churches in Bulgaria were organized under the authority of the clergy sent from Byzantium and in the Byzantine style. Boris knew very well that the Byzantine clergy would be his chief advocates in the interests of the empire, and he wanted to purify them. Their main aim was to establish political superiority over the peoples who accept Christianity of the empire through the church.⁷²The first step

⁶⁸ *Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya*, C.II, s.154-167,179-180

⁶⁹ *Gretskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya*, C.IV, s.116-117

⁷⁰ *Latinskiĭzvoriza Blgarskataistoriya*, C.II, s.177

⁷¹ Guzelev, *Knez Boris Perviy*, s.256-257

⁷² D. Obolenskiy, *Vizantiyskoye Sodrujestvo Natsiy. Šest Vizantiyskih Portretov*, čev. Ivanova, Lomize, Yanus-K, Moskova 1998, s.85-90

Boris took was to send Bulgarian youth to Istanbul to learn the teachings of religion. Boris's son Semyon was also one of those who were sent to Istanbul. Boris's goal was to replace the Byzantine clergy over time with Bulgarian clergy. Boris's attempts would bear fruit in 893. For the first time, the rise of the Bulgarian cleric to the highest rank was recorded in "Postanovleniye Klementa".⁷³

The second important step was the idea of Bulgaria's cultural development. Cyril and Mifodiy⁷⁴, who were expelled from Great Moravia in 886, received a group of students. They opened up a large space for their work, allowing Bulgarian youth to receive training to prepare them for their church and political life, to learn the Cyrillic alphabet, and to open schools.⁷⁵

In 889, Boris abandoned his throne and closed the monastery and handed over his throne to his eldest son Vlademir-Rosate (889-893). Rosate, like his father, was not a Christian and had been a member of the Tengri belief system since his birth. When he took over the throne, in 893, he and his senior high-ranking families opposing Christianity and Boris policy at the palace began an uprising by order of Rosate. The churches in the capital had been plundered and the clergy fired. Christians were subjected to various pressures. On hearing this, Boris temporarily left the monastery and quickly suppressed the uprising. Boris would be very determined and ruthless in suppressing the uprising. While he suppressed the uprising in 865, some families had forgiven him, but he had no mercy on anyone in this latest uprising. In fact, miles were drawn to his son Rosate's eyes and he was thrown into the dungeon.

⁷³ D. Obolenskiy, *Vizantiyskoye Sodrujestvo Natsiy. Şest Vizantiyskih Portretov*, Aziz Kliment, çev N.V. Malihina s.420-425; *GretskilzvorizaBlgarskatalstoriya*. C. 9. s. 34

⁷⁴The two brothers, born in Thessaloniki, Cyril and Mephodi were sent by the Byzantine Emperor to Moravia to teach the Christian religion in Slavonic language. These two brothers, who invented the Slavic alphabet and translated many religious books into the Slavic language, were declared "equivalent to the Apostles" by the Orthodox Church. *Ensiklopidičeskiy Slovar Brokgauzai Yefrona*, Kirili Medodiy Clause, 86th Volume, St.Petersburg.1890-1907.

⁷⁵ B. N. Florya, Sudbı *Kirillo-Mefodiyskoy Traditsiiposle Kirilla i Mefodiya*" Aleteya, S. Peterburg 2000,s.8-20.

After Boris suppressed the uprising, the so-called “People's meeting”, which is an important place in the history of Bulgaria, was held. At the meeting, final decisions on two important issues were communicated to the public. After that, the throne would be transferred to Semyon, who was educated in Byzantium, and Plysky, the capital of Bulgaria, would be moved to Prislav.⁷⁶

Boris's favorite son, Semyon, was the ruler who would make his State an important force in the Balkans and bring it to the status and position his father had always dreamed of.

Semyon Era(893-927)

Semyon had brought Bulgaria to its widest borders and made it a political force. It also showed important cultural developments. Let us recall that Semyon had grown up in Byzantium from an early age and had learned Byzantine culture and politics well. When he ascended to the throne, he fought a number of battles with Byzantium. The cause of wars was always political. In 913, he entered the Byzantine land and came up to the walls of Istanbul. Semyon's target was the Roman imperial crown. He thought that there could be only one empire in the world. His idea was not to establish a Bulgarian empire, but to establish a new empire instead of Byzantium. Semyon was in front of the walls of Istanbul, emperor VIII. Constantinos and Patriarch Nikolas Semyon were welcomed to Constantinople with a magnificent ceremony. At the negotiating table Byzantine had to make great concessions. In addition, Semyon's daughter would be the taste of the young Byzantine emperor. Semyon took the Imperial crown from the Patriarch of Constantinople. After that, his title would have taken over Byzantine rule as Bulgaria's Baselius (king, ruler) and father-in-law of the young Byzantine emperor. The Byzantine was helpless and had no reason to object to the title of Baselius. They were confronted by the ruler of a Christian country, bearing the Turkish blood called Semyon, but was raised in Byzantium. Opposed to Byzantium, there was not a barbarian, but a ruler who was raised by Byzantine culture and politics.

The Byzantine-Bulgarian ruler made plans to marry the families and on the other hand tried to correct the situation that Byzantine

⁷⁶Guzelev, *Knez Boris Perviy*, s.465,474

entered. They resorted to various routes, and even allowed Empress Zoe to return to the palace, who was once exiled in the monastery. Returning to the palace, Zoe's plans to marry the Byzantine-Bulgarian ruler families were cancelled, opposing Semyon's coronation as emperor, causing new tensions between the countries.

Upon these developments, Semyon reigned against the Byzantine Empire and became dominant over the entire Balkan Peninsula. He traveled to Greece in 918 and went to the Gulf of Corinth and achieved certain successes.

Semyon had not lost his hope to regain his Basilius title. Again, as in 913, he came to the walls of Istanbul in the fall of 924 and they sat at the negotiating table between the two countries. As a result of the negotiations, Symeon reinstated the title of Basilius of Bulgarians and Romans. Romanos, dissatisfied with this situation, issued a written protest in 925. The claims of Byzantium were only the last desperation. Semyon will carry the title of Basilius of the Bulgarians and Romans until his death.

Semyon kept his country under strict military rule for 20 years. The people were tired and exhausted from the wars. After Semyon's 927 deaths, his son, Petro, ascended the throne. Unfortunately, Petro could not manifest himself in the political arena. He preferred passive and obedient politics.⁷⁷

Petro Era(927-969)

With the rise of Petro to the throne, as a result of the wars fought during the Semyon period, the first Bulgarian State was in the process of collapse.⁷⁸

After Semyon died, the situation he had established while he was alive was reversed during Petro. Deprived of the spirit of war and bravery, Petro signed a 30-year peace agreement with Byzantium. Petro was immediately recognized by the Byzantium as the Bulgarian

⁷⁷Ostrogorskiy, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, s.243-249, Bojilov, *Tsar Semyon Velikiy (893-927) Zolotoy Vek Srednevekovoy Bolgarii*, Oteçestveniya Front, Sofya 1983,s.95

⁷⁸ Mutaçiev, Mutaçieva, *İstoriyana Bilgarskiyanarod ot naçenkitenaçoveşkiyajivotponaşitezemi do bilgarskotovızrajdane*, s.139

Tsar. The patriarchate Semyon had established in recent years was immediately confirmed and accepted by the Byzantium.

Petro did not marry someone from the legitimate ruler's dynasty, but married Marina-Irina, the granddaughter of Romanos Lekapenos. In this case, Semyon's military and political achievements have been neutralized.

Bulgarian and Byzantine Basilius didn't become the reign of Bulgars like Semyon desired, however, the Byzantines found a submissive groom in the personality of the new Bulgarian ruler. Thus, Bulgarian influence in Bulgaria decreased, Byzantine influence was strengthened. The Christianization of Bulgaria itself has progressed rapidly under the spell of Byzantine Christianity. In the cultural sense, Byzantium has reached its highest point. After the wars fought during Semyon's period, the country was in crisis as well as in political terms.⁷⁹

Conclusion

When the mixed Oghur community of Bulgarians came to the Balkan Peninsula, they found Slavic tribes living in these lands and took them under their rule. Oghurs and Slavs lived in harmony for a long time without interfering with each other's religious beliefs. Both folks continued their pagan beliefs until the end of the 9th century. The population belonging to the Christian religion in the country has been seen as foreign enemies or Byzantines. During the reign of Krum and Omurtag, Christians experienced great hardship and oppression. From the time of Omurtag, the nomadic Oghur Turks gradually moved into settled life, and the marriages with the still pagan Slavic population led to the proliferation of Slavic and Slavic-speaking populations. Bulgarian Turks began to lose some of their cultural values as a result of adopting the Slavic language. Slavicization of Bulgarian Turks accelerated since the 9th century and their populations increased. Despite these developments in the public base, Turkish Bulgarian families at the senior executive level remained Tengrians as a religious belief and made marriages among themselves without mixing with the Slavs.

⁷⁹Ostrogorskiy, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, s.249

The fact that Bulgaria was a strong powerful country with wide borders in the south east of Europe in the 10th century made it an essential actor in regional political developments. In the 9th century, Moravia had succeeded against the Frankish, attracting other Slavs from the region to its side. The increase in the population of Moravia in the Trans-Danube Region led to a decrease in the activity of Bulgarians there. Population and possible land loss had to be prevented anytime soon. The subsequent strengthening of the Franks in the region also caused Bulgaria to stay between the two powerful Christian states, the Franks and Byzantium. Bulgarians, who were “pagan and barbaric” and were in the midst of a tension among Christian states, were not able to have equal rights as powerful Christian countries in international treaties. In order to have equal rights with Christian countries, there had to be contemporary legislation and this legislation had to be based and operated on theocratic foundations, as was the case with the Franks and Byzantines, who were Christians at the time.

Byzantine 9th century was a period of great political and cultural breakthrough, and it no longer needed Western Roman support as it used to. The goal of Byzantium was to spread Christianity in the Balkans and to gain political supremacy over the folks who accepted Christianity through the church. Rome, aware of these developments, wanted to use the Bulgarians against Byzantium by attracting them to its side. Han Boris had learned of theocratic policies of these aims through the envoys sent by both states and did not want any church dependent on the state. In addition, the region needed an independent church to become a power among Christian countries.

Religion and politics have become inseparable in the world, and religion has often been the driving force in politics. Political strife between the two parts of the Roman Empire developed into church - denomination strife. Boris has managed to use the conflicts between these two political forces to confront them. However, the fruits of Boris's policy were taken in the era of Semyon. Semyon, who was sent by his father to Istanbul to learn Christianity, learned Byzantine culture and Politics well. During his term, Bulgaria reached its widest borders and became a political force in the region. His country has also shown

significant cultural developments. Semyon entered Byzantine territory in 913 and was based on the city walls of Istanbul. Semyon's target was the Roman imperial crown. As a person raised by Byzantium, he thought that there could be only one empire on earth. His goal was not to establish a great Bulgarian Empire, but to establish a single universal empire instead of Byzantium. In the face of Byzantium there was not a barbarian but a ruler with the culture and politics of the Byzantine Palace, bearing the Turkish blood of the Christian country. Byzantium had no power to resist, accepted his defeat and was forced to sit at the negotiating table. During the negotiation, Byzantium made great concessions, fulfilling all Semyon's terms. Semyon would have taken the imperial crown from the hands of the patriarch of Constantinople and had the title of Basilius (king, emperor), and the young Byzantine emperor would have retained the dominion of Byzantium through his father-in-law. Semyon would bear the title of Basilius "Emperor of the Romans and Bulgarians" until his death. His son, Petro, was young and inexperienced, and the population was exhausted by the long and exhausting wars that led the country to political and economic depression. The patriarchate Semyon had established in recent years was immediately confirmed and accepted by Byzantium. Petro did not marry someone from the legitimate ruler's dynasty, but married the granddaughter of Romanos Lekapenos. In this case, Semyon's military and political achievements have been neutralized. Bulgarian and Byzantine Basilius did not become the reign of Bulgars like Semyon desired. The Byzantines found a submissive groom in the person of the Bulgarian ruler. Thus, Bulgarian influence in Bulgaria declined and Byzantine influence strengthened.

With the adoption of Christianity, there have been significant developments in the field of culture and education. Expelled from Great Moravia in 886, groups of students of Cyril and Methodius were admitted to Bulgaria and a large area of activity was established for their studies. Bulgarian youth have been given support to prepare them for their church and political life. Schools were allowed to open for the public to receive education and learn the Cyrillic alphabet. With the arrival of the Cyrillic alphabet, many religious books have been

translated, the literate population has increased in the country and Bulgaria has gained momentum in the field of science.

Thanks to Boris's policy, the Bulgarians, who soon formed an independent church, left indelible marks on European history. By initiating a new historical process with the acceptance of Christianity and Slavic writing, an independent church was created by a “barbarian Khan”, even though there was no mention of an independent church in Europe. This cultural development has affected all other Slavic countries (such as Russia, Serbia) and they have taken the Bulgarian church model as an example.

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