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Foreign Bogomilism? The Historiosophic Hesitations of Petar Mutafchiev

(Abstract)

The article is devoted to the 1934 philosophical and historical essay by Petar Mutafchiev entitled *The Priest Bogomil and St. John of Rila. The Spirit of Negation in Our History* (*Пон Богомил и Свети Иван Рилски. Духът на отрицанието в нашата история*), discussed in the context of both the author's general historiographic output and the spiritual and cultural explorations of Bulgarian intellectuals in the interwar period. The study examines certain external influences on Mutafchiev's scholarly work, first and foremost Benedetto Croce's views on 'absolute historicism'. It also investigates three central historiosophic concepts of the Bulgarian medievalist: 1) the 'saltatory' development of Bulgarian history, 2) the destructive impact of Byzantinism on the political, religious and cultural life of medieval Bulgaria, as well as 3) the superficial character of the Bulgarian people's religion – the effect of receiving 'foreign' Christianity from the very same Byzantine hands. In this regard, Bogomilism appears to be an 'external' doctrine, having incorporated older dualist ideas, which passed through Byzantium and therefore also reflected the destructive Byzantinism to some extent. Mutafchiev's original conception goes off the beaten paths of earlier views and testimonies, attesting to the excellency of both the essay itself and the historian's overall vision of Bulgarian history.

Keywords: Petar Mutafchiev, Bogomilism, Bulgarian interwar historiography.

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