

SACRALIZATION OF THE URBAN SPACE: THE EXAMPLE
OF THE MS. CHAI 1521 AND THE NEOMARTYRS OF SOFIA ON 16TH C.

(Summary)

The Middle Ages create a stable model of sacralization of space. It is always related to the Presence of God that could take place personally through grace. The translation is an import of holiness but it could be created in space too. The article discusses exactly such a phenomenon on the basis of a concrete historical case – neomartyrdoms of Sofia. The analysis follows two main directions: 1. To study the phenomenon of the 16th century Sofia neomartyrs as a way of sacralization of the urban space in the context of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans. 2. To answer the question how the literary production recreates the Orthodox concept of holiness, of the City in particular. The aims of the veneration of Sofia neomartyrs were religious and political. The direction of the intended results, however, was not anti-Ottoman but anti-Islamic and it pursued the consolidation of the Orthodox Christian community. It was this confessional community that was the addressee of the message of the neomartyrs veneration, not a national or ethnic one. The translation of holy models – that of (Upper) Jerusalem and of Constantinople for the City, and that of (Minor) Mount Athos for the region – led to the restoration of the Christian Empire through the Body of the Church, a major concept in the paradigm “Byzance après Byzance” and of the same type as we find in Constantinople after the Megalochasma of 1453, when the Ecumenical Church adopted a part of the heritage of the Empire.

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