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THE PAULICIANS

The subject of the present study is the Paulicians. With their native homeland in Anatolia and different Christian doctrine, the Paulicians were a purely underground movement, influential in the 7th-12th centuries. Perceived as heretical by Orthodox Christianity, they were forced to act secretly. However, they were influential in Byzantium and the Orthodox Church when they were strong. Orthodox and Armenians were responsible for their disappearance in Anatolia, which led to the emergence of different doctrines and movements in the following centuries and their spread in the Balkans.

Constantinos, the Paulicians' first leader, was pronounced a didaskalos in 655. In the first half of the 9th century, divided into two, the movement lost its power in Anatolia. Constantinos and later leaders identified themselves as Christians.

The Paulician doctrine accepts some texts from the New Testament, but they interpret the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, and rituals such as baptism and evharistiya differently from Orthodox Christians. Although often associated with dualist doctrines, neither their form of organization nor their orders and prohibitions are similar to the dualist ones. Their association with Christianity is based on more detailed data; however, they have different ideas about central issues, such as the Trinity and the position of Jesus Christ as God.

The Paulicians adopted a significant number of New Testament texts, especially the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul. Thus they adopted a new interpretation of Christianity, which, combined with their belief that deviated from the primary religious admissions, led to a negative perception. Due to their different interpretations, they were declared heretical by the Armenian Church in the east and the Orthodox Church, and the Catholic Church in the west. As a result, they were persecuted and forced to migrate or go underground; thus, the inauthentic information about them increased. Since there are no Paulicians living today, there is no way to study the subject in its own reality.

Introduction

The Paulicians have been a non-formalized and non-institutionalized movement that is spoken, written and drawn a lot, although there is not much information about them. In the period until the middle of the 5th century when Christianity completed its own process as a religion, there were many movements that could not carry itself to later periods. Since the movements in this process are in the period of establishing religion itself, it is more plausible that there are contradictory and/or different ideas. But in the following period, Paulicianism was one of the most influential movements that disturbed central Christianity and forced it to take care of itself. Paulicianism was a movement that attracted attention with this feature. The most important reason of this interest is, of course, the fact that it is accepted as a heretic and that there is not much information about it, ie ignorance. This led to the writing of these movements by their adversaries, but the formation of suspicious

data in an effort to declare their heresy. As they could not become central doctrine under state protection, they could hardly find themselves writing.

The most explicit data on the geography, teachings, beliefs and practices of the Paulicians are related to those who lived in Anatolia. They lived Central Anatolia and the Black Sea mountains inland, especially in Malatya and Sivas; mostly in Samosata (Samsat), in the ancient Mananali on the borders of Erzincan, and in settlements such as Arguvan and Tephrike (Divriği) in Malatya. Apart from these areas of life in the Byzantine period and in the geography, the Armenian geography is thought to have spread alongside the Malatya Muslim Emirate. However, the information and data about the Paulicians living in this second area are less and more complex. Most of these data are based on Armenian sources. More importantly, similar movements in both regions are likely to be the same and not linked. The Paulicians were involved in the Armenian geography in two periods. The first is the medieval period and is generally called Tondrakians. The second is XIX. Century and they were associated with both Paulicians, Tondrakian and Protestantism. It was mostly used in the form of new Tondrakian. Sometimes they are all thought together.

The basic approach in both old and modern research sources related to Paulicians and similar movements is based on the concept of “interaction”. The emergence of these communities in the close geographies and living in the close geographies as a result of migrations, as well as having similar doctrines, beliefs and practices, have often led to the explanation of the concept of “interaction”, and that the new one is influenced by the old one. One thing that is certain at this point is that they always have an interest in Christianity. However, the aim of this study is to evaluate each movement, period and community as it is in itself. The goal of understanding themselves as they are, is to take into consideration the fact that human beings can produce when necessary conditions are formed. Because man is a productive entity and the aim of the study is the concept of “production”.

The doctrine, beliefs and acceptances that are said about these communities, which mostly originate from the teachings of Christianity, show that they interpret Christianity, sacred texts and present Christians differently. These movements, which may be geographically or historically close or distant, may have similar interpretations. However, this does not require them to be continuation of each other or to influence each other. The general opinion of the study is that the common point of these movements is the idea of reverting to the religious origin. Therefore, they claim to have true religion in the face of the central religious associates, where they are very different. According to them, the Christian societies in which they emerged moved away from the true state of religion and centralized their human authority, thus creating an environment in which negative and evil prevailed. They accepted that it was possible to get rid of this by returning to the origin and original texts of religion. Paying attention to this issue will provide an opportunity to see the differences rather than the similarities and sameness between central religion and heretics. However, the study is limited to the Paulicians and the subject is discussed within the framework of historical process and basic beliefs.

The Paulicians are a closed and semi-concealed community because they do not feel safe from the members of the state religion who are under the protection of the state. The fact that they were strong and resistant to Byzantium for a while allowed the creation of slightly more open data. However, since they tend to show themselves differently than they are, it is inevitable for them to create difficulties in defining them in their own reality. Therefore, it becomes difficult to establish the historical processes of the Paulicians, to present the systematic of their beliefs and practices and to put forward ideas about them.

Paulicians have had three different habitats in history. These are Byzantine, Armenian and Balkan lands. The main sources of information about them belong to these three habitats. Byzantium was important for the Paulicians, the same in terms of resources. The main reason why the Byzantine sources have a narrative closer to the real Paulicians is that the main source belongs to the Peter of Sicily, the Byzantine ambassador sent to and living with the Paulicians. His work is known as “the History of Paulicians”¹. This small work is valuable because it was created by observing the Paulicians from the inside. However, many other data mostly belong to external opponents, such as various documents and decisions.

The important secondary sources about the Paulicians belong to the Armenians. Medieval Armenian historians wrote about the communities they associated with the Paulicians. Armenian sources often referred to them as Tondrakian. This name is given because of the geography they live. There are other names given by the same logic. However, Armenian historians such as Aristakes Lastivertsi did not give much information about these ideas on the grounds that they could lead listeners and readers to these ideas. Although Armenian sources used Paulician and other names, they mostly called them Tondrakian. This name is given because of the geography they live. There are other names given by the same logic. However, Armenian historians such as Aristakes Lastivertsi did not give much information about these ideas on the grounds that they could lead readers and listeners to these ideas.² The Armenian source of a controversial modern period Paulician, considered to be his own text, is a famous manuscript known as ali “*Banali Jshmartut ’yan*” (Բանալի Ջշմարտության, The Key to the Truth).³ However, it does not seem possible that the information in this manuscript matches the data of Peter of Sicily. It is also a very difficult issue to analyze the enigma both about the Key and the modern period Armenian Paulicians called the New Tondrakians. However, some noteworthy studies have been carried out recently about the Armenian Paulicians (XIX. Century).

¹ Peter of Sicily, “7. Peter of Sicily’s History of The Paulicians (870),” in *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 65–92.

² Aristakes Lastiverts’i, *Patmut’iwn Aristakeay Vardapeti Lastivertts’woy* (Venetik: Tparani Srboyn Ghazaru, 1844), c. 23.

³ Fred. C. (Frederick Cornwallis) Conybeare, *The Key of Truth a Manuel of The Paulician Church of Armenia*, ed. and trans. Fred. C. (Frederick Cornwallis) Conybeare (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1898).

Of these, Anna Ohanjanyan's work is particularly important with her critical approach and new proposal. She said that "the Key to Truth", which has an anti-Latin passion instead of definitions such as New Tondrakianism, Armenian Protestant and Paulician, has an Armenian and Protestant heritage.⁴ However, she also excludes the possibility of being a movement of her own by linking to another movement, idea. Yaşar Tolga Cora is another work that was taken with a similar approach⁵.

The emergence of the Paulicians in the Middle Ages is also a mystery and contains assumptions. The most obvious information is that the Paulicians have a relationship with Christianity. However, even Peter of Sicily gives contradictory information about the origin. In addition, he deals with the Paulicians he is assuming that they are influenced or continued by their predecessors. However, they are more likely to be the continuation of Christianity. In fact, the assumptions and the association with what is considered to be bad in the history of Christianity derive their power from being the central religion of Christianity (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Armenian, etc.), and with this power it is heretic to condemn communities with different religious ideas and practices.

The origin of the Paulicians was generally associated with Mani and/or Paul of Samosata. Peter of Sicily also contradictorily relates both to Mani and argued that they had connections with the name of Paul. According to this, the mother, who is a Manichaeist, teaches her two sons (Paul and John) and sends them out of Samosata. They come to the place called Phanaroia (Erbaa) and spread their ideas in a village. This village is called Episparis in the sense of 'seed bed'. After that, they take the name of Paulician instead of Manichaeist. Contradictory information appears both in the association of Paul of Samosata⁶ and in the same people saying that they cursed Paul of Samosata. In addition, Peter reports that the Paulicians condemned Mani and other deviations close to him⁷.

The role of the Paulicians in the Balkans, especially in the Bulgarian territory, is remarkable. Other movements, such as the Bogomiller, have attracted much attention, leading to the overlook of the Paulician holdings in Europe. However, some recent research, especially the work of Donka Radeva, is very important and remarkable on the subject, allowing the Paulicians to find their traces even today.

⁴ Anna Ohanjanyan, "The Manuscript Key of Truth: A Clue to Antiquity or A Riddle Text of Modern Times?" (Budapest: A Presentation made on November 28, 2013 at The Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies (CEMS), Central European University (CEU), 2013), 1–13; Anna Ohanjanyan, "The Song 'Key of Truth' and the Problem of New Tondrakians ('Banali Chshmarthw'yan' Yerky Yev 'Nor T'vondrakets'inery')," *Kant'egh: Gitanakan Hodvatsneri Zhoghovatsu*, no. 1 (2011): 161–66.

⁵ Yaşar Tolga Cora, "Localizing Missionary Activities: Encounters Between Tondrakians, Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Khnus in The Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *The Ottoman East in the Nineteenth Century: Societies, Identities and Politics*, ed. Yaşar Tolga Cora, Dzovinar Derderian, and Ali Sipahi (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 109–32.

⁶ Peter of Sicily, "The History of The Paulicians", c. 85, 93, 112.

⁷ Peter of Sicily, c. 15.

Radeva's work, which draws attention on both the Byzantine Paulicians and the European Paulicians, is much more important in terms of the approach and method⁸. She wanted to show that there has been a successive belief and thought that has been traced even now in Bulgaria since the Bible era (1st century). He argued that this could not be revealed in the Medieval writings due to the lack of adequate analysis and evaluation and biased behavior, but it could still be solved by new approaches. He wanted to show that there was a sacred archetype, a model, on the basis of the Paulicians (in the Bible), that it did not lose itself in later periods, so that it was possible to identify the recurring tradition. As a result, she stated that the Paulicians regarded themselves as sincere and faithful, and that their teachings were a new Christian interpretation. Radeva has made new expansions with this approach⁹. Taking a different approach, Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova aimed to reveal how the Paulicians were defined in two medieval Slavic sources (a sermon text and the 24th title of *Panoplia Dogmatica*) and the conceptualization of alterity through linguistic and cultural approach. She has shown that there is some consistency in the basic mechanisms between these two texts shaping the image of these pervers.¹⁰

Taking these considerations into account, the historical process of the Paulicians was processed through three regions. Later his beliefs were discussed. The subject was examined with the titles "Byzantine Paulicians", "Armenian Paulicians", "Bulgarian Paulicians" and "Paulician Beliefs" respectively.

I. Byzantine Paulicians

The information that clearly demonstrates the historical existence of the Paulicians is about Constantine of Mananalis (the area lying between Tercan and Kiğı, south of Tuzlaçayı), who is also regarded as their founder. It is estimated that Constantine, who lived in the reign of Constans II (641–68), was *didaskalos* under the name Silvanus in 655. Silvanus was associated with one of the friends of whom Paul had acted together^(1Cor.1:19;1Thess.1:1). Thus, the tradition of taking the names of the disciples of St. Paul is thought to have begun. Paulician leader Constantine served twenty-seven years around Colonea (Şebinkarahisar) and was eventually reported to Emperor Constantine IV (668–85). Thereupon the Emperor assigned a man named Symeon to execute Constantine and to draw the community to the Orthodox Church. There is information that Constantine was stoned and executed, and that his follow-

⁸ Donka Radeva, "Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword," n.d., 1–38. I would like to thank Donka Radeva for sending the pdf of the remarkable article study which has not yet been published and has a new approach.

⁹ Donka Radeva, "Pavlikyanstvoto Mezhdur Legendite i Istoriyata VII–XVII Vek" *Plovdivski Istoricheski Forum, Godina I*, n.d., 36–57; Donka Radeva, "The Bulgarian Paulicians between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam (Xvii–Xx Century AD) (Bulgarian)," in *Religiya, Natsionalna Identichnost I Dürzhavnost Na Balkanite Prez XIX–XXI v.* (Veliko Tarnovo: Velikotürnovski universitet "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodii" 2018), 30–45.

¹⁰ Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova, "Paulicians Between the Dogme and the Legend," *Studia Ceranea*, no. 7 (2017): 229–63.

ers were handed over to Orthodox church officials. When he came to Symeon, he returned to Istanbul, but three years later he went to Cibossa (near Şebinkarahisar). He became the new *didaskalos* of the Paulicians and took the name of Titus, one of Paul's disciples.^(2Cor.7:6-7) At this time, Justus, the adopted son of Constantine of Mananalis, questioned whether Christian dualism was consistent with the doctrine of St. Paul and appealed to the Orthodox bishop of Colonea to arbitrate between Titus and himself. The bishop reports Titus to the Emperor, and Titus and his followers are burned alive. Justus and his followers passed to the Orthodox Church. This event took place between 687-693 according to the sources¹¹.

The Paulician Church of Macedonia at Cibossa was weak. An Armenian, Paul, who escaped the interrogation, took refuge in the Episparis area of Phanaroia with his sons Gegnesius and Theodoros. Paul brought together the Paulicians and did not qualify as a leader like *didaskalos*. However, their sons claimed that they had the characteristics of *didaskalos*. Paul supported Gegnesius. Gegnesius took the name of St. Paul's trusted companion, Timotheus, who supported the missionary activities of Paul and Silvanus.^(2Cor.1:1;1Thess.1:1) Peter of Sicily says Timotheus Gegnesius has been in office for thirty years.¹² In this case, since he died in 748, he must have done *didaskalos* in 718¹³.

As the main sources of the Paulicians are divided into Greek and Armenian, their living spaces are divided into two: Byzantine and Armenian lands. In other words, it is seen that the Paulicians existed in Armenian geography besides Cibossa and Episparis. Data from Jhon of Oztun (Hovhannes III Oztnetzi, Armenian Catholicos) shows this. In fact, these data also include information that a group of people, defined as iconoclasts, living in the same geography as the Albanians, joined the Paulicians¹⁴. This shows the existence of a wider geography subject to the Paulicians.

Peter of Sicily tells that Emperor Leon III (717–741), who emphasized iconoclast thought in 730 with the order to destroy all religious images, called *didaskalos* Timotheus to Istanbul and questioned the Patriarch (probably Anastasios, 730–754).¹⁵ The Patriarch forces Timotheus to condemn those who reject Orthodox faith, who do not respect the Cross or Mary, and who do not want to join the Holy Communion. In the narrative, even if the questions are answered according to Paulician beliefs, the answers have the meaning to please both sides. According to Peter, Timothy's faith is secret, but the secret meaning of his answer is parallel and true to his true belief. According to him, the real meaning is in the answers. Accordingly, the

¹¹ Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton. Historical Introduction. *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 10–14.

¹² Peter of Sicily. *The History of The Paulicians*, c. 114–122.

¹³ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 14.

¹⁴ John of Oztun. Appendix IV: John of Oztun. *The Key of Truth a Manuel of The Paulician Church of Armenia*, ed. and trans. Fred. C. (Frederick Cornwallis) Conybeare (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1898), 152–54.

¹⁵ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 15–16.

Orthodox Church is in fact the Paulician Church; the holy cross is Jesus with arms open and Mary is holy Jerusalem. When asked if he believed in the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and baptism, he replied in the same way. He expressed the characteristics of the Paulician Church in his words. He declared that baptism was Jesus himself, that is, living water. Thus Timotheus rescued himself, appearing to be Orthodox¹⁶. In the end, Timotheus was declared Orthodox by the Patriarchate and sent to Phanaroia with the permission of the empire. However, he went to Mananalıs, the land of the first *didaskalos* Constantinople, which was in the hands of the Arabs at the time. Peter says that the last *didaskalos* Sergius Timotheus founded the Paulician Church in Achaia^(Act.18:12;2Cor.1:1) in Mananalıs¹⁷. Timotheus died in a plague epidemic in 748. However, his church was under the protection of the empire and became a respected movement both in the Caucasus and Byzantine lands.

After Timothy, the Paulicians were divided into two about the *didaskalosate*: who followed his son Zakharias and his adopted Joseph. These two leaders, who claim the *didaskalosate*, decided to emigrate to Byzantine territory. In this period, when the Abbasid Caliphate re-established Islamic rule in 772, many Armenians migrated to Byzantine lands and the Paulicians joined this movement. However, Arab margraves killed Zakharias' followers. Zakharias escaped when he saw the danger, thus losing the *didaskalosate*. Joseph and his followers made themselves as if they were heading south to the margraves and then went west to Episparis in Phanaroia, the center of Paulician in Byzantine Anatolia. Joseph, the undisputed *didaskalos*, took the name of Epaphroditus, whom Saint Paul praised^(Phil.2:25;4:18)¹⁸. The Episparisians welcomed the Paulicians, but a Byzantine official arrested them the moment they met to pray. Epaphroditus survived and moved to Antioch in Pisidia (near Yalvaç), which was Christianized by St. Paul. There he founded the Philippian Church of the Paulicians¹⁹. Epaphroditus, who served for about thirty years, died before 800²⁰.

The next Paulician leader, Baanes (Vahan), who succeeded Epafroditus, was born in Armenia and Peter said that he was one "of the Hebrews". He was *didaskalos*, but his leadership was blocked by a man named Sergius. The adherents of Sergius were agents of Peter of Sicily and branded Baanes with the nickname "the Foul"²¹. What happened to Baanes is unknown. Sergius is actually Greek and is from a village near Istanbul. It is said that a Paulician woman whom she fell in love with or a teacher called a sorceress was a factor in her transition to Paulicianism. He was accepted by some Paulicians as *didaskalos*. He took the name of Tychicus whom Saint Paul described as "my brother"^(Ef.6: 21)²². In the second Council of

¹⁶ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 115–121.

¹⁷ Peter of Sicily, p. 163.

¹⁸ Peter of Sicily, p. 129.

¹⁹ Peter of Sicily, p. 7, 163.

²⁰ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 17–18.

²¹ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 130.

²² Peter of Sicily, p. 134.

Nicaea (787), the iconoclast decisions were abolished. Later, when Tihikos *didaskalos* in the period of Empress Eirene (797–802), both during this period and during Nicephorus I (802–11), the Paulicians benefited from the old legal freedom. Sergius also wrote pastoral letters like St. Paul. It is also said that he wrote a book about St. Matthew, who understood to interpret the Gospel of Matthew²³. He moves the center of the Paulicians to Cynochorion near Neocaesarea (Niksar). He moves the center of the Paulicians to Cynochorion near Niksar. Here, establishes the Paulician Church of Laodicea (Denizli). Meanwhile, Patriarch Nicephorus (806–815) manages to convince Michael I (811–3) to declare that the Paulicians are heretic and to put the death penalty into effect again. Then Leo V (813–820) restarts the iconoclast period, but does not repeal the decision of the Paulicians that they are heretic and should be executed²⁴.

The prosecution of the Paulicians rises through the Thomas, Orthodox Archbishop of Neocaesarea. Many of the Paulicians are executed. Meanwhile, the Paulician Church of Laodicea members kill Thomas. Sergius' fans call the killers *Astatoi* in terms of stray. Then, the *Astatoi* settle in the Argaoun (Arguvan) fortress given by the Emir of Melitene (Malatya). Sergius-Tychicus and his supporters later joined the *Astatoi*. They found Paulician Church of the Colossians in Argaoun. Passing to Cilicia, Sergius, with the permission of the Emir of Tarsus, establishes the Ephesus Paulician Church based in Mamistra. These churches show emulation to the churches founded by St. Paul. The *Astatoi* fought against the Byzantine with the Muslims of Melitene in the period of Michael II (820–830) and certainly in the period of Theophilus (830–842). Sergius continued his life with carpentry and died approximately 834–5. There is information that he was murdered by an Orthodox fanatic or a fan of Baanes. It seems that it was possible that Sergius fans started killing Baanes supporters, but the mixed environment may have led to quarrels and turmoil. Then Sergius fans start killing Baanes supporters. This suggests that the Baanes supporters might have killed Sergius, but the mixed environment may have led to quarrels and turmoil. Theodotus, *synekdemoi* of Sergius, ended these killings by providing peace. In this mixed process, no new *didaskalos* are elected; Sergius's six *synekdemoi* run the administration in Argaoun. Most of the Paulicians continue to live in the Byzantine lands²⁵.

Queen Theodora canceled all iconoclast decisions as an iconodulist in 843. Now the cursed list of heretics is announced every year on the first Sunday of the Great Lent. The law applied to the Paulicians brings executions. Carbeas' father is among those executed. Carbeas, then, goes to Argaoun with about five thousand

²³ Gouillard (Trans.), 16. The Synodikon of Orthodoxy: Clauses About Bogomils, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 134–39, d; Jean Gouillard (Trans.), "Le Synodikon de l'orthodoxie," in *Travaux et Mémoires-2*, ed. E. de Boccard (Paris, 1967), 9, <https://orthodoxie.typepad.com/ficher/synodikon.pdf>.

²⁴ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 18–20.

²⁵ Hamilton and Hamilton, 20–21.

men and enters the service of the Emir of Melitene (843–844). In 856, Carbeas and his supporters go to Tephrike (Divriği) on the Byzantine border, where they are independent from the Emir of Melitene. It becomes an attractive place for the Byzantine Paulicians, and Carbeas supports Muslims of Melitene in their attacks against Byzantine until his death (863). After that, Chrysocheir, Carbeas' son-in-law and nephew, takes over. But Sergius' two surviving synekdemoi, Basileius and Zosimus, remain religious leaders. In the turmoil of the revolution in the palace in 867, Chrysocheir attacks the west, Nicaea, Nicomedia and Ephesus. Thereupon, Basil I sends Peter of Sicily to Tephrike for peace talks at 869–70. Peter can only make captive change. Chrysocheir was killed in battle in 872 and his head was cut off and sent to the emperor²⁶. Tephrike preserves its independence until it is destroyed by an earthquake in 878. The Paulicians, whose power was broken, do not attract much attention as a community that lives their beliefs in their living spaces from now on. A Paulician unit under the command of Diaconitzes, son-in-law of Chrysocheir, joins the war in the Byzantine army in 885.²⁷ Although this shows that they live with a massive population, Diaconitzes is soon returned to Orthodoxy by Emperor Leo VI (886–912)²⁸.

The Paulicians were scattered from Anatolia either in the form of deportation from their original habitat or settling in the Balkans in various ways. It is possible to come across their traces in the close environment they are dispersed from. They were seen in Euchaita (Elvançelebi Village, Çorum), Miletos (Milet) and Ephesus (Efes) in the 10th century and at the beginning of the next century²⁹. There are also thoughts that they have spread to the Armenian geography. This relationship is plausible since it has been for a long time. When it comes to the latter, that is, settling in the Balkans, Peter of Sicily gives an interesting information about this: *“I had heard these blasphemers babbling that they intended to send some of their number to the country of Bulgaria to detach some from the orthodox faith and to bring them over to their own foul heresy. They were emboldened by the fact that the divine preaching had just begun, and thought that they would be able easily to sow their own tares in the pure and guileless wheat. These unholy people often do this, and eagerly accept many blows and dangers in order to share their personal plague with those they meet”*. It is understood from this information that before the 880s, the Paulicians carried out mission activities in the dominant regions of the Orthodox Church bravely and faithfully.

²⁶ Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, 4 Books vols. (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998), Book 4/37, 496n; Albert Vogt, *Basile I^{er}, Empereur de Byzance (867–886), et La Civilisation Byzantine à La Fin Du IX^e Siècle* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1908), 325.

²⁷ Hamilton and Hamilton, “Historical Introduction”, p. 21–22.

²⁸ Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton, trans., 9. The Death of The Paulician Leader Chrysocheir (c. 878), *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450* (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 96–97, b.

²⁹ Hamilton and Hamilton, “Historical Introduction”, p. 23.

II. Armenian Paulicians

After this period, when the Paulicians were active, the two regions associated with them reached a remarkable point. These are the Armenian geography and the Balkans. Although the developments regarding the Paulicians were not with very clear data, both regions started before the effective Byzantine period. However, the Paulicians were previously lost in the Armenian geography. In the Balkans, especially in Bulgaria, its effects and traces have reached until recently.

In the Armenian sources, the bets from the movements, which are mostly associated with the Paulicians, accepted as perverted and known by different names, go back to the beginning of the 5th century. Koriwn (about 380–450) talks about a community he named as *Barbarosakan* (Բարբարոսական, Borborites) in his work known as “Vark’ Mesropay Vardapeti” (About Vardapet Mesrop). He also states that Saint Mesrop spread the teaching in this community and sanctified a bishop named Anania³⁰. Immediately afterwards, the movement of *Mtzhnt*, which is considered to be excommunicated by 447 Shahapivan Synod and derived from Messalians, is mentioned. This movement, with no other information about them, was mostly associated with the Paulicians. This group, called *Pavlik’eank’* (Պավլիկեանք, the Paulicians), was held in the 554 Divin Synod with the Nestorians and they were cursed again³¹. Catholicos Hovhannes III Otznetzi (717–728) commemorates them as *Payghake* (Պայղակեի) and accuses them of incest. He says that although they were warned by Catholicos Nerses, [Nerses II (548–557), who collected the Divin Synod, but Nerses III (641–661), which was Catholicos when the Paulicians were active, it is actually more likely to be the second.], they did not care and escaped and hid after his death, and even the iconoclasts that were excluded by the Aghuan (Albanian) Catholicos were united with them³².

While the name Paulician was mentioned in Greek sources as “Paulicianoi” (Παυλικιανοί), it was used in various forms such as Pawlikeank’, Paylikeank’, Pollikeank’, Pollikeank’ (Պավլիկեանք. Պայլիկեանք. Պոլիկեանք. Պոլիկեանք) in the Armenian sources dated between 6–11 centuries³³. Another movement, known as Tondrakian and accepted as heretic, was again associated with the Paulicians. Tondrakians, who clearly showed their existence in 9-11 centuries, is an Armenian movement with the most information about them. It has been suggested that the movement got its name from the village of T’ondrak in the province of Turuberan. Contemporary Armenian sources show Smpat Zarehavantsi as the founder of the movement. Abulbart

³⁰ Koriwn, “Vark’ Mesropay Vardapeti (Bnagir A), *Matenagirk’ Hayots’*, A. Hator, Y. Dar, ed. Zawen Yekawyeay (Ant’ ilias-Libanan: tp. Kat’ voghikosut’ ean Hayots’ Metsi Tann Kilikiyoy, 2003), 229–57, Chap. XV/4; XVI/1.

³¹ Vrej Nersessian, *The Tondrakian Movement Religious Movements in the Armenian Church from the Fourth to the Tenth Centuries* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1987), 9–12, 15n

³² John of Otzun, Appendix IV: John of Otzun, p. 153; Nersessian, *The Tondrakian Movement*, 17; Nina Garsoian, *Paulician Heresy: A Study of the Origine and Development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire* (The Hague-Paris: Mouton & Co, 1967), 132, 82n.

³³ Nersessian, *The Tondrakian Movement*, 12.

(Ebu'l-Verd), the Emir of Manazkert (Malazgirt), exerts severe pressure on them and tortures Smpat in the 840–850s³⁴. Grigor Narekatsi (950?–1003?) also named the movement as Tondrakians and associated it with a village named T'ondrak [Թոնդրակ (T'ondrak), Թոնդրակ (T'ondruk), Թոնդրակ (T'ondurak), Թոնդրակ (T'ondurek)]. He listed fourteen members of the movement in the same letter.³⁵

The members of the movement lived in the province of Hark', Kashe, Aghyuso and T'ulayl villages in Mananagh (Mananali) province, and in the cities of Khnus (Hınıs) and Ani. They had villages in Syunik', Ayunik' and Ararat provinces. Also, preachers were wandering in Shirak, Rshtunik, Mokk' states. Heretics revolt between 906–930 in Ayunik province and 915–920 in Ararat. In the same process, especially Ts'uraberd (Ts'ur), Berd and Tamalek' villagers of Syunik' province attack Tat'ev Monastery. In this uprising, Ts'uraberdians kill the abbot and pour myurron oil (myrrh). However, Tondrakians had been subjected to violent prosecution again between about 990 and 1010. Although they revived by 1030, Grigor Magistros Pahlavuni's military detachments drove the Tondrakians in settlements such as T'vondrak, Kashe, T'ulayl, Khnus (Hınıs) in 1050–53 and hit a great blow. In this process, there is information that the Tondrakyan refugees to the south and Diyarbakır sides³⁶.

Aristakes Lastivertsi, the author of the same period as Grigor Magistros, named one of the Tondrakians as Mtzghneay and compared one of them to Nestorius. However, he gave the names of regions such as Hark' (Bulanık), Apahunik' (north of Van Lake), H'lat (Ahlat), Karin (Erzurum), Mananaghi (Kashe and Aghyuso villages) ve Ekegheats [Pakhra Mountain in Bazmaghbivr (büyük kaynak), (Khach', Haçköy=Tercan)] in his bets on Tondrakians. Aristakes declared that the Tondrakians performed the sacred victim (khorhurd patarag=eucharist) three times a year and believed that if he did not regret it, he would not benefit the universe and the memorial days, and also did not accept the Church and any rituals of the Church (baptism, sacred victim, cross and fasting). In fact, he did not find it appropriate to explain what they did. The reason for this is the idea that he may refer the hearing to the same sin and lose the persistence of the hearing. Aristakes Lastivertsi said that Patriarch Sargis (992–1019) and Mananaghi Bishop Samuil (in 1005 or 1011) stamped the faces of the Tondrakians with a fox sign³⁷.

The pressure of Grigor Magistros was effective and the Tondrakians or the Armenian Paulicians gradually disappeared as of the last quarter of the 11th century. However, when a different community was discovered in the 19th century, it came to the fore again violently and the new ones were named with the old names.

³⁴ S. Poghosyan, T'vondrakyan Sharzhum, *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran* (Yerevan, 1978), 199.

³⁵ Vrej Nerses Nersessian, Grigor Narekatsi, Mystic and Poet: The Soul's Search for Immediacy with God, *One in Christ* 51, no. 1 (2017): 102.

³⁶ Poghosyan, T'vondrakyan Sharzhum, p. 199–200.

³⁷ Aristakes Lastivertsi, Patmut'iwn, Hay Dasakan Matenagrut'iwn, accessed January 20, 2020.

The Paulicians and the New Tondrakians comes first in the names used to name the this community. This process can be expressed as “The Key of Truth” (*Banali Jshmartut’yan*, Բանալի Ձշմարտության) issue. The word “The Key of Truth” is a propositional phrase in a written text that is claimed to have a group of people identified in the Khnus. This word, which has the key to open the door to teaching and/or religion, is used as a name for the text. It was also used to name the mentioned community. Some of this community settled in the region between Akhalts’kha (Ahıska) and Yerevan, especially in the Third Arkhveli, from the village of Chevirmé (in Khnus) during the Turkish-Russian war in 1828-29. A lawsuit was initiated in 1837 on the residents of Arkhveli (Արխվելի , now Lernut) Village of Shirak province. This community was named as “Tondrakian” in the texts related to the case. The “Key of Truth” was taken from their hands during the trial process³⁸.

Galust Ter-Mkrtchyan argued in 1892 that the Tondrakians were of Armenian origin and the main source of all protestants and Evangelical movements. He stated that similar movements stretching from Anatolia to France have the same feature³⁹. Frederic Conybeare argued that the teaching of the Paulicians was Adoptionist when he described this text and its owners in the introduction of “the Key of Truth” published in 1898⁴⁰. He handled all heretics from Maniheim to Qatar from the beginning to the end of his work and tried to prove this idea. It has been suggested that the main idea of the heretics was the Adoptionist Christ Jesus idea, which bears the idea that Christ Jesus is the “adopted Son” as a human being. This idea also affected subsequent researchers⁴¹. This idea led not only to the Khnus movement, but to all the movements that have taken place in history as protestant. Leon Arpee, a protestant Armenian researcher, said that the doctrine in the “Key of Truth” was Adoptionist Unitarianism in the idea of Christ Jesus and saw his followers as having the same characteristics as the Medieval Paulicians.⁴² The idea that they are protestant has gone very far. It was even suggested that Protestantism started among the Armenians not earlier than 150 years ago, and these ideas came from the Armenian Apostolic Church Fathers; Heretics such as Mtzighne, Paulician, Tondrakian and New Tondrakian adopt protestant ideas; these ideas prepared the 16th century Protestant Reform in Europe⁴³. However, some researchers recently highlighted im-

³⁸ Ohanjanyan, The Song ‘Key of Truth, p. 161.

³⁹ Ohanjanyan, The Manuscript Key of Truth, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Fred. C. (Frederick Cornwallis) Conybeare, Intruduction. *The Key of Truth a Manuel of The Paulician Church of Armenia*, ed. and trans. Fred. C. (Frederick Cornwallis) Conybeare (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1898), xxxv.

⁴¹ Ohanjanyan, The Manuscript Key of Truth, p. 3.

⁴² Leon Arpee, Armenian Paulicianism and The Key of Truth. *The American Journal of Theology*, no. 10 (1906): 278.

⁴³ Krikor Haleblan, The Origins of Armenian Protestantism. *Defending the Faith*, ed. Vartan Archpriest Kasparian (California, 2015), 111; Ohanjanyan, The Song ‘Key of Truth,’161.

portant question marks on the subject⁴⁴. Anna Ohanjanyan, who saw the manuscript of the “Key of Truth” and court records, stated that Adoptionistic Crystallogly was adapted to the Paulician and Tondrakian doctrines in the previous studies. In her study, she revealed that there was no clear evidence of the ideas previously put forward⁴⁵. She came to the following conclusion: Priest Hovhannes, alleged to be the author of The Key to Truth, “indeed founded “newly invented” teachings, which bore the imprint of anti- Latin tendencies in the 18th century Armenia. He seems to combine and intertwine a number of Protestant concepts, some ritual and doctrinal principles of Armenian Church, some apocryphal narratives and maybe remnants of local heresies (not necessarily Paulician or Tondrakian) within the doctrine of Key of Truth. The anti-Latin passion of Key of Truth comes to prove it to have a common Armenian-Protestant legacy”⁴⁶.

A striking point on the subject is that the definition of Paulician was reflected in the Ottoman documents in the same period. There is a short document in the 13th “Non-Muslim Community Record” (Gayri Müslim Cemaat Defteri) in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive. In this document, dated 1879, it is stated that the Paulicians were depended (*yamak*) to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul⁴⁷. It is likely that the document, which is not another information, is related to the Khnus community, also called the New Tondrakian.

III. Bulgarian Paulicians

Apart from Byzantine Anatolia, the second important Paulician habitat after the Armenian geography was the Balkans, especially Bulgaria today. The Bulgarian Paulicians were mainly formed by immigration from Anatolia. The policy of immigration from the eastern border of the Byzantine to the Balkans is based on the goal of creating a war power. In addition, migration of heretics has the goal of Orthodoxyization. Population transfer from Anatolia to the Balkans was also valid for non-heretics. Armenians come first. One of the most well-known migrations takes place in the policy of Emperor Constantine V (741–775). He emigrated Armenians from cities such as Theodosiopolis (Erzurum), which he conquered in 751⁴⁸, and Paulicians, who were not seen as heretical because they were orthodoxized, to form a line of defense against the Bulgarians. Some researchers stated that those who were displaced were those living in Byzantine lands or border areas such as Theo-

⁴⁴ Ohanjanyan, The Manuscript Key of Truth, 1–13; Cora, Localizing Missionary Activities, p. 109–32.

⁴⁵ Ohanjanyan, The Manuscript Key of Truth, p. 1.

⁴⁶ Ohanjanyan, 13.

⁴⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Gayri Müslim Cemaat Defteri, No: 13, Page No: 2, Doc. Date 1879; Canan Seyfeli, *İstanbul Ermeni Patrikliği, Kuruluşu ve İdari Yapısı* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2019), p. 123.

⁴⁸ J. Laurent, *L’Arménie Entre Byzance et l’Islam Depuis La Conquête Arabe Jusqu’ En 886* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1919), 208.

dosiopolis, Melitene, Tephrike⁴⁹. Contemporary Theophanes expressed this in the events of 754/5: “The emperor Constantine settled Syrians and Armenians whom he had brought from Theodosiopolis and Melitene in Thrace, and from them spread the heresy of the Paulicians”⁵⁰. However, the real exile of the Paulicians to the Balkans developed after their powers in Anatolia were broken and dispersed. The influence of Byzantium on this grew after 970, when it increased its power in the east again. Byzantine, while placing the Armenians to the west in the period when it expanded its eastern border by demolishing the small Armenian kingdoms, in the meantime, drove the Paulicians to the Balkans.⁵¹ It is understood that the remaining Paulicians lived under Muslim rule until the beginning of the 12th Century, since they fought among the Muslim troops against the Crusaders in the First Crusade⁵². Those who remained migrated to the geography of Bulgaria by Byzantine again. Antakya Orthodox Patriarch Theodoros II (970–6) convinced John I Tzimiskes (969–76) to drive the heretics from the east in the newly captured areas. Upon this, the Emperor placed the Paulicians in Philippopolis (Plovdiv, Filibe) and its vicinity in about 975⁵³. While some sources mention two hundred thousand Paulicians in this immigration, the settlement center is understood to be Philippopolis⁵⁴.

It is difficult to clearly identify the religious and political lines of the Paulicians in the Balkans from sources. It is understood that they display different postures according to time and place. While sometimes they were Byzantine warriors, they sometimes fought against the Byzantines with the Pechenegs, Catholics or Crusaders. Sometimes when they were forced to accept Orthodox teaching, some of them did not give up their beliefs despite torture and death. Sometimes they opposed Catholics and Crusaders. Instead of carrying out mission activities in such an environment, the Paulicians only tried to protect themselves. However, a significant number of the Paulicians eventually accepted Catholicism. It can be said that the main reason why they feel close to Catholics is that they are both anti-iconic. This complex situation is an important factor that prevents clear data on the teaching of the Paulicians.

Euthymius of the Periblepton saw the Paulicians in about 1045 the same as heretics, such as Montanus, Paul of Samosata and Mani. He said that the Paulicians did not drop the holy texts and the letters of Saint Paul just like their predecessors. He also stated that their teachings were similar, but that their heresies were obvi-

⁴⁹ Rene Grousset, *Başlangıcından 1071'e Ermenilerin Tarihi*, trans. Sosi Dolanoğlu (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2005), p. 320.

⁵⁰ Theophanes Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 593.

⁵¹ Canan Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilise Merkezi Ecmiatzin* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2015), 132–50, 342n.

⁵² Garsoian, *Paulician Heresy*, p. 15–16.

⁵³ Peter Charanis, The Transfer of Population as a Policy in the Byzantine Empire, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3, no. 2 (1961): 146.

⁵⁴ Radeva, *Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword*, p. 19.

ous, that they could only harm those who saw them as a deep-rooted tradition, and that no one was even affected and upset⁵⁵. These statements have parallels with the words of the Armenian historian Aristakes Lastivertsi.

In 1081, Alexios I (1081–1118) fought with 2800 Paulicians in Dyrrachium to stop the Norman attack. This union, described as the Maniheist, has two leaders, Xantas and Culeon, and returned to their homes with their men after the defeat⁵⁶. Alexios then forced the Paulicians to Orthodox baptism and punished those who refused, arrested their leaders and confiscated the people's homes. The Paulician leader Traulos collaborated with the Pechenegs and captured the Beliatoba fortress, run by Alexios near Philippopolis⁵⁷. The Emperor made another similar attempt in Philippopolis in 1114. Then he wanted to be baptized with Orthodox baptism, especially the Paulicians in Philippopolis, and was partially successful in this. However, Paulician leaders such as Cusinus and Pholus were not able to be baptized⁵⁸.

It is known that a few of the Paulicians in the Balkans accepted to Bogomilism. For example, in the west of Anatolia, where Bogomil mission activities were carried out, they have adapted to Bogomil traditions in cultural sense since 1040s⁵⁹. However, there is also evidence that the Paulicians fed the Bogomil. It is said that *pop* Bogomil received his first spark from the Bulgarian Paulicians⁶⁰. Euthymius Zigabenus touched on the common feature of these two movements: “And they banish all the pious emperors from the fold of Christians, and they say that only the Iconoclasts are orthodox and faithful, especially Copronymus (Constantine V, 741–775)”⁶¹. This information suggests that Bogomilism, which emerged after the iconoclasm, was influenced by this idea in the Paulicians.

During the reign of Emperor Manuel I (1143–80), Moglena (Karacaova, Greece) bishop Saint Hilarion (1134–64) provided information indicating that the Paulicians lived in his bishopric region⁶². While Istanbul's Latin Emperor Baldwin I intends to conquer Philippopolis on April 14, 1205, the city is almost captured in

⁵⁵ Euthymius of The Periblepton, 19. Euthymius of The Periblepton Condemns Bogomils (C. 1045), *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 158.

⁵⁶ Anna Comnena (Komnene), *The Alexiad*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dawes, vol. Books (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books, 1928), Book IV/IV.

⁵⁷ Comnena (Komnene), Book VI/IV.

⁵⁸ Comnena (Komnene), Book XIV/IX.

⁵⁹ Hamilton and Hamilton, p. 35.

⁶⁰ Hamilton and Hamilton, p. 30.

⁶¹ Euthymius Zigabenus, 25. Extracts from Euthymius Zigabenus Dogmatic Panoply Against The Bogomils, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 180–207, p. 11.

⁶² Euthymius, 33. St Hilarion of Moglena (1134–64) Converts Bogomils in His Diocese, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, ed. E. Kaluzhnicki, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 225–26.

the revolt supported by Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan. Then Kaloyan defeats the Emperor in Adrianople (Edirne), takes prisoner and takes Serres. On top of that, the Paulicians, known as Popelicans, propose to deliver the city to Tsar. When Renier de Trit, who Baldwin declared as a duke to the city, learned about this, he burned most of the neighborhoods outside of the city wall where the Paulicians were living⁶³. This event shows that the Paulicians who had their teachings existed at this time. Thus, the Paulicians surrendered Philippopolis to Tsar Kaloyan, which was the centerpiece for them throughout their history. In addition, this event was a turning point in the integration of the Paulicians into the new Bulgarian State⁶⁴.

There is little information to show that the traces of the teachings of the Paulicians, which disappeared over time in the Bulgarian geography, remain. After 1580, Pietro Cedolini, appointed by Pope Gregory 13 as an apostolic visitor, mentions seventeen villages belonging to the supporters of Paul who lived their own life between Nicopolis (Niğbolu) and Philippopolis (Plovdiv). These villagers were Paulician; They glorified Paul, were away from the cross of Jesus, rejected all religious icons and paintings, opposed baptism with water and separated themselves from the Orthodox Church. These Paulicians, who did not know much about them, converted to Catholicism at the last stage⁶⁵. In addition to integration with the Bulgarian State, the Paulicians were unable to carry themselves to the modern era with their teachings due to Catholicization and partially Orthodoxy. However, the cultural presence of the Paulicians in the Bulgarian geography continued. Some legends that reveal the perception of an opposing group have made their traces continue. In these legends, the Paulicians were described as the devil's disciples. Donka Radeva has revealed that their influence continues with their legends or with the still living Paulician dialect. She said that the Paulicians were true and sincere Christians in their understanding, and that with these characteristics, they were transformed into a different Bulgarian community by preserving their archetypes. As an example of this, she mentioned the existence of some communities from the Paulicians in the 21st century. She stated that these communities sustain duality (dualism) as a common feature with their ancestors⁶⁶.

IV- Paulician Beliefs

Peter of Sicily described the Paulicians in terms of teaching with the word "*There are not two separate groups. The Paulicians are also Manichaeans, who have added the foul heresy they discovered to the heresy of their predecessors, and have sunk in the same gulf of perdition*"⁶⁷. This summarizes the form of approach in his book. In the following sections, he stated that they accepted the Bible and the

⁶³ Geoffroi de Villehardouin and Henri de Valenciennes, *IV. Haçlı Seferi Kronikleri*, trans. Ali Berktaş (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2006), p. 399, 400.

⁶⁴ Radeva, *Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword*, p. 33–37.

⁶⁵ Hamilton and Hamilton. *Historical Introduction*, p. 24.

⁶⁶ Radeva, *Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword*, p. 33–37.

⁶⁷ Peter of Sicily, *The History of The Paulicians*, p. 3.

letters of Paul, Jacob, John and Judah⁶⁸. Accordingly, he argued that the Paulicians had developed a new doctrine by reinterpreting and understanding the Manichaeist doctrine with the texts of the New Testament, thereby distorting Christianity.

According to Peter of Sicily, Paulician leader Constantine of Mananalis, who lived in the period of Constans II (641–68), was also influenced by the Manichaean doctrine and transformed it into Paulicianism by interpreting it with the texts of the New Testament⁶⁹. However, the Manicheist past, which is constantly emphasized in the text of Peter, is rather ambiguous. In addition, some researchers have emphasized that there is no evidence of Manichaist or gnostic influence in the Paulician tradition.⁷⁰ In fact, because of the similarities, the unknown is defined by acting on what is known. It is possible to understand this from some of Peter's statements. While Peter stated that Constantine taught Manichaeistic heresy in one place,⁷¹ he said that they had cursed Mani, who was clearly the chief guides elsewhere⁷². He even conveyed the Paulicians saying that they did not follow the Manicheist's immorality (teachings)⁷³. Also, by saying "*they anathematize enthusiastically Mani and all the foul heretics of his party, and Paul of Samosata*"⁷⁴, Peter reveals that the Paulicians had their own teaching and interpretation. This suggests that Peter was trying to identify the perverted (heretic) ideas in the teachings of the Paulicians, and put them into a pattern of his own thought, both while living with them and writing. However, Constantine defined himself as a Christian. Peter, when saying elsewhere, states that the Paulicians see themselves as true Christians. When Peter says "*they call themselves Christians, and they call us who are truly named from Christ our true God, Romans*"⁷⁵ in another place, he actually states that the Paulicians see themselves as true Christians.

Peter of Sicily thinks that Constantine's teaching is an idea of Manichaean origin, interpreting the Bible and Acts. He cites some events about improving his teaching: "*This man entertained in his house for some time a certain deacon, a prisoner who was returning to his own country from Syria and came first to Mananalis. ... The prisoner was bringing back from Syria two books, one of the holy Gospel and the other of the Apostle, which he presented to Constantine in return for his hospitality.*". He continues: Constantine "*realised that his heresy was unlawful and hateful ... , he determined to give a new face to the evil. He determined, ... that no other book at all should be read than the Gospel and the Apostle*". Peter adds: "*He took the origin of every blasphemy from the Manichaean books already mentioned, and was able through the co-operation of the devil to twist the thoughts of*

⁶⁸ Peter of Sicily, p. 42, 44.

⁶⁹ Peter of Sicily, p. 94–98.

⁷⁰ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 8.

⁷¹ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 105.

⁷² Peter of Sicily, p. 100.

⁷³ Peter of Sicily, p. 3.

⁷⁴ Peter of Sicily, p. 15.

⁷⁵ Peter of Sicily, p. 37.

the Gospel and the Apostle to his own opinion in his interpretation. He rejected the books of the Manichaeans"⁷⁶. Peter also explained that Paulician leader Sergius was Paulician in a similar way. Accordingly, Sergius "*entered into a relationship with an immodest woman who belonged, it is said, to the Manichaean heresy*". Impressed by this woman, Sergius read and studied Paul's Letters, Acts and Bibles, thereby developing his ideas⁷⁷. Thus, Peter evaluated the event with the same approach.

Sergius' development before revealing his idea reveals that not only those who knew the Bible well but also other Christians thought about reading the Bible. Because Peter stated that Sergius previously said to the Manichaeist woman, "*It is not right for laymen like me to read them, but only for priests*"⁷⁸. Similarly, Sicilian Peter warned the Orthodox against the Paulicians: "*The best plan for the simple is this, to avoid these corrupt people, and not be disgusted, nor try to answer their enquiries, but be silent when they make enquiry, and, if possible, run away from private audience with them, as if they were snakes..... It is difficult for the simple not to be swept away by them, as they quote all the sayings of the Gospel and the Apostle in conversation, and their craft is only recognized by those who are very familiar with holy scripture*"⁷⁹. Peter's warning shows that the Paulicians were effective and successful in missionary. It is therefore considered dangerous for Christians other than those who know the scriptures well because they use the Scripture. With this warning, Christians were advised to stay away from them, as they did not recognize the holy text as much as the Paulicians. For this reason, the way for the Orthodox Church to dominate the Paulicians was not by speech and discussion, but by silencing and destroying with pressure and violence.

Constantine has some interesting words that show his devotion to the Bible with a different interpretation. He said: "*You are the Macedonians and I am Silvanus sent to you by Paul.*" These and similar words were evaluated with literal meaning by Peter⁸⁰. However, Constantine spoke this word to the people of Kibossa and made an analogy. Considering the entire text, it is understood that this analogy was made about the entire Paulician Church. He continued his analogy in the above his word and showed himself in position of the student of Paul. He thus showed his loyalty to Paul and his letters. It is also understood that through this high analogy and allegory, he captured the spirit of Jesus Christ, who spoke with matters in the Gospels.

It is understood that among the texts accepted by the Paulicians, the entire Christian Bible was not included. According to the Sicilian Peter, the Paulicians "*do not accept any book of the Old Testament, calling the prophets cheats and brigands,.... They accept only the four holy gospels and the fourteen epistles of St Paul, the catholic epistle of James, the three epistles of St John, that of St Jude and the*

⁷⁶ Peter of Sicily, p. 95–97.

⁷⁷ Peter of Sicily, p. 138–152.

⁷⁸ Peter of Sicily, p. 138.

⁷⁹ Peter of Sicily, p. 10, 12.

⁸⁰ Peter of Sicily, p. 101.

*Acts of the Apostles, using the same text as we do*⁸¹. Elsewhere, he stated that the Paulicians “that they follow the words of the holy Gospel and of the Apostle”.⁸² In addition, Peter used the following statement to show that among the scriptures of the Paulicians there were texts they produced: “*They also have cursed epistles of their leader Sergius, full of impiety and arrogance*”⁸³. These letters were probably created by emulating St. Paul.

Paulician leader Sergius, in these his words quoted by Peter, talks about following a tradition in which he probably included his letters: “*Be imitators of me, and hold fast the traditions which you received from me*”,⁸⁴ “*Let no one deceive you in any way. You have these promises from God, be confident. I have written to you, having confidence in your hearts, that I am the door-keeper, the good shepherd, the guide of the body of Christ, the light of the house of God, and I am with you always to the close of the World.*”^[Matt. 28,20] “*If I am absent in the body, still I am present in the spirit.*”⁸⁵ ve “*We are the body of Christ; if anyone separates himself from the traditions of the body of Christ, that is, our traditions, he sins, because he takes the part of those who teach otherwise, and does not believe sound doctrine*”⁸⁶. From these words of Sergius, it is understood that they care about their commitment to the Bible and their loyalty to their scriptures. Here Sergius likened the church to the body of Jesus, just like St. Paul, and stated that he was the guide of this body. Thus, he pointed to unity in Jesus Christ and to the unity of the Church.

One of the interesting issues associated with the Bible is that the Paulicians reject St. Peter’s “the two catholic epistles”. Sicilian Peter stated that he did not know, why the Paulicians were enemies of St. Peter. In fact, they may have negatively evaluated Peter’s words about him because of the importance they gave to Paul⁸⁷. Saint Peter points out that St Paul is incomprehensible and some distort his words: “*So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction*”^(2.Pet.3:16). In these words of St. Peter, there are two situations that can disturb the Paulicians. The first is the issue of incomprehensibility in the words of St. Paul. However, it is possible for the Paulicians to see themselves as the best understanders of Paul. The second is the subject of “*the ignorant and unstable*” people to distort the Sacred text. The Paulicians do not see themselves in Paul’s position anyway. Paulician leaders regard themselves as Paul’s helpers. Therefore, the criticism of St. Peter is like directly addressing Paulician leaders. Therefore, the Paulicians may have associated the criticism with them and may have been disturbed by it. Another point that

⁸¹ Peter of Sicily, p. 42.

⁸² Peter of Sicily, p. 23.

⁸³ Peter of Sicily, p. 43.

⁸⁴ Peter of Sicily, p. 160.

⁸⁵ Peter of Sicily, p. 161.

⁸⁶ Peter of Sicily, p. 167.

⁸⁷ Peter of Sicily, p. 44.

increases this disturbance is that Orthodox Christians often accuse the Paulicians of distorting the Bible when interpreting it. They should not have wanted to face this accusation because they considered themselves to be the true and correct interpreter of St. Paul.

It is understood that there are different interpretations of the Scriptures and therefore discussions among the Paulicians. Peter said that the discussion between Iustus, who killed Constantine by throwing stones in his execution, and Paulician leader Symeon, the whale nickname, came out of his different interpretations from the letter to the Colossians.⁸⁸ It is known that St. Paul said “*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church;*”^(Col.1.16-18) and in Christianity, this meant interpretation as Jesus Christ. In this discussion, it is understood that they differ from interpreting Jesus Christ. In addition, it is understood that the Paulicians based their idea of “*above all the idea of the first-born Jesus Christ*” on these texts. The Paulicians have been accused of being Adoptionist throughout history for these ideas.

The idea of Jesus Christ is above all related to the idea of God when it comes to Christianity. There is not much clear data on the idea of God of the Paulicians in Peter’s History. Peter said that: “*By an improper use of allegory, and in ignorance, they are able to say that they confess the Holy Trinity and to anathematize those who do not*”⁸⁹. He hinted that they refused the Trinity, but they pretended to accept it. Thus, he says that the Paulicians have the idea of a Trinity according to them and/or a different interpretation. Donka Radeva has reached similar conclusions. According to her; “*The analysis proves that the sacral archetype of the Paulicians (i.e. Ontology, Cosmology, and Christology) has not changed. The Orthodox Trinity of ‘the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’ is blessed and sacralized. The Heavenly Father, the Creator of the world, and Christ are the three coeternal consubstantial Divine Persons who have established the cosmic (heavenly), earthly and human order*”⁹⁰. Here, Radeva did not include the Holy Spirit. However, it is easy to add this from the Christian texts used by the Paulicians. However, it is very difficult to find a clear ‘Holy Trinity’ doctrine in the Paulicians. In addition, if a trilogy was included, it is not necessarily Christian trilogy. It is understandable and acceptable to have Father, Son and Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible. So they can talk about a holy trinity. However, it is certain that the Paulicians interpret the scriptures differently. In the Christian texts accepted by the Paulicians, there is no explicit expression of the “Holy Trinity”, there is no explicit statement indicating that the three are Gods, and there is no expression that presents three as Gods in the same sentence. Considering that this state of the scriptures and they reject the Christian tradition that interprets

⁸⁸ Peter of Sicily, p. 110.

⁸⁹ Peter of Sicily, p. 14.

⁹⁰ Radeva, Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword, p. 29.

these texts, it is highly plausible that they have different interpretations of the idea of God and of the trinity. Also, if the Paulicians acted according to the words of St. Paul given above, it is possible that they might have considered Jesus Christ to be created (first and foremost) and the creations to be the most perfect. However, this is a matter that can completely change the idea of God and teaching, as they reduce Jesus Christ to a created being.

Another subject that affects the idea of God very closely is the idea of creation. However, there are no clear data on the idea of the creation of the Paulicians. Peter said: “*they confess two principles, an evil one and a good one; one who is the maker of this world and has power over it, the other has power over the world to come*” And “*they say that the maker of the cosmos is one god, and that another god, whom they call the heavenly father, has no power in this cosmos but does in the age to come*”⁹¹. First of all, it is literally a coercion to reach the conclusion of dualism from these expressions. Neither in Mani dualism⁹² nor in Zoroastrian dualism,⁹³ there are no ideas of two Gods who share the realms (the world of creation, the world and the hereafter) as the domain of domination. Because God has power in all three realms. Also, there is no idea of God where the evil is creative. Demiurge is neither a god nor a true creator. In fact, the idea of a bad God who created the universe and dominated him, the world, is in no systematic religion. In dualist and gnostic religions such as Mandaeanism and Manichaeism, the universe and man are created from the combination of two opposite elements and is the God of Light that brings life to existence⁹⁴. Therefore, it is impossible for the Paulicians to believe that the evil God is creative. However, according to the Christian interpretation, the Paulicians might have gone to a little excess. According to the Book of Genesis, in Christianity, the human who was expelled from Heaven through the devil fell into the world dominated by the devil. This world, in which man fell, is a realm in which the lost heavenly realm is regained. However, in this world, dominated by the devil, whose head is crushed on the cross, the Church is Heaven. In the other realm, the Heaven (Celestial Church), where good and survivors reach again, is a realm that the devil cannot enter and his power does not reach. It also dominates the hereafter and/or the life after death, which dominates creation and the realm of creation⁹⁵. In no systematic religion, it is not possible for these two realms to be different domi-

⁹¹ Peter of Sicily, *The History of The Paulicians*, p. 36, 38.

⁹² Canan Seyfeli, *Maniheizm (Çokkültürlülük Konferansı (27–28 Kasım 2005, Diyarbakır)*, Diyarbakır: İnsan Hakları Derneği Yay., 2005), p. 137–40.

⁹³ Irach J. I. Taraporewala, *Zerdüş Dini: Zerdüş'ün Gathaları Üç Unutulmuş Din: Mitraizm, Maniheizm, Mazdakizm*, trans. Nice Damar (İstanbul: Avesta Yayınları, 2002), 43–50; Mehmet Alıcı, *Kadim İran'da Din: Monoteizm'den Düalizm'e Mecusi Tanrı Anlayışı* (İstanbul: Ayışığı Kitaplığı, 2012), p. 205–36.

⁹⁴ Şinasi Gündüz, *Sâbiiler Son Gnostikler* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1995), p. 67–109; Mehmet Alıcı, *İştğın Elçisi Mani ve Gnostik Düşüncesi* (İstanbul: Divan Kitap, 2018), p. 248–369.

⁹⁵ Canan Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilisesi'nde Sakramentler* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2015), p. 33–47.

nating (god). So the Paulicians see the devil only as the dominating of the world. It is possible to understand this from the words of Peter of Sicily. He quoted the Paulicians said, “*You believe in the creator of the universe, and we believe in those who speak in books*” and added, “*You have neither heard his voice nor seen his face*”^(Jn 5:37)⁹⁶. The first is the words of the Paulicians, which Peter quoted. The second belongs to the Bible of John, and follows these words: “*And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me*”. The Paulicians must have interpreted the “*testifying*” in these words as “*speaking in books*”. It seems unlikely that the Paulicians, who seemed to be discussing with quotes from the scriptures, accused Christians of believing in the creator of the universe. However, it is plausible that the Paulicians accused Orthodox Christians of “*abiding by the devil*”. Thus, they must have emphasized that they are different from Christians by stating that they believe in a god who speaks to man and is close to man (themselves).

Hamiltons came to the conclusion that Paulician leader Constantine “*did found a new type of Christianity, a world-affirming dualism based on his understanding of the New Testament*”⁹⁷. They have also put forward ideas in many places, showing that dualism applies to all Paulicianism. The definition of dualist has already been reflected in the name of their work. But the subject of dualism does not appear in the texts of Paulicianism as a distinct belief and acceptance. In fact, the Paulicians did not see the world as negative as even Christians. This is because they do not have the idea of Jesus, who lifted the original sin of humanity on the cross. In Christianity, the world is the place of regaining what he lost in this realm, which he came to by losing the heavenly realm, where he lived peacefully and together with God, holy and immortally, as a result of the original sin⁹⁸. However, the Paulicians accepted such matters as spiritual and unworldly, not literally. So they interpreted the texts of the New Testament and developed their own invisible divine realm and the apparent realm (world) idea. Even Donka Radeva put forward ideas to support this information. According to her, Paulicianism cannot be defined as cosmogonic dualism. Because, according to the data provided by the sources, the parts of the cosmogonic, etiological and crystallogical model reveal that the perception of the Paulicianist universe is not dualism. However, he is of the opinion that there is a potential for dualism in the dialectic of the Bible⁹⁹. However, this potential is not dualism in the idea of creation and universe perception, but moral dualism in view of the world and world life. It would be better to call it the idea of good and bad opposition rather than dualism. This is related to the idea of “the devil who is the dominating of the world” belonging to Christianity.

Peter also included the ideas of the Paulicians about Jesus Christ in his words about St. Mary. He also gives their ideas about St. Mary. When he says somewhere, “*They say, ...that our Lord and God became man in a virgin, and anathematize*

⁹⁶ Peter of Sicily. *The History of The Paulicians*, p. 38.

⁹⁷ Hamilton and Hamilton. *Historical Introduction*, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilisesi'nde Sakramentler*, p. 35–40.

⁹⁹ Radeva, *Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword*, p. 7.

those who do not. And all the particulars of the incarnation of the Lord they admit, saying one thing with their mouth, another in their heart,"¹⁰⁰, in another place, "*the glorious ever-virgin mother of God is not even counted (in their hostility) among the bare number of good human beings. They say that the Lord was not born of her, but brought His body from heaven, and that after the birth of the Lord she had other children from Joseph*"¹⁰¹. In this belief, it is emphasized that Jesus Christ is different from other people as a man, he is heavenly with his body, and his existence is not caused by Mary. However, the fact that Mary's womb is a bag shows that Jesus is embodied in her womb. This incarnation is actually nothing but a fatherless birth. This suggests that the Paulicians considered Jesus both sacred and divine both physically and spiritually. This means accepting the essential feature that distinguishes Jesus from other people. In some of his words about Saint Mary, Peter said that Jesus was not born of him physically, and this contradicts the formula of repentance. He contradicted the acceptance of the Paulicians about Mary in the 39th sentence given above, both as a body that was not born from Mary and descended from Heaven, and that Mary made other children after her birth. In another place, with the same contradiction, he said that the Paulicians, "*teach that she gave birth to God in appearance and not in reality, and have the ridiculous idea that after the divine birth she had other sons from Joseph*"¹⁰². Also, since the Orthodox Church admits that Virgin's virginity is constant, Peter criticizes the Paulicians, but the sons of Mary are mentioned in the Bible^(Mt.12:40-42, Mk.3:31, Lk.8:21).

The Paulicians had their own view of the Christian sacraments. They believed most of the New Testament texts, but they interpreted them differently than Christians. The data of Peter of Sicily show that the Paulicians did not regard Jesus Christ as god. This is related to the fact that it is possible that the Jesus and the Holy Spirit of the Bible interpreted by Christians may not be interpreted as gods. Christianity established a religious structure and tradition after the age of the apostles, interpreting the Bible between about 100–450. This was actually itself. The Paulicians were far from these developments. They developed a unique idea, only by interpreting the majority of the New Testament texts. This allowed them to create their own traditions, although they were fed from the same sacred texts from which the Christian teaching came from. Therefore, for example, Christians regarded bread and wine as the true the body and blood of Jesus Christ, while the Paulicians interpreted it as "symbolic words of Christ". Peter put it this way: "*they refuse to accept the divine and awe-inspiring mystery of the body and blood of the Lord. ... that it was not bread and wine that the Lord gave to his disciples at the supper, but that symbolically he gave them his words as bread and wine*"¹⁰³. However, according to Peter, they say, "*We are the body of Christ*"¹⁰⁴. However, they may even consider it symbolic. Like-

¹⁰⁰ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Peter of Sicily, p. 39.

¹⁰² Peter of Sicily, p. 22.

¹⁰³ Peter of Sicily, p. 40.

¹⁰⁴ Peter of Sicily, p. 167.

wise, it appears that they do not accept baptism, or rather water baptism. Peter said that “*he said that baptism was Our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing else, because He said, ‘I am the living water’*”¹⁰⁵. Here, the answer of Paulician was again allegorical, and meant baptism in Christ, not in water. As for Jesus’ word, it is not explicitly expressed in the Bible, but it is implied in the Gospel of John^(Jn.4:10). This word is in line with the interpretation of the Paulicians. They did not accept sacramental baptism. It is understood that the Paulicians agreed to “be baptized in Jesus Christ, the living water” and that baptism should be realized by faith. In such a situation, the Paulicians cannot be expected to believe in the cross of Christ. So Peter reported it as follows: “*they do not accept the image, power and operation of the precious life-giving cross, but heap it with a thousand insults*”¹⁰⁶.

It is understood from their own structure that the Paulicians did not accept the orthodox hierarchy. However, Peter said that they opposed the presbyters: “*they turn away from the elders [lit. presbyters] of the Church. They say that the elders conspired against the Lord and so they ought not to name them, avoiding even the very name*”¹⁰⁷. Christianity acknowledges that in the New Testament texts there are three ranks appointed by “putting the hand on the head”. These are the church servant (diacon), the elders (presbyters) and the supervisor (episcopos). The elderly committee refers to the community and has undergone a two-way transformation over time: the priest (servant of the communion) and the council of bishops¹⁰⁸. The Paulicians seem to have opposed the elder assembly in the Bible. So there are two hierarchies left, just as in the first period of Christianity, for example in Paul. The Paulicians also rejected the priest (K’ahanay in the Armenian Church, Kohen in the Syriac Church) in the Christian tradition.

With the idea of reliance on Scriptures, as in the movements of ratating to the original of religion, the Paulicians extracted and accepted two hierarchies (supervisor and church servant) from the New Testament texts. There are two clear and distinct individual missions in the New Testament texts: those who manage the sacred presentation (bishop and/or presbyter) and church servants (deacons). As for the elderly (presbyters), it is an olds council based on the Old Testament. According to the New Testament texts, there may be apostles, supervisors and church officials in this council¹⁰⁹. Ignatius of Antioch (30–107) described presbyters as “*the sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles of Christ*”¹¹⁰. This statement spontaneously refers to the Old Testament, to the Jews. Probably the Jews of Jesus period should have an influence on the Paulicians’ rejection of the presbyters. So, this was shaped

¹⁰⁵ Peter of Sicily, p. 120.

¹⁰⁶ Peter of Sicily, p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Peter of Sicily, p. 45.

¹⁰⁸ Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilisesi’nde Sakramentler*, p. 441–43.

¹⁰⁹ Seyfeli, p. 440.

¹¹⁰ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians. *ANF01: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1-The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus (Online Edition, 2002), p. 109–20, Chap. III.

in the form that in the Paulicians to reject presbyters, which meant a council, and to accept two individual officials (bishop and diacon). Donka Radeva stated that the Paulicians had a hierarchical model consisting of a leader and disciples who put forward their beliefs with unwavering words and self-sacrifice¹¹¹. It can be assumed that they are attached to the New Testament texts and do not regard the Clergy as sacramental. Therefore, their hierarchies were mostly in the form of administrative structuring. The Paulicians were also not structured like Manichaeists (elected and listeners) or similar to other gnostics.

Paulician leader Constantine had the title of *didaskalos*, which means teacher in Greek. In practice, however, it worked as a guide. *Didaskalos* was like the bishop being the only leader in the first period of Christianity. The idea of the single leader bishop expressed uniqueness in the Universal Church. However, this idea was interpreted over time as being the only leader in Christianity, almost all the ancient churches, in the region of the bishop¹¹². Right after the Bible era, this was one of the issues discussed. Ignatius of Antioch (30–107) said: “*Let the laity be subject to the deacons; the deacons to the presbyters; the presbyters to the bishop; the bishop to Christ, even as He is to the Father*”¹¹³. He also said about the bishop: “*Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop*”¹¹⁴. He, also said: “*your bishop presides in the place of God*”¹¹⁵. and “*the bishop is the representative of the Father of all things*”¹¹⁶. Here he puts the bishop in the place of Baba by analogy. He says “*the Lord did nothing without the Father*”¹¹⁷ and places the church in Christ’s place. According to him, the bishop is “*the Chief Captain of the Lord*”¹¹⁸. According to his talent, he is “*imitator of the Christ of God*”¹¹⁹. Elsewhere, he referred to Jesus Christ, who was described in the Letter to Hebrews as “*the only High Priest*”, and called him “*the true and first Bishop*” according to Luke^(Luk.4: 6)¹²⁰. Here, he placed the bishop instead of Christ in the concrete sense. Therefore, the Universal Church has only one bishop. The first shaping of Christianity through tradition was basically accord-

¹¹¹ Radeva, Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword, p. 13.

¹¹² Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilisesi 'nde Sakramentler*, p. 478.

¹¹³ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans. *ANF01: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1-The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus (Online Edition, 2002), p. 140–51, Chap. IX.

¹¹⁴ Ignatius, Chap. VIII.

¹¹⁵ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians. *ANF01: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1-The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus (Online Edition, 2002), p. 98–109, Chap. VI.

¹¹⁶ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians, Chap. III.

¹¹⁷ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, Chap. VII.

¹¹⁸ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, Chap. VIII.

¹¹⁹ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians, Chap. VII.

¹²⁰ Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, Chap. IV.

ing to Eucharist¹²¹. The first clear examples of this formation are seen in Ignatius. He said that the Eucharist was the only one and explained the reason as follows: “*For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons*”¹²². This parallels Paul’s saying: “*one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all*”^(Eph.4:5-6). The Paulicians, who do not accept the Christian tradition, seem to have adopted the only leader idea of the New Testament. However, it is mentioned that the Paulician leaders (Sergius) saw themselves as Christ’s apostles¹²³. Indeed, just like the bishop conducting the ritual in eucharistic symbolizes Jesus, the only leader says the same thing. In this case, if the only leader symbolizes Jesus, his aides near the only leader symbolize the disciples of Jesus. In the hierarchy, as in Ignatius, it is essential to connect to Christ with a hierarchical line. However, this linear and traditional transfer is not revealed in the Paulicians because they do not accept the tradition or it is not possible to follow their own traditions. First of all, the main reason for this is that they are free to read and interpret the Scriptures themselves. Second, their lives are so bumpy that they have not been able to form a tradition in one line. It is possible to understand this since the Paulicians could be governed by *didaskalos* for only two centuries from Constantine¹²⁴. Then there is information that the name *synekdemos* is used for the leader. However, here, the practical meaning of these names is more important than the name given to the leader. In the text of the repentance formula aimed at Orthodoxizing the Paulicians, all the only leaders, including Constantine, were identified as *synekdemos*. However, in the “a” text, *synekdemoi* are also introduced as followers of Sergius, the only leader¹²⁵. This latest information also supports the information provided by Peter¹²⁶.

Three names and two ranks draw attention in the church structures of the Paulicians. These are *didaskalos*, *synekdemos*, and *notarius*. *Didaskalos*’ teacher and guiding meaning¹²⁷ is equivalent to the Christian supervisor, the bishop. This points to a only leader. The Paulicians had periods without *didaskalos*, but at such times it appears that they were ruled by at least the *synekdemoi* community¹²⁸. *Didaskalos*

¹²¹ Seyfeli, *Ermeni Kilisesi’nde Sakramentler*, 67. The ‘Christ mystery’ has been revealed mainly in Eucharist. Thus, the expression of the Eucharist as the Christ mystery caused to be said the mystery to other rituals associated with Christ. In other words, there has been a process parallel to the development process of the teaching of Christ”.

¹²² Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians. *ANF01: Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1-The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus (Online Edition, 2002), 129–40, Chap. IV.

¹²³ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 166.

¹²⁴ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 9.

¹²⁵ Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton, trans., 11. Abjuration Formulae (Tenth Century) For Paulician Converts to Orthodoxy, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450* (Manchester: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 102–10, a/15, b/1.

¹²⁶ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 174, 183.

¹²⁷ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 183.

are the only leaders in terms of administration and they are teachers with sacred texts such as doctrinal epistles. Hamiltons stated that the *didaskalos* were chosen by the *synekdemoi* and that if they were true, they approved a leader with a divine charisma¹²⁹. Regarding the election of the leader, Peter stated that there is no single guide after Sergius' death, these *synekdemoi* are in the same status and equal and there are priests named *notarius* attached to them¹³⁰. In the summary version, Peter described Paulician religious officials as follows: "*They reject our priests and other members of our hierarchy. They call their own priests synekdemoi and notaries; they are not distinguished from the others by dress or diet or the rest of their manner of life*"¹³¹. It is clear that the Paulicians reject administrative meaningful ranks other than the two individual basic hierarchies of the New Testament. It seems that they accept two ranks, *didaskalos* or *synekdemoi* and *notarius*, but reject sacramental rites in Christianity. The fact that there is no difference between the lifestyles of these two ranks shows that even though there is no priesthood, there is a simple life idea. This also manifests itself in the giving of ranks, and therefore they do not perform clergy. However, even if there is no information, it is possible for them to perform a small task assignment rite. However, their ideas about baptism show that they did not hold an initiation ceremony. In parallel, neither the leaders and their deputies nor the members of the community are forced into a mystical life. They do not have sexual abstinence or a prohibition on marriage. Even an only leader can get married and have children. They can also have a profession, that is, they can engage in worldly affairs¹³². Moreover, unlike the Manichaeists, they can kill and fight. The Paulicians, who do not have the beliefs that would require pulling skirts from the world, are not cold towards material assets. This is about them not being dualists. They neither show excessive respect nor enmity against the elements on the negative side of dualism, the evil, the substance, and the material realm dominated by evil. With all these features, it is understood that they have very important differences from the Manichaeists they are accused of. So the Paulicians are a complete New Testament commentator.

Closed societies that are heretic or heterodox have always been accused of excessive blasphemy by orthodoxes. One of these main reasons is that they hide themselves. Peter put it like this: "*In a word, like an octopus or a chameleon, they change both manner and appearance to suit the occasion, to catch some of the witless. When someone pays attention to their nonsense, then they show him a little of their mysteries ...*"¹³³, "their rites and heresies should not be shared with their nearest neighbours, far less with those who are strangers to them, but only with those few

¹²⁹ Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 9–10.

¹³⁰ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 183.

¹³¹ Peter of Sicily. 8. Peter The Higooumenos: An Abridgement of Peter of Sicily. *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450*, trans. Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton (Manchester: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 92–96, p. 19.

¹³² Hamilton and Hamilton. Historical Introduction, p. 9–10.

¹³³ Peter of Sicily. The History of The Paulicians, p. 16.

whom they perceive to be more perfect in impiety”¹³⁴. One of the ways Paulicians hide themselves is their allegorical and symbolic speech. Peter emphasizes that in the arrest of Paulician leader Gegnesius and being questioned by the Patriarch, his words and intention (meant) were not the same, the asked looked the same as the asking, but the truth was different. Accordingly, the Patriarch asked respectively: “*Why do you deny the orthodox faith?*”, “*Why do you not believe in and honour the precious cross?*”, “*Why do you not worship and venerate the holy mother of God?*”, and “*Why do you not partake of the stainless body and precious blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but dishonour it?*”. He also asked the Catholic Church and baptism. Gegnesius’ answer to all these questions has been to curse those who do not accept and/or perform it. Peter hinted that the word is different and the meaning is different, and said that by Orthodox belief he meant his own heresy, the crucifixion of Jesus with the cross, Jerusalem with Mary, the word of Jesus with the body and blood of Him, the Manichaeist council with the Catholic Church and and Jesus Christ himself with baptism.¹³⁵ These answers reveal that the Paulicians had an idea for almost all of the theological issues of Christianity. In this case, it is possible to talk about an independent Christian church.

The Hamiltons came to the following conclusion: “*Constantine of Mananalis really did found a new type of Christianity, a world-affirming dualism based on his understanding of the New Testament.*”¹³⁶. This expresses the idea that Paulicianism is a new Christian interpretation centered in the New Testament. Here, they meant that the Paulicians believed in their own way, as in Donka Radeva’s statement, “*the Paulicians think of themselves as sincere Christians*”¹³⁷. Donka Radeva took a different approach and stated that the Paulicians had a genuine and sincere belief that gave birth to sacrifice themselves. He said this about both Byzantine and Bulgarian Paulicians. According to her, the Paulicians believed that their faith originated directly from Jesus Christ and the sermons of the Apostle Paul. She supported this with the idea that the Paulicians set up the apostolic hierarchy in accordance with the sacred model of the Apostle Paul and consisted of a leader and supporters following the Holy Word¹³⁸.

Conclusion

As a result, it was understood that the name Paul, who was active in the Paulicians taking this name, actually referred to the apostle Paul. In other words, if this movement is based on a Paul, he is definitely the apostle Paul. Indicators of this are these: Their acceptance of Paul’s epistles, the Acts, the Four Gospels, and other New Testament texts parallel to the texts of St. Paul; Shaping their churches by emulating the mission of St. Paul; Their glorification of St. Paul, and therefore their refusal of

¹³⁴ Peter of Sicily, p. 33.

¹³⁵ Peter of Sicily, p. 115–120.

¹³⁶ Hamilton and Hamilton, Historical Introduction, p. 10.

¹³⁷ Radeva, Paulicians-Digeneses of Word and Sword, p. 30.

¹³⁸ Radeva, 8–9, p. 37.

the epistles of St. Peter due to a small and vague criticism; Accepting St. Paul as a guide to them, and shaping their lives with the words of St. Paul on basic subjects such as God, the Church, Jesus Christ; and accept themselves as true Christians.

The main factor for Paulicians to establish a Christianity different from general Christianity is that they restrict the Bible belief. It is primarily their rejection of the Old Testament while valuing St. Paul. The second important factor is the rejection of the tradition of the predecessors, the Church Fathers and the councils, which helped shape the general Christianity. For this reason, Paulicians have their own unique ideas about the basic teachings of Christianity. Another issue that these features reveal is the following: Paulicians are not dualists and gnostic, and Manichaist teachings did not play a role in the formation of this movement.

Paulicianism is a different Christian interpretation that emerges and develops within the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church and migrates from Anatolia to the Balkans over time. The fact that it was a secret organization due to their heretic acceptance both prevented the emergence of their own first-hand data and caused the Orthodox Christians to be exhibiting an extremely exclusivist approach and give false information.

When the information provided by the sources is evaluated critically, discreetly and in an attempt to understand it in its own reality, it is seen that the Paulicians have their own perception of the universe and the world, and this shapes issues such as the Bible, God, Jesus and the Sacred understanding. However, their differences, especially in the idea of God and Jesus, differed from central Christianity attracted attention, and they were subjected to the same hostility shown to heretics throughout history.

The Paulicians, who accepted the texts of the New Testament and interpreted them accordingly, had different ideas about the basic topics of Christianity such as Jesus, Mary, eucharist, baptism, and the cross. Moreover, the debates that Christianity formed between 2–5 centuries did not affect them. It was important for them to directly refer to and read the scriptures. They are free from Christian symbolism and the belief in deep meaning believed to exist behind what is seen. This has shaped their views as belief in what is more material and visible. It is about this that they reject the icons. These traits led them to be interpreted as first and original Protestants by modern period researchers. However, with these features, Paulicianism is just a movement to return to the original and the original texts.

The fact that Paulicians were warriors and altruists with their religious beliefs and acceptances that led them to sacrifice showed that they were sincere. These features have had a significant impact on their emergence with similar ideas in different regions and times, especially in the Balkans, in ancient Bulgaria. It is still possible to find its traces in Bulgaria although it has changed culturally. It is quite likely that this is due to the high feelings of freedom, self and feel different.