

For a Possible Bessarabian-Bulgarian Trace in the Relationships of *Zograf* Monastery, Russia and Japan on the Basis of the Mount Athos Archives

Vladislava Spasova Ilieva

<http://doi.org/10.7546/BF.1.2025.05>

(Summary)

The text throws some light on several newly discovered letters from the Japanese Archive of the Bulgarian Saint George the *Zograf* monastery on the Mount Athos. These letters were sent by two *Zograf* monks – father Anatoliy Tihay and father Georgi Chudnovski from Japan and America to the monastery and to the Russian Saint Panteleimon monastery on Athos. At the end of the 19th century both of them took part in the new Russian Orthodox mission in Japan. I suggest that at least one of the two monks, namely father Anatoliy, who was born in Bessarabia (and more precisely in 1838 in Hotin, today in Ukraine) could be of Bulgarian origin. Except in the already mentioned written correspondence, this hypothesis could find some arguments for existence in the long-lasting struggles of *Zograf* brotherhood for the preservation of the Bulgarian character of Kaprian and Dobrovets Monasteries in Moldova. The letters of the two fathers contain information both for their lives, for the substantial contribution of the Bulgarian *Zograf* monastery to the educational and converting activities of the Russian Orthodox mission in Japan and America, as well as for the relation of *Zograf* monastery with the Russian Saint Panteleimon monastery on Athos.

Keywords: Russian Orthodoxy; Russian Orthodox mission in Japan; Saint George the *Zograf* monastery on the Mount Athos; Bessarabian Bulgarians

Vladislava Spasova Ilieva
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies
with Ethnographic Museum
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Bl. 6 Acad. Georgi Bonchev St.
1113 Sofia, BULGARIA
semiramissia@yahoo.com