

THE BLACK BOX TREASURES

(A treasure map - #12)

Who didn't want, as a child, to have a treasure map? A map which would lead you to a treasure casket? Probably at that time, you didn't realize one principle that such a map sometimes has to be consider a treasure itself. When Fr. Michal Szlachciak, C.R. visited the General House a few months ago, I showed him the black box numbered 153 which contains some documents about our Bulgarian Mission. Checking those sources he found one

document, a map, which caught his attention. So he decided to write a few paragraphs about it and is sharing it with us today. So this edition of BBT is prepared by **Fr. Michal Szlachciak**, the superior of our Bulgarian Mission.

"Checking the sources in our Roman Archives about the Mission in Bulgaria, I came across many interesting historical documents. It was interesting to find out that there are many documents in different languages along with some old newspaper, maps and even icons. The map which is included in the scan below is a part of the document entitled "Remarks on the Current Needs of the Bulgarian Union" (April 13, 1876; ACR-R 64860). The text was probably written by Fr. Paul Smolikowski, C.R. I will write more about this document later.

Let's move to the map. I think that this is an interesting and valuable "relic". The map is handmade on very thin paper (almost transparent). Perhaps this map was just traced over some original map. I also attached a Greek Map (although written in Latin alphabet!) from the mid-nineteenth century which shows the so-called Sea-Baltic Thrace (*Belorussia Тракия*). It is a disputed area among three nations: Bulgarian (Slavic), Greek and Turkish (Arabic). The historic moment in which this particular map was created (1876) was a turbulent time for the Bulgarians. It was the time of Liberation War (from the Turkish's domination) which ended in 1878 with the liberation of one part of Bulgaria.

On "our" map from the Archives, please notice the places which are associated with our ministry: Varna, Bourgas and Adrianopol. We can clearly see three rivers going through this last city (Arda, Tundza and Marica). It is interesting that on the map we cannot find other places where the Resurrectionists ministered such as: Akbunar and Canoe. So the map is very interesting and unique. I looked for similar maps in the archives in Burgas, Mal'ko Tyrnovo and Sofia, unfortunately without any luck. Please note that the map also includes Constantinople as the area of Slavic influence. It is this place where the Bulgarian Union was signed, on December 18, 1860, and there the Bulgarian Exarch for the Catholics of Eastern Rite resided (until the end of the First World War).

The most interesting, however, are the trails marked with two-colored dots. Perhaps these indicate the movement of the liberation troops, which would indicate that they wanted to reach not only Constantinople but also to Syria itself. It is more likely that they are old trade routes, designated in Byzantine times (East Roman Empire). In fact, these routes overlap almost entirely with the routes of old Roman roads. Enjoy!"

Fr. Michal Szlachciak, C.R.





