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**CYRIL “THE VLACH” AND JOSEPH: THE FIRST BISHOPS OF ASPROKASTRON?
NEW CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION
IN THE MOLDAVIAN-RUTHENIAN AREA (1303-1375)
(Summary)**

Keywords: Asprokastron, Halych, Kiev, Cyril, Joseph, Moldavia, Byzantium, Lithuania.

This study examines the emergence of Moldavia's early ecclesiastical organization during the 14th century, with a focus on its strong connections to the Metropolitanate of Halych. In 1370, Moldavia was integrated into the *Respublica Christiana*, a process that implied the detachment of Siret from the Halych bishopric of the Lithuanian archeparchy and its inclusion into the Roman Catholic Church. In conjunction with this, the paper also offers a re-evaluation of the ecclesiastical history of the Russian Church during the first half of the 14th century, introducing new insights into the refoundation of the Metropolitanate of Halych and the origins of the bishopric of Asprokastron.

Despite the fact that the exact location of the Asprokastron mentioned in the episcopal title remains debated in historiography, it is known that a bishop named Cyril held the see in 1345. In 1353, another bishop named Cyril, referred to as “the Vlach”, appears in the records of the bishopric of Przemyśl. In the absence of further evidence, this study proposes that they may be the same person, suggesting a transfer from Asprokastron to Przemyśl following the dissolution of the Metropolitanate of Halych. Contrary to mainstream Romanian historiography, this paper presents an alternative interpretation regarding the appointment of Joseph as bishop of Asprokastron, arguing that his role served as a bridge between the Metropolitans of Ungrovlachia and Antony of Halych.

Overall, the study aims to offer a new perspective on the early development of the Moldavian Church, highlighting its integration within wider Eastern Orthodox networks, particularly those of the Russian ecclesiastical space.

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