The Archdioceses of Ahris and Peć in the last two centuries of their existence are linked with the destinies of the two neighboring people, Greeks and Serbs, in the areas of Macedonia and Old Serbia. Kallinikos Delikanis' documents come to enlighten some of the folds of these relationships and of the existing spiritual situation in the areas mentioned above.

A. The documents' content

They amount to 100 and are dated from 1662 up to 1767. Most of them refer to the administrative situation of the Archdioceses of Ahris and Peć; others intimate the spiritual links between these two churches and between them and the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem. Some others afford information concerning the educational situation in some of the cities under their jurisdiction.

We shall try to analyse all these facts, briefly, in order to draw some conclusions

B. Administrative situation of the Archdioceses of Ahris and Peć

The documents referred to the administrative regime of these Archdioceses, are characteristic of the great efforts made by both, themselves and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in order to insure their autonomy or their independence.

Only when the survival of these churches became impossible, did their subject, almost simultaneously, to the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The official correspondence between the Archdioceses of Ahris-Peć and the Ecumenical Patriarchate constitutes the proof of the fact.

The documents of the codes of these Archdioceses speak about the «most holy Archdiocese of the first Ioustiniani, of Ahris and of all Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania, Second Macedonia, Pontus West» or «of Peć and all Serbia» or «Archdiocese of Ipec, Bulgaria, and all Serbia», and to the fame «Archbishop of Bulgaria, Serbia, Dalmatia maritime, Pontus West and all Illyria».

In spite of all these, in some interior Acta of the Archdiocese of Ahris, as for example in the memorandums concerning the elections of Archbishops and Metropolitans, the name «Patriarch» is mentioned. For example in the «memorandum of Ahris Ignatius, when Gregorius resigned» there is a reference to «our Archbishop and Patriarch of all Bulgaria and of the first Ioustiniani, Ahris...1963».

Likewise in the «Confession in ordination of a bishop», the elected bishop says: «In addition I promise all the privileges that this Patriarchal throne of the first Ioustiniani, Ahris possesses...».

Moreover in the «Thanksgiving of Ahris Zosimas and Patriarch», the same says «to the supreme and Patriarchal throne of the first Ioustiniani Ahris» and «Patriarchate that fell to me».

2. Ibid., p. 911: «Τίτλος τοῦ 'Αρχιεπισκόπου Ἰπεκίου. Μακαριώτατα καὶ θεοσέβε-στατα 'Αρχιεπισκόπου Ἰπεκίου, Βουλγαρίας καὶ πάσης Σερβίας. Φήμη τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Τοῦ μακαριωτάτου 'Αρχιεπισκόπου Βουλγαρίας, Σερβίας, Δαλματίας παραθαλασσίας, Πόντου Δυτικοῦ καὶ πάσης 'Ἰλλυρίας ἤ οὖστω Σερβίας, Βουλγαρίας, Δαλματίας, Δραγωνίας πα- ραθαλασσίας καὶ πέραν Δοναύβεως».

3. Ibid., ρρ. 797-798: «-Τῆς ἁγιωτάτης 'Αρχιεπισκόπης τῆς Α' Ἰουστινιανῆς 'Α- χριδῶν ἓνεκ προστάτου καὶ ποιμένος ἐναπομείνασης... ἡμεῖς δὲ οἱ ἐν τῷ κλίματι τῆς ἁγιωτάτης ταύτης 'Αρχιεπισκόπης διατελοῦντες ὑποκείμενοι ἐν Αρχιερείς... ἐγνώσαμεν καὶ κανονικῶς μετεθέσαμεν ἐνθρονίζοντες Ἀρχιεπισκόπου καὶ Πατριάρχην ἡμῶν πάσης Βουλγαρίας καὶ τῆς Α' Ἰουστινιανῆς 'Αχριδῶν καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἔτει σωτηρίω 1693 Αὔγουστοι 13 Ἧδευς. Μ. Ἀ. Καστορίας Δαυίδ, Μ. Δυρραχίου Δανιήλ, Π.Περετσίου Παρθένιος, Μ.Κορυτζάς Μακάριος, Μ.Γκόρας 'Αρσένιος, Μ.Κιτιαίων πόλεως Μητροπόλης καὶ Τοποτηρητής 'Α- χριδῶν Κοσμάς».

4. Ibid., ρρ. 799-800: «...ἐπόμενος ἐσομαι τῆς Καθολικῆς καὶ Ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλη- σίας καὶ τῷ Μακαριώτατῳ μοι Ἀλθέω καὶ Διστότη κ.κ. Ιγνάτω τῆς Α' Ἰουστινιανῆς 'Αχριδῶν καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας, Ἀλβανίας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν Πατριάρχην σὺν τῇ ὑπερτελε- στάτῃ αὐτοῦ ἁγία Συνοδῷ... Πρὸς τούτους υπερακούομεν τῷ κατὰ δύναμιν κατ᾽ έτος τέλος πρὸς όσοστοι καὶ βοηθειαν τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας. Ἑτὶ δὲ ὑπόσχομαι ἀπὲρ κέκτηται προνόμια δ' Πατριαρχικὸς οὕτως θρόνος τῆς Α' Ἰουστινιανῆς 'Αχριδῶν...».

5. Ibid., ρρ. 804-805: «Ἐχάριστα 'Αχριδῶν Ζωσιμᾶ Ἰ.Πατριάρχης. Ἐπειδή ἐκ Θεοῦ ὑδηγηθεῖσα ἡ θεία καὶ ὑπερτερεστάτη Σύνοδος τῶν Ιερωτάτων Μητροπολιτῶν καὶ θεοφιλετάτων ἐπισκόπων... τῆς καὶ ημῶς ἁγιωτάτης 'Αρχιεπισκόπης τῆς Α' Ἰουστινιανῆς 'Αχριδῶν... ἐμβιβάσατε με εἰς τὸν ὑπέρτατον καὶ Πατριαρχικὸν θρόνον τῆς Α' Ἰου- στινιανῆς 'Αχριδῶν... καὶ κυβερνᾶν τὸν Χριστοῦ λογικὸν ποιμνῖον καὶ τὴν θεόθεν λα- χοῦσαν μοι Πατριαρχίαν...».
Elsewhere, Zosimos addresses «Zosimas by the grace of God Archbishop of the first Iousteinian, Ahris, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albanitia, Second Macedonia and Patriarch of the rest».

The same is noticed from the side of the Serbian Archbishops also. For example, Archbishop Arsenius, on the emblem of the Archdiocese of Peć says: «Arsenius by the grace of God Archbishop of Peć and all Serbia, Bulgaria, Maritime, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Croatia, Banat, Temisvar, Danube, and all Illyria Patriarch».

These appeals of the Patriarchal honor don’t possess any canonical support, they are desirable domestic trends without any canonical reflection. For this reason in a «Special Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch Kallinikos B» at 1693, we have a reference to the «autonomous Archbishops who are they of Ahris, of Cyprus, of Iberia and of Peć», due to an usurpation of the «patriarchal» surname, by the former Archbishop of Ahris Meletios in Russia.

C. Spiritual relations

In addition to the administrative situation, the spiritual links between these two Churches deserve to be mentioned as well. Our documents mention characteristically the great spreading of the honorary cult of the Serbian Saint John Vladimir in Macedonia and Epirus, where mainly the Archdiocese of Ahris was geographically extended.

6. Ibid., p. 837: «Ζωσιμάς ἐλέω Θεού 'Αρχιεπισκόπος τῆς Α' 'Ιουστινιανῆς, 'Αχρειδῶν, Σερβίας, Βουλγαρίας, 'Αλβανίτιας Β', Μακεδονίας καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν Πατριάρχης... 1707».
8. Delikanis, Ibid., pp. 795-796: «Καλλινίκου Β' Περί τῶν ἐν τῷ Ἰεραρχικῷ τῆς Καθολικῆς καὶ 'Αποστολικῆς 'Εκκλησίας τάγματι Πατριαρχῶν... Τοὺς δ' αὐτονόμους ἀρχιεπισκόπους οὔτε τις οὖν ὁ 'Αχριδῶν, καὶ ὁ Κύπρου, καὶ ὁ τῆς Ίβηρίας, καὶ ὁ Πεκίου, κατὰ διαφόρους καιροὺς, ἐπ' αὑτίας τισι φιλοτιμήσαντα πη μὲν βασιλέως σπουδάσματα πη δὲ καὶ Συνοδικαὶ διασχέψεις Ίδιας ἀρεσκείας, ἀπλῶς τοὺς τοιούτους 'Αρχιεπισκόπους ὑποτίσαν καὶ ἀνόμασαν, καὶ τούτῳ μόνῳ ἔχουσιν ὅνομα καὶ ὅνως λέγονται καὶ ὅνως γράφονται, δηλονότι ἀρχιεπισκοποι τῆς δὲ Πατριαρχικῆς ὑνομασίας ἔνοις πανελάθει ὑπάρχοι καὶ ἀμέτοχοι, καὶ μήτε ἐν τοῖς διπτύχοις ἔχουσι χώραν, μήτε τῷ Πατριαρχικῷ κατάλογῳ συντάσσονται». See also Delikanis, Ibid., pp. 929-1058, Ἰστορικαί Σημειώσεις περὶ τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς 'Αχρειδῶν.
In the area of Elvasan-Neokastron, during that particular period, there was a monastery of Saint John Vladimir, known as fragmant, miraculous and great martyr. The honorary cult of Saint John Vladimir is justified here, because the Saint was murdured by the Bulgarians the moment he has coming out of the church, in Prespa, around 10169.

The particular spiritual links between the Archdiocese of Peć and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Constantinople have to be mentioned as well. Three documents are particularly interesting.

One of them is that of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Dositheos at 1706, addressed to the former Archbishop of Peć Arsenios, in which he recommends the preservation of the unity of the Archdiocese of Peć, in order to prevent the infiltration of papacy among the Orthodox Serbs, so that the same will not happen in Serbia as it occurred in Croatia, Calabria and Erdelion10.

Of the same content is also the letter of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athanasios E’ to the metropolitans of Batzika and Fruska at 1709 to support the unity of the Archdiocese of Peć, being under its canonical jurisdiction11.

Finally, remarkable is the document of the Ecumenical Patriarch

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10. Ibid., pp. 905-910. «Φανερὸν δὲ ἦν ἡ ἐνότης τῶν Ἀρχιερέων δὲν εἶναι δυνατόν νὰ φυλαχθῇ χωρὶς τοῦ συνδέσμου τῆς εἰρήνης, δότης ἐστὶν, ὡς εἴρηται, ὃ ἐκάστης δυσκή- σσεως θρόνος, εἶτε Πατριαρχικός, εἶτε Ἀρχιεπισκοπικός. Καὶ ἐκ τούς ἀνακτολογῶν, δοσὶ ὁ Ἀρχιε- ρεῖς ἐχωρισθηκαί μετὰ τῶν κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἐπαρχιῶν ἀπὸ τῶν προεδρευόντων τῆς διοικήσεως ἐκάστου θρόνου, κατ’ ἄλλων ἐξάλλων τῆς εὐσεβείας, καὶ τέλος ἐκάττηνησαν εἰς τὰς πο- νηρὰς ἐκκλησίας τῶν αἱρετικῶν, καθὼς εἶναι μερικοὶ ἐπίσκοποι εἰς τὴν Χαρβατίαν καὶ Καλαβρίαν καὶ Ἐρδελίαν ὄποιοί, ἐξαιρεθέντες τῶν κατ’ αὐτοὺς προεδρευόντων θρόνων, ὑπέπεσαν εἰς τὸν παπισμὸν».
11. Ibid., pp. 912-915: «Ἰερώτατοι μητροπολίται Φρούσκας καὶ Μπάτζικας οἱ ὑποκείμενοι τῷ ἁγιωτάτῳ θρόνῳ Πεκίου, ἐν ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι ἄγαπτοι ἀδελφοί καὶ συλ- λειτουργοί· ἐνιστάται κληρικοὶ, ὅσασταυ καθηγούμενοι τῶν λαῶν καὶ σεβασμοῖς μο­ ναστηρίων, εὐλαβεῖσται λεπτικοὶ· ίδιοτὰς εὐθυναίς καὶ κατακεκλομένους, καθιστάνται· ἔνοχοι· ἠγαπᾶντες καὶ πραγματευόμενοι καὶ λοιποί εὐλογημένοι· ἱερακίας τῶν αὐτῶν ἐπαρχι­ ῳν... ἄνελλόμεθα υμῖν καὶ πᾶσιν τούς αὐτούς χριστιανοῖς, ἵνα αὐτοικάτας ἀφ’ ὑμῶν τὴν μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἀταξίαν, ἀσύμφορον καὶ ἐπιβλαβῆ υδαῖν ὡς ἀντικειμένην τῆς λειτουρ­ χοῦντας καὶ νόμως, δεῖξητε καὶ ἀδίκους τὴν προτεράν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ κανονικὴν, καὶ διὰ ταύτα θανάστου καὶ ἑπανενήν, ἐπιθυμεῖσι καὶ ἑπιστατὴν, ἵνα εἰσέχει οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀρχιερεῖς πρὸς τὸν κατὰ καρούς ἀρχιεπισκόπον Πεκίου κώρ Καλίνικου... καὶ μνημονεύοντες τὸ κα­ νονικὸν αὐτῶν ὅνομας εἰς τὰς ἐκκλησίας τῆς καθολικῆς καὶ ἕτοιμον καὶ προπηγάζετε τὴν αὐτῶν αἰκαταστάσιν...».
Jeremias, in which is emphasized the orthodox spirit of the Archdiocese of Peć and of the Serbs under this Church. «Επειδή τοιγαρούν καὶ τινες τῶν ἐπεροδὸξων, βουλομένοι εξεπατητήσαι τοὺς ἀπλουστέρους ἡμῶν τῶν ὄρθωδοξῶν ἀνατολικῶν χριστιανῶν, συκοφαντίαν καὶ κατηγορίαν ψευδεπίπλαστον, καὶ διὸς ἔξω τῶν θυρῶν τῆς ἀλήθειας, καὶ πάντη ἀνάρμοστον κατὰ τῆς λεπᾶς 'Εκκλησίας τῆς ἀγιωτάτης ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Πεκίου καὶ τῶν ταύτης ἀρχιερεῶν ἐξήγερξαν, ὅτι δηλαδὴ οὐκ ἔχουσι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ 'Εκκλησίας, οὔτε ὁμόφρονες καὶ ὁμόδοξοι ήμένη τυγχάνουσι, ἵνα συκοφαντίαν ἐστὶ προφανῆς, καὶ ματαιολογία διάκενος καὶ ἀσυστάτος πρὸς ἐξεπάτην τῶν ἀπλουστέρων, ὡς εἰρήνηι, ἐπινοηθεῖσα ημεῖς γὰρ τὴν Ἑκκλησίαν τῆς ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Πεκίου, καὶ τῶν ταύτης ἀρχιεπισκοπῶν, καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ τελοῦνται ἀρχιερεῖς μετα καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῶν Χρυστιανῶν Σέρβων ὁμόφρονας ἡμῖν οἴδαμεν, φρονοῦντας τι καὶ δοξάζοντας, ὡς ἀληθῶς, ὅσα ἡ καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἀνατολική Ἑκκλησία φρονεῖ καὶ δοξάζει, ὡς δὲ τίνες λέγουσι κατ' αὐτῶν καὶ διαβάλλουσι τούτως, ὡς ἐτέροφρονας, συκοφαντίας εἰς ψευδείς, καὶ κατηγορίας μηδαμός ἀληθεύουσαι... διδοσκυλοῦμεν καὶ διαβεβαιοῦμεν, ὅτι ἡ Ἑκκλησία τῆς ἀγιωτάτης ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Πεκίου, ὅ τι τὰ ἀρχιεπίσκοπους τελοῦσι, καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτῇ τελοῦντες ἀρχιερεῖς, μετά τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῶν Χρυστιανῶν Σέρβων, ἔνωθεν καὶ εἰς ἀρχῆς ὑπάρχουσι ὁμόφρονες, καὶ ὁμόδοξοι ἡμῖν, καὶ ἔχουσι τὸ ἡμέτερον ὄρθωδοξον φρόνημα τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν Ἀνατολικῆς Ἑκκλησίας, καὶ τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς Ὅρθωδοξον ἡμῶν πίστεως ὁμολογοῦσι καὶ πιστεύουσι κατὰ πάντα, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς. Ἐνθέν τοι καὶ γνώσκοντες τούτως πάντας ὀρθόδοξους, φρονοῦντας τι καὶ ἀλληγόρουσας καὶ τεργούσας πάντα τὰ τῆς καθ' ἡμῶν Ἀνατολικῆς Ἑκκλησίας δόγματα καὶ διδάσκαλα, τιμᾶτε καὶ ἀγαπᾶτε αὐτούς, καὶ διευκολύνοντες κατὰ τὸ πρόπον καὶ δίκαιον, μηδαμός προσέχετε, ἢ πιστεύοντες ταῖς κατὰ τούτων ἐρεσκελίαις, συκοφαντίαις, καὶ κατηγορίαις τῶν ἐπεροδῶν...»12.

D. Conclusions

1. The two Archdioceses of Ahris and Peć followed the historical course of their people. This course is parallel and common. Administratively, these two churches preserved almost the same autonomy and independence. Whenever they faced administrative problems and needed any assistance, they addressed the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which evidently acted in such a way, so that their independence be preserved. The reasons at the subjection of these two

12. Ibid., pp. 915-917.
Archdioceses to the Ecumenical Patriarchate at 1766 and 1767 are found within them and outside the real intentions of the Mother Great Church.

2. Between the two bordering Archdioceses no administrative problems existed, during that period. On the contrary, in both these thrones, Serb and Greek archbishops changed, according to the canonical principle about local and not national and racial churches; their population was mixed (Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians).

3. The trends of some Archbishops to be called «patriarchs» had an internal character and not an interorthodox canonical one; they were called patriarchs ψιλῶ όνόματι. The official patriarchal documents never mention them as «patriarchs» but as «Archbishops». Therefore the aspects of some modern church historians to support today the «independence» of the metropolitan See of Skopje13, connecting it with the administrative regime of the shining past of Archdiocese of Ahris, are considered by our sources side as inaccurate.

4. The spiritual links between the two churches are developed through the popular honorary cult of the local Serbian Saint John Vladimir, who was very popular and beloved saint among the Greek and Serbian population of the same Churches of Ahris and Peć. Remainders of this cult are preserved till today.

5. Finally, particular spiritual and administrative links are developed between these two churches and the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem. These two Patriarchates contribute in various ways as guardians, to the autonomy of these churches and through this to the strengthening of the orthodox faith of the Greeks and Serbians, which was threatened by the papal propaganda and especially by the Ounia, which ravaged the Balkans during those years.

13. See also Άθ. Άγγελοπούλου, «Τὸ ἐκκλησιαστικὸν καθεστώς τῶν μητροπόλεων τῆς Βορείου Μακεδονίας ἀπὸ τοῦ 1913 μέχρι σήμερον», Μακεδονικά 15(1975) 28-44.