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PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE IN THE MEDIEVAL TRADITION

*(Summary)*

An attempt is made in this paper to offer a general analysis of the tradition, within the scope of which the view of Christian Love has been formed, and of those characteristic “images” which present the idea of love in the old Bulgarian literature. The topic is conditionally divided into three aspects: “Erōs and agapē – forms of the unified love”, “Fall off and return in love” and “Measureless love of St. Zealots”. The traditional conception of agapē as “equal mutual love”, which is a pattern of the love of God, is traced in Byzantine and old Bulgarian hagiography. It is interesting to note that in certain cases the Christian conjugal symbols give away a kind of a mystical sublimation of erōs in the personal union of the Saint and God. The more profound philosophical reflections on erōs, which link Plato’s dialogues “Symposium” and “Phaedrus” to “Canticus canticorum” are related to Gregory of Nyssa, who exerted a strong influence on the writings of Patriarh Euthymius.