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*THE LIFE AND WORK OF PAISIY HILENDARSKI*

*About 250 years ago Paisiy Hilendarski, an obscure monk from Mt. Athos, transformed his little booklet Slavo-Bulgarian History into a real political manifesto and a harbinger of the upcoming new era of nationalism and national self-determination. As he sought to revamp the Bulgarian historical memory and national dignity, Paisiy constituted a modern Bulgarian national identity through recounting the country's glorious historical past, in a conscious attempt to emancipate (revive) the Bulgarians for a new spiritual and political life. By recalling the forgotten memories of once glorious Bulgarian kingdoms, he gave a strong impulse for revival and quick development of the Bulgarian national consciousness as being inextricably connected with the feeling of belonging to one and the same nation, united by shared common language, territory, historical memory and experience, as well as spiritual cultural heritage. This is, no doubt, the first and up most important precondition for escaping from the perils of anonymity, in which until then the Bulgarian nation coexisted alongside a large number of other national groups under the umbrella of one already quite backwards empire, such as the Ottoman Empire.*