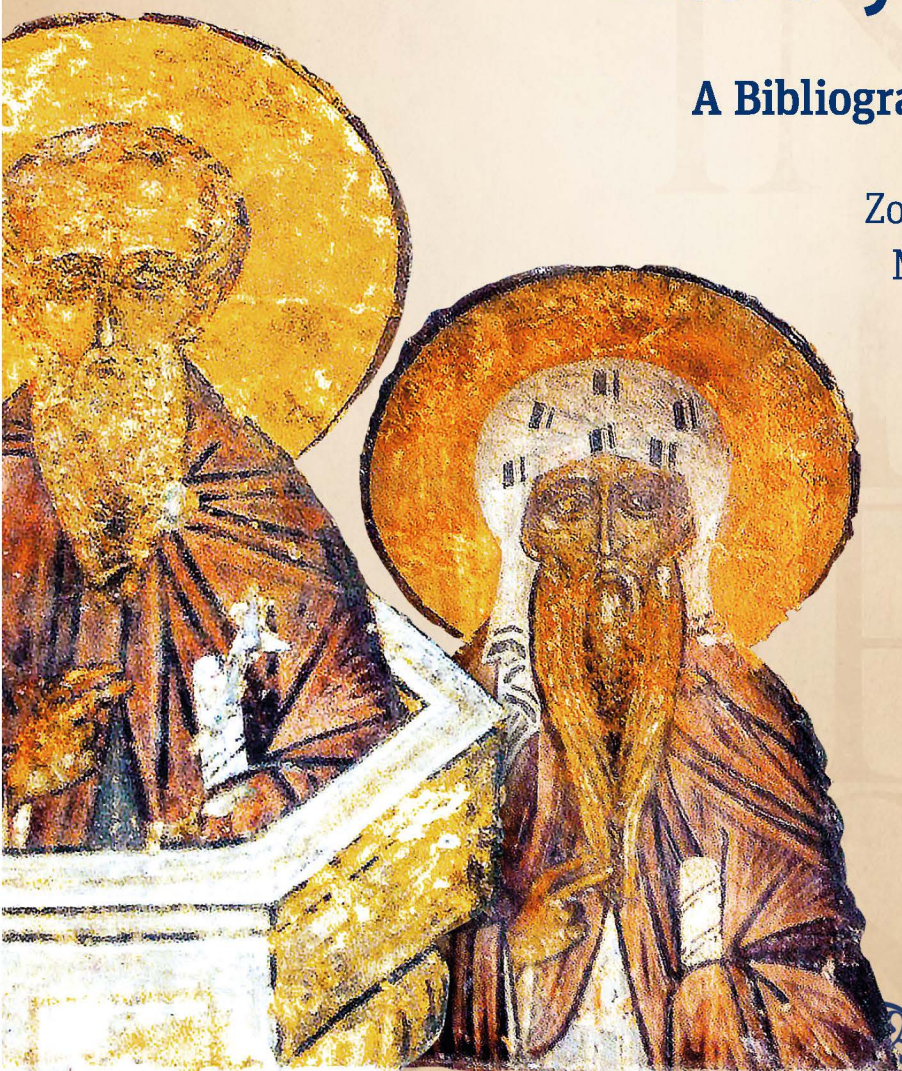
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XLI

Muhammad and the Origin of Islam in the Byzantine-Slavic Literary Context

A Bibliographical History

Zofia A. Brzozowska
Mirosław J. Leszka
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Translated by

Katarzyna Gucio

(VI, IX, XII, XIV, XX, XXV, XXVII, XXXV)

Katarzyna Szuster-Tardi

(Introduction, I–V, VII–VIII, X–XI, XIII, XV–XIX, XXI–XXIV, XXVI, XXVIII– XXXIV, XXXVI–XXXIX)

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Introduction



Several decades ago, Dmitri S. Lihačev (1906–1999) noted that the culture of the Arabs and the dawn of Islam were issues that did not attract much attention from Old Rus' authors[1]. The above-mentioned assessment, expressed by one of the most eminent experts in medieval Rus' literature, probably contributed to the fact that the Muslim theme, although constantly present in sources of East Slavic provenance, rarely drew the interest of researchers and, so far, has been considerably less known than, for example, the polemical works directed against the followers of Judaism or Western (Latin) Christianity, which had been created in this area[2].

---

[1] Д.С. Л и х а ч е в, *Поэтика древнерусской литературы*, Москва 1979, p. 10–14.

[2] Among the studies that offer a comprehensive view of the image of Islam in the Old Rus' literature, it is worth mentioning: И.Ю. К р а ч к о в с к и й, *Предистория русской арабистики. Киевская и Московская Русь*, [in:] *Избранные сочинения*, vol. V, Москва–Ленинград 1958, p. 13–31; M. B a t u n s k y, *Islam and Russian Mediaeval Culture*, "Die Welt des Islams. New Series" 26.1/4 , 1986, p. 1–27; i d e m, *Muscovy and Islam. Irreconcilable Strategy*, *Pragmatic Tactics*, "Saeculum. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte" 39, 1988, p. 63–81; i d e m, *Россия и ислам*, vol. I, Москва 2003; P. B u s h k o v i t c h, *Orthodoxy and Islam in Russia 988–1725*, [in:] *Religion und Integration im Moskauer Russland. Konzepte und Praktiken*, *Potentiale und Grenzen 14.–17. Jahrhundert*, ed. L. S t e i n d o r f f, Wiesbaden 2010, p. 117–143. Another noteworthy example are the works by Yuri Maksimov, which focus primarily on Byzantine anti-Muslim texts, while also referring to the issue of their reception in the writings of Orthodox Slavs in the Middle Ages, *inter alia*: Ю.В. М а к с и м о в, *Преподобный Иоанн Дамаскин об исламе*,

Moreover, Church Slavic texts usually constitute a side topic in studies on anti-Muslim polemics in the Middle Ages, conducted mainly on the basis of Greek and Latin sources, or written in the languages of the Christian East, including Syriac, Coptic, Arabic or Armenian. For example, in the multi-volume study *Christian–Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, the Slavic tradition, both in its southern (Balkan) and eastern (Rus') dimensions, has been taken into account only marginally[3].

This monograph aims to fill this historiographic gap. Therefore, on its pages, we will present those Old Rus' texts whose authors referred to the issue of the birth of Islam, and presented – or at least, briefly outlined – the profile of its creator, the prophet Muhammad, and the essence of his teachings, or attempted to describe the historical circumstances in which he operated, and the Arabian environment from which he originated. We have decided to include the sources existing in Rus' before the mid-16th century, when, along with the accession of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates to the Moscow state, the perception of the followers of Islam by East Slavic authors changed fundamentally, and their interest in Muslim subjects grew, creating a completely new cultural dynamic.

In our study, we consciously do not distinguish between the so-called translation and original literature – this is justified by the specificity of the source material, for which such a division would be artificial. In the case of the Old Rus' discourse on Islam, we deal with a certain continuum: compilation texts were created in Rus' on the basis of foreign works translated into (Old) Church Slavic, which, in turn, were a source of inspiration for native authors. At this point, it should also be emphasized that in the period of interest to us (11th–mid-16th centuries), it was Greek translations that were dominant in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. The

"Дамаскин" 4(16), 2010, p. 22–31; i d e m, *Византийцы и Коран*, 2011, halkidon2006.orthodoxy.ru/ [24.07.2020]; i d e m, *Византийские сочинения об исламе*, Москва 2012.

[3] To the Medieval polemical texts were dedicated the following volumes: *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. I, *600–900*, eds. D. T h o m a s, B. R o g g e m a, Leiden–Boston 2009; vol. II, *900–1050*, eds. D. T h o m a s, A. M a l l e t t, Leiden–Boston 2010; vol. III, *1050–1200*, eds. D. T h o m a s, A. M a l l e t, Leiden–Boston 2011; vol. IV, *1200–1350*, eds. D. T h o m a s, A. M a l l e t t, Leiden–Boston 2012; vol. V, *1350–1500*, ed. D. T h o m a s, A. M a l l e t t, Leiden–Boston 2013.

way Muhammad and Islam were perceived was, therefore, shaped under the overwhelming influence of Byzantine authors – the works originally written in other languages usually found their way into the writings of Orthodox Slavs through their Greek translations. This applied both to Arabic texts (such as fragments of the *Quran*), Syriac (e.g. *The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*) and Latin (e.g. Riccoldo da Monte Croce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*) ones. For this reason, on the pages of this book, we devote so much attention to Byzantine literature: usually, we discuss the place a given work holds in the culture of the Eastern Empire, which is a starting point to reflect on its reception on the Slavic territory. Because a significant part – if not the vast majority – of the texts presented here was translated into (Old) Church Slavic in the Balkans (in Bulgaria, Serbia, on Mount Athos or in Slavic monastic circles in the territory of the empire), only then to arrive in Rus', the narrative on Islam told by Old Rus' authors cannot be studied in isolation from the trends noticeable in the writings of their civilizational brethren from Southeastern Europe (Bulgarians and Serbs).

Although we have included texts representing a number of different literary genres (apart from liturgical poetry) – from historiographic works, through polemical treatises, homiletics, epistolography and itineraries, to hagiography and apocalyptic works – this monograph includes only those relics that were certainly known in Rus', or, more broadly, in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. In the case of sources that exist in different versions, only those redactions that had been translated into (Old) Church Slavic were discussed. A Byzantinist, therefore, may notice a certain fragmentary nature to this selection: the sources we present will not include, for instance, important writings in the Eastern Christian anti-Muslim discourse such as the works by Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 750–c. 825), Nicetas of Byzantium (9th century) or Bartholomew of Edessa (13th century). However, it should be remembered that the medieval Slavic tradition was characterized by considerable syncretism; not all Byzantine works were translated into (Old) Church Slavic, and the selection criteria and factors determining the dissemination of individual texts are not always entirely clear to the contemporary researcher. On the other hand,

the literature of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, although dependent on Byzantine literature, is an important link in the study on numerous phenomena in medieval culture (including the processes of shaping the stereotypical image of Islam and its founder in the minds of Eastern Europeans). There are examples of sources that have survived to this day only in the Slavic language version (the oldest *Apocalypse of Daniel*, written in Sicily between 827–829). The existing Church Slavic copies of some Byzantine works (e.g. the chronicle of George the Monk – Hamartolus) often present a version of a given work that is much closer to a protograph than the preserved Greek manuscripts.

The thematic axis of this work is the biography of Muhammad and the circumstances of the birth of Islam. Therefore, we have chosen those texts in which the person of the Muslim prophet appears, if only occasionally (or is a symbolic figure, e.g. the embodiment of evil in apocalyptic works). We have taken into account the sources relating to Islam, as well as showing the environment in which this religion was formed. Hence, the pages of this monograph contain the texts describing (or mentioning) the history of the Arabs – both from the inland of the peninsula and the Byzantine–Persian border, at the end of the pre-Muslim era (6th century), during Muhammad's life and in the first decades after his death, when the followers of Islam made significant territorial annexations, also at the expense of the Christian empire (until the beginning of the 8th century). However, what remained outside the scope of our studies are the sources discussing later Arab history (e.g. *The Martyrdom of the Forty-two martyrs of Amorion*, who died in the mid-9th century) or the culture of other Muslim peoples (including the Turks, Volga-Kama Bulgars, and Mongols/Tatars), which probably existed in relatively large numbers, both in Rus' and in the Balkans.

As our book is addressed not only to Palaeoslavists and Byzantine scholars, but also to a wide range of researchers dealing with the issues of the confrontation and coexistence of cultures and the Christian-Muslim dialogue throughout history, we have made every effort to ensure that navigating one's way through the presented material is as simple as possible. Therefore, we have included references to the existing editions of the sources, including their publications within the classic collections:

Patrologia Graeca (*PG*), *Patrologia Latina* (*PL*), and *Patrologia Orientalis* (*PO*). Hagiographic works, characterized by considerable variability, have been organized based on their systematization: *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, *BHG* (the Greek variants)[4], *Bibliotheca hagiographica balcano-slavica* (the Balkan material)[5] and the Oleg V. Tvorogov's catalog (the Rus' material)[6]. The Church Slavic texts that have not been published so far have been identified by us within the manuscripts (for each of them, at least one copy has been found and personally examined), followed by the titles and incipits of the sources in the original version.

* * *

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* * *

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[4] *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, ed. F. H a l k i n, vol. I–III, Bruxelles 1957 [=Bruxelles 1986].

[5] К. И в а н о в а, *Bibliotheca hagiographica balcano-slavica*, София 2008.

[6] О.В. Т в о р о г о в, *Переводные жития в русской книжности XI–XV вв. Каталог*, Москва–Санкт-Петербург 2008.

List of Abbreviations



Angel.	Angelica Library (Biblioteca Angelica) in Rome
BA	Ambrosian Library (Biblioteca Ambrosiana) in Milan
BAR	Romanian Academy Library (Biblioteca Academiei Romane) in Bucharest
BAV	Vatican Apostolic Library (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana) in Rome
BBB	Burgerbibliothek of Berne
BCF	Biblioteca Comunale Forteguerriana in Pistoia
BLL	British Library in London
BM	Library of Saint Mark (Biblioteca Marciana) in Venice
BML	Laurentian Library (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana) in Florence
BNCF	National Central Library of Florence (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze)
BNF	National Library of France (Bibliothèque Nationale de France) in Paris
BNU	National University Library (Biblioteca nazionale universitaria) in Turin
Bod.	Bodleian Library in Oxford
BOZ	Central Archives of Historical Records, Zamoyskis' Archive (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej) in Warsaw
BSB	Bavarian State Library (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) in Munich
BU	Belgrade University Library (Univerzitetska biblioteka u Beogradu)
CRL	Cadbury Research Library in Birmingham
Esc.	Library of the Royal Site of San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial)
HAB	Herzog August Library (Herzog August Bibliothek) in Wolfenbüttel
HAZU	Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti) in Zagreb

ML	Malatestiana Library (Biblioteca Malatestiana) in Cesena
MSPC	Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Muzej Srpske pravoslavne crkve) in Belgrade
NBS	National Library of Serbia (Narodna biblioteka Srbije) in Belgrade
NLG	National Library of Greece (Εθνική Βιβλιοθήκη) in Athens
ÖNB	Austrian National Library (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek) in Vienna
PBS	Library of Serbian Patriarchate (Biblioteka Srpske patrijaršije) in Belgrade
SBB	Berlin State Library (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)
SLUB	Saxon State and University Library (Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek) in Dresden
Vallic.	Vallicellian Library (Biblioteca Vallicelliana) in Rome
WLB	State Library of Württemberg (Württembergische Landesbibliothek) in Stuttgart

* * *

БАН	Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Библиотека Российской академии наук) in St. Petersburg
ГИМ	State Historical Museum (Государственный исторический музей) in Moscow
ИРЛИ РАН	Institute of Russian Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences (Институт русской литературы Российской академии наук) in St. Petersburg
НБКМ	'S.S. Cyril and Methodius' National Library (Национална библиотека "Св. Св. Кирил и Методий") in Sofia
ОГНБ	Odessa National Scientific Library (Одеська національна наукова бібліотека)
РГБ	Russian State Library (Российская государственная библиотека) in Moscow
РГАДА	Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (Российский государственный архив древних актов) in Moscow
РНБ	National Library of Russia (Российская национальная библиотека) in St. Petersburg

I

Ammonius, *Relatio on the Slaughter of the Monks of Sinai and Rhaithou*



(BHG 1300)
Date: between the 4th and 6th centuries
Original language: Coptic (?) or Greek
Slavic Translation: before the 14th century, Balkans (?)

Nothing is known about the author of *Relatio*. It is uncertain whether his name was Ammonius. In *Relatio*, he describes himself as a monk from Egypt, who visits Mount Sinai as a pilgrim. His native community was Canobus (cap. 41), but after returning from Sinai, he settled in a small community near Memphis (cap. 41). There, he made notes of events that he had experienced and had been relayed to him. The final fragments of his text, known as *Relatio*, were supposedly added by another person. They indicate that the notes in Coptic were in the possession of an anchorite from Naukratis [now Kum Ga'if, approx. 83 km south-east of Alexandria], where they were found by a priest named John, who translated them into Greek (cap. 42). The Coptic version has not been preserved (if it existed at all). *Relatio* has been translated into many languages, including Syrian, Aramaic, Arabic and Georgian (from Arabic). There is also a Church Slavic translation.

Ammonius' *Relatio* is a hagiographic text. Its dating is problematic. Researchers are divided into the proponents of its early dating (according to them, *Relatio* is an authentic document created at the end of the 4th or

beginning of the 5th century) and the supporters of a thesis that it was produced in the mid-6th century. What lends weight to the first view are the details consistent with the information provided by other sources (the persecution of the Alexandrian bishop named Peter, a monk named Moses who converted a number of Pharanites or the Saracen invasion of Sinai after the death of their *phylarch*). However, other elements match more the realities of the 6th century (the precision of monastic terms, "fortifications" or "forts" on Mount Sinai and in Rhaithou, 600 archers in Pharan). There are reasons to suspect that Ammonius' *Relatio* contains two different martyr traditions, collected in one narrative by a pilgrim traveling in peace named Ammonius. Numerous scholars believe that this text was fabricated by monks on Mount Sinai in the 6th century.

Ammonius' *Relatio* has been preserved in six languages: Greek, Aramaic (in the Christian-Palestinian variant), Syrian, Arabic, Georgian and Church Slavic. The source was circulated in two different redactions. The first is represented by the *Christian Palestinian Aramaic* (CPA) palimpsest manuscript, the second by Greek manuscripts, in particular, Sinaiticus Graecus 519 (10th century, fragmentary). These two different redactions are also reflected in the Arabic tradition. Another Greek manuscripts: Sinaiticus Graecus 267 (14th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 534. Syriac manuscripts: BAV, Syr. 623 (9th century); BL, Add. 14 645 (dated 936). Arabic manuscripts: BLL, Or. 5019 (11th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus 542 (9th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus 557 (13th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus, NF Parchment 1 (9th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus, NF Parchment 35, 6; Sinaiticus Arabicus 400 (13th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus 401 (13th century); Sinaiticus Arabicus 423 (dated 1623). Georgian manuscripts: *Sinai Polykephalon*, copied at Mar Sabas in 864; Ath. 57 (10th–11th centuries); Ath. 8 (10th century).

There is no complete edition yet that would include all versions. Until recently, the most famous version of Ammonius' *Relatio* was the *Christian Palestinian Aramaic* (CPA) redaction, preserved in a palimpsest manuscript, which Agnes Smith Lewis edited and translated into English in 1912. Although Sinaiticus Graecus 519 is longer, more detailed and more terminologically precise than *Christian Palestinian Aramaic*, some

discrepancies suggest not only that these manuscripts represent different redactions, but also that *Christian Palestinian Aramaic* is earlier than Sinaiticus Graecus 519 (although Pierre-Louis Gatier thinks differently). Nevertheless, Sinaiticus Graecus 519 remains vital in complementing Ammonius' story, because the CPA manuscript misses several pages. Apart from the above-mentioned edition of Agnes Smith Lewis, the *Christian Palestinian Aramaic* redaction has been published in a new edition developed by C. Müller-Kessler and M. Sokoloff.

The Greek redaction, known thanks to the 17th-century edition of F. Combefis, is currently available in Modern Greek translation, in the edition of D.G. Tsames and K.G. Katsanes. One of the Arabic manuscripts and the Georgian version derived from it were published by R.G. Gvaramia. An edition of two Syrian manuscripts, studied by M.-J. Pierre, is in preparation. The Church Slavic version was published by I. Pomjalovskij as early as 1890, based on the manuscript of РГБ, 173.I.45. It included a list of differences (omissions of the Slavic translator) in relation to the Greek text. Although we have editions of individual versions of *Relatio*, there is not one that would include both redactions and most manuscripts. Daniel F. Caner pointed out the significant discrepancies between the edition of Tsames–Katsanes and the CPA as well as Syrian and Arab redactions. Fortunately, the storyline remains essentially intact.

Slavic Translation

There is a comprehensive translation of Ammonius' *Relatio* into Church Slavic (**Повѣсть Аммониа мниха ѡ оубиенныихъ сѫтыхъ ѻц҃ь въ Синаи и Раиѳоу**). It must have been produced before the 14th century, because the oldest preserved copies of the discussed text come from this century. Its publisher, I. Pomjalovskij, considered the manuscript РГБ, 173.I.45, fol. 79d–90d (currently stored in the Russian State Library in Moscow) as the most representative of them. On its pages, Ammonius' account was placed adjacent to another hagiographic work, which centers on Byzantine-Arab contacts, i.e. *The Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* (XXVIII).

It appears that the author of the manuscript intentionally combined these two texts as both exhibit the motif of a threat to the Eastern Christians on the part of the Saracens.

The translation was probably based on the Greek text and is relatively faithful to its original. The translator employed only slight shortcuts, leaving out individual phrases, sometimes longer, one or two-sentence fragments, usually containing information that was either illegible or irrelevant for a reader unfamiliar with the specifics of the eastern borderland of the Byzantine Empire – the later Slavic recipient. For example: quite consistently, he eliminated the names of Arab tribes in the text, replacing such terms as the *Blemmyes* or *Moors* with the term barbarians (**варвари**).

Given the fact that the discussed work appears both in numerous South Slavic manuscripts (Zograph Monastery, Athos, № 107, fol. 396'–408; BAR, № 150, fol. 129–140'; BAR, № 305, fol. 89'–101'; Rila Monastery, Bulgaria, № 2/22, fol. 345–358'; Dragomirna Monastery, Romania, № 684, fol. 185–198; PBS, № 282, fol. 122–136; MSPC, № 139, fol. 252'–267'; Hilandar Monastery, Athos, № 443, fol. 251–267; Pljevlja Monastery in Montenegro, № 71, fol. 69–90) as well as Rus' manuscripts, it can be assumed that it was first produced in the Balkans, and then – as a result of a lively cultural exchange in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* in the 14th century – it came to Rus'.

The Old Rus' manuscript tradition of Ammonius' *Relatio* was very diverse. This text appeared both within the *miscellanea* type manuscripts (РГБ, 304.I.758, fol. 213–232' – from the beginning of the 15th century; РГБ, 304.I.777, fol. 160–183' – from the beginning of the 16th century), as well as in the Patericons (РГБ, 304.I.701, fol. 430'–444' – 1469; РНБ, 728.1366, fol. 351'–361' – 15th century; РНБ, 728.1367, fol. 392–407 – 16th century) and in the so-called Torzhestvenniks (*Торжественники*: РНБ, Сол. Анз. 83/1448, fol. 130–143 – from the end of the 15th century; РГБ, 37.411, fol. 176–187' – from the 15th–16th centuries). It can also be found on the pages of the Old Rus' Menaion Reader (*Четьи-Минеи*) from the 15th–16th centuries – the books containing a selection of hagiographic texts, intended for personal reading and arranged according to the order of the liturgical year of the Eastern Church – in the January volume,

on 14.03 (РГБ, 173.I.91, fol. 348'–363 – from 1480–1520; РГБ, 299.712, fol. 163'–181 – from the end of the 15th century / the third quarter of the 16th century). In the mid-16th century, the discussed work was also included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) by metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563): it was placed in the January volume, on 14.01 (ГИМ, Син. 990, fol. 501'–507'; ГИМ, Син. 178, fol. 622–629').

The Arabs

During Ammonius' pilgrimage, barbarians supposedly raided two different monastic groups, which he described in his *Relatio*. The first was a "Saracen" attack on the monks on Mount Sinai, the second, the "Blemmyes" assaulting the monks in Rhaithou. Both allegedly happened on the same day and the same number of monks (40) were killed.

Ammonius claims that he had witnessed the first attack and was told about the latter. It is surprising, therefore, that the part of the story describing the Saracen invasion of Mount Sinai is much shorter and far less detailed than the part describing the raid on Rhaithou. It would have been logical if Ammonius' *Relatio* had been written not by an external visitor on Mount Sinai, but by a resident of Rhaithou. The story of the attack on Sinai appears to be drawn from another, short documentary source – perhaps from a "list" of holy fathers tortured on Mount Sinai, included in *Relatio*.

According to the testimony of Ammonius, the Saracens, who assaulted the Sinai monastery in large numbers, killed everyone they found in nearby houses. They performed similar slaughters in Getrambe as well as in Horeb, Kodar and other places near the Holy Mountain. The attackers slew everyone within their reach. The others were saved by a miracle in the form of a great fire on the mountain top, which terrified the barbarians. The ascetics living in Rhaithou, on the other hand, perished at the hands of Black People (Μαῦροι), the Blemmyes. It is possible that the author somehow confused the Saracens with Blemmyes, although the inhabitants of Sinai easily distinguished between the two groups.

The attack was made with the intention to loot the monastery. The Blemmyes counted on finding rich spoils there. The monks were defended against the invaders by the "Ishmaelites" (Ισμαηλῖται). Ammonius used this term in reference to the Pharanites due to their conversion to Christianity.

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II

John Malalas, *Chronicle*



Date: 527 (first part); updated 560s or 570s
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: 10th century, Bulgaria

What we know about John Malalas (born in the 480s, died after 565, maybe in 578) is only what he revealed himself. He was a Hellenized Syrian. The alias 'Malalas' comes from the *mll*, the Syrian root for a 'rhetor' or 'scholastikos'. Evagrius, a Church historian, referred to him as John Rhetor. Malalas came from Antioch and spent a significant part of his life in this city. Here he received an education and began his career as a jurist. It is possible that, in his youth, he visited the capital of the empire several times (e.g. in the years 512–519, 522, 523). He eventually moved to Constantinople after the earthquake in 526 or after the capture of the city by the Persians in 540. He spent the rest of his life there, except for short trips to Thessalonica and Paneas.

The *Chronicle* (*Chronographia*, *Χρονογραφία*)

Malalas' most important text is an extensive historiographic work known as *Chronographia*. It is a chronicle covering the history of the entire world from Adam and Eve up to the contemporary times of the author, i.e. the reign of Justinian I the Great (527–565). Its first and final sections have not been preserved. What has survived includes 18 books. In *Chronicle*,

one can distinguish the biblical-Greek part (lib. 1–6), Roman (lib. 7–12) and Byzantine (lib. 13–18).

The first part of the *Chronographia*, containing a description of the earthquake from 526, was probably completed around 527. It remained in the hands of the Church historian, Evagrius. Later, however, Malalas supplemented and expanded his work three times. The fourth and final version ends abruptly at the description of the expedition led by Marcian to Roman Africa in 563. It is possible, however, that the *Chronographia* also covered the death of Justinian (565).

Malalas' chronicle is an example of popular history intended for a wide audience. The author is accused of succumbing to official propaganda and a lack of criticism. Malalas remained loyal to his hometown, to which he devoted considerable attention in the *Chronographia*. In later books, especially, in book 18, he focused more on the events in Constantinople. The early books are based on the work of his predecessors. Malalas quotes (directly or secondhand) 75 authors, among whom Eusebius of Caesarea and Eustathius of Epiphania play a special role. According to W. Treadgold, the *Chronographia* is essentially a paraphrase of the latter author's text. For historians, the most valuable is book 18, in which Malalas described the reign of Justinian I. In this case, he could rely on his own observations, documents and conversations with the participants of the events. Despite some shortcomings, the *Chronographia* is an important source for learning about the social, political and religious aspects of the history of early Byzantium.

The authorship of John Malalas was questioned in the past due to the discernible differences in the language (between the first 14 books and later ones) as well as the change of the author's religious views (up to book 17, they were closer to monophysitism while in book 18, they are clearly orthodox). There have been attempts to attribute the *Chronographia* (or its 18th book) to the patriarch of Constantinople, John III of Antioch (565–577) or to John Rhetor with the alias Diakrinomenos. It has also been suggested that the work, originally written by a monophysite, was later reworked by an orthodox author. None of these theses could be convincingly proven.

The work of John Malalas enjoyed great popularity and was used by numerous authors between the 6th–9th centuries. Part of its popularity was due to the book's simple language, but also to the way curiosities and stories were interlaced with its main narrative. As a result, it reached beyond a small group of educated and critical recipients. The *Chronographia* was used by John of Ephesus, Evagrius Scholasticus, the authors of *Chronicon Paschale* and the *Palatine Chronicle*, John of Nikiu, John of Damascus (X), Theophanes (XIII), George the Monk (Hamartolus, XIX), John Zonaras (XXV). It was quoted by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus in the 10th century and George Cedrenus in the 11th century. The *Chronographia* became a model for other authors, contributing to the development of the literary genre – the chronicles from the "creation of the world."

The *Chronographia*'s popularity was expressed in its translations into Latin (8th century), Old Church Slavic (Bulgaria, 10th century) and Georgian (10th–11th century).

The most complete Greek text of the *Chronographia* has been preserved in only one manuscript, Bod. Barocci 182 (12th century). Unfortunately, it was copied sloppily. It is incomplete: its beginning is damaged (lib. 1) and it ends abruptly, which is clear from the excerpts of Constantine VII and the partially preserved Slavic translation. Fragments of Malalas' work are also preserved in other manuscripts. Their list is provided by J. Thurn. The Latin translation is preserved in one manuscript: BAV, Pal. lat. 277 (8th century).

Slavic Translation

The *Chronographia* by John Malalas was one of the earliest Byzantine historical accounts adapted in the *Slavia Orthodox* area. Most likely, it was translated into Old Church Slavic in the 10th century, in Bulgaria, i.e. during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927) or – what seems more likely – his son, Peter (927–969). It is worth mentioning that this was a comprehensive translation, extremely faithful to the Greek original – Slavic copies of Malalas' work, although fragmentary, often contain

a variant of the text that is significantly closer to the protograph than the existing Byzantine manuscripts.

Unfortunately, not a single complete copy of this translation has survived till present day. We only have fragments included in native Slavic historiographical compilations, which for the most part, were not produced in the Balkans, but in Rus' and in later centuries at that, e.g. the *Judean Chronograph* from the 1260s (which provided the basis for the texts preserved in the following manuscripts: РГАДА, 181.279 – from the third quarter of the 15th century; BOZ 83 – from the late 15th/early 16th century; the Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, 19.109 – from the first third of the 16th century; ГИМ, Зав. 436 – from the first half of the 17th century), the *Troitsky Chronograph* from the 14th century, the *Sophia Chronograph* (included in the manuscript of РНБ, 728.1454 from the 16th century), the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* of the second redaction from the mid-15th century and the *Illustrated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible* from 1568–1576, based on the latter text. In the Slavic version, the following sections have been preserved: a large part of books 1–2, almost the entire text of books 4–10, passages abstracted from the broader narrative context in books 11–12, a comprehensive abridgment of books 13–17 as well as a small fragment of book 18. This compilation sometimes leads researchers to the conclusion that the comprehensive Old Bulgarian translation of John Malalas' chronicle provided ancient Slavs primarily with a source of information about ancient history.

The Arabs

The Arabs (in the *Chronographia* most often called the Saracens) are present in Malalas' text both in the biblical context (in the first books of the chronicle) and the historical context. In book 9, Malalas notes Augustus' subordinating Arabia to Rome. The next fragments report the threat posed to Antioch by the Persians and Saracens (lib. 10), the alliance between the Romans and the Arab leader, Odaenathus (260–267) and his

wife Zenobia (260–272) (lib. 12), the conflict between Gallienus (253–268) and the aforementioned Odaenathus, the death of the Arab ruler, the fight between Zenobia and the Romans and her defeat by Aurelian (270–275) (lib. 12). Further mentions of the Saracens in Malalas' work concern the construction of a weapons factory in Damascus during the Diocletian (284–305) reign for fear of Arab attacks, and the threat to the eastern provinces from the Persians and Arabs under Constantius Chlorus (305–306) (lib. 12). After a longer break, the Saracens appear in the *Chronographia* during the reign of Justin I (518–527) and Justinian I (lib. 17 and 18). Once again, the mentions are related to the threat of Arab invasions. Malalas devoted significant attention to al-Mundhir (Alamundaros) and Nu'man, the rulers of the Lakhmids allied with the Persians, who posed a serious threat to the empire, and their rival al-Harith (Arethas), the ruler of the Ghassanids allied with the emperor. Malalas' account of the participation of the "Roman" and "Persian" Arabs in the war between the two empires is an important supplementation to the testimony of Procopius of Caesarea.

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III

The Lives of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger



(BHG 1689–1690)
Date: after the beginning of the 7th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translations: after the 14th century, Balkans & Rus'

Symeon Stylites the Younger is also known as Symeon of the Admirable Mountain (*Thaumaston oros*) or Symeon Thaumaturge. We learn about his biography thanks to both his lives and other sources, such as the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius and *Pratum spirituale* by John Moschus (V). He was born in Antioch in 521 to a very religious family. John, Symeon's father, was from Edessa. His mother, named Martha, is revered as a saint.

There were many hagiographic texts devoted to this saint in Byzantine literature. The oldest and most extensive of them (BHG 1689), sometimes attributed to Arcadius, the archbishop of Cyprus, is believed to have been created as early as at the beginning of the 7th century. At the turn of the 11th century, Nicephorus Uranus wrote its paraphrase (BHG 1690). In addition to it, there are three other abridged lives of Symeon, inspired by *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites* (BHG 1691a–c). They were useful for liturgical reading or during holidays in honor of the saint. They also served as religious reading for laypeople. From the perspective of the history of literary genres, short lives fall between long works and very short texts from Synaxaria/Prologues. This book, due to its thematic

framework, will only discuss these variants of the life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger, which were known in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* (BHG 1689 and 1690).

* * *

The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger

(BHG 1689)
Author: unknown
Date: beginning of the 7th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: beginning of the 15th century, Rus'

The life story of Symeon was told in a very long biography, containing 259 chapters. *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* (Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμὼν Συμεὼν τοῦ ἐν τῶ Θαυμαστῷ Ορει) was probably written in the late 6th or early 7th century. The dates proposed by P. Van den Ven, V. Déroche, and even P. Speck, differ slightly from each other. Van den Ven believes that *The Old Life of St. Symeon* was written shortly after the saint's death (around 592), that is, at the end of the 6th century. P. Speck and V. Déroche raised their doubts regarding this hypothesis. The former noted that fragments on the worship of images, as well as miracles performed by the image of Symeon, could have been added later. V. Déroche dates *Life* to the reign of Phokas, between 602 and 610, indicating that it does not account for 14 years of Symeon's life. The researcher notes that the omissions coincide with the reign of Maurice (582–602). Gregory, the bishop of Antioch at the time, was not mentioned, although, according to Evagrius, the bishop was in close relations with

Symeon. Déroche suggests that this deliberate omission was due to the fact that the text was written during the reign of Phokas.

The author of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* remains anonymous. In the summary of the *Life*, mentioned in the text of John of Damascus (IX), the authorship of the original is attributed to Arcadius, the archbishop of Cyprus, but no other source confirms this. H. Delehaye and P. Van den Ven reject this possibility. They tend to believe the author, who portrays himself as an eyewitness to the events described. In their opinion, the *Life* was written by a monk who presented the text based on his own observations. V. Déroche draws attention to the repetitions which, in his opinion, did not result from the author's personality or writing style nor were they deliberately and systematically employed for a specific purpose. He states that the author used written sources and various traditions that he could not synthesize.

The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger begins by discussing the basic issues concerning his family, as well as his early life until his arrival at the Monastery of St. John (cap. 1–10). The author of the *Life* presents Symeon's childhood in a classic way, as full of signs and wonderful events testifying to his future holiness. Similarly to his namesake, St. Symeon the Younger began the ascetic life very young, in fact, he was still a child (6–7 years old). It happened after his father perished during the earthquake (526). His father's death undoubtedly deprived Martha of the income necessary to provide her son with an education. It is possible that Symeon was transferred to the monastery to become a servant there, but his biographer did not make a note of this fact.

Symeon joined the community of ascetics living around a hermit-stylite named John, who was their spiritual leader. The subsequent chapters (cap. 11–38) were devoted to his stay in this monastery and the beginnings of his ascetic practice. The next ones describe several visions and miracles that he performed as a young stylite (cap. 39–56). Seven-year-old Symeon obtained John's approval to undertake the same ascetic practices (cap. 16). The monks erected a pillar for the boy close to John's pillar so that both ascetics could easily talk. A few years later, it was exchanged for a higher one, but still in the vicinity of John's pillar (533–534). Changing the pillar

became an opportunity for the ordination of Symeon to a deacon by the bishops of Antioch and Seleucia in the short time he spent on the ground. For eight years, until the death of John, the austerities of Symeon were supervised by the elderly stylite. After the death of John, Symeon gained full control over ascetic practices, which were very strict.

The sections describing the period of the Persian invasion are quite extensive (cap. 57–64). It was followed by the relocation of the saint to the top of the mountain (cap. 65–67). The following chapters are mainly descriptions of miracles, although some important events were noted in them, such as the plague (cap. 69), the death of bishop Ephraimius (cap. 71–72), and another earthquake, perhaps from 551 (cap. 78).

Beginning with chapter 90, the number of details increases. Shortly after the Persian occupation of Antioch, the saint took a pillar on a hillside near Antioch, named the "Hill of Miracles" because of his activity. He founded a monastery there (551), and the faithful he had healed built a church in gratitude for the mercy shown to them (cap. 94–100; 108–112). An extensive chapter describes, how Symeon climbed his new pillar after consecrating the monastery (cap. 113). The Monastery of St. Symeon is located at a height of about 500 meters, on a hill overlooking the mouth of the Orontes, near the road connecting Antioch with the port of Seleucia Pieria and further with Laodicea.

Subsequent parts of the text were devoted to miracles, weaving important events from the life of the saint into their description e.g. the ordination of Symeon to the priesthood by Dionysius, the bishop of Seleucia (cap. 132–135), and some historical events – the earthquake in 557 (cap. 104–105), the persecution of pagans and heretics in Antioch in the mid-'50s (cap. 157–165), the appointment of Amantius for the *archon* (actually, the *magister millitum*) (cap. 160–165), and the military campaign against Alamundaros (cap. 186–187).

In the further part of the *Life*, we read about the visit of John Scholasticus, to whom Symeon prophesied the throne of the patriarch of Constantinople (cap. 202). Then Symeon foretells the reign of Justin II (565–574) (cap. 203 and 205–206) and the election of Anastasius as the bishop of Antioch (cap. 204). The saint helps the ill daughter of the

emperor (cap. 207), predicts Justin's mental problems and prophesies the reign of Tiberius II (574–582). The last part of the *Life* is mainly a description of miracles, except for a brief mention of Evagrius (cap. 233) and the prophecies about the future problems of the monastery (cap. 240). The last five chapters focus on the disease and death of the stylite (cap. 255–259).

Symeon not only healed, but also predicted future events (the death of archbishop Ephraimius of Antioch, the illness of bishop Domnus or the earthquake in Antioch). He was credited with the ability to read other people's thoughts (Evagrius testifies to this). He also performed other miracles. Thanks to his prayers, the monastery obtained a source of water, and once, when grain was scarce, its granaries were filled thanks to the intercession of the saint. Symeon also predicted his own death at the age of 75. As he testifies, he was a stylite for 68 years. He gives this number himself in a letter to Thomas, the guardian of the relics of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. The letter has been preserved in the *Life of St. Martha*, his mother, where he states that he had started living on the pillar since he lost his milk teeth. The saint fell ill around 592. Upon hearing this, Gregory, the patriarch of Antioch, set out to assist him in the last moments, but Symeon had died before he arrived.

Symeon was also involved in doctrinal disputes. When the Samaritans erased the holy images in the churches, he wrote to the emperor Justin II arguing that they be respected. This letter was quoted by John of Damascus (IX) and the Second Council of Nicaea. The saint enjoyed the respect of emperors, especially Maurice's.

In addition to the letter to Thomas, St. Symeon the Younger is credited with several letters. Many of these short spiritual treatises were printed by Giuseppe Cozza-Luzi ("Nova PP. Bib.," VIII, III, Rome, 1871, p. 4–156). There is also the *Apocalypse* and the letters to the emperors Justinian I (527–565) and Justin II (fragments in *PG*, vol. 86.2, col. 3216–3220). Furthermore, Symeon was the author of a number of liturgical hymns.

After his death, the saint performed miracles the way he did in his lifetime. He healed the blind, lame and lepers, saving many from wild

animals, casting out demons and raising the dead. In several cases, the images representing him performed the healing.

The Life of St. Symeon Stylite the Younger also exists in translation into Georgian and, similarly to its Greek prototype, reveals the veneration of Georgians for the saint. The Georgian translation must have been created before 978, because the oldest known manuscript comes from that year. It was published in 1918 on the basis of MS Tiflis A105 (dated to 1697) and MS Tiflis A177 (18th century). There are older manuscripts that have not been used: Sinaiticus Georgianus 46 (978 AD); the Patriarchal Library of Jerusalem 33 (13th–14th century). The *Life of St. Martha*, Symeon's mother, was also translated into Georgian. The Arabic redaction is yet to be published.

The manuscripts: Athos Lavra B71 (catal. 191) (11th–12th century); Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 108 (the end of the 10th century); Bod. Barocci 240 (12th century); BSB, Gr. 366 (10th century); BNF, Gr. 1459 (11th century); Athos Vatopedi 84 (formerly 79) (9th century); Lesbiensis Leimon 43 (12th–13th century); Patmiacus 257 (12th century); Athos Esphigmenou 105 (18th century).

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* (**Житие и жизнь и пощенїе преподобнаго ѻца нашего Сумеѡна чюдотворца, иже въ Дивнѣи горѣ, иже пространьства ради.** Incipit: **Блᶜвенъ Бг̃ъ иже всѧ чл̃кы хотѧи спᶜти**) must have been created no later than in the second decade of the 15th century. In 1420, the monk Eusebius-Ephrem included it in the Menaion Reader (*Четьи-Минеи*) he compiled (covering the lives of saints from November to May). The protograph of Eusebius-Efrem, a Rus' by origin living and working in the Slavic circle at the Monastery of the Holy Mother of God Peribleptos in Constantinople, has not survived to this day. However, its direct copy has been preserved, prepared for the Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius

between 1432 and 1443 (РГБ, 304.I.669). It features the life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger on fol. 49–124, which is immediately followed by the annotation that this work was copied by the "poor Eusebius" on March 2, AM 6928 (AD 1420).

In the 15th century, the discussed text became popular in Rus' literature, primarily within the Menaion Readers (e.g. РГБ, 113.597, fol. 336a–432d – from 1494). In the years 1488–1508, it was included in the collection of saints' lives by Nil Sorski (1433–1508), one of the most eminent Old Rus' writers and thinkers of the late 15th century. His initiative, aimed at organizing the hagiographic material known in Rus' and gathering it in one collection, predated the undertaking of the Metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563), which would result in the creation of the Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*). The part of Nil Sorski's compilation is currently stored at the State Literary Museum in Moscow (ГЛМ РОФ 8354, № 14). *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* is featured in this manuscript on fol. 4–95'.

In the mid-16th century, it was natural that the life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger was also included in the Great Menaion Reader by the Metropolitan Macarius: it can be found in the May volume, dated to 24.05 (РНБ, 728.1321, fol. 489a–526c; ГИМ, Син. 994, fol. 647b–726a; ГИМ, Син. 180, fol. 1029a–1125d). In the 16th century, it was also included in the *miscellanea* manuscripts, e.g. РГБ, 304.I.182, fol. 125–260' (a selection of texts by Symeon the New Theologian with supplements); РГБ, 304.I.685, fol. 143–233' (a collection of saints' lives).

The Arabs

In chapters 186–187, *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* offers an interesting story about the saint's intervention in the battle between two Arab tribes: the pro-Byzantine Ghassanids and the pro-Persian Lakhmids. This information can also be found in the abridged *Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* written by Nicephorus Uranus (cap. 193–194, col. 3164).

Byzantium and Persia often waged their wars *via* their Arab allies. Al-Harith ibn Jabalah al-Ghassani was allied to the former. The Byzantine authors rendered his name as Arethas, while At-Tabari references him as Khalid ibn Jabalah. His long reign (529–569) saw the greatest flourishing of the Ghassanid state. At first, however, it seemed that he was unable to successfully face the Lakhmid leader Al-Mundhir III (Alamundaros), who was an extremely demanding, fearful opponent. The author of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* provides various evidence of that. During the Lakhmid fights with the Ghassanids, Arethas' son was murdered by al-Mundhir III (around 545 or 546). If we believe the source, the young man was sacrificed to "Aphrodite," that is, the Morning Star, identified with the goddess al-Uzza.

The author of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* also described al-Mundhir III's attachment to paganism, his persecution of Christians and his invasion of Roman territory in the mid-550s. During the invasion in 553, Arethas defeated the Lakhmid army near Chalcis ad Bellum and killed his greatest enemy, who once again had raided the Roman territory. He was also close to capturing the two sons of Al-Mundhir.

In a dramatic way, the author of the *Life* presents the initial advantage of the Lakhmids. Devastated, the Ghassanids panicked and retreated under the impact of Mundhir's forces. Only his sudden death as a result of a blow to the head changed the course of the battle. According to the *Life*, this was the result of the prayers of Symeon, who, thanks to his vision, indirectly participated in the fight. Among the general panic, Symeon entered into a state of ecstasy and had a vision in which the Holy Spirit placed him on the hill at the place of the clash. Symeon reported: *And I stood in the middle of the camp of the [Roman] soldiers and Saracens, where the Roman philarch Arethas camped*. When the defeat seemed inevitable, divine power intervened and Alamundaros was defeated. Symeon assured his fellow believers that victory would be achieved the same day. Then the soldiers from the Roman army came and testified that, in fact, they had relied on the "servant of God" (Symeon) and that it was his help that changed the course of the clash. It is interesting that the dramatic

description omits the main role of Arethas and his son al-Mundhir. In the battle near Chalcis, Jabalah, the son of Arethas, was killed, which only fueled the Ghassanid ruler's efforts to destroy the enemies of his tribe. Soon the Lakhmid capital of Al-Hira was seized and burned down. This was the peak of Arethas' career.

Because it was believed that Symeon had the gift of healing, sick people made pilgrimages to his pillar. They were both Romans and barbarians. Among them were the people "from the land of Ishmaelites" (ἀπὸ τῆς ᾽σμαηλίτιδος χώρας), whom the saint helped find their donkey (cap. 201). Since the Arabs or Saracens were often called the 'Ishmaelites,' there is no doubt that it is a reference to the nomads from the border area. Unfortunately, there are no specifics about their homeland. The author of the *Life* could not have known that the Ishmaelites would become the followers of the new Abrahamic religion (Islam).

The Church Slavic translation of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* is faithful to the Greek original, but several issues are presented in a slightly different way. And so, the ruler of the Lakhmids, Al-Mundhir III, is characterized by the Slavic hagiographer as the leader of the Saracens, subject to the Persian tsardom (РГБ, 304.I.669, fol. 103': **бѣ нѣкто старѣишина Сраціномъ. подлежащемъ персьскомоу цр҃ствоу. именемь Ѧламоундаросъ**). At the same time, he emphasizes that he was a pagan (**елинъ слоужбою**) and uses the distinctive epithet, the "man of blood" (**моужь крови**) to describe him. Al-Mundhir was claimed to be a fierce persecutor of Christians for a number of years: stopped by no one, he would take many prisoners of the Byzantine border, whom he imprisoned and starved, subjecting them to various tortures and even shaming them by having them participate in the worship of the devils (**слоужбамъ бѣсовьскымъ приобщатисѧ**). From the *Life* we also learn that a "Greek old man" (in the original: an imperial deputy) came to the court of Chosroes to ask him for peace (**въпросити яже в мирѣ**). Most likely, it was an attempt to resolve the conflict between Al-Mundhir III and Arethas (Al-Harith) II, the ruler of the Ghassanids, allied to the Byzantine Empire. The message ended in failure, and Al-Mundhir III announced another attack on the empire, boasting that he would destroy

all homesteads and kill their inhabitants. Soon (in June 554), he raided the Byzantine border with enormous forces. According to the hagiographer, everyone who lived in the east, panicked (fol. 104: **вси иже на въстоцѣ живоущии смѧтошасѧ зѣло**). Then the author of the biography outlines the vision that St. Symeon supposedly experienced. In this vision, he found himself on a hill, located in the border area, between the lands of the Saracens, Persians and Greeks (**близь предѣлъ Сраciньскыхъ Персъ же и Грекъ**). And he saw two armies of foes, charging each other: the Arabs allied with the Byzantines under the command of Arethas (**воиномъ и Сраciномъ. идеже Ѧрефа старѣишина**) and the troops led by the "persecutor" Alamundaros (**съ Ѧламоундаромъ мѫ̄тлемъ**). In the battle, the scales of victory were going to tip to the latter's side, but ultimately, a higher power came to the aid of the Christians: an angel of God with a sword appeared and chopped Al-Mundhir's head off. This vision was claimed to have anticipated the real events, i.e. the defeat of the Lakhmids by the Ghassanid ruler, Arethas.

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Nicephorus Uranus
The Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger

(BHG 1690)
Date: the 10th–11th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: after the 14th century, the Balkans

The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger was paraphrased and abridged on a few occasions. The author of one of the paraphrases (BHG 1690: Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Συμεὼν τοῦ ἐν τῷ

Θαυμαστῷ Ορει συγγραφέντα παρὰ Νικηφόρου τοῦ μαγίστρου Αντιοχείας τοῦ ᾽Οὐρανοῦ), not much shorter than the original, was Nicephorus Uranus, a friend of Symeon the Metaphrast. He was not only a brilliant soldier, but also a defender of monasteries. Nicephorus' career helped him gain the emperor's trust and rise in the army. He held the office of *épi tou kanikleiou*, the head of the imperial office, giving him access to the emperor. In 980, he was sent as a deputy to Baghdad, where he was imprisoned for some time by the Sultan ʻAdud al-Dawla. Upon his return, he commanded the Byzantine army in the East. In 996, he was given the command of the troops fighting the Bulgarians in the West, which he did successfully before being sent to the East. According to Yahya of Antioch, he was appointed the governor of Antioch in 999. He remained in Antioch until 1006/7, when he crushed the Arab uprising. He died shortly thereafter. It was likely at this time that he created the abridged life of St. Symeon Stylites. Surely, he had *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger* before him – he could have borrowed a copy from the Monastery of St. Symeon or ordered another one for personal use.

Nicephorus Uranus uses a much more sophisticated language than the original author, who wrote in a relatively simple way. In some passages, he supplemented the text of *The Old Life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger*. In particular, he gave details of Amantius, his predecessor as the administrator of Antioch, which are completely absent from the original.

P. van der Ven assesses the value of the abridgment made by Nicephorus Uranus critically. According to him, this is a mediocre paraphrase. He thinks that the author decided to omit some miracles because he was tired of a lengthy text. The fact that a close associate of the emperor wrote an abridgment of the long life of St. Symeon could have contributed to the dissemination of this saint's worship in the empire, especially in court circles.

Manuscripts: Library of Vallicellane, B.14; SBB, Gr. Fol. 17 (11th century); Bod. Clark 44 (12th–13th century); Bod. Rawlinson Auct. G 199 (dated to 1141); Athos Dionysiou 143 (dated to 1632–1633); Athos Iviron 424 (16th century).

Slavic Translation

The work by Nicephorus Uranus was probably translated into Church Slavic in the 14th century in the Balkans (**Житиѥ и жизнь прⷮпⷭбнаго wца нашего Сѵмеѡна иже на Дивнѣи горѣ, съписано ѿ Никїфора магїстра антиѡхїискаго**. Incipit: **Блᶜвень Бг̃ь, того бѡ блᶜвити**). It has been preserved on the pages of several manuscripts of the South Slavic provenance: Serbian (Torzestvennik from the end of the 14th century – РНБ, 588.873, fol. 244–299; the Menaion Reader for May and June from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, № 445, fol. 122–173'); Bulgarian (the codex from the Rila Monastery, № 4/8, fol. 635–665' – dated to 1479; the manuscript from the Zograph Monastery on Mount Athos, № 90, fol. 198–217' – from the 14th century); Moldavian but retaining the characteristics of the Tarnovo Literary School (the Menaion Reader for April, May and June, written in 1474 by the monk Jacob in the Putna Monastery, and commissioned by the Moldavian *hospodar* Stephen III the Great (1457–1504) – № 31, fol. 162'–212'; a 16th-century copy of the aforementioned codex from the Dragomirna Monastery, № 739, fol. 182–243; a collection of saints' lives from February to May, prepared in the first quarter of the 17th century for Anastasius Crimca, the Moldavian metropolitan (1608–1617, 1619–1629), and then gifted by him to the monastery in Suceava – V. Stefanyk National Science Library in Lviv, Петр. 2, fol. 229–253). Klimentina Ivanova mentions several other copies: BAR, № 164, fol. 233–281' (15th century); the codex from the Pljevlja Monastery in Montenegro, № 5, fol. 321–375' (17th century); Biblioteca Sfântului Sinod, Bucuresti, Sl.III.26, fol. 228–272 (16th–17th century).

The translation of the life of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger by Nicephorus Uranus reached Rus' quite quickly. We find it, e.g. on the pages of a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th century – РГБ, 304.I.754, fol. 216–286'. It is also noteworthy that on the Slavic ground, the discussed work underwent significant editorial changes, as a result of which, parts of the text less interesting to the later recipient were removed or abridged, including the outline of the situation on the Byzantine-Persian border in the 6th century.

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BHG 1690

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IV

John Moschus
The Spiritual Meadow



(BHG 1440z–1442y)
Date: beginning of 7th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: early 10th century, Bulgaria

John Moschus, also known as Eucrates, was born around 550 in Cilicia (formerly, it was believed that his birth town was Damascus) and died in Rome in 619 or 634. He became a monk at an early stage of his life. He stayed as a hermit in the Monastery of St. Theodosius, in the Great Lavra of St. Sabas, and finally, in the Judean Desert. He spent the years 568–578 in the Laura of Pharan. He was a teacher and friend of Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem (V).

During his lifetime, he traveled a lot, practicing peripatetic asceticism (*xenitei*), but also escaping the Persian invasion. Together with Sophronius, he went to Egypt (around 578), Palestine and Sinai. He spent 10 years (around 583–593) in the Laura of the Aeliotes, which is often believed to have been located on Mount Sinai, but it is possible that it was near Jericho. Another long stopover on John's path was Alexandria, where he stayed twice, in about 578–582 and then in 606–615. He also visited the monasteries of Syria, Asia Minor, the Aegean islands, Cyprus, Samos and others. In 604, together with Sophronius, he escaped from Persia to Antioch, and after the seizure of Jerusalem by the Persian army, he went to Egypt, where he became acquainted with John III the Almoner,

the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria (610–619). Moschus' last trip was to Rome, where he died two years later.

The stories about the lives of monks and elders collected during his numerous journeys were used by John Moschus to create the work known as Λειμών (*The Spiritual Meadow*). When John felt his death approaching, he entrusted the manuscript to Sophronius, with whom the work was closely related. At his request, Sophronius was also supposed to transport his body to Sinai, which proved impossible due to the Arab invasions. Ultimately, Sophronius buried his friend's remains at the Monastery of St. Theodosius.

The most important work of John Moschus is Λειμών, known under the Latin title *Pratum Spirituale* (*The Spiritual Meadow*). It falls within the current of traditional "fatherly sayings" (*apoftegmata patrum*). The author collected about 300 stories, usually quite short, which he had heard during his travels. They describe the virtuous works and pious activities of the holy fathers who performed them, struggling with temptations and evil spirits.

The work was very popular and often copied. Over time, the collection was supplemented and modified – new stories were added to it while others were deleted or rearranged. Individual anecdotes were included in various *florilegia*. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (died 886), knew two versions of *Pratum Spirituale*: one consisting of 304 chapters, and the other, 342. The Georgian version includes 30 additional stories, some of which (11) are devoted to the events in Cyprus while others talk about different miraculous events that occurred during the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590–604) and the reign of Constans II (641–668). The latter are not featured in the Greek version. Since the last one of these 30 stories mentions "our Laura of Mar Saba," it can be assumed that this series was collected ca. 670 by a monk from this monastery.

Moschus' work reached the West relatively late, although there had been translations of part of the stories. The first was probably made by Anastasius the Librarian (John Deacon, the author of pope Gregory the Great's *Vita*, written in the 9th century, was familiar with it). The second appeared in the 11th century and was the work of John the Monk.

In the third decade of the 15th century, *Pratum Spirituale* was translated by Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439). He used the manuscript he had received from the archbishop of Crete. Individual stories were also included in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.

The Latin translation was published by Feo Belcari (1410–1484) in 1475, and then, in a slightly changed version (219 chapters in a different order), by Aloysius Lipomannus (1496–1559) in 1558. It was reprinted many times; for instance, it was included in *PL*, vol. 74, col. 119–240.

The work of John Moschus has also been translated, partially or fully, into Armenian (40 stories included in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*), Arabic (entitled *Book of the Garden*, 10th century), Ethiopian (40 stories), Georgian (90 stories), and Old Church Slavic. *Pratum Spirituale* can be found in a large number of manuscripts – their number exceeds one hundred, but many of them contain only a part of the stories (some only one). The most important is BML, Plut. X, 3 (12th or 13th century) – it contains 301 chapters; BNF, Gr. I596 (11th century) – includes Moschus' texts grouped in three series, other stories about ascetics, and *Diegemata* by Anastasius of Sinai (X); BM, Gr. II, 21 (mid-10th century) – contains a shorter, separate version. Large sections of the text are included in Athos Vatopedi 171 (10th century); BA, Gr. 529 (M 83 Sup.) (13th century); Taurin, Gr. C (11th century) and SBB, Gr. 221 (85 stories attributed to Moschus, 10 of which are not featured in Migne's edition).

Slavic Translation

In the Slavic tradition, the work of John Moschus was known as the *Sinai Paterikon*. It is worth remembering that this title, which *note bene*, does not quite correspond with the content of the work, appeared relatively late (14th–15th century). The oldest translation of *Pratum Spirituale* into Old Church Slavic is believed to have been created at the dawn of the literary tradition of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. The most common view in the literature of the subject is the thesis that this translation was made at the beginning

of the 10th century in Bulgaria. Some scholars are even willing to attribute its authorship to St Methodius, which would push its creation to the second half of the 9th century. Russian Paleoslavists sometimes suggest that the work of John Moschus was translated in Rus' in the 11th century.

The Greek protograph of this translation is unknown. Certainly, it was a manuscript representing a redaction, in which *Pratum Spirituale* consisted of 300 chapters. The fact that the work of John Moschus is comprised of 301 parts in the Slavic tradition is due to an ordinary mistake of the copyist (an error in the counting of the first ten chapters of the work). The comprehensive Old Church Slavic translation of the *Spiritual Meadow* has been preserved until today only within the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 551 (dated to the 12th century) and the codex ГИМ, Син. 848 (16th century), which was copied on the former. Interestingly, aside from the text by John Moschus, these manuscripts contain 34 other stories (similar in content and genre to *Pratum Spirituale*) about the life and deeds of holy fathers.

In the 10th century in Bulgaria, most likely in the circle of Cosmas the Presbyter, there was a kind of abridged comprehensive translation of the Old Church Slavic *Pratum Spirituale*, covering 97 chapters of this work. In the manuscript tradition, it became known under the distorted Greek title: *Limonis* (**Книга, нарицаемая Лимонисъ, еже сказаетсѧ новаго рая цвѣтци различнїи** – from Greek Λειμών). It was preserved on the pages of the manuscript ГИМ, Чуд. 3186, dated to the late 15th/early 16th century. In the second half of the 11th century, a new redaction of *Limonis* appeared in Rus', in which the original compilation was expanded by 43 chapters of John Moschus' work as well as the so-called *Egyptian Paterikon* – a collection of monastic texts from the 4th to 5th centuries translated from Greek. A later, East Slavic variant of *Limonis* is found, e.g. in manuscript РГБ, 304.I.37 from the beginning of the 15th century (fol. 178–242').

Fragments of *Pratum Spirituale* were also popularized in the literature of *Slavia Orthodoxa* within other collections of stories about the life and deeds of holy fathers (Paterikon). For instance, 25 chapters of John Moschus' work were translated from Greek into Old Church Slavic

in Bulgaria in the early 10th century as an integral part of the so-called *Alphabetic and Jerusalem Paterikon* – a Byzantine collection of monastic texts, of which *Apophthegmata Patrum* constituted the essential part. Fifty-eight chapters of the *Spiritual Meadow* can also be found in the so-called *Compiled Paterikon*, written in Bulgaria in the 14th century. Experts cannot agree whether the creators of this *zvod* used a comprehensive Slavic translation of John Moschus' work or if they translated the fragments of their interest themselves.

Pratum Spirituale must have enjoyed considerable popularity in Rus'. Obvious borrowings and scenes inspired by this piece can be found in the text of *Kiev Pechersk Paterikon* – an original relic of Old Rus' literature, whose current form emerged in the first three decades of the 13th century. Fragments of the comprehensive Slavic translation of John Moschus' work and the excerpts from *Limonis* were also included in the second redaction of the Prologue.

In the 1520s, a new redaction of the *Sinai Paterikon* was created under the auspices of the archbishop of Novgorod the Great, Macarius (later the metropolitan of Moscow). Its author, whose name, **Досифеос Осифитиє**, has been preserved in three copies of the compilation (ГИМ, Увар. 960/883 from 1528–1529; РНБ, Q.I.397 from 1528, and РНБ, 717.643 from the 17th century), is identified by some researchers with Dositheus Toporkov – one of the students of Joseph Volotsky. He redrafted the comprehensive Slavic translation of *Pratum Spirituale*, most likely on the basis of a copy of ГИМ, Син. 848, making numerous abbreviations and corrections. In the mid-16th century, the effect of his work was included in the Great Menaion Reader (June volume, under the date of 30.06).

Dositheus' redaction also became the basis for the first printed Slavic edition of John Moschus' work, published in Kiev in 1628. Interestingly, it divided the text of the *Pratum spirituale* into 219 chapters, based on one of the earlier Latin editions (e.g. by Aloysius Lipomannus from 1558). This edition exists in about 10 manuscript-copies.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Among the preserved stories were also those that took place on the Sinai Peninsula, so it is not surprising that the Arabs appear in them. They are characterized by moralizing anecdotes as well as the accumulation of miraculous events and divine interventions, which means that they must be analyzed with great caution. They reflect popular ideas about nomads. The Saracens were portrayed in a negative light as dangerous invaders and robbers attacking hermits and looting their possessions. Sometimes Arabs also appear as people who require the help of holy fathers.

Usually, holy men are defended against aggressors by a higher power. For example, Abba Gerontius spoke of a lonely anchorite meeting a group of Saracens on the other side of the Dead Sea. Suddenly, one of them turned around and cut his head off. God immediately punished the Saracen, who was lifted into the air by a huge bird and then thrown to the ground (XXI). Another Saracen got swallowed up by the earth when he tried to kill a monk named Ianthus (XCIX). Other monks – Anthony of Scopulus Monastery and a monk living near Clysma – were also miraculously saved. In the stories, the Arabs were after the property of monks and hermits. A group of camel guides from Arabia stole a donkey from Abba Gerazius (CVII), but it was recovered by a lion owned by the saint. Other Saracens, described as pagans, wanted to rob another monk, but were paralyzed and could not move for two days (CXXXIII). Thanks to the prayers of another father, Abba Jordan, three Saracens were forced to release from captivity a young man who was going to be offered to an unnamed deity (CLV). In the latter case, interesting historical information was given – it happened during the reign of the emperor Maurice (582–602), when the Saracens' phylarch was Namanes (an-Nu'man III ibn al-Mundhir, 580–602), who plundered the area near Arnon and Aidon.

John also noticed the presence of Christians among the Arabs. The story CXXXVI features a Christian-Saracen woman who prostituted herself for lack of food. When she offered her services to Abba Sisinnius, he sent her away with provisions.

In connection with the figure of Sophronius (the patriarch of Jerusalem), the 30 above-mentioned additional stories of the Georgian redaction included information about the Muslim occupation of this city and the construction of a mosque during Sophronius' lifetime (*Histoires édifintes géorgiennes*, 100–102, transl. G. Garitte, "Byzantion" 36, 1966, p. 414–416).

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In 1624, *editio princeps* of 115 chapters (Greek text and Latin translation in parallel) was published. It was prepared by Fronton du Duc (*Ioannis Moschi Pratum Spirituale*, *Ambrosio Camaldulensi interprete ex mss. Summi Pontificis Vaticani & Regis Christianissim*, [in:] F. Ducaeus, *Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, Paris 1624, p. 1055–1162). Other chapters from Traversari's translation that were not included in this edition were published in 1681 by Jean-Baptiste Cotelier (J.-B. Cotelerius, *Ecclesiae Graecae Monumenta*, vol. II, Paris 1681, p. 341–456; and notes: col. 655–678). Moschus' work was also included in *PG* (ed. J.-P. Migne, *PG*, vol. 87.3, col. 2852–3112). Subsequent fragments of Moschus' work, or texts that were attributed to him, were published in the 20th century.

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V

Doctrina Iacobi



Author: unknown
Date: between 634 and 640 or 660s–670s.
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: before the 15th century (before 1018?), Balkans (?)

Διδασκαλία Ιακώβου (*Doctrina Iacobi*; *The Teaching of Jacob*) is a Christian polemical treaty from the 7th century, written in Greek in Palestine. It has the form of a dialogue whose plot was set in Carthage in 634. It is difficult to date the creation of this treaty accurately. Traditionally, it was assumed that it was written between 634–640. G. Dagron considered the text's *terminus ante quem* to be the year 646/647. Paul Speck rejected both such an early dating of *Doctrina Iacobi* and the integrity of its text, claiming that it was a compilation from the 8th century. His theses were not widely accepted. Given that *Doctrina Iacobi* makes no reference to Carthage being in the hands of Muslims, the text must have been written before the city was occupied by al-Numan ca. 695–696. The treaty can, therefore, most likely be dated to 660 or 670.

Doctrina Iacobi tells the story of a Palestinian Jew, Jacob, who having arrived in Carthage from Constantinople to do business there, is captured, imprisoned and forcibly baptized by the Byzantine authorities on the Pentecost (May 31) 632, along with other Jewish residents of this city. His first reaction is to delve into the Holy Bible, in which he seeks help. However, after reading it, he concludes that Christianity is a religion that

he should accept and writes a letter to the Jews in Carthage, instructing them why they should also embrace their new faith.

Doctrina Iacobi was designed to be a record of a weekly discussion held in an unknown place in Carthage in 634 (it finished on July 13) between the Jews who had been forcibly baptized at the emperor's order. It focused on the state of the Byzantine Empire in light of the recent Arab conquests and how Jews who were being forced to convert should behave in this situation. In the text, Jacob was persuading others to accept the Christian faith. His main opponent was his countryman (they both came from Ptolemais in Palestine), a merchant from Constantinople named Justus. Justus tried to convince him to abandon Christianity, but ultimately, he succumbed to Jacob's arguments. In the end, all participants accepted Christianity, and Jacob and Justus returned to the East.

The dispute was certainly invented by the author. The treaty was aimed at the educated Jewish elite throughout the Roman Empire, and its goal was to win the hearts and minds of Jews. However, there is no doubt about the authenticity of the historical background, against which the dispute is unfolding. Numerous historical details were shown correctly (factional struggles, social conflicts between Jews and Christians, the Persian invasion and the devastation of Palestine). Even Jacob and Justus, who came from Ptolemais, could potentially have met in Carthage. A letter from Palestine informing about the catastrophic defeat and the death of the Roman commander may have quickly reached Carthage. The Jewish community of this city remained in constant contact with the main centers of the Jewish population in Palestine while trade continued. Therefore, *Doctrina* deserves a careful analysis as an authentic text from the 660s (Howard-Johnson).

In addition to several partial Greek manuscripts, the text has been preserved in Latin, Arabic, Ethiopian, and Slavic translations. It is possible that there was a Syrian redaction, which is currently missing. The Greek (incomplete) text has been preserved in four manuscripts: BNF, Coislin 299; BML, Plut. 9, 14; Athos Esphigmenou 58. Several manuscripts contain abridged versions of *Doctrina Iacobi*. Extracts from it have been included in a number of other sources.

The Arabic redaction has been preserved in numerous manuscripts, although they often contain only fragments of the text. They represent three redactions. The following manuscripts have been preserved, among others: CRL, Mingana christ. ar. 237; CRL, Mingana christ. ar. 238; Sinaiticus Arabicus Christianus 627; Charfé 5/20; Oxford, Balliol College 3 27; Sbath 44; Le Caire 517; Beirut, Oriental Library 617. The Ethiopian redaction exists in one manuscript only: Abbadie 51 (entitled: Sargis d'Aberga).

Slavic Translation

Until recently, it was believed that the Church Slavic translation of *Doctrina Iacobi* (**Книга гл҃емаа Іаковъ жидовинъ. пото҇ же бы҃ хр҃тїанъ. списана бы҃ Іωсифω҇ новокрещены҇ ѿ Іоу҆деи въ Ѧфрикыи пр҃ї цр҃тве҆ Ираклиев҆к. в҆ѣра и противленїе кр҃тивъшиⷭ҇ Іюдеи въ Ѧфрикїи и в Карфаген҆к**) was created in the late Middle Ages. It is known that in 1494, it was included in the *miscellanea* manuscript containing the Mosaic Pentateuch and a selection of polemical works, which is currently kept in the collections of the Russian State Library in Moscow (РГБ, 113.5, fol. 377–483). This codex was created in Novgorod the Great at the request of Joseph Volotsky (around 1440–1515), who was working at the time on the anti-heretical treaty (*Просветитель*), directed against the followers of the heterodox movement, the so-called Judaizers (*жидовствующие*), spreading in north Rus' in the late 15th century.

Doctrina Iacobi became popular in Rus' literature at the turn of the 16th century on the wave of polemics with the Novgorodian heretics. Several copies of the Church Slavic translation of this work come from this period: a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th century (РГБ, 304.I.91, fol. 41a–96d), a *miscellanea* manuscript from the beginning of the 16th century (РГБ, 304.I.772, fol. 202–335), and the 16th-century codex ГИМ, Син. 156, in which the discussed text is placed beside the works of John of Damascus (XI): *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* and *Dialectic* (fol. 190–227). A.V. Gorskij and K.I. Nevostruev noticed that in the

Church Slavic translation of *Doctrina Iacobi*, one can find serbisms, which may indicate a South Slavic provenance of the translation.

In the mid-16th century *Doctrina Iacobi* was also included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of Metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563): it was placed in the December volume, on 19.12 (ГИМ, Син. 989, fol. 414a–440a; ГИМ, Син. 177, fol. 550a–584d). Interestingly, within this compilation, the works discussed here were put right after *The Life of St. Gregentius, archbishop of the Himyarites* (*St. Gregory of Taphar*) (XIX).

Alexander I. Pereswetoff-Morath recently proposed a different, much earlier dating of the Church Slavic translation of *Doctrina Iacobi*. This researcher has pointed out that several quotes from the books of the Old Testament appearing in the text of the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by the Kiev Metropolitan Hilarion (the mid-11th century), as well as in the *Tale of Bygone Years* (beginning of the 12th century), shows considerable resemblance to analogous passages in the Slavic version of *Doctrina Iacobi*, preserved in the Rus' copies from the 15th–16th centuries. The work in question therefore must have been translated before the mid-11th century. Most likely, it was done in Bulgaria, before 1018 – Alexander I. Pereswetoff-Morath does not exclude the possibility that the translation was made during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927). Next, its fragments were included in the collection of biblical quotes, compiled in Bulgaria or Rus' before the mid-11th century, which then served as a source for Hilarion and the creators of the *Tale of Bygone Years*. However, as the researcher admits, this issue requires further in-depth study.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The interest of the author of *Doctrina Iacobi* in Islam, the conquests of Muslims and their prophet is hardly obvious. The target readers of the treaty were Byzantine Jews from Carthage, forced to take baptism in the Christian Church by decree of Heraclius (610–641). Despite this, the text is one of the earliest external accounts of Islam. It noted the

appearance of a "false prophet" among the Saracens (*Doctrina Iacobi*, V, 16). Undoubtedly, it makes a reference to Muhammad, although his name is not mentioned in the text. This may be the earliest non-Islamic reference to Muhammad.

The part of *Doctrina Iacobi* that is the most interesting for Islamic scholars is the final section of the treaty. Justus, who arrives to Carthage, says he has received a letter from his brother Abraham. He learns from him about the Saracen invasion and their killing of the Byzantine commander (a member of the imperial guard – *candidatus*; the Slavic version says that his name was Sergius). It is most likely a reference to the defeat of Sergius, the commander of the Byzantine troops in Palestine, suffered in 633. According to the author of *Doctrina Iacobi*, Jews were glad to hear about the death of the Byzantine commander. It is possible that for a moment, some of them hoped that the self-proclaimed Arab prophet could really be the Messiah. The author of the treaty makes efforts to dispel these hopes.

At the time of the Arab invasion, Abraham was in Caesarea, from where he set out for Sycamine by boat. He did not see the Saracen attack himself, but other people told him about it. They also mention the prophet who came with the Saracens. After arriving in Sycamine safely, Abraham asks a man who was well versed in the Scriptures about this prophet. He is told that Muhammad is false (πλάνος) because prophets did not come equipped with a sword and a war chariot (μετὰ ξίφους καὶ ἅρματος). Abraham continues to search for information about the Saracen prophet, inquiring among the people who have met him. They confirm the rabbi's words that there is no truth in the so-called prophet. They add that he spills human blood and claims that he has the keys to paradise (τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ παραδείσου), which is hardly believable (*Doctrina Iacobi*, V.16).

Doctrina Iacobi offers four details about the prophet:

- his prophecy began among the Saracens;
- he supported war and conquest as an integral part of his prophetic mission;

- he proclaimed the coming of the Anointed One, Christ;
- he claimed to have had the keys to paradise.

In *Doctrina Iacobi*, the image of Islam and its prophet is distorted. *Doctrina* denies the Islamic tradition, according to which the prophet was no longer alive during the conquest of Palestine (although it agrees with the traditions of some other peoples of that time). The author of *Doctrina Iacobi* had very limited knowledge of Islam, derived from observation and oral communication rather than from written texts.

Jacob compares the Byzantine Empire to the fourth beast of Daniel's prophecy by trying to incorporate the birth of Islam into the apocalyptic tradition of Judeo-Christian eschatology. Similar mechanisms are found in *Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem* by Pseudo-Athanasius and *Quaestiones et responsiones* attributed to Anastasius of Sinai (X).

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Ethiopian

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Sargis d'Aberga (Controverse judéo-chrétienne) (fin), ed. S. G r é b a u t, [in:] *PO*, vol. XIII, p. 5–109.

Slavic

Великія Минеи Четіи. Декабрь. Дни 18–23, Москва 1907, col. 1438–1542.

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VI

Sophronius of Jerusalem
Synodical Letter



(CPG 7635)
Date: 634
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: after 1219, Serbia

Sophronius was born in Damascus around 560 and died in Jerusalem on March 11, 638. He was a student of John Moschus (VII), with whom he became friends. We know most of the facts about his life from the prologue to the *Spiritual Meadow*, the work of John Moschus, which the author dedicated to him. In the works of John Moschus, he is called a sophist. He obtained a thorough education and worked as a rhetoric teacher.

Sophronius accompanied John to Egypt (around 578), Palestine and Sinai. On Sinai, they spent about ten years. After returning to Palestine, Sophronius entered the monastery of St. Theodosius near Bethlehem. Both he and John decided to leave Palestine due to the Persian invasion. They fled to Egypt and from there, they moved to Rome (614), where John Moschus died (619). Before his death, he had asked Sophronius to transport his body to Sinai, which proved impossible due to the Arab invasions, so Sophronius buried his friend in the monastery of St. Theodosius. He spent about five years there, starting from 619. In 626, he found himself in Egypt again with a group of monks. They were probably fleeing from

the Arab invasion. In 633, he was in Alexandria, where he disputed with patriarch Cyrus. A year later, he was elected the patriarch of Jerusalem (634) and he maintained this position until his death around 639.

His relationships with emperor Heraclius (610–641) and the patriarch of Constantinople were strained because of his strong opposition to monoenergism. David Olster went so far as to say that both the failures of the Byzantine army and the conflict over monoenergism pushed Sophronius to disapprove of the imperial policy so much that he questioned the identification of Romanhood with Christianity. The direct involvement of Sophronius in state and church policies was interrupted by the Muslim siege of Jerusalem. The patriarch witnessed the Arab conquests in Palestine and surrendered Jerusalem to the caliph Umar in 638. According to *The 60 Martyrs of Gaza*, he was executed at the behest of Amr ibn al-As because he had converted several Muslims to Christianity.

Sophronius was the author of numerous works that have been preserved until present day. These include 23 *Anacreontic Odes* for liturgical celebrations in classic meter, the *Synodical Letter* – a series of homilies on liturgical celebrations (seven in total), and *Encomium*, written in honor of Saints Cyrus and John. Sophronius' homilies are important for understanding Byzantine responses to Islam because of the time of their creation and the references to events unfolding at the time. On the subject of Sophronius' works, see: *Clavis Patrum Græcorum* 7635–7681.

Two redactions of the so-called *Synodical Letter* have been preserved: from Sophronius to Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, and to pope Honorius (which differs significantly from the one to Sergius). In addition, numerous abridged versions of Sophronius' writing have been preserved. The Greek text in redaction to patriarch Sergius is included in the manuscript BNF, Gr. 1115 (dated to 1276). The letter was read at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (680–681) and has been preserved in its Greek and Latin documents. The manuscripts that feature the redaction of the letter to Sergius are: BSB, Gr. 186 (dated to 1445/6); BNU, Gr. 67 (13th century); Ohrid, Gr. 84 (13th century). The manuscripts that feature the redaction of the letter to Honorius are: Leiden,

BPG 60A (13th–14th century); BML, Plut. LXXXVI-6 (11th–12th century) and BAV, Gr. 1116 (13th century). There are also: Athos Vatopedi 594; Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 281 (13th century).

Slavic Translation

A small fragment of the *Synodical Letter* of Sophronius from Jerusalem (*PG*, vol. 87.3, col. 3189C–3193D) was translated into Church Slavic in Serbia after 1219 as an integral part of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*. In the oldest preserved copy of this compilation, dated to 1262 (HAZU III c. 9), the discussed work was included in one chapter (the 62nd) along with the polemical text of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Nicephorus, directed against the iconoclasts. Sophronius' letter is on fol. 375b–377c and is entitled: **И ѥще ѡ ѥресехъ и ѡ начелниц҃ѣхъ ѥресемь ѿ съборныхъ иже вь ст҃ыхъ ѡц҃а нашего Софрония патриарха Ꙗросолимьскаго. и приложение ѿ того и до нн҃я** (incipit: **Да боудеть оубо проклеть присно и клеть**...; explicit:...**ѥсть нечьстивая и бг҃оненавистьная ѥресь**). The same text is found in later South Slavic copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, including the manuscript at the Museum of the Old Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, no. 222 (fol. 342d–344c).

The *Nomocanon of St. Sava* was adapted in Rus' in the 1270s, when the Metropolitan of Kiev, Cyril II, received a copy of this compilation from the Bulgarian despot Jacob Svetoslav (Rus' by origin, he ruled in the western Balkan Mountains by the order of the Bulgarian Tsar John Asen II). The oldest Old Rus' copy of the aforementioned collection of laws is the so-called *Riazan' Kormchaia* from 1284 (*Рязанская Кормчая* – РНБ, F.п.II.1). It includes a fragment of the *Synodical Letter* of Sophronius from Jerusalem on fol. 379c–381c. An identical text can also be found in later East Slavic copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, including РГАДА, 181.1593, fol. 565–568' – from the last thirty years of the 16th century. Interestingly, an excerpt from Sophronius' work, drawn from St. Sava's compilation, also appears on the pages of *Мазуринская*

Кормчая – a Balkan legal compilation, based on the Old Church Slavic translation of the *Nomocanon in Fifty Titles* (РГБ, 173.I.187, fol. 276–279 – from the 15th century).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The rise of Islam and the Arab invasion provided a direct context for Sophronius' two sermons; one given at Christmas on December 25th, 634 (CPG 7637), and the other at Epiphany on January 6th, 637 (?) (CPG 7653). The Saracens were also mentioned in the *Synodical Letter* to patriarch Sergius, where Sophronius was asking the Constantinopolitan patriarch to pray for their defeat and the restoration of peace (cap. 3).

Both aforementioned sermons argued that the Muslim military invasion was part of God's will. Sophronius sees the victory of Muslims as a result of God's wrath. According to him, the invasion was a form of punishment to Christians for losing their way, in particular for heresies. If they earned God's approval, they could defeat the invaders. Therefore, Christians should repent their sins to obtain the Lord's forgiveness and then observe the final destruction of the Saracens, whose success was an anomaly in history. Sophronius believed that Muslims stood outside the biblical narrative and were changing the proper course of history.

In both texts, the bishop presented the terrors of the Islamic invasion, writing about the destruction and looting, the plundering of cities, bloodshed, the demolition of churches and monasteries, damaging crops, and ridiculing the cross. The Saracens are described as vengeful, barbaric and savage people who hate God. They embody the foulness of desolation foretold by the prophets. Their leader is the devil and their subordinates are demons who detest God. The Arabs are also referenced as "pagans" (ἀδοκήτως), which raises the question of how much the patriarch knew about the birth of Islam.

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Greek

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Slavic

Zakonopravilo or the Nomocanon of Saint Sava. The Ilovica Manuscript from 1262. Photoprint reproduction, ed. M.M. P e t r o v i ć, Gornji Milanovac 1991, fol. 375b–377c (facsimile).

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VII

The Quran



Original language: Arabic
Date: c. half of the 7th century
Greek Translation: c. half of the 9th century
Slavic Translation (fragmentary): after
second half of the 9th century

Byzantine Translation of the *Quran*

The holy book of Islam was translated into Byzantine Greek most probably in mid-9th century in Constantinople, in the circle of patriarch Photius (ca. 820–891). Researchers usually assume that the translator could not have been a native speaker of either Arabic or Greek. In his work, he used a language so rife with errors and so colloquial that he offended some of his later readers, including the refined Euthymius Zigabenus (12th century, XXX). It can also be assumed that the author of the translation did not profess Islam and did not have access to Muslim exegetical texts. He most likely was a Jacobite Syrian Christian. Interestingly, there is also a controversial theory that St. Constantine-Cyril himself (Versteegh; Maksimov) was responsible for the translation. Such notion is, however, undermined by the fact that the Apostle of the Slavs spoke Greek much better than the author of the discussed relic.

The Byzantine translation of the *Quran* is regarded by experts as faithful. However, it includes more or less serious lexical errors, resulting from the misunderstanding of the original. In the Greek translation of the

Muslim holy book, a different segmentation of the text was used: it was divided into 113 Surahs, while Surah 1 (*Opening*/*Al-Fatiha*) was considered an introduction (a similar arrangement can be found in some early Arabic copies of the *Quran*).

Unfortunately, not a single manuscript with the analyzed translation has survived to our time. However, we have many quotations from it, preserved in two Byzantine works from the second half of the 9th century: the treatise of Nicetas of Byzantium and a ritual of renunciation of Islam by an anonymous author (XIX). The former, entitled *Refutation of the Teachings of Muhammad* (ca. 870 AD), contains a comprehensive discussion of the content of the *Quran*, supported by numerous, often very detailed and extensive quotations from the Greek translation of the holy book of Islam.

The *Quran* and its reminiscences in Church Slavic literature

Most likely, there has never been a complete translation of the *Quran* into the (Old) Church Slavic language. Not a single medieval manuscript from the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*, containing at least a fragment of this work has survived to this day. Moreover, source material from the era in question provides no information that would justify a conclusion that the translation of the Muslim holy book into the language of liturgy and literature of Orthodox Slavs has ever been done. It can be assumed that translations of the full text of the *Quran* into Slavic languages began to appear only in the early modern era.

However, quotations from the *Quran* can be found in many (Old) Church Slavic monuments. Most of them are translated from Byzantine Greek and Latin. In the rite of renunciation of Islam, 13 fragments of the Book are invoked; in the treatise by Euthymius Zigabenus (12th century) titled *Panoplia dogmatica* – as many as 51 (including 38 passages preserved in the Slavic version); in the work by John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*

(XI) – 9; in the *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen* (XIII) – 2; in the currently known fragment of the polemical text of Michael Syncellus (XII) – 2; in the chronicle by George the Monk (Hamartolus, XX) – 2; in the Slavic version of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* by Riccoldo da Monte Croce (XXXI) – 33; in four *Orations Against Muhammad* by emperor John Cantacuzene (XXXIV) – 26.

The *Quran* is also quoted in texts written in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. Among them, we should list: *The Life of St. Constantine-Cyril* (XXI – 2), *Troitsky Chronograph* (2), the second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* (2), the *Rogozhski Chronograph* (2), the *Rus' Chronograph of 1512* in the mid-sixteenth century Western-Russian version (2), the *Resurrection Chronicle* (1), the *Illuminated Chronicle of Ivan the Terrible* (2), the *Nikon Chronicle* (19), and the *Journey Beyond Three Seas* by Afanasy Nikitin (XXXVII – 3). Taking into account the fact that many of the Quranic fragments appear on the pages of several interdependent relics, it can be assumed that in the medieval Slavic tradition only about 2% of the text of the holy book of Islam was known. In the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*, the work in question was not included in the intellectual circulation to the same extent as in Byzantium or Western Europe. However, the *Quran* was not completely unknown to Orthodox Slavs: they were aware of the existence of the Muslim holy book, they quoted it most often *via* Byzantine authors, on occasion even trying to cite its fragments in the Arabic original (the case of Afanasy Nikitin).

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VIII

The Martyrdom of St. Arethas



(BHG 166)
Author: unknown
Date: 7th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: 10th–12th century, Bulgaria

Arethas (ar. Harith) was the leader of the Christian community in Najran (Nagran) in the first quarter of the 6th century. He was killed during the persecution initiated in this city by Yusuf Dhu Nuwas, the Jewish ruler of the Himyarites (Homeritae). Its peak was the massacre of the residents of Najran around 523–524.

The Himyarites were subjected to the rulers of Ethiopia. The first Ethiopian intervention on the peninsula took place in 518 or 519, as a result of which a Christian ruler, Madikarib Yafur, was imposed on them. Jewish circles reacted with a rebellion that brought Yusuf Dhu Nuwas to power, which led to the severance of contacts with Byzantium, the massacre of Ethiopian troops in Zafar, and finally, to the persecution in Najran. Next, Dhu Nuwas wrote a letter to the Lakhmid king, Al-Mundhir III ibn al-Nu'man of Al-Hira, and king Kavadh I of Persia, informing them of his deed and encouraging them to treat Christians under their domination in a similar way. This letter arrived at Al-Mundhir's in January 519, when he was receiving a mission from Constantinople, seeking to make peace between the Roman Empire and Al-Hira. He disclosed the contents of the letter to the Roman ambassadors who were petrified.

News of the slaughter spread quickly throughout the Roman and Persian states, and refugees from Najran even reached the court of the Roman emperor Justin I (518–527), begging him to avenge the martyrs. The first to react was the Christian ruler of Ethiopia, Kaleb (Ella Atsbeha or Ella Asbeha, Elesboas, Ελεσβόάς), who gathered an army and fleet, went to Arabia and defeated Yusuf.

The above-mentioned events were described by the author of the *Martyrium Arethae* (*Acta S. Arethae*, *Martyrium S. Arethae*), placing them in the 5th year of the reign of emperor Justin I. This is not the only source describing the actions of Dhu Nuwas. We know them from the two letters of Symeon of Beth Arsham (there was another one but it has been lost) and from the *Book of the Himyarites*, published by Axel Moberg in 1924. The first letter of Symeon, published by Ignazio Guidi, describes in detail the persecution of Christians in Najran. The second, discovered by I. Shahīd, who ascribed it to Symeon (in this case, the authorship is disputed), contains additional information. Furthermore, some of the events described in the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* can be found in the *History of the Church* by John of Ephesus, the *Life of St. Gregentius* (XXII – published by Berger), in the *Chronique de Séert*, the Syrian *Zuqnîn Chronicle*, the chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, in Michael the Syrian's work, and in the 14th–century Ethiopian *Kebra Nagast*. The figure of Dhu Nuwas is mentioned both by Byzantine sources (Philostorgius and Procopius) and Arabic ones (Ibn Hisham, Ibn Ishaq).

As M. Detoraki has shown, for the author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, the primary source was the first letter of Symeon of Beth Arsham. He also drew from a Syrian anti-Chalcedonian source, and was inspired by the Scriptures, in particular, the *Book of the Maccabees*. However, the researcher concluded that the *Book of the Himyarites* was not a direct source for the author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*. The author of the text remains unknown, although some researchers point to Sergius of Resafa or Nonnus, a Byzantine deputy to the Arabs. Regarding the author's background, certain theses suggest that he came from Byzantine merchants from Adulis or travelers.

The *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* has been preserved in two Greek redactions. The older one, created in the 7th century at the latest, was found by Michel Lequien (*Oriens Christianus*, II, Paris 1740, p. 369, 428). The second, corrected by Symeon Metaphrast, comes from the 10th century. *Martyrium sancti Arethae* is also known in the Ethiopian version (in the Ge'ez language) and Arabic one.

The text of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* has been preserved in 35 manuscripts, seven of which are very fragmentary. The oldest of them are: BNF, Gr. 1540 (9th–11th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 525 (9th century – no beginning of the text); BAV, Palat. Gr. 325 (10th century); BAV, Gr. 797 (9th–11th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 497 (10th–11th century); Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 30 (10th–11th century); BA, D 92 sup. (Martini-Bassi 259) (10th–11th century). A large number of the manuscripts come from the 11th century, including: BNF, Gr. 1537; BNF, Gr. 1454; Sinaiticus Graecus 497; РНБ, 906.213; Athos Philotheou 9; ÖNB, Gr. 114; BAV, Palat. Gr. 17. Several come from the 12th century, e.g. NLG, 2096; BAV, Palat. Gr. 4. The full list of preserved manuscripts is provided by M. Detoraki (*Le martyre de saint Aréthas et de ses compagnons*, p. 103–120). The researcher has divided the manuscripts into five groups.

Slavic Translation

The *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, also known in the literature of the subject as the 'comprehensive life', was translated into the Old Church Slavic language early, certainly before the 12th century. Diana Atanasova claims that this translation could have already been made in the 10th century in Bulgaria. Its basis was the Greek version, largely consistent with the BHG 166 variant, published by M. Detoraki. The discussed work spread throughout the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area within two types of compilations: the Menaion Readers (*Четьи-Минеи*) and *miscellanea* manuscripts. Eleven copies are currently known from the South Slavic lands, representing two different versions of the text (usually, the abridgments and editorial interferences were applied to the final parts of the work). Redaction A has been

preserved primarily in the so-called *Stanislav Menaion Reader* (НБКМ, 1039), written around 1353–1361 near Skopje (fol. 274b–284d, no ending, the text of the biography breaks at 37.15 – according to M. Detoraki's edition), as well as in: the Menaion Reader from the Visoki Dečani Monastery from the mid-14th century (NBS, Деч. 94, fol. 303–319 – incomplete); the Menaion Reader from the last quarter of the 14th century (HAZU, III.c.24, fol. 156'–162' – incomplete); the Menaion Reader from the 17th century (NBS, Pc 59, fol. 259'–266); the Menaion Reader from the Hilandar Monastery from 1624 (№ 440, fol. 253'–268'). Redaction B (complete) is found in: the Menaion Reader from the Hilandar Monastery from 1320–1330 (№ 644, fol. 26–43); the Menaion Reader from the monastery in Cetinje from the end of the 14th century (Цет. 20, fol. 161–180'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the Zograf Monastery, dated to the 14th century (Зогр. 19, fol. 182'–188); Vladislav the Grammarian's codex from 1469 (HAZU, III.a.47, fol. 64–73'), and in a *miscellanea* manuscript from the Monastery of Rila from 1483 (PM 4/5, fol. 510–527').

In Rus', the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* also became popular within the Menaion Readers and *miscellanea* manuscripts. The following copies of East Slavic provenance may be indicated: the Menaion Reader from the last quarter of the 15th century (РГБ, 113.591, fol. 258–272); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th century (РГБ, 304.I.755, fol. 347'–357'); the Menaion Reader from the 16th century (ГИМ, Син. 170, fol. 299'–313'); the Menaion Reader from the third quarter of the 16th century (РГБ, 173.1.89, fol. 467'– 481'), and the so-called *Cvetnik* from the 16th century (РГБ, 299.65, fol. 166'–178').

The discussed work can also be found in the Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of the metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563) – a monumental collection of the lives of saints and other texts intended for personal reading, arranged according to the order of the liturgical year of the Eastern Church and collected in twelve volumes. The *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* is featured in the October volume, dated to 24.10: РНБ, 728.1318, fol. 406c–409d; ГИМ, Син. 987, fol. 785b–792d; ГИМ, Син. 175, fol. 1396a–1403b. A common feature of the Rus' copies is

the extensive *lacuna* in the final part of the work, including the fragment from 21.1 to 37.7 (according to M. Detoraki's edition) and containing information, such as the actions of the Lakhmids' ruler, al-Mundhir III.

In the Slavic tradition, there are also known three prologue lives (textologically dependent on the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*): Arethas', Syncletica's of Najran, and the Ethiopian king's of Axum named Kaleb (Ελεσβόάς, **Елизвои**). The prologue life of St. Arethas was translated into Church Slavic twice: in the first half of the 12th century in Rus' (the oldest preserved copy: РНБ, 728.1324 from the turn of the 13th century), and in the first half of the 14th century in the Serbian monastery on Mount Athos. Both variants were included in the Great Menaion Reader, on 24.10, as was the prologue life of St. Syncletica and St. Kaleb (excerpted from the text of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* in the second half of the 12th century in Rus').

It is also worth mentioning that St. Arethas enjoyed considerable popularity in Rus'. His name was recorded in the menology, attached to the Novgorodian *Ostromir Gospels* from 1056–1057. Furthermore, the Officium dedicated to this martyr is found on the pages of the manuscript from 1096 (РГАДА, Тип. 89). The anonymous author of the *Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon* claims that the relics of St. Arethas were gifted to the Pechersk Monastery in 1073 by the Byzantine empress. Interestingly, the creator of *The Tale of the Rout of Mamai* references Arab martyrs of Najran, comparing them to the Rus' warriors who were ready to give their lives in the battle with the Tatars at the Kulikovo Field in 1380.

The Arabs

The protagonists of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* are various groups of Arabs. Primarily, they are the Himyarites (Homeritae) living in the southern Arabian Peninsula, in a country identified by the author as the land of Saba. It should be emphasized, however, that the author of the *Martyrdom* does not refer to them by the names usually used for this

ethnos. They are neither Saracens nor Arabs nor Ishmaelites. This is due to the fact that only religious identification matters to him: Christians *versus* Jews.

1. Dhu Nuwas – the follower of Judaism – and his subordinates

For the author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, these are radically negative figures. According to him, they practice idolatry, do not fear God and worship idols, only pretending to follow Judaism. Their leader, Yusuf Dhu Nuwas, is deceitful. He breaks the word given to the inhabitants of Najran that he will spare them if they capitulate without a fight. He is responsible for the persecution; he is the one who gives orders: to burn 427 people at the stake (priests, deacons, hermits, virgins dedicated to God), to imprison 4,252 Christians (men and women of different ages) who were faced with the choice to convert to Judaism or die; and finally, he is the one who orders subsequent executions. In the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, we find information about the decapitation of groups of women, Arethas and his 340 companions, a widow and her two daughters, and about the repressions of Christians who honored Arethas, including a certain woman and her son.

2. Arethas – the follower of Christianity – and numerous city residents

They are located at the opposite end of the spectrum. They are devoted to Christianity and are ready to give their lives for their faith. The nature of the source means that considerable attention was paid to their leader, Arethas, son of Khaneph. He is an old (95-year-old), gray-haired man, a great-grandfather who had taken part in wars. In his lifetime, he was the master of the whole city and the surrounding area. He wields some influence in Najran, but not so great that he would be listened to when he recommended fighting instead of opening the gates to Dhu Nuwas. During the persecution, he bravely opposed the demands of Dhu Nuwas and set an example for the other residents of Najran.

A separate fragment was devoted to the martyrdom of the widow, a significant figure in the city, and her two daughters. In the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas*, she remains unnamed, however, according to Symeon of Beth Asham, it was Doma, Azmenia's daughter. In the Arabic version, she is named Dahdar, daughter of Arma. In the Church Slavic variant, she is called Syncletica – the Slavic translator probably mistakenly understood her function to be her name. She had a huge fortune (more than 10,000 gold and silver coins). She was brought to Dhu Nuwas and had to stand by him while other Christians were killed. Later, the women were kept under guard. The king thought he would convince the widow to save herself, her daughters and her property by blaspheming the Son of God. Instead, she and her daughters regretted not sharing the fate of other women. Three days later, Dhu Nuwas sent a messenger who gave them a choice – either they renounce Christ or they die a terrible death. When they were brought before the king, he urged her to consider her origin, dignity and wealth as well as her (and her daughters') beauty, and save herself. He offered her a place in his palace, recognizing that she was faithful to her husband, although she had over 300 men who managed her property (cap. 10). The king then ordered that her head be uncovered and she stand before the entire army. The holy woman turned and saw a crowd of women lamenting and pounding their chests. She turned to them announcing that she and her daughters would remain loyal to their faith (cap. 12). When the younger daughter spat in the king's face, the royal guards beheaded both daughters. The king ordered their blood to be collected and brought to the mother who took a drink from it. Then she was beheaded at the order of the king (cap. 14).

3. Alamundaros (al-Mundhir III) and Lakhmids – identified unambiguously as Saracens

Dhu Nuwas wanted to convince other rulers to persecute Christians. He sent deputies to the ruler of Saracens, Alamundaros (Al-Mundhir III, the Lakhmid king, 503–554) and to the king of the Persians. He tried

to bribe Al-Mundhir. At the Lakhmids', Dhu Nuwas' deputies met with the Byzantine message who came to negotiate peace. Thanks to this, the news of what happened in Najran reached Constantinople. Through Timothy, the bishop of Alexandria, the emperor made an effort to persuade Elesboas (Kaleb), the ruler of Ethiopia, to prepare the army for the attack and destroy the godless king.

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IX

The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius



Date: c. 690–692
Original language: Syriac
Greek Translation: mid-7th or early 8th century
1st Slavic Translation: late 9th century / early 10th century, Bulgaria
2nd Slavic Translation: 10th century, Bulgaria
3rd Slavic Translation: first half of the 14th century, Bulgaria
Slavic abbreviated redaction: second half of the 11th century, Bulgaria
Slavic interpolated redaction: 15th century, Rus' (?)
Sermon on the Ishmaelites of the Last Times (Slavic paraphrase): second half of the 15th century, Balkans
Old Czech Translation: 16th century, Bohemia
Old Polish Translation: 1562–1580, Poland

There are few texts that have been inscribed in the history of world literature as deeply as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. The work enjoyed immense popularity. Early, in the mid-7th or early 8th century, it was translated into Greek, soon afterward into Latin and then into other languages. It was known under various titles: *Apocalypse*, *Revelatio*, *Sermo*, *Revelation*. The Syrian original is entitled: *Mēmrā ʿal yubbālā*

d-malkē w-ʿal ḥ arat zabnā (*Homily on the Succession of Kings and on the End of Time*).

The anonymous author of the *Apocalypse* signed it with the name of St. Methodius. In the Syrian text, it is Methodius of Olympus and, according to the Greek translation, his namesake, bishop of Patara. In either case, Methodius is thought to have been a martyr who lived at the beginning of the 4th century. According to the Syrian version, he supposedly experienced a revelation on Mount Senegar, identified with Mount Singara.

In fact, the text was probably written at the end of the 7th century, around 690–692. Pseudo-Methodius mentioned the attack of the Arab fleet on Constantinople. Since the first fleet was built by the Arabs under caliph Uthman (ʻUthmān ibn ʻAffān; 644–656), the *Apocalypse* must have been written after he had taken power. Other data allows for more precise dating. The Syrian text lacks information about the civil war (656–661) between the supporters of Ali (ʻAlī ibn Abī Tālib) and Muawiya (Muāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān). Furthermore, no mention was made of the peace treaty which Muawiya secured in 659 with the Byzantine emperor Constans II (641–668).

Its author lived under Arab rule. He was probably a clergyman, but the issue of his religion remains open (he could have come from the Jacobite, Chalcedon or Melkite branch of Christianity).

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is a small, apocryphal work consisting of 14 chapters, originally written in Syriac. Its author was influenced by *Daniel's Revelation* and *Apocalypse*. He also used a number of other texts: the *Cave of Treasures* attributed to Ephrem the Syrian, the Greek *Julian Romance*, Syrian versions of the legends about Alexander the Great, the Bible and its Syrian exegesis, the eschatological tradition operating in Syria in the 7th century and other texts that are difficult to identify.

Research on the *Apocalypse* began in the second half of the 19th century. At that time, however, the researchers did not have access to the original Syrian text. Until 1930, they relied heavily on its Greek, Latin and Slavic translations. In 1897, the publisher of the Greek text, the Russian philologist V.M. Istrin, identified four Greek redactions, the last three of which

were based on the first, and used at least fourteen of the preserved Greek manuscripts for his edition.

While Istrin was analyzing the Greek redactions, the German medievalist Ernst Sackur studied the oldest Latin translations of the *Apocalypse*. Sackur, unaware of Istrin's work that was printed a year earlier, published a critical edition of the oldest form of the Latin text, based on four manuscripts from the 7th and 8th centuries. Sackur provided his edition with a very strong introduction and extensive footnotes, in which he answered some of the questions posed by Istrin. He even considered the possibility that the *Apocalypse* was written in Syrian rather than Greek, but ultimately, he rejected it. He believed that its author was a Syrian Christian.

The Syrian manuscript did not surface until 1931, although the first person to draw attention to the Syrian text of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* was J.S. Assemani, who linked the work included in the manuscript of BAV, Syr. 58, with the text attributed to Methodius, featured in the catalog of Syriac literature Abdīso bar Brīkā, published by him. The researcher who rediscovered BAV, Syr. 58 and determined that it was the Syrian version of the *Revelatio*, was the Hungarian scholar Michael Kmosko. Thanks to him, we know that the original *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* was written in Syrian (Syriac) and its author was from Mesopotamia, a former state of the Sassanids.

The *Apocalypse* is not only a prophecy, but also an account of the world history from Adam and Eve to its end. It contains historiographic and geographical data as well as an apocalyptic prophecy. The text consists of a historical and prophetic part. The first, covering chapters 1 to 10, briefly discusses the history of the world from the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise to the Arab conquest in the 7th century. Apocryphal elements appear in the biblical part. By introducing characters such as Gog and Magog, known from other Christian eschatological works, Pseudo-Methodius tries to legitimize himself as the father of the Church from the 4th century. The apocalyptic part begins with the announcement of the end of the Persian kingdom and the arrival of the sons of Ishmael from the Yathrib Desert who gather in a place called Gev'ath Râmthâ. Their dominance will only be curbed by the ruler of the Byzantine Empire.

The Syrian version has been preserved only in several manuscripts. The most important among them comes from the 16th century and was included in BAV, Syr. 58 (fol. 118–136, dates to 1584–1586; the portion, in which one finds the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, dates to 1584). The remaining Syrian manuscripts: Yale's Beineke Library, Syr. 10 (1224/5); Mardin orth. 368 (dated to 1365); Mardin orth. A; Mardin orth. 891.

There are nearly 100 Greek manuscripts but most are late texts from the post-Byzantine period. The most important ones are: BAV, Gr. 1700, fol. 117'–157 (dated to 1332–1333); Bod. Laud Gr. 27, fol. 8–24 (15th century); BAV, Gr. Pii.II.11, fol. 257'–258; 244–251, 259–263 (15th century); ÖNB, med. 23, fol. 81'–95 (16th century).

The oldest known manuscript of Latin version is dated to the year 727 (BBB, Bibliotheca Bongarsiana 611, fol. 101'–115' – the oldest manuscript of this apocalypse in any language). The Latin translation was written by Peter the Monk, about whom we know nothing, aside from his name. He was convinced that the prophecy was being fulfilled during his lifetime. He entitled his translation *Sancti Methodii episcopi Paterensis Sermo de regnum gentium et in novissimis temporibus certa demonstratio*. Other Latin manuscripts worth mentioning: BNF, Lat. 13348, fol. 93–110 (8th century); St Gallen 225 (dated 760–797); St Gallen 238; BAV, Barb. Lat. 671 (formerly XIV.44) (8th century); Zurich Central Library, C65; Carlsruhe, Aug. perg. 254; BSB, clm 18525b (Tegernsee 525b).

The history of the Latin translation of Pseudo-Methodius' work still poses a number of problems and until further research is undertaken, the relationship between these variants remains unclear. Relatively early, the Latin translation was split into two redactions, followed by others. The texts of the second and third redactions were not related to the Greek text. They are shortened and redrafted versions of the first redaction. *Alexander's Legend* was deleted from the second Latin redaction (in Germany, perhaps around the year 793). Ambrosius Autpert of S. Vincenzo also rejected it between 758 and 767 as referring to the earthly rather than spiritual truth. In the third redaction (created at

the Lake Constance around the year 800), *Alexander's Legend* was kept and an explanation of the reference to Gog and Magog was added.

After the invention of printing, the work of Pseudo-Methodius was published in Cologne in 1475. Next, it was printed by Johann Froschauer in Augsburg in 1496. A commentary by Wolfgang Aytinger entitled *Tractatus super Methodium* was added to this edition. The text itself, under the title *De revelatione facta ab angelo beato Methodio in carcere detento*, with Aytinger's commentary and Sebastian Brant's introduction was published by Michael Furter in 1498. From then on, it spread throughout Europe, in numerous editions, sometimes illustrated. Subsequent editions were published in 1504 and 1516.

Slavic Translations

The first Old Church Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse* was written quite early. It was probably done in Bulgaria during the reign of Symeon I the Great (893–927), i.e. at the end of the 9th century, or in the first three decades of the 10th century. It was based on the so-called 'first Byzantine (Greek) redaction', created at the beginning of the 8th century. The oldest Slavic translation should be associated with the group of intellectuals from Preslav. Some sources even go as far as to suggest that the text by Pseudo-Methodius was translated by someone from the milieu of John the Exarch, one of the most eminent Old-Bulgarian writers.

The Old Bulgarian translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* quickly became known in Serbian, Rus', and even Moldavian literature. This is evidenced by surviving manuscripts that contain the text of the work in question. The manuscript from the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos (№ 382/453, former № 24), dating back to the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century, is usually considered the oldest and most representative of them. It represents the Serbian redaction of the Old Church Slavic language, while retaining certain linguistic features of the Bulgarian protograph. There are also several subsequent South and East Slavic copies:

- SBB, Vuk Karadjić Collection, № 54 (48) (early 14th century);
- ГИМ, Син. 591 (15th to 16th centuries);
- National Archives of Romania in Bucharest, № 741 (turn of the 15th and 16th centuries);
- NBS 40 (third quarter of the 16th century);
- NBS 149 (17th century);
- ИРЛИ РАН, Богосл. 64 (19th century).

The first Old Church Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is usually referred to by researchers as 'free'. Its author focused on conveying the general meaning of the original, paying less attention to finding exact equivalents of individual Greek words in the Old Church Slavic language. On the other hand, regarding the factual aspects, the analyzed translation is characterized by relative faithfulness to the first Byzantine redaction. A comparison of the content of the text found in the manuscript № 382/453 with the Greek version allows, however, to identify several interesting innovations, reflecting the worldview of the Bulgarian translator from the beginning of the 10th century. And so, not much attention is paid to the ethnicity of the Ishmaelites. While the first of the two passages of the work in which the ethnonym 'Arabs' (τῶν Αρραβων) appears is translated faithfully (**ꙗравь**), the other, however, is omitted. The translator quite consistently states that the area from which the sons of Ishmael came is the Yathrib desert (**ꙇєвьтьрывь; вь поустиноу ꙇєфривь; ѿ поустыню ꙇєтрива**). Only at one point in the narrative, for reasons unknown to us, does Yathrib become a mountain. Several changes sneaked into the descriptions of the natural environment in which the Arabs–Ishmaelites lived, as well as their customs.

The question of the second translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* into the Old Church Slavic, independent of the one discussed above, is rather poorly examined and has long failed to attract the interest of researchers. It was not until the 1970s that Pirinka Penkova pointed out that in two late Rus' manuscripts (ГИМ, Син. 154, a copy of the so-called *Rus' Chronograph from 1512* and the Copenhagen Royal Library codex 147, containing the text of the historiographical compilation from 1676) a translation of the work attributed to the bishop of Patara can be found, different from that in the codex from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos (№ 382/453). Analyzing its linguistic features, Francis J. Thomson, Maria Yovcheva and Lora Tasseva came to the conclusion that this translation was based on the oldest variant of the first Greek redaction (without later interpolations), was made in Bulgaria, most probably under the reign of tsar Peter I (927–969), and can be associated with the Preslav circle. Very soon this work, like the first Slavic translation, had to find its way to Rus' – in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, the oldest Kiev historiographical text, compiled in the form that has survived to our days in the first decades of the 12th century, there are two fragments under the date of AM 6604 (AD 1096), which paraphrase the text of the *Apocalypse*, manifesting a number of similarities with both the first and the second translation.

The author of the second translation tried to convey the message to his readers as close to the original as possible. Not knowing about the existence of the Syrian text, he chose the earliest Greek version available to him for translation and rendered it as accurately as he could. The effects of his efforts can be seen in many places in the translation. The area from which Ishmaelites came is consistently referred to as the Yathrib desert (**отъ пустыня Ѳтривскиѧ**).

In the first half of the 14th century, another Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* was written in Bulgaria. According to some researchers, the origins and dissemination of this text should be associated with the then increasing pressure of the Ottoman Turks on the Balkans and the consequent revival of eschatological sentiment among

the South-Slavic population. Most probably, the translation was done in the then capital city of Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnovo, in the *milieu* of the local school of writing. It was based on the first Byzantine redaction. It has survived until our times in several copies:

- ГИМ, Син. 38 (the so-called *Priest Philip's Codex*, made for the Bulgarian tsar John Alexander in 1344/5);
- ГИМ, Син. 682 (Rus' manuscript, 15th century);
- Serbian manuscript of the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos, № 179 (16th century);
- РГБ, 304.I.770 (beginning of the 16th century).
- There are also several later Russian copies (17th to 19th centuries).

As Francis J. Thomson points out, the third Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is characterized by remarkable faithfulness to the Greek text on which it was based. Thus, Yathrib is consistently referred to as a desert (**до пустыня Ефрїевьскыѧ**). In keeping with the well-established style of the time, the 14th-century Bulgarian translator also retained many Greek terms in the original form (e.g. ὄναγρος – **онагръ**), without attempting to find a Slavic equivalent for them. Interestingly, like the authors of previous translations, he had some problems with determining the ethnicity of the Ishmaelites. Although passage 13.15 is translated quite faithfully, in section 7.1 he replaced Arabs (τῶν Αρράβων) with Avars (**Яварми**), probably based on the similarity of the pronunciation of the two ethnonyms.

The most important innovation of the 14th-century translator is the division of the final parts of the narrative into paragraphs and assigning them titles. One of them is *Concerning the Imprisoned Tartars* (**О затворенныихъ тартарохъ**) and it can be assumed that the Bulgarian author

identified unclean peoples, confined – according to Pseudo-Methodius – in the north by Alexander the Great, with Tatars/Mongols.

Medieval Slavs, having included the work attributed to the bishop of Patara into their own historical and eschatological discourse, made creative use of it, often modifying its content and adapting it to current realities. An interesting example of such an approach is the original Old Bulgarian abridged redaction, preserved in the so-called *Priest Dragol's Codex* (NBS 651/632), a Serbian manuscript from the middle of the 13th century. It was written at a time when there was no independent Bulgarian state and the areas that once formed part of it had been under the Byzantine rule from 1018. It was most probably compiled in the second half of the 11th century, in a period that was difficult for Bulgarians after the fall of the uprising of Peter Delyan (1041), when the empire's increased fiscal pressure was accompanied by invasions of steppe peoples (Pechenegs and Cumans/Polovcians) on Bulgarian lands.

There is no doubt that the Old Bulgarian abbreviated redaction is based on the oldest Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse*. The version of the work preserved on the pages of *Priest Dragol's Codex* is very similar to the text found in the manuscript of the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos (№ 382/453). However, this work differs significantly from its original version. Its author made significant abbreviations in the text of the *Apocalypse*, dispensing with those narratives which, in his opinion, were out of date or not necessary for any other reason. Thus, the contents of the first Slavic translation are quoted, albeit with abbreviations and paraphrases, from paragraph 10.6, where the invasion of the Christian lands by the Ishmaelites is recounted. Interestingly, the issue of their ethnicity is completely diluted. There is no mention that they are Arabs. It is worth noting that in the description of the oppression to which Christians were subjected under the rule of the 'sons of Ishmael', was included an extensive interpolation on the situation of the Bulgarian people under the rule of Byzantines.

The most interesting and at the same time the most difficult to interpret Slavic version of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* is probably its

so-called 'interpolated redaction'. For more than 120 years, this text has been the subject of discussion among specialists, and many issues related to the circumstances of its compilation, date, content and source of inspiration for its individual parts, are still waiting to be resolved. There is probably one thing that raises no doubts: the interpolated redaction is an original work of the literature of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, which does not have a direct original in the Byzantine literature. However, as regards the time and place of the work's writing, Russian and Bulgarian scholars disagree. The former, following V. Istrin, assume that the text is an Old Rus' source, written in the 15th century. Bulgarian palaeoslavists, on the other hand, allow for the possibility that the text may be dated much earlier, sometimes locating it even in the 11th century. They suggest that the 'interpolated redaction' is a work of South-Slavic provenance.

Most probably, the basis for the compilation was the oldest translation of the work of Pseudo-Methodius into the Old Church Slavic. The Slavic author, however, approached the material he had at his disposal very creatively, introducing far-reaching interventions into it: abbreviations, interpolations, changes in the arrangement of the content. These interpolations, to which the redaction owes its name, are extensive, supplementing the message of the *Apocalypse* with many new elements, derived from other Byzantine works of an eschatological character, known in Slavic translation, such as the homily of Ephrem the Syrian on Parusia, *Apocalypse of Daniel* (XVII), *Life of St. Andrew Salos* (XXIV), *Apocalypses Johannes prima et tertia*.

The interpolated redaction has been preserved in several dozen (mainly Russian) copies, the oldest of which can be traced back to the beginning of the 16th century. Here are the most important of them: BOZ 92 (early 16th century); РГБ, 304.I.769 (early 16th century); РГАДА, 341/721 (16th–17th centuries). The discussed text also appears on the pages of many later Russian manuscripts (17th–19th centuries). This phenomenon can be attributed to the popularity of the *Apocalypse* among the Old Believers. In many *miscellanea* manuscripts we can also find fragments of the analyzed work. Moreover, Pirinka Penkova is of the opinion that the text

of the interpolated redaction (or of the related eschatological compilation) is in both manuscripts (ГИМ, Син. 154 and the Copenhagen Royal Library Codex 147 of 1676), containing the second translation of the work of Pseudo-Methodius into Old Church Slavic.

The Slavic interpolated redaction contains a text variant that is very far removed from the original version. Historical and narrative parts containing reminiscences of the Byzantine Empire's struggle with Persians and Arabs were removed or very abbreviated. Of the passages concerning the Ishmaelites, only passage 5.2–3, containing a description of their harsh life in the Yathrib desert, is relatively faithfully quote. Interestingly, in the interpolated redaction the ethnonym 'Arabs' is not used even once. There are also no other proper names that would make it possible to identify the people (or groups) with whom the author of the work in question associated the Ishmaelites. One can get the impression, however, that the threat from invaders of different faith was very much real for him. In those parts of the text that were borrowed by the Slavic author from other eschatological works and woven into the narrative of Pseudo-Methodius, a genuine fear of the Ishmaelites is evident, as well as the awareness of their military strength. For example, the text mentions that they would conquer the whole world and reach the walls of Rome, which they would besiege three times. The last assault would end with their victory. Although the name of Constantinople is not mentioned in the text, we may get the impression that the author of the interpolated redaction prophesies that the aggressors would manage to break through its gates, enter the city walls and reach the church of Hagia Sophia. However, God would save the Christians gathered inside through his angel: tsar Michael, who came from Rome – the literature on the subject points to a number of different monarchs, from the Bulgarian prince Boris-Michael (852–889) to the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (1261–1282). This ruler, whose character is an obvious expansion of the theme of the anonymous Byzantine emperor, who defeated the Ishmaelites in the original version of the work, expels the invaders, recovers the Holy Land for Christians, restores the clergy, rebuilds many cities and churches, re-establishes passages to

the roads leading to Jerusalem and India, and also ensures the empire the last 30 years of peace and prosperity before the advent of the Antichrist and the end of the world.

Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova noted that at the end of the 15th century another paraphrase of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* was written in the Balkans, entitled: *Sermon on the Ishmaelites of the Last Times*. It has probably survived until our times in only one manuscript of Bulgarian provenance, dating back to the 17th century, currently kept in the collection of the 'SS. Cyril and Methodius' National Library in Sofia (НБКМ 1051). It can be assumed that the author of the book based it on the oldest Old Church Slavic translation of the work attributed to the bishop of Patara. The text of the НБКМ 1051 manuscript is similar to the historical version in the manuscript of the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos (№ 382/453). The Slavic author made significant abbreviations in the translation of the *Apocalypse*, preserving first of all the fragments in which the Ishmaelites appear. There is no doubt that the author of the paraphrase in question associated the 'sons of Ishmael' described by Pseudo-Methodius unequivocally with the Ottoman Turks, who at that time were conquering subsequent territories in the Balkans, at the expense of the Byzantine Empire and the South-Slavic states. This paraphrase dates back to the period between 1453 and the end of the 15th century.

References, borrowings and quotations from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* can be found in many original literary works, written in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* in the Middle Ages. One of them is the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* (*Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*), an old-Bulgarian compilation text written during the Byzantine rule in Bulgaria (in the second half of the 11th century or in the 12th century). The work of Pseudo-Methodius was probably also a source of inspiration for the Serbian monk Isaiah, who in 1371 completed the work on the Old Church Slavic translation of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite at Mount Athos and decided to supplement his manuscript with a short description of the dramatic events that took place in the Balkans during that period, that is, the injustices suffered by the local population at the hands of the Ottoman

Turks following the defeat of the South-Slavic army coalition in the battle on the Maritsa River.

Another noteworthy phenomenon is the popularity of the work attributed to bishop of Patara among the authors of Old Rus' historiographic texts (the so-called *letopises*). Two quite extensive references to the *Apocalypse* can be found in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (XXIX), the oldest Kiev *letopis* compiled at the beginning of the 12th century. Both fragments are dated under AM 6604 (AD 1096) and have already been the subject of a comprehensive analysis of Alexei A. Shakhmatov. A much less known relic of medieval Rus' historiography is the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, which is probably the oldest existing historiographical work, created in an intellectual *milieu* of Novgorod the Great. The older redaction of the said text is preserved in only one manuscript, the so-called 'Synodal' manuscript from the 13th–14th centuries (ГИМ, Син. 786), covering the events from 1016 until 1352. In this work, under the annual date AM 6732 (AD 1223/1224) we find a richly detailed description of the first Mongolian invasion of Rus' and the Battle of the Kalka River. The author of the *letopis* also attempted to explain to his readers who the invaders were and why God allowed them to bring such destruction to Christian lands. His narrative clearly resonates with the tone of the vision of Pseudo-Methodius, whose authority the Old Rus' artist evokes directly. A similar narrative, perhaps borrowed from the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, can be found on the pages of several later Rus' historiographic works (i.a. the *Laurentian Codex* from 1377). The common feature of the sources presented here is the pursuit of a specific modernization of the message of Pseudo-Methodius, including his vision into the description of events taking place in Rus' between the 11th and 13th century.

The translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* into Czech had to be produced in the 16th century at the latest. It was published in 1571 in Prague, in a publishing house owned by Jiří starší Melantrich of Aventýn. The edition is entitled: *Knjžka Swatého Methudya prawého Mučedlnijka Božijho kterýž byl nayprwé w Olimpiadě a potom w Týru w těch dwau Slawných Městech Biskupem*. The Czech translation was made from Latin and was probably based on the first Latin redaction. We do not know

who the author of the translation was. On the pages of this old print we can find a dedication, which shows that the publication of the work of Pseudo-Methodius in the Czech translation was initiated by Jakub Sel, a burgher and mayor of the town of Hradec on the Elbe (Hradec Králové). The translation was made on the basis of one of the earlier editions of the Latin text, perhaps from 1504 or 1515. Interestingly, in the USTC online database (collective database of all books published in Europe between the invention of printing and the end of the 16th century), besides information on the 1571 edition, there is also a reference to another, earlier edition of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* translated into Czech. The book, published in 1566 in Prague publishing house owned by Jan Jičínský, was entitled: *Proroctwj welmi hrozná od Swatého Methudya Mučedlnjka Božijho y giných Pobožných a Včených Mužůw Duchem Swatým nadchnutých předpověděná*.

Between 1562 and 1580, an old Polish translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* appeared. Its author, Michał Hey Stawicki, translated the *Apocalypse* from a Latin translation. He probably used the 1504 edition. The Polish title of the work is *Proroctwo Methodiusza S. Biskupa miast Tyrskich y męczennika chwalebnego, który gdi byl trzyman pod Dioklecianem Cesarzem w więzyeniu dla słowa Bożego przez niemały czas, thedy z obiawienia Anioła Pańskiego, wydał wiele pisma potrzebnego, a zwłaszcza o stworzeniu świata począwszy od Adama do dnia sądnego* (*The Prophecy of Methodius, saint bishop and glorious martyr, whose prophecy was revealed to him by the Angel of God when he [Methodius] was in prison for the word of the Lord, letting him know what would happen to the earthly kingdom of the last times, from Adam until the day of judgment*). Along with the text of the source, Hey Stawicki added a commentary by Wolfgang Aytinger (*Wykład na Proroctwo Metodyjusza świętego, który w sobie ma pięć rozdziałów – A lecture on the Prophecy of Holy Methodius, which has five chapters*), although he did not disclose the author's last name.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The terminology used in the *Apocalypse* to describe Arab invaders varies. They are sometimes called the sons of Ishmael, son of Hagar, who was a servant to Abraham's wife, Sarah (5.2; cf. Gen 16:16; 21:9–21); other times they are referred to as the Midianites (5.6). The identification of the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Midian is not accidental. Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar, and Midian, son of Abraham and Keturah, were half brothers. In the Scripture, the terms Midianites and Ishmaelites are used interchangeably.

The *Apocalypse* was written during or shortly after the Arab conquests, in response to the difficulties faced by Christians and in reaction to cases of apostasy to avoid taxation. Since the text was written after the empire had lost its important provinces – Syria, Palestine and Egypt – these events, dramatic from the Christian point of view, were reflected in it. The *Apocalypse* describes events that happened at the hands of Muslims in previous decades.

Pseudo-Methodius regarded Muslims [the 'Ishmaelites,' 'sons of Ishmael'] as pagans and described them as 'children of desolation.' He saw the Muslim invasion as a punishment for sins. The text announces that 'the sons of Ishmael,' or Muslims, will emerge from the Yathrib Desert to inflict divine punishment on Christians who "fell into deprivation." Books 11–14 contain apocalyptic visions of strong anti-Muslim overtones, heralding the complete defeat of the Arabs by the Byzantines before the second coming of Jesus. The *Apocalypse* also notes the appearance of the last ruler, emperor-Savior, echoing the prophecy that was attributed to the legendary *Tiburtine Sibyl*. The aforementioned Roman emperor was foretold to personally lead a war against Muslims, defeat them and free Christian lands from the power of 'the children of Ishmael', thus saving all Christianity. After his victory, he would put his crown upon the cross, offering his kingdom to God.

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X

Anastasius of Sinai
Questions and Answers



Date: unknown, probably c. 700
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: before 927, Bulgaria

Anastasius of Sinai (Sinaïta, c. 630–c. 700) was a monk and priest at the monastery in Sinai. Little is known about him. He was born in Alexandria or, more likely, in Amathus, Cyprus. The period of his activity falls on the second half of the 7th century. He left Cyprus before the Arab invasion of the island in 649. He went to Palestine and then to Sinai. Here, around 660, he entered the St Catherine's Monastery, formerly Theotokos. He referred to himself as a monk living in Sinai (*Viae dux*). Anastasius' works suggest that he traveled a lot, including to Syria, Palestine and Egypt. In the latter, he visited Alexandria and Babylon (now Cairo).

Eutychius of Alexandria (877–940) believed that Anastasius was the Byzantine chief Mahan (Vahan, Βαανής). After the defeat at the Yarmuk River (636), he supposedly entered the monastery and took the name of Anastasius. S. Griffith is cautious about this identification, while A. Bingelli rejects it strongly. Sinaïta lived to an old age (10th century, see: *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. H. D e l e h a y e, Bruxelles 1954, col. 617, lines 26ff.). The date of his death is unknown but it must have been after the year 700.

Research on the legacy of Anastasius of Sinai is hindered by the fact that he is sometimes confused with his namesakes, the patriarchs of Antioch – Anastasius I (559–570, 593–598) and Anastasius II (599–609). Anastasius is known as the author of *Hodegos* (Lat. *Viae dux*, *Guide*) – a collection of works that were created to defend the Chalcedonian *credo* in the face of the challenges from monophysitism and monotheletism. Its texts were written over a number of years and, at one point, they were collected into a single book. Sidney H. Griffith dates the creation of this collection to the period before the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680/681). Anastasius' second important work is *Erotapokriseis – Quaestiones/Interrogationes et responsiones* ('Ερωτήσεις καί αποκρίσεις περί διαφόρων κεφαλαίων γινόμεναι εκ διαφόρων προσώπων προς τον άββα Αναστάσιον, ών τας λύσεις έποιήσατο, ούκ εξ έαυτοϋ, άλλ' εκ πολλής πείρας – *Questions and Answers on different subjects asked by different people to Abba Anastasius, who gave the answers not from himself but from long experience*) – a collection of 103 texts on theological questions. Several of his homilies and a collection of short stories (*Narrationes*) about pious Christians whom Anastasius had met or about whom he was told have also been preserved. Anastasius is also credited with writing a commentary on the first chapters of Genesis (*Hexaemeron*), a commentary on Psalm 6, and a sermon on Good Friday. However, the authenticity of many of these texts is unclear.

Anastasius' numerous works were published between the 16th to the 19th centuries (e.g. A.M. Bandini, F. Combefis and A. Mai). The most important ones (*Hodegos* and *Erotapokriseis*) were published in the 17th century by J. Gretser. These editions were reprinted in *PG*, vol. 89.

Erotapokriseis (*Quaestiones/Interrogationes et responsiones*) consists of 103 questions and answers. The number 154, contained in the J. Gretser edition and repeated by Migne, is higher because some of them were doubled or tripled. This is due to the fact that the edition used various collections of *Erotapokriseis*, which included *florilegia* of patristic quotes. J. Gretser and J.-P. Migne based their editions on two collections: the *103 Quaestiones/Interrogationes et responsiones* attributed to Abba

Anastasius and the collection of *Florilegium 88 Questions*, written in the 9th century, attributed to Anastasius of Sinai, Anastasius of Antioch or Anastasius of Nicaea. The author of *Florilegium* drew from *103 Quaestiones/ Interrogationes et responsiones*. A thorough analysis of the relationship between these collections was carried out by M. Richard.

It is possible that Anastasius Sinaïta used *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* by Pseudo-Athanasius. However, the arguments in favor of the seniority of the former author are not conclusive (Sieswerda). According to M. Richard, *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* are, apart from *Florilegium 88 Questions*, the oldest written account of Anastasius' *Erotapokriseis*. The collection of Anastasius of Sinai is chaotic and characterized by the differing lengths of individual questions, no connection between questions on similar subjects, numerous repetitions, etc. It is possible that the stories were collected into a single book after the death of Anastasius. Munitiz believes that it was done by his student.

Questions and Answers have been preserved under the name of Anastasius Sinaïta, but also under the name of another Athanasius. Many of the numerous manuscripts contain only a part of this work. The most complete version of *Erotapokriseis* can be found in the following manuscripts: ГИМ, Син. греч. 265, fol. 241–298' (9th–10th century) and HAB, 4240 / Guden grec 53 (9th century). Among other manuscripts containing various collections of *Questions and Answers*, the following are noteworthy: BML, Gr. plut. IV, 16 (dated to 1062); BML, Gr. plut. VI, 35 (11th century); BA, Gr. 452, 1.9 sup., fol. 162–165' (dated to 1142); Athos Karakallou 14, fol. 261–262', 239–242' (12th century); BA, Gr. 21, A 84 sup., fol. 104'–109 (12th–13th century); Patmiacus Gr. 5, fol. 178–218' (12th century); SBB, Gr. 70 (Phill. 1474), fol. 211'–216' (12th century); Andros, Monastery of Hagia 64 (15th century); Sinaiticus Graecus M 6 (9th century); Sinaiticus Graecus M 139 (12th century?); Sinaiticus Graecus X 144 (dated to 1312); Athos Vatopedi 38 (11th century); BAV, Pii 11 (15th century); NLG, 2492 (12th century); BNF, Gr. 364; BNF, Coislin 116 (15th century); BNF, Suppl. grec 28 (14th century). A number of them contains only a section of *Quaestiones/Interrogationes et responsiones*.

Slavic Translation

Questions and Answers were translated into Old Church Slavic quite early: during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927), most likely at the beginning of the 10th century, in Bulgaria. The translation was based on a later redaction of the collection (the so-called *Florilegium 88 Questions*), created in the 9th century, in which Anastasius of Sinai's text was expanded with many interpolations drawn from the Holy Bible as well as the works of other Eastern Church Fathers. Interestingly, *Florilegium* was translated into the Old Church Slavic language within a comprehensive compilation featuring a selection of patristic texts. Later, through the so-called *Symeon-Sviatoslav Miscellany from 1073* – a codex commissioned by the Kyiv prince Sviatoslav Yaroslavich (1073–1076) and currently kept in the collections of the State Historical Museum in Moscow (ГИМ, Син. 1043, fol. 27b–223b) – the text by Anastasius of Sinai was disseminated in medieval Rus' and Serbian literature. It suffices to say that 27 nearly complete copies of *Symeon-Sviatoslav Miscellany* (24 of Rus' and three of Serbian provenance) as well as numerous fragmentary copies have survived till the present day.

The text of *Questions and Answers*, preserved within *Symeon-Sviatoslav Miscellany* (ГИМ, Син. 1043), is not complete (**Ѩнастасиѥви отъвѣти противоу нанесеныимъ ѥмоу отъвѣтомъ нѣ отъ какыихъ правовѣрьныихъ о различьныихъ главизнахъ**). This manuscript features the following chapters of the work of Anastasius of Sinai (they are presented here in parallel with the Greek variant of the text, published in *PG*, vol. 89): I (fol. 27b–33b – col. 329–344); II (fol. 33b–36a – col. 344–352); III (fol. 36a–38c – col. 352–357); IV (fol. 38d–40a – col. 357–361); V (fol. 40a–43d – col. 361–369); VI (fol. 43d–51c – col. 369–385); VII (fol. 51c–53d – col. 385–389); VIII (fol. 53d–63a – col. 389–409); IX (fol. 63a–73c – col. 409–432); X (fol. 73d–75d – col. 432–436); XI (fol. 76a–80d – col. 436–445); XII (fol. 80d–88b – col. 445–460); XIII (fol. 88b–89b – col. 460–461); XIV (fol. 89b–91c – col. 464–468); XV (fol. 91c–95b – col. 468–476); XVI (fol. 95b–98d – col. 476–484); XVII (fol. 98d–106d – col. 484–500); XVIII (fol. 106d–114c

– fol. 500–513); XIX (fol. 114c–117a – col. 513–517); XX (fol. 117a–120d, 129a–130d – col. 517–532); XXI – fragment (fol. 130d – col. 532); XXIV – fragment (fol. 131a–134d – col. 541–552); XXV (fol. 134d–135b – col. 552); XXVI (fol. 135b–d – col. 552–553); XXVII (fol. 135d–136c – col. 553–556); XXVIII (fol. 136c–140a – col. 556–561); XXIX (fol. 140a–141a – col. 561–564); XXX (fol. 141a–143b – col. 564–568); XXXI (fol. 143b–144a – col. 568–569); XXXII (fol. 144a–145b – col. 569–572); XXXIII (fol. 145b–146c – col. 572–573); XXXIV–XXXV (fol. 146c–147c – col. 573–576); XXXVI (fol. 147c–148b – col. 576–577); XXXVII (fol. 148b–149b – col. 577–580); XXXVIII (fol. 149b–d – col. 580–581); XXXIX (fol. 149d–151c – col. 581–585); XL (fol. 151c–154b – col. 585–589); XLI (fol. 154b–155c – fol. 589–593); XLII (fol. 155c –157d – col. 593); XLIII (fol. 157d–158a – col. 593–596); XLIV (fol. 158a–b – col. 596); XLV (fol. 158b–159b – col. 596–597); XLVI (fol. 159b–162a – col. 597–601); XLVII (fol. 162a–c – col. 601–604); XLVIII (fol. 162c–163c – col. 604–608); LII – fragment (fol. 163c–d – col. 613); LIII (fol. 163d–164b – col. 616); LIV (fol. 164c–d – col. 616–617); LV (fol. 164d–166b – col. 617–620); LVI (fol. 166b–c – col. 620); LVII (fol. 166c–168c – col. 621–625); LVIII (fol. 168c–169a – col. 625); LIX (fol. 169a–175b – col. 625–637); CXLII (fol. 175b–c – col. 793); CXLIII (fol. 175c–176c – col. 796–797); CXLIV (fol. 176c–177d – col. 797–800); CXLVI (fol. 178b–c – col. 800–801); CXLVII (fol. 178c–179a – col. 801); CXLVIII (fol. 179a–d – col. 801–804); CXLIX (fol. 179d–180b – col. 804–805); CL (fol. 180b–d – col. 805); CLI (fol. 180c–181a – col. 805); LX (fol. 181a–186c – col. 637–645); LXI (fol. 186c–187b – col. 645–648); LXII (fol. 187b–190a – fol. 648–652); LXIII (fol. 190a–193c – col. 653–660); LXIV (fol. 193c–198d – col. 660–672); LXV (fol. 198d–205c – col. 672–684); LXVI (fol. 205c–209a – col. 685–692); LXVII (fol. 209a–d – col. 692–693); LXVIII (fol. 209d–210b – col. 693); LXIX (fol. 210b–c – col. 693–696); LXX (fol. 210c–211a – col. 696); CXXVIII (fol. 211a–d – col. 780–781); LXXI (fol. 211d– col. 696); LXXII (fol. 211d–212d – col. 697); LXXIII (fol. 212d–214a – col. 697–701); LXXIV (fol. 214a–d – col. 701); CLII (fol. 214d–215d – col. 808–809); CLIII – fragment (fol. 215d–217d – col. 809–813); CLIV (fol. 217d–218c – col. 813–824).

Discreet passages from Anastasius of Sinai's *Questions and Answers* can also be found on the pages of other Old Rus' manuscripts of the *miscellanea* type. It is worth mentioning here the so-called *Sviatoslav Miscellany from 1076* – a codex commissioned by prince Sviatoslav Yaroslavich, based on Greek texts and earlier Slavic translations of Old Bulgarian provenance, currently stored in the Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (РНБ, ОР Эрм. 20). Fragments of Anastasius of Sinai's work, included in this manuscript, were probably drawn from *Symeon-Sviatoslav Miscellany from 1073*: Q I (fol. 114'–116'); V (fol. 202–205); and XIV (fol. 205–206'). Later East Slavic compilations usually include short passages from *Questions and Answers*. For example, a copy of an Old Rus' law collection, known in the literature as *Мерило праведное*, dated to the 14th century (РГБ, 304.I.15, fol. 61–62) features extensive excerpts from Q XVI (*PG*, vol. 89, col. 476–480). Moreover, a *miscellanea* manuscript from the end of the 14th century (ГИМ, Чуд. 21, fol. 232–233'; 234–234') contains two short fragments from QQ XVI and XVII.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Anastasius Sinaïta was interested in both theological issues and the everyday life of the community. *Questions and Answers* were created shortly after the Muslims had seized the Sinai Peninsula, hence, the invasion must have been reflected in them. Although the monastery, fortified during the time of Justinian I the Great (527–565), was not taken by the Arabs and remained intact throughout the occupation, it lost contact with Constantinople.

Anastasius Sinaïta was one of the first authors to give information about Islam, although he did not name it directly. The fight against Islam was not his goal either. Arabs' beliefs appear in the margins of his polemics with the monophysites. Anastasius mentioned neither the name of Muhammad nor the *Quran*. He wrote about Muslims describing them

as Arabs, less often Saracens, therefore, he used terms devoid of religious connotations. The Arabs were most often perceived by Anastasius as infidels (ἄπιστοι, *infideles*), similarly to Jews, Manicheans and pagans. There is no doubt, however, that he referred to Muslim, and not pagan, customs of the Arabs. He emphasized that Christians were in dispute (διαλέγεσθαι) with the Arabs. His knowledge of the new religion, however, remained at a very basic level (D. Sahas). The references to Islam are most visible in *Viae dux*. In other texts of Anastasius, there is no direct polemic with Islam, but Muslims are present in them. The topics of *Questions and Answers* are extremely diverse, but the situation of Christians living under Muslim rule plays an important role in them. Anastasius discusses, for example, the views of the Greeks and Arabs about the issue of Satan not bowing to Adam (QQ XXVI), which is found in the *Quran* (Surah 2, 34). The presence of the Arabs at Sinai was also reflected in QQ XLIX, LXXV, LXXVI, LXXX, LXXXI, LXXXVII, LXXXIX, XCIX, CI and CII.

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XI

John of Damascus, *On Heresies*



Date: after 743
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: before 927, Bulgaria (in the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*, without the chapter on Islam)
2nd Slavic Translation: after 1219, Serbia
(in the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*)
3rd Slavic Translation: 16th century, Rus'

Although several biographies of John of Damascus (Damascene, c. 676–749) have been written, our knowledge about him is still quite modest. He was probably born to a Christian family around 676 in Damascus. His father, Sergius Mansur (Ibn-Sarjun Mansur), held the office of a logothete during the rule of caliph Muawiya (661–680). His father made sure John received a thorough education. John was supposedly taught by the monk and philosopher named Cosmas, brought from Italy. Under his guidance, John received a classical education and studied the Bible. John knew the Arabic language and culture. After the death of his father, he managed the family estate and served at the court of the caliphs, first Abd al-Malik (685–705) and then Al-Walid I (705–715). After resigning from his post, perhaps due to more stringent policies towards Christians, John entered the Monastery of St. Sabas, located near Jerusalem. There, he focused on studying the texts of the Church Fathers and his own writing. After emperor Leo III (717–741) introduced his iconoclastic policy, John vigorously engaged in opposing it. He did it so

eagerly that in 753, after his death, the Council of Hieria condemned him along with Germanus of Constantinople and Gregory of Cyprus. John died in the Monastery of St. Sabas before the year 753.

John of Damascus was the author of numerous works, including *Introductio elementaris*, which is an introduction to philosophy; three orations against iconoclasm (*Contra imaginum calumniatores*); texts directed against Nestorians and Manicheans, as well as a number of homilies and hagiographic works. Sometimes, he is credited with the *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen*. His most important work is the *Fount of Knowledge*, a compendium of theological knowledge, the first "theological sum" in the history of theology (A. Zhyrkova). It was dedicated to bishop Cosmas of Maiuma, John's adopted brother. It consisted of three parts: *Capita pilosophica* (also known as *Dialectica*); *De haeresibus* (*On Heresies*) and *Expositio fidei* (*Explanation of the True Faith*). This work was completed after 743 and was held in high esteem by both the Eastern and Western Churches. John is recognized as the last Church Father.

The text of John Damascene, in which the theme of Islam appears, is *De haeresibus*, the second part of the *Fount of Knowledge*. Its full title is: *Briefly on a Hundred Heresies: Where They Came from and Why They Appeared*. It was created after 743, but it is believed that some of its fragments had been written earlier. As it is pointed out, the first eighty chapters are almost a literal quotation of the characteristics of the heresies found in *Panarion* by Epiphanius of Salamis while chapters 81–99 were presumably drawn from the works of several authors: Theodoret of Cyrus, Timothy of Constantinople, Sophronius of Jerusalem (V), and Leontius of Byzantium. It is believed that perhaps John possessed some unknown work, which included both Epiphanius' catalogue of heresies and the texts by the above-mentioned authors. The longest, 100th chapter, devoted to the Ishmaelite heresy, is recognized as the original work of John (though not by all scholars). It is thought to be incomplete. It is one of the earliest characterizations of Islam, which – it should be emphasized – came from the pen of a Christian, but one who was anchored in the Arab world.

Slavic Translations

The oldest Old Church Slavic translation of the work *On Heresies* was written at the beginning of the 10th century, during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927), in Preslav, the capital of the Bulgarian state at the time. The treatise of John Damascene was then translated from Greek as an integral part of the third redaction of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* (the so-called *Syntagma*), created at the turn of the 9th century in Constantinople. Copies of this source were brought to Rus' from the Balkans in the 1040s, most likely by the Bulgarians who had emigrated to the Eastern Slavic territory after the collapse of their country in 1018. The oldest existing copy of this translation is the so-called *Efrem Kormchaia* (*Ефремовская Кормчая* – ГИМ, Син. 227, fol. 249–275'), an old Rus' manuscript, dated to the beginning of the 12th century.

It is worth remembering that in the process of creating the aforementioned legal compilation, the text *On Heresies* was subjected to significant editorial interference. Both in the Byzantine copies of the third redaction of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* (e.g. in the manuscript of Vindob. Hist. Gr. 56 from the 11th century) as well as Church Slavic copies (ГИМ, Син. 227 and later, e.g. РГБ, 304.I.207, fol. 217a–238d – from the beginning of the 16th century), the Damascene's treatise is invariably presented as the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis, bishop of Cyprus (**Ѳпифания и епᶜпа кѵпрьскаго**). The layout of the final part of the text was changed: after 99 paragraphs, a chapter on autoproscoptic heresy was introduced (100), and at the very end of the work, a section on Iconoclasts (102) was added. However, the most important issue, from the point of view of our considerations, is that the original text on Islam by John of Damascus cannot be found on the pages of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* (neither in Greek nor Slavic versions). Instead, a fragment of an anti-Muslim treatise by Michael Syncellus (XII) was placed in the discussed text as paragraph 101.

An Old Bulgarian translation of *On Heresies* was also included in the so-called *Russian Kormchaia* (*Русская Кормчая*), compiled in the

seventh decade of the 13th century, based on earlier legal compilations and the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, by the decrees of the Council of the Rus' Church in Vladimir in 1274. Its oldest preserved copy is *Новгородская Синодальная Кормчая* from 1282 (ГИМ, Син. 132). Both on the pages of this codex and its subsequent copies (РГБ, 304.I.205, fol. 397–416; РГБ, 304.I.206, fol. 407–428'), the layout of the text reproduces the variant known from the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*: 99 original chapters by John of Damascus, par. 100 on autoproscoptic heresy, par. 101 on Islam by Michael Syncellus, and par. 102 about Iconoclasts.

The treatise *On Heresies* was translated into Church Slavic for the second time in Serbia after 1219. This translation became popular in the territory of *Slavia Orthodoxa* as an integral part of the so-called *Nomocanon of St. Sava*. Both the oldest copy of this legal compilation preserved till present day, the so-called Ilovitsa codex from 1262 (HAZU III c. 9, fol. 354d–373d) as well as later manuscripts (including the manuscript from the Museum of the Old Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, № 222, fol. 326c–341d), contain the complete text on Islam by John of Damascus, however, it was quite mechanically interwoven with the polemical work of Michael Syncellus. On fol. 369d–370a, the copy from Ilovitsa offers a short fragment of *On Heresies* (incipit: **Єсть же и доѣ̈ня дрьжещии прѣлыщающия люди слоужба Измаильтьска рекше вѣра Сраціньска**...; explicit:...**лъжии прр°кь именемь Моамедь**), and then, after a short intersection from the treatise by Michael Syncellus, it provides the remaining part of Damascene's treatise (fol. 370a–373a – incipit: **и почьть ветхы и новыи завѣть**...; explicit: **винноюе же питию ѿноудоу ѿрече**). The version of *On Heresies*, recorded within the *Nomocanon of St. Sava* also misses the excerpts from the work of *Arbiter* by John Philoponus (par. 83). However, a paragraph about autoproscoptic heresy is included.

The *Nomocanon of St. Sava* was adopted in Rus' as early as the 1270s, when the metropolitan of Kiev, Cyril II, received a copy of this compilation from the Bulgarian despot Jacob Svetoslav (Rus' by origin, he ruled the western Balkan Mountains by the decree of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Asen II). The oldest Old Rus' copy of the aforementioned collection of

laws is the so-called *Riazan Kormchaia* from 1284 (*Рязанская Кормчая* – РНБ, F.п.II.1). The piece about Islam, containing the text of John of Damascus and excerpts from the treatise of Michael Syncellus, can be found there on fol. 374a–378b. An identical text is also included in later East Slavic copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, incl. РГАДА, 181.1593, fol. 557–563, which comes from the last three decades of the 16th century.

The Serbian translation of the work *On Heresies* became popular in Rus' literature of the late Middle Ages. For example: the copy of *Palaea Interpretata* from the first half of the 16th century (РГБ, 304.I.730, fol. 395–403') contains extensive extracts from this treatise, drawn from the *Nomocanon of St. Sava* and presented as Epiphanius' *Panarion*; it contains the first 33 chapters and par. 99 on Monothelets (split up by a text about the supporters of Simon Magus, which was absent from the Damascene's work). Interestingly, although *Palaea*'s compilers omitted John's text about Islam, they included another anti-Muslim work, i.e. the Slavic translation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* by Riccoldo da Monte Croce (XXXI, fol. 363–394'). The chapter *On Heresies*, dedicated to Islam, was also used by the creators of the compilatory narrative *The Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* (**Сказаніе о χѵлнѣй вѣрѣ Срацинѣстѣй**), preserved, e.g. in the *Nikon Chronicle* (XXXVIII).

In the 16th century, another Church Slavic translation of the treatise *On Heresies* was created. Its author was prince Andrew Kurbski (1528–1583), who based his translation primarily on earlier Latin translations. His translation of the work of John Damascene has been preserved, e.g. on the pages of the manuscript РГБ, 256.193, dated to the late 16th or early 17th century (fol. 219'–242'). This is a nearly complete translation: it only lacks excerpts from the work of *Arbiter* by John Philoponus (cap. 83) as well as the final part of the chapter on Islam: the narrative stops at the reflections on the lack of testimonies in the Scriptures and in the revelations of earlier prophets, announcing the coming of Muhammad.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Islam is perceived by John Damascene as the last heresy preceding the arrival of the Antichrist. He refers to the followers of Islam as Ishmaelites, Hagarenes and Saracens. He derives them from Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar, banished by Sarah, the wife of Abram (hence, the Saracens – from the words of 'Sarah' and κενός – 'stripped'). According to John, until the times of emperor Heraclius (610–641), the Arabs had been overt idolaters. During this emperor's rule, Muhammad surfaced, whom John calls 'Mamed', a pseudo-prophet, the creator of heresy and "laughable principles," which the Arabs adopted. He disavows the importance of his revelation because he had received it in a dream and no one witnessed it.

The passage devoted to Islam contains nine quotations from the *Quran* (Surahs 2.223, 2.230, 4.157–158, 4.171, 5.114–115, 5.116, 26.155–157, 47.15, 112.1–4) as well as several references to it, which are not found in its contemporary version (e.g. an extensive tale of two female camels). It seems that while working on his treatise, John Damascene could have used a version of the *Quran* that does not exist today.

John notes the Islamic monotheism: *Say*, *He is Allah*, *the One*. *Allah is the All-embracing*. *He neither begat*, *nor was begotten* (Surah 112), and the fact that it does not recognize the divinity of Christ. He includes a short list of Muslim customs: circumcision, rejection of the Sabbath and baptism, restrictions on food consumption, a ban on alcohol consumption, and polygamy.

It is generally believed that John had reliable information about Islam. His comments about this religion in the work *On Heresies* were a source of knowledge and inspiration for many other authors in later centuries.

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XII

Michael Syncellus
Unknown refutation of Islam



Date: late 8th or early 9th century
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: before 927, Bulgaria
(in the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*)
2nd Slavic Translation: late 10th / early 11th century,
Bulgaria (in George the Monk's Chronicle)
3rd Slavic Translation: after 1219, Serbia
(in the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*)
4th Slavic Translation: 14th century, Bulgaria,
Serbia or the Hilandar monastery
at Mount Athos (in George the Monk's Chronicle)

Michael Syncellus was born in Jerusalem around 761/762. He was of Arab origin. At the age of several years he was dedicated by his mother to the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem to the rank of reader. At the age of 25, after his father's death, he became a monk in the Monastery of St. Sabas, and some time later ordained a priest by the patriarch of Jerusalem. Circa 800, when he was in the Monastery of St. Sabas, he enlisted the Graptoi brothers, Theodore and Theophanes, to the community, becoming their spiritual guardian. Noteworthy is the fact that the monastery where Michael lived was attacked by the Arabs

several times. At the turn of the first and second decade of the 9th century, he was appointed *synkellos* of the patriarch of Jerusalem and moved with his disciples to the monastery of Spudaioi, which was located near the Church of the Resurrection. Circa 812/813 (815) he was sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem, Thomas, along with Theodore, Theophanes and Job, with letters to pope Leo III. He did not reach Rome. He stayed in Constantinople in the Chora monastery, where he became involved in the recurring iconoclastic dispute. As a defender of the cult of icons, he was imprisoned after 815 and then banished from the city and for several years stayed in some monasteries in the Anatolian Prusa. During Theophilus' reign (829–842) he returned to Constantinople in 834. After the condemnation of iconoclasm and the removal of the iconoclastic patriarch John the Grammarian, Michael was said to have been offered the dignity of the patriarch of Constantinople. He did not accept the proposal, contented with the position of *synkellos* to Methodius, the new patriarch of Constantinople and *hegoumenos* of the Chora monastery. He died on 4 January 846.

Michael Syncellus was a prolific author. However, there is a discussion about the specific texts attributed to him, because in the period in which he created, there were several people who were named after him and who held the position of *synkellos*. Currently, eight works (Kolia-Dermitzaki) are attributed to him with certainty, including *Encomion of Dionysius the Areopagite* or one of the versions of *Martyrdom of the 42 martyrs of Amorion*.

Michael Syncellus was probably the author of a polemical text, presenting dogmas of Islam and elements of ritualism and religious customs of Muslims. Interestingly, he was able to use the Arabic tradition in his work on the text, in addition to earlier Byzantine accounts (e.g. the last chapter of John of Damascus' treatise *On Heresies*, on criticism of Islam – XI). He wove two free quotations from the *Quran* into his narration: Surah 5.116 and Surah 47.15.

The anti-Muslim polemical text by Michael Syncellus has not survived to our times in its entirety. Only those fragments of it that have been included in George the Monk's *Chronicon syntomon* (XX)

have survived. In one of the Byzantine copies of George the Monk's chronicle, currently in the collection of the National Library of France (BNF, Coislin 305, fol. 312'), we find a mention that an earlier work by Michael Syncellus had been woven into the text about Muhammad. It is worth noting that this manuscript is the only complete Greek copy of the Chronicle's original redaction that has been preserved to our time. A fragment of Michael Syncellus' treatise also appears in those manuscripts with the work of George the Monk, which represent his second, more popular redaction (the so-called *vulgata*). Here, however, it was included in a different sequence of stories about Muhammad and Islam, following a short outline of the Muslim prophet's biography, it was also minimally abridged. Another, almost identical to an older version of the chronicle (BNF, Coislin 305) fragment of the treatise in question can also be found in the third redaction of *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*, commissioned by the patriarch of Constantinople's Tarasius (784–806).

Slavic Translations

The existing paragraphs of Michael Syncellus' treatise were translated into Church Slavic several times, within the works in which the text had already been interwoven on the Byzantine ground, i.e. the chronicle of George the Monk and the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*.

Thus, in the oldest Old Church Slavic translation of the Chronicle of George the Monk, made in Bulgaria at the end of the 10th century or at the beginning of the next century (the so-called *Временник*), we find the same parts of the treatise by Michael Syncellus as in the Greek manuscripts, which contain a more popular variant of the work of Hamartolus (the so-called *vulgata*). In the manuscript РГБ, 310.1289 from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, which became the basis for V. Istrin's edition, this source – placed immediately after the sequence with the description of Muhammad's life – is on fol. 315'–316' (incipit: **бесѣдова съ Ѥврєи и съ хрстианы**...; explicit:... **и тако оумрєти им въсхотѣ**). The manuscript ГИМ, Син. 148, in turn, containing a 14th-century South Slavic translation

of an older version of *Chronicon syntomon* (the so-called *Летовник*), includes a similar version of the chronicle as in the Greek codex BNF, Coislin 305. Above all, we find an unambiguous note on fol. 316' of this copy, namely, that integrated into the text of Hamartolus' work is a fragment of Michael Syncellus' anti-Muslim treatise: **Ѡ нихже что и Михаиль бл҃женыи и протосиггель ст҃аго града рѣ҇ вь кратц҃ѣ сицевая**. These words are followed by a fragment of the work (fol. 316'–317'; incipit: **Измаилите иже и Агаране и Саракины**...; explicit:...**хоулеть сквьнни и вражѧ҆ебнии**.

However, the history of the reception of Michael Syncellus's text in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* is primarily related to the creation and dissemination of successive compilations of Church law, based on Byzantine nomocanons, by the Slavs themselves referred to as the *Kormchaia Books* (from Old Church Slavic **кормчий** – 'helmsman', *Book of the Helmsman*). The earliest to be adopted here was the third redaction of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* (the so-called *Syntagma*), which was written at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries in Constantinople. The Old Church Slavic translation of this compilation was created as early as the beginning of the 10th century, during the reign of Symeon I the Great (893–927), in the then capital of the Bulgarian state, Preslav. In Rus', copies of this relic were transported from the Balkans in the 1040s, most probably by Bulgarians who emigrated to the Eastern Slavic region after the fall of their country in 1018. The oldest existing copy of this translation is the so-called *Efrem Kormchaia* (*Ефремовская Кормчая* – ГИМ, Син. 227), an old Rus' manuscript, dated to the beginning of the 12th century.

On fol. 273'–274' of this manuscript there is an almost identical fragment of Michael Syncellus's treatise as in the copies of an older version of *Chronicon syntomon* (BNF, Coislin 305; ГИМ, Син. 148), titled **О Агарѧньхъ иже Измаилите гл҃ютьсѧ** (incipit: **Срацины же наричють яко ѿ Сары наречены**...; explicit:... **яко нечьстиви и хоульни отъвьржени**). Interestingly, in *Efrem Kormchaia*, as well as in later copies of this collection (e.g. РГБ, 304.I.207, fol. 237a–238a – from the beginning of the 16th century), a fragment of Michael Syncellus' work was presented as an immanent part of the treatise *On Heresies* by John of Damascus (XI),

identified here – *nota bene* – as the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis. The Byzantine compilers who worked on the third redaction of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*, decided for some reason to replace the last chapter of John of Damascus' work dedicated to Islam with a fragment of Michael Syncellus' text. The Old Bulgarian translators, on the other hand, preserved this structure.

Interestingly, the abovementioned Slavic translation of the polemical text attributed to Michael Syncellus, can also be found in the so-called *Russian Kormchaia* (*Русская Кормчая*), compiled in the seventh decade of the 13th century, on the basis of previous collections of law and the *St. Sava's Nomocanon*, as a result of the decisions of the Synod of the Rus' Church in Vladimir on the River Klyazma in 1274. Its oldest surviving copy is *Новгородская Синодальная Кормчая* of 1282 (ГИМ, Син. 132). A fragment of Michael Syncellus' work, presented as the last chapter of John of Damascus' treatise *On Heresies*, can also be found in later copies of this compilation (РГБ, 304.I.205, fol. 414–415; РГБ, 304.I.206, fol. 426'–427').

Parts of the aforementioned treatise were translated into Church Slavic in Serbia after 1219, as an integral part of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*. The Serbian author, who, in preparing his collection of the Church law, drew on Byzantine materials, decided to include in it an extensive chapter on Islam, which was actually a compilation of the work by John of Damascus and some fragments derived from the text attributed to Michael Syncellus. In the oldest surviving manuscript, the Ilovitsa codex from 1262 (HAZU III c. 9, fol. 369d–373d) we can find a short quotation from Michael's treatise on fol. 370a (**иже бесѣдовавь съ Ꙗ҆врѣи и съ хр҃тияны рекше съ ариани и с нестория҃ны ѿвсоудоу почрьпь злая. ѿ Ꙗ҆врѣи оубо ꙗ҆диноначелиѥ. ѿ ариань же слово и дх҃ъ створена шба. ѿ несторианьь же чл҃вкосложениѥ**) and another, longer fragment on fol. 373a–373d (incipit: **и ꙗ҆диномоу тькъмо покланяти се бо҃у**...; explicit:... **яко нечьстиви и хоулници**). The same text can be found in later, South Slavic copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, among others in the manuscript from the Old Church Museum in Sarajevo, № 222 (fol. 338b–341d).

The *Nomocanon of St. Sava* was adopted in Rus' as early as 1270s, when the Kiev metropolitan Cyril II received a copy of this compilation from the Bulgarian despot Jacob-Svetoslav (of Rus' origin, ruler of the western Stara Planina appointed by the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Asen II). The oldest Old Rus' copy of this collection of laws is the so-called *Riazan Kormchaia* from 1284 (*Рязанская Кормчая* – РНБ, F.п.II.1). A compilation work on Islam, containing excerpts from the treatise by Michael Syncellus, can be found in it on fol. 374a–378b. The same text can also be found in later, East Slavic copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, including РГАДА, 181.1593, fol. 557–563 – from the last third of the 16th century.

Excerpts from Michael Syncellus' polemical work undoubtedly enriched the Old Rus' discourse on Islam, functioning in the East Slavs' literature also within the scope of native compilation texts on anti-Muslim themes: the stories of *On Bohmit the Heretic* (**Ѡ Бохмите еретиц҃ѣ**), in the version that appears on the pages of the *Troitsky Chronograph*, the second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, the *Rogozhsky Chronograph*, the *Illuminated Chronicle of Tsar Ivan the Terrible*, the Reading Menaions and manuscripts of the *miscellanea* type, as well as – within *The Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* (**Сказаніе о хѵлнѣй вѣр҃ѣ Срацинѣст҃кй**), preserved, for example, in the text of the *Nikon Chronicle*.

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В.М. И с т р и н, *Книгы временыя и образныя Георгия Мниха. Хроника Георгия Амартола в древнем славянорусском переводе. Текст, исследование и словарь*, vol. I, Петроград 1920–1922, p. 450–451.

3rd Church Slavic translation:

Zakonopravilo or the Nomocanon of Saint Sava. The Ilovica Manuscript from 1262. Photoprint reproduction, ed. M.M. P e t r o v i ć, Gornji Milanovac 1991, fol. 396b–398d (facsimile).

Sarajevo Rudder Zakonopravilo of St. Sava from the 14th Century, Dobrun 2013, fol. 361b–364a (facsimile).

4th Church Slavic translation:

Летовник съкращень от различных летописьць же и поведатели и избрань и съставлень от Георгиа грешнаа инока, Санкт-Петербург 1878–1881, fol. 316'–317' (facsimile).

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Zofia A. Brzozowska, Mirosław J. Leszka

XIII

Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen



Author: unknown, Theodore Abu Qurrah? John of Damascus?
Date: probably 2nd half of the 8th or beginning of the 9th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: probably 2nd half of the 16th century, Rus'

This text (Διάλεξις Σαρακηνοῦ καὶ Χριστιανοῦ) is a dialogue between two people, a Christian and a Saracen (Muslim), in which the former explains to the latter the principles of the Christian religion, arguing its truthfulness and superiority over Islam. In earlier literature on the subject, it was attributed to John of Damascus (XI).

In fact, it is difficult to establish whether the *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen* is the work of John, or whether its authorship should be attributed to another Christian, Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 750–c. 825). It is also debatable whether it was created in the privacy of the studio (cell), as an invention of the author, or whether it is a record/summary of a real debate conducted between Saracens and John of Damascus. In the latter case, the account could have been written down by Abu Qurrah or another author.

What speaks in favor of assigning the authorship of the *Disputation* to John of Damascus is the fact that it discusses issues identical to those featured in John's *Fount of Knowledge*. Additionally, both works have

a similar style and vocabulary. It is noteworthy, however, that these topics also appear in other Christian polemical texts. They can be found in Theodore Abu Qurrah's writings as well. It is possible that the text written by John was later developed by Theodore. The situation is further complicated by the fact that some scholars question the authorship of certain *Opuscula* by Theodore Abu Qurrah, including those whose contents coincide with the *Disputation*. It is also probable that a student of John transcribed his arguments against Islam on the basis of his notes (Janosik). In any case, even if John of Damascus did not write the *Disputation*, the influence of his thoughts on this work is unquestionable. As Janosik points out, *John is responsible for the ideas and the format of the Disputation*, *and someone else*, *perhaps Theodore Abu Qurrah*, *is responsible for the final transmission*. This researcher indicates that Theodore used both written dialogues and oral accounts. For possible transmission paths of *Disputation*, see: Janosik, p. 137.

The most important issues raised in the *Disputation* are: the origin of evil, God's power and justice, the role of God in shaping the fetus in mothers' wombs, the importance of baptism for salvation, the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus, the two natures of Christ, his divinity and the idea of the incarnation, the meaning of the Word of God (for the Christian, meaning Jesus, and for the Muslim, the *Quran*), obedience to God's will, and the issue of the death/sleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Christian presents the Trinitarian doctrine, explains the birth (not creation) of the Son willed by the Father, and the idea of hypostasis. The above-mentioned topics touched on the most important contention points between Christianity and Islam. They all had been raised in early polemics.

Researchers point to the rather chaotic nature of the dispute, including jumping from topic to topic, switching from dialogue to description, a lack of precision, and ambiguity in Greek terminology. The latter is explained by the fact that the original language of theological disputes between Christians and Muslims was Arabic, in which, at the time of John of Damascus, there was no proper terminology. It is possible that the author of the *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen* intended it to be *a training manual for Christian apologetics*. Because it was

written in Greek, it was not addressed to Muslims, but was designed to arm Christians with arguments that were helpful in debating Muslims.

There are two redactions of this dispute, differing mainly, but not exclusively, in the order of the problems raised. The first is a Latin translation, *Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni*, published by Michel Lequien in 1712 (=*PG*, vol. 94). It was based on the Latin, 13th-century translation of R. Grosseteste (ca. 1170–1253) and on the lost Latin translation (*nec recenti translatione, cujus Graecum textum obtinere non potui: PG*, vol. 94, col. 1585–1586). Lequien also used the works of Theodore Abu Qurrah, adding a fragment of his *Opusculum* 18 to the edition of the *Disputation* in which we read that it comes from John of Damascus and was drawn from an oral account (διὰ φωνης Ιωάννου Δαμασκηνου). Lequien believed that the last part of the dispute was edited by Theodore Abu Qurrah.

The second redaction was published with a Latin translation in 1788 by Andrea Gallandi based on a Greek manuscript from the 13th century. J.-P. Migne published it in the vol. 96 of *PG* under the title *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani*. The text published by Gallandi coincides in several sections with the works of Abu Qurrah and overlaps with the Greek parts of the Lequien's edition (Sahas). Daniel Sahas believes that it was written by John of Damascus and used by Theodore, who included its passages in *Opuscula* 9, 35, 36, 37 and 38. Although there are differences between the two redactions and they existed under different titles, they are the same text.

Manuscripts: Athos Iviron 380 (4500) (13th/14th century); ML, 3, 190 (12th century); Esc. III, 1 (12th century); Esc. Ω III, 7 (13th century); BA, 658 (12th century); Vallic. Gr. 3 (13th century); BAV, Reg. 35 (14th century); BNU, Gr. 200 (B. IV 22) (15th century); ÖNB, Theol. Gr. 306 (13th century).

Slavic Translation

The existence of a Church Slavic translation of the *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen* requires further scholarly analysis. There is no doubt that this text was adopted in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area. Most likely,

it was translated in Rus' in the late Middle Ages. We can find the Slavic version of the analyzed source on the pages of several late Rus' manuscripts, including РГБ, 304.I.201, fol. 263–267 (from the first half of the 17th century) and РНБ, Q.I.264, fol. 321'–324' (17th century). Interestingly, in the first of the manuscripts listed here, the *Disputation* was placed together with polemical texts by Maximus the Greek (c. 1475–1556), one of the most outstanding Rus' writers of the turn of the 16th century. Although he was of Byzantine origin, he wrote in Church Slavic and his works included polemics with the followers of Islam (XXXIX).

The Slavic translation of the *Disputation* (**Сїѣ прѣнїѣ второѥ выписано ис книги Дамаскиновы. В немже шписуѣтсѧ гаданїа хр҃тїанина ко Срацынѡмъ**) was most likely incomplete. The manuscript РГБ, 304.I.201 cites respectively the contents of the following fragments (the paragraphs were numbered according to the edition of the Greek text by B. Kotter): par. 5 (Christ is God), par. 6 (Words vs. Communication), par. 7 (Incarnation), par. 8 (Hypostatic Union), par. 9 (Dormition of Mary), par. 10 (The Completeness of the Act of Creation), par. 1 (Origin of Evil), par. 3 (Will and Tolerance) and par. 11 (Christ's Superiority over John the Baptist). In manuscript РНБ, Q.I.264, we find only a part of this work, including paragraphs 5–10 (the text breaks off at the beginning of paragraph 10). It is noteworthy that the layout of the text of the Slavic version, preserved in its entirety in the manuscript РГБ, 304.I.201, coincides with the Latin redaction of the relic (*Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni*), published by Lequin in 1712 and reprinted in *PG*, vol. 94. The discussed work was also supposedly featured in a small collection of patristic texts, most likely translated by prince Andrew Kurbski (1528–1583), which was published in 1585 at the Mamonicz printing house in Vilnius.

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Joannis Damasceni, *Disceptatio Christiani et Saraceni*, ed. J.-P. Migne, [in:] *PG*, vol. 94, col. 1585A–1597C (1st redaction).

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XIV

Theophanes, *Chronographia*



Date: 810–814
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation (fragmentary): beginning of the 10th century, Bulgaria

Theophanes (Homologetes, Confessor), author of *Chronographia*, was born c. 760 in Constantinople. His father Isaac was a senior military officer. His mother's name was Theodora. At the age of three he was orphaned by his father and was placed under the care of emperor Constantine V (741–775). Thanks to the imperial support, he received education and began his state career (during the reign of Leo IV – 775–780). It is known that he was married to Megalo for a short time. Both spouses decided to abandon secular life and lead a monastic life. Theophanes founded the monastery Megas Argos on the southern coast of the sea of Marmara, near Sigrane and became its head. He attended the Second Council in Nicaea in 787, which condemned iconoclasm and restored worship of icons. As an iconophile, Theophanes found himself in opposition to emperor Leo V (813–820), who was an advocate of iconoclasm. The emperor persecuted Theophanes and exiled him to the island of Samothrace. There the chronograph died in 818.

Theophanes' *Chronographia* covers the period from 284 to 813 and continues the work by George Syncellus. The latter was a friend of Theophanes and allegedly asked him to continue his work before

his death, passing on the materials he had collected. This information became the basis for a discussion on the role Theophanes played in the creation of *Chronographia* – whether he was just an editor of the materials collected by George or should rather be considered a full-fledged author. Some scholars also believe that Theophanes the Confessor had no links whatsoever to *Chronographia*, and that it was another Theophanes who lived in the 9th century that was responsible for it.

The material follows an annual order. The description of events in each successive year begins with listing the number of the year from the creation of the world (Theophanes adopts the Alexandrian era – he assumes that it began on September 1, 5493 B.C.) and the year of the reign of the given Roman/Byzantine emperor, the Persian emperor (and, after the abolition of the Persian state, the Arabic caliph), the pontificate of the pope and the patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch. The system of dating within the indiction was also included in this order.

Chronographia is based on a number of sources, including those that have not survived to our times. These include works by Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodoret, Theodore Lector, Priscus, Procopius of Caesarea, Agathias Scholasticus, John Malalas (II), John of Epiphania, Theophylact Simocatta, George of Pisidia, the so-called *Megas Chronographos*, *Constantinople Chronicles*: from 668–720 and iconophile after 720. It is worth noting that Theophanes drew from eastern sources (probably one of his sources was *Chronicle* by Theophilus of Edessa, translated into Greek in Palestine in the second half of the 8th century, which he used when working on fragments concerning the Arabs).

Slavic Translation

In the Slavic tradition, Theophanes' work was probably known only in fragments. As Anna-Maria Totomanova has recently demonstrated, this source – like the *Chronographia* by George Syncellus, of which it is a continuation – was not translated into the Old Church Slavic language in a comprehensive form, but only within a historiographic compilation,

created in Byzantium in the 9th century. It included: extensive excerpts from the chronicle of Julius the African (3rd century), with a description of world history from the creation of the universe up to the resurrection of Christ (constituting about 2/3 of the text), the ending of the work by George Syncellus (dedicated to the period up to the reign of Diocletian – 284–305) and several initial paragraphs from Theophanes' narrative: from AM 5777 (AD 284/285) to AM 5816 (AD 323/324). The Slavic version of the *Chronographia* therefore ends with the description of the reign of emperor Constantine the Great (306–337). Moreover, compared to the original Greek text, there is a number of abbreviations and omissions. The translation in question was written in Bulgaria at the beginning of the 10th century. According to Anna-Maria Totomanova, the basis for that translation was an abbreviated version of the chronicle, identical to the version published by Carl Gotthart de Boor in 1883. The Slavic text has been preserved in five Rus' copies from the 15th to the 16th century (РГБ, 310.1289; РГБ, 98.863; РГБ, 98.908; РНБ, 728.1474; РНБ, 717.829/939).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The work of Theophanes contains a lot of information concerning both Muhammad (Mouamed, Moamed) and Arabs in the analyzed period. The Byzantine historian outlines the life of the founder of Islam (among other things, he mentions him being an orphan, his merchant activity, Khadija, his first wife, epilepsy, visions). He clearly describes him as a false prophet. He also provides a rudimentary description of Islam, drawing attention to the Muslims' faith in the eternal, very sensual reward (eating, drinking, relations with women) for participating in war. He labels Islam as a heresy, an immoral doctrine, and tells Christians to feel sorry for its misled followers. Theophanes outlines the history of the Arab expansion in the 7th and early 8th centuries (the conquest of the eastern provinces of Byzantium, the blockade/siege of Constantinople in 674–678, 717–718), the same time presenting Arabs as enemies of the Christian God, people who

are cunning, cowardly, prideful. He explains their victories not so much as the fruit of their bravery and ability, but the weaknesses of the Byzantines.

It must be clearly stated that Theophanes' work is an extremely important source of knowledge about the history of Byzantine-Arab relations. However, only a small fragment of the chronicle was known in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*, including a description of events from the 3rd and 4th centuries. It should be remembered, however, that *Chronographia* was one of the most important sources for George the Monk (Hamartolus – XX), whose work was highly popular in the literature of the Orthodox Slavs (mainly Eastern).

Editions

Greek

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Slavic

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XV

Nicephorus, the patriarch of Constantinople
Concise Chronography



Date: c. 821
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: late 9th / early 10th century, Bulgaria

Nicephorus was born in Constantinople in the 750s (752 or around 758) to a family belonging to the Constantinopolitan elite. His father, Theodore, was the imperial secretary. Nicephorus received a thorough education and, initially, he pursued a clerical career. For some time, he was the imperial secretary (he might have begun his career under Leo IV – 775–780). He was a subject of Tarasius, who became the patriarch of Constantinople in 784. Perhaps, after Irene took over autonomous power (797), he resigned from his career as a clerk and settled in a monastery he had founded, somewhere in the Asian suburbs of the capital. Probably, after the death of empress Irene (803), he returned to Constantinople and managed a shelter for the poor (unmentioned by name). After the death of patriarch Tarasius, by the decision of emperor Nicephorus I (802–811), Nicephorus was elected the new patriarch. He took the bishop's throne on April 12, 806. As an ardent defender of the cult of icons, he lost his position in 815 by the decision of Leo V (813–820),

who reverted to the iconoclastic policy. Nicephorus spent the last dozen years of his life in monasteries, first in Ta Agathou, near Chrysopolis, and then at St. Theodore's. He rejected the offer of emperor Michael II (820–829) to return to the patriarch's throne. He died in 828.

Nicephorus penned a number of texts, both theological – related to the dispute around the cult of icons (including *Antirrhetikoi*, *Apologeticus minor*, *Apologeticus maior pro sacris imaginibus*, among other works)– and historical (*Historia syntomos*, *Chronographikon syntomon*).

The *Concise Chronography* (Χρονογραφικὸν σύντομον) is *no more than a set of chronological tables* (Mango), covering the times from Adam until the year 828. It consists of lists of events starting with Adam to Babylonian captivity; indices of Persian rulers from Cyrus to the conquests of Alexander the Great; the Ptolemy dynasty until Cleopatra; the rulers of Rome from Caesar to Michael II; Roman empresses from Helena and Theodora, the wives of Constantius Chlorus (305–306); the kings of the ten tribes of Israel in Samaria; the highest Jewish priests from Aaron to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem; the bishops of Constantinople, the bishops of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch; canonical as well as dubious and apocryphal books of the Old and New Testament with the number of verses. Work on the final version of the text was completed around 821 (Treadgold). The text belongs to the so-called 'short chronicles.' It enjoyed considerable popularity. Some manuscripts contain supplementation that dates back to the 10th century. Circa 870, the *Concise Chronography* was translated into Latin by Anastasius the Librarian.

A large number of manuscripts has been preserved, representing two redactions of the text. Not all of them contain the above-mentioned lists. The oldest of them are: BL, Add. 19 390 (early 10th century); Oxford, Christ Church, Wake 5 (late 9th century); Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 24 (10th century). These, however, were not used by C. de Boor. His edition was based on other manuscripts, including: BNF, Reg. 1320; Bod. Barocci 196; Bod. Laud. 39; BSB, Gr. 510; BNF, Suppl. Gr. 67; BNF, Reg. 1711.

Slavic Translation

The chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus was translated into Old Church Slavic already during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927), in the capital of the Bulgarian state at the time, Preslav. An older redaction of the Greek text was probably the basis for the translation. The discussed work quickly spread across the literature of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, both in its southern and eastern parts, as an integral part of the so-called *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* – a Byzantine legal compilation, adopted on the Bulgarian territory before 927, and later accepted in Rus' in the mid-11th century. Due to its incompleteness, the oldest Old Rus' copy of this collection, the so-called *Efrem Kormchaia* (*Ефремовская Кормчая* – ГИМ, Син. 227), dated to the beginning of the 12th century, does not contain the work of patriarch Nicephorus. However, it can be found in its later copies, including РГБ, 304.I.207, fol. 285d–290c (a manuscript from the beginning of the 16th century). Manuscripts from this group feature the first Slavic text redaction, the contents of which is the closest to the Greek original.

In the 1270s, the second, extended redaction of the chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus was produced in Rus'. It was based on the Old Bulgarian translation, but was supplemented with materials taken from other historiographic sources. Its compilation is connected with the initiative taken as a result of the synod of the Rus' Church in Vladimir in 1274: a development of a new collection of church laws, the so-called *Russian Kormchaia* (*Русская Кормчая*), based of various earlier native texts and the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, which arrived to Rus' from the Balkans. The new church laws were intended to provide a basis for the functioning of the Rus' Church in conditions of dependence from the Mongols. The oldest preserved copy of this compilation – and at the same time, the earliest Slavic copy of the chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus – is *Новгородская Синодальная кормчая* from 1282 (ГИМ, Син. 132, fol. 567'–576).

In the second half of the 15th century, another, third redaction of the work was created in Rus'. It was based on both earlier Slavic versions and contained a number of interpolations and additions, developed on

the basis of other sources. The work of patriarch Nicephorus must have enjoyed extraordinary popularity in the Eastern Slavic territory. Over 50 manuscripts, representing many different variants and subvariants of the text, have been preserved; apart from the basic division into three redactions, researchers also distinguish four versions within the second redaction, and three within the third redaction. There are also manuscripts containing a rather unique form of the *Concise Chronography* (РНБ, 351.22/1099).

Moreover, borrowings from the chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus can be traced in original medieval Slavic works (Bulgarian and Rus'), including in the concise lecture on universal history from the creation of the world to the 9th century by Constantine of Preslav (so-called **Историкии**); in the *Tale of Bygone Years*; the astronomical and mathematical treaty entitled *Teaching on Numbers* by Kirik the Novgorodian, one of the most renowned Rus' intellectuals of the 12th century; as well as in the lives of prince Alexander Nevsky. Furthermore, the third redaction of the chronicle was included in several Old Rus' historiographic texts, such as abridged compilations from 1493 and 1495 or the *Nikon Chronicle* from the 16th century.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The name Muhammad appears neither in the Greek version nor in the three main Slavic redactions of the *Concise Chronography*. Similarly, Muhammad is not featured in Nicephorus' main historical work entitled *Historia syntomos*. Instead, they all mention the Saracens in paragraphs devoted to the rule of Heraclius (610–641), Constans II (641–668) and Constantine IV (668–685). The references are very laconic. They note the destruction of the Byzantine lands by the Saracens and the unsuccessful blockade/siege of Constantinople in the years 674–678 under Constantine IV. A mention of Muhammad is, however, found in the text of the historical compilation, based on the third redaction, preserved in the manuscript РНБ, 351.22/1099 from the second half of the 15th century. Its author was

Eufrosin, a monk from the St. Cyril Monastery in Beloozero. He drew from the materials of his contemporary, igumen Ignatius, who, in turn, used a late variant of the chronicle of patriarch Nicephorus. The interpolated passage about the Muslim prophet contains information that he lived during the reign of Constantine III (641), son of Heraclius (fol. 12).

Editions

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Slavic

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XVI

The Life of St. John of Damascus



(BHG 884)
Date: 808/969?
Original language: Arabic
Greek Translation: ?
Slavic Translation: no later than the 12th century

The *Life* was created on the basis of the *Life of John* (so-called *Ur-Vita*), written in Arabic between 808 and 969. The Arabic text has not survived. It is commonly believed that John VII, the patriarch of Jerusalem between 964–966, could have been the translator and editor of the Greek version of the *Life*. There are also views that it could have been the patriarchs of Jerusalem, John VI (c. 838–842) or John VIII (1098–1106/1107). John III, the patriarch of Antioch in the years 996–1021, also appears in the discussion about the authorship (Vassa Kontouma presented interesting arguments in favor of the latter concept).

It is presumed that the lost Arabic *Life of John* (*Ur-Vita*) was the basis of both the Greek *Life* and an Arabic text associated with the name of the Antiochan monk Michael (the end of the 11th century). More than 60 manuscripts of *Life* have survived, the oldest of which come from the 11th–12th century (ÖNB, Phil. 158; Athos Vatopedi 497; Athos Lavra 456; BM, Gr. VII 25; Chalcedon, Panaghia 10).

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of the life of St. John of Damascus, attributed to the patriarch John (**Житїе и жизнь прп^обнаго wц҃а нашего Іѡанна Дамаскына, съписанно Іѡанномь патрїархо^м Ѧндїѡхїискы^м**. Incipit: **Иже по wбразѣ Бж҃їю съхранившїимь**), was created in the Balkans, in the 12th century at the latest. This work has been preserved on the pages of several South Slavic manuscripts, including the codex from the Rila Monastery, № 2/23, fol. 301'–329 (15th century); the Serbian manuscript MSPC 91, fol. 96–109' (15th century); the manuscript from the Gračanica monastery, № 36, fol. 164–182 (15th century); BAR 327, fol. 151–171' (16th century); the Serbian *Torzestvennik* from the late 15th/early 16th century (РНБ, 182.53, fol. 131–144); the 16th-century collection of saints' lives from January to August (PBS 68, fol. 273–292'); the Reading Menaion for September, October and December from the 17th century (NBS 59, fol. 392–403), and two manuscripts from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos (№ 442, fol. 620–644'; № 462, fol. 1–36').

The discussed work probably arrived to Rus' at the end of the 15th century. Its oldest copy of East Slavic provenance, preserved to this day, is the Menaion Reader for December and January, dated to the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century (РГБ, 113.593, fol. 24'– 46'). *The Life of St. John of Damascus*, attributed to the patriarch of Antioch John, is also found in several other Rus' manuscripts from the 15th–16th century, including: РГБ, 98.279, fol. 148'–161'; РГБ, 304.I.176, fol. 1–24'; РГБ, 304.I.177, fol. 80–112'; РГБ, 173.I.90, fol. 31'–58'; РГБ, 304.I.688, fol. 277'–315'; РГБ, 304.I.746, fol. 161'–188'; РГБ, 304.I.748, fol. 1–25 (the beginning is missing); РГБ, 310.560. fol. 61d–71a; dated to 4.12.

In the years 1488–1508, Nil Sorski (1433–1508), one of the most eminent Old Rus' writers and thinkers of the late 15th century, included this text in his collection of saints' lives. His initiative, aimed at organizing the hagiographic material known in Rus' and gathering it in one collection, predated the undertaking of the metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563), who developed the Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*).

The second volume of Nil Sorski's compilation is currently stored at the Russian State Library in Moscow (РГБ, 304.I.684, fol. 177–198). In the mid-16th century, this text was also included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader by metropolitan Macarius: it was placed in the December volume, under the date 4.12 (ГИМ, Син. 989, fol. 35b–44b; ГИМ, Син. 177, fol. 46c–61a).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The *Life* is not deemed as a particularly good source of information about the life of John (Sahas) and must certainly be used with caution. As for issues related to Arabs, it does not contain many details. In addition to the ethnonym 'Arabs,' the author primarily uses the term 'Saracens,' and rarely 'Hagarenes.' The *Life* mentions the occupation of Damascus by the Arabs, their sea expeditions, during which many prisoners were captured, then sold or killed if there were no buyers (in this context, instead of the ethnonym Arabs, the "barbarians from Damascus" – ἐκ τοῦ Δαμασκοῦ βάρβαροι, is employed). Cosmas, an Italian monk, was supposedly one of those prisoners. Father of John pleaded with a Saracen archon for Cosmas' life and made him a teacher for his sons. The thread of John's relationship with the Saracen archon (alternatively, *archegos*), at whose side he was forced to serve as an adviser reaches its apogee in the story of how John, as a result of the intrigue carried out by the emperor Leo III (717–741), was accused of encouraging the latter to attack Damascus, defended by the sparse Saracen troops. For treason, the prince sentenced him to have his hand cut off, which was miraculously restored to him by the Mother of God. In this passage, the Saracen archon is described as a barbarian and an enemy of Christ. After this event, despite requests to stay in Damascus, John went to Jerusalem, to the Monastery of St. Sabas.

For the author of the *Life*, the Saracens are barbarians hostile to Christians. It is interesting, however, that this attitude did not encourage him to attack, or even criticize their religion.

Editions

Greek

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Slavic

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XVII

The Apocalypse of Daniel



Date: after the 820s
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translations: after the 10th century, Bulgaria & Rus'

In Byzantine literature, the *Apocalypse of Daniel* was known as several Christian pseudo-epigraphic works, attributed to Daniel of the Old Testament, and thus, associated with the Hebrew Bible. There were numerous texts inspired by the *Book of Daniel*, created both in Jewish and Christian circles, written in various languages (Greek, Coptic, Armenian, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Syrian). Multiple and different from each other, they were written over a long period of time, hence, the prophecies included in them were adapted to current circumstances. In this monograph, due to its thematic framework, only those that became popular in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area will be discussed.

A

The Vision of the Prophet Daniel on the Emperors and the Last Days and on the End of the World

Author: unknown
Date: beginning of the 9th century

Original language: Greek (not preserved)
Slavic Translation: 10th–11th century, Bulgaria

This is probably the oldest version of the Greek vision of Daniel that has ever been created. Little is known about it. All we can say with a degree of certainty is that the Church Slavic text is a translation of the lost Greek original. Relying on the identification of historical and geographical references, P. Alexander believes that the Greek protograph of the Slavic vision of Daniel was written in Sicily between 827 and 829, shortly after the Euphemius' rebellion and at the beginning of the Arab invasion of the island in the summer of 827, but before the death of emperor Michael II in October 829. W. Treadgold narrowed down this date even further: to the spring of 829, noting that the text contains a description of the expedition sent to the rescue of besieged Enna. The researcher also thinks that since the Church Slavic vision of Daniel and the pamphlet quoted in the *Life of St. Euthymius* predicted the death of Michael II and both texts were created in the spring of 829, they were the work of the same author, Methodius of Olympia. Treadgold also thinks that the Greek original was written in the East (its author knew about the expedition sent from there), perhaps in the capital itself, although the researcher admits that the author's knowledge of the island and Syracuse suggests his relationship with Sicily.

The Slavic vision of Daniel is conceptually similar to the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel/Pseudo-Daniel* (*Diegesis Danielis*) and it is possible that both relics may represent two versions of the earlier work. Similarly to many other Byzantine apocalyptic texts attributed to Daniel, the oldest vision of Daniel is based on various Greek redactions of the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (IX).

In the Slavic vision of Daniel, historical and apocalyptic threads are interwoven. At the beginning, the archangel Gabriel takes Daniel to a high mountain and shows him what will happen in the final days (cap. 1). A series of empires and emperors symbolized by animals (e.g. a lion) or objects (a scepter and horn) appear before Daniel's eyes. The names of these rulers are not revealed – we only know their initials (cap. 2) or

their numerical notation (cap. 3). After the rule of many men, of which the last four will wage a war and destroy each other, the emperor from Heliopolis (the City of the Sun) will come, who will achieve a great victory and enter the City of the Seven Hills, i.e. Constantinople, and bring peace to the people (cap. 3). Then he will send deputies to the West, but here, in the town of Tyrannis (**нарицаемаго Тyриниды**) (Syracuse? In the Slavic copies the name Sredec, i.e. Serdica, Sofia, appears), there will be a rebellion and acts of injustice, and then fights between unspecified rebels and persecutors of the local population will ensue. Next the island (Sicily, in the Slavic text: Danube) will be attacked by the Ishmaelites (cap. 4). A new ruler (cap. 5–6), whose name begins with the letter *tau* (cap. 8; in Slavic excerpts: **Столькофалеоу** or **Стонепанеи**), will manage to stop them. Later he will go to Rome through Lombardy (**Кардия**), where he will be met with resistance. He will leave Rome on the "same route" back to Constantinople and no one will stand in his way because God will be with him. His rival, whose name begins with the *sigma* (the Slavic text is unclear here: the name of three saints? three hundred chapters?), will flee from the capital to the East and perish miserably.

The next ruler will rule briefly and will be defeated by the emperor of Ethiopia (cap. 8). After him, Michael will take power. His rule will last 33 years and it will be a time of peace, joy and wealth. His successor will face the invasion of "unclean peoples" (cap. 10). Then a Roman emperor will rise to power, who will live in Jerusalem for 12 years. The vision ends when the Son of Perdition appears. When this happens, the Roman emperor will enter the place of the Skull (Golgotha), lay his crown on the cross, raise his arms to heaven, and give the Christian empire to God. And then the Son of Perdition will perform signs and wonders.

In the Church Slavic vision of Daniel, it is difficult to separate historical events from the mythical plan, but sometimes it is possible. In the description of the first beast, the ruler who will raise and destroy the altar, blaspheme against God, expel the priest from the throne and lose the power for some time to reclaim it, researchers see emperor Leo III the Syrian (717–741), the iconoclast who removed patriarch Germanus, was challenged by the usurper Artabasdus, but regained Constantinople.

The emperor with an animal name who will marry a woman from Hellas is considered to be Leo IV (775–780), and his descendant who rules along with his mother – Constantine VI (780–797). Irene (797–802) was depicted as an Amazon (a one-breasted woman, **ѥдьносьсица**). The description of her successor's struggle with a dangerous enemy, initially victorious but ending in failure, refers to the conflict with the Bulgarians. It is more difficult to prove that the origin "of the Gofin/Gopin family" (**ѿ рода готина / гофина / гопина**) refers to the Arabic roots of Nicephorus I (802–811), meaning, the Ghafna family of the Ghassan tribe.

Slavic Translation

Researchers lean towards the view that the oldest variant of Daniel's vision was translated into the Old Church Slavic language in the mid-11th century in the lands of the former Bulgarian state, which were then under Byzantine rule. This date seems to be supported by the South Slavic (mainly West Bulgarian) toponymous material, quite mechanically interpolated into the text of the revelation, appearing in the preserved copies of the relic. However, Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova are of the opinion that the linguistic features of the translation – demonstrating many similarities with the oldest Slavic translation of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (IX), made in Bulgaria during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927) – allow us to assume that it was already created in the 10th century. Identifying the cities in Sicily, which appear in the source text, with Bulgarian centers would be the result of interference by a later scribe.

Currently, five manuscripts are known, containing the discussed variant of Daniel's vision (**Видѣние Данила пророка. Ѡ цр҃ѣхъ и послѣдних҃ъ дн҃ехъ и ѡ коньчинѣ вѣка**):

- The manuscript from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos (№ 382/453, previous reference number: 24), dated to the end

of the 13th century or the beginning of the 14th century. It represents the Serbian redaction of the Church Slavic language while maintaining some linguistic features of the Bulgarian protograph. The text of the revelation, featured on fol. 68a–69d, is incomplete: the title and the first few sentences of the work are missing (incipit: **скипетрь ѿ чрѣсль юго, име юмоу пишетсѣ юлиньскомь писменемь**).

- The *Priest Dragol's Codex* (NBS, 651/632) – an Old Serbian manuscript from the third quarter of the 13th century. It contains the full text of Daniel's vision (fol. 234–240).

- The Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, № 56 – a Serbian convolute from the 15th to 18th centuries. The part containing the text of the revelation must have been removed and re-stitched at a later stage, without maintaining the correct order of the pages, however, the work in question has survived as a whole (fol. 185, 188, 189, 189').

- НБКМ, 309 – a manuscript of Bulgarian provenance from the late 16th century, containing fragments of Daniel's vision (fol. 154, 155', 90, 90').

- The codex of Bulgarian origin from the collection of the Center for Slavic and Byzantine Studies, № 17, from the first half of the 18th century. It contains the entire text of the revelation, although it is scattered on individual pages across the manuscript (fol. 15, 19, 109, 110').

In two manuscripts (NBS, 651/632, fol. 242'–247' and the Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, № 56, fol. 189', 188, 188', 190, 190'), the work discussed here is accompanied by a commentary (**Я се тлъкование Данилово**), which is an original South Slavic text from the 11th century.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

This variant of Daniel's revelations contains references to the beginnings of Muslim expansion in Sicily. After the description of the rebellion (most likely, the Euphemius' rebellion) in the city of Tyrannis, which should be identified with Syracuse, the Ishmaelites will enter the island and plunder it. They will go to a place called Mariana (**Мариянын**), where a rebel will settle them. Next, they will travel to a place called Enna (**Ѭньнеи**, the Slavic copies mention here Velbazhd, now Kyustendil). They will not seize it, however, because people will come to its rescue (cap. 4).

Daniel heard from an angel that God did not love Ishmael. He gave him the strength to occupy the land of the Romans. Because of the sins of its inhabitants, the honor of the priests will be blighted and sacrifices will not be made in churches. During this time, *in the seventh century*, the number of Ishmaelites will be fulfilled and once they have gained power, they will plunder Persia and Romania (Roman Empire) and other islands near Jerusalem, Calabria (**Лаврия**) and Sicily (**Сикилия**). And they will blaspheme saying: *The Romans are fleeing from our hands, in secret* (cap. 5). After leaving the city, called the Rebellious City (Syracuse, in the Slavic text: **Тыраниды Сръдца**), they will find God's messenger carrying two copper vessels for crumbs (alternatively: two coins to receive crumbs). They will capture a man named Stolkefaleu (**Столькофалеѹ** or **Стонепанеи**) and lead him to Acrodunion (Acradina, **Якродоуньнь**). And there they will anoint him immediately as the emperor. Earlier he was considered dead. He will set out against the Ishmaelites with fervor and a great many people. He will meet the Ishmaelites in a place called Perton (**Пертонъ**) and fight a fierce battle against them. And there will be a well with two outlets to mix the blood of the Romans and the Ishmaelites. And God will hand over the Ishmaelites to the emperor, and then release all the faithful (cap. 6). The ruler will dissolve his troops, build ships and send his forces deep into the Roman lands and tame the "red beards" (the Rus?). And this is how he will expel Ishmael.

B

The Apocalypse of Daniel (Pseudo-Daniel)

Date: early 9th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: 1672–1673, Russia

The *Apocalypse of Daniel* was written in Greek in the Byzantine Empire in the early 9th century. Most researchers (Aerts, Berger, Congourdeau, Olster et al.) support this dating. Currently, the date proposed by C. Mango, i.e. around 716/717, is rejected. Some fragments could have been written even centuries earlier than the date of the work as a whole would indicate. However, defining specific dates for apocalyptic sources is extremely difficult.

Dating of the text is possible on the basis of the historical event mentioned in it – the transfer of the empire from Constantinople to Rome (cap. 7.14), which was certainly an allusion to the coronation of Charlemagne as the emperor in Rome on Christmas 800. This belief is supported by the indication that, according to the *Apocalypse*, the last Byzantine ruler preceding this event was a woman (cap. 6.10), which most probably refers to Irene (797–802). The *Apocalypse of Daniel* was created at the beginning of the 9th century, between 801–802.

The place of origin of the Greek *Apocalypse of Daniel* was probably Constantinople, which is at the center of the author's interest (Berger suggested the Greek islands, but this supposition has not been widely accepted). The apocalyptic part shows Semitic influences. The sources of the apocalyptic part may have originated in Palestine or Egypt. If this hypothesis is correct, it can explain the sudden leap in the middle of the *Apocalypse* from the history of Byzantium in the 780s to the story of the coming of Antichrist.

The title varies depending on the manuscript and edition: *Diēgesis peri tōn hēmerōn tou Antichristou to pōsmellei genesthai kai peri tēs synteleias tou aiōnos – The Account of the Days of the Antichrist and How It Will Be and of the Completion of Time* (Macler 1895); *Tou en hagiois patros hēmon Methodiou episkopou logos peri tōn eschatou hēmerōn kai peri tou Antichristou – The Sermon of our Father Bishop Methodius Who Is among the Saints, about the Last of the Days and the Antichrist* (Istrin 1897). The Oxford manuscript identifies Methodius as the author. In the texts of modern researchers, the source also appears under various titles: *The Narration of Daniel about the days of the Antichrist and the end of times*, *Greek Daniel-Diegese* (Berger 1976); *The Daniel Apocalypse of 716/717 A.D.* (Mango 1982); *Apocalypse of Daniel* (Zervos 1983); *Apoc. Meth. Gr. E.* (Pertusi 1988); *Daniel-Diegese* (Martínez 1992); *Greek Daniel, First Vision* (Hoyland 1997); *The Apocalypse of Daniel* (Olster 1998); *Greek Apocalypse* (*or Narrative*) *of Daniel* (*Diegesis Danielis*) (DiTommaso 2001); *Diegesis Danielis* (DiTommaso 2005); *Dièġèsis* (*Narration*) *sur les jours de l'Antichrist* (Congourdeau 2014).

The text was discovered and published at the end of the 19th century. It should not be confused with many other medieval works attributed to Daniel or Methodius, such as the Syrian *Apocalypse of Daniel* from the 7th century, the Hebrew *Apocalypse of Daniel* from the 12th century or the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (IX).

The *Apocalypse of Daniel* contains elements parallel to such early sources as the *Sibylline Oracles* (between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD), 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, and the *Revelation of St. John* (all from the end of the 1st century AD). Based on previous traditions and sources discussing the final days, the author outlined his versions of the story of what was going to happen in the near future. The text can be divided into two parts. The first part (chapters 1–7) prophesies (*vaticinium ex eventu*) the Byzantine-Arab war of the 8th century and the enthronement of Charlemagne. The other chapters (8–14) describe the origin and personal characteristics of the Antichrist. In the historical part, the *Apocalypse of Daniel* describes the rule of several Byzantine

rulers: Leo III (717–741), Constantine V (741–775), Leo IV (775–780), and Irene (797–802).

The text of the *Apocalypse of Daniel* is preserved in its entirety in two manuscripts: a manuscript from the 15th or 16th century from the School of Medicine in Montpellier in France (405, fol. 105–115') and the 15th century manuscript at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Bod. Canon. Gr. 19, fol. 145–152). In addition, the Venetian manuscript from Biblioteca Marciana (BM, Gr. VII 22) contains a fragment of the *Apocalypse*. A. Kraft also lists: NLG, 1077, fol. 176–179' (1460–1465); NLG, 1350, fol. 28–30 (19th century); Meteōra, Monē Metamorphōseōs 338, fol. 63'–70 (17th century). The *Apocalypse of Daniel* has been preserved in various versions and redactions in Greek, Coptic, Church Slavic, Armenian, Arabic, and Persian.

Slavic Translation

One of the later redactions of the *Apocalypse of Daniel* was translated from Byzantine Greek into Church Slavic in 1672–1673 by Nicolae Milescu (1636–1708), known in Russia as Nikolaj Gavrilovič Spafarij – a Moldavian traveler, diplomat, writer, and translator working at the court of the tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. The translation was then included by him in the author's collection of apocalyptic texts, entitled *Хрисмологион*, which has survived to this day in a copy from the first decade of the 18th century (РГБ, 173.I.25). The *Apocalypse of Daniel* is featured there on fol. 224'–230.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The Arabs are present in the first part of the *Apocalypse of Daniel*. They appear at the beginning of the text. There they are called the sons of Hagar and the Ishmaelites. The three sons of Hagar – Ouaches, Axiaphar and Morphosar – entered Byzantium. Some set up a camp near Chalcedon. Other Ishmaelites attacked other cities and regions of the

empire – Antioch, Cilicia, Iberia, Anatolia, Smyrna, and Constantinople (the city on seven hills). Yet others invaded Persia, reached Trebizond and the borders of Armenia. They shed the blood of the Romans, killed children, starting from two years old and even younger.

Then the author of the *Apocalypse of Daniel* outlines the attack on Constantinople (undoubtedly, a reference to the siege of 717–718) – a huge number of the sons of Hagar (myriads of myriads) arrived on ships and gathered at the sea. He prophesies that many will deny Christ and follow the apostates. Sacrifice will cease in churches, God's liturgy will be ridiculed, and priests will be like laypeople. The Ishmaelites will mock Christians and their God who is unable to help them. Planning the invasion of Constantinople, the sons of Hagar will want to build a bridge made of boats in the sea to get into the city. Its inhabitants will flee, looking for shelter in the mountains and mountain valleys.

Finally, when the rulers of the empire start doubting God, he will help them by sending an emperor, who was thought to be "dead and useless." His name starts with the letter K and he comes from the outer Persian lands. This ruler, along with two boys, will lead those fighting against Hagar's sons and massacre them, waging the bloodiest war since the creation of the world. Only a handful of Ishmaelites will survive the massacre. They will serve the Romans. The ruler of the Romans will defeat all enemies, no one will resist him. He will bring peace, rebuild cities and fortresses, restore prosperity, and Christian worship. He will be 33 or 36 years old (differences between the manuscripts).

His successor, however, will be an evil ruler who will spread filth and injustice. The next ruler will be a mean and foreign woman (Oxford manuscript) or a foreign man (Montpellier manuscript). This will mean the restoration of fights and murders, and the destruction of churches. Women will give birth to the children of the infidels. Constantinople will be destroyed by fire, its walls will fall, and only the column of Constantine will be spared. Power will be transferred to Rome, while Daniel, king of the Jews, will reign in Jerusalem. The Jews will oppress Christians and bow to the Antichrist once he arrives. The *Apocalypse of Daniel* ends with the announcement of the Judgment Day.

C

The Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel

Date: unknown, probably the 13th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translations: 13th–14th century

The *Last Vision of Daniel* was written in the 13th century, although its original version existed in Byzantium before the 10th century (Pertusi). Between the 10th and 15th centuries, it was modified and adapted to the situation in the empire. Of the numerous Byzantine apocalypses and apocalyptic oracles attributed to Daniel, the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel* is preserved in the largest number of copies, but at the same time, it is one of the most difficult texts to decipher. In manuscripts, it appears under various, misleading titles. Most often it is Ἡ ἐσχάτη ὅρασις τοῦ Δανιήλ or Ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ προφήτου Δανιὴλ περὶ της συντελείας του κόσμου (Latin: *Ultima visio Danielis*).

F. García Martínez calls the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel* a rather random collection of short oracles rather than a proper apocalypse. Its text begins with the statement that three angels will be sent to earth. Each will be assigned a specific geographical area. The third one is allotted Asia, Phrygia, Galatia, Cappadocia, Syria, and Constantinople. The prophecy focuses on the fate of Constantinople, "a city on the seven hills." According to the prophecy, God will punish it with fire and water for the sins of its inhabitants. The city will be besieged by powerful armies, and its walls will fall like figs shaken off a tree. A young man will march against it, oppress it, place his scepter there, and put his hands on God's holy altars; and holy things will be desecrated and given to the sons of perdition. The sleeping snake will awake and strike the young man, and make its name famous for a short time. The sons of perdition will turn their faces west, and the sleeping snake will kill the saints. The seven hilled-city will be ruled by

a white race (people with fair hair) for six and five years (65?). Later, it will be invaded by the blood-feeding peoples of the North, which will split into four armies. The first will winter in Ephesus, the second in Malagina, the third in Akra-Kampos (Pergamum), and the fourth in Bithynia. They will accumulate large reserves of tree trunks and plunder the areas up to the borders. This will alert the peoples of the south and awake "the great Philip." They will gather in front of the city of seven hills and fight a war like never before, and human blood will flow through the streets of the city and the sea will be filled with blood to the Strait of Abydos.

When God decides that the punishment is sufficient, the Byzantines will discover a righteous man who will rule for 32 years and defeat all peoples, especially the Arabs, Ethiopians, Franks, and Tatars (cap. 47–59). He will be followed by another emperor who will reign for 12 years. Feeling death approaching, he will go to Jerusalem to offer his kingdom to God (cap. 60–61). This emperor will have four sons who will rule in Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Thessalonica, and who will kill each other during the civil war (cap. 62–65). A wicked woman will take over then, after whose reign, Constantinople will disappear beneath the surface of the sea (cap. 66–71), while in Thessalonica, another king will rule until this city also slides into waves (cap. 72–73). The *Last Vision* ends with the advent of Antichrist, the appearance of demons and other eschatological events (cap. 74–85).

We find many fragments of the *Last Vision of Daniel* in the other apocalypses of Daniel, especially, as Schmoldt shows in his commentary to the text, in the Greek *Vision of Daniel on the Future of the Seven-Hilled City*. The *Last Vision* also contains apocalyptic elements from texts attributed to figures other than Daniel, known e.g. from the *Apocalypse of Andrew the Fool*, which is part of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (XXIV).

Although the *Last Vision* undoubtedly contains some older elements, the original version of which may be one of the oldest apocalyptic texts of *Byzantine Daniel*, the reference to "the great Philip" (maybe Philip I, king of France, 1059–1108) in the preserved versions may indicate the turn of the 12th century as the time of its creation. The announcements of the rule of the fair-haired people in Constantinople, on the other hand,

may refer to the Fourth Crusade (1204). For this reason, most researchers date this text to the 13th century. However, there is no agreement on this issue. K. Berger proposes earlier dating (the 8th century), while L. DiTommaso gives a broad timeframe (the 10th–12th centuries).

The *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel* was first published on the basis of three manuscripts (BNF, Gr. 947; BNF, Gr. 2180; BM, Gr. II.125 – olim Nanianus 181) by Konstantin von Tischendorf. In 1893, A. Vasiliev published the second edition of the text based on two other manuscripts (BAV, Ottob. Gr. 418, fol. 298–300', and ÖNB, Phil. Gr. 162, fol. 164'–167'). Later, he wrote a short article listing variants of the text from the second Viennese manuscript (ÖNB, Iur. Gr. 6, fol. 201'–202'). In 1895, an edition of Erich Klostermann was published, who used the same three manuscripts as Tischendorf along with the second manuscript from the Biblioteca Marciana (BM, Gr. VII.38 – olim Nanianus 154). In 1897, V.M. Istrin prepared the next edition, using other manuscripts (mainly codex 217 of the Monastery of Koutloumousion at Mount Athos, fol. 181'–183'; codex BL, Harley 5734, fol. 42–45', and the Monastery of St. John (Patmos) codex 529, fol. 560–562'). He also pointed to a list of 11 manuscripts containing the copies of the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel*. The list of 12 other manuscripts was prepared by Wilhelm Bousset. In 1972, Hans Schmoldt prepared a critical edition of the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel*, along with a German translation and commentary. He based it on 19 manuscripts, the oldest of which comes from 1332/1333. Currently, more manuscripts containing the text of the *Last Vision* are known.

Slavic Translation

Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova are of the opinion that all the Slavic versions of the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel* preserved to this day are the copies of four independent translations of the work into Church Slavic, made in the Balkans in the 13th–14th century, i.e. soon after the creation of the Greek protograph. On the pages of the aforementioned *Priest Dragol's Codex* (NBS, 651/632) from the second

half of the 13th century, aside from the above-mentioned relics from the 10th–11th centuries, we find the text entitled **Стихъ. Видѣніе Данила пророка** (fol. 240'–242), which is a rather loose paraphrase of the *Last Vision of the Prophet Daniel*.

A comprehensive Church Slavic translation of the discussed work was written at the end of the 13th century or the beginning of the next century by a Bulgar associated with the literary school in Veliko Tarnovo. This translation, entitled **Пр҃рка Даніила прозрѣніе о послѣднихъ врѣмени и о антіхрїстѣ**, is faithful to the Greek original. It also enjoyed some popularity in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, both in its southern part and in Rus'. It has survived in three copies, of various provenance:

- БАН, 13.3.19, fol. 220'–224' – a copy of the Middle-Bulgarian manuscript, made by the Moldavian monk Gabriel in 1448.

- BAR, collection Cluj-Napoca, № 26 – a Moldavian manuscript from the 16th century. The text of the revelation (without the title) is found there on fol. 378'–380.

- The manuscript from the Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos, № 97 (previous ref. number: 50/3/308) from the mid-18th century.

Bulgarian Paleoslavists mention two other copies. They were once in the collection of the National Library in Belgrade, which was destroyed in a fire during World War II. Currently, they are known to researchers mainly thanks to the descriptions of L. Stojanović (NBS, 312, fol. 68–73' and NBS, 313, fol. 78–83).

Interestingly, in the 13th century, another comprehensive translation of the *Last Vision of Daniel* into Church Slavic was made, independent of the above-mentioned one. V.M. Istrin considered it as an Old Rus' translation. Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova, however, do not exclude the possibility that it was created in Bulgaria, and then gained popularity in Rus'. Its following copies are known:

- ГИМ, Хлуд. 241, fol. 132'–134' – a Serbian copy of the Bulgarian manuscript from the mid-15th century.

- РГБ, 310.1, fol. 422–423 – a Rus' *miscellanea* manuscript from the late 15th century.

- the so-called *Svarichevski Izmaragd* from the collection of A.S. Petrushevich, State Library in Lviv, from the 16th century. The text of the revelation can be found here on fol. 203–204.

According to V.M. Istrin, in the West Rus' *miscellanea* manuscript, dated to the mid-16th century (ГИМ, Чуд. 62/264), there is another Church Slavic translation of the *Last Vision of Daniel* from the 13th–14th century. The extraordinary popularity of this work in the literature of the Orthodox Slavs of the late Middle Ages, which resulted in the creation of several independent versions of the text, can be linked to the spread of apocalyptic sentiments in this area, caused, on the one hand, by the capture of Constantinople by the participants of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and, on the other, by the growing threat from the Ottoman Turks.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Muslims (the Ishmaelites) appear in the *Last Vision of Daniel* for the first time in the context of the battles with the Eastern and Western rulers, who will defeat them, chasing them up to Colonia. This was supposed to happen before the invasion of the blood-feeding peoples from the North. Once again, they are featured in the vision when the inhabitants of Constantinople, carrying out God's order, find a gray-haired, just, and merciful man and raise him to the throne. According to the vision, the four angels will take him to Hagia Sophia, crown him as emperor and put the sword in his right hand, ordering him to defeat

his enemies. Wielding the sword, the emperor will strike the Ishmaelites, Ethiopians, Franks, Tatars, and all other nations. And he will divide the Ishmaelites into three groups: he will strike the first one with the sword, he will baptize the second one, and he will hunt down the third group all the way to Monodendron (Colonia, 'one tree'). Peace and prosperity will prevail during his and his son's reign. It is unclear whether the Muslims from the *Last Vision of Daniel* are the Ottoman Turks or Seljuk Turks.

Editions

A

Slavic

Истрин В., *Откровение Мефодия Патарского и апокрифические видения Даниила в византийской и славяно-русской литературах*, vol. II, Москва 1897, p. 156–158.

Лавров П.А., *Апокрифические тексты*, "*Сборник Отделения русского языка и словесности Академии наук*" 67.3, 1899, p. 1–5.

Tăpkova-Zaimova V., Miltenova A., *Historical-Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria*, Sofia 2011, p. 152–160.

B

Greek

Die griechische Daniel-Diegese. Eine altkirchliche Apokalypse. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar, ed. K. Berger, Leiden 1976.

Истрин В.М., *Отк ровение Мефодия Патарского и апокрифические видения Даниила в византийской и славяно-русской литературах*, vol. II, Москва 1897, p. 145–150.

Slavic

Истрин В., *Откровение Мефодия Патарского и апокрифические видения Даниила в византийской и славяно-русской литературах*, vol. II, Москва 1897, p. 159–162.

C

Greek

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XVIII

Gregory Decapolite
The Historical Sermon About a Vision Which a Saracen Once Had



Date: the first half of the 9th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: before the late 12th / beginning of the 13th century, Rus' (?)

Gregory was born in Irenopolis, the Isaurian Decapolis in Syria at the end of the 8th century (c. 780–790 – Dvornik; before 797 – Mango). His parents were Sergius and Maria. He had a brother, unknown by name. Our modest and uncertain knowledge about him comes from his *Life*, written shortly after 842/843 by Ignatius the Deacon, a rhetoric lecturer at the school of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and after 845 – the bishop of Nicaea. According to the *Life*, Gregory left his secular life quite early and devoted himself to monasticism. First, he entered the monastery where his brother was staying, then he moved to the monastery of his uncle Symeon. Later, he lived in the hermitage for some time. He was a supporter and defender of icon worship. During the reign of emperor Theophilus (829–842) and the so-called Second Iconoclasm, he embarked on a journey to support iconophile environments. His journey led through Ephesus, Proconnesus, Ainos, Christopolis, Thessalonica, Corinth, Neapolis, Rome

(he stayed there for three months), Syracuse, Otranto, from where he went back to Thessalonica and then to Constantinople. The *Life* notes an episode of Gregory's contact with the Arabs. During the trip, after leaving Otranto, he allegedly encountered a unit of Arab warriors, one of whom wanted to kill him. When he raised the spear at Gregory, his hand stiffened. Gregory healed the attacker with his touch. In the last years of his life, Gregory struggled with epilepsy. The exact date of his death is unknown (before 841, in 841, or November 20, 842).

The *Historical Sermon* (*Logos historikos Gregoriou tou Dekapolitou*, *pany ōphelimos kai glykytatos kata polla*, *peri optasias hēn tis Sarrakēnos pote idōn*, *episteuse*, *martyrēsas dia ton Kyrion hēmōn Iēsoun*) is the only known work of Gregory. Its authenticity, despite some doubts and attempts to date it to the 14th century (Beck, Khoury), is now widely recognized. In it, Gregory described a certain Saracen, a relative of an Arab emir, converting to Christianity. Gregory supposedly heard this story from a Byzantine *strategos*. The Saracen decided to convert to Christianity after attending a service dedicated to St. George at a church which he initially wanted to transform into a stable for his camels. When they were brought into the church, despite resistance from Christian clergy, all the animals died. This shocked the Saracen so much that he decided to attend a service, during which he had a vision that prompted him to ask a local clergyman to present him the essence of Christianity. When he did this, the protagonist of the story decided to convert. On the advice of the priest, he went to the monastery on Mount Sinai, where he was baptized. He stayed in the monastery for three years, under the name Pachomius. Then he returned to the clergyman from the church of St. George, who advised him to go to the court of his uncle, confess his Christian faith and reject the teachings of Muhammad. He did so and, despite pressure from his uncle, he did not renounce Christianity, which ultimately led to his stoning by the Arabs. Pachomius' comportment and miraculous signs after his death allegedly spurred many a person to accept Christianity. It is believed that this situation may have occurred during the reign of Umar II (717–720) or Hisham (724–743) because some elements of the narrative indicate

that this happened at a time of emerging Sufi beliefs and practices among Muslims (Sahas).

The text is known from two manuscripts (only slightly different from one another): BNF, 1190 (from 1568), and BAV, 1130 (16th century).

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of Gregory Decapolite' work must have already existed at the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 13th century, when – as experts agree – the so-called first redaction of the Old Rus' Prologue (a collection of short hagiographic texts: prologue lives) was created. There is no doubt that the *Historical Sermon* was included in this compilation on November 26, i.e. on the day of the consecration of St. George's church in Kiev, built by prince Yaroslav the Wise (1016–1054) in the mid-11th century. The story of Gregory Decapolite is found in numerous preserved copies of the first redaction of the Prologue, the oldest of which date back to the 13th century, including: РГАДА, 381.1.156, fol. 81c–82c (the second half of the 13th century); ГИМ, Син. 239, fol. 103d–104c (1313); РГАДА, 381.1.157, fol. 61a–61d (the first three decades of the 14th century); РГАДА, 381.1.163, fol. 77a–77d (1356); РГАДА, 381.1.158, fol. 92d–93b (the end of the 14th century); РГАДА, 381.1.162, fol. 135b–136a (the turn of the 15th century); РГАДА, 381.1.154, fol. 120d–121d (the late 14th/the first half of the 15th century); РГАДА, 381.1.155, fol. 81d–82c (the late 14th/the first half of the 15th century); РГАДА, 381.1.160, fol. 96a–96d (the third decade of the 15th century).

A similar variant of the *Historical Sermon* was also included in the so-called second redaction of the Old Rus' Prologue, probably compiled in the first half of the 14th century. It is represented by the following manuscripts: РГАДА, 381.1.164, fol. 177a–178a (the first half of the 14th century); РГАДА, 381.1.161, fol. 156b–157a (the second half of the 14th century); ГИМ, Син. 247, fol. 135b–135d (the second half of the 14th century); РГБ, 304.I.33, fol. 160d–161d (the turn of the 15th century); ГИМ, Син. 244, fol. 139d–140c (the turn of the 15th century); ГИМ,

Син. 248, fol. 100c–101a (1406); РГАДА, 381.1.165, fol. 78b–79b (the late 14th/first three decades of the 15th century); РГАДА, 381.1.153, fol. 151a–151d (the end of the 14th/the first half of the 15th century).

The work in question does not appear in the Old Rus' Menaions but it was included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563), a monumental compilation from the mid-16th century. It was placed in the November volume, dated to 26.11 (РНБ, 728.1319, fol. 719b–719d; ГИМ, Син. 988, fol. 1213b–1213d; ГИМ, Син. 176, fol. 1555c–1556b). It can also be found in certain *miscellanea* manuscripts, e.g. РГБ, 113.530, fol. 418'–422 (the mid-16th century); РГБ, 304.I.599, fol. 192–193' (16th century).

The Slavic version is either a fairly loose paraphrase of the Greek text or a translation of a redaction different than the variant published in *PG*, vol. 100. First of all, it is worth paying attention to the fact that in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area, this text was not considered the work of Gregory Decapolite, but an anonymous story entitled *A Word about a Saracen, Baptized under the Influence of the Vision He Experienced in the Church of St. George* (**Слоⷮ ѡ Сорочининѣ крⷣстившимъсѧ ѿ видѣния ѥже видѣ въ црⷣви сⷯго Георгиѧ**). Furthermore, its contents include several significant differences compared to the Byzantine version preserved to this day, e.g. in the Slavic version of the story, the main character was said to have been baptized in Jerusalem by the local patriarch and only later went to the monastery on Mount Sinai to become a monk.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

In Gregory's story, Muhammad is described as unclean (in a religious sense) or bloodstained (μιαρός), and above all, as a false prophet (**лжаго прр°ка Махмета**). His followers are shown in a bad light, as cruel, contemptuous and hostile to Christians. Gregory consistently refers to the Arabs as the Saracens (Σαρρακενοὶ, **Сраꙗини/Сорочини**). Some scholars believe that in this particular case, the term should be understood in a religious rather than ethnic sense (Maksimov).

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XIX

The Formula of Abjuration of Islam



Date: the mid-9th century
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: before 927, Bulgaria
(in the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles*)
2nd Slavic Translation: after 1219, Serbia
(in the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*)
3rd Slavic Translation: late 14th century, Rus'
(in the *Euchologion of the Great Church*)

The anonymous rite of abjuration of Islam and conversion (or rather re-conversion) to Christianity has been preserved in the manuscripts from the 13th–14th century (e.g. BAV, Palat. 233 from the 14th century, or ÖNB, 306 from the 14th century). The time of its creation is unclear. It is believed that it could have been written as early as the 8th century, but surely before the mid-9th century. Its dating to the 12th century has been rejected. During the time of patriarch Photius (858–867, 877–886), it was included in a set of other related formulas, namely: the abjuration of Judaism and Manichaeism. Due to some similarities between the ritual and chapter 101 of John Damascene's treatise *On Heresies* (XI), the formula's authorship was sometimes attributed to him. The text that has survived to this day is associated with Nicetas Choniates (ca. 1155–1215/1216).

Form-wise, the ritual was based on the Byzantine Church's formulas of abjuration of other religions, e.g. Judaism. It consists of anathemas and shows some knowledge of the *Quran*, Hadiths and the use of existing anti-Islamic polemics. It features, for example, 13 quite loose quotations from the *Quran* (Surah 2.25–26, 2.158, 3.49, 4.43, 5.6, 22.5, 31.29, 38.73–74, 47.15, 56.20–21, 70.4, 83.25–28, 112.1–4).

In the text, the followers of Islam are consistently referred to as the Saracens. The name Muhammad appears in the forms Μωάμεδ and Μουχοῦμετ. The ritual details the specific principles of Islam that those who wanted to become Christians would have to renounce. First was the statement that Muhammad is a prophet and messenger of God, followed by, e.g. the references to the successors of Muhammad, the *Quran*, the teachings on Paradise, marriage, the rise of the human kind, the sanctuary in Mecca, God (*This is one God*, *'holosphyros' [made of solid metal beaten to a spherical shape] who neither begat nor was begotten*, *and no-one has been made like him* – trans. by D.J. Sahas), and Christ. It also mentions the Arabs' worship of the goddess Aphrodite, called by them Habar, meaning "Great" (it is the only time when this ethnonym appears).

The ritual is an interesting reflection of Byzantine views on Islam and its creator from the mid-9th century. Little is known about the practical application of the formula of abjuration of Islam. It could have been useful during the Byzantine victories over the Arabs in the 10th century.

Slavic Translations

The ritual of abjuration of Islam was translated into Church Slavic several times. It was first translated probably at the beginning of the 10th century, during the reign of Symeon the Great (893–927) in Preslav, as an integral part of the third redaction of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles* (the so-called *Syntagma*), formed at the turn of the 9th century in Constantinople. The copies of this legal compilation were brought to Rus' from the Balkans in the 1040s, most likely by the Bulgarians who had emigrated to the Eastern Slavic territory after the collapse of their

country in 1018. However, it should be remembered that the oldest copy of the Slavic version of the *Nomocanon in Fourteen Titles – Efrem Kormchaia* (*Ефремовская Кормчая* – ГИМ, Син. 227), preserved to this day, is not comprehensive, hence, it does not contain the text of the ritual. However, it can be found in later copies of this set of laws, including РНБ, 717.1056/1165, fol. 356'–359' (from the end of the 15th century).

The Old-Bulgarian translation of the ritual (**Чинъ бываѧ на^ѧ wбращающимсѧ ѿ Сорочинъ къ чистѣи нашеи непорочнѣи истиннѣи вѣрѣ хрїстїаньстѣи**) was probably also included in the so-called *Russian Kormchaia* (*Русская Кормчая*), compiled in the seventh decade of the 13th century, based on previous legal collections and the *Nomocanon of St. Sava*, resulting from the provisions of the 1274 Synod of the Rus' Orthodox Church in Vladimir on the Klyazma River. Its oldest preserved copy is *Новгородская Синодальная Кормчая* (ГИМ, Син. 132). The translation of the liturgical rite discussed here, concurrent with the variant preserved in manuscript РНБ, 717.1056 / 1165, can be found in the following manuscripts:

- the Chudov redaction of the *Russian Kormchaia* (cap. 98): РГБ, 304.I.205, fol. 439'–442' (the end of the 15th century); РГБ, 304.I.206, fol. 454'–457' (the beginning of the 16th century);

- the Sophia redaction of the *Russian Kormchaia* (cap. 43.VI): РНБ, 728.1174, fol. 262'–265' (the 1580s).

The ritual of abjuration of Islam was translated into Church Slavic for the second time in Serbia after 1219 (**Чинь бываѥщии надь wбращающими сѧ ѿ Срацины къ ч^ст^ѣи истиннѣи хр^стияньсц^ѣи нашеи вѣрѣ**). This translation became popular in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area as an integral part of the so-called *Nomocanon of St. Sava* (cap. 64.III). It has been preserved in a fragmentary form in the oldest existing copy of this legal compilation, the so-called *Ilovitsa Codex* from 1262 (HAZU III c. 9, fol. 396b–398d), and in its entirety – in the 14th-century manuscript from the Old Orthodox Church Museum in Sarajevo, № 222,

fol. 361b–364a). The *Nomocanon of St. Sava* was adopted in Rus' as early as the 1270s, when the metropolitan of Kiev Cyril II received a copy of this compilation from the Bulgarian despot Jacob Svetoslav (Rus' by origin, he ruled in the western Old Mountain by the decree of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Asen II). The oldest Old Rus' copy of the afore-mentioned set of laws is the so-called *Ryazan Kormchaia* from 1284 (*Рязанская Кормчая* – РНБ, F.п.II.1). The formula in question is featured there on fol. 399d–402c.

As Tatiana Afanasyeva has recently shown, in the 1380s, another Church Slavic translation of the ritual of abjuration of Islam was created, completely independent of earlier translations. The discussed work was translated within the *Euchologion of the Great Church* – a Byzantine collection of texts used during liturgical rites in the Constantinopolitan Basilica of Hagia Sophia. The initiator of the translation was probably metropolitan Cyprian Tsamblak (1389–1406). The text of the ritual has been preserved in a parchment codex from the end of the 15th century (ГИМ, Син. 675, fol. 207'–217) and later Rus' *Trebniks*, e.g. РНБ, 717.1085/1194, fol. 194–199 (from 1505).

In the mid-16th century, when the Kazan Khanate was annexed to the Moscow State and, consequently, there was an increase in the number of conversions from Islam to Eastern Christianity, the discussed formula gained in interest. It can be found on the pages of *miscellanea* manuscripts, e.g. РГБ, 173.I.175, fol. 492–499 (the first half of the 17th century); РГБ, 173.I.196, fol. 78'–86 (first half of the 17th century); РГБ, 304.I.739, fol. 541–549' (17th century); РГБ, 304.I.741, fol. 280–291' (17th century). This work was also used by the creators of the compilation *The Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* (**Сказаніе о хулнѣй вѣрѣ Срацинѣстѣй**), preserved, e.g. in the *Nikon Chronicle*.

Editions

Greek

Saracenica sive Moamethica opera Friderici Sylburgii, Heidelberg 1595, p. 74–91.

Nicetae Ordo qui observatur super iis qui a saracenis ad nostrum christianorum puram veramque fidem se convertur, [in:] *PG*, vol. 140, col. 124–136.

E. M o n t e t, *Rituel d'abjuration des musulmans dans l'Église grecque*, "Revue de l'Histoire des Religions" 53, 1906, p. 145–163.

Slavic

1st Church Slavic translation:

Syntagma XIV titulorum sine scholiis secundum versionem Palaeo-Slovenicam, adjecto textu Graeco e vetustissimis codicibus manuscriptis exarato, eds. V.N. B e n e š e v i č, J.N. Š č a p o v, vol. II, Serdica 1987, p. 135–147.

2nd Church Slavic translation:

Zakonopravilo or the Nomocanon of Saint Sava. The Ilovica Manuscript from 1262. Photoprint reproduction, ed. M.M. P e t r o v i ć, Gornji Milanovac 1991, fol. 396b–398d (facsimile).

Sarajevo Rudder Zakonopravilo of St. Sava from the 14th Century, Dobrun 2013, fol. 361b–364a (facsimile).

3rd Church Slavic translation:

А.П. Я б л о к о в, *О происхожденіи чина присоединенія мухаммеданъ къ православной христіанской вѣрѣ*, Казань 1881, p. 21–28.

Translations

French

E. M o n t e t, *Rituel d'abjuration des musulmans dans l'Église grecque*, "Revue de l'Histoire des Religions" 53, 1906, p. 145–163.

Serbian

Чин који се врши над онима који се обраћају од Сарацена нашој чистој и истинитој хришћанској вјери, [in:] *Сарајевски препис Законоправила светог Саве из XIV в. Превод*, transl. С. Продић, С. Стјепановић, Добрун 2015, p. 326–329 (2nd Church Slavic translation).

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XX

George the Monk (Hamartolus)
Chronicle



Date: 846/847; before 867; after 867; after 870
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: late 10th / early 11th century, Bulgaria
2nd Slavic Translation: 14th century, Bulgaria, Serbia
or the Hilandar monastery at Mount Athos

Almost nothing is known about George the Monk (Hamartolus), author of *Chronicon syntomon*. In some manuscripts he is referred to as ἁμαρταλός ('sinner'). He was probably a monk in one of the Constantinoplean monasteries. It is unclear when exactly his work was created. Researchers indicate that it was written under Michael III (842–867), in 846/847 (Afinogenov), before 867 (Hunger, Karayonopoulos-Weiss), after his death (Moravcsik, Wasilewski), or after 870 (Markopoulos, Treadgold). Suggestions of a later date (Regel), during the reign of Leo VI the Philosopher (886–912), have failed to gain broad approval.

Chronicon syntomon, whose full title is *Chronicon syntomon collected, combined and interpreted from various chroniclers by George the Monk and Sinner*, belongs to the world history genre and covers the history from the creation of the world until 843 (the restoration of Orthodoxy after the second period of iconoclasm).

There were two versions of this work. The earlier one (according to Afinogenov; it was allegedly written in 846/847; Marie-Aude Monégier du Sorbier, however, believes it should be dated later) is known from the manuscript BNF, Coislin 305 (10th century or early 11th century) and a one-page fragment in the codex ÖNB, Theol. Gr. 121 (10th century). The later version (after 871), sometimes referred to as *vulgata*, is known from 29 manuscripts. In addition to the mentioned manuscripts, the oldest among them include: BNF, Coislin 310 (10th century); Messanensis 85 (10th/11th century); Esc. Φ I 1 (11th century); Patmiacus 7 (11th century); BML, LXX, 11 (11th century); ÖNB, Hist. 40 (11th century).

Chronicon syntomon is divided into four fundamental parts: I – secular history from Adam to Alexander the Great; II – biblical history from Adam to Roman times; III – the fate of Rome from Caesar to Constantine the Great (306–337); and IV – from the times of the latter to 843. As for the source basis, for the Byzantine period, which is of interest to us here, George used first of all *Epitome* by Theodore Lector, from the otherwise unknown epitome of *Chronographia* by Theophanes. The period 813–843 is considered his own work based on documents and his own observations.

George was a compiler, he often literally quoted his sources, but his original contribution is evident (Afinogenov). *Chronicon* was written without any care for the chronology of events, with a tendency to present stories of a moralistic and anecdotal character. There are more than forty such stories. For this reason, George earned the moniker of a "short-story writer." He is also an author with a penchant for polemics (against Jews, Muslims, heretics or emperors-iconoclasts). George's work was quite popular – as evidenced by the large number of preserved manuscripts (30) and the fact that it was translated into Church Slavic – which was probably to some extent a consequence of the accessible language. *It is better to garble the truth than to lie in Plato's language* – he wrote in the preface to his work.

Slavic Translations

There is a huge body of scholarly literature dealing with the issue of how the Chronicle of George the Monk (as well as its continuation) was incorporated into Medieval Slavic literature. Most scholars, to summarize the long debate, are of the opinion that the first translation came into being in Bulgaria in the late 10th or early 11th century and was quickly transferred to Rus', where it was further edited. Some, e.g. Ludmila Gorina, maintain that the *Chronicon* (including its continuation) found its way into Old Rus' writings through some Bulgarian historiographical text that reached Rus' after 1018. Others, however, argue for the Rus' origin of the oldest Slavic translation of the Chronicle of George the Monk.

The Old Bulgarian translation (the so-called *Временник*) survives in a dozen or so copies, representing two variants of the text. Thus, there are four manuscripts containing the earlier redaction of the Slavic translation of the chronicle: the oldest of them is dated to the beginning of the 14th century (РГБ, 173.I.100), while the remaining ones originated in the 14th–16th centuries. However, copies representing the older redaction of the translation are of no use for our research, as this variant of the Chronicle of George the Monk only reaches the year 553. The later redaction of the text, textologically dependent on the original one, is likewise known from roughly a dozen copies (some complete and some fragmentary), dating from the 15th–17th centuries. The manuscript РГБ, 310.1289, from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, is considered the most representative of them all.

In the first half of the 14th century another Slavic translation of the Chronicle of George the Monk was made, which was completely independent of the above-discussed tradition (the so-called *Летовник*). Its basis was the older version of the Byzantine text. The translation has the features of the southern orthography of the Church Slavic language and was done probably in Bulgaria, Serbia or in the Hilandar monastery at Mount Athos. Currently, there are at least 13 known Serbian copies of the translation, dating from the 14th–16th centuries. Some of them

constitute a part of the collections of Russian institutions: ГИМ, Син. 148 (a manuscript from 1386, brought to Russia in 1655).

Excerpts from George the Monk' Chronicle undoubtedly enriched the Old Rus' discourse on Islam, functioning in the East Slavs' literature also within the scope of native compilation texts on anti-Muslim themes, e.g. the story *On Bohmit the Heretic* (**Ѡ Бохмите ересиѣ**), in the version that appears on the pages of the *Troitsky Chronograph*, the second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, the *Rogozhsky Chronograph*, the *Illuminated Chronicle of Tsar Ivan the Terrible*, the Reading Menaions and manuscripts of the *miscellanea* type (XXXV).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

George the Monk (Hamartolus) was about two hundred years apart from the era when Muhammad taught and Arab followers of Islam launched their first attack on Byzantium, he used the accounts by earlier authors when writing sections of interest to us herein. Thus, strictly historiographical sequences describing the youth and first appearances of Muhammad and the invasion of the Arab armies in the eastern Byzantine Empire were compiled by George the Monk based on a Greek-language chronicle by Theophanes.

The author of *Chronicon* included information on Muhammad (Μουχούμετ, Μωάμεθ), describing him as a false prophet (ψευδοπροφήτης), a mad and godless man (δυσσεβής, παραπαίοντος), and called his teachings heresy. It should be noted that he mentions the name of Allah (Αλλά). George mentions Muhammad's marriage to Khadija. He refers to the illness – epilepsy and the hesitation of his wife before she was the first to recognize him as a prophet and announce it to her tribesmen.

The most extensive part of the analyzed story is a kind of polemical text, presenting the most important – according to our author – dogmas of Islam and elements of ritualism/customs of Muslims. And this part of George the Monk's narrative is essentially dependent on earlier sources. Quite a large fragment was taken from a comprehensive treatise

by Michael Syncellus, an East Christian author with Arab roots, writing in Greek. In one of the Byzantine copies of George the Monk's chronicle, currently in the collection of the National Library of France (BNF, Coislin 305, fol. 312'), we find a mention that an earlier work by Michael Syncellus had been woven into the text about Muhammad.

The remaining portion of the Hamartolus' text is probably the original work by George the Monk. Although he draws information about the religious imagery of Muslims from earlier accounts, including the chapter on Islam in the treatise by John of Damascus *On Heresies* (XI) and *Disputation between a Christian and a Saracen*, whose author is considered to be either the latter or his Arabic-speaking pupil, Theodore Abu Qurrah, he nevertheless infuses them with his own unique style. As researchers emphasize, George the Monk distinguishes himself from previous East Christian authors writing about Muhammad and Islam (including Theophanes and Michael Syncellus quoted here) by exceptionally harsh and uncompromising tone of expression. He fiercely argues with Muslims, describing them with hostile and often even offensive epithets.

George the Monk also notes the most important episodes of the Byzantine-Arab struggle in the 7th and early 8th centuries, including the blockade of Constantinople in 674–678, during the reign of Constantine IV (668–685), without any further details; the battle of Sebastopol in 692; the struggle for North Africa during the reign of Leontius (695–698); the siege of the Byzantine capital in 717–718 (during the reign of Leo III – 717–741).

Editions

Greek

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Slavic

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В.А. М а т в е е н к о, Л.Н. Щ е г о л е в а, *Книги временные и образные Георгия Монаха*, vol. I–II, Москва 2006–2011.

2nd Church Slavic translation:

Летовник съкращень от различных летописьць же и поведатели и избрань и съставлень от Георгиа грешнаа инока, Санкт-Петербург 1878–1881 (facsimile).

Translations

Russian

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XXI

The Life of St. Constantine-Cyril (the Philosopher)



Date: after 869 and before 882/885
Original language: Old Church Slavic

Since 863, St. Constantine-Cyril conducted a Christianizing mission in Great Moravia along with his brother, Methodius. Traditionally, Constantine is recognized as the creator of the oldest literary language of Slavs (Old Church Slavic) and the first alphabet designed for its transcription (the Glagolitic script). *The Life of St. Constantine-Cyril* was most likely produced within his circle of students, probably soon after his death in 869 (and before 882/885). Suggestions for a later dating of this text (the end of the 9th century, 9th–10th century or 13th century) made by some scholars did not gain support. The issue of the authorship of this work has not been resolved unambiguously. Saint Methodius and Clement of Ohrid have been indicated as hypothetical authors, among others. There is also a hypothesis about the collective authorship by Constantine's students, involving Methodius. With a high degree of probability, it can be assumed that the author of *Life* was a Slav, a well-educated man, familiar with the Byzantine culture and associated with Byzantine Christianity. *Life* was most likely written in Moravia in Old Church Slavic (in Glagolitic script) and modeled on Byzantine works of this genre. Experts rejected the view that it was originally written in Greek and then translated

into Old Church Slavic. The author had a good knowledge of the early life of Constantine-Cyril, which is explained by the fact that he either obtained it from him personally or from St Methodius. Constantine's later life was probably known to him from his own experience.

There are about 60 complete copies of *Life* (15th–18th centuries) and a significant number of extracts from it (the earliest come from the 13th century). The oldest known manuscript, ГИМ, Барс. 619, is of Old Rus' provenance and was written at the beginning of the 15th century. Other manuscripts, often used in studying this text, also come from that century, including РНБ, 728.1288/478 (the second half of the 15th century) and РГБ, 173.I.19 (the last quarter of the 15th century). Most of the preserved manuscripts (over 80%) represent the Old Rus' redaction of the Church Slavic language while others are most often of South Slavic provenance (Serbian and Bulgarian). It is believed that *Life* arrived in Rus' from Bulgaria, where, as more copies were made, it gradually adopted a linguistic character native to Rus'.

Some scholars allege that the polemical parts of *Life* inspired the creators of the Old Rus' story of prince Vladimir the Great's conversion to Christianity in the Byzantine rite, which was included in the oldest Kiev Chronicle, *The Tale of Bygone Years* (AM 6494/AD 986), and disseminated throughout the historiography of medieval Rus' via this work (XXIX).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Threads on Muhammad appear twice in *Life*. First, in chapter 6 in reference to Constantine's involvement in the Byzantine mission at the court of the caliph Al-Mutawakkil in the 850s (in 851, and most likely, in 855/856), and then in chapter 11, in the story of a delegation to the khagan of the Khazars in 860. It is widely recognized that both Byzantine legations indeed took place. Subsequent missions from Constantinople to Baghdad and the theological disputes of their participants with the followers of Islam are also noted in Arabic sources. The role that Constantine

supposedly played in these messages was certainly exaggerated by the author of *Life*, who makes him the central figure.

In the first case, according to the hagiographer, Constantine refuted the attacks of his Arab interlocutors regarding the Holy Trinity. He also pointed to the superiority of Christianity over Islam. In this polemic, Constantine demonstrated his knowledge of the *Quran* (although not very accurate – Ivanov), which is explained by the fact that before leaving for Baghdad, he had had the opportunity to familiarize himself with the comprehensive Greek translation of the holy book of Islam, which was created in Constantinople around the middle of the 9th century (Brzozowska). In the text, there are two loose references to the *Quran*: Surah 19.17 in chapter 6 and Surah 3.49 in chapter 11. It is noteworthy that Constantine-Cyril, or rather the author of *Life*, does not resort to the Byzantine anti-Muslim literature in his polemic with the Arabs.

Interestingly, outside the sphere of religious polemic, the author of *Life* shows respect to the achievements of the Arabs (he calls them the Hagarenes or Saracens) in the field of science (e.g. geometry or astronomy) and recognizes their wealth while simultaneously accusing them of particular malice and an attempt to poison Constantine (!).

In the second case, Constantine was claimed to participate in a discussion between the representatives of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, based on which the khagan of the Khazars would select the religion for his subjects. Constantine disavows Muhammad as a prophet, citing Daniel's prophecy that no prophet would appear after the coming of Christ. In that passage, Muhammad is explicitly called a liar.

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XXII

The Life of St. Gregentius, archbishop of the Himyarites (St. Gregory of Taphar)



(BHG 705–706)
Author: unknown
Date: the mid-10th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: the second half of the 14th century,
the Xeropotamou Monastery on Mount Athos

According to the hagiographic tradition developed in the 10th century, Gregentius (Γρηγέντιος), son of Agapius, in the middle of the 6th century was the archbishop of Zafar (Taphar), the capital of the Himyarite Kingdom (Yemen/al-Yaman, the ancient *Arabia Felix*). There are three texts associated with the figure of Gregentius (passed on together or separately): his biography (*Bios*, *Life*), the collected laws for the Himyarites (*Nomoi*), and a dispute about the true faith with a Jewish law teacher, Herban (*Dialexis*). The most popular part was *Dialexis*, which circulated independently, as evidenced by numerous manuscripts. The texts were collected into one whole, known as the *Dossier of St. Gregentius*, no earlier than in the 10th century. As a continuous text, they were found only in one manuscript BNF, Coislin 255.

The *Life of St. Gregentius*, written in Greek, has also been preserved in the Slavic translation. The name of its author is unknown. In some

manuscripts, the text was attributed to the bishop of Najran (John or Palladius). A. Berger thinks that it was penned by a monk who lived in the Monastery of Maximina. The *Life is St. Gregentius* is largely fictitious and built around legends, although its last part has certain historical value. Jean-Marie Sansterre called it "a hagiographical romance."

The *Life of St. Gregentius* could not have been created in the 6th century, because it contains a number of ahistorical fragments. For example, the bishop was supposedly born in the "country of the Avars," who had not come to the Balkans until the end of the 6th century, therefore, long after his birth. He could not have venerated the icon of Christ in the basilica in Lateran nor visited a series of churches built in the 8th and 9th centuries. It was formerly believed that the *Life of St. Gregentius* was written in Rome in the middle of the 9th century. However, more data indicates that the text was completed a century later, in Constantinople in the 10th century. *Nomoi* and *Dialexis* are later additions. The author of the *Life* modeled this work on the biography of Gregory of Agrigento. He might also have drawn from the itinerary of St. Vincent.

According to the *Life*, Gregentius received his name in honor of a local holy man. However, in the days preceding Gregentius, this name cannot be found in other sources. The Latin suffix may or may not indicate its western origin. His name may come from Agrigentius – "a man from Agrigento." It may also be a combination of the name Gregory and Agrigento or the name of St. Vincent (Vincentius). When encountering this unusual name, several later scribes changed it to Gregorius (Gregory). It appears in this form in all Slavic versions, in the Arabic translation of *Dialexis* as well as on the fresco depicting Gregentius at the monastery in Koutsovendis, Cyprus (12th century). Other versions of the saint's name are Gregentinus and Rhegentius.

The source is divided into 10 chapters. In the first eight, the chronology and geography are unclear. According to the *Life*, Gregentius was born at the end of the 5th century in the town of Lyplianes (Ljubljana), in the land of the Avars. He traveled across northern and central Italy and Sicily, meeting numerous pious Christians, visiting ascetics and the graves of deceased saints. During these travels, Gregentius became a deacon and

a lector in the church. He experienced visions and wrote homilies. His guide was a mysterious holy man whom he met multiple times along his way.

Historical events or the names of the rulers appear only in the prophecies that Gregentius receives during his travels. They all relate to his future mission in Yemen. The ninth chapter, based on solid historical sources and containing more precise details, has a different character.

The *Life of St. Gregentius* has been preserved in relatively numerous manuscripts. The full text is included in: Sinaiticus Graecus 541 (dated to 1180); BNF, Coislin 255 (13th–14th century; catalog: 12th–13th century); Athos Karakallou 42 (14th century); Athos Dionysiou 183 (16th century); Athos Lavra 347 (Γ 107) (13th–14th century); Athos Philotheou 109 (15th century); Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 467 (dated to 1487). In some other manuscripts, only fragments of the *Life* appear. The 19th-century manuscripts from Mount Athos contain its Modern Greek paraphrase: Athos, Skete Hagias Annas, 85.4 (19th century); Athos Vatopedi 92 (dated to 1876); Athos Kausokalybia 258 (dated to 1858). A complete list of manuscripts containing the *Life of St. Gregentius* as well as other texts related to Gregentius or attributed to him is provided by Albrecht Berger. There, you can also find a discussion of the textological tradition of the *Life of St. Gregentius*.

Slavic Translation

The *Life of St. Gregentius* and *Dialexis* were translated into Church Slavic in the second half of the 14th century. The annotation found on the pages of the manuscript made at the Xeropotamou Monastery in 1462, currently stored in the library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences in Bucharest (BAR, Slav. 137, fol. 413), informs the reader that the translation was written by the Serbian monk Anthony (secular name: Arsenius Baraš), a writer and translator of Byzantine patristic and hagiographic texts. Interestingly, in the Slavic tradition, the saint discussed here became known as Gregory, the bishop of the Himyarite city of Taphar (**Григорїа,**

епⷭпа бывша, иже въ Ѡмиритѣ градѣ Тафарона), and *Dialexis* received the title of *A Disputation with the Jew Ervan* (**Прєнїє съ Жидовиномъ Єрваномъ**). Both works became popular in South Slavic literature. The oldest Serbian transcript preserved to this day is the codex from the Visoki Dečani Monastery (Деч. 98, fol. 1–277), dated to the last quarter of the 14th century. The *Life of St. Gregentius* was also included alongside the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* within the collection of hagiographic texts, prepared by Vladislav the Grammarian at the request of Demetrius Cantacuzene in 1469 (HAZU, III.a.47, fol. 2–63'). The following copies of South Slavic provenance may also be indicated: the Serbian codex from the 14th century (BAR 288, fol. 1–112); the Moldavian *miscellanea* manuscript from 1441 (BAR 165, fol. 1–138'); the 15th-century codex from the Rila Monastery (№ 2/23, fol. 363–556'); a copy from the 16th century (MSPC, Гр96, fol. 1–253); a manuscript from the collection of the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć, dated to 1561 (№ 95, fol. 1–202'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 16th century (ГИМ, Щук. 505, fol. 154–314'); a fragmentary copy from the Pljevlja Monastery dated to 1550–1560 (№ 107, fol. 1–114').

The works discussed here arrived in Rus' no later than in the 1430s. Some of their East Slavic copies contain an annotation that these texts were transcribed by a man named Athanasius Rusin in 1431/1432 from a manuscript located in one of the Great Lavra sketes on Mount Athos. Curiously, in the Slavic tradition, the biography of St. Gregentius (Gregory) along with the text *Dialexis* attributed to him functioned either as separate manuscripts or as part of *miscellanea* codices. Several Rus' copies from the 15th and 16th centuries have been preserved: ГИМ, Син. 419 (a manuscript made for prince Vasili Yaroslavovich in 1452); РГБ, 37.411 (former signature: 178.411), fol. 342c–453'; РГБ, 173.1.159, fol. 1–253 (from the first half of the 15th century); РНБ, 351.45/1284 (15th century); РНБ, 728.1210, fol. 74–200' (1440–1450); РНБ, 717.802/912, fol. 23–135 (from the second half of the 15th century); РГБ, 98.52, fol. 182–319' (from the beginning of the 16th century); РГБ, 304.I.772, fol. 1'–195 (16th century).

At the end of the 15th century, the Slavic translation of *Dialexis* was used by Joseph Volotsky (around 1440–1515) as one of the sources of polemic arguments in his anti-heretical treaty (*Просветитель*) directed against

the followers of the heterodox movement, the so-called Judaizers (*жидовствующие*), which was spreading in northern Rus' in the late 15th century.

In the mid-16th century, the *Life of St. Gregentius* (Gregory), along with the anti-Jewish text attributed to him, was also included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563): it was placed in the December volume, on 19.12 (ГИМ, Син. 989, fol. 348a–413c; ГИМ, Син. 177, fol. 476a–549d). Interestingly, within this compilation, the works discussed here were put right before *Doctrina Iacobi*.

The Arabs

Chapters 9–10 of the *Life of St. Gregentius* are key for Arab and Islamic scholars. They describe Gregentius' mission in southern Arabia, which is announced in earlier chapters. The hermit Arthadus, whom Gregentius met while wandering around Italy, predicted his future activity in the land of the Himyarites. He mentioned the names of the rulers during whose reign it would take place and foretold Gregentius' converting various nations: pagans, Jews, Himyarites, and Moors. Gregentius heard this prophecy for the second time from an Armenian preacher. Under his influence, he sailed to Alexandria in Egypt, where a female slave presaged that Protherius, bishop of Alexandria, would appoint Gregentius as the bishop of the Himyarites (in fact, Timothy III/IV, 517–535, was the patriarch at the time). This was going to happen in response to a letter from the king of Ethiopia.

Chapter 9 informs us about what happened in the land of the Himyarites: in the days of the Roman emperor Justin I (518–527), Elesboam (Elesboas, Ella Atsbeha or Ella Asbeha, also known as Kaleb) – the ruler of Ethiopia, Dounaas (Yusuf Dhu Nuwas; actually: Yusuf As'ar Yath'ar, also known as Masruq) – king of the Himyarites, and Protherius (Timothy III/IV) – Alexandrian patriarch, the aforementioned Dounaas conquered the city of Negra (Najran) in the kingdom of the Himyarites, murdered the Christians living there along with their leader, Arethas (VIII), and made

a treaty with the king of Persia. At Justin's request, Elesboam, the ruler of Axum (Ethiopia), embarked on expeditions against the Himyarites, defeated them, killed their king and baptized people. He then asked Protherius to send him a bishop. Protherius, inspired by St. Marc, consecrated Gregentius against his will as a priest and bishop.

Next, Gregentius and Elesboam's envoys set out on their way and through Ethiopia, they reached Taphar/Zafar. The author of *Bios* lists temples erected in the Himyarite cities by the order of the Ethiopian king. He also mentions the destruction of pagan temples in Najran per his command. During his stay in the land of the Himyarites, Gregentius consecrated churches built by the king in Najran, Zafar and other cities while providing them with priests. Gregentius also appointed bishops for all the cities of the country and ordered people to be baptized (under the penalty of death for refusal), which also happened.

After 36 months in the Himyarite kingdom, Elesboam returned to Ethiopia, abdicated the throne to his son Atherphotham, and chose the life of a hermit on Mount Ophra. Before leaving, he appointed Abram as the new Himyarite king (in reality, it was Sum(u)yafa' Ashwa', or Esimiphaios from Byzantine sources), leaving him an army of 15,000 men. Gregentius participated in the nomination of Abram – God pointed him out to Elesboam, answering the prayers of the bishop. Elesboam appointed the son of the martyr Arethas as the local ruler in Najran.

We learn about the persecution of Christians in Najran from other sources, including the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* and the *Book of the Himyarites*. Also, Ethiopian expeditions against the Himyar are known from numerous epigraphic and literary sources in Greek and other Christian Oriental languages. In some way, the *Life of St. Gregentius* continues recounting the events in southern Arabia. Gregentius' activity in this region begins when the author of the *Martyrdom of St. Arethas* ends his story.

Islam cannot be, and is not, present in the *Life of St. Gregentius*. However, there are references to it in *Dialexis*. The Arabs appear in it as "hated Hagarenes" and "the tribe of Ishmael". Some scholars suggest that in reality, the discussions with Jews disguise the arguments

against Islam. A. Berger saw references to Islam in several passages in this text, but pointed out that Islam was not the *Dialexis*' main concern.

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XXIII

The Life of St. Basil the Younger



(BHG 263–264)
Author: Gregory (?)
Date: the mid-10th century
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: the late 11th century
or the beginning of the 12th century, Rus'
2nd Slavic Translation: the 14th century, Bulgaria

Nothing is known about Gregory, who introduced himself as Basil's pupil and the author of his *Life*. Even his existence is sometimes questioned. If he was a historical figure, he must have outlived his protagonist, who died in 944 or 952. In a number of manuscripts, he is called a monk. It is also uncertain whether the entire *Life of St. Basil the Younger* was written by one person. G. da Costa-Loullet believes that the original version of the *Life*, written by Gregory, did not contain the long passages on Theodora and Gregory himself. She attributes its authorship to a later, anonymous author.

The *Life of St. Basil the Younger* (Βίος καὶ πολιτεία καὶ μερικὴ θαυμάτων διήγησις τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλειου τοῦ Νέου, συγγραφεὶς παρὰ Γρηγορίου τοῦ μαθητοῦ αὐτοῦ; *Vita St. Basilii iunioris*) was most likely written in Constantinople, perhaps around the mid-10th century. It is usually dated to 956–959. The *terminus post quem* is marked by

the death of patriarch Theophylact, whom Gregory readily criticizes; the *terminus ante quem* is the death of Constantine VII (913–959), as the text mentions his joint reign with his son Romanus II (945–959), but fails to make a reference to the independent reign of Romanus (959–963). The *terminus ante*, however, can be moved to 961 (the death of Romanus' mother, Helena Lecapena), and even to 963 (the creation date of the *Vision of Cosmas*).

It is possible that the commissioners and readers of the work were the representatives of the imperial administration. The protagonist of the *Life*, Basil the Younger (Βασίλειος ὁ Νέος) is thus called so as to distinguish him from other ascetics of the same name. The story of Basil is told by Gregory, one of the saint's students. The action was set in the first half of the 10th century. Chronologically, the *Life* is divided into three parts, separated by long time lapses. There is a 17-year gap between the first and the second part, while the second and third parts are 20 years apart.

The *Life* does not contain any information about the family background of Basil, who removed himself from the world as a young man and lived as a hermit in a deserted place in Asia Minor. One time, the courtiers of the Byzantine emperor were passing by him and were disturbed by his strange appearance. They assumed that they might be dealing with a spy. They captured the ascetic and brought him to Constantinople. Here, he was subjected to brutal interrogation by the patrician, the *parakoimomenos* Samonas.

The official tried to question Basil about his identity and origin. All the saint revealed was that he was a stranger on earth, which only increased the patrician's suspicion. Basil was tortured, but still refused to reveal his name, background or any details of his ascetic life. When Samonas called him impious, Basil accused the official of leading an unclean life. Angry, Samonas ordered his men to hang the saint upside down, with his hands and feet tied. When Basil was released three days later, it turned out that he was alive and unharmed. Samonas attributed this miracle to sorcery and ordered Basil to be devoured by a lion. When the animal showed no aggression towards the saint, it was decided that he ought to be drowned in the sea, but two dolphins escorted him ashore to the Hebdomon. This

episode was said to have taken place in the tenth year of the joint reign of Leo VI (886–912) and Alexander, which was in 896. The problem is that Samonas had not assumed the position of the *parakoimomenos* until 907.

From that moment on, Basil's life improved. In Constantinople, he met a sick man named John who was suffering from a fever. He healed him and accepted his invitation to stay at his house. He became famous, and believers swarmed to him for advice and guidance as well as for healing. Among those who visited Basil was a certain Gregory, who became his student and later wrote the detailed *Life* of his teacher.

After the death of John and Helena, Basil moved to the house of Constantine Barbarus, the successor of Samonas as the *parakoimomenos*, in the Arkadianai district. There, he spent the rest of his life, with the exception of a week at the Grand Palace of Constantinople and a brief period when he was a guest at the house of Anastasius and Constantine Gongylius – the brothers from Paphlagonia and the relatives of Barbarus – near the port of Eleutherius. As they were said to have been highly respected by the rulers of the time, it can be assumed that this is the period of the regency of empress Zoe Carbonopsina in the years 914–919.

The action of part of the *Life* takes place during the reign of Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944), specifically, after the death of his son Christopher (931) and at the time, when seven people of imperial rank stayed in the palace (Romanus, his two sons, their wives, Helena – the daughter of Romanus, and her husband – Constantine VII). During his stay at the Grand Palace, Basil reprimanded Romanus I on his greed and lust. The emperor humbly accepted these reproaches. Basil also persuaded a certain Cosmas, who had ambitions to become emperor, to abandon his earthly pursuits and become a hermit near Nicomedia. This story seems to be based on the life of the monk Cosmas, who had a famous vision in 933.

According to the *Life*, Basil died on March 26, during Lent, which corresponds to the year 944 or 952. The earlier date is more probable. He was supposed to be 110 years old at the time of his death. He was buried in the private Church of Theotokos on the Asian side of the strait, across from the capital. In fact, it is not at all certain whether Basil was a historical figure. A number of researchers doubt his existence.

Despite these doubts, the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* is firmly embedded in the historical reality of the 10th century, and his hagiographer gives the impression that he knows this reality first-hand. However, the chronology is inconsistent and has serious gaps. The text mentions a number of historical events, such as the death of emperor Christopher Lecapenus and the Hungarian invasion of the Balkans. These events were often identified in reference to Basil's prophetic abilities. He was said to have predicted the rebellion of Constantine Doucas in 913 (described in the second part of the *Life*), the attack of the Rus' on Constantinople in 941, the coup d'état planned by Romanus I's son-in-law – Romanus Saronita, and the birth of the children of Helena Lecapena and Constantine VII (described in the third part of the *Life*). Basil prophesied that Helena would give birth to a daughter, and then a son named Romanus. Since Romanus II was born in 938, this prophecy could not have been written until the mid-930s.

A large part of the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* is comprised of the posthumous *Journey of Theodora's Soul* (Basil's servant) and the visions of the Resurrection and the Last Judgment. Both of these parts are of great importance in the Slavic tradition. The visions are interspersed with descriptions of individual episodes from the life of St. Basil, however, it seems that for the author, eschatological questions were more important than encouraging the dissemination of his cult.

The *Journey of Theodora's Soul*. At the request of Gregory, who wanted to know the truth about the afterlife, Basil made the late Theodora appear to him. She told him about the trials she faced immediately after her death and showed him where she was staying in the afterlife. She told him about the torments of her soul after death and how the power of St. Basil's prayers helped her. After she died, her soul had to pass through 21 toll houses, each guarded by demons and dedicated to exposing a specific sin. The angels told her that at baptism, each person receives a guardian angel who records his or her good deeds, and a demon – the sins. If there is a shortage of good deeds at any of the toll houses, the demons will throw a person's soul into Hades. The Ethiops, representing the demons,

carried the documents recording all the sins of Theodora. She had to counterbalance them with good deeds, which ran out at the fifth "gate". Basil saved her by delivering a scarlet bag full of gold, symbolizing his supernatural good deeds. Theodora successfully passed through the toll houses, entered Heaven and saw God.

Visions of the Last Judgment. The vision of the Last Judgment was revealed to Gregory when he uttered a heretical thought that perhaps the Jews would ultimately be saved since they were the chosen people. In response, he heard an angry invective against the Jews, who had not accepted the Son of God sent by the Father and had crucified him. Gregory asked to be sent a sign confirming his faith and received a vision of the Last Judgment.

The *Life of St. Basil the Younger* exists in four Greek redactions. Abridgments and paraphrases of the *Life* are also known in the Byzantine tradition. One such alteration became the source of its Arabic translation, made in Damascus in 1693 (*The Life of St. Basil the Younger and the Description of the Vision that Theodora, His Maid, Saw When Her Soul and Body Were Separated*). The *Life of St. Basil the Younger* has been preserved in whole or in part in 24 manuscripts from the 12th–19th centuries. The 16th-century manuscript ГИМ, Син. греч. 249 is the most complete. There are also two manuscripts from the 13th century. NBF, Gr. 1547 is an abridged text, where less flowery language is used. It was published by François Combefis in *Acta Sanctorum*. Codex Iviron 478 from Mount Athos contains only visions, without any biographical or historical material. It was published by S.G. Vilinskij. Other important manuscripts include: BNF, Gr. 1547 (13th century); NLG, Gr. 1018 (14th century); Bod. Holkham. 86 (14th century); BM, App. VII. 35 (14th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 1685 (17th century); BM, App. II. 125 (15th century); Athos, Monastery of St. George 25 (15th century); Athos Iviron 478 (13th century); NLG, Dionisiou 187; Damask. Orth. Patr. 227 (acc. to a different numerical system – 1639, dated to 1790); Sinaiticus Graecus 532.

Slavic Translations

The earliest Church Slavic translation of the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* was written in Rus' at the end of the 11th century or at the beginning of the next century (Incipit: **Пρєбжєтвєныи Дв҃дъ вѣщаа рєчє, в памѧть вѣчноую боудєть правєдьникъ**). It must have existed already in the second decade of the 12th century, when the variants of the *Tale of Bygone Years* (also known as the *Russian Primary Chronicle*) were created – the text of the oldest Kiev chronicle contains clear borrowings from the discussed relic, e.g. in the description of prince Igor's attack on Constantinople (AM 6449/AD 941). As shown by Tatiana V. Pentkovskaya, the basis for this translation was a Greek manuscript, representing the second variant of the first redaction (BHG 263), related to the manuscript NLG, Dionisiou 187 from 1328. The text of the Old Rus' translation of the *Life* can be found in only a few copies, the oldest of which come from the end of the 15th and early 16th centuries, incl. РГБ, 98.162, fol. 1a–206b (without the beginning, from the second quarter of the 15th century); РГБ, 200.46 (the beginning of the 16th century).

Excerpts from the oldest translation of the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* also existed in Old Rus' literature as separate literary works. A small passage from the *Life* was included in the East Slavic legal compilation (the so-called *Мерило Праведное*), drawn up at the end of the 13th century. It can be found in its oldest copy: РГБ, 304.I.15, fol. 53–53' (from the 14th century). In the so-called first redaction of the Old Rus' Prologue, created at the end of the 12th century or at the beginning of the 13th century, we find a short life of St. Basil the Younger, based on the work discussed here (under the date 26.03). Within the so-called second redaction of the Old Rus' Prologue, most probably compiled in the first half of the 14th century, the aforementioned prologue life was included under the date 22.11. Under December 30, a short hagiographic text was placed, devoted to St. Theodora of Constantinople, which is also a paraphrase of part of the extensive life of St. Basil the Younger. Fragments devoted to the journey of St. Theodora around the afterlife also existed in Old Rus' literature as an independent work (e.g. БАН, 13.3.21, fol. 88). In the 12th–13th centuries,

the text *A Word on Heavenly Powers* was written here on the basis of the eschatological part of the *Life*.

In the 14th century in the Balkans, another translation of the *Life of St. Basil the Younger*, independent of the above-mentioned Church Slavic translation was created (Incipit: **Непостижимаго Бг҃а о члчьстѣмь родѣ преблагаго и чл҃колюбиваго**). Its authors relied on a Greek manuscript related to the copy of Athos Iviron 478 (the 13th century), representing the third redaction of the text (BHG 264), in which the hagiographic episodes are abridged, and the main content is the *Journey of Theodora's Soul* and the *Vision of the Last Judgment*. Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova believe that this translation was made in Bulgaria during the reign of tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–1371). It has been preserved in several South Slavic manuscripts, incl. РНБ, 588.61, fol. 1–106 (from the mid-14th century); РГБ, 270.1470, fol. 1–60' (14th–15th centuries); a manuscript from the church in Nikolec, № 53, fol. 127–232' (15th–16th centuries). In Rus', the Middle-Bulgarian translation of the *Life* probably became known as early as in the 14th century. Its oldest East Slavic copy comes from the first quarter of the 15th century (РГАДА, 201.16).

Both Church Slavic translations of the life were included in the Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) by metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563), a monumental compilation from the mid-16th century; they were placed in the March volume, under the date 26.03: ГИМ, Син. 992, fol. 633a–747d (the Old Rus' translation); fol. 748a–791a (the Bulgarian translation).

The Arabs, Muhammad, and Muslims

Muslims do not play a significant role in the historical part of this work. There is only a single reference to the *parakoimomenos* Samonas, whom the author describes as "the son of Hagar" (Hagarene), who converted to Christianity, and achieved the high rank of a patrician (*patrikios*) during the reign of emperor Leo VI. Samonas appears as a villain in the *Life*. When Samonas interrogates Basil, the ascetic does not stoop to answer him.

Samonas is a historical figure. He was indeed an Arab, a eunuch, captured in battle by the Byzantines and converted to Christianity. He was in the service of Stylianus Zaoutzes, but when the latter was preparing a revolt, Samonas revealed his plans to emperor Leo VI. Soon, he became the right hand of the ruler who valued him and raised him to the dignity of a patrician. Even his unsuccessful escape from Constantinople did not hurt him. Leo made him the godfather to his son, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, despite Samonas' questionable orthodoxy. He lost his influence only when he began to scheme against the eunuch Constantine Barbarus, whom he had gifted to the imperial couple and who took his place.

The *Life of St. Basil the Younger* shows that the Byzantine society was open-minded in the mid-10th century. A former Muslim could achieve a very high position. It is worth remembering that the same phenomenon happened on the Muslim side, as evidenced by the career of Leo of Tripoli. Samonas' conversion is also confirmed by other sources, hence, on this point, there is no reason to doubt the testimony of the *Life*, despite its hagiographic nature.

More references to Muslims appear in the eschatological part of the work. According to it, the "Hagarenes and Saracens", along with other dissenters (Jews, pagans and heretics of all kinds), shall initially be struck by a vision of the Holy Cross, which will cause their panic and make them tremble. These emotions will only intensify once they hear the singing of angelic choirs praising the Father and Son of God, who has returned into the world to judge the living and the dead. Muslims, similarly to the representatives of other confessions, shall feel the infinite error of their religious ideas and the lawlessness associated with them. Next, all heresiarchs are supposed to be judged: among them, "the foolish Arius", followed by "damned Muhammad".

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XXIV

Nicephorus
The Life of St. Andrew the Fool (Salos)



(BHG 115z)
Date: the 10th century
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Translation: the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century, Rus'
2nd Slavic Translation: the 13th–14th century, Bulgaria (?)
3rd Slavic Translation: no later than in the 14th century, Serbia
4th Slavic Translation: the 13th–14th century, Bulgaria (the *Apocalypse*)
5th Slavic Translation: the mid-15th century, Rus'

Andrew of Constantinople, the protagonist of the Byzantine hagiography, was also known as Andrew the Fool (Salos, Σαλός). He belonged to the group of so-called "holy fools" who embraced being considered insane in order to serve Christ. His fate was described in the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Life of St. Andrew Salos*; Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ᾽Ανδρέου τοῦ διὰ Χριστὸν σαλοῦ).

The author of the *Life* introduced himself in the last fragment of this text. He wrote that his name was Nicephorus and he was a priest of the Great Church, named after the Wisdom of God, in the queen

of cities (Constantinople). He declared that he described what he had seen with his own eyes and partly what he had learned from Epiphanius, the archbishop of Constantinople. This would mean that he lived in the 5th century, during the reign of emperor Leo I (457–474). However, this is fiction. The actual author, who lived in the 10th century, did not admit to writing the *Life*, pretending to have discovered a hitherto unknown document that had been written in the 6th century by Nicephorus, the priest of Hagia Sophia. Because the name Nicephorus was rare in early Byzantium, it is possible that it was indeed the name of the real author. His knowledge of the topography and history of the capital shows that he was a resident of Constantinople, or at least, that he lived there from an early age. It cannot be excluded that he was a priest. He had basic education but lacked formal literary schooling.

The narrator of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*) places his protagonist during the reign of emperor Leo I (457–474) and claims that he was a contemporary of his. He pretends to be a witness to Andrew's career and makes great efforts to cover the traces of his time. However, he failed to avoid anachronisms, e.g. he presents Symeon of Emesa (the 6th century), who was a model for Andrew, as a figure from the "olden days".

The dating of this work is being debated by specialists. It is certain that the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* could not have been written before 650 nor after 1000. However, it is difficult to indicate the exact time of its creation. C. Mango thought that the text was written in the 7th century, before the Iconoclasm. In his opinion, no fear of the Arabs reflects the optimism prevailing in the empire over the years 680–695. His arguments were shared by J.F. Haldon. There are many indications, however, that it is L. Rydén, the translator and publisher of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, who is right – and he dates the text to the sixth decade of the 10th century. He relies mainly on its stylistic and ideological comparison with other texts from the 10th century, including the *Life of St. Basil the Younger* (XXIII), the *Life of Niphon of Constantia*, and the prologue to the *Life of Philaretus* in its revised version from the 10th century. Most researchers agree with Rydén's opinion.

A special feature of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* is that in addition to the main character, there are others: Epiphanius, a disciple of Andrew; and his biographer, the priest Nicephorus. Therefore, it is not a biography in the strict sense, but a "hagiographic novel" with several characters.

In the work, Andrew is a young and handsome 'Scythian' boy who came to Constantinople as a slave during the reign of Leo the Great. He showed great intelligence and beauty. His owner, *protospatharios* Theognostus, decided that the boy should get an education. In his dream, Andrew received an order from God to become a "holy fool" and an announcement that he would defeat the devil (cap. 1). He confided his dream to Nicephorus, the author of the *Life*. When subsequent dreams confirmed earlier announcements, Andrew began to behave like a madman. When he committed his first insane act (he undressed himself and cut his clothes into pieces), he was chained to the church of St. Anastasia (cap. 2–3). Hopes that he would be cured of madness were futile, and St. Anastasia herself encouraged his decision. After four months, he was released as his illness was declared incurable (cap. 5).

From that moment, the young man began to live like a beggar in the streets, behaving as if he were mentally ill. As a result, he was ridiculed and abused: he was beaten and trampled, hit on the head with a truncheon, his hair was pulled out, he was spat on, and dragged along the streets by a rope that restrained his legs. He was slapped on the face, which people smeared with charcoal and ink. He was treated this way not only because he was considered a fool that could be despised, but also because his behavior, often extravagant and shocking, meant the violation of commonly accepted social norms (relieving himself in public, pretending to be intoxicated with wine, etc.) (cap. 19), and therefore aroused the indignation and aggression of the crowd.

In subsequent episodes, the author of the *Life* outlines the events from Andrew's life. He devoted a lot of attention to the description of the mortification, which the young man inflicted on himself. The saint suffered hardships, slept among the dogs (cap. 5), refrained from eating and drinking, or quenched his thirst by drinking water from puddles. He

also had to face threats to his morality. One time, he was dragged into a brothel and provoked by prostitutes who stole his robe. On a number of occasions, he was tempted by Satan and had to fight his armies. Both the devil and his minions often appear in the form of Ethiops.

Living in total humility and impeccable purity, Andrew receives the gift of prophecy, experiences visions, and levitates during prayer. One of his skills is the ability to expose the real characters of different people (e.g., he exposed the sodomite-eunuch, cap. 17) and to reveal the unclean forces (e.g., he unmasks the devil who, having assumed the form of an old woman, accuses him of being a bandit, cap. 12). During an epidemic in Constantinople, with the help of Daniel the Stylite, Andrew drives it away via prayers. When they begin to call on God, fire comes down from heaven and burns the Ethiop, whose hands are dark, stained with blood and drip with destruction (cap. 30).

The saint performs many a miracle, exposes thieves (cap. 22), fights off demons that appear everywhere, both at the funeral of a rich man and in the church. He predicts future events (cap. 29), punishes a grave plunderer (cap. 31), and combats mages (cap. 35). When Andrew falls into a pit, saints Peter and Paul save him (cap. 29). In his vision, he is visited by the prophet Daniel (cap. 36). An important part of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* are his visions. During a harsh winter, Andrew, who is close to dying, is taken to heaven by an angel. He tells the author of the *Life* about what he saw in the afterlife (cap. 9–11).

Andrew behaves like a madman, but he does good deeds (he gives away the money he receives from good people to beggars, cap. 6). He spends his nights in prayer and does not pretend to be mad with everyone. His biographer, priest Nicephorus, and the student, Epiphanius – the future patriarch of Constantinople – know the truth about him. An important moment in the life of Andrew is when he meets young Epiphanius. The saint prophesies to him that the latter will become the patriarch of Constantinople (cap. 8). Epiphanius, on the other hand, receives a vision in which he sees Andrew in paradise (cap. 28). Andrew conducts theological disputes with Epiphanius. He assists the latter in his fights against his weaknesses. He is hosted at the house of Epiphanius'

parents (cap. 16) and speaks to their servants in their native languages (cap. 19). He stays there till his last days. He spends the last night in prayer, after which he dies on May 28, after 66 years of "insane life." His body miraculously disappears.

Part of the *Life* is the *Apocalypse of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*), in which Andrew speaks about the end of the world. It happens at the request of Epiphanius, in the house of his parents, where Andrew spends the last week of his life. He prophesies about Constantinople that until the end, no nation will be able to conquer it, because the city is under the protection of the Mother of God and no one will snatch it from her, although many will try.

In the final days, first, the era of wealth, justice and peace will come. Then God will humiliate the sons of Hagar through the hands of the Roman emperor so that there will be no Ishmaelites left in Constantinople. The emperor will also persecute the Jews and tame the "fair-haired people". He will subjugate his enemies and stop collecting taxes. He will restore holy churches and rebuild destroyed altars. And it will be like in Noah's time, when people rejoiced in peace until the flood came. After the 32-year reign of the good emperor, bad times will come. The son of lawlessness will reign in Constantinople for three and a half years. He will allow incest, and unite nuns with monks and priests in marriage. Angry, God will send all sorts of misfortunes. Only those who live in Rome, Riza, Armenopetra, Strobilos or Karioupolis will be spared.

The next ruler of Constantinople will revert to paganism and start persecuting the Church. A few days after his reign begins, the churches will be burned down. The precious Cross will be called the gallows. Brother will stand up against brother, children against their parents. Many will become martyrs, others will be displaced from their homes on the islands. Other misfortunes will befall humanity – earthquakes, fights between nations, fire from heaven, great flocks of birds, poisonous snakes. After the end of the godless rule, the emperor of Ethiopia will come – he will be at the helm of the empire for 12 years. He will be a good, peaceful ruler. He will restore the churches that had been ruined by his predecessor. When his reign is over, another emperor will come from Arabia and will

rule for a year. During his reign, the pieces of wood from the Holy Cross will be reunited into one. The emperor will go to Jerusalem and lay the Holy Cross there, along with the imperial diadem.

In Constantinople, three young men who are shameless and foolish will begin their rule. They will rule in peace for 150 days before starting a fierce civil war. The first will leave for Thessalonica, the second to Mesopotamia, to the Cyclades islands and Alexandria, and the third will connect Phrygia, Caria, Galatia and Asia, Armenia and Arabia. Everyone will prepare for war by recruiting armies and building fleets. They will wage a bloody battle in which they will all die. As a result, there will be a shortage of men, and women will have to wait for the arrival of foreigners. With no men of noble blood, the wicked woman of Pontus – the devil's daughter, a sorceress furious with men and women, full of Bacchic madness – will reign in Constantinople. This impure empress will declare that she is a goddess and will fight against God. She will take away valuable items and books from the Church and have them burned. She will overturn the altar of the Great Church of God's Wisdom. In her day, murders will become commonplace.

Then the Almighty God will cut off the soil under the city with the sickle of his power. The sea will rise and engulf Constantinople. After this time, imperial power will be handed over to Rome, Sillyon, and Thessalonica. However, this will not be the end of misfortunes, because God will open the gates that Alexander, the king of Macedon, had shut, and 72 kings will come out with unclean peoples. They will scatter all over the earth under the sky, eating the flesh of living people and drinking their blood, enthusiastically devouring dogs, rats, frogs and all kinds of filth. The sun will turn to blood, the moon and all the stars will stop shining. Then, the Satan-Antichrist will rise from the tribe of Dana. When the Antichrist is defeated and captured along with his demons, then the trumpet will sound and the dead will be resurrected.

The *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*) was widely disseminated. Over a hundred manuscripts in Greek have been preserved, the oldest of which (BSB, Gr. 443) comes from the period between the mid-10th century and the beginning of the 11th century. Some of the manuscripts contain the

incomplete text of the *Life*. The manuscripts of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*) include: BSB, Gr. 443 (10th century); ÖNB, Hist. Gr. 123 (14th century); Lesbiensis 37 (15th century); Istanbul, Patriarchal Library, Panagia 130 (dated to 1616); NLG, 1014 (11th century); NLG, 2419 (dated to 1293); BAV, Gr. 2010 (12th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 543 (dated to 1630); BAV, Gr. 1574 (11th–12th century); BSB, Gr. 552 (14th century); Athos Vatopedi, 229 (13th century); BNF, Gr. 1547 (dated to 1286); Bod. Lincoln Gr. 21 (dated to 1586); Hierosolymitanus Sabaiticus 415 (14th century). Copies of the *Apocalypse of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*): ÖNB, Hist. Gr. 123 (14th century); BAV, Gr. 1574 (11th–12th century); BSB, Gr. 552 (14th century); NLG, 1014 (dated to 1071); Bod. Holkham. Gr. 26 (14th–15th century); Lesbiensis 37 (15th century); Bod. Lincoln. Gr. 21 (16th century); BAV, Gr. 2010 (12th century); NLG, 2419 (dated to 1296); BNF, Gr. 1547 (dated to 1286).

Slavic Translations

The *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*) was extremely popular in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area. Some researchers try to connect this phenomenon with the ethnicity of the saint: in Greek copies of the work, he is referred to as Scythian (σκύθης), while in Church Slavic copies, he usually is presented as a Slav (in some, later copies, he is also called a Rus', and sometimes even a Novgorodian). According to A.M. Moldovan, supported by other Palaeoslavists, the oldest, comprehensive translation of the text was created by an inhabitant of Rus', working in the territory of the Rurikovich State or outside its borders (on Mount Athos or in the Studios Monastery in Constantinople). He used a Greek copy representing the same redaction of the text (E) as codex BSB, Gr. 552. The translation was written very early: in the 11th century or in the first decades of the next century. It must have existed at the end of the 12th century or at the beginning of the 13th century, when – as the experts on the subject quite unanimously agree – the so-called first redaction of the Old Rus' Prologue (a collection of short hagiographic texts: prologue lives) was

developed. This compilation includes several different fragments of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (under the date of October 1–5, 8, 12, 16). Most likely, the description of the Mother of God's revelation to St. Andrew in a temple of Constantinople's Blachern in the 1160s became an inspiration for prince Andrew Bogolyubsky (1157–1174) to establish a new holiday in the Rus' Orthodox Church, the so-called Protection of the Virgin Mary (October 1).

The Old Rus' translation of the *Life* (Incipit: **Жизнь Бо҃угодив и житье непорочно мужа добронравна. възлюблении хотящю ми исповѣдати**) has been preserved in an incredible number of copies. A.M. Moldovan lists as many as 108 complete and over 100 fragmentary ones, considering the incomplete manuscript of РГАДА, 381.1.182, from the end of the 14th century, as the oldest and most representative of them. Many other manuscripts come from the 15th–16th centuries, e.g. ГИМ, Син. 924/152; РГБ, 98.162, fol. 207a–337b; РНБ, 717.216, fol. 1–176'; ГИМ, Син. 925/153; РГБ, 304.I.780, fol. 28'–279'; РГБ, 299.29.

Excerpts from the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*) were also included in various compilations. Small parts of the conversation between St. Andrew and Epiphanius were recorded in the second quarter of the 13th century on one of the blank pages of the so-called *Symeon-Sviatoslav Miscellany from 1073* – a codex commissioned by the prince of Kiev, Sviatoslav Yaroslavich (1073–1076), currently stored in the collection of the State Historical Museum in Moscow (ГИМ, Син. 1043, fol. 127'). The fragments of the work discussed here can be found both in the Prologues of the first and second redaction (the latter features additional passages, dated to October 6–7, 15, and 25), and in other types of collections. The metropolitan Macarius' *Great Menaion Reader*, a monumental compilation from the mid-16th century, contains both parts of the *Life* quoted in the Prologues (under the dates: October 1–8, 12, 15–16, and 25), and its comprehensive version (under the date 2.10: РНБ, 728.1318, fol. 29a–63d; ГИМ, Син. 987, fol. 40c–102a; ГИМ, Син. 175, fol. 45a–116c).

Vassilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anissava Miltenova believe that in Bulgaria, a translation of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* into Church Slavic was created independently of the Old Rus' translation. However, it has

not survived to this day in its entirety, but only in fragments, included in the so-called *Priest Philip's Codex*, made for the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Alexander in 1344/1345 (ГИМ, Син. 38, fol. 21–37: **Избранїѥ мало ѿ житїа с҃тго ѡц҃а нашего Ѧндрѣа ѭродиваго Хр҃а ради, имѣѫщее въпросы с҃тго Ѳпїфанїа, съ ѿвѣтми с҃тго Ѧндрѣа полезно сѣло**). The language of the translation shares many features characteristic of the Tarnovo literary school, hence, it was made in the 13th century or in the first decades of the following century. The abridged *Life*, most likely created for the *Priest Philip's Codex*, can be found on the pages of several other manuscripts, including the Bulgarian collection of saints' lives from the 14th century (MSPC, 43, fol. 218–223') or the manuscript from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, № 434 (around 1580). Fragments of the translation also appear within the so-called *Compiled Paterikon*, written in Bulgaria in the 14th century (including БАН, 12.3.9, fol. 288–303' – from the 14th century).

In the 14th century (at the latest), another comprehensive Church Slavic translation of the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (Incipit: **Житїѥ Бг҃оугодно и жизнь непорѡчнѫ мѫжа добродѣтелна хощѫ вамь повѣдати ѡ дрѳвѣи**) was created. Its author, most likely working in Serbia or on Mount Athos, did not use the previous translations, relying directly on the Greek text of the redaction represented, e.g. by the manuscript BAV, Gr. 1574 (D). According to the researchers, this translation exhibits the linguistic features of the Tarnovo literary school and is very faithful to the original. Currently, it is known only from nine copies from the 14th–16th centuries – one Bulgarian, two Rus', and six Serbian and Moldovan, including: РГБ, 236.76 (the end of the 14th century); РГБ, 270.38 (the first half of the 15th century); РНБ, 182.41, fol. 169–252' (the mid-15th century); ГИМ, Заб. 73 (172) (the end of the 15th/beginning of the 16th century); РНБ, 728.1286 (the mid-16th century); ГИМ, Хлуд. 238 (16th century); a manuscript from the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, № 486, fol. 1–86' (16th century).

Interestingly, in the mid-15th century, another translation of the work in question was written in Rus'. Its author probably knew the earliest Church Slavic translation (the 11th–12th centuries), but translated the Greek

text by himself, making efforts to preserve the meaning of the original. This relic has survived only in two incomplete Rus' copies: РГБ, 173.I.154, p. 841–899 (selected fragments, the second half of the 15th century) and РГБ, 113.621 (no beginning, the first half of the 16th century).

Similarly to Byzantine literature, the *Apocalypse of St. Andrew the Fool* existed in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa* as an autonomous literary text, independent of the *Life*. Some scholars believe that there was even a separate translation of the eschatological part of the work, based on one of the Greek copies of the apocalypse. It was created in Bulgaria in the 13th–14th centuries. Unfortunately, the only copy of this relic preserved until modern times burned down during the fire of the National Library of Serbia during World War II. As a result, it can only be researched based on the text edition published by Ljubomir Kovačević in 1878.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

In the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*), there are relatively few references to the Arabs / Saracens / Ishmaelites. C. Mango believes that the absence of any signs of an immediate threat from the Arabs fits in with the period after the Arab defeat in 674–678, which gave the empire a respite, especially in the years 680–695. It is distinctive that in the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool*, the devil can take the form of an Arab dressed in a black robe. St. Andrew made Epiphanius aware of this when they were discussing Satan. The future patriarch then realized that he already had had such an encounter, when an Arab merchant appeared before him. He told Andrew that Satan approached him on the street near Forum Bovis. He had assumed the form of an old Arab with gray hair and wild eyes, dressed in black and wearing brick-colored shoes. According to Andrew, that "son of the Hagarenes" was a centurion of demons, a never-resting enemy of those who strive for God (cap. 12).

The presence of Arabs is more pronounced in the *Apocalypse of St. Andrew the Fool* (*Salos*), in which the defeat of the Ishmaelites was

foretold. Some details reveal that it was written after the Arab conquest. According to it, God will humiliate the sons of Hagar, because he will be angry with them for their blasphemy and because their fruit comes "from the bile of Sodom and the bitterness of Gomorrah". He will send a Roman emperor against them to defeat them and destroy their children with fire. There will be no Ishmaelites in Constantinople. Illyricum will be returned to the empire and Egypt will pay tribute. The ruler who will defeat them will be the first of the apocalyptic emperors, whose reign will last 32 years. An interesting innovation, compared with other apocalyptic texts, is the prophecy that the fifth apocalyptic ruler, following the reign of the emperor from Ethiopia, will be the emperor from Arabia. He will be the one to restore the Holy Cross from the pieces of wood and it is he who will give the imperial crown to God in Jerusalem.

Researchers have suggested that these two rulers, Ethiopian and Arab, can be identified as the reincarnations of Alexander the Great and emperor Jovian (363–364). They also note that in the *Vision of Daniel* in Hebrew (transl. A. Sharf, [in:] *A Source for Byzantine Jewry under the Early Macedonians*, "Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher" 20, 1970, p. 302–318, esp. 303–306), where the history of Byzantium from Michael III (842–867) to Constantine VII (913–959) is presented in the future tense, two co-regents rule with Leo VI (886–912). One is described as Dark, and the other as Arab. It is a reference to the basileopator Stylianus Zaoutzes and the Arab eunuch, Samonas. L. Rydén believes that this story was re-interpreted in the *Apocalypse of St. Andrew*.

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XXV

Symeon Magister and Logothete
Chronicle



Date: second half of the 10th century
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: 14th century, Bulgaria

We know almost nothing about the author. He held the title of Magister and Logothete. He was probably active from the reign of Romanus I Lecapenus (919–944) to the beginnings of the time of Basil II (976–1025). In addition to the chronicle, he is credited with the epitaph on the death of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (959) and Stephen Lecapenus (963). Because of his titles, he is sometimes identified with the famous 10th-century hagiographer St. Symeon Metaphrast (he died circa 1000), author of the lives of saints and acts of martyrs. Some researchers suggest that the author of chronicle came from the clerical aristocracy. It has been pointed out that he represented the Byzantine historiography trend hostile to the Macedonian dynasty.

The *Chronicon* by Symeon the Magister and Logothete is known in two variants: A redaction, the older one, presents a description of the events from the creation of the world to 948, i.e. the death of Romanus I Lecapenus. For obvious reasons, it was written after that year, perhaps after the death of Constantine VII (959), which is mentioned in passage 135.1 (provided that it is not an interpolation, as Wahlgren believes), maybe

during the reign of Nicephorus Phokas (963–969). The later redaction B contains a lecture on the history of Byzantium, extended with additional details, which covers the time until 963. It was probably written during the reign of Nicephorus Phokas (maybe in 968, as Treadgold believes.) The earlier version of Symeon the Logothete's chronicle corresponds to the *Georgius Monachus Continuatus* in redaction A and the writings of Leo the Grammarian and Pseudo-Theodosius Melissenus, while its later version – to its variant B. There are links between Book VI of *Theophanes Continuatus* (the so-called Text III) and the work by Symeon Logothete. It is believed to be a combination of two texts, the so-called Text IIIa (886–948) and Text IIIb (944–963). Text IIIa is meant to form part of Symeon Logothete's redaction B. Text IIIb is said to be based (albeit with some changes) on redaction A. Separate in textological terms, although related in terms of their content are: the *Chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon* and *Chronicon Ambrosianum*.

It should remain open whether Symeon the Logothete compiled fragments of various works or continued some single work (there is a view that Symeon the Logothete could have used some otherwise unknown chronicle covering the period from the creation of the world to 842). In his work we can see the use of different sources, depending on the period, e.g. for the early Byzantine era it was the *Church History* by Theodore Lector; also evident are traces that indicate his knowledge of the works by John Malalas (II), *Chronicon Paschale*. *Chronographia* by Theophanes (XIV) was the basic source for the period examined in this book. For that era, the idea that Symeon relied on the work by George the Monk (XX) is now rejected. According to the A.P. Każdan, for the times of Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912), the base was some *Life of Basil*, written in the circle of patriarch Photius, supplemented by annalistic references to Leo VI. The last part of the work was based on the oral tradition and personal observations of the author.

For the Byzantine era, the work is organized around the reign of individual emperors (one reign – one chapter), for the earlier period: around the leader of the people, who is the main point of the narrative. Symeon the Logothete's work was popular, as evidenced by the numerous

surviving manuscripts (according to Wahlgren: 29 of Greek version A, 8 of Greek version B, 2 – Pseudo-Symeon, 11 – *Chronicon Ambrosianum*), versions and references, as well as translations into the Church Slavic language. The oldest manuscripts come from the 11th and 12th centuries: BNF, Gr. 1711; BSB, Gr. 218; BNF, Gr. 1712.

Slavic Translation

The *Georgius Monachus Continuatus* or the corresponding parts of the chronicle of Symeon Magister and Logothete (description of events from 842) were translated into Church Slavic early. It can be assumed that the oldest Slavic translation was completed in Bulgaria in the late 10th / early 11th century, and it was based on the newer, expanded redaction of the text (B), written after 963. Therefore, the Slavic translation dates back to merely several decades later than the original Greek version. Moreover, the *Georgius Monachus Continuatus* was translated as an immanent part of the chronicle of George the Monk (Hamartolus) and since then it has been considered to be a part of it in the Church Slavic literature.

Interestingly, in the 14th century a comprehensive Slavic translation of the chronicle of Symeon Magister and Logothete was made, which was completely independent of the above-discussed translation. Its basis was the older version of the Byzantine chronicle (A) containing the description of the events up to 948. In the manuscript that contains this translation, the work is attributed to Symeon Magister and Logothete. The translation has the features of the southern orthography of the Church Slavic language and was done probably in Bulgaria. In later centuries it was moved to Rus'. Currently, there is only one known copy of the translation: РНБ, F.IV.307 (a Russian manuscript from 1637, which is a copy of the Middle Bulgarian manuscript; the chronicle of Symeon Magister and Logothete can be found on fol. 1–254).

Both Slavic translations are characterized by their extreme fidelity to the original and – according to some researchers – they present a version of the text that is closer to the protograph than some preserved Greek copies.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Following Theophanes, his main source of information for the period in question, the author of *Chronicon* included a wealth of information on Muhammad (Μωάμεθ, Μουχούμετ) and Arabs (**О Мухметѣ** – РНБ, F.IV.307, fol. 116–117’). He mentions that Muhammad was an orphan, that he found a work with Khadija, whom he later married. He mentions his illness – epilepsy and his wife’s hesitation before she was the first one to recognize him as a prophet and announced it to her tribesmen. Symeon describes Muhammad teaching as heresy. He draws attention to the rewards of a sensual nature for participation in war. Symeon depicts the main episodes of Arabic expansion in the 7th and early 8th centuries (including the blockade/siege of Constantinople in 674–678, 717–718, the battle of Sebastopol in 692, the occupation of North Africa in 695). Symeon points out that the Arabs owed their victories to the Christian God, who wanted to punish the Romans for their sins through them. He also cites the prophecy of Stephen of Alexandria, according to which the Arabs would reign for 309 years and experience 27 years of misery.

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Slavic

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XXVI

John Zonaras, *Epitome historiarum*



Date: ca. 1145
Original language: Greek
1st Slavic Version: ca. 1170, Bulgaria / 14th century, Serbia
2nd Slavic Version: ca. 1408, the Hilandar Monastery at Mount Athos
3rd Slavic Version: 14th century, Bulgaria
4th Slavic Version: 15th century, Balkans (?)

Our knowledge about the life of John Zonaras (presumably, his monk name) is extremely modest. Perhaps he was born during the reign of Michael VII (1071–1078) or Nicephorus Botaniates (1078–1081). Warren Treadgold thinks that the historian was most likely born around 1074. He came from a family who made a career in trade and entered the circles of the Constantinople official elite. He rose in the imperial court and the judiciary. He served as the Imperial Secretary (*protoasekretis*) and was the *droungarios tes vigles* ("head of the civil courts in Constantinople"). He started a family and had children. It is possible that around 1130, he lost his wife and child (children), which traumatized him deeply and drove him to abandon his secular life and retreat to the Monastery of St. Glyceria, on a small island of the same name located just over seventy kilometers from Constantinople, in the archipelago of the Princes' Islands (some scholars believe that the reason for abandoning his secular life was the

loss of position in the imperial court). There, after several years, under the pressure of friends, he began working on *Epitome*. The date of Zonaras' death is unknown.

Epitome historiarum (Ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν, *Extracts of History*) covers history from the creation of the world to the year 1118. It is the vastest Byzantine historical work. It may have been completed around 1145 (Treadgold). At the end of the 17th century, Carl Du Cange, a modern publisher of Zonaras' work, split it into eighteen books. *Epitome* can be roughly divided into two main parts. The first twelve books, covering the period till Constantine the Great (306–337), were based on biblical passages and the works of Herodotus, Xenophon, Arrian, Plutarch, Cassius Dion and Flavius Josephus. The base source for other books were the works of Procopius of Caesarea, John Malalas (II), John of Antioch, Theophanes (*Chronographia* is the main source used to study the period of our interest from the 7th century to the beginning of the 8th century – XIV), patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople (XV), George the Monk (Hamartolus – XX) – or Pseudo-Symeon or George Cedrenus – John Skylitzes, Michael Attaleiates and Michael Psellus (among others). After 1079, *Epitome* became independent of other historical works and was developed on the basis of John Zonaras' personal knowledge, supplemented by the knowledge of friends. He wrote in plain language, although "formal and Atticizing" (Treadgold). He avoided long speeches, descriptions and digressions (per request of his friends). Rather than quote his sources *in extenso*, he discussed and abbreviated them.

John Zonaras' work enjoyed great popularity. It has been translated into Church Slavic several times. There is also an Aragonese version. To date, it has been preserved in over 72 manuscripts.

Slavic Translations

An adaptation of John Zonaras' *Extracts of History* on the Slavic lands is an extremely complex issue. Undoubtedly, from the moment it was written, it enjoyed a considerable interest in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area.

Its earliest translation into Church Slavic could have been written around 1170 in Bulgaria or in the 14th century in Serbia. The oldest copy of this variant source, preserved only in the form of a single card torn out of the codex, comes from the second half of the 14th century (РНБ, 182.94). It was a fragmentary translation. Ca. 1408, in the Serbian monastery on Mount Athos, an abridged version of the chronicle (the so-called *Паралипомен*) was commissioned by the despot Stephen Lazarević (1402–1427). This is the only variant of the Slavic translation of the work of John Zonaras that was disseminated in Rus'. It has been preserved in one Rus' copy from the beginning of the 16th century: РГБ, 113.655. There is one more South Slavic version of the chronicle that has survived till the present day on the pages of the Serbian manuscript from the 15th century (Athos Zograph N151). The selection of fragments from the work of John Zonaras can additionally be found in the manuscript РНБ, F.IV.307, which contains a 14th-century translation of the work of Symeon the Logothete. It should be emphasized, however, that none of the above-mentioned Slavic versions is complete – each of them is a type of compilatory abridgment. Collecting the material preserved to the present day (all the copies of the Church Slavic translations of John Zonaras' work) would allow for reconstructing the full text of only the first six books of the chronicle.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Following Theophanes, who is his main source for this period, John Zonaras mentions Muhammad (Μωάμεθ, Μουχούμετ). He writes about his difficult beginnings, his marriage (without mentioning the name of Khadija), his epilepsy, and the false monk who supposedly confirmed the truth of his teachings. Zonaras describes the prophecies of Muhammad as unclean and indicates that among the Ishmaelites he had taken the place of a leader, teacher and legislator.

Zonaras writes about the early expansion of the Arabs (Ishmaelites, Saracens, Hagarenes) into Roman provinces and their destruction. He describes the war operations of Muawiya against Byzantium in a little more detail, including the blockade of Constantinople (674–678) and the Arabs' possession of a strong fleet. He mentions the battles for North Africa during the reign of Leontius (695–698), and further presents the Byzantine-Arab contention in the first decades of the 8th century, including the siege of Constantinople in 717–718. In Zonaras' work, the information about Muhammad and the Arabs is usually devoid of the emotional and religious context that is visible in the primary sources for this period. For example: when studying the blockade of Constantinople in 674–678, Theophanes sees it as the intervention of God and the Mother of God and suggests that in 678, the Arabs asked the Byzantines to make peace once they had realized that they (the Byzantines) were under God's protection. Zonaras, on the other hand, points out that the Arabs sought peace because they understood that their plans to defeat the Byzantines could not be implemented because their fleet had been largely destroyed by the Greek fire and they feared an attack from the Byzantines. This attitude of Zonaras can be explained, on the one hand, by his views on the causes of the events (pointing to real, logical reasons, without seeking divine intervention; Černoglazov), and on the other hand, by the fact that the Arab issue was not a significant problem for Byzantium in the times when he was writing his work.

Editions

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Translations

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German

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Greek

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XXVII

Constantine Manasses, *Chronicle*



Date: 1145–1148
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: 1335–1340, Bulgaria

Constantine Manasses is the author of *Synopsis Chronike*, a chronicle that is written in verse and spans the period from the creation of the world until the year 1081 (the death of emperor Nicephorus Botaniates, 1078–1081). Our knowledge about him is limited. We do not know the exact dates of his birth or death. According to Elizabeth Jeffreys he was born in ca. 1120 and died some time after 1175. It could be reasoned that he held no church function (in older literature on the subject he is recognised as the metropolitan of Naupactus from the year 1187) or state function. He was associated with the Constantinopolitan literary community. Also, he had patrons – the sebastokratorissa Irene, wife of Andronicus, brother of emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180), as well as the sebastos John Constostephanus, nephew of Manuel I. We know that he accompanied the latter during a mission to Jerusalem in 1160 which was described in his *Hodoiporikon*. He authored prose and poetry ranging from eulogies (e.g. in honour of Manuel Comnenus) to romances (*Aristander and Kallitea*, whose mere fragments survived).

Synopsis Chronike was commissioned by the sebastokratorissa Irene, mentioned above, possibly between 1145 and 1148. The first author to ever refer to *Synopsis* was Michael Glycas (who died in the 1180s) in *Biblos*

Chronike. *Synopsis* was written in decapentasyllabic verse (political verse). The edition by Odysseus Lampsidis comprises 6620 lines. In the process of writing it, Manasses used the works of different authors, with their truthfulness as the key selection criterion. Other than this general declaration, Manasses did not mention any of those authors by name. Scholars claim that his sources included the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, John the Lydian, John of Antioch, John Malalas (II), Theophanes (XIV), George the Monk (XX), George Cedrenus and John Zonaras (XXVI). We also know that he referred to his own work, in particular *Aristander and Kallitea*.

In all likelihood, the Chronicle was popular both in Byzantium and beyond. This is supported by the large number of manuscripts that have remained (over 100) as well as the fact that it had its prose version.

Slavic Translation

The popularity and significance of the text is also evidenced by its 14th century translation into Middle Bulgarian, commissioned by the tsar of Bulgaria Ivan Alexander (1331–1371). The translator annotated the Chronicle using glosses with basic information on Bulgarian rulers. The translation was most likely created in Veliko Tarnovo in the period 1335–1340. We know three manuscripts coming from the territory of Bulgaria: two dating from the half of the 14th century (now at the State Historical Museum in Moscow, the second one in the Vatican Library) and one dating from the 16th century (currently at the library of the Romanian Academy). The translation of the work by Constantine Manasses, done in Bulgaria, gained popularity in the Slavic world. Its copies survived in Rus' (3 from the 17th century) as well as Serbia (from the 16th century). Contemporary researchers consider the Bulgarian translation to be of high quality. It is seen as a landmark in the development of Bulgarian literary language.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

In the period in question the Arabs appear in *Synopsis Chronike* only twice. The first reference to the Arabs has to do with the reign of emperor Leontius (695–698). Constantine Manasses states that Africa was invaded by plunderers descending from Hagarenes. The emperor considered the danger to be serious and took action. Despite initial successes of the Romans (Byzantines), Carthage, the capital of North Africa, was conquered and pillaged by the Arabs who are described by the historian as savage, cruel and bloodthirsty beasts. We also learn from Manasses here that the Arabs had a large fleet. The second reference appears in relation to emperor Anastasius II (713–715). We learn that the emperor sent Byzantine ships against the fleet of "Hagarene pirates". During that expedition a mutiny took place against the emperor and Theodosius, formerly a tax collector, was proclaimed as the new ruler.

It appears Manasses saw the Arabs primarily as bloody and cruel plunderers who invaded the Byzantine lands. It should also be noted that Constantine Manasses did not bring up religious themes when referring to the Arabs.

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XXVIII

The Life of St. Theodore of Edessa



(BHG 1744)
Author: unknown
Date: before 1023
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: no later than
in the14th century, the Balkans

The author of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* (*Bios kai politeia tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Thodōrou tu dialampsantos en askēsei kata tēn megistēn lauran tou hagiou Saba, epeita gegonotos archiepiskopou poleōs Edesēs, kai axiomnēmoneuta katorthōkotos erga – Life and conduct of our holy father Theodore, who shone in asceticism in the great Laura of the Holy Sabas, and then became archbishop of the city of Edessa and was the author of deeds worthy of remembrance*) introduces himself as Basil, the Melkite bishop of Emesa (in the Greek redaction) or Manbij (in the Arabic redaction), the nephew and student of Theodore (cap. 2). If this is true, he would live in the 9th century. He often tells the story of the saint in the first person. He claims to have accompanied Theodore when the latter went to Edessa after his election and consecration as the bishop (cap. 43), as well as on the trip to Baghdad (cap. 70), where he assisted him in the baptism of the "Persian king" (cap. 82). None of these claims can be verified from other sources and are most likely fictitious.

Posing as an eyewitness, the anonymous author probably wanted to make his story more credible. He probably never saw the places mentioned in the text with his own eyes.

According to the *Life*, Theodore was born in Edessa to a Christian family. His parents, Symeon and Maria, baptized him when he was two years old (the ceremony was performed by the bishop of the city). Unlike many saints, Theodore did not promise to be a saint as a child. It changed as a result of the experienced vision. When his parents died, he married off his sister, then gave away his possessions to the poor and went to Jerusalem. He was 20 years old at the time. As a monk, he entered the Monastery of St. Sabas (cap. 4–10) and quickly assumed a high position there as the *oikonomos*. After the death of abbot John, Theodore moved to an isolated cell (*kellion*) (cap. 11–15), where he was accompanied by a young man named Michael, who was related to him (cap. 16–20). Michael suffered martyrdom near the gates of Jerusalem on the orders of the "Persian" (meaning, Arab-Muslim) king Adramelech, because he refused to renounce Christianity (cap. 24–37).

After the death of the bishop of Edessa, Theodore was elected as his successor and ordained by the patriarch of Antioch at the request of the patriarch of Jerusalem (cap. 41–44). He had to face the heresies of the Nestorians, Manicheans, and Jacobites, on the one hand, and abuse of the Muslim authorities, on the other (cap. 41–53). He then went to Baghdad ('Babylon' in the Greek text) to defend the case of his fellow believers against the caliph. The anchorite Theodosius ('stylite' in the Greek version) predicted that Theodore would perform a miracle of converting the "king of the Persians" to Christianity (cap. 54–60).

During his stay in Baghdad (cap. 73–116), Theodore gained access to the court of the caliph, whom he healed and prompted him to convert to Christianity (cap. 70–111). Then, on his behalf, he went to Constantinople to obtain the relic of the Holy Cross (cap. 84). When he delivered it, he defeated an influential Jew (*archisynagōgos*) in a religious debate (cap. 86–91) in the presence of the ruler and his *archimagoi* and *archisatrapai*.

When Theodore left Baghdad, the converted caliph (who accepted a new Christian name – John) called a congregation and announced his conversion to the Persians, Ishmaelites, Jews, and Christians. The outraged crowd turned on him and dismembered him along with his three companions. From that moment on, the martyr ruler, buried with his companions by the catholicus, performed numerous miracles, as a result of which, more Muslims converted (cap. 106–111). John appeared in the dream to Theodore and the anchorite Theodosius, who died shortly thereafter.

Three years later, the caliph reappeared in Theodore's dream and announced his approaching death. The bishop settled the matter of succession and set off again for Palestine, where he visited holy places, and then settled in his cell, where he died twenty days later (cap. 99–113). The patriarch of Jerusalem buried him on July 19 at the "fathers' cemetery", near the burial place of his former companion, Michael.

The *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* attributes to Theodore the authorship of three texts. They are *Ascetic Didascalia* (cap. 39), *Ascetic Centuria – A Hundred Chapters of Ascetic Life* (cap. 40), and *Dogmatic Didascalia* (cap. 46).

It is difficult to determine when exactly the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* was created. It must have been written before 1023, because this is the date of the oldest preserved manuscript. It is possible that the conquest of northern Syria by the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus Phocas (963–969) in the 960s was the opportunity to describe the saint's deeds. The *Life* was first written in Greek, in the Byzantine Empire, and then translated into Arabic at the Laura of St. Sabas.

The *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* provides interesting information on the development of ascetic movements, the living conditions, economy, and customs. On the historical side, however, it is not very credible. This is a hagiographic novel, composed of elements of various origins, and not a historical text. The only verifiable characters are the emperor Michael III (842–867) and his mother Theodora (a regent until 856), who are mentioned during Theodore's trip to Constantinople. Researchers (Ch. Loparev, A. Vasiliev, H. Gauer) tried to link Theodore's consecration to

the synod in Jerusalem in 836. On this basis, they determined Theodore's life span to fall between 776 or 793 and around 860. However, in the text of the *Life*, there is no evidence confirming the connection between Theodore's consecration and the Synod of Jerusalem.

The *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* has been preserved in three main languages of the Melkite Church: Greek, Arabic, and Georgian. The Arabic version, in a revised redaction, was widespread in the Melkite communities in Syria and Palestine. The oldest Greek manuscript dates back to 1023 and is stored in the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos (originally, a Georgian monastery). Other manuscripts include: ГИМ, Син. Греч. 381, fol. 227–285' (dated to 1023); ГИМ, Син. Греч. 126, fol. 112–181' (11th or 12th century); Angel. B1.8, fol. 219–265 (11th century); Sinaiticus Graecus 544, fol. 59–206' (14th century); BNF, Gr. 776, fol. 25–29 (15th century); BNU, 147, fol. 194–284 (16th century); BNF, Supp. Gr. 441, fol. 1–5 (17th century); Istanbul, Deipara monastery, 82, fol. 33–94 (not dated).

The Arabic version survived in a minimum of six manuscripts (including at least two from the 13th century: Sinaiticus Arabicus 538, dated to 1211 and BNF, Ar. 147). Vasiliev gave an overview of the manuscript tradition (*Life of St. Theodore*, p. 168–169). The texts of these manuscripts (also in the same language version) differ in a number of details. The question about the original redaction has not yet been resolved.

The text of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* was expanded by an extensive fragment of *The Martyrdom of St. Michael who was in the Great Laura of our holy father Sabas*, which, as an independent work, survived only in the Georgian version from the 10th century. According to the redaction from the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*, Michael was a relative and companion of St. Theodore. They both made a living making wicker baskets, which Michael sold in Jerusalem. One day, the young man caught the attention of Seida, the wife of the "king of the Persians" (i.e. the caliph), and rejected her promotions. He was then captured at her command and charged with harassment. The ruler (Αδραμέλεχ/Adramelech in the Greek version, unnamed in the Arabic text) tried to convert him to Islam by using a certain educated Jew as an intermediary. A theological debate was organized. When Michael won in it, he was tortured and beheaded.

The *Martyrdom of St. Michael the Sabaite*, preserved in Georgian translation, probably comes from the original Arabic version, written in the Laura of St. Sabas. The narrator of this text is a monk named Basil (cap. 1), who supposedly heard the story of the martyrdom of the monk Michael from "the famous abba Theodore Abu Qurrah" (c. 750–c. 825), whose hermitage he visited during a procession around the monastery. Therefore, it is a system of "embedded narratives": Theodore tells Basil the story of the martyrdom of the monk Michael, who was active during the reign of caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan. The latter can be identified with Adramelech from the Greek version of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*.

Although both texts tell the same story, they differ in numerous details. In the *Life*, Michael comes from Edessa, in the *Martyrdom* – from Tiberias; in the *Life*, he is a relative and disciple of Theodore, in the *Martyrdom* – a relative and student of a certain "abba Moses" who dies seven days after Michael's martyrdom and is buried at his side. P. Ingoroqva and L. Datašvili consider this text as an original composition written in the Monastery of St. Sabas by a Georgian monk named Basil. However, it seems that the text was originally written not in Greek or Georgian, but in Arabic (in the 9th century). Then it was translated into Georgian in the Monastery of St. Sabas between the 9th and 10th centuries. It is certain that the *Martyrdom of St. Michael the Sabaite* was created before the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*, in which it was included.

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* (**Житье и жизнь. иже въ ст҃хъ wц҃а нашего Феодора. въсиавшаго въ постницѣ^х^, въ велицѣки лаврѣ ст҃го wц҃а нашего Савы. посем же бывша архиеп^с^па въ гра^ѧ^ Єдесѣ, и достопомнимаа исъправивша дѣла. списана ѿ Василиа еп^с^па Ямасиискаго.** Incipit: **Бл^с^венъ Бъ҃ ѿц҃ь г^с^ь вседръжитель**) was created in the 14th century (at the latest) in the Balkans. As Francis Thomson observed, the redactional diversity of the text of this

work in its individual copies is so significant that there might have been two independent Slavic translations. The relic in question can be found on the pages of the following manuscripts of the South Slavic provenance, under the date July 9: a 14th-century Bulgarian collection of saints' lives from January to July (MSPC, 43, fol. 79'–169); a Serbian *miscellanea* manuscript (BAR, 152.I, fol. 219–254'); a 15th-century Moldavian Menaion Reader for July and August (from the Dragomirna Monastery, Romania, № 791, fol. 149'–218'); a 15th-century Serbian collection of saints' lives (MSPC, 91, fol. 227'–277); the Menaion Reader for July and August from around 1625 (the Hilandar Monastery, Athos, № 446, fol. 84'–156'), and a Bulgarian *miscellanea* manuscript from the 14th century (НБКМ, 1045, fol. 244–284' – a different redaction of the text). Fragments of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* have been preserved on the pages of a Moldovan *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th century (BAR, 165, fol. 214–283'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th–16th century (the Rila Monastery, № 2/22, fol. 1–76); and the Menaion Reader from the 15th century (Biblioteca Sfântului Sinod, Bucureşti, Sl.I.145, fol. 196–269').

In South Slavic literature, the fragments of the life of St. Theodore, devoted to the martyrdom of the monk Michael from the Monastery of St. Sabas, existed as a discrete hagiographic text. This is evidenced by several copies: the Menaion Reader from the 15th century (BAR, 153, fol. 433–446' – under the date July 9); the Serbian Menaion-*Torzestviennik* from 1509 (РНБ, 182.56, fol. 489'–495' – dated to July 29); and the Serbian Menaion Reader from 1595 (UB, 1, fol. 336–340 – dated to July 29).

The *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* also quickly reached Rus'. Several East Slavic copies of this work have survived to this day, and can be dated to the 14th century, e.g. the codex containing the text of the relic in question, along with the work of the *Hundred Chapters of Ascetic Life* attributed to St. Theodore, and Ammonius' *Relatio* (РГБ, 173.I.45, fol. 1a–64b), or a separate manuscript with the *Life* (РГБ, 304.I.36, fol. 1c–105b). There are, furthermore, several Rus' copies of the discussed work from later centuries: a collection of saints' lives from 1444 (РГБ, 304.I.687, fol. 289–430'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 15th century (РГБ, 304.I.752, fol. 2–125); a collection of saints' lives from the last quarter of the

15th century (РГБ, 310.1081, fol. 103–193'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the 16th century (РГБ, 304.I.773, fol. 1–132'); a *miscellanea* manuscript from the beginning of the 16th century (РГБ, 304.I.776, fol. 1–141'); and the Menaion Reader from 1632 (РГБ, 304.I.779, fol. 60'–179'). Interestingly, there are also richly illuminated manuscripts containing the full text of the life of St. Theodore, including РНБ, 166.89 – from the end of the 16th or 17th century.

In the mid-16th century, this text was also included in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) by metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563): it was placed in the July volume, under the date 9.07 (РНБ, 728.1323, fol. 65a–86d; ГИМ, Син. 996, fol. 89b–125b; ГИМ, Син. 182, fol. 116c–164d). It is noteworthy that in the May volume of the same compilation, under the date of 23.05, there are two versions of a short hagiographic work dedicated to the monk Michael from the Monastery of St. Sabas (1. **В тоиже дн҃ь стр҃ть с҃тго ѡц҃а нѣшего Михаила мниха.** Incipit: **Сеи б҃ѣ ѿ Ѳдеса града.** 2. **В тоиже день с҃тго ѡц҃а нашего Михаилаила мниха.** Incipit: **Сеи б҃ѣ ѿ Ѳдеса града** – РНБ, 728.1321, fol. 470a–b, 487b–c; ГИМ, Син. 994, fol. 614a–b, 644b–d; ГИМ, Син. 180, fol. 981b–d, 1024d–1025b). This text, however, is not a Church Slavic translation of the *Martyrdom of St. Michael the Sabaite*, known from the Georgian version, but is, *de facto*, a re-edited abridgment of the sections of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* that discuss the fate of the monk, sentenced to death by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik.

The relic in question must have enjoyed considerable popularity in Rus'. We can find references to it in original Old Rus' works. One of them is the *Life of St. Olga*, which was created in the mid-16th century, and then included in the *Book of Royal Degrees* (*Степенная книга*) – a monumental historiographic work, written on the initiative of the Moscow metropolitan Macarius at the turn of the 1560s, with the intention to organize information about the history of the Rus' statehood. The author of the life was a well-read man and had the ambition to show the fate of the Princess Olga (d. 969) against a wide historical background. As a result, he outlined the history of Byzantium and Rus' from the mid-9th century to the end of the next century. Thus, the life discusses the

incidents of the year 843, among other events: the pious empress Theodora, who ruled in Byzantium after the death of her Iconoclast-husband Theophilus (829–842), along with her son Michael restored the cult of icons in the Eastern Church. The next verse offers a meaningful passage, which makes a clear reference to the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*: **В та же времена и лѣта святыи Феодоръ, епископъ Єдескии, крести въ Вавилонѣ Моавию, Царя Пирсидьскаго** (*At this time and in those years, St. Theodore, the bishop of Edessa, baptized Muawiya, the ruler of Persia, in Babylon*).

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

In the opinion of numerous researchers (Peeters, Griffith, Beck), the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* is a hagiographic novel, written by an author who had never been to the East and knew next to nothing about Islam. The measure of this ignorance is the fact that he identifies the religious leaders of Islam as *archimagoi*, confusing them with the leaders of the old Persian religion (cap. 86). That is why the text cannot really be used for expanding knowledge of Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle East in the 9th and 10th centuries. It shows how little a Byzantine author of average education knew about Muslims, their religion and the situation of Christians under their rule.

The author of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* misplaces the expansion of the Arabs in the time of Constans II (642–668) instead of Heraclius (610–641). Referring to their successes, he explains that the Saracens were able to conquer Phoenicia and Palestine because it was divine punishment for the actions of emperor Constans II – the monotheletic heresy, the assassination of the imperial brother Theodosius, the exile of pope Martin I and the ill-treatment of Maximus the Confessor (cap. 21–23). Theophanes explained the events in a similar way.

Muslims appear in the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* also in the context of abuses committed by the local authorities, which prompted Theodore

to go to Baghdad. During his stay in this city (cap. 73–116), thanks to the support of the catholicus (*qātalīq*) – the 'metropolitan' of the city, who used the Christian doctors and scribes employed there – he gained access to the caliph's court. The Muslim ruler, whose Greek name is Μαυίας/ Mauïas (the Arabic version identifies him with al-Ma'mun, the caliph between 813–833), was seriously ill at that time. Theodore cured him with an infusion of dust from the Holy Sepulcher. The healing and Theodore's teachings made the caliph and his three servants convert to Christianity (cap. 70–111) and condemn all heresies. The caliph renounced Islam, condemned Muhammad ('godless Mōamed') and his teachings (cap. 81). The converted ruler was baptized in the Tiger river and took the name John (cap. 78–83). Basil became his godfather. The caliph was portrayed as an educated man speaking Greek, Syrian, Arabic, and Persian. After the conversion, he made decisions favorable to the orthodox. He ordered the restoration of property to the church in Edessa. The Manicheans had their tongues cut off, the Nestorians and Eutychians were exiled from the city and their meeting places (*synagōgai*) were destroyed. The supposed effect of these activities was that, with the exception of the Hagarenes, the people of Edessa were "one flock" (cap. 75).

The fact that the 'caliph' and three of his servants were murdered after they confessed to conversion means that two cases of martyrdom in the Muslim world were presented in the text of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa*. In addition to Michael the Sabaite, whose passion is part of the Greek, Arabic and Slavic versions of the *Life*, the martyrs were the converts Mauïas/John and his comrades. While in the first case, we are dealing with an official death sentence, in the second – a mob rule.

Although the *Life* presents the conversion of the Muslim-Persian king Mauïas as Theodore's greatest success, the polemic with Islam plays only a secondary role in this work. Theodore calls Islam the religion of Mōamed that confuses people (*hē laoplanos thrēskeia tou Mōamed*). For him, Muhammad himself is the precursor of the Antichrist (*prodromos tou Antichristou*) (cap. 80). He considers Islam to be comprised of the Arian and Manichean heresy (cap. 81) and, therefore, is not worthy

of detailed examination. Theodore's most important opponents were not the Saracens or Hagarenes, but Christian heretics (the Nestorians, Jacobites, and Manicheans) against whom the saint defends orthodoxy (cap. 46–52).

The text is chronologically inconsistent. There is a discrepancy between ʿAbd al-Malik, who ordered the execution of Michael (Adramelech in the Greek text of the *Life*, confirmed in the *Martyrdom*) and al-Ma'mun (813–833), presented by the Arabic text of the *Life* as a converted caliph and martyr (in the Greek text: Mauïas). It is debatable whether the story of the conversion of the Muslim ruler is pure invention or whether there is a grain of truth in it. A. Vasiliev thought that the mysterious convert could have been Abbas – the son of the aforementioned caliph al-Ma'mun who rebelled against his uncle, al-Mu'tasim (833–842). Later, however, he withdrew from this thesis. It was also suggested (Loparev, Maksimov) that the converted Abbasid 'prince' was al-Mu'ayyad, the son of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861), killed for the revolt by his brother al-Mu'tazz (866–869) on August 8, 866–869. However, this identification is also questionable.

It is noteworthy that, although the author of the *Life of St. Theodore of Edessa* uses invectives towards the Arabs (*hoi ponēroi kai akarthartoi Sarakēnoi*), he also assured the reader that thanks to numerous miracles, the Church and all Christian people were treated well by Muslims (*Agarēnoi*). Kind words are also used in reference to the Muslim ruler, Adramelech, although it was at his command that Michael was beheaded. He is portrayed as a gentle ruler who did not want to harm Christians (cap. 23–24).

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Zofia A. Brzozowska, Teresa Wolińska

XXIX

The Story of How Prince Vladimir Chose the Religion



Author: unknown (Nestor the Chronicler?)
Date: the beginning of the 12th century, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

It is an extensive tale about the circumstances in which the prince of Kiev, Vladimir the Great (978–1015), decided to be baptized in the Eastern (Byzantine) rite in 988–989, thus determining the direction of the civilizational development of Rus' for centuries. The story is considered as one of the earliest, original East Slavic texts, whose thematic axis is a polemic with the followers of other religions, including Islam. It has survived to this day primarily within the *Tale of Bygone Years* (also known in the literature as the *Russian Primary Chronicle*), widely recognized as the oldest existing Old Rus' chronicle. According to Aleksey A. Shakhmatov's approach, which is considered classic today, it was compiled around 1113 by Nestor, the monk from the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery, based on earlier native historiographic records from the 11th century. Later, it was subjected to further editorial interferences (the second decade of the 12th century). It is currently known in two versions – their interdependence and chronology of creation is the subject of scholarly discussion, which would go beyond the thematic framework of this work. The variant, which was considered older by Shakhmatov and his followers,

has been preserved in the so-called *Laurentian Codex* from 1377 (РНБ, F.п.IV.2), the lavishly illustrated *Radziwiłł Chronicle* (preserved in two copies from the 15th century: БАН, 34.5.30; РГБ, 173.I.236), and many later historiographical compilations. The second redaction of the *Tale of Bygone Years* is represented by the *Hypatian Codex*, preserved in several manuscripts: БАН, 16.4.4 (the 15th century) and РНБ, F.IV.230 (the 16th century).

The story of prince Vladimir choosing the new faith, preserved in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* under the annual date AM 6494 (AD 986), consists of three segments. The first part of the narrative contains a description of the messages sent to the Rus' ruler by neighboring peoples, among which various monotheistic religions had already taken root: the Muslims from Volga-Kama Bulgaria, "Germans from Rome", representing Latin Christianity, the followers of Judaism from the Khazar Kaganat, and an envoy of the Eastern Christian Byzantine Empire. The extensive statement of the latter, known as the *Philosopher's Speech* (sometimes considered in the literature of the subject as a separate work, included in the chronicle in the early 12th century), contains not only a synthetic lecture of the teachings from the Old and New Testaments, but also a polemic with the followers of other religions. The story ends with a description of the messages sent by Vladimir to the neighboring countries, the purpose of which was to gather information about the nature of the rituals held there and the general condition of individual religious communities.

Islam appears in all three parts of the narrative. Furthermore, the arrival of the Volga-Kama Bulgarians of "Muhammad's faith" (**Болъгары в[ѣ]ры Бохъмичѣ**) in a sense initiates the discussion about religion at the seat of the Kiev ruler. Muslims appear first at the court of Vladimir, encouraging him to accept their religion and "bow down to Muhammad" (**поклонисѧ Бохъмиту**). When the prince asks them about the Islamic principles, he receives the following answer:

> They replied that they believed in God, and that Mahomet instructed them to practice circumcision, to eat no pork, to drink no wine, and, after death, promised them complete fulfillment of their carnal desires. "Mahomet," they

> asserted, "will give each man seventy fair women. He may choose one fair one, and upon that woman will Mahomet confer the charms of them all, and she shall be his wife. Mahomet promises that one may then satisfy every desire, but whoever is poor in this world will be no different in the next". They also spoke other false things which out of modesty may not be written down. Vladimir listened to them, for he was fond of women and indulgence, regarding which he heard with pleasure. But circumcision and abstinence from pork and wine were disagreeable to him. "Drinking", said he, "is the joy of the Russes. We cannot exist without that pleasure".

The harshest, polemic tone assumed when discussing Islam is used by the scholar from the Byzantine Empire (Philosopher):

> Then the Greeks sent to Vladimir a scholar, who spoke thus: "We have heard that the Bulgarians came and urged you to adopt their faith, which pollutes heaven and earth. They are accursed above all men, like Sodom and Gomorrah, upon which the Lord let fall burning stones, and which he buried and submerged. The day of destruction likewise awaits these men, on which the Lord will come to judge the earth, and to destroy all those who do evil and abomination. For they moisten their excrement, and pour the water into their mouths, and anoint their beards with it, remembering Mahomet. The women also perform this same abomination, and even worse ones". Vladimir, upon hearing their statements, spat upon the earth, saying, "This is a vile thing".

The image of Islam outlined in the above passages is completed by the accounts of the Rus' deputies sent by Vladimir to the Volga-Kama Bulgaria to gather information about Muslim worship. They convey to the prince the following impressions from their personal visit to the mosque and participation in the Mohammedan prayer:

> When we journeyed among the Bulgars, we beheld how they worship in their temple, called a mosque, while they stand ungirt. The Bulgar bows, sits down, looks hither and thither like one possessed, and there is no happiness among them, but instead only sorrow and a dreadful stench. Their religion is not good.

It is worth asking about the sources from which the author of the Old Rus' story could have drawn information about Islam and the customs of its followers. Certainly, his account relies on the Byzantine tradition, represented in particular by a fragment of the chronicle by George the Monk (known as Hamartolus – XX), devoted to Muhammad and the religion he created. At the beginning of the 12th century, it had already been known in Rus' in the Old Church Slavic translation (in later centuries, it even existed independently in the Old Rus' literature as the story *On Bohmit the Heretic* – XXV). Therefore, it is from the Byzantine chronicler that the author of the work discussed here could have obtained the information about the monotheism of Muslims, circumcision allegedly practiced by them, their eating habits (prohibition of eating pork and drinking wine), faith in destiny applying both to temporal and eternal life (it contains a nearly direct quote from the text by George the Monk: *For everyone who lives here, either in wealth or in poverty and infamy, will be there in the same condition*), and above all – a belief in sexual promiscuity, which allegedly characterized the followers of Islam also after death, when they are in Paradise.

On the other hand, it is much more difficult to indicate the source from which the author of the story drew the accusation (expressed through the Philosopher) that Islam "pollutes heaven and earth", because its followers, similarly to the inhabitants of the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah, find pleasure in homosexual relations which was supposedly linked to their regular washing of anal parts. An almost identical motif is also found on the pages of *Palaea Interpretata* (XXXIII) and the *Sermon on Idols* (XXXII). It is possible that these works are textologically connected or that they derive (independently of each other) from the same polemical text which has not been preserved to this day. An interesting assumption has recently been put forward by Alexander I. Pereswetoff-Morath, according to which one of the sources of inspiration for the creator of the *Philosopher's Speech* was the Church Slavic translation of *Doctrina Iacobi* (IV), written as early as the beginning of the 12th century.

The author of the story could have learned some elements of Muslim rituals from an eyewitness account. This is probably the nature of how

the prayer in the mosque, mentioned in the third of the previously quoted passages, is portrayed. As noted by D. Arapov, the description of the ritual activities included in the *Tale of Bygone Years* corresponds to the prayer (*as-salah*). The Old Rus' chronicler – or one of his informants – could have also observed the Muslim ritual ablutions (*wudu*, *ghusl*, *tayammum*) performed by Muslims and then misinterpreted their meaning.

It is difficult to evaluate the historicity of the Muslim mission sent to prince Vladimir from the Volga-Kama Bulgaria in the 980s. Usually, this episode is considered a literary creation, but it is worth emphasizing that it is somewhat confirmed in the linguistic layer of the work. In contrast to the Byzantine texts translated from Greek, the name of the Muslim prophet was given on the pages of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* in a very distorted form (**Бохмитъ**), which is a consequence of a series of phonetic changes characteristic of several Turkish dialects, including the language of the Volga-Kama Bulgarians.

The story of prince Vladimir choosing the monotheistic religion appears not only in the above-mentioned copies of the *Tale of Bygone Years*, but was also included – often in a significantly re-edited or abridged form – in a number of Rus' historiographic texts from the 15th–16th centuries, dated to AM 6494 (AD 986), e.g. the *Chronicle of Suzdalian Pereyaslav*, the newer redaction of the *Novgorod First Chronicle*, the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle*, the *Sophia First Chronicle*, the *Resurrection Chronicle*, the *Nikon Chronicle*, the *Tverian Chronicle* (abbreviation), the *Chronicle of Abramka* (abbreviation), the *Chronicle of Nikolay A. Lvov*, the *Book of Royal Degrees* (*Степенная книга*), the *Typographical Chronicle*, a Moscow *svod* from the late 15th century, the *Vologda-Perm Chronicle*, an abridged *svod* from 1493, the *Vladimir Chronicle*, the *Kholmogory Chronicle*, the *Ustiug Chronicle*, the *Karamzin Chronicle*, and the *Novgorod Chronicle in Copy of P.P. Dubrovsky*.

The discussed story is the only extensive sequence dedicated to Islam and containing polemical elements that can be found in Old Rus' historiographic material. In the description of later events, Muhammad and the religion he founded appear rather sporadically, usually in the accounts of the clashes between the inhabitants of Rus' and Islamic steppe

peoples: the Polovtsians and the Mongols/Tatars. Among the references of this kind, it is worth mentioning, e.g. the stories about the attack of the Polovtsians on the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery (AM 6604/AD 1096) and the first battle with the Mongols by the Kalka River (AM 6732/AD 1223–1224), containing clear borrowings from the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* (IX); the account of the death of St. Abram, murdered by the Volga-Kama Bulgarians in AM 6737/AD 1229 (included in the *Nikon Chronicle*), a narrative about Zosima of Yaroslavl, who personally converted to Islam in AM 6770/AD 1262 (appearing in: the *Sophia First Chronicle*, the *Chronicle of Symeon*, a Moscow *svod* from the late 15th century, the *Vologda-Perm Chronicle*, and the *Nikanor Chronicle*), or the sequences devoted to the battle with the Tatars in the Kulikovo Field in 1380 (XXXVI). Islam does not enter the orbit of Rus' chroniclers until the mid-16th century, when the Kazan Khanate is annexed to the Moscow state.

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Zofia A. Brzozowska

XXX

Euthymius Zigabenus
Panoplia Dogmatica



Date: c. 1112–1114
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: end of the 14th / beginning of the 15th century, Bulgaria

Euthymius Zigabenus (born c. 1050 – died after 1118) was a theologian and monk associated with Constantinople. He lived in the Virgin Mary Monastery, near the capital of the empire. Thanks to his theological knowledge, he advised emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118) on matters of faith. At his request, he wrote a book, which is a kind of encyclopedia of ancient and recent heresies, and a compilation of complex anti-heretical texts. *Panoplia Dogmatica* (Πανοπλία δογματική) owes its title to emperor Alexius I.

In addition to *Panoplia Dogmatica*, Euthymius Zigabenus wrote a number of theological treatises devoted mostly to biblical issues, among which are exegetical comments to the Psalms, Gospels and Epistles of St. Paul. He also created scholia to the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus, which are almost a literal copy of the comments made by Elias of Crete. He is also credited with the authorship of several homilies, including those dedicated to St. Jerome, the bishop of Athens, and the teacher of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

Panoplia Dogmatica (*The Arsenal of Dogmas*) is a text aimed at supporting the emperor's fight against heretics. According to the testimony of Anna Comnena, it was created in relation to the trial of the leader of the Bogomils, Basileus, which took place in Constantinople around 1099. However, the final version of the text was not published until 1113–1114.

The Full Dogmatic Armor of the Orthodox Faith, *or the Arsenal of Dogmas* – because that was the full title of *Panoplia Dogmatica* – consists of 28 chapters of varying length. In the first seven, Euthymius gives a lecture on orthodox teaching. Next, he reviews heresies, beginning with ancient times. In the following chapters, he discusses Christological heresies, Monothelitism, Iconoclasm, and then (from chapter 23), he shifts to more modern times, discussing the Armenians (ch. 23), Paulicians (ch. 24–25), Messalians (26), Bogomils (27) and Saracens (28). The most autonomous sections are those devoted to Origenism and the heresy of the Armenians. The rest of the work compiles the writings of the Church Fathers or collections of those writings, which John of Damascus also quoted in his treatise *Against the Jacobites*. Zigabenus lavishly cited early authors: Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers and John Chrysostom. In his work, he also used the statements by Pseudo-Dionysius, Leontius of Byzantium, Leontius of Cyprus, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, and Photius. Moreover, he drew from the *Guide* of Anastasius of Sinai and the collection of John Phurnes, a monk from a monastery on Mount Ganus. Furthermore, he was familiar with the works of his namesake, Euthymius from the Peribleptos Monastery.

The source enjoyed immense popularity, as evidenced by the fact that it has been preserved in over 70 manuscripts. The most important include: Dublin, Trinity College Library, 186 (12th century), fol. 224; BML, Plut. 6.10 (14th century), fol. 130'–131; Athos Vatopedi 162 (12th century), f. 150; BL, Addit. 1871 (12th century), f. 179'; BNF, Gr. 1230 (13th century), fol. 134; BNF, Gr. 1231 (12th century), fol. 91; BNF, Gr. 1232A (dated to 1131), fol. 101'; BNF, Gr. 1233 (13th century), fol. 29; Vallic. B 15 (12th century), fol. 128'; BAV, Ottob. Gr. 73 (12th century), fol. 87'; BAV, Palat. Gr. 200 (12th century), fol. 134'; BAV, Reg. Gr. 35 (13th century), fol. 174';

BAV, Gr. 668 (dated to 1305–1306), fol. 191; BAV, Gr. 404 (14th century), fol. 73'; BAV, Palat. Gr. 274 (13th century). Chapter 28, devoted to the Saracens, is included in only one manuscript BAV, Palat. Gr. 367.

Slavic Translation

The *Panoplia Dogmatica* treatise by Euthymius Zigabenus was translated into Church Slavic, perhaps at the end of the 14th century or in the first decades of the 15th century in Bulgaria. Only five fragmentary copies of this text (South Slavic, from the 15th–16th century) have survived until this day. Chapter 28, devoted to the Saracens (Islam), has been preserved only within one Slavic manuscript, currently stored at Odessa National Scientific Library (ОГНБ, 1/108, fol. 24–35'). It is entitled: **Тїтло к҃д на Сарак҃ни, иже наричѫ҇тъ се Измаилїте ѹ҃бо, яко ѿ Исмаила съходеще. сн҃ь же б҃ъ съ Авраамовъ, родив се емѹ҇ ѿ Агары рабине Сарринь. Агарѣне же ѿ Агарь матере Исмаилевы. Сарак҃ни же ѿ иже Агарь рещи къ аггелѹ҇ егда изъгнана ѿ госпожде своеѥ хождаше по пѹ҇стини но сещи Исмаила, яко Сарра тъщѹ҇ ме ѿпѹ҇сти яко же ѡни гл҃ютъ** (incipit, fol. 24: **Сарак҃ини даже ѹ҃бо до Ираклиа ц҃ра лѣтъ идѡломь слѹ҇жахѹ҇**...; explicit, fol. 34: ...**Бж҃ьнаго б҃лгопрѣбытїа погрѣшающѹ҇мѹ҇, и ѿ тѹ҇жа҆емомѹ҇ Б҃а**:~).

The text of the source is incomplete. The manuscript must have been taken apart and then stapled together without maintaining the correct order of the pages. In its current form, one of them is missing; it contained the ending of paragraph 9, all of paragraphs 10 and 11, and the beginning of paragraph 12. Analysis of the manuscript, however, allows us to assume that the chapter on Islam was probably translated in its entirety, except for the last section of paragraph 29, containing a recapitulation of the author's views. At the current stage of research, we are unable to determine whether the South Slavic translation of Euthymius Zigabenus' work was at all known in Rus'. There are indications that the text was not especially popular in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Zigabenus devoted chapter 28 of *Panoplia Dogmatica* to Islam. His main sources of information about this religion were the works of Nicetas of Byzantium and John of Damascus (XI). He also used the anonymous treatise *Against Muhammad* and the chronicle of George the Monk (Hamartolus – XX). Although he tried to creatively develop and interpret the quoted texts, he also took erroneous statements from them. It was a novelty that in *Panoplia Dogmatica*, Euthymius not only presented standard Byzantine views on Islam, but in a style resembling a documentary, he also included 51 quotations from the *Quran* that came from the Greek translation used by Nicetas of Byzantium (860s–870s) and Euodius the Monk (late 9th century): Surah 2.158, 2.168, 2.187, 2.191, 2.223, 2.230, 2.256, 4.3, 4.43, 4.153, 5.6, 5.46–47, 5.51, 5.68, 5.116, 6.142, 7.158, 7.178, 7.188, 9.30, 13.43, 15.6–8, 15.16–18, 17.16–17, 17.40, 18.86, 19.22–25, 21.80–81, 22.5, 26.155–157, 27.16–19, 31.29, 37.1–5, 47.15, 51.1–4, 52.1–6, 53.1–7, 61.6, 68.1, 69.1–3, 77.1–6, 79.1–6, 85.1–3, 86.1–3, 89.1–4, 95.1–3, 100.1–4, 103.1, 108.1–2, 113.1–5, and 114.1–6. He did not correct the errors contained in this translation.

Presenting Islam, Euthymius quoted information that the Arabs had worshipped the Morning Star (Lucifer) and Aphrodite Habar before Muhammad. Next, he introduced the readers to the figure of Muhammad, whom he presented as a student of heretics, among whom was an unnamed monk (an offshoot of the legend of Sergius Bahira). He provided a number of facts about the life of the Islamic prophet (the early orphanhood, marriage to Khadija, business trips to Syria), after which he proceeded to present and refute Muslim beliefs. His text mentions the same issues that had been discussed in the early polemics with Muslims. He denied the divine origin of the *Quran* (he attributed the revelation of Muhammad to his disease – epilepsy), defended the idea of the Trinity, and the worship of the cross. He criticized the religious violence and polygamy permitted by the *Quran*. He pointed to the fallacies in Muslims' teaching about Christ, defended his divinity and argued that it was Christ, and not his shadow, who was crucified. In his criticism of Islam, he also referred to

various aspects of the daily life of Muslims (e.g. eating restrictions, fasting, treatment of women). He devoted considerable attention to the attitude of Muslims towards Christians and Jews.

In the Latin translation of *Panoplia Dogmatica* by Pietro-Francisco Zini (printed in Rome and Venice in the mid-16th century), selected quotations from the *Quran* along with Byzantine comments were provided to readers.

Editions

Greek

Ε υ θ ύ μ ι ο ς Ζ ι γ α β η ν ό ς, Πανοπλία δογματική Αλεξίου Βασιλέως του Κομνηνού: περιέχουσα εν συνόψει τα τοις μακαρίοις και θεοφόροις πατράσι συγγραφέντα, εις τάξιν δε και διεσκεμμένην αρμονίαν, Επί ανατροπή, και καταφθορά των δυσσεβεστάτων δογμάτων τε και διδαγμάτων των αθέων Αιρεσιαρχών, των κακώς κατά της ιεράς αυτών Θεολογίας λυττησάντων, Tîrgovişte 1710 (the *editio prionceps* of the Greek text; it is available in the digitized version http://digital.lib.auth.gr/record/125169; unfortunately, chapter 28 was omitted for fear of the Turks' reaction).

Panoplia dogmatikē, ed. J.-P. M i g n e, [in:] *PG*, vol. 130, col. 20–1360.

The fragments devoted to Islam have been published separately:

Ismaeliticae seu Moamethicae sectae praecipuorum dogmatum Elenchus ex Euthymii Zigabeni Panoplia dogmatica, ed. F. S y l b u r g, [in:] i d e m, *Saracenica sive Moamethica*, Heidelberg 1595.

Euthymii Zigabeni Panopliae dogmaticae caput 28, [in:] *Schriften zum Islam von Arethas und Euthymios Zigabenos und Fragmente der griechischen Koranübersetzung*, transl. K. F ö r s t e l, Wiesbaden 2009, p. 43–83.

Translations

Latin

Ismaeliticae seu Moamethicae sectae praecipuorum dogmatum Elenchus ex Euthymii Zigabeni Panoplia dogmatica, ed. F. S y l b u r g, [in:] i d e m, *Saracenica sive Moamethica*, Heidelberg 1595 (chapter on Islam).

Panoplia dogmatikē, ed. J.-P. M i g n e, [in:] *PG*, vol. 130, col. 19–1359.

German

Euthymii Zigabeni Panopliae dogmaticae caput 28, [in:] *Schriften zum Islam von Arethas und Euthymios Zigabenos und Fragmente der griechischen Koranübersetzung*, transl. K. F ö r s t e l, Wiesbaden 2009, p. 43–83 (chapter on Islam).

Russian

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XXXI

Riccoldo da Monte Croce
Contra legem Sarracenorum



Date: around 1300
Original language: Latin
Greek Translation: Demetrius Cydonius, c. 1360
Slavic Translation: the end of the 15th / beginning of the 16th century, Rus'

Riccoldo da Monte Croce was born in Florence around 1243 and died there on October 31, 1320. His father's name was probably Pennino. In 1267, Riccoldo joined the Dominican order (the Monastery of Santa Maria Novella). Thoroughly educated, he taught in monasteries in Tuscany for many years. In 1286 or 1287, he set out on a papal preaching mission to Acre and made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (1288). Next, he traveled as a missionary in western Asia for many years. He visited Mosul (1289), among other places, and was sent as an envoy to the Mongolian ruler Il-Khan Arghun. He spent a lot of time in Baghdad, which became his primary location. The Dominican devoted his stay in Muslim countries mainly to learning the principles of Islam from within and studying the Arabic language. He read the *Quran* and other works of Islamic theology. He tried to gain knowledge about Islam in order to refute its claims more effectively.

During his stay in the East, Riccoldo came into conflict with the local Christians – Nestorians. He boasted that in Baghdad, he had managed to persuade the Nestorian patriarch Mar Yaballah to recognize the doctrine of Nestorius as heretical. However, Mar Yaballah was rejected by his fellow believers. Riccoldo returned to Florence before 1302 and achieved a high status among the Dominicans.

As a result of his experiences gained in the Levant, Riccoldo left behind a rich literary output. The most popular of his works is *Against the Laws of the Saracens* (Latin: *Contra legem Sarracenorum*; other titles: *Disputatio contra Sarracenos et Alkorani*; *Antialkoranum Machometi*; *Impugnato Alkorani*; *Improbatio Alkorani*; *Confutatio Alkorani*; *Confutatio legis late Sarrhacenis a maledicto Mahometo*). He also wrote a number of other texts: *Libellus ad nationes orientales* (a polemical treaty targeting the Jacobites and Nestorians), *Epistole ad ecclesiam triumphantem* (*Epistolae de Perditione Acconis* – a collection of letters written in the form of a lamentation in response to the Crusaders' losing Acre), *Liber peregrinationis* (a type of diary from his stay in the East, intended as a guide for missionaries working there), *Contra Errores Judaeorum* (*Against the Errors of the Jews*), and *De Variis Religionibus* (*On Different Religions*). Riccoldo is also the author of two theological works: the defense of the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas (in cooperation with John of Pistoia, around 1285) and the commentary on *Libri Sententiarum* (before 1288). He is also credited with the authorship of *Christianæ Fidei Confessio facta Sarracenis* (printed in Basel, 1543), which was probably written around the same time as the above-mentioned works. Around 1290, Riccoldo began translating the *Quran* into Latin, but it is unclear whether this work was completed.

In the 18-chapter treatise *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (*Against the Laws of the Saracens*), Riccoldo gathered various arguments against Islam: theological, philosophical, moral, logical and, philological. It is not certain whether this work was written in Baghdad or in Florence, shortly after the Dominican's return to Italy. It is possible that Riccoldo started writing it during his stay in the Middle East, and completed the final redaction already in Florence. The text was written in Latin, so if it was

indeed written in Baghdad, the local Muslim authorities were completely unaware of its character.

For Riccoldo, the basis for writing this polemic with Islam was the *Quran*. In his work, the author used the original Arabic *Quran* (whose copy he owned), although he also used its Latin translation by Mark of Toledo. The National Library of France stores the Arabic manuscript of the *Quran* (BNF, Ar. 384) read by Riccoldo while writing *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, with the Dominican's handwritten annotations in Latin. However, Riccoldo read beyond the holy book of Islam. One of his main sources, widely cited by him, is the Latin translation of the anonymous Mozarabic polemical treatise *Liber denudationis siue ostensionis aut patefaciens*. Riccoldo also used his own observations regarding Muslim beliefs and related topics, which he described in *Liber peregrinationis*. He could also have drawn from other sources, such as *Doctrina Mahumet*, attributed to Muhammad, *Summa totius haeresis Sarracenorum* and *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim Sarracenorum* by Peter the Venerable, *Explanatio simboli Apostolorum* by Ramon Marti, the anonymous treaty *Quadruplex reprobatio* or *De statu Sarracenorum* by William of Tripoli. Furthermore, in the treatise, Riccoldo employed the polemic tricks present in the works of Peter the Venerable, Thomas Aquinas, and Aristotle.

The work *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was very popular among Christians as a polemical text against Islam. Later polemists (e.g. Nicholas of Cusa) made references to the treaty. It was also translated multiple times. Around 1360, Demetrius Cydonius, one of the leading Byzantine intellectuals of the 14th century, translated Riccoldo's polemic into Greek, entitling it *Against the Followers of Muhammad*. This translation was widely used by Byzantine theologians, including emperor John VI Cantacuzene (XXXIV). Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425), the grandson of John Cantacuzene, used this work to write his own anti-Islamic treaty. In this way, Riccoldo's knowledge entered the Byzantine intellectual mainstream. Interestingly, *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was again translated from Greek into Latin. The work was also rendered in German and Spanish. The author of the German translation, entitled *Verlegung des Alcoran*, was

Martin Luther (1542). To recapitulate, it was one of the most influential Western medieval anti-Islamic polemics. When printing was invented, it was edited relatively quickly. It was first published in Seville in 1500, under the title *Confutatio Alkorani* or *Confutation of the Quran*.

The popularity of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* is evidenced by the fact that 32 manuscripts have been identified so far. These include: BNCF, Conv. Sopp. C 8.1173; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 335 (15th century); SLUB, A. 120 B (16th century); BNF, Lat. 6225 (15th–16th century); BNU, H.II.33 (1213), fol. 247–267' (ca. 1525); Yale University Beinecke Library, 979; WLB, Theol. et Phil. 2° 83; BCF, A.1, fol. 55–83'.

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was probably created at the turn of the 16th century. It can be found in several Rus' manuscripts from the 16th century, including the July volumes of the Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of the metropolitan Macarius (**Начало сеи книгѣ изложено бы҃ ѿ латынїна Риклада. сущ҃ ему҃ бывш҃ в чину҃ оучителѧ по законѹ҃ саракиньскомѹ҃** – РНБ, 728.1323, fol. 453a–464a; ГИМ, Син. 996, fol. 462–476; ГИМ, Син. 182, fol. 810–828' – dated to 31.07) and in one of the copies of *Palaea Interpretata* (РГБ, 304.I.730, fol. 363–394'). The analysis of the text contained in the above-mentioned manuscripts allows us to assume that the Slavic translation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was not comprehensive and included the introduction, chapter one, beginning of chapter two and chapters 13–17 (along with the interpolated fragment of chapter seven).

The Slavic text of Riccoldo da Monte Croce's treaty contains as many as 33 quotations from the *Quran*: Surah 2.32, 2.87, 2.117, 3.7, 3.42, 3.45, 3.59, 3.118, 3.135, 4.48, 4.157–158, 4.171 (thrice), 5.46–47 (twice), 5.110, 5.117 (twice), 8.7–8, 10.41, 15.9, 17.1, 21.5, 21.16, 21.91, 34.24, 35.1, 38.73–74, 44.38, 61.6, 109.6 (twice). An additional benefit of all language versions

of the work are the original Arabic titles of some Surahs appearing on its pages, phonetically written in Latin, Greek and the Cyrillic alphabet, respectively.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

Riccoldo was undoubtedly one of the Latin authors more informed about Islam. It was due to both his four-year stay in Baghdad and his knowledge of Arabic and the *Quran*. To a limited extent, he also relied on the non-Quranic tradition to strengthen the multilayered criticism of Islam's holy book. In *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, Riccoldo focused on criticizing the *Quran* and the person of Muhammad. He knew and quoted the Quranic verse (Surah 4.82) that this book is true because it contains no contradictions, but in his opinion, the holy book of Muslims is full of inconsistencies, lacks order and coherence (cap. 6). Since the *Quran* does not meet the criteria that are set out in it, it is false. Riccoldo made philological arguments, pointing out that in the *Quran*, God often speaks in the plural form (cap. 15). He asked what Muslims meant by mentioning the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in their holy book (cap. 15). Because Riccoldo could not accept the divine origin of the *Quran*, he tried to prove that it was a man-made, random collection of texts. As evidence, he cited the fact that it was written after the prophet's death, following intense disputes, and that there had been several versions of it until caliph Uthman (644–656) chose one and ordered to burn the others.

Many of the allegations made by the Dominican scholar had appeared in earlier polemical treatises and chronicle works. This applies, for example, to the thesis that Muhammad had teachers who had told him what he later included in the *Quran*. Riccoldo emphasized that the Saracens themselves said that Muhammad would not have been able to write the *Quran* without the help of God (cap. 4). Because Muhammad was not an educated man, the devil surrounded him with a number of heretics who helped him create his teachings. Riccoldo mentioned that among

Muhammad's teachers were a Christian monk named Bahira (Baheyra), who, according to *Contra legem Sarracenorum*, professed the Jacobite heresy, the Jew Abdullah – son of Salam – who had converted to Islam, and the Persian named Salon (cap. 6 and 13). The heretic monk was already known to John of Damascus (XI), while the story of a Jewish convert could have been drawn from the accounts of Salman and the rabbis' conversion, included in both Muslim and Christian sources. Riccoldo points to the Talmud as the source of the *Quran*. He is also aware of the Christian inspiration in the teachings of Muhammad. The Dominican argues that while Muhammad recognized the authority of the Scriptures, the *Quran* objects to a number of issues in the Old and New Testaments.

Developing the treaty around the criticism of the *Quran* colored the image of Muhammad painted by Riccoldo. The Dominican attacked the prophet, accusing him of leading a life filled with rape and adultery, valuing sensual pleasures and material goods. He devoted a lot of space to his sexual promiscuity, as supposedly evidenced by taking away Zayd's wife and Muhammad's desire of Maria the Copt (cap. 8). The image of Muhammad in *Contra legem Sarracenorum* is the image of a heresiarch, false prophet, and evil man. In the first chapter of his work, devoted to the similarities between Islam and certain Christian heresies, Riccoldo presented the prophet very traditionally – a heresiarch. However, unlike his predecessors, in particular John of Damascus, he saw Islam as a separate religious system. He did not duplicate the misconception that Muhammad introduced a Christological heresy. He pointed out the basic differences between Christianity and Islam (a denial of the divinity of Christ, a rejection of the possibility that God could have a son).

Muhammad is described in most chapters of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* as a false prophet, the Antichrist's predecessor, and an envoy to Satan who decided to create an intermediate system between the New and Old Testaments: the *Quran*. For this purpose, he chose a diabolical man (*hominem diabolicum*), a vile person – Muhammad (cap. 13). The latter, enriched by his marriage to a rich widow, wanted to become the Arab leader, but they rejected him because of his bad reputation. That is when he decided to become a prophet. Epilepsy, from which he allegedly

suffered, made his goal easier. By denying Muhammad's status as a prophet, Riccoldo uses the well-known argument that neither the Old nor New Testaments contained any announcement of his coming. Moreover, based on the words of Jesus, according to which John the Baptist was the last of the prophets, he concludes that Muhammad was a false prophet (cap. 3). From the earlier texts, the Dominican also drew the story of Muhammad as an epileptic, which had already appeared in Theophanes' *Chronographia* (XIV). Another accusation against Muhammad, often raised by Christian polemists (including Riccoldo – cap. 7), was the lack of miracles. The author's knowledge of the *Quran* allows him to question the later Muslim tradition, attributing to Muhammad the power to perform miracles (e.g. slicing the moon in half). He mocks the story of Muhammad's overnight journey to Jerusalem and from there to heaven (cap. 14).

Criticizing Islam as a religion, Riccoldo accuses Muslims of mistakenly equating happiness with sensual pleasures only, which is allegedly supported by the hedonistic vision of paradise. In his opinion, Muslims are irrational and do not follow reason (cap. 8). He criticizes Muslim marriage and sexual customs. He talks about a temporary marriage that was practiced as a way to circumvent the Islamic ban on fornication. He even quotes a verse from the *Quran* which Islamic theologians use to justify their behavior. Finally, Riccoldo is very critical of Islamic law, which he juxtaposes with Christian canonical law. He criticizes the spread of the new faith by murdering infidels (cap. 8). He treats the Quranic prohibitions on robbery or perjury as only apparent, because it is easy to obtain remission of sins (cap. 12). Like many before him, Riccoldo had to explain Islam's successes. He could not believe that they were caused only by human action, so he suggested that it was the devil's doing. He was the one who persuaded Muhammad to spread Islam with the sword and kill the infidels (cap. 10).

Despite Riccoldo's hostility towards Islam, his work conveys specific knowledge of the *Quran*. This does not mean that there are no errors or deliberate misinterpretations in his text. One of them concerns the relationship between God and his messenger. Riccoldo claimed that Muhammad wanted to equate himself with God, which is contrary to

the doctrine of Islam. Similarly, the information about the poisoning of Muhammad by a Jewish woman, the claim that Islam also allows sodomy (cap. 3), or the story of Muhammad's responsibility for the death of Bahira (cap. 13) are incorrect. Riccoldo knew of the existence of the Hadiths, but attributed their creation to Muhammad (cap. 9).

Riccoldo tried to prove the superiority of the Christian faith over Islam. In the opinion of some researchers, the treatise *Contra legem Sarracenorum* represented the didactic method developed by the Dominicans and was a type of textbook intended for missionaries carrying out the task of converting Muslims. Riccoldo, however, focused on criticizing the *Quran*, and not on explaining the Christian dogmas to Muslims, who were not ready for it. He decided that first, the Islamic doctrine had to be negated.

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Zofia A. Brzozowska, Teresa Wolińska

XXXII

The Sermon on Idols



Author: unknown
Date: 11th–14th century, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

The work, known in the subject literature as the *Sermon on Idols* (some manuscripts mention a significantly longer title: **Слов[о] с[вѧ]таг[о] Григорьѧ. їзобрѣтено в толъцѣхъ ѡ томъ, како первое погани суще ѧзыци кланѧлисѧ їдоломъ ї требы им клали. то ї нын[є] творѧт** – *The Word of St. Gregory, Found in the Comments, about how Pagans Have Bowed to Idols and Offered them Sacrifices, and Now They Continue to Do That*) is an original Old Rus' compilation text. Nothing is known about its author. It can only be assumed that in his work, he relied primarily on one of the homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, known as the Theologian (4th century). The homily had been written for the celebration of the Epiphany (*PG*, vol. 36, col. 335–360) and circulated in Rus' in the Church Slavic translation, preserved, e.g. in the manuscript ГИМ, Син. 954 from the 14th century. The Slavic compiler also used native texts, such as the *Tale of Bygone Years* (XXIX).

Dating the origin of the *Sermon on Idols* is a contentious issue. E.V. Aničkov claimed that this is one of the oldest pieces of Old Rus' literature, written in the 1060s to help eradicate pagan remnants in Rus'. Gerhard Podskalsky believed that the discussed work was created in the period before the Mongol invasion, i.e. by 1237. However, most

researchers are inclined to support a later date, placing the text at the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century. The oldest preserved copy of the *Sermon* comes from the turn of the 15th century (it must have been written before 1412). Currently, it is stored in the Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (РНБ, 351.4/1081, fol. 40–43). According to some researchers, it represents an older variant of the text that is the closest to the protograph. Another version – with several additions – features in two later manuscripts: РНБ, 728.1285 from the 15th century and РНБ, 351.43/1120 from the 16th century. There is also an interpolated redaction preserved on the pages of a *miscellanea* manuscript from the third quarter of the 15th century (ГИМ, Чуд. 270). There, the *Sermon on Idols* is attributed to St. John Chrysostom.

As Podskalsky noted, the analyzed piece contains an enumeration of all religious ideas known to the Old Rus' writer that were contrary to the theology of Eastern Christianity, hence, "a mixture of late Antiquity and Old Slavic pantheon, Islam and superstition." It makes two references to Muhammad. In the first, he is characterized as a cursed Saracen priest (**Мамеда проклѧтаг[о] срациньскаг[о] жерца**). Interestingly, he is mentioned here among the worshipers of the "diabolic mother-goddess, Aphrodite," which may be a reflection of the belief widespread across the Byzantine and Church Slavic literature that the Arabs were, in fact, idolaters, worshiping Aphrodite-Habar, whose most important sanctuary was said to be in Mecca. Later, the text mentions the "deceitful and disgusting Saracen books" (the *Quran*?) traced to the "Saracen priest, damned Muhammed" (**срачиньскаго жьрца Моамеда и Бохмита проклѧтаго**). It is noteworthy that in this last passus, the East Slavic scribe used two different forms of the Muslim prophet's name: one adopted from Byzantine literature and another, strongly distorted, characteristic only of Old Rus' literature (**Бохмитъ**). Next, he listed several peoples known to him who professed Islam, including the Saracens (i.e. Arabs), Bulgarians (Volga-Kama) and Turkmen. He emphasized that all Muslims practice the custom of a peculiar ritual ablution, which involves washing

the anus with water and then pouring it in the throat. This controversial view on the rituals of followers of Islam was probably taken from the *Tale of Bygone Years* (AM 6494/AD 986).

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Zofia A. Brzozowska

XXXIII

Palaea Interpretata



Author: unknown
Date: before the 14th century, Bulgaria or Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic

Palaea is a type of compilation text, based on Byzantine literature and designed to tell and explain selected Old Testament stories. At times, it includes a relevant theological commentary drawn from the writings of the Church Fathers, or fragments of other works (apocryphal and hymnographic), thematically related to biblical stories. As determined by Małgorzata Skowronek, the oldest variant of this genre, the so-called *Palaea Historica*, was established in the monastic circles of Byzantium at the end of the 9th century, and then it was assimilated in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area. There were at least two independent translations of this source into Church Slavic: the older of them is believed to have been written at the turn of the 11th century, and the newer – in the mid-14th century.

Researchers are debating when and where a later type of relic discussed here, the so-called *Palaea Interpretata*, was created. Some of them consider it to be a translation of a Greek work whose original language form has been lost while others claim that it is an original Slavic compilation, created on the basis of various Byzantine texts in Bulgaria in the mid-10th century or in 11th–13th century in Rus'. Certainly, the work in question must have been written before the 14th century, because its oldest preserved copies (of Old Rus' origin) come from that century: РНБ, ПДА, А.119

(14th century – a fragment of this manuscript is now stored in the Russian State Archive of Old Acts: РГАДА, Син. тип. 53); РГБ, 833.320 (late 14th/ early 15th century); РГБ, 304.I.38 (dated to 1406).

Palaea Interpretata is distinguished from the previous version by the richness of its source material. In addition to discussing the biblical books, it contains fragments of apocryphal texts and various genres of Eastern Christian works from many eras and linguistic areas, including Ephrem the Syrian, Pseudo-Methodius of Patara, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Epiphanius of Salamis, and John the Exarch. The discussed work can, therefore, be regarded as a kind of summation of the knowledge about the world at the time, on whose pages theological reflections are placed beside explanations of a number of phenomena in the field of geography or biology. *Palaea Interpretata* is also a text with a clear polemical bent directed primarily against the followers of Judaism – this is even reflected by the full title of the relic: *Annotated Palaea against Jews* (**Палея толковая иже на июдея**). This work, however, also contains a number of anti-heretical and anti-Muslim passages.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

As Małgorzata Skowronek observed, in the most complete and (so far) most thoroughly examined copy of the *Palaea Interpretata* (РГБ, 304.I.38, from 1406) we find only five fragments referring to the customs and religious ideas of Muslims (for comparison: there are over 50 anti-Jewish passages in the aforementioned manuscript). On fol. 21d–22a, a mention about the followers of Islam was woven into the description of an exotic fish called 'muraena' (**мюрома**), which supposedly defied nature and mated with a viper, provoking the author's disgust. He notes that in the world of people, similar behavior can be found among *bisurmans*/Muslims (**бесерменьскии языкъ**), who – infected with the heresy of Muhammad (**ересию Бохмита**) – abandon their wives and connect with each other sodomitically. Moreover, due to these practices, they tend to attach much more importance to anal hygiene than to the cleanliness of the face and breasts.

The author of *Palaea Interpretata* returns to this thread when describing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (fol. 69b). He states that "the unfortunate Hagarenes of the Muslim faith" (**в'ѣры Бохмичѣ окаянии агаряне**) commit the same offense as the dwellers of the biblical cities destroyed by God's wrath: man lays there with man, he washes around his anus, and then pours the same water over his head and chin. It is worth noting that the association of Islam with homosexuality was quite a common motif in Old Rus' literature. For example: in the *Tale of Bygone Years* (XXIX), the description of the choice of religion by prince Vladimir contains an accusation that Muslim women have sexual relations with representatives of both sexes. Analogous descriptions of ablutions allegedly performed by Muslims, intended to disgust the Christian reader, appear both in the oldest Kiev chronicle (under the annual date AM 6494/AD 986) and in the *Sermon on Idols* (XXXII).

The accusation (albeit only in an allusive form) of practicing anal contact also appears in those passages of *Palaea Interpretata*, in which the followers of Islam are considered to be the descendants of Ham, one of the sons of Noah, who was sometimes accused of raping his own father. In the above-mentioned fragment (fol. 69b), the Slavic author states that the Hagarenes' behavior links them to Ham, whom Noah prophesied would be degraded as a slave to his brothers. In his opinion, Muslims humiliated themselves voluntarily by accepting the faith of *the Jewish slave Muhammad*, *which defiles heaven and earth* (**в'ѣровавше въ жидовьскаго хлапа Бохмита, та же оубо в'ѣра оскверимѣть небо и землю**). A similar passage can also be found in the description of the division of the world among the sons of Noah after the Flood (fol. 57c).

The author of *Palaea Interpretata* devotes surprisingly little space to religious ideas or the theology of Islam. The only passage which offers a trail of reflection on this topic is an accusation made jointly at Jews and Muslims, *who believe in Muhammad to their own undoing* (**погибели своеѣ Бохмиту в'ѣрующие**), that they do not recognize the Holy Trinity (fol. 27d). The author's attitude toward Muhammad is also rather ambiguous: he portrays him both as a heresiarch and the founder of a separate religion, and even a kind of deity worshiped by Muslims.

The text of *Palaea Interpretata* is characterized by extraordinary variance: additional elements, usually polemical, may appear in individual manuscripts. For instance: a copy from the first half of the 16th century (РГБ, 304.I.730, fol. 395–403') contains extensive excerpts from the treatise of John of Damascus *On Heresies* (without the chapter on Islam), taken from the *Nomocanon of St. Sava* (XI) and presented as the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis. The anti-Muslim text, i.e. the Slavic translation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* by Riccoldo da Monte Croce (XXXI) was also included in the aforementioned codex (fol. 363–394').

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Zofia A. Brzozowska

XXXIV

John VI Cantacuzene
Four Apologies, Four Orations against Muhammad



Date: 1360–1373
Original language: Greek
Slavic Translation: probably the 15th century, Bulgaria

John Cantacuzene was born around 1295. He came from a rich and influential family. He supported Andronicus III Palaeologus (1328–1341), who between 1321–1328 struggled for power with Andronicus II (1282–1328), his grandfather. Andronicus III made John *megas domestikos* – the supreme commander. During the reign of Andronicus III, John was his closest associate. He participated in war campaigns conducted by the emperor, including the ones against the Turks (1328) and Bulgarians (1331). After the death of Andronicus III (1341), John first attempted to exercise regency on behalf of John V (1341–1347, 1355–1376, 1379–1391), the minor son of Andronicus, and when this was met with strong resistance from Anna of Savoy, Andronicus' widow, he led to his own imperial proclamation on 26 October 1341. After several years of fighting, during which John received aid from the Turks, an agreement was reached between the opposing parties in 1347, as a result of which Cantacuzene (as John VI, 1347–1354) became the co-ruler alongside John V Palaeologus. Helena, the

daughter of Cantacuzene, became the wife of John V Palaeologus, which was supposed to consolidate the agreement. However, in 1352, the conflict between the Cantacuzenes and Palaeologuses resumed. During the civil war, John reached for Turkish help again, which resulted in the Turks seizing the first beachheads on the Balkan Peninsula. The civil war ended in 1354 with John Cantacuzene stepping down from the throne. This is when he became a monk and took the name Joasaph. In the Monastery of Mangana, he turned to writing. He penned *History*, which covered the history of the empire between 1321–1356/1363, treatises in defense of Gregory Palamas, nine dialogues against Jews, and eight texts on Islam: four apologies in defense of Christianity against Islam (*Contra sectam mahometicam apologiae IV*) and four orations against Muhammad (*Contra Mahometem orationes quatuor*).

John Cantacuzene was involved in religious affairs, supporting Gregory Palamas, and organizing a synod at the palace in Blachernai in 1351, during which, hesychasm was recognized as orthodox doctrine. During his stay at the monastery, John continued to engage in the political life of Byzantium, which resulted in his imprisonment by Andronicus IV (1376–1379), his own grandson. He spent the last years of his life in Mistras. He died there in one of the local monasteries on June 15, 1383.

Islam-related texts by John Cantacuzene were written between 1360 and 1373. They consist of four apologies and four orations. Apologies were supposedly written to provide arguments in defense of Christianity to a monk, Meletius, who came from Isfahan and converted to Christianity. He received a letter from a man named Sampsates from Isfahan, in which he attacked Meletius because of his conversion (it is unclear whether the story of the letter is based on facts). In his apologies, John Cantacuzene explains the issue of the Holy Trinity, original sin and the role of Christ in its redemption, the role of miracles and worship of icons in search for God, to ultimately attack Islam, indicating that it is not associated with Abraham and that Muhammad's teachings did not come from God, among other issues.

John Cantacuzene also launched a bitter attack on Islam in his orations against Muhammad. On their pages, he roundly criticizes the *Quran* and

disparages Muhammad. In scholarship, attention is drawn to the differences between the first and second cycle, emphasizing that the first is more moderate in criticizing Islam while the second attacks it fiercely. It is believed that the cycle of apologies was produced before the orations.

When preparing to write the apologies and orations, John allegedly drew from the treatise *Contra legem Sarracenorum* by Riccoldo da Monte Croce (XXXI), already known in Byzantium in its Greek translation by Demetrius Cydonius (Turner, Todt, Argyriou). He also used Gregory Palamas' letter to the faithful in Thessalonica, in which he talked about his captivity at the hands of the Turks. Interestingly, in *Four Orations against Muhammad*, we find as many as 26 quotations from the *Quran* (of varying degrees of accuracy), which John Cantacuzene took from the Greek translation of the work by Riccoldo da Monte Croce. He also quotes the original Arabic titles of several Surahs after the same source. In *Orations*, they were written in the Greek alphabet.

John's writings have been preserved in 46 Greek manuscripts from the 14th–19th centuries (Todt). The oldest manuscripts include: BAV, Gr. 686 (1373); BNF, Gr. 1242 (1370/1375) and Tigurinus C27 (1374). The anti-Islam texts of John Cantacuzene have been translated into Church Slavic (15th century) and Romanian (1669).

Slavic Translation

The Church Slavic translation of eight polemical texts by John Cantacuzene, devoted to the criticism of Islam and its founder, is an issue still awaiting a thorough scholarly study. A comprehensive translation of the aforementioned works into the literary language of the Slavs was probably created in the 15th century in the Balkans, most likely in Bulgaria. It has survived to this day in several manuscripts of South Slavic provenance, including in the manuscript of the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, currently stored in the Austrian National Library in Vienna (ÖNB, Slav. 34, fol. 1–178) from the 15th century, or in codex 2082 in the Moses Gaster collection of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, from the

mid-16th century. In Slavic manuscripts, anti-Muslim treatises by emperor John Cantacuzene are usually placed beside his other texts in which he criticized Judaism. The Church Slavic translation of the discussed sources has not been published yet.

Editions

Greek

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Zofia A. Brzozowska, Mirosław J. Leszka

XXXV

On Bohmit the Heretic



Author: unknown
Date: 14th century (short redaction) / first half of the 15th century (extensive redaction), Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

Narratives about the Muslim prophet, usually with the telling title *On Bohmit the Heretic* (**Ѡ Бохмите еретиц҃ѣ**) are enmeshed in the following Old Rus' historiographical compilations: the *Troitsky Chronograph* (14th century, short redaction), the second version of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* (mid-15th century, extensive redaction), the *Rogozhsky Chronograph* (15th century, short redaction), the *Rus' Chronograph of 1512* (abbreviation), the *Resurrection Chronicle* (16th century, abbreviation) and the *Illuminated Chronicle of Tsar Ivan the Terrible* (16th century, extensive redaction). Sometimes these stories, extracted from their original narrative context, can also be found in *miscellanea* manuscripts, e.g. РНБ, 728.1285 from the first quarter of the 15th century (fol. 105d–108a – extensive redaction).

In the late Middle Ages, texts on Muhammad begin to function outside the historiographic tradition as integral parts of an anonymous work whose thematic axis is the need to defend the doctrinal purity of Eastern Christianity: **Слово на Въздвиженїе честнаго и животворящаго Креста**. It can be found on the pages of Old Rus' Menaion Reader (*Четьи-Минеи*) from the 15th-16th centuries – books that contain hagiographic and

hymnographic texts, arranged in the order of the liturgical year – in the September volume, under the date of 14.09 (the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross): РГБ, 304.I.666, fol. 53'–56' (end of the 15th century); РГБ, 113.590, fol. 65–68 (1451–1494); РГБ, 304.I.663, fol. 252'–257' (end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century); ГИМ, Син. 169, fol. 97'–100 (16th century); РГБ, 173.I.88, fol. 167'–171 (16th century).

We do not know when the text in question was included into the Menaion Reader. In the oldest Slavic manuscript of this kind, which contains texts from the month of September, the so-called *Stanislav's Menaion* (НБКМ, 1039), written about 1353–1361 in the vicinity of Skopje, **Слово** does not appear. The earliest manuscripts, however, that do include it, were written at the end of the 15th century in Rus'. It is therefore most likely that this work was compiled and interwoven into the text of the Menaion Reader in the second half of the 14th century or in the 15th century in the eastern Slavic region. We also find it in the so-called Great Menaion Reader (*Великие Четьи-Минеи*) of the metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563) – a monumental collection of the lives of the saints and other texts intended for personal reading, arranged according to the order of the liturgical year of the Eastern Church and collected in twelve volumes. **Слово**, of course, can be found in the September volume: РНБ, 728.1317, fol. 171c–172c; ГИМ, Син. 986, fol. 336c–338a; ГИМ, Син. 174, fol. 385b–386d.

The extensive redaction of the text *On Bohmit the Heretic* (**Ѡ Бохмите ересиѣ**) can be found on the pages of the second version of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* and the *Illuminated Chronicle*. The *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* is a unique piece of medieval Rus' historiography. Its anonymous authors set themselves the remarkable task of presenting the beginnings of Rus' against the background of the universal history. In the tradition of the Byzantine literature, their account begins with the creation of the world. This preliminary theme is followed by a detailed summary of the Old Testament events and by an account of the conquests of Alexander the Great. Much space is devoted to the history of Rome. The authors outline the circumstances of the rise of the city on the Tiber and trace its history, including all the eras into which it is divided, that is

the age of Roman kings, the Republic, the Principate and the Dominate. Their attention is also drawn to the history of the Christian empire with Constantinople as its capital. Its beginnings are linked to the reign of Constantine I the Great (306–337), the founder of the city on the Bosporus and the first Roman ruler who turned toward the new religion. A systematic account of the history of Byzantium is extended into the reign of Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944), which paralleled that of Igor (912–945), prince of Kievan Rus'.

The authors drew on both old Rus' historiography and Byzantine sources, including especially John Malalas' chronicle (II) and the work by George the Monk (Hamartolus – XX) and its anonymous continuation. They were unlikely to have known these texts in their Greek original, but rather read them in their Church Slavic translations created in Bulgaria towards the end of the 10th century or at the beginning of the 11th century. Some sections of the source contain obvious borrowings and literal excerpts from the Slavic translations of both chronicles. The second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* must have been prepared in the first half of the 15th century. The authors neglected to mention the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. It can thus be assumed that the source was completed before that event.

The sequence dedicated to the founder of Islam, entitled *On Bohmit the Heretic*, includes – along with a description of the first Arab-Muslim invasions on the territory of the Byzantine Empire, placed immediately after it – about twelve columns of the text written in semi-uncial in the manuscript БАН, 33.8.13 from the last third of the 15th century, which is the basis of Oleg V. Tvorogov's edition (fol. 224b–227a). In the manuscript from the year 1485 (РГБ, 228.162) the narrative includes two and a half sheets of text in semi-uncial (fol. 342–344'). This narrative is not an original work but a faithful loan from the Church Slavic translation of George the Monk's chronicle.

The second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* served as the basis for several later Rus' stories about the birth of Islam, such as the text in the manuscript from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (РНБ, F.IV.151), which is the third volume of a richly illustrated Old Rus'

historiographic compilation (known in literature as *Illuminated Chronicle – Лицевой летописный свод*), made in one copy for tsar Ivan the Terrible (1533–1584), for his book collection. It was written in 1568–1576 by a team of scribes and miniaturists, employed in the scriptorium at the Cathedral Church of the Protection of the Mother of God, in the then seat of the Russian ruler: Alexandrovskaya Sloboda.

The *Illuminated Chronicle* presents the development of the Rus' statehood against a broad background of world history. In three manuscripts it includes a rather synthetic lecture on history, starting from the creation of the world, through the events described in the Old Testament, the history of ancient Greece, Hellenistic states, the republic and the Roman Empire, to the outline of the history of Byzantium, brought to the beginning of the 10th century. The following volumes show the history of Rus' from 1114 up to 1567, when the authors of the *Illuminated Chronicle* lived. The basis for the lecture on common history in the compilation in question was mainly the second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* and the *Rus' Chronograph of 1512*. These sources, on the other hand, depend on Byzantine texts known in the Slavic translation: the aforementioned chronicles by John Malalas and George the Monk with its anonymous continuation, as well as John Zonaras (XXVI) and Constantine Manasses (XXVII).

The *Illuminated Chronicle* is rightly regarded by specialists as a phenomenon without precedent in the history of medieval Rus' historiography. Apart from the oldest manuscript, containing the text of the Slavic translation of the chronicle of George the Monk (РГБ, 173.100) and the 15th-century illuminated copy of the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (БАН, 34.5.30), it is probably the only relic presenting the events of the past in parallel with in words and images, text and illustration. In each of the ten manuscripts mentioned above, almost all the cards are decorated with miniatures.

The РНБ, F.IV.151 manuscript (known in the literature as *Illuminated Chronograph*) is a paper codex with 1217 cards measuring 40 x 30 cm, in 18th-century binding. 2191 miniatures illustrate its contents. This

volume describes the history of the Roman Empire from the seventies of the 1st century until the reign of Constantine I the Great (306–337), followed by lectures on the history of Byzantium until 919 – the text stops during a narrative when Romanus I Lecapenus becomes emperor. On fol. 677–681' we find an extensive sequence dedicated to Muhammad, tellingly entitled *On Bohmit the Heretic*. We cannot regard it as an original Old Rus' work. It is a *de facto* rewritten version of a fragment of George the Monk's chronicle dedicated to the founder of Islam. The authors of the third volume of the *Illuminated Chronicle* did not, however, take it directly from the Church Slavic translation of Hamartolus' work but, as I mentioned above, from the second redaction of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* based on it. The content of the latter relic was also the basis for the further narrative part (fol. 682–688), providing information about the death of the Muslim prophet and a description of the Arab invasions on the eastern territories of the Byzantine Empire, during which a number of important centers (including Damascus and Jerusalem) passed under the rule of the followers of Islam.

In the РНБ, F.IV.151 manuscript we can find two images of a Muslim prophet: in fol. 677 he was shown among his disciples, and in fol. 682 – in the grave. But his "portraits" lacked any individual attributes. As the experts on the subject emphasize, the stereotyping of the image is a phenomenon characteristic of the vast majority of illustrations decorating all volumes of the *Illuminated Chronicle*. In the images of Muhammad, it is also striking that there are no attempts to Orientalize the costume. It is odd that the creators of miniatures did not refer to the canon of depicting St. John of Damascus, who lived almost at the same time as the Muslim prophet and in a culturally related area. The tradition of showing this saint with some eastern attributes must have been known to the authors of the manuscript РНБ, F.IV.151. Suffice it to point out that in this manuscript, on the fol. 772' we find an image of John of Damascus, made in a manner fully consistent with the canon, spread throughout the iconography of the Eastern Church: in brownish-tan robes and in a characteristic white wrap on his head.



Fig. 1. Muhammad with a group of his disciples. Fragment of the miniature from the manuscript РНБ, F.IV.151 (fol. 677)

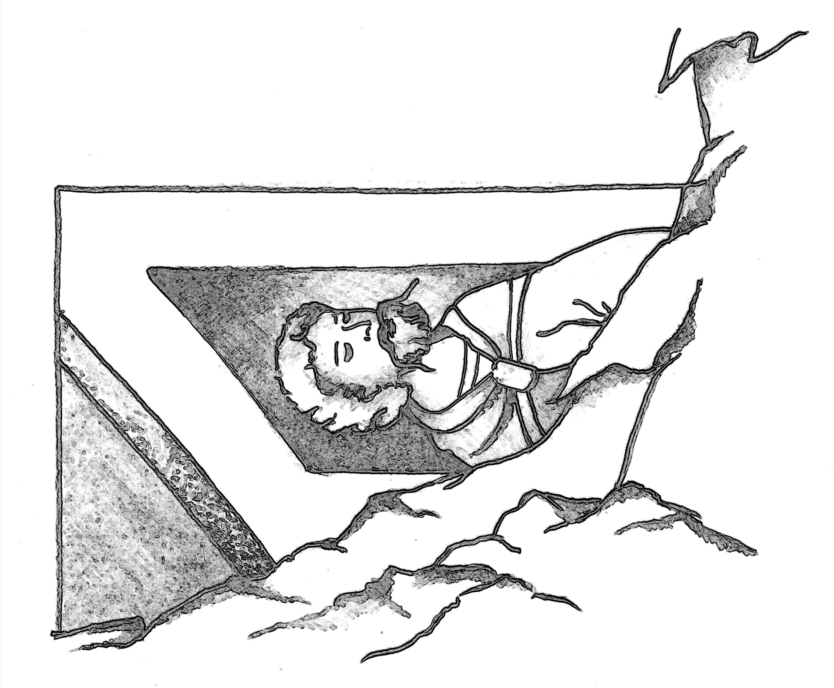


Fig. 2. Muhammad in the grave. Fragment of the miniature from the manuscript РНБ, F.IV.151 (fol. 682)

The Muslim prophet was depicted in the miniatures in the РНБ, F.IV.151 manuscript in almost the same way as the heresiarchs, whose claims, stemming from Christian thought, were condemned by the Church. A clear reference to the canon of imagining prophets is a scroll of parchment, brandished by the founder of Islam in his right hand in one of the miniatures (fol. 677). These images correspond to the ideological meaning of the text *On Bohmit the Heretic*, which they illustrate. They are also perfectly in line with the tendency characteristic of Old Rus' literature to perceive Muhammad as a false prophet, and the religion he created as one of many heresies within Christianity.

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XXXVI

The Tale of the Rout of Mamai



Author: unknown
Date: early 15th century, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

The Tale of the Rout of Mamai (*Сказание о Мамаевом побоище*) is a completely original work by an anonymous Old Rus' author. It is also a source that offers the most historical information from the so-called "Kulikovo Cycle" – a collection of narrative texts centered on the causes and course of the battle at the Kulikovo Field. It was fought on 8 September 1380 at the Don River by the allied forces of several Rus' princes under the leadership of the Moscow ruler, Dmitri (named "of the Don" by posterity to commemorate this event) and the Golden Horde commanded by Mamai, who was supported by the grand prince of Lithuania, Jogaila (1377–1381, 1382–1434). This clash, ended with a brilliant victory of the Rus' side, was a breakthrough for the morale of the Rus' people: for the first time since the Mongol invasion, their forces managed to defeat the Tatars in the open field.

However, it seems that the direct impulse to write the story was not the victory of the Rus' army, but later Tatar attacks (e.g. the capture and plunder of Moscow by khan Tokhtamysh in 1382 and the invasion of emir Edigey in 1408), which made the Rus' realize that the threat from the Golden Horde was still quite serious and it could only be won by uniting the forces of many Rurik princes. Even if the author of *The Tale of the*

Rout of Mamai, who wrote in the early 15th century, was not an eyewitness of the events he described, he could have used the accounts of the people participating in the battle: his narrative abounds in details that cannot be found on the pages of chronicles. While the text contains noticeable anachronisms (e.g. Mamai's ally is not Jogaila, but his father, Algirdas (1345–1377), who was already dead in 1380; also, the Rus' princes are blessed by the metropolitan of Kiev, Cyprian Tsamblak, who had not come to Moscow and gained the recognition of Dmitri until the year 1381), according to many researchers, they were a deliberate choice of the author, and not mere errors.

The Tale of the Rout of Mamai enjoyed incredible popularity in later centuries, as evidenced by the large number of copies and versions of the text. Experts identified as many as eight redactions, of which four were created in the 15th and 16th centuries. The so-called "basic redaction," the oldest and, at the same time, the most faithful to the protograph, is known in five subvariants. The first of them has been preserved on the pages of the manuscript РНБ, Q.IV.22 from the beginning of the 16th century, considered to be the earliest existing copy of the discussed work. The second version can be found in the codex РГБ, 310.578, dated to the second quarter of the 16th century, and in the manuscripts related to it. The other three variants, represented respectively by the manuscripts РНБ, Q.XV.70 (19th century); ГИМ, Заб. 261 (17th century), and РНБ, Мих. Q.509 (18th century) probably come from later periods.

The second redaction of the story, in the literature of the subject referred to as the "chronicle" redaction, was created at the end of the 15th century or in the first years of the next century. It was included in the *Vologda-Perm Chronicle*, covering the period until the 16th century (ГИМ, Син. 485). Another variant of the *Tale of the Rout of Mamai* was developed in the years 1526–1530 by the Moscow metropolitan Daniel. He made a number of interpolations, emphasizing the role of Cyprian Tsamblak in the events of the 1380s (for this reason, the researchers typically refer to this redaction as "Cyprian's"). It was interwoven within the text of the *Nikon Chronicle*, a monumental work of Moscow historiography from the 16th century. Interestingly, the aforementioned variant

of the story was also included in the *Illuminated Chronicle* (*Лицевой свод*), based on the *Nikon Chronicle*, made in one copy for tsar Ivan IV the Terrible in the 1560s–70s (БАН, 31.7.30). At the beginning of the 17th century at the latest, the so-called 'extensive redaction' of the *Tale of the Rout of Mamai* was compiled. It has been preserved in the manuscript of РНБ, 588.1414. In the 17th century, several other, later variants of the work were created.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The presence of Muslim motifs in the work discussing the conflict between the Rus' army and Tatar forces may seem like something completely natural. Indeed, the author of the text repeatedly emphasizes the religious aspect of the battle, showing it in the broader context of civilizational struggles. In his view, it is one of the many acts of defending Christianity against the infidel attackers, and the warriors participating in it are compared to martyrs giving their lives for their faith (it is worth mentioning that these also included Arab saints from the 6th-century Najran, who had been sentenced to death for refusing to convert to Judaism, i.e. St. Arethas and his companions – VIII).

Interestingly, the religious affiliation of the Татарs and their leader does not attract the author's attention. Although he characterizes the attackers using epithets traditionally reserved in Eastern Christian literature for descriptions of Muslims, e.g. "godless Hagarenes" (**безбожные агаряны**), in his opinion, they are not so much the followers of another monotheistic religion as pagans. Comparing prince Dmitri to emperor Constantine the Great (306–337), he presents Mamai and Batu Khan as "the new Julian the Apostate" (361–363).

Therefore, the context in which the name of Muhammad appears in the analyzed text is rather peculiar. The story reads that Mamai, having understood that the battle could end in the defeat of his troops, begins to call on his gods for help: **безбожныи же царь Мамаи, видѣвъ свою погыбель, нача призывати богы своа: Перуна и Салавата, и Раклиа,**

и Гурса, и великого своего пособника Махмета (РНБ, Q.IV.22). In this perspective, the Muslim prophet, mentioned next to Perun, the ancient philosopher Heraclitus (sic!), and Chors, in a way, becomes one of the deities allegedly worshiped by the Mongols/Tatars. In some variants of the work, this peculiar pantheon was further expanded by the Slavic goddess Mokosh (ГИМ, Син. 485 – the "chronicle" redaction). It appears that the anonymous author of the *Tale of the Rout of Mamai* perceived Muhammad in a similar fashion to how he is viewed in the Old Rus' text the *Sermon on Idols* (XXXII).

In the manuscript of РНБ, F.IV.231, which is a very late copy of the basic redaction (dated to the turn of the 18th century), we find another mention of the Muslim prophet. Here, one of the Tatar warriors, Tele-bey (Chelu-bey?), presented as a Pecheneg using the language of the Hellenes and resembling the biblical Goliath in appearance, calls for Muhammad's help with the words: **Отец Магмет, помози** (fol. 307'). The Rus' author attributes a similar utterance to his compatriots: **призывающе своих богов Магмета. О Магмит, помози нам и моли бога о нас** (fol. 307'). This passage is quite vague: the founder of Islam seems to be both a deity worshiped by the Tatars and a kind of advocate, pleading for the one God's help on their behalf. This motif is certainly a later interpolation. It is also included in the text of the 17th-century redactions (if in a slightly different wording), e.g. a variant featured in the *Synopsis*, created in the *Kiev-Pechersk Laura* around 1670, or in the version of a monk of this monastery, Panteleimon Kochanovsky from 1681.

Interestingly, in some of the 15th–16th century manuscripts, Mamai is portrayed as a zealous Muslim, openly seeking to Islamize Rus'. In *The Story of the Life and Death of the Grand Prince Dmitri Ivanovich, a Russian Tsar*, included in: the *Novgorod Fourth Chronicle* (AM 6897/AD 1389), the *Sophia First Chronicle* (AM 6897/AD 1389), the *Karamzin Chronicle* (AM 6897/AD 1389), the *Novgorod Chronicle in Copy of P.P. Dubrovsky* (AM 6897/AD 1389), the *Vologda-Perm Chronicle* (AM 6895/AD1387), the *Nikanor Chronicle* (AM 6895/AD1387), and the *Book of Royal Degrees* (*Степенная книга*), the Tatar ruler supposedly uttered these words: **преиму землю Рускую и церкви христианскыя разорю и вѣру их**

на свою вѣру преложу и велю покланятися своему Махмету, идеже церкви были, ту ропаты поставлю (*I shall take the Rus' land and destroy Christian churches, and I shall change their faith to my faith, and I shall command [them] to bow to our Muhammad, and I shall build mosques where there once were churches*).

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XXXVII

Afanasy Nikitin
The Journey Beyond Three Seas



Date: 1468–1475, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

The Journey Beyond Three Seas (*Хождение за три моря*) is quite a unique literary relic of medieval Rus'. Although it fits in with a long tradition (which in the Eastern Slavic lands dates back to at least the first decades of the 12th century) of creating extensive accounts of personal travels (so-called *хождение*), it goes beyond the framework of this genre both in terms of its themes and formal features. In contrast to the itineraries produced by other Old Rus' travelers between the 12th and 15th centuries, the subject of which is usually Constantinople or the Holy Land, the text of Afanasy Nikitin records his journey to India. Thus, it is an account that exceeds the geographical horizon of a medieval European, in a way, heralding the discoveries of Vasco da Gama. Moreover, the *Journey Beyond Three Seas* by Afanasy Nikitin is distinguished by the extremely personal tone of expression: we read his travel log, written primarily for his personal use, where he often records his very intimate dilemmas and thoughts.

We know very little about Afanasy Nikitin: the only source of information about him may be the work he left behind with annotations featured on the pages of the *Sophia Second Chronicle* (РГАДА, 181.371/821, fol. 193). He was a merchant and came from Tver. Contrary to what some scholars

claim, most likely, his travel was not an official mission; it was taken on Afanasy's private initiative and was of a typically commercial nature. He set off to the East at the same time as Vasili Papin, an emissary of the grand prince of Moscow, whose mission, according to the author of the chronicle, had taken place a year before the expedition of prince Yuri Vasilievich (brother of Ivan the Terrible) to Kazan (1467–1469). Near Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga River, the Tver merchant and his companions were attacked and robbed by Nogai Tatars. He decided to continue his journey to the East, wanting to compensate for the losses suffered as a result of this theft. Initially, he sailed the Caspian Sea, visiting, e.g. Derbent and Baku, after which, he crossed the Persian lands to board a ship in Hormuz, sailing through the Arabian Sea to India. In the subcontinent, he stayed mainly in the territory of the Muslim Bahmani Sultanate, whose capital was Bidar. On his way back to Rus', after arriving at the port of Hormuz, he chose a different route through Isfahan and Tabriz to Trebizond, and then crossed the Black Sea. After disembarking in the Crimea, he probably went up the Dnieper. His health seriously deteriorated and he died on the way to Smolensk. Afanasy's manuscript was brought to Moscow by merchants who had accompanied him, and then, through the deacon Vasili Mamirev, it reached the chronicler in 1475. Based on the data provided in the copy of the *Sophia Second Chronicle*, the journey of Afanasy Nikitin can be dated between 1466 and 1475. By comparing the information of the Tver merchant with Indian and Persian sources, L.S. Semenov narrowed down the date of this event to 1468–1474.

The *Journey Beyond Three Seas* has been preserved in three redactions. The oldest variant can be found on the pages of the aforementioned *Sophia Second Chronicle* (РГАДА, 181.371/821, fol. 193–220' – from the mid-16th century; ГИМ, Воскр. 1546, fol. 1192'–1193 – from the second half of the 16th century, a fragmentary copy), and so-called *Chronicle of Nikolay A. Lvov* (РНБ, F.IV.144, fol. 442'–458' – from the mid-16th century). These are historiographic works, based on another, earlier compilation, created in the 1480s. The second redaction has survived in its entirety within the manuscript РГБ, 173.I.195.2 (previous reference numbers: 178.8665; 304.III.24), fol. 369–392' (from the turn of the 16th century). Its

fragments can also be found in the *miscellanea* manuscript РГБ, 178.3271 from the end of the 15th century, widely recognized as the oldest existing copy of the itinerary of Afanasy Nikitin. As textological studies have shown, both redactions from the end of the 15th century were created independently of each other on the basis of a protograph of the work, perhaps the original. However, the third, 17th-century variant of the text, was based on the second redaction. It is represented by two copies: РГБ, 310.754, fol. 300–319, and РНБ, F.XVII.17, fol. 402–412.

The Arabs, Muhammad and Muslims

The issue of Afanasy Nikitin's attitude towards Muslims and their religion has been the subject of discussion among researchers for many years. Some of them go so far as to say that during his journey to the East, he converted to Islam while others are more inclined to emphasize his unique openness to other cultures, value systems or even languages that exceeded the moral standards of the era. The literature of the subject also includes beliefs, according to which the case of the Tver merchant should be considered as an example of an individual who, detached from his native land, kinsmen and fellow believers, somehow loses his identity, getting lost in a civilization and mentality that was foreign to him.

Despite being repeatedly urged or even forced to accept the faith of Muhammad (including by khan of Junnar in Central India), it is rather certain that Afanasy ultimately remained faithful to Christianity until the end. This may be indicated both by the unfavorable tone in which he sometimes speaks about Muslims ("bisurman dogs") as well as the dilemmas recurring in the text, where he wonders if being away from Rus' and Orthodox fellow believers could have somehow tainted his Christian faith. On the other hand, Nikitin's attitude is unique to his era: despite his many contemporaries treating Islam as one of the heresies within Christianity or even idolatry, he is aware that Muslims worship the one God, the same as the followers of Christ. Therefore, to Afanasy, Muslims seem closer to his own belief system than the followers of other religions of the

Indian subcontinent, whom he simply treats as pagans worshiping stone idols. This attitude also has practical consequences: deprived of access to Christian temples as well as his books and other personal items looted by the Tatars, he has no possibility of keeping European time counts, including fasts and holidays. Consequently, the Tver merchant decides, though not without doubt, to pray, fast and celebrate with Muslims (*I am going back to Russia thinking that my faith is dead, for I have fasted with the Moslems* [...] *As for the great Christian feast, the Resurrection of Christ, I knew not when to keep it, and I fasted with the Moslems, and broke my fast when they broke theirs*). Ultimately, his worldview evolves into a kind of religious syncretism: Afanasy admits that true piety is about worshiping the one God and addressing him with a pure soul. He also does not avoid calling the Creator Allah, intersecting his itinerary with a series of short prayer phrases, most likely overheard from the natives during the journey (they were written in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, usually in a very contaminated form and quite randomly transcribed into the Cyrillic alphabet).

The Tver traveler describes Muslims living at the time in the territory of Persia and India (especially the Bahmani Sultanate) while showing a basic understanding of the assumptions of their religion: he emphasizes that they are monotheists, and Muhammad is a very important figure for them. Several times, he refers to Islam as "Muhammad's faith," even quoting the term *Muhammad-dini* (Махмет дени) overheard from the locals, and describes its founder according to the Muslim tradition – as "God's prophet." He is also aware that the most important sanctuary of this religion is in Mecca.

Nevertheless, Afanasy devotes little attention to the biography and teaching of Muhammad or the beginnings of Islam. His work contains only one small reference to this topic. When describing the Persian city of Ray, Nikitin follows the local tradition and states: *There Shah Husain, son of Ali and grandson of Mohammed, was slain*. Thus, he refers to one of the most important events from the early Islamic period, which caused a split into the Sunni and Shiites, i.e. the murder of the grandson of the prophet, Al-Husayn ibn Ali, son of Fatima and Ali, together with his family during the battle at Karbala in 680.

Afanasy is the only Old Rus' author who quotes the *Quran* in the original. In the prayers woven into the text of his itinerary, we find several fragments of the holy book of Islam, reproduced phonetically by Nikitin in Arabic and written in the Cyrillic alphabet:

Afanasy Nikitin ***Journey Beyond Three Seas*** **(РГБ, 173.I.195.2, fol. 392')**	***Quran*** **– Arabic text (transcription)**	***Quran*** **– English Translation (transl. 'Alī Qulī Qarā'ī)**
бисмилна. ги рахмам ррагым	Surah 1.1: *Bismi Allahi alrrahmani alrraheemi*	Surah 1.1: *In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.*
Їса рухомо	Surah 4.171: ***AAeesa** ibnu Maryama rasoolu Allachu wakalimatuhu alqaha ila Maryama wa**roohun** minhu faaminoo bi**Allahi***	Surah 4.171: *The Messiah, **Jesus** son of Mary, was only an apostle of Allah, and His Word that He cast toward Mary and **a spirit from Him**.*
хꙋво мꙋгоу лези. лѧ лѧїлѧга. ильлѧ гꙋѧ. алимꙋл. гѧиби. вашагадити. хоуа рахманꙋ. рагымꙋ. хоуво могꙋ. лѧзи. лѧ илѧга. ильлѧ хꙋѧ. альмеликꙋ. алакꙋдосꙋ. асаломꙋ. альмоуминоу. альмоугаминꙋ. альазизꙋ. альчебароу. альмоутаканъбироу	Surah 59.22–23: *Huwa Allahu allathee la ilaha illa huwa AAalimu alghaybi waalshshahadati huwa alrrahmanu alrraheemu. Huwa Allahu allathee la ilaha illa huwa almaliku alquddoosu alssalamu almuminu almuhayminu alAAazeezu aljabbaru almutakabbiru*	Surah 59.22–23: *He is Allah – there is no god except Him – Knower of the sensible and the Unseen, He is the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. He is Allah – there is no god except Him – the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-benign, the Securer, the All-conserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous.*

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XXXVIII

The Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith



Author: unknown
Date: the end of the 15th century, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

The *Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* (**Сказаніе о хулнѣй вѣрѣ Срацинѣстѣи**) is a compilatory work, created in Rus' at the end of the 15th century. Its earliest version can be found in a *miscellanea* manuscript, currently stored in the collection of the Russian State Library in Moscow (РГБ, 113.506, fol. 60–66'). According to many researchers, this manuscript is a convolute, and the part including the text in question was written at the end of the 15th century (1492–1493). The anonymous author of the story "about the Saracen faith" quite mechanically combined three texts of Byzantine provenance, known in the Church Slavic translation: a chapter of John of Damascus' treatise *On Heresies* dedicated to Islam (XI), a part of the polemical work by Michael Syncellus (XII), and fragments of the ritual of abjuration of Islam (XIX). He probably based his work on one of the copies of the *Nomocanon of St. Sava* – a legal compilation known in Rus' since the second half of the 13th century. In the manuscript РГБ, 113.506, the text of all the above-mentioned Byzantine works was presented in Serbian translation. Moreover, the parts of the treatise *On Heresies* and the works of Michael Syncellus were interwoven with each other in exactly the same way as on the pages of the *Nomocanon*

of St. Sava. Therefore, the Rus' scribe should only be credited with combining them with the fragments of the ritual of abjuration of Islam.

The *Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* is comprised of the following blocks of text:

- fol. 60–60' (incipit: **Єсть же и доньнѣ держащи и прелщающе люди слоужба Измаильтьска рекше вѣра Сраціньска**...; explicit: ...**лжепр҃ркъ имене҆м҃ Моаме҆д҃**) – John of Damascus, *On Heresies*;

- fol. 60' (incipit: **иже бѣсѣдова҆в҃ сь Євр҃ки и съ христианы**...; explicit: ...**ѿ несторьян же чл҃кослоужєнїе**) – Michael Syncellus;

- fol. 60'–64' (incipit: **и почє҆т҃ ветхы и новыи завѣт**...; explicit: ...**и ины нѣкиѫ г҃лы смѣха достоины**) – John of Damascus, *On Heresies*;

- fol. 64'–65' (incipit: **в раи же четыре҆м҃ рѣка҆м҃ г҃лете**...; explicit: ...**проклинаа ѿрицаѫсѧ и҆х҃**) – the ritual of abjuration of Islam, fragments of cap. 5–6, 11–12, 15–16, 19–22;

- fol. 65' (incipit: **и ины нѣкиѫ г҃лы смѣхѵ достоины**...; explicit: ...**вино еже пити ѿноу҆д҃ ѿре҆ч҃**) – John of Damascus, *On Heresies*;

- fol. 65'–66 (incipit: **и единомѵ҆ж҃ точию клаѭтисѧ Бо҃у**...; explicit: ...**но Моисєѡѵ҆ и Ароновѣ сестрѵ сию мнѣти. Сице баснослови҆в҃**) – Michael Syncellus;

- fol. 66 (incipit: **елико҆ж҃ ѿ ве҆т҃хаго писаниа**...; explicit: ...**и За҆х҃рию ѿца Пр҆т҃чва**) – the ritual of abjuration of Islam, cap. 7;

- fol. 66–66' (incipit: **себе же оубо ключарю раискомѵ быти ре҆ч҃**...; explicit: ...**яко нечестиви и хѵлници**) – Michael Syncellus.

Interestingly, the work on Islam, compiled from fragments of the last chapter of John of Damascus' *On Heresies*, the text of Michael Syncellus and the ritual of abjuration of Islam, also appears on the pages of *Мазуринская Кормчая* – a Balkan legal compilation, based on the Church Slavic translation of the *Nomocanon in Fifty Chapters* (РГБ, 173.I.187, fol. 265–272' – from the end of 15th/beginning of the 16th century). The same text is also included in the manuscript РГБ, 173.I.191 from the 16th century – a Rus' copy of a less-popular Byzantine set of laws, the Nomocanon of the Constantinopolitan patriarch John the Faster (582–595), which was later supplemented (fol. 142'–161).

In the years 1526–1530, the *Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* was included in the initial version of the *Nikon Chronicle* – a monumental, multi-volume work of Rus' historiography, created in the circles directly linked to the Moscow metropolis. It is noteworthy that one of the editors of the compilation (perhaps even metropolitan Daniel himself, who personally supervised the creation of the *svod*) decided to expand the text of the story of the "Saracen faith" by three notes. The first of these was included in the second block (the work of Michael Syncellus), in the narrative on Muhammad's contacts with the representatives of various religions and denominations. The Old Rus' scribe expanded this distinctive catalog of heretics, whom the founder of Islam supposedly encountered in his youth in order to learn from them, by the following groups: the Manicheans, Jacobites (i.e. Syrian Monophysites), Armenians (also not recognizing the decisions of the Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon), **христораздорникы** (the author probably meant here the Christolites, i.e. the "cleavers of Christ"), the Donatists, and Lampetians. It can be assumed that the names of the last three factions were borrowed by the creator of the *Nikon Chronicle* from John Damascene's treatise *On Heresies*. This claim is supported by the fact that in the said work, the views of the Christolites, Donatists and Lampetians were discussed in the same section of the narrative (as heresies 93, 95 and 98).

The second note was placed in the third block, containing an extensive fragment of the treatise by John of Damascus, which, e.g. draws attention to the fact that Muslims sometimes accused Christians of idolatry, i.e. the

worship of inanimate objects: the cross and icons. The editor of the *Nikon Chronicle* added here that this accusation could be extended to the veneration of angels, archangels, apostles, prophets, martyrs and many other saints. The most interesting is the last note, placed at the very end of the work. It contains a recommendation that Christians should not establish contacts, friendships or fellowship with the Hagarenes nor should they have love for them, because Islam is the work of demons (**Да сіа вѣдяще, отвѣгаите отъ Ягарянскихъ дружебъ, и общенія и единосовѣтія и любви, яко дѣмонско есть**).

The *Tale of the Shameful Saracen Faith* also appears on the pages of the second West-Rus' redaction of the *Rus' Chronograph*, compiled in the mid-16th century and textologically dependent on the *Nikon Chronicle*. The discussed work underwent here significant editorial interferes and abridgment.

Editions

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XXXIX

Maximus the Greek (Michael Trivolis)

A revealing word against the Hagarene aberration and against the filthy dog Muhammad, who invented it

A second word, about the same, to the devout ones against the God-defier and dog, Muhammad, including a story about the end of this world

Answers of the Christians to the Hagarenes who revile our Orthodox Christian faith



Date: 1532–1555, Rus'
Original language: Church Slavic (Old Rus')

Maximus the Greek, or rather Michael Trivolis (he became known in Rus' under his monastic name), is undoubtedly one of the most interesting creative personalities in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* area of the late Middle Ages. He was Byzantine by origin. He was born in Arta around 1470 to a fairly wealthy Greek-speaking family. His parents, Irene and Manuel, were considered – as Michael-Maximus proudly emphasizes in one of his works – "to be Christians, Greeks and philosophers." Therefore, they

made sure that their son received a thorough education, including Latin. The knowledge of this language probably influenced the fate of our protagonist: in 1492, he left his homeland to go to Italy, along with John Lascaris, sent to the East by Lorenzo de' Medici (Lorenzo il Magnifico, 1469–1492) to bring Byzantine manuscripts to Florence.

Michael Trivolis was fortunate enough to come to Italy in the golden age of the Renaissance and humanistic thought. Over the dozen years he spent there, visiting Florence, Padua, Ferrara, Vercelli, Venice, and perhaps also Milan, he, e.g. attended lectures at the local universities, worked in the Aldo Manuzio printing house (1449/1450–1515) and helped a relative of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) to organize his literary legacy. Above all, however, he used his linguistic skills to rewrite manuscripts and translate them from Greek into Latin. Interestingly, the spirit of the Renaissance did not overpower him completely: the pious Byzantine was offended, e.g. by the uncritical recognition of humanists for the achievements of the pagan creators of ancient Greece and Rome. During his stay in Florence, he also came into contact with Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) and, influenced by his sermons, in 1502, he even began his novitiate at the Dominican Catholic Monastery of San Marco in Florence. However, he left it and in 1506, traveled to Mount Athos to finally take the Eastern-rite monastic vows in the Greek Monastery of Watopedi and assume the name of Maximus. He spent ten years on the Holy Mountain, involved in rewriting manuscripts and documents, creating epitaphs, epigrams, and liturgical poetry. The year 1516 was the turning point in Michael's life: it was when the embassy of the grand prince of Moscow, Vasili III (1505–1533) arrived at Athos, looking for a translator from Greek. Although our protagonist did not speak the Church Slavic language, he was appointed to this role by the igumen Watopedi Anthemius, as a person endowed with exceptional linguistic talents, capable of mastering the written language of the Orthodox Slavs in a very short time. Therefore, Maximus left the Holy Mountain in the summer of 1516, and then – after a short stay in Constantinople/Istanbul – he arrived in Moscow on March 4, 1518.

Having arrived in Rus', the monk Maximus zealously performed the tasks entrusted to him. Initially, he translated texts from Greek into Latin, which were later translated into Church Slavic by Vlasij Ignatov and Dmitri Gerasimov (the latter had participated in the monumental undertaking initiated by the archbishop of Novgorod the Great Gennadius and aimed at the creation of the first comprehensive Slavic translation of the Bible – 1499). Soon, however, the gifted Byzantine mastered the language of his hosts so well that not only could he translate into it, but also create his own original literary texts in that language. In the years 1518–1525, he supervised the translation of, e.g. the commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Psalms, as well as the works of St. John Chrysostom. Using the manuscripts he had brought from Athos, he also tried to make corrections in old translations from Greek into Church Slavic. This initiative met with the disapproval of his circle and became one of the reasons for the impeachment of Maximus. In February 1525, he was brought before the court. He was accused not only of interfering with the text of the liturgical books (which, in fact, equaled an accusation of heresy), but also of spying on behalf of Ottoman Turkey and criticizing the autocephaly of the Rus' Church (established – against the ecclesial tradition of the Eastern Church – without the consent of the Constantinopolitan patriarch). In May 1525, banned from contacts with the outside world and writing, the learned monk was sent to the Monastery of St. Joseph near Volokolamsk. His condition improved only after his transfer to the Monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Tver (1532–1537). In the new place of internment, he could engage in unrestricted literary activity. In the 1540s, he was probably transferred two more times: first to Moscow, and then to the Trinity Laura of St. Sergius. He regained his freedom around 1547, probably on the initiative of the Moscow metropolitan Macarius (1542–1563). Little is known about Maximus' later fate. The last reference to him comes from 1552. The hagiographic tradition developed in later centuries dates his death to December 12, 1555.

Maximus' personal experiences, the accusation of heresy and many years of imprisonment, had an impact on the nature of his work. In the

1530s and 1540s, he wrote mainly polemical texts. When discussing with the representatives of other religions and confessions (Jews, Muslims, pagans as well as Catholics, Protestants and the followers of various heresies within Christianity), he proves himself to be not only a scholar of broad knowledge, but above all – a zealous Orthodox Christian who primarily wants to prove his orthodoxy to his readers. The monk compiled several collections of his own writings. The oldest of them, comprised of 47 chapters, was written in the years 1547–1551. It has survived to this day and is now stored in the Russian State Library in Moscow (РГБ, 173.I.42). In later years, two more collections of his writing were created, comprised of 73 paragraphs.

I

A revealing word against the Hagarene aberration and against the filthy dog Muhammad, who invented it

(Слово wбличїтелно на агарѧньскꙋю прелесть и ꙋмыслившаго ea скверна҃го ѱа Моамет҃а)

The first and most extensive of Maximus the Greek's anti-Muslim works was probably written between 1532 and 1547. It was included in the oldest collection of his writings, preserved in the manuscript РГБ, 173.I.42 (fol. 60'–92'). While it is a completely original literary text, content-wise, it depends on the earlier polemical tradition. In the first part of the treatise, assuming that the truth and value of a given religion are determined by the moral condition of its founder, the author focuses on the biography of Muhammad. Interestingly, although the monk has much more information about him than other Byzantine and Rus' authors, he does not indicate his sources directly and only mentions that his knowledge comes from "trustworthy men."

According to Maximus, in his youth, Muhammad worked for a wealthy "Ishmaelite of Arabia," guiding his caravans to Palestine and Syria. When his employer died, his widow, overwhelmed by love, made him her husband and the co-owner of all her property. Having thus acquired a high economic and social status, Muhammad conceived of the idea of persuading the Arabs to abandon idolatry. However, he did not undertake this mission alone. Maximus the Greek reports that at his side there were two advisers (contrary to a number of other Eastern Christian authors who mention only one): the Jew Elijah, expelled by his fellow believers from Jerusalem on charges of heresy. Supposedly, it was he who acquainted Muhammad with the idea of monotheism, the practice of circumcision, not eating pork, and ritual ablutions. The other adviser was said to have been an Arian monk who had fled Constantinople and allegedly told the later prophet that Christ was neither God nor the Son of God, but only an ordinary man. The latter was also attributed with influencing Khadija, to whom he explained the nature of Muhammad's epileptic attacks, persuading her that they were caused by the visions of the archangel Gabriel. Inspired by the Arian monk, she would then boast to other women that her husband was a prophet, spreading the news to Arabs. According to Maximus, Elijah even began to envy the Arian for the esteem in which he was held by Muhammad and Khadija. Hence, he decided to get rid of his rival insidiously: when the three of them went to the desert and lay down to sleep after a lavish feast seasoned with wine, the Jew supposedly murdered the monk with Muhammad's sword. The prophet, having woken up, believed that he had committed the murder under the influence of the alcohol, and, therefore, forbade his disciples from drinking wine.

However, the religion he created, had little to do with temperance. Maximus the Greek directly accuses Muhammad of basing it primarily on satisfying all bodily needs, promising his followers their unbridled fulfillment also in the future life: in Paradise, there would be three rivers (of honey, wine and milk) as well as beautiful girls with whom the saved ones would be able to lay without moderation, and who, despite this, would be virgins again the next day. In order to disavow Muhammad as a potential messenger of God, the author cites another episode from the

prophet's life. The more inquisitive Arabs would ask him why he did not perform miracles like Christ and the other prophets, to which he supposedly replied: *The prophets and Christ were sent by God to perform miracles and various signs, and I was sent to kill with the sword those who would not obey my words* (РГБ, 173.I.42, fol. 69: **прр°цы и Хс̃ самъ послани быша ѿ Бг̃а чюдесы и различными знамєнїи, азъ͒ посланъ єс͒ мече͒ ѕбивати повелѣнъ непокарающаяся мои͒ словесе͒**).

Next, Maximus the Greek moves on to discuss the most important dogmas of Islam and the elements of Muslim rituals. He notes that although the *Quran* praises the Gospel and recognizes it as the Word of God, it also contains a number of teachings that unambiguously contradict it. Therefore, the monk Maximus enumerates that Muslims do not recognize Christ as God nor the Son of God, reject the dogma of the Holy Trinity, and confuse the Mother of God with Moses' sister, Miriam (although the two women are separated by a time interval of about 1,480 years). Despite the recommendations contained in the New Testament, the followers of Islam do not receive baptism, and instead, perform ritual ablutions before prayer. Muhammad appears to pander to human weaknesses by promising his followers sexual gratification in Paradise, and even allowing them to renounce their religion when circumstances require them (e.g. when it is a matter of life and death).

What distinguishes Maximus the Greek from earlier Byzantine polemists is his exceptionally sharp and uncompromising tone of expression. Muhammad is for him a "filthy dog," a liar and a "wolf in a sheep's clothing," the Antichrist's predecessor, a false prophet, the worst of heretics, a messenger of Satan, the son and embodiment of the devil, a beast, and a wild hog. Moreover, the author – probably under the influence of his own observations made in the Balkans occupied by the Ottoman Turks in the second half of the 15th century – assigns him specific political and military goals: in his opinion, he wants to deprive all Christian monarchs of power and completely eradicate Christianity from the face of the earth. Similarly to the former persecutors of the first Christians, he derives pleasure from endless wars, the shedding of blood, capturing

Christ's followers, tormenting them and making them abandon their religion: through violence, promises of material goods and honors, and sometimes, even with ordinary trickery.

II

A second word, about the same, to the devout ones against the God-defier and dog, Muhammad, including a story about the end of this world

(Слово ѡ томже къ бл҃говѣрны҃м на Бг҃ѡборца пса Моамєѳа, в немже и сказанїе ѿчасти ѡ кончинѣ вѣка сє҃)

The second polemical text by Maximus the Greek was probably written soon after he finished working on the first one. It was included in the oldest collection of his writings (РГБ, 173.I.42, fol. 92'–104). As the author himself emphasizes, it complements the above-discussed treatise and develops the ideas that were only signaled in the first work. This time, the monk Maximus focuses on the contemporary global situation in the world and the condition of two monotheistic religions: Christianity and Islam. It pains him to say that in his day, the followers of Muhammad are triumphing, displacing Christians from the lands they had inhabited for centuries: obliterating the Byzantine Empire and seizing Constantinople as well as defeating other orthodox "Europeans": the Bulgarians and Serbs. These successes, according to Maximus, are part of the plan that Muhammad and his successors had pursued since the reign of emperor Heraclius (610–641).

However, the situation described by the monk has clear eschatological connotations. The victories of the "infidel Ishmaelites" and their

persecution of Christians intensified at the end of the 15th century because – according to Maximus the Greek – the end of the world and the Last Judgment were approaching inevitably. Muhammad is, therefore, in his view, a false prophet and the predecessor of the Antichrist, announced in the Apocalypse, and even the embodiment of the devil. He persecutes Christians and ravages their territories only temporarily because, ultimately – by God's will – he will be defeated and humiliated.

III

Answers of the Christians to the Hagarenes who revile our Orthodox Christian faith

(Ѿвѣты хрїстїанѡмъ противѹ агарѧнєхъ хѹлѧщихъ нашѫ православнѹю вѣрѹ хрїстїа҃нскѹю)

The third and last of the anti-Muslim texts by Maximus the Greek was probably written a little later than the two above-mentioned works. It cannot be found in the oldest collection of the texts by the learned monk (РГБ, 173.I.42), but appears in later collections, incl. РГБ, 256.164, fol. 140–147' (from 1551–1555). Contrary to earlier treatises, the *Answers* do not contain an overview of Muhammad's biography, Islamic dogmas, or a historical outline of Muslim-Christian relations. The author focuses here on showing how the followers of Christ, when they come into contact or a dispute with the Hagarenes, can counter their allegations. In his opinion, the line of defense should be based on the Gospel, which, even in the *Quran*, is considered as a book sent by God. A Christian must, therefore, point out to Muslims their inconsistency: if they accept the Gospel as God's revelation, how can they deny its teachings: the belief that Christ is God and the Son of God, and the redemptive value of baptism? (All while practicing circumcision – a custom adopted from the Jews). The New Testament should also be used to refute the most serious theological

objection made by the Muslims: the notion that by believing in the Holy Trinity, Christians, *de facto*, worship three gods.

Therefore, this work does not add much to the way of portraying Muhammad and the Arabs in the first centuries of Islam in the Old Rus' literature. It does, however, offer one interesting element: when writing about the respect accorded to the Gospel in the *Quran*, Maximus the Greek cites from memory its Arabic term: *Injil* (fol. 142: **иньѕилъ ѯакъ**). This quote may prove that Maximus the Greek once had had contact with the Arabic original of the holy book of Islam.

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Abstract

This monograph presents those Old Rus' texts whose authors referred to the issue of the birth of Islam, and presented – or at least, briefly outlined – the profile of its creator, the prophet Muhammad, and the essence of his teachings, or attempted to describe the historical circumstances in which he operated, and the Arabian environment from which he originated. Authors have decided to include the sources existing in Rus' before the mid-16th century, when, along with the accession of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates to the Moscow state, the perception of the followers of Islam by East Slavic authors changed fundamentally, and their interest in Muslim subjects grew, creating a completely new cultural dynamic.

Authors do not distinguish between the so-called translation and original literature – this is justified by the specificity of the source material, for which such a division would be artificial. In the case of the Old Rus' discourse on Islam, we deal with a certain continuum: compilation texts were created in Rus' on the basis of foreign works translated into (Old) Church Slavic, which, in turn, were a source of inspiration for native authors. At this point, it should also be emphasized that in the period of interest to us (11th–mid-16th centuries), it was Greek translations that were dominant in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. The way Muhammad and Islam were perceived was, therefore, shaped under the overwhelming influence of Byzantine authors – the works originally written in other languages usually found their way into the writings of Orthodox Slavs through their Greek translations. This applied both to Arabic texts (such as fragments of the *Quran*), Syriac (e.g. The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*) and Latin (e.g. Riccoldo da Monte Croce's *Contra legem Sarracenorum*) ones.

Authors have included texts representing a number of different literary genres (apart from liturgical poetry) – from historiographic works, through polemical treatises, homiletics, epistolography and itineraries, to hagiography and apocalyptic works. This monograph includes only those relics that were certainly known in Rus', or, more broadly, in the area of *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

Keywords: Muhammad, Islam, Old Rus' literature, Byzantine literature



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