

## Preface

We are pleased to introduce to readers the special issue of the *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* comprising the full papers of the international symposium on Gothic language, history and culture “The Goths Compared: East Germanic communities between Balticum, Pontus and the West” which was held on November 5–6, 2019 at the *National Research University Higher School of Economics* (HSE) in Moscow. The symposium was organised by the Centre for Medieval Studies, HSE.

The field of Gothic studies, and of Gothic philology in particular, which has been relatively calm for decennia is now experiencing an upsurge thanks to recent finds of texts written in Biblical Gothic: The Bolognese fragment, being all the more important as it includes textual passages and individual words not previously attested in the extant manuscripts, and the graffiti from Mangup, testifying to the spread of Gothic literacy and alphabet as far east as Crimea. These new data invite a comparative analysis of different aspects of Gothic culture presently known, as well as an up-to-date synthesis of available knowledge on an interdisciplinary level. Our symposium brought together experts in various disciplines: Gothic language and writing, “Barbarian” archaeology, history of the Mediterranean and Modern history – who shared their experiences, knowledge and research findings. Of special importance was the cooperation of researchers from Western Europe and from Russia where Gothic studies have a complicated history. The participants’ contributions placed a particular emphasis on comparing models of appropriation of Greek-Roman culture by the Goths, and, conversely, images of the Goths drawn within the classical oecumene – from Gaul and Italy to Syria and the Caucasus.

The volume opens with the paper by **Carla Falluomini** (University of Perugia) which turns to the Goths’ presence in southern Gaul. Contrary to the long-standing view of them as destroyers of classical Roman culture, the Visigoths here were engaged in building activity, erecting representative edifices which glorified the power of their kings. The Church of Notre Dame de la Daurade in Toulouse, once the capital of the Visigothic kingdom, was originally built as royal chapel and decorated with mosaics which, for the most part, were lost afterwards. Analysing the preserved copies of Latin inscriptions in the mosaics, the author concludes that some of the Biblical names therein might have been influenced by Gothic forms of the names in Wulfila’s Bible

translation. This gives us a very interesting example of amalgamation of cultural forms in the Gotho-Roman world.

Biblical adaptations are also the topic of the paper by **Arend Quak** (University of Amsterdam) which focuses on Germanic versions of Psalms. Although Wulfila's translation of the Psalter did not survive as a whole, fragments of it do appear as quotes in various extant sources, including the newly discovered ones. By comparing them with their West-Germanic counterparts (Old English, Old High German, Old and Middle Dutch), the author identifies similarities and differences between them, revealing some of Wulfila's specific approaches to translation.

The Goths in Italy are addressed in the paper by **Yana Bepalchikova** (European University at St. Petersburg). It is well known that of all Gothic kings, Theoderic did most to emulate Roman emperors. A less studied topic is his combined use of Roman and Germanic models of power and of relationship between rulers in his contacts with Barbaricum. Close matrimonial ties of the Ostrogothic king with Germanic rulers stipulated both a form of hierarchical relations between them and a corresponding epistolary etiquette.

The article by **Giacomo Bucci** (University of Perugia) discusses the Gothic "genitive of negation", its semantic and pragmatic properties, and its possible origins. Parallels are drawn with typologically similar phenomena in Slavic and Balto-Finnic languages.

The contribution by **Petr Shuvalov** (St. Peterburg State University) brings us to the Balkans. Its subject is chapter XI of the Strategikon of Pseudo-Maurice which touches upon mysterious *xantha ethnê* – a term that encompassed mostly Germanic peoples bordering the late Empire.

Equally mysterious is the image of a Balkan Goth in the Syriac tradition, presented in his paper by **Alexey Muraviev** (Higher School of Economics, Moscow). *The Miracle of SS. Gurias, Samonas and Abibus* offers us a rare example of Gothic-Syriac contacts. The description of the savage Gothic "barbarian" by an Eastern Christian hagiographer is very illustrative by itself. At the same time, *The Miracle* provides interesting comparative material concerning the life of the Goths within and outside the Empire.

A fresh look on connections between the Balkans, Italy and the Black Sea Goths is offered in the article submitted for this volume by **Michel Kazanski** (National Centre for Scientific Research, Paris). Having carefully examined clothing details from 6th century "barbarian" burials of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, the author identifies a series of items that could not possibly belong to the local (Tetraxite) Goths. Instead, they find analogues in Ostrogothic Italy, which seems to point to a large group of Ostrogoth soldiers being transferred with their families to Crimea as a part of emperor Justinian's military policy.

The subject of Gothic identity, specifically the Christian Gothic identity is discussed in the paper by **Andrey Vinogradov** (Higher School of Economics, Moscow) and **Maksim Korobov** (unaffiliated scholar, Irkutsk). The recently found Gothic graffiti from Mangup and Bakhchysarai made necessary a revision of previously held opinions on Gothic culture in Crimea and its interrelation with neighbouring Greek and other cultures. As the texts of the graffiti demonstrate, Crimean Gothia participated in Byzantine theological and liturgical processes. Furthermore, the authors hypothesize that the alternative counting of weekdays which is attested in epigraphy in this part of Crimea may be a vestige of an ancient Homoean identity.

The volume concludes with the paper presented by **Nikita Khrapunov** (Crimean Federal University, Simferopol) which brings us back to recent times. The author follows the continuously changing public image of the Crimean Goths: from early modern intellectual travellers to present day academia. In ideologically motivated historiographies of the 20th century, the Crimean Goths were viewed either as heroic ancestors or aggressive intruders, or even entirely dismissed as insignificant. Sad as it was, it showed how the subject of Gothic studies could outgrow its purely academic limits and acquire a broader interest.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the participants of the symposium for their inspiring contributions. The present volume may be viewed as a further step towards comparative study of Gothic/East Germanic cultural models. In our opinion, this is the way which opens many new perspectives of research.

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