Religion, Philology, and Slavic Cultures: Slavonic Apocrypha

Introduction

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In the summer of 2016, experts in medieval Slavistics and in Biblical Studies joined in a pilot workshop of the European Association of Biblical Studies (EABS) annual conference in Leuven, Belgium. The success of the meeting and the projected cooperation between Slavacists and Biblicists resulted in the formation of an EABS research group in 2017, under the name of “Slavonic Apocrypha.” In the same year an independent program unit, “Rethinking Biblical Written Tradition through Slavonic Interpretations,” of the International branch of the Society of Biblical Literature (ISBL), was launched at the joint ISBL and EABS 2017 meeting in Berlin.

The objectives of both groups are set out in the description of the research unit “Slavonic Apocrypha” (EABS):

Despite its “Slavonic Apocrypha” name, this research unit is intentionally broad in scope and provides a forum in which both biblical scholars and Slavacists can discuss current issues in their fields and exchange ideas. It includes the traditionally understood Slavonic Apocrypha, i.e. translations of Hellenistic pseudepigrapha, as well as a variety of sacred literature in Slavonic such as theological discourses, historiographies, hagiographies, liturgical texts, and folk tales that are intertwined with biblical texts in both manuscripts and religious practices. Lexicographical works and linguistic analysis of Slavonic manuscripts are central research fields in this

forum. We also welcome contributions from scholars of other academic fields that discuss these topics.

Slavonic Apocrypha are studied as biblical reception history. Because the mechanism of intertextuality in Slavic religious literature was more powerful and longstanding than the assessment of marginality and the differentiation of the texts according to canonical/noncanonical, our unit aims to contribute to the ongoing search for a comprehensive term for apocalyptic, pseudepigraphical, and apocryphal literature. It also addresses the pressing need for a platform where European scholars of “Slavonic Apocrypha” and their international colleagues can express their concerns, discuss solutions, and set mutual goals. It promotes the publication of critical editions of “Slavonic Apocrypha” and discusses the concerns over the digitization project of Slavonic manuscripts. While the name “Slavonic Apocrypha” is inadequate for this corpus of literature, we will wait and allow the scholarly consensus in the field to lead us to a better one.¹

Selected peer-reviewed papers from the proceedings of the inaugural meeting of “Slavonic Apocrypha” at the 2016 annual conference of EABS in Leuven, Belgium (July 17-20, 2016) as well as from the 2017 joint meeting of EABS and ISBL in Berlin, Germany (August 7-11, 2017) are published in this section.

¹ <https://www.eabs.net/EABS/Research-Units/Research_Units_2018/Research_Unit_Pages_2018/Slavonic_Apocrypha.aspx>