Apocryphal Tradition and Slavonic Pilgrimage Literature

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Abstract

Slavonic pilgrimage literature is an interesting example of the widespread knowledge of apocryphal literature not only through the written tradition, but also through the mediation of the Palestine liturgical tradition and oral legends. The collective memory of *Slavia Orthodoxa* was formed, therefore, not only on the basis of familiarity with the Holy Scriptures, but also through liturgical tradition and oral legends attested in a complex of “holy books” where the apocryphal and legendary motifs enrich and complete the understanding of sacred history characters and events.

Keywords

Slavonic pilgrimage literature – Slavonic apocryphal literature – Slavonic Holy Scriptures – Palestine liturgical tradition

1 The Centrality of Liturgical Celebration

Before talking about the presence of the apocryphal tradition in Slavic pilgrimage literature we need to consider briefly how the biblical and apocryphal writings in the Byzantine-Slavic world have been transmitted since the first Slavic written language was created and the first translations made.

In the Byzantine-Slavic Middle Ages, now generally known as *Slavia Orthodoxa*, the Bible was not read as it is today, in the form of a single book, but for the most part there were books used for celebrating the liturgy. For this reason, if we want to understand the meaning and role of the canonical and apocryphal writings in Church Slavonic literature, it is important to consider the

mediating role of liturgical books, and above all the mediation of the liturgy.¹ Authors and copyists had no dictionaries or biblical concordances either, but only some tools for understanding the gospels that helped to identify the parallel places in the Gospel account.² Regarding the lexicons and thesauri, geared especially to understanding the Holy Scriptures, we basically have to wait until the second half of the sixteenth century, when the so-called *Azbukovniki* began to spread under the influence of new cultural trends brought to Russia by Maximus the Greek.³

We must try to imagine that, especially in the monastic circles from which the majority of Church Slavonic writers came, the daily liturgical offices were the key moments of community life, and therefore that the liturgy, in particular liturgical books, must have provided the natural context for developing an approach to the Holy Scriptures and their topics. The Psalter, the liturgical book consisting of psalms and Old and New Testament canticles, was the tool with which monks first learnt to read and was usually learnt by heart, becoming an essential point of reference in literary production.

In celebrating the liturgy, in fact, the mechanisms and mental associations that are largely foreign to us today evolved, but they lie at the heart of the biblical worldview of *Slavia Orthodoxa*. Think, for instance, of the relationship established between the Old and New Testament in the liturgical readings, or between the various pericopes regarding a given liturgical feast. Or the relationship between the Holy Scriptures and offices sung in the course of a festivity. Not to mention the Ordinary of the liturgy, which, according to tradition, dates back to St John Chrysostom and St Basil, or to the sacramental rites

- 1 See more widely in relation to the issue of biblical quotations in Church Slavonic literature, M. Garzaniti, "Bible and Liturgy in Church Slavonic literature. A New Perspective for Research in Medieval Slavonic Studies", in: *Medieval Slavonic Studies. New Perspectives for Research. Études slaves médiévales. Nouvelles perspectives de recherche*, eds. J.A. Álvarez-Pedrosa and S. Torres Prieto, Paris, 2009, pp. 127-148.
- 2 In the Byzantine-Slavic world there are Gospel Books with the Sections (also called Chapters of Ammonius) of Eusebius of Caesarea indicated in the border. This was an ingenious textual division which, on the basis of the Eusebian canon tables, enabled identification of parallel passages. It was used since the patristic age to enable a better understanding of the Gospels, and involved interpreting each section of text with the help of parallel passages (M. Garzaniti, "The Gospel Book and its Liturgical Function in the Byzantine-Slavic tradition", in: *Catalogue of Byzantine Manuscripts in their Liturgical Context. Subsidia 1. Challenges and Perspectives*, eds. K. Spronk, G. Rouwhorst, and S. Royé, Turnhout, 2013, pp. 35-54, see pp. 38-39).
- 3 Л.С. Ковтун, "Азбуковники", in: *Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси*, ред. Д.С. Лихачев [L.S. Kovtun, "Azbukovniki", in: *Dictionary of Old Russian Writers and Literacy*, ed. D.S. Likhachev], Leningrad, 1987-2004, vol. 2, 1, pp. 10-20.

marking significant moments in life. The celebration of the liturgy was the natural place not only for reading but also for interpreting the Holy Scriptures, which were rendered pertinent in the homily, where sense was given to the often-troubled historic events of any given community in the Middle Ages.

In reality, the ancient liturgical books, which made up the bulk of the Church Slavonic manuscript tradition and which for the most part have yet to be studied, at most give us a glimpse of the existence of a complex liturgical tradition with its own customs, which have become stratified over the centuries through constant adaptation and sometimes radical changes. Given the current state of studies, it is hard for us to understand the real life of the community that celebrated that liturgy.⁴

2 The Holy Scriptures and the Body of “Holy Books”

In Church Slavonic literature the first works to be translated and divulged had a liturgical or paraliturgical function, that is works that had a direct use in the liturgy or at least helped its understanding and realization. This created a general perception of a body of “holy books” (*svyaschennye knigi*) that extended far beyond the Holy Scriptures, to the extent that the distinction between Holy Scriptures and “holy books” sometimes became blurred.⁵ The core elements of this body were the Gospel, the *Apostolos* and the Psalter, but it gradually expanded to include all the writings, which in some way commented on and actualized the Christian message. At least in an early phase, this body of works

4 Scholars encounter a number of difficulties when attempting to study the Byzantine-Slavic liturgy, but the one that emerges most clearly is the absence of tools that can help to understand the manuscript and print tradition of the liturgical books in both the Greek and Slav versions. This makes it extremely difficult to identify both the citations from the liturgical books and the mediation of the liturgical books with regard to knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. On more than one occasion in the course of my research, I have been forced to consult the modern editions, which differ in various respects from the liturgical books of past centuries. An edition of the *Hirmologion*, with an extensive commentary by Ch. Hannick, is available for Slavonic hymnography. This is an important reference tool for research into hymnographic citations (Ch. Hannick, *Das altslavische Hirmologion. Edition und Kommentar*, Freiburg i. Br., 2006).

5 Following the interpretation of H. Goldblatt with regard to the *Skazanie o pismenekh* of Konstantin Kosteneckij, the whole body of scriptural and liturgical books could be defined as “the book of the Slavs” (H. Goldblatt, *Orthography and Orthodoxy. Constantine Kostenečki's Treatise on the Letters*, Firenze, 1987, p. 227). Specific research needs to be carried out into the notion and evolution of a complex of “holy books” in the literary tradition of *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

must have included Apocrypha, as is testified by the manuscript tradition and the abundance of citations in Church Slavonic literature.⁶ The idea of a biblical canon that is distinguishable from the sum of liturgical and canon law book,⁷ together with an exegetic literature distinct from homiletics and apologetics, only became established in a later age with the emergence of learned monasticism.

In the liturgical celebration, which was regulated by the *typikon* (initially the Studite *typikon* and subsequently the Sabbaites or Jerusalem one), each book performed a specific function in a hierarchy, at the top of which there was the Gospel Book (the Lectionary or *Tetraevangelion*).⁸ Furthermore, for a number of centuries the Holy Scriptures were not generally contained in one or more distinct volumes that could be consulted as required; instead they were segmented into readings ordered according to the liturgical year and could be found in various liturgical books, such as the Lectionary (or *aparakos*), the *Apostolos* and the *Prophetologion*. Manuscripts containing one or more Bible books cropped up only rarely, and only with regard to certain books. In particular, the *Tetraevangelion* with the Four Gospels in the traditional order did soon begin to spread. It almost always had notes and addenda, sometimes later added, in the margins or with charts, which were indispensable for liturgical use.

It is beyond the scope of my speech to examine the individual books and their evolution in the history of the Byzantine-Slavic liturgy, it is sufficient to

6 For a presentation of the apocryphal and legendary motifs that can be read in the pilgrimage literature of *Slavia Orthodoxa* until the fifteenth century, see M. Garzaniti, "Les apocryphes dans la littérature slave ecclésiastique des pèlerinage en Palestine", *Apocrypha. Revue internationale des littératures apocryphes*, 9 (1998), pp. 157-177.

7 G. Fedotov's opinion is generally quoted today: "In Russia, the notion of the Biblical canon, distinguishing strongly between the inspired Holy Scripture and the works of the fathers, never existed. All religious writings were called sacred and divine insofar as they were not heretical" (G.P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, I. *Kievan Christianity*, Cambridge, MA, 1946, p. 43). In fact the question deserves deeper study, starting with the reception of the patristic tradition on the biblical canon and the spread of the so-called Indexes of true books (*Indeksy istinnykh knig*, s. И.М. Грицевская, *Индексы истинных книг* [I.M. Gricevskaja, *Indexes of true books*], St. Petersburg, 2003). See on the biblical canon in Russia starting from the Bible of Gennady, A.A. Алексеев, "Библиейский канон на Руси", in: *Труды Отдела древнерусской литературы* [A.A. Alekseev, "Biblical Canon in the Rus'", *Proceedings of the Department of Russian Medieval Literature*], 61 (2010), pp. 171-193.

8 The Gospel, often very finely bound, was placed on the altar and assumed a particular role in the course of religious functions. For more about the symbolism of the Gospel Book in the liturgy, see M. Garzaniti, *Die altslavische Version der Evangelien. Forschungsgeschichte und zeitgenössische Forschung*, Köln – Weimar – Wien, 2001, pp. 13-26.

recall that the Gospel and Psalter occupy a dominant position in the liturgy, which obviously accounts for their predominance in Church Slavonic literature. The continual reading of the Holy Scriptures, generally limited to these books, was only commonplace in the monasteries. It was not until the 15th century that a Bible was produced in Church Slavonic (Gennady Bible); while it was only with the printing of the Ostrog Bible, in a context influenced by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, that the Bible we know today also began to spread in the Orthodox world. This explains why “knowledge of the Bible rarely went beyond what was read during the liturgy.”⁹ It’s important to remember this also to consider the knowledge and dissemination of the Apocrypha. We must, however, consider that a learned monasticism started to emerge in the 15th and 16th centuries, and that various different commentaries on the books of the Bible and miscellanies with apocryphal texts began to circulate in the richer libraries of the monasteries.¹⁰

3 Slavia Orthodoxa’s “Collective Memory”

Over the centuries a common system of references and associations was created through the liturgy; these informed the minds of successive generations and found their way into liturgical and paraliturgical books. Contemporary sociology has developed the notion of “collective memory” to define this process of sedimentation of references and mental associations and in the past this idea was used to study both the ancient world and also contemporary society.¹¹ In this case it would be more accurate to talk in terms of “*memoria ecclesiae*,” because it developed and was rooted in historically and socially defined church communities, in the dialectic between the local churches, with their own specific traditions, and the universal church.

This *community memory*, which is first and foremost “memory of the Word,” developed as part of a celebration, in which an important role, together with

9 A.A. Алексеев, О.П. Лихачева, Библия, in: *Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси*, ред. Д.С. Лихачев [A.A. Alekseev, O.P. Likhacheva, Bible, in: *Dictionary of Old Russian Writers and Literacy*, ed. D.S. Likhachev]. Leningrad, 1987–2004, vol. 1, p. 74.

10 See the important dissertation by R. Romanchuk about the Kirillo-Belozerskij monastery community (R.L. Romanchuk, *The Textual Community of the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery 1397–1492*, Los Angeles 1999).

11 The notion of “collective memory” was developed between the two wars by M. Halbwachs, and was successfully applied to the study of the sacred topography of the Holy Land (M. Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre sainte*, Paris, 1972). See M. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Chicago, 1992, for a collection of his texts in English.

the liturgical books, was played by iconography, music, architecture and even paraments and sacred furnishings, in the context of a liturgical performance consisting of gestures and movements. This “memory” was gradually enriched and transformed, becoming, over the centuries, a solid “archive” of references and citations that can be found in Church Slavonic texts, even in those without a direct liturgical function. This served to interpret historic and personal reality, and was capable of subsuming individual events within a universal “economy.”

4 Memory and Church Slavonic Literature

Reconstructing this “collective archive” is very important for a correct interpretation of the presence of Holy Scriptures and Apocrypha in Church Slavonic literature. We are in fact accustomed to placing biblical, as well as apocryphal and patristic citations, within the individual works from which they come, as if the medieval writer had the same libraries and critical tools that we have, inserting them into a very different context to that of the medieval writer. It is difficult to imagine, in so far as people have no experience of it, the power and stratification of meanings recalled in the liturgical context. The only comparable phenomenon nowadays might be the system of references and associations set in motion by modern means of mass communication.

If we were to begin working seriously in this field, we could solve the many interpretative difficulties that crop up when examining evidently theological-liturgical texts from an exclusively literary or folk literary, historic or juridic point of view. We would overcome the difficulties that arise if we strictly separate the concepts of “orality” and “writing” in medieval literature of monastic origin, depriving it of a context, in which the original works themselves are often nothing other than an echo of the Word uttered during the liturgy, which is written in the form of explanation or illustration, mostly with the purpose of applying it to new historical circumstances.¹²

12 For more on problems concerning the relationship between orality and writing, see W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, London, 1982, and B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Princeton, N.J., 1983. It is also very important to study the relationships between memory and writing in the *Slavia Orthodoxa*, to which Picchio rightly refers (R. Picchio, “Epiphanius the Wise’s ‘Poetics of Prayer’”, in: *Russica Romana*, I (1994), pp. 9-28).

In medieval society, in the environment in which the written culture circulates, the word, as uttered and heard in the liturgical celebration, has a central role, while the work of the scribe occupies a secondary place and is reduced to a “slavish activity.” This is clearly manifested in the illuminations present in the Gospel Book, in which the evangelists write what is dictated to them or they dictate the Divine Word, as in the case of John with Prochorus.

5 The Practice of Pilgrimage in the Slavic World and the Palestinian Monastic Tradition

Since Palestine had been transformed into the Christian Holy Land, thanks also to the decisive boost given to the process by the pilgrimage of Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, interest in the holy places had grown considerably. The practice of pilgrimage had spread to such an extent that many religious and lay people, men and women, set out to see Jerusalem and visit Palestine. It should not be surprising, then, that a reaction to the excesses caused by this practice¹³ had developed, especially in the monastic environment. Its spread would inevitably involve the people who were converted to Christianity in which we find the same dynamics. In the southern Slavic world during the second half of the tenth century, Cosmas the Presbyter had twice harshly criticized the practice of pilgrimage to Rome or Jerusalem in his anti-Bogomil treatise, the so called Sermon against the heretics.¹⁴ From the eleventh century, during the birth of the Crusades movement, this practice also involved the Eastern Slavs.¹⁵

At the root of the practice of pilgrimage is probably the same curiosity that led the fortune of the Apocrypha in Church Slavonic literature initially in the

13 Criticism of the practice of pilgrimage, based on ascetic-spiritual matters, has its roots in the Patristic Age. I would mention, in particular, two letters of Gregory of Nyssa, during his mission in Arabia and Palestine in 383 (PG, vol. 46, col. 1010-1015, 1015-1024; B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa. Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*, Regensburg – Münster, 1950, pp. 421-426).

14 See Козма Пресвитер, Беседа на новоявившуюся ересь богомилоу, 43, 2-4; 51, 8-10, in: Ю.К. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвитер в славянских литературах* [Yu.K. Begunov, *Cosmas the Presbyter in Slavic literatures*], Sofia, 1973, pp. 351, 359.

15 See the essay of E.-R. Labande, “Recherches sur les pèlerins dans l’Europe des XI^e et XII^e siècles”, *Cahiers de civilisation medievale dans l’Europe des XI et XII siècles*, 3 (1958), pp. 344-345, and the rich chapter of A.V. Nazarenko’s volume (A.B. Назаренко, *Древняя Русь на международных путях* [A.V. Nazarenko, *Old Rus’ on International Routes*], Moscow, 2001, pp. 617-648).

Balkan area, then in the East Slavic area; a desire to learn more about the events and characters of the Holy Scriptures than the concise style of biblical texts could satisfy. From the twelfth century, with the *Pilgrimage of Abbot Daniil*,¹⁶ accounts of these pilgrimages began to circulate in Rus', featuring more or less detailed descriptions of the holy places and relics preserved there. This literary production enjoyed great success especially in Rus', but did not fail to extend to the entire *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

Rightfully, A.N. Veselovsky saw the fruit of collective poetry in works such as the *Pilgrimage of Abbot Daniil*. "At their base – he writes – you could find ancient local memories, indicating one or another episode in the Gospel narrative, and in turn each of these episodes then became linked to the others, a personal-biographical relationship or preference-prefigurational relationship, which recognizes an expression of the same coherently expressed idea in events that apparently have no relation to each other. Now let us suppose generations of pilgrims, brought up with this symbolic vision of the world: local memory about Palestine would remind them of a whole series of others, which unwittingly impose themselves, out of habit and due to an unconscious analogy. A whole series of memories would thus be inspired by just one reminiscence, which the author of a subsequent itinerary would then repeat."¹⁷ Veselovsky, anticipating by several decades the reflections of contemporary sociology, had unfortunately failed to understand the fundamental role of the liturgy at the base of the symbolic vision of the Slavic byzantine world.

In Slavonic pilgrimage literature we find a series of motifs of Palestinian liturgical and monastic tradition, which in some ways outnumbers contemporary Byzantine pilgrimage literature. The latter was characterized by the scarcity of sources, both in terms of the number of works, and of the paucity of their manuscript tradition.¹⁸ We have to take into account, in fact, that, follow-

16 On *Pilgrimage of Abbot Daniil*, particularly with regard to the historical context and the literary structure, see our introduction in Daniil Egumeno, *Itinerario in Terra santa*, ed. M. Garzaniti, Roma, 1991, pp. 9-68, and more recently M. Гардзанити, "У истоков паломнической литературы Древней Руси", in: «Хожение» игумена Даниила в Святую Землю в начале XII в., ред. Г.М. Прохоров [M. Gardzaniti, "At the Sources of Old Russian Pilgrimage Literature", in: Igumen Daniil's "Khozhenie" to the Holy Land at the beginning of twelfth-century], St. Petersburg, 2007, pp. 270-338.

17 А.Н. Веселовский, "Разыскание в области русского духовного стиха, III-V", *Сборник Отделения русского языка и словесности Императорской Академии наук* [A.N. Veselovsky, "Research in the field of Russian spiritual verse", *Collection of the Department of Russian Language and Literature of the Imperial Academy of Sciences*], XXVIII, 2 (1881), pp. 1-150, here p. 173.

18 On byzantine pilgrimage literature see A. Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca in Terram Sanctam*.

ing the theological doctrine of the fathers and the presence of a more cultured aristocracy, Byzantium considered the practice of pilgrimage with greater distrust and that relations with the Holy Land were mostly connected with the perpetuation of relationships with the Palestine monasteries, which depended on the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem.¹⁹ While retaining its traditional protection of the holy places, the Byzantine Empire remained essentially unconnected with the Crusades and the revival of medieval pilgrimage to the Holy Land, while preferring to develop the idea of reduplicating Jerusalem in Constantinople according to the model of relationships with early Rome.²⁰ The most profound influence of the Palestinian tradition is manifested in the Byzantine liturgy when, in the thirteenth century, the so-called sabaitic or Jerusalem *typikon* was adopted in Constantinople and throughout the Byzantine world, including *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

Slavonic pilgrimage literature thus provides us not only with testimony of the situation of places in the Holy Land, but also an important perspective on the encounter between the Slavic world, the Jerusalem liturgy and the traditions of Palestinian monasticism. Tales of this pilgrimage experience, which obviously has its central moment in the visit to the Holy Sepulchre, contain references to biblical characters and events, often enriched with apocryphal and legendary motifs connected with the Old and New Testament.

Before examining a few examples, I would just like to observe that pilgrims would have learnt about these motifs in contact with Palestinian Christianity in proportion to their own skills and interests. They could do so by taking part in the celebrations, in which they would inevitably have noticed more or less substantial differences compared to their own tradition, though still within the common Byzantine liturgy. They may also have discovered new details about biblical events during visits to the shrines, perhaps with the help of a guide who, as reported by the hegumen Daniil, may also have been a Palestinian monk. If properly trained, the pilgrim could verify what was being reported on the basis of literature known to him and even express an opinion. Daniil takes

Studien zu Pilgerführern und Reisebeschreibungen über Syrien, Palästina und den Sinai aus byzantinischer und metabyzantinischer Zeit, Frankfurt a. M. – Berlin – Bern – New York – Paris – Wien, 1994.

19 Not only the pilgrimage tales, but also the saint's lives bear witness to this trend, as recently A.-M. Talbot indicated (A.M. Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century", in: *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present*, ed. J. Patrich, Leuven, 2001, pp. 97-110).

20 See E. Patlagean, "Byzantium's dual Holy Land", in: *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land*, eds. B.Z. Kedar and R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, New York, 1998, pp. 112-126.

on this task to prevent the further spread of fanciful stories from other pilgrims.²¹

In this way we can appreciate the complexity of constructing medieval Slavic collective memory about the biblical world. Such collective memory is the result of different community memories coming together, even if within the same ecclesiastical tradition, which at the same time develops from the difficult coexistence of orally transmitted memories and written traditions, between libertarian tendencies and checks by the church authorities.

6 Apocryphal and Legendary Tradition in Slavonic Pilgrimage Literature

In the texts of Eastern Slavic tradition that I have examined, dating from the twelfth-fifteenth century, there are numerous references to apocryphal literature and in some cases they are actual quotations. The most frequent references belong to the *Protoevangelium of James*, which spread in the Slavic area already in the ninth-tenth century.²² They include various episodes, such as the Annunciation, Joachim's fasting, the time spent in the cave in Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt, the mountain that opened up to shelter Elizabeth and her son, Mary dismounting from the donkey, the vision of the Mother of God, the death of Zechariah. It would, therefore, also be important to examine pilgrimage literature in order to study the textual tradition and the fortune of this apocryphal Gospel in *Slavia Orthodoxa*. If we look at the quotes from the

²¹ See Гардзанини, "У истоков паломнической литературы Древней Руси", pp. 289-290.

²² The oldest manuscript of the *Protoevangelium of James* dates from the thirteenth century, but the first Slavic translation probably dates from the ninth-tenth century. See И.Я. Порфирьев, "Апокрифические сказания о новозаветных лицах и событиях по рукописям Соловецкой библиотеки", *Сборник Отделения русского языка и словесности Императорской Академии наук* [I. Ja. Porfir'ev, "Apocryphal Tales about Old Testament Personages and Events according to Manuscripts of the Solovki Library," *Collection of the Department of Russian Language and Literature of the Imperial Academy of Sciences*], ЛП, 4 (1890), pp. 10-12, 136-148; М.Н. Сперанский, "Славянские апокрифические евангелия", in: *Труды восьмого археологического съезда в Москве* [M.N. Speransky, "Slavonic Apocryphal Gospels," *Proceedings of the 8th Archaeological Congress in Moscow*], vol. 2, Moscow, 1895, pp. 64-66; A. de Santos Otero, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der altslavischen Apokryphen*, vol. 2, Berlin – New York, 1981, pp. 1-32. The most recent edition was edited by Б. Христова, *Протевагелието на Яков в старата българска книжнина* [B. Khristova, *Protoevangelium of James in the Old Bulgarian literature*], Sofia, 1992.

Protoevangelium of James, it seems clear that the hegumen Daniil, for example, must have been in possession of a Slavonic translation.

Again in the tradition of Marian texts there are references to the Dormition of the Mother of God. See in particular the episode when the Jew Iechonia had his hands cut off and the ordeal by water or the Risen Christ's appearance before his mother. Old Testament references also include Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek, which I will discuss, Abimelech's sleep and references to episodes of Adam's cycle (the head of Adam and the remains of the serpent).²³

Most pilgrimage accounts come from the Slavic East, but testimony also came from the Southern Slav area. I would mention especially the Sermon about the holy places in Jerusalem (*Slovo o mestakh svyatykh v Ierusalime*), contained in the *Bdinskij zbornik*, where we find many elements of apocryphal origin or related to the Palestinian legend.²⁴ For example, in his journey through Galilee, in the land where Jesus preached, the anonymous pilgrim would have visited the cave where Jesus is said to have danced with Jewish children (*skakali*). There we see a reference not only to the known Gospel image (Matt 11, 17), but perhaps also to the *Dance of the Saviour*, a text of Coptic origin, that has recently attracted the attention of scholars.²⁵

Of course, as well as the themes, which certainly go back to apocryphal literature and which have come into the Slavic world in different ways, we can mention further legendary motifs, which, while interesting, do not appear to be linked to traditional apocryphal writings. For example, the legend of the Sinai stones, transferred by the angels to Mount Zion at the wish of the Mother of God, an element found in many accounts of pilgrimage.²⁶

23 See Garzaniti, "Les apocryphes dans la littérature slave ecclésiastique."

24 See the printed edition of miscellany in *Bdinski zbornik. An Old-Slavonic Menologium of Women Saints* (Ghent University Library Ms.408, A.D. 1360), eds. J.L. Scharpé and F. Vyncke, Bruges, 1973, phototype reproduction in *Bdinski Zbornik. Ghent Slavonic Ms 408 A.D. 1360*, Facsimile Edition, with a Presentation of I. Dujčev, London, 1972 (digital reproduction in <<http://bdinski.obdurodon.org/15/07/2016>>). For an analysis, see M. Гардзанити, "Слово о местах святых в Иерусалиме. Значение и функция паломнической литературы в Бдинском сборнике", *Старобългарска литература* [M. Gardzaniti, "The *Slovo o mestakh svyatykh v Ierusalime*. Meaning and Function of the Pilgrimage Account in the *Vidin Miscellany*," *Old Bulgarian Literature*], 53-54 (2016), pp.169-184.

25 P. Piovanelli, "Thursday Night Fever: Dancing and Singing with Jesus in the Gospel of the Savior and the Dance of the Savior around the Cross," *Early Christianity*, 3 (2012), pp. 229-248; P. Dilley, "Christus Saltans as Dionysos and David: the Dance of the Savior in its Late-Antique Cultural Context", *Apocrypha. Revue internationale des littératures apocryphes*, 24 (2013), pp. 237-253.

26 A.N. Veselovsky presented this episode, with a wealth of references, in his paradigmatic essay (Веселовский, "Разыскание в области русского духовного стиха", pp. 12-23).

7 A Model Example. Melchizedek's Cave in *Pilgrimage of Abbot Daniil*

"On Mount Tabor on a level place there is a really wonderful cave, like a small cellar, excavated into the rock and there was a small window on top of that holy cave. The altar is built on the bottom of the cave to the east. The cave has small doors. You can go up into that cave by steps from the west. In front of the gates of the cave there are small fig trees, around it raises every type of small trees. Before there was a large forest around the cave, there are now small and thin saplings. In that little cave lived St. Melchizedek. Abraham came to him and called him three times and said, 'Man of God!' Melchizedek went out and brought out bread and wine, he built an altar in that cave, he made a sacrifice with bread and wine and immediately the sacrifice was elevated to God in heaven. And there Melchizedek blessed Abraham and Abraham cut his hair and nails; Melchizedek was, in fact, hirsute. This was the beginning of the liturgies with bread and wine, and not with unleavened bread. In this regard says the prophet: 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' This cave is a good shot of arrow, to the west of the Transfiguration (...) The way to Nazareth passes by the cave of Melchizedek. Nazareth is to the west of Tabor. For the second time we entered this holy cave with love and we prostrated ourselves to the holy altar, which Melchizedek had built with Abraham. This altar still stands in that cave today and St. Melchizedek often comes to celebrate the liturgy in that holy cave. All believers who live there, stop on that holy mountain: they told me this truthfully. We praised God who has made us worthy, wicked and unworthy, to see those holy places and kiss them with unworthy lips."²⁷

As we read, the hegumen Daniil introduced Melchizedek with a description of a small cave with an altar and the entrance to the west, which recalls the orientation of the early Christian churches. In the sacred text (Gen 4:7) there is no mention of Melchizedek being called by Abraham, nor of the erection of the altar, but only the offering of bread and wine, which the patristic tradition has interpreted as a prefiguration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Genesis widely reported the blessing of Abraham, here barely hinted at, while Daniil introduces details which are absent in the Old Testament text: raising the offering to

27 Translation mine. Original text in M.A. Вenevитинов, "Житие и хождение Даниила, Русьския земли игумена, 1106-1108 гг." *Православный палестинский сборник* [M.A. Venevitinov, «Zhitie i khozhenie Daniila, Rus'skiya zemli igumena», *Orthodox Palestinian Collection*], III (1883), pp. 1, 3; IX (1885), pp. 3, 3; I-XXII, pp. 1-297 (reprint in Igumen Daniil, *Wallfahrtsbericht*. Nachdruck der Ausgabe von Venevitinov 1883/85 mit einer Einleitung und bibliographischen Hinweisen von Klaus Dieter Seemann, München, 1970), see pp. 113-115.

heaven, shaving Melchizedek's hair and cutting his nails. Melchizedek appears, indeed, as a hirsute (*kosmat*) and lonely old hermit.

Proving that Melchizedek's offering is the beginning of the Christian liturgy, the author quotes Ps 110:4 about the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek, a theme taken up in the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 5:6). The main source is actually a writing attributed to Athanasius, *Historia de Melchisedek*,²⁸ numerous Slav manuscripts of which are known starting only from the second half of the fifteenth century with the title *Slovo Afanasiya archiepiskopa aleksandrijskogo o Melchisedece*, and which is present in *Velikie Minei Chetii* (May 22).²⁹

The hegumen Daniil does not stop there, but introduces an actualizing element of Melchizedek's memory in the context of the controversy between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches about the use of unleavened bread in the liturgy. On this subject I can mention an anti-Latin treatise entitled *Styazanie s Latinoju*, attributed to the Metropolitan of Kiev, Georgij (†1076), which states that Latins "do not worship the holy shrine as they have received and have learnt from the saints" referring precisely to Ps 110:4, with the reference to the "order of Melchizedek," as Daniil himself did.³⁰ In the second visit to the cave the hegumen's account reports a local legend, still alive, according to which Melchizedek himself came to celebrate the liturgy, with express reference to an oral source.

Of course it is not always possible to distinguish whether the author relates what he learned during the trip from the guides or from the local community and what are instead written sources, from which he drew.

8 The Noah Simandron

In the pilgrimage tales in the Holy Land can be read a lot of references to apocryphal literature, and more generally to the Palestinian legend. It should not be forgotten however, as we said, that there were other eastern Christian pilgrimage destinations beginning with the Byzantine capital. An important witness is the pilgrimage tale to Constantinople dating from the early thirteenth century,

28 See PG 28, cols. 525-530; BHG 2268.

29 Порфирьев, *Апокрифическая сказания*, pp. 53-55, 131-135, 222-225, 256-259.

30 See А. Попов, *Историко-литературный обзор русских полемических сочинений против Латинян* [A. Popov, *A Historical and Literary Review of the Russian Polemical Works against the Latins*], Moscow, 1887, p. 90. The explanation is to be found in common reference to a quoted apocryphal text, the *Historia de Melchisedek* (Веселовский, "Разыскание в области русского духовного стиха", p. 44 n. 2).

The Pilgrim Book (*Kniga Palomnik*), written by Dobrynja Jadrejkovič (†1232), who, under the name of Antonij, became Archbishop of Novgorod.³¹ In his account, the pilgrim talks about an instrument that is played at church: “they have no bells in Santa Sophia, but holding a small *simandron* (*bilo*), strike to call the faithful to Matins, but do not strike to call them to Mass or Vespers. They have the *simandron* according to the angel’s teaching, while the Latins ring bells.”³² The *simandron* is a fairly large wooden bar or beam, which, generally placed on the shoulder, is beaten with a wooden (or metal) hammer, even today, in order to call the monks to Matins in some monasteries. According to the most recent studies, there is no Greek testimony to explain the origin of this instrument and its meaning.³³ There are, however, Slavic sources, which help us to reconstruct the symbolic meaning of this tool. The *Tolkovaja paleya*, followed by the later *Khronograficheskaya paleya*, a commentary of the Penta-teuch built on a broad base of patristic and apocryphal literature, whose origins date back to the thirteenth century, talks about the construction of the ark and the Flood. According to *Paleya* 1477 (GIM Sin. 210, f.59v.), when the ark was finished, Noah was faced with the difficult task of gathering in the animals: “... and Noah was concerned, therefore, about how to collect the animals and birds and the Lord God said to Noah: after striking the *simandron*, order them to eat with you (and) they will come together. And Noah did as the Lord God commanded him.”³⁴ The same code page features an evocative painted mini-

- 31 For an analysis of the *The Pilgrim Book* see M. Garzaniti, “Le Livre du Pèlerin d’Antoine de Novgorod: Constantinople dans le premier témoignage d’un récit de voyage russe”, *Slavica Occitania*, 36 (2013), pp. 25-45. For the edition see X.M. Лопарев, “Книга Паломник. Сказание мест святых во Цареграде Антония архиепископа Новгородского в 1200 г.”, in Православный Палестинский сборник [Kh. M. Loparev, “Kniga Palomnik. Skazanie mest svyatykh vo Caregrade Antoniia archiepiskopa Novgorodskogo v 1200 g.”, *Orthodox Palestinian Collection*] XVII, 3 (51) (1899), pp. I-CXLIV, 71-94.
- 32 X.M. Лопарев, “Книга Паломник”, p. 80. The pilgrim, recalling that “the Latins ring bells”, shows that he was perfectly aware of the Western origin of the instrument. We know, however, with certainty, that in Novgorod already in those years there were the first bell towers (Ch. Hannick, “Die Bedeutung der Glocken in byzantinischen und slavischen Klöstern und Städten”, in: *Information, Kommunikation und Selbstdarstellung in mittelalterlichen Gemeinden*, ed. A. Haverkamp, Oldenbourg, 1998, pp. 1-23).
- 33 See in particular the studies of R. Stichel and Ch. Hannick, who have studied the use of *simandron* and bells in the Byzantine-Slavic area (R. Stichel, “Jüdische Tradition in christlichen Liturgie: zur Geschichte des Semantrons”, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 21 (1971), pp. 213-228; Hannick, “Die Bedeutung der Glocken”).
- 34 Толковая Палея 1477 года. Воспроизведение Синодальной рукописи N. 210 [The «Commented Palaea» 1477. Reproduction of Synodal Manuscript N.210], vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1892.

ature, which represents Moses in the act of beating the *simandron* at the invitation of an angel, and animals gathering to enter the ark. According to G.V. Popov this miniature dates back to the 1560s.³⁵

This may thus be the origin of *simandron*. Its symbolic meaning is clear in the typological interpretation of the patristic tradition: the ark is a symbol of the church, in which humanity and creation find salvation. The *Paleya* develops in particular the biblical explanation of this episode in a context of apology in an anti-Judaic key. It is no coincidence, we believe, that even in the *Pilgrim Book* we meet the same apologetic reason on several occasions, particularly when the pilgrim refers to the prophecy that in recent times the Jews would be converted and would begin an era of prosperity and peace. In the Slavic area we can also read the same episode in the Apocalypse of Methodius of Patara, in which, however, not God, but an angel teaches Noah how to use the *simandron*, just as in the *Pilgrim Book*, linking this tool to the “angel’s teaching.”

We can find representations of animals summoned with the *simandron* again in the miniatures of the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, of Barlaam and Ioasaf Life, as well as in icons and frescoes. The invention of the *simandron* is also present in the oldest apocryphal literature of the Syriac, Arab and Ethiopian area, particularly in the *Book of Adam* and in the *Cave of treasures*, although it is not currently possible to establish a direct relationship with the textual Slavic tradition. The apology in an anti-Judaic key probably helps us to understand the origin of *simandron*. According to Stichel, the *simandron* is probably related to the tradition of Judeo-Christian communities, who would have inherited it from its use in synagogues.³⁶

35 Г.В. Попов, “Миниатюры Псковской Палеи 1477 года (о некоторых аспектах развития рукописной иллюстрации грозненского времени)”, in: *Древнерусское искусство. Исследования и атрибуции*, ред. Л.И. Лифшиц [G.V. Popov, “Miniatures of the Pskov’s Palaea of 1477 (on some aspects of the development of manuscript illustration during the reign of Ivan Terrible)”, in: *Old Russian Art. Researches and Attributions*, ed. L.I. Lifshitz], St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 325-341, see p. 328.

36 Stichel, “Jüdische Tradition in christlichen Liturgie”, p. 226. We cannot dwell on such a complex issue. We merely observe that in Eastern Europe, almost up until the present day, they used a wooden mallet, known as a *Schulklopfen* or *Shulklopper* and which in shape resembles the horn (*šofar*) in use in the synagogue. This hammer was used to knock on house or shop doors on Friday evenings to remind people that the Sabbath was about to begin (s. M. Garzaniti, “Eventi sonori nei racconti di viaggio del Medioevo russo”, *Musica e storia*, IX, 2 (2001), pp. 473-488).

Conclusions

With my paper, I wished to provide a broad outline, supported by a few examples, of the contribution made by pilgrimage literature, with its numerous apocryphal and legendary motifs, to constructing the collective memory of *Slavia orthodoxa*. Along with iconography, pilgrimage literature is one of the main sources for studying the spread of apocryphal literature in the Byzantine-Slavic world.³⁷

The examples presented should help us to understand the ways and forms in which such apocryphal and legendary motifs were transmitted. On the one hand, we can see that there was a close link between the oral form of worship and of local narratives, which were part of the pilgrim experience, and the written testimony of the Slavic liturgical and paraliturgical books. Pilgrims were inevitably driven to compare the authoritative local liturgical tradition with the Slavic “holy books” available to them and this comparison became more and more important as an increasingly standardized form gradually took hold with the affirmation of the Jerusalem typikon in the Byzantine liturgy and an ever more rigid canon of writing production.

This led to the deletion of spurious texts or texts suspected of heresy, but survived many apocryphal and legendary motifs and themes, which continued to be present even in unexpected works. Moreover, through quotations and references to “sacred books” some pilgrimage tales inevitably became sacralized, thereby increasing their authority and spread.

Of course, within the same community, different sacred texts were used, thereby creating a hierarchy in which some texts, beginning with the Holy Scriptures, played a fundamental role, while others performed a different function. This resulted not only in a sacralization process, but also a prioritization process, which helped to define what was covered by the canon and what ended up being marginalized or excluded. It is important to emphasize the historical aspect of this process with its local dynamic, in which each community developed according to its own legacy, though always in relation to other communities. In this way, a given text in a given period could play a sacral role in a community, whereas in another period it might become a marginal text; elsewhere in another community (and or in other times) it might be configured as a forbidden text. This do not exclude mutual influences between different

37 According M.N. Speransky, the “Christian legend” followed three routes to reach Rus’: the Bulgarian translations of apocryphal literature, the pilgrimage tales and the fine arts (М.Н. Сперанский, *История древней русской литературы* [M.N. Speransky, *History of Old Russian literature*], Moscow, 1914, pp. 262-264).

communities, especially from the late Middle Ages with the new centralization processes.

Another key element to keep in mind is the specificity of the Slavic world, generally perceived as being on the fringe of the Mediterranean world in a conception of history in which the center of gravity moved inexorably westward. The Middle East played a key role only in the first phase and after the first centuries of Christianity, the focus then shifted permanently onto the Latin world and usually only followed the history of Western European culture, leaving the rest to the periphery. We forget, as well, that *Slavia orthodoxa* not only developed from early Middle Ages an alphabet and a language that assumed a sacral function, as in the rest of the Christian East, but it established close relations with the Byzantine world as a whole, not only with its capital Constantinople, but with the Middle East and with its rich monastic literature too. In this way medieval Church Slavonic literature played a role in the transmission of the Byzantine culture, often preserving apocryphal and legendary motifs that have disappeared in the Greek tradition.