THE THREE SLAVONIC TRANSLATIONS
OF THE GREEK CATENA ON JOB
With an Appendix on the Author of the First Prologue
to the First Translation: Polychronius or Photius?

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A. INTRODUCTION

A somewhat neglected field of Slavonic translated literature is that of catenae on the books of the Old Testament, which have hitherto attracted scholarly attention mainly with regard to the Biblical texts contained in them. The sole major achievement of the twentieth century was the publication in 1918 under extremely difficult circumstances of the first volume of the catena on the Minor Prophets by Nikolay Tunitsky (1878–1934), which had been sponsored by the Commission for the Critical Edition of the Slavonic Bible established in 1914. The publication of the catena on the Song of Songs by Anatoly Alekseyev in 2002, of the abridged version of the third translation of the catena on Job by Iskra Khristova-Shomova and the catena on Ecclesiastes by Lyubov Osinkina, both in 2007, are most welcome signs of a renewed interest in catenae. It is to be hoped that they will soon be followed by an edition of the first of the three translations of the catena on Job, which has been announced by Khristova-Shomova.

B. THE GREEK CATENA

The earlier of the two catenae on Job (CPG № C 50) contains 2492 excerpted passages, 529 of which are anonymous. Of the 1963 passa-
ges ascribed to nineteen specific authors, 785 (31.5% of the overall total) were taken from the commentary by Olympiodorus of Alexandria (CPG 7453)\(^6\), while another 413 (16.6%) were taken from the commentary on Job by Polychronius of Apamea (CPG № 3880) and since all 413 are on the first twenty of the forty-two chapters of Job, the compiler of the catena clearly had a codex with only the first half of Polychronius’ commentary at his disposal\(^7\). Apart from these passages in the catena Polychronius’ commentary has been lost, although his complete commentary was available to the Pelagian Julian of Aclanum, who included a literal translation of some of its passages in his Latin commentary on Job (CPL 777)\(^8\). The catena also made use of the commentary on Job by John Chrysostom (CPG № 4443), from which 217 passages (8.7%) were taken\(^9\). It is not necessary here to name all the other sources of the catena, suffice it to say that 190 passages (7.6%) were taken from the commentary on Job by Didymus the Blind of Alexandria (CPG № 2553)\(^10\) and 60 (2.4%) from the commentary by Julian the Arian (CPG № 2075)\(^11\).

The not inconsiderable scholarship devoted to the relations between the MSS of the catena has revealed that the earliest form, the

\(^6\) Ed. Hagedorn 1984: 1–398; on the catena tradition of the commentary see pp. XIX–XXXIV; on Olympiodorus, about whom little is known other than that he was made deacon by Patriarch John Nicetites of Alexandria (c. 505–515/6), see pp. XXXIX–XLV. Why Hristova-Shomova 2011: 182 categorically denies that the author is to be identified as Olympiodorus of Alexandria is unclear.


\(^11\) Julian’s commentary ed. Hagedorn 1973: 1–316; on the catena tradition see pp. XXVI–XXX; on the controversy regarding the Arian author, see pp. XXXIV–LVII.