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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE MEDIEVAL SLAVONIC TRANSLATION OF THE *ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA*

The apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (*APTh*), one of the most popular non-canonical New Testament texts, was probably translated into Old Church Slavonic in the 10th century. According to the catalogue compiled by A. de Santos Otero, the Slavonic *APTh* is preserved in 41 manuscripts from the 11th–18th cc. and various Slavic traditions (Santos Otero 1978). In the Slavonic manuscripts, the text has been labelled a Martyrdom (Мученіє), as in many Greek manuscripts, which have the title μαρτύριον τῆς ἁγίας πρωτομάρτυρος Θεκλής (Spittler 2008: 157–158).

The oldest extant manuscript of the Slavonic *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is from the 11th c. (*Pogod63*). Unfortunately, it consists only of two incorrectly joined folios: the end of the text (parts 40–43, according to Lipsius' text division (Lipsius 1891), and two miracles (one preserved in total, and the other one has only the beginning). This manuscript received much attention from scholars in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is mentioned in many Slavic manuscripts catalogues (Гранстрем 1953: 17; Каринский 1925: 7–8; Никольский 1906: 493) and has been published several times (Срезневский 1863: 170–171; Jagič 1882; Тот 1976).

All researchers who have worked on the manuscript agree that it was written in the 11th century. Vatroslav Jagič focused on the orthography, remarking: “nach der Orthographie berührt es sich mit den genauesten altslovenischen Texten altrussischen Recension” (Jagič 1882: 232), and placed the manuscript in the same timeline as the *Izbornik of 1073* and *Ostromir Gospel* (Jagič 1882: 232, 234). Parion Ohienko also focused on palaeography and claimed that „писано в два стовпці дуже гарним уставним письмом, яке близько нагадує київську школу XI віку“ (Огієнко 1929: 184). Imre Tot examined

the use and alternations of letters, concluding that the text had been copied from an Old Church Slavonic protograph but that the scribe was from Rus' (Тот 1976: 250, 252).

There are some corrections in the manuscript that were first noticed by V. Jagič (Jagič 1882: 235–238) and later studied by I. Tot (Тот 1976: 234–236). Based on these, I. Tot assumed that the Thecla text in *The Great Chetii Minea* by Metropolitan Makarii might have been copied from the manuscript. In support of this theory, it can be noted that the manuscript was probably used in Novgorod, where the cult of St. Thecla was followed (Щеголькова 2018), and that Makarii based his work on the Novgorod collection of manuscripts (Миллер 2002). It is difficult to say with certainty where this manuscript was written. However, it can be assumed that it was written in Kyiv (such a hypothesis is often expressed concerning *Izbornik of 1073* and the *Ostromir Gospel*, graphically close manuscripts). The other traces of the cult of St. Thecla in Kyivan Rus' are the well-known lost (but fortunately described and photographed) fresco from the Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv (Макаренко 1924: 7–13) and very similar frescos in the St. Sophia Cathedral (Никитенко, Корниенко 2014: 263) and the Church of St. Cyril (Макаренко 1924: 10) in Kyiv. All these pictures portray Thecla as a holy apostle with a cross and the Bible. This tradition was based on the *APTh* and was developed by some Fathers of the Church, particularly Methodius of Olympus (*The Symposium*) and Gregory of Nyssa (*Life of Makrina*).

THE STRUCTURE OF THE *APTh* FROM AN 11th-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT (COMPARED TO GREEK AND LATER SLAVONIC MANUSCRIPTS)

The preserved Slavonic *APTh*'s fragment corresponds to the Greek *APTh*'s end (40–43) but is slightly extended and supplemented with miracles. The 'First Miracle' tells about a pagan priest whom Thecla converted to Christianity; the 'Second Miracle' is about a child tormented by the devil. These two miracles often accompany the *Martyrdom of Thecla* in later Slavonic manuscripts. However, there were three miracles; the third one tells about the physicians of Seleukeias, who envied Thecla, and her miraculous disappearance into the mountain. Because the second miracle was extant only partly, there is a reason to assume that the entire manuscript contained the third miracle also. A review of late Slavonic *APTh* manuscripts shows that the miracles can either be absent or be present but not in their entirety. Some tendencies are immutable, however: for example, if the text contains only one miracle, it always is the third one. If there are two miracles, they are always the first and third ones. The second miracle occurs most rarely and only together with the first and third ones, as illustrated by the following table:

manuscript	1th miracle (about pagan priest)	2th miracle (about the child tormented by the devil)	3th miracle (about the phisicians' envy and Thecla disappearing into the mountain)
Pogod63	+	+	?
Bdin	–	–	–
TSL755	–	–	+
TSL666	+	+	+
TSL663	–	–	+
GMM	+	+	+
Viln F19-79	–	–	–
Viln F19-103	–	–	–
Zam	+	–	+
Oss.38	+	–	+

All these manuscripts have been explored at different levels. There is much information about some of them, while only a little about others. The *GMM* text (consulted here, not from the manuscript itself, but from the edition) was probably related to both the *Pogod63* and *TSL666* manuscripts. The Middle Bulgarian *Bdinski manuscript* 14th c. does not contain any miracles. Two manuscripts from the Vilnius collection (*F19-79* and *F19-103*) belonged to Suprasl monastery and were probably copied from South Slavic manuscripts, as attested by the *jury* in them. The scribe of *TSL755* (15th c.) had a very creative approach, using a version close to the Ukrainian Church Slavonic recension. *TSL663* (16th c.) was copied from it with all peculiarities but probably has a Moscow provenance. There appears to be some connection between *Zam* (17th c.) and *Oss.38* (17th c.), although each has its own history. *Zam* was written in the St. Sophia Church in Polotsk with a very pro-Kyiv attitude¹, but it was read and used for many years in the Basilian monastery in Zamość. *Oss.38* has a distinct tendency to combine traditional Old Church Slavonic lives of saints with new text by Piotr Skarga, translated into Old Ukrainian.

¹ This manuscript contains not only the translated lives of Saints but also some original Rus' texts, in particular, related to Saint Sophia Church in Kyiv: *Consecration of Saint Sophia in Kyiv*, *About the arrival of Saint Andrew the Apostle to Kyiv* and *The miracle of St. Nicholas concerning the infant*. It looks like the scribe Aleksiy, who left his name and many notes on the margins, saw the connection between two St. Sophia Churches – in Kyiv and in Polotsk.

Working with another group of manuscripts, Amber Ivanov has claimed that only a third of them omit the miracles (Ivanov 2020).

Based on this number of manuscripts (small but sufficient for tentative conclusions), it can be said that a translation from Greek was probably made only once, in the 10th century, but that the witnesses took different paths. The analysis of the text shows that the presence or absence of miracles is not the only feature that revealed the connection between some manuscripts and divided them into groups. Nevertheless, two questions remain. First, why do some manuscripts contain miracles and others do not? Was it because, in some instances, a shorter text was required? And second, the main question: what was the origin of the miracles in the text?

THE ORIGINS OF THE MIRACLES

There are some questions about the origins of the miracles and the nature of their combination with the main text. Did it appear during translation? Was the supplement with miracles already enclosed in the Greek manuscript from which the translation was made? For instance, Ivan Franko associated the miracles with the fifth-century *Life and Miracles of Thecla* (Франко 2006: 45), but in fact, these miracles are not connected to that Seleukeias text. As rightly pointed out by Jaen-Daniel Kaestli and Willy Rordorf, the main difference is that the miracles described in the fifth-century text occurred after the miraculous disappearance of Thecla. In contrast, those in the supplement occurred during Thecla's life, after her blessing by Paul and becoming an independent preacher (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 10).

It was easiest to find out about the miracle of the envy of Seleukeias physicians and Thecla's disappearance into the mountain (the third in the Slavonic miracles set) because it was known from Lipsius' publication (manuscript G). In Jonson's opinion, "This version is a Greek extension (and not a paraphrase) of the *APTh* and was written probably in the fifth or sixth century. It betrays no direct knowledge of the *Life* but contends with the *Life's* revision of Thekla's death/disappearance" (Jonson 2006: 227).

At the same time, many questions remained concerning the first and second miracles in the oldest extant Slavonic manuscript. The answer appeared in Gilbert Dagron's critical edition of the *Life and Miracles*, in the appendix, where he published the three miracles in the same order as in the Slavonic translation (Dagron 1978: 418–421). However, it was still unclear how the miracles were related to the Greek tradition of the *APTh*. The issue was clarified thanks to the research on the endings of the different Greek *APTh* manuscripts made by Kaestli and Rordorf (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014). It showed that among 41 manuscripts, 28 have additional texts describing the last years of Thecla's life. The number of miracles during Thecla's last years in the Greek manuscripts is higher than in

Slavonic manuscripts, as well as the variability of their combinations. Nevertheless, this fact gives greater weight to the assumption that the *APTh* and these miracles were translated together from Greek into Old Church Slavonic as a single text.

PECULIARITIES OF THE OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC TRANSLATION

The preserved part of the eleventh-century manuscript gives an impression of a precise translation (keeping in mind, of course, that it is unknown from which Greek manuscript the translation was made). For example, at the beginning of the manuscript text, Thecla tells Paul about her self-baptism:

<p>40. [Же ραζπμϕ] η ρεγε παβλε σαμα σα κρ̄ς̄τηχ̄ζ η πρηαχ̄ζ βανηκ̄. ποσπ̄шь̄с̄т̄во̄ва̄в̄ыη βο τεβ̄ϕ β̄ζ εῡγ̄λη̄ η μ̄ζη̄ϕ ποσπ̄шь̄с̄т̄во̄ва̄ β̄ζ η̄ζμ̄ζβ̄ενη̄ε</p>	<p>40. [λογισάμενος μή τις αὐτῇ πειρασμὸς πάρεστιν ἕτερος]. ἡ δὲ συνιδούσα εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἔλαβον τὸ λουτρὸν, Παῦλε ὁ γὰρ σοὶ συνεργήσας εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κάμοι συνήργησεν εἰς τὸ λούσασθαι.</p>
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The Greek phrase Ἔλαβον τὸ λουτρὸν (took a bath) has been interpreted as “I baptised myself and took a bath”; but, as J. Barrier noted, the word τὸ λουτρὸν often was used in meaning of baptising, particularly in Tit 3:5 and Ef. 5:26 (Barrier 2009: 179).

Based on the later Slavonic manuscripts, it could be said that such an approach (trying to translate accurately) was inherent in the entire text. All the instances can be reduced to 1) omitting specific local names or references (such as τὴν Βασιλικὴν ὁδὸν – πο πογ̄τη (*APTh* 3); 2) incorrect spelling of names (as in the names of Onysyphoros’ sons (*APTh* 2); 3) lack of distinction between Greek concepts such as δῆμος and ὄχλος, which made no sense in the Slavic world and perhaps were not understood by the translator, who rendered them both as η̄λροΔ̄ζ; and 4) only a little interpretative translation in very few cases. The only significant difference is in the list of the Beatitudes. It is crucial, however, to remember that it is unknown whether these features result from a translator's interpolation or whether they were peculiarities of the Greek protograph. Nevertheless, this version of the Beatitudes list was preserved in all Slavonic manuscripts that have been examined here. Another issue is that later scribes may have contributed many mistakes and misinterpretations.

The first question concerns the ending of the main text of the *APTh*. The words “and after she had enlightened many with the Word of God, she slept a good sleep” (καὶ πολλοὺς φωτίσασα τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ καλοῦ ὕπνου ἐκοιμήθη - η̄ м̄ногы̄ пр̄ѣс̄ѣщ̄ыш̄η . ѣ̄ж̄нем̄ь̄ сл̄о̄в̄ь̄м̄ь̄ д̄о̄б̄ры̄н̄м̄ь̄ о̄ч̄ь̄п̄е) (43), are

followed by “her revered body was buried in her holy temple where we celebrate her memory on the 24th of September, by the grace of God, to Him be the honour and the Kingdom forever and ever. Amen”.

As Kaestli and Rordorf argue, “When the story was transmitted independently, this original ending mentioning Thecla’s death was retained only in a limited part of the Greek witnesses of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*” (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 10). Such additional information about Thecla’s body is found in Greek manuscripts 26 and 51, and Kaestli and Rordorf also mentioned the Slavonic version of the *APTh*, based on the *Bdinski manuscript* version (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 12). Among all the examined Slavonic manuscripts, the extended ending is contained in seven manuscripts, while three do not have it. It is worth noting that all three witnesses have undergone many emendations from the scribes. The witness *TSL755* is known to be a very creative work of a scribe, and manuscript *TSL663* was copied from it. Witness *Oss.38* also has traces of ‘perfections’. In that instance, the main text is very closely (and logically) connected to the next miracles. The scribe probably omitted the phrase about Thecla’s assumption because the next miracle part concerns her life. Thereby, the narration about miracles started immediately after the words about her arrival to Seleukia.

As previously mentioned, all three ‘Slavonic miracles’, in the same sequence as in Slavonic manuscripts, are published in the appendix to Dagron’s. The first miracle tells of how Thecla lived in a lonely place in the cave near the spring in Myrseon (ἐν τῷ Μυρσεῶνι – въ мѣрѣсенѣонѣ), the myrtle forest, and collected healing herbs. Once, a pagan priest (ὁ ἱερεὺς τῶν ἐλλήνων – иереи поганьскыи) passing by mistook Thecla for a prostitute. Defending herself, Thecla threw him from his horse, and he lay unconscious for three days and nights (in the Slavonic text, only three days). After regaining consciousness, he decided she was a goddess and ordered her portrait. In the end, he became a Christian and the portrait, i.e., the icon, was transmitted from generation to generation until it was owned by the Christian philosopher named Akhaios (ὁ Ἀχαιός).

The comparison of the Greek and Slavonic versions reveals some simplification in the translation (or, alternatively, translation from a different Greek version). Foremost, the beginning of the first miracle is somewhat different: it appears that the Slavonic text shortens passage 13–23 that mentions Thecla’s martyrdom, her receiving an Apostolic mission from Apostle Paul, and her coming to Seleukeia (Dagron 1978: 418):

По страсѣи мѣнниа апѣство прѣнѣмѣши отъ
 ѣтаго павѣла вѣселеньскаго оуѣнтѣла
 ѣтаа пѣрвомаѣеница Феѣкла обрѣте вѣса
 сѣщаа вѣ мѣтрополи сѣлеуѣкѣи погани
 сѣщаа.

Вѣ та же лѣта ѣтаа дѣва наоуѣнѣ а
 словесѣи бѣжюи н вѣрѣваша вѣсѣи граждани.
 Тѣшѣтаашѣ во са вѣ едѣнѣомѣ мѣстѣ
 жѣтѣи, того радѣи н вѣ пѣци жѣвѣаашѣ вѣ
 мѣрѣсенѣонѣ н дѣже бѣ нѣстоуѣнѣкѣ. По
 вѣса же нѣдѣлаа нзлааашѣ н сѣбѣнрааашѣ
 вѣилѣи н то ѣдѣаашѣ на вѣсѣи нѣдѣлиѣ.

Αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ὁσία, δέσποτα, μετὰ τὸ
 διασωθῆναι καθὼς εἶρηται, ἵνα συντόμως
 εἶπω, εἰσελθοῦσα ἐν Σελευκείᾳ μετὰ
 τοὺς ἀγῶνας τοὺς μαρτυρικοὺς τὴν
 ἀποστολὴν ἐμπιστευθεῖσα παρὰ
 τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου Παύλου τοῦ
 διδασκάλου αὐτῆς καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης,
 εὔρε πάντας τοὺς ἐν Σελευκείᾳ τῇ
 Ἰσαύρων μητροπόλει Ἕλληνας ὄντας καὶ
 ἀνομους κατ’ ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους καὶ
 σπεύσασα διδάξαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ,
 ὡς πιστευθεῖσα τὴν πόλιν, εὐγενῆς τε
 οὔσα, ἔσπευσεν ἐν ἰδιάζοθσι τόποις
 οἰκεῖν. Ὅθεν ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ ᾧκει ἐν
 τῷ Μυρσεῶνι, ἔνθα νῦν ἡ πηγὴ, κατὰ
 κυριακὴν δὲ ἐξῆι συλλέγειν βοτάνας
 καὶ ταύτας ἦσθιεν ὄλην τὴν ἑβδομάδα.

The continuation of this miracle in the Slavonic version is close to the Greek one.

In Dagron’s publication, it is followed by the next miracle correlated with this one that is titled Ὑουδο Β in Slavonic (Dagron 1978: 417–418). It is numbered as text 5 in the edition by Kaestli and Rordorf (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 60–67). It is worth reminding that it is preserved only partly in the oldest Slavonic manuscript and often is absent in later ones. That miracle is about healing a child tormented by the devil and contains several details. The child was brought to Thecla by a nursemaid, and after the child was healed, the mother, greatly moved, called her whole family, and they all went to Thecla. Thecla preached to them the Gospel she had “inherited from Paul”. It turned out that the child’s father, who had been absent at the time, had witnessed the murder of Thecla in Antioch. It is precisely that place in the plot where the manuscript *Pogod63* is interrupted. Then the mother led the father to Thecla, and he also wanted to become a Christian. Thecla wrote a letter to Apostle Peter (!), and he called a priest who baptizes all converts. The Church of St. Irina was being built funded by a reward paid by the child’s father to Thecla and the priest.

The complete text of this miracle is found in manuscripts *TSL666* and *GMM*. The translation appears relatively precise. For example:

ОТРОУА ЕТЕРА ОΥΖ ΠΕΡΒΥΗΧΖ ΓΡΑΔΑ ΤΟΥ
 МПΥНМЪ БЫРАДШЕ ДЪМОНЪМЪ НЕУНСТЫНМЪ
 Н БЪ ПНТОМО ЖЕНОИЖ ЕТЕРОИЖ ЖІВѢШТЕЖ
 БАНЪЗ МУРСЕНОНЬСКЫА ГОРЫ.

Παιδίον οὖν τινος τῶν πρώτων τῆς
 πόλεως ὠχλείτο ὑπὸ πνεύματος
 ἀκαθάρτου, παραλυτικὸν τυγχάνον
 ἦν δὲ τρεφόμενον παρά τινι γυναικί
 οἰκούσῃ ἐν τῇ ἐπαύλει τῇ πλησίον τοῦ
 Μυρσεῶνος

As mentioned previously, the “third miracle” in the Slavonic manuscripts had quite likely been included in the Old Slavonic protograph. It is worth repeating that it often appeared as the sole miracle in later manuscripts. As noticed by Davis, the miracle originated in the cult of Artemis in Seleukeia and has connections with Biblical motives, e.g., the Protomartyr Stephen, and St. Paul’s Epistles. It also resulted in the growth of certain features of Thecla’s cult, such as her portrayal as a female protomartyr close to the scale of Protomartyr Stephen (Davis 2008: 36–48). The Greek manuscripts give us two versions of this miracle. The first begins with a very interesting image of a ‘cloud of light’ that led Thecla to Seleukeia (νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ὠδήγει αὐτήν) (Narro 2019). The second does not contain that image but includes the tale of the healing of Theonila, the daughter of Proklianos, a wealthy citizen of Seleukeia. The second version is published in the appendix to Dagron’s book (Dagron 1978: 418–421). Both versions are found in the edition by Kaestli and Rordorf (Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 12–13, 69–90). The Slavonic manuscripts contain the second version, which omits the cloud of light and has tale about the daughter of Proklianos, whose name is spelt in various ways in the manuscripts (Priklian, Prohlian, Prohalian).

The story of the third miracle begins directly with Thecla’s arrival at Seleukeia and her settling near the town, in the cave on the mountain, and the visit by the women to her to learn God’s Word, with some of them deciding to live there, in a kind of monastery, with Thecla. The main plot concerns Thecla’s healing of various people and the envy of some Seleukeian physicians just before the episode about Proklianos’ daughter’s healing. Afterwards, it tells physicians’ understanding of Thecla as a priestess of Artemis. They bribed drunk thugs to defile her (in their understanding, the priestess of Artemis should lose her power to heal in this case). In danger, Thecla prays and hears a voice from heaven and sees that the mountain (ἡ πέτρα – камень) cleaves, hiding her. Intruders managed to grab her by her clothes, however, so the clothing (μέρος τι τοῦ μαφορίων – γαστήρ οὗτς αμοφορία) that is left outside marks the holy place.

Overall, comparing the Greek and Slavonic texts gives the impression of a relatively accurate translation. The Slavonic versions do not name the locality where Thecla lived – Καλαμῶνος ἦτοι Ῥοδεῶνος (Lipsius 1891: 271; Dagron 1978: 418; Kaestli, Rordorf 2014: 69) or simplify the expanded phrase as πρὶν τὴν θύραν τοῦ σπηλαίου – къ дѣреми.

In conclusion, the oldest extant Slavonic *APTh* manuscript provides an impression of the type of *APTh* tradition. Comparison with the Greek *APTh* and with later Slavonic *APTh* manuscripts have allowed me to propose that there was only one translation of the *APTh*, and that the original Greek manuscript included three miracles. On the other hand, the miracles are not entailed in the fourteenth-century Bulgarian *Bdinski manuscript* or two sixteenth-century Suprasl manuscripts (copied probably from South Slavonic manuscripts). This could mean one of two things: either that 1) the miracles were omitted in the interest of brevity, or that 2) the history of the Slavonic *APTh* is a bit more complicated than that. It is important also to emphasize that exploration of the various Slavonic manuscripts shows that despite the ‘common Slavonic space’, each Slavic literature has its own favourite (or not favourite) texts, and its own history of reading and perception.

LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

Pogod63	St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Pogodin 63, 2 fols. (11th c.).
Bdin	Gent, Library of Gent University, Bdinski Zbornik, 408, fols. 39r–58r (14th c., A.D.1360).
TSL775	Troice-Sergiyeva Lavra, F.304, 755 (1628), fols 230r–243r (15th c.).
TSL666	Troice-Sergiyeva Lavra, F.304, 666 (1618), fols. 91v–104r (15th c.).
TSL663	Troice-Sergiyeva Lavra, F.304, 663 (405), fols. 373v–396r (16th c.).
Viln F19-79	Vilnius, The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, F19-79, fols. 167r–173r (16th c.).
Viln F19-103	Vilnius, The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, F19-103, fols. 167r–172r (16th c.).
Zam	Lviv, Zamoysky manuscript, Scientific Library of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, 203.III, p. 180–198 (16th c.).
Oss.38	Lviv, Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, Oss.38, fols. 301v–308v (16th c.).
GMM	Великие минеи четии, собранные Всероссийским митрополитом Макарием. Вып. 2. Сентябрь. Дни 14–24. Санкт-Петербург, 1869, с. 1376–1390.

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НАБЛЮДЕНИЯ ВЪРХУ КОМПОЗИЦИЯТА НА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНИЯ СЛАВЯНСКИ
ПРЕВОД НА ДЕЯНИЯТА НА ПАВЕЛ И ТЕКЛА

(Резюме)

Статията изследва старобългарския превод на апокрифните деяния на Павел и Текла с фокус върху най-стария запазен ръкопис. Оцелял е само фрагмент от ръкописа, съдържащ края, допълнен с чудеса. При сравнението в статията са използвани оригиналният гръцки текст и по-късни славянски ръкописи.

Ключови думи: апокрифи; старобългарски превод на Деяния на Павел и Текла; Мъчение на Текла; чудеса; ръкопис.

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