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FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXT BOOK ON PAULICIANISM AND BOGOMILISM

Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c. 650 – c. 1450; selected sources / translated and annotated by Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton; assistance with the translation of Old Slavonic Texts by Yuri Stoyanov. Manchester Medieval Sources Series. Series advisers Rosemary Horrox and Janet L. Nelson. Manchester – New York: Manchester University Press, 1998. XVII + 327 pp.

The growing crisis in the world at large and in traditional Western Christianity has been paralleled by an enormous surge of interest in everything labeled 'occult', 'dualist' or 'Gnostic' in the late 20th c. If you enter the Internet and look for information on these subjects, you are bound to be swamped by thousands and thousands of web pages, many of which are produced by deranged minds. Scholarly interest in dualism has also expanded but until now English-speaking lecturers and students alike have had limited access to its sources. Janet and Bernard Hamilton, helped by the Bulgarian philologist Yuri Stoyanov, deserve our great appreciation for bringing out this splendid and much needed volume. It is published as part of the well established and renowned Manchester Medieval Sources Series. At the same time, this collection is not free of problems and mistakes as, hopefully, my review will make abundantly clear.

The Hamiltons have chosen to cover dualist heresies in the Byzantine world by which they mean 'the area affected by Byzantine civilization' (p. x). They begin the preface by saying that 'this book is about the rise of Christian dualism' (p. ix). Really? The first known Christian dualist in the world was, in fact, Marcion who lived in the 2nd century. Although the dualist heresies persisted after the fall of Byzantium in 1453, the Hamiltons refuse to deal with them after that date because of what they call insufficient work on the early Ottoman records (p. x). A lot of these records have already been published (the earliest ones known to

me date to c. 1430) and they are fiscal, not religious, in character. Most Bulgarian dualists, called Paulicians, became Roman Catholics in the late 16th and early 17th c., so information about their previous beliefs can be found in Vatican documents, published or not, and in preserved local traditions. The Hamiltons do not include documents belonging to the Armenian sect of the Tondrakians because of the linguistic barrier (p. x) but at the end of their book they find another pretext which is the unreliability of Conybeare's publication about them titled *The Key of Truth* (p. 293).

After the Preface and the list of abbreviations the Hamiltons put two maps of the so called Byzantine lands in Europe (p. xiv) and in Asia Minor (p. xv). But Bulgaria was part of the 'Byzantine lands' only when it was conquered by Constantinople between 1018 and 1185. The first map seems to be copied, without any reference, from G. Ostrogorsky's *History of the Byzantine State* (rev. ed., 1969, p. 289). The Bulgarian empire which in the 9th and 10th c. included most of Southeastern Europe is shown to cover in the north only what was later known as Wallachia. In fact, Bulgaria included Transylvania before the arrival of the Magyars (in 892 Prince Vladimir-Rasate negotiated with the German King Arnulf to stop trading Transylvanian salt with the German rival Moravia) and its northeastern border reached as far as Besarabia.

A 55-page long and substantial Historical introduction explains the genealogy of the Eastern dualist sects and the context, in

which they developed. The H. claim that Mani's cosmology is borrowed from Zoroastrianism (p. 1) but it is essentially Gnostic. They also reject the possibility of continuity between ancient Gnosticism, Manichaeism or Marcionism and Paulicianism which appeared in the second half of the 7th c. and they suggest that the Paulicians were simply 'Christian dissenters' (p. 3). If so, why similar dualist movements have not sprung up in other Orthodox countries such as Russia or Serbia? The etymology given of the Armenian word *Paylikeank* (the followers of the wretched little Paul) is not only twisted but also wrong (p. 7). In Armenian *payl* means 'filth,' so *payl-i-keank* stands for 'the filthy ones'. Later on the Hamiltons contradict themselves by admitting that Constantine, the founder of Paulicianism, may have contacted some early Christian sects which survived in eastern Anatolia (p. 11). My own opinion is that Marcionites were predecessors of the Paulicians. The latter were not pro-cosmic, as the Hamiltons believe, because one of the recantation formulas ascribes to them rejection of marriage¹. This went hand in hand with sexual promiscuity which the Paulicians inherited from ancient Gnostic groups and later passed on to the Bogomils and Cathars. The Hamiltons lightly and wrongly dismiss it as Orthodox church fabrication (p. 10). As Donka Radeva has shown in a remarkable recent article, in the early 20th c. there existed traces of rituals among the former Bulgarian Bogomils, now Roman Catholics, of child sacrifices and promiscuity². The Cathars who rejected normal heterosexual relationships often turned to homosexuality and since their predecessors were Bogomils from Bulgaria, they were called *bougres* in French or *buggers* in English³.

¹ Стефанов, Йером.П. Маркион – предтеча на павликянството и богомилството. – Философия, 1998, № 5–6, 45–50.

² Радеева, Д. Павликянският дуализъм – архетипи и повторения. – История, 1998, № 4–5, 54–60.

³ Zerner, M. Du court où on appela les hérétiques des "bougres". Et quelques déductions. – Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, 1989, № 4, 305–324.

The Hamiltons discuss Paulicianism at length following Lemerle as they admit (p. 292) and then proceed to deal with Bogomilism but fall into another trap of contradiction. They think that its doctrine was copied again from Zoroastrianism because the ancestors of the Bulgarians had contacts with Persia. They rely on John the Exarch who writes that the pagan Slavs "were not ashamed to call the devil the eldest son of God" (p. 26). But it was the Bulgars, an Asian tribe, who migrated from Pamir to the Balkans (whether they were influenced by Zoroastrianism is another matter) and not the Slavs who came down from North-eastern Europe! The main Bulgarian source on Bogomilism is, of course, Cosmas the Priest whose work is dated by the Hamiltons to the last quarter of the 10th century (p. 27). They base their reasoning on the fact that the Bulgarian Tsar Peter (927–969) is called 'good Christian' meaning, presumably, 'dead'. But in the original Old Bulgarian (not Old Slavonic) text the epithet preceding Peter's name is *pravoveren* (literally, 'of right faith' or Orthodox) which does not betray whether he is alive or not. It is evident from the text of the sermon that Cosmas was a court priest in the capital Preslav before its Byzantine takeover in 971. He mentions war activities which may well date his work to 970. The Hamiltons also write that Tsar Peter was canonized in 972 (p. 114). Where they get this information from is not clear at all. At that time Eastern Bulgaria was overrun by John Tzimisce whose last concern was to extol the memory of his former rival. Quoting Stoyanov, the Hamiltons join him in thinking that the flourishing of Bogomilism was helped by the translation of numerous apocryphs in the Okhrid literary school (p. 31). This suggestion is not supported by evidence and the numerous preserved homilies of St. Clement of Okhrid (d. 916) don't bear traces of such uncanonical works.

The Hamiltons go on to deal with Byzantine Bogomilism and its sources: Euthymius of the Periblepton, Euthymius Zigabenes, Anna Comnena, various abjuration formulas, council decisions, letters etc. They acknowledge belatedly the Paulician influence on Bogomilism (p. 38). Here are some er-

rata. The Hamiltons write that the Armenian pre-Lenten fast lasts both for two weeks (p. 35) and for three days (p. 164); they assure the readers that the Bible was 'edited' by St. John Chrysostom (p. 38) but he wrote sermons based on it; the Hamiltons ridicule Orthodox and Bogomil belief in demons (p. 43) although the New Testament is quite clear about their existence and actions; the union of the Bulgarian church with Rome did not end 'c. 1232' (49 and 265) but in 1235 when a council at Lampsak received it back into the Orthodox fold and acknowledged its patriarchal status; the Adamite Lazarus who walked about naked in the Bulgarian capital Tarnovo in the mid-14th century is not considered by the Hamiltons a Bogomil (p. 54) but he was a Gnostic in the ancient vein; Bulgaria was not conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1393 (p. 55) because it was by then divided into three parts with Kaliakra, Tarnovo and Vidin as their capitals which fell respectively in 1395, 1393 and 1396; it is said that proof of Bogomils becoming Muslims after the conquest is lacking (p. 55) but the Bosnian heretics did receive gradually Islam while the Bulgarian ones, as mentioned earlier, became Roman Catholics; Bulgaria which converted to Christianity in 864 (rather in 865) did not receive Archbishop from Constantinople in the same year (p. 66) but in 870; Helen was not wife of Constantine the Great (p. 70) but his mother (this is a real howler!); Constantine himself did not die in 327 (p. 70) but in 337 (a typo); Montanism was not a sect (p. 88) but a church schism; the monastery of the Bulgarian hesychast St. Theodosius is not 'Kilifarevski' (p. 282) but Kilifarevo; the second Tarnovo council against the Bogomils was not held 'c. 1360' (p. 285) but in 1359; the Eastern and Western churches did not break relations in the 13th century (p. 301) but in 1054; the title of Pope is not unique to the Roman pontiff (p. 302) but it belongs to the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa as well. The errata list can be expanded. The Hamiltons apply two different systems of quoting Slavonic titles by which they transliterate some of them while translate others into English. My choice is for the first system.

The bulk of the book is taken by the translated sources which read fluently and are

accompanied by copious notes, most of which repeat the information provided in the historical introduction. Among these are also texts about the Cathars which, according to the Hamiltons, disclose their provenance from Bogomilism. Other scholars are inclined to attribute their appearance to indigenous factors, notably the Gregorian 11th c. reforms. Perhaps the truth lies in between the two opinions. There are other sources on Balkan dualism which could have been included: 1) the Typikon of the Bachkovo monastery in Southern Bulgaria founded by Gregory Bakuriani in 1083 which mentions the local Paulicians⁴; 2) the Life of St. Gerard of Transylvania, 11th century, which relates that the Bogomils venerated particularly Archangel Uriel⁵; 3) the Dialogue of John Cantacusenus with a Jew written in the 1360s mentioning the docetism of the Manichaeans (Bogomils)⁶; 4) the Life of the Bulgarian St. Ephrem who became Patriarch of Serbia and died in 1400 tells about his dispute with a 'Messalian' (Bogomil) Vlach who loses and dies promptly⁷.

The collection is accompanied by useful appendixes about the *Ritual* of Radoslav the Christian and the Armenian sources of the Paulicians. The Hamiltons are correct in proving that Conybeare's opus titled *Key of Truth* is a late forgery and is thus not reliable.

All in all, this is a groundbreaking publication which will be essential reading for anyone interested in mediaeval dualism. But care should be taken, if a second edition is done, to remove the most blatant mistakes and repetitions in order to enhance the quality of the book.

⁴ Б а р т и к я н, Х. За споменатия в Устава на Григорий Бакуриани "Ανιδρίχτων ἔθνος". – Духовна култура, 1981, № 4, 25–30.

⁵ I v a n k a, E. Gerardus Moresanus, der Erzengel Uriel und die Bogomilen. – *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 1955, № 1–2, 143–146 (= *Miscellanea Georg Hofmann SJ*).

⁶ И о а н н К а н т а к у з и н. Беседа с папским легатом. Диалог с иудеем и другие сочинения. СПб., 1997, с. 217.

⁷ П а в л о в, П., В. Г р у д к о в. Призвани да просият... Жития на св. Патриарх Йоаким I Търновски, св. Исая Серски и св. Патриарх Ефрем Печки. Велико Търново, 1999, 77–78 (original text), 83–84 (translation).