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ON THE SUBJECT OF THE OLDEST BULGARIAN COPY OF BARLAAM AND IOASAPH

*(Summary)*

The paper analyses the results of the study on the South Slavonic (Bulgarian and Serbian) manuscript tradition connected with the novel Barlaam and Ioasaph. The results reported correct numerous misinterpretations of this tradition. They are based on the text of copies in Middle Bulgarian (MS 3/14 from the Rila Monastery, dated to the second half of the 14th century; MS Shchuk. 905 from the State Historical Museum, dated to the first half of the 14th century; MS 132 from the Romanian Academy of Sciences, dated to the first half of the 14th century; MS f. 188, No 778 from the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, dated to the mid 15th century; MS Holy-Trinity-Sergius Laura 687 from the Russian State Library in Moscow, dated 1444; MS 13.5.15 from the Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg, dated to the first quarter of the 16th century) and in Serbian (MS 422 from Hilandar Monastery, dated to the third quarter of the 14th century and the manuscript from the Shishatovats Monastery, dated 1518) and that of the Russian MS 410 from Bolshakov's collection at the Russian State Library in Moscow, dated to the first quarter of the 16th century. It has been established that the fragments from the novel in MS Shchuk. 905 are a part of MS 132 from the Romanian Academy of Sciences. Actually this is the oldest Bulgarian copy of Barlaam and Ioasaph originating in the 1350s at the latest. Most probably it is also the oldest Slavonic copy amongst the 224 Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian medieval manuscripts known today. The analysis of the texts reveals the need of reconsidering certain questions, namely: What are the genealogical relations of the Slavonic medieval copies of Barlaam and Ioasaph preserved till present? When and where did the Slavonic translation (translations) of the novel appear? What was the history of this text in the Slavonic lands? The answers to these questions should be reviewed since some claims made in the last decades are obviously groundless.