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The Culture



1. Political Ideology, Education and Literature

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The volatile situation in Bulgaria during the first few years of Peter's reign required him to conduct an active propaganda aimed, internally, at legitimising him as the lawful ruler of the Bulgarians and, externally, at demonstrating and strengthening his imperial dignity, acknowledged by Byzantium in the peace treaty of 927. Furthermore, the spread of the Bogomil heresy in Bulgaria forced the tsar to become personally involved in the struggle to protect Orthodoxy from the attacks of heretic preachers. As the union of faith and state power constituted a pillar of popular unity, the ruler was expected to intervene directly and firmly in order to put an end to the spiritual schism, which could not be regarded as a purely religious issue¹.

¹ И. Ду й ч е в, *Рилският светец и неговата обител*, София 1947, pp. 41–43; М. К а й м а к о в а, *Религия, църква и държава в ранносредновековна България (края на VII – началото на XI в.)*, ДК 80.2/3, 2000, pp. 18–19.

The popularity that the Bogomil heresy enjoyed in this period is indicative of the alienation of broad social strata from the ruling elite and of a certain disappointment with the model of political and socio-economic relations which established itself in the country in the early decades of the 10th century. Bulgarian society seemed to be undergoing a process of considerable social differentiation, which became a source of internal tensions and ultimately eclipsed the ethnic divisions, which had already lost their edge².

However, the limited sources available allow us to appreciate the depth of the social polarisation and the conflicts it generated mostly based on their consequence, namely, the moral crisis. It appears that the lofty principles of Christian morality, officially upheld by the Church and the ruling elite, did not find embodiment in social life, which gave rise to a mass heretical movement³. The Bogomils' response to the Orthodoxy preached by the clergy, which consecrated and legitimised state power and the *status quo*, was a very extreme and uncompromising denial of any kind of authority and compulsion⁴. In Petar Mutafchiev's insightful words, the pessimistic mindset of the Bogomils found no use for any social or political ideal⁵.

² В. Златарски, *История на българската държава през средните векове*, vol. I/2 *Първо българско царство. От славянизацията на държавата до падането на Първото царство*, София 1971, pp. 521–525; D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London 1971, p. 118; R. Brown, *Byzantium and Bulgaria. A Comparative Study Across the Early Medieval Frontier*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1975, pp. 161–162; P. Pavlov, *Les lois agraires de la dynastie Macedonienne et la politique sociale du tsar bulgare Pierre (927–969). Selon le Traité contre les Bogomiles du prêtre Cosmas et quelques autres sources*, Bsl 56.1, 1995, pp. 103–105.

³ Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството*, София, 1993, pp. 67–68; Г. Литаврин, *Христианство в България в 927–1018 гг.*, [in:] *Христианство в странах Восточной, Юго-Восточной и Центральной Европы на пороге второго тысячелетия*, ed. Б.Н. Флоря, Москва 2002, p. 165.

⁴ Cosmas the Priest, p. 342. See also: D. Angelov, *Affermissement et fondements ideologiques du pouvoir royal en Bulgarie medieval*, BvŹ 3, 1971, p. 25; Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, p. 222; Д. Оболенски, *Богомилите. Студия върху балканското новоманихейство*, София 1998, p. 101.

⁵ П. Мутафчиев, *Поп Богомил и св. И. Рилски. Духът на отрицанието в нашата история*, ФП 6.2, 1934, pp. 6–7.

The need to protect the traditional Christian notion that any kind of authority is established and emanates from above from the attacks of the heretics prompted tsar Peter's contemporary Cosmas the Priest to postulate, in his damning *Sermon against the Heretics*, that *emperors and noblemen are appointed by God*⁶. As proof of that he quoted carefully selected passages from the Bible invoking Christians to worship and obey rulers and all kinds of masters⁷.

⁶ Cosmas the Priest, p. 342. Some authors tend to interpret this statement as a reflection of some peculiar Bulgarian attitude to authority. In Dimitar Angelov's (Д. Ангелов, *Общество и обществена мисъл в средновековна България (IX–XIV в.)*, София 1979, p. 191) words: *това е българският вариант за божествения произход на земната власт, възникнал в обстановката на изострени обществени противоречия и на все по-засилващото се господство на боярската аристокрация над зависимите селяни в средновековна България през средата и втората половина на X век. Като "богопоставен" презвитер Козма обявява не само "царя", т. е. върховния владетел, но и неговите най-близки сътрудници – боярите, които имали решаваща дума в управлението на държавата и под чиято непосредствена власт като едри земе-владелци и висши военни и граждански сановници се намирала значителна част от населението в страната* [this is the Bulgarian version of the divine origins of earthly power, which emerged in the context of bitter social conflicts and ever increasing dominance of the boyar aristocracy over the independent peasants in mediaeval Bulgaria of the second and third quarter of the 10th century. Presbyter Cosmas declares 'god-appointed' not only the 'emperor', i.e. the supreme ruler but also his closest associates, the boyars, who had the final say in the government of the country and under whose immediate control, as large landowners and senior military and civil dignitaries, was a significant part of the population of the country]. Cf. Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, p. 51; Г. Бакалов, *Византийският културен модел в идейно-политическата структура на Първата българска държава*, Ист 3, 1994, 4/5, p. 25. Here we concur in essence with Yurdan Trifonov's (Ю. Трифонов, *Беседата на Козма Пресвитера и нейният автор*, СБАН.КИФ 16, 1923, pp. 76–77) interpretation of this passage from the *Sermon*: *Козма, който в борбата си с еретиците е използвал главно посланията на Павла, стои на становището на последния, че всяка власт е от Бога, и думите му за царе и бояри не визират определен цар... Явно е, че Козма не говори за даден цар, а общо за "царе и бояри", т. е. за властта* [Cosmas, who in his fight with the heretics used mostly Paul's epistles, agreed with the latter that every authority is from God; therefore, his words about emperors and boyars make no reference to a particular king... Clearly, Cosmas does not refer to a particular emperor, but to "emperors and boyar", i.e. to power]. Cf. Д. Оболенски, *Богомилите...*, p. 78.

⁷ Prov 8, 15–18; Ps 19, 19; 20, 2–8; Matt 16, 17–19; Rom 13, 1–4; 1 Pet 2, 13–21; 1 Tim 2, 1–3; Tit 3, 1–2.

Similar thoughts, called forth by the atmosphere of spiritual dissention, are to be found also in some of the works of monk Peter, who was held in high esteem and enjoyed wide popularity in Bulgaria around the middle of the 10th century⁸. In his *Tale of Fasting and Prayer* he extols obedience to the rulers as the duty of the true Christian but is quick to set certain ethical requirements for the rulers themselves:

to fear rulers and serve them wholeheartedly, as we serve God. And they, the rulers, to be fair with their slaves, to live peacefully and quietly with everybody and be modest. And neither to be proud, nor to act superior, nor to shy from the spiritual and indispensable [things] in this world⁹.

In the *Sermon on Transitory Life*, monk Peter castigates secular rulers and the rich for their unrighteous lives. However, we should not forget that the author's criticism is not social but focuses on the moral improvement of believers, especially those on whom God has bestowed power and wisdom.

How could you not comprehend God's power and God's order, God's will, you earthly sovereigns and lords, noblemen and judges of men? Who gave you power and dignity, and wit, and wisdom, to know and to understand? You chase and rule, but you do not lead men to God!¹⁰

It should be noted that tsar Peter ruled in times of intensive institutional strengthening of the Bulgarian church, which had acquired a patriarchal status in 927, while the clergy (especially the ever growing ranks of the

⁸ Evidence of this popularity is the fact that one of Peter's discourses was included, with attribution to John Chrysostom, in the Longer Version of the *Zlatostruy* miscellany, compiled around the middle of the 10th century – Я. Милтенов, *Нови данни за "Поучението за спасението на душата"*, приписвано на черноризец Петър, СЛ 51, 2015, pp. 157–186.

⁹ Peter the Monk, p. 272.

¹⁰ Peter the Monk, p. 348.

monks) established itself as a numerous and influential social group within Bulgarian society¹¹.

It is also worth remembering that in the first half of the 10th century monasticism was favoured and treated with particular respect by the rulers of Byzantium and Bulgaria. A case in point is Romanos I Lekapenos, who trusted monks unreservedly and built numerous churches and monasteries. According to the testimony of *Continuation of Theophanes*, the monastery of St. Panteleimon, built by the tsar on the Asian coast of the Bosphoros, provided sustenance to eight hundred monks. The abbot of this monastic brotherhood was monk Sergios, a nephew of patriarch Photios' and the tsar's spiritual father, who the autocrat valued highly and always kept at his side as a role model¹². After he was dethroned/deposed and exiled by his own sons, the superannuated Romanos confessed his sins and received absolution and communion in the presence of three hundred monks, summoned from *all monasteries and lauras*, from Jerusalem and from Rome. The monk-tsar sent two *kentenaria* of gold to the hermits in Mount Olympus in Bithynia so that they prayed for the salvation of his soul and they spent two weeks fasting and praying for his sins to be forgiven¹³.

Tsar Peter also regarded monks and monasticism with profound admiration and awe. Mediaeval rumour had it that he went deep into the mountains where St. John of Rila dwelt; it is also known that the ruler exchanged letters with the hermit monk St. Paul the Younger, who lived in Mount Latros (now Beşparmak) in southwestern Asia Minor: *Furthermore, Peter, who ruled Bulgaria and frequently greeted him with courteous and humble letters, called upon him to pray for his salvation*¹⁴.

¹¹ В. Златарски, *История...*, pp. 523, 526; Д. Оболенски, *Богомилите...*, p. 80; Д. Ангелов, *Богомилството...*, pp. 64–67. According to Ivan Bilyarski (И. Билярски, *Небесните покровители: св. Цар Петър*, ИБ 2, 2001, pp. 32–44) interesting observation, under tsar Peter Bulgaria became a 'monastic empire', i.e. it was at that time that it transformed into a 'Byzantine type of country'.

¹² *Continuator of Theophanes*, pp. 433.12–434.17.

¹³ *Continuator of Theophanes*, pp. 438.20–440.14.

¹⁴ *Life of St. Paul the Younger*, pp. 71–72. See also: В. Златарски, *История...*, p. 540; И. Дуйчев, *Рилският светец...*, pp. 123–132.

In the same vein, the service for tsar Peter declared, *you loved monks and the servants of the holy church for their prayers and hoped for God's reward, in which you were not disappointed as it bore good fruit*¹⁵.

The currently available archaeological evidence adds a number of very significant details to the scant written testimony to the rise of monasticism in Bulgaria during Peter's reign. Doubtless, many monastic institutions, founded and protected by prince Boris I-Michael and his son tsar Symeon, continued to operate and develop in this period, such as the monastery at the Great Basilica in Pliska¹⁶, several monasteries in Preslav and its surroundings (the Palace Monastery, as well as those near the Round Church, in Patleyna, etc.)¹⁷, the Holy Mother of God Monastery near the village of Ravna (25 km southeast of Pliska)¹⁸, the monastery at Karaach Teke, near Varna¹⁹, St. Panteleimon Monastery, founded by St. Clement in Ohrid²⁰, St. Archangel Michael Monastery, founded by St. Naum near Lake Ohrid²¹, etc.

¹⁵ *Service of St. Tsar Peter*, p. 393.

¹⁶ П. Георгиев, С. Витлянов, *Архиепископията-манастир в Плиска*, София 2001; *ИБСА*, pp. 76–77.

¹⁷ Т. Тотев, *Дворцовият манастир в Преслав*, Шумен 1998; R. Kostova, *Bulgarian monasteries ninth to tenth centuries: interpreting the archaeological evidence*, ППРЕ 8, 2000, pp. 190–202; Т. Тотев, *Манастири в Плиска и Преславе в IX–X вв.*, ПКШ 7, 2004, pp. 347–365; *ИБСА*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁸ К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Скрипторият в Равненския манастир: още веднъж за украсата на старобългарските ръкописи от IX–X в.*, [in:] *Средновековна християнска Европа: Изток и Запад. Ценности, традиции, общуване*, ed. В. Гюзелев, А. Милтенова, София 2002, pp. 719–725; Р. Костова, К. Попконстантинов, *Манастирите на Покръстителя*, [in:] *Християнската култура в Средновековна България. Материали от национална научна конференция Шумен 2–4 май 2007 година по случай 1100 години от смъртта на св. Княз Борис-Михаил (ок. 835–907 г.)*, ed. П. Георгиев, Шумен 2008, pp. 176–177; *ИБСА*, pp. 80–81; К. Popkonstantinov, R. Kostova, *Architecture of Conversion: Provincial Monasteries in the 9th–10th c. Bulgaria*, ТГЭ 53, 2010, pp. 118–124.

¹⁹ К. Popkonstantinov, R. Kostova, *Architecture of Conversion...*, pp. 124–127; Р. Костова, К. Попконстантинов, *Манастирите на Покръстителя...*, pp. 177–178.

²⁰ R. Kostova, *St. Kliment of Ohrid and his monastery: some more archaeology of the written evidence*, SB 25, 2006, pp. 593–605; eadem, К. Попконстантинов, *Манастирите на Покръстителя...*, pp. 173–174; *ИБСА*, p. 78.

²¹ Р. Костова, К. Попконстантинов, *Манастирите на Покръстителя...*, pp. 174–175; *ИБСА*, p. 78.

Another monastery which had its heyday during tsar Peter's rule was the monastery near the village of Chernoglavtsi (25 km northwest of Pliska), among the ruins of which were found more than seventy inscriptions, three of which have been dated to 954, 959 and 962, respectively²². It was during the same time that the numerous rock monasteries to the south of Dristra, along the dried-up Kanadol River, flourished, as well as the rock hermitages near the village of Murfatlar, near present-day Constanța in Northern Dobrudzha²³.

The fragments of book cover metal ornaments, writing implements (*styluses*), graffiti, Greek and Slavic *abecedaria* and various Greek and Slavic (Glagolitic and Cyrillic) stone inscriptions allow us to regard the monasteries of Preslav, Pliska, Ravna and Karaach Teke as among the main cultural and educational centres in the country at the time before the conquest of the eastern Bulgarian territories by the armies of emperor John I Tzymiskes in 971.

The emergence of 'private' monasteries, founded by members of influential aristocratic families holding the highest positions of authority in the state and ecclesiastical administration was a particular development in the history of monasticism that occurred around the middle of the 10th century. A case in point here is the private residence near the church at Selishte in the Outer City of Preslav which was transformed into a monastery. George Synkellos became the patron of this monastery; the monk reinterred therein his mother's remains, as well as those of several other individuals (most probably relatives of his) in a chamber under the west portico of the church. At the northern wall of the same church yet another burial chamber was found, in which the remains of

²² Т. Балабанов, *Старобългарският манастир при с. Черноглавци (Предварително съобщение)*, ИИМШ 8, 1993, pp. 263–272; К. Попконстантинов, Г. Атанасов, *За два надписа от Х в. от манастира при Черноглавци, Шуменско*, Епо 2.4, 1994, pp. 105–110; Т. Балабанов, М. Тихова, *Надписът от 18 септември 6463 г. (954 г./955 г.) – от с. Черноглавци, Шуменско, България*, ПКШ 6, 2002, pp. 58–66; П. Георгиев, *Манастирът от Х в. при с. Черноглавци, Шуменска област*, ГСУ.НЦСВПИД 12, 2005, pp. 71–79.

²³ Г. Атанасов, *За хронологията и монашеската организация в скалните обители през Първото българско царство*, [in:] *Светогорска обител Зограф*, vol. III, ed. В. Гюзелев, София 1999, pp. 281–299.

Mostich, ichirgu-boila had been reinterred. Mostich had been the governor of the core territories of Bulgaria around Pliska and Preslav during the reign of tsar Symeon, who at the age of eighty abdicated from his office in order to become a monk²⁴.

The appearance of such a 'family' monastery in Preslav is hardly surprising in as far as the senior church officials were recruited from within the ranks of the aristocratic establishment. However, something else is of interest in this particular case; the inscription for the re-interment of George Synkellos' mother and his lead seals²⁵, as well as the inscription on Mostich's grave, are only in the Slavic language and written in the Cyrillic script. This is undoubtedly clear evidence of the wide spread of the Slavic language in state and ecclesiastical circles in the last two decades of Peter's rule, who at that time began to inscribe his lead seals with Slavic legends²⁶. It was also at that time that the practice of daily services in the Slavic language was fully introduced in the Bulgarian monasteries²⁷. All this allows us to assume that around the middle of the 10th century the dominant trend in Preslav was towards gradual emancipation of the Christian Bulgarian culture from the Byzantine one, a policy going back to prince Boris I-Michael and tsar Symeon.

Considering the above described cultural situation, it is hardly surprising that respect for the men of the cloth is a central topic in Cosmas the Priest's *Sermon*. The Old-Bulgarian writer stresses that *priests are always ordained by God* and they cannot be judged by the laity for their personal

²⁴ К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Манастир на чъргубия Мостич*, [in:] *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2007 г.*, София 2008, pp. 629–632; Р. Костова, *Патронаж и манастирска география в България през втората половина на IX и X в.*, [in:] *Laurea. In honorem Margaritae Vaklinova*, vol. I, ed. Б. Петрунова, А. Аладжов, Е. Василева, София 2009, pp. 201–202; К. Попконстантинов, Р. Костова, *Манастирът на Георги синкел български в Преслав: Историята на една аристократична фамилия от X в.*, Пр.Сб 7, 2013, pp. 44–63.

²⁵ И. Йорданов, *Корпус на средновековните български печати*, София 2016, pp. 175–177 (№ 326–334).

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 116–120 (№ 254–259a).

²⁷ М. Йовчева, *Старобългарският служебен миней*, София 2014, pp. 14–21.

sins as long as they preserve their orthodoxy²⁸. However, Cosmas goes further than simply assert the authority of the clergy; he sounds a warning to the secular rulers, too, stating that the Church stands above them and is not subject to their will. *So many mighty emperors, princes and wise men of old have tried to destroy God's Church, but have only ruined themselves, body and soul. And the Church stays inviolate now and forever*²⁹.

Obviously, towards the middle of the 10th century Old-Bulgarian literature already abounded in translated texts postulating the supremacy of spiritual authority over secular power. However, the earliest Preslav writers rarely touched upon this topic in their writings³⁰; the ruler's standing in the first decades after the conversion to Christianity was too high

²⁸ Cosmas the Priest, p. 314.

²⁹ Cosmas the Priest, p. 318. Here, and elsewhere, Cosmas paraphrases a passage from the Pseudo-Chrysostom's *Sermo de pseudoprophetis* (PG, vol. LIX, col. 560): Ю. Трифонов, *Беседама...*, pp. 33–34; Cosmas le prêtre, *Le traité contre les bogomiles*, transl., ed. H.-Ch. Puech, A. Vaillant, Paris 1945, pp. 47–52; Ю. Бегунов, *Козма Пресвитер в славянских литературах*, София 1973, pp. 227–229. It has been established that this apocalyptic work was written by an anonymous Antiochene author around the middle of the 7th and the middle of the 8th centuries: A. Whealey, "Sermo de pseudoprophetis" of Pseudo-John Chrysostom: *A Homily from Antioch under Early Islamic Rule*, B 69, 1999, pp. 178–186. The Old-Bulgarian translation of the text was included as *Discourse 24* in the longer version of the *Zlatostruy* collection – F. Thomson, *Chrysostomica Palaeoslavica. A Preliminary Study of the Sources of the Chrysorrhoeas (Zlatostruy) Collection*, Сут 6, 1982, p. 10; *Иоанн Златоуст в древнерусской и южнославянской письменности XI–XVI веков. Каталог гомилий*, ed. Е. Гранстрем, О. Творогов, А. Валевичус, Санкт-Петербург 1998, pp. 22–23 (№ 33); Я. Милтенов, *Златоструй: старобългарски хомилетичен свод, създаден по инициативата на българския цар Симеон. Текстологично и извороведско изследване*, София 2013, p. 42; А. Димитрова, *Псевдо-Златоустовото слово "За лъжепророците" в "Беседа против богомилите" – цитиране или нов превод?*, KWSS 9, 2014, pp. 23–32; eadem, *Златоструят в преводаческата дейност на старобългарските книжовници*, София 2016, pp. 218–223 (The author believes that Cosmas used directly the Greek text of the discourse, rather than the translation found in the *Zlatostruy*).

³⁰ Quite telling in that respect is the fact that, in his *Hexameron*, John the Exarch touches only once on the subject of the interplay between the state and the church, in the context of the biblical story of King Uzziah (2 Chron 26, 16–23), in order to illustrate the need for strict separation of the imperial and the ecclesiastical dignity: John the Exarch, *Hexameron*, vol. II, pp. 65–69 (43 b–d).

and the Bulgarian church was too young and weak to aspire to a totally independent role in social life.

The critical attitude to secular rulers found a clear expression in the *Testament* of St. John of Rila, the first Bulgarian hermit. This unique record of the ideological attitudes of Bulgarian monkhood in the first half of the 10th century propounds the idea that monks serve the King in Heaven and not earthly masters:

Nor look to be recognized and beloved by earthly kings and princes,
nor put your hope in them, leaving the heavenly King, with whom you
enlisted to be soldiers and *wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against
the ruler of the darkness of this world* (Eph 6, 12)³¹.

The author of the *Testament* did not hesitate to set even his relations with tsar Peter within the context of his negative attitude to secular authority, a motif developed further in a number of hagiographic works devoted to the saint³²:

³¹ *Testament of John of Rila*, p. 442.103–107 (transl. I. Iliev, p. 131; another translation: K. Petkov, *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century. The Records of a Bygone Culture*, Leiden 2008, p. 113). In favour of the authenticity of the *Testament*: I. Dujičev, *La réforme monastique en Bulgarie au X^e siècle*, [in:] *Études de civilisation médiévale*, Poitiers 1974, pp. 255–264; B. Гюзелев, “Велико светило за целия свят” (Св. Иван Рилски в измеренията на своето време), [in:] *Светогорска...*, pp. 13–24; *Testament of John of Rila*, transl. I. Iliev, [in:] *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders’ Typika and Testaments*, vol. I, ed. J. Thomas, A. Hero, Washington 2000, p. 127; Г. Литаврин, *Христианство в България...*, p. 139. However, the text is only familiar from much later copies, which raises serious doubts about its authenticity – А. Турелов, Б. Флоря, *Християнска литература у славян в середине X – середине XI в. и межславянские культурные связи*, [in:] *Христианство в странах Восточной, Юго-Восточной и Центральной Европы на пороге второго тысячелетия*, ed. Б.Н. Флоря, Москва 2002, p. 414.

³² Г. Данчев, *Близост и различия в епизода за неосъществената среща между св. Иван Рилски и цар Петър в житията на Рилския светец*, ИИМК 5, 1993, София 1998, pp. 71–76; X. Трендафилов, *Диалогът Иван Рилски – цар Петър като историософски факт*, ПКШ 4, 1999, pp. 20–31; Г. Подскалски, *Средновековна теолошка књижевност у Бугарској и Србији (865–1459)*, Београд 2010, p. 133; Б. Николова, *Средновековните византийски и български владетели, кралете*

Now again, keep yourselves away from the avaricious snake, *for the love of money is the root of all evil* (1 Tim 6, 10), according to the apostle, who calls it a second idolatry. Because for the hermit wealth consists not in silver and gold, but in perfect poverty, in the denial of his personal will, and in lofty humbleness. [...] For in the beginning, when I came to this wilderness, the sly enemy attempted to allure me, for the pious king sent to me a lot of gold. For the sake of God I refused to see him, for I understood that it was a perfidy of the devil. I did not accept it, but returned it to those who sent it³³.

* * *

Faced from the very beginning of his reign with multiple external and internal challenges, tsar Peter placed at the heart of his ruler's propaganda the idea of his perfect piety and of himself as the supreme protector of the Bulgarian church and defender of the faith. Evidence of the fact that around the middle of the 10th century the idea of the ruler's piety had grown in scale to become an official political programme are the seals on which the images of tsar Peter and tsartisa Maria-Irene are accompanied by the legend † Πέτρος βασιλεὺς εὐσεβής (*Peter a pious emperor*)³⁴.

и князете на Средна и Западна Европа в съдбата на светците от българския пантеон, ИП 67.5/6, 2011, p. 138; I. B i l i a r s k y, *Le tsar sur la montagne*, [in:] *Histoire, mémoire et dévotion. Regards croisés sur la construction des identités dans le monde orthodoxe aux époques byzantine et post-byzantine*, ed. R. P ä u n, Seyssel 2016, pp. 53–71.

³³ *Testament of John of Rila*, pp. 441.76 – 442.95 (transl. I. I l i e v, p. 130).

³⁴ И. Й о р д а н о в, *Корпус на средновековните български печати...*, pp. 95–110 (edition of 88 seals of this class). One more seal was published recently: Ж. А л а д ж о в, *Печат на цар Петър от разкопките на обект "Улица" в Преслав*, НСЕ 13, 2017, pp. 307–310. See also: И. Й о р д а н о в, *Печатите на преславските владетели (893–971)*, София 1993, pp. 14–15, 31–33; i d e m, *Възникване и утвърждаване на царската институция в средновековна България. (Според данните на владетелските печати)*, [in:] *Етническият проблем и националният въпрос на българите*, Пловдив 1994, p. 110; J. S h e p a r d, *A marriage too far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria*, [in:] *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium*, ed. A. D a v i d s, Cambridge 1995, pp. 142–146 (reprinted in: i d e m, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, Farnham 2011, V); И. Й о р д а н о в,

No doubt this ‘political piety’ represented a peculiar continuation and evolution of the religious and political beliefs of Boris I-Michael and of the tsar-philosopher ideal cultivated at the court of Symeon I³⁵.

It should be noted that it was precisely in the 930s–960s that the targeted efforts of the Bulgarian ruling circles created the conditions for the establishment and the wide dissemination of the cult of prince Boris I-Michael³⁶.

Корпус на печатите на средновековна България, София 2001, pp. 60–63. It seems likely that Leontios Deacon (p. 78.11) made an implicit reference to the title of interest here, when he wrote of Peter as *ἄνδρα θεοφιλῆ καὶ σεβάσιμον* (a God-loving and pious man). No doubt, the title *pious emperor* had a profound political and religious significance and should not be described as *inconsequential* (...) *honorary rather than real* – V. Beševliev, *Die Kaiseridee bei den Protobulgaren*, *Bvž* 3, 1971, p. 92; *idem*, *Първобългарски надписи*, София 1992, p. 81.

³⁵ А. Николов, *Старобългарският превод на “Изложение на поучителни глави към император Юстиниан” от дякон Агапит и развитието на идеята за достойнството на българския владетел в края на IX – началото на X в.*, *Pbg* 24.3, 2000, pp. 81–82.

³⁶ The evidence of the existence of this cult is indirect; there are no extant *vitas* of Boris-Michael, nor services, canons and panegyrics for him and his name is not to be found in any *Menaion* or *Synaxarion*. However, there are sufficient grounds to argue that the cult emerged soon after 907, but later declined for reasons on which there is no need to dwell here: Н. Георгиева, *Към въпроса за почитанието на княз Борис I като светец*, *КМС* 8 1991, pp. 178–188; Д. Чешмеджиев, *Към въпроса за култа на княз Борис-Михаил в средновековна България*, *ИП* 55.3/ 4, 1999, pp. 158–176 (detailed review of primary sources and research); А. Турилов, *Борис*, [in:] *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. VI, Москва 2003, p. 31; А. Турилов, *Slavica Cyrillomethodiana. Источниковоедение истории и культуры южных славян и Древней Руси. Межславянские культурные связи эпохи средневековья*, Москва 2010, pp. 124–125; Г. Подскалски, *Средновековна теолошка...*, p. 79; А. Nikolov, *Making a new basileus: the case of Symeon of Bulgaria (893–927) reconsidered*, [in:] *Rome, Constantinople and Newly Converted Europe. Archeological and Historical Evidence*, vol. I, ed. M. Salamon et al., Kraków–Leipzig–Rzeszów–Warszawa 2012, pp. 101–108. As noted above, Ivan Bilyarski disputes the existence of a mediaeval cult of Boris-Michael: И. Биларски, *Небесните покровители...*, p. 33; I. Biliarsky, *St. Peter (927–969), Tsar of the Bulgarians*, [in:] *State and Church: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium*, ed. V. Gjuzelev, K. Petkov, Sofia 2011, p. 175. To the research reviewed in D. Cheshmedzhiev’s article, could be added: D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth...*, pp. 308–309, 313; *idem*, *Nationalism in Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, *TRHS*, 5th series, 22, 1972, p. 6; Б. Флоря, *Формирование государственности и зарождение политической мысли у славянских народов*, [in:] *Очерки*

In this context, it should be remembered that at least two events related to the personality of Boris I-Michael found their place among the holidays celebrated by the Bulgarian church around the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century; on May 28th it commemorated *the victory of the Bulgarian prince Michael, when a revolt broke out against him on account of the conversion* and on April 28th, *the consecration of Apostle Peter's church among the Bulgarians*³⁷. The former is a reference to the anti-Christian revolt in Bulgaria in the spring of 866, which was to a large extent due to the insensitive behaviour of the Byzantine bishops and priests who settled in the country; the latter most probably refers to the consecration of the Great Basilica in the Outer City of the Bulgarian capital of Pliska, the most spectacular church building in early mediaeval Bulgaria, whose construction began under the auspices of the legates of Nicholas I and Hadrian II.

In essence, these church holidays, introduced in the first decades after the conversion, commemorated the short-lived affiliation of Bulgaria to the Roman Church in 866–870 and must have played a crucial role in the canonisation of Boris I-Michael soon after his death on May 2nd, 907. Moreover, in the eyes of his contemporaries, the Christianiser of the Bulgarians, who became known for his acumen and dexterity in manoeuvring between Constantinople and Rome, symbolised the idea of closeness and peace between the Christian peoples of Byzantium and Bulgaria³⁸. His veneration as a saint apparently helped strengthen the ruling dynasty

истории и культуры славян, В.К. Волков, Москва 1996, pp. 265–266. An attempt at systematising the types of sainted rulers in Eastern and Northern Europe in the 9th–12th centuries can be found in: K. G ó r s k i, *La naissance des états et le "roi-saint". Problème de de l'idéologie féodale*, [in:] *L'Europe aux IX^e–XI^e siècles. Aux origines des états nationaux*, ed. A. G i e y s z t o r, T. M a n t e u f f e l, Varsovie 1968, pp. 425–432 (unfortunately, the author does not include the available evidence of the cults of Boris I-Michael and Peter).

³⁷ А. Т у р и л о в, *Slavica Cyrillomethodiana...*, p. 120.

³⁸ About Boris see: J. S h e p a r d, *Slavs and Bulgars*, [in:] *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, c. 700 – 900, ed. R. M c K i t t e r i c k, Cambridge 1995, pp. 228–248 [= idem, *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, Farnham 2011, II]; L. S i m e o n o v a, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross. Photios, Bulgaria and the Паpacy, 860s–880s*, Amsterdam 1998; И. Б о ж и л о в, В. Г ю з е л е в, *История на средновековна България (VII–XIV в.)*, София 1999, pp. 169–195; Г. П о д с к а л с к и, *Средновековна теолошка...*, pp. 65–79.

and nourished the traditional reverence of Bulgarians for the members of their ruling family.

All this allows us to conclude that it was by no means a coincidence that tsar Peter named his first son and heir Boris; what we have here is clear evidence of the aspirations of this ruler to legitimise himself as someone continuing the political traditions whose foundations were laid by his grand-father, Boris I-Michael. The same trend can also be observed in the church service for tsar Peter, which meaningfully refers to the deceased ruler as *emulator of the good deeds of the Archangel Michael*³⁹.

Indirect evidence of the political climate and the ruler's propaganda in Preslav during the period under consideration can be found in the epistle of patriarch Theophylaktos of Constantinople (933–956) addressed to the *emperor of Bulgaria* Peter. Referring to his family ties with the Bulgarian sovereign, the patriarch extols his *faithful and God-loving soul* and portrays his correspondent as an incarnation of the ideal of the God-guided Christ-loving ruler⁴⁰, very similar to the description given in patriarch Photios' epistle to Boris I-Michael almost a century earlier.

Theophylaktos observes that the tsar:

considers not only what is good for himself but shields protectively every subject of his, counsels what is best and salvatory. And what could be better or more salvatory than the true and sincere faith, as well as the sound understanding of the Divine, through which with sound conscience we worship the only most all-pure and most holy God? Because this constitutes the basis of our salvation. Not only do you honour that as one of the most important things and always apply it with every effort, but you also constantly, every day and every hour, show it and guide to it every subject⁴¹.

³⁹ *Service of St. Tsar Peter*, p. 392.

⁴⁰ *Letter of the Patriarch Theophylaktos to Tsar Peter*, p. 312.28–29. See also: Г. Подскалки, *Средновековна теолошка...*, p. 163.

⁴¹ *Letter of the Patriarch Theophylaktos to Tsar Peter*, p. 311.6–14.

Of particular interest is the concluding part of the epistle, where patriarch Theophylaktos expresses his conviction that tsar Peter will personally strengthen his subjects' piety and eradicate the Bogomil heresy.

But you, God-lover, be my herald of piety, teacher of Orthodoxy (ὁρθο-δοξίας διδάσκαλος), corrector or persecutor and destroyer of the heretic delusion and the strongest and the most excellent in everything that is best, about which I will boast no less than about our kinship and the friendship⁴².

The idea of the active role of the pious tsar Peter as a stalwart and propagator ('teacher') of Orthodoxy among his subjects, reflected in patriarch Theophylaktos' epistle, could be traced in some records which suggest that the Bulgarian ruler was not averse to certain literary pursuits. Thus, a brief homily dealing with moral issues was published under his name in two Russian collections from the 16th century, *Peter emperor said: your mouth must not be the gateway of evil talk, nor must your tongue utter evil. Your throat must not be the highway of sinful speech*⁴³. Also associated with tsar Peter's name is the compilation of a paschal table, published by Yakov Kraykov in his *Book for Various Occasions* (Venice, 1572), containing the clarification, *This text found I, Jacob, in the books of Peter, emperor of the Bulgarians, who had his capital in the city of Great Preslav and died in the great Rome*⁴⁴.

⁴² *Letter of the Patriarch Theophylaktos to Tsar Peter*, p. 315.131–134.

⁴³ Р. Павлова, *Петър Черноризец – старобългарски писател от Х в.*, София 1994, p. 28; П. Димитров, *Петър Черноризец. Очерци по старобългарска литература през следсимеоновата епоха*, Шумен 1995, p. 41.

⁴⁴ J. Jerkov-Karaldo, *Le "Različnie potrebi" di Jakov di Sofia alla luce di un esemplare complete*, BBg 6, 1980, p. 230; Р. Павлова, *Петър Черноризец...*, p. 29; А. Николов, *Политическа мисъл в ранносредновековна България (средата на IX – края на X век)*, София 2006, p. 253. It remains unclear whether these paschal tables were attributed to tsar Peter by the book's publisher, Yakov Kraykov, or he himself copied them from an older manuscript, similar to the prayer book (from the 17th c.?) seen by Pencho R. Slaveykov, which contained a paschal table bearing the heading, *тази пасхалия състави цар Петър, който умря в Рим* [this paschal table compiled tsar Peter, who died in Rome] – П. Р. Славейков, *Писма*, СХУНК 20, 1904, p. 38; Б. Ангелов, *Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература*, vol. I, София

As could be seen, the above records do not reveal clearly the nature of tsar Peter's literary pursuits⁴⁵. However, contemporary Slavistics has significantly enriched the traditional understanding of the development

1959, p. 55. As regards the legend about the death of tsar Peter in Rome, it was recorded as early as the second half of the 11th century in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*: V. Тапкова-Zaimova, A. Миленова, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria*, Sofia 2011, p. 293; *Peter, the king of Bulgaria, a righteous man, left the kingdom and fled westwards to Rome and ended his life there*. See also: Д. Чешмеджиев, *Няколко бележки за култа към цар Петър I (927–965)*, [in:] *Християнската традиция и царската институция в българската култура*, ed. В. Бонева, Шумен 2003, pp. 29–30, 34–35; Г. Подскалки, *Средновековна теолошка...*, pp. 77, 239. Ivan Bilyarski cautiously speculates that the note on Peter's death in Rome, included in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, could be a later interpolation, based on Kraykov's book of 1572 (И. Биларски, *Сказание на Исая пророка и формирането на политическата идеология на ранносредновековна България*, София 2011, pp. 13–14, 172–173; idem, *The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah. The Destiny and Meanings of an Apocryphal Text*, Leiden–Boston 2013, pp. 9–10, 57). For a skeptical view on Bilyarski's hypothesis see: М. Цибранска-Костова, *Сборникът "Различни потреби" на Яков Крайков между Венеция и Балканите през XVI век*, София 2012, pp. 114–115. Recently, Hristo Trendafilov has argued that the compiler of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* lived and worked at the beginning of the 17th century and used Yakov Kraykov's book (Х. Трендафилов, *Българският апокрифен летопис и Мавро Орбини*, Шумен 2016, p. 42). However, this theory is invalidated by the fact that an Ottoman chronicle of the beginning of the 16th century includes an abridged and partially edited Turkish translation of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*: D. Rusev, *Eine untypische Abweichung in der osmanischen Geschichtsschreibung: Die Geschichte der bulgarischen Herrscher in Tevârih-i âl-i 'Osmân von Kemâlpâşazâde. Wissenschaftliche Hausarbeit zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Master of Arts der Universität Hamburg*, Hamburg 2016; D. Rusev, *Kemâlpâşazâde's History of Medieval Bulgaria: A 16th-century Ottoman rendering of the Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle (Tale of the Prophet Isaiah)*, [in:] *Testis temporum et laudator historiae. Сборник в памет на проф. Иван Божилов* (in press). However, the reference to Peter's death in Rome is missing from the Turkish translation of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*; therefore, the question of the origin and interpretation of this motif remains unresolved.

⁴⁵ By and large, I share the doubts raised in historiography about equating the Old-Bulgarian writer monk Peter with tsar Peter: Й. Андриев, *Кем был Черноризец Петър?*, BBg 6, 1980, pp. 51–56. A detailed overview of the discussion on this issue is given by Rumyana Pavlova, who does not however commit herself to a particular view: Р. Павлова, *Петър Черноризец...*, pp. 9–30. An interesting hypothesis is that Cosma's *Sermon* was written *не без участието на цар Петър* [not without the involvement of emperor Peter] – П. Павлов, *Две бележки към "Беседа на недостойния презвитер Козма срещу новопоявилата се ерес на богомилите"*, Пр.Сб 4, 1993, p. 226.

of Old-Bulgarian literature in the decades after Symeon I's death, which allows us to analyse here in greater detail the literary activities of the Preslav writers, whose texts largely reflect the political and cultural trends in the Peter's court.

The starting point of our analysis of the activities of the Bulgarian writers in the 930s–960s is the famous *Izbornik of 1076*. As research in the past few decades has demonstrated, this Russian manuscript is an almost exact copy of an Old-Bulgarian collection of the 10th century, conventionally referred to as the *Izbornik of the sinful John*, which was compiled on the basis of a *Princely Izbornik*, itself based on an even earlier collection of texts, the so-called *Menaion Izbornik*. Recently, William Veder described these three books as variations of the same collection, intended to support the upbringing of Bulgarian heirs to the throne (καναρτικείνοι) and summed up his observations as follows:

The book's purpose must have limited its dissemination to a single copy per generation. If the hypothesis is correct, the *Menaion Izbornik* must have been composed around 900 for the kanartikeinoi Michael and Peter, the *Princely Miscellany*, around 930 for the kanartikeinos Boris and the *Sinful John's Izbornik*, around 960 for emperor Boris II's heir. No such internal dynastic documents of imperial pedagogy are known to exist in other European mediaeval cultures.⁴⁶

Here we would analyse in greater detail some of the texts and their renditions in the different versions of the *Izbornik* since these reflect, although in an abbreviated form and frequently with significant editorial alterations, the content of a number of Old-Bulgarian translations kept in the palace library in Preslav and in the metropolitan monasteries.

⁴⁶ *КЪНАЖИНИ ИЗБОРНИКЪТ за възпитание на канартикина*, ed. У. Ф е д е р, vol. I, Велико Търново 2008, p. 12. See also: W. V e d e r, *The "Izbornik of John the Sinner": a Compilation from Compilations*, ПК 8, 1983, pp. 15–33; i d e m, *The Izbornik of 1076*, [in:] *The Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus'*, transl. i d e m, introd. i d e m, A. T u r i l o v, Cambridge, Mass. 1994, pp. XXIII–XL; W. V e d e r, *Two Hundred Years of Misguided Philological Research*, RS 47, 1994, p. 107; i d e m, *Der bulgarische Ursprung des Izbornik von 1076*, КМС 10, 1995, pp. 82–87.

Along with the biblical Book of Sirach, the *Izbornik of 1076* comprises also fragments from John Climacus' *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, the *Egyptian Patericon*, emperor Symeon's *Miscellany* (the *Izbornik of 1073*) and *Zlatostruy* (a collection of John Chrysostom's homilies translated into Old Bulgarian by the orders of tsar Symeon). Furthermore, Dmitriy Bulanin's research indicates that the anonymous compiler of the original *Menaion Izbornik* had at his disposal and put together in a single tome the complete Old-Bulgarian translations of a number of Greek homiletic texts: *Paragon of the Souls* by emperor Leo VI the Wise (with a misleading attribution of authorship to Maximos the Confessor), *Exposition of Paraenetic Chapters Addressed to emperor Justinian* by Deacon Agapetos, the *Encheiridion* by the Stoic philosopher Epictetus (in a Christianised version by Nilus of Ancyra), fragments of *Chapters on Love* by Maximos the Confessor, as well as some other patristic authors' writings⁴⁷.

Thus, nowadays, it could be considered proven that the appearance of the *Izbornik of 1076*, regarded by some researchers as 'an original example of Old-Russian literature', whose texts are indirectly related to the Bulgarian originals⁴⁸, represents simply the final link in a long chain of transformations undergone by a series of writings, either translated or compiled in the Preslav literary centre between the end of the 9th century and the year 971. As William Veder rightly observed, with the ongoing acculturation of Bulgarian society in the decades after its conversion to Christianity, the transition from translation to active imitation required

⁴⁷ Д. Бу л а н и н, *Неизвестный источник Изборника 1076 г.*, ТОДРА 44, 1990, pp. 161–178; i d e m, *Античные традиции в древнерусской литературе XI–XVI вв.*, München 1991, pp. 96–137; i d e m, *Житие Павла Фивейского – болгарский перевод X в.*, КМС 10, 1995, pp. 10–11; i d e m, *Текстологические и библиографические арабески. VII. "Наставление" Агапита: несколько эпизодов из истории славянской рецепции*, [in:] *Каталог памятников древнерусской письменности XI–XIV вв. (Рукописные книги)*, ed. i d e m, Санкт-Петербург 2014, pp. 537–538; i d e m, "Кормчая книга" и "Книга Кормчий" (Семантика названий двух древнерусских книг), РЛН, 2017.2, pp. 10–14. Dmitriy Bulanin's conclusions have been espoused by W. V e d e r, *The Izbornik of 1076*..., pp. XXXIII–XXXVIII.

⁴⁸ Н. М е щ е р с к и й, *Взаимоотношения Изборника 1073 г. с Изборником 1076 г.*, [in:] *Изборник Святослава 1073 г. Сборник статей*, ed. Б.А. Р ы б а к о в, Москва 1977, pp. 91–92, 99.

time; thus the emergence of such an extensive exhortative compilation as the Old-Bulgarian *Izbornik* (copied with minor alterations and additions in Kiev in 1076) should be linked to the work of the writers from the literary centre in the Bulgarian capital at the time of tsar Peter⁴⁹.

The size of the *Izbornik* makes any detailed exploration of its content within the context of this article impossible⁵⁰. Therefore, the present analysis will be limited to three of the works there, which demonstrate clearly how the compilers of the miscellany used the older texts and adapted them to serve the spiritual needs of their contemporaries.

Let us turn our attention first to an anonymous work entitled *Admonition to the rich*⁵¹. The copy in the *Izbornik of 1076* represents it as a compilation of seventeen fragments of the complete Old-Bulgarian translation of the *Exposition* by Deacon Agapetos⁵², a fragment of the Old-Bulgarian translation of the Christianised version of the *Encheiridion* by Epictetus⁵³ and two fragments from the Old-Bulgarian translation of the *Chapters on Love* by Maximos the Confessor⁵⁴.

Although the oldest of all still extant copies, the copy of the *Admonition* included in the *Izbornik of 1076* can by no means be considered the most complete or the closest to the original. A comparison with two Serbian copies from the end of the 14th century and a Russian one from the 16th century (from the so-called *Meletskiy Miscellany*)⁵⁵

⁴⁹ W. V e d e r, *The Izbornik of 1076...*, pp. XXXIX–XL.

⁵⁰ No serious attempt has been made in contemporary historiography at a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the ideas contained in the *Izbornik of 1076*. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning Stanislav Bondar's stimulating monograph, which however disregards Veder's research and passes over the sources of the texts included in the *Izbornik*: С. Б о н д а р ь, *Философско-мировоззренческое содержание "Изборников" 1073–1076 г.*, Киев 1990.

⁵¹ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. М о л д о в а н et al., f. 24v–28v.

⁵² Chapters (according to their numbering in the Greek text) 5, 8, 12, 19, 28, 32, 42, 25, 47, 48, 53, 64, 68, 23, 41, 14, 56.

⁵³ Fragment of Ch. 28.

⁵⁴ Fragments of Ch. 58 and 60 of the first centuria.

⁵⁵ SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library – Sofia, № 1037, f. 230v – 233r (Serbian *Paterikon* from the end of the 14th century) – S; National Library of Serbia – Belgrade, Pc 26, f. 354r – 356r (Serbian collection of the third quarter of the 14th century) – B;

reveals that the original, which is the basis of this compilation, must have also included some other fragments of Agapetos' *Exposition*⁵⁶,

Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine – Kiev, Мел. м./п. 119, f. 111v–113r (Russian collection of the 16th century) – *M*. The text of *S* and *M* was published alongside the text of the copy of the *Izbornik of 1076* in: Д. Буланин, *Неизвестный источник...*, pp. 171–178. Recently, *S* was published again by Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić, who was clearly not aware of Bulanin's publication: С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Rex imago Dei: о српској преради Агепитовог владарског огледала*, [in:] *Трећа југословенска конференција византолога, Крушевац 10–13 мај 2000*, ed. Л. Максимовић, Н. Радосевић, Е. Радловић, Београд–Крушевац, 2002, pp. 146–147. See also: Б. Флоря, А. Турилов, *Общественная мысль Сербии конца XII–XIII вв. (Власть и общество в представлениях сербских книжников)*, [in:] *Власть и общество в литературных текстах Древней Руси и других славянских стран (XII–XIII вв.)*, ed. Б. Флоря, Москва 2012, pp. 132–133. The text of *B* has not been published; it is known to me from a microfilm copy held at St Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia. *S* and *B* are practically identical, with *B* revealing some minor gaps, most probably due to the scribe's negligence. Description of the National Library of Serbia, Рс 26: Л. Штаваньин-Ђорђевић, М. Грозановић-Пајић, Л. Цернић, *Опис ћирилских рукописа Народне библиотеке Србије*, vol. I, Београд 1986, pp. 45–52. The compilers of the inventory note that the manuscript was bought by Vladimir Vuksan and added to the inventory of the National Library of Serbia in 1949. What is of interest is whether there is a connection between this manuscript and the one used by M. Petrovskiy in 1865 in the publication of a homily attributed to Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev, whose title is practically identical with that of the copy of the work in the inventory of the NLS – Рс 26, f. 91. According to the publisher's note, this is a Serbian manuscript, written on rag paper from the 14th–15th century, which at that time was in the possession of Konstantin D. Petkovich, the Russian consul in Dubrovnik (Н. Никольский, *Материалы для повременного списка русских писателей и их сочинений (X – XI в.)*, Санкт-Петербург 1906, pp. 92–94; М. Сперанский, *Из истории русско-славянских литературных связей*, Москва 1960, pp. 16–19). Recently, the manuscript once owned by Petkovich was found by Anatolii Turilov in the manuscript collection of the Library of the Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg, catalogued under reference БАН, Тек. пост. 13 (А. Турилов, *Памятники древнерусской литературы и письменности у южных славян в XII–XIV вв. (проблемы и перспективы изучения)*, [in:] *Славянские литературы. XI Международный съезд славистов. Братислава, сентябрь 1993 года. Доклады российской делегации*, Москва 1993, p. 32).

⁵⁶ The entire Ch. 24 (*S*, *B*) and Ch. 71 (*S*, *B*); fragments of Ch. 38 (*S*, *B*), Ch. 39 (*S*, *B*, *M*), and Ch. 67 (*S*, *B*). Furthermore, in *S* and *B* Ch. 23 features in its entirety, and not just as a fragment, as is the case in the *Izbornik of 1076* and *M*.

the Christianised version of the *Encheiridion*⁵⁷ and the *Chapters on Love*⁵⁸.

The aim of the compiler was to inculcate into ‘the rich’ a set of moral and ethical norms, by which they should be guided in their actions. The text begins with a reminder that a man on whom God has bestowed his grace must pay back his debt. What follows are several thematic motifs which are instrumental in constructing the ideal image of ‘the rich’: compassion for those ‘suffering in misery’ and benefaction; avoiding sycophants and recognising true friends; fair dispensation of justice; merciful treatment of the ‘slaves’; refraining from ‘inappropriate desires’; personal humility and avoiding the pride that goes with ‘high rank’.

The question to whom the compilation under consideration here was addressed raises a number of issues. As could be seen, the titles of the text according to the copies included in the *Izbornik of 1076* and in the *Meletskiy Miscellany* feature the rather general and apparently lacking specific socio-political meaning term ‘rich’⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ A fragment of Ch. 40 features in *S* and *B*; following the work under consideration, the same two copies feature Ch. 69 of the *Encheiridion*, under the title *Слово подвижное к Богу*.

⁵⁸ First centuria, Ch. 24 and 49 (*S*, *B*).

⁵⁹ Of interest is the way in which the Byzantine military commander and writer of the second half of the 11th century, Kekaumenos interprets and derives the etymology of the Slavic word for *rich*: *Help the needy in every way, because the rich man is god to the poor one, as he does good to him. For that reason the Bulgarians call a rich person βoγάτοn, which means ‘God-like’* – Kekaumenos, p. 120.23–26; И. Дуйчев, *Проучвания върху средновековната българска история и култура*, София 1981, pp. 197–198. Kekaumenos’ comments on the perception of the word ‘rich’ in the 11th century are significant as, on his mother’s side, he was the grandson of Samuil’s military commander Demetrios Polemarchos and was fluent in Bulgarian – Kekaumenos, p. 174.20–24; С. Пириватрич, *Самуиловата държава. Обхват и характер*, София 2000, pp. 152–153; G. Nikolov, *The Bulgarian aristocracy in the war against the Byzantine Empire (971–1019)*, [in:] *Byzantium and East Central Europe*, ed. G. Prinz ing, M. Salamon, P. Stephenson, Kraków 2001, pp. 144–145. It should also be noted that, in his work, Kekaumenos (p. 120.22–32) advances the view that there exists a kind of a tripartite social structure: the *rich* (πλούσιοι) – people who can perform juridical (and in a broader sense, administrative and social) functions, have the right to express their opinions freely and are obliged to do charity for the benefit of the poor;

Cosmas, who in his *Sermon against the Heretics* paints the picture of the social stratification of Bulgarian society around the middle and the second half of the 10th century, portrays 'the rich' in the context of the heretical attacks against them. The way this Old-Bulgarian writer sees them, they are, by and large, those invested with power in this country, the tsar, the elders and the noblemen⁶⁰. Furthermore, it is 'the rich' who are the carriers of literacy and have access to 'the books' (primarily the Bible, 'the divine books', but also 'the writings of the holy men', i.e. the Church Fathers)⁶¹. Stressing that *wealth is not an evil if we manage it well*⁶², the writer adds, *if you are rich, you could save yourself through good deeds and prayer, and by reading often the holy books and do what they command*⁶³.

It is significant that the section titled *On the Rich* in Cosmas' work is almost entirely devoted to a discussion on the need to disseminate and get to know the books in the context of the wealthy Bulgarians' treatment and attitude of them⁶⁴. According to the writer, in their 'big-headedness' they hide 'the divine words' from the sight of their brethren, not allowing 'God's word' to be copied and read, letting the books to be eaten by mould and worms. *No, man, do not hide God's words from those who want to read and copy them, but rejoice that your brethren will save themselves through them. Because they were not written to hide them in our heart or home*⁶⁵. The rich should realise their duty to disseminate the books, because departures from the true faith are caused *by not reading the books and by the indolence of priests*⁶⁶.

Similar views are voiced in what amounts to a brief foreword to the *Izbornik*, *The Homily of a Certain Monk on Reading Scripture*⁶⁷. The

the *middling* (μέσοι) – not granted the right to voice their opinions and unable to do charitable work, but still allowed to help the poor; and the *inferior* (οἱ κάτω).

⁶⁰ Cosmas the Priest, p. 342.

⁶¹ On this distinction: Cosmas the Priest, p. 310.

⁶² Cosmas the Priest, p. 356.

⁶³ Cosmas the Priest, p. 357.

⁶⁴ Cosmas the Priest, pp. 384–387.

⁶⁵ Cosmas the Priest, p. 384.

⁶⁶ Cosmas the Priest, p. 387.

⁶⁷ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. Молдован et al., f. 1r–4v (transl. W. Veder, pp. 3–4). See also: Б. Ангелов, *За три съчинения в Симеоновите сборници*, СЛ 5, 1979,

anonymous author compares the significance of books to the righteous with the reins, which are used to steer and control a horse. He invokes Christians to probe deeply into the essence of what they are reading and urges them to abide by the truths found in the books. As for the author's understanding of the practical purpose of the apparently chaotic *Izbornik*, a book seeking to inculcate the norms of practical Christian morality into its readers but also a means of aiding the knowledge of the evangelical truths in the spirit of strict Orthodoxy, it is revealed in the last lines of the *Homily*:

This, brothers, let us understand, and let us listen with the ears of our mind and understand the power and the instruction of the Holy Writ. Listen how of old it is recorded in the Lives of St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril the Philosopher, and many other saints that from childhood they applied themselves to Scripture and by so doing strove for virtue. See what the source of virtue is: the study of the Holy Writ. Thus, brothers, following both the former and the latter, let us strive after their way of life and their deeds, and let us continually study the words of Scripture doing what they command, so that we shall be worthy of life everlasting.⁶⁸

* * *

As it was observed earlier, the *Izbornik of 1076* mirrors, although rather distortedly, the content of the 10th-century Old-Bulgarian miscellany, based on longer translated texts available to the anonymous compiler. It could be assumed that, in its original form, this book was intended for the members of the tsar's family, the most trusted noblemen and the senior Bulgarian clergy and was later revised to make it more readily accessible to a broader readership (it is this revised version that William Veder refers to as *Sinful John's Izbornik*).

pp. 21–32; W. Veder, *Three Early Slavic Treatises on Reading*, [in:] *Studia slavica mediaevala et humanistica Riccardo Picchio dicata*, ed. M. Colucci, G. Dell'Agata, H. Goldblatt, vol. II, Roma 1986, pp. 717–730; *Слова на светлината. Творби на старобългарски писатели от епохата на св. княз Борис, цар Симеон и св. цар Петър*, ed., transl. И. Добрев, Т. Славова, София 1995, pp. 184–185.

⁶⁸ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. Молдован et al., f. 3v–4v (transl. W. Veder, p. 4).

Serious arguments in favour of the above hypothesis provide our observations on another text included in the miscellany, *A Discourse of a Father to his Son* (original title: *A Certain Father's Words to his Son for Profit to his Soul*)⁶⁹. There are dozens of Russian copies of this work from the 14th–18th centuries (some of which reflect the content of South-Slavic antigraphs), which have not yet been sufficiently studied.⁷⁰ There are also three extant Serbian copies from the 14th–15th century⁷¹, as well as two Bulgarian copies of the 15th–16th century⁷². Like the Russian copies these reflect the same version of the text.

As for the content of the *Discourse*, it consists of a series of fatherly pieces of advice, which seek to guide the son towards a life *according to God's commandments*⁷³, towards meekness, humility, good intention, submission, love and good-heartedness, and mercifulness, in order for him to arrive at *the inalienable dwelling-places of the Jerusalem on high*⁷⁴. By exposing the transience of earthly life, the anonymous author calls for charity towards the poor and the suffering, daily prayer and, most of all, awe for the priesthood:

⁶⁹ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. А. Молдован et al., f. 4v–15v. Unfortunately, as several sheets of the manuscripts are missing, the text of the *Discourse* is incomplete and stops at f. 15v, what begins at f. 16r–24r is some unidentified edificatory text, analysed by: У. Федер, Р. Новак, *За приноса на Методиевите ученици в тълкувателната литература*, КМС 4, 1987, pp. 304–310.

⁷⁰ Н. Никольский, *Материалы...*, pp. 203–210.

⁷¹ From the end of the 14th century: National Library of Serbia – Belgrade, Рс 26, f. 81r–84v; SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library – Sofia, № 1037, f. 94v–100v (М. Стоянов, Х. Кодов, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в Софийската Народна библиотека*, vol. III, София 1964, pp. 240–243). From the first half of the 15th century: a miscellany, held by the Metropolitanate of Skopje, no catalogue record (Б. Ангелов, *За три съчинения...*, p. 37).

⁷² From the 15th century: Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences – Saint Petersburg, № 298, f. 156r–159r. From the 16th century: SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library – Sofia, № 433 (Panagyurishte miscellany), f. 158r–159v). The text of the copy of the Panagyurishte miscellany has been published in its entirety, while the one of Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences № 298, partially in: Б. Ангелов, *За три съчинения...*, pp. 32–37. See also А. Милтенова, *Сборник със смесено съдържание, дело на етрополския книжовник йеромонах Даниил*, СЛ 9, 1986, pp. 119, 123.

⁷³ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. А. Молдован et al., f. 6r (transl. W. Veder, p. 5).

⁷⁴ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. А. Молдован et al., f. 7v (transl. W. Veder, p. 5).

Consider the church to be heaven, the altar the throne of the Most High, the ministers the angels of God. Therefore, stand in church as in heaven, in fear and as if God Himself were before your eyes. When you leave, remember what took place and what you heard... Whenever you are in the swell of this life, or whether you come to grief in the stormy ocean of the world, I shall show you, my son, the true havens: the monasteries, homes of the holy fathers.⁷⁵

Exhorting his son to give everything needed to the monks, the author advises him to get close to a *man who fears God and serves Him with all his might*⁷⁶, to follow his example in life and listen to his words. What follows is a series of precepts for a pious life; the son should celebrate the saints' days and make his home known to the poor, the widows and the orphans:

Whether you have a rich home or a poor one, it is all through God's providence. But of all your property try to give a tenth to God who has given you life here and, after your parting, the promise of life everlasting⁷⁷.

In conclusion, the author stresses that *not all who know God are saved but those who do His will*⁷⁸ and wishes his son to avoid, when the Last judgement comes, the eternal torment reserved for the sinners and to rejoice together with the just *in the undying light and in eternal joy in ages without end*⁷⁹.

On the surface of it, the *Discourse* is unremarkable, both in form and content; the motifs developed in it are traditional for the Christian homiletic literature. However, our perception of this work and its nature changes dramatically when we compare it with its source, the first version of the *Discourse*, known solely from a later Serbian copy from the 16th–17th century⁸⁰. Here we shall discuss only some of the most prominent features of this

⁷⁵ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. Молдoвaн et al., f. 12r, 14r (transl. W. Veder, p. 7).

⁷⁶ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. Молдoвaн et al., f. 14v (transl. W. Veder, p. 7).

⁷⁷ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. Молдoвaн et al., f. 15v (transl. W. Veder, p. 8).

⁷⁸ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. Y. Федеп, p. 57 (transl. W. Veder, p. 8).

⁷⁹ *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. Y. Федеп, pp. 58–59 (transl. W. Veder, p. 9).

⁸⁰ *A Discourse of a Father to his Son (primary version)*, pp. 79–81.

older paraenetic text, bearing all the linguistic hallmarks testifying to its Old-Bulgarian origins. This text affords us a unique opportunity to reveal the ideological motivation of the anonymous writer who compiled the popular version of the *Discourse*, whose text was included in the *Izbornik of 1076*. Here, quoted in translation, are those passages of the original version of the *Discourse* which allow us to describe it as a peculiar kind of ‘mirror of princes’, a homily to a future ruler. A translation of the relevant excerpts from the popular version, according to two Serbian copies of the 14th century and the incomplete copy in the *Izbornik of 1076*, is available in the footnotes⁸¹.

Both in sadness and in joy, let the temple be your shelter. Fall before the Most High, call to the Generous, make Him caress you. The soul-loving Lover of man will not turn away from you, but will comfort you seeing that you have entrusted all your cares to Him (cf. Ps 54, 23).

Stand in the church in fear, as if [you are] in heaven, and before the eyes of the omniscient God, listening and watching eagerly what is sung there. And when you leave, remember what was said and write it in [your] heart so that it stays with you⁸².

Be wise and reasonable, seeing what God’s will is and what the King in Heaven demands of us, the earthly ones, and what He asks of His creation, full of every goodness⁸³.

⁸¹ In the following footnotes we provide the English translation of the equivalent passages of the text in its popular version after Veder’s translation of the *Discours* [in:] *The Edificatory Prose...*, pp. 5–9.

⁸² *A Discourse of a Father to his Son (primary version)*, pp. 80–81; *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. МОЛАДОВАН et al., f. 11v–12r: *Let the church be a haven to you both when you are grieved and more so when you are not. Every moment and every day enter and prostrate yourself before the Most High, press your face to the ground, and make Him remember you, for He who loves souls and loves men will not turn away from you, but will receive you and comfort you. Consider the church to be heaven, the altar the throne of the Most High, the ministers the angels of God. Therefore, stand in church as in heaven, in fear and as if God Himself were before your eyes. When you leave, remember what took place and what you heard* (transl. W. Veder, pp. 6–7).

⁸³ *A Discourse of a Father to his Son (primary version)*, p. 81; *Izbornik of 1076*, ed. A. МОЛАДОВАН et al., f. 12v–13r: *Be alert, understand what is the will of God, what the King of heaven demands of those on earth, what He asks of His creation. It is not little mercies*

If you are in trouble or in the waves of life, even if harrowing events befall you, my son, do not be fearful, but bear their distressing shock with courage and manliness, calling to your God for help.

If you find out, or hear, or have learned that the God-bearing men of the One who leads us all, are persecuted, deprived of any rest, poor in [their] dwellings, but rich with the gifts of the spirit, go to them with warm faith so that they send their prayers to the Most High and you will find solace in any misfortune. Pity them and you will be heartened, because [they] are the sons of cheer and solace and, when they have thought out the trial, they know [how] to offer comfort.

If you receive a diadem and are crowned with an imperial crown, do not consign to oblivion the things you had heard from me and always tirelessly call to mind my exhortations to protect the monasteries. Because they always beseech those reigning and are used to being [their] helpers [along the way] to the heavenly kingdom.

Oh, son, find a man who fears God and waste no time but help him. If you have found such a man, grieve no more, for you have found a life-giving treasure. Come close to him, body and soul, observe his life, how he moves, sits, and eats, and every habit of his. But most of all observe his words and let no word [of his] fall to the ground, for the words of the saints are more valuable than any crown embellished with pearls and gold. May you, child, receive through them Christ's grace and because of them be given the kingdom of heaven. Amen!⁸⁴

that are easily done? For it is written, "Be merciful so that mercy will be shown to you" (cf. Luke 6, 36). What does He who is filled with all good demand of us? (transl. W. V e d e r, p. 7).

⁸⁴ *A Discourse of a Father to his Son (primary version), pp. 80–81; Izbornik of 1076, ed. A. М о л а д о в а н et al., f. 14v–15r: In the town in which you live and in the others in the surroundings, search whether there is any man who fears God and serves Him with all his might. If you have found such a man, grieve no more, for you have already the key to the kingdom of heaven. Cling to him in both your soul and body and observe his life, how he walks, sits, and eats, and inquire into his every habit. Moreover, observe his words: let no word of his fall to the ground, for holy words are more valuable than pearls (transl. W. V e d e r, pp. 7–8).*

The overall tone of the text creates the impression that its author was someone of royal status (*what the King in Heaven demands of us, the earthly, that is the earthly rulers*), while his addressee (and son) enjoys high social standing and is to be invested with imperial power. Obviously, the explanation for the appearance of such motifs could be sought in the realm of the rhetoric that is characteristic of the Christian paraenetic literature. Still, it seems more likely that, in its initial form, the *Discourse of a Father to his Son* was an original Old-Bulgarian homily of an emperor (Peter?) addressed to his son and heir (Boris II?)⁸⁵ and not just a translation of an ‘unspecified Greek homily’⁸⁶ or some hypothetical ‘Greek homiletic treatise’⁸⁷.

It should be noted that the motif of respect for priesthood is practically missing from the earliest version; there the focus is put on fervent prayer and diligent attendance of church services. Furthermore, the compiler of the *Discourse* demands special care for the monasteries and following the example of ‘the God-fearing’.

The above considerations are consistent with the overall spirit and with some specific ideas in the earliest version of the *Discourse*. However, this cannot in itself confirm the potential ‘authorship’ of tsar Peter, nor could it answer the question about the possible sources (Greek and Old-Bulgarian), used by the compiler. In that regard, it is worth bringing to mind the opinion of Peyo Dimitrov that *one of Peter’s models* when putting together the *Discourse* were the *Paraenetic Chapters* of emperor Basil I, addressed to his son Leo (a work most probably produced by patriarch Photios), the Slavic translation of which may have been executed in 10th-century Bulgaria⁸⁸.

⁸⁵ A similar hypothesis was advanced for the first time in: П. Д и м и т р о в, *Петър Черноризец...*, pp. 69–78.

⁸⁶ F. T h o m s o n, *Quotations of Patristic and Byzantine Works by Early Russian Authors as an Indication of the Cultural Level of Kievan Russia*, SGa 10, 1983, p. 71.

⁸⁷ *The Edificatory Prose of Kievan Rus’...*, p. 5.

⁸⁸ П. Д и м и т р о в, *Петър Черноризец...*, p. 74. For a more detailed discussion of the manuscript tradition and the early print editions of the translation of the *Paraenetic Chapters*: А. Н и к о л о в, *Към въпроса за разпространението на някои византийски “княжески огледала” в старобългарската литература (края на IX – началото на X век)*, [in:] *Средновековните Балкани. Политика, религия, култура*, ed. С. Р а к о в а, А. С и м е о н о в а, София 1999, pp. 80–83; i d e m, *Старобългарският превод...*, pp. 88–89, 92; i d e m, *The Medieval Slavonic Translation of the Paraenetical*

It should be noted here that the ideological thrust of the revisions to the initial text of the *Discourse*, which resulted in the emergence of its popular version, is to a large extent similar to that which produced the revision of the original text of the *Admonition to the Rich*; judging by the two Serbian copies of the 14th century, the aim of the amendments was to increase the relevance of the work. In the case of the *Discourse* this meant anonymising and transforming an emperor's homily to his son and future sovereign into edifying reading, which could be used in the instruction for people of different social strata. The social status of the reviser responsible for the popular version as someone belonging to the church hierarchy, as well as his mindset, manifest themselves in the idea of priests as 'God's angels' and the demand he makes for regular payment of the tithe.

The original source of the *Admonition to the Rich* underwent a similar transformation to make its ideological content relevant to the addressee and consistent with the aims of the Old-Bulgarian *Izbornik*. However, the starting point of our analysis should be the metamorphoses of the title of the complete translation of Agapetos' *Exposition*, the main source

Chapters of Emperor Basil I between the Balkans, Ostrog and Moscow: Preliminary Remarks, [in:] *Byzantium, New Peoples, New Powers: the Byzantino-Slav Contact Zone, from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. M. Kaïmakova, M. Salamon, M. Smorąg Różycka, Cracow 2007, pp. 349–356; idem, *Средневековый славянский перевод “Учительных глав” императора Василия I: проблемы изучения рукописной традиции и ранних печатных изданий*, [in:] *XIX Ежегодная богословская конференция Православного Свято-Тихоновского гуманитарного университета*, vol. I, Москва 2009, pp. 41–47. Dimitrov's hypothesis highlights the need for more thorough examination of the Slavic manuscript tradition of this work. My initial research has revealed that two chapters from Agapetos's *Exposition* were interpolated in the core text of the earliest known copy of the translation (Serbian, from the beginning of the 15th century), evidence of the fact that, as early as the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century, these two Byzantine 'mirrors of princes' (and, most probably, also the translation of patriarch Photios's epistle to prince Boris I-Michael) were featured together in a special kind of collections, which are currently known only through Russian copies of the 16th century. Recently, Dmitriy Bulanin dismissed categorically the proposed early dating for the Slavic translation of the *Paraenetic Chapters*, but the debate on this issue is far from over: Д. Буланин, *Текстологические и библиографические...*, p. 554.

of the compilation which mutated into the all too familiar *Admonition* but only after its second reworking upon being included into the *Izbornik*.

The review of the versions of the complete translation's title reveals remarkable divergence, which demands logical explanation. If we were to take as a starting point the comparison with the text's titles in the Greek manuscript tradition, we would notice immediately that the phrase *homily of the good emperorship*, reproduced in almost all Slavic copies, has its equivalent in a copy from a manuscript of the Austrian National Library in Vienna, Vindob. Iur. gr. 15, f. 192r: ὑπόθεσις ἀγαθῆς βασιλείας. It is this part of the title which undoubtedly featured in the translation right from the time of its execution. Subsequently, the title was further expanded by adding phrases such as *to the kings and princes, also to the noblemen, to the bishops and abbots, good also for the monks*, and *to the priests*⁸⁹.

The tendency to re-address the *Exposition* for Justinian to a wider section of the upper class leads some contemporary researchers to conclude that Bulgarian rulers did not 'need' Agapetos' work

because it provided support for their political claims. It is more likely that 'the mirror' of the Constantinople deacon was attractive to the newly converted Christians as it represented a collection of moralistic gnomes of universal importance.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ В. Вальденберг, *Наставление писателя VI в. Агапита в русской письменности*, ВВ 24, 1923/1926, p. 28; Agapetos Diaconos, *Der Fürstenspiegel für Kaiser Iustinianos*, ed. R. Riedinger, Athen 1995, p. 24; А. Николов, *Към въпроса...*, pp. 77–78.

⁹⁰ Д. Буланин, *Неизвестный источник...*, p. 168. See also: idem, *Текстологические и библиографические...*, pp. 538–540. The same theory has been put forward by Francis Thomson ("Made in Russia". *A Survey of the Translations Allegedly Made in Kievan Russia*, [in:] *Millenium Russiae Christianae. Tausend Jahre Christliches Russland 988–1988*, ed. G. Birkfellner, Köln 1993, p. 351, fn. 381 (repr. in: idem, *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Medieval Russia*, Aldershot 1999, V), who gives the different versions of the work's title as evidence that in mediaeval Bulgaria this text was clearly viewed as a collection of moralistic gnomes addressed not merely to princes, as the variant titles show (...) The idea that it was translated for Symeon (893–927) or Peter (927–969/70) of Bulgaria as part of their interest in Byzantine political ideology (...) is unlikely.

This observation is noteworthy as it explains the interest in Agapetos' *Exposition* among the wider aristocratic and ecclesiastical circles in 10th-century Bulgaria, which to a large extent predetermined its reception in mediaeval Russia. However, we should not forget (and this was stressed rather astutely many years ago by Ihor Shevchenko⁹¹) that the addition of such a text to the repertory of the Preslav translators at the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century could hardly be explained outside the context of the political ideas and claims of the first Bulgarian tsar, Symeon I, who after 917 proclaimed himself emperor of the Romans and began using lead seals bearing the legend, Συμεὼν ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων⁹².

Thus, it could be assumed that the tendency to re-address (through changes to the title) the *Exposition* to the secular and spiritual masters (princes, noblemen, bishops, abbots) emerged as early as the *Golden Age*, when the complete text of the work was included in the *Menaion Izbornik*, reconstructed by Bulanin. As it is known, Symeon I invested considerable effort precisely into elevating the Christian identity and culture of his closest noblemen. Hence the *Menaion Izbornik* should be placed alongside such 10th-century translations as *Symeon's Miscellany* and *Zlatostruy*. Therefore, it is no accident that in the Old-Bulgarian *Izbornik*, known from a Russian copy of 1076, the contents of those sizeable tomes are closely interwoven⁹³.

Here we should once again remind ourselves of William Veder's hypothesis that, to a large extent, the archetype of the *Izbornik of 1076*, the *Sinful John's Izbornik*, replicates a *princely Miscellany*, whose content could be reconstructed on the basis of its reflections in the later South Slavic and Russian manuscript tradition. It is this *Princely Miscellany* which seems to be the source of the two 14th-century Serbian copies of the compilation of fragments from Agapetos' *Exposition*, Epictetus' *Encheiridion*

⁹¹ I. Ševchenko, *Agapetus East and West: the Fate of a Byzantine 'Mirror of Princes'*, RESEE 16.1, 1978, p. 28.

⁹² И. Йорданов, *Корпус на средновековните български печати...*, pp. 73–82 (№ 80–107).

⁹³ Я. Милтенков, *Общите пасажии между колекцията Златоструй и Княжеския изборник*, СЛ 49/50, 2014, pp. 28–45.

and Maximos the Confessor's *Chapters on Love*. As has been noted already, this version of the text is more complete than the one included in the *Izbornik of 1076* under the title *Admonition to the Rich*.

The very title of the *Admonition to the Rich* in the Serbian copies, *Discourse to the Rulers on Earth*, is evidence of the active aspiration of the 10th-century Bulgarian editor to transform Agapetos' *Exposition*, devoted to the hallowed personality of the tsar, into a more general moral exhortation addressed to the earthly masters. The expression *ruling on earth*, as well as the overall content of the compilation, suggest that the *Discourse* was meant for the secular rulers, unlike the complete text of the *Exposition* which was supposed to be read by the noblemen, bishops, abbots and priests.

Evidence of the addressee of the *Discourse to the Ruling on Earth* is the fact that it includes almost the whole Ch. 71 of Agapetos' *Exposition* (completely missing from the *Admonition of the Rich*), whose target is the ruler's pride

The proud and arrogant person must not strut like a tall-horned young bull but think of his carnal nature and stop his heart from singing his praises. Even if he is a prince on earth, let him know that as he was [made] of earth, from the clay he ascended the throne⁹⁴.

The compiler of the *Discourse* tactfully spared his readers the concluding words of this chapter according to the complete version of the *Exposition*, and in time would come off it.

The fact that this passage was at all included in the *Admonition to the Rich* is consistent with my earlier hypothesis about the overall nature of the editorial revisions to the texts in *Sinful John's Izbornik*, whose purpose was the transformation of a number of existing Old-Bulgarian translated and original works into widely accessible edifying reading matter.

* * *

⁹⁴ Д. Бу л а н и н, *Неизвестный источник...*, р. 176.

The observations made so far demonstrate that in the 930s–960s the now relatively strong in its Christian faith Bulgarian society entered a new stage of its spiritual development, marked by an increased demand for widely accessible edifying works (including *vitas*). As a result of the challenge posed by Bogomil propaganda the high secular and ecclesiastical circles were faced with the task of elevating the moral and ethical standards of ordinary believers, who did not, as a rule, have direct access to the biblical books, let alone to the abstruse and rather hefty interpretative, dogmatic and homiletic works of the Church fathers⁹⁵.

The responsibility for organising the creation, copying and dissemination of such ‘soul-saving’ books, meant to be read by clerics and laymen outside the walls of the temples, lay mostly with the ruler; he was the one who, by tradition, defined the main trends in the development of the cultural and spiritual life of the country. He had the requisite financial and material resources; he had under his direct supervision the largest library in Bulgaria and the entire Slavic world, housing practically all the existent texts in Old-Bulgarian of any significance, both translated and original. Clearly, tsar Peter was well aware of his duties and put considerable effort into becoming a *teacher of orthodoxy*, a role assigned to him by patriarch Theophylaktos. As protector of monasticism and denouncer of the moral and social vices, this Bulgarian ruler became a true *fighter against the ignorance of the clergy and against the heresies*. Therefore, it is no accident that pious tsar Peter, who died as a monk, was canonised soon after his death and thus became a patron saint of the Bulgarian people⁹⁶, whose name was later adopted as a ‘throne’ name by the leaders of all the major uprisings of the Bulgarians against the Byzantine rule in the 11th and 12th centuries⁹⁷.

⁹⁵ Cf. И. Божилев, В. Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България...*, pp. 280–281.

⁹⁶ *Service of St. Tsar Peter*, p. 387: застъпникъ ѿ ви(д)мыхъ враговъ противны(х).

⁹⁷ Generally on the canonisation of tsar Peter and his cult: И. Билярски, *Небесните покровители...*, pp. 34–36; Д. Чешмеджиев, *Няколко бележки...*, pp. 35–36; И. Билярски, *Покровители на Царството: св. цар Петър и св. Параскева-Петка*, София 2004, pp. 33–42; Д. Чешмеджиев, *Култът към цар Петър (927–969): манастирски или държавен?*, [in:] *Любав према обрзавану и вера у Бога у православним манастирами*, 5. Међународна Хилендарска

2. Art and Church Architecture

Zofia A. Brzozowska

2.1. Church Architecture and Sculpture

For many scholars the Old Bulgarian architecture from the reign of Peter remains in the shadow of the foundation achievements of this ruler's predecessor, Symeon I the Great. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, not a single edifice raised in the 10th century within the area that interests us here survived to our times in its original form⁹⁸. The lack of written sources makes it difficult to ascertain the age and definitive attribution of the objects being discovered during archaeological excavations with a high degree of precision⁹⁹ – therefore the time of creation of most of them

конференција. *Зборник избраних радова 1*, ed. Р. Матејић et al., Beograd–Columbus 2006, pp. 255–257; И. Биљарски, М. Йовчева, *За датата на успението на цар Петър и за култа към него*, [in:] *Тангра. Сборник в чест на 70-годишнината на акад. Васил Гюзелев*, ed. М. Каймакамова et al., София 2006, pp. 543–557; Б. Николова, *Цар Петър и характерът на неговия култ*, Рбг 33.2, 2009, pp. 63–78; Д. Чешмеджиев, *Българската държавна традиция в апокрифите: цар Петър в Българския апокрифен летопис*, [in:] *Българско средновековие: общество, власт, история. Сборник в чест на проф. д-р Милияна Каймакамова*, ed. Г.Н. Николов, А. Николов, София 2013, pp. 262–271; Д. Польшанский, *Царь Петр в исторической памяти болгарского средневековья*, [in:] *Сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д.и.н. Петър Ангелов*, ed. А. Николов, Г.Н. Николов, София 2013, p. 141; М. Каймакамова, *Култът към цар Петър (927–969) и движещите идеи на българските освободителни въстания срещу византийската власт през XI–XII в.*, ВМд 4/5, 2013/2014, pp. 417–438.

⁹⁸ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири от Велики Преслав*, София 1980, p. 68. The sole building from Peter's time that survived to modern times is a small church, cross-domed, dedicated to the Mother of God, which is located in Yana, near Sofia. The building was destroyed in 1948; however its main architectural structure can be recreated thanks to a photograph. Н. Мавродinov, *Старобългарското изкуство. Изкуството на първото българско царство*, София 2013, pp. 245, 267.

⁹⁹ Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири в светлината на археологическите разкопки и проучвания*, СЛ 22, 1990, p. 9; i d e m, *Манастири в Плиске и Преславе в IX–X вв. Краткая археологическая характеристика*, ПКШ 7, 2003, p. 367; Р. Костова, *Патронаж...*, pp. 199–201.

is dated in the literature of the subject to the end of the 9th or the first half of the 10th century. Commonly, and with rather little consideration, they are accepted to have originated during the reign of Symeon.

It is difficult to accept the thought that Peter, so enamoured with Christian values and supporting the monastic movement, would not have undertaken any foundation initiatives during the four decades of his reign¹⁰⁰. He most likely continued his father's activity, and perhaps even commissioned the expansion or completion of the objects from the earlier period. The evidence supporting the latter hypothesis can be found in the archaeological material. For example: a seal depicting Peter and his wife, Maria Lekapene, dated to 940–950, and an amphora with the monogram of the ruler's name, have been found in the ruins of the church of St. John in Preslav (the so-called Round/Golden Church); the church was traditionally considered to have been founded by Symeon¹⁰¹. Moreover, numismatic material, collected during the excavation of the site, also confirms the supposition that the construction of the Round Church, begun at the end of the 9th century, may have been finally completed in the 960s – within its foundations, coins of Leo VI the Wise (886–912), Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (913–959), Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944) and Nikephoros II Phocas (963–969) have been found¹⁰².

Peter's seals were uncovered in two other Preslavian religious buildings, usually dated in the literature of the subject to an earlier period. Two lead seals were discovered in the ruins of the so-called 'palace basilica', raised during the reign of prince Boris-Michael (most likely in 866–870), which was thoroughly renovated by his grandson¹⁰³. A *sigillum* from the 930s, adorned with an image of Peter and Maria, was in turn found

¹⁰⁰ Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 244–245.

¹⁰¹ Т. Тотев, *Родов манастир на владетелите в Преслав*, СЛ 20, 1987, p. 128; Б. Николова, *Православните църкви през българското средновековие (IX–XIV)*, София 2002, p. 92; И. Йорданов, *Корпус на средновековните български печати*, София 2016, p. 96.

¹⁰² Т. Тотев, *Родов манастир...*, p. 125.

¹⁰³ Б. Николова, *Православните църкви...*, p. 93; И. Йорданов, *Корпус...*, pp. 118–119.

during the studies of the architectural structure of the so-called ‘palace monastery’ in Preslav. Other artefacts found in this object allow us to assume that it was expanded in Peter’s times: a lead seal with an image of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos made after 945, and a seal depicting Romanos I, Constantine VII and the Bulgarian tsaritsa’s father, Christopher Lekapenos, made in 927–931¹⁰⁴.

The monastery built on the Avradak hill, located to the south-east of Preslav’s centre, beyond the contemporary city walls of the Bulgarian capital, was undoubtedly built during Peter’s reign¹⁰⁵. A rather precise dating of this architectural complex is possible thanks to the numismatic material gathered during archaeological excavations carried out in its ruins: a coin from the period of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos’ sole rule (945–959) was discovered in the deepest layer, dating to the period during which the monastery’s foundations were laid. The latest coins found at this site can be associated with the reign of John I Tzymiskes (969–976)¹⁰⁶. The monastery on the Avradak hill may have been therefore founded no earlier than 945. It most likely fell into ruin during the war that started after Peter’s death. The architecture of the complex provides further arguments to support this hypothesis. Despite having been located in the open and outside of Preslav’s fortifications, its builders did not surround the monastery proper with a strong defensive wall. One may therefore suppose that it was built during the several decade long period of peace, most likely in 927–969¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири...*, р. 12; idem, *Манастири в Плиске...*, р. 371; idem, *The Palace Monastery in Preslav*, ПКШ 3, 1998, р. 145; I. Jordanov, *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*, vol. III/1, Sofia 2009, pp. 89–90; idem, *Корпус...*, р. 91.

¹⁰⁵ С. Ваклинов, *Формиране на старобългарската култура. VI–XI в.*, София 1977, р. 205; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 107, 125, 145; Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири...*, р. 10; М. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav*, Sofia 1993, р. 26; Т. Тотев, *Манастири в Плиске...*, р. 366; idem, *Още наблюдения за църква № 1 в Дворцовия манастир на Велики Преслав*, Истор 4, 2011, р. 301.

¹⁰⁶ Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 245.

¹⁰⁷ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 127, 144; Т. Тотев, *Манастири в Плиске...*, р. 369; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 247.

In the 10th century, the grandest building within the complex was most likely the main church of the monastery. During the excavations on the Avradak hill, a ruined, stone church of relatively small size: 7,4 m by 12,8 m was discovered. This building (the so-called ‘church no. 1’) was undoubtedly a cross-domed church, created on the basis of models taken from the Byzantine architecture¹⁰⁸. It had a complex structure, matching the Eastern Christian ideas of the tripartite division of sacred space: within it, there was the chancel reserved for the clergy, the nave for the laypeople, and the narthex¹⁰⁹. On the eastern side, the church terminated with three semi-circular apses. The altar was located within the largest, central one, while the side apses accommodated the *diaconicon* and *prothesis* (*proscomidion*). The space that should remain off limits to the laypeople was most likely, according to the Byzantine tradition, separated from the remainder of the temple with a stone partition¹¹⁰.

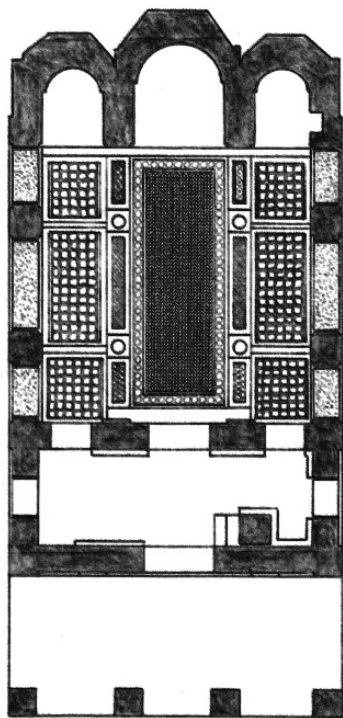
The main dome of the church rested on four massive marble pillars. Their remains were uncovered during the excavations: two of them were made from pink-hued stone, the remaining two – from white marble. The aforementioned pillars fulfilled another important role: they divided the space designated for the lay participants of the liturgical ceremonies into three parts, corresponding in their width to the apses located at the eastern end of the church. On the western side, the church was adjoined by a rather large, unicameral narthex. According to the local tradition, it had one central and two side entrances, likely preceded by some type of a portico¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁸ С. В а к л и н о в, *Формиране...*, p. 205; Н. Ч а н е в а-Д е ч е в с к а, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 20, 37, 99; S. D o n c h e v a, *Symbolic Emphases in the Mediaeval Religious Architecture*, НВ.ЗР 3, 2005, p. 249; Т. Т о т е в, *Още наблюдения...*, p. 305; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 250–252.

¹⁰⁹ G. M i n c z e w, “Cała świątynia staje się mieszkaniem Boga”. *Bizantyńskie mistagogie – wykładnia i komentarz liturgii niebiańskiej*. [in:] S y m e o n z T e s s a l o n i k i, *O świątyni Bożej*, transl. А. М а с і е j e w s k a, Kraków 2007, pp. 18–19.

¹¹⁰ К. М и я т е в, *Архитектурата в Средновековна България. Архитектура и строителство*, София 1965, p. 112; Н. Ч а н е в а-Д е ч е в с к а, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 34, 42, 54.

¹¹¹ Н. Ч а н е в а-Д е ч е в с к а, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 45–46, 66; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 255–256.



‘Church no. 1’ in the Avradak monastery. Building plan with reconstructed floor mosaic. Drawing (after G. Ganev): E. Myślińska-Brzozowska

The building is noteworthy for its architectural distinctiveness. According to experts, ‘church no. 1’ of the Avradak monastery had a skeletal structure – the weight of its vaulting was not spread evenly across its walls, but rather focused on several sections of the wall, specially reinforced with pilasters¹¹². Interestingly enough, such architectural solutions only appear on the Byzantine soil in the 10th century – we can observe them e.g. within the church in Myrelaion (*Bodrum Camii*), founded by the emperor Romanos I Lekapenos in the 920s¹¹³. The adaptation of this technological innovation by Bulgarian builders attests to lively cultural contacts between the Constantinopolitan and Preslavian elites of this era. It would be tempting to suppose, although without source evidence to support this, that it was Maria Lekapene who

initiated the construction of the Avradak monastery. Had that been the case, she would have likely told the builders of the monastery’s church (who perhaps came from Byzantium) to copy the architectural designs of the Constantinopolitan church erected by her grandfather, and which housed the remains of her family, including those of her grandmother Theodora and father Christopher.

Within the building’s structure one may find several features characteristic to Bulgarian architecture of tsar Peter’s times. The remains of the

¹¹² Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, p. 252.

¹¹³ Г. Колпакова, *Искусство Византии. Ранний и средний периоды*, Санкт-Петербург 2010, pp. 299–301; А. Компа, *Konstantynopolitańskie zabytki w Stambule*, AUL.FH 87, 2011, pp. 156–157.

church walls evidence that the temple's original facade was decorated on three sides with shallow (ca. 10cm) niches. Moreover, while the components located on the side elevations of the building were associated with its skeletal structure, the ones placed above the church's main entrance merely imitated load-bearing pilasters, and were purely decorative¹¹⁴. According to Nikola Mavrodinov, the structure of the main church of the Avradak monastery was also distinguished by an element that was practically unknown to Byzantine architecture – above its narthex, there have been (according to the Bulgarian scholar) two square towers, exceeding in height even the central dome of the church¹¹⁵.

The largest church of the monastery must have also been notable for its opulent interior decorations. Unfortunately, no traces of wall paintings have been found in the Avradak monastery. Within its ruins however – similarly to the remains of the other Preslavian architectural monuments from that time – relatively numerous fragments of polychrome ceramics have been found¹¹⁶. During the dig a relatively well preserved floor of the church has also been uncovered; it was made of stone and ceramic tiles, in white, green, red, yellow, dark pink and grey¹¹⁷. Numerous elements of stonework have also been found. Among the four capitals topping the marble columns that held up the dome, only two survived to our times (one of these – in its entirety). Over one hundred fragments of the stone frieze that adorned both inner and outer side of the building have also been collected. Among the ornaments used by the Preslavian artists the motifs of heart-shaped leaves and 'wolves' teeth' were predominant¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁴ К. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, р. 113; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 53, 73, 75; Н. Мавродинев, *Старобългарското...*, р. 253.

¹¹⁵ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 66; Н. Мавродинев, *Старобългарското...*, р. 254.

¹¹⁶ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 90.

¹¹⁷ С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, р. 206; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 86–88; Т. Тотев, *Още наблюдения...*, р. 302; Н. Мавродинев, *Старобългарското...*, р. 255.

¹¹⁸ С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, р. 205, 211; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 70, 94; М. Станчева, *Veliki Preslav...*, р. 59; Н. Мавродинев, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 256–257.

The main church of the Avradak monastery has also provided us with what are probably the only examples of the Old Bulgarian sculpture that we can date to the 10th century¹¹⁹. The outer facade of the building was adorned by depictions of animal heads, originally carved in lime: during the dig, three figures of lionesses and one of a monkey have been found. These served a function analogous to the stonework elements preserved on the facades of the Western European mediaeval cathedrals, as gargoyles, i.e. decorative gutters serving as drains for the rain water. It is worth noting that such decorations are not to be found in Byzantine architecture. Artefacts from the Avradak monastery church therefore are a continuation of a home-grown, Bulgarian tradition, and show certain analogies to the bas relief depictions of animals preserved on the capital and stone plates from the Stara and Nova Zagora. The renderings discussed here are, however, much more schematic in nature and, according to some researchers, attest to artistic regress of the Bulgarian sculpture in the 10th century¹²⁰.

What is interesting, the monastic complex included another church (the so-called 'church no. 2'), measuring 6,5 m by 11,5 m. Its design did

¹¹⁹ In the older literature of the subject, the capital and the five stone plates found in the Stara and Nova Zagora were sometimes considered to have belonged to the period being discussed here. They are decorated with bas reliefs depicting animals (lions or panthers), humans, birds and fantastic creatures: a griffin, a phoenix and a two-headed eagle (С. В а к л и н о в, *Формиране...*, pp. 236–237; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 282–288). This dating was recently put into question by Bulgarian scholars, Ivan Ivanov and Mariana Minkova, who noted that the iconographic details of the analyzed representations allows the supposition that they were created during an earlier period – in the middle of the 9th century, or at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries (И. Т. И в а н о в, М. М и н к о в а, *Още веднъж за средновековните каменни релефи от Стара Загора*, ИСИМ 3, 2008, pp. 177–184; И. И в а н о в, *Гривести прабългарски барсове, а не византийски лъвовое са изобразени върху прочутите Старозагорски каменни релефи*, [in:] *Доклади и научни съобщения от V национална научна конференция "От регионалното към националното – история, краезнание и музейно дело" на Историческия музей – Полски Тръмбеш, Велико Търново 2012*, pp. 405–416).

¹²⁰ К. М и я т е в, *Архитектурата...*, pp. 112–113; С. В а к л и н о в, *Формиране...*, pp. 205–206, 212; Н. Ч а н е в а - Д е ч е в с к а, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 96–97, 126; Т. Т о т е в, *Старобългарските манастири...*, p. 10; М. S t a n c h e v a, *Veliki Preslav...*, pp. 71–73; Т. Т о т е в, *Манастири в Плиска...*, p. 369; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 257–258, 289–291.



A lioness with a child and a lion. Stone plates found in Old Zagora, decorated with bas reliefs. 9th–10th century. Drawing: E. Mysłińska-Brzozowska

not differ much from the previously discussed building. It was most likely of cross-dome design. There was only one entrance to the building, located *vis-à-vis* the altar. Having crossed the church's threshold, the faithful approached a small narthex, from which they then moved into the main nave, divided into three parts by four great pillars holding up the dome. From the eastern side, the main church structure was adjoined by three apses; these however were not connected with each other. According to experts, the lack of passages between the area housing the altar and the *diaconicon* and *proscomidion* may be considered a local feature, shared by numerous Old Bulgarian basilicas built in Pliska and Preslav¹²¹.

The local architectural traditions appear to have found another expression in decorating the outer walls of the building, in the form of shallow, 10-centimetre niches, some of which were an integral part of the skeletal structure of the building, while others were added purely for decorative reasons. The facade and the interior of the church were also adorned with a frieze of the 'wolves teeth'¹²².

¹²¹ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 20, 33, 42, 53, 99; Б. Николова, *Православните църкви...*, p. 98; С. Дончева, *Към манастирското устройство в околностите на столичните центрове в Първото българско царство*, ПКШ 7, 2003, p. 443; eadem, *Symbolic Emphases...*, p. 252; Т. Тотев, *Още наблюдения...*, p. 305; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 258–259.

¹²² Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, p. 259.

Interestingly enough, the religious buildings were located at a fairly considerable distance from the rest of the Avradak monastic complex. Some scholars suggest therefore that the monastery was a female community: the residential buildings, in which the nuns spent most of their time, would have been purposefully separated from the church and the male clergymen serving the ministry there for moral considerations¹²³. The inhabitants of the monastery were not however alienated from the social life. As archaeological excavations indicate, caring for the elderly, disabled and ill was an important part of their everyday existence. Ruins of a hospital and of a nursing home were discovered within the monastic complex¹²⁴. The nuns also had their own artisanal workshop, in which they made small objects (including crosses and icons), which they most likely sold to those visiting their community¹²⁵. No traces of painted ceramics or of a scriptorium have been found during the excavations at the site, one may therefore suppose that in the contemporary Bulgaria both of the associated activities were, unfortunately, considered to have been occupations reserved for men.

The monastic complex included a well. Moreover, its buildings were also supplied by a specially designed hydraulic system, based on Byzantine models. The hospital also included a toilet. Its existence, much like that of the bathing complex in Pliska and of the extended water distribution networks supplying the inhabitants of both of the Bulgarian capitals, attests to a fairly high standard of everyday life in Bulgaria during the reign of the son of Symeon I the Great¹²⁶.

¹²³ К. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, р. 126; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 125, 144; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 250.

¹²⁴ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, р. 131; Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири...*, р. 10; *idem*, *Манастири в Плиске...*, р. 369; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 248. The hypothesis about the existence of a hospital within the Avradak monastery is occasionally criticised in the newer literature of the subject: Т. Тотев, *Нови наблюдения и данни за облика на гражданската архитектура през Първото българско царство*, ПКШ 1, 1995, р. 322; N. Amudzhieva, P. Tsvetkov, *The Cult of Saints-Healers – an Alternative and Opposition to the Official Medicine in Medieval Bulgaria*, *Jahr.EJB* 4.7, 2013, р. 360.

¹²⁵ Т. Тотев, *Нови наблюдения...*, р. 322; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 249.

¹²⁶ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 126, 152; Т. Тотев, *Нови наблюдения...*, р. 328; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 249–250, 265–266.

The churches of the Avradak monastery were likely not the only religious buildings erected by tsar Peter. During his reign, the capital of Preslav gained numerous other buildings of this kind, among them the later temple located by the south-western corner of the city's wall. It was a stone church, constructed on the plan of a Greek cross, with a partial 'skeletal' structure, its central dome resting on four great pillars, a solution similar to those used in both of the Avradak monastery churches. On the eastern side, the church's structure was closed with three, semi-circular apses. Their outer facades were decorated with shallow (10 cm) niches¹²⁷.

Churches in the 10th century, which served as family necropoleis, were also founded by Preslavian aristocrats. Ruins of two stone religious buildings (so-called 'churches no. 3 and 4') were discovered in the area of 'Selishte', located within the southern part of the capital city. These structures were typical cross-dome churches, with elements of 'skeletal' construction used in their construction. Group burials have been uncovered within the narthexes of each of the temples¹²⁸. A family tomb was also found in the remains of the so-called 'church no. 7', located near the northern wall. The church itself was unusually simple from architectural standpoint – it was a single nave temple, adjoined by a single apse¹²⁹.

Peter continued foundation activity of his father outside of the capital as well. He most likely expanded of the old seat of Bulgarian rulers in Pliska, by having a small palace chapel and a bathing complex constructed there¹³⁰. He also finished the construction of a church in Vinica, located near Preslav, which was most likely started by Symeon I the Great¹³¹. The example of the church in the village of Yana in the Sofia region allows

¹²⁷ Б. Николова, *Православните църкви...*, pp. 95–96; S. Doncheva, *Symbolic Emphases...*, p. 250; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 260–261.

¹²⁸ К. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, pp. 118–119; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 19, 22–26, 34, 40, 44–45, 49, 50–53, 60, 64–67, 70, 73, 76, 79, 81–83; Т. Тотев, *Нови наблюдения...*, pp. 323–324; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 261–264; Б. Николова, *Православните църкви...*, p. 97.

¹²⁹ Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 264–265.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 245, 265–266.

¹³¹ К. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, pp. 120–121; С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, p. 201; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 245–246. Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 62–63.

one to suppose that in the 10th century some of the provincial centres of the Bulgarian state may also have boasted stone temples, built using the models taken from the Byzantine architecture¹³².

Among the architectural Old Bulgarian monuments from the 10th century, the ruins of a certain monastic complex found in the 'Selishte' area deserve particular attention. The poor state in which the majority of its objects are preserved make an analysis of its architectural assumptions more difficult. The main monastic church was most likely raised on the plan of a Greek cross, with the central dome resting on four columns. Not far from it, the remains of another, smaller temple were uncovered: it was designed as a typical cross-domed church¹³³.

Some unique epigraphic material was found at the aforementioned site, allowing dating the creation of the monastery to 927–969. During archaeological works in 1952, a limestone tombstone with a Cyrillic inscription was discovered by the northern wall of the main monastic church¹³⁴. The inscription informs that an aristocrat named Mostich was buried in the temple, and that he held a high state office during the reigns of Symeon and of his son Peter. Near the end of his life he decided to become a monk. He therefore endowed his wealth to the monastery to which he decided to retire. He remained there until his death, and was subsequently buried within its walls.

¹³² Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, р. 267.

¹³³ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 118–121; Т. Тотев, *Старобългарските манастири...*, р. 11; S. Doncheva, *Symbolic Emphases...*, pp. 251–252.

¹³⁴ К. Миятев, *Архитектурата...*, р. 122; С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, pp. 226–227; Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, pp. 103, 118; Т. Тотев, *Родов манастир...*, р. 120; *idem*, *Старобългарските манастири...*, pp. 8–9; M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, pp. 47–48; Т. Тотев, *Манастири в Плиска и Преславе...*, р. 367; M. Wójtowicz, *Najstarsze datowane inskrypcje słowiańskie X–XIII w.*, Poznań 2005, pp. 28, 157; П. Павлов, А. Орачев, А. Ханджийски, *Българската писменост. Европейски феномен*, София 2008, р. 20; Р. Костова, *Патронаж...*, р. 201; Т. Тотев, *Още наблюдения...*, р. 305; П. Павлов, *Години на мир и "ратни беди" (927–1018)*, [in:] Г. Атанасов, В. Вачкова, П. Павлов, *Българска национална история*, vol. III, *Първо българско царство (680–1018)*, Велико Търново 2015, р. 408.

Interestingly, another notable Cyrillic inscription was uncovered within the monastery (which in the older literature of the subjects is often referred to as ‘Mostich’s monastery’) in 2007. It was found in a burial crypt located near the main church entrance. Its text can be reconstructed in the following way: **СѢ БСТЬ СѦНКЕЛ | МАТЕР И БРДО-БОЛЖ | ПОГРЕБЕЛЪ**. As it therefore turns out, Mostich was not the only Bulgarian aristocrat from the 10th century whose temporal remains were laid to rest within the church. The mother, and perhaps also other family members of a person who held the dignity of a synkellos, were buried within the underground crypt as well. This dignitary is most likely to have been the monk George, who was the synkellos of the Bulgarian patriarchate during the second half of the 10th century. Supporting this is the discovery of five seals bearing the customary plea for God to show His mercy, found within the ruins of the church in which both of the abovementioned inscriptions were found as well: **ГЕОРГИУ ЧРЪНЬЦЮ И СѦНКЕЛВ БЛЪГАРЬСКВЕМЪ**¹³⁵.

Synkellos George was also most likely the founder of the monastic complex created within the ‘Selishte’ area¹³⁶. The temple located within it was a *sui generis* necropolis – the remains of the ruler’s entourage were laid to rest within an adjoining crypt. The hypothetical idea that tsar Peter himself may have spent his final years within the complex, and was subsequently buried – like Mostich and the mother of synkellos George – in the main church of the monastery, is an interesting, albeit unfortunately extremely difficult to prove, a thought¹³⁷.

¹³⁵ M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, p. 61; P. Костова, *Патронаж...*, p. 202; К. Попконстантинов, P. Костова, *Манастирът на Георги, синкел български в Преслав. Историята на една българска аристократична фамилия от X в.*, Пр.Сб 7, 2013, pp. 44–62; S. Kempen, *The “Synkel” Inscription from Veliki Preslav – a New Reading*, WSA 86, 2015, pp. 109–117; И. Йорданов, *Корпус...*, pp. 174–181.

¹³⁶ P. Костова, *Патронаж...*, pp. 204, 208; К. Попконстантинов, P. Костова, *Манастирът на Георги...*, pp. 52–54; S. Kempen, *The “Synkel”...*, p. 109.

¹³⁷ Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Църкви и манастири...*, p. 118; M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, pp. 60–61.

2.2. Painting

Not a single Old Bulgarian icon written on a wooden board survived to our times from the 9th or 10th century. This should not, however, lead to a conclusion that the Southern Slavs were still at that time strangers to the practice of creating depictions of Christ, Mother of God, and saints (once again gaining popularity in Byzantium after 843), or to the tempera painting. The information that the Preslavian temples housed icons that were venerated by the faithful can be found in several sources from the period.

Without a doubt the most interesting of those is the *Sermon Against the Heretics* by Cosmas the Priest. The experts maintain that it may have been created either several years after Peter's death (969–972), or in the first half of the 11th century. Regardless of which of these is correct, it is worth remembering that the aforementioned writer described the Bogomil heresy which appeared on Bulgarian lands – according to his own words – during the reign of the 'orthodox tsar Peter' (в лѣта правѣкрааго цѣра Петра)¹³⁸. Moreover, by showing the incompatibility of the heterodox teachings with the Christian doctrine, Cosmas listed plentiful valuable information about the realities of the functioning of the Bulgarian church of the 10th century.

The topic of the cult of the holy paintings returns many times on the pages of the aforementioned treatise. The Old Bulgarian writer concluded that the Bogomils he denounced did not venerate icons, considering such practices idolatrous (еретици же не кланяют сѧ иконамъ, но кѣмиры наричють я). Wanting to instil in the reader fear and loathing for his opponents, Cosmas added that heretics are worse than demons, since even demons fear the image of Christ written on a board (Бѣси боѧт сѧ ѡбраза г[о]с[под]на на дѣсцѣ написана)¹³⁹. The above passage constitutes evidence of the adoption of the tempera painting into the Old Bulgarian culture.

¹³⁸ Cosmas the Priest, 3.

¹³⁹ Cosmas the Priest, 10. Cf. К. Паскалева, *За началото на иконописта в българските земи (VII–XII в.)*, [in:] е а д е м, "В началото бе словото". Сборник статии и студии 1967–2011 г., София 2011, p. 103.

The text of the *Sermon Against the Heretics* also allows establishing which iconographic schemes that were characteristic to the Byzantine sacred art have also been known in Bulgaria during the times of Cosmas the Priest and tsar Peter. For in an apostrophe to the Mother of God, the Slavic polemist clearly states that there are pictorial depictions of Christ in his physical form, held in Mary's arms (ЕГОЖЕ ОБРАЗЪ ТѢЛЕСНЫИ ВИДѦЩЕ НА ИКОНѢ НА РЪКОУ ТВОЕЮ)¹⁴⁰. We can assume, that icons of *Hodegetria* or *Eleusa* are described here¹⁴¹. In another part of the narrative he mentions a depiction of the Son of God (ОБРАЗЪ Г[О]С[ПОД]Е НЪ НА ИКОНѢ НАПИСАНЪ)¹⁴² and representations of the Mother of God (С[В]А[Т]ЫНА В[О]ГОРОДИЦА М[А]РІА ВИДИМЪ ИКОНОУ)¹⁴³. In the anathema at the end of the work, Cosmas in turn lists icons on which Mary, Christ and the saints were depicted (ИКОНЫ Г[О]С[ПОД]НА И В[О]ГОРОДИЧИННЫ И ВСѢХЪ С[В]А[Т]ЫХЪ)¹⁴⁴.

What is interesting, within the Old Bulgarian polemist's treatise we may find both mentions of specific gestures made by the faithful during the veneration of the holy icons (e.g. bowing or kissing)¹⁴⁵, as well as passages attesting to the adaptation by the Bulgarian church of the 10th century elements of the Byzantine theology of icons¹⁴⁶.

The fact that icons written on wood depicting Christ and saints were to be found in Bulgarian churches during Peter's reign is also attested by Byzantine historiographers. Leo the Deacon and John Skylitzes both noted that among the treasures captured in Bulgaria (most likely from

¹⁴⁰ Cosmas the Priest, 31.

¹⁴¹ К. Паскалева, *За началото на иконописата...*, p. 103.

¹⁴² Cosmas the Priest, 32.

¹⁴³ Cosmas the Priest, 33.

¹⁴⁴ Cosmas the Priest, 70.

¹⁴⁵ Cosmas the Priest, 32–33, 70. Cf. L. Praszko, *Rozwój i rozpowszechnienie ikony w Bułgarii od IX do XIX w.*, [in:] *Tysiąc lat ikony bułgarskiej IX–XIX w. Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Wystawa ze zbiorów bułgarskich*, Warszawa 1978, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Cosmas the Priest, 31 (ЧЕСТЬ БО ИКОННАА НА ПРЪВОВЕБРАЗНААГО ПРЕХОДИТЬ); 33 (ИКОНѢ БО КЛАНАЮЩЕ СѦ, НЕ ШАРѢ, НИ ДЪСЦѢ ПОКЛАНАЕМ СѦ, НО ТОМОУ БЫВШОУЩМОУ ТАЦѢМЪ ОБРАЗОМЪ). Cf. Ю. В е л и к о в, *Иконопочитанието и иконоотрицанието в "Беседа против богомилите" на Козма Презвитер*, [in:] *ТРИАНТАФЪЛЛО. Юбилеен сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. Христо Трендафилов*, ed. В. П а н а й о т о в, vol. I, Шумен 2013, pp. 365–374.

the capital Preslav) in 971 by the emperor John I Tzymiskes was an icon, depicting the Mother of God, holding the Son of God in her arms¹⁴⁷. The source evidence quoted above does not, however, allow the answering of one fundamental question: whether the icons kept in Bulgarian churches of the 10th century were imported from Byzantium, or whether they were the work of local artists.

Characteristic of the Old Bulgarian art of the 9th and 10th centuries is the tradition of creating icons on ceramic tiles, which in its way has even foreseen analogous trends in Byzantine painting. The dissemination of this practice in the capital Preslav is usually explained in the literature of the subject with acceptance of contemporary artistic impulses arriving to the Balkans through Cappadocia from the culturally important Christian centres of the East: Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and perhaps also from the countries of the Orient¹⁴⁸. The development of workshops manufacturing polychrome ceramics in the new capital of the Bulgarian state, intended primarily for decorating the interiors of the buildings being erected in this period, was also determined by a certain practical consideration: the availability on site of a cheap and easy to work raw material, i.e. the kaolin clay¹⁴⁹.

The beginnings of the discussed phenomenon are usually dated to the end of the 9th century, and associated with Symeon's foundation activity – the transfer of the seat of the Bulgarian rulers to Preslav and with the rapid expansion of this centre, intended to give it the rank and urban-

¹⁴⁷ Leo the Deacon, IX, 12, p. 158; John Skylitzes, p. 310. Cf. L. Praszko, *Rozwój...*, p. 8; M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, p. 17; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис в България до края на XIV в.*, София 1995, p. 14; Т. Тотев, *Монастыри в Плиске...*, p. 379; К. Паскалева, *За началото на иконописата...*, pp. 103–104; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, p. 316.

¹⁴⁸ С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, pp. 216–220; В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане и развитие на старобългарската култура и изкуство*, [in:] *Кратка история на България*, ed. И. Димитров, София 1981, p. 93; М. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, p. 37; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 14; К. Паскалева, *За началото на иконописата...*, p. 99; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, p. 317; J.M. Wolski, *Budownictwo kościelne i klasztorne*, [in:] M.J. Leszka, K. Marín, *Carstwo bułgarskie. Polityka – społeczeństwo – gospodarka – kultura. 866–971*, Warszawa 2015, p. 275.

¹⁴⁹ С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, p. 215.

istic shape of a truly capital metropolis¹⁵⁰. On the other hand, it is difficult to determine for how long the artists' workshops that created the ceramic icons in Preslav continued to function; did they still exist during Peter's reign? Bulgarian researchers, Totyu Totev and Rossina Kostova are of the opinion that they must have been active at least until the mid-10th century.¹⁵¹ Having analysed the numismatic and sphragistic material (discussed earlier in this chapter) that was found in Preslav during archaeological works, one may assume that the artefacts discussed here were created during the first decades of Peter's reign in the workshops of the so-called 'palace monastery' and in the vicinity of the Round Church¹⁵².

Writing about Preslavian ceramic icons it would be impossible not to mention, even if briefly, the famous image of St. Theodore Stratelates, discovered in the ruins of the monastery located in Patleyna. The literature of the subject usually accepts that this artefact, considered to be the apogee of the Old Bulgarian painting, was created at the end of the 9th, or at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries¹⁵³. This dating corresponds

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 215–217; В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 93; M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, p. 37; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 15; Т. Тотев, *Преславските ателиета за рисувана керамика*, ППРе 7, 1995, p. 101; *idem*, *The Palace Monastery...*, p. 148; *idem*, *Производство рисованной керамики в болгарских монастырях*, АДСВ 32, 2001, pp. 109–110; A. Djourova, G. Guero, *Les trésors des icônes bulgares*, Paris 2009, pp. 12, 18; R. Kostova, *Polychrome ceramics in Preslav, 9th to 11th centuries: Where were they produced and used?*, [in:] *Byzantine Trade 4th–12th Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange*, ed. M.M. Mango, Aldershot 2009, pp. 97–98; К. Паскалева, *За началото на иконописата...*, p. 100.

¹⁵¹ Т. Тотев, *Преславските ателиета...*, p. 101; *idem*, *The Palace Monastery...*, p. 148; *idem*, *Производство рисованной...*, p. 109; R. Kostova, *Polychrome ceramics...*, p. 98.

¹⁵² Т. Тотев, *Преславските ателиета...*, pp. 106–108; *idem*, *The Palace Monastery...*, p. 148; *idem*, *Производство рисованной...*, pp. 119–123.

¹⁵³ K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatov, S. Radojčić, *Frühe Ikonen. Sinai. Griechenland. Bulgarien. Jugoslawien*, Sofia–Belgrad 1972, p. LV; С. Ваклинов, *Формиране...*, p. 218; L. Praszko, *Rozwój...*, p. 8; В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 93; M. Stancheva, *Veliki Preslav...*, pp. 31–35, 62; D. Talbot Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, London 1993, p. 115; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 15; К. Онасч, A. Schnieper, *Ikony. Fakty i legendy*, transl. Z. Szanter, Warszawa 2002, p. 248; A. Djourova, G. Guero, *Les trésors...*, pp. 18–19; G. Mińczew, *Ceramiczna ikona św. Teodora Stratylaty*, [in:] *Leksykon tradycji*

to the findings of Totyu Totev, who assumed, based on the analysis of the numismatic material gathered on the site (including coins minted during the reign of the emperor Leo VI the Wise), that the workshops of the Patleyna monastery were operational during the reign of Symeon¹⁵⁴.

The images being discussed here were made with non-abrasive paints on ca. 20 ceramic tiles measuring 12 x 12 cm, fired from the local white clay, and subsequently glazed. The head of the saint was presented *en face*, and his depiction can be characterised as static and austere. The painting is kept in warm, ochre-yellow tone, and the dark browns with which the hair, beard, eyes and robes of the figure were conveyed contrast with the gold of the halo and the bright beige of the background¹⁵⁵. Some of the researchers are of the opinion that the way in which St. Theodore is depicted on the icon from the Patleina monastery corresponds to the models widespread in the Byzantine painting of the 9th and 10th centuries¹⁵⁶.

On the other hand, it would be difficult to present even a single example of a ceramic icon that would have definitely been created during the 927–969 period. According to Liliana Mavrodinova, the artefact depicting enthroned St. Paul should be considered to have come from Peter's era (Totyu Totev identifies the man shown on the painting as Christ)¹⁵⁷, and produced in a workshop that existed most likely until the mid-10th century by the so-called 'palace monastery'¹⁵⁸. It cannot be ruled out that other artefacts were also created in this workshop during

bulgarskiej, ed. G. Szwa t-G y ł y b o w a, Warszawa 2011, p. 61; К. П а с к а л е в а, *За началото на иконописата...*, p. 99.

¹⁵⁴ Т. Т о т е в, *Преславските ателиета...*, pp. 103–104; i d e m, *Производство рисованной...*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁵ L. P r a s z k o w, *Rozwój...*, p. 8; D. T a l b o t R i c e, *Art...*, pp. 115, 188; G. M i n c z e w, *Ceramiczna ikona...*, p. 61; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 321–322.

¹⁵⁶ С. В а к л и н о в, *Формиране...*, p. 218; К. П а с к а л е в а, *За началото на иконописата...*, p. 99; Н. М а в р о д и н о в, *Старобългарското...*, p. 322.

¹⁵⁷ Т. Т о т е в, *The Palace Monastery...*, p. 148; i d e m, *Монастыри в Плиске...*, p. 379.

¹⁵⁸ Л. Н. М а в р о д и н о в а, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 15; А. Д ж о у р о в а, G. G u e r o v, *Les trésors...*, pp. 20–21.

the life of Symeon's son, among them the icon of the *Hodegetria*¹⁵⁹ or the plaque depicting St. Cyril of Alexandria¹⁶⁰.

The interiors of churches erected during the 10th century in the south-western part of the Bulgarian state were instead decorated with wall paintings. Unfortunately, it is difficult to give a precise answer to the question of which of the surviving examples thereof can be dated to 927–969. To imagine how the interiors of the Western Bulgarian temples must have looked like during the times of tsar Peter, and how remarkable was the quality of the paintings then created, let us examine in turn all of the fragments of polychromies created during the 9th and 10th centuries.

During the archaeological excavations in Strumitsa, carried out in 1973, a relatively well preserved painting was uncovered on the western wall of the crypt situated under the church dedicated to the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis. In the literature of the subject it is usually dated to the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries. In accordance with the middle-Byzantine art canon, it presents the male figures half-length and *en face*, arranged in three rows. One may assume that these are the depictions of the saints in whose honour the aforementioned church was raised. In the topmost part of the composition we find figures of four men. According to experts, the saints imagined there are Timothy, Comasios, Eusebios and Theodore. In the second rank there are six portrayals, however only two of these survived to our times in their entirety. Over the course of centuries, the lowest part of wall painting has suffered the most: presently, we may admire only two of the images, located on the right side of the composition. The polychrome was made using lively colours: the static figures of the men, dressed in red-and-orange or purple robes, with heads surrounded by round, golden halos contrast with dark blue, nearly black background¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁹ Т. Тотев, *The Palace Monastery*..., p. 148; и де м, *Монастыри в Плиске*..., p. 379.

¹⁶⁰ R. Kostova, *Polychrome ceramics*..., p. III.

¹⁶¹ В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане*..., p. 92; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис*..., pp. 17–18; D. Cheshmedjiev, *Notes on the Cult of the Fifteen Tiberiopolitan Martyrs in Medieval Bulgaria*, SCer I, 2011, pp. 146–148; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Painting and Architecture in Medieval Macedonia. Artists and Works of Art*, Skopje 2011, p. 11; J.M. Wolski, *Budownictwo kościelne*..., p. 276.

One may suppose that the paintings adorning the interior of the church of St. Leontios, located near Vodocha, were created near the end of the 10th century. Unfortunately, only several small fragments of the original polychrome survived to our times. Among these, the incompletely preserved expressive depiction of the execution of Forty Martyrs deserves particular attention. The naked figures of the saints are outright striking in their vividness. The artist was inclined to realistically express the extreme emotions accompanying the men at the moment of death: the pain, despair and fear emanate from the faces, postures and gestures of the over a dozen people that can be seen on the surviving part of the composition. Moreover, the images of the martyrs have been individualised: next to elderly men there are youths, next to those who accepted their faith others are desperately fighting for survival. Aside from the scene inside the church of St. Leontios that is being analysed here, several other paintings survived as well. These are mainly half-length depictions of saints, showing some similarity to the images from the crypt under the church in Strumitsa¹⁶².

The wealth of painted decorations was characteristic also of several religious buildings in Kastoria, added to the Bulgarian state during the reign of prince Boris-Michael. Most likely it was already during the reign of this ruler that the basilica of St. Stephen was built. Fragments of the original polychrome dated to ca. 889 (based on the *graffiti* discovered on the surface of the paintings) have been found in the western part of this church. Among these, the scene of the Judgement Day located on one of the walls of the narthex and the images of saints decorating the pillars deserve particular attention¹⁶³.

The turn of the 9th and 10th centuries has also seen the creation of the oldest wall paintings in the Kastorian basilica dedicated to the Archangels.

¹⁶² В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 93; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 18; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Painting and Architecture...*, pp. 12–13; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 387–390.

¹⁶³ A.W. Epstein, *Middle Byzantine Churches of Kastoria. Dates and Implications*, ArtB 62.2, 1980, pp. 190, 192, 199; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, pp. 18–19; E. Drakopoulou, *Kastoria. Art, Patronage and Society*, [in:] *Heaven and Earth. Cities and Countryside in Greece*, ed. J. Alban, E. Chalkia, Athens 2013, p. 117.

Unfortunately, only fragments of these survived to our times. For example: in the apse of the *diaconicon* of the church we find full length depiction of Matthew the Evangelist. The saint is presented in a static pose, his right hand raised in a blessing gesture. His face is austere, and the giant eyes seem to be gazing directly at the viewer. The head is surrounded by a halo, and the entire figure is presented against a dark blue background. The experts are willing to suppose that the image was created by the same group of artists who decorated the interior of the church of St. Stephen¹⁶⁴.

The paintings from the interior of the church of St. Kosmas and Damianos in Kastoria come, on the other hand, from a later period. The literature of the subject usually dates them to the time of Samuel's reign (976–1014, formally as a Bulgarian tsar between 997–1014)¹⁶⁵, or even to sometime in the first thirty years of the 11th century¹⁶⁶. Examining the ascetic and hieratic depictions of the saints (Basil, Nicholas, Constantine and Helena) that have been preserved on the walls of the church, one might see their stylistic similarity to the paintings from the basilicas of St. Stephen and that of the Archangels discussed earlier. Perhaps those scholars who in the Kastorian paintings would like to see a reflection of the artistic currents flowing to the Balkans from Asia Minor are therefore correct¹⁶⁷. This hypothesis appears to also be supported by the fact that the founder of Constantinople and his mother were depicted in the north-western corner of the narthex of the church dedicated to Kosmas and Damianos. The canon of portraying Constantine and Helena with a relic of the True Cross was, after all, created most likely (ca. mid-9th century) in Cappadocia¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁴ A.W. Epstein, *Middle...*, pp. 190, 192, 199; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 19; E. Drakopoulos, *Kastoria...*, pp. 117, 122; J.M. Wolski, *Budownictwo kościelne...*, p. 276.

¹⁶⁵ Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, p. 20; E. Drakopoulos, *Kastoria...*, p. 117; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 377–378.

¹⁶⁶ A.W. Epstein, *Middle...*, pp. 196–199.

¹⁶⁷ В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 92; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, pp. 18–19; A.W. Epstein, *Middle...*, p. 197.

¹⁶⁸ L. Brubaker, *To Legitimize an Emperor. Constantine and Visual Authority in the 8th and 9th Centuries*, [in:] *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries. Papers from the 26th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, ed. P. Magdalino, Cambridge 1994, pp. 141–142;

Samuel's reign is also often associated with the creation of the painted decorations in the basilica of St. Achilles (surviving in a very poor state) located by the lake Prespa¹⁶⁹, and with the execution of the oldest mediaeval frescoes in the rotunda of St. George (built in the 4th century) in Sofia. Under the central dome of the latter church we find eight angelic figures, full of grace, presented with their wings outstretched, in flight. They are extraordinarily dynamic, bringing to mind association with Byzantine miniature painting from the so-called 'Macedonian Renaissance' period. The viewer's attention is drawn by both intricately draped curls of the angels, as well as by their windswept robes and soft modelling of their facial features. Similar characteristics can also be seen in the images of the prophets Jonas and John the Baptist, discovered in the interior of the rotunda in Sofia¹⁷⁰.



Ch. Walter, *The Iconography of Constantine the Great. Emperor and Saint*, Leiden 2006, p. 46.

¹⁶⁹ В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 93; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, pp. 20–21; S. Korunovski, E. Dimitrova, *Painting and Architecture...*, p. 14.

¹⁷⁰ В. Гюзелев, *Зараждане...*, p. 93; И. Кандарашева, *Стенописите от първия живописен слой в църквата "Св. Георги" в София*, Pbg 19.4, 1995, pp. 94–113; Л.Н. Мавродинова, *Стенната живопис...*, pp. 21–22; Н. Мавродинов, *Старобългарското...*, pp. 390–392; J.M. Wolski, *Budownictwo kościelne...*, pp. 275–276.