

EAST CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 450-1450

# The Tale of the Prophet Isaiah

*The Destiny and Meanings of  
an Apocryphal Text*



Ivan Biliarsky



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BRILL

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Florin Curta

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*By*

Ivan Biliarsky



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**1** In Judah *is* God known: his name *is* great in Israel. **2** In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. **12** He shall cut off the spirit of princes: *he is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

(Psalms, 76:1–2, 12)

Γνωστός ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ Θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ κατοικητήριον αὐτοῦ ἐν Σιών. τῷ φοβερῷ καὶ ἀφαιρουμένῳ πνεύματα ἀρχόντων, φοβερῷ παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι τῆς γῆς.

(Ψάλμοι 75 :2–3, 13)

Cognoscetur in Iudaea Deus in Israhel magnum nomen eius et factus est in pace locus eius et habitatio eius in Sion ... et ei qui aufert spiritus principum terribili apud reges terrae

(Ps. 75:2–3, 13)



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## PREFACE

This book is a translation of my monograph, *Skazanie na Isaiah proroka i formiraneto na politicheskata ideologija na rannosrednovekovna Bulgaria* (= *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah and the Formation of the Political Ideology of Early Mediaeval Bulgaria*), which was published in 2011 in Sofia. I had almost one year after the publication of the Bulgarian text to take into consideration all the suggestions of my colleagues, and now the reader has in his hands a noticeably modified book. It is significantly enlarged and enriched with ideas, some of which are new, others have been neglected in the Bulgarian version. I strongly hope that my new study is more consistent and clear and I would like to thank to all my colleagues who helped me achieve this result. I would like as well to thank Vladimir Vladov for the translation of the text and to express my special gratitude to Christopher Bonura for editing manuscript and improving the English. Without his help, the book would not be the same.

Following the common practice, the titles of books and articles published in other alphabets are transliterated in Latin characters. With Greek, I used the classical transliteration, while for Cyrillic, I have employed the general rules in use for the Library of Congress system. However, I have preferred the common English spelling wherever that would help a reader unfamiliar with Bulgarian, Serbian, or Russian. For example, I preferred “archiepiskopia” (archbishopric) to “arkhiepiskopija” or “arkhiepiskopiia,” and “Sofia” (the capital of Bulgaria) to either “Sofija” or “Sofia”.

Several other points of clarification are given in the text itself. The book was shaped by recommendations from the readers, Christopher Bonura, Florin Curta (the editor of the series), and Marcella Mulder (assistant editor at Brill). I assume responsibility for any error or absence.

Sofia, June 11, 2012

The day of Sts Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas  
Mother of God *Axion Estin*



## INTRODUCTION

A book is conceived gradually, even though in the beginning there is always a sudden spark that rouses the author's interest in a certain theme, a certain source, in certain figures and events. The spark might come on some concrete occasion, at times an insignificant one, perhaps even unrelated to the author's research. Afterwards, the spark might ignite a short-lived interest, or be the initial cause of concrete research that will subsequently be left off and never resumed, or else resumed much later, rekindled by some other spark. However, another course is also possible: the author might proceed towards his goal at a regular pace, moved by a lasting interest in the problem; or by the fact that the work has been ordered—and this is an incitement to which all, or nearly all, intellectuals submit.

This book is the result of such momentary gleams that eventually led to the idea of a new reading of a mediaeval treatise, and along with this, a new examination of many stereotypes that have been imposed for more than a century and are now ingrained in society—and from there in historical science. The first steps on the path that led to this book were taken in Rome in the second half of the 1990s, incited by the seminars organised by Professor Pierangelo Catalano and Professor Paolo Siniscalco, and entitled “Da Roma alla Terza Roma”. Dealing with the idea of Empire, of the City and citizenship, and of the religious foundations of state power and law, these seminars provided me with the environment I had long been seeking in my desire to fill my researches with a deeper meaning, to give them a greater completeness, integrity, that would go beyond the concrete work with sources or with amassed literature; to situate my writing in the context of History viewed not only as a chain of events but as a road to a destination, a purpose, a meaning. The second stage of conception developed in Bucharest during my stay in New Europe College, where a group was formed, a group of people with shared interests in the problem area related to translating theological terms into the vocabulary, conceptual framework, and essence of political and legal thought. This is an area of study that Carl Schmitt designated as “political theology”, and that was subsequently taken up and further developed by various Catholic, Protestant, and, more recently (though not very systematically) by Orthodox authors. I will not enumerate here the friends who are part of this basically informal group, for they know very well who they are, and I wish to avoid the risk that someone might be omitted

from this enumeration and hence feel unjustly offended. And the last step towards defining the direction of my work was taken in Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., in the course of very interesting, indeed, unforgettable, talks with Professor Irfan Shahîd. The result of that stay was not only my research about Tsar Arev (its idea sprang from a remote childhood memory of my father relating to me events that had taken place in Iraq) but also the general orientation to search for the Near Eastern roots of the literary work I purposed to study.

That was how the idea was born; as for its course of realisation, it spanned from Sofia through Jerusalem, then through the little village of Hawarden in Wales, and finally to Paris. It was during my stay in Jerusalem, on a scholarship at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (AIAR), that the main parts of the work related to the Old Testament tradition were completed. These sections are easily recognisable within this book, for they would have been impossible to write had I relied only on the resources available in Bulgaria. That is why I want to specially thank the team at AIAR and particularly the institute's director, Professor Seymour Gitin, for the opportunity provided me. There is also an exceptionally rich theological collection at Gladstone's Library in Hawarden, Wales (which at the time of my stay there was still called St Deiniol's Library), and I had the excellent opportunity to use it thanks to the specially kind attitude of this institution towards Bulgaria and Bulgarians, an attitude that is a legacy from the time of William Gladstone. I would like to personally thank the warden, Father Peter Francis, and the other colleagues at the library.

And so we come to the text itself, which is the basis of this book. It is called *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an Angel Took Him to the Seventh Heaven*. This work is known in Bulgarian historical science, and internationally as well, as a *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle of the 11th Century*. Evidently, the latter title is not derived from the text itself, and it is not present in the only preserved manuscript copy. What is more, the work has its own title, which is written and clearly declared in the manuscript. Then where did the title by which it is known to scholars come from? From the publishers of the text, of course! Long ago Lj. Stojanović put the following heading to the almost fully normalised text he published: "*Kao bugarski letopis*". This is not a true title and evidently involves no claim of renaming the work. It was part of the overall attitude of science in that time (in Serbia and elsewhere), which looked upon the publication of a text as inseparable from its interpretation. This approach led to the normalisation of the work's spelling and punctuation, and to all sorts of intervention. I am not expressing disapproval of this

here, especially as the Serbian scholar did a good job and his intervention in the text has not led to any deviations or misinterpretation. The above-mentioned title, popular even today, was actually composed not by the first publisher of the text but by Jordan Ivanov, who later republished the *Tale*. Jordan Ivanov's title *does* contain an interpretation of the source, and also a preliminary assessment of it (inasmuch as every title is situated above, which means "before", the work). His assessment was evidently influenced by his milieu and his time. By this title, he basically posited the parameters of interpretation, which later *became almost the norm* for other scholars. I say "almost" because the *Tale* is so confusing that it would be impossible for its interpretations to be unanimous and to follow a single model. These interpretations will be discussed in a separate chapter on historiographical problems, but here I will deal with the title Jordan Ivanov gave to the work.

*Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle of the 11th Century* is a designation encompassing several characteristics. The work is defined as a "chronicle", even though it quite clearly follows the tradition of Near Eastern and especially biblical prophetic literature. It is true that it includes an enumeration of consecutive rulers; part of this account resembles a mythical pre-history, and it all seems to end in the future. Nevertheless, this does not make it a "chronicle"; does not put it in that genre.

In addition, the chronicle is "Bulgarian" and "apocryphal"; the latter is understood as meaning—again "thanks" to Jordan Ivanov—a mostly Bogomilian work, or in any case a heretical one. As to whether the work is Bulgarian, there is a basically unanimous opinion in Bulgarian historiography that it is, and this opinion rests on the previous characteristic. Most scholars consider it to be an original, national work, and if there is any difference of opinion among them at all, it is whether the *Tale* is folkloric, dualistic (Manichaeism or Bogomilian), or simply a patriotic historical account. As I said, the apocryphal nature of the text is usually thought of as dualistic and Bogomilian, and only recently have other interpretations appeared. In fact, the *Tale* really is "apocryphal" but not in the usual sense. In various cultural and religious environments, "apocrypha", "pseudepigrapha" or "deuterocanonical" books are the names given to texts that are in the line of the Holy Scripture tradition but do not belong to its normative body of texts; specifically for Orthodox Christians, this body is defined by the Septuagint and the Gospel-Apostolic tradition. In this sense, but in no other, I accept the thesis that the work is *apocryphal*.

The title's last point for discussion is its dating from the 11th century. This question has a place further on in the presentation; here I will only note that

I believe this to be a compilatory work in which some of the ideas reflected date from *before* the indicated time, and that it was probably completed *after* that time.

Here, at the beginning of this book, I must make a point in order to avoid a grave misunderstanding of its purpose: the objective of the research I am offering here is not to study the text of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* as a source of knowledge of historical events. I state this from the start, and the reader should not expect any other approach here. The other approach has been the topic of other studies by other researchers. I should also state that I do not mean to, and cannot, completely reject that other view. It has arisen and exists in a certain social milieu and, in the opinion of that milieu, it undoubtedly carries information about events. This approach elaborates ideological theses based on a view of history that is at least partially *imaginary*; but the theses cannot be isolated from the aspect of positive events in the work. That is why some authors have succeeded in finding some quite interesting data in the story. If I object to the positivist approach to the work, it is because there is a tendency for this approach to be applied in interpreting all elements of the work, situating them in real time and a real environment. This exclusive interpretation is, in my opinion, an insufficient and dangerous way of approaching the source, and is dictated by ideological considerations rooted in the 19th century, considerations that I discuss separately in this book.

We come to the question of what I intend to present and prove in this book. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is certainly one of the most interesting but also one of the most ambiguous and unclear texts of mediaeval Bulgarian literature. It is not an original work but a compilation consisting of various layers, its essential basis being neither folkloric nor dualistic, and—least of all—patriotic. The *Tale* has its origin essentially in biblical and Near Eastern prophetic literature of the apocalyptic type, a genre in which the presentation of the past serves as an occasion to express views on the meaning of existence and on the future, understood as the Salvation of people. To put it in modern terms, this is a work that states very significant positions on issues of identity, the state, ideology, the origin and purpose of power. These positions present the religious nature of state power on the basis of, using terms and images from, Holy Scripture, and especially the Old Testament.

*Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* reflects the initial steps in the creation of a new identity for the baptised Bulgarians and, in my opinion, it stresses two main ideas in this respect. The first emphasis concerns the view that the neophytes are the New Israel, a very familiar thesis both in the Byzantine

Empire and in Western Europe. The second emphasis is on a unity between Romans/Byzantines and Bulgarians, which are presented in the text as practically a united people on a single territory and under the same rule, especially since the time of Tsar Constantine and after it. These two emphases combine in the general idea of the New Israel as the earthly kingdom of Romans/Byzantines and of Bulgarians.

These are the general theses that I will attempt to present and prove further on in this book. The evaluation of this attempt is not for me to make and not to be placed in the introduction—it is left to you, the readers of this research. I can only be thankful for the interest shown and express my gratitude to all those who have supported me in the creation of this book. Some of them were already mentioned, with or without their names, as the people who helped me in Sofia, Rome, Bucharest, Jerusalem, Washington D.C., Hawarden, and Paris.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE TEXT OF THE LITERARY WORK AND ITS MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

#### *The Variable Destiny of the Kichevo Manuscript and the Place of Tale of the Prophet Isaiah in It*

*Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an Angel Took him to the Seventh Heaven* has reached us in a single copy within a later Serbian manuscript from the beginning of the 17th century. It was from this copy that Ljubomir Stojanović published the text in 1890. For a whole century after that, the original itself was considered lost, although it had at times been in the hands of researchers, some of whom (for instance A.M. Seliščev) worked with it, but regarding other topics without paying attention to the narrative that is our object of interest. This confused destiny of the manuscript matches to a great extent the insufficient clarity of the text itself. Fortunately, in the last decade of the 20th century, Anatolij Turilov rediscovered the manuscript, which in fact had never been lost, and put it back into academic circulation. That is why the brief description of the manuscript and the context of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* within it, will be based on the large, exceptionally important article by Turilov, published in 1995.<sup>1</sup>

Our text has come down to us in a codex, which is in State Historical Museum (= GIM), Moscow, Khludov collection, nr. 123, a manuscript of 457 paper sheets (the beginning is missing) in format 4° (195×135 mm). A. Turilov traced the watermarks and dated the manuscript to the beginning of the 17th century, explicitly indicating that a date around the turn of the 16th to 17th century is less probable.

The text is written in two columns, in small calligraphic semi-uncial script. Ligatures are abundant throughout the text. The spelling is defined as

---

<sup>1</sup> A. Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik s 'Bolgarskoj apokrificheskoj letopis'ju' (Datirovka, sostav i istorija rukopisi)", *Palaeobulgarica*, XIX, 1995, 4, pp. 2–39 (see pp. 2–5 about the 'disappearance' of the manuscript and its adventures). See also Sv. Nikolova, M. Yovcheva, T. Popova, L. Taseva, *Bulgarskoto srednovekovno nasledstvo v sbirkata na Alexeij Khludov v Dărzhavnija istoricheski muzej v Moskva. Katalog*, Sofia, 1999, No 87 (Khlud. 123), pp. 92–93 and fig. 94–99.

Serbian, with traces of the Resava School orthography. The original binding has been preserved: a wooden board covered with leather; it once had clasps that are now missing.

The contents of the manuscript are quite rich and diverse. A. Turilov presents them in detail in the above-cited article, and I shall not repeat his observations here.<sup>2</sup> In short, the texts comprise commemorations of Bulgarian as well as Serbian saints. This is understandable, as the manuscript is Serbian and was probably created in a Serbian environment. These commemorations include: Serbian Archbishop Arsenius, St King Stephen Dečanski, St Sava, St Symeon/Stephen Nemanja, St Vitus' day, etc. In addition to this, there is an impressive Eastern Slavic presence and influence in the collection, which is one of its characteristic features.<sup>3</sup> It is represented in particular by the orations of St Cyril Turovsky, but also by some typically Russian commemorations and feasts. These include the feast of Veil of Our Lady (October 1) and Translation of the relics of St Nicholas from Myra in Lycia to Bari (May 9); at least the first of these was exceptionally important for the ideology of state power. In the feast of St Nicholas, we can see a Serbian connection, for a direct Italian influence was coming to this country by way of the Dalmatian coast, and the cult of this saint, centred on his shrine in Bari, was popular in Serbia.

All these observations indicate the manuscript was composed in an environment, and perhaps a location, of Southern Slavic–Eastern Slavic collaboration and exchange, which gives us some idea as to its history and fate. Anatolij Turilov notes the inclusion of a number of texts related to saints by the name of Anna, and proposes that the locality where it was created was Studenica or Mount Athos.<sup>4</sup> In any case, he relates the veneration of St Anna to Serbia and specifically to the wife of St Symeon/ Stephen Nemanja, Anna—the nun Anastasia. Despite these observations, which are indubitable, and although it was probably composed in a Serbian milieu with a strong Russian influence, what we know of the manuscript's subsequent path indicates its history took place entirely among Bulgarians of the western (southwestern) Bulgarian lands, and was especially connected with a Bulgarian ecclesiastic, Hieromonk Cyril Peččinović. In any case, I believe it is certain that the manuscript comprising the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* was created and kept in monastic circles and has some relation to the large centres of South Slavic collaboration in Macedonia.

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<sup>2</sup> Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik", pp. 8–26.

<sup>3</sup> Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik", pp. 35–36.

<sup>4</sup> Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik", pp. 37–38.

As for the textual assemblage in which the apocryphon is included in the Kichevo manuscript, I can agree with A. Turilov that the work is not in its own proper literary context there. There are two more groups of apocryphal works in the manuscript, which also do not belong to its convoy, for they do not form a unity with it in terms of their place in the manuscript and in terms of their contents. One group encompasses apocryphal prayers to St Martyr Tryphon. The second has attracted greater interest: it consists of “*Paralipomena Ieremiae*”, which is combined with “*Revelation of Baruch*”. This editing is unique; the uniting of the two works was probably done in a Slavic milieu. It merits special attention, but we should point out that, within the manuscript, this couple of works remains isolated from *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and does not form a coherent set with the latter.

These observations, based chiefly on research by other scholars, and without my having first-hand knowledge of the manuscript, seem to suggest that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* has been put there by chance. Thus, the study of the whole collection provides practically no concrete data, except that it helps us localise the compiling of the work. Though this conclusion seems to me improper and dubious, I do not feel I could offer anything more concrete than this for the time being. It is evident that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is a compiled text and that it existed chiefly in Western Bulgaria, where it had some dissemination (as far as we can judge by the sole copy that has reached us) in the Serbian and more generally South Slavic context. We have reasons to classify it as monastic literature and to define its environment of dissemination as a monastic one.

Finally, we come to the question as to the possible influence that a printed book—Jacob Kraykov’s *Book for Various Occasions*, published in 1572 in Venice—may have had on the manuscript as a whole and specifically on *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. This book precedes the Kichevo manuscript by several decades, it contains some similar topics, and it had a proximate, if not identical, area of dissemination in Macedonia and the Western Balkans. Further on in this book I state my view as to this possible influence, but in any case, it can hardly be thought of as anything other than a hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> I should point out that in an article devoted to a concrete apocryphal text from the book by Jacob Kraykov “*Book for Various Occasions*”, Janja Jerkov Capaldo has expressed the view that this printed book has had influence upon the manuscript tradition and dissemination of the apocryphon (J. Jerkov Capaldo, “Un apocrifo sulla Dormizione in un libro slavo pubblicato a Venezia nel 1572”, *Europa orientalis*, 27, 2008, p. 28). This may serve as an indirect example of possible influence of this book upon the manuscript specifically as regards the reference to the death of Tsar Peter in Rome.

Here I would draw attention to another circumstance that can only be mentioned in passing within the framework of this study, but could not be researched in greater depth without access to the manuscript. I am referring to the two paschal tables (Παρχαλία Κϋλοβα ζση σιιϵ), included in the Kichevo manuscript at f. 255<sup>v</sup>; they may have some relation to the paschal tables ascribed to Tsar Peter, published by Jacob Kraykov in 1572, and may be similar to those that P.R. Slavejkov saw in an euchologium, dating, possibly, from the 17th century.<sup>6</sup> The data on the text, which Turilov presents in his description, are insufficient to permit a judgment as to the possible identity of the texts, and so I will not state any specific position on the matter. Perhaps future research will be able to confirm or reject the hypothesis concerning the influence of the 1572 *Book for Various Occasions* on the Kichevo manuscript, but for the time being this can be left as just a topic of discussion.

### *The Text of the Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*

Here I offer a new publication of the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, made on the basis of the very high-quality photographs of the Kichevo manuscript where the work is included. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first publication based entirely on the manuscript after that of Lj. Stojanović. The latest edition prepared and published in the book by A. Miltenova and V. Täpkova-Zaimova<sup>7</sup> comments on all the Serbian scholar's inaccuracies of transcription and corrects them, inasmuch as it was realised after A. Turilov's rediscovery of the manuscript. I find some differences only in the cited numbers. Here I have endeavoured to offer an edition that fully conforms to and follows all the particularities of the copyist's spelling, even including the overdeveloped and—it seems to me—unfounded use of dia-critical signs, a particularity that might possibly contain useful information for understanding the text. The manuscript columns are published as they are to be found within the original, and the lines in this edition conform to the lines in the columns. I have made no changes of punctuation, nor added

<sup>6</sup> R. Pavlova, *Peter Chernorizets—starobulgarski pisatel ot X vek*, (= *Kirilo-Methodievski studii*, vol. 9), Sofia, 1994, p. 29; M. Tsibranska, *Etudi värkhu kirilskata paleotipia, XV–XVIII vek*, Sofia, 2007, pp. 58–59; A. Nikolov, *Politicheskata misäl v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria (sredata na IX—kraja na X vek)*, Sofia, 2006, pp. 252–253.

<sup>7</sup> V. Täpkova-Zaimova, A. Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina väv Vizantija i v srednovkovna Bulgarija*, Sofia, 1996, pp. 192–206; V. Täpkova-Zaimova, A. Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria*, Sofia, 2011, pp. 274–300.

any division into parts marked by consecutive numbers, capital letters or new lines. In this way, a more complete idea of the text itself is obtained, and my personal intervention in it has been reduced to a minimum. I have only taken the liberty of placing footnotes in certain places, and numbering, in the margins, the original lines of the Old Slavonic text. The text written with red ink is underlined.

The translation of the text, added to this edition of the original, is the one included in Kiril Petkov's book, published several years ago.<sup>8</sup> It is printed parallel to the original, and only some minor changes have been made, chiefly related to the spelling of some personal and geographical names, which has been brought in conformity with the spelling used in this book: Isot/Izot, Ozius/Ozia, Goliat/Goliath, Dristar/Dorostorum, Odeljian/Odelean, Tcherven/Cherven, Nesebar/Messenbria, Shtip/Štip, etc. There are also some other slight differences. I must stress, however, that I did not use Petkov's translation in the body of my research and I sometimes took the liberty to use other words without changing the sense of the text.

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<sup>8</sup> K. Petkov, *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century. The Records of a Bygone Culture*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2008, pp. 194–199. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the author for kindly permitting the publication of his translation here.



Chludov 123, f. 400d-403a

- f. 400d ска̀нїе ꙗсаїа прѣ́ка · ка̀ко  
възъ́ненъ бы́ агг̀ла̀ до · зѣ́го нѣ́мы ·  
Се́ азъ ꙗсаїа прѣ́къ · нже́ бѣ́гомъ  
 5 възлю́кше , въ прѣ́цѣ́ гдѣ́мъ на  
шнѣ́ ꙗ́хо́мъ · прїи́до вожї́емъ  
пѣ́вѣнїемъ ска̀ннѣ́ еже́ хо́щѣ  
тъ бы́ · въ послѣ́нїе́ днѣ́ · ро́дъ  
ѡ́лву́скѣ́ · на зѣ́мни в'сѣ́ · не́  
 10 азъ ска́заю се́ вратї́е · нѣ́ ѡ́цѣ́  
нѣ́ны дѣ́ломъ стѣ́мъ сво́имъ  
ска́ мнѣ́ · н азъ же́ ва́ ска́зашю́ ,  
не́ же се́ снѣ́е ѡ́га ꙗ́къ бѣ́ бл҃го́дѣ́  
дїе́ свое́ прои́зволнѣ́ на мнѣ́ ·  
 15 то́га посла́ ст҃го агг̀ла̀ свое́го  
къ мнѣ́ · н по́етъ мнѣ́ ѡ́ зѣ́мліе́ ꙗ́  
высо́тѣ́ нѣ́ншю́ · н тѣ́ видѣ́хъ  
пѣ́нїа агг̀ла̀ска · по́ица ꙗ́ ꙗ́  
сла́веща · н възъ́е ме́ па́кы на́  
фѣ́торѣ́ нво́ · н тѣ́ видѣ́хъ нна́  
 20 мно́га несро́енїа · н възра́до  
ва́ се́ сѣ́ло · ѡ́ видѣ́хнѣ́ то́мъ ·  
н съмѣ́тнше́ в'се́ ко́стн мо́е · н ре́  
ми агг̀ла̀ вѣ́ещи мѣ́ · по́внза́  
н се́ ꙗсаїе́ · да́ вншнѣ́ сла́вѣ́жїю́ ,  
 25 вѣ́лнка н не́нзрѣ́на · н възъ́е  
ме́ па́кы ѡ́ то́у на́ , ꙗ́ко́ нво́ , н  
на́ , дѣ́то́е , н на́ , е́ · н на́ , сѣ́ · да́  
н до́ , зѣ́ма́ нва́ до́сѣ́го́хѣ́ · н  
тѣ́ видѣ́хъ сѣ́дїю́ сѣ́ща на́ прѣ́сто  
 30 лѣ́ вно́цѣ́ · н прѣ́възненѣ́ · н  
ѡ́крѣ́тѣ́ егѣ́ видѣ́хъ ѡ́гнѣ́ на́  
горе́ща н кло́кѣ́ща , н тнѣ́  
сѣ́ща тнѣ́щїи агг̀ла̀ сѣ́зжа́хъ  
ѣ́мъ · н т'мнѣ́ т'ма́мы прѣ́сто  
 35 лѣ́хъ ѣ́мъ · н па́кы видѣ́хъ до́  
сншю́ егѣ́ пѣ́нїа агг̀ла̀ска́ ,

*Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an  
 Angel Took Him to the Seventh Heaven*

I, Prophet Isaiah, beloved among the prophets of our Lord God Jesus Christ, came on God's command to tell you what will happen in the last days of humankind all over the earth. Not I am narrating this, brothers, but the Heavenly Father told me this through His Holy Spirit and [now] I am telling to you. Here is what [happened], when the Lord God showed His good will toward me. Then he sent to me his holy angel and lifted me up from the earth to the heavenly heights, and there I saw angels who sang and praised the Lord. Then [he] took me again to the Second Heaven and there I saw many arrangements and rejoiced mightily on account of what I saw, and all my bones were confounded. And the angel who led me said: "Straighten up, Isaiah, to see the great and unspoken divine glory!" He led me to the Third Heaven, then to the Fourth, the Fifth, the Six, until we reached even to the Seventh Heaven. There I saw a judge, sitting on a high and most sublime throne, and I saw a river of boiling fire flowing around him, and thousands and thousands of angels served him and innumerable more stood before him. Then again I saw to his right angels singing to him,

<sup>a</sup>The letter corrected from n to ѡ.

- f. 401a ἄ ῶ σῆδὸ ἐγο πλά γρῆσνῆνῆ, τοῦτᾶ  
 ἄζκῆ βῆπρoсн ἄγγλᾶ βoдeщᾶ мe -  
 н ῥῑῑ ἔμῆс гῑн ῑoкᾶжн гᾶ мoῑгo -  
 прнзвᾶв'шᾶгo мe ῶ ῑрῑῑᾶ мῑтῑрe<sup>a</sup> мoῑe .  
 5 н ῑрe мн ἄγγλᾶ сн гῑнe - сλᾶῑ нз'врᾶ  
 нн бжтн пррῑῑe нсᾶῑe - нeбъз'м  
 жнo ē внд'ктн вь тῑῑсн гᾶ сeῑe,  
 нб тῑῑк'мo гᾶᾶ ἔгo δeсλᾶшн ῑeнῑ  
 к тῑeῑῑ - н ῑo сeῑ δвo δeсλᾶшᾶх'  
 10 гᾶᾶ гᾶᾶ мoῑгo кῑ мн'к - гᾶᾶᾶ  
 цᾶᾶ нсᾶῑe, нсᾶῑe вьзлᾶoῑeнн  
 мoн - ндн н сᾶᾶжн ῑoдs ῑᾶῑeῑ'сᾶ  
 мs нᾶ зeмᾶнн e'сᾶ сᾶᾶ - eжe внд'к  
 н сλᾶῑшᾶ - н кᾶᾶкo ᾶῑῑe' вь нᾶ ῑ  
 15 сᾶᾶῑнᾶ вῑῑῑнᾶ - ῑoсᾶᾶῑeннeс ῑo  
 дs - ἄз' вoрῑῑ ἔμῆс гῑн дoῑῑo ē мн  
 зe вь - н нe вьз'врᾶщᾶн мeнe  
 ῶнoῑ' жe прнᾶдo - тoгᾶ δeсλᾶῑ  
 шᾶᾶ гᾶᾶ гᾶᾶ мoῑгo - гᾶᾶᾶᾶ к' мн' -  
 20 ῑсᾶῑe вьзлᾶoῑeннῑ мoн пррῑῑe -  
 дᾶᾶ кᾶᾶкo ᾶῑῑoῑ' δвeтн жнeс  
 цeнᾶ нᾶ зeмᾶнн лᾶoῑe - ῑo тῑeῑῑ  
 вo дῑῑῑᾶгo прῑῑᾶ нe вsдeтῑ ,  
 нн нᾶᾶᾶ вь ῑῑῑῑ - нн нᾶᾶᾶ вь  
 25 зы нн сᾶᾶтн ῑeнῑe мнoῑo сe - н  
 ῑo сeῑ δвῑe сῑнe мe ἄγγλᾶῑ гῑнῑ ,  
 ῶ нeᾶᾶ н ῑoсᾶᾶῑн мe дoдs нᾶ зe  
 мᾶн - н ῑo сe ῑῑсλᾶῑшᾶᾶ гᾶᾶ дῑῑs  
 гoῑe кῑ мн'к гᾶᾶᾶᾶ - нсᾶῑe вь  
 30 злᾶoῑeннῑ мoн пррῑῑe - ндн нᾶ  
 зᾶᾶᾶᾶ ῶдᾶ вьшнῑ сῑᾶнн ῑнᾶᾶ ,  
 ῶᾶῑῑн ῑῑeтῑῑo ῑῑ ῶ кsмᾶннᾶ,  
 ῑeкoмн вᾶᾶᾶᾶ - н нᾶсeлн зeᾶᾶᾶ  
 кᾶᾶᾶᾶᾶᾶᾶ - eжe ῑῑῑeтншe  
 35 ῑнᾶᾶᾶᾶᾶᾶ , н eᾶннн - тoгᾶ жe  
 ἄзкῑ вῑᾶтῑe бжῑeᾶᾶᾶᾶ ῑoῑeнῑe

and to his left sinners crying. Then I asked the angel that led me saying unto him: "Sire, show me my Lord, who called me from the womb of my mother." The angel of the Powers of the Lord told me: "Hearken, oh Isaiah, chosen prophet of God, it is impossible to see the Lord in the body, but you will hear His voice, His words directed to you." And then, therefore, I heard the voice of my Lord God Who spoke thus to me: "Oh Isaiah, Isaiah, My beloved one, go and tell to humankind on earth all that you saw and heard, and what will happen to the last of [your] kind in the last days." And I told Him: "Lord, I feel good to be here; do not send me back to where I came from." Then I heard the voice of my Lord God Who spoke thus to me: "Isaiah, my beloved prophet, how else will the people who live on earth learn? There will be no other prophet after you, nor will there be another after that, nor will any one be coming up, nor will any one tell my words." Then the angel brought me down from the heavens and put me down on earth. And then I heard a voice that told me something else: "Oh Isaiah, My beloved prophet, go westwards from the upper countries of Rome, take one third part of the Cumans called Bulgarians, and populate the land called Karvuna that was evacuated by the Romans and the Hellenes." Then I, brothers, on God's command

<sup>a</sup>The word *митре* is added later above the line.

- f. 401b
- 5 <sup>1</sup>ѣмь · прїи́дѣ на лѣвѣи сра́нѣ рїи́ ·  
<sup>2</sup>и ѡдѣлѣ третїи ѡ кѡманн · и ꙗ́  
<sup>3</sup>вѣдѣ ѡ хъ пѣтѣ трѣстїи покáзѣ ,  
<sup>4</sup>и доведѣ ѡ хъ до рѣцѣ е́же глѣтꙗ се зá  
 5 тнѣса , и кѣ дрѡгѡ рѣцѣ глѣмá ере  
<sup>6</sup>са · и то́га бѣ нма , г · рѣкы вѣкїе  
<sup>7</sup>и насади зѣмлю карвѣнскѣ , ренó  
<sup>8</sup>ли вьлгарьска · вѣ во ѡпѣстѣла ѡ  
<sup>9</sup>ѣмь · за рл · лѣ · и нади еи сь мнѡь  
 10 сѣо лѡтї · ѡ дѣна до море · и постави  
<sup>10</sup>нмѣ црїа ѡ ны , емоу вѣ нме салв  
<sup>11</sup>црѣ · и тѣн дѣо црѣ насади хѡрѣ и гра  
<sup>12</sup>дове · нѣколнко лѡтї ти выше по  
<sup>13</sup>ганн · и тѣн во црѣ съво́ри · р · мого́ ·  
 15 вѣ зѣмли влгарьстѣн · то́га на́ре  
<sup>14</sup>кѡше нме емѣ · р · мого́л · црѣ · и вѣ та  
<sup>15</sup>лѣта нзѡкыла бѣ ѡ вѣсѣо , и вые ·  
<sup>16</sup>р · мого́и вѣ црѣво егѡ · и тѣн же вѣ  
<sup>17</sup>р · вѣи црѣ вѣ зѣмли влгарьскѡи ·  
 20 и црѣвока лѣ · р · и ѡ · и скѡнчá сѣ ·  
<sup>18</sup>и тѣ по нѣѣ ѡбрѣтѣ ннѣ црѣ вѣ зѣм  
<sup>19</sup>ли вьлгарьстѣн дѣтншѣ · вѣ кравѣ  
<sup>20</sup>ношень , г · лѣ , еже на́ре сѣ нме и  
<sup>21</sup>мѣ испорꙗ црѣ · прѣемь црѣво влгарь  
 25 скѡе · и тѣн црѣ съза градн вѣлнкїе  
<sup>22</sup>и на дѣнавѣ дрѣстѣрꙗ гра ѡнꙗ създа ·  
<sup>23</sup>и вѣли прѣзидѣ ѡ дѣнава до море ,  
<sup>24</sup>ѡнѣ създа , и плюска гра · и тѣн  
<sup>25</sup>црѣ мнѡьсѣо мнѡ нзманьтене по  
 30 гѣвѣн · и тѣн црѣ насади вѣсѣ зѣмлю к  
<sup>26</sup>рѣвѣнскѡи · и дѣо вѣхѣ рѣвѣже ѡи ѡ  
<sup>27</sup>пн · и рѡднѣ испорꙗ е́дино ѡроуе · и на  
<sup>28</sup>рѣ нме емѣ нзѡтѣ · црѣ же испорꙗ црѣво  
<sup>29</sup>ва на зѣмли влгарьскѡи · лѣ · рѡв ·  
 35 и по́мь погѣвѣше егѡ нзманьтене  
<sup>30</sup>на дѣнавѣ · и по ѡмрѣтїи же испорꙗ

came to the left parts of Rome, took aside a third of the Cumans and led them on the way, pointing out with a reed, and brought them over to the river called Zatiusa and to another one, called Ereusa. Back then, there were three large rivers. I populated the land of Karvuna, called Bulgarian land, for it had been deserted by the Hellenes for one hundred and thirty years. And I populated it with many people from the Danube to the sea and I made one among them a tsar: his name is Tsar Slav. This tsar set up country and towns. For some time these people were pagans. This tsar made a hundred mounds in the Bulgarian land; then they gave him the name "The Hundred-mound Tsar." These were years of plenty, and there were hundred mounds in his kingdom. He was the first tsar in the Bulgarian land, and ruled for one hundred and nineteen years and passed away. Then after him another tsar was found in the Bulgarian land, a child carried in a basket for three years; he was given the name Tsar Ispor and he took over the Bulgarian realm. This tsar built great cities: at the Danube, the city of Dorostorum; a great rampart between the Danube and the sea; and he built the city of Pliska. This tsar slew a multitude of Ishmailites and populated the entire land of Karvuna, for before that there were Ethiopians. A child was born of him, and it was called Izot. Tsar Ispor ruled over the Bulgarian land for one hundred and seventy two years and then the Ishmailites slaughtered him on the Danube. After the slaying of Ispor,

<sup>a</sup>Sic!

- f. 401c Цѣта вѣлгар'ска · нѣрекоше кѣманѣ  
 вѣлгарѣ · а прѣже вѣхъ испора цѣта ꙗ  
 ганн сѣло · н кѣз'вожнѣн сѣще · н в'  
 нѣчьстїа многа · н вѣвахъ в'сѣа в  
 5 разн грѣскомѣ цѣтвѣ на лѣта мнѣ  
 га · н помѣ пакы прѣемь цѣтво вл'  
 гѣрьскоѣ сѣнь испора цѣта · емоуѣ нм  
 нзѣ · н тѣн цѣрь погъвы ѡзїа цѣта ѡ  
 вѣстокъ сѣ вои своимѣ · н гѣліада фр  
 10 га помор'скаго · н вѣ лѣтѣа нзѣта цѣ  
 вѣлгар'ска · вѣше градн чѣстн · сѣло  
 н роднѣ нзѣтъ цѣрь · б · ѡроуѣ · еднѣ  
 же назва вѣрн · а дрѣгаго снмѣнѣн ,  
 цѣрь же нзѣтъ цѣтвова · р'лѣ · н г'мц  
 15 н , вѣ гра' рекомѣн' плѣсцѣн н скѣн'ча  
 сѣ · н по ѡмр'тїю же нзѣта цѣта па  
 кы прѣемь цѣтво вѣлгар'скоѣ · сѣнь ѣ  
 ворнѣ · н бы блгоутнѣв · н блговѣ  
 рнѣ сѣло · н тѣн цѣрь кѣтн в'сѣ зѣло  
 20 вѣлгар'скѣю · н сѣза цѣркн по зѣмѣ  
 вѣлгар'стѣн · н на рѣцѣ вѣргѣл'ннѣцн ,  
 н тѣ прїем' цѣтво на вѣчн полн · сѣ  
 за вѣлн цѣркн · н прїнде на добрн' ·  
 н тамѣ скѣн'ча жнѣво свѣн · н цѣровѣ  
 25 же лѣ , сї · грѣха не нмѣѣ нн жєнїн ·  
 н бы влѣено цѣтво<sup>a</sup> егѣ · н скѣн'ча  
 сѣ сѣ мнрѣ ѣ гн · Пѣтѣже пакы прѣ  
 цѣтво вѣлгар'скоѣ сѣмѣн' вѣр' егѣ ·  
 н сѣза градн вѣлнкїѣ · по морѣ н вѣл  
 30 кы гра' прѣславѣ , ѡн' сѣзнда , н тѣ  
 в' нѣмь прїемь цѣтво · до гра' реко  
 ма зѣвѣча · н до солѣннѣ · н прѣсла' гра'  
 дн н сѣзнда за · кн лѣ · н многа зн  
 мєнїа сѣвѣрн цѣрь сѣмѣнѣн · цѣтво  
 35 ва тѣмѣ<sup>b</sup> · рл · н родн стго пера цѣта вл'  
 гар'ска · мѣжа стѣ н прѣвѣд'на ·

tsar of the Bulgarians, the Cumans were called Bulgarians, for earlier they had been godless pagans under Ispor and [lived] in great iniquity and were always enemies of the Greek kingdom for many years. And after that the son of Tsar Ispor took the Bulgarian kingdom again; his name was Izot. This tsar slew Ozia, the king of the East with his armies, and Goliath, the sea Frank. There were many great cities in the years of the Bulgarian Tsar Izot. Two sons were born of him: he called the one Boris and the other Symeon. Tsar Izot ruled one hundred years and three months and died in the city called Pliska. After the death of Tsar Izot his son Boris took over the Bulgarian kingdom. He was pious and very devout. This tsar converted the entire country of Bulgaria and built many churches all over the Bulgarian land and round about the river Bregalnitsa and there took over the kingdom. On *Ovche pole* [= Sheep's Field] he built white churches and went over to Dobrich, and there ended his life. He ruled sixteen years, without sin and without a wife. His kingdom was blessed and he died in God and in peace. Then Symeon, his brother, took over the Bulgarian kingdom again, and built great cities at the sea, and he built the great city of Preslav, and there he took over the kingdom all the way to the city called Zvechan and to Thessalonica. The city of Preslav [he] built and worked on for twenty eight years. Many portents did Tsar Symeon produce. [He] ruled for one hundred and thirty years and sired St Peter, the Bulgarian tsar, a man saintly and wholly righteous.

<sup>a</sup>Sic! Error of the copyist.

<sup>b</sup>Correction: it was writteb 'прїемѣн' but later corrected into 'тѣмѣ'. The word 'лѣ(т)' is not present in the manuscript but only in some editions.

- f. 401d
- ѿноу<sup>ѿ</sup> и тога<sup>ѿ</sup> въ то<sup>ѿ</sup> врѣмѣ в<sup>ѣ</sup>не  
 га<sup>ѿ</sup> црѣ с<sup>ѣ</sup>мевонѣ црѣтвоваше ·  
 цю<sup>ѿ</sup> възымаше данькѣ ѿ в<sup>ѣ</sup>се  
 и зѣмин своѣн по в<sup>ѣ</sup>семъ ѿбл<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 5 стѣю<sup>ѿ</sup> црѣтва ег<sup>ѿ</sup> · повѣсно тѣ  
 чю<sup>ѿ</sup> · и лъжницъ масл<sup>ѣ</sup> · и ганц<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 на годниъ то вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> данькѣ емъ  
 ѿ зѣмле ег<sup>ѿ</sup> · и ѿ л<sup>ѣ</sup>д<sup>ѣ</sup>н ег<sup>ѿ</sup> а нно  
 ннч<sup>ѣ</sup>то дрѣво не вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> емъ , и вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> и  
 10 зѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>въл<sup>ѣ</sup>та многа въ врѣна о<sup>ѿ</sup>  
 на · прѣ црѣ тѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> с<sup>ѣ</sup>мевонѣ · и ѿ  
 смр<sup>ѣ</sup>т<sup>ѣ</sup>ю ег<sup>ѿ</sup> пакы прѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>емъ црѣ  
 тво в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгарьское · снъ ег<sup>ѿ</sup> црѣ  
 перъ · и бы црѣ в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгарь<sup>ѣ</sup> еше  
 15 и грѣкѣ · и црѣтв<sup>ѣ</sup>ва въ зѣм<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгарьско<sup>ѣ</sup> , лѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> , вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> · грѣх<sup>ѣ</sup>а не  
 нмѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> ни жен<sup>ѣ</sup> · и бы в<sup>ѣ</sup>вено црѣ  
 тво е · тога<sup>ѿ</sup> дѣво въ д<sup>ѣ</sup>нн и лѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>т<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 стѣго пера црѣ в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгарьскаѣ  
 20 бы и зѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>въл<sup>ѣ</sup>та ѿ в<sup>ѣ</sup>сего · снрѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 чѣ пшен<sup>ѣ</sup>нца и масл<sup>ѣ</sup> · мѣда жѣ  
 и м<sup>ѣ</sup>лѣка и вин<sup>ѣ</sup>а , и ѿ в<sup>ѣ</sup>сего да  
 рован<sup>ѣ</sup>та бѣж<sup>ѣ</sup>та врѣше и кн<sup>ѣ</sup>пѣше ·  
 и не вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> в<sup>ѣ</sup>скд<sup>ѣ</sup>н<sup>ѣ</sup>те ни ѿ цю<sup>ѿ</sup> ·  
 25 нѣ вѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> сн<sup>ѣ</sup>тостѣ и зѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>вн<sup>ѣ</sup>льсѣво  
 ѿ в<sup>ѣ</sup>сего до и зѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>волен<sup>ѣ</sup>та бѣж<sup>ѣ</sup>та ·  
 и тога<sup>ѿ</sup> въ лѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>хѣ стѣго пера црѣ  
 в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгарьскаѣ · в<sup>ѣ</sup>врѣтѣ жен<sup>ѣ</sup>а нѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 ка в<sup>ѣ</sup>внца · ма<sup>ѣ</sup>а и м<sup>ѣ</sup>дра · и  
 30 сѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>ло правед<sup>ѣ</sup>на въ зѣ<sup>ѣ</sup>мин в<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 гарьстѣн<sup>ѣ</sup> · н<sup>ѣ</sup>мемъ елен<sup>ѣ</sup>а · и ѿ  
 д<sup>ѣ</sup>н к<sup>ѣ</sup>стан<sup>ѣ</sup> д<sup>ѣ</sup>нна црѣта стѣ<sup>ѣ</sup> м<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 жа и правед<sup>ѣ</sup>на · сн<sup>ѣ</sup>н о<sup>ѣ</sup>убо бы  
 снѣ к<sup>ѣ</sup>стан<sup>ѣ</sup> д<sup>ѣ</sup>на зелен<sup>ѣ</sup>а · и ѿ  
 35 м<sup>ѣ</sup>трѣ елен<sup>ѣ</sup> · и съ к<sup>ѣ</sup>стан<sup>ѣ</sup> д<sup>ѣ</sup>н<sup>ѣ</sup>  
 г<sup>ѣ</sup>лени в<sup>ѣ</sup>лгаренор<sup>ѣ</sup>нн црѣ рѣ

At that time, when Tsar Symeon ruled, he taxed his land from all the provinces of his kingdom that much: he took one sheaf, one egg, and one spoon of butter per year. That was his tax on the land, nothing else did he require from his people. And there was plenty at that time, under this Tsar Symeon. After his death, his son Tsar Peter took over the Bulgarian kingdom, and he was tsar of the Bulgarians and of the Greeks as well. He ruled the Bulgarian land for twelve years, without sin and without a wife, and his rule was blessed. In the days and years of St Peter, the tsar of the Bulgarians, there was plenty of everything, that is to say, of wheat and butter, honey, milk and wine, the land was overflowing with every gift of God, there was no dearth of anything but by the will of God everything was in abundance and to satiety. And then, in the years of St Peter, tsar of the Bulgarians, there was a widow in the Bulgarian land, young, wise, and very pious, by the name of Elena. She gave birth to Constantine, a saintly and very pious man. He was the son of Constantine the Green and Elena, and this Constantine was called Porphyrogenitus and he was tsar of the Romans.

f. 402a скы · ѿ по завѣстнѣ мѣтнѣ игдо ѡле  
 на · вѣжа въ визѣ гра ѿ елѣинѣ  
 римьскы · по нѣ ѡврѣтѣ непра  
 зна сѣши · ѿ тамо роднѣ костѣ  
 5 нѣтнѣ цѣта · ѿ томѣ гавнѣ агглѣ  
 гнѣ · ѿ елговѣствѣова емѣ ѡтнѣ  
 крѣтъ на вѣстоцѣ · любѣкѣста  
 во сѣ перѣ цѣрь ѿ константѣннѣ цѣрѣ,  
 ѿ сѣбра воѣ своеѣ ѿ поѣмѣ мѣтрѣ  
 10 своеѣ · ѿ по нѣде на вѣстоцѣ по  
 морѣ · на краиннѣевѣ<sup>a</sup> мѣкѣсо ·  
 да ѿ гѣ же вѣ константннѣ цѣрѣ  
 тѣ вѣ малѣ гра ѿ именѣ визѣ  
 тѣта, ѿ донѣде константннѣ до то  
 15 го мѣкѣста · ѿ вѣнде мѣкѣсто пѣ  
 стѣ · ѿ морѣ до морѣ · ѿ по нѣслѣ  
 вѣсѣ вѣ аще нѣде на краиннѣевѣ  
 мѣкѣсто ѿ обрѣцѣ ѡтнѣ крѣтъ хѣвѣ  
 на нѣ же распѣ сѣ хѣсѣ · ѿ тѣ пакѣ  
 20 възвращѣ сѣ на сѣ мѣкѣсто пѣ  
 стѣ · ѿ сѣзнѣкѣу гра ѿ нарѣкѣ  
 нѣ емѣ новѣ ерлнѣмѣ · сѣтѣмѣ  
 поконѣ · а цѣремѣ скрашенѣ  
 е · да донѣде же по нѣде константннѣ  
 25 цѣрѣ на краиннѣевѣ мѣкѣсто ·  
 а до толнѣ прѣидѣше нѣкѣто  
 рнѣ наснѣнѣцнѣ · тако исполннѣ,  
 ѿ по гѣвише землѣ елгарѣскѣ  
 ю по морѣ · а перѣ цѣрѣ елгарѣ  
 30 скѣ правѣднѣ мѣжѣ · ѡстаѣ  
 цѣрѣтѣ · ѿ вѣжа на западѣ е рнѣ  
 ѿ тѣ скѣчѣ жнѣтѣе своеѣ · ѿ по  
 мѣ вѣстѣвъ ннѣ цѣрѣ именѣ  
 сѣвѣкѣта · а порѣкло мѣ снѣмѣк  
 35 лнѣтъ · ѿ тѣнѣ свѣ нзѣде ѿ го  
 ры рекомнѣ витѣша · ѿ по нѣ

Because of envy, his mother Elena fled from the Roman Hellenes to the city of Viza, found herself with a child, and gave birth to Tsar Constantine. To this tsar an angel of God revealed the good word about the Honest Cross from the East. Tsar Constantine and Tsar Peter loved one another. He gathered his army, took his mother and set off to go East, over the sea, to the Cranium's place. There was a small town called Byzantium where Constantine was staying. As Constantine came to that place, he saw that it was desolate from sea to sea, and thought in himself: "If I go to the Cranium's place and find the Honest Cross of Christ, on which Christ was crucified, I will come back to this desolate place, I will have a city built here, and I will call it New Jerusalem, the resting place of saints and the adornment of tsars." However, while Tsar Constantine was on his way to the Cranium's place, certain violent men came, as tall as giants, and devastated the Bulgarian land by the sea. The Bulgarian tsar Peter, a righteous man, gave up his kingdom, fled to the West, to Rome, and there ended his life. After that, another tsar arose, called Seleukia with the nickname Simeklit. He went out from the mountain called Vitoshka and went

<sup>a</sup> Error of the copyist, instead of 'краиннѣевѣ' he wrote 'краиннѣевѣ'. The reason may be misunderstanding of "Cranium's place" (= Golgotha) that became "Krainievo" (linked to the word "kraj" = "end", "limit", "border").

- f. 402b
- ДЕ НА ПОЛЕ РЕКОМОДЕ РОМАНІА · Н ТШ  
 ПРІЕТЬ ЦРѢТВО · Н ТЪН СЪЗДА, Ё, ГРАВ'  
 ПО ЗЕМАН БЪЛГАРСѢН · Д · ПЛОДІВЪ,  
 В · СРЕЪ · Г · ВРЪЗНИКЪ · Д · СРѢЦЪ, Ё ·  
 5 ННШЪ · Н ЦРѢТВОВА СЕВ'КІА ЦРЬ ВЪ СРѢ  
 ЦН ГРАДЪ Н ПО ЗЕМАН БЪЛГАРСѢН,  
 ЛЪ · Л'К · Н ТШ СКОН'ЧА СЕВ'КІЕ ЖИТІЕ  
 СВОЕ · ПО ГРА' ВРЪЗНИКЪ · ДА ДОДЕ Ж  
 СЪЗДА СЕВ'КІА · Ё · ГРАДН ПО ЗЕМАН БЛ'  
 10 ГАРЬСѢН · А ДО ТОЛН ЦРЬ КОСТАНТИНЪ,  
 ѠВРѢТЕ ѠТНЫ КРѢХЪ · ПАКЪ ѠВРАТН  
 СЕ · Н ПРІИДЕ КЪ ГРАДЪ БЪЗАНТИ · Н ПОМІ  
 СЛН ВЪ В'СЕВ'КЕ · Н РЕ КАНО СЕ МѢСТО ПОУ  
 СТО АЗЪ СЪЗНАЪ ГРА, Н НАРЕКЪ НМЕ Ё  
 15 МШ КОСТАНТИНЪ ГРА, Н ПОСЛА КОСТАНЪ  
 ТННЪ ЦРЬ ВЪ РИЪ, КЪРАТОРА ЗАЛОГО НД  
 РЕКЪ · НАЖЕНІ ВОЕ РИШСКІЕ ЗА, С, Л'К,  
 ѠНЪ ЖЕ НДЕ Н ПРѢГНА Н ЗА, Г'Л'К, ЗА' ВО  
 ВЪ КЪРАТОРЪ · Н СВѢЩА СЕ ВЪ СЪ ЕЛЪ  
 20 ЛІНЫ · ДА Н ПОГ'ВНІ ЦОГА КОСТАНТИНА  
 Н МІТРЪ ЕГО ЕЛЕНЪ · ТОГА ВНАЪ ГЪ ВНСО  
 ВНСЕО Н · Н ПОРАЗЪ Н ПАЛНИЦЕО НЕВН  
 МОЮ · Н ВЪШЕ НЕВЪМН · КЪРАТОРЪ ЖЕ  
 ЗАН · НН ДѢТН НН ЖЕНН НАМЪШЕ · Н ПО Ё  
 25 ТН ВЪШЕ РИМАНАЕ ВЪ НОВН ІЕРАМЪ ·  
 ТОГА ДА СТЫ КОСТАНТИНЪ ОУСРОНЪЕ ВЪ СЕ  
 ЦРѢТВО ІЕРАНАСКОЕ · ПОЛАТН ЦРКІЕ Н П  
 НДЕ СЪ ВОИСКАМН НА ДЪНАВЪ · Н СЪЗЫ  
 ДА ГРА' РЕКОМН БДННЪ · А ПОРЕКЛО МШ  
 30 СЕМОВРЪХН БАВЪЛО · Н ПАКЪ КОСТА  
 НТИНЪ НАСЕЛН ЗЕМЛО БЪЛГАРСКОЕ ·  
 Ѡ ЗЕМЛЕ ЗАПАДНІЕ · Н СЪЗДА ЦРЬ КОС  
 ТАНТИНЪ · О · ГРАДОВЪ ПО НМЕНІН  
 ТЪ ВЪ СЕН ЗЕМАН · Н ТШ ПРѢКЪ ВЪ ЦРѢЕ<sup>а</sup>  
 35 ЗЪ · Л'К · Н СКОЧА СЕ · ПО НЕ ЖЕ ПАКН  
 ВЪСТА ЦРЬ ННЪ ВЪ ЗЕМАН БЪЛГАРСКОЕ ·

to the field called Romania, and there he took the kingdom. He built five cities in the Bulgarian land: 1/Plovdiv; 2/Srem; 3/Breznik; 4/Sredets; 5/Niš. He ruled in the city of Sredets over the Bulgarian land for thirty seven years. And there did Tsar Seleukia end his life, by the city of Breznik. While Seleukia was building the five cities in the Bulgarian land, Tsar Constantine found the Honest Cross of Christ. He came back to the city of Byzantium and thought in himself: "Where is that desolate place? I will build a city and I will call it Constantinople". Then Tsar Constantine sent an evil curator to Rome and told him: "Go and chase away the Roman army for six years." He went and sent them away for three years. The curator was a wicked man, and he conspired with the Hellenes to slay Tsar Constantine and his mother Elena. But God saw their high-minded treachery and struck them with an invisible stick and they became invisible. The evil curator had neither wife nor children. And the Romans were taken in the New Jerusalem. Then Tsar Constantine arranged well the entire Kingdom of Jerusalem with royal palaces, set off with his army toward the Danube, and built a city called Bdin, and its nickname was "Babylon on the Seven Hills [Hepthalophos Babylon]." And again did Constantine populate the Bulgarian lands to the west. After taking all these lands, he created seventy<sup>b</sup> cities, and spent sixty two years in his kingdom and passed away. After him another tsar arose in the Bulgarian land.

<sup>a</sup> There are some erased letters in the end of the line. Maybe the copyist tried to write here the number of the year but later gave up. <sup>b</sup> In the K. Petkov's translation—nine. This is an error of the Jordan Ivanov's edition, where stead ѓ (= 70) he wrote ѓ (= 9): Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonija*, Sofia, 1931, p. 285. In both editions of A. Miltenova and V. Tăpkova-Zaimova (*Istoriko-apocaliptičnata knižhnina*, p. 201; *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 289, 294) only in the translations the number is 17 but in the edition of the original text—70.

f. 402c ѡмоуѣ нѡмѣ снѡмѡ · н ѡрѣвова лѣ · вѣ ·  
 н скончѡ сѣ · н по немъ же пакы ѡбрѣ  
 тѣ сѣ ннѣ црѣ , н ѡмѣнѣ ннѣкѣфорѣ ·  
 н прѣемѣ црѣво вѡлгарьскоѣ · н тѡн  
 5 погубнѣ макснѡитѡна црѡа вѣзакѡ  
 на · н воѣ егѡ · н тѣ съзѡ днѡтнѣкѣ ,  
 н морѣнець · н сѣкрѣ , н на запаѣ вѣклѣ  
 грѡ · н кѡстоурѣ · н на дѣнѡвѣ ннѣкѡ  
 поль · н тѡн црѣвова , лѣ · лѣ , н по  
 10 гыве · н вѣ же ѡ нѣгѡ ѡрѡуѣ ѡмоуѣ н  
 ме снѡмѡ , прѣмѣдѡн · н прѣемѣ црѣво  
 вѡлгарьскоѣ · хрѣдѡуѣ н зѡлѣ людѣ ·  
 н погубнѣ зѣмѡ вѡлгарьскѡ · ѣрѡ  
 нмьскѡ н рѣнскѡ · кѡстантннѡ  
 15 црѡа ѡвѡла · н тѡгѡ вѣзѡвѡхѣ вѣснѣ лю  
 дѣ на снѡмѡна црѡа , ѡ люѣтѣ на  
 вратѣ · ѡ сѣ црѡа · прѣвѣ же црѣ снѡ  
 мѡнѣ вѣ црѣвѣ сн · д · лѣ · лѣ н скончѡ сѣ ·  
 н ѡмѣ ѡбрѣтѣ сѣ ѡ ннѡ ѡрѣсла црѣ ·  
 20 н ѡмѣнѣ вѡснѡтѣ · тѡгѡ пѡде вѣнѣцѣ вѡ  
 гѡуѣтнѣвѡ н хрѣтѡлѡгѡвнѣвѡ црѡа кѡстан  
 тннѡ · на глѡвѣ егѡ · н прѣтѣ вѡснѡ  
 тѣ црѣво · н погубнѣ вѣсѣ зѣмѡе рѡтнѣ ·  
 н езуѣ поганѣ , ѡко нѣкы мѡжѣ хрѡ  
 25 вѣ · вѣ днѣ вѡснѡтѡ црѡа мнѡга вѡлгѡ  
 вѡше вѣ людѣ · прѣвѣ же вѡснѡтѣ вѣ црѣ  
 е сн , лѣ , л · ннѣ жѣнѣ ннѣ грѣха нѡмѣ ,  
 н вѡвнѡ вѣ црѣво егѡ · н вѣ днѣ вѡсн  
 лѡ црѡа ѡбрѣтѣ црѣ · трѣ вѡ ѡ вѡвнѣ  
 30 цѣ прѡрѡчнѡ · мѡуѣсѣнѣ н дѡнѣ сѡмѡ  
 нѡ · н вѣ ѡрѣ сѡмѡнѡлѡвѣ · н ѡмѣнѣ  
 дѡтѣстѡнѡнѣ · н тѡн прѣемѣ црѣво  
 вѡлгарьскоѣ , н грѣскоѣ , н црѣво  
 вѡ , лѣ , лѣ · н потѡмъ вѣста ннѣ црѣ  
 35 сѡцѡа вѡдѡвнѡ · н прѣемѣ црѣво н црѣ  
 вова лѣ · г · н скончѡ сѣ · н потѡмъ вѣстѣ

His name was Symeon and he ruled twelve years and died. After that again a tsar arose, by the name of Nicephorus, and took over the Bulgarian kingdom. He slew the lawless tsar Maximian and his army. He also built Dimotik [Dydymoteichon], and Morunets [Kavala], and Serres, to the west Belgrade and Kostur [Kastoria], and at the Danube, Nicopolis. He ruled for forty three years and perished. He had a child whose name was Symeon the Wise. He took over the Bulgarian kingdom, but he was dishonest and evil with the people and he ruined the lands of Bulgaria, Jerusalem, and Rome, the lands [under the power] of Tsar Constantine. Then all the people called aloud to Tsar Symeon: "Woe to us, brothers, on account of this tsar!" Tsar Symeon spent four years in his kingdom and passed away. Then another tsar arose, from another lineage, by the name of Basil. The crown of the pious and Christ-loving Tsar Constantine rested on his head. Tsar Basil took over the kingdom and destroyed all enemy lands and pagan peoples, the brave man that he was. In his days, there were many goods among the people. Tsar Basil spent thirty years in rule, without a wife, sinless, and his rule was blessed. In the days of Tsar Basil three brothers, [sons] of a widow-prophetess became tsars: Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. And there was a son [alternative meaning: servant] of Samuel by the name of Augustian. He took over the Bulgarian and the Greek kingdom and reigned for thirty seven years. And after that another tsar of the same widow arose, took over the kingdom, ruled three years, and passed away. And after that another tsar arose,

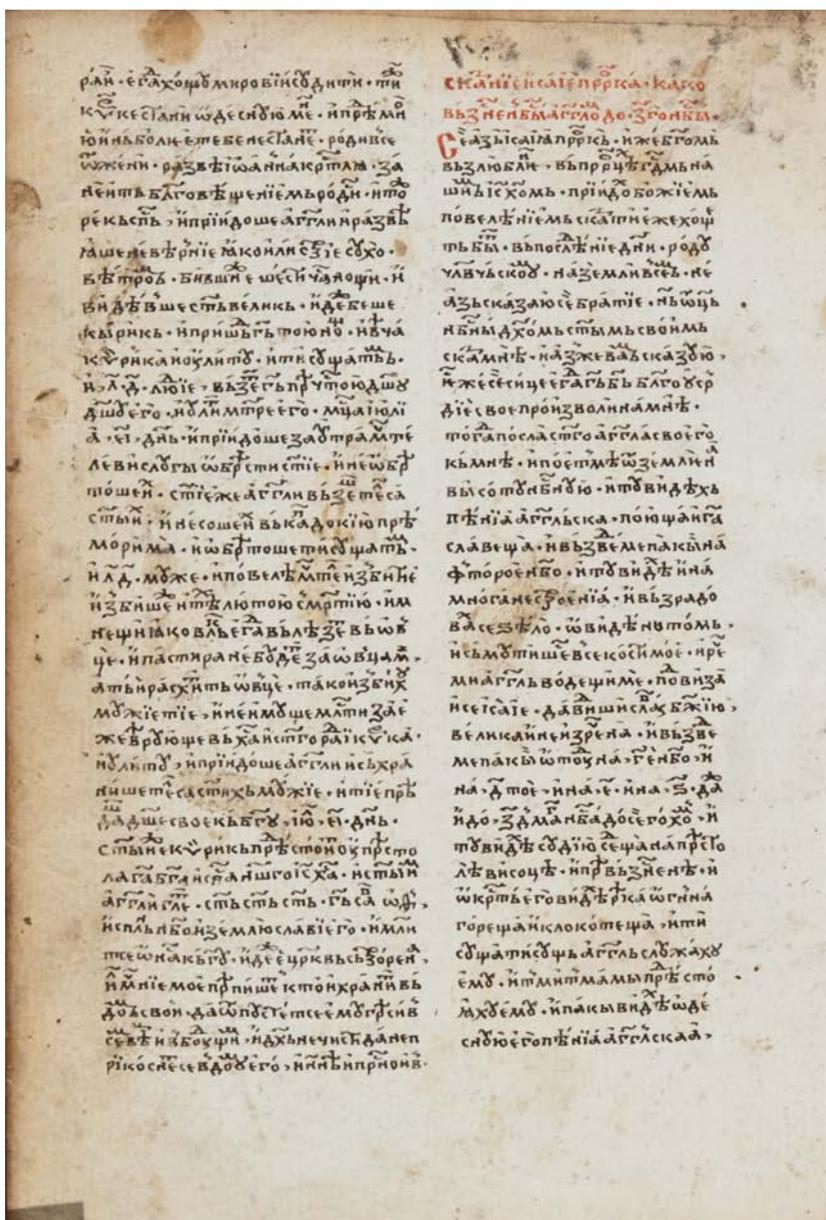
<sup>a</sup>The texte was changed and probably the word is written later. Probably the reason is a damage on the folio.

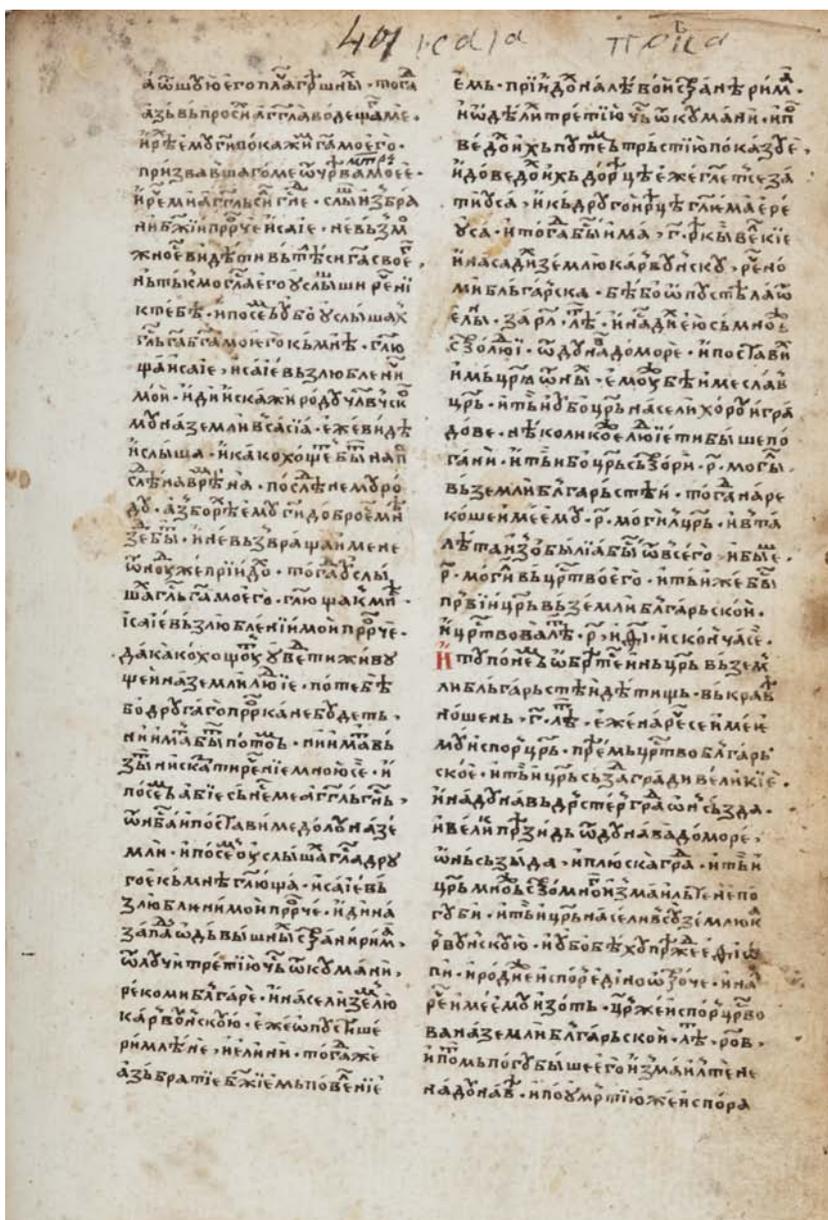
f. 402d  
 5 ЦРЬ НН' · НМЕНЕЪ РОМА · ПАКНЪ ѿ Т  
 ГОЗЫ ЧРЬСЛА · Н ПРЪЕМЪ ЦРТВО ВЛЪ  
 ГАРЬСКОЕ · Н ТЪ СКРА ВОЕ СВОЕ Н ѿ  
 ЗЪТАРН СЕ НА ВЪСТОНА ЦРІА · Н ПО  
 10 НАЕ ПОРЪ НА ВЪСТѠ · ІАКО ПОГЪ  
 ВЪ ДВА ЦРІА · Н ВОЕ СВОЕ ПОГЪБІ  
 Н ВЪЗВРАТН СЕ ѿ ВЪСТОКЪ ВЪ ГРА  
 ПРЪСЛА · Н ПРЪЕМЪ ВЪ ЦРТВЪ СН РОМ  
 НЬ ЦРЬ · Ѡ · ЛЪ · Н СКѠУА СЕ · Н ПО  
 15 МЪ ѿВРЪТЪ ННЪ ЦРЬ · СЪН ПРА  
 ВЕДНІЕ ТЕѠРН · БЛГОВЪРНН ЦРЬ  
 Н БЛГОУБЪСТНВЪ · Н ТЪН ВО СЪЗНА  
 ВЕКЪ МІСТНОЕ ПО ЗЕМАН ВЛГАРЬ  
 СТЬКН · Н ГРЬСТЬКН · Н БЪ ЦРТВІЕ  
 20 ЕГО ВЪСА БЛГА ВЫШЕ · Н ПРЪЕМЪ ЖЕ  
 ВЪ ЦРТВЪ СН ЦРЬ ТЪН · ЛЪ · КГ ·  
 Н СКѠУА СЕ · Н ПОТѠМ НЪЗЫДЕ ННЪ  
 ЦРЬ НМЕНЪ ГАГА · А ПОРЕКЛО М  
 ѠДЕЛЪНЪ · КРАСЪ СЪБЛО Н ТЪН  
 25 ПРЪЕМЪ ЦРТВО ВЛГАРЬСКОЕ · Н ГРЬ  
 СКОЕ · Н ПОГЪВН ВЪ КЪНАДЪ ДВА  
 ГРА · ЕЖЕ ВЪХЪ ВЪ ѿБОНЪ ПОЛЬ  
 МОРЪ · Н СЪЗДА · Г · ГРАДОВЕ ВЪ ЗЕМ  
 ЛН ВЛГАРЬСКОН · Д · ЧРЬВЕН · Б · НЕ  
 30 ВРЬ · Г · ЦНПЪ · Н ТЪ ЦРВѠВА ЛЪ КН ·  
 Н ШЪКНОВЕНЪ БЪ ѿ ННОПЛЕННІКЪ,  
 НА ѿВЪЧЕ ПОЛЕ · Н ПОМЪ ВЪСТА ЦРЬ  
 ННЪ ѿ КОСТАНТИНА ГРА · НМЕНЕЪ  
 35 АРЕВЪ · Н СЕ НА ПРЪСТОЛЪ КОСТАНТИ  
 НА ЦРІА · Н ЦРТВѠВА ЛЪ · Ш · Н СКѠ  
 УА СЕ · Н ПОМЪ ВЪСТА ДРЪ ЦРЬ · ѿ Ю  
 ЖНІЕ СРАНН · НМЕНЕЪ ТЪРГІН Н П'  
 ВЪЗЕ ВЪКНЦЪ КОСТАНТИНА ЦРІА,  
 Н ПОИМЕ ВСЕ ЦРТВО ВЛГАРЬСКО ·  
 40 Н ГРЬСКОЕ · Н ЦРВЕЪ · ЛЪ · ШІ ·  
 Н СКѠУАЕТ' СЕ · Н ПОМЪ ПАКНЪ НЪ

f. 403a ДѠЕ НЪКОНЪ НАСНАНЪ Н ПРЪЕЛЪНЪ  
 ГЛЕМН ПЕНЕШ НВЪРННІ Н ВЪЗАНН ·

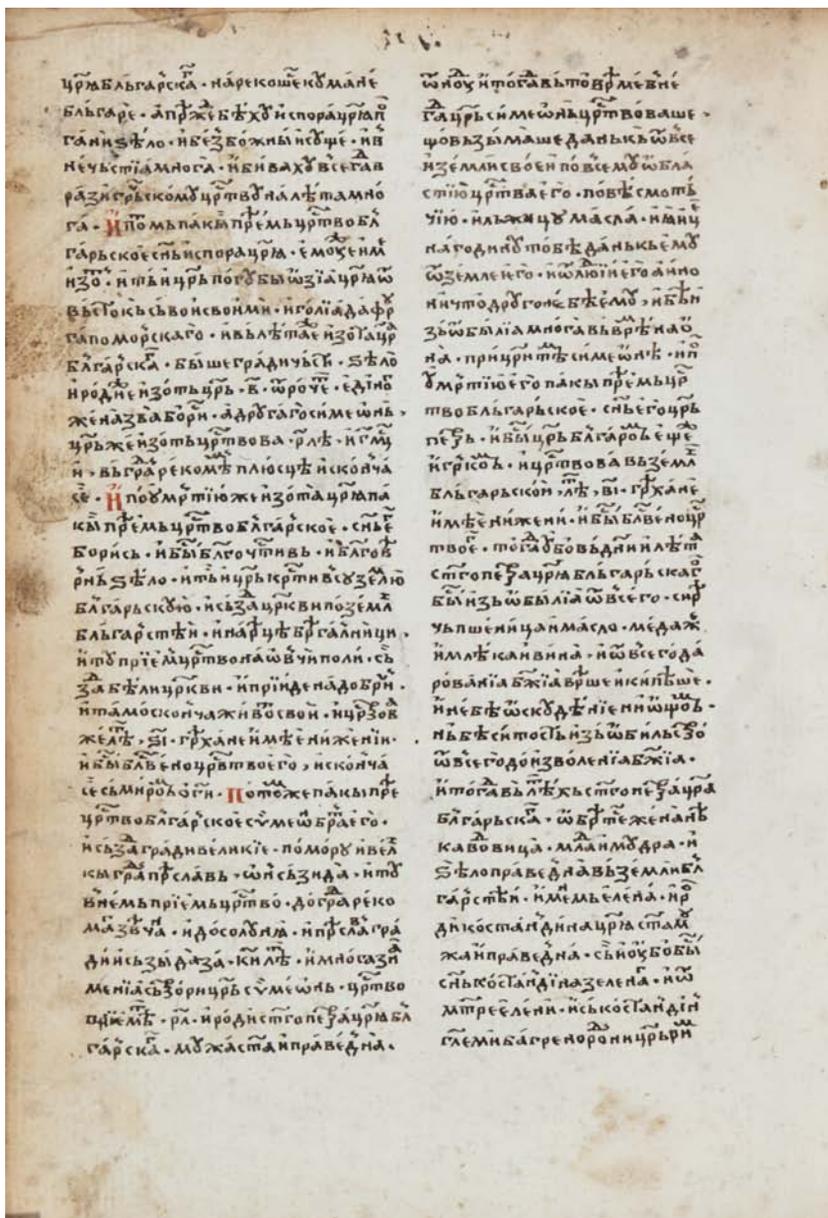
by the name of Roman, from the same lineage, and took over the Bulgarian kingdom. He gathered his army, [for he was] angry with the Eastern tsar, and went over the sea, [planning] to destroy two tsars, but destroyed his army. And he came back from the East to the city of Preslav. Roman reigned for nine years and died. After that another tsar arose, son of the righteous Theodora, a pious and devout tsar. He built great monasteries in the Bulgarian and Greek land. There were all kinds of goods during his reign. He ruled for twenty three years and passed away. Then another tsar came out, by the name of Gagan, and his nickname was Odelean, a very handsome one. He took over the Bulgarian and the Greek kingdom. He ruined in Kumida two cities, which were across the sea. And he built three cities in the Bulgarian land: 1/ Cherven; 2/ Messembria; 3/ Štip. And there he ruled for twenty eight years and was cut down by a man from a foreign nation at Ovche Pole [Sheep's Field]. And after that another tsar appeared from Constantinople, by the name of Arev, sat on the throne of Tsar Constantine, ruled for seven years, and passed away. And then another tsar came from the southern countries by the name of Turgius. He taking over the crown of Tsar Constantine and taking the entire Greek and Bulgarian kingdom, he will reign for seventeen years and will pass away. And then came out

certain violent swindlers called Pechenegs, lawless and infidel.



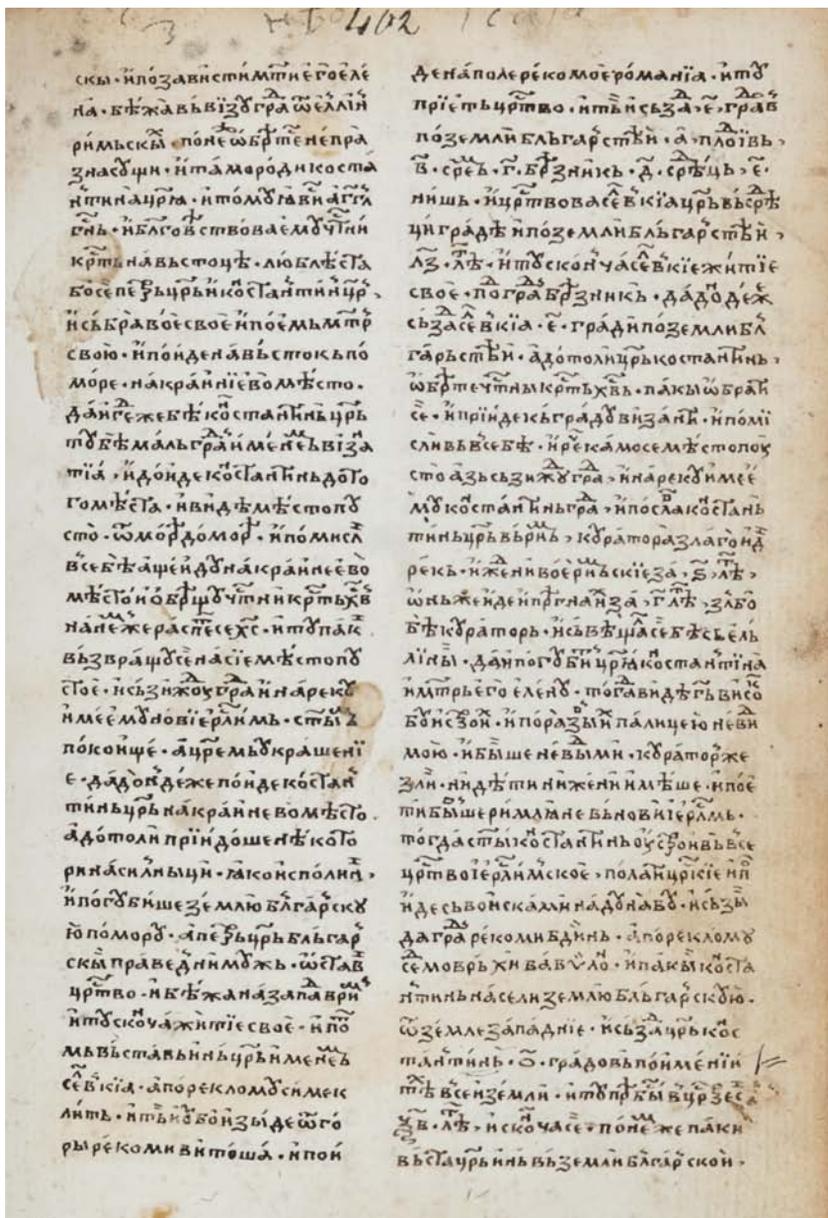


GIM 86795, Kludov. 123, f. 401r.



Црѣль Българска . и нарекоше ю маанѣ  
 Българе . а прже бѣху и спорацрѣла  
 галинѣ сло . и не збожи на нѣмѣ . и не  
 нечестіа много . и не вѣху в сѣ гав  
 рѣзи грѣскомѣ црѣво палѣ тамно  
 га . **И** по ма пакѣ прѣмь црѣво бл  
 гарьское снѣ испорачрѣ . емоу е на  
 нзо . и на нцрѣ по гѣ бѣ шѣ та црѣво  
 вѣсто къ сѣвои своним . и голѣ дѣ фр  
 са по морскаго . и вѣлѣ та е нзо а цр  
 блгарска . бѣше граднучьскѣ . сѣ сло  
 ироднѣ н зѣо ть црѣ . в . шорѣ . е дѣно  
 же на зѣва борн . а дрѣ гдѣо снѣ шѣ нѣ  
 црѣ же н зѣо ть црѣво ва . рѣлѣ . и гѣ му  
 и . вѣ градѣ комѣ плѣсцѣ и скопчѣ  
 се . **И** по дрѣтнѣю же н зѣо та црѣла па  
 ка прѣмь црѣво блгарское . снѣ  
 борн сѣ . и бѣ блго чѣпнѣ в . и блго в  
 рнѣ сѣ сло . и тѣ н црѣк рѣтнѣ в сѣ сѣ лю  
 блгарскаго . и сѣ зѣа црѣк в н по зѣ ма  
 блгарстѣн . и на рѣцѣ брѣ галинцѣ  
 и по прѣмь црѣво на вѣ чн поли . сѣ  
 зѣа блзи рѣкѣ . и прѣдѣ на до борн  
 и тамо скопчѣ жи во свои . и црѣво  
 же лѣ . сѣ . грѣ ханѣ и мѣ е ни же ни .  
 и вѣ блвѣ ноу црѣво е го . и скопчѣ  
 се сѣ мнро а о гн . **И** то же пакѣ прѣ  
 црѣво блгарское сѣ мѣ шѣ братѣ го .  
 и сѣ зѣа граднѣ великѣ . по морѣ и вѣл  
 ка гра прѣ сла вѣ . шѣн сѣ зѣ на . и по  
 вѣ мѣ прѣмь црѣво . до градѣ ко  
 ма зѣ ва . и до солдѣ ма . и прѣ сла град  
 дѣнѣ зѣ вѣ рѣ за . и нѣ лѣ . и мѣ о сѣ зѣ  
 мѣ на сѣ зѣ орн црѣ сѣ мѣ шѣ нѣ . црѣво  
 прѣ мѣлѣ . ра . и ро днѣ стѣ по е гѣ а црѣ ва  
 блгарска . мѣ жа стѣа и прѣ вѣ дѣ на .

шѣноу и то гдѣа по брѣ мѣ вѣнѣ  
 гла црѣ снѣ мѣ шѣ црѣво вѣше  
 цѣво зѣ ма мѣ дѣ а нѣ къ шѣ вѣсѣ  
 и зѣ ма нѣ во е н по вѣ мѣ шѣ бл  
 стѣо црѣ вѣтѣ го . по вѣсѣ мѣ шѣ  
 шѣно . и на жѣ цѣ блга сла . и на цѣ  
 на го дѣ нѣ по вѣ дѣ а нѣ къ шѣ мѣ  
 шѣ мѣ лѣ нѣ го . и шѣ лѣ о гнѣ го а нѣо  
 ни цѣо дрѣ го мѣ бѣ жѣ мѣ . и бѣ н  
 зѣо блга сла много вѣ вѣ рѣ на о  
 на . при црѣтѣ снѣ мѣ шѣ . и нѣ  
 дрѣтнѣо е го пакѣ прѣ мѣ црѣ  
 тѣво блгарское . снѣ е го црѣ  
 рѣ шѣ . и бѣ мѣ црѣ блгаро бѣ шѣ  
 и грѣсо дѣ . и црѣво ва вѣ зѣ ма  
 блгарскаго . и вѣ грѣ ханѣ  
 и мѣ е ни же ни . и бѣ блвѣ ноу црѣ  
 тѣво е . по гдѣо вѣо вѣ дѣ ни лѣ стѣ  
 стѣ по е гѣ а црѣ ва блгарскаго  
 бѣ н зѣ шѣ блга сла шѣ е го . снѣ  
 шѣ шѣ мѣ ни цѣ а нѣ ма сѣо . мѣ дѣ а жѣ  
 и мѣ лѣ сѣ а нѣ вѣ на . и шѣ вѣ е го дѣ  
 ро вѣ а нѣа бѣ жѣ а вѣ рѣ шѣ нѣ снѣ шѣ шѣ .  
 и нѣ бѣ шѣ шѣ ко дѣ нѣ е ни шѣ шѣ о б  
 нѣ вѣ снѣ то сѣ нѣ шѣ шѣ бѣ нѣ шѣ о  
 шѣ вѣ е го дѣ нѣ зѣ во лѣ нѣ гѣ бл жѣ а .  
 и то гдѣа вѣ лѣ хѣ стѣо нѣ гѣ а црѣ  
 блгарска . шѣ брѣ тѣ же на нѣ  
 ка во вѣ ца . мѣ а нѣ мѣ дрѣ а нѣ  
 сѣ сло прѣ вѣ сѣ дѣ а вѣ зѣ ма мѣ бл  
 гарстѣн . и мѣ мѣ е лѣ на . и рѣ  
 дѣ нѣ сѣ та нѣ дѣ нѣ а црѣ ста мѣ  
 жа и прѣ вѣ дѣ на . сѣ ноу бѣо вѣ  
 снѣ ко сѣ та нѣ дѣ на зѣ е лѣ на . и шѣ  
 мѣ прѣ е лѣ ни . и сѣ ко сѣ та нѣ дѣ нѣ  
 глѣ мѣ блгаре но ро ни црѣ рѣн

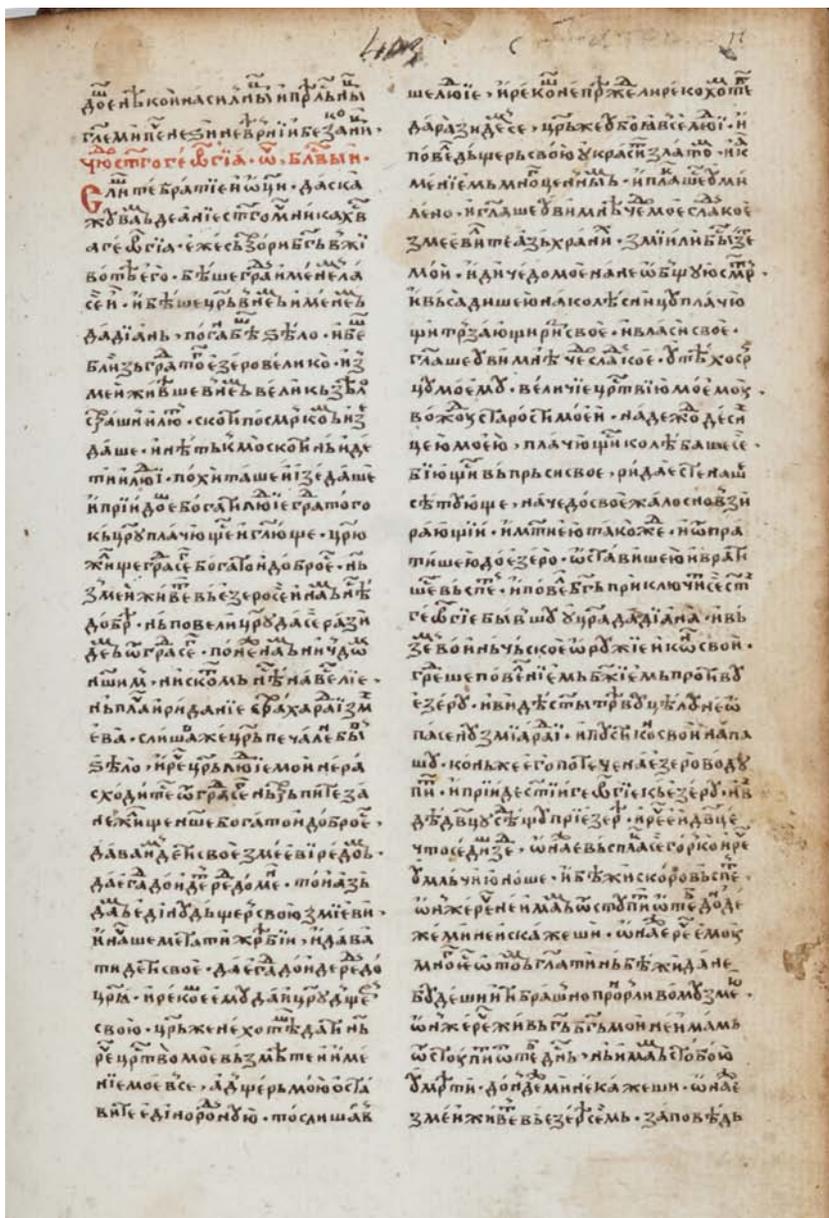


120 X O T T O O K C I

емоу еи месиме ѿ црѣтво в а л ѣ . в и  
 и ско н ч а се . и по не м же п л а к ѡ б о р ѣ  
 п е с е и н ѣ у р ѣ . и м е н ѣ д н и к ѡ ф о р ѣ .  
 и п р е м ѣ ц р ѣ т в о б а л ѣ г а р ѣ с к о е . и по и  
 по г о д ѣ и м а к с и м ѡ н а ц р ѣ в е з а к о  
 н а . и в о ч е г о . и т ѣ с в ѣ д а м о т и к ѣ .  
 и м о р ѣ н е ч ѣ . и с ѣ р ѣ . и н а з л а п ѣ л ѣ  
 г р а . и к о с т о у с ѣ . и н а д ѡ н а в ѣ н н о  
 п о л ѣ . и по и ц р ѣ т в о в а . м о . л ѣ . и по  
 с ѣ б е . и б ѣ ж е ѡ н е г о ѡ р о ч е е м о у е и  
 м е с и м е ѡ . п р ѣ м ѣ ц р ѣ . и п р е м ѣ ц р ѣ  
 б а г а р ѣ с к о е . х о д о ч т ѣ и з ѣ л ѣ ю д е ѣ .  
 и по г о д ѣ и з е м ѣ л о б а г а р ѣ с к ѡ ю . т е р а  
 н а м ѣ с ѣ ю и р ѣ б с ѣ ю . к о с т а н ѣ н а  
 ц р ѣ в о в а л а . и по г о в ѣ з ѣ м ѣ х о в с н ѣ ю  
 д ѣ е н а с ѣ м ѣ ѡ н а ц р ѣ . ѡ л о у ѣ н ѣ  
 б р а т ѣ е . ѡ с ѣ ц р ѣ . п р ѣ б ѣ ж е ц р ѣ с н а  
 е ѡ н ѣ в ѣ ц р ѣ т в ѣ с и . а . л ѣ . и с к о ч а с е .  
**И** по м ѡ б ѡ б р ѣ т е с е ѡ н ѡ ч р ѣ с л а у р ѣ .  
 и м е н ѣ в ѣ с н а м е . т о г а п а д е в ѣ ч ѣ б а  
 г о ч т ѣ в а н х р ѣ т о л ю б ѣ и в а ц р ѣ k o c л a n  
 т ѣ н а . н а с л а в ѣ г о . и п р е т ѣ в с н а  
 т е ц р ѣ т в о . и по г о д ѣ в с е з е м л е р а т ѣ е .  
 и с ѣ ѡ п о г л а т е . т а к о н ѣ к ѣ м ѡ ж ѣ х р а  
 б р ѣ . в ѣ д ѣ и в а с н ѣ л а ц р ѣ м н о с а б ѣ л а  
 б ѡ ш е в ѣ л о д е . п р ѣ б ѣ ж е в а с н а м е в ѣ р з  
 е с ѣ . л ѣ . а . д ѣ и ж е н ѣ и г р ѣ х а н м е ѣ .  
 и в ѣ л ѡ б ѣ м ц р ѣ т в о е г о . и в ѣ д ѣ и в а с i  
 л а ц р ѣ ѡ б р ѣ т е ц р ѣ . т р ѣ в р а ѡ б о в и  
 ц ѡ п р ѣ ц ѣ . м ѡ ч с е и н а р о н ѣ с а м ѡ  
 н а ѣ . и в ѣ ѡ р о с а м о н л e в ѣ . и м е н ѣ  
 а в г о с т ѣ л ѣ н ѣ . и по и п р е м ѣ ц р ѣ т в о  
 б а г а р ѣ s к o e . и г р ѣ s k o e . и ц р ѣ т в о  
 в а . л ѣ . а з ѣ . и по т о д ѣ в с т ѣ л ѣ и ц р ѣ  
 ѡ ц р ѣ в о в ѡ н ѣ . и п р е м ѣ ц р ѣ т в о и ц р ѣ  
 в о в а л ѣ . г . и с k o ч а с e . и по т о д ѣ в с t

ц р ѣ и н ѣ . и м е н ѣ б р о м а . п а к и ѡ т  
 г о з ѣ ц р ѣ с л а . и п р е м ѣ ц р ѣ т в о б а л ѣ  
 г а р ѣ s k o e . и т ѣ с в р а в о е с в о е и р  
 з ѣ в а р ѣ с н а в ѣ с т о н а ц р ѣ . и по  
 н а д е п o р ѡ n a в ѣ s t o . т а к о п o г o д  
 б ѣ л ѣ в а ц р ѣ . и в о e s в o e п o г o d ѣ  
 н ѣ в ѣ z в р а н e ѡ v ѣ s t o k ѣ v ѣ г р а  
 п р с л a . и п р ѣ b ѣ v ѣ ц р ѣ t в s i r o m  
 л ѣ ц р ѣ . ѡ . л ѣ . и с k o ч а с e . и по  
 м ѡ б ѡ б р ѣ т e и т ѣ ц р ѣ . с ѣ b p a  
 в e d ѣ t e ѡ р ѣ . б а г о в р а н ѣ ц р ѣ  
 и б а г o ч т ѣ и в ѣ . и т ѣ ѡ б o с ѣ n ѣ  
 в e k ѣ m ѣ n ѣ p e п o z e m л и b a r ѣ  
 с ѣ ѣ n ѣ . и г р а s t ѣ n ѣ . и в ѣ ц р ѣ t в i e  
 e g o v s a б a г a б ѡ ш e . и п р ѣ b ѣ ж e  
 v ѣ ц р ѣ t в ѣ s i c р ѣ t ѣ n ѣ . л ѣ . и s t .  
 и s k o ч а с e . и по т о д ѣ i z ѣ d ѣ n ѣ  
 ц р ѣ i m e м ѣ г a г a . а п o р e k л o м  
 ѡ д e л ѣ л ѣ . k р a с л e z ѣ л o и т ѣ n ѣ  
 п р e м ѣ ц р ѣ t в o б a г a r ѣ s k o e . и г р ѣ  
 s k o e . и по г o д ѣ i n ѣ k o л ѣ d ѣ v a  
 г р a . e ж e б ѣ x o v ѣ o б o n ѣ п o л ѣ  
 м o d ѣ . и с ѣ z a . г . г р a d o в e z e m  
 л и b a r ѣ s k o i . а . ч р ѣ v e n ѣ . в ѣ  
 б р ѣ . г . ц и п ѣ . и т ѣ ц р ѣ z o v a л ѣ k ѣ  
 n o s ѣ i s k o v e л ѣ b ѡ и л o п л e n и k ѣ .  
 n a ѡ v e ч e п o л e . и по м ѡ b ѣ s t a ц р ѣ  
 и н ѣ ѡ k o c л a n t ѣ n a г р a . и м e н ѣ  
 a p e v ѣ . и с e n a n ѣ s t o ѡ л ѣ k o c л a n  
 n a ц р ѣ . и ц р ѣ t в o в a л ѣ . z . и s k o  
 ч a c e . и по м ѡ b ѣ s t a d р ѣ c р ѣ . ѡ ѡ  
 ж ѣ n e z ѣ n ѣ . и м e n e t ѡ r e g i n i  
 v ѣ z e v ѣ n ѣ k o c л a n t ѣ n a ц р ѣ .  
 и по m e v s e ц р ѣ t в o б a g a r ѣ s k o .  
 и г р ѣ s k o e . и ц р ѣ z ѣ e . л ѣ . z i .  
 и s k o ч a d e t e . и по n a k ѡ b ѣ z

GIM 86795, Kludov. 123, f. 402.



GIM 86795, Kludov. 123, f. 403r.



## CHAPTER TWO

### *TALE OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH* IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIAEVAL LITERATURE AND MODERN RESEARCHES

#### *Historiography*

The story of scholarly research on *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* in Bulgarian historiography has largely matched the ideological path of this field of research. Regrettably, during almost the whole 20th century our historiography was unable to emancipate itself from the nationalistic ideas of the preceding century, and from certain methods—linked to those ideas—of interpreting sources. In the case of this source, the situation appears even more complicated because of the unclear presentation in the work itself. This lack of clarity has permitted anyone willing to tear the text out of its historical and literary context to discover within it a confirmation of his own ideas, or of the general direction of interests in society at the time in which the respective scholar lived. Thus, in the studies devoted to the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*<sup>1</sup> we see included all the themes that excited Bulgarians during the past two centuries: the Bogomils, the Bulgars, national self-affirmation, anti-Greek propaganda, etc. These studies have been elaborated within the framework of a markedly national interpretation of the source. In this respect, we should look at the difference between the Bulgarian scholars and the non-Bulgarians who have worked on the text in question. The latter—I mean mainly K. Jireček, S.A. Ivanov, A. Turilov, D. Polyvjannyj, etc.—propose what are in some cases far more balanced interpretations, without exaggeration in one direction or the other. Still, I do not mean to place all the Bulgarian scholars in the same category. On the contrary, some have proposed very adept interpretations, devoid of strong ideological overtones, and others have approached the work from a strictly textological angle, without aiming at any ulterior social objectives in their research.

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<sup>1</sup> The source was known in Bulgarian historiography as “*Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle of the nth Century*”. This was a title that Jordan Ivanov contrived for the work, but I believe it is time to leave this designation behind, for it does not correspond to the actual text. I shall dwell on this later in my research.

Evidently, the different tenors of interpretation of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* have been determined both by the “social demand” of the times (whether or not clearly realised by the scholar) and by the personal preferences of the researcher. In this way, different currents of interpretation have emerged, which oftentimes interweave and interpenetrate. Below I will discuss these currents separately, but here I will mention the more basic ones: the Bogomil-centred interpretation, the Bulgar-centred interpretation, the positivistic-historic, the mythological, etc. I do not want to leave the impression I reject the achievements of these studies. The diversity of interpretation is due to the insufficient clarity of the interpreted text; hence, every new study contributes to its clarification, by bringing a new point of view, and they have all encouraged further attention to the text, even if only by positing a thesis that would later be refuted and rejected. Moreover—and I want to stress this—many of the studies have more or less really contributed to understanding the work under consideration, and merit our attention and discussion.

Before pursuing this issue, I should briefly discuss how the *Tale* came be published.

#### *Publications of the Text of Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*

The *Tale* has had an interesting publication history. The manuscript that contained the only known copy of the text “disappeared” around the end of the 19th century and—as mentioned earlier—it was generally thought to have been lost during the revolution in Russia. Thus for an entire century, historians had access only to the first publication of the source, realised by Ljubomir Stojanović in 1890.<sup>2</sup> In his edition, the Serbian scholar followed what was then the normal practice when publishing Cyrillic mediaeval texts: he normalised the spelling. This procedure may sometimes lead to important changes in the original appearance of the source, which is certainly not favourable to an adequate interpretation. Anatolij Turilov has drawn attention to some aspects in this connection and maintains quite correctly that since there was only a single extant manuscript copy, its spelling ought to have been preserved in the publication of the work.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski hrisevulji, akti, biografije, letopisi, tipici, pomenici zapisi i dr.*, in: *Spomenik*, Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, t. III, 1890, pp. 190–193.

<sup>3</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, p. 27.

In fact the edition by Ljubomir Stojanović contains only the text of the work and an indication of the manuscript in which it is included (“*Po rukopisi Preobraženskog staroobrednog manastira iz zbirke Hilferdingove* [According to a manuscript from the Transfiguration Old Believer’s monastery, from the collection of Hilferding] *nr. 123*”). The only element in Lj. Stojanović’s publication that resembles a commentary on the text is the title he has chosen for it, which is: “*Kao bugarski letopis* (Like a Bulgarian Chronicle)”. This was why approximately thirty years later, when the apocryphon was reprinted, it was given the heading that still remains today: “*Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*”.

This title of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* was given to the text by Jordan Ivanov when he republished the text in 1923.<sup>4</sup> His work consisted in simply reprinting and reediting the text published by Ljubomir Stojanović, for the manuscript was considered lost or in any case inaccessible in the wake of the political upheaval in Russia following the First World War. Thus, Jordan Ivanov had not worked with the manuscript itself, nor with any photographs of it. This second edition has certainly been very important for research on *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, for it has taken the place of the largely inaccessible publication by Ljubomir Stojanović and become the basic source of information for Bulgarian research. In addition, it is accompanied by a commentary, which we will discuss further.

Even though Jordan Ivanov did not work directly from the manuscript, his publication contains some innovations that have influenced later comprehension of the source. The title is only one example. Also important innovation is his division of the text into chapters, which reorganises it and makes it easier to understand. However, such an intervention could be judged excessive, for it involves an element of interpretation. J. Ivanov’s version even displays some deviations from Lj. Stojanović’s publication, which consist in omissions. They are due to faulty attention and are typical copyist errors, but they certainly reflect on the quality of the publication. These places have been noticed and indicated by A. Turilov<sup>5</sup> and I will not deal with them here, for they have no direct bearing on our further discussion.

The last publication to date of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* was realised by A. Miltenova in her book co-authored by V. Tăpkova-Zaimova and devoted to historical-apocalyptic literature among the Orthodox peoples.<sup>6</sup> A. Turilov

<sup>4</sup> J. Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, Sofia, 1925 (reprint, Sofia, 1970), pp. 273–287.

<sup>5</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, pp. 27–28.

<sup>6</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Istoriko-apokaliptičnata knižhnina*, pp. 192–206. In 2011

knew about this edition, which was very long awaited due to the publishing house's pace of work, but apparently he did not have access to it at the time when he was preparing his article on the rediscovered Kichevo manuscript. I conclude from his remarks that he hoped the rediscovered manuscript would be taken into consideration in the new edition of the text; I can now say that it has been.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of this, I have taken the liberty of copying and republishing the text—not because I had any doubts as to the quality of the editor's work, but to make the present book complete, and in order to attempt to follow the original in a more precise way, avoiding, for instance, the lowering of supralinear letters down to the line, etc.

As for the published translations, I will only list them here. The first modern Bulgarian translation was by Ivan Dujčev, and appeared in the early 1940s.<sup>8</sup> All subsequent editions have practically repeated this one, until the publication of the book by V. Tăpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova, which includes a new translation supplied with notes on differences from the previous one.<sup>9</sup> I will not trace all the translations into English and French that have been made so far. I will only mention the recent English translation of Kiril Petkov,<sup>10</sup> which is included in the present book, and the latest translation in the recently published English language edition of the book by V. Tăpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova.<sup>11</sup>

This overview of the publications was a necessary step before going on to the next part of this study, which concerns the various interpretations of the text. I will try to systematise them into several separate groups, as this will facilitate a better understanding of how the source has been studied. However, since, as I said, these approaches to the text are not mutually exclusive and indeed are often interconnected, some of them might fall into more than one group.

Most Bulgarian studies have highlighted the patriotic character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. This emphasis is undoubtedly the result of the basic line of

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a new English edition of the book and the text of our source came out: Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 274–300.

<sup>7</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, p. 27 note 36. See Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina*, p. 193 note 2.

<sup>8</sup> Iv. Dujčev, *Iz starata bulgarska knizhnina*, t. I, Sofia, 1943, pp. 154–161.

<sup>9</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina*, pp. 199–206, see and p. 193/194 note 13.

<sup>10</sup> K. Petkov, *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century. The Records of a Bygone Culture*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2008, pp. 194–199.

<sup>11</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 291–295.

Bulgarian historiography, the aim of which was national consolidation and to raise the self-esteem of Bulgarians. The “patriotism” of the author of this work has been demonstrated in different ways, which deserve attention and will be examined separately.

The first argument for the patriotic nature of the *Tale* is that it has preserved the memory of the Bulgarian state and its rulers during the age of Byzantine domination, when the work was supposedly composed. Many scholars have made this assertion.<sup>12</sup> The text is thus said to contain a memory of the past Bulgarian state, preserved in the age after that state fell under Byzantine domination. It is difficult to disagree with such a view, especially as the story obviously begins within the context of the Bulgarian state and its rulers. Yet it seems to me that this does not correspond to what could be called “patriotism”. The latter term has a markedly modern sound and meaning and is the product of 19th century nationalistic ideals, and it would be anachronistic to read into the *Tale* these concepts which arose long after the era of the book and the events described in it.

Whereas there is some agreement among scholars on the view that the memory of the Bulgarian state has been preserved in the work, the argument that the *Tale* is patriotic because of its anti-Byzantine position is far less generally accepted; indeed, it is rarely supported. This view was emphasised especially in the earlier studies of M. Kajmakamova,<sup>13</sup> but most other authors believe the work displays full loyalty to the Empire.<sup>14</sup> Still, Kajmakamova gives various arguments for her standpoint. Basic among these is that the work is centred on Bulgarians and the Bulgarian state, which, in the context of the conquest of this state by the Byzantine Empire, the idea and memory of which were inherently anti-Byzantine. Another significant argument of

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<sup>12</sup> M. Kajmakamova, “Bulgarski apokrifni letopis' i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie”, *Starobulgarska literatura*, vol. 15, 1984, pp. 51–59; M. Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, Sofia, 1990, pp. 124–132; M. Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na 'Bulgarski apokrifni letopis'”, *Civitas Divino-humana. In honorem annorum LX Georgii Bakalov (Bulgarska vechnost, t. 60)*, Sofia, TANGRA TanNakRa IK, 2004, pp. 429 ff., 438.

<sup>13</sup> Kajmakamova, “Bulgarski apokrifni letopis' i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie”, pp. 51, 54–55, 56, 58; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, pp. 125–127, 131–132.

<sup>14</sup> K. Jireček, “Das christliche Element in der Balkanländer”, *Sitzungsberichte des Kaiserlichen Academie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Philol.-hist. classe*, Bd. 136, 2, 1897, S. 1–98; V. Beševliev, “Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifni letopis ot XI vek”, *Srednovekovna Bulgaria i Chernomoriето*, Varna, 1982, pp. 42–43; S.A. Ivanov, “Bolgarskaja apokrificheskaja letopis' kak pamjatnik etnicheskogo samosoznanija bolgar”, *Razvitie etnicheskogo samosoznanija slavjanskikh narodov v epokhu zrelogo feodalizma*, ed. G.G. Litavrin, Moscow, 1989, pp. 73–75.

Kajmakamova is that the Turkic origin of the Bulgarians is underscored in the text, which relates them to the Cumans; this is also considered an anti-Byzantine characteristic.<sup>15</sup> It should be acknowledged, however, that M. Kajmakamova also points out the positive attitude of the compiler of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* towards some of the *basileis*, who are idealised in the work.<sup>16</sup> She has presented a new view on these matters in recent years, and has offered a considerably more interesting study of the source. In an article from 2004, Kajmakamova points out the unity of the concept of Bulgaria and the Roman-Byzantine Empire within the *Tale*, which according to some mediaeval scholars was the “last kingdom” from the vision of the prophet Daniel.<sup>17</sup> This unity is a basis for the declared identity of Bulgaria as an Orthodox realm based on the imperial philosophy formed during the time of Tsar Symeon.<sup>18</sup> I find these assertions astute and quite justified, but they would then seem to exclude any ideological opposition to the Empire or any “anti-Byzantine motifs”, “patriotism”, or “national propaganda” in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, as some scholars have claimed.

I do not think we find enough arguments, or clear and indisputable evidence, supporting the “anti-Byzantine” character of this work. The compiler’s focus on the Bulgarian past, which he presented in a heroic light, does not suggest any opposition to the Empire. To discover such an attitude, we would have to suppose there was a primordial antagonism and intolerance between Bulgarians and Byzantines, but such antagonism is primarily an assumption of modern historiography, and specifically in Bulgarian national historiography in the 19th and 20th century. This antagonism was truly a product of the ecclesiastic struggle against the Ecumenical Patriarchy during the last decades of Ottoman domination and at the time when the autocephalous Exarchy was created. It was these events that poisoned mutual feelings and provoked intolerance between Bulgarians and Greeks. They lie at the root of the notion of the “double bondage” to which the Bulgarian people were supposedly subjected, and which became an overriding theme in

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<sup>15</sup> Kajmakamova, “‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’ i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisane”, pp. 54–55. In the later researches of the author this thesis is not so categorical: Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’”, pp. 428–429.

<sup>16</sup> Kajmakamova, “‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’ i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisane”, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’”, pp. 423–424, 427.

<sup>18</sup> Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’”, pp. 418, 437–438, and *passim*.

how Bulgarians came to perceive the past. That is probably the explanation for the attitude to the Byzantine Empire in Bulgarian historiography, and for the fact that Bulgaria, certainly the most thoroughly “Byzantinised” country in the mediaeval Orthodox world (or, in the worlds of Dimitri Obolensky, the “Byzantine Commonwealth”, a culture that was recently designated more aptly by I. Bozhilov as “Byzantine world / Monde byzantin”<sup>19</sup>), is the only country that at present does not acknowledge its “Byzantine heritage”, at least not publicly prefers to see a theme of ideological struggle against Byzantium rather than common cultural roots. This is a rather interesting topic for a special study, but it is beyond the scope of this work. I would say that in the last decades historians finally seem on their way to surmounting the impact and implications of this attitude.

In addition, I cannot accept the view that the mention of the kinship of the Bulgars and Bulgarians with the Cumans in *Tale* is meant to emphasise their Turkic origins. I do not expect a mediaeval compiler, especially the compiler of this work, to have such deep knowledge of the ethnogenesis of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This citation more likely reflects a remote memory that the Bulgarian ancestors, whose name by the time of the writing seems to have remained only as an eponym of the nation, had originated in the Great Eurasian Steppe.

The text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* provides sufficient reason to see in it an expression not only loyalty but even unity between Bulgarians and Byzantines, a unity naturally based on Christianity. The history of the two peoples is presented as a joint one; the time when Bulgarians were pagans, and hence when the two nations were divided and opposed to one another, is quite negatively assessed in the text: “for earlier they had been godless pagans under Ispor and [lived] in great iniquity and were always enemies of the Greek kingdom for many years”.<sup>20</sup> The Christian identity in the text predominates over the national one, and that the symbol and embodiment of this identity is the “Greek kingdom”. On the other hand, pagans—even Bulgarian pagans—are “godless” people living in “great iniquity”.

It is natural for the emphasis of the work to be on the Bulgarians, but it does not neglect the Byzantine Romans either. The lands of the Bulgarians and Byzantines share a Christian topography, and they are jointly described as a replica of the Holy Land. The state power is also a shared one for both: the state is one “Bulgarian and Greek kingdom” and its power is usually in

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<sup>19</sup> Iv. Bozhilov, *Vizantijskijat svjat*, Sofia, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> See in this book p. 16 (f. 401c, lines 2–6).

the hands of the same tsar. There is practically no distinction between Bulgarian and Roman rulers: they follow one after the other and only analysis of the names can give us some idea of which historical personages underlie the characters. The two saintly kings, patrons and models of royalty, are also presented jointly: Tsar Peter and Tsar Constantine. The bad kings are also common to both nations. The distinction and opposition in the work is not between Bulgarians vs. Byzantines but between these two peoples on one side, and other peoples on the opposite side; these others may be Eastern or Western. Further on in this presentation I will examine in detail the elements of the narrative in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*; here I would like to underscore this Bulgarian-Roman/Byzantine community, which is one of the most characteristic features of the work under discussion, and which, in my opinion, reflects the real mutual attitudes among Bulgarians and *Rhomaioi* in that age.

It should be pointed out, however, that some scholars tend at times to abuse the idea of this so-called “community” or “loyalty”. Though it is a fact, I do not think we should assume it present in each and every element of the text and seek it there. I shall give just one example to clarify what I mean. In his commentary to *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, Ivan Dujčev suggests Tsar Izot should be identified with Khan Krum.<sup>21</sup> In rejecting this thesis, V. Beševliev points out that a work so loyal to the Empire would not have cited a ruler who had slain the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus I Genikos, and he proposes instead the identification with Khan Omurtag, a ruler who was more peaceful and friendly towards Constantinople.<sup>22</sup> We will specially discuss Tsar Izot and his identification, but here I will only say that I do not accept either proposal, especially as they are rather weakly argued. One must not rest on a presumed notion either of loyalty to the Empire or of an anti-Byzantine stance in the work, presumptions that are used in building logical constructions that only serve to reveal our own contemporary views. Hence, the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* testifies to the consolidation of Orthodox society on a biblical basis—this is a sufficiently categorical assertion regarding a whole cultural process, and it is not necessary to seek and discover traces of it in each small historical detail.

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<sup>21</sup> Iv. Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, in: idem, *Bulgarsko Srednovekovie*, Sofia, 1972, pp. 126–127.

<sup>22</sup> Beševliev, “Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifen letopis ot XI vek”, pp. 43–44.

Some authors discerned the patriotic tenor of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* in the biblical basis of the text, specifically in the fact that Bulgarians are represented as the New Chosen People. This view is related to the biblical theme to which the present study is devoted, though not from a patriotic perspective. This aspect is so obvious as to be inescapable: the prophetic story of Isaiah, the other personages, and the whole construction show it. Jordan Ivanov was the first to mention the biblical foundation of the “patriotic” aspect of the work, but he did not go on to specially develop the idea.<sup>23</sup> It has been pointed out by practically all authors, but has not been given special attention and has been defined as a typical form for the Middle Ages, underlying which are the real ideas of the work. The only exception to this is the above mentioned article by M. Kajmakamova, who especially deals with the topic of patriotism in the representation of Bulgarians as the New Israel.<sup>24</sup> The social importance of the *Tale* is defined by Kajmakamova as “an activation of the national consciousness of Bulgarians on the basis of the Orthodox consciousness”, whereas other similar apocalyptic works, such as *Vision and Interpretation of Daniel, Revelation of St Methodius of Patara (or Patarensis,)* and *Tale of Isaiah* had exactly the reverse function: to activate the Orthodox consciousness of the people through knowledge about Bulgarian history.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* (i.e. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*) “fuels the patriotism of Bulgarians in the times of Byzantine rule in order to strengthen their national self-awareness” by combining “national” with Christian devotion.<sup>26</sup> We are told that the biblical form of the work is practically just a tool, typical for the age, used for achieving the “national” and “patriotic” objectives that the author of *Tale* had set himself. Kajmakamova believes that the “propaganda goals” of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* are clearly declared.<sup>27</sup>

Actually, the “New Israel” idea during the Middle Ages was not linked to patriotism, which is a much more recent phenomenon, situated in the framework of the national idea born during the Age of Enlightenment. Messianism could be an ideological paradigm for nationalism, and we find it as such among many nations: Russians, Poles, etc. However, in cases when this idea has developed in a Christian form, it has tended to use the terminology of the New Testament rather than the Old. Such nations have

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<sup>23</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, 274.

<sup>24</sup> Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifen letopis’”, pp. 417–441.

<sup>25</sup> Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifen letopis’”, p. 419.

<sup>26</sup> *ibidem*, p. 419.

<sup>27</sup> *ibidem*, p. 421.

considered themselves to be a “victim people” (in some cases simply an innocent victim, and in some, a nation that has sacrificed itself for others), a people crucified by history, etc. It is true that the notion of the God-bearing Nation has also occurred, which is related to the Chosen People among whom the Divine presence resides in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, but this notion has been related to eschatological expectations rather than concretely to the Old Testament.

Indeed, the New Israel idea is rooted in the Gospels and has been mentioned in the times of the Apostles. In this context, it is connected with the New Covenant between God and Humanity, which replaces the Old and comes to encompass God’s whole nation-Church, without any ethnic distinction. Thus, according to early Christian conceptions, all the believers are the New Israel and the term has a universal meaning. Such was its meaning in the Christian Roman Empire, later called Byzantium. This Empire was a political organism not connected with any specific ethnic group; initially it was a community defined by citizenship, which was based on a common cult and common legal and political order; later the shared Christian religion was added, which at a certain point started to predominate over all other characteristics. In a way the single model of the New Israel idea was created, which was universal and covered all Christians as God’s People; its bearers were the Church and the Empire.

The other model of the New Israel idea was connected with a specific nation and its rulers; we may call this a “limiting” model, to distinguish it from the universal one. It arose among the invading peoples who came to populate the former territories of Rome in the age of the Great Migration, and particularly among the Franks. The emergence of this ideology had multiple causes, among them opposition to the universalism of Rome. The so-called barbarians were making the first significant attempt at building a Christian identity distinct from Roman identity, one that would be particularistic and closely-guarded, as opposed to the universal, all-embracing identity of the Romans. Naturally, they turned to the biblical concept of the People of Israel, which, far from being universal, consciously drew a line between itself, as God’s Chosen People, and others. This model spread among the Germanic peoples, among the Celtic peoples of the British Isles, and later among the Slavs (Serbs and Russians) and in the Caucasus.

This book is devoted to the development of the New Israel idea among the Bulgarians; our focus will mainly be on the interpretation of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. This source evidences the development of just this political ideology and self-consciousness, which are the result of a certain stage of development of Bulgarian society after the Conversion and firm

establishment of Christianity. These models have nothing to do with the modern concepts of patriotism or national propaganda, which were not phenomena of the mediaeval period.

The interpretation of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* as a Bogomil heretical literary work is usually associated with Jordan Ivanov, but Konstantin Jireček mentions this view in the very first study of the source. The Czech scholar does not ground his thesis thoroughly, he merely connects the citation that the very pious ruler Boris-Michael “was without sin and without wife”, to the asceticism and denial of the flesh typical for dualists.<sup>28</sup> It would be fair to say that the “Bogomil thesis” gained ground thanks in particular to Jordan Ivanov. This eminent mediaevalist scholar took the stand of including the source in a collection of Bogomil books and legends; and this stand would later have a great impact on the historiography. He also offered a more thorough demonstration of his thesis.<sup>29</sup> The main argument once again is the negative attitude of dualists to marriage and sexual life, which is presumed to be what the description of Boris-Michael in *Tale* is about. Ivanov also draws attention to the fact that there is no mention of wives of rulers in the source. To these arguments he also added several cases of miraculous birth: from a widow or from a cow (as Ivanov was inclined to read the word in the text). Another argument supporting the Bogomil character of the text was the supposedly negative attitude to war, shown by the fact that the writer avoided this subject in his narration. The only wars indicated are between Christians and pagans or other infidels. With respect to peacefulness, a fine example is Tsar Peter: when attacked by foes, he did not resist but left the kingdom and went to Rome. The notion of the Seven Heavens is also supposed to be a Bogomil conception. The fact that we find the figure of prophet Isaiah in the centre of the story is also interpreted in this sense, for the “moderate Bogomils” felt a special attachment and respect for this prophet. In this narration, Isaiah substitutes Moses in leading the Chosen People to their promised land.

Resting upon his thesis about the Bogomil character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, Jordan Ivanov claims that the work cannot have had a Greek-Byzantine original, although it did have some Greek sources. The latter were in fact biblical apocrypha that really did reach Bulgarian culture through the Greek language. At the end of his commentary on the source, the prominent

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<sup>28</sup> Jireček, “Khristijanskijat element”, p. 263.

<sup>29</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 275–276.

Bulgarian scholar seems to retreat from his firm position and says that “the author was hardly a perfect Bogomil”, but rather one of the undecided men of letters, a man of the people, who wavered between Orthodoxy and all sorts of branches of the dualist doctrine, someone like Priest Jeremiah.<sup>30</sup>

I mentioned earlier that, after Jordan Ivanov presented his view, the thesis about the Bogomil character of the *Tale* became especially popular in Bulgarian historiography, though hardly any new arguments were made in support of it. In a way, Emil Georgiev continued this view as well, and with him it acquired distinctly ideological traits: since this is a “Bogomil” work, he reasons, it is necessarily “democratic”, opposed to Church canons.<sup>31</sup> Together with these unfounded conclusions, springing from the pathos of the totalitarian socialist times, the author also proposes some well-argued ideas when assessing the work, saying it has a distinctly biblical character, contains the idea of the God-closeness of the Bulgarian people, etc. These features, in fact, have nothing to do with Bogomilism or with “democratic” attitudes. It should be noted that in her above-mentioned recently published article, M. Kajmakamova seriously disputes the arguments supporting the Bogomil character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. She casts doubt on the idea that a text in which the world is ruled by God and by a prophet sent by Him could be considered a dualistic Neo-Manichaean text.<sup>32</sup> She also examined the citations of negative attitude to marriage and women. Seeking biblical and especially Old Testament grounds for these passages, her interpretation rejected any relation to Bogomilism.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the fact that the ruler is idealised and that he is portrayed according to the generally accepted models of piety, practically excludes a dualistic viewpoint.<sup>34</sup>

I accept this justified criticism by M. Kajmakamova and agree with her. The common view of a Bogomil character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* has practically no foundation and springs only from Jordan Ivanov’s enormous, and certainly well merited, authority. Still, this thesis is to be rejected and the general place of this work in mediaeval Bulgarian literature must be rethought.

For this purpose, the meaning of the term “apocryphal” must be clarified. In the encyclopaedic dictionary of Old Bulgarian literature such books

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<sup>30</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, p. 280.

<sup>31</sup> E. Georgiev, *Literatura na izostreni borbi v srednovekovna Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1966, pp. 316–320.

<sup>32</sup> Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’”, p. 423.

<sup>33</sup> *ibidem*, pp. 434–435.

<sup>34</sup> *ibidem*, pp. 435–438.

are defined as “secret”, and “not accessible” to all; later they became non-canonical, sectarian, and prohibited.<sup>35</sup> Thus, for the Bulgarians apocryphal literature was associated with prohibited, non-ecclesiastic literature. This in itself may have had some justification, but it did not justify later logical leaps. The first leap was to define such literature as Bogomil in character; unfortunately, in Bulgaria everything that was problematic from an ecclesiastic point of view in the Middle Ages tends to be defined as somehow related to the Bogomils. The second step is that all works of an unofficial, folk kind, works that stand apart from the high theology of the Church, are declared “heretical”.

Actually, apocrypha are texts connected to biblical themes (of the New and Old Testament) that are not among the biblical books officially recognised by the Church. They are not canonical, but this does not mean they are heretical. This fact shows in the various designations of these works among Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Protestants: they may be called “apocrypha”, but also “deuterocanonical books” or “pseudepigrapha”. The official normative scope of the Holy Scripture is different for the various Christian confessions, and some books that are part of the biblical order among the Orthodox are not part of it for other confessions. The criteria of inclusion are at times formal and strongly dependent on tradition. Regarding the Old Testament, in the Orthodox Church inclusion is generally determined by the presence of a book in the text of the Septuagint; for Catholics the criterion is largely the Vulgate. Of course, every such generalisation carries the risk of inaccuracy, but the basic point is that the absence of a book in the normative list of Holy Scripture does not make that book heretical. Quite simply, there are some reasons for not considering that book to be part of Divine Revelation, but this does not mean it is necessarily harmful, dangerous, or heretical. Viewed in this perspective, an apocryphon is not a folk sectarian text but a biblical-type work that is not part of the Holy Scripture books recognised as Revelation. Based on such a definition, there can evidently be no place among the apocrypha for the so-called *folk literature*. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* may be considered part of apocryphal literature inasmuch as it is not canonical, and it has a marked “biblical” prophetic character. This qualification would drastically contradict the thesis that this is a “folk” text and an original Bulgarian text.

A very different matter is the thesis about the dualistic-Bogomil character of the text, a view that has been repeated mechanically since the previous

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<sup>35</sup> *Starobulgarska literatura. Entsiklopedichen rechnik*, Sofia, 1992, p. 36.

century. The idea of rejecting marriage and woman (as a sexual partner) is in no way necessarily a Bogomil tenet. It is true that, at least since the time of Mani, the dualists had a negative attitude to biological reproduction, especially when the actions connected with it are practiced to satisfy one's lust. However, this does not make this doctrine any different from all other ascetical trends in the Church, or from various heretical communities that strive to mortify the flesh. Unlike the dualists, the Church does not condemn the flesh, which was not only created by God, but has been sanctified by the Incarnation of the Saviour. Nevertheless, official Christianity views the flesh as something that might divert a person from the path to God. It is not evil by definition, but it may lead to abuse. That is why the attitude to it is rather reserved, and indications like those found in the *Tale*, and even much stronger ones, can be found in purely Orthodox circles as well.

As for the Seventh Heaven, we should point out that it was a popular idea in the Hebrew religion, and statements that it exists can be found in the main body of Holy Scripture as well as in the non-canonical books, especially the Book of Enoch. The Psalter mentions heaven in several places (see especially 67:5), and so do other canonical books of the Bible (in many places the word is in the plural—"heavens", the abode of God). The term is most clearly mentioned in the Book of Enoch, which has come down to us in two versions, a Slavic and an Ethiopian. This book has roots in the canonical text of Holy Scripture, where it is mentioned both in the Old and New Testament (Genesis, ch. 5; Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira 44:15; Epistle of Jude 1:14; Epistle to the Hebrews 11:5). Apart from this, Enoch and his prophecies are mentioned in Talmudic literature, in Midrash and in Aggadah (a collection of exegetic texts of classical rabbinic literature that is part of Hebrew oral law, supplementing Mosaic written law).<sup>36</sup> The early Church had a great interest in the Book of Enoch (chiefly in what we now call the "Ethiopian Book of Enoch"), and some of the Fathers of the Church, for instance Tertullian, considered it canonical.<sup>37</sup> Later, it was gradually abandoned, and today only the Ethiopian Church counts it among the canonical books. This book cannot possibly be considered heretical. The Slavic Book of Enoch contains a much more concrete description of the Seventh Heaven.<sup>38</sup> The book has been said to be related to some Judaic sects because of the way it describes tying all four feet of the sacrificial animal,

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<sup>36</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, t. VI, 2nd edition, Detroit-New York-San Francisco-New Haven (Conn.)-Waterville (Maine)-London, 2007, p. 442.

<sup>37</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, t. VI, p. 443.

<sup>38</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, t. VI, pp. 444-445.

and to have noticeable Iranian influence in it, but not of the kind connected with any Manichaean beliefs. The Book of Enoch is not at all dualistic or heretical, although it evidently does not belong to the strictest rabbinical orthodox line. It was composed in a Hebrew milieu and was later widely disseminated, including (and perhaps primarily) in Christian circles. In view of this, I do not believe the mention of the Seventh Heaven represents a Bogomil element in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

As for the prophet Isaiah, his mention does not prove any link with Bogomilism. It is absurd to take the name of one of the prominent prophets, from the Old Testament book perhaps best loved by Christian exegetes, as evidence of affiliation to a dualist heresy. We will devote a special discussion to this prophet in the present study, but here I will only point out that, apart from the book in the Bible, Isaiah's name is also connected with several non-canonical works, such as *Ascension of Isaiah*, *Vision of Isaiah*, and *Martyrdom of Isaiah*. The first two are thought to have been created in a Christian environment. Though certain Gnostic sects have used them, they are not at all heterodox, especially not in the context of early Christian times, when they originated.<sup>39</sup>

So we must agree with the authors who reject the idea of the Bogomil character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and we should place this text in a particular group of unofficial but not necessarily heretical works that were a part of mediaeval Bulgarian literature but whose real environment was Near Eastern prophetic literature, especially literature based on Old Testament traditions.

Now we come to the next group of interpretations of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, which may be classified based on some motifs that the scholars have defined as *folkloric* or as *pagan remnants*, chiefly from the Bulgars, but also from the palaeo-Balkan population. The intellectual environment in which these interpretations arose and developed is closely connected with Bulgarian historiography's ravings in the 1970s and 1980s about Thracians and Bulgars. This was a time of official revival of nationalism, which eventually took the ugly form of anti-minority campaigns that made Bulgaria infamous in Europe. We may consider Ivan Venedikov as the founder of this approach to *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* (of course, he had nothing to do with the above-mentioned political aspect of the issue); recently, newer and even more extreme studies in this trend have appeared.

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<sup>39</sup> Vaillant A., "Un apocryphe pseudo-bogomile: La Vision d'Isaïe", *Revue des études slaves*, vol. 42, 1963, pp. 109–121; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, t. X, pp. 75–76.

It may be said that Ivan Venedikov devotes a significant part of his book *The Copper Threshing Floor of the Bulgars* to such a pagan-folkloric-centred interpretation of what he calls the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*. As I said, these ideas are part of a larger worldview upon which the book depends. It suffices to see who wrote the foreword (Alexander Fol) and what that foreword contains. Explicit stress is placed on the “ancient Thracian and *non-Christian* heritage” (my italics).<sup>40</sup> In fact, the main aim of this trend in historiography is to interpret all of mediaeval and early modern history and culture in a pagan context, in which Christianity is only formally present, an outward façade, but of no essential significance. This was the basic political line of the communist regime.<sup>41</sup> Still, I want to emphasise very strongly that I do not claim *all* the cited authors took part in a premeditated enforcement of these political models of thought.

Let us examine concrete examples of such an interpretation of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* in Venedikov’s book. One of the basic devices for denying the Christian basis of the work is to reinterpret the characters: persons and topics related to Holy Scripture are said to be a traditional form for those times, one which conceals a different underlying meaning. In the case of prophet Isaiah, the fact that he figures as narrator of the tale is said to be a formal means of giving greater weight to the narrative of the text.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps most typical of all is the attitude of the author to the marvellous appearance of the child Ispor and the connection of this passage to the biblical story of Moses’ childhood. Venedikov devotes special attention to the theme of the foundling child (as a variant of the miraculous birth/appearance of the hero with a mission), but only to water down the biblical perspective and dissolve it into various mythological pagan narratives. Thus, he explicitly points out that “the theme of Moses was familiar to thousands of people in Bulgaria from Bible reading”,<sup>43</sup> and evidently the compiler of the apocryphon was one of those readers. Yet this Bulgarian historian believes

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<sup>40</sup> A. Fol in the book of Iv. Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno na prabulgarite*, Sofia, 1983, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> We see a similar attitude to the Bulgarian Christian tradition displayed in those views that emphasise the role of the Church, yet not in terms of its basic mission of salvation of souls, but for its “great importance for preserving the Bulgarian nationality”. Unfortunately, this attitude continues even today.

<sup>42</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 33, 38.

<sup>43</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 54. I should specially point out that the title of Holy Scripture is written here with lowercase letters, although it is a *title*. In addition, I would not agree with the thesis that “thousands of people” had read the Bible in early mediaeval Bulgaria, a time regarding which it is not clear that the text had been translated yet. People were familiarised with its stories mostly at liturgical readings, not directly from the text.

the apocryphon has merely dressed up the legend in a Christian form. He asks himself whether the tale has anything to do with the Bible, and his answer is predetermined: the motif is not biblical but pagan and folkloric.<sup>44</sup> He thus reaches the conclusion that it was the history of pagan Bulgaria that the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* had retold, and all the authentic or mythological data in it serve to build the image of a fabulous kingdom of the “Copper Threshing Floor”, i.e. Bulgaria as it was before the conversion to Christianity.

As strange as this approach to history might seem, it has been surpassed in Bulgarian historiography by the works of a group of folklorists, and especially the work of Todor Mollov devoted to the relations between mythology, epos, and history, published in the 1990s.<sup>45</sup> At the centre of the debate are several elements of the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and especially the story of the child Ispor. One may ask whether a serious researcher should at all discuss such works. I think it vain to try to refute their theses. It is hard to discern any clearly formulated assertions in these works, and the characters they construct actually have nothing to do with the text of our source. Most remarkable of all, in my opinion, is the image of the “prophets from Sredets (Sofia)”, whose institution was supposedly of a shamanistic and was evidently a legacy from pagan times. I will not deal with Todor Mollov’s general thesis, or what there is of a thesis, here. I will comment on his assertions only when they concern some concrete problems relevant to my topic, or when they are formulated clearly enough in connection with some source.

Now we come to the purely *positivistic interpretations* of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. They are not all the same and must not be assessed as equal in quality. This approach is typical and second nature for any historian, and we will find it applied by practically all researchers who have written about the *Tale*. Of course, first of them was Konstantin Jireček, who, like Jordan Ivanov, tried hesitantly to find real historical events corresponding to those cited in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Both these authors have underscored that the text has just about no value as history.<sup>46</sup> Ivan Dujčev was the first to protest against such a categorical conclusion, and after him Veselin

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<sup>44</sup> In order to prove this strange thesis the author is inclined to seek all sorts of justifications and arguments, but not the obvious ones—see Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 55 ff.

<sup>45</sup> T. Mollov, *Mit, epos, istorija. Starobulgarskite istoriko-apokaliptični skazanija (992–1092–1492)*, Veliko Tărnovo, 1997, 256 p.

<sup>46</sup> Jireček, “Hristijanskija element”, p. 261; Ivanov, *Bogomilski knjigi i legendi*, pp. 274–275.

Beševliev.<sup>47</sup> Practically all authors afterwards shared the latter view to some extent. Here I will not deal with it, as I find the impulse to explore historical parallels to characters and events in the *Tale* normal and understandable. Nevertheless, I cannot pass over some cases where the search for actual historical events underlying the text, and for identification of the characters at all costs, has reached proportions that require some comment.

*The Copper Threshing Floor of the Bulgars* by Ivan Venedikov combines the above-mentioned mythological theme with a purely positivistic approach to the text; Venedikov considers the *Tale* to be a source of authentic historical data about the earliest Bulgarian history. What is more, he evidently finds that the mythological-folkloristic interpretation of the text is the way to glean the “rich data” he believes to be contained in the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*. This is how he seeks (and obviously, to his mind, finds) historical facts. Thus he states in the book: “We will look not only for the facts but for the traditions, i.e. the fabulous background against which they appear. We want to see how the facts are transmitted through the fable. We want to see what the Bulgarian kingdom looked like not through the eyes of the chroniclers but through the eyes of the folk tale.”<sup>48</sup> There is nothing essentially wrong about such an approach, or more precisely, there would not be if the facts in question were of another category, not related to concrete events. It is, of course, true that the data about identity, political ideology, and worldviews dating from pre-modern times often reach us through texts that some would define as “legendary”. The problem arises when researchers strive to find real events behind works of a clearly religious-ideological character. Eschatological, apocalyptic, and instructive texts had aims, purposes, and audiences that were quite different from those of concrete historical works. The latter may ultimately aim at constructing some identity, but the pursuit of this goal must first pass through an authentic or invented narrative about past events. Scholars should be cognisant that works such as the *Tale* cannot simply be read as historical works *romans à clef* for real events. Unfortunately, Venedikov adheres to a different trend, that which seeks a historical factual basis underlying the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*; I will give several examples of this approach.

I will skip the author’s historical-geographical commentaries and focus on the alleged use of the name Cumans for emphasising the Hunnic-Bulgar

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<sup>47</sup> Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, pp. 124–125; Beševliev, “Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifen letopis ot XI vek”, pp. 39 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 11.

or Turkic-Bulgar character of the nation.<sup>49</sup> In this framework, history and the historical situation are seen in the perspective of the 19th and 20th century, the time of nation building. The biblical worldview that was the true prism, through which the world was seen during the Middle Ages, is completely (or almost completely) disregarded by Venedikov. I shall not discuss the issue in detail but will refer to what is written about the Cumans, or rather about the image of them created in the context of biblical apocalyptic thinking and eschatological expectation.<sup>50</sup> In this context, Venedikov comes to a conclusion that merits serious attention: “this means that the apocryphon knows the legend of the migration of the Bulgars in a different version from that known to the Byzantine chroniclers. ... the apocryphal chronicle reflects the historical truth *more authentically* than the Byzantine chroniclers” [my italics].<sup>51</sup> The implications of this idea are strikingly obvious. The author continues his presentation and quite naturally reaches the conclusion that: “Consequently we see that the compiler of our apocryphon had a record of facts connected with the foundation of the Bulgarian state that was authentic, real”.<sup>52</sup> Then Venedikov presents his view that the authentic facts have been interpreted in terms of a fantastic plot borrowed from Holy Scripture so as to give them a Christian framework, as required in that age. I shall leave aside Venedikov’s thesis that the ideas of “monotheistic Tangrists” were parallel to Christian ideas, and point out that this is a clear case of substitution: a text is being commented on from a perspective opposite to that of the ideas placed in the work; that is, a text attempting to create a Christian identity for the newly baptised people is transformed into a text that uses biblical forms to dress up and make more acceptable a non-Christian historical tradition. It is impossible to know why Venedikov arrived at the conclusion that some time in the past there had been a Bulgarian narrative about the “founding of the Bulgarian state” at the root of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*—the reasons of the late scholar can only remain a mystery.

In his book devoted to the administrative organisation of the First Bulgarian Empire, the same author continues in the same direction and even intensifies this trend of interpretation of the apocryphal text. A chapter of the book is devoted to *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*; this chapter aims to “discover” the historical identities of some of the enigmatic rulers mentioned in

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<sup>49</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 34 ff.

<sup>50</sup> V. Stojanov, *Kumanologija*, Sofia, 2009, t. I, pp. 11–27.

<sup>51</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 38, the interpretation—pp. 38–39.

it.<sup>53</sup> In his preliminary overview of the more problematic portion of the text, Venedikov divides it into a true part and a false, and he proposes identifying some of the mentioned tsars with historical Bulgarian rulers, for instance Roman with Tsar Gabriel-Radomir-Roman. In other cases, however, the historical correspondence is so difficult to find that he is obliged to see in the characters some unknown local Bulgarian governors from the time of the Cometopouloi. I will deal with these ideas in greater detail in the section of this book about the various characters mentioned in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*; here I will only say that all these ideas are merely fanciful surmises that are not proven because they are supposed to be self-evident; at other times the first elements in the chain of reasoning are used as arguments to prove the following ones, though the first have not themselves been proven or at least justifiably assumed. It seems to me we should not really be spending too much time dealing with this kind of interpretation, but I am obliged to admit the interpretations by this author are nearly the only existing ones to date regarding some parts of the text. Moreover, his comments are largely a result of the confusing nature of the source itself, especially when it is approached with the intention of making a positivistic historical interpretation.

We can find similar tendencies in some commentaries by Pavel Georgiev in connection with *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. He has devoted articles to some details of the narrative. The first article examines the citation of “Ethiopians” in this work.<sup>54</sup> The second is about the “Hundred Mounds” built by Tsar Slav, known as “tsar of the hundred mounds”.<sup>55</sup> In the following article, the author continues the trend, inherited from K. Jireček, to seek the localisation of this region in Dobrudja and the surrounding areas. P. Georgiev’s attempts to equate the idea of “hill/mound”, in the context of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* with that of “city/castle/fortress”,<sup>56</sup> which fits in naturally with the general presentation of the work. Certainly, the *Tale* uses the image of the city in order to construct the image of the world. Apart from this, the article appears rather confused and overcomplicated; ultimately, it too identifies the “Hundred Mounds” with lands broadly located in the lower

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<sup>53</sup> Iv. Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo na Bulgaria prez IX i X vek*, Sofia, 1979, pp. 118–152.

<sup>54</sup> P. Georgiev, “‘Etiopite’ ot Bulgarskija apokrifen letopis”, in: *Sbornik v chest na prof. Ivan Dobrev*, Sofia, 2005, pp. 186–197.

<sup>55</sup> P. Georgiev, “Stokhålmieto i negovite tsentrove”, *Palaeobulgarica*, XXX (2006), 4, pp. 54–68.

<sup>56</sup> Georgiev, “Stokhålmieto i negovite tsentrove”, pp. 55, 60.

Danube basin. The third article by the same author attempts to identify the “Ethiopians” and “Pagans” as the local population conquered by the newly-arrived Bulgars.<sup>57</sup> What is common to this way of interpreting the text is the tendency to view it as if it were written by a modern-day historian, with our contemporary interests and ways of thinking.

### *Character of the Text*

The characteristics of this work and its compilation are interconnected; conclusions about the latter stem from the view as to the typological particularities of the text. Before presenting my ideas on the matter, I should state that any conclusions about this kind of work that are too categorical might be risky when based on conjecture and supposition. As mentioned above, Miliana Kajmakamova underscores the biblical basis of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and abandons certain well-established stereotypes. I would specially like to draw attention to some studies of two Russian scholars: first S.A. Ivanov and then D. Polyvjannyj<sup>58</sup> who has further developed S.A. Ivanov’s ideas in an interesting way. These scholars correctly point out that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not a work that reflects the formation or condition of ethnic identity of Bulgarians in the age of the First Empire. On the contrary, it indicates that the ideology of Orthodox Christian universalism had gained ground, which in the context of that age signified consolidation within the framework of the single, unified Orthodox State, i.e. the Byzantine Empire, which became the *de facto* “Bulgarian” state as well after Bulgaria was conquered at the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>59</sup> Thus, in a sense Tsar Symeon’s idea of achieving unity of Bulgarians and Byzantines under a single crown was realised, though the crown was not that of the Bulgarian tsar but of the *basileis*.<sup>60</sup> The main character through whom this view is represented in *Tale*

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<sup>57</sup> Georgiev P., “Za Pagan, paganite i ‘Gospodarja na Bulgaria’ Kampagan”, *Istoricheski pregled*, 2007, 5–6, pp. 119–134.

<sup>58</sup> S.A. Ivanov, “Bolgarskaja apokrificheskaja letopis’ kak pamjatnik etnicheskogo samosoznanija bolgar”, *Razvitie etnicheskogo samosoznanija slavjanskikh narodov v epokhu zrelogo feodalizma*, ed. G.G. Litavrin, Moscow, 1989, pp. 73–75; D.I. Polyvjannyj, *Kul’turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovoj Bolgarii v kontekste vizantijsko-slavjanskoj obshtnosti IX–XV vekov*, Ivanovo, 2000, pp. 95–121.

<sup>59</sup> Ivanov, “Bolgarskaja apokrificheskaja letopis’ kak pamjatnik etnicheskogo samosoznanija bolgar”, pp. 74–75; Polyvjannyj, *Kul’turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovoj Bolgarii*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>60</sup> Tsar Symeon’s ideology is best presented and discussed in the book by Iv. Bozhilov (*Tsar Simeon Veliki (893–927). Zlatnijat vek na srednevekovna Bulgarija*, Sofia, 1983), where the

of the *Prophet Isaiah* is that of the conqueror Basil II Boulgaroktonos, who is described in the text as a pious tsar, whose power is blessed, and who unswervingly follows in the footsteps of the baptiser Khan Boris-Michael I and of the pious St Tsar Peter.<sup>61</sup>

Before continuing with the discussion of the character of the work, it should be recalled that this work is a compilation, and although it forms a unified text with a single ideological message, in some cases it reflects ideas from different époques. It reflects, and to an extent consciously expresses, some religious political-ideological theses characteristic of its times, but it was composed from sources that were written over several centuries, and it comprises sections and ideas from other works that have influenced it. This generally means that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not the product of a recorded or revised folklore (pagan) epos but of a combining of diverse traditions, among which the biblical influence is predominant. Hence, in their book V. Täpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova write about the diversity and multiplicity of sources used, which has resulted in repetition of characters and events, at times even in differing assessments of the same character; all this implies the text was composed over a long period of time; they consequently propose a later chronology.<sup>62</sup>

In asserting the above thesis, I should emphasise that I believe the work nevertheless contains a general and integrated message. The latter may be related to the construction of a Christian identity of the newly converted Bulgarians in the 9th–11th century and possibly the maintenance of this identity in the following centuries, as well as the creation and preservation of an ideology of power connected with, and based on, this identity. The work shows the strong influence of biblical prophetic texts as well as similar but non-canonical Near Eastern texts, I believe that the Christian identity in it adopts the device of positing the converted nation's similarity to the Chosen People of the Old Testament: this is the New Israel ideology, typical for other European peoples in the Early Middle Ages. This idea is presented in the *Tale* in combination with the idea of the religiously based unity between Romans/Byzantines and Bulgarians. The ideology stemming from

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author has traced all aspects of the *Great Idea* formulated by the tsar, an idea that remained the political ideology of mediaeval Bulgarians until the time of Ottoman conquest.

<sup>61</sup> Polyvjannyj, *Kul'turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovoj Bolgarii*, pp. 120–121. Similar ideas have been developed extensively in chapter 2 of the new book by Iv. Bozhilov, *Bulgarskata archiepiskopia XI–XII vek. Spisäkät na bulgarskite archiepiskopi*, Sofia, 2011, pp. 61–71, 132–133.

<sup>62</sup> Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina*, p. 193; Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 276 ff.

this unity is likewise linked to imagery borrowed from biblical texts about kings and, more generally, about the rulers of the Children of Israel. This is the main object of discussion and demonstration in the present book.

### *Authorship*

The authorship of the compilation cannot be established. The fact that this compiler used parts and ideas from older works is only one of the reasons; no less important a reason is that there are no indications which could possibly help us establish the compiler's identity. All we can do is to trace the circle in which the work was compiled. Two proposals have already been made on this question: 1) The compiler was a Bogomil heretic; 2) he came from the circle of Orthodox monks in the western Bulgarian lands.

I discussed the first proposal in connection with the supposedly heretical character of the work. As mentioned above, Jordan Ivanov was the main proponent of this view,<sup>63</sup> and its popularity may be attributed to the enormous influence of this scholar. Some later researchers have repeated his view uncritically. I already expressed my opinion as to the "Bogomil" character of the work and here I will only repeat my conclusion, that we have no grounds for considering this work to be heretical (as some historians are evidently inclined to believe) and see no reason for qualifying its author as a Bogomil.

The other proposed identification is that he was a Bulgarian monk, i.e. that the *Tale* is related to monastic circles. K. Jireček was the first to suggest this, and other authors have followed his opinion.<sup>64</sup> In fact, there is nothing to say against this view—the work does seem to fit well into the framework of the monastic tradition. It is not a work of high urban erudition (not even of ecclesiastic knowledge), nor is it seemingly a work by someone from the royal court, nor does it come from the purely oral folk tradition of the people. Of course, since it is compilation, some of these cited characteristics may be present as elements in the text, but we cannot classify the whole text in any one of these groups. However, to define the compiler (or compilers) as belonging to monastic circles is not a particularly new idea and does not contribute much to understanding the work, for these circles may have been internally very diverse.

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<sup>63</sup> J. Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, Sofia, 1931, pp. 275, 279–280.

<sup>64</sup> Jireček, "Khristijanskijat element", p. 267.

Finally, when talking about compilation we should have in mind that the spelling in the only manuscript that has reached us is Serbian with traces of the Resava School.<sup>65</sup> This fact should be carefully considered, without jumping to one extreme or another. In the Late Middle Ages and in the post-Byzantine era, the western parts of the Balkans, as well as a part of Bulgaria, were under strong Serbian political, ecclesiastic, and ultimately cultural influence. I will not go into retracing the facts, or analysing the Resava orthography, or the Serbian conquest and a defence of this region. The important thing is that the narrative under discussion in this book existed in a Serbian environment as well, or an environment under Serbian influence. Both Bulgarian and Serbian memories are present in the manuscript, as well as some texts related to Russia.<sup>66</sup> This does not permit us to identify the compiler or even the copyist of the manuscript as surely “Serbian” (he could easily have been a Bulgarian), but it does cast doubt on some seemingly Bulgarian-centred ideas related to the text.

### *Localisation*

After this overview of the publications and historiography concerning *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, I should offer my own ideas about its origin. Like most of my colleagues who have undertaken this difficult task, I have found it extremely problematic to draw any firm conclusion.

Regarding the question of where the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* was composed, the almost unanimous view is that it was in the western Bulgarian lands. I do not think there are serious grounds for doubting this, but we should not fail to note that the eastern parts of the state are also presented in it. It should also be specified that, being a compiled work, the text and the separate parts that went into compiling it might have been created in different places. As for a more precise localisation, we find two places that have already been proposed by historians: Sofia and the Osogovo monastery.

The assertion that the present-day capital of Bulgaria was the central city in the text owes more to interpretation than to the actual text itself. I shall not discuss here the question of the so-called “Prophets from Sredets” and shamans. Nevertheless, I am not inclined to overlook the idea that Sofia may

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<sup>65</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, pp. 9–10.

have been an important location for the composition of the text. We recall the enormous importance that Sofia and the Sofia area had in the religious, literary, and cultural life of Bulgarians in the 16th–17th century, which happens to be the time when the manuscript was created. This fact, together with the proposed idea of looking for some possible influence of Jacob Kraykov's printed book *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, should be considered.

The localisation in the Osogovo monastery was first suggested (but merely as a possibility) by K. Jireček, and is based on a local tradition, according to which the relics of the Prophet Isaiah were preserved in this holy monastery.<sup>67</sup> We have other data about such claims of possession of relics and veneration for Isaiah, in addition to the Serbian note mentioned by Jireček.<sup>68</sup> Yet this local tradition was not very strong and not popular enough to first cause the appearance of a significant “Prophet Isaiah's literary cycle”, and then disappear, leaving very few, or almost no, traces. I cannot categorically reject the localisation of the work's composition in the Osogovo monastery, but still less can I confirm it. It is hardly useful to ascribe certainty to claims that cannot be proven. Besides, even K. Jireček himself was not certain that this was where the text was produced; he merely presented the idea as a suggestion, and as such it should remain.

Finally, the fate of the only manuscript copy to have reached us has also contributed to localising the work in the western regions of Bulgaria. However, we should have in mind that the localisation of the work can only partially be connected with the localisation of the manuscript, for the text of *Tale* occupies a rather independent place within the collection. Foremost I should recall that according to specialists like A. Turilov, the spelling of the collection is Serbian, with some traces of the Resava School.<sup>69</sup> This could be considered natural for that age, and certainly points to the western Balkan origin of the manuscript. A. Turilov, who has made practically the only fully scientific description of the Kichevo manuscript, proposes several ideas for defining the place of its creation. They are based on the contents, and more precisely on the strong presence of memories, *vitae*, and offices of women saints named Anna, a highly popular name in Nemanide Serbia. According to him, the possible places may be the monastery of Studenica and the two Athonite centres, the scete St Anna and the Chilandari monastery.<sup>70</sup> All

<sup>67</sup> Jireček, “Khrstijanskijat element”, p. 268.

<sup>68</sup> See in Tsibranska, *Etudi vărkhū kirilskata paleotipia*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>69</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Turilov, “Kichevskij sbornik”, pp. 37–38.

three places remain unproven within this hypothesis, but in any case, they confirm the Serbian origin of the manuscript and its connection with the western lands.

The colophons that have been preserved in it form another important source about the creation of the manuscript. They and their interpretation indicate it has practically never left Macedonia.<sup>71</sup> The first mentioned owner of the book is a certain Dimo, who paid 260 ducats for it (which is an impossibly enormous price!) probably in the 18th century. At the very end of that same century, Cyril Pejčinović acquired the manuscript for 8 groschen and it remained his property to the end of his life in 1845. It has been surmised that the manuscript accompanied this educator in all his travels, starting from the Kichevo monastery, through the Markov (Marko's) monastery, and Mount Athos, and finally to the Lešok monastery near Tetovo, where, after Cyril Pejčinović's death, it was bought by A.F. Hilferding and so taken to Moscow. This information is interesting for our study, for they are the only indications outside the text itself that can suggest the area where the manuscript was present. The area was evidently Macedonia, more likely the western part of this land. It was in Mount Athos later and only temporarily, and I do not believe this fact could be important for the localisation of the text. While this information cannot prove anything by itself, when added to observations on the contents and other accessible data, they might help to determine the region to which the narrative is connected. The result, in fact, coincides with the views that have been expressed so far.

### *Dating of the Text*

In Bulgarian historiography, the text of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is usually dated to the 11th century. The earliest attempt at dating is, again, K. Jireček's.<sup>72</sup> Initially he gave a wider dating and situated the creation of the text between 1018 and 1186, adducing as evidence the lack of any mention of John I Asen and Peter, or of the Bulgarian Empire that these tsars revived. This is a serious argument, to which the author added the dating of the war with the Pechenegs, the very last event mentioned in the apocryphon, to 1048–1053. Later, Jireček asserted in passing that the text was from the 11th century. Jordan Ivanov takes this assertion as a basis, and

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<sup>71</sup> Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik", pp. 5–7.

<sup>72</sup> Jireček, "Khristijanskijat element", pp. 266–267.

though he does not clearly pronounce himself on the 11th century dating, he notes in two places that the chronicle part concludes with an account of events that took place around the middle of that century.<sup>73</sup> Later, the indication of 11th century becomes part of the title this author has put to the apocryphon. There is practically no debate about the dating of the text to the 11th century. Subsequent researchers have simply repeated the theses of Konstantin Jireček and Jordan Ivanov out of respect for these highly authoritative scholars, and also because the story concludes with the Pechenegs and because of the identification of Peter Delyan.

In attempting to solve the problem of dating the work, we should keep in mind the recently proposed mutual influence of other sources, as well as the possibility of later interpolations in the text. The *Tale* may have been influenced by a work that has recently been published with commentary, *A Useful Tale about the Latins*. In view of the passage about the death of St Tsar Peter in Rome, which we find only in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and in *Book for Various Occasions* by Jacob Kraykov, influence may have occurred in respect to those works as well. We should look at these works in relation to the *Tale* in order to find not only direct influence, but also the shared meaning that they produced.

In his recently published book, containing the latest edition and commentary for *A Useful Tale about the Latins*, A. Nikolov proposes several comparisons of this text with other sources. As a result, he discovers some influence of *Useful Tale* upon the later works *Russian Primary Chronicle* of Nestor and *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.<sup>74</sup> Before discussing the influence that Nikolov finds, it is important explain his thesis and to express, as far as I can, my view on it. A. Nikolov believes the polemical anti-Catholic work he has published was created originally in Greek around the beginning of the 12th century and was translated into the Slavonic in Bulgaria, in the western Bulgarian lands; later, due to the direct authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the Russian Diocese, the work was taken to Kiev.<sup>75</sup> This is not the place for a detailed discussion of these assertions, but I accept most of the conclusions and they will be the basis of my further observations.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 273–274, 279.

<sup>74</sup> A. Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite—pametnik na srednevekovnata slavjanska polemika sreshtu katolitsizma*, Sofia, 2011, pp. 27 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, pp. 9, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Despite my acceptance of Nikolov's arguments, I regrettably find that his reasoning and explanations are not always sufficiently grounded in historical fact, or are sometimes less than convincing. For instance, see Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, r. 39–44: I do not

Here we will leave aside the problem of the textual similarity to *Russian Primary Chronicle*, which is outside the scope of this study,<sup>77</sup> and concentrate on the similarity to *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The comparison A. Nikolov makes is very interesting and may serve as a basis for certain conclusions. I agree with the assertion that the compiler of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* had at his disposal a Greek text that related the origin of the Bulgarians to the Scythians.<sup>78</sup> I also agree, at least partially, that there is some influence of *Useful Tale* upon *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*<sup>79</sup> (and not the reverse), but I do not think this has been sufficiently proven by A. Nikolov. In addition to his arguments, I would add the more general observation that one was an official theological polemical work, while the other was an apocryphon; hence, we should not presume a deuterocanonical text could have influenced a normative one. Yet the possibility remains that some unknown third work may have influenced both texts separately, a third work that is either unknown or not yet identified. This problem remains to be discussed. In any case, the conclusions of A. Nikolov situate the compilation of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* most probably after the end of the 11th century, without setting a clear *terminus ante quem* to its composition.

This view, however, raises another problem related to the anti-Catholic character of *Useful Tale about the Latins* and the fact that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, allegedly influenced by *Useful Tale*, contains a passage about the death of St Tsar Peter in Rome; there is some contradiction here.

This reference to the death of St Tsar Peter in Rome is the other citation that obviously connects *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* to some other source. Such an event has not been repeated or confirmed anywhere else. We find it only

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consider it proven that the translation was made in the Bulgarian lands under Byzantine rule and specifically in the western lands, in the Archbishopric of Ochrid. Nonetheless, even if it is not proven, I do find this probable. Still, it is important to point out that we cannot draw conclusions about where the translation was made judging by the contents of the text itself, since it must have repeated the Greek original (at least we have no reasons to believe it had not). Perhaps a textological and philological analysis of the work might add arguments in support of the author's proposals. Nevertheless, I think it unlikely that the recently translated text would have exerted influence at lightning speed on two other works, localised in the western Balkans and in Kiev, places that in that age were too distant for this. Though connected through Constantinople, they were in different dioceses—that of the Ecumenical Patriarchy and that of the Archbishopric of Ochrid—which would not have facilitated contacts between them.

<sup>77</sup> I should in fact stress A. Nikolov's conclusion that this influence allows us to date the *Useful Tale* to the very end of the 11th or the beginning (first decade) of the 12th century—Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, r. 35.

<sup>78</sup> Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, r. 36.

<sup>79</sup> Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, r. 38.

in the *Tale* and in the printed *Book for Various Occasions*, published by Jacob Kraykov in Venice in 1572. This information has been given due attention elsewhere in this book, here I will only make a few preliminary remarks, connected with the dating and character of the text.

First, practically all scholars who have written on the topic find that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* has had some influence on Jacob Kraykov's printed book. Yet it must be emphasised that the only copy of the work to have reached us dates from the beginning of 17th century, while the printed book is from 1572, i.e. it is older by several decades than the manuscript. Jacob Kraykov's books were disseminated in the western Bulgarian lands, and that is where the Kichevo manuscript came from. At least this is the only region in which we know it was present. Since the text of *Tale* is a compilation, I would propose for discussion whether we might not find some influence of the printed book on the manuscript text. This is chronologically possible, geographically quite admissible, and the context of the work does not exclude it.

Let us discuss briefly the nature of the citation about the death of Tsar Peter in Rome, which I have examined in detail in the respective chapter of this book. It is immediately evident that this passage seems, as it were, grafted onto the text and not well connected to the rest of the narrative. Hence, it may be supposed, though it cannot be proven, that the mention in *Tale* is a later addition made by the writer of the Kichevo manuscript, and borrowed from *Book for Various Occasions*. Jacob Kraykov could have invented the story in order to connect Bulgaria to the Italian lands and to Rome, city of the Holy See; such a tendency is present in his books, even in the lexical aspect, also demonstrated in the study by M. Tsibranska. It should also be underscored that the reference to Rome, and to Constantinople for that matter, is an imperial paradigm and, in my opinion, is closely related to the joint presentation of St Tsar Peter and St Constantine in our apocryphon.

This is where the question arises about the influence, as proposed and argued by A. Nikolov, of *Useful Tale about the Latins* upon *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The first of these works has a strongly anti-Catholic character, while the latter is overall neutral with regard to the Roman Church. The mention of Rome is where the city is used as a reference point for localising the Bulgarians when Isaiah is sent to them, and the indication that St Tsar Peter died in Rome. The first of these references is ideologically indifferent, unlike the second. We may ask whether a text influenced by an anti-Latin polemical work could possibly contain information that glorifies Rome, even if only subtly. The answer is probably that it would not. This gives me one more reason to indicate the possibility that the passage about the

death of Tsar Peter in Rome might be a later interpolation. In addition, why exclude the possibility that this addition was made in the 16th–17th century, possibly under the influence of the book printed in 1572?

Certainly, I want to stress once again that such an assertion remains hypothetical and can hardly ever be categorically confirmed or rejected.

While leaving the above suggestion within the sphere of conjecture, we must admit that it nevertheless points to the possibility that the passage about the death of St Tsar Peter in Rome might be only one of several additions, and some additions might be unrecognised as such. In this connection, I would recall my view that the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is a compilation—though with a unified message—in which there are certainly additions and a variety of ideas, which generally do not impair its integrity.

Certain mentions of geographical names that are inconsistent with the time of the early Bulgarian Middle Ages could also point to such a conclusion. One of these names is that of the city of Breznik, the other is “Dobrich”.

Regarding the city of *Breznik*<sup>80</sup> the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* says that it was founded by Tsar Seleukia Simeklit, who later died there.<sup>81</sup> Of course, this is legendary information, but the question nevertheless arises why the text cites this particular town, hidden away in the mountain recesses of Western Bulgaria.

The city of Breznik is not mentioned in any mediaeval document.<sup>82</sup> This could be expected, for extant Bulgarian official documents of that time are few in number and, hence, not very representative. More importantly, Breznik is not present in Serbian documents either, which are significantly more numerous; and we should keep in mind that during the 14th century this region was under Serbian rule, and later became part of the Patriarchate of Peć, and is hence comparatively well-documented. We need not draw very strong conclusions from this lack of reference to the city, but I feel we *do* have reason to believe that in the late Middle Ages the city was not particularly important. We may be even more confident it was not so in the 11th

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<sup>80</sup> On the early Ottoman history of the town of Breznik: N. Manolova-Nikolova, “Rudarstvo i sveti mesta (primerät na gr. Breznik)”, *V sveta na choveka. Sbornik v chest na prof. d.i.n. Ivanichka Georgieva*, ed. Dzh. Madzharov, Kr. Stoilov, t. 2, Sofia, 2008, pp. 177–192.

<sup>81</sup> See this book p. 19 (f. 402b, lines 2–8).

<sup>82</sup> The city of Μπρεάσνικ indicated in a charter of the time of Alexis I Comnenos is not the one we are looking for, because it is situated in the region of the city of Strumitsa in Eastern Macedonia—see Iv. Snegarov, *Istorija na Ochridskata archiepiskopija*, vol. I, Sofia, 1924, pp. 223–224 note 7; L. Taseva, *Bulgarska toponimija ot grätski i sräbski srednovekovni dokumenti*, Sofia, 1998, p. 155.

century, when no information about Breznik appears, though this is the century to which the *Tale* is usually dated.

To get some idea about the development of Breznik in later ages we would have to turn to the Ottoman archives, which are considerably more ample.<sup>83</sup> We find it mentioned there starting from the 15th century. The earliest reference known to us is from 1462–1463, when the monastery of *Mateyalı* is mentioned as situated in the Breznik area.<sup>84</sup> N. Manolova-Nikolova has drawn attention to another interesting document dated in 1488, concerning the existence of a *Law of Breznik* that contained a regulation of the mining production and the whole economic life in this settlement during the Early Ottoman period.<sup>85</sup> This implies that it was some sort of administrative centre around the middle of that century. This conclusion is confirmed by the *cizye* tax register for 1490/1491, where it is indicated that part of the revenues went for the salary of Mevlâna Muhiyiddin, who was imam of the mosque in Breznik.<sup>86</sup> This is indirect proof of the importance of the city, because in that early age, soon after the Ottoman conquest, Friday mosques existed only in cities and in administrative centres. The existence of a mosque may be taken as a reason to consider Breznik was some administrative centre at that time, probably a centre of a *nahiye*. In the beginning of the 17th century, the city had grown into a *kaza* centre with its own *kadi*, as specially indicated in the sources.<sup>87</sup> This is a mark of considerable rise in importance, a development that might be relevant for the present study.

So, how can we explain the presence of Breznik in a text preserved only in a manuscript copy from the early 17th century, but which preserves a work that seems to originate in a much earlier age? It seems rather unlikely

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<sup>83</sup> Mentions of the city of Breznik not only in documents but by travellers, have been collected in the book by A. Choleva-Dimitrova, *Selishtni imena ot jugozapadna Bulgaria. Izsledvane. Rechnik*, Sofia-Moscow, 2002, p. 102. In 1475, Jacopo de Promontorio de Campis mentions Breznik as a mining centre—Manolova-Nikolova, “Rударство i sveti mesta (primerât na gr. Breznik)”, pp. 177–178.

<sup>84</sup> *Turski izvori za bulgarskata istorija/Fontes turcici historiae bulgaricae*, t. II, Sofia, 1966, p. 65.

<sup>85</sup> N. Beldiceanu, *Les actes des premiers sultans conservé dans les manuscrits turcs de la Bibliothèque Nationale à Paris*, t. II, *Réglements miniers (1390–1512)*, Documents et recherches, VII, Paris-La Haye, 1964, pp. 218–220; Manolova-Nikolova, “Rударство i sveti mesta (primerât na gr. Breznik)”, pp. 178 ff.

<sup>86</sup> *Turski izvori za bulgarskata istorija/Fontes turcici historiae bulgaricae*, t. VII, Sofia, 1986, p. 34.

<sup>87</sup> *Turski izvori za bulgarskata istorija/Fontes turcici historiae bulgaricae*, t. V, pp. 197–198 (1606—the Breznik kaza is mentioned) t. VII, p. 198 (1616—a *kaza* centre with its own *kadi*), r. 301 (1625—a *kadi* of Breznik is indicated).

that the name of this city was included in the text in the 11th century. The Ottoman sources testify to the rising importance of the city (as perceived by Muslims and Christians alike) precisely at the time when the Kichevo manuscript was created. Since a firm answer based on documentary source evidence cannot be given, I would propose a working hypothesis, which is similar to the one about the citation of the death of Tsar Peter in Rome. One possible explanation for the inclusion of the name of Breznik in the apocryphon could be that it was included there later, when the Kichevo manuscript was being composed.<sup>88</sup> This was the late 16th and early 17th century, which saw both the noticeable rise in the city's its status and was also the very time when the surviving manuscript of the *Tale* was copied. I do not mean this copying involved a full revision of the work, but a number of interventions may have been made in the text, one of which may have been the mention of Breznik.<sup>89</sup>

As I already noted, if we were to accept this solution to the problem—a solution that for the time being remains no more than a hypothesis—we might explain other unclear passages as well in the text. So we could see this as a text that reflects the idea of the changed identity, now a Christian one (i.e. based on Holy Scripture), of the Bulgarians from the age after their conversion. This text, while remaining integral in its message, might have undergone multiple interventions and additions during the later Middle Ages and also in the early Ottoman era.

Another such example is the name of Dobrich, which is mentioned as the place where Khan Boris-Michael (Tsar Boris in the *Tale*) died. Since the name Dobrich is that of the modern city, located in northeastern Bulgaria in the Dobrudja region, and since it is evident that this modern name is too

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<sup>88</sup> I would like to stress that N. Manolova-Nikolova (“Rudarstvo i sveti mesta (primerät na gr. Breznik)”, p. 179) proposes a similar idea, and conjectures that the name “Breznik” was cited in the manuscript copy of the apocryphon because of the increased importance of this settlement in the Early Ottoman epoch (end of 16th–beginning of 17th century).

<sup>89</sup> I shall mention here a probably similar case of intervention in an older text by the copyist, a case related to me by my colleague Rositsa Gradeva, whom I want to specially thank for her assistance in the preparation of this part of the study. And so, in the book “*Gazavat name*”, composed in the 15th century, the mosque Siyavuş [Paşa] in Sofia is mentioned (*Pisanie za verskite bitki na sultan Murad, sin na Mehmed khan*, ed. M. Kalitsin, Sofia, 1992, p. 43; R. Gradeva, “Sofijskata katedralna tsärkva XV—nacheloto na XIX vek”, *Balkanite. Modernizatsija, identichnost, idei. Sbornik v chest na prof. Nadja Danova*, ed. Yura Konstantinova et alii, Sofia, 2011, pp. 570–575). This was in fact the basilica St Sophia, which had been given the name Siyavuş [Paşa] not before the 16th century. This was probably a substitution of the name made by a later copyist of the text, who was familiar with the new and contemporaneous for him name of the mosque. Of course, this is not a proof of the hypothesis I propose, but just an illustration of a similar relation to a text, of an existing practice in copied texts.

recent to have been referred to in the mediaeval text, the use of this name could be viewed as possible evidence of a later interpolation in the text. Few authors have written about this problem and the topic is usually skipped and attributed to the generally confused character of the source. Thus, in a comment to the translation, V. Tăpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova note that the citation could be related to *Dobrudja* and *Dobrich*, and that the name was probably built on the basis of the word “*dobro*” (= “good”), associated with the reign of Boris.<sup>90</sup> Of course, this reasoning is logical and is based on the general thesis of the authors, who follow the traditional approach of dating the text to the 11th century. This is one possible solution, but I will propose a different possible interpretation of the source.

Before examining the idea that the reference might be to something having to do with Dobrudja, I would like to mention one more toponym that fits. This is a plain on the west bank of the river Morava, near the mouth of the river Toplitsa, which was once called *Dobriče* and which we know about from the *Lives of the Serbian Kings and Archbishops* by Archbishop Danilo, from the part of the book devoted to King Stephen Dečanski.<sup>91</sup> I do not think this late citation gives us very ample possibility for interpretation, so I will cease searching in this direction. The discrepancy in time and in ethnic-cultural environment of the two mentions is so great that we cannot look for any connection between them. Moreover, the above-mentioned plain was not important enough to be a likely interpolation into the text later on.

Evidently, this is not the case as regards Dobrudja and the memory of its rulers, one of whom gave his name to it. The name of this historical-geographical region has been the topic of many studies and detailed debates,<sup>92</sup> but we shall not touch upon them here. I accept the prevailing,

<sup>90</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina*, p. 204 note 19; Tăpkova-Zaimova and A. Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 297 note 19.

<sup>91</sup> P. Mutafchiev, “Dobrotič-Dobrotitsa i Dobrudja”, in Mutafchiev P., *Izbrani proizvedenija*, t. II, Sofia, 1973, p. 115.

<sup>92</sup> Mutafchiev, “Dobrotič-Dobrotitsa i Dobrudja”, pp. 115 ff.; A. Popescu, “Dobrogea otomană (sec. XV–XVI): Discocieri teritorial-administrative și cronologice”, în: vol. *Români în Europa medievală. Studii în onoarea Profesorului Victor Spînei*, ed. Dumitru Țeicu, Ionel Căndea, Brăila, 2008, pp. 633 ff.; A. Popescu, “The Region of Dobrudja from the Middle Ages to the end of Ottoman Rule”, 2008, *Egkyklopaideia Meizonos Ellinismou, Euxeinos Pontos*, URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/1.aspx?id=12392> (and the older literature cited there). I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anca Popescu for the assistance afforded me in the preparation of this study. A thorough overview of the etymology of the name “Dobrudja” is made by V. Gjuzelev in *Istorija na Dobrudja*, t. II, Veliko Tărnovo, 2004, pp. 387–390 (with older literature cited).

though not unanimous, thesis that the name of the region comes from that of Despot Dobrotitsa, the most notable ruler of the principality of the local dynasty of Terters. More important for the present study is the question as to when the name first appears in the sources. It is logical to place the *terminus post quem* according to the date of Despot Dobrotitsa's death and the Ottoman conquest of the region, which was after 1388 and before 1393. Such a solution would locate the appearance of the name long after the 11th century, the time to which the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is usually dated. The name first appears in narrative sources in the first half of the 15th century, in the chronicle by Yazıcıoğlu Ali.<sup>93</sup> Without discussing at length the history of its appearance, it is enough to note that it already existed in the 15th century and was sufficiently well known that the copyist of our source may have been familiar with it and possibly interpolated the name there. It should also be pointed out that the form of its usage varied and it is hard to find a rigorously applied one in that time.

We thus come to the topic of the form cited in this particular case, "Dobrich", which inevitably reminds us of the modern city of that name in northeast Bulgaria. I must say at once that I believe it impossible this could be the city referred to in the source. It did not exist in the Middle Ages: after the 11th century, the central part of Dobrudja was almost completely deserted and virtually no urban life remained there, but could be found only along the Pontic littoral of the Danube. The present-day city of Dobrich was founded probably at the beginning of the 16th century by the Ottoman merchant Hacıoğlu,<sup>94</sup> and until the year 1882 was called Hacıoğlu Pazarcık. The name "Dobrich" was invented after the end of Ottoman domination based on the name of Despot Dobrotitsa and, of course, in connection with the region of Dobrudja; this is plainly evident in the act of February 1882, issued by Prince Alexander I, where this name is indicated without mention of any prior Bulgarian name of the city.<sup>95</sup> Evidently, there was no such name to mention.

Nothing in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* could be related to the name of the present-day city of Dobrich. A later addition of the name is an impossible explanation, for this name first appeared centuries after the later copy was written, let alone the original text. However, this does not

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<sup>93</sup> M. Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă. Izvoare narative privind istoria Europei orientale și centrale (1263–1683)*, București, 1978, p. 33; Popescu, "Dobrogea otomană", p. 633.

<sup>94</sup> Around the middle of the 16th century Hacıoğlu Pazarcık had acquired the official status of a city—*Istoriya na Dobrudja*, t. III, Sofia, 1988, p. 14.

<sup>95</sup> *Därzhaven vestnik (State Official Newspaper)*, ann. IV, nr. 22/27. II. 1882, p. 170.

refute the connection with Dobrudja in general. In the text, *Dobrich* is not mentioned as being the name of a city; in fact, the category of the toponym is not indicated in any way. Hence we may suppose this mention was a distorted form of the designation of the historical-geographical *region* of Dobrudja, a name that was created in the 15th century, and which was no doubt at first not stable in the forms in which it appeared in the Ottoman texts. It was created on the basis of the term “lands of Dobrotitsa” according to the already traditional way in which the Osmanlis constructed the names of the lands they conquered.

Naturally, the question arises as to the time this historical-geographical name was inscribed in the text. This could not have happened before the beginning of the 15th century, when the name itself first came into existence. Since this is long after the supposed time when the text was written, the name can only have come there as the result of a later interpolation.

Therefore, the citing of toponyms like Breznik and Dobrich can be taken as one more reason to look for late interpolations in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Such cases give me reason to maintain the hypothesis of the compiled character of this source and the presence of later additions in it. I do not want to qualify this assertion as more than a hypothesis, for the character of the text is such as to presuppose that discussions will continue and a generally accepted and indisputable position on the issues will likely never be reached.

Nevertheless, in order to establish when the apocryphon was created, we must take into account that it is a compiled text, and based on works written in various ages. We should also keep in mind that, since the narrative in the text stops rather abruptly, its ending might be missing (i.e. that it might have had a continuation and a conclusion that are unknown to us).

I have already discussed the compiled character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, so here I will only repeat that no scholar has explicitly questioned this, but will add that neither has anyone viewed this compiled character in the way I have proposed. This compiling has broken the text down into fragments in the course of its history, although its unified message has been respected and a complete unified text has been ultimately produced. Hence, the fragments upon which the compiled text was composed would have to be dated differently. I would place part of the work even before the 11th century, and part of it, maybe after that century. Still, the reasonable question can arise as to why the last identifiable historical events mentioned in the *Tale* are from the middle of the 11th century, while important subsequent events are not present in the text. I could not give a sure answer to this question (apart from repeating that was the time when the text was

concluded), but I *can* propose we should think more about the possibility that what we have now is not the full text. The latest research on the text points out the lack of a concluding apocalyptic part, which was so typical of similar works from that time.<sup>96</sup> The narrative known to us concludes with the invasion of the Pechenegs, who are described as violators, deceivers, infidels, and lawless.<sup>97</sup> This is usually interpreted as an announcement of an eschatological character, hinting at the approaching end of the world. The atmosphere this part creates is indeed eschatological, but I do not believe we can be quite sure that the Pecheneg invasion was intended as the beginning of the Apocalypse in the text. The logic of the presentation up to that point does not in any way suggest the approaching end of the world. The Pechenegs are mentioned unexpectedly—they appear as a *deus ex machina*, and also, there is no direct reference to the end, and the common apocalyptic figure of the Last Emperor is missing, as are other images from the Apocalypse. It is probable that the text continued or at least was open for further continuation. I am aware such an assertion cannot be proven by textually based arguments, and even less can we know what the continuation might have been. For this, we should perhaps look at the extant works of the Isaiah's literary cycle, but I say this only as a conjecture. What matters for the present study is that I have reasons to propose the “missing end” solution, and thus to reject the strict dating of the work to the middle or after the middle of the 11th century. Of course, I confirm that this century was evidently important for the construction of the text and probably marks one of the stages of this construction. Certainly, this is the age related to the last identifiable historical events cited in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. However, this does not signify the work could not have been continued. Another question needing clarification is how an apocryphon dating from the beginning of the second millennium could have remained intact and reached us in just one known copy, made about six hundred years later. Indeed, it seems to me rather improbable that this could really be the case.

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<sup>96</sup> Тăпкова-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Istoriko-apocaliptichnata knizhnina*, p. 193; Тăпкова-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 279.

<sup>97</sup> See this book p. 21 (f. 402d, the last line–f. 403a, lines 1–2).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE AND THE PROMISED LAND

#### *The Prophet Isaiah and the New Israel*

The *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* claims to be a vision from the point of view of the Prophet Isaiah which he received in heaven before being sent by God back to earth to lead the Bulgarians. Why was it that the prophet Isaiah was chosen as the narrator and as the person who leads the Bulgarians to their new land? I will not dwell on the untenable thesis that the prophet is a character that comes down from certain shamans from the Sofia area.<sup>1</sup> Nor do I think it particularly likely his popularity was due to some local veneration of this prophet in the territories between northeastern Macedonia and Kraishte (the area of Sofia), which some scholars assert based on the presence of relics of Isaiah in the Osogovo monastery.<sup>2</sup> Since we do not have enough extant data about such a cult, it could hardly have been a considerable one. Moreover, we should not explain the accumulation of such a relatively sizeable amount of literature connected with the name of Isaiah by some veneration for which we have very scant data. The explanation must lie elsewhere and is probably linked with the prophet himself and how he was perceived, and not with local traditions.

#### *The Prophet Isaiah in His Historical Context*

In order to understand the use of the figure of Isaiah in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, it is necessary to understand the background of this biblical prophet. Isaiah is one of the most highly revered prophets of the Old Testament, and certainly a favourite of Christian interpreters of Holy Scripture. In Hebrew, his name signifies “Yahweh is salvation”. Very little is known about his life: he

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<sup>1</sup> Mollov, *Mit, epos, istorija*, pp. 104ff. The whole book may be said to be essentially determined by such ideas.

<sup>2</sup> Jireček, “Khrisťjanskijjat element”, p. 268 (see also p. 241 note 4); Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 163–164, note 2. Regarding the mention of St Prophet Isaiah *иже въ горѣ ѿсогѡвцѣи* and his commemoration on May 9, see Tsibranska, *Etudi vărkhū kirilskata paleotipia*, p. 41.

was the son of Amos (Isaiah 1:1, 2:1—but not the prophet Amos); of his family we know nothing further with certainty, but some parts of his book give reasons to believe he was related to the high society of Jerusalem, his city of birth. Some other, non-biblical Hebrew traditions preserved in the Talmud, assert he was the nephew of Amaziah, king of Judah, i.e. his father Amos was the king's brother.<sup>3</sup> This was one of the reasons he was characterised as a “royal prophet”, someone quite close to the ruling power. This fact is evident by the biblical book ascribed to him. His exact date of birth is unknown, but it is known that he began his work as a prophet in the last year of Uzziah's rule, at the age of twenty. His service to his mission as prophet continued for more than half a century, until the time of King Manasseh. He had a wife who is also called a “prophetess” (Isaiah 8:3), though it is not clear whether this title was due to her being the wife of a prophet or to some personal qualities of hers. He had two sons (Isaiah 8:18, see 8:1–4). He was certainly a very cultivated man. The date of Isaiah's death is not known. The apocryphal *Martyrdom of Isaiah* tells us he suffered for his faith under king Manasseh: he was sawed in half at the order of this lawless king.<sup>4</sup> Tradition holds that he was buried in Paneas, in the north of the Holy Land, and that his relics were translated to Constantinople in AD 442. His name is associated with one of the canonical books of the Old Testament and with several deuterocanonical or apocryphal texts, one of which is our *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

Isaiah was a contemporary of the prophet Micah and lived in a time soon after the prophets Hosea and Amos. It was a time of great religious fervour, but also of political and social calamities. The Northern Kingdom fell under the domination of the Assyrians, and soon Judah followed it. Social and religious decay had enveloped both north and south. Idolatry spread, especially in Samaria, where it was practiced more or less openly. It was for these reasons that prophet Isaiah became the bitter critic of the lawlessness of the Chosen People; similarly critical were most of the other prophets. Isaiah's popularity in Christian theology is due to his relation to

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<sup>3</sup> Tract Megilla (Book of Esther), 10b: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/to4/mego2.htm>. Babylonian Talmud, trans. Michael Levi Radkinson (1918), r. 22–23.

<sup>4</sup> This information is legendary and is not derived from Holy Scripture but from the Talmud and certain deuterocanonical books. The main source is the so-called *Martyrdom of Isaiah*—see J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. II, pp. 163–164. Some slight support for it is contained in St Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (11:37), but without concreteness. This event is also mentioned by certain Fathers of the Church (Tertullian, St Justin, pseudo-Epiphanius), but is nevertheless considered more legendary than not.

Christianity and the prophecy of the coming of a Messiah who would be born by a Virgin, and his admonition to all nations to have faith in One God. The book of the prophet consists of three parts, probably written at different times. Here we shall not dwell in detail on the book and its structure. It will interest us only insofar as it enables us to understand the prophet in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

As mentioned, Isaiah was called the “royal prophet”; and this was due not solely to his possible kinship with the Jesse-Davidic dynasty that ruled Judah. From the very start of his prophesying, he was connected with the royal house and appeared in connection with the end of the period of royal sin. It should be noted that he began preaching to the Southern Kingdom in the last year of Uzziah’s reign, and thus marked the return of prophecy to Israel after a long period of its lack due to the king’s sin. We will deal in greater detail with this sin elsewhere in this book, but here I will only point out that, although the king was driven from the city as a leper, essentially deprived of actual power, and even buried outside the city walls, the sinful and law-transgressing Uzziah formally retained the throne, which was believed to be the reason God deprived the Chosen People of prophetic presence. The latter was restored with the prophet Isaiah, and this fact makes him a strong exponent of the theocratic idea, that is, the power of the priestly class as opposed to that of the reigning king, especially in the context of the Uzziah’s “royal sin”.

Theocracy is the basic, defining principle for Isaiah. We see it especially in the idea he developed of the coming King of Israel. It is exceptionally important that precisely Isaiah, in following the prophecies of the Psalms and the earlier books, related the Messiah, future king of Israel, to the descent of Jesse, which refers to King David and his lineage.<sup>5</sup> Thus, God, through the prophet, confirms the promise given to King David of the eternal reign of his descendents.<sup>6</sup> The description of the kingdom to come reminds us of paradise, not of an earthly garden of prosperity (see Isaiah 11:6–9). These ideas were interpreted differently in Jewish and Christian circles but for both communities they were greatly significant. Although the two traditions see the Kingdom in rather different ways, both saw the mention of the House of David as a royal sign, although the Kingdom is seen in rather different ways. In any case, the it emphasised on the holiness of the Lord

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<sup>5</sup> These ideas are especially well-developed in Isaiah, ch. 11, and also in Jeremiah 23: and 33:15, and to a lesser degree in Zechariah 6:12.

<sup>6</sup> See 2 Samuel ch. 7, Psalms, 88/89.

and of His dwelling, i.e. the Temple and Jerusalem; on that faith and obedience to the Commandments of God as the only path to Salvation, combined with distrust in earthly power and human wisdom; on the moral dimensions of abiding by the Law in such a way that this would not be mere ritual and empty hypocrisy.<sup>7</sup> Isaiah was active in the political life of his times, and not only to expose debauchery and idolatry. He intervened in the making of purely political decisions regarding the policy of the southern kingdom, pressed between Assyria and Egypt, and always upheld Israelite purism.

In fact, in order to better understand the “royal” character of Isaiah’s prophecies we should briefly mention the different notions of kingship that existed in Israel of the Old Testament. One such conception was that of the Deuteronomical school, the members of which were to various degrees suspicious of the monarchy as something alien to Israelite theocracy, as something that interfered with the direct power of the Lord God over His People. This was a priestly-levitical movement, which ultimately aimed to restore the old *Amphictyonic* organisation of the People of Israel by restricting the importance of the monarchy.<sup>8</sup> The knowledge of God’s will could be attained either through the prophets (though there could be times when none were present, such as during the period of punishment in King Uzziah’s reign) or by means of some Temple procedure, in which case power would pass into the hands of the priests. This group considered the king’s authority to be real enough but that he was no more than an ordinary man when facing the prophet and the High Priest. Through the latter the king learns the message of God, even in cases such as that of the building of the Temple, a privilege refused to David (though himself a prophet!) but preserved for his descendants. In the book of the prophet Ezekiel, we learn about an organisation where the king has his place but only as head of an entirely priestly-levitical theocratic state.<sup>9</sup> In the view of the Deuteronomists Israel appeared to represent not an ethnic or national unity but a religious cult community.<sup>10</sup>

Another type of understanding was tied to a concept of royal messianism, which emphasised the God-chosenness of the king of the Chosen People.

<sup>7</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. X, 2nd ed., Detroit-New York-London, 2007, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, in: *Studies in Biblical Theology*, vol. II, London 1953, pp. 70 ff.

<sup>9</sup> E. Hammershaimb, “Ezekiel’s View of the Monarchy”, in: *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen septuagenario A. D. VII Id. Nov. Anno MCMLII a collegis discipulis amicis dicata*, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 130–140; Carlson R.A., *David, the Chosen King. A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel*, Stockholm-Göteborg-Uppsala, 1964, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> A.R. Hulst, “Der Name ‘Israel’ in Deuteronomium”, *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, 9 (1951), pp. 102 ff.

This understanding held that God's will became manifest was through a God-chosen king, whose power given by the choice of God. While this necessarily meant that kingship did not need to be hereditary and God's choice could fall upon separate successive kings, it could also be His choice of the whole line of descendents, including the yet unborn ruler *beginning from his mother's womb*.<sup>11</sup> This would become a source of the dynastic tradition and of the formula of "birth in the purple" (*porphyrogenesis*) as a model of transmission of power from father to son later in the Byzantine Empire and the latter's satellite countries.<sup>12</sup>

We should keep in mind that the differences between the two groups of interpretations are not all that great and not at all insurmountable. Most importantly, both sides are firm supporters of Divine theocracy—of this there is no doubt—but saw it in different ways.

In the Holy Scripture, we see presented two views, both fully compatible with Hebrew theocracy. We learn of sinful kings and of the punishment, they are meted for their sinfulness, but never of sinful prophets, which would essentially be a contradiction in terms, inasmuch as a prophet is such because he *hears* and *passes on to others* the Word of God. The prophet Isaiah was a prominent political figure of his time. He never held any official position in the Kingdom of Judah, but he did take part in the making of political decisions in the course of several decades, in a period of history that was complicated, turbulent, and difficult. The prophet of God certainly always held a position that stemmed from the popular faith that God rules the world and especially His own People, a circumstance that reflected on the destinies of people that entered in contact with the Children of Israel. Despite their transgressions and lawlessness—which entails punishment—the Hebrews remain the Chosen People, and this fact gave them hope and justification for every political decision they made. Their faith that He would not allow His People to be ultimately annihilated must be the starting point of every decision—rather than trust in earthly forces, powers, unions, and armies, if these should put in question the obeisance to the Testament and the Law. Powerful enemies were merely an instrument of God's punishment, Assyria was merely the rod with which sinners were beaten (Isaiah, 10:15). Only God can punish and only God could save the Kingdom of Judah. And

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<sup>11</sup> Although the reference is to a prophet, not a ruler, this expression—which has become emblematic of God's choice—occurs in many places in the Book of Isaiah (see 44:2, 24; 48:8; 49:1, 5; see also Jeremiah, 1:5).

<sup>12</sup> G. Dagron, "Né dans la pourpre", *Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance*, 12, 1994, pp. 105–142.

God calls all people to abide by His Commandments and bids them create the New Israel, whose king should be of the Stump of Jesse and of Davidic lineage.

It should be pointed out that the description which the prophet Isaiah gives of the life of the Chosen People is not at all flattering: Jerusalem is compared with Sodom and Gomorrah, faith has turned into superstition, sorcery and the worship of foreign deities are rampant. The princes and the leaders of the People are among the most corrupt, their hands are stained with blood, yet they pretend to pray to God with these hands (Isaiah, 1:15–20). This sinful violation will be overcome and the start of a new age will be set, when the New Israel shall appear, ruled by a branch of the stem of David. The religious revival begins with the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah and will truly bring about a rebirth of the moral message and religious purity, though only after many obstacles have been overcome.

Having explored the background of Isaiah and his prophetic career in the Old Testament, we can better understand why the author of the *Tale* chose him as the figure whom God would have return to the earth to lead the Bulgarians to their homeland. The argument as to his presence in history should be sought in the original texts on which the Bulgarian compilation was based, and not with local traditions. Thus, in order to examine seriously the presence of the prophet Isaiah in the text of the *Tale*, we had best begin with the admission that there were most probably no specifically Bulgarian motives for his central role in the work, but because Isaiah represented the idea of a return to the righteous past, and as we shall see, the Christian idea of a New Israel, which was how the land of the Bulgarians was understood in the *Tale*. This concept originated in biblical tradition, especially in its Christian interpretation, and in the deuterocanonical and apocryphal biblical literature, not because of pagan associations or even simply the presence of relics of Isaiah housed in a monastery near Sofia. Extant works and their degree of dissemination support to this. Some early apocrypha we know of includes the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, the *Vision of Isaiah*, and the *Ascension of Isaiah*. The first of these likely emerged in an Israelite environment, probably in the 2nd century BC, and it was probably first written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek. The next two apocrypha were composed in the early Christian period, probably in Greek. Subsequently the three formed a set called *Ascension of Isaiah*,<sup>13</sup> which has been preserved in its entirety

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<sup>13</sup> R.H. Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah, Translated from the Ethiopic Version, Which, together with the New Greek Fragment, the Latin Versions and the Latin Translation of the*

only in the Ethiopian tradition and in more or less large fragments in Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Slavic. The *Martyrdom* tells of how King Manasseh gave in to lawlessness and commanded that Isaiah be sawn in half. The *Vision* and the *Ascension* relate the voyage of the prophet across the Seven Heavens to the abode of God and his vision of the end of the world. We will not discuss this work in detail, inasmuch as it is not considered part of the strong Isaiah tradition that we find in later Slavic literature. Nevertheless, we cannot completely overlook it, for, in my opinion, this is the work that lies at the foundation of this tradition, together with the canonical biblical *Book of Isaiah*. In any case, the work had enormous importance for the development and perception of biblical literature, especially among Eastern Orthodox Christian peoples.

### *Isaiah in the Mediaeval Christian Tradition*

Without questioning the assertion of some scholars that “there is no textual connection” between the *Ascension* and several reworked local Slavic texts, I would venture the opinion that the apocalyptic part (with its historical interpretation), as well as the narrative about the voyage through the Seven Heavens and the visions in them, are certainly linked to the Judeo-Christian apocryphon and have a common ideal source. This could be true with or without a textual connection.

As regards the present study, this conclusion is particularly important and that is why I will briefly discuss the above-mentioned works. Part of the complex, early Judeo-Christian apocryphon *Ascension of Isaiah* has reached us in fifteen Slavic transcripts, the oldest of which is Russian, dating from the 12th century, from the Dormition (Uspenskij) Cathedral in Moscow (State Historical Museum, Synodal collection, No 1063/4).<sup>14</sup> Among other works that we should consider is the *Tale of the St Prophet Isaiah about the Future Times and about the Kings, and about the Antichrist Who Is to Come*.<sup>15</sup> This

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*Slavonic, is here Published in Full*, London, 1900; J.H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. II, pp. 143–176. A different opinion expressed Enrico Norelli in his book on the Isaiah's tradition (E. Norelli, *L'Ascensione di Isaia. Studi su un apocrifo al crocevia dei cristianesimi* (Origini n. s. 1), Bologna, 1994) who dated the *Martyrdom* later than the other texts.

<sup>14</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 131–164; *Uspenskij sbornik XII–XIII vv.*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 169–177; A. Kossova Giambelluca, “Nabljubenija vŕkhu starobulgarskata traditsija na Videnie Isaevu. Šaotvetstvija i razlichija s tekstovata tradicija na Vŕznesenie Isaevu”, *Palaeobulgarica*, 1983, 2, pp. 66–79.

<sup>15</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 139 ff.

work is a compilation connected with the prophet Isaiah only in its title. The tale itself consists of a chronicle followed by an apocalyptic section, the latter containing the story of the apocalyptic last king Michael. In the chronicle, the text contains at least two passages that are the same as the narrative of the *Tale*, the main subject of this study. The passages are the story of the fight between King Gordius, called Chigochin, and King Gagan (Gaghen) Odelean, and the story of the evil King Symeon the Wise. These similarities cannot be accidental. Evidently there is a connection between the two works, and it is notable that the *Tale of the St Prophet Isaiah about the Future Times and about the Kings, and about the Antichrist Who Is to Come* is considerably more detailed about both episodes. A sufficiently large amount of literature has been devoted to this matter, and, without going further into the discussion, we can say that the two form a set that has quite enough common features; these would probably be found to be even more numerous if we had the whole texts on which to base our judgement—one of the texts gives the impression that the beginning is missing (as it starts from the thirty-seventh king), while the other ends quite abruptly. The connection of the *Tale* with the old apocryphon *Ascension of Isaiah* is harder to specify, but it can be traced in at least two directions. First, the *Tale* mentions Isaiah's journey through the Seven Heavens, which, although textually different, is clearly related the voyage of the prophet across the Seven Heavens to the abode of God in *Ascension of Isaiah*. The second connection is the apocalyptic nature of both. Although the *Tale* lacks a detailed description of the end of the world, at the beginning God promises Isaiah a vision of "what will happen to the last of [your] kind in the last days." A description of this vision may have been contained in a missing ending to the *Tale* (which ends rather abruptly in its current state) or may not have ever been present in the *Tale*, but its mention echoes the vision of the end of the world in the *Ascension of Isaiah*.

The next work is from the "Isaiah" tradition extant in Slavic literature is entitled *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times*.<sup>16</sup> Here the narration is by the prophet himself and is structurally very similar to the text of our *Tale*. Indeed, the beginning parts of both works—about how the prophet Isaiah was raised to the Seventh Heaven and received his special mission from the Lord—are identical. The texts are related, although the narratives become quite different further on. It should also be noted that *Vision of*

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<sup>16</sup> *Bulgarskata literatura i knizhnina prez XIII vek*, ed. Iv. Bozhilov, St. Kozhukharov, Sofia, 1987, pp. 159 ff.; Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 332 ff.

*the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times* has a Greek original, and this fact resolves many questions about the general nature of this Isaiah tradition in Slavic literatures. All this gives reason to assert that the two works have a common archetype, which must be a Greek one and quite earlier.

This brief, and certainly incomplete, overview shows that the apocalyptic works of the so-called “Isaiah” tradition constitute a complex set with a common ideological message. This message is related to “past history” and to the “history of last days” of peoples, to the succession of benevolent and blessed kings and kingdoms and the retracing of those kingdoms in the unity of history, a unity based on the salvation, as promised by the Lord, of the faithful at the end of the world and in the last time. Thus, religious eschatology and political ideology provide the grounds for the formation of a new identity, which can be formulated as the “New Israel”. Once accepted, this view supplies an explanation for the presence of the figure of the prophet Isaiah in the texts under consideration. In fact, we may say that, most probably, his popularity in the compiled Slavic books was inherited from the same popularity in the Christian East. It is due to the Christian interpretation of his prophecies, in which he speaks about the rebirth of Israel, appeals to all nations to have faith in the One God, and foretells the future kingdom of the Chosen under the rule of the Branch of David’s stump. In this way, the eschatological royal tradition becomes linked to the name of Isaiah (and to the prophet Daniel, which explains the special importance of this prophet).

The apocryphon we are discussing here, and especially the way it was interpreted in mediaeval Bulgaria, were based less on Old Testament events than on their New Testament interpretation. The latter gives a new dimension to understanding Isaiah, a different dimension though based on the pre-Christian biblical tradition. The Holy Fathers of the Church were the first to qualify this prophet as the greatest of all, and many Fathers devoted special commentaries on Isaiah and his book. Basically, the main message of the commentaries is that—in keeping with the Christian tradition—they see him as a forerunner of the Gospel, which foretold the coming of the Saviour and called all nations to the Holy Mountain of the Lord God, *all* and not only the people of Israel. This creation of a New Israel, of a New God-chosen People, is one of the central points in the Christian understanding of Isaiah and in his being selected as chief personage in certain non-canonical or semi-canonical texts, such as our *Tale*.

Universalism did not hold a large place or was very welcome in the Hebrew environment. Still, the idea of *Renovation* (meant as a return to the righteous past) existed in ancient Israel as well, and hence the first

rudiments of the idea of a *New Israel* can be found in the Old Testament texts as well, even without interpreting them as prophecies of the New Testament. There was probably such an element in the whole deuteronomic movement and in some other Israelite groups, but there it could not possibly have been aimed at the idea that would later grow in a Christian environment, namely, that the New Israel is a covenant of the Lord not only with the descendents of Abraham and Sarah but with *all* faithful and righteous peoples.

### *New Israel in Christian Thinking*

The Christian idea of the New Israel rests on the book of Isaiah, but was formulated by St Peter in his First Epistle: “*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*” (1 Peter, 2:9–10). These words of the apostle paraphrase the words of the Old Testament where the Lord declares to the People of Israel that they are His own People (Exodus 19:5–6; Deuteronomy 7:6, 10:15, 14:2). In my opinion, an especially important text is Exodus 19:6, where the God-chosenness of the Children of Israel is based on obedience to the Law and to the absolute theocracy and religious identity of the chosen. That is where the seed lies for the future idea of the Chosen People, which for the Hebrews remained more or less linked with ethnic affiliation but which underwent a significant development in the Christian environment. It was in the early Church that a new and entirely universalistic understanding of the New Israel was devised, one in which the New Israel was identified with the Church. Thus, the Chosen People was no longer ethnically defined and affiliation among that People was not determined by origin; for all people are included in the new Covenant.

However, in the course of history, an ideology of religious exclusiveness based on ethnic origin developed even in Christian environments. Elements of such an ideology can be observed both in the Roman/Byzantine Empire and in certain Barbarian kingdoms, being based largely on the ethnic principle combined with territorially based government. Essentially, the idea of the New Israel, of the New Chosen People, has two dimensions and manifestations, which at times yield opposite results. Universalism meets particularism; the universal idea meets a kind of “mediaeval nationalism” or, in the modern world, authentic nationalism. The New Israel of

the early Church had indicated the spiritual community without discrimination, but came to be substituted by a definition of God-chosenness based on group identity criteria. This was a basis not only for claims to a special mission for those having that identity but also for political, ethnic, or social exceptionalism. Both tendencies are evident in the Empire, but the latter gradually came to be perceptibly predominant after the loss of the territories in the Near East and North Africa, and with the Hellenisation of the state. The change of model was accompanied by a change of identity and, respectively, by a new political conduct brought about by the new conception.

Because of the strong connections between mediaeval Bulgaria and the Byzantine state, it is perhaps worthwhile to call attention to how the Byzantines developed a self-conception of being a New Israel, a conception which could be imported and utilised by the people of Bulgaria. The latest general study on the Byzantine idea of the New Israel is that of Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson in the introduction to the volume *Old Testament in Byzantium*.<sup>17</sup> The authors trace the development of the idea starting from Late Antiquity, its transformations related to the political events on the territory ruled by the New Rome, and its manifestations in various cultural spheres: literature, art, ritual, architecture and urban planning, knowledge. It started by taking away the *chosenness* from the Hebrews and assimilating it in favour of the Christians. The “Promised Land” of the old Chosen People became the “Holy Land” of the Christians, and the landscape, especially the urban one, now came to be dominated by the basilicas of the new faith, and not by the Temple, the houses of prayer or the pagan sanctuaries. The imperial capital Constantinople turned into the New Jerusalem, a new holy city at the centre of the Holy Land. The Empire—in terms of government, people, land—was interpreted as typologically identical with God’s People. In this sense, it is worth noting the comparison, made by Cosmas Indicopleustes in his exegesis of Daniel’s prophecy about the kingdoms, between the laws, institutions and order of the Old Testament and the Roman ones, which he considers to be their substitutes and continuation.<sup>18</sup> In this interpretation, the Empire is seen as an eternal structure corresponding to the Kingdom of God, and which appeared together with the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus

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<sup>17</sup> P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, “Introduction”, *Old Testament in Byzantium*, Washington, D.C., 2010, pp. 1–38.

<sup>18</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, éd. W. Wolska-Conus, vol. I (= *Sources chrétiennes*, 141), Paris, 1968, pp. 387–389.

Christ in the world. The chronicle of John Malalas, with its specific view on the biblical past, also provides interesting possibilities.<sup>19</sup> Of course, the time of the emperor Heraclius was crucial for this new conception, for it was a time of constant crisis for the Byzantine state and society. Scholars typically devote special attention to this period since it was exceptionally rich in manifestations of the ideology we are discussing. The salvation of Constantinople from the Persian and Avar siege in AD 626 was an event that had enormous consequences for the spiritual life of the Byzantines and of Orthodox Christians. In contemporary literature, the event was viewed as a fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies about the salvation of the Chosen People and the demise of the latter's enemies. This is expressed in the well-known homily by Theodore Syncellus. It is entirely based on the typological correspondence of events during the siege with Old Testament archetypes, as Theodore attempted to construct an image of Byzantium as the New Israel.<sup>20</sup> He likens the Avars to Gog and Magog,<sup>21</sup> and calls the Persians "Chaldeans" and "Assyrians";<sup>22</sup> a reference to the oppressors of Israel in biblical times. For the same purpose, he refers to the Persian King Chosroes II as "Nebuchadnezzar", the Assyrian king who seized Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple (see 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Daniel, Judith, etc.), while the Satrape Shahrbaraz is called "Holofernes" (see the Book of Judith).<sup>23</sup> The drowning of the army of the Avars and Slavs in the waters near the imperial capital is compared to that of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15 ff.).<sup>24</sup> In addition, he describes the Empire as the Holy Land, so that Constantinople becomes Jerusalem;<sup>25</sup> and the Bosphorus becomes the river

<sup>19</sup> *Recherches sur la chronique de Jean Malalas*, ed. J. Beaucamp et autres, Centre des recherches d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 15, Paris, 2006. About Bulgaria—Iv. Bozhilov, *Sedem etuda po srednovekovna istorija*, Sofia, 1995, p. 253; Nikolov, *Politicheskata misal v rannosrednovekovna Bulgaria*, pp. 166 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Magdalino, Nelson, "Introduction", pp. 16–17.

<sup>21</sup> L. Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, Cracoviae 1900, p. 316; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 300<sub>14</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 300<sub>22,28</sub>, 313<sub>20</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, pp. 13, 34. See also Sternbach, p. 309, Makk, p. 28, where there is reference to the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan (2 Kings, 25:8 ff.).

<sup>24</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 308<sub>14</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 301<sub>6-7</sub> and in many other places in this text; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 14 etc. The imperial capital is called "navel of the world" (Sternbach, p. 317<sub>26</sub>; Makk, p. 41), an expression employed for Jerusalem as well.

Jordan.<sup>26</sup> The leaders of the city's defence, Patriarch Sergius and the Patrician Bonus, are called the "New Moses" and the "New Gideon" (Judges, chapters 6–8), respectively.<sup>27</sup>

The Chosen People are the people of God's Law, and hence the identity of the New Israel and the ideology related to it has a direct bearing on law, legislation, and normative order. Of course, law always held an important place in the Empire, but we can notice certain significant features of Roman law beginning in this period. Quite naturally, the major figure of Byzantine and post-classical Roman law was Justinian, thanks to the codification of Roman law commissioned in his reign. The attitude towards him during the Middle Ages both East and West was one of nearly religious reverence. Even though we can discern in this emperor's policies the romantic dream of restoring the Empire in its grandeur of the times of the first pagan emperors, it should be pointed out that the main purpose of his code was to Christianise Roman law. After the age of Emperor Heraclius and especially in the second half of the 7th century, a new massive ecclesiastic legislation was undertaken (chiefly at the Council in Trullo), followed in the next century by the secular legislation of the iconoclastic emperors.<sup>28</sup> These laws stressed Christianisation to an even greater degree, and naturally the Old Testament heritage, towards which the heretical emperors were particularly partial. For these emperors the rejection of images was a way of building an identity based on religious exclusiveness. It was certainly derived from the Old Testament tradition of prohibiting idolatry and images in general, and shows a distinct tendency to archaisation and "Judaisation" of ritual—and ritual always played an essential role in Byzantine culture, especially the sacrament of the Eucharist. Thus we see that legislation developed hand in hand with the introduction of some elements of religious service promulgated in the councils of the second half of the 7th century, which were inspired by Old Testament forms and practices. The law and ritual together led to a new identity both of the faithful people and for their state. Thus, in this process we can trace all three exceptional and decisive factors for the creation of identity: religious practice, a sense of biblical historical precedent, and the creation of a normative order.

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<sup>26</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 300<sub>31</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 305<sub>15,18</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Magdalino, Nelson, "Introduction", pp. 18–19.

The chaotic years of the seventh century were not without their consequences. After the reign of Heraclius, the Byzantine understanding of themselves as a New Israel mostly stressed particularism, not on the universal character of the Empire. While the Byzantine Empire preserved many traits of the Christian universalism of the Church, the idea of the New Israel in Byzantium closely mirrored the religious exclusiveness in the Western periphery of the Christian world.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, in Europe the idea of exclusiveness first arose among the Barbarians that had settled on the territories of the Empire.<sup>30</sup> The Frankish or Visigothic notions of being a New Chosen People (also shared, among others, by the inhabitants of the British Isles) can be seen not as an attempt to adopt the Roman legacy but rather an attempt to escape it. This was an alternative way—and perhaps the only alternative available to these peoples at the time—for them to acquire a model of a unified and homogeneous society, with its institutions, law, and government anchored to the idea of sacredness and theocracy.<sup>31</sup> Thus, when Gregory of Tours compared Clovis and Chlothar to the King and Prophet David, he presented an Old Testament model of king and leader, not a Roman one.<sup>32</sup> Of course, these ideas were further developed after the anointment of Pippin the Short as king and the introduction of this “Davidic ritual” in Christian Western Europe, and later by Charlemagne with his revival of the concept of Davidic

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<sup>29</sup> In Ethiopia the construction of identity based on the Old Testament tradition was such that it combined religious particularism with certain universalist ideas. I have devoted a separate article to this question (Biliarsky Iv, “The Birth of the Empire by the Divine Wisdom and the Ecumenical Church (Some observations on the Ethiopian Book of Kebrā Nagast)”, *The Biblical Models of Power and Law / Les modèles bibliques du pouvoir et du droit*, ed. Ivan Biliarsky, Radu G. Păun, (= *Rechtshistorische Reihe*, 336), Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Bern-Bruxelles-New York-Oxford-Wien, 2008, pp. 23–43), to which I refer the reader; here I will express some disagreement with Peter Brown, who seems inclined to equate, or at least consider similar, the processes that took place in Ethiopia and among the Franks: P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, A. D. 200–1000*, second edition, Blackwell Publishing, Malden MA-Oxford, 2003, pp. 138–139, 140–141.

<sup>30</sup> I should point out an interesting assertion that must be kept in mind when studying the New Israel ideology: it usually comes from outside a society and is the product of developments in a marginal circle. See Mary Garrison, “The Franks as New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne”, in: *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitz. Hen and M. Innes, Cambridge, 2004, p. 120.

<sup>31</sup> The New Israel identity and the related political-ideological use of the past among the Germans is especially well presented in the study by M. Garrison, “The Franks as New Israel?”, pp. 114–161.

<sup>32</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of Franks*, ed. O.M. Dalton, vol. II, Oxford, 1927, p. 133; Brown, *The Rise*, p. 139.

kingship.<sup>33</sup> This was a tradition that continued in France until the Revolution in the late 18th century, and still continues in Great Britain today. It may be said to have reflected the predominant interpretation and sacralisation of the ruler's power during the Middle Ages.

In Ireland and Britain this development was especially interesting and produced a result that influenced not only the local but also the general European tradition.<sup>34</sup> As early as the first half of the 6th century Gildas described the Brits and the situation in the country in clearly Old Testament terms and with profuse comparisons and quotations from the biblical prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, reproaching the Brits for their sins even as the prophets exposed the sinfulness of Israel.<sup>35</sup> Celtic, and especially Irish, Christianity displayed a remarkable readiness to follow Old Testament models in detail. As Peter Brown writes, "in 'barbaric' Ireland there was nothing—from polygamy to the public display of the chopped-off heads of enemies—that was not borrowed from the Old Testament".<sup>36</sup> Thus, the inhabitants of the extreme European Northwest, who made an enormous contribution to European culture, intended to preserve God's blessings for themselves as His Chosen People, just as this blessing had followed the Hebrews along their course. The pre-Christian period of Celtic culture was for the Irish "their previous Covenant with the Lord God" who prepared them for Evangelisation. In this sense, we notice how the adoption of biblical pre-Christian texts was closely linked both to tribal-ethnic exclusiveness *and* to the idea of a New Israel.

This cultural renewal of the Celtic peoples produced particularly interesting results among the insular Celts as regards in terms of their royal ideology. In the pre-Christian age there was a well-developed tradition among them, related to the hierogamy of the ruler with some local goddess of fertility and

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<sup>33</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, "Mutaberis in virum alium. Observations sur certains problèmes juridiques, liés à l'onction royale", *Ius et ritus. Rechtshistorische Abhandlungen über Ritus, Macht und Recht*, herausg. von Iv. Biliarsky, Sofia, 2006, pp. 94–101.

<sup>34</sup> See R. Meens, "The uses of the Old Testament in early Medieval canon law: the *Collectio Vetus Gallica* and the *Collectio Hibernensis*", in: *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitz. Hen and M. Innes, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 67–77; Biliarsky, "Mutaberis in virum alium", pp. 93–94.

<sup>35</sup> Gildae *De excidio Britanniae*, pp. 86 ff. (practically the whole book—especially after p. 50—is based on these comparisons; the second part of the book deals with the British kings and judges in parallel but as opposed to the Hebrew ones because of the formers' sinfulness); Brown, *The Rise*, p. 140.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, *The Rise*, p. 338. On polygamy see the interesting observations by P. Brown (op. cit., pp. 338–339), as well as F. Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, (= *Early Irish Law Series*, vol. III), Dublin, 1988, p. 70.

hunting, and this tradition involved special rituals that created a not particularly positive image of the “barbarians of the Northwest”.<sup>37</sup> Later, both in the Iro-Scottish and Welsh environment, a royal ideology of the Davidic type developed,<sup>38</sup> which may have influenced the formation of such an ideology in continental Europe.<sup>39</sup>

The Slavic peoples also developed a New Israel identity and ideology. Whereas among the Poles and Russians this phenomenon appeared only in a later age,<sup>40</sup> amongst the Serbs we find a great amount of information from the times before the Ottoman invasion and the conquest of Southeastern Europe. Hence, the development among the neighbours to the west of the Bulgarians is of greater interest for our study. This Bible-based political ideology was already evident in the literary tradition related to the cult of St. Symeon, the Grand Zhoupán Stephen Nemanja, who was compared to the Old Testament Patriarchs in literature and in art.<sup>41</sup> The military successes of the Serbian rulers were likewise traditionally described in terms of Old Testament figures such as Moses and Joshua ben Nun.<sup>42</sup> A number of *vitae* of Serbian rulers from the Nemanides dynasty provide ample material for study. Especially worthy of attention are the *vitae* of the founder of

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<sup>37</sup> M. Herbert, “Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland”, *Women and Sovereignty*, (= *Cosmos. The Yearbook of the Traditional Cosmology Society*, vol. 7), Edinburgh, 1992, pp. 264–275; M. Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup. Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age*, Dublin-Portland OR, 1996, pp. 169 ff.; B. Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*, Dublin-Portland OR, 2000, pp. 57 ff.

<sup>38</sup> This is testified to by the texts that interpret the power of the ruler as well as various depictions of King David, of which the sarcophagus at St Andrews is the most significant—see *The Art of the Picts. Sculpture and Metalwork in Early Medieval Scotland*, London, 2004, pp. 129 ff.

<sup>39</sup> M. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons. The Origin of Royal Anointing Ritual*, Berlin-New York, 1985, pp. 5 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Among these nations, messianism, developed since the 17th century, is related to the formation of nations and nationalism. However, even if the ideology of chosenness of the people as a New Israel, as Theophoric, or as a Sacrificial Nation was not connected to nationalism, in any case since the Age of Enlightenment it was related to some kind of exclusiveness that could border on racism or religious intolerance. For instance, the remarkable case of the Boers in South Africa (A. du Toit, “The myth of the Calvinist origins of Afrikaner nationalism and racist ideology”, *American Historical Review*, 88, 1983, pp. 920–952) or the racial conflicts in North America, where both sides elaborated similar views: Garrison, “The Franks as New Israel?”, pp. 114–123; A.D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples. Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford, 2003.

<sup>41</sup> B. Bojović, *L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastiques du Moyen Age serbe*, (= *Orientalia christiana analecta*, 248), Roma, 1995, p. 299 (see also note 88), 332, 337–138, 386, 407.

<sup>42</sup> Bojović, *L'idéologie monarchique*, r. 532, 627–631; Đurić V., “Novi Isus Navin”, *Zograf*, vol. 14, Beograd, 1983, pp. 5 ff.

the dynasty as well as that of the king Stephen Dečanski written by Gregory Tzambalak. During the 15th century, at the time of the Branković dynasty, in the face of the Ottoman conquest and with the approaching seventh millennium and expected end of the world, the Serb's idea of their being the people of the New Israel grew stronger and is increasingly present in the sources. This occurred in the context of an exceptionally strong interest of the Serbians in the Old Testament as a text, in connection with the project of a new translation and/or editing of the Old Testament in the first quarter of the 15th century.<sup>43</sup> Of course, the importance of this project was more than purely literary, being obviously linked with the political situation and the development of a new identity related to the specific situation of Serbia in the Balkans in the face of the approaching Ottomans. In interpreting themselves as the last support of Christianity and in the categories of an epic battle that acquired increasingly eschatological traits, the Serbs and their ruler trusted in God's assistance just as the biblical leaders of the Children of Israel did in their time. Perhaps the text where this view was expressed most clearly was the *Vita of Stephen Lazarević* by Constantine the Philosopher (Kostenečki), in which a number of themes were developed and personal and topographic images presented that stressed the similarities between Serbia and the Serbian capital and that of the Holy Land and Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup> The purpose of these comparisons lies in the idea of constructing the identity of this nation as a new Israel so as to ground the nature of the nation's rule.

Of course, mediaeval Bulgaria could not remain isolated from the dissemination of this model of identity and ideology. The model can be discovered equally in Preslav, in Tarnovgrade and in the capital that developed in the Southwest lands under the Cometopouloi.<sup>45</sup> The present book is largely devoted to this model. However, there are certain differences between the creation and use of the New Israel idea among the Bulgarians and in the neighbouring countries. In Bulgaria in the 9th–10th century, the model was

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<sup>43</sup> N. Gagova, *Vladeteli i knigi. Uchastieto na juzhnoslavjanskija vladetel v proizvodstvoto i upotrebatata na knigi prez Srednovekovieto (IX–XV v.): retseptsijata na vizantijskija model*, Sofia, 2010, pp. 232 ff.

<sup>44</sup> J. Erdeljan, "Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim. Razmišljanja o recepciji jednog toposa u doba Stefana Lazarevića", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, XLIII (2006), pp. 97–109.

<sup>45</sup> A. Nikolov, *Političeskata misl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 160 ff. (the author gives an interesting overview of the various views about the past and its use in building an identity and the political ideology related to this identity); Iv. Biliarsky, "Old Testament Models and the State in Early Medieval Bulgaria", *Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, Washington D.C., 2010, pp. 255–277.

understandably not the same as in Serbia in the 14th–15th century or in Tărnovgrade during the Second Bulgarian Empire. In the former case, there was the emergence of a new identity in the transition period after the great change that every nation underwent in the Middle Ages after adopting the Christian faith, while in the latter two cases—and especially in Serbia—it was the result of the struggle against the advancing Muslim conquerors and the existential threat they posed to autonomy and Christianity.<sup>46</sup> The difference in the situation meant that they attached different meaning to the idea of being a New Israel, though both were ultimately rooted in Holy Scripture.

We have indications that point to the existence of such identity its ideology in mediaeval Bulgaria. However, they are neither so numerous nor so original as those later found in Serbia. Among them, we may point out a number of liturgical texts that designate the pious nation as Israel, especially with reference to the rite of the coronation of the Tsar, where the power of the enthroned is directly compared to that of King David, enthroned and anointed by the prophet Samuel under God's direction.<sup>47</sup> The problem is that all these are translated texts, directly borrowed from Byzantine Greek originals, as was the practice for nearly all Bulgarian liturgical literature. The same could be said regarding the presence of Old Testament themes and models of historical literature. In both cases we have a phenomenon that represents one of the essential characteristics of the whole Bulgarian mediaeval culture: *borrowed* identity based on *borrowed translated texts*, the source of which was the Byzantine Empire that Bulgaria tried to imitate throughout the Middle Ages. I have developed this topic in another one of my studies;<sup>48</sup> here I will point out that whatever grain of originality may be found in the Bulgarian environment lies rather in the deuterocanonic literature, which were more open to alteration and adaptation by their Bulgarian translators than more official texts. The *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is one such deuterocanonical text.

In the *Tale*, there is no direct reference to the New Israel but it certainly contains indications of such a concept; the clearest of these is the narrative of the prophet Isaiah about how he led the Bulgarians to their land. I would say that this narrative typologically matches the narrative of the arrival

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<sup>46</sup> Biliarsky, "Old Testament Models", p. 276 note 80.

<sup>47</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, "Le rite du couronnement des tsars dans les pays slaves et promotion d'autres *axiai*", *Orientalia christiana periodica*, vol. 59, fasc. 1, 1993, p. 103<sub>14–25</sub>. This particular text exists in a Serbian and Russian environment, where it was likewise translated and borrowed from the Empire.

<sup>48</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, "L'histoire et l'identité", *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, XLI, 1–4, Bucarest, 2003, pp. 33–55.

of the Hebrew people in the Promised Land. Inasmuch as elsewhere we will show that the geographical-historical characteristics of the new lands of the Bulgarians were intended to reflect Canaan, we may say that the people that came to the land and received it by Divine grace must have the characteristics of a Chosen People. They inhabited it under the direction of the prophet and in following the will of God. This people are called the “last” to live in the “end times”. The eschatological dimension of the implications of the text are confirmed in the last part of the *Tale*, where, in referring to the invasion of the violent and the lawless, the narrative suggests the end of the world. Though originating in the Old Testament, the lawless one is an eschatological figure in the New Testament as well (2 Thessalonians, 2:8).

The Bulgarians are *chosen* and *separated* as a third part of the Cumans, who are located in the “upper countries” or on “the left parts” of Rome. This is done by the prophet Isaiah, but at the command and by decision of the Almighty. The prophet leads them, “showing the road with a reed”. This character strongly reminds us of the prophet Moses leading the people of Israel through the desert. The Holy Scripture refers in many places to “reed”, especially in the Old Testament, and in most cases this means either some unit of length measured with a reed stem (especially for measuring the Temple in the Book of Ezekiel, ch. 40–48, but also in Revelation of St John, 11:1, 21:15), or something easily bendable (Isaiah 58:5, Matthew 11:7, Luke 7:24) but it was also often used as a synonym for staff (1 Kings 14:15; 2 Kings 18:21; Ezekiel 29:6; Isaiah 36:6, 42:3, 58:5; 3 Maccabees 2:16; Matthew 11:7; Luke 7:24). Some of the concrete quotations deserve special attention. In the Book of Isaiah 3:1, the reed and the sceptre are mentioned as a means of support. A similar meaning is found in the Gospel of Matthew 27:29, where during the Passion of Christ, in the praetorium, His torturers give him a reed as a mock sceptre and then beat Him with it. In these two quotations “reed” is used as a synonym of rod but both are used as a support in the literal and figurative sense: physical and spiritual support. It is to note that reed is related to the story of the infant Moses, whom Pharaoh’s daughter discovers in the “flags”, placed in an “ark of bulrushes” (Exodus, 2:3–5). All these observations give us some reason to see a parallel between the tale of the prophet Isaiah leading the Bulgarians to their land by indicating the way with a reed, and the biblical story of Moses leading Israel to the Promised Land, which is a symbol of victory achieved with the aid of God and is one of the signs and pillars of power in the Empire.<sup>49</sup> The prophet Isaiah, as he

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<sup>49</sup> The biblical story of Moses leading Israel to the Promised Land, which is a symbol of

appears in our *Tale*, possesses the features of a leader of the Chosen People and thus reminds of the prophet Moses. Isaiah did not belong to the tribe of Levi, closely linked to the Covenant of the Hebrews with the Lord, but to the tribe of Judah, mostly linked to the idea of calling all peoples to faith in the Messiah, who, in his earthly origin, was connected precisely to King David and the stump of Jesse. Thus, Isaiah acts in the *Tale* as a typological successor to Moses, leading a new Chosen People to a new Holy Land, but unlike the people led by Moses this new Chosen People were part of a New Covenant created through the coming of the Messiah. We now understand why the name of this particular prophet was used and how the text presents the people he led is an image of the as the Chosen People and of the royal priesthood.

### *Geographical Features of Religious Identity*

Land and people form an indivisible unity and jointly supply, and/or receive, an identity to/from the state, which is in a similarly inseparable unity with the ruling power. These characteristics common to all peoples can be found in some elements of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, a fact that reflects the state of society in Bulgaria in the times of the Conversion, during the building of a new Christian identity based on the Holy Scripture. We may assert that a complex set of ideas existed in the country, closely connected to the formation of self-consciousness, in which the perception and reworking of ideas taken from the Old Testament was of great significance. Direct testimonies to this are few and fragmentary, so the reconstruction of this connection can only rest upon the few texts that have come down to us. We saw that in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* we find traces of the construction of the concept of a New Chosen People. Such a people require a Promised Land to occupy. In this part of the study, we will trace certain geographical characteristics through which the new land of the Bulgarians was reinterpreted as a holy topography. We may assert that a complex set of ideas existed in the country, closely connected to the formation of self-consciousness, in which the perception and reworking of ideas taken from the Old Testament was of great significance. Direct testimonies to this are few and

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victory achieved with the aid of God, was a common image of power in the Byzantine Empire, see G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Etude sur le 'césaropapisme' byzantin*, Bibliothèque des Histoires, Paris, 1996, pp. 106–107, 114–115, 224.

fragmentary, so the reconstruction of this connection can only rest upon the few texts that have come down to us.

Before beginning my discussion specifically of the text of the *Tale*, I should point out the importance of the concept of Holy or Promised Land for the various monotheistic Abrahamic religions and the frequent “assimilation” of the concept. After the Christianisation of the Empire, a new Christian topography was created, which replaced the Israelite topography related to Canaan and reinterpreted the country in the spirit of the new faith.<sup>50</sup> The Empire was covered with a dense network of churches and monasteries and the urban landscape came to be dominated by enormous Christian basilicas. Some of these were built upon sites related to Old Testament history, which came to be common to all three Abrahamic religions. As all places of Divine presence, the Holy Land became the main point of attraction for pilgrimage. The Holy Sepulchre came to replace in many respects the Temple and the Holy of Holies.<sup>51</sup> Churches were erected above Jerusalem and in Sinai holy sites such as the supposed location of the Burning Bush and the place where the Law was given through Moses were now in the hands of the Christians. As Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson have pointed out, this was the last page in the story of the Hebrews’ loss of religious independence (a story that began with the destruction of the Temple by the Romans) and of the *appropriation* of this religion by other monotheistic faiths.<sup>52</sup> The Muslim conquerors, who arrived later on the scene, did the same thing; the Temple Mount came to be regarded as sacred to the Muslim and is still in their hands; likewise, many other “Old Testament” sites, such as the Tombs of the Patriarchs in Hebron are under the control of the followers of the prophet Mohammed.

This appropriation of the Holy Land was an important step for the creation and self-representation of a New Chosen People. It represented a semi-otic victory for the new faith, but was not the only path to achieving this victory. Such appropriation was only possible to those people who had direct physical access to the land of the Canaanites, the Holy Land of the Old Testament. Other people, for whom this access was not possible, took the image of that land, copied it, and reinterpreted their own lands in its image.

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<sup>50</sup> This is the topic of the book by R. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, New Haven-London, 1992.

<sup>51</sup> Ousterhout R., “New Temples and New Solomons. Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture”, *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, Washington D.C., 2010, pp. 237–239.

<sup>52</sup> Magdalino-Nelson, “Introduction”, pp. 13–14.

The representation of the land of the Bulgarians following the biblical archetype shows us how mediaeval people saw their own land and testifies that the whole complex of land-people-state was thought of as a replica of the Old Testament model.

Let us begin with the land to which, following God's will, the prophet Isaiah led the Bulgarians and where they established their kingdom. In the *Tale* it is called as "The Land of Karvuna, called Bulgarian Land". There the prophet settled the people entrusted to him in place of the Romans and Hellenes, who had left. In its geographical location this land is well-known to us, if for no other reason, at least because it is mentioned as "Chora of Karvuna" in Tsar John II Asen's horismos for the Ragusan merchants dating from 1230.<sup>53</sup> This is present-day Dobrudja, where khan Asparukh's Bulgars, coming from the steppes, first settled. It is essentially a continuation of the Eurasian Steppe and the place where tribes coming from the Northeast would usually first penetrate the Danube frontier. Important for this study are the geographical characteristics of the land, which suggest its religious importance: known to the Romans as Scythia Minor, the region represented a wide belt of land between the Danube and the Black Sea, closed northward by the Danube delta and open southward to the Deliorman region and Moesia. This land is not described in the text of the *Tale*, but it is clearly suggested to be fertile and rich. The fertility of the land is mentioned explicitly in the section about the reign of Tsar Slav, when there was "plenty of everything".

There is a striking similarity between the 'Land of Karvuna,' in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and the Promised Land: Canaan is a wide belt of land situated between the Jordan River and the sea. In both cases, the land is defined with reference to two bodies of water. In the case of Canaan there is a river that continues into the Dead Sea, and the two together represent a prototype of the Danube; on the other side stretches the Mediterranean, which corresponds to the Black Sea. In both cases, God blesses His people by allowing them to populate and rule over the land that is exceedingly plentiful and fertile. This is made clear by the fact of the Covenant and the multiplying of the nation of Abraham.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, "Les circonscriptions administratives en Bulgarie au 13e siècle", *Symmeikta*, 13 (1999), p. 199.

<sup>54</sup> Here we may cite many passages from Holy Scripture depicting the Promised Land as delimited by water, especially a river or a sea. Though not referring to the river Jordan, such is the case in Deuteronomy 1:7, where Moses repeats God's words about the land between the sea and the Euphrates.

The symbolism of rivers is important for our further discussion. We have already referred to the large rivers that shape the boundaries of the two countries. In the *Tale* some other rivers are also noted: the Bulgarians were led to 'the river called Zatiusa and to the other river, called Ereusa. And then there were three large rivers'.<sup>55</sup> These other rivers are not geographically localised but in the *Vision of Baruch* there is mention of a river with a similar name, to which it is said the prophet was taken by an angel from Heaven in order to see the world from there. There he saw a dragon drinking up the sea at the rate of one cubit a day. The Lord also created 343 large rivers, which filled the sea. Thus it was that the water balance in the world was maintained.<sup>56</sup> Among the listed rivers, along with the Danube and Euphrates we find the name "Zeteus", which strongly resembles the designation in our source. If we consider the two texts together, we understand that the place to which the prophet led the Bulgarians is traced by one of the rivers created by God in order to counteract the powers of evil on earth, embodied by the serpent, and to maintain harmony in God's Creation. This imbues the text with a strong cosmological meaning and confirms the Old Testament foundation of the two texts and of their elements, and proves the main direction of our research.

The river is a symbol often used in the Holy Scripture to trace boundaries, particularly the boundaries of the Chosen People (e.g. Exodus 23:31, etc.). The use of the river as a symbolic image is especially typical for attempts to appropriate the holy topography for a New Israel and a New Promised Land. Here we will not list all such cases, but I cannot overlook some important ones similar to those in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Thus, in the above-mentioned homily by Theodore Syncellus on the salvation of Constantinople in AD 626, in constructing the image of the imperial *Polis* as a New Jerusalem, the Bosphorus is presented as the river Jordan that set the boundaries of, and defined, the Holy Land.<sup>57</sup> Even more interesting is the case of Belgrade, presented as a New Jerusalem in the *Vita of Stephen Lazarević* by Constantine the Philosopher, where the river Danube is compared to Pison, one of the four heavenly rivers according to the Bible (Genesis 2:11–12).<sup>58</sup> This and the fact that the Danube merges with the Sava River near the capital are viewed as a testimony of God's blessings on the Serbian land.

<sup>55</sup> In this book, p. 15 (f. 401b, lines 4–6).

<sup>56</sup> *Stara bulgarska literatura*, t. 1, Sofia, 1982, p. 72.

<sup>57</sup> Sternbach, *Analecta Avarica*, p. 300<sub>31</sub>; Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie*, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> K. Kuev, G. Petkov, *Săbrani săchinenija na Konstantin Kostenechki. Izsledvane i tekst*, Sofia, 1986, pp. 368–369; Erdeljan, "Beograd kao Novi Jerusalem", pp. 100–101.

Of course, the most interesting and clear reference to a river as a characteristic of the Promised Land of Israel, a reference closely connected with Bulgaria, is found in the apocryphal text concerning, once again, the prophet Isaiah: his *Vision* of the last time. This is a work dating from the 13th century, which has a Greek prototype.<sup>59</sup> It is textually closely related to the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and the two are said to have a common prototype. In any case, the first part, about the elevation of the prophet to the Seventh Heaven, is almost identical to the *Tale* and the general structure and orientation to a historical and eschatological presentation implies common ideas and purposes in the two texts. That is why the reference to the river in the context of Israel's *Mezina Zemlja* (Mezina Land) acquires special significance. I shall quote the whole passage from the text: "*They will come to the river that is called 'the hidden heaven'; this river passes through the Land of Israel, which is called Mezina Land. There will flower the sceptre of the Stump of Jesse*".<sup>60</sup> A little further on in the text it is said: "*When you see the end of the kingdom of Mezina Land, afterwards no king from this tribe will rise to power*".<sup>61</sup> Here there are several points that merit attention. Primarily this is the identity of the land of Israel and that of Mezina. Inasmuch as the latter may be interpreted as Moesia, there is a clear identification of the land of the Bulgarians with the Promised Land in the Bible. The Israel/Mezina Land is defined by a river passing through it. Geographically, this should be the river Jordan and its corresponding river from "Mezina". This is true in some sense, but the correspondence of images in this case is religious rather than geographic, for the river is called a "hidden heaven". Here we may no longer overlook the comparison, mentioned above, to the heavenly river Pison, which is identified with the Danube in the *Vita of Stephen Lazarević* by Constantine Kostenečki. In fact, we have here the use of the same paradigm in building the image of the Holy Land by referring to a river. I should also point out that the entire passage is markedly eschatological when it indicates the flowering of the sceptre from the stump of Jesse and the fact that the land of Mezina Land is the 'last' kingdom, after which there will be no other ruler from this tribe (of Jesse and Judah). This is a clear allusion to the Kingdom of God and the End of the World. Hence, the Promised Land and the Land of Israel in the apocryphal book cannot be identified only with the Promised Land of the

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<sup>59</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 332–333.

<sup>60</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 340–341, 349–350.

<sup>61</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 341, 350.

Old Testament, inasmuch as the events presented have a clear eschatological perspective. In addition, the people connected with this land are not only the old Chosen People but also the New Israel.

We thus see the special importance of the river theme in the building of the image of the Holy Land, but it is particularly important in the narrative about the *arrival of the Chosen People in the land promised by the Lord*. This occurs by the crossing of a river with the aid of God. Let us first examine the biblical prototype of these events and see if we can find traces of it in the texts related to Bulgaria.

The Hebrew people received the Land of Canaan as its own by the will and blessing of God and on the basis of the Covenant made with God. We are told about this Covenant in chapter 17 of Genesis: it is made by God's choice and involves the condition of loyalty and righteousness (Genesis 17:1–2). The acquiring of the land is an inseparable and crucial part of the Covenant: “*Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God*” (Genesis 17:8). Other people had lived there before the Hebrews—the name of the land comes from Canaan, son of Noah and his descendents—but they would be given into the hands of the Chosen People, which would have the land as its heritage.

In the text of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, the coming of the Bulgarians to the Land of Karvuna is presented in a similar way.<sup>62</sup> There too there were previous inhabitants—the Hellenes and Romans—but these had deserted the land and, unlike the case in the biblical text, were not given over into the hands of the new masters. More importantly, God Himself designates the country as the land of the Bulgarians. As I have already pointed out, this is done from an eschatological perspective, and the prophet is sent on a special mission, despite his wish to remain in the bliss of the heavenly abode; he has to sacrifice this in order to fulfil the task set to him and lead the Bulgarians to the land allotted to them by God. Of course there is no indication of a Covenant between the Bulgarian people and the Lord, but His will is expressed categorically and indisputably: “*Oh Isaiah, My beloved prophet, go westwards from the upper countries of Rome, take one third part*

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<sup>62</sup> The conquest of a country (a new Fatherland) in the context of building a New Israel identity is always very emotionally charged; it happens through God's will, assistance, and blessing, and is represented as a particularly important moment in history that necessarily follows an Old Testament model. For a comparison with Rothar's list of the Lombard kings and the special role of Alboin, who brought his people, by “God's might”, to the Apennines, see Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 163–164.

*of the Cumans called Bulgarians, and populate the land called Karvuna that was evacuated by the Romans and the Hellenes.*<sup>63</sup>

The Bulgarians, like the Hebrews, are led by a prophet to the land promised them, i.e. by a person possessing the gift of knowing, of 'hearing' God's will and of carrying it out. The prophets Moses and Isaiah both carry this out as a special mission in performance of God's will. As mentioned, Isaiah is a character corresponding to Moses in the *Tale*. Regarding the latter, his mission is clearly expressed in the text of Holy Scripture (Exodus, chapter 3). We will devote special attention to him in this book, as he plays an important role as a paradigmatic image of a God-inspired leader of the God-chosen people. It is important that both prophets were later used in a Christian environment as models of a righteous ruler and were thus connected with the idea of the legitimacy of royal power.

I would like to draw special attention to the entry into the country, the passing of the boundary (represented as a river) in order to penetrate into the Promised Land. This is presented as an act of transition, of change, of *passage*, which imparts a new quality of life to the life of the Chosen People. We see these ideas present both in the biblical and in the Bulgarian texts.

Coming from Egypt into Sinai, the twelve tribes of Israel chose to enter into Canaan not directly from south-southwest but from the east, and to appear on the left bank of the river Jordan. Historically, this was probably done as a choice of the route that would involve the least military opposition from peoples already inhabiting the land. In the context of Holy Scripture, however, this event inevitably assumes a religious dimension as one of the most important points in the history of the Hebrew people. This is confirmed by the events taking place at the crossing of the river, which once again require God's intervention and aid.

The crossing of the river Jordan is described in chapter 3 of the Book of Joshua,<sup>64</sup> where it is clear that this happened with assistance coming from above, manifest as a miracle, similar to the crossing of the Red Sea. The narrative of these events should be seen and studied in the light of the capture of Jericho and the founding of one of the largest Hebrew sanctuaries in the pre-monarchic period, that in Gilgal, where the twelve stones taken at the passage of the river were preserved (Joshua 4).<sup>65</sup> I should also point out that

<sup>63</sup> In this book, p. 14 (f. 401a, lines 29–35).

<sup>64</sup> Regarding this biblical narrative, see: F. Langlamet, *Gilgal et les récits de la traversée du Jourdain (Jos. III–IV)*, Paris, 1969.

<sup>65</sup> R.G. Boling, *Joshua. A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, New York, The Anchor Bible, 1982, pp. 177–181.

the Hebrew were commanded to go after the Ark of the Covenant carried by the Levites,<sup>66</sup> but not to approach too near it that they might know the way, which they had never passed before (Joshua, 3:3–4). Evidently, God Himself pointed the way through the Levites bearing the Ark of the Covenant; this way was not known to the Hebrews previously.<sup>67</sup> This resembles both a religious procession and a military march in which God Himself is the military leader. It is clearly said in the Holy Scripture, in the words of Joshua ben Nun that this was a miracle (i.e. a direct intervention of God in the world). The latter warned the people to sanctify themselves, for on the following day God would perform a miracle among them (Joshua, 3:5). In these words, we find the idea of God's presence among the Chosen People, which is central to biblical history.<sup>68</sup>

After that Joshua explains to the Levites what should be done, i.e. he repeats what the Lord has said to him: that they should stop when their feet have touched the water, and remain there until all the people cross the river over dry land (Joshua, 3:7–17). And that is what happened. While the priests stood in the middle of the river, the children of Israel passed upon dry land until the entire nation had crossed the Jordan. This passage is exceptionally important; because that is when the Israelites enter their land, enter it with God's assistance and His personal participation.

The importance of this event for the Hebrew people is confirmed in the next chapter, 4 of the Book of Joshua. It is said there that Joshua, at God's command, ordered that one person from each tribe should take a stone from the place where the Levites had stood, carry the stones to the place where they would lodge and set them there to the glory of God's name and might.<sup>69</sup> This forms a memorial for Israel of the entry into the land.<sup>70</sup> Evidently, this

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<sup>66</sup> Regarding the Levites, see the commentary by R.G. Boling, *Joshua*, pp. 160–162.

<sup>67</sup> With regard to following the Levites, the biblical text uses a verb that usually means religious, liturgical procession—Boling, *Joshua*, p. 162.

<sup>68</sup> That is why people should keep at a distance from the procession bearing the Ark of the Covenant—see Boling, *Joshua*, p. 163. Similar events are described elsewhere in Holy Scripture—see 2 Samuel, 6:6 ff.

<sup>69</sup> Here I will again point out the similarity between the story of the passing of the river Jordan and the passing of the Red Sea in the Exodus from Egypt. They are evidently connected and form a united set of events. This is confirmed by the sanctuary with the twelve stones in Gilgal, which is a continuation or replica of the altar built by Moses in Sinai, likewise made of twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of Israel (Exodus, 24:4)—see F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, Cambridge, Mass., 1973, p. 104.

<sup>70</sup> Some authors believe the events are an etiological myth and explain the sanctuary in Gilgal in a way that was acceptable to the Israelites. This issue will not concern us for it

memory and the story of it left a permanent trace in the memory of the population, since thousands of years later, in 1268, in an entirely different cultural environment, a story of a similar event is told.<sup>71</sup>

As mentioned, the crossing of the river should be viewed in combination with the capture of Jericho and the successful entry of the twelve tribes into Canaan. These events represent a repetition of the Exodus from Egypt and the end of bondage under the Pharaoh, the most important episode in the history of the Children of Israel. They set the beginning of ceremonial tradition of commemorating the keeping of the Covenant, a tradition that some authors have called a "liturgical conquest".<sup>72</sup> This was how the events of the time of Joshua ben Nun were designated, which shows their exceptional religious value and impact on the Israelite cult. It seems they became the basis of the special cult of Gilgal, connected with the "*ritual conquest*", which was closely related to the ideology of power among the Hebrew people. Some important elements of the ritual and of holy war can be found in the Book of Joshua: the sanctification performed when worshipping at sanctuaries or before a holy war; the procession with the Ark of the Covenant, which resembles a military march. We may add the twelve stones in the sanctuary, the circumcision, and the appearance of the archangel, and, most of all, the parting of the waters, i.e. the passing across the river, which is an obstacle on the way to the Promised Land. We see the unity of the suggestion in the stories in the Exodus and in the crossing of the Jordan.<sup>73</sup> The tradition of the annual march in Gilgal became part of the celebration of the Spring New Year, one of the most important rituals for the Israelites. In later ages, the procession was moved to Zion and the festivities were held on the mountain; traces of these festivities, which were closely related to the royal ideology of the Hebrews, can be found in the Book of Isaiah.<sup>74</sup>

This connection can be seen in other biblical events similar in form and relevant to power: for instance the crossing of the river upon the return

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is not connected to the topic of this article. I refer the reader to relevant literature on the question: H.J. Kraus, "Gilgal. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte Israels", *Vetus Testamentum*, 1 (1951), pp. 181–199; M. Noth, *Das Buch Josua*, Tübingen, 1953, pp. 32–35; E. Vogt, "Die Erzählung vom Jordanübergang: Jusue 3–4", *Biblica*, 46 (1965), pp. 125–148; J.A. Soggin, "Gilgal. Passah und Landsnahme: Eine neue Untersuchung des kultischen Zusammengangs der Kap. III–VI des Josuabuches", *Supplements. Vetus Testamentum*, 15 (1966), pp. 263–277; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>71</sup> W.B. Stevenson, "The Remarkable Stoppage of the Jordan in the Year 1268AD", *The Expository Times*, vol. XVII, Edinburgh, October 1905–September 1906, pp. 45–46.

<sup>72</sup> Boling, *Joshua*, p. 89.

<sup>73</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 104 ff.

<sup>74</sup> See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 106 ff.

of King David to Jerusalem from the eastern bank of the Jordan after the revolt of Absalom. A special article devoted to these events views them as examples of a *rite de passage* connected with royal power and originating from the cult of Gilgal, i.e. from the ritualisation of the crossing of the Jordan by Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the stay of King David in Transjordan, according to the *rite of passage* schema of Arnold van Gennep,<sup>76</sup> proves to be a sojourn in a *world beyond*, while the crossing of the Jordan is a renewal of life, of existence (in David's case, his life as king of Israel). It is the same pattern according to which not only the king but also the entire Chosen People reached the Promised Land.<sup>77</sup> This observation provides a different perspective on the passage, which appears to be an entry/return to the immanent world and, in some sense an acquisition of a new quality of being.

It is worth noting that in *De excidio Britanniae* by the British Christian author Gildas (6th century) the crossing of the river Jordan by the Chosen People is specifically indicated as archetypal for the event about which Gildas was writing: how St Alban of Verulamium (the first British martyr for the faith, along with St Julius and St Aaron) saves thousands of Christians pursued by pagan Romans when the waters of the river Thames open up in answer to his prayers, allowing the people are able to pass across and escape from their pursuers.<sup>78</sup> I cannot say why in this case, connected with flight and pursuit, not with conquest, the reference is to the passage of the river Jordan and not to the parting of the Red Sea, which is closer to the story and would be a more logical comparison. Perhaps the allusion is to the victorious character of martyrdom and the undaunted believers who triumph over their enemies in spite of suffering and death. What is important for this

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<sup>75</sup> J.M. Hutton, "The Left Bank of the Jordan and the Rites of Passage: An Anthropological Interpretation of 2 Samuel XIX", *Vetus Testamentum*, LVI, 4, 2006, pp. 470–484. See also P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel. A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, New York, 1984, pp. 412–424, but in these commentaries the events are viewed in a traditional light, only as history, with no anthropological notes.

<sup>76</sup> A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage*, Emile Nourry, Paris, 1909.

<sup>77</sup> J.M. Hutton, "The Left Bank of the Jordan and the Rites of Passage: An Anthropological Interpretation of 2 Samuel XIX", pp. 82–83. At the end of his study, J.M. Hutton (*ibid*, p. 84) raises several interesting questions that he leaves open for further study, namely: what was the significance of the Eleon (Olive) Mountain and of the river Jordan as boundaries between the *immanent* and the *liminal* world; how is Transjordan classified as "Otherness", etc. I believe that I am offering here a solution to one of the questions: by crossing the river in the Bible, and hence in the societies constructed in accordance with models borrowed from the Bible, a passage takes place to a new condition of the People that considers itself "Chosen".

<sup>78</sup> Gildae *De excidio Britanniae, fragmenta, Liber de paenitentia accedit et Lorica Gildae*, ed. H. Williams, M.A., London, 1899, p. 28 line 4 ff.

study is that *De excidio Britanniae* by Gildas draws very heavily on Biblical images in depicting British Christians and may serve as an example of the use of the New Israel theme in Western Europe. This passage across the river is a typical case in which the Book of Joshua is explicitly cited. I will not make a direct comparison with our text, where direct citation is absent, but I should emphasise that the same *topos* is used in an entirely different, though likewise Christian, environment.

The *liturgical conquest* and its ideological basis certainly had an impact in much later ages in a Christian environment. Can we find traces of biblical ideas in Bulgaria after the Conversion to Christianity, ideas reflected in the story of the crossing of the river Jordan at the conquest of Canaan?

The figure of Joshua enjoyed special popularity in the Byzantine Empire and in Balkan countries. He represented the king-warrior who, with the aid of God and of the Archangel Michael, defeated his enemies.<sup>79</sup> We often find him in literature and in pictorial art. However, the representation of the conqueror king is only indirectly connected to the theme of crossing a river, entry and conquest of a new land. It is mentioned in the *List of Names of Bulgar Princes*, where the name is of great significance, even though this monument is not defined in its geographical features.<sup>80</sup> For us this text is particularly important, since, as shown in another study, the way it was inscribed in later Christian literature in Bulgaria, and then in Russia, marked a transition from a pagan state to the concept of the New Israel. I have devoted a separate article to this and shall not discuss it here.<sup>81</sup> I will only say that every mention in this text is of special importance, whether it be related to the old faith or to Christianity. This is essentially a pagan monument and is the most important work of pagan Bulgar culture to have reached us, a testimony to the concept of power and emerging statehood. Its importance for the new state religion, and the royal ideology based on it is manifest in the context of manuscripts of historical works that have reached us. In this context, every word may acquire new meaning. Here is the quotation: "*These five princes held the principality on the other side of the Danube for 515*

<sup>79</sup> See: Đurić, "Novi Isus Navin", pp. 5–16.

<sup>80</sup> Iv. Bozhilov, "Ot varvarskata dārzhava do Tsarstvoto. Bulgaria ot srednata na IX v. do pārvite desetiletija na X v.", in: idem, *Seden etuda po srednovekovna istorija*, Sofia, 1995, pp. 90–91; Iv. Bozhilov, "Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis", in: idem, *Sedem etuda po srednovekovna istorija*, Sofia, 1995, pp. 232–233; Iv. Bozhilov, *Kulturata na srednovekovna Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1996, pp. 48 ff., 53 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, "Ot mifa k istorii ili Ot stepi k Izrailju", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, XLII (2005), pp. 7–21. See Excursus I in this book.

years with shaved heads. And after that Prince Isperikh came to the land on the Danube. The same continues until now”.<sup>82</sup> There are several aspects here that merit attention. These sentences mark the end of the first part of the *List of Names*, which was probably composed some time around the settlement of Asparukh’s Bulgars in Moesia. The next part is an addition to it. Moreover, this certainly refers to a turning point in the history of the nation, at least as the first writer of the text understood it.

This turning point is marked by the passage across a river—the Danube in this case—whereby the Bulgarians settle in their new land. We have no description of this passage. It is not even mentioned in the text. Nevertheless, this is indisputably the act referred to. In the text, it is said that the princes had ruled as such for 515 years—beyond, on the other side of the Danube (ОВЪ ОНОУ СТРАНОУ ДОУНАИ). Thus, the river as boundary is obvious. After that Asparukh “came to the side of the Danube” (ПРИДЕ НА СТРАНА ДОУНАИ). What does this mean? It is not plainly said that he came *this side* of the river, nor is it said that he *crossed the river*, but obviously this is the meaning. When referring to the *side* one usually has in mind *the other side* as opposed to *this side*, or *the side one was on previously*, and not simply *any one of the sides*. Hence there should be no dispute that in the indicated text the author had in mind *passage* and thus the *dividing line* between two ages of Bulgarian history (i.e. the history of the people whose princes are presented with the years of their rule) through the location of the tribe on different territories with respect to the river. The opposition in question defines the way of movement with respect to the borderline: it must be traversed in order to pass to this side of the river. Regrettably, this is all we can say about the arrival of the people in their new land, but this narrative merits attention, especially if we consider that this is a text, which, in the chronicles, is inserted as part or continuation of the biblical Book of Kings.

Having argued my view that the cited text refers to passage across a river as a means of reaching the land in which the people lives “*down to the present day*” I should try to show the essential difference between the two distinct periods: the age “on the other side” and the age “on this side” of the river. The difference is indicated in the text only by reference to “holding the principality ... with shorn heads” (ОСТРИЖЕНАМИ ГЛАВАМИ). I would define this difference as related to religion, for we are dealing with an external sign of religious affiliation or a special kind of piety and not merely a kind of

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<sup>82</sup> M. Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove (Novo tǎlkuvane)*, Sofia, 1988, pp. 20–21, 25.

hairstyle or fashion. There are quite a lot of possible interpretations of the shorn heads,<sup>83</sup> which I will not discuss here, but I should point out a possible explanation that is consistent with the thesis of this book. The shearing or shaving of the head is discussed in the Old Testament. In several passages of the Mosaic Law we find a prohibition for the Levites to shave their heads, an interdiction that is explicitly said to be a sign of religious purity (Leviticus, 21:5; Ezekiel, 44:20). Similarly, the Nazirites who have vowed and dedicated themselves to the Lord must not shave or drink wine or any other drink made out of grapes (Numbers, 6:5). This is the basis of the tale of Samson, who was a Nazirite from his mother's womb and therefore was not to shave or shear the hair on his head—as a matter of fact, in the Bulgarian translation of Holy Scripture both words are used in this connection (Judges, 13:5; 16:17, 22). When the prophet Samuel was born, his mother St Hannah vowed “no razor shall come upon his head” (1Samuel, 1:11). There was a similar view regarding the shearing of the head. The prophet Job shaved his head when he learned of the death of his children (Job, 1:20). The Lord slew the Moabites and these are described with clipped hair and beards (Jeremiah 48:37). Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba, and all of them have shorn heads (Isaiah 15:2). In the New Testament, St. Paul has his hair cut off as a sign of a vow he had taken (Acts 18:18).

Of course, more examples could be given, and not only from Holy Scripture, but I will limit myself to these. We thus come to the idea that the shearing and shaving of the head is a sign either of some Divine punishment or of something contrary to the religious purity characteristic of the Levites and Nazirites. This is where we should seek the meaning of the passage indicating that five princes ruled on the other side of the river with shorn heads. That was the age before the important turning point in the history of the people: their settling in their present-day land on the right bank of the Danube. That age coincided with the times before the passage, taken in the sense of a general change and a new condition, as occurs after initiation or some other rite of passage. This “passage” across was actually the conquest of the country that God had allotted. The preceding age was a condition of greater distance from God's gifts to His people, the Chosen People of Israel, or the New Israel.

There is however, an essential element in the biblical narrative that is not be found in the Bulgarian tale: the reference to the Ark of the Covenant and its role in the conquest. The simplest explanation for this lack is that

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<sup>83</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 41 ff.

there was obviously no such object in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, we could expect it would be substituted by some symbolic element. But no such element can be found in the texts that come down to us. There might be an explanation for this, connected to the development and change of the Old Testament tradition. The Ark was widely represented in the age previous to the Kings, among other things, as a military safeguard for the Hebrews. We find indications of this in the Books of Joshua and Judges, and in the beginning of the Books of Samuel and Kings. The setting of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem is connected with the Temple and the fact that this most holy of sites for the Children of Israel was more secure, and in particular with new monarchical ideology that developed after the establishment of the Kingdom.<sup>84</sup> The idea of the God of Israel as a warrior was preserved and even further developed by the kings of the Chosen People, but it was no longer necessary for the Ark itself to be carried in front of the people and the army. In fact, the sanctuary of Gilgal and the cult of the Conquest there represented a transition from the ideology of the alliance of the Twelve Tribes to that of the Kingdom.<sup>85</sup> This latter ideology influenced the Christian monarchical ideas based on the Old Testament tradition. Consequently, we cannot expect that images and ideas from the pre-monarchical age of the Hebrews should be assimilated in Bulgaria, especially not in order to justify a certain view on state power based on Old Testament views.

In the preceding discussion, I have attempted to present the use of geographic characteristics for constructing the idea of a New Israel. This idea is related mainly to the people, to God's Chosen People, but it is inseparable from the people's land, from the image of the Promised Land, both by its purely natural, geographic characteristics and by its religious geographic ones. The most important of the latter is the linking of the Covenant between God and His people to the Land and to the great importance of entry into the land, to its conquest. These observations will enable us to go on to a related theme largely present in the *Tale*: the theme of cities.

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<sup>84</sup> Boling, *Joshua*, pp. 159–160, 179 ff.

<sup>85</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 105.

*Cities and Founding of Cities**The Founding of Cities: Between Creator, Hero, and Ruler*

Scholars have long accepted that the founding of cities is a kind of creative activity, which assimilates a ruler (or hero) with the Creator. Of course, in different religions and their corresponding worldviews, this creative activity is interpreted and evaluated in different ways, but in all cases this is a sacral activity connected to the understanding of a city as an essential and holy place, around which the environing space and, ultimately, the entire world of mediaeval man is constructed. This explains the place the city holds in the organisation of the world: it is a *central place* and around this centre is situated the tribe, the state, the community, and, ultimately, the world. This is a *cultivated space* and hence the activity involved in cultivation is more or less similar to a divine activity. Undoubtedly, in the framework of pagan thought this activity is part of the repetition of cosmogonical cycles and resembles the work of a hero, the Ancestor, or deity-creator.<sup>86</sup> Inasmuch as in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*—and in some similar works—the founding of cities is evidently of decisive importance and is a distinctive mark of the activity of kings, this connection to pagan thought has not been overlooked; on the contrary—it is emphasised in recent works on Bulgarian apocrypha. Although I express my disagreement with the general standpoint set forth in some of these works, my aim is not to reject them *a priori*.<sup>87</sup> They are valid within certain limits, for some of the characters are indeed presented as semi-divine persons, heroes, or as people with a special mission, as blessed by God. The problem with certain rather one-sided interpretations is the unfounded emphasis they place on pagan or semi-pagan motifs in the narrative, although these motifs are declaredly biblical and the pre-Christian remnants in them do not strongly influence the general meaning of the work.

In the apocryphal texts we are considering, and especially in the *Tale*, the founder of the city has many features not only of a pagan hero but also of an Old Testament character. Significantly, the many citations of archetypal images of cities refer chiefly to Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Babylon, cities important to Judeo-Christian history.

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<sup>86</sup> M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, p. 30 ff.

<sup>87</sup> I have devoted a separate article to this topic—see: Iv. Biliarsky, “Les villes, les héros et l’Univers”, *Forma formans. Studi in onore di Boris Uspenskij*, a cura di S. Bertolisi e R. Salvatore, Napoli, 2010, pp. 63–76.

In the apocryphal tradition, to which the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* belongs, the city is presented as a sacred place, the creation of which is brought about by a sacral act performed by an elect and holy person who thereby repeats and copies the creative work of God. In short, the foundation of a city strongly recalls the Creation of the world. Thus, the city can be perceived in the Judeo-Christian tradition as well as an image of the world or of the entire Universe. We find that such a meaning is attached to the city when it is associated with the Eucharistic community of faithful people, as happens in the Orthodox liturgy.

The foundation of cities is a theme not only in epic literary works and pagan literature but in the Holy Scripture as well. Throughout the entire Old Testament, we repeatedly find such narratives, and they hold an important place in the text. Here I should point out several passages in which the earliest history of the Chosen People is presented. The very first generation of Adam, trying to bring order to the world, builds a city. Such is the case of Cain, who, after the birth of his son Enoch, builds a city and names it after his son (Genesis, 4:17). After the Flood, the people who are yet undivided and speak the same language gather to build a city and tower; “*and let us make us a name*” (Genesis, 11:4). The tower of Babylon is more likely a negative symbol of human pride and presumption, but this passage clearly indicates that the building of the city is related to the building of the world after the disaster and to the first covenant with God. Many examples can be given here, but I will confine myself to these, mainly in order to indicate that the cosmic importance of the creative activity of building the city is not exclusively connected with epos and pagan mythology but with biblical history as well.

In most texts, the founding of a city is connected with the setting up of a State. Inasmuch as the idea of empire was predominant in the cultural-political circle to which mediaeval Bulgaria belonged, these narratives more or less contained the ecumenical ideal of imperial universalism. The beginnings of the Roman Empire are linked to the birth of the city of Rome, which was cosmopolitan by definition and from the very start. The same could be said about Constantinople, built upon the site of the old Byzantium, where the emperor Constantine transferred the Empire, thus renewing the imperial idea. These are classical cases but it should be noted that similar examples were those of the founding and construction of Alexandria. In the *Revelation* of St Methodius Patavensis, a apocalyptic text that would have been familiar to the Bulgarians in a Slavic translation, the emergence of this city is described as marking the beginning of the reign of Alexander the Great: after founding the city, the king of Macedonia conquered

Persia and united the whole world under his power.<sup>88</sup> In the *Vita of St Andrew Salos* (the Fool-for-Christ), Alexandria is described as “the navel of the world (*umbilicus mundi*)”.<sup>89</sup> Jerusalem is usually also described as the centre of the world and the navel of Creation, which means that the concept of Alexandria was similar to that of Jerusalem. This confirms the connection between the conceptions of cities and kingdoms viewed according to the paradigm of holiness and centrality.<sup>90</sup> We find the same view present in the liturgical texts: the printed Euchologion of Metropolitan Peter Mogila contains a remarkable prayer for the foundation of a city, quoted by Alexander Naumow,<sup>91</sup> which deserves detailed study and interpretation.

Regrettably, in the Bulgarian literary heritage there are no narratives about the founding of cities, such as the Byzantine *Patria of Constantinople* for instance, or lives of either mythical or historical city founders. In fact, the most interesting text in which this topic is strongly present is the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The topic is present in certain other sources as well, but these are likewise insufficient, heterogeneous, and legendary. Still, they are the only ones we have, and it is from them that we must draw the ideas in question, which occupied the minds of Bulgarians during the age of the country’s Christianisation.

### *The Founding Kings and the Demiurge Heroes*

The sacred aspect of the founding of cities can be found both in official religion and in certain practices of popular faith. This is true not only of large urban centres but of smaller settlements as well, and of individual buildings and construction work in general. Undeniably, certain practices of this popular faith retained pre-Christian traditions. One such example is the cases of sacrifices—even human sacrifices—offered at the start of construction work in the Balkan tradition.<sup>92</sup> This tradition, amply described in Balkan folklore and in modern academic literature,<sup>93</sup> required that a shadow—

<sup>88</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 227–228, 247; *Starobulgarska eskhatologija*, p. 91.

<sup>89</sup> Rydén, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse”, p. 207<sup>138–139</sup>; *Starobulgarska eskhatologija*, p. 190.

<sup>90</sup> Regarding the symbol of “navel of the world”, see: Eliade M., *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, București, 1999, pp. 188–189.

<sup>91</sup> A. Naumow, “Bogorodične ikone i ritualizacija odbrane grada”, *Crkvene studije /Church Studies*, t. 3, Niš, 2006, p. 189.

<sup>92</sup> As a variant of this practice, we may point out sacrifices made to the house spirit, which is essentially benevolent but must not be forgotten or annoyed. This continued until the 20th century and perhaps even to this day.

<sup>93</sup> I. Georgieva, *Bulgarska narodna mitologija*, Sofia, 1983, pp. 170–179.

usually that of a young woman—be built into the new construction. This was done by measuring the shadow at a certain time of the day, or simply when the woman would happen to come to the building site, and then building in the material carrier of the measure or else using the measure as a unit for the building. Subsequently, the girl or young woman would die and would be considered built into the construction, thus becoming the householder (*stopan*) or guardian spirit of the building.<sup>94</sup> Such practices confirm the sacral character of construction, evident in the exclusiveness of masons' guilds, in their arcane rituals, and in other features of this community. This sacral nature of the profession was carried over into its results—the building, the dwelling, the village, the city.

The sacral character of the city is one of the preconditions (but also a consequence) of the sacral character of the act of its foundation. This act repeats the archetypal work of the Creator. Ultimately, all these categories of creation derive from, and are an image of, their archetype, i.e. the act of world creation as it is variously understood in the various religious systems. For pagans this act finds expression in the eternally repeated cosmogonic myth according to which *chaos* is organised into *cosmos*. In the Judeo-Christian and Islamic tradition, the Creation is a single, unrepeated act of God whereby He creates the world out of nothing and only through His Word. Thus, creation is always an image and reflection of these two views on the archetype. This is seen most clearly in such an important creative act as the founding of a city, particularly in the role of the act in the organisation of the world.

In historical-apocalyptic texts, and particularly in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, the founders of the city are presented in a narrative situated in the context of Holy Scripture and specifically of the tales of Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, who serve as models for the characters of the apocryphal tale. One element in the depiction of some characters is the century-long length of their lives, which strongly resembles the patriarchs of early biblical history. Most interesting in this respect is the way in which, according to the *Tale*, these characters come into the world: a special excursus is devoted to this in my book, and I refer the reader to it.<sup>95</sup> There I have used as an example the story of the birth of Sargon, King of Akkad; I will briefly

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<sup>94</sup> This is a familiar legend in the folklore of all Balkan countries, and is related to the name of Master Manol; Mircea Eliade has devoted a special study to it: M. Eliade, *Comentarii la legenda Masterului Manole*, București, 1943.

<sup>95</sup> Excursus II "The Birth of the Hero".

touch upon it here as well, inasmuch as it is related to an interesting indication of the founding of a city and thus has special importance for our study.

The founder King of Akkad is often confused with his namesake Sargon, King of Assyria. History presents us with an instance in which the later Assyrian king referred to this coincidence of names once, upon finding himself in the delicate situation of being accused of usurping the right of founding a city. This act seemed sacrilegious in the eyes of his contemporaries, for he had presumed to do something that was proper only for the gods. Only they had the right to carry out such creative activity. Thus, the king seemed to claim membership of a divine circle, something to which he was obviously not entitled. Sargon of Assyria tried to avoid the religious problem thus arising by insisting that he had only repeated what his namesake and predecessor Sargon of Akkad had done before.<sup>96</sup> The story then develops in a way that bears no relation to this study, but it confirms the sacral character of the founding of cities in the traditions of ancient societies of the Near East, since this act was thought to be the legitimate right of gods alone, not of kings, even if these were semi-divine.

#### *The Founding Kings in the Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*

Not all kings in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* are depicted as founders of cities but those who *are* usually have the characteristics of semi-divine persons or prophets that convey the Wisdom of God in words comprehensible to men. Such is Tsar Ispor, usually equated with Khan Asparukh, who in the *Tale* lays the foundations of the city of Dorostorum on the Danube, and of the city of Pliska.<sup>97</sup> Dorostorum was a city well known since Antiquity, long before the times of the First Bulgarian Empire. Thus, history tells us it was not founded by Asparukh or any Bulgar ruler. Pliska, on the other hand, did emerge from the central camp of the Bulgar cavalry, which had settled south of the Danube, and the arrival of these Bulgars may be connected with the name of Asparukh. Nevertheless, we may say that the tale does not present historical data on the founding of the above-mentioned cities but of the establishment of a new territory, that of Moesia, and of its appropriation.

The account preceding the narrative about Ispor's activity in the *Tale* is even more legendary in content. It begins with the narrative about Tsar

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<sup>96</sup> I would refer the reader to the interesting article by Marc van de Microop, "Literature and Political Discourse in Ancient Mesopotamia. Sargon II of Assyria and Sargon of Agade". *Minuscula Mesopotamica. Festschrift für Johannes Renger*, Münster, 1999, pp. 327–339.

<sup>97</sup> See in this book, p. 15 (f. 401b, lines 25–28).

Slav, who populated regions and cities and made a hundred mounds during his reign, which lasted for a hundred and nineteen years and was a time of plenty.<sup>98</sup> In another chapter of this book, I have devoted space to identifying this Tsar Slav. In this case, the name is most probably an eponym of a Slavic tribe presented as a mythological founder. According to the *Tale*, he was the *first tsar of the Bulgarian land*, invested personally by the prophet Isaiah; this enthronement seems to be naturally linked to the settlement of the country. The founding of cities seems to be something of secondary importance for this king, while the greatest emphasis is placed on the hundred mounds in the country, from which the name of the kingdom is even derived. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that none of the cities is mentioned by name, which means that the reference to it aimed only at stressing the connection between the act of settling upon the land and of founding cities there.

The other founder king is Seleukia, called Simeklit, who came from the mountain Vitosha and founded five cities in the Bulgarian lands: Plovdiv, Srem, Breznik, Sredets (Sofia), and Niš.<sup>99</sup> After that, he reigned in Sredets over the Bulgarian land for thirty-seven years<sup>100</sup> and died by the city of Breznik. Elsewhere in this study, I have devoted attention at greater length to the Tsar Seleukia Simeklit, who seems to represent some distant memory of the age of the Diadochi and is also derived from the biblical tradition. Here I would like to draw attention to the founding of cities and see whether we may draw some conclusions from the names of the cities. It would be too difficult and risky to over-interpret in this direction. Plovdiv may be connected with the voyage of King Seleukia to Romania (the Thracian Lowlands), mentioned in the apocryphon. Elsewhere I have expressed disagreement with the identification proposed by Iv. Venedikov of Srem not as Sirmium but as some small town in Thrace.<sup>101</sup> The other cities are geographically related to Tsar Seleukia's capital city Sredets, a region to which the *Tale* is specifically related and to which historians link this literary work.

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<sup>98</sup> See in this book, p. 15 (f. 401b, lines 10–16). Regarding the symbolism and significance of the number 100—see H. Meyer, R. Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, München, 1987, col. 784–797.

<sup>99</sup> See in this book, p. 19 (f. 402b, lines 2–5). Regarding the symbolism and significance of the number 5—see Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 403–442.

<sup>100</sup> Regarding the symbolism and significance of the number 37—see Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 708.

<sup>101</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, p. 133. See in this book, where I have discussed King Seleukia Simeklit.

The next founding king mentioned in the *Tale* is Nicephorus, whose prototype I am inclined to seek among one of the Byzantine emperors. This character took over the Empire, slew the “lawless Maximian” and his army, and founded Dimotik (Didymoteichon), Morunets (Kavala), Serres; to the west, Belgrade and Kostur (Kastoria); and on the Danube, Nicopolis.<sup>102</sup> In this case, we find some kind of geographical division: the first three cities (which we should consider to be “eastern” inasmuch as the others are “to the west”) are situated in Eastern Macedonia and Aegean Thrace. These are the cities Didymoteichon, Kavala, and Serres. The other two are located in the Western Balkans: Kastoria and the Albanian city of Berat (this is how the above-mentioned city of Belgrade is usually identified). The only mentioned city on the Danube is Nicopolis, which gives us reason to exclude that the present-day Serbian capital Belgrade is the one mentioned in the *Tale*. We can find no connection between the two cities, but we can attempt to define the geographical location that serves as a reference point for the narrator. Along the east-west direction, this is the line dividing Eastern Macedonia and Thrace from the territories situated to the west. It is identical with the region of the old border between Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia, and this most generally coincides with the locations that have so far been proposed as the place where the *Tale* was compiled—the area of Sofia and the so-called Kraishte area.

The last of the legendary royal founders of cities is Gagan, nicknamed Odelean, who laid the foundations of Cherven, Messembria, and Štip;<sup>103</sup> his prototype must have been Peter Delyan, the son of Tsar Gabriel Radomir. The three mentioned cities are well known and situated at different key locations: near the Danube, on the Black Sea coast, and in Macedonia, respectively. However, we cannot connect these cities in any way to Peter Delyan. Their being grouped together under his name appears quite fanciful, so the message of this connection should be sought elsewhere. A possible perspective for interpretation could be the act of *creation* as something typical for this tsar, and the connecting of points in three different parts of Bulgaria as people saw it at that time.

These are the first group of founding tsars, and I want to distinguish them from the second group, which is more historically authentic. What can we say in general about these first three? We should exclude all factual authenticity in how they are presented and abandon the attempt to connect

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<sup>102</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 6–9).

<sup>103</sup> See in this book, p. 21 (f. 402d, lines 23–25).

the quoted cities with these rulers. The purpose of their inclusion in the text is to emphasise their constructive activity and divinely blessed reign. All three were righteous tsars who held power for relatively long, so the people enjoyed prosperity and well-being under them. This image of the “good tsar” is necessarily connected with the narrative of the founding of cities, a tale that also depicts the rebirth and recreating of the life of the State and of the people with God’s assistance and under the reign of a righteous and blessed king.

This holds equally true for the two tsars that I would designate as “more historical”. I will present them in reverse order due to certain particularities of my presentation, namely, that the building of cities is cited only in relation to Tsar Symeon, presented in *Tale* as the brother of Boris, but who was likely based on Boris’s son and heir Tsar Symeon (893–927). About him it is said that he built many cities—though none are mentioned by name—along the seacoast.<sup>104</sup> The text does mention that he built the city of Preslav. Symeon is said to have built it in twenty-eight years. This indication has the same meaning as the previous ones: this activity is creative and hence blessed, reminiscent of Divine creation. It is not without importance that the new capital city—Greater Preslav—is related to the transformation of Bulgaria into a *Christian Empire*. That is why the construction of the new Bulgarian capital as presented in the source is not a historical account of the event: we know that the city existed before the times of Tsar Symeon’s reign.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the text testifies to the *renovation* of the city, which is practically identical with its *creation anew*. This is a new beginning of statehood in mediaeval Bulgaria, which—typically for the *Tale*—is presented as a building of a city. Though it dates before the time of Tsar Symeon, the city of Preslav remains closely associated with this tsar: it was *his* capital, the centre of *his* cultural and political project as we know it from history.<sup>106</sup> We may well say that Preslav was no less Tsar Symeon’s imperial city than Constantinople was St Constantine’s imperial city.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See in this book, p. 16 (f. 401c, lines 29–33).

<sup>105</sup> Iv. Venedikov, “Preslav predi da stane stolitsa”, *Sbornik Preslav*, t. I, Sofia, 1968, pp. 39–47.

<sup>106</sup> Iv. Bozhilov, *Tsar Simeon Veliki (893–927). Zlatnijat vek na srednovekovna Bulgarija*, Sofia, 1983, pp. 55 ff.; Iv. Bozhilov, “Preslav et Constantinople: dependances et independences culturelles”, in: *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers*, New Rochelle-New York, 1986, pp. 429–446; Iv. Bozhilov, “Preslavskata tsivilizatsija”, in: *Sbornik Preslav*, 4, Sofia, 1993, pp. 33–47.

<sup>107</sup> It is with Greater Preslav as the imperial city of Symeon that the idea of “duplicated empire” is connected, the *Tsarstvo* that this ruler built in Bulgaria; this idea became a basis of the political ideology of the Bulgarian State during the whole Middle Ages—Bozhilov,

As regards the construction of Preslav, I would draw attention to another point in the *Tale*. The apocryphon tells us that Tsar Symeon built Preslav in 28 years. The number 28 is regarded as a perfect number, the product of 7 multiplied by 4 (connected with the Creation, the week, and the month) and the sum of all numbers from 1 to 7; all this suggests the plenitude and harmony of Divine will.<sup>108</sup> This number occurs in several places in the Bible. It occurs as part of the description of the preparation of the Tabernacle, which was a predecessor of the Temple, the Home of the Lord. The tabernacle had to be made of ten curtains, each of which was to be twenty-eight cubits long (Exodus, 26:2, 36:9). I am inclined to look for a connection between the size of the curtains and the number of years of the construction of Greater Preslav, but I simply propose this idea for discussion. In this line of thought I would refer to Origen's commentary on the *Song of Songs*, in which he draws attention to the mention of the Bride's words: "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." (Song of Songs, 1:5); Origen sees in this image the Queen of Sheba.<sup>109</sup> As he understands it, the text certainly refers to the curtains of the Tabernacle and of the Temple (Exodus, 26:7–13), the House of the Lord,<sup>110</sup> which is a prototype of the Mother of God, who encompassed the Unencompassable, and also of the Church as the body of Christ. In keeping with such an interpretation, we could draw an interesting connection between the Tabernacle and the city of Preslav, and between the Temple and the Mother of God as the vessel of God. Here we are only one-step away from establishing a connection between the veneration of Mary as City Protector and the great importance of her cult for the political-theological thought of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox world. We thus come to the idea of the State as Church, presented in *Tale* through the construction carried out by Boris, the son of Izot.

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*Vizantijskijat svjat*, pp. 405–412 and ff. Elsewhere I have called it, following N. Iorga—"Empire hors de l'Empire" ("Byzance hors de Byzance").

<sup>108</sup> Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 689–692.

<sup>109</sup> Origène, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques*, t. I, Texte de la version latine de Rufin, introduction, traduction et notes, par L. Brésard, O.C.S.O. et H. Crouzel, S.J., (= *Sources chrétiennes*, No 375), Paris, 1991, (livre, II, 1, § 50), pp. 290–291.

<sup>110</sup> Origène, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des cantiques*, t. I, (livre, II, 1, § 51–52, 54), pp. 290–291, 291–293.

*The Founding of the City and the State-Church*

Tsar Boris is presented as the son of Tsar Izot in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, but according to the general opinion, he is certainly modelled after Khan Boris-Michael I. For this khan there is no direct indication in our *Tale* that he created cities, but he is likewise described as pious and faithful, and as baptiser of the Bulgarian land. To some degree, the character matches the traditional historical description of the ruler in question. The narrative twice insists on the fact that churches were built: once in the passage stating “and (he) built many churches all over the Bulgarian land”, and a second time, “on Ovche pole [= Sheep’s field] he built white churches”.<sup>111</sup> The construction of divine temples was certainly a clearly expressed sacral activity related to the work of creation as we see it in the framework of this study. This follows the model of the king and prophet Solomon, who built the Temple, the House of the Lord God. This activity is of an identical kind to the founding of a city and the founding of a State. This interpretation directly points to the interpretation of the State or the Kingdom as a temple and as a Church, i.e. as the Body of Christ that encompasses all the believers and is directly linked with Salvation. It is connected with the Divine presence and is one of the paths for sacralisation of government power in pre-modern societies.

I have devoted a separate article to this issue, and I would refer the reader to it and to one of the excursuses in this book;<sup>112</sup> here I will limit myself to noting the basic conclusions in order to demonstrate the thesis developed in the present study. I am referring to the account of the beginning of the Second Bulgarian Empire, which, in a sense, is also the birth of Tărnovgrade as a political and spiritual centre of the country. The story of the city begins with the *arrival* of an icon of St Demetrius who, the people of the city believed, had left his own city of Thessalonica in order to come to the centre of the Asen brothers’ movement aiming at the restoration and renovation of the Bulgarian Empire. Here these events interest us only insofar as they are certainly relevant to the holiness of the State as a political structure and to the *sanctification* of Tărnovgrade as capital. I am referring not only to the

<sup>111</sup> See in this book, p. 16 (f. 401c, lines 20–21, 22–23).

<sup>112</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, “La demeure et la corne de l’Empire”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol. 69, fasc. 1, 2003, pp. 179–197. See in this book Excursus III. Similar ideas are developed in the article by Jelena Erdeljan (J. Erdeljan, “New Jerusalems in the Balkans. Translation of Sacred Space in the Local Context”, *Novye Ierusalimy. Ierotopia i ikonografija sakral’nykh prostranstv*, ed. A.M. Lidov, Moscow, 2009, pp. 458–471); the author seems not to have been acquainted with my article.

indication that St Demetrius<sup>113</sup> is protector of the city and of the Empire but also to the recurrence of a *topos* that is highly characteristic for narratives about the creation of a holy place. In the cited passage, the *topos* appears in connection with the account of the restoration or renewal of the Empire by the Asen brothers. As Ivan Bozhilov has observed, this the idea of the *Renovatio imperii* was an essential characteristic of the movement of the Asenides.<sup>114</sup> The beginnings of the capital city and the beginnings of the State is presented as similar to the construction of a monastery, or church, or temple, i.e. of a holy place that serves as an image of the Temple of the Lord in the Old Testament. The Temple is the dwelling of God Himself, and it is through it that the Divine presence is realised among the Chosen People. We have allusions to such an ideological schema in the mention that Tsar Boris built churches, presented in the context of the building of cities in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and perhaps in the building of Greater Preslav by Tsar Symeon.

Thus, we come to the most important of the builder monarchs: Constantine the Great, who was not only the ideal image of a Christian ruler but also of a ruler-builder of cities, a renovator ruler.

*St Constantine: The Founding of a City and the City Model between Jerusalem and Rome/Constantinople*

It could be said that the image of Constantine the Great as we find it in the *Tale* and the narrative about the cities founded by him, are the most distinctly biblical in content. St Constantine is presented in the context of the reign of St Peter, Tsar of Bulgaria, and as the latter's friend and companion at that. Both of them, although in different ways, became an ideal model of the Christian ruler for the faithful.<sup>115</sup> Elsewhere in this book, I discuss the typology of Constantine's empire and the particular features

<sup>113</sup> D. Obolensky, "The Cult of St. Demetrios of Thessaloniki in the History of Byzantine-Slav Relations", *Balkan Studies* 15 (1974), pp. 3–20; V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, "Quelques représentations iconographiques de Saint Démétrius et l'insurrection des Assenides—première scission dans son culte 'œcuménique'", *Byzantinobulgarica*, V, Sofia 1978, pp. 261 ff.; V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, "Le culte de saint Démétrius à Byzance et aux Balkans", *Miscellanea Bulgarica* 5 (1987), pp. 139 ff.; Iv. Bozhilov, "Asenevtsi: Renovatio imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum", in: idem, *Sedem etuda po srednovekovna istorija*, Sofia, 1995, pp. 152–153, 190–191; Bozhilov in *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 421 ff.

<sup>114</sup> Bozhilov, "Asenevtsi: Renovatio imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum", pp. 131 ff.

<sup>115</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto. Sv. tsar Peter i sv. Parasheva/Petka*, Sofia, 2004, pp. 25 ff.

this kind of empire had in Bulgaria, but here I would draw attention to the founding of cities. In connection with Constantine, this act is most intensely charged with ideology compared with other characters in the *Tale*. According to the text, he set the beginning of Constantinople, called the New Jerusalem, and of Bdin on the Danube, designated as “Babylon of the Seven Hills” (*Heptalophos Babylon*). These are the only cities designated by name, but it is said he created seventeen more cities and “resettled” the Bulgarian land. This is evidently an act of *renewal* in the context of the apocryphon, probably connected to the plundering of the land by violent giants who came by sea and destroyed it at the end of Tsar Peter’s reign. It is understood that the reign of Tsar Constantine, which is said to have lasted sixty-two years, is presented in the *Tale* as a blessed, pious, and prosperous time.

The account of the founding of *Constantinople* is broken into two parts. Importantly, despite the divided structure of the account, this is a single story about the same Tsar Constantine, as I have demonstrated elsewhere in this book. There can be no doubt that the mentioned “city of Byzantium” is the imperial city on the Bosphorus. This is essentially a single narrative complex and between the two parts is situated the account of Constantine’s visit to Golgotha and the discovery and bringing back of the True Cross of the Lord’s Passion.

Constantine is presented entirely within the framework of the special mission that God assigns to founders: being one whose birth was attended by miracles, and having been ordered to seek the True Cross by a Divine messenger, he sets from Byzantium for “the place of the skull”, Golgotha, and vows to return and found a city there, the name of which shall be New Jerusalem, which he does after his return. Together with this, the story of the evil curator in Rome occurs; after the latter is defeated, “the Romans were taken to the New Jerusalem”. We thus encounter two urban (capital city) paradigms in Mediterranean civilisation: that of Jerusalem and that of Rome. Constantinople proves to be a synthesis of the two.

Rome, the Eternal City, was well known in mediaeval Bulgaria as a religious and political centre. The first contacts of Bulgaria with the Holy See date from the 9th century.<sup>116</sup> The ancient imperial capital figures in the chronicles that were much translated at the time of the tsars Symeon and Peter. It is in Rome that the events take place in the last days, as related

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<sup>116</sup> *Istorija na Bulgarija v tri toma*, t. I, *Istorija na srednovekovna Bulgarija VII–XIV vek*, Sofia, 1999, pp. 169–228.

in the history of the eschatological Saviour King, closely connected with the Eternal City in eschatological literature.<sup>117</sup> A memory of Rome was preserved likewise in the folk culture of the Bulgarians. Here I should point out an apotropeic (safeguarding against evil) ritual practice that existed in this country until the 20th century and which, according to researchers, retold the legend of the founding of Rome.<sup>118</sup> This ritual was performed during epidemics, especially the plague, and presented the ploughing of a furrow around the city or village that were to be preserved from disease—this was done by two naked twin brothers who would harness twin oxen.<sup>119</sup> The disease cannot cross the furrow and enter the village; and if it is encircled on the inside, it cannot get out. The ritual was performed in cases when a village destroyed by the plague was relocated. This resembles what the legend tells us about the founding of Rome by the brothers Remus and Romulus, and the tracing of the *pomoerium*. Even more importantly, we have data that a similar ritual was performed at the founding of Constantinople.<sup>120</sup> This practice suddenly provides an interesting perspective on the importance of the encircling of settlements with a furrow as an apotropeic means for dividing the *internal* from the *external* side in order to protect the inside, the sanctified place, the centre, from external dangers.

There is no doubt that mediaeval Bulgarian culture was strongly linked to Constantinople, and this determines the attention we will devote to this city. The imperial city on the Bosphorus is a New Rome, a city protected by God, the Eye of the Christian *Oecumene*, the New Jerusalem. It may simply be called the “City”. As for Rome, the city on the Tiber, it combined the imperial heritage of a pagan world capital with that of Christianity, personified by the preaching and martyrdom of the first apostles and teachers of the whole world, Saints Peter and Paul, as well as of many other Christian saints and believers. Rome was the cathedral city of St Peter, whom Our Lord Jesus

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<sup>117</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 200ff., 212ff.; *Starobulgaska eskhatologija*, p. 116; V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, A. Miltenova, “Political Ideology and Eschatology. The Image of the ‘King-Saviour’ and Concrete Historical Personages”, *Relations et influences reciproques entre Grecs et Bulgares XVIIIe–XXe s.*, Tessononiki, 1991, pp. 447, 450.

<sup>118</sup> V. Venedikova, “Bulgarski paraleli na antichnija obichaj zaoravane pri osnovavane na selishte”, *Izsledvanija v chest na akad. Dimitar Dechev po sluchaj 80-godishninata mu*, Sofia, 1958, pp. 779–785.

<sup>119</sup> *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i knizhnina*, t. XXVIII, p. 557; Venedikova, “Bulgarski paraleli”, p. 779.

<sup>120</sup> J. Bidez, Fr. Winkelmann, *Philostrogus Kirchengeschichte* (Die griech. christl. Schriftsteller der erst. Jahrhunderte), Berlin, 1972, S. 20–22; E. Follieri, “La fondazione di Costantinopoli: riti pagani e cristiani”, *Roma Costantinopoli, Mosca*, Napoli, 1973, pp. 221–222.

Christ Himself addressed in these words: “And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18). The city was a location concentrating holiness, and one of the main places of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages. For its part, Constantinople, the New Rome, was purely Christian in its history and represented a special focal point of holiness in the Eastern Mediterranean. As capital of the Empire that encompassed the Christian *Oecumene*, the city was also a holy city, and thus under the special protection of God and His Mother. This is testified to by the fact of the veneration of the Holy Virgin as City-Protector and her special heavenly intercession for cities as centres and locations of the Christian community.<sup>121</sup> The cult of the Holy Virgin was a characteristic element of the influence of Constantinople over the whole Byzantine world, and explains the duplication of the city in all Orthodox countries. The intercession of the Holy Mother of God is particularly important in an eschatological perspective, for it is related to the Divine presence: the Holy Virgin had carried the Lord under her heart, and—though a human being—she had encompassed the Immeasurable, had become a home to Him, just like the Tabernacle and the Temple, and subsequently the Church. As a human being and Mother of God, she is an intercessor for the Salvation of Humanity.<sup>122</sup> That is why she is also the Protector of the Eye of the Christian world, Constantinople, for any attack against this city would amount to a hindrance to the salvific role of the Christian Empire.<sup>123</sup> The beginning of this cult must have been set in the 6th century, but its most memorable manifestation is usually connected with the siege of the city by the Persians, Avars, and Slavs in AD 626, and with the addition of the *Akathist Hymn of Mother of God* to the most solemn of all celebrations of the Virgin. The text of this hymn was translated into Bulgarian soon after the Conversion, which indicates the rapid dissemination of the veneration for the Mother of God,

<sup>121</sup> A. Cameron, “The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, N. S., vol. XXIX, Pt. 1, April 1978, *passim*; D. Polyvjannyj, *Srednovekovnijat bulgarski grad prez XIII–XIV vek*, Sofia, 1989, pp. 158–160; D. Polyvjannyj, “Mjastoto na Devin grad i negovata rolja”, *Istoricheski pregled*, 10 (1984), 2, pp. 81–85; Iv. Bozhilov, *Bulgarite vav Vizantijskata imperija*, Sofia, 1995, pp. 181–183; Naumow, “Bogorodične ikone i ritualizacija odbrane grada”, pp. 187 ff.; Bozhilov, *Vizantijskijat svjat*, pp. 392–393.

<sup>122</sup> A. Cameron, “The Theotokos in the Sixth-Century Constantinople”, pp. 99 ff.; R.G. Păun, “La couronne est à Dieu. Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521) et l’image du pouvoir pénitent”, *L’empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie Byzantine et post-byzantine*, Bucarest, 2001, p. 199 ff.

<sup>123</sup> P.J. Alexander, “Strength of the Empire and its Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes”, *Speculum*, 37 (1962), p. 355.

Protector of Cities. In Bulgaria many traces have been found of the Constantinopolitan cult of Mary as Protector of the City, among which I should point out certain passages in the office of St Mocius (the first martyr to have suffered in the city of Byzantion), whose feast day coincides with the date of the founding of Constantinople, May 11.<sup>124</sup> The earliest mention of the Holy Virgin as City Protector in Bulgaria was that related to the capture of Preslav by John Tsimiskes and the seizing of an icon of the Mother of God, which was taken from the occupied capital and brought to Constantinople, where it was placed on a golden throne as part of the Emperor's triumph.<sup>125</sup> Several decades later, the Holy Virgin is mentioned in the Bitolja inscription of Tsar John Vladislav, in the second decade of the 11th century.<sup>126</sup> During the entire Middle Ages and in the early Modern period her veneration remained characteristic of Orthodox countries. At times it had more outstanding manifestations (as in the veneration of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God in Russia and, later, in other countries<sup>127</sup>) and at times other specific saints were substituted for this cult, who carried out the same or similar functions. In Bulgaria, such was the veneration of Saint Paraskeva (Petka) of Epibatos, known as Petka of Tărnovgrade, a cult that spread from the Second Bulgarian Empire to neighbouring Serbia and later to the Romanian principalities of Walachia and Moldavia, following the path of this saint's relics. Elsewhere I have argued in detail my belief that the Cult of St Paraskeva was particularly strong in these countries precisely because she fulfilled the role of a substitute for the Marian city-protection veneration in Constantinople.<sup>128</sup> The

<sup>124</sup> *Novgorodskaja sluzhebnaia mineia na maj (Putjatina Mineia) XI veka. Text, Issledovanija, Ukazateli*, ed. V.A. Baranov, V.M. Markov, Izhevsk, 2003, pp. 348–351. The Greek text of the divine service: *Analecta hymnica graeca e codicibus eruta Italiae inferioris*, ed. I. Schirò, vol. IX, *Canones Maii*, Roma, 1973 (In diem Constantinopoleos conditae et in sanctum Mocium), pp. 115–123; v. aussi M. Yovcheva, “Kalendarnite osobenosti na Putjatiniia minej—otpravna tochka za mnogoposochni izsledvanija”, *Slavia Orthodoxa. Ezik i kultura. Sbornik v chest na prof. dfn Rumjana Pavlova*, Sofia, 2003, pp. 182–193.

<sup>125</sup> Bozhilov, *Bulgarite vāv Vizantijskata imperija*, pp. 181–183; Bozhilov, *Vizantijskijat svjat*, pp. 392–393.

<sup>126</sup> J. Zaimov, V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, *Bulgarin rodom. Bitolskijat nadpis na Ivan-Vladislav, samodărzhets bulgarski*, Sofia, 1981, p. 9.

<sup>127</sup> See the exceptionally interesting article by A. Naumow (“Bogorodične ikone i ritualizacija odbrane grada”, pp. 187–198). M. Pljukhanova, *Sjuzhety i simvoły Moskovskogo tsarstva*, Sankt Petersburg, 1995, pp. 23–62.

<sup>128</sup> To this question is dedicated the greater part of my book on patron saints of the Empire: Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 43 ff., 80 ff. See also Iv. Biliarsky, “The Cult of Saint Petka and the Constantinopolitan Marial Cult”, *Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale (Actes du colloque international, 17 janvier 2004, New Europe College, Bucarest)*, volume coordonné par Iv. Biliarsky, Radu G. Păun, Bucarest, 2007, pp. 81–104.

reverence for the Holy Mother of God City Protector had one other development, strongly linked both to the Empire and to monasticism: the special protection over the Garden of the Mother of God in Holy Mount Athos.<sup>129</sup>

Constantinople is presented in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* in close connection with Rome on one hand and with the Bulgarian lands on the other. The relation to Rome is clear and corresponds to the historical situation since the foundation of Constantinople. It was a copy of Rome in every respect. The Church, and with it the Empire, declared the imperial city to be the New Rome by decision of the Ecumenical Council and raised the see there to the rank of the Pentarchy, the five Patriarchates. The new city repeated the urban structure of the old imperial capital, even including the seven hills upon which it was built. Like Rome, it was called “seven-hilled” (*Heptalophos*). The Emperor Constantine aimed to likewise repeat the social organisation of the Eternal City, resettling many of the senatorial families in the new city in order to emphasise the continuity between the two capitals. This is indicated, in a way, in our apocryphon, where it is said that “Romans were taken to the New Jerusalem”.<sup>130</sup> This assertion is hardly the result of historical knowledge of the modern kind, but rather expresses an awareness of the similarity between the two cities as regards their political and ideological function; the source of this awareness we must seek in the texts on which the compiled *Tale* is based.

The connection of Rome with the Bulgarian land is displayed in our *Tale* in several directions. The first of these is related to the mention of Rome as a geographic reference point for the land from which the prophet Isaiah led the third part of the Cumans in order to lay the foundations of the Bulgarian state. This land is designated as the “left parts of Rome”.<sup>131</sup> Many interpretations have been proposed for this question. What is important for our research is not the precise geographical location of these lands but the fact that in this way the Eternal City became the starting point for the beginning of Bulgarian history. The West, Rome, is also where Tsar Peter found shelter after the Bulgarian land was conquered by ‘violent men ...

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<sup>129</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, “Sveta Gora kato svestheno mjesto na Pravoslaviето (Bogorodichnija kult i imperskata ideologija)”, *Ljubav prema obrazovanju i vera u Boga u pravoslavnim manastirama / Love of Learning and Devotion to God in Orthodox Monasteries*, Belgrade/Columbus, 2006, pp. 211–220.

<sup>130</sup> See in this book, p. 19 (f. 402b, lines 24–25).

<sup>131</sup> It should be noted that a similar text could be found in a polemical anti-Latin work that seems to be connected with the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* (Nikolov, *Povest polezna za latinite*, pp. 35–39). Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that no traces of anti-Catholic ideas or polemics can be found in *Tale*.

as tall as giants'. This information is important, though not historical or particularly interested in fact, because it contains a memory of the Russian invasion of the Balkans. It is interesting as being yet another indication of the special relationship between Bulgaria and Rome in the context of our apocryphon.

In fact, the most important treatment of the Roman-Constantinopolitan tradition in its relation to Bulgaria we find in the section of the *Tale* about Emperor Constantine the Great, especially in the fact that his reign is presented in close connection with that of Peter, tsar of Bulgaria. According to the narrative, Constantine was born in the time of the latter; the two loved each other and later, after the death of the Bulgarian ruler, Constantine settled the Bulgarian lands and founded cities. Evidently, theirs were two different kingdoms, but towards the end, it seems as if they are one, under the care of Constantine. From here on the *basileis* are presented as Bulgarian rulers, and usually no difference is made between them and the Bulgarian tsars. This common State is designated as "the Kingdom of Jerusalem" after the name of its capital, the New Jerusalem. This directs our attention and search towards biblical history and sacral topography.

That is likewise what the mention of the city of Bdin points to, mentioned as Heptalophos Babylon (or Babylon on Seven Hills, СЕДМОВРЪХИ БАВУЛОН). This citation is quite peculiar and not easy to understand, for in biblical texts Babylon is usually presented very negatively, as the epitome of vice. Upon the forehead of the richly arrayed harlot in the Revelation of St John is a sign that reads: "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of abominations of the earth" (Revelation, 17:5). Thus, Babylon combines in itself the image of wealth, debauchery, and excessive luxury. As such, the city has rebelled against the Lord ("hast striven against the Lord", Jeremiah, 50:24). That is why it will come to evil, and the prophet exclaims "Alas!" or "Woe unto thee!" when he mentions this city along with other rich and iniquitous ones (there are many quotations that express this, for instance, 3 Ezra 16:1; Revelation 18:10, etc.). Particularly important in building the image of the city is the story of the tower of Babylon (Genesis, 11:1–9), according to which the people, still all speaking the same language—started building a tower that would reach to the heavens in order to "make a name" for themselves. This construction would become a symbol of human pride, which merited and received God's punishment.

The Bible sets forth an unambiguously negative evaluation of the image of Babylon. Nevertheless, the mention of Babylon in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not negatively connotated. In the tale of the founding of Bdin, we find no negative elements, and the designation "On Seven Hills"—which

contains a clear comparison with Rome—excludes the possibility of interpreting it in a negative light. “Babylon of the Seven Hills” (Heptalophos Babylon) is one of the designations used for Constantinople that is no less common than the designation “New Rome” or “New Jerusalem” in apocryphal and apocalyptic literature.<sup>132</sup> In some eschatological works the fall of Constantinople is compared to the engulfment of Babylon (Jeremiah, 51:42, 64; Revelation, 18:21), which testifies to the importance of the ancient city in world history. The negative assessment related to worldly pride and riches is there, but accompanied by the illustration of a global disaster, the victim of which might be value-neutral.

The problem of the comparison between Bdin and Babylon has not gone unnoticed in Bulgarian historiography, although some of the explanations offered for it seem unacceptable to me. One such explanation is the assumption that Bdin is compared to Babylon because there is a river passing by the city.<sup>133</sup> I do not think this is the right explanation of the text. The comparison with Babylon has principally an ideological significance, for which the outward features are hardly of defining importance. Evidently Bdin/Vidin is an important and large city that—with all proportions kept—may be compared to the capital of the country and hence to Constantinople. It is in this direction that we should seek the explanation of the citation in question. The view has also been stated that Babylon is counted as one of the *holy cities* simply because it is present in Holy Scripture, even though not in the happiest way.<sup>134</sup> I am inclined to accept this explanation and the authors’ arguments that in some late apocryphal text “Babylon of the Seven Hills” / Heptalophos Babylon (whatever city was meant by this name) is one of the important cities in holy history and in eschatological literature. In the *Vision of the Prophet Daniel about the Kings and about the Last Days* this is what the Roman *Tsarstvo* is called (meaning the Constantinopolitan Eastern Roman Empire), for which it had been prophesied that a single-breasted woman would reign over it.<sup>135</sup> This information has been interpreted as an allusion to the amazons and Empress Irene’s treatment of her son Constantine VI. The account of a vision of the prophet Daniel in Priest Dragol’s manuscript (13th century) begins with the exclamation addressed

<sup>132</sup> Rydén, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse”, p. 250.

<sup>133</sup> V. Tapkova-Zaimova, “Tirnovo entre Jérusalem, Rome et Constantinople. L’idée d’une capitale”, *Roma fuori di Roma: istituzioni e immagini*, Roma, 1994, p. 149.

<sup>134</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 73–74.

<sup>135</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 153 ff. and 165 ff.

to Constantinople “Woe unto you, Heptalophos Babylon!”<sup>136</sup> These texts give us good reason to place Babylon alongside the important cities, as mediaeval man counted them. Thus Constantinople—probably due also to its luxury and riches, became “Babylon of the Seven Hills”, and the city of Bdin/Vidin borrowed this name from it. The mechanism by which the loan was made is not very clear. The important thing is that it testifies to the comparison of the city with the Imperial City, and also that this is yet another proof of the solid biblical foundation on which the text of *Tale* was based, and which naturally points to the holy places and the city of the Holy of Holies, of God’s Presence.

*Jerusalem* is a holy city for the Hebrews and, after them, for the Christians and Muslims, and thus unites the monotheistic religions derived from the Abrahamic tradition. This is the city of the Temple, i.e. of the Divine presence amidst the Chosen People. Jerusalem is defined as the Home of the Almighty in the Book of Psalms (Psalms, 75/76:3), and the very origin of the name comes from *JHWH Shammah*, meaning “The Lord is there” (Ezekiel, 48:35).<sup>137</sup> The presence of God is the main circumstance that gives Jerusalem its holiness for the Hebrews. From the perspective of Christianity and Gospel history, this is the city of the Passion of Christ, the city of the Resurrection, where the most important parts in the life of the Incarnate Logos took place; it is the city of Salvation. That is precisely why Jerusalem was characterised as the fundamental *topos* of mediaeval civilisation, the *topos* of identity in which man in that age found a point of orientation both spiritually and spatially.<sup>138</sup> From the viewpoint of political theology, God’s presence is the most significant element grounding the sacralisation and religious legitimisation of authority. Through it a particular identity of power is created, which encompasses not only the capital city but also the nation, the kingdom and the king, linking these to the biblical tradition of the Chosen People, the Promised Land, and the divinely anointed kings of Israel.

We should also mention the idea of Jerusalem as the navel, meaning the centre, of the world.<sup>139</sup> According to the *Vita of St Andrew Salos* (Fool-for-Christ), God will gather together Israel in the end of the world in His Holy City.<sup>140</sup> Golgotha, (“the place of the skull”), where the Saviour suffered and was crucified, is also there, but it is related not only to the Passion of Christ but also to the beginnings of Mankind, for that is where the grave and skull

<sup>136</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 311 and 314.

<sup>137</sup> Erdeljan, “Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim”, p. 98.

<sup>138</sup> Erdeljan, “Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim”, p. 97.

<sup>139</sup> Rydén, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse”, p. 248.

<sup>140</sup> Rydén, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse”, p. 221; *Starobulgaska eskhatologija*, p. 192.

of Adam were. Thus the Saviour, the New Adam, took upon Himself the sins of men from the Fall and then freed them from Original Sin. It is at Golgotha that the last king will return his crown to God, together with earthly power invested in kings by Him.<sup>141</sup> Thus, Jerusalem appears as God's City, as the city of God's presence in the Temple, where the story of the first man Adam will be united with that of the Saviour, the New Adam, and so on until the end of time. These observations are certainly valid at least to some degree for the New Jerusalem as well, in every version of that city.

In the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* the images of the Holy City and of the "Kingdom of Jerusalem" are of central importance. In order to understand them it must be stressed that in this work it is precisely Constantinople that is looked upon as the New Jerusalem.<sup>142</sup> Here I should note that in a very interesting article by Robert Ousterhout the author seriously questions the importance of the idea of Constantine's city as the New Jerusalem. The creation and construction of the new capital was a political and not a religious act. The city was conceived as a political and topographic replica of Rome, not of the holy city of Hebrews and Christians, just as it was not the centre of holiness until the middle of the 5th century.<sup>143</sup> Constantinople duplicates some of the natural spatial, and even more so the political, features of Rome but not those of Jerusalem, and in this respect it is in strong contrast with some other eastern (Mtskheta, Moscow) or western (Bologna) examples. The city draws its holiness from the accumulation there of holy relics (an activity that is proper to government) and not from similarity with Jerusalem.<sup>144</sup> In his exceptionally interesting and noteworthy conclusion, the author generalises that the holiness of Jerusalem and that of Constantinople are of different kinds: while in the former the holy events *had happened* and were *established as having occurred* in certain places that are unchangeable, in the latter, holiness and the objects that embody it were introduced and placed there in order to sanctify the place and legitimise the authority in power.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse", pp. 245–246; *Starobulgaska eskhatologija*, p. 117.

<sup>142</sup> This is often occurs in apocalyptic and eschatological texts—see *Starobulgaska eskhatologija*, pp. 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, 187, etc. Notably, the Bulgarian capital is called "New Jerusalem": V. Gjuzev. "Residenzen Tärnovo, Bdin und Kaliakra ...", S. 62.

<sup>143</sup> R. Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", *Ierotopija. Sozdanie sakral'nykh prostranstv v Vizantii i Drevnej Rusi*, ed. A. Lidov, Moscow, 2006, pp. 98–100.

<sup>144</sup> Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", pp. 101 ff.

<sup>145</sup> Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", p. 109.

The idea of Constantinople as the New Jerusalem nevertheless occurs in this article as well, and Robert Ousterhout points out the objects with which it is associated, first among which are the relics of the Passion of Christ, preserved in the Church of Our Lady of Pharos.<sup>146</sup> This is part of the sacred topography of the imperial capital, which maps out its eschatological future. This tradition became evident particularly in the Patria of Constantinople, in which of special importance were the Great Church of St Sophia, the Xerolophos, and especially the column with the statue of the emperor, raised in the Forum of Constantine.<sup>147</sup> Thus, we find that the duplication of the holy city stems at least partially from the discovery and placing of the True Cross in the capital, which is identical with the scheme of the story in the *Tale*. The Cross is the material emblem of the Christian Empire and of the authority in it, and is part of the Byzantine identity by its salvific quality, but also as a *tropaiophoric* (victorious) symbol, closely linked to the veneration for St Constantine and his mother St Helena.<sup>148</sup> Moreover, by incorporating parts of the relic within the bronze statue of the emperor at Constantine's Forum, a shared veneration of the two was achieved, and, essentially, the identification of the emperor with the tree of the passion of the Saviour; this was exceptionally important for the conceptualisation of government authority in the New Rome of Christianity.<sup>149</sup> In addition, it remained an essential characteristic of the Empire, while the Cross itself was set in the foundations of the City and will be found there and cleaved at the End of Days.<sup>150</sup> The city of emperors creates its quality of holy place, in the Christian understanding of holiness. This is quite different from the pagan understanding, particularly of the idea of "Eternal City". For Christians, no worldly things are deemed eternal, and the sanctity of Rome was reinterpreted in Christian terms. Rome and the Empire were one and the same thing, and in this particular case the perception of *pars pro toto* is not the only explanation, for Rome was the Empire and the Empire was Rome. As for the sanctity,

<sup>146</sup> Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", p. 107; P. Magdalino, "L'église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VII<sup>e</sup> / VIII<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)", *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, éd. J. Durand, B. Flusin, Paris, 2004, pp. 15–30.

<sup>147</sup> In the Slavic translation of the Vita of Andreas Salos: *Starobulgaska eskhatologija*, p. 193; see also E. Folieri, "La fondatione di Costantinopoli", pp. 222–226; G. Dargon, *Constantinople imaginaire. Etude sur le recueil des PATRIA*, Paris, 1984, pp. 74–77, 136 ff.

<sup>148</sup> A. Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and the relics of the True Cross in the Thirteenth century", *Vostochnokhristianskie relikvii*, ed. A.M. Lidov, Moscow, 2003, pp. 205–215.

<sup>149</sup> Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and the relics of the True Cross in the Thirteenth century", p. 207.

<sup>150</sup> Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse", p. 227.

as Christians understood it, of the Empire, it was beyond any doubt: Christ had been born in the Roman Empire, it was where He passed his earthly life, and it was where His Passion was accomplished. Thus, the Empire turns out to be sanctified by the Presence of God and this sanctity is taken over and continued by Constantinople. However, it was effectuated not through the Temple or the Ark of the Covenant, nor through the early life of Christ, but through the ecclesification of the Empire and the Eucharistic presence of God in the Church, understood as the Home and Dwelling of the Unencompassable. Thus, the city combines the imperial sanctity of the world's capital with the legacy of Jerusalem. The city on the Bosphorus is a "holy city", "a New Jerusalem", which can perish only with the End of the World. The latter is linked with the Last Judgement and Salvation, and hence the city is under the special protection of the Lord and His Mother. The eschatological idea regarding the New Jerusalem is presented in the Book of Revelation of St John (ch. 21), where the New Jerusalem is designated as the bride of the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*) and is depicted in all the glory of the World to come and of the Salvation of mankind. This is the striving and the goal, but the building of cities understood as spatial icons of God's city was something earthly in character. Cities strove to achieve the signs of God's presence amidst the Chosen People mostly in the past rather than the future as depicted by the Last Judgement.

The idea of *translatio Hierosolymi* can be found among many Christian nations. It dwells mainly on the belief in the sanctity of the respective place, a sanctity acquired in the same way as that of Jerusalem—through Divine presence, which alone can sanctify a space. Holiness is accumulated through the translation of relics; this was understandably considered to be a "royal ritual", inasmuch as the rulers were particularly fervent in this activity, which had a distinct political dimension along with its religious one. Together with this, a special *holy topography* was built of the urban space and the surrounding area, which was to "repeat" at some scale the topography of the Holy Land in the new place. This was done for cities, for extensive territories, or for separate temples and monasteries. The building of such replicas, of such spatial depictions, was of enormous importance for the construction of a Christian identity in the Orthodox countries and in the West.

The creation of the image of Constantinople as New Jerusalem was linked with the translation of relics to, and the accumulation of grace in, the imperial capital, which made of the city a holy place, a site of pilgrimage. As such, the city was sanctified by the only possible source of holiness—God's presence, usually associated with the Tabernacle, the Temple, and the Ark

of the Covenant. All these are Old Testament symbols, which demonstrate the presence of the Lord among His chosen people. In studying the Byzantine sacred-spatial interpretation, of particular importance is the interpretation of certain churches—St Polyeuctus, St Sophia, and others—as replicas of the Temple; respectively, those who ordered their construction (among them were Justinian I and other leading political figures) were seen as a New Solomon or even as persons who had surpassed the glory of this biblical king.<sup>151</sup> I should also refer to the fact that Byzantine authors describe some churches as “the Lord’s Temple” (Ναὸς Κυρίου), and that in the imperial court there was a special church simply called “the Lord’s Temple” or “Lord’s Church”—any further specification was consciously avoided. This designation has a special significance; Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson have drawn attention to this.<sup>152</sup> Evidently, the reference was to the holy space in the Old Testament and expressed the idea of identifying with it. Of course, this occurred in the context of the existence of Constantinople and of special objects of religious cult, such as the Rod of the prophet Moses and the Throne of King Solomon.

We should not forget, however, that all Old Testament locations of God’s presence were reinterpreted in Christian theology as prefiguring the Mother of God, who, in turn, was interpreted as the image of the Holy Ecumenical Church. In this sense, I should repeat that the *ecclesification* of the Empire and the *imperial Mariology*—the special veneration for Our Lady as Protector of the City—should be understood as a manifestation of the saving and holy presence of God among the Chosen People. These ideas passed to other countries of the Byzantine Commonwealth and were assimilated there.

Of special importance were the Dominical relics, which were part of the construction of the holy space in the imperial capital city; especially important in this respect was the True Cross, explicitly mentioned in the *Tale*. The importance of the Cross is enhanced by the fact that, in the story, the emergence of the New Jerusalem occurs in the context of the finding of the Cross by St Constantine, who specially goes to seek it in the Holy

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<sup>151</sup> R.M. Harrison, “The Church of St. Polyeuctos in Istanbul and the Temple of Solomon”, in: *Okeanos. Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students*, ed. C. Mango, O. Pritsak, U. Pasiecznyk, Harvard Ukrainian Studies VII, Cambridge MA, 1984, pp. 276–279; R.M. Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium: The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana’s Palace Church in Istanbul*, London, 1989; R. Ousterhout, “New Temples and New Solomons. Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture”, *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, Washington D.C., 2010, pp. 239–251.

<sup>152</sup> Magdalino, Nelson, “Introduction”, pp. 10–13.

Land. If we follow the chronology of events as they are presented in this apocryphon, we will see that the building of the city is made to depend on the bringing of the Cross: "If I go to the Cranium's place and find the Honest Cross of Christ ... I will come back to this desolate place, I will have a city built here, and I will call it New Jerusalem".<sup>153</sup> After that Constantine departs, finds the Cross, and returns to found the City. The message is clear: the creative and civilising activity of the ruler (building a city, redeeming the wilderness, creating a new centre of the Empire/World), and the construction of sacral space interpreted in the categories of the Divine presence through the Cross, expressed in the name of the New Jerusalem. Thus, we have reason to see in the *Tale* a narrative that is a synthesis of the Byzantine view of the holiness of the capital as a New Jerusalem and the location of the God's presence.

The idea of the royal city as a New Jerusalem developed in Serbia as well, where it was clearly expressed in the 15th century. Also of interest in this respect is the topographic representation of the Holy Land with reference to the region of Eastern Macedonia in an interpolation to the text of one of the copies of the *Description of the Holy Land in Jerusalem* by Constantine the Philosopher (Kostenečki). In this text, we find direct topographical and geographical references: the river Strymon as imaging the river Jordan, the mountain of Pirin represents the mountain where Moses died, the city of Petrich is Jericho, and Belasitsa corresponds to the mountain upon which the holy city of Jerusalem was situated.<sup>154</sup> These comparisons are particularly interesting because they do not refer to a capital or an important urban centre and thus stand apart from the use of the idea of the New Jerusalem in the political sphere. Yet they categorically serve to prove the existence of this idea in the Serbian environment, where the author was writing. Still, the focus of this idea was the presentation of Belgrade, the capital city in the age of the Despot Stephen Lazarević.<sup>155</sup> This was a specific development of the predominant view in this country that the Serbs were the New Israel, which led to a particularly strong interest in the Old Testament amidst literary circles attached to one of the last important Christian rulers in the Balkans before the Ottoman conquest. As everywhere, in the case of Belgrade the image of the city as a New Jerusalem is a complex one. In it, geographic and

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<sup>153</sup> See in this book, p. 18 (f. 402a, lines 16–24).

<sup>154</sup> M. Petrova, "An Unknown Copy of the Description of Jerusalem by Constantine of Kosteneč", *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. LIX, 1998, pp. 265–266, 269; Gagova, *Vladeteli i knigi*, p. 238.

<sup>155</sup> This is essentially the topic of the article by Jelena Erdeljan ("Beograd kao Novi Jerusalem", pp. 99–109).

topographical characteristics are interwoven with purely religious imagery and serve as a backdrop and confirmation of the latter. Testifying to this are the “paradisiacal” characteristics of the city and of the Serbian land in general, the presentation of Belgrade as the navel of the world and the centre of nations, the accumulation of sanctity in this city. These Old Testament motifs accompany the identification of the New Jerusalem as the New Constantinople. Thus, the characteristic of centre of nations becomes natural for the cosmopolitan city, which was defined as the centre of the world. The accumulation of holiness was prefigured by the collection of holy relics in the Byzantine capital, while the expression “of the Seven Hills” (*Heptalophos*) was directly borrowed from the Roman-Constantinopolitan tradition.<sup>156</sup> Particularly worthy of attention are the relics, for they express most clearly the synthesis between the traditions of Jerusalem and of Constantinople, and in the case of Belgrade, of the “Bulgarian legacy” in Serbia under the despot Stephen Lazarević. While the miraculous icon of the Mother of God, known as “of Belgrade”, indicates the Mariological tradition of Constantinople, the presence in Belgrade of the relics of St Paraskeva-Petka, brought from Târnovgrade and Vidin, points to the legacy of the Bulgarian tsars.<sup>157</sup> The same can be said for the relics of St Empress Theophano, and of the special cult of St Constantine and the presence of the relic of his right hand in the Serbian capital.<sup>158</sup> The synthesis we see in Belgrade in the times of the despot Stephen Lazarević seems to me obvious and very indicative. The city became the New Jerusalem, *because* it had become the New Constantinople. The same is true for the ruler of the city, who united in himself the figures of a New Moses and a New Constantine<sup>159</sup>—this is an image that elsewhere in this book I have defined as that of the *Renovator*.

In Russia, we find traces of these ideas starting from Kiev, but they were particularly developed in Muscovy, where we find an integral programme that far surpassed even that of the Empire.<sup>160</sup> Its centre and chief material

<sup>156</sup> Erdeljan, “Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim”, p. 103.

<sup>157</sup> Erdeljan, “Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim”, pp. 103–106. Regarding the cult of St Petka as a substitute of the Mother of God, Protector of the City, see Biliarsky, *Pokrovitelji na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 80 ff.

<sup>158</sup> G.P. Majeska, “The Body of St. Theophano the Empress and the Convent of St. Constantine”, *Byzantinoslavica*, 38, 1977, pp. 14–21; G. Dagron, “Theophano, les Saints-Apôtres et l’église de Tous-les-saints”, *Symmeikta*, 9, 1994, pp. 201–218.

<sup>159</sup> Erdeljan, “Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim”, p. 108.

<sup>160</sup> A very rich amount of literature has already been devoted to these problems, including concrete study of monuments and generalisations as to the state of the art in these studies. Here I will only cite two collections devoted to this problem, which provide a general

monument was the New Jerusalem Monastery of Patriarch Nikon. The building of this monastery, the planning and implementation of various projects for the capital city of Moscow, were of great importance for the policy of sacralising the state and government authority during the time of Tsar Alexis Mihaylovich. In fact, this policy had begun much earlier and was connected with the assumption of the Byzantine legacy by Russia after the Union of Florence and especially after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans. Thus, the centre of the Orthodox world was transferred to the north, to Muscovy, and with it the special holiness of the Empire acquired through relics, and the creation of a special sacral space expressed through the idea of the New Jerusalem and the belief in the Divine presence in the capital city. Related to this idea were the marriage of John III Vassilievich to Sophie Palaeologina, the coronation of John IV as Tsar, the creation of the Moscow Patriarchate, the accumulation of relics in the capital, Tsar Boris Godunov's project to build the church of the Holy of Holies and the Holy Sepulchre in the Moscow Kremlin, and, as the crowning achievement—the New Jerusalem of Patriarch Nikon. This superficial overview shows the close connection between the *Tsarstvo* and the religious programme we are discussing, and defines the strong political-religious emphasis in this programme. The realisation of the New Jerusalem project in Moscow was oriented to the idea of the Divine presence in the *Tsarstvo* and, thus, to the sanctification and legitimisation of the country as the centre of the Orthodox (= Christian) world. We see how the idea of a New Jerusalem proved identical with that of a New Constantinople, which in the case of Muscovy was expressed by the starets Philotheus in his notion of the “Third Rome”. I should specially draw attention to the synthesis between the Constantinopolitan imperial legacy and that of the Old Testament kingdoms of the People of Israel, which was perhaps most vividly affirmed in Moscow.

The Georgian kings also created a genuine replica of the Holy Land and the Holy City of Jerusalem in their kingdom in the Caucasus. Mariam Chkhartishvili, who calls it a “spatial icon of Jerusalem”, recently studied this phenomenon in an article.<sup>161</sup> In building the old Georgian capital, the holy city of Mtskheta, the topography of Jerusalem and the Holy Land was

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overview of it: *Ierusalim v russkoj kul'ture*, ed. A. Batalov, A. Lidov, Moscow, 1994, 224 p.; *Novye Ierusalimy. Ierotopia i ikonografija sakral'nykh prostranstv*, red. A.M. Lidov, Moscow, 2009, 910 p.

<sup>161</sup> M. Chkhartishvili, “Mtskheta kak Novy Ierusalim: Ierotopija “Zhitija sv. Nino””, in: *Novye Ierusalimy. Ierotopia i ikonografija sakral'nykh prostranstv*, ed. A.M. Lidov, Moscow, 2009, pp. 131–149.

followed with precision.<sup>162</sup> In the city we find the cave with the remains of the “Bethlehem church”, (the Georgian one, not that of the Gospels), as well as Mount Tabor, the Mount of Olives; about fifteen kilometres southeast of the city is “Bethany”, and beyond the river, at the foot of the hill called Golgotha, is the Gethsemane Garden with the church of the Dormition of Our Lady.

Of course, this is the landscape context of the representation of the kingdom as an image, or more precisely *an icon*, of Jerusalem. The aim however went beyond: to achieve resemblance to the Heavenly Jerusalem and thus to fulfil the project of the newly converted Georgians, who also assumed the idea of being a New Israel. The Georgian kings distinguished between the topographical “duplication”, in Mtskheta and the vicinity, of the holy place and the actual reproduction of the Upper Jerusalem referred to in the Book of Revelation. This is the heavenly abode that is “repeated” not in the city but in the royal palace and its “garden of paradise”.<sup>163</sup> Hierotopy and the ideology connected with it use topography to demonstrate the idea that God is present in the three-dimensional icon. This can easily be noticed in the earthly kingdom, though through different depictions. This is achieved through the visible and perceptible presence of the “Burning Bush”, which contains God (and hence is a prototype of the Tabernacle, of the Temple, of the Mother of God and of the Church), as well as by the perception of the city of Mtskheta-New Jerusalem as an image of paradise, of the Kingdom of Heaven. However, the most important sign of the presence of God in the holy city of the Georgians remains the chiton of Jesus Christ. It was brought there and then entered a tree that grew upon the grave of St Sydonia, which thereby became *Svetitskhoveli*, i.e. the “living”, “life-bearing column”, the main support of the Church, viewed therefore as the Temple, as the Ark of the Covenant, and as the House of the Lord.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the overview of the ideas regarding the New Jerusalem in Orthodox countries during the Middle Ages—in the Balkans, in Eastern Europe, and in the Caucasus—is based on the project of *translatio Hierosolymi* to Constantinople. In this way the image of the New Jerusalem and the New Constantinople (or Third Rome) were

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<sup>162</sup> This topic was first raised by K. Kekelidze, who published his study on the Jerusalem origin of the Georgian church in a separate booklet in Saint Petersburg in 1914. Here I quote from the reprint of this work dating from 1957. (“K voprosu ob ierusalimskom proizkhozhenii gruzinskoj tserkvi”, in: Kekelidze K., *Etudy iz istorii drevnegruzinskoj literatury*, t. IV, Tbilisi, 1957, p. 362). See also Chkhartishvili, “Mtskheta kak Novy Ierusalim: Ierotropija “Zhitija sv. Nino””, pp. 133–135.

<sup>163</sup> Chkhartishvili, “Mtskheta kak Novy Ierusalim: Ierotropija “Zhitija sv. Nino””, pp. 137–144.

simultaneously constructed in the new places. Typical for the project is that it is a means of building the image of the people as a New Israel and of the state as a God-chosen and God-protected organism in the visible world, one that should be an icon, an image of the Upper Jerusalem, i.e. of the Heavenly Kingdom. Several different variants of the construction of these images were presented—at least in brief. What they have in common is not only the topographical match with the earthly Jerusalem but in particular the attainment of the sanctity of the Divine presence. Inasmuch as this presence has concrete spatial parameters both in the Old Testament (the Tabernacle, the Temple, etc.) and in the New Testament (the Holy Land, the place of the Nativity and of the Incarnation, and especially of the Passion and sacrifice of the Saviour—Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre), its *translatio* can be achieved only by transferring the carriers of holiness to the new place. Such carriers were all relics of saints, containing part of the grace those saints possess, but especially the Dominical and Marian relics, which might be only contact relics. Among these should be specially mentioned the relics of the Passion of Christ, and foremost the Cross, because it had the greatest importance for the creation of the spatial icon of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and due to its prominent presence in the *Tale*. Another reason for our special interest in the cult of the Cross is the close connection of these objects of veneration with the cult of St Constantine and St Helena, and of saintly rulers in general.

In one way or another, the Cross was part of the hierotopical projects for the capital cities in Orthodox countries. In Russia, the project was centred on the Cross and its presence in Moscow.<sup>164</sup> A small-scale variant of it can be seen in the so-called *Shumaevski* Cross, and it was later developed on a greater scale in the New Jerusalem Monastery and, to some degree or another, throughout the whole capital city. This reproduction of the city of the Saviour's Passions is centred on the cross as the main instrument and symbol of the redeeming self-sacrifice of the Lord. In Georgia, the situation was slightly different, as the cross was not part of the reproduction of the Upper Jerusalem in the royal palace. Yet we find it in the three crosses placed by King Miriana, one of which was that of "Golgotha".<sup>165</sup> We

<sup>164</sup> S.L. Javorskaja, "Znachenija kresta v ierotopicheskom zamysle Novogo Ierusalima. Ot Konstantina Velikogo do tsarja Alekseja Mikhajlovicha", *Novye Ierusalimy. Ierotopia i ikonografija sakral'nykh prostranstv*, red. A.M. Lidov, Moscow, 2009, pp. 774–803.

<sup>165</sup> Chkhartishvili, "Mtskheta kak Novy Ierusalim: Ierotopija "Zhitija sv. Nino", pp. 134, 139, 140 ('the enemies' are defeated by St Nino owing to the sign of the cross), 143–144.

already mentioned the case of Serbia and Constantine's relics. Undoubtedly, the veneration of the Cross and of St Constantine and St Helena form an integral hagiological complex distinctly charged with political meaning. The main common points here are: the appearance of the Cross in the sky and Constantine's victory in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, which made of the vision of the cross a victorious labarum for the army; the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the discovery of the True Cross; the building of churches on the site of the Passion, and the translation of relics to the new capital Constantinople. This translation, especially that of the True Cross, actually amounted to the transmission of the whole context of the Salvation to the Byzantine capital, which thus became the centre of the Christian world and the destination for pilgrimage that would substitute for the Holy Land. The veneration of relics and the use of relics in liturgy or other ritual acts became an inseparable part of the definition of Empire and of the Orthodox state as a whole. The cross became a central component of the understanding of Orthodox Empire and its self-identification, while the related relics were the essential element of the legitimisation of the power of the *basileis*.<sup>166</sup> Thus, the duplication of Jerusalem was related to veneration of the Cross, which in turn was connected with the veneration of St Constantine, and all these together served as the main legitimisation of that power.

Coming back to the case of Bulgaria, we should note that the veneration of the St Constantine and his mother, as well as that of St Philothea, were part of the hagiological programme of St Patriarch Euthymius. He was thus probably continuing an old tradition reflected in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, where the idea of the Imperial City as a New Jerusalem was inseparable from St Constantine and the story of the translation of the Cross definitely ascribed to him, not to Heraclius and the events connected with the great losses suffered in the 7th century. The presence of the Cross there was the only, and obviously sufficient, argument for identifying Constantinople with the Holy City, and thereby the whole Empire with the Holy Land.

Thus the Empire, and subsequently the states of other Orthodox countries, became not simply a political organisation for the exercise of the power requisite for achieving a certain degree of organisation of society, but a sacral phenomenon directly related to God's work for human Salvation

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<sup>166</sup> A. Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and the relics of the True Cross in the Thirteenth century", pp. 205–215.

and to the eschatological meaning of the world's being. One of the signs of this was the spatial imitation of the Holy Land, which I have called a "geographical characteristic" of religious belonging, and whose natural and urban topography I have traced.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DIVINELY CHOSEN KING, HUMBLE TO GOD: TSAR IZOT, OR DAVIDIC ROYALTY

The *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* lists a number of rulers and other figures whose origin and meaning are obscure. Their names do not match any known rulers in Bulgarian history. So who were Tsar Izot, or King Ozia, or any of the other strange characters who appear in the tale? While scholars have generally attempted to link them to characters in the history of Bulgaria, such attempts strain logic and have been largely unconvincing. I would argue, instead, that these figures are biblical types, modelled on important biblical persons and embodying the ideas associated with those characters.

In this chapter, I will focus on the figure of Tsar Izot, and his embodiment, in my view, of the concept of Davidic royalty. The specific model of David is not overtly mentioned in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and so its presence there must be discovered and argued. Still, we have sufficient reason to discern in the text this particular understanding of royalty, usually associated with the name of King and Prophet David: he is the archetype of the God-chosen and anointed king, who is ruler and leader of the Chosen People,<sup>1</sup> and is likewise a prophet, a poet and singer known for his harp, a victorious military leader, and a man, and as such is a sinner (as evident in the case of Uriah's wife), but one who repents, thus setting an example not only for all earthly rulers, but for every human in general. Among all these characteristics, there are two aspects that I want to highlight especially: the God-chosenness of King David, who was singled out to accomplish the work of God, and his humility before the Almighty. This humility is one of the features characteristic of him, especially in comparison with King Saul, who lost the Lord's protection precisely because of his lack of submissiveness. King David is regarded in Christian political theology as the incarnation of

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<sup>1</sup> Of course, every king could be considered God-chosen, since, in one way or another, his power inevitably stems from the Lord. Here I try to trace the use of the image of the King and Prophet David, who was the first of the righteous God-chosen kings (given that the reign of King Saul ended tragically).

a ruler's virtues and an exemplary ruler, together with some other biblical personages and Emperor Constantine the Great. The figure of David as ruler was elaborated in oratorical prose, in liturgical texts, and in pictorial art. Indeed, this paradigm was universal in Mediaeval Christendom, and no significant differences are evident in its contents and functioning in Byzantium compared with Western Europe.

It should be stressed that, in the times of the Judges, the Hebrews' attitude to royalty and to monarchy in general was quite ambivalent, and at times we can discover a strongly negative shade in it. In the People of Israel, the theocratic idea was so strong that it practically stifled the monarchic one. They had no inherited rule (usually associated with monarchy), which never existed in a pure form in Israel, and there was not even much power concentrated in the hands of a God-chosen monarch. For it was considered that even limited power would put in question the direct power of God over His Chosen people, which, in turn, would provoke a feeling of rivalry in the Levites and priests. No less a figure than the Prophet Samuel—creator of the Kingdom of Israel—had bitter words about people who gather to ask for a king such as other nations have. More than that, according to Holy Scripture, God Himself says that, in asking for a king, the people reject Him and His power (1Samuel, 8:7). The story of the election of Saul as king also reveals God's complete power over the world and His People. Saul is described as a handsome man, but his choice is not at all based on any personal merit of his. It is the result of Divine intervention alone, and not due to the merit of the lad who went to seek his donkeys in the land of the tribe of Benjamin and outside its boundaries. None of Saul's relatives believed he was one of the prophets and had become king of Israel: God's choice was completely free and followed no human logic (1Samuel, ch. 8–9). It was the same later on, when David was chosen to be king, and again for future great rulers—in all cases the only thing that mattered was God's choice, protection, and blessing. Thus, we see the above-mentioned ambiguity in the attitude to monarchy in Holy Scripture: it is presented as a burden, as something that creates inequality and at times injustice, and a rejection of the Lord's power over Israel, yet simultaneously it is said to be the work and choice of God. The strengthening of the kingdom provoked opposition among some people, as revealed by the so-called "Deuteronomist" movement, which led to a general reform of the Israelite religion and produced several books of the Bible: the Book of Deuteronomy itself, at least partially the Book of Joshua, 1–2 Samuel, etc. This was a large and complex reform movement, which carried out the "demythification" and "spiritualisation" of the religion of the Hebrew people, purified it from its extremely elaborate ritualisation, and

put a greater moral and purely theological emphasis in it. Still, it was also a compromise with the temple group, often identified as the “monarchic” current, because it set the requirement for rigorous centring of the cult in Jerusalem, in the Temple, and for destruction of all other shrines.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the Deuteronomists were theocratically oriented rather than monarchic, but we cannot say they were essentially anti-royalist. On the contrary, the reform is associated chiefly with the name of King Hezekiah and his great-grandson, King Josiah; these two were hardly opponents of monarchy. Yet the Deuteronomists introduced certain changes in the texts of Scripture, which influenced the way King David’s image was presented.<sup>3</sup> Thus, two separate aspects of his image are constructed: the blessed and God-chosen King of the Chosen People, and the repentant sinner. These aspects are not necessarily contrary or mutually exclusive. To the first image is devoted a large part of the account of the rise of David as king and of his reign (2 Samuel, ch. 2–5), the story of the translation of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 Samuel, ch. 6), and especially the words of the Lord, transmitted through the prophet Nathan, regarding the messianic future of the seed of David (2 Samuel, ch. 7) which are confirmed in the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah, ch. 11).<sup>4</sup> The other aspect of King David’s image we find in 2 Samuel, in the part telling of how the king sinned with the wife of Uriah, and the story of Absalom (2 Samuel, ch. 11–24).<sup>5</sup> In any case, both aspects refer to a specific way of serving the will of God, and in both aspects of the image issues are resolved in a Judaic religious environment; but this environment influenced the perception of the Davidic image by Christianity, and consequently, the interpretation of the idea of royalty in terms of this image, in the Christian environment.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, regarding the Davidic model of royalty, we may define it primarily as “veterotestamentarian”, but also as “neotestamentarian” in its political-religious nature, and David became extremely important to

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<sup>2</sup> In this respect the classical authors and works are: G. von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, London, 1953; idem, *Deuteronomy; a Commentary*, London, 1966; M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, Sheffield, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Many studies have been devoted to this topic; for a more comprehensive and specially focused presentation, see: R.A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King. A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel*, Stockholm-Göteborg-Uppsala, 1964, 304 p.

<sup>4</sup> Carlson, *David, the Chosen King*, pp. 41–128.

<sup>5</sup> Carlson, *David, the Chosen King*, pp. 131–259.

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting the more intense propaganda use of the image of David during the reign of Basil I—see Nikolov, *Politicheskata misäl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 85–86.

Christianity. The king is a descendent of the tribe of Judah, but he is also the ancestor on both sides of the earthly parents of the Lord Jesus Christ; by his repentance he set an example not only of royal humility before God, but also of the repentance expected of every Christian;<sup>7</sup> his psalms are a book of the Old Testament, but they are also extremely important for Christians. Psalms are certainly the most important Old Testament text for Christian liturgy. All these historical circumstances, and many others, have made the king and prophet David a fundamental model ruler not only for the Christian Roman Empire but to an even greater degree for the successor kingdoms that replaced it in Western Europe, in the Caucasus, and along the whole Mediterranean.

Mediaeval Bulgaria is no exception in this respect, and in this chapter, I will try to trace the basic features of the Davidic type of royalty as far as they are reflected in the apocryphal work under discussion in this book. As I already noted, in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, there is no direct reference to the King and Prophet David, and so we shall have to deduce and demonstrate the presence of this model. I should say at the start that for a study such as this one, it is not particularly important whether the information contained in the text corresponds to what modern historiography recognises as historical truth. For us the text is interesting as a document regarding the identity of the state and state power, and this identity is always ideologically, not factually defined. In this sense, we will view the depiction of the historical path of Bulgarians as modelled on Holy Scripture and the story of the Chosen People, with its God-anointed king.

### *Tsar Izot and His Reign*

In discussing the Davidic type of royalty in the *Tale*, our attention is focused on the cited Tsar Izot. The account of him in the apocryphon is brief but substantial, and offers possibilities for various interpretations:

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<sup>7</sup> Regarding this idea in Bulgaria, see: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 177–179; M. Kuyumdzhieva, “Stseni po istorijata na tsar David v galerijata na tsārkvata ‘Rozhdestvo Christovo’ v Arbanasi”, in: *Peti dostoiit’. Sbornik v pamet na St. Kozhukharov*, Sofia, 2003, 2003, r. 535–552; Kuyumdzhieva, M. “*David Rex Penitent*: Some Notes on the Interpretation of King David in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art”, *The Biblical Models of Power and Law/ Les modèles bibliques du pouvoir et du droit (Actes du colloque international, Bucarest, New Europe College, Institute for Advanced Study, 28–29 janvier 2005)*, ed. Iv. Biliarsky, R.G. Păun, Frankfurt/M., 2008, r. 133–151.

И ПОМЪ ПАКЫ ПРЪЕМЪ ЦРЪТВО ВЛГАРЬСКОЕ СЪНЪ ИСПОРА ЦРНА · ЕМОУЕ ИЛИ ИЗОТЪ · И ТЪНЪ  
 ЦРЬ ПОГЪВЫ УЗТА ЦРНА У ВЪСТОКЪ СЪ ВОИ СВОИМИ · И ГОЛІАДА ФРГА ПОМОРСЕКАГО ·  
 И ВЪ ЛЪТАЕ ИЗОТА ЦРЪ ВЛГАРЬСКА · ВЪШЕ ГРАДИ ЧЪСТН · СЪЛО И РОДНЕ ИЗОТЪ ЦРЬ  
 · Б · УРОУЕ · ЕДИНО ЖЕ НАЗВА БОРН · А ДРЪГАГО СІМЕОНЪ , ЦРЬ ЖЕ ИЗОТЪ ЦРЪТВОВА ·  
 РЪК · И ГЪМЦЪ И , ВЪ ГРАДЪ РЕКОЛЪКЪ ПЛОСЦЪКЪ И СКОНЫЧА СЕ ·<sup>8</sup>

The writer explicitly indicated him as being the son of Tsar Ispor and, a little further on, as being the father of the tsars Boris and Symeon. This gives us the framework of his dynastic affiliation. If we presume that Tsar Ispor is identifiable with Khan Asparukh, or with some image based on the memory of him (and we have no reasons to reject this identification in its ideological, not historical-factual, aspect), it becomes clear that any attempt at historical critique of the source is doomed to fail. Usually the names “Boris” and “Symeon” are assumed to designate Khan Boris-Michael I and his son Tsar Symeon, who are presented here as brothers. These two rulers have no kinship or clan ties with Khan Asparukh, they do not descend from the clan of Dulo, and though they were Bulgars by origin, they were not related to the ruler who first brought his people south of the Danube. The name “Izot” is not known to have existed in Bulgaria, and this fact confronts the researcher with a new difficulty. The copyist obviously was not very knowledgeable about Bulgarian history and was not a contemporary of the cited rulers.

We can be sure that Izot is not a historical but an ideological personage. His character, as we find it in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, is certainly positive: he is a victorious ruler (which signifies that he is under God’s protection); the cities under his rule flourish and prosper. Here we find two of the basic paradigms, those of the good king and of the blessed kingdom. Who is this tsar, then? What message does his image in the apocryphon convey? What memory does it embody? To attempt to answer these questions, we must seek some Byzantine and biblical comparisons for his name.

The name “Izot” is not familiar, but in the texts we come several times across a similar name, Azot, in the forms Ἀζοτ or Ἀζώτειος / Ἀζώτος. It is cited in many places in the Slavic, respectively Greek, translation of the Old Testament. This is the name of a Philistine city, also known as Ashdod,<sup>9</sup> which plays a special role in the battles between the Children of

<sup>8</sup> See in this book, p. 16 (f. 401c, lines 6–16).

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the city of Ashdod see: M. Dothan, *Ashdod II–III: The Second and Third Seasons of Excavations. Atiqot 9–10* (English Series), Jerusalem, 1971; “Ashdod”, in: *The New Encyclopaedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, vol. I, ed. E. Stern, Jerusalem, 1993,

Israel and their sworn enemies (see Joshua, 11:22, 13:3, 15:46–47; Judges, 1:18; 1 Samuel 5:3, 6, 7, 6:17; II Chronicles, 26:6; Nehemiah, 4:7, 13:23, 24; Judith, 2:28; Isaiah 20:1; Jeremiah, 25:20; Amos, 1:8, 3:9; Zephaniah, 2:4; Zechariah, 9:6; 1 Maccabees, 4:15, 5:68, 9:15, 10:77, 78, 82, 84, 11:4, 14:34, 16:10). The citizens of Ashdod manage to capture the Ark of the Covenant and place it in the temple of Dagon (1 Samuel, ch. 5 ff.). That is why God punishes the Philistines and especially the inhabitants of Ashdod. In the Book of Amos, we read that God will destroy the inhabitants of Ashdod (Amos, 1:8). They are called proud and arrogant in the Book of Zechariah and, once again, they are threatened with destruction (Zechariah, 9:6). The city is punished for its sins: Judah Maccabee destroys its altars and burns the idols of Ashdod (1 Maccabees, 5:68); also, Jonathan Maccabee burns down the city and the temple of Dagon (1 Maccabees, 10:84).

We see that, on the basis of these data alone, it would be hard to draw any conclusions at all. What is certain, the city of Ashdod and its inhabitants are presented in a negative light, as alien and enemies to the Children of Israel. In this respect we cannot expect that Tsar Izot in *Tale of the prophet Isaiah*, son and heir to Tsar Ispor (who, as we shall see, is presented as the New Moses), would have some relation to the name of one of the main cities of hereditary foes of the Israelites.

I will not pursue this line of interpretation any further, and, abandoning the search for parallels with the name of the city of Ashdod, will undertake a new line of investigation.

We also encounter the name “Azotos/Azotios” in the Constantinopolitan *Patria*. There the personage with that name is described as the adversary of Constantine the Great, but the latter is victorious in Byzantium at the founding of the city of Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> Once again, it is hard for me to imagine that the heroic, good, and blessed Tsar Izot could be identified, even conditionally, with an opponent of the saintly emperor Constantine, a model Christian ruler who is likewise presented as a pious and righteous tsar in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The similarity of the names is coincidental and should not be overinterpreted in a way that would lead to fanciful results. We must not focus on this similarity alone and disregard the whole context of the literary work or the biblical books.

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pp. 93–101; S. Gitin, “The Philistines: Neighbors of the Canaanites, Phoenicians and Israelites”, in: *100 Years of American Archaeology in the Middle East*, ed. D.R. Clark and V.H. Matthews, Boston: American School of Oriental Research, 2004, pp. 57–85.

<sup>10</sup> G. Dargon, *Constantinople imaginaire. Etude sur le recueil des Patria*, Paris, 1984, pp. 45–48.

In the treatise *De thematibus* by the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, we find an interesting citation of a name that strongly reminds us of Tsar Izot's. The author presents the Greek transcription of the Armenian name Ashot as Ἀζῶτος (*Azot/Azotos*).<sup>11</sup> Written in this way, it becomes quite similar to "Izot". Constantine VII is telling here about the Armenian ruler of the late 9th century, Ashot II Yerkat.<sup>12</sup> Agostino Pertusi, publisher of the text, even explains the meaning of the name, which we find given both as Ἀζῶτος, and as Ἀζῆτος in the manuscripts. It might be derived, he says from the Armenian word "*azât*" meaning "noble".<sup>13</sup>

In another work, *De administrando imperio*, the same author Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus transliterates the same Armenian and Georgian name, Ashot, as Ἀσώτιος (*Asotios*).<sup>14</sup> The difference in transcription and in the supposed and possible pronunciation of the name is not insurmountable, and we may consider these two names to be one and the same, which enables us to attempt to identify the personage under consideration. The first who comes to mind in view of the narrative is Ashot the Curopalate, one of the early representatives of the Bagrationi dynasty, in whose time was fully elaborated the story that this family of rulers of both Georgia and Armenia were descended from the King and Prophet David. The name itself was very popular within this dynasty in the first centuries of its rule. This series of coincidences give us reason to discuss the possibility that the name might testify that the image of King David was used in the construction of a royal ideology in the Caucasus and the Balkans, especially as this is suggested by the account of Tsar Izot's victories in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. In order to argue this interpretation, I would first have to examine how the vanquished opponents of this pious and God-chosen ruler are presented in the *Tale*.

### *The Antagonists*

Even though the name of King David is not cited in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, we find there some clear traces of the Davidic paradigm of royalty, expressed especially by the characters of Tsar Izot's opponents. Here we will examine in detail two names of biblical origin: Goliath and Ozia.

<sup>11</sup> Costantino Porfirogenito, *De thematibus (introduzione-testo critico-commento)*, ed. A. Pertusi, (= *Studi e testi*, 160), Città del Vaticano, 1952, p. 75 7.

<sup>12</sup> Costantino Porfirogenito, *De thematibus*, pp. 144 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Costantino Porfirogenito, *De thematibus*, p. 146, note on 1.7.

<sup>14</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, transl. by R.J.H. Jenkins, Budapest, 1949, pp. 198 ff., and 204 ff.

*Goliath, the Sea Frank*

This person is mentioned in the section that tells of the accomplishments of Tsar Izot: “And this tsar [Izot] slew (... and) Goliath, the sea Frank.” Many attempts have been made to identify him, but they have always involved an excessively positivistic interpretation of the source. There are three indications through which we may try to reach some conclusion about the message underlying the cited name. Firstly, the passage refers to “Frank”. The term should be understood broadly as meaning a person connected with Western Europe and the Catholic world, not in the narrow sense of someone of Frank nationality or related to the Frankish state. More than enough speculation has already been made on this issue. The second indication lies in the mention of his being connected with the sea. This reference is rather strange, for the Bulgarians at that time stayed away from the wide open seas and had almost no connection with maritime peoples. I would like to examine in somewhat greater detail the name itself of this foe, vanquished and slain by Tsar Izot: “Goliath” refers us to the Old Testament and the story of the battle between young David and the Philistine champion.

The name of the gigantic Philistine Goliath is mentioned several times in Holy Scripture.<sup>15</sup> The major event related to him is his fight with David and his being slain by the future king of the People of Israel. He is presented in chapter 17 of the First Book of Samuel. Goliath was a Philistine from Gath (see also 2 Samuel 21:19, 1 Chronicles, 20:5) and he was evidently the mightiest warrior in the Philistine army, which had gathered against Israel and King Saul. Goliath is described as a remarkably big man—six cubits and a span in height. His armour and weapons are such that they alone are enough to instil fear in the opposing army. And this giant of a man challenged any Hebrew to single combat, with the result deciding the war. For forty days none of the sons of Israel was willing to fight him, and Goliath inveighed against Israel every day, morning and evening. David was on the scene of the battle by chance: he had to bring food to his brothers, who were in the army; he himself had not been called to battle, being too young. He heard the words of Goliath and was not afraid but came forth against the Philistine, and killed him with his sling, and then unsheathed Goliath's own sword and used it to cut his head off.

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<sup>15</sup> The name “Goliath” is derived from the Lydian “Alyattes”—see W.F. Albright, “Syria, the Philistines, and Phoenicia”, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3d edition, vol. II, part 2, Cambridge, 1975, p. 513.

This story is among the most popular ones in Holy Scripture, and the ways it has been interpreted are no less various than the story is famous. Here we will not go into the historical-factual attempts to identify Goliath and trace some of the latter's concrete features, nor recent medical assessments of his health which try to explain why David vanquished the Philistine champion so easily.<sup>16</sup> We will also not touch upon the problem concerning a certain Elhanan, son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite who is said to be the vanquisher of the giant in 2 Samuel (21:19) (a similar text is present in 1 Chronicles, 20:5).<sup>17</sup> I will only say that, even if the victory was ascribed to David only later, it was still early enough for his image to acquire a life of its own and to influence the Israelite, Christian, and Muslim cultures. What is important for us is precisely the image and the message it conveys, not the historical nature of the duel.

Goliath is certainly, on one hand, an image of the powerful enemy of God's Chosen People, on the other, an image of worldly power and might that does not rely on God but strives to achieve everything despite and even against God. His power, in terms of enormous height, muscles, weapons, is the first striking thing about him when Goliath is first presented in the text. His arms and armour serve to emphasise that he is a mighty warrior, terrifying, striking fear into the hearts of his opponents.<sup>18</sup> Yet the young, inexperienced David defeats him. This is not a victory of intelligence and skill over brute force, nor of ingenuity over power. David is deemed too young for war and has been left behind to tend his father's sheep, but he cannot bear to hear Goliath defy "*the armies of the living God*" (1 Samuel,

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<sup>16</sup> Such a medical explanation is that he had a restricted visual field (the so-called "tunnel vision"), because he suffered from acromegaly, and this—we are told—is why David was able to defeat him—see Vl. Berginer, "Neurological Aspects of the David-Goliath Battle: Restriction in the Giant's Visual Field", *Israel Medical Association Journal*, 2, 2000, pp. 725–727; Vl. Berginer, Ch. Cohen, "The Nature of Goliath's Visual Disorder and the Actual Role of His Personal Bodyguard (1 Sam. 17:7, 14)", *Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, vol. XLIII, 2006, pp. 27–44.

<sup>17</sup> These two contradictory passages in the Bible have been the subject of many studies and interpretations, aimed at resolving the contradiction. According to some authors, Elhanan and David are one and the same person, and the difference is that one is a given name and the other is a title (L.M. von Pákozdy, "Elhånån—der frühere Name Davids?", *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, t. 6, Berlin, 1956, S. 257–259), while according to others the difference is between a person's given name and his regnal name (A.M. Honeyman, "The Evidence of the Regnal Names among the Hebrews", *Journal of Biblical literature*, v. 67, pp. 13 ff.).

<sup>18</sup> *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, II, 1073; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, VII, p. 738. Regarding Goliath's weapons, see: Y. Yadin, "Goliath Javelin and the mēnôr 'ōrēgîm", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, vol. 87, London, 1955, pp. 58–69.

17:26, 36). The theological message of the story is that victory does not depend on the strength of the warrior but on God's will. This is the message of the biblical narrative. David, in going to fight the Philistine, says: "*The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*" (1Samuel, 17:37), and also: "*Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.*" (1Samuel 17:45–47). Here is the key to the story: this is the Lord's war and He cannot allow the Chosen People to be vanquished by their enemies.

The same message is presented even more explicitly in the legendary texts of *Aggadah*.<sup>19</sup> There Goliath is presented as an allegory of the arrogant profanation of God's name by the enemies of Israel. In *Midrash on the Psalms*, we read that when David saw how huge and well-armed Goliath was, he thought the latter to be invincible, but when he heard him blaspheming, David said to himself: "I know I will vanquish him, for he does not have the fear of God in him". This is the message of the biblical story, which we should look for likewise in the other texts mentioning the Philistine warrior. We find the same interpretation in the Quran, where it is said that the Hebrews did not believe they could defeat Goliath, but Allah gave David the courage to slay him (Surah 2:250–252). In the literature coming after the Quran, Jālūt, as Goliath is called, is one of the Philistine kings, descended from the Amalekites. He is mentioned as an "Ifriś", a name very close to Idrīs or Iblīs, as Satan is designated, which concretely shows the attitude towards this personage.<sup>20</sup>

This Philistine champion is model for one of the enemies defeated by Tsar Izot, Goliath, the sea Frank. Many attempts have been made to identify the latter with a concrete historical person. Early on, Konstantin Jireček related the name of Tsar Izot's adversary to some Bulgarian-Frank conflicts.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Midrash Tehillim—*The Midrash on the Psalms*, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959, 36:2.

<sup>20</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. VII, pp. 738–739.

<sup>21</sup> Jireček, "Khristijanskijat element", p. 263.

Veselin Beševliev asserts the name refers to Emperor Louis the Pious.<sup>22</sup> Other authors only note the connection with Franks and the existing opinions on the topic. Obviously, all these interpretations of the reference are quite positivistic and seek to find its historical context, testified to by some factual source. In my opinion, the approach should be different.

The reference in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not concretely to Goliath, the personage cited in Holy Scripture, nor to any concrete historical personage. The citing of the Philistines and their warrior is, again, ideological in meaning. This is an image, towards which the ideological attitude is similar, but ultimately the text is not focused on Goliath but on his opponent Tsar Izot. The overview presented above provides some reference points as to what kind of image is being constructed. Foremost, this is the image of the enemy of the Chosen People, of Israel. Thus, he should be an enemy of the New Israel as well. Secondly, being the foe of the people he is also the foe of God, “for the battle is the LORD’s” (1Samuel, 17:47). This means that we have here a testimony to the victory over the enemies of the Lord, who are also the enemies of God’s People. These enemies are those who rely on earthly power and might, rather than on God.

Thus, through the images of the adversaries of the good tsar, we see an ideological and religious model of that tsar himself: this is the Davidic type of royalty, a ruler modelled after the first righteous king (regardless of his sin with Uriah’s wife) after Saul perished for having disobeyed God’s will. I believe the main purpose of the mention of Goliath is to emphasise the Davidic image and model personified by Tsar Izot. This image achieves an additional result: in this way, not only is the kingdom perceived in Old Testament parameters, but the People as well. The anointed tsar, obedient to God and defendant of God’s will against the blasphemy of the uncircumcised, must surely be the ruler of God’s Chosen People. Thus, the mention of the Philistine warrior reflects not only the idea of the kingdom but also the identity of the people in that kingdom.

### *Ozia, the King of the East*

This is the name of another of Tsar Izot’s adversaries, defeated and slain by the latter: “This tsar [Izot] slew Ozia, the Tsar of the East, with his armies ...”.

This passage provides no information, apart from the specification that this was an Eastern ruler and that Tsar Izot slew him in war, not in single

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<sup>22</sup> Beševliev, “Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifn letopis ot XI vek”, p. 44.

combat. We do not have many options and should look in Holy Scripture for the identification of this Eastern Tsar Ozia; more precisely, we should consider the eponymous king of Judah, whose name also appears as Azariah.<sup>23</sup> The name Ozia (and some others in the Slavic translation of Holy Scripture, that sound similarly or are spelled similarly) is mentioned multiple times both in the Old (34 times),<sup>24</sup> and New Testament (twice).<sup>25</sup> The form Azariah occurs 56 times, but only in the Old Testament.<sup>26</sup> Of course, all these mentions are not of the same person, but of the same name. Several persons carry it, but the one that will interest us most here is Uzziah, king of Judah, son of King Amaziah and father of King Jotham (2 Samuel, ch. 15 and 2 Chronicles, ch. 26). What information can we derive from Holy Scripture? In 2 Kings 15:1–7, we read:

1 In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. 2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 3 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; 4 Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places. 5 And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land. 6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 7 So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

The Book of Chronicles, ch. 25, gives more details:

1 Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. 2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. 3 Sixteen years old *was* Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his

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<sup>23</sup> See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 20 (To-Wei), Detroit etc., pp. 450–451 together with the cited literature.

<sup>24</sup> It occurs twice in 2 Kings, twice in 1 Chronicles, eleven times in 2 Chronicles, once in Ezra, twice in Isaiah, and once each in the Books of Hosea, Amos, and Zechariah.

<sup>25</sup> It is cited twice in the Gospel according to Matthew (1:8, 9). This was the name of the King of Judea.

<sup>26</sup> In 2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, in 1–2 Chronicles, twice in Ezra 1, four times in Ezra 2, and once in Ezra 3, five times in Nehemiah, twice in Tobias, and once in Jeremiah, seven times in Daniel, and twice in 1 Maccabees.

father Amaziah did. 5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper. 6 And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. 7 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. 8 And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly. 9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry. 11 Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. 12 The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred. 13 And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings *to cast* stones. 15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. 16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men: 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land. 22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. 23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings; for they said, He *is* a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

To this, we should add some additional details provided in the writings of Flavius Josephus.<sup>27</sup> In *Jewish Antiquities* he indicates that Uzziah, son of Amaziah, inherited his father's throne and began to rule in Jerusalem over the two tribes in the 14th year of the reign of Jeroboam over Israel. His mother was from Jerusalem and was called Jecholiah.<sup>28</sup> He was a good, just, and magnanimous man. He waged wars and defeated the Philistines, having taken Gath and Jabneh by storm, and then vanquished the Arabs as well, who lived at the border with Egypt. He built a city on the Red Sea and placed a garrison there. Thus, he became the ruler of lands reaching to Egypt and undertook to strengthen the walls of Jerusalem, which had been neglected by the previous rulers; he built many towers and dug many channels. He took special care of the economy—of the cattle and plants—and he provided seeds. King Uzziah also reformed the army of Judah. He had 370,000 armed men, whom he divided into detachments of a thousand each, and gave to every man a sword, brazen bucklers and breastplates, as well as bows and slings. He ordered the construction of many siege machines and other war machines. Therefore, Flavius Josephus writes, when he accomplished all these good things, King Uzziah became proud and departed from the path of righteousness and the Law. One day at a great ceremony, he donned priestly garments and decided to make sacrifices to God at the Golden Altar. Azariah, the High Priest, and eighty other priests tried to guard him against this and told him that, according to the Law, not just anyone could sacrifice, but only the descendents of Aaron; this angered the king and he threatened to kill them. Then a strong earthquake came about, the Temple opened and a ray of sunlight fell upon the king's forehead; under the light, it became visible that he was stricken with leprosy. The priests saw this and told him to leave the city, as he was impure. And so he did, paying thus for his lawlessness. He lived outside the city as an ordinary citizen, and his son took over the throne after him. King Uzziah died at the age of sixty-eight, having reigned for fifty-two years. He was buried in his gardens, with no other graves nearby.

We see that the narrative of Flavius Josephus does not differ much from the biblical one, on which it is based. There were many attempts to reconstruct the story surrounding the sin of Uzziah. One thing at least is clear: there is an ambiguous attitude shown towards this king of Judah both in

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<sup>27</sup> Josephus with English translation of R. Marcus in Nine Volumes, vol. VI, *Jewish Antiquities*, Books IX–XI, London-Cambridge Mss., MCMLI, l. IX, 215–227, pp. 112–121.

<sup>28</sup> It also appears as Jechiliah and Jecoliah—Y<sup>e</sup>kolyāhû. These are variants of the same name, and there is no contradiction here.

the Bible and by the authors who have written about him. He was one of the longest reigning and most successful rulers of the southern kingdom. He reorganised the army and was a builder. He was a successful military commander and enlarged the kingdom's territories, so that they extended from the Mediterranean and Egypt in the west, to the desert in the east. His relations with the Northern Kingdom were not what they were under his father. He extended the territory of Judah southwards and reached the Red Sea, where he built a city. This is related to the special care this king took of commerce, an activity that required maintenance of roads and ensuring safety for travellers and goods on the roads. The king also took care of agriculture.<sup>29</sup>

The whole portrayal of a good and wise ruler clashes drastically with the subsequent negative evaluation of him. What kind of sin caused such a change? Julian Morgenstern has proposed a detailed study of the facts and tries to support some concrete specifications,<sup>30</sup> not all of which are very convincing. He compares the data from the Bible with those from Flavius Josephus and thereby specifies that the "Golden Altar" and the "Altar of Incense" are one and the same, and this was the altar situated right before the Holy of Holies. The event related to the burning of incense must have evidently happened at the feast of Yom Kippur, the only day in the year when the High Priest may enter the Holy of Holies and attain the presence of God. No exception could be made for anyone else, but according to the story of King Uzziah that has reached us, the king intended to be that exception.<sup>31</sup> Here I will not discuss the problems related to the earthquake that followed the violation of the law by the king—this is not directly relevant to our topic.<sup>32</sup> Some words should be said about the leprosy (according to some

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<sup>29</sup> J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies III. The Historical Antecedents of Amos", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. XV, Cincinnati, 1940, pp. 267–271; *II Kings. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* by M. Cogan, H. Tadmor, 1988, pp. 167, 168; *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. VI (si-z), ed. D.N. Freedman, New York-London-Toronto-Sidney-Auckland, 1992, pp. 777–778; P.C. Beentjes, "They Saw that His Forehead Was Leprous (2 Chr. 26:20). The Chronicler's Narrative on Uzziah's Leprosity", *Purity and Holiness. The Heritage of Leviticus*, ed. M.J.H.M. Poorthuis, J. Schwartz, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2000, pp. 62–63; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 20 (To-Wei), Detroit etc., pp. 450–451.

<sup>30</sup> J. Morgenstern, "Amos Studies II. The Sin of Uzziah, the Festival of Jerobeam and the Date of Amos", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. XII–XIII, Cincinnati, 1937–1938, pp. 1–20.

<sup>31</sup> Morgenstern, "The Sin of Uzziah", pp. 5–9.

<sup>32</sup> Julian Morgenstern discusses this issue in detail and bases on it his proposed dating of the event and the search for the initial story that served as the foundation for the stories that have come down to us—Morgenstern, "The Sin of Uzziah", pp. 12–18. At some points, the author's conclusions give the impression he is over-interpreting the source's text.

scholars, this was “psoriasis”) and what it signifies.<sup>33</sup> The disease certainly has a key role in creating the image that this king of Judah left after him. Uzziah is in fact the only leprous king mentioned in Holy Scripture. It seems he did have some such ailment, as confirmed by an archaeological monument, a slab with an Aramaic inscription, discovered by a Russian expedition in the 19th century. At first, the necessary attention was not paid to this find, and it was nearly lost, but it later reappeared when the archaeological storehouses of the Russian mission were being cleaned. The inscription is authentic, it tells us of the translation of the bones of King Uzziah, and warns not to open it.<sup>34</sup> This can be said to confirm the king was stricken, or was thought to be stricken, with leprosy. Uzziah evidently remained king nominally but was removed from actual power and isolated in a place that was euphemistically called “home of freedom”; after his death, he was buried as a leper outside the city, not in the royal tomb.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, according to the biblical text, and also according to Flavius Josephus, the otherwise powerful and good King Uzziah became proud and violated the law in attempting arrogantly to usurp the right of the Aaronic priesthood to enter the Holy of Holies on the feast of Yom Kippur. Because of this, he was punished with leprosy until the end of his life. However, we find that the historical interpretation of events gives us a picture that differs much from the one presented above and depicted by the Deuteronomist reformers. Julian Morgenstern reveals this other picture in detail.<sup>36</sup> In fact, at the time of King Uzziah, the holiday Yom Kippur had not yet been established, neither had the special rights of the Aaronic priesthood been instituted. All these were the later work of the Deuteronomists. So the king could not have violated the law and been punished for this by God. Moreover, at that time the burning of incense and entry into the Holy of Holies and God’s presence, was the prerogative and duty precisely of the king, who did this at the celebration of New Year.

So the question arises, what was Uzziah’s sin? Why was he punished? Morgenstern assumes, but without any particular grounds for this, that the king must have made some mistake or violated some oath, and the Deuteronomists devised the subsequent general explanation, which reflects

<sup>33</sup> Beentjes, “They saw that His Forehead was Leprous”, pp. 70–72.

<sup>34</sup> W.F. Albright, “The Discovery of an Aramaic Inscription Relating to King Uzziah”, *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, 44 (December, 1931), pp. 8–10.

<sup>35</sup> Albright, “The Discovery of an Aramaic Inscription ...”, p. 10; *II Kings. A New Translation ...*, p. 167; *The Anchor Bible*, p. 779; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 20, p. 450.

<sup>36</sup> Morgenstern, “The Sin of Uzziah”, 9–12, 15–18.

the standpoint of the Aaronic priesthood, only later. I do not intend to discuss this assumption. I do not believe the precise historical interpretation of events that took place eight centuries before Christ, is essential to our study. We have a text whose normative character is indubitable, as is its influence over world culture. In this sense, the image of King Uzziah, as perceived during the whole period following the subsequent reform of the Judaic religion, and during the Middle Ages, has been defined largely by his sin as described in Holy Scripture. He became filled with pride before the priesthood, disregarded the Aaronic priests and entered into conflict with them. This is the image of a king, a ruler, who has become so presumptuous as to want to assume directly the sacerdocy in violation of God's will.

This is how he appears in Christian theology as well. Uzziah is a king of Judah who has not been forgotten, at the very least because one of the remarkable and most influential fathers of the Church, St John Chrysostom, mentions him multiple times in his cycle of homilies, at least six of which are devoted to this king, and also mentions him in his commentary to the Book of Isaiah.<sup>37</sup> The connection between this king of Judah and the incorporeal celestial forces is indicated by Isaiah's vision (Isaiah, 6:1), which is dated to the year of Uzziah's death. In the second homily, St John Chrysostom asks, but without answering the question, why the prophet used this event to mark the date.<sup>38</sup> The third homily specifies that until the time he was punished, the king had done only good, and that his sin came from pride, the gravest sin of all.<sup>39</sup> This theme is further developed in the fifth homily,<sup>40</sup> which presents some interesting aspects relevant to the present study. Foremost, the Father of the Church discusses the comparison between the royalty and the priesthood, which is particularly significant in the case of King Uzziah's sin. According to St John Chrysostom, the priest is always higher than the king and than any earthly power; this becomes especially evident in the case of Uzziah, for the high priest is humble and warns the king not to violate the Law, in contrast with the arrogance and presumptuous pride of the king. This presumption receives a well-merited punishment, but God

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<sup>37</sup> J. Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias *In illud Vidi Dominum* PG LVI 97–142", *Studia patristica*, vol. XII, éd. E. Livingstone, Berlin, 1975, pp. 283–293.

<sup>38</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 107–112; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias (In illud vidi dominum)*, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par J. Dumortier, *Sources chrétiennes*, 277, Paris, 1981, pp. 82–103; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", pp. 284–285.

<sup>39</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 112–119; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias*, pp. 104–136; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", p. 285.

<sup>40</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 129–135; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias*, pp. 178–201; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", p. 285.

is merciful, so the king has his life spared and nominally keeps his throne, though losing the actual right to exercise power. The law requires that lepers be expelled from the camp or the city (Leviticus, 13:42 ff.); according to St John Chrysostom, Uzziah was not duly expelled and that is why the Hebrew people was deprived of the revelation of God's Word, and the Lord stopped speaking through the prophets. Prophecy returned to the Chosen People only after the death of the leprous king, and that is why the dating of Isaiah's vision with reference to this event is important. That is when God once again sent a message to His people.

The sixth and last homily is not particularly interesting for our topic.<sup>41</sup> The other two—first and fourth—form an independent group. They were not created at the same time as the other four. Their logical connection with the others is also of a different kind, but this is not a topic of our study.<sup>42</sup> The first homily about Uzziah<sup>43</sup> is on the theme of respect for the Church, and it prepares the topic of the fourth, which is the triumph of the Church over her persecutors.<sup>44</sup> Interesting themes here are the comparison between royalty and sacerdocy, and the eulogy of marriage, composed by this Father of the Church.

The material contained in the homilies has some similarities to St John Chrysostom's work on the prophet Isaiah. There we find several things worth noting. King Uzziah is presented as a ruler seized by pride that has let his successes go to his head. Therefore, he decides he can have anything, can violate the Law and add sacerdocy to his royalty. God punishes the king of Judah, though He does not take his life; the sin is great enough, so it may be expected that the people of Judah will also fulfil the Law and will depose their ruler, stricken with leprosy. However, the nation fails to revenge the defiled honour of the priesthood and thereby comes to share in the sin of Uzziah, so the Lord punishes the people by depriving them of prophetic word.<sup>45</sup> Hence, Isaiah's vision is dated by the year of the death of

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<sup>41</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 135–142; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias*, pp. 202–230; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", p. 285.

<sup>42</sup> Basically the article by J. Dumortier is devoted to him (see "Les homélies sur Ozias", pp. 283–293).

<sup>43</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 97–107; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias*, pp. 42–81; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", pp. 285–286.

<sup>44</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 119–129; Jean Chrysostome, *Les homélies sur Ozias*, pp. 137–177; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", p. 286.

<sup>45</sup> PG, vol. LVI, col. 68; Jean Chrysostome, *Commentaire sur Isaïe*. Introduction, texte critique et notes par J. Dumortier, *Sources chrétiennes*, 304, Paris, 1983, pp. 254–257; Dumortier, "Les homélies sur Ozias", p. 287.

King Uzziah—that was when the people were exempted from the punishment. All this serves as a basis for once again comparing the Church and worldly power.<sup>46</sup> These writings by St John Chrysostom certainly constructed a certain image of King Uzziah for Christian culture; the influence of this image was especially strong in the East, in the Empire and the countries of the Byzantine Commonwealth. It is a negative image; in addition to pride, another great sin that is part of its negative quality, is the arrogant appropriation of sacerdocy by the secular ruler. In a Christian milieu, this should be understood as an act of oppression on the Church. We should consider this when studying the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, where a ruler with an identical name is indicated as being an adversary of the “good ruler”.

The similarity of names of the two rulers—the biblical one and the one in our apocryphal work—should not be overlooked. It remains to be demonstrated, however, that the ruler in the apocryphal text is a reference to the biblical one. We have several reasons to claim he is, though the source itself does not contain concrete indications. Tsar Ozia is called an “Eastern tsar” in the text, and this is a reference to the Orient, not a means of distinguishing him from some “Western” ruler. Ozia is slain by Tsar Izot, i.e. he is the latter’s antagonist, and hence the attitude to this character partially coincides with the attitude towards Uzziah in the Bible, at least with the negative part of the presentation of the King of Judah, which is the predominant aspect (being the one that comes last, the negative part determines the general impression). We may thus say that we have here more evidence of the ideological connection between the biblical king of Judah and the one in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

One other such connection can be seen in the strong presence of the Prophet Isaiah, who is the narrator of the *Tale* but who also lived and was active in the time of King Uzziah. The latter ruler has a strong connection with the prophetic tradition of Isaiah, and it is in the year of his death that the prophet saw God sitting on a high throne, the train of His robe filling the whole temple (Isaiah, 6:1). If we relate this to what the prophet Amos says (Amos, 1:1), we will see that the reference is to the events surrounding the punishment of the king of Judah and the earthquake that befell his kingdom when he violated the Law.

We have two possible interpretations, both of which confirm that the character in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is a reference to the character of Uzziah, King of Judah. The latter, however, is present in the *Tale* not as a

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<sup>46</sup> Dumortier, “Les homélies sur Ozias”, pp. 288–289.

concrete historical personage but as an ideological paradigm. But a paradigm of what? On one hand, there is his pride, which is the underlying cause of his violation of the Law. There is violation of God's will by the highest-placed representative of the Chosen People, of the nation that was "chosen" precisely because it had concluded a Covenant with God to obey the Law. Hence, the violation of the Law is not an ordinary transgression of the norm but a religious offence that can put in doubt the God-chosenness of the Hebrew people. That is why the Lord responds immediately and strikes the guilty one, so that the guilt might not pass on to the whole people.

St John Chrysostom sees Uzziah's sin as consisting in pride and lack of humility, which lead him to attempt usurping the priesthood.<sup>47</sup> In fact, he displays an inability to view success as a gift from God, and not as a man's merit. Thus, intoxicated by his accomplishments, the king of Judah desired to be a priest. This certainly contrasts with the humility shown by the King and Prophet David when the Lord refused to allow him to build the Temple, and by his subsequent repentance in the case of Uria's wife. This is St John Chrysostom's general position in his homilies. These homilies are one of the possible paths by which the concept of Uzziah's sin of pride may have reached the author of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, or at least come into this part of the apocryphon. The homilies connected with King Uzziah were familiar in mediaeval Bulgaria, but, as far as I can judge by the preserved manuscripts, they were translated much later, in the 14th century, as part of the collection *Margarit*.<sup>48</sup> One of the disciples of St Theodosius of Tarnovgrade compiled this collection, as indicated in a marginal note with the name of Dionysius the Wondrous (*Divni*).<sup>49</sup> This means the translation of St John Chrysostom's homilies could not have influenced the text about Tsar Ozia in a Bulgarian milieu, for it appeared later than the *Tale*.<sup>50</sup> Of course,

<sup>47</sup> Dumortier, "Les homélie sur Ozias ...", p. 285.

<sup>48</sup> *Starobulgarska literatura. Entsiklopedichen rechnik*, p. 263.

<sup>49</sup> B. Hristova, D. Karadzhova, E. Uzunova, *Belezhki na bulgarskite knizhovnitsi X–XVIII vek, t. I, X–XV vek*, Sofia, 2003, No 140, pp. 83, 190–191; B. Angelov, "Tarnovskijat knizhovnik Dionisij Divnij", *Starobulgarska literatura*, 7, 1980, pp. 54–62.

<sup>50</sup> In discussing these issues, we should always bear in mind the fact that the work is compiled and it is hard to determine the date of each separate part; the parts date from various époques, according to the standpoint presented in this book. In this sense, I would like to note that a section of the book *Margarit* is included in the Kichevo manuscript, which is the only manuscript come down to us containing the text of *Tale*. (Turilov, "Kichevskij sbornik", p. 12, f. 319c–327a). Moreover, the excerpt is about St Hannah, the Prophet Samuel's mother. This raises the question whether there might have been some later influence, but this assumption should be taken as no more than a hypothesis.

there might have been a translation that was subsequently lost, but this assumption would be arbitrary and not based on concrete data.

The other possible way of seeking a Bulgarian origin of the text is to consider the biblical texts translated into Bulgarian, which were either of the kind meant for readings and containing the whole contents of the book, or else parts of the *Palaea* (*Palaea historica* and *Palaea interpretata*), or else again citations in liturgical texts. In any case, the story of King Uzziah, of his pride and sin, were part of the *Hexameron* by early tenth-century writer John the Exarch and were therefore known in Bulgaria, at least through this work.<sup>51</sup> However, there is more reason to seek the origin of the text outside Bulgaria. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not an original, purely Bulgarian work but a compilation based on Eastern (chiefly Old Testament) prophetic texts, and which has borrowed parts of various works created in the Middle East. That must have been where this part of the apocryphon came from: it was most probably created in the literature of the Middle Eastern or Caucasian peoples, and borrowed from there, to be cited in this Bulgarian work.

We may ask what are the results of this reference to Tsar Ozia as opponent to Tsar Izot. It is clear that the good tsar slew the guilty violate ruler. The question is, whether, in addition to this general assertion, we can find some hint that Izot is a protector of the Church against the arrogance of the other ruler, who has some underlying characteristic of an oppressor of the priesthood. The type of image that has been constructed of the slain ruler inclines us to precisely this conclusion. Tsar Izot's antagonist bears the name of the king who personifies pride and disregard for the priesthood, and this must signify that the personage on the opposite side is a humble and pious protector of the Church.<sup>52</sup>

The question then arises whether this interpretation is not in contradiction with the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Is this Tsar Izot a Christian at all? This is not an easy question to answer. On one hand, in the section preceding the one about Izot, we read that under Tsar Ispor the Bulgarians were still pagans, and it is specified that this was "earlier". This should mean

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<sup>51</sup> R. Aizetmüller, *Das Hexameron des Exarchen Johannes*, Bd. II, Graz, 1958, pp. 65–69 (43b–d); Joan Exarch, *Shestodnef*, transl. and comment. N. Kochev, Sofia, 1981, pp. 78–79.

<sup>52</sup> We may also ask ourselves whether in the reference to Tsar Ozia there might be some similarity to the epistle of Patriarch Photius to Khan Boris-Michael I, in which it is explicitly noted that divine service is something not characteristic of royal power and befitting only the sacerdoty—see Photii patriarchae Constantinopolitani *Epistulae et amphilochia*, ed. B. Laourdas et G. Westerink, vol. I, Lipsiae, 1983, p. 22<sup>658–659</sup>; Nikolov, *Politicheskata misal v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, p. 51.

that after Ispor and during the time of Izot, who succeeded him, they were no longer such. On the other hand, a few lines further below we are told that Tsar Izot's son, whose name was Boris, baptised the Bulgarians. I assume that this is part of the generally inconsistent and somewhat confusing structure of the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. We cannot definitely say that Izot was a Christian, but in any case he was a good and pious tsar, which rather suggests he was a Christian as well. The emphasis in this apocryphal work is not on the national or ethnic aspect, as some scholars have affirmed, but on the Christian one. Overall, we should agree with the position, stated earlier, that *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* presents a viewpoint quite close to the policy of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, we should not see any non-Christian or anti-Christian ideas being consciously conveyed by *Tale*.

Therefore, that Tsar Izot is one of the rulers presented as exemplary, and consequently he must be a righteous ruler, even though this is not clearly said in the text. I am convinced that this quality of his is also indicated through the images of his adversaries, one of whom is Tsar Ozia from the East. The latter conveys a very concrete ideological message: he is an unrighteous ruler who has violated the Law and God's will, and he is an arrogant oppressor of the Church as well. This conclusion is based on an examination of the prototype, the biblical Uzziah, king of Judah, under whose name the ruler in *Tale* is presented.

So we may claim with a large degree of conviction that the data about Ozia, just like the mention of Goliath, the sea Frank, provide evidence about the image of their opponent, Tsar Izot, son of Ispor. Thus, he appears before us as a ruler of the Davidic type, a vanquisher of the enemies of God and the enemies of the New Israel.

*The Davidic Paradigm of Power and Tsar Izot:  
The Bagrationi Dynasty and the Idea of  
the Davidic Royalty in the Caucasus*

We may say that the two defeated adversaries of Tsar Izot serve to confirm, at least judging by their names, that this tsar embodies the Davidic image of a righteous ruler. This fits in well with the general character of the text we are studying here, and with some of its characteristic features.

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<sup>53</sup> Beševliev, "Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifen letopis ot XI vek", p. 43.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* presents a Bulgarian identity based on the idea of a New Israel, something very typical for the Barbarian kingdoms to Rome in Western Europe. However, this phenomenon is present not only in the Europe, but also in the Eastern Mediterranean world, and below we will discuss such a case. The following discussion will give us a good opportunity to present a hypothesis as to the name of Tsar Izot, who, as was pointed out, is unknown in the factual history of the Bulgarian Middle Ages.

I would like to attempt to find a connection with the names cited in the works of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and discover their possible relation to the name of the character in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The scholarly *basileus* begins his story about the origin of the Iberian (i. e. Georgian) ruling dynasty, with the Prophet and King David; later comes the name of Ashot, translated into Greek as *Azotos* or *Azotios*, which, in this Hellenised form, comes especially close to the name of Tsar Izot. This name was very typical for the early representatives of the Bagrationi dynasty. We should also have in mind that in early mediaeval Georgia and Armenia, comparisons to the biblical kingdoms of the Chosen People were a quite widespread and developed practice. There was a long tradition of Hebrew presence in the Caucasus, and this certainly must have influenced the culture of Georgians and Armenians. The Hebrew presence underlies many cultural phenomena there, but we will focus only on the argumentation that grounds the royal power of the Bagrationi dynasty in terms of the image of King David, who is indicated as being the ancestor by blood of the dynasty. It took quite a long time to construct this idea, and it appears in various works. Especially notable among these is *History and Tale about Bagrationi*, by the 11th century author Sumbat Davitis-dze; this work is our basic source.<sup>54</sup> Of course, it should be stressed once again this author was not the creator of the traditional story, which had appeared long before him, but he did offer an elaborate and sufficiently early systematisation of the legend. The Bagrationi came to power as the leading dynasty in Georgia in the 9th century under Ashot the Curopalate, who ruled over the whole country; but even before that time, they were rulers of some small Caucasian principalities.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> I work with the Russian translation of the text: Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, Transl., introd. and notes M.D. Lordkipanidze, in: *Pamjatniki gruzinskoj istoričeskoj literatury*, t. III, Tbilisi, 1979.

<sup>55</sup> See the introduction to Sumbat's History by M. Lordkipanidze (Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, pp. 14 ff.).

Ashot is particularly interesting for us because, as mentioned above, his name could be the base to construct the name of Tsar Izot from the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. It was at this time that the composition of the history about the dynasty's origin from the King and Prophet David was fully completed, and the dynasty was thereby related to the earthly parents of Lord Jesus Christ. The history appeared simultaneously in the Armenian and Georgian milieu, and became a common historical and ideological *topos* for grounding the power of the Bagrationi family and its predominance over pretenders to the royal crown.<sup>56</sup>

The creation of this legendary history has a prehistory that might suggest some ideas about the practice of seeking a (semi)divine origin of the family in order to justify its claims to rule. An example of this is given in the text of *History of Armenia*, attributed to Sebeos, a 7th century author. He points out that Bagrationi's ancestor was Hayk, the eponymous ancestor of the Armenian people.<sup>57</sup> This equating of ruling family to a national ancestor was related mostly to the pre-Christian history and mythology of the people and Sebeos remained an isolated case; not long afterwards, this idea was abandoned in the environment of the new religion. Now the family's origin came to be legitimised by its biblical ties. Thus, Moses Horenatsi presented a new version, according to which the Bagrationi were descended from a noble Hebrew by the name of Shambat.<sup>58</sup> It is obvious that locating the roots of the dynasty in Israel was a means of creating a new identity. In this case, it was a link in the chain connecting the mythical ancestors to the biblical personages; we discover here a schema similar to that used in interpreting the *List of Name of the Bulgar Princes* as fitted within the framework of a Christian world chronicle.<sup>59</sup>

The story of the descent of the Bagrationi from King David is present in sources from before the time of Sumbat. The first mention of this descent is related to Armenian literature: it is found in the early 10th century work of John Draskhanakerttsi. In Georgian literature, the first mention of the story is in the *Vita of St Gregory of Khandzta* by St George Merchulé, a work written in the middle of the 10th century. In this text the saint addresses Ashot the Curopalate as "lord, called son of David, the prophet and God-anointed".<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, pp. 17–18.

<sup>57</sup> Sebeos, *Istorija Armenii*, ed. Patrakian, Sankt Peterburg, 1862, pp. 7, 10, 177 etc.

<sup>58</sup> *Istorija Armenii Mojsija Khorenskogo*, transl. I. Emin, Moscow, 1858, p. 61.

<sup>59</sup> Biliarsky, "Ot mifa k istorii ili Ot stepi k Izrailju", pp. 7–22. See also Excursus I in this book.

<sup>60</sup> Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, pp. 13–14.

This confirms the thesis that the legend was created in a common Armenian and Georgian environment, apparently in the 9th century.

Evidently, the legend became popular and famous enough to enter the treatise *De administrando imperio* by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. The emperor writes that the Georgians believed they were descendents of Uriah's wife, with whom King David sinned, and who had children by him. After this, their genealogical line led to the Holy Mother of God. They also believed their origin was in Jerusalem, but had left the city at the advice of an oracle and settled at the boundaries of Persia, where they still lived to this day (i.e. until the time of Constantine VII).<sup>61</sup> It is notable that the *basileus* does not cite the genealogical line that leads to Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, but the one leading to the Holy Virgin, which, in a sense contradicts the legend, as we know it from the text of Sumbat. Finally, the genealogy reaches the two brothers, David and Skandiates, who migrated to the Caucasus. I should draw attention to the emigration from Jerusalem: the fact that it came about in a miraculous way (with an oracle involved) is a sign of special protection by God. Ashot was one of the descendents of David, brother of Skandiates, who became curopalate and ruler of Iberia (Georgia).<sup>62</sup>

How could the *basileus* have learned about this legend? One possibility is that he had access to some Georgian written text or to some oral tradition.<sup>63</sup> But this seems somewhat doubtful. There is no known Greek translation of Sumbat's history, and the *basileus* almost certainly did not read Georgian or Armenian. However, it is noteworthy that there had always been a strong Caucasian presence in the Constantinopolitan court. Both the Georgians and the Armenians had high positions in the administration and the court offices, and people of these nationalities could have provided the Byzantine ruler with the most significant information contained in the story, which was very important for the political ideology of the two Caucasian countries.

We thus come to Sumbat's account about the history of the Bagrationi family; this is the main source, which influenced later Georgian mediaeval historiography and became part of the subsequent chronicles of the country. The account is brief and may be divided into two parts: from Adam to

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<sup>61</sup> Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, 1967, p. 204.

<sup>62</sup> Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, p. 204.

<sup>63</sup> E. Taqaishvili, "Georgian Chronology and the Beginning of the Bagratide rule in Georgia", *Georgica. A Journal of Georgian and Caucasian Studies*, v. I, no. 1, 1935, p. 18.

the arrival of the seven brothers in Georgia, and after that arrival. The second part is substantially different from the first: it presents some features of a historical narrative, and does not merely repeat the biblical text. We will deal mainly with the first part. It contains a genealogy from Adam to King David, followed by another genealogy starting from David and ending with Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary, and then from Cleopas, brother of Joseph, to a certain Solomon, whose seven sons left the Holy Land and went to Armenia.<sup>64</sup> The genealogy from Adam to King David practically represents a citation of this genealogy contained in the Gospel according to Luke (3:32 ff.), while the one from King David to Joseph, the earthly father of the Saviour, is borrowed from the Gospel according to Matthew (1:1–16). Sumbat introduces Cleopas, brother of Joseph, and Cleopas' descendents into the genealogy. It has been established that the source of this story is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>65</sup> The mention of Cleopas in this work strongly emphasises the Davidic idea about the family's origin. According to Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, the Romans searched hard for David's descendents (i.e. the royal descendents) in order to take them out of the Hebrew environment and thereby avoid new unrest that might be provoked by the biblical legitimation of the pretenders to the throne.<sup>66</sup> This blood tie to the kings of Judah became one of the reasons for the martyrdom of Symeon, son of Cleopas.<sup>67</sup> Here we should point out a difference compared with the text of *De administrando imperio*, in which Constantine VII emphasises the genealogy from King David to the Holy Virgin, not the one leading down to Joseph. Of course, both Mary and Joseph are descendents of David, but the stress on the line of the Mother of God represents a stronger insistence on the connection to Lord Jesus Christ, while the emphasis on the line to Joseph is connected primarily with the ancestry of King David.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>65</sup> Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, with an English translation of Kirsopp Lake, London-Cambridge (Mss.), MCMLIII, vol. I, p. 232 (III. xi–xii), pp. 272 ff. (III, xxxii ff.), p. 374 (IV. xxii); Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, p. 232: "... ἀνεψιόν, ὡς γέ φασι, γεγονότα τοῦ σωτήρος, τὸν γὰρ οὖν Κλεωπᾶν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ ὑπάρχειν Ἡγήσιππος ἱστορεῖ, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦτοις Οὐσπασιάνον μετὰ τὴν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἄλλοσιν πάντας τοὺς γένους Δαυίδ, ὡς μὴ περιλειφθεῖν τις παρὰ Ἰουδαίους τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς βασιλικῆς φυλῆς ἀναζητεῖσθαι προστάξαι ...".

<sup>67</sup> Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 272–274.

<sup>68</sup> A similar relation is to be found in the Ethiopian book Kebra Nagast (§70–71): Sir E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Queen of Sheba and her Only Son Menyelek* (I), Oxford-London, 1932, pp. 120–121; Kebra Nagast. *Die Herrlichkeit der Könige (Nach den Handschriften in Berlin, London, Oxford und Paris)*, herausg. Carl Bezold, München, 1905, p. 72; G. Colin, *La Gloire des rois (Kebra Nagast). Épopée nationale de l'Éthiopie*, Genève, 2002, p. 65.

Thus, we see that the addition of Cleopas and his descendents appears in a text borrowed from Holy Scripture. This is a New Testament Gospel text, but its purpose is to emphasise not the line leading to Christ but that leading to David, as is clearly declared both in the Armenian and Georgian traditions, which refer to the God-anointed king of Israel as the ancestor of the Bagrationi.<sup>69</sup>

The continuation of the story is quite interesting:<sup>70</sup> the seven sons of this person called Solomon went to Armenia, where a certain Rachael baptised them. Three of them remained there and their descendents later ruled the land, while the other four went to Georgia, where one of the brothers, named Guaram, was elected to be *eristavi* (i.e. ruler) and founded the dynasty of the Georgian Bagrationi. A little further on in the text, the Hebrew origin of the brothers is indicated again. Setting aside some unclear portions of the account, I would like to draw attention to a passage that might be viewed as a *topos* of Old Testament origin. We do not know the names of all seven sons of this Solomon, but we are told they were descended from King David. At the time when their Caucasian kingdom was founded, the position of patriarch-catholicos of Mtskheta was held by Samuel, who took part in the election of Guaram as ruler. Under this catholicos, the people of Tbilisi began building the Sioni cathedral, which is directly connected to the beginnings of the Kingdom. Half the cathedral was built by the people.<sup>71</sup> The reference to the “people” as builders of the temple may have a great significance, especially if viewed within the context of the creation of the Kingdom. In this way, not only is Bagrationi connected to the prophet King David, but his story somehow repeats the story of David’s anointment by the prophet Samuel, and it is accompanied by the story of the construction of the cathedral of Sioni, which is an image of the ecumenical Church. This was certainly a holy undertaking that therefore sanctified the Kingdom itself.<sup>72</sup> I would specially

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<sup>69</sup> M. Karbelashvili, “The Bagrationi Dynasty and Georgian Political Theology (materials for the investigation of Georgian political thought)”, *Philological researches. Transactions of the Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature*, (in Georgian), Vol. 20, Tbilisi, 1999, pp. 128–129; eadem, “The Georgian Political Theology as a Unique Phenomenon”, *International Symposium. Christianity: Past, Present, Future. October 11–17, 2000*, Tbilisi, Georgia. Short contents of papers, Edited by Mary Chkhartishvili and Lado Mirianashvili, Mematiane, Tbilisi, 2000, pp. 49–50.

<sup>70</sup> Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> Sumbat Davitis-dze, *Istorija i povestovanie o Bagrationakh*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>72</sup> The Ethiopian book Kebra Nagast sets the beginning of the kingdom and its sanctity as connected with the Ark of the Covenant, considered to be the abode of God—see: Iv. Biliarsky, “The Birth of the Empire by the Divine Wisdom and the Ecumenical Church (Some Observations on the Ethiopian Book of Kebra Nagast)”, pp. 23–43.

like to stress the name of the church—Sioni cathedral—which can still be seen and visited in Tbilisi. The name refers to the Mount Zion “Upper Room” (Marc, ch. 14, Luke ch. 22), the “mother of all Christian churches.”<sup>73</sup> The reference to the Church, viewed as a reflection of the Temple, but also as the Body of Christ, gives us ample possibilities to interpret these indications, which deserve to be the subject of a separate study. Here it should at least be noted that we find a similar topos centuries later in Bulgaria.<sup>74</sup> This *topos* is firmly rooted in the Old Testament, which provides prototypes for many New Testament themes related to the holiness of the state and state rule.

Thus, we find the Davidic paradigm of royal power present in the Caucasus as well, stated here more clearly and in greater detail. There is nothing strange about the fact that such parallel processes occurred. The image of King David from the Old Testament is one of the chief models for building the royal ideology in different Christian traditions. The similarity in the names of rulers is notable and deserves greater attention. Previously in this discussion we mentioned the phonetic transformations that the otherwise unknown name of Izot might have undergone: it became clear that “Ashot” in its Greek form *Azotos* or *Azotios*, is one such form. Hence, I will venture the hypothesis that the strange name “Izot” of the tsar in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* could be a changed form of the Georgian and Armenian “Ashot”. My first inclination would be to connect this with the name of Ashot the Curopalate himself, but I will refrain from doing so for two reasons. First, there are no concrete proofs confirming such identification; second, and more importantly, the name is used for an ideological purpose, not in a concrete historical sense. The name is not a reference to a concrete historical figure, a leader and ruler of his people, but to the embodiment of an idea, which did Bulgarian rulers probably assimilate as well. The idea is that of the biblical justifications of state power as based on God’s will, grace, choice, and anointment.

In order to try to ground the proposed hypothesis, I would first have to explain why this reference is present in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, why it is possible there, and then to trace the path of such ideas and knowledge about the Bagrationi dynasty from the Caucasus to Bulgaria.

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<sup>73</sup> A.N. Veselovskij, “Razyskanija v oblasti russkogo dukhovnogo stikha”, *Zapiski Imperatorskoj akademii nauk*, t. 40/1, Sankt Peterburg, 1882, pp. 5–6, 34–36; B. Todić, “Tema Sionskoj tserkvi v khramovoj dekoratsii XIII–XIV vv.”, *Ierusalim v russskoj kul’ture*, ed. A. Batalov, A. Lidov, Moscow, 1994, pp. 34–39.

<sup>74</sup> I have specially devoted an article to this problem: I. Biliarsky, “La demeure et la corne de l’Empire”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol. 69, fasc. I, 2003, pp. 179–197. See Excursus III in this book.

Of course, the Bulgarian rulers were far from being the first to use King David's image for the purpose of religious justification of their power, and to centre their political and state ideology on that image. The aim was to exalt a given ruler without deifying him, by using the only available biblical historical archetypes, the kings of Israel and Judah, and especially the king and prophet David. This means presenting a given ruler as either a blood descendent of David or a continuer of his work, i.e. the work of the righteous, God-anointed, and humble-to-God king of the Chosen People. I am not aware of any data showing the thesis was ever developed that Bulgarian rulers were David's descendents by blood. On the contrary, we have a sufficient amount of indications, though not systematic ones, of the attempt to relate local rulers to those of Old Testament times. We find such indications in the *List of the Bulgar Princes* and in other works. These ideas motivated the compiler of the apocryphon to create the image of the ruler by borrowing it from literary models that were meant to illustrate that the Bulgarian rulers continued the Davidic type of power, given by God. Thus, behind the name of Izot (and all characters like him) there is no underlying historical personage—neither a Bulgarian ruler, nor an Armenian or Georgian member of the Bagrationi dynasty (specifically, not Ashot the Curopalate either). This was a literary image borrowed from Armenia and/or Georgia (but that had passed through the Empire), and that, in the mind of the writer, was connected with Old Testament models and archetypes.

We may ask how all this, and especially the name of Ashot/Azotos, could have reached Bulgaria starting from the Caucasus. Of course, as in the case of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' text, we cannot retrace the exact path, but we could assert with conviction that this was not something impossible. Of course, the first possibility was that these ideas and images came from Armenian and Georgian literature to the Balkans in passing through the Empire. Both the Balkans and the Caucasus were part of the "Byzantine Commonwealth", or "Byzantine World", and there was intense exchange of ideas and texts within the framework of this world. The narrative about the Davidic origin of the Bagrationi entered Byzantine literature through the writings of Constantine VII, and the latter's works must have been at least partially known in Bulgaria, a country that was very well represented in them. During the 10th century, in the time of the tsars Symeon and Peter, this country was a melting pot of ideas and literary activity. Thus, the narrative about the Davidic origin of a remote dynasty could have influenced the political thought and imagery of the newly baptised country.

The other possibility is direct contact between Bulgaria and people from the Caucasus. In the Balkans, there was always a remarkable presence, in terms of culture and individuals, of representatives of the countries from beyond the Black Sea; the presence was often in Bulgarian territories, such as Philippoupolis or the Black Sea littoral. In most cases, these were Armenians but there were Georgians as well, especially in connection with the Bachkovo monastery. Hence, we may say that we may neither confirm nor exclude the occurrence of mutual contacts and exchange of ideas between these two points.

The last of the three presumed paths of exchange lies outside the territory of Bulgaria, in some of the contact points of exchange within the framework of Eastern Christianity. Constantinople was not the only such point, not the only centre of influence radiating towards neighbouring countries. Other such centres were Mount Athos and its monasteries, in which all Orthodox peoples were represented; also, Jerusalem and the Holy Land in general, the Sinai monastery of St Catherine, etc. The Armenian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Places has always been strong, even to this day. Georgians made a remarkable contribution to the spiritual life of Mount Athos through their monastery Iviron, and were present in Jerusalem and the Sinai monastery. So we may say there could have been a direct exchange between South Slavs and Caucasians, an exchange including transmission of ideas about power, an embodiment of which ideas could be the image of the Davidic Tsar Izot.

Still, it seems most probable to me that these ideas reached Bulgarian literature through Greek-language works of Byzantine literature.

There are other examples as well of the presence of the idea of Davidic royalty in mediaeval Bulgaria.<sup>75</sup> I do not think these need be discussed and presented in detail here, for this book is concretely focused on commenting *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. I will only note the direct mention of King David and his anointment by the prophet Samuel, which we find in the text of prayers forming the *Ordo* of the imperial coronation in Bulgaria; of course, these prayers were translations, and the original was from

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<sup>75</sup> Here it is worth noting the well-known indication in *Hexameron* by John the Exarch, who points to the Davidic example of how a dynasty's rule is legitimated—see Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, pp. 121–123, and the older literature cited there. It is also worth noting that David and Solomon were used as models with respect to the Bulgarian rulers Symeon and his son St Tsar Peter by the Byzantine author of “Oration on the Treaty with Bulgarians”—Iv. Dujčev, “On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 32 (1978), p. 276<sup>362</sup>-278<sup>378</sup>/277–279, 294; Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, pp. 237–238.

Constantinople.<sup>76</sup> Essentially, the Davidic and Solomonic model of ruler's institution was materialised to a great degree through the ritual of anointment with holy oil, which has a religious, but also a legal and political significance.<sup>77</sup>

I will also note some manifestations of the Davidic model of royalty in Bulgaria, relevant to our topic. The theme of the tsar-devotee of books has been developed in other studies,<sup>78</sup> and here I will restrict myself to noting that it involves a direct comparison of the ruler to the prophets and kings David and Solomon; it is not a reference to some sort of “cultural policy” of the Bulgarian ruler—in this case, of Tsar Symeon.<sup>79</sup> Similar interesting observations can be made in studying a laudatory comparison of the same tsar in a later Moldavian manuscript, from the 17th century:

Ѧ сѣ мнѡгѣи црѣе мѣдѣри бѣшѡ. ѡ книгѣи мнѡгѣи испѣсашѡ. соломѡн прѣвѣмѡ рѣ бѣ пѣче вѣсѣ члѣкѣ въ іерѡлѣмѣ живѡущи; испѣса бѡ. ѣгѣ. прѣитѣчи ѡ. ѣе. пѣсѣни. въ дѣни іѣкѣилѣ црѣ. ѡвѣи оубѡ ѡ кни. избрѣнни бѣшѡ. ѡвѣи ѡгѣню прѣдѣани бѣшѡ. ѡрѣжеже ерѣтиѣкѣ. сѣще сѣстѣви. ѣс кни. ѡ. ѣв бѣ потѡпи. и. ѣдѣ. пѡжѣ. ѡ іѣсѣдѣ. полвѣсѣвѣскѣи испѣса. ѣгѣ. кни. ѡ пѣоломѣ кѣзѣнигѡлюбѣвѣцѣ сѣбрѣ до. ѣи кѣнигѣи. ѡ сѣмѣн црѣ блѣгарѣкѣи испѣса мнѡгѣи книгѣи. ѡ іѣко дѣвѣдѣ црѣ на злѣтѣ. стрѡѣни. иѣрѣдѣше. ѡ книгѣи пѣче вѣсѣ любѣдѣше:—...<sup>80</sup>

The image of the book-loving tsar is strikingly obvious. Also plainly obvious is the comparison or the context in which the Bulgarian ruler is mentioned: he is compared to the two biblical prophets and kings, David and Solomon.

<sup>76</sup> See Iv. Biliarsky, “Le rite du couronnement”, p. 103<sub>15–19</sub>, p. 116<sub>15–19</sub>. I am currently working on a newer and fuller edition of the texts, for which more and previously unused manuscripts will be used, and a more comprehensive interpretation of the source will be made.

<sup>77</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, “Mitaberis in virum alium”, pp. 123–125.

<sup>78</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, M. Tsihranska, “Translatio imperii et les formules verbales et les images d'élégie de souverain (le cas de la Bulgarie médiévale)”, *Diritto @ storia*, No 8—2009, Memorie // XXIX—Roma—Terza—Roma, [http://www.dirittoestoria.it/8/Memorie/Roma\\_Terza\\_Roma/Biliarski-Tsihranska-Translatio-Imperii-elogio-souverain.htm](http://www.dirittoestoria.it/8/Memorie/Roma_Terza_Roma/Biliarski-Tsihranska-Translatio-Imperii-elogio-souverain.htm); Iv. Biliarsky, *Word and Power*, Brill, Leiden, 2011, pp. 242–245.

<sup>79</sup> It is a merit of Iv. Bozhilov (*Tsar Simeon Veliki*, pp. 54, 163–166) to have put a special emphasis on the topic of the use of the image of King and Prophet David for Tsar Symeon. The author devotes special attention to the cited text of the note from the Moldavian manuscript, and to its interpretation.

<sup>80</sup> A.I. Jatsimirskij, “Melkija zametki”, *Izvestija otdela russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj Akademii nauk*, t. II, 1897, pars 2, p. 359. This text by A.I. Jatsimirskij was reprinted by L. Miletich (“Tsar Simeon, spomenat v edin sredno-bulgarski rākopis”, *Bulgarski pregled*, VI, 7 (1898), p. 159), and since then by all later Bulgarian authors. Here I am publishing the text as A.I. Jatsimirskij has presented it. He states that this is a manuscript from the mid 17th century, containing sermons and orations for Lent Sundays; it belonged to the Scete of St Nicholas in the Russian province of Bessarabia, which the author visited in the summer of 1895.

Some new studies on this text were recently published, and among them is an article that should be specially mentioned, especially as it offers a new interpretation of the origin of the text.<sup>81</sup> What does David's quality of book-loving refer to? This biblical king is also a prophet and the writer of several books of the Old Testament, but it would not be completely accurate to call him the author of these books. The books of Holy Scripture are works of the prophets, but the latter are not authors of the texts, but attributed to Divine Revelation. The prophets are only the means by which God has decided to *reveal* his Word. Thus, in the comparison the Bulgarian ruler is lauded as a disseminator of God's word, not merely of the knowledge and literacy embodied in "books". That is why Gregory Presbyter calls Tsar Symeon a "book-devotee" in the heading of his translation or selection of Old Testament books, viewed as forerunners of Christ's Good Tidings.<sup>82</sup>

I would also like to draw attention to the indication in the same note that Tsar Symeon not only loved Holy Scripture but also played the golden strings like King David. Here the comparison with the biblical king is explicit and clear; but we should ask what the image of the king with the harp exactly signifies. Evidently, the image is taken from Holy Scripture, where it often appears. Playing the harp is mentioned in the biblical text in connection with the future King David in the chapter describing his anointment by the Prophet Samuel (1 Samuel, ch. 16). The harp is present throughout his story, both before and after he becomes ruler of Israel (see 1 Samuel 18:10, 19:9; and in several places in Book of Psalms). The harp is certainly linked to the image of King David, and it became one of the ruler's insignia; and in our times, a political emblem. As such, the harp figured in the coat of arms of the Georgian Queen Tamar, in the Bagrationi's coat of arms, and generally in Georgian national symbols. Similarly, the harp figures in the Irish national coat of arms, and indicates a particularly strong biblical tradition in Irish culture.

In connection with these observations and with the symbolism underlying this musical instrument, I would like to draw attention to the passage in the Second Book of Samuel (2 Samuel 6:16, 20–23; a similar text in 1 Chronicles, ch. 15), which tells of the translation of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It is indicated there that King Saul's daughter Michal watched from a window King David leaping, and dancing, and playing music before the procession, and she despised him for shamelessly uncovering himself

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<sup>81</sup> M.V. Rozhdestvenskaja, "Tsar' David, tsar Simeon i večij Bojan", *Preslavska knižhovna škola*, 2, 1997, pp. 65–73; Nikolov, *Političeskata mišal v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, p. 155.

<sup>82</sup> Hristova, Karadzžhova, Uzunova, *Beležhki*, II, pp. 117, 294–295, No 489.

before the people, not like a king but like a base fellow. He answers her that he is willing to play and dance before the Lord and that blessed is the Lord. Hence, we may draw the conclusion that playing and dancing is not commendable in persons of high rank and is not at all a “royal” activity, but that it befits even the king when done before the Lord. Thus, in a specific way, it becomes something “royal” in character.

This episode has been investigated in biblical studies and there are several interpretations of it.<sup>83</sup> Our task is not to assess these or to trace the presentation of the topic in Old Testament books. This passage has been said to be an interpolated text or has been thought to reveal some contradiction between veneration of the Lord and veneration of the Ark of the Covenant; the latter cult was not typical of Saul’s family, represented here by Michal.<sup>84</sup> The opinion has also been stated that the story contains an indication of some orgiastic Canaanite festivity, which should have ended in *hierogamy*, or holy marriage to the “lady at the window” (in this case, Michal); this did not happen, so it is written she was childless.<sup>85</sup> Undoubtedly, fertility is connected with royal ideology and with the ruler’s position as part of the cosmic order, especially when he mates with some chthonic goddess. Theoretically and in the perspective of the history of religions, hierogamy is ultimately a way of serving the deity in order to maintain the balance in nature and society, a balance that entirely depends on the deity’s will and on the ritual. It is quite possible there were remnants of such pagan beliefs among the Hebrews at various times in their history: this is evident in the prophets’ constantly rebuking the people for being lawless and deserting the faith. I accept the view of researchers of the text that such a remnant can possibly be seen in 2 Samuel, 6:16, 20–23, but I do not think this historical conclusion could influence the perception of this text of Holy Scripture in a Christian environment more than a thousand years after the time to which it refers and in which it was probably created. As an additional, though remote, proof I would like to indicate that Gregory of Tours mentions King David’s dance before the Ark of the Covenant as being an expression of his knowledge of the faith; this is said in the context of other examples of righteous faith in the Old Testament (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Solomon).<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Carlson, *David, the Chosen King*, pp. 91–96.

<sup>84</sup> Carlson, *David, the Chosen King*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>85</sup> J.R. Porter, “The Interpretation of 2 Samuel VI and Psalm CXXXII”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 5 (1954), pp. 161–173; G.W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion*, *Horae Soederblomianae* 5, Lund, 1963, pp. 34 ff.; Carlson, *David the Chosen King*, pp. 94–95.

<sup>86</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of Franks*, ed. O.M. Dalton, vol. II, Oxford, 1927, l. V. 31 (43), pp. 216–216.

In this sense, playing the harp can be viewed as part of the ruler's image, constructed over the centuries on the basis of the image of King David. We find such traits in various and faraway Christian cultures, and this is probably the origin of the harp symbol of the government and state of Ireland. If we approach the interpretation of the passage about Michal not in the historical but in the political-theological aspect, David's playing music was long seen as a royal service to the Lord. Tsar Symeon is described in a similar way in the cited note.

In *conclusion* we may say that the proposed identification of Tsar Izot from *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* fits in with the general interpretation of this apocryphal work as being closely connected with biblical texts. In this case, the path of the identification passes through the Caucasus as well. I will repeat that this is a hypothesis liable to discussion, and that the identification does not see Tsar Izot as one of the Bagrationi, but reflects a loan of ideas from the literature of the Caucasian peoples, a loan that ultimately points to Old Testament models.

The important conclusion for this study is that in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, chiefly through the character of Izot, we see a remnant of the ruler paradigm based on the image of the Old Testament King and Prophet David, an image that accords with the ruler ideal in the cultural environment of monotheistic religions. This ideal presents the ruler as God-chosen, humble to God, and leader of God's Chosen People.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE RENOVATOR KING: TSAR ISPOR AND THE MOSAIC ROYALTY: CONSTANTINE AND THE ROYALTY OF THE RULER-CONVERTER TO CHRISTIANITY

In this chapter, we will discuss the image of the ruler-renovator, one of the most characteristic images in Byzantine civilisation, depicted in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* as well.<sup>1</sup> This character is usually associated with St Emperor Constantine the Great, who converted the Empire to Christianity, and served as the model of a ruler-renovator to later emperors and kings. This emperor was a model for every righteous ruler in the Christian world, and certainly a universally recognised symbol of imperial identity and legitimacy.<sup>2</sup> It should also be said that in the construction of the renovator king's figure we find models derived both from the New and from Old Testaments. The model in the Gospel tradition is Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the New Adam, Renovator and Saviour of the world; in the Old Testament, it is the prophet Moses. The image of the renovator king is present in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and this source provides material for studying this model and provides some idea about how the identity and political ideology of the mediaeval Bulgarian state was built.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, the presence of Constantine in the text of the *Tale* is much obvious than that of Moses. Constantine is mentioned by name and reference is made to one of his most important achievements, the founding of the new

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<sup>1</sup> In my first note to the preceding chapter, I mentioned that every ruler is, in a sense, God-chosen. However, obviously not every ruler possesses the *personal quality* of renovator. This is true in Bulgarian history as well. The renovators are clear and well known. The idea of renovation was clearly elaborated by I. Bozhilov in his articles about *Renovatio Imperii*. This aspect will be present in this study as well, but I would like to put the stress elsewhere: the king is the *imago Christi* and in this sense he becomes an image of the Renovator of the world, the New Adam, the Saviour. So not every king is a *Renovator* in his personal capacity, but as an image of the Heavenly King, from Whom he has received his power, every ruler bears a part of the New Testament idea of *renovation*.

<sup>2</sup> P. Magdalino, "Introduction", in: *New Constantines*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the tsar as New Adam, though interpreted in a slightly different aspect, see: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, pp. 186–193.

capital, the New Rome. On the other hand, we have no explicit mention of Moses in the text. But we have reason to believe there is a trace of his presence in the character of Tsar Ispor. This legendary ruler is usually equated with Khan Asparukh and probably does indicate some remote memory of this khan, who brought his tribe from the Eurasian Steppe to the Balkans. A fitting place is given to Ispor in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*:

И ТЪС ПО НѢЪ ѠВРѢТѢ ННЪ ЦРЬ ВЪ ЗЕМЛИ БЛГГАРСТѢН ДѢТНЦЪ · ВЪ КРАВѢ НОШЕНЬ  
, Г · ЛѢ , ЕЖЕ НАРЕ СЕ ИМЕ ИЛИС ИСПОР ЦРЬ · ПРѢЕМЪ ЦРТВО БЛГГАРСКѢ.<sup>4</sup>

He is presented as “a child,<sup>5</sup> who was carried in a basket for three years”. That is all we know about his origins. His appearance in the world is not described as a “birth”; instead, the expression “was found” (ѠВРѢТѢ) is used. He is not the natural heir of the preceding Tsar Slav, and his rule is in no way derived from the legitimacy of Slav, of whom he is not a descendent nor bears any indicated relation to him. Therefore, the child Ispor appears in the world entrusted with a mission and becomes the creator-founder of cities and of a state. He figures in the text mainly with his building achievements: two of the most important cities of early mediaeval Bulgaria are associated with him (the central city Pliska and the ancient city of Dorostorum), as well as the great wall spanning from the Danube to the Black Sea.

The view has been set forth in Bulgarian scholarship that the waters on which the “child Ispor” floated in his basket were in fact a river.<sup>6</sup> Here I should note that the reading of the term as “basket” has been called into question; the expression in the original text is “ВЪ КРАВѢ” (= in a cow), not “ВЪ КРАБѢ” (= in a basket). We will not discuss this problem at length, for the topic has been fiercely debated in the past, at times in a very misleading way.<sup>7</sup> I will only say that I subscribe to the opinion of the majority of scholars who have not been tempted by fantastic interpretations of the text such as the birth of a man (or deity) by a cow, interpretations that attempt to link the text religious systems that clearly could not have been those of the

<sup>4</sup> See in this book p. 15 (f. 401b, lines 21–25). Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, p. 282; Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 281.

<sup>5</sup> In the Slavic text one finds the augmentative of the word “child”—“детище”.

<sup>6</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> I do not believe a single letter could change the meaning and message of the whole work. I prefer not to discuss here why the letter “r” (= v) figures in the text. This could be an error of the copyist, for “r” (= b) and “v” (= v) are written in a similar way. I realise this argument is not very strong but I do not think it contradicts the general understanding of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, whereas the other solution appears rather eccentric to me. About the other explanation, see: Georgiev, *Literatura na izostreni borbi*, p. 319; Mollov, *Mit-epos-istorija*, pp. 34–35.

mediaeval Bulgarian. In accepting the reading of the phrase as “in a basket”, I should nevertheless note that floating on a *river* is not directly cited in the text and can only be supposed. Yet the whole context of the story presents the destiny of the character as closely linked to the river Danube, a fact that could be considered indirect proof of the proposed interpretation. Thus, the legend of Tsar Ispor turns out to be related to the topos of the miraculous appearance of a child that will be a hero with a mission. In this respect, the story seems similar to narratives of the coming of Moses and of other classical or Near Eastern heroes.<sup>8</sup> I have devoted a special excursus in this book (see Excursus II), to these characters and to the “Mosaic paradigm” of the *floating child*. I refer the reader to that section, for understanding this *topos* will help us to also understand the Mosaic type of kingdom as related to the Constantinian type, which is the topic of the present part of the book.

#### *The Moses-Constantine Typology in the Mediaeval World*

In order to clarify the meaning of renovator king and demonstrate the presence of this character in Bulgaria, specifically in the source under consideration, it is necessary to present and examine the two veneration—for St. Constantine and for the prophet Moses—separately, though briefly and schematically. The cult of St Emperor Constantine the Great was one of the most influential imperial cults of Constantinople. The image of the first Christian emperor became the chief paradigm of a ruler in the Orthodox East and the basis for the construction of the royal ideology in the countries of the Byzantine Commonwealth. In this respect, Bulgaria once again strictly followed the Byzantine practice, in which the enrolment of emperors in the list of saints was something uncommon. An opposite example is Serbia, where we see a very different model of canonisation of rulers. While in mediaeval Bulgaria only St Tsar Peter was the object of veneration,<sup>9</sup> almost all Serbian tsars, kings or princes—and especially the Nemanide dynasty—were canonised as saints, became the object of veneration, and were given the basic literary attributes of a saint cult: vitae, liturgical services, eulogies,

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<sup>8</sup> Of course, the story is not limited in the Near East. The Anglo-Saxons even in the Christiania times believed that their kings were descended from Sceaf, who floated to shore in a boat or basket and grew up to become leader of the people. Sometimes, this narrative is linked to the Noah's Ark. I dedicated a special Excuse to this topic.

<sup>9</sup> Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvo*, pp. 19–20 (see also note 4 with studies on this problem; the question of the veneration of Khan Boris-Michael remains disputed and no definitive solution has been reached).

etc.<sup>10</sup> The inclusion of St Constantine in the list of saints is almost an exception in the Empire. The few *basileis* who have been enrolled in the calendar are commemorated as saints somewhat officially, and I am not aware of any popular cult at all to have arisen with respect to them. Things stand differently as concerns Constantine: part of the veneration for him has a purely popular basis and is even folkloric, among the Greeks as well as in Bulgaria and other Orthodox countries. His cult is connected with certain remnants of solar religious practices (e. g. firewalking of the *Anastenaria/Nestinari*), with saintly patronage of the family and matrimony, etc.<sup>11</sup> Simultaneously, the official ecclesiastical share of the veneration for this saint is an important element of the Constantinopolitan feasts in May, as well as of the state ideology centred on the idea of Renovation of the Empire, closely connected with the general Christian idea of renewal and Salvation. Constantine is an emperor equal to the apostles and baptiser of the Empire, and he is venerated precisely as such. He was the ruler who re-established the empire and gave it a new start. His role in bringing the Roman Empire to Christianity is typologically similar to that of the apostles: it lies in the dissemination of the faith and, ultimately, the Salvation of people. With respect to the topic of this study, it is particularly important that the veneration of St Constantine goes together with that of the Holy Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. The vision of the cross that Constantine had before decisive battles became a martial labarum of the Roman army and thus acquired a powerful symbolic meaning in the political sphere. It is important to emphasise that the adoration of the Cross is closely linked to the ruler ideology.<sup>12</sup> It is due, on

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<sup>10</sup> In the inclusion of the Serbian mediaeval rulers in the list of saints and the veneration of them, there is a noticeably Western, more exactly Hungarian, influence. Regarding the ruler's holiness in the Hungarian lands, see: G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Regarding nestinarstvo, see: I. Georgieva, "Nestinarstvoto v Bulgaria", *Vtori mezhdunaroden kongres po bulgaristika*, t. I, *Etnografija*, Sofia, 1987, pp. 39–51; Fol V., R. Nejкова, *Ogän i muzika*, Sofia, 2000. I would particularly direct attention to the special issue of the journal *Bulgarski folklor*, no. 4/2005, devoted to this problem field. Regarding SS. Constantine and Helena as patron saints of matrimony, see especially the interesting article by K.G. Pitsakis, "Un thème marginal du culte de Saint Constantin dans l'Eglise d'Orient: Saints Constantin et Hélène, protecteurs de la famille", in: *Diritto @ Storia*: <http://www.dirittoestoria.it/memorie2/Testi%20delle%20Comunicazioni/Pitsakis-marginal.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 85; F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, M.B. Pljukhanova, "Srednevekovaja simbolika vlasti: krest Konstantinov v bolgarskoj traditsii", *Literatura i istorija. Acta et commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis*, 78, 1987, pp. 132–148; F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, M.B. Pljukhanova, "Srednevekovaja simbolika vlasti v Slavia Orthodoxa", *Godishnik na Sofijskija universitet, Fakultet po slavjanski filologii*, vol. 86, part 2, 1993, pp. 95–164.

one hand, to the fact Constantine and his mother St Helena are credited with the finding and translation of the relics of the crucifixion. This is of essential importance for our study, as in the *Tale* the finding and bringing of the cross is of central importance, and it is precisely Constantine who performs it there. The other royal quality of the cult of the cross is its *tropaiophoric* (victorious) function: it brings victory to the warrior and ruler. This association stems from Constantine's vision, previous to the battle at the Milvian bridge, of a cross in the sky, together with the words "ἐν τούτῳ νικά", meaning "with this, win!".<sup>13</sup>

Thus, it can be said that the Cross became a symbol and incarnation of the new religious identity of the Christian Roman Empire and of its ruler, and remained such until the loss and fragmentation of the relic during the 13th century.<sup>14</sup> The direct connection and physical contact between the emperors and the Cross was of great ideological importance. Of course, it was based in particular on Constantine's vision and his subsequent victory over Maxentius, and on the discovery of the True Cross by St Helena, but it had other textual and material bases as well. Parts of the nails and of the Cross were built into the imperial insignia and thus became part of the essential characteristics and symbols of sovereignty. Moreover, the historian Socrates tells us in his *Historia ecclesiastica* that Constantine had part of the Holy Cross built into his own bronze statue that stood on the Porphyry Column in the forum of the new capital.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the statue became a double cult object, as a depiction of the emperor, and as containing part of the relics of the Passion of Christ. When we consider this fact in the context of the identification of the emperor with his image, it inevitably points to the identification of the ruler with the relic.<sup>16</sup> The Cross of God is central to

<sup>13</sup> *Vita Constantini*, ch. XXVIII; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, translated with introduction and commentary by A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, Oxford, 1999, pp. 80–81.

<sup>14</sup> Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and the relics of the True Cross in the Thirteenth century", pp. 205–215. In fact it should be pointed out that the cult of the True Cross and its discovery as connected with SS. Constantine and Helena is of a slightly later date and is testified to in the end of the 4th century (395AD) in *De obitu Theodosii* by St Ambrosius; before that time there were competing veneration of the Tree of the Passion. Regarding the veneration of the Cross and its connection with state power among the Orthodox Slavs, see: F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, M.B. Pljukhanova, "Srednevekovaja simbolika vlasti v Slavia Orthodoxa", pp. 95–164; F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, M.B. Pljukhanova, "Srednevekovaja simbolika vlasti: krest Konstantinov v bolgarskoj traditsii", pp. 132–148.

<sup>15</sup> Socrate de Constantinople, *Histoire ecclésiastique livre I*, texte grec de G.C. Hansen, trad. par Pierre Péruchon, S.J. et Pierre Maraval, Sources chrétiennes, No 477, Paris, 2004, I, I, 17, pp. 174–181; *Patrologia graeca*, vol. 67, Paris, 1864, col. 118–122.

<sup>16</sup> Eastmond, "Byzantine identity and the relics of the True Cross in the Thirteenth century", p. 207 (see also the quoted literature in the notes 11 and 12).

the concept and essence of the Christian Roman Empire, which is naturally associated with Constantine's name.

A considerable amount of literature is devoted to the veneration of the Baptiser of the Empire.<sup>17</sup> I will only draw attention to some of the more significant elements of this saintly emperor's cult. As I mentioned, his image was used to indicate, and became emblematic of, the *Renovation*. His work can be compared to that of the *Word of God*, of Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, who is also the New Adam, come to carry out the Renovation and Salvation of Humanity<sup>18</sup>. The ideas of *Renovatio Imperii*—as we find them in mediæval Bulgaria—are associated with the setting of a new beginning and with a beginning in general.<sup>19</sup> This is what Constantine did when he transferred the capital to the newly built city that he called “New Rome”, and also “New Jerusalem”. Thus, the rhythm of imperial renovation and rebirth is expressed through the image of the *New Constantine*, which appeared as early as the 5th century and passed through the age of the Heraclius dynasty and the iconoclastic emperors. In the time of the heirs of Heraclius, this paradigm was used particularly intensely and declaratively, which testifies to its important ideological function. Coincidentally or not, this was also the time of intensified use of another image important for royal ideology: that of the New David. Importantly, this happened in the time of the Persian and then of the Arab invasions, after which the Empire would never be the same again. Other changes occurred at this time as well: Greek definitively became the official language of the empire, and the ruler's title became “*basileus*”, identical with that of the biblical kings; the Christological disputes were concluded at this time, and the heartland of the empire was permanently transferred to Anatolia and the Balkans when the important centres in the Near East and North Africa were lost. This period was also the eve of the iconoclast crisis that shook the Eastern Christian world, and was closely linked with the growing influence of Old Testament ideas in Byzantine society.

The natural conclusion is that in the period of the 7th–11th century many *basileis* and usurpers adopted the name of *Constantine* in order to

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<sup>17</sup> Here are some more important works that could give some orientation for further research: P. Alexander, “The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes”, p. 353; A. Kazhdan, “‘Constantin imaginaire.’ Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great”, *Byzantion*, 57 (1987), pp. 196–250; *News Constantines, The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries*, ed. P. Magdalino, Variorum, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, “The Strength of Empire and Capital”, pp. 351–354.

<sup>19</sup> Bozhilov Iv., “Asenevtsi: Renovatio imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum”, pp. 131–215.

legitimate their power.<sup>20</sup> In fact, nearly all emperors bearing this name fall within this period, except for the very first and the very last (St Constantine the Great and Constantine XI Palaeologos), and Tiberius Constantine, who was of the 6th century. The use of the name expresses the idea of the Renovation-Restoration, discussed by Paul Alexander and Paul Magdalino, an idea that is one of the characteristic traits of the culture of the Eastern Roman Empire<sup>21</sup>. This was a renovation that had assumed the form of a return to the models of the past. Thus, the image of the Christian ruler is built upon the Divine archetype, just as the Celestial Kingdom is a model and prototype of the Christian Empire.

As I mentioned, the cult of St Constantine is directly related to the *Feast of the Birth (Renovation) of Constantinople*, celebrated on May 11 of the Great Church calendar as part of the series of feasts known as “the Constantinopolitan month of May”. Here I will not discuss in detail the importance of this feast for the political ideology of the Empire: the attitude toward the capital and the formation of the ideology of the capital in New Rome is very familiar and their importance is well recognised.<sup>22</sup> The *Queen of cities* on the shore of the Bosphorus is a City protected by God, it is the eye of the Christian Universe, a city under the special protection of the Mother of God, for it is at the centre of God’s plan for the Salvation of people. This ideology of the capital city passed over into mediaeval Bulgaria and underwent further development there. Historians have traced the trend for Bulgarian capital cities, above all Preslav and Tărnovgrade, to be conceived, built, perceived, and honoured, as replicas of Constantinople.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, while the city of the *basileis* was simultaneously the New Rome and the New Jerusalem, it is certain that the Bulgarians considered their capital to be a New Constantinople, a New Tsarigrade. Thus, we see that such a city is inseparable from the idea of a New Constantine, i.e. from the idea of renovation.

<sup>20</sup> P. Magdalino, “Introduction”, in: *New Constantines*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander, “The Strength of Empire and Capital”, p. 351; Magdalino in *New Constantines*, pp. 7–9.

<sup>22</sup> P.J. Alexander. “The Strength of the Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes”.—*Speculum*, 37 (1962), *passim*; E. Follieri. “La fondazione di Costantinopoli: riti pagani e cristiani”, *Roma, Costantinopoli, Mosca, Napoli*, 1973, *passim*; G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale, Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris, 1974 et idem, *Constantinople imaginaire. Etude sur le recueil des “Patria”*, Paris, 1984.

<sup>23</sup> V. Gjuzelev. “Die Residenzen Tărnovo, Bdin i Kaliakra und ihre höfische Kultur”, *Höfische Kultur in Südosteuropa*, Göttingen, 1994, *passim*; Polyvjannyj, “Mjastoto na Devin grad i negovata rolja”, pp. 81–85; V. Tapkova-Zaimova. “Tărnovo entre Jérusalem, Rome et Constantinople. L'idée d'une capitale”. *Roma fuori di Roma: istituzioni e immagini*, Roma, 1993, pp. 141–155.

In another study, I have examined in greater detail the presence of the feast of the Birth of Constantinople within the Bulgarian 10th century liturgical cycle for the month of May.<sup>24</sup> The interest shown then in the royal city was not coincidental; it was politically determined by the enormous ideological importance of the Byzantine capital. The Bulgarian rulers, starting with Tsar Symeon, who made great efforts to conquer the city, understood this importance.<sup>25</sup> This policy of theirs marks one of the characteristic particularities of the imperial idea in Bulgaria during the Middle Ages. The presence of the feast of Constantinople certainly testifies to this. Several tropars of the service for St Mocius from the Putiatin Menaeum, preserved in Bulgarian, indicate the strong interest in the cult of the Mother of God as City Protectress in Bulgaria. The emphasis on this particular aspect of the Marian cult is certainly connected with the political ideology of the Empire, which was reflected, copied and developed in mediaeval Bulgaria. Here we should also point out that every celebration of Constantinople was closely connected to the cult of St Constantine the Great. He was not only the baptiser of the Empire, but founder of the City that carried his name. The City, Empire, and Emperor became similar notions that designated and represented the *community*. The patronage over one of these was a patronage over the others as well, according to the principle of *pars pro toto*, so often used in the typological presentation of government power. Grace descends upon the Kingdom through divine presence effectuated by means of the Dominical relics and through the protector saints and intercessors; this explains the accumulating of relics in the capital. Without this grace, the Kingdom and its king could not exist. But through divine grace, the kingdom or empire can become an earthly reflection of the kingdom of heaven. We find that this grace of the Divine presence is vitally important for the king and his state, while the saint who prays to obtain it and through whom it comes, is not only a foundation and cause but also an image and meaning of royal power.

To summarise, we may say that Saint Constantine is certainly present in the religious sphere as an image and model of ruler and political leader.<sup>26</sup> He

<sup>24</sup> Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 26–29.

<sup>25</sup> In this connection, we could point out the particularly typical cases of Tsar Kaloyan and Tsar Michael III Shishman Asen—Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460)*. *Genealogija i prosopografija*, pp. 43–68 (I/3), 119–134 (I/26); *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, 1999, pp. 441 ff., 562 ff.

<sup>26</sup> As such, his image is certainly present in Bulgaria as well. There are sufficient proofs of this, but the most important one of all is the *Panegyric of SS Constantine and Helena* by Patriarch Euthymius of Tărnovgrade, in which the Baptiser is indicated as an exemplary ruler,

is foremost the founder and renovator of the Empire, and these two qualities of his were perceived as similar. From persecutor of the Christians the state turned into their most fervent protector, and Christians enjoyed constant and various support from the ruler. The Empire had become new, different, and in the eyes of mediaeval Christians, revived. The second paradigm of Constantine is that of military leader and victor: it is connected with the adoration of the Cross, the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, with the complete military history of the Empire in Late Antiquity. Both these dignities were due to the piety of the ruler and to divine protection over him in connection with the special mission with which he was charged. Thus, his image appeared as similar to that of Moses, prophet and leader of the Hebrews, who freed his people from slavery and led it to the Promised Land.

Eusebius of Caesarea, and following him the subsequent Christian tradition of panegyrics, present and laud Constantine by comparing him to the prophet Moses. The Mosaic paradigm of the ruler's image follows the same model of Renovation, of which this prophet is emblematic in the Hebrew religion. I need not demonstrate the importance of Moses and his work for the history of the Covenant between the Chosen People and God. He was certainly a man with a mission, through whom Israel received Revelation and the Law. That is why his appearance in history can be viewed in this context: it is a result of the direct operation of God's will in support of the Chosen People. Actually, the story of child found in a basket in the reeds on the shore of the Nile means to show that God protects the hero He has assigned to save His people, to free them from bondage in Egypt, and give them a Law and a strong, true faith. This is essential in the perception of the prophet Moses as this type of charismatic leader, even as a "royal" figure. Such a perception is consistent and inevitable in a firmly established and clearly defined theocracy, such as that of the society of the People of Israel in Old Testament. This is also one of the basic themes in the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>27</sup>

As Gerhard von Rad has accurately pointed out, according to theological interpretations Moses is the person who united in himself nearly all possible notions of state and ecclesiastic authority for the Chosen People:

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a model of royalty: Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 145–146; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, Sofia, 1990, p. 147. These assertions are partially put in doubt by A. Nikolov as concerns Tsar Symeon, see: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 229–230.

<sup>27</sup> A. Cameron, "Eusebius of Caesarea and the Re-Thinking of History", in: *Tria Corda: scritte in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano*, ed. E. Gabba, Como, 1983, p. 85; Hollerich, "Moses and Constantine in Eusebius", p. 81.

he was at once a priest and national leader, a prophet, a legislator, and a military leader.<sup>28</sup> It could be said that Eusebius of Caesarea was the first author to portray Moses with the characteristics of a political leader and as a royal paradigm for the Christian environment, and he did this in order to glorify Constantine. This approach was probably a response to the writings of various Roman pagan authors attacking the image of the Lawgiver of the Hebrew people, writings dating from the time of the great persecutions of Christians during the reign of Diocletian.<sup>29</sup> It should be noted, however, that this “royal” image of the prophet Moses was not first created by the Christians. They inherited it from the Hellenistic Jewish authors and philosophers. Among these latter, we should point out foremost Philo of Alexandria, Artapanus (who lived in the 2nd century BC) and Flavius Josephus. There are several characteristics of this image of Moses that I would like to discuss separately.

Coming next in importance to the perception of the prophet as religious leader is that of Moses as *‘king’ and leader of his people*, who liberated them from slavery in Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. The comparison with Constantine is obvious, but these ideas did not originate from Eusebius but once more from pre-Christian Jewish Hellenistic literature. Such is the main theme in the second part of *De vita Mosis* by Philo of Alexandria, who from the very start calls Moses “king and philosopher”, and considers this prophet in the framework of the Platonian idea of the ideal state and its governance.<sup>30</sup> Philo depicted the leader of the people not only as a philosopher-king; he additionally associated this position with Moses’ quality of legislator, high priest, and prophet. These four characteristics, according to Philo, define the image of Moses and his tasks, set to him by God. Flavius Josephus also emphasised the leadership qualities of Moses, who not only led the people out of Egypt but also conducted them through the desert, providing them—with God’s assistance—with food and all necessities; though he had assumed a tremendous responsibility, he did not turn into a despotic tyrant but preserved his humility and pious way of life.<sup>31</sup> We

<sup>28</sup> G. von Rad, *Moses*, London, 1960, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Regarding this issue, I would refer the reader to a book especially devoted to it: J. Gager, *Moses in the Greco-Roman Paganism*, Nashville, 1972, 176 p.; T.D. Barnes, “Porphyry *Against Christians*. Date and Attribution of Fragments”, *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s., 24 (1973), p. 437; Hollerich, “Moses and Constantine in Eusebius”, p. 85.

<sup>30</sup> Philo, *De vita Mosis*—Philo in Nine Volumes, with an English translation by F.H. Colson, M.A., vol. VI, London-Cambridge MA, MCMXXXV, l. II. 2 ff., p. 450.

<sup>31</sup> Josephus, *The Life. Against Apion*, (= In eight volumes, vol. I), with English translation by H. St. J. Thackeray, M.A., London-New York, MCMXXVI, l. II. 156–160, pp. 354–356.

find an echo of this “royal” idea about Moses in St. John Chrysostom as well, who points out that Moses cared not for a high position in Egypt but preferred his own people.<sup>32</sup>

Related to this characteristic is the image of Moses as *legislator*, a characteristic that is closest of all to his image in the Old Testament. Philo of Alexandria sees in lawgiving one of the essential characteristics of this prophet’s work.<sup>33</sup> Philo associated him with royal power and said in words that were especially popular in Antiquity, that the king was *embodied law* (ἔμψυχος νόμος), while the law was a *just king* (βασιλεὺς δίκαιος). Thus, the theme of Moses’ “royal power” and the theme of his legislation are united in their meaning on the basis of ancient philosophy.<sup>34</sup> In general, Moses’ lawgiving and the expressing of God’s will through him is a basic theme in Philo’s *De Vita Mosi*.<sup>35</sup> This topic is also thoroughly elaborated by Flavius Josephus. In his apologetic work *Contra Apionem* Josephus defends the Hebrews, their faith, and the content of the biblical narratives, against various Egyptian Hellenistic authors who had attacked with particularly strong ridicule what was written in the Book of Exodus and the history of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt. Josephus comments on the calumny that Israel was chased out of Egypt due to some infectious disease (probably leprosy) or that Moses was actually an Egyptian (and even a Gentile high priest), a political leader and religious rebel, not a Hebrew prophet. The view had also been expressed that the Hebrew people were barbarians who had not contributed to world civilisation of that time. Josephus devotes part of his arguments against this view to the contributions of the Chosen People, especially in the field of lawmaking. According to him, Moses was the most ancient of his nation’s lawgivers, and, compared with him, the Greek lawgivers Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus, seemed born but yesterday.<sup>36</sup> In this text, we see how the ancient Hebrew author ascribes to the prophet the features of a Hellenic lawmaker, but with priority over the lawmakers of the Greeks. Thus, *lawmaking* is found to be a genuine Hebrew contribution to civilisation: while the Gentiles were ruled through royal orders (i.e. at the arbitrary will of an earthly lord) or through unwritten tradition, the Hebrews possessed a Law by the will of God.<sup>37</sup> Moses was no charlatan but a great

<sup>32</sup> Patrologia graeca, t. LXI, col. 15. About this text in the Bulgarian milieu in: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovekovka Bulgaria*, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> Philo, *De vita Mosi*, l. II. 2–3, pp. 450 ff.

<sup>34</sup> Philo, *De vita Mosi*, l. II. 4, p. 452.

<sup>35</sup> Philo, *De vita Mosi*, l. II. 12 ff., pp. 456 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, l. II. 154, pp. 352–354.

<sup>37</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, l. II. 155, p. 354.

legislator, of the kind that the Greeks had in the person of King Minos and the later creators of law. Some of these lawmakers had believed and asserted their laws were the work of Zeus, or of Apollo and his oracle in Delphi; they had hoped by this claim to make their laws more easily accepted. Flavius Josephus also asks in his work who the most successful lawgiver was, who had reflected God's will in rules, and adds that the question can only be answered by examining the texts as such.<sup>38</sup> This is what he does in his apologetic work. One could say that the very act of comparing Moses with the Hellenic kings and lawgivers represents, in the eyes of an Israelite, a sort of retreat from the idea of chosenness and exclusiveness. The prophet and lawgiver of the Chosen People should normally not be compared—even favourably for him—with representatives of the Gentiles. Even more bewildering is the reference to pagan divinities as alleged sources of law created in Antiquity. The thought of comparing God's will with that of pagans would have been intolerable to Jews of an earlier time; but the Hebrews of the Hellenistic period strove to integrate themselves into the cultural environment of the Hellenistic Mediterranean world. In any case, this is an example of Moses' image used for political purposes, a use that would later be made in the Christian environment. Together with this, we should note that the object of our study, the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, does not afford much substance for the topic of "lawmaking", which, regrettably, is left out from the chief themes of the work.

Contrary to this, the third theme—that of Moses as *army commander and military leader* of his people—is particularly interesting for our study, because it provides the main direction for comparison between Moses and St Constantine. This image of the prophet is based foremost on the text of the Bible, where we find many examples of his participation in battles until the very end of his life. Here I would specially draw attention to legendary information, quoted by Artapanus and Flavius Josephus, that Moses took part as commander of Pharaoh's army in the war between Egypt and Ethiopia. The older of these references occurs in Artapanus,<sup>39</sup> but Flavius Josephus repeats this story in the *Jewish Antiquities*, where he explains that this was a way for the proud Egyptians to be humiliated. According to Josephus,<sup>40</sup> the Ethiopians attacked and vanquished Egypt

<sup>38</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, I. II. 161, pp. 356–358.

<sup>39</sup> M. Hollerich, "The Comparison of Moses and Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea's Life of Constantine," *Studia Patristica*, 19 (1989), p. 82.

<sup>40</sup> Josephus in Eight volumes, vol. IV, *Jewish Antiquities, books I–IV*, London-New York, MCMXXX, I. II, 237–253, pp. 268–274.

and were on the verge of conquering it. Then, after consulting an oracle, Pharaoh allied himself with the Hebrews and asked his daughter (who had adopted the prophet) to allow Moses to be their common commander in chief. She gave her approval and the prophet also agreed; he carried out a brilliant campaign in which he not only reached the capital of Ethiopia but even took the Ethiopian king's daughter as wife. This is certainly a legend, but such traditions established the image of Moses as military commander. This image was built mainly on biblical texts presenting the victories of the Chosen People over their enemies on the way to the Promised Land, the most important of these triumphs being the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea and the battle with the Amalekites in the desert.

Especially important in both these battles is Moses' rod, which was his weapon, used to obtain victory by the power of God. Tradition held that it was carried to Constantinople and this relic became a fundamental element of the veneration of the prophet in the imperial capital. Here we come to an exceptionally important common feature between the veneration for the prophet Moses as commander and that of Constantine: the material weapons of victory, the Rod and the Cross. The rod of Moses is present as a means for punishing the Egyptians in most stories about the plagues inflicted on them by God in order to make them let Israel go, but the most important events of Chosen People's triumph were these two battles. The first was the victory over Pharaoh and his army, who drowned in the sea that had parted after Moses pointed his Rod, and then returned again by the same means, covered the pursuing Egyptians (Exodus, ch. 14). Similarly, in the battle against Amalek, Israel was victorious only after Moses, holding the Rod, lifted his hands towards God (Exodus, ch. 17).

Basically, the rod of Moses (and that of Aaron) is a prototype of the cross in its Christian understanding, and we find indicated in certain passages a direct relation between the two objects. Certain deuterocanonical books presented the Rod as a prototype of the Cross and revealed a very strong relation between them. For instance, in the Ethiopian book *Kebrā Nagast* the Rod is said to be a symbol of Salvation, a forerunner and prototype of the Mother of God (it is said there that the Rod "*is Maria*") and of the Cross, through which mankind is saved from Original Sin.<sup>41</sup> In general, apocryphal

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<sup>41</sup> *Kebrā Nagast*, ed. C. Bezold, S. 107–110; Wallis Budge sir E.A., *The Queen of Sheba and her Only Son Menyelek*, § 98, pp. 177–182; G. Colin, *La gloire des rois (Kebrā Nagast). Épopée nationale de l'Éthiopie*, (= *Cahiers d'orientalisme*, XXIII), Genève, 2002, § 98, pp. 88–91.

works illustrate the theme of the Cross.<sup>42</sup> In any case, both the Cross and the Rod were signs of victory and weapons with which the faithful people vanquished the enemy. A cross appeared on the night before the battle of the Milvian Bridge and the victory over Maxentius, accompanied by words whose meaning was clear: “By this you shall win”, after which it becomes a tropaiophoric labarum for the Roman army. Yet it should be emphasised that Cross and Rod are only tools in the hands of a righteous ruler, and the power of victory comes from God alone. In all cases, the cult of the Holy Cross and the relic of Moses’ Rod are two of the elements that assimilate the veneration of the Hebrew prophet and that of the first Christian emperor.

The view of Moses as political leader of his people can be summarised in the words of Flavius Josephus that Moses became best in everything he undertook—as a commander, as a wise counsellor, and as a true protector of his people.<sup>43</sup> Of course, we should keep in mind that the history of the Hebrew people in the Old Testament affords much better material for political images for justifying a ruler’s power than the New Testament. The very nature of political action involves the risk of committing deeds that would be incompatible with the very clear and pure ethical message of the Gospel. In the Old Testament, we find many examples that appear strange from a Christian perspective: shedding of blood, merciless treatment of enemies, etc. The intervention of God in the world—through force and bloodshed—and His assistance for His Chosen People, are direct, powerful, and occur regularly in the pre-Christian biblical texts. The eschatology of the Old Testament is quite strongly connected with *this world* and punishment is meted here, not in the beyond. In fact, in the Old Testament we can find all the images and ideas needed for justifying and legitimating the power of the king: the blessed and anointed monarchy; holy war; state support for the clergy. We find other institutions as well, of the sort that was necessary for newly formed Christian states. This, together with the passionate striving for holiness in Late Antiquity, was the main reason for Old Testament stories to become the foundation of the political doctrine in the time of transition to the Middle Ages. In this sense, it is quite natural that Moses, the renovator-creator of the Hebrew cult and the first person of Israel to have

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<sup>42</sup> We find an example of this in *Tale of the priest Jeremiah about the Passion Tree* (see: D. Petkanova in *Starobulgarska literatura. Entsiklopedichen rechnik*, pp. 334–335 and the cited researches), but this is related to the veneration of the True Cross in general.

<sup>43</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, I. II. 158, p. 354: “ἐν οἷς ἅπασι καὶ στρατηγὸς ἀριστος ἐγένετο καὶ σύμβουλος συνετώτατος καὶ πάντων κηδεμῶν ἀληθέστατος”.

concentrated so much power in himself, should become the archetype for interpreting and venerating the first Christian Roman emperor and renovator of the Empire, St Constantine.

The Christian political doctrine assimilated the interpretation of Moses proposed by the Hellenistic Jewish writers and developed it further. As I pointed out, this further development was made first and foremost in *Vita Constantini* by Eusebius of Caesarea, who tried to induce and impose the idea that the first Christian emperor had a mission and was chosen by God to perform His work of salvation in this world. This suggestion is made through comparisons, at times formal ones, to the life of the Hebrew prophet. The life of Constantine is compared to that of Moses starting from their childhoods. The emperor grew up and was raised in the court of Diocletian, and his childhood there is analogous to the childhood and youth of Moses in Pharaoh's court, next to the ruler's daughter.<sup>44</sup> Both figures lived close to the tyrants whom they would one day destroy, and both were formed in an alien environment. Further on, in the description of the battle at the Milvian Bridge, the death of Maxentius is presented as a repetition of the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, which points once again to the Mosaic paradigm, this time as regards the opponent of the righteous king.<sup>45</sup> Centuries later, Theophanes Confessor in his *Chronography* used the same story to describe the victory of Constantine. This shows a tendency of repeated use of the model devised by Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>46</sup> This victory, just like Moses', was due to God's assistance and protection (ch. XXXIX). The victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge and its comparison to the defeat of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea was later used as a model to describe other rulers. Socrates, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, compares Theodosius II to a biblical prophet in connection with his victory over the usurper John.<sup>47</sup>

One other portrayal of Moses as victorious, as vanquisher of enemies with God's assistance is found in the narrative of the battle with Amalek in the desert, and of the prophet's constant prayer with hands raised towards God

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<sup>44</sup> *Vita Constantini*, ch. XII: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ed. A. Cameron, S. Hall, Oxford, 1999, p. 73.

<sup>45</sup> *Vita Constantini*, ch. XXXVIII: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, pp. 84–85.

<sup>46</sup> Theophanis Confessoris *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, vol. I, Leipzig, 1883, p. 14 line 10 (AM 5802); Cl. Rapp, "Old Testament Models for Emperors in early Byzantium", *Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, Dumbarton Oaks Symposia and Colloquia, Washington, 2010, p. 187.

<sup>47</sup> Rapp, "Old Testament Models for Emperors in early Byzantium", p. 184.

(Exodus, 17:8–16). This image has also been widely used to portray victors, though not unambiguously. The image of Moses praying while holding a rod could represent a righteous ruler who relies on the Almighty, but it could also represent the clergy praying for the warriors in their fight against the foes. In general, the political message underlying these two interpretations of the story is different, but the biblical text itself permits this difference. Rasha Rashev quotes several examples of this;<sup>48</sup> I will not go into this problem, for there are no traces that could be called “serious” or “acceptable”, of the presence in the Bulgarian milieu of this supreme military commander paradigm.<sup>49</sup>

Traces of Moses’ image as the model and ideal of a pious, God-chosen ruler can be found not only in the Empire but also in nearly all of Eastern Christendom. It occurs among the Armenians,<sup>50</sup> and among other Eastern peoples; but especially important for our study is, again, the image of St Constantine in *Vita Constantini* by Eusebius of Caesarea, a depiction of Constantine the Great based on the Mosaic archetype.<sup>51</sup> It was likewise through Constantinople that these ideas arrived in the neighbouring countries.<sup>52</sup> In mediaeval Bulgaria, we do not find these ideas developed in detail, but some traces have remained, dating, accidentally or not, from the 10th century.

<sup>48</sup> R. Rashev, *Tsar Simeon. Shtrihi kām lichnostta i deloto mu*, Sofia, 2007, pp. 68–69.

<sup>49</sup> I do not believe that the graffiti from the region of Serres are such, mentioned in the cited book in which the author himself does not express this view very firmly: Rashev, *Tsar Simeon. Shtrihi kām lichnostta i deloto mu*, pp. 70–71 (fig. 5). On the other hand we could pose the question whether the allusion made by Pope Nicholas I to the victorious prayers of Moses, directly compared to the military commandership of Joshua ben Nun, might not have had some ideological consequence in Bulgaria: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misāl v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, pp. 59 ff.

<sup>50</sup> R.W. Thomson, “The Formation of the Armenian Literary Tradition”, in: *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoian, T.F. Mathews, R.W. Thomson, Washington, DC, 1980, pp. 135–150.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding the prophet Moses and the use of his image, see: M. Hollerich, “Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First ‘Court Theologian,’” *Church History* 59.3 (Sept. 1990), pp. 321–325; M. Hollerich, “The Comparison of Moses and Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Life of Constantine,” pp. 80–95; G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Etude sur le ‘césaropapisme’ byzantin*, Bibliothèque des Histoires, Paris, 1996, pp. 114–115, 155, 238; A. Wilson, “Biographical models: The Constantinian period and beyond,” in: *Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend. Based on a 1993 Warwick symposium entitled: Constantine and the Birth of Christian Europe*, ed. S.N.C. Lieu and D. Montserrat, New York, 1998, pp. 107–135; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, pp. 36 ff.

<sup>52</sup> R. Rashev, “Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej i bulgarskijat Zlaten vek”, *noo godini Veliki Preslav*, vol. I, ed. T. Totev, Shumen, 1995, pp. 66–69; R. Rashev, “Tsar Simeon—‘nov Mojsej’ ili ‘nov David’”, *Preslavska knizhovna shkola*, 7 (2004), pp. 366–376; Rashev, *Tsar Simeon. Shtrihi kām lichnostta i deloto mu*, pp. 60–72.

*Moses-Constantine in Bulgaria*

We find such a mention in the correspondence between Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos and Tsar Symeon.<sup>53</sup> The patriarch reproaches the Bulgarian ruler for abusing the image of “New Moses” in assuming it for himself. From his words, we may expect to draw some conclusion as to what the main parameters were of Tsar Symeon’s claims, and to at least partially understand what assertions these claims were based upon.<sup>54</sup> The patriarch addresses the Bulgarian ruler with queries that delineate the image of a New Moses claimed by Symeon. The question is what prophecies and signs he might have received from God in order to consider himself such, whether he has seen the Glory of God, and what commands he has received from Him, from what bondage he has saved God’s People. All these are appropriate questions to be asked of someone presenting himself as the contemporary image of the Hebrew prophet and lawmaker. From these questions R. Rashev draws information about Tsar Symeon’s pretension, inferring that the tsar meant to present the conquest of Byzantine territories in the Balkans as a liberation of God’s People (i.e. the Byzantines, the Christians) from the power of the *basileus*-pharaoh, and he claimed it was God’s suggestion that motivated him to do this;<sup>55</sup> it is not to be excluded, Rashev asserts, that the tsar claimed to have received prophecies and Divine commands regarding the salvific purpose of his deeds.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, I do not think these reproaches provide an adequate idea about what was written in the letter sent from Preslav. In fact, all these traits are simply the main features of the biblical prophet as we find him in Holy Scripture and in the subsequent tradition. Thus, any pretension by the Bulgarian ruler to be seen as a New Moses could provoke the rhetorical question of whether he believes he matches certain qualities. Some of these traits might have indeed been part of Symeon’s pretension, but for other listed features, this is improbable. Such improbable features are prophecies and signs, seeing the Glory of God, and the reception

<sup>53</sup> I would like to note that our late colleague Rasho Rashev was the first to raise the issue of the glorification of the Bulgarian ruler as *New Moses*, and to draw attention to the preserved data for this ideological paradigm. This was done in a series of studies possessing pioneering importance in this respect: Rashev, “Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej i bulgarskijat Zlaten vek”, pp. 66–69; Rashev, “Tsar Simeon—‘nov Mojsej’ ili ‘nov David’”, pp. 366–376; Rashev, *Tsar Simeon. Shtrihi kăm lichnostta i deloto mu*, pp. 60–72. See also Nikolov, *Politicheskata misäl v rannosednovekovka Bulgaria*, pp. 154–156, 177.

<sup>54</sup> Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letters*, ed. R.J.H. Jenkins, L.G. Westerink, (= *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, vol. VI) Dumbarton Oaks, 1973, No 25 67–84, pp. 176–177.

<sup>55</sup> Rashev, “Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej i bulgarskijat Zlaten vek”, p. 67.

<sup>56</sup> Rashev, “Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej i bulgarskijat Zlaten vek”, pp. 67–69.

of divine commands: the latter signifies not commands to do something but reception of the law by the New Moses in the Old Testament sense. Hence, we really do have here some remnants a true Mosaic paradigm of a Bulgarian ruler, which is all the more important for the present study as it is presented in the context of the “new” and of “renovation”, as R. Rashev has well noticed.<sup>57</sup>

Elements of the Mosaic model of king can be found also in the story of the visit of St Tsar Peter to St John of Rila in the sylvan desert of Rila Mountain; the story is similar in many of its features to that of Moses ascending Mount Horeb in Sinai. Here we are interested not in its historical value, nor whether this ruler really did go to the mountain to meet the anchorite, but in the ideological meaning of the narrative. The history of this visit has been interpreted in many various ways, but they are all alike in defining it as asserting the superiority of the Church over the state. The authors see this meaning in the holy anchorite's refusal to meet the tsar personally, despite the latter's plea. Basically such a turn of the story could be expected from a literary work of the hagiographic genre. I should say also that the sources are not unanimous. It has been proven that the story of the visit of Tsar Peter to Rila as told in the *Vita of St John* by Patriarch Euthymius was composed after and under the influence of the so-called *Popular Life* (or the *Legend*). The story must have arisen somewhere, then been reflected in the *Popular Life*, and from there passed into the text written by the patriarch of Tarnovgrade. Yet this author's objectives in writing it and the suggestion of his work are different from those of the *Popular Life*. Undoubtedly, Euthymius asserts the idea of some kind of theocracy through the words he puts in the mouth of the hermit of Rila addressing the ruler. This is clear enough and generally agreed upon, so there is no need to prove it here. The real problem lies in the different attitude expressed in the *Popular Life*: there too the tsar and hermit fail to meet, but the story about this event is different.

Ivan Dobrev wrote in a recently published book that the story of the unaccomplished meeting between tsar and hermit is based on Old Testament

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<sup>57</sup> Rashev, “Tsar Simeon, prorok Mojsej i bulgarskijat Zlaten vek”, pp. 65, 68–69. I would like to state my disagreement with this author's proposed view (ibidem, p. 67), that the reference to the feats of the fathers and ancestors implies the victories of the pagan Bulgarian rulers over the Empire, and Khan Krum's reaching Constantinople. This is drastically inconsistent with the idea of the tsar as New Moses, proclaimed in Rashev's study. It is not possible that pagan rulers would be used to construct the image of the creator of the faith in One God: these rulers had positive characteristics only in Bulgarian nationalist historiography of the 19th–20th century.

motifs. We find this theme in the image of the rock, of St John's rod, in the smoke of the altar, in the sacrificial bullock, and in the Tabernacle as prototype of the Temple. Ivan Dobrev notes and highlights these motifs in the text, but, regrettably, he finally prefers to look for pagan mythical images borrowed from folklore, such as the symbols of the rock, of the Cosmic Tree, of chthonic daemons, etc.<sup>58</sup>

I argue that the Old Testament ideas and images predominate here over folkloric ones, and in support of this I would like to recall in brief the story itself as related in the *Popular Life*.<sup>59</sup> St Tsar Peter was in Sredets (present day Sofia) when the fame of the Rila hermit's feats reached him. He sent nine hunters to the mountain to find St John and to indicate to the ruler the place where the hermit dwelled, for he wanted to visit him and pay his respects to him. The hunters went to Rila but failed to find the hermit, for he was elsewhere, in another space, in another world. Finally, they prayed and the saint appeared to them. The men were very tired and hungry, and he fed them with angelic bread, sent him by God, gave them of this manna. We may consider that so far the references to Holy Scripture are quite obvious and clear: the story is similar to the Gospel story of the five loaves and two fish with which Jesus fed the multitude (Matthew, 14:14 ff.; Mark, 6:37 ff.; Luke, 9:13 ff.; John, 6:8 ff.), and also to that of the manna with which the Lord fed Israel on their way through the desert (Exodus, ch. 16).

The hunters went back to the tsar and showed him the way, marked by a river and a rock. The tsar started out and reached the rock, but from then on the road became so narrow and steep he could not continue. The sylvan desert would not allow him to go on. The men accompanying him only pointed out the mountain and the cliff where the saint was. Then Tsar Peter sent two servants to ask St John's permission for the ruler to approach and pay his respects. The hermit answered that the tsar must go to the top of the mountain and set up a tent there, while he himself would make a very smoky fire. Thus, the tsar would see the smoke, while the hermit would see the tsar's tent and they would meet in this way "for they are allowed to meet only thus". That is how things transpired and Tsar Peter sent a cup full of gold

<sup>58</sup> Iv. Dobrev, *Sveti Ivan Rilski*, (= *Altbulgarische Studien*, Bd. 5), Linz, 2007, pp. 302–322.

<sup>59</sup> J. Ivanov, "Zhitija na sv. Ivana Rilski s uvodni belezhki", *Godishnik na Sofijskija universitet, Istoriko-filologichen fakultet*, t. XXXII, 13, 1936, pp. 33–35; *Stara bulgarska literatura*, t. IV, *Zhitiepisni tvorbi*, Sofia, 1986, pp. 127–129.

to the saint, who returned the gold but kept the cup as a token. The hermit had no need of gold, unlike the ruler who had to pay for the defence of the country and for many public needs. Finally, St John told the tsar's men that the ruler would have to leave the place quickly, for the soil was not firm in this place.

I believe that the biblical basis of this story is obvious, although many authors have given in to the temptation of looking for a basis (which is no firmer than the soil in the story) in pagan mythology. First of all I should point out that the saint is presented here as someone dwelling in a different reality and different space from those of the people who sought him. To enter his reality would be extremely difficult and can be achieved only as an exception and through grace: this applies for the hunters and the tsar equally. This is the holy reality of God's presence, and entering it may be easily refused or may be done only partially, for it is a dangerous thing to do, like every contact with the sacred. This applies equally to "touching" any divine object: the Tabernacle, the Temple, the Ark of the Alliance, the Eucharist. In our case, St John does not "embody the Lord God Himself" but the holiness of a man of God, holiness more or less connected with God's presence. This is the key to understanding the story. It begins with the hunters wandering about in the forest without being able to reach the hermit. They succeed in finding him only after praying and by his own decision to reveal himself to them. Afterwards they eat angelic bread and nourish themselves with manna, which is strongly reminiscent of Holy Communion, which happens to be the only possible way of associating with God. The mention of *manna* is not an allusion but a direct quotation from Holy Scripture. We have here a typological reference to all means of communicating with God that are indicated in the Bible, but above all to the impossibility of direct contact except through grace and by God's own decision. A typical example of this is the desire of the Prophet Moses to see God in His glory, and the impossibility of this to happen in the "ordinary" way.

The journey of the tsar to the mountain matches the story of the reception of the Law in Sinai and Moses' ascending Mount Horeb to meet the Lord. This trip is hard, dangerous, and difficult, for it is ascension to God. Even staying for a while where God is present is dangerous, and that is why Moses was not allowed to see God (Exodus, 33:18–23), that is why the high priest, who alone can enter the Holy of Holies once a year, must perform many purification rituals before doing so (Leviticus, ch. 16). Only Levites may enter the sanctuary and not die, but even they must not look directly at it (Numbers, 4:18–20). Similarly, Tsar Peter had to approach and try to enter

into the world of the divine. He had to touch the boundary between the two worlds. In the story, this boundary is depicted as a river, along which the tsar goes but which he never crosses. The meaning of the river is made even clearer through the extant depictions of the meeting of the ruler and the hermit. The two are usually shown as standing on two different mountain—St John's rock and the Tsar's peak—separated by a rivulet running between them through the valley down below.<sup>60</sup>

Moses asked to see God in His Glory, but the Lord refused this, for the sight would be unbearable and deadly for a mortal man. The prophet sees only His back and hears His name pronounced by Himself. This “meeting” is symbolically repeated at the “meeting” of St John with Tsar Peter. The hermit does not allow the ruler to enter his world and shows himself by the smoke coming from his fire, and the tsar sees this “sign”. The word “sign” is repeated many times in the text, as Ivan Dobrev points out in his book, and this repetition is of essential importance regarding the story.

In the *Popular Life*, there are many other elements that could confirm the thesis proposed here, but I would direct attention to the place where the tsar is located: the peak that would later be called Tsar's Peak. He set up his tent there so the saint could see him. If we ask what the meaning of this location is, St John's words suggest a possible solution: the saint told the tsar's men that the place was dangerous, for the soil underneath was not firm. That is why the tsar should leave quickly. This text has not passed unnoticed by scholars writing on the topic and has usually been defined as signifying the theory that the Church is predominant over the State. Without denying this, here the passage refers foremost to the theme of being too close to holiness (i.e. to God's presence), which is always dangerous, as clearly shown in the cited passage from Holy Scripture. In my opinion, this story contains an indirect reference to what transpired with the Prophet Moses on Mount Horeb.

In examining this narrative, we should place it in its own spiritual environment. Although this is a literary work created in Bulgaria, its true context was certainly not “national-ethnic” but the middle-Byzantine hagiographic

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<sup>60</sup> V. Ivanova, “Obrazi na tsar Petra v dve starinni ikoni”, *Izvestija na bulgarskoto istorich-esko druzhestvo*, vol. XXI, Sofia, 1945, pp. 99–108; L. Prashkov, “Edin letopisen tsikal ot zhitieto na Ivan Rilski ot XIV vek”, *Tärnovska knizhovna shkola*, t. I, Sofia, 1974, pp. 429–442; E. Bakalova, “Käm interpretatsijata na naj-rannija zhitien tsikal na Ivan Rilski v izobrazitel-noto izkustvo”, *Kirilo-Methodievska studii*, t. III, 1986, pp. 146–153; E. Bakalova, “Zur Interpretation des frühesten Zyklus der Vita des Hl. Ivan von Rila in der bildenden Kunst”, in: *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel zum 70. Geburtstag (in memoriam)*. München 1988, S. 39–48.

tradition contemporaneous to the writing of the text. This reference enables us to make comparisons that might yield very interesting results. In this connection, I would cite a recently published book by Andrei Timotin, who focuses his attention on the visions and prophecies referred to in the work, and how these are related to political power in this literary context. He makes the important observation that among the Egyptian hermits, the desert fathers of Late Antiquity (in other words, in an environment matching that of the Rila hermit) developed the figure of the saintly anchorite, who represents God Himself and derives his absolute authority from this fact, an authority equal to that of the apostles and prophets.<sup>61</sup> The anchorite not only represents God, but he speaks God's Word, which is why people turn to him for advice and he becomes a centre of social influence so important as to place him only a step away from political power. The saintly anchorites and the spiritual fathers bring the Word of God and transmit it through their speech, and they are the only legitimate heirs to the Old Testament prophets; the stories about their deeds are widely based on Old Testament paradigms.<sup>62</sup> We see here a religious-political situation that can quite rightly be considered a prototype of the story of Tsar Peter's visit to the Rila sylvan desert.

All this is closely connected with Israelite theocracy, in which a clear distinction is made between *royalty* and *priesthood*. The king's place is obviously not with the hermit saint. The king must not enter the world of the sacred, yet his own place is no less sacred and, in a sense, also belongs to that world. He is there, with his tent, which seemingly is an image that refers to the Tabernacle in the Old Testament and, through it, to the Temple. The mountain is also an important biblical symbol: seeking its roots in the Old Testament, we can begin with Mount Horeb, go on to Mount Moriah (upon which the Temple is situated and where the "sacrifice" of Isaac also occurs) and to the "Holy Mountain of God" in Isaiah, and, in the New Testament, we may consider the words of Christ, that "a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid" (Matthew, 5:14). In light of all these indications, the passage testifies not only to the domination of the Church over the State, but also to the sacralisation of the power of the ruler, who is staying in the Mountain and whose sign is the Tabernacle, the Abode of God. This theme is equally present in the work of Patriarch Euthymius, who compares the secular power to the Tabernacle

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<sup>61</sup> A. Timotin, *Visions, prophéties et pouvoir à Byzance. Etude sur l'hagiographie méso-byzantine (IX–XI siècles)*, Dossiers byzantins—10, Paris, 2010, pp. 45–46.

<sup>62</sup> Timotin, *Visions, prophéties et pouvoir à Byzance*, pp. 52, 58.

and to the horn of holiness.<sup>63</sup> The tsar is up there on the mountain, and that is not a place for those lacking holiness.

We have reason to consider the story of Tsar Peter's *ascent* of the mountain and visit to St John of Rila, to be a narrative typologically built upon the biblical story of Moses meeting with the Lord on Mount Horeb, and receiving the Tables of the Law. In the *Popular Life*, the story was constructed in the context of the middle-Byzantine hagiography contemporaneous to the text. This consideration leads us again to the Mosaic image of the ruler in mediaeval Bulgarian society. This is a story about the encounter with holiness and the unequal position of earthly power before God's presence, but it is also about earthly power's connection with, and origin from, that presence. The story in the *Popular Life of St John of Rila* about the unrealised meeting between St John and Tsar Peter is in particular important for the present study, since we are examining as parallel the images of St Constantine and his archetype, the prophet Moses, while the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* presents, likewise as parallel, the images of the Roman emperor and of the Bulgarian saintly tsar.

Thus, in this respect the two texts form a set of mutually complementary parts, and this set points to some significant patterns of power in mediaeval Bulgaria. To understand them, we must take into account that the unrealised meeting on Mount Horeb in Sinai became a *topos* in Christian political theology. This *topos* is to be found in other Orthodox countries and literary texts as well. Foremost I should refer to Byzantine hagiography, which gives us many examples of the mutual exchange of legitimation between the ruler, or secular power in general, on one hand, and the hermit saint on the other.<sup>64</sup> In this connection, I should point out the study by Ovidiu Cristea concerning the meeting of the Moldavian prince Stephen the Great with the hesychast Daniel Sihastrul; this account conveys a similar message.<sup>65</sup> It points to the necessary humility of the earthly ruler before God, Who is the source and holder of all power. Gilbert Dagron defines this humility as "a constitutive element of the ruler's legitimacy".<sup>66</sup> It has its origin in another Old Testament image, that of the penitent King David, but also, to some extent, in Moses,

<sup>63</sup> Biliarsky, "La demeure et la corne de l'Empire", pp. 194–195; Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 23, cap. XII; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> Timotin, *Visions prophétiques et pouvoir à Byzance*, pp. 65 ff.

<sup>65</sup> O. Cristea, "Note sur le rapport entre le prince et l'homme saint' dans les Pays Roumains. La Rencontre d'Etienne le Grand avec Daniel l'Ermite", *L'Empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine*, Bucarest, 2001, pp. 177–185.

<sup>66</sup> Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, p. 133.

his people's charismatic leader, who nevertheless was not powerful enough to see the Lord in His glory, and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, but only to see it from the mountain before his death. These ideas are deeply rooted in Israelite theocracy, from where they passed into Christianity and in turn came to influence literature in Bulgaria.

In fact, the most interesting development of the image of Moses and Constantine as a paradigm of royalty occurred among the Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages. Data about Bulgaria is extremely scarce, though we know it was in Tărnovgrade in the 14th century that the most significant work relating to the cult of Constantine was written: *Panegyric to SS. Constantine and Helena* by Patriarch Euthymius. This work is notably one of the extremely few hagiological texts written by the patriarch scholar that are not devoted to saints connected in some way with Bulgaria. The exception is due to the importance of the cult of St Constantine, especially with respect to the ideology of royalty. The orientation of the *Panegyric* to this theme is obvious, if for no other reason than because the author wishes that the tsar might imitate the Baptiser of the Empire.<sup>67</sup> This wish refers to the tsar's support of the Church and to victories over the enemies of the Christian faith and the establishment of peace in the Universe. The image in question is quite well constructed in the eulogy, but, admittedly, the similarity with the prophet Moses is not so obvious here. Actually, if there is such a similarity at all, it should be derived from the context, where its demonstration will always stand delicately on the brink of conjecture. Examples of such a derivation would be to consider the mention of Constantine as "destroyer of the idols"<sup>68</sup> and the permission asked during a military campaign "to set up the tent like the great Moses" and hold divine offices there.<sup>69</sup> A similar situation occurs regarding the thesis about the "king-preacher of the faith" or the "king-priest", elements of which can be found in the *Panegyric*, and which is a function reminiscent of the position of the prophet Moses as both religious and political leader of his people.<sup>70</sup> There are also two formal similarities that we must point out. The first is Constantine's escape from the court of Diocletian, which Eusebius of Caesarea directly compares to the flight of Moses from Pharaoh's court; in the work of Patriarch Euthymius, this similarity is

<sup>67</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 145–146; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 147.

<sup>68</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 104, 114; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 114.

<sup>69</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 140–141; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, pp. 142–143.

<sup>70</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke*, S. 104, 114–115, 119 ff., 135–137; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, pp. 114, 122, 127 (and the whole history concerning the First Ecumenical Council), 139–140 (and in general the reference to St Constantine as "bishop").

not straightforwardly indicated.<sup>71</sup> The other case is related to the battle at the Milvian Bridge and Maxentius drowning in the river, like Pharaoh in the Red Sea.<sup>72</sup> Here mention is made of the story in Exodus about the Egyptian ruler, but the mention is not as prominent as in other works. Overall, it may be said that the *Panegyric for SS. Constantine and Helena* does not support categorically enough the thesis about Constantine-New Moses. In this work, we find another image that is sufficiently clear and explicitly stated, that of Constantine as a New David,<sup>73</sup> but this is not our main topic here. Regarding the lack of grounds for the New Moses image, I will only say that one possible explanation of this could be the general orientation of Patriarch Euthymius's views, that the Church is predominant over royal power. In this context, to base the construction of the tsar's image on that of Moses, the prophet-lawgiver and establisher of the faith of the Hebrews, is something that would have turned the matter in a different direction, towards a situation in which the political leader should have power over the ecclesiastic sphere rather than the other way around.

Certainly, the most important among the Southern Slavs work depicting the ruler as a New Moses and New Constantine is the *Vita of Stephen Lazarević* by Constantine the Philosopher (Kostenečki). This work is the product and continuation of the Serbian political ideology of the time of the Nemanides dynasty, and of the identity, formed at that time, of the people as New Israel.<sup>74</sup> In the text these ideas are expressed through the construction of the ruler's image as based on Old Testament models such as Joshua ben Nun, Samson, the High Priest Eli, etc.<sup>75</sup> Here I will not make a detailed analysis of this work, but there are several points that I should note. One of them is the comparison to the kings and prophets David and Solomon, and to Alexander the Great.<sup>76</sup> However, the most important models figuring

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<sup>71</sup> Kalužniacki, *Werke*, S. 105; Patriarch Evtimij, *Sächinenija*, pp. 114–115. Also: Vita Constantini: *Vita Constantini*, ch. XII, XIX–XXI; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, pp. 73, 77–78.

<sup>72</sup> Kalužniacki, *Werke*, S. 109–111; Patriarch Evtimij, *Sächinenija*, p. 118.

<sup>73</sup> Kalužniacki, *Werke*, S. 129; Patriarch Evtimij, *Sächinenija*, p. 133.

<sup>74</sup> Moses is a model for numerous Serbian rulers in the 13th–14th century, as is well registered in the ruler hagiography of Serbia: see, for instance, Bojović, *L'idéologie monarchique*, pp. 362, 383, 393, 401, 528, 532, 545 etc.

<sup>75</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija, Skazanie za bukвите, Zhitie na Stefan Dechanski*, ed. A. Totomanova, Sofia, 1993, p. 139 (ch. 8–9); Kuev K., G. Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki. Izsledvane i tekst*, Sofia, 1986, p. 364.

<sup>76</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija*, pp. 139–140 (ch. 10, 11, 12); see also in the *hairētismoi* and the acrostic—pp. 191–192; Kuev, Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki*, pp. 364–365, 424–426.

here are those of Moses and Constantine, and it is upon them where the fundament of the image of Stephen Lazarević dwells.<sup>77</sup> The *Vita* begins with a relatively extensive presentation about the prophet Moses as leader appointed by God, as legislator, and saviour of the People of Israel, with whom the Serbian ruler is compared both formally (for instance, with regard to the length of his rule) and in essence.<sup>78</sup> This line of comparison continues, directly or indirectly, in other passages and runs through the whole work.

On the other hand, the author presents to us a direct connection with the image of St Constantine, whom he declares to be no less than a blood ancestor of the Despot Stephen Lazarević.<sup>79</sup> The emperor is presented as being the grandfather of Bela-Uroš, who in turn was the grandfather of St Symeon/ Stephen Nemanja, who, for his part, was the grandfather of the despot. Thus, Constantine proves connected with all the deeds of the Serbian ruler, for whom he serves as example and model. This is made especially clear by the story of the building of Belgrade as the despot's capital. The city is appears as a replica foremost of Jerusalem, but a clear reference is included to Constantine's work as city builder.<sup>80</sup> In addition, in order not to leave the least doubt, at the end of the *Vita* the author designates the ruler as Stephen-Constantine.<sup>81</sup>

This work of Constantine Kostenečki offers probably the best synthesis of the Mosaic and Constantinian model of ruler. It is perhaps not accidental that the work is about the Despot Stephen Lazarević—the most important Christian ruler in the Balkans in the early 15th century, who attracted to himself the hopes and imagination of all Balkan Slavs. However, I also think we have reason to look for the penetration of the model among those Slavs centuries earlier, for which examples were indicated, and which is confirmed by the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

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<sup>77</sup> Of course, this has not gone unnoticed in scholarly literature. I would refer the reader to the latest and very interesting study by Jelena Erdeljan (Erdeljan, "Beograd kao Novi Jerusalim", p. 108).

<sup>78</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija*, pp. 137–138 (chapter 1–4); Kuev, Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki*, pp. 362–363.

<sup>79</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija*, pp. 145–146 (chapter 13–16); Kuev, Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki*, pp. 371–372.

<sup>80</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija*, pp. 165–167 (chapter 51); Kuev, Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki*, pp. 393–396.

<sup>81</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki, *Sächinenija*, p. 192; Kuev, Petkov, *Säbrani sächinenija na Konstantin Kostenečki*, p. 425.

*Moses-Constantine in the Tale*

After this overview, we may go on to the data provided by the *Tale*. Elsewhere in this book, I have discussed in detail some confusing points in the presentation of Tsar Constantine in this apocryphon, as well as the identification of this ruler. I will only note that, in my opinion, the reference is to a single person bearing this name, and that this is a character based on the memory, representation, and cult of the first Christian emperor, although fantastically transformed in some points. The image of Constantine matches the paradigm established by Eusebius of Caesarea and forms a set with the image of the Prophet Moses, which makes Constantine the “New Moses”. Above I endeavoured to trace the basic features of the image, which can be grouped in several different areas: God-chosen political leadership, religious renovation, lawgiving, military command. This is the image of Moses and, at least partially, of the New Moses. Now we should see which of these features could be found in the text of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Due to the nature of this text, we cannot expect a text of this sort to develop the theme of religious renovation or legislation. These topics are too complicated for this work and would require a different kind of presentation. Of course, they could be present in the form of the prophet’s receiving God’s will and expressing it to the people in an accessible form. This role would combine legislation, which for the Hebrews consisted in the will of the Almighty, with faith and the cult. In the *Tale* such a role is not to be found directly expressed in the part concerning Tsar Ispor, but some elements of it can be found in the introductory part, told as the words of the prophet Isaiah. The image of the king who is lawgiver and expresses God’s will, and is also establisher of a religion, can be discerned in the typological structure of the narrative.

It is notable that the above-mentioned features of Moses coincide in many respects with that of St Tsar Constantine as presented in the *Tale*: he too is a hero with a mission who appears miraculously in the world; he is the creator, founder, and renovator of the Empire; he not only creates the City and the “Kingdom of Jerusalem”, but provides a connection with biblical reality and thus posits a biblical archetype for the Empire; he is also presented as closely connected with the Bulgarian Tsar Peter, so that the two characters are typologically identical within the apocryphon, as are the kingdoms of the Bulgarians and Romans, together called the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The arguments supporting that Tsar Ispor held *God-chosen leadership* (in other words, supporting one of the elements of the Moses-Constantine image) can be found in the story of the basket, which we defined as a *topos*

that repeats the story from Moses' childhood. The element of leadership is obvious here, if for no other reason, at least because Ispor is tsar of the people. The God-chosenness is demonstrated by the miraculous appearance of the "child" we discussed. The successful and beneficial reign of Ispor is represented chiefly by the tsar's creative activity and victories over enemies. Following the established model for this kind of text, the author points out that Ispor not only built the cities of Pliska and Dorostorum on the Danube, but also a "great wall" from the Danube to the sea.<sup>82</sup> While in this construction activity we find no similarity to the Mosaic paradigm of rule, we certainly see a benign and successful reign.

As for the birth of Tsar Constantine (the other carrier of the Moses-Constantine image), it is not quite clearly described in the *Tale*. The first indication is that in the time of St Peter, tsar of Bulgaria, there was in the Bulgarian land a widow, young and wise and righteous, called Helena, and she gave birth to Tsar Constantine. This looks similar to the story of the miraculous birth of a child-hero with a mission:<sup>83</sup> the mother is young and wise, but most importantly, she is a widow, in other words, there is no father involved, which implies divine intervention for the birth of the hero. At the same time, Constantine is called Porphyrogenitus, which, besides being a reference to the 10th century emperor, signifies that the child is a ruler's son, which would somehow cast doubt upon the fact of miraculous birth just mentioned. Moreover, a little further below the father is referred to by name as Constantine the Green, which is evidently a reminder of the historical Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus. A little further on in the story we again find confirmed that the child's birth is somehow problematic: the mother flees from the Roman Hellenes to the city of Bizye, because she is pregnant. Regrettably, I cannot say why the city of Bizye was chosen. The more important question is why a pregnant woman would flee unless there was something unclear about her pregnancy. It should also be noted that she is fleeing from the "Roman Hellenes", a circumstance that connects the problems in some way with the Empire. These observations show how unclear the text is, and that it was obviously compiled from different sources, some of them mutually incompatible. I could say that these passages contain a remote reminiscence of the divorce of Constantius Chlorus and the separation

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<sup>82</sup> See U. Fiedler, "Bulgars in the Lower Danube Region. A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence and of the State of Current Research", in F. Curta, *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages. Avars, Bulgars, Khazars, and Cumans*, Brill, Leiden, 2008, pp. 152–154.

<sup>83</sup> See Excursus II in this book.

of Helena with the young Constantine from the imperial circle. It could also be asserted that the flight from the “Roman Hellenes” (even though before the child is born) preserves some memory of the flight of Constantine from Diocletian’s court, which has as its archetype the flight of Moses from Pharaoh’s court.<sup>84</sup> Various interpretations could be offered, but they would all be highly arbitrary and improbable. Hence, I do not want to dwell on them.

The only thing I dare claim with some confidence, is that both the story of Tsar Ispor and that of Constantine utilise the archetype of the hero on a mission who has come into the world miraculously or at least thanks to God’s protection. This connects the accounts to the story of the prophet Moses. This is true at least in one of the sources of the apocryphon. Both characters fit in with a series of such heroes appearing in the *Tale*. The message conveyed by such a figure is clear and unambiguous: the king-hero has a mission from God, and he must fulfil some part of God’s work on earth. This was certainly true as regards Constantine, who put an end to the persecution of Christians and set a new beginning for the Roman Empire and for the world of that time in general.

I would like to say a few words about the indicated pagan religion of Ispor and his people, indicated in the following passage: “After the slaying of Ispor, Tsar of the Bulgarians, the Cumans were called Bulgarians, for earlier they had been godless pagans under Ispor and [lived] in great iniquity and were always enemies of the Greek kingdom for many years.”<sup>85</sup> The text is not clear at all in this part, especially because according to the account in the *Tale* the Bulgarian conversion to Christianity came later, under Ispor’s grandson, Tsar Boris, and not under Ispor’s immediate successor, Izot. The question therefore arises, what does the passage mean, stating that, after the tsar’s death, the Cumans were called Bulgarians, whereas before that they were pagans. If this is a concealed indication of the Conversion, why is there another baptiser later on? Moreover, I feel the text is somehow artificially attached to the surrounding passages and remains alien to the general account. Tsar Ispor is depicted as a kind and blessed tsar, of which his construction activity is a sure sign. Then why does the story end so negatively? An exact answer to these questions could hardly be given but I

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<sup>84</sup> *Vita Constantini*, ch. XIX–XXI; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, pp. 77–78; T. Barnes, *Constantin and Eusebius*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, London, 1981, p. 271.

<sup>85</sup> See in this book, p. 15–16 (f. 401b–410c).

do not think that the citation invalidates what was said above regarding the Mosaic type of ruler embodied by the tsar Ispor. The discrepancy is probably due to contradiction between the separate original texts from which the *Tale* was compiled. It was well known that the first rulers were pagans, but this was usually not overly emphasised since they too were seen as part of God's plan for Salvation. Some of the sources that had served as a basis for the compiled presentation must have contained a clearly negative attitude to the pagan rulers, which was carried over into the apocryphon in question. This attitude, in any case, has come down to us isolated within the extant work. In fact, this is not the only discrepancy we find in the text. The death of Ispor in battle against the Ishmaelites should likewise not be interpreted in a negative light: this is not a punishment from God but death in heroic battle against the infidels. Ispor's death is the result of the clash of forces, not a punishment meted for some transgression he might have committed.

We should also note the quote that, being pagans, the Cumans-Bulgarians lived in infamy and were enemies of the "Greek kingdom". In this text, the godlessness of the pagans is a sin combined with their infamy and the two characteristics appear in a negative light together. They form a set, and this perception is an important stage in the development of Bulgarian political ideology. The attitude is obviously linked to hostility towards the Greek kingdom. Thus, the Empire appears once again in a positive light in contrast with the pagans. The author of the apocryphon evidently identifies it with his own country. Not only is the Empire not set in opposition to Christian Bulgaria, but the two are depicted together, as a unity of culture and religion. They are as one. This view is undoubtedly part of the general attitude of the writer to the universal power of the *basileis* that unites true Christians in the visible world, as shown in multiple passages in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

It is not difficult to see in the *Tale* the figure of Tsar Constantine as creator/renovator of the Empire, just as Moses was to the Hebrews and Emperor Constantine the Great to the Roman Empire. This image of Tsar Constantine is, in fact, not lightly alluded to but explicitly declared. Constantine is the true creator of the *Tsarstvo* in the *Tale*. It is true that Rome is mentioned even before he appears in the story: the city is mentioned in connection with the separation of the "third part of the Cumans, called Bulgarians", which occurred in the countries above Rome or to the left of Rome. We learn that Tsar Constantine's pregnant mother flees from Romans. Subsequently, Rome is obviously under the rule of Constantine, for he sends a curator there and resettles Romans in the New Jerusalem. The Empire is present, and it is the state ruled by the tsar-baptiser. We also find him building the City, and other cities, and founding Rome anew. The text explicitly

says that the New Jerusalem founded by Tsar Constantine is situated on the site of ancient Byzantion, and is called *Konstantin-grad* (Constantinople) in the text, so as to leave no doubt which city it is. It is also explicitly said that after the Romans were taken to the City, the emperor instituted the Kingdom of Jerusalem and built the royal palace. I am inclined to interpret the palace as a metaphor for the organising of government in the state. This refers the reader to the image of Constantine as renovator and re-founder of the Empire, as mentioned above. He is said to be its creator but at the same time it is made clear the Roman Empire already existed before him and he only made a new beginning for it. The transference to the new capital is just that and it emphasises the renovation.

Of course, it is clear that nothing could be more closely connected with Constantine's legacy than the city bearing his name.<sup>86</sup> In itself, this city conveys the idea of renewal, and does so formally by its name, being classified as *new* (New Rome) by no less than an ecumenical council.<sup>87</sup> At first, the renovation had purely imperial characteristics: this was a new capital, which did not necessarily imply a new Christian religious centre.<sup>88</sup> But this situation could not go on for long, since not only the capital city had been renewed, but the whole Empire—and this, not because its centre had been moved to the East but because of the newly displayed tolerance towards the Christian faith, which was the start of breaking with the paganism of the past. Thus, by the middle of the 5th century, Constantinople was already a great religious centre and was designated as the “New Jerusalem” in the *Vita of St Daniel the Stylite*.<sup>89</sup> The whole symbolism of this rather short narrative is charged with expectation and the fulfilment of change. The writer mentions the modest city of Byzantion, but the place is described as “desolate from sea to sea”. That is what it is like when Constantine chooses it as the site for the new city, that is how it is described a few lines further below when he returns

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<sup>86</sup> For a thorough study of this problem, see: Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, pp. 61–97.

<sup>87</sup> See canon III of the Second Ecumenical Council (First in Constantinople) AD 381: P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline générale antique (IIe–IXe s.)*, Pontificia commissione per la redazione del Codice del diritto canonico orientale, Fonti, fasc. IX, tom. I, part. 1: *Les canons des conciles oecuméniques*, Grottaferrata, 1962, pp. 47–48; *Pravilata na Sv. Pravoslavna tsarkva s talkuvaniyata im*, ed. S. Tsankov, vol. I: *Pravilata na sv. Apostoli, na I, II, III, IV vselenski sabori*, Sofia, 1912, p. 386.

<sup>88</sup> R. Ousterhout, “Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem”, pp. 98–99.

<sup>89</sup> H. Delehay, *Les saints stylites*, Subsidia hagiographica, 14, Bruxelles, 1923, pp. 11–13; Ousterhout, “Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem”, p. 99; Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, pp. 18, 293–309.

from the Cranium's Place (Golgotha). The story of the evil curator in Rome is placed exactly in this context and it must somehow present the *old* and the *new* in opposition and show the transition from one to the other while preserving continuity. The evil curator and the Hellenes (i.e. the "pagans") who had conspired to slay Tsar Constantine and his mother Helena are defeated but the Romans are taken to Constantine's city. This indication of the settlement of the Romans in the city tempts us to relate it to the historical fact of the transference of representatives of the senatorial families to New Rome, but also to see it as a new beginning for old Rome.

While the new capital is designated by its two names—New Jerusalem and Constantinople—the Empire has only one name: Kingdom of Jerusalem. This is not coincidental, for the change of religion is what justifies the re-founding of the state. There is no visible mark here of the new construction, or of the resettlement. However, religion becomes the foundation of a new unity that is one of the most significant elements and characteristics of this apocryphal work.

In fact, Christianity and renovation are inseparably united in Constantine, and that is why for the description of the new state and capital the writer used *biblical names and symbols*: Jerusalem, Golgotha, etc. The city is built to be the capital of the Empire, i.e. of the world, but it is such a capital for the additional reason that it is a holy place. It is called "New Jerusalem" because it is made holy by God's presence similar to the city of the Temple and of the Passion. This designation, which repeats the name of the holy city of Hebrews, Christians, and Muslims, is only the outward expression and strong proof of what is indicated in the story: holiness is the chief and primary characteristic of the foundation and life of the City as these are presented in the *Tale*.

The founding of Constantinople-New Jerusalem was conceived in connection with the translation of the True Cross to this site. Here we may cite St Constantine's thoughts in the *Tale* on the choice of the site: he says that if he goes to Golgotha and finds the Cross there, he will return here and found the New Jerusalem on this site. And so he did. The text relates that he went, found the Wood of Christ's Passion, and returned to found the City in a deserted place where the town of "Byzantion" had once stood. Thus, the tsar ensures the holiness and Divine presence in the place by the True Cross, which becomes the symbol of the location and sanctifies it, but which is also a weapon for vanquishing enemies. In this case we see one more allusion to the connection between Moses and Constantine, since the rod of the former is the forerunner of the cross as weapon of victory of the Christian ruler, received from God prior to the battle of the Milvian Bridge. We

also see here some marks of David's and Solomon's royalty. King David was the one who transferred the Ark of the Covenant and ensured the Divine presence in Jerusalem despite all his fears and concerns, and even though he was not himself granted the honour of building the Temple, the Lord's House (see 2 Samuel, ch. 6–7). It was King Solomon who built the Temple of God and, as such a builder, he served as a model for Christian rulers, as shown by Justinian's building the Great Church of St Sophia (by which he even claimed to have "surpassed" the Old Testament king and prophet), by the presence of Solomon's throne in the palace in Constantinople, and by the ritual of anointment of French kings, even though the latter practice was due to other reasons as well.<sup>90</sup>

Constantine's plans, we learn from the *Tale*, were not limited to building and settling the City. He explicitly mentioned that the new capital was conceived as "a resting place of saints and adornment of tsars".<sup>91</sup> This passage indicates its purposed functions. "A resting place of saints" could mean an accumulation of Divine grace in the capital through the translation of relics there, a very typical practice of *basileis* of Constantinople, which followed the Davidic paradigm, mentioned above, of transferring the Ark of the Covenant and accumulating grace and holiness in the capital city. The Cross is a relic of Lord and hence fits in the same tradition as the translation of relics of saints. Acquiring relics is definitely a "royal" practice and a ritual of great importance, both religiously and politically,<sup>92</sup> especially in the capital city. That is why the practice was traditionally connected with the most saintly rulers, foremost, of course, being the first Christian emperor. We find this confirmed in other texts as well, such as the *Vita of St John of Rila*, which, according to Dragan's Minaeum copy, dates from the 13th century. In this narrative the religious zeal of Tsar John I Asen, who translated the relics of St John from Sofia to Tărnovgrade, is compared with the fervour of the

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<sup>90</sup> R. Ousterhout, "Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem", *Ieropotija. Sozdanie sakral'nykh prostranstv v Vizantii i Drevnej Rusi*, ed. A. Lidov, Moscow, 2006, pp. 101–102; Ousterhout R., "New Temples and New Solomons. Rhetoric of Byzantine Architecture", *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, Washington D.C., 2010, pp. 223–251; Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, pp. 293–309; Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre*, p. 225; J.-P. Bayard, *Le sacre des rois*, Paris, 1964; Biliarsky, "Mutaberis in virum alium", pp. 96 ff. Specifically about King Solomon's throne, see: G. Dagron, "Trônes pour un empereur", in: *Byzantio. Kratos kai koinonia. Mneme Nikou Oikonomide*, Athens, 2003, pp. 185, 188–189, 192.

<sup>91</sup> See in this book, p. 18 (f. 402a, lines 22–24).

<sup>92</sup> P. Guran, "La translation des reliques: un rituel monarchique?", *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, XXXVI, 1–4, 1998, pp. 195–231.

ancient rulers St Constantine and St Tsar Peter.<sup>93</sup> This reference to figures of unquestionable authority, model rulers, amounts to a reference to royal saintliness, to the holiness of power, which these two rulers represent and embody. Later we will mention the relation and link between the two; here I note the example of St Constantine with respect to sanctifying the City.

In fact, the accumulated holiness is part of God's presence and the choice of the name New Jerusalem for the Imperial City and Kingdom of Jerusalem for the Empire, directly referred to the biblical models in order to build their typological image in a Christian environment. Of course, this was not done through and in the *Tale* but we could say that this apocryphon carries reminiscence and traces of the practice of sanctifying the urban space through relics.

*Victorious military commandership*, realised only through reliance on God's protection, is one of the characteristic features both of Moses as commander (his victory over Pharaoh at the Red Sea, and his victory at the battle against Amalek) and of Constantine's reign (the victory at the Milvian Bridge). The signs of their imminent victories—Moses' Rod and Constantine's Cross—signs that are mutually related according to the Christian interpretation, also unite these two figures. We find traces of this image of victor through Divine assistance in the characters of Ispor and Constantine in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

Regarding Tsar Constantine, the apocryphon does not relate his military victories at length, but leaves no doubt there were many. When the angel told him about the True Cross in the East, Constantine "gathered his army, took his mother, and set off to go East".<sup>94</sup> This resembles the beginning of a military campaign, not a pilgrimage. A little further on it is said that, after building the New Jerusalem and the royal palace, Constantine "set off with his army for the Danube" and created there the city of Bdin.<sup>95</sup> Not a word is said of battles and victories, but there is an army involved in the story, and again the impression is that of an emperor leading a military campaign. As for Divine intervention, we find evidence of this in the story that God vanquished his enemies with an invisible stick, and they became invisible. This seems like a fairy-tale plot, yet it is the story of a miracle performed in support of the pious Christian ruler.

<sup>93</sup> и поревнова древнѣиимъ цремъ, рекъ же великомуъ Костантинуоу црю и Петру црю—it should be noted that neither of the two are referred to as saints. See Ivanov, "Zhitija na sv. Ivana Rilski", p. 58.

<sup>94</sup> See in this book, p. 18 (f. 402a, lines 9–11).

<sup>95</sup> See in this book, p. 19 (f. 402b, lines 27–30).

Regarding Tsar Ispor, God's victory-bearing protection over him can be found in the passage mentioning the tsar's battles with the Ishmaelites. In this account, the tsar is the positive character, the hero, and the Ishmaelites are his adversaries. The question is how this passage can be related to the image of Moses as supreme military commander of his people. I do not believe we should make vain efforts to build improbable hypotheses: there is no reference to Moses here. The story does not point to Moses any more clearly than to any other military commandership. Moreover, Ispor's death in the last battle does not support such a connection, although it does not exclude it either. The only connection, however uncertain, might lay in the identity of the adversaries mentioned here, called "Ishmaelites". What does the image of this people mean: a reference to some Eastern nations or the simple personification of the Chosen People's adversaries? Of course, these two possible answers are not mutually exclusive.

If we assume the first variant, that they were a specific Eastern nation, this would imply we agree with the "historical" reading of the source, a method that I argued against at the beginning of the book. Of course, I do not want to exclude any historical basis whatever to the related events. The semiotic and symbolic imagery that I am trying to trace here not only does not exclude, but also even implies some underlying actual event that was perceived in the framework of a certain prevailing code system. Therefore, I should say I do not exclude some partial historical basis, but I also do not believe the historical aspect is the main message of the text. The mention of "Ishmaelites"—even if it does have underlying it an actual clash that took place with the Khazars or some other people of the Steppe, could expectedly be a sign of something more important. In order to find out what, we should discuss the designation itself of "Ishmaelites".

The term is familiar and it is known that these were the descendents of Ishmael, son of Abraham and of the Egyptian Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden, of whom the Book of Genesis relates (Genesis, ch. 16).<sup>96</sup> Several aspects of this story should be emphasised. Hagar is presented in a rather problematic way: she behaves badly towards her mistress who sent her into the arms of her own husband; Sarah is certainly the more important figure, as it is she, and not Hagar, who will become the mother of the Chosen People. It is also important to point out that the birth of Ishmael is presented according to the traditional model of miraculous birth of a son after years of

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<sup>96</sup> The similar designation of "Hagarians" is also derived from her name. It was widely used to designate the Islamic conquerors, thought of precisely as enemies of the Chosen People, of the New Israel.

expectation and when the parents are extremely old: Abraham is eighty-six at the time (Genesis, 16:16). In this we could discern Divine intervention, and God certainly does intervene, as confirmed by the story of Hagar's meeting an angel, when she is fleeing from Sarah's harsh treatment; this angel is God Himself (Genesis, 16:7–13), whom she calls “*Thou God seest me*”. In this way, she becomes one of those who have spoken with God, a privilege granted to very few characters in the Bible. God foretells she will have a large posterity from Ishmael, although He gives the latter some very ambiguous qualifications. A special attitude to Abraham's first son is expressed also by God's answer to the father's prayer, where He says Ishmael will be blessed, made fruitful and multiplied exceedingly, that he shall beget twelve princes, and a great nation shall issue from him; yet the Covenant will be established with Isaac (Genesis, 17:20–21).

There is a clear and categorical emphasis on Ishmael in the Bible. Yet the evaluation of him is not quite simple: he is blessed but not chosen; he is a son of Abraham and circumcised on the same day as his father but is expelled into the desert; his offspring multiplies to form a large people but is not called by the name of Abraham and is not part of God's People. The image of Ishmael, and hence of the Ishmaelites, is of the nature of “one's own strangers”. They are more or less presented as very *different* from the Chosen People, and in the course of history this name, like the name *Hagarians* (which is practically the same, based on “Hagar”), came to designate the Arabs, the Muslims, people different from the Hebrews and ultimately foes. This is how the mention of the name in the *Tale* should be interpreted—Tsar Ispor wars with the adversaries of the Chosen People (the New Israel), slays many of them, but dies at their hand in a battle by the Danube. In the military valour displayed here by Ispor we cannot see the exact Mosaic model of the vanquisher of enemies, but we do see the characteristic of a military commander of the Chosen People in war against a different people.

The connection of Bulgaria with this Mosaic paradigm finds room in the *Tale* mostly by the account of the special relations between Tsar Constantine and Tsar Peter, but also by the obvious unity of Bulgarians and Romans, and of their two kingdoms. First, it should be pointed out that, according to the *Tale*, Tsar Constantine was born in the time of Tsar Peter (И ТОГА ВЪ ЛѢХЪ СТО ПЕРѦ ЦРѦ ВЛГАРСКА • ѠБРОѢТЕ ЖЕНѦ НѢКА ВѢВНЦѦ • МЛА Ѧ МСДРА • Ѧ СЪЛО ПРѦВЕДѦНА ВЪ ЗЕМЛѦ ВЛГАРСТѢН • ИМЕМЪ ЕЛЕНѦ • Ѧ РДН КѦСТѦНДѦНА ЦРѦ СѢА МЪЖѦ И ПРѦВЕДѦНА).<sup>97</sup> Peter's was a blessed reign, and the ruler was

<sup>97</sup> See in this book, p. 17 (f. 401d, lines 27–33).

“without sin and without a wife”, and by the grace of God there was plenty of all goods and no destitution.<sup>98</sup> This is the environment in which God decides the miraculous birth of Constantine should take place. There is also a strong personal bond between the two saintly tsars, for it is said: “Tsar Constantine and Tsar Peter loved one another”.<sup>99</sup> Some time ago, I pointed out the parallels between the two characters, at least in this text.<sup>100</sup> At that time, I may have been somewhat hasty in declaring the cult of St Tsar Peter was a cult of St Constantine; this judgement was partially corrected in an article we wrote jointly with Maria Yovcheva.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, we have all reason to assert that—at least in the *Tale*—the two tsars form a couple showing typological unity in the interpretation of the Kingdom and of the power of the ruler. Here I will not deal with all the possible questions that such an interpretation might give rise to, but I cannot fail to mention one issue that I feel is the most important. St Constantine posits a paradigm for the identity of rule in the Empire: this is the ideal Christian ruler not due to any personal qualities of his but because he strictly obeys God’s will and fulfils God’s plan for his people’s salvation. His personal qualities only aid him in better performing his mission. That is precisely why Paul Magdalino relates the reproducing of the image of the first Christian emperor to the “rhythm of imperial renovation” in the Eastern Roman Empire. A similar relation exists with respect to St Tsar Peter, though not shown in the *Tale*.

I already mentioned the frequent occurrence of the name of Constantine (and even New Constantine) among *basileis* in critical times for the Byzantine Empire. The same can be noticed for the name of Tsar Peter during what was the most critical age (not counting the Ottoman conquest) of the Bulgarian Middle Ages, the 11th and 12th centuries, a time of conquest of the Bulgarian state and of movements to restore it. This is the last age for which there are comparatively sure data reflected in the text of the *Tale*, which gives some scholars reason to date the apocryphon from that time. If so, the

<sup>98</sup> See in this book, p. 17 (f. 401d, lines 15–26).

<sup>99</sup> See in this book, p. 17, 18 (f. 401d, line 19, f. 402a, lines 7–8). Tsar Peter’s saintliness is explicitly indicated in the source.

<sup>100</sup> Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>101</sup> Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 33–34; Iv. Biliarsky, M. Yovcheva, “Za datata na uspenieto na tsar Peter i za kulta kăm nego”, *Tangra. Sbornik v chest na 70-godishninata na akad. Vasil Gjuzelev*, Sofia, 2006, pp. 552–555. The strongly expressed monastic nature of the cult of St Tsar Peter shown by analysis of divine service for his veneration, actually confirms some features of the paradigm of ruler devoted to God, a paradigm familiar from other works as well. In Serbia, we find it in the image of St Symeon/Stephen Nemanja; in Bulgaria, in that of Tsar Peter. See also: Nikolov, *Politicheskata misъл v rannosrednovkovka Bulgaria*, pp. 182 ff.

events of that time are of essential importance for this study. That is why I will emphasise once again the use of the name “Peter”—which implies also the use of St Tsar Peter’s image, example, model—by practically all leaders of movements aimed at restoring the Bulgarian state.<sup>102</sup> The first to use it was Peter Delyan, son of Tsar Gabriel Radomir and grandson of Tsar Samuel.<sup>103</sup> In AD 1040, he headed the rebellion in the western Balkans, aiming at *Renovatio Imperii*. Apart from the military and political intricacies of the uprising, what is important for our topic is that the leader of the revolt declared himself tsar under the name of Peter. He was not assuming a dynastic name, for he was of the Cometopouloi family. This was exactly a reference to a saintly tsar who had been a model Bulgarian Christian ruler ever since the time of the former dynasty that had reigned in Preslav. After Peter Delyan, the Serbian prince Constantine Bodin similarly took this name when in AD 1072 he was declared tsar of the Bulgarians under the name Peter.<sup>104</sup> Evidently, this was again a desire to invoke the existing and evidently universally acknowledged paradigm of a ruler in the person of Tsar Peter. Constantine Bodin was also related to the Cometopouloi, and not to Khan Krum’s dynasty in Preslav (to which St Tsar Peter belonged), but, again, the name was not assumed as dynastic but as a religious-political model. We thus come to the last case, when the Bulgarian Empire was, this time, successfully restored by the Asen brothers—Theodore and Belgun.<sup>105</sup> Coming to power, they adopted the royal names Peter and John.<sup>106</sup> It was precisely the taking of the throne by the elder brother and his adoption of the name of Peter that acquired the meaning of a Renovation (or Restoration) of the Empire associated with the name of the tsar-saint.<sup>107</sup> Thus, we see that the attempts to restore and re-found the state in Bulgaria during the 11th century, which we could call “rhythm of Bulgarian imperial renovation” are connected to the idea of the heavenly patron of state rule and to that age’s model of a Bulgarian pious tsar, Peter.

<sup>102</sup> As noted, I have already discussed this problem—see: Biliarsky, *Pokroviteli na Tsarstvoto*, pp. 34–36.

<sup>103</sup> V.N. Zlatarski, *Istorija na bulgarskata dърzhava prez srednite vekove*, t. II, Sofia, 1934, pp. 44 ff.; *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 396–400.

<sup>104</sup> Zlatarski, *Istorija*, II, pp. 141–142; *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 403–405.

<sup>105</sup> Bozhilov, “Asenevtsi: Renovatio imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum”, pp. 131–217; *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 421 ff.

<sup>106</sup> Iv. Bozhilov, A. Totomanova, Iv. Biliarsky, *Borilov Sinodik. Izdanie i prevod*, Sofia, 2010, pp. 150–151, 311; M. Popruzhenko, *Sinodik tsarja Borila*, Sofia, 1928 (= *Bulgarski starini*, vol. VIII), p. 77.

<sup>107</sup> Nicetae Choniatae *Historia*, rec. J.A. van Dieten, Berolini et Novi Eboraci, 1975, pp. 371 ff.; Iv. Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460). Genealogija i prosopografija*, Sofia, 1985, No I/1–2; *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 425–429.

In relation to the joint presentation of St Constantine and St Tsar Peter, it is also worth noting the passage about Tsar Peter's death in Rome, which befell while Tsar Constantine was at Golgotha ("the Cranium's Place"). Here is the segment of the text:

а до толи прїи́доще нѣкото́ри на́сна̀ныци · ꙗко̀ испо́лни , њ по́гвѣнше зѣмлю̀  
 влѣга́рскую̀ по̀ морѣ · а̀ перъ̀ црѣ̀ влѣга́рску̀ прѡ́ведѣнѣ̀ мѣжъ · ѡстаѣ̀ црѣ̀тво · њ  
 вѣ́жа на̀ запа̀ в рѣ̀ њ тѣ̀ скѡ́ча̀ жнѣтѣ̀ своѣ̀ .<sup>108</sup>

A text similar in meaning is cited in the printed book *Разъличнїе потреби́и* (*Razlichni potrebi, Book for Various Occasions*) published by Jacob Kraykov in Venice in 1572. It is explicitly stated there that the publisher had found the source that his publication was based on, among "the books of Peter, the Bulgarian tsar, whose capital city was Greater Preslav and who died in Greater Rome" (сѣи́и ѡзѡвѡды̀ ѡбръ̀втохъ̀, азъ̀ ѡ́ковъ̀ въ̀ книгахъ̀ Петра̀ црѣ̀ влѣга́рскаго̀ ѡжѐ вшѐ томоу̀ насто́лни градъ̀ великѝ Прь̀славъ̀ ѡ́ оумръ̀тъ въ̀ вѣ́ликѝ Римъ̀ ÷).<sup>109</sup> The unanimous opinion of scholars is that the information about the death of Tsar Peter in Rome is legendary. It contradicts all other sources of information and is not confirmed by any other testimonies; it is also inconsistent with the logic of events.<sup>110</sup> The fact that Peter became a monk in the Bulgarian capital city shortly before his death would preclude such a development. Yet we should pose the question what this passage in the *Tale* means and whether it has any connection with the quote from the Venetian edition. If the answer to the latter question is positive, then we may ask how the text from the apocryphon became known to Jacob Kraykov. The latest and most thorough study of these texts has been conducted by M. Tsibranska and is included in her book on the Cyrillic palaeotypia. The study is situated in the context of an integral study of the historical value of *Разъличнїе потреби́и* (*Book for Various Occasions*) and a panorama of cultural life in the western Bulgarian lands, presented in connection with book printing in Venice.<sup>111</sup> We learn of a third mention of Tsar Peter's dying in Rome, found in the manuscript *Euchologium* possessed by Botyo Petkov, teacher in Kalofer, a book mentioned by Petko R. Slavejkov to Nikolay Palauzov. The text was placed together with a Paschal Table ascribed to Tsar Peter.<sup>112</sup> According to studies and assessments of this piece of

<sup>108</sup> See in this book, p. 18 (f. 402a, lines 26–32).

<sup>109</sup> Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, p. 386; Tsibranska, *Etudi vǎrkhu kirilskata paleotipia*, p. 33.

<sup>110</sup> Biliarsky, Yovcheva, "Za datata na uspenieto na tsar Peter i za kulta kǎm nego", p. 545.

<sup>111</sup> Tsibranska, *Etudi vǎrkhu kirilskata paleotipia*, pp. 33–59 (especially pp. 56–59).

<sup>112</sup> Tsibranska, *Etudi vǎrkhu kirilskata paleotipia*, pp. 58–59.

information, these two facts—the Paschal table and the information—resulted from the influence of Jacob Kraykov’s book upon later texts and specifically upon the unknown Euchologium belonging to the teacher Botyo Petkov. But this does not directly answer the question about the connection between the information in the *Tale* and that in *Book for Various Occasions*. I would like to propose for discussion an idea that is hard to prove but, in my opinion, worth discussing. Practically all authors who have written on this matter are inclined to see some influence of the *Tale* upon Jacob Kraykov’s printed book. Nevertheless, we know that this apocryphon has reached us only in a manuscript copy from the 17th century, while the printed book in question dates from 1572, i.e. it is older by several decades. Jacob Kraykov’s books were disseminated in Macedonia and Kraishte, where the Kichevo manuscript originated, or at least was kept. Inasmuch as I consider the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* to be a compilation and believe it was not fully completed in the 11th century, I would propose for discussion whether the printed book might not have influenced the later manuscript copy. In an article about a completely different text, Janja Jerkov Capaldo points out the influence of this very same printed book, Jacob Kraykov’s *Book for Various Occasions*, upon the manuscript tradition of an apocryphon based upon this printed work.<sup>113</sup> Though this cannot be considered proof of influence in the case of the work we are considering, it does show a similar pattern. Such an influence is chronologically possible; geographically it is also quite conceivable. We should note as well that the statement that Tsar Peter died in Rome is not in itself organically connected to the rest of the account, so it could be an interpolation by the copyist, though this cannot be proved. Still, such an explanation could set things in a very different situation. Jacob Kraykov could have invented the story or have adopted it from elsewhere in order to establish a connection between Bulgaria and the Italian lands, a tendency that is present in his books, even in the lexical aspect, as well demonstrated in M. Tsibranska’s study.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Jerkov Capaldo, “Un apocrifo sulla Dormizione in un libro slavo pubblicato a Venezia nel 1572”, p. 28.

<sup>114</sup> I would like to note a proposed explanation of the presence of Tsar Peter in Jacob Kraykov’s book. Janja Jerkov Capaldo suggests that the mention of the Bulgarian ruler is connected to the veneration of St Peter of Athos, who is strongly present in the hagioritic tradition, especially in the apocryphon about the Dormition of Our Lady and the Holy Mountain as her earthly haven, her Garden (Jerkov Capaldo, “Un apocrifo sulla Dormizione in un libro slavo pubblicato a Venezia nel 1572”, pp. 35 ff.). The idea is interesting but I would like to stress the fact that M. Tsibranska (Tsibranska, *Etudi vărkhū kirilskata paleotipia*, pp. 46–47) first indicated it. Janja Jerkov Capaldo is familiar with her book and cites it, but,

Worth mentioning here is the strange assertion of Alexander Ivanovich Sobolevski that Tsar Peter died as a monk in some monastery in Constantinople;<sup>115</sup> the source of this statement is not clear, but is typologically similar to the statement about this ruler dying in Rome. After all, Constantinople was the New Rome. This claim is not confirmed in any other source, but it would be just as incorrect to deny its ideological meaning as to take it as a pure historical testimony about the place of the Tsar Peter's death. The indicating of Rome, or, for that matter, of Constantinople, is part of the imperial paradigm and, in my opinion, is closely related to the joint presentation of St Tsar Peter and St Constantine in our apocryphon. If this was a later interpolation, it is situated in the context of a work in which the two rulers jointly represent a Mosaic-Constantinian model of rule. This is an additional testimony of their parallel presentation, in which, at least in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, they ultimately embody the same royal/imperial paradigm of a pious and God-loving renovator tsar.

To summarise the contents of this chapter, we may draw several conclusions. The more general of them is that the already stated unity of the Bulgarian and Byzantine traditions as a persistent and prevalent trend in the *Tale* has been confirmed once again. There is no element at all of opposition between the two, nor any enmity between the two sides; the rulers of the two countries, who are models to be followed, are presented together and united in the message conveyed by this text.

In this chapter a specific model for a ruler has been traced, which we have called “the image of the renovator king”, and which is expressed in the persons of various rulers within *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Its embodiment in the Empire was St Constantine the Great, who was remembered ever since Late Antiquity according to the model established by Eusebius of Caesarea—that of the New Moses. This model is found in the *Tale* and we may say that it is relatively better represented there than the King David's model of a ruler chosen by God and obedient to Him. In our apocryphon, the ruler model is embodied chiefly in Tsar Constantine and by the joint presentation of Constantine and Tsar Peter, but also in Tsar Ispor. We also find elements of this image in the persons of other rulers or popular leaders mentioned in the text. Through the renovation, a standard Christian theme, the *Tale* presents one of the basic models of constructing the identity of society and state. This was one of the basic tasks and objectives of the text

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unfortunately, not in respect to this proposed hypothesis.

<sup>115</sup> A.I. Sobolevskij, *Drevnjaja tserkovno-slavjanskaja literature i eja znachenie*, p. 16 quoted by Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, p. 386.

and these images are among the major ones in it. All this is situated entirely within the biblical-Gospel tradition, and I do not think there is place left for significant folkloric or pagan remnants.

## CHAPTER SIX

### KINGS AND THEIR NAMES

In this chapter I have examined, each separately, those of the characters mentioned in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* whose historical identification is somewhat problematic. Most of them have been discussed in 19th and 20th century historiography, and various sorts of solutions to their identity have been proposed, some of which were dictated by the demands of the times in which the scholars worked. I have tried to make an overview of previous theories and to confirm them or propose my own interpretations.

I would like to stress explicitly that not all characters in the *Tale* are included in this chapter. The ones missing here are those whose identities are not in any doubt, and thus discussing them seems needless. Such cases are the characters Khan Boris-Michael I and his son Tsar Symeon. The case of St Tsar Peter also seems undisputable; but with him, we notice an incipient political ideology being developed, which I have touched upon at its respective place. Similarly, a special discussion in this study is devoted to the legendary tsars Ispor and Izot and to the characters connected with them, appearing in “their” sections of the source. I am referring especially to Goliath the Frank and to Tsar Ozia, as well as to some others. They are not presented in this chapter and I would refer the reader to those other parts of this book.

The characters discussed below are arranged in alphabetical order, not chronologically or in the order in which they are mentioned in the source. In many cases, the solution I propose is not to identify a real historical personality from the mediaeval history of Southeast Europe or the Orient, but to seek a constructed ideological character borrowed from the biblical or some other tradition, and displaying a certain emphasis in its underlying ideological paradigm. In the context of the *Tale*, such a character could have an even greater historical significance than the mention of a real Bulgarian ruler.



may say that the text itself does not offer much possibility for drawing conclusions about the character of this Tsar Arev. In fact, the most important information is that provided by the name itself, which we will discuss in detail.

It would not be a novel assertion to say that we should study the source in the context of Near Eastern literature. I already noted that the work is very reminiscent of biblical prophetic literature. However, in the case of Tsar Arev I will refer not to the Hebrew biblical tradition but to the legacy of the Christian Arabs. His name, as it figures in the *Tale*, is evidently similar to the Arabic name “Areph” (Hārith), which was very familiar in the Empire in its Hellenised form “Arethas” (Ἀρέθας). The name was typical for Byzantines of Christian Arabic origin who had found refuge in the Roman/Byzantine Empire after the Islamic conquest of the Near East.

The Arabic presence in the Eastern Roman provinces was very strong ever since Late Antiquity. We find it both in politics and in religious life. In the battle of Yarmouk in AD 636 the Muslim Arabs vanquished the Byzantine army. In Arab polities, such as the Ghassanides, one of the most loyal Roman allies in the Near East, embraced Christianity and interacted closely with the Romans. After the empire lost practically all of its Asiatic domains outside Anatolia to the Islamic Arabs in the last years of Emperor Heraclius’ reign, the Christians in the Near East found themselves in a new situation. They were now under the rule of a conqueror espousing a different religion. The Christian Arab princes, who until then had been at the service of the Romans and for whom their religious affiliation was more important in many respects than their ethnic similarity to the conquerors, found their situation insecure. Despite their enmity towards the conqueror, some of them remained under the power of the Muslims, while others gave prevalence to their religious kinship with the Christian Empire, crossed the Taurus Mountains, and settled in Asia Minor under the leadership of Jabalah, the last semi-independent prince of the Ghassanide dynasty.<sup>4</sup> We have little information about the fate of the family after that time, but there is reason to assert that in the early 9th century it gave the first and only Arabic dynasty of Byzantine *basileis*. This dynasty is associated with the name of Nicephorus I Genikos, whose Arabic origin from the Ghassanides is confirmed by several sources, especially the history of al-Tabari, who mentions that Nicephorus belonged to the family in question, the founder of which was thought to be

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<sup>4</sup> Concerning the history of this family, especially under Byzantine power after the Arabic invasion, see: Irf. Shahîd, “Ghassan post Ghassan”, *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times. Essays in Honour of Bernard Lewis*, Princeton, 1989, pp. 324 ff.

Jabalah.<sup>5</sup> The Arabic origin of Nicephorus is also mentioned by Michael the Syrian<sup>6</sup> and in other sources. We thus find that we have the names of three *basileis* of Arabic origin (Nicephorus, his son Stauracius, and his son-in-law Michael I, who was also called Rangabe, a name of Arabic origin) and of one patriarch: St Ignatius, son of Michael Rangabe. All of them had close connections, though in different ways, with Bulgarian history. This connection spans in history from Nicephorus I, who met his death in Bulgaria at the hands of the Bulgarian army of Khan Krum, who drank wine from the fallen Nicephorus' skull to celebrate his victory, to Nicephorus' grandson Patriarch Ignatius, during whose pontificate the Bulgarians were converted to Christianity.

Thus, there was a strong presence of Christian Arabs in the history of the Byzantine Empire precisely during the period with which we are dealing. We may also point out the great figure of Arethas of Caesarea, one of the writers who represent the "first Byzantine renaissance".<sup>7</sup> He is particularly important for this study, because of his name. The Christian Arabs who found refuge in the Empire did not quickly blend in with the population and long preserved their identity, remaining simultaneously Christian Arabs and Byzantines. This included preserving their traditions, language, and also their system of names. "Arethas" and "Gabalas" are the most typical Hellenised Christian Arabic names, and history does not know of any person in the Empire to have carried that name without having at least a remote Arab origin.<sup>8</sup>

The name is typical for the representatives of the early Ghassanides, of whom we know two people that had it. One was a phylarch of Kinda and ally of the Romans; he lived in the late 5th and early 6th century.<sup>9</sup> Another

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<sup>5</sup> *The History of al-Tabari*, vol. XXX, *The Abbasid Caliphate in Equilibrium*, Trans. et annot. by C.E. Bosworth, Published by State University of New York, Albany, 1985, pp. 239–240; E.W. Brooks, "Byzantines and Arabs in the Time of Early Abbasids", *English Historical Review*, XV (1910), p. 743; Shahîd, "Ghassan post Ghassan", pp. 325 ff. and p. 334 note 7.

<sup>6</sup> Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, ed. J.B. Chabot, vol. III, Paris 1924, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin: notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle*, Paris, 1971, pp. 205–241; Irf. Shahîd, "Islam and Byzantium in the IXth Century: the Baghdad—Constantinople Dialog", *Cultural Contacts in Building a Universal Civilisation: Islamic Contributions*, ed. E. İhsanoğlu, Istanbul, 2005, pp. 150–153; *Enkyklopaïdiko prosopographiko lexiko byzantinis istorias kai politismou* (= EPLBIP), t. III, Athens, 1998, pp. 153–156 (and the cited literature).

<sup>8</sup> Shahîd, "Islam and Byzantium in the IXth Century: the Baghdad—Constantinople Dialog", r. 151.

<sup>9</sup> I. Shaîd, *Byzantium and Arabs in the 6th Century*, Washington, 1995, pp. 724–725; idem, "Byzantium and Kinda", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 59 (1960), S. 57–73; EPLBIP, t. G, p. 152.

ruler with the name Arethas was even more famous: he was a loyal ally of Justinian I and was awarded the title of patrician by this emperor; he died in AD 569.<sup>10</sup> The name Arethas was well-known in Bulgaria because it belonged to the leader of the Arab Christian martyrs who suffered for their faith in the sixth century in the city of Najran in southern Arabia and were commemorated in the *Acta S. Arethae*.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, I would like to draw attention to an interesting problem. St Arethas was well known in Bulgaria ever since the time of the First Bulgarian Empire,<sup>12</sup> and, as one would suspect, his cult arrived via the Byzantine Empire. Understandably, the name was present in its Greek form (Ἄρεθα or Ἀρεθα), not in its Arab original. Then how can we explain the appearance in the 11th century *Tale* of the same name in a form so close to the Arabic one? A precise answer could hardly be given. The only way to know would be to have access to some tradition not influenced by the Hellenised form of the name. Such a tradition could be either the Arabic one itself, or some Greek text that directly sprang from the Arabic tradition and was not influenced by the familiar Byzantine form of the name. In the present state of our knowledge, there can be no convincing and indisputable proof.

These observations have another and more important significance for us. They demonstrate once more the close connection of the text, or of the source from which it was compiled, with the Near Eastern tradition. This connection is confirmed by the general nature of the apocryphon and hence provides a useful context for studying the details, such as the name of Tsar Arev.

Thus, we have reasons to propose that the name of Tsar Arev from the *Tale* should be identified with the Arab name Areph (Hārith)/Arethas, but

<sup>10</sup> I. Kavar, "The Patriciate of Arethas", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 52 (1959), pp. 321–343; Shahid, *Byzantium and Arabs in the 6th Century*, pp. 744 ff., 757 ff.; *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, J.R. Martindale, vol. III AD 527–641 (IIIA), Cambridge, 1992, pp. 111–113; EPLBIP, t. G, pp. 152–153.

<sup>11</sup> I. Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran. New Documents*, Brussels, 1971; I. Shahid, "Byzantium in South Arabia", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 33 (1979), 23–94; G.L. Huxley, "On the Greek Martyrium of the Negranites", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 8 (1980), pp. 41–55.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding the veneration of St Arethas and his companions, two interesting studies were published recently: D.P. Atanasova, "Māchenieto na sv. Areta i christijanskite mu sāmishlenitsi v slvjanskite staroizvodni cheti-minei",—in: *НѢСТЪ ЗЧЕНИКЪ НАДЪЗЪ ЗЧИТЕЛЪМЪ СВОИМЪ. Sbornik v chest na prof. dfn Ivan Dobrev, chlen-korespondent na BAN i Uchitel*, Sofia, 2005, pp. 566–578; D.P. Atanasova, "Māchenieto na sv. Areta i christijanite s nego v juzh-noslavjanskite staroizvodni cheti-minei. Izdanie na teksta po rākopis № 1039 ot Narodnata biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Methodi",—in: *Bibliotekata—minalo i nastojashte. Jubileen sbornik, posveten na 125-godishninata na Narodnata biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Methodi"*, Sofia, 2005, pp. 275–297.

the evidence is not conclusive. We have no other choice, except simply to continue noting it as “unclear” and “unidentified”. Therefore, we should not strain the sources, not try at all costs to find a historical person from whom our Tsar Arev should have originated.

### *Basil*

We could say that the identification of Tsar Basil presents no problems; nearly all scholars who have written on this matter are unanimous that the Tsar Basil in the *Tale* should be identified with the *basileus* Basil II Boulgaroktonos.<sup>13</sup> The *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* tells us that Tsar Basil was of a different family, but the crown of Constantine fell to him and he “took over the kingdom”, and, being a courageous man, he destroyed many enemy lands and pagan nations. There was plenty of good for the people in the days of Tsar Basil, who reigned for thirty years<sup>14</sup> without wife and without sin, and his reign was blessed.<sup>15</sup>

While I agree with associating Tsar Basil with the historical Emperor Basil II, unlike some other researchers I will not be tempted to see in the *Tale's* description of this Basil destroying enemy lands and pagan nations some reference to the conquest of Bulgaria by the historical Basil II. Of course, the mention could have expressed a remote memory of this event, but Basil II conquered many peoples, including non-Christian peoples, and had major successes against the Muslims, who were often described as pagans. The same caution should apply to the mention of his sinless life. Tsar Basil is presented here according to the prototype of the most pious rulers figuring in the apocryphon, i.e. Khan Boris-Michael I, the Baptiser of Bulgaria, and St Tsar Peter. The ascetic style of life of the historical Emperor Basil II was well known and amply presented in the sources,<sup>16</sup> and in fact he

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<sup>13</sup> Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 129; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovkovna istoriops*, pp. 130–131; Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 38. About this emperor, see: Iv. Bozhilov, Iv. Biliarsky, Chr. Dimitrov, I. Iliev, *Vizantijskite vasilevsi*, pp. 263–270. Obviously the term “Boulgaroktonos” is not cited in the text. It is to be noted that it appeared some centuries later, after the time of the reign of Basil—P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*, Cambridge, 2003, *passim* and pp. 66 ff.

<sup>14</sup> About the number 30: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 692–702.

<sup>15</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 19–28).

<sup>16</sup> M. Arbagi, “The celibacy of Basil II”, *Byzantine Studies/Etudes byzantines*, 2, 1975, pp. 41–45; Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*, pp. 61–62.

really never married, but the indication that he lived “without a woman and without sin” did not come from any historical knowledge but is a way, typical in the *Tale*, of constructing the image of a righteous and pious ruler. For example, Tsar Boris and Tsar Peter in the *Tale* are both also said to have lived “without sin and without a wife” (though the historical Boris-Michael and Peter did marry). The idea of living without sin and without a wife is simply a *topos*, shorthand in fact for indicating a ruler was pious and good. This could equally be said regarding the courageousness of Tsar Basil. Emperor Basil II is remembered for being courageous and resolute; but the reason these qualities were mentioned in the *Tale* was to present him as an ideal ruler.

The general description of Tsar Basil's reign recalls the paradigm that explicitly connects Tsar Basil to Constantine the Great, the pious and Christ-loving Tsar, whose crown fell to Basil. The will of God is evident in the fact that the crown “came” to him, and the fact that Tsar Constantine is ascribed these qualities certainly carries the qualities onto Basil as well. He is a righteous and certainly God-pleasing ruler, for his reign is blessed, he lives sinless, and there is much good for the people.

As I noted above, the character of Tsar Basil is based on a reminiscence of Basil II. We are presented a conception of a ruler, and of the qualities he must possess (chiefly qualities related to religion and faith), and of the beneficent results of imitating this God-loving exemplar. Interestingly Basil II, the famous “Bulgar-slayer” (“Boulgaroktonos”) is presented here as a Bulgarian ruler.<sup>17</sup> Should this surprise us? I do not think so. A great deal of literature has accumulated on the topic of the events in Bulgaria in the late 10th to early 11th century, but the most subtle observations are those of Iv. Bozhilov, S.A. Ivanov, D.I. Polyvjannyj, and Paul Stephenson in his commentary and interpretation of the policy of the victorious *basileus*.<sup>18</sup> The country was

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<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting that his nickname, which indicates victory over the Bulgarians and hence the opposition between Bulgarians and Byzantines, was not created in the time of Basil II himself, nor did it express any hostility towards the Bulgarians, which is also confirmed by *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*—P. Stephenson, “Basil II *Boulgaroktonos*: the origins of a legend”, *Byzantium and the Bulgarians (1018–1185)*, ed. K. Nikolaou, K. Tsiknakis, Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposium, 18, Athens, 2008, pp. 39–49; P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*, Cambridge, CUP, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Bozhilov in *Istorija na Bulgarija*, t. I, 1999, pp. 341–343; Bozhilov, *Vizantijskijat svjat*, pp. 389 ff.; Ivanov, “‘Bolgarskaja apokrificheskaja letopis’ kak pamjatnik etnicheskogo samoznanija bolgar”, p. 74; Polyvjannyj, *Kul’turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovoj Bolgarii*, pp. 95–97, 120–121; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study on the Northern Balkans, 900–204*, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 62–79; P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*,

conquered and the First Bulgarian Empire destroyed, and the Romans, after long efforts, succeeded in building a culturally and now politically united *Byzantine Commonwealth*, a world that, as of that time, became a synthesis between the Greek-speaking culture of Constantinople and that of the Slavs. In a certain sense, Basil II assumed the legacy of the Bulgarian state and created a Byzantine-Bulgarian Empire, as clearly indicated in the charters of the *basileus* for the Archbishopric of Ochrid; these documents refer to the union of the Empire and Bulgaria under a common yoke, and “without violating the boundaries and decrees of those who reigned previous to us”.<sup>19</sup> Bulgaria was integrated administratively, economically, and politically, in a way that preserved the previous fiscal system, and through intermarriage with the Bulgarian aristocracy. The model that Tsar Symeon had envisaged was now achieved, though by means of a Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria instead of the Bulgarian capture of Constantinople as Symeon had hoped. Thus, the Byzantine emperors, beginning with Basil II, became the rulers of the Bulgarians as well. As a confirmation of this, I would cite some of the conclusions of Iv. Bozhilov, according to whom Basil II was not simply a conqueror and destroyer, but also a “manager” (the expression is Bozhilov’s), and he sought the means to draw the Bulgarians into the Empire; his basic goal was not conflict but the creation of a community.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the *basileus* is presented as a unifier of Bulgarians, as their true tsar, to whom, in the words of the *Tale*, “the wreath of Tsar Constantine has fallen”.

Regarding Tsar Basil there is one other circumstance that we should consider: the fact that the brothers Moses, Aaron and Samuel appear in the text. There is an obvious difference in the way these are presented compared with most of the other mentioned kings. They “are to be found” (in other words, they appear in political-historical reality) “in the days of Tsar Basil”. There is simultaneity of rulers here, not succession. The only other similar case in the *Tale* is that of Tsar Peter and Tsar Constantine. The reign of Tsar Basil is not defined in the text, but it is obviously a typological continuation of that of Constantine, while that of the Cometopouloi, inherited after them

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Cambridge, 2003; Iv. Bozhilov, *Bulgarskata archiepiskopija XI–XII vek. Spisäkät na bulgarskite archiepiskopi*, Sofia, 2011, pp. 59 ff.

<sup>19</sup> J. Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, pp. 550, 556. Polyvjannyj, *Kul’turnoe svoeobrazie srednevekovoj Bolgarii*, pp. 95–97; Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier*, pp. 77–79. The most extensive and in-depth commentary on this text has recently been made by Bozhilov, *Bulgarskata archiepiskopija XI–XII vek*, pp. 59–62.

<sup>20</sup> Bozhilov, *Bulgarskata archiepiskopija XI–XII vek*, pp. 69–70.

by Augustian, is indicated as being a “Bulgarian and Greek” reign. This joining of the two nationalities points to a memory of the conflict, which is not mentioned and not particularly important for the author. Mentioning it was more probably consciously avoided. Here, as throughout the whole text, Bulgaria and the Empire are not placed in opposition, but presented as following a common political, religious, and historical course. In fact, here we find the most important message of the section about Tsar Basil: this part is not a narrative about his reign, but an indication of a shared tradition. The greatest significance of his inclusion in the *Tale* is that the victor and conqueror of Bulgaria, Basil II Boulgaroktonos, was incorporated into a text containing extremely important data about the religious-political model of the Bulgarian state. Moreover, he figures here as a pious and blessed ruler who follows the model of the Baptist and that of the saintly kings, Khan Boris-Michael I and St Tsar Peter.

### *Cometopouloi*

The Cometopouloi Dynasty was the last dynasty of the First Bulgarian Empire, and played a major role in the last years before the Byzantine conquest. After the death of their father, the *Comes* Nicholas, the four Cometopouloi (Comes’ sons) brothers—David, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel—jointly ruled the Bulgarian Empire during the final years of its resistance to the Byzantines. It seems undisputable that the three brothers in the *Tale* Moses, Aaron and Samuel, as well as the so-called Augustian,<sup>21</sup> are in fact characters based upon a reminiscence of the Cometopouloi brothers and, perhaps, upon the memory of Aaron’s son, called Alousianos (or Aloussian). The view is well argued in previous studies, and practically all historians unanimously support this conclusion. Therefore, we find the historical identification of these brothers poses no problem, and so I will not specially discuss them. The tsar Roman (probably a character reminiscent of Samuel’s son Tsar Gabriel Radomir), who is of the same family, is discussed in a section of this chapter under the heading of his name. I would also refer the reader to the special excursus in this book, where I have examined the royal paradigm of the hero with a mission, born of a widow-prophetess, a paradigm that these brothers illustrate.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 28–34).

<sup>22</sup> See in this book Excursus II.

Thus, I have left for discussion only one brother not designated by name, who figures in the part of the text immediately following the one about these brothers.<sup>23</sup> It is said there that after Augustian, a third one, born of the same widow, rose and assumed the reign and ruled for three years, and died. We can hardly find anything certain to go by in this text, anything by which to propose some historical identification. Even the few pieces of information cited must not be accepted uncritically. First, the tsar comes after Augustian—but who is Augustian? Authors who have written on this matter identify him with Aaron's son Aloussian.<sup>24</sup> In the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* he is presented as a child of Tsar Samuel, and it is said he took over the “Bulgarian and Greek Kingdom” and reigned for thirty-seven years. Let us assume that Aloussian may have been called a tsar, and also, mistakenly, a son of Tsar Samuel. His general portrayal in the *Tale* still contradicts the historical facts and traditions. The thirty-seven-year-long rule should imply a quite positive evaluation of this ruler, who quite obviously had God's blessing. This qualification seems to me inconsistent with a similar assessment regarding the Tsar Samuel's direct heirs, Tsar Gabriel Radomir and his son Peter Delyan. Moreover, he is placed chronologically before them, which complicates things even more, especially considering that the *Tale* is usually dated as written only a few decades after the events of Aloussian's activity. For me this identification is problematic, but I cannot offer a better one, so I consider the problem still open.

Let us return to the unnamed tsar, placed after Augustian and before Roman. The other statement that might serve as a reference for understanding the character is that he is the child of the same widow as the three brothers. This would make him the brother of Moses, Aaron and Samuel. This happens to make things easier for us, for we know that the Cometopouloi brothers were four in number. Among the names listed here, the name of David is missing, who was the eldest of them and seems to have headed up the movement. Sources are not informative about him: it is known that he ruled in Edessa (Voden) or Moglena and very early on was killed by local Walachians.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting that he is present in a later tradition and was canonised as a tsar-saint. He is also known from icons of him of the late

<sup>23</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 34–36).

<sup>24</sup> Dujčev, *Iz starata bulgarska knižhnina*, t. I, p. 240; Dujčev Iv., “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 129.

<sup>25</sup> V.N. Zlatarski, *Istorija na bulgarskata dārzhava prez srednite vekove*, t. I, part 1, Sofia, 1927, pp. 633, 640, 646–647; *Istorija na Bulgaria*, t. II, Sofia, 1981, pp. 390, 397–402; *Istorija na Bulgarija*, Sofia, 1999, t. I, pp. 308–318.

Ottoman period, and from mural frescos,<sup>26</sup> but above all from the *Stematography* by Christopher Žefarović, from the *Slovenobulgarian History* of Father Paisius of Chilandari, from *Zographou Bulgarian History*, etc. Christopher Žefarović was the first to supply the information about Tsar David of Bulgaria and he even provided pictures of him in his publication. This ruler is portrayed together with St Theoctist on a whole page, dressed in monastic habit and holding a sceptre and a cross in one hand, and a scroll in the other, upon which are written the words: “ВСАКО ЦРѢВО САМО В’ СЕБѢ РАЗДѢЛАА СЯ ЗАПИСѢТѢТЪ.”<sup>27</sup>

In Paisius’ book, we find several references to David. In the listing of Bulgarian tsars there, Tsar David comes after Seleukia and before Samuel.<sup>28</sup> A little further on he is described as a blessed person who abandons his position of ruler and chooses to withdraw to a monastery, where he completes his life in piety, after which his relics long remain imperishable in Ochrid.<sup>29</sup> He is also referred to as the uncle of St Tsar Vladislav/Vladimir, a character who evidently combines the characters of St Prince John Vladimir and the latter’s murderer, Tsar John Vladislav. David is also placed in the list of Bulgarian saints, and is described as one of the noteworthy rulers of his country.<sup>30</sup> Similar information in an abridged version is repeated in the *Zographou Bulgarian History*. There the character in question is placed after Boris, Symeon, Peter, Boris, Seleukia, and Sabbotin, but before Samuel, Radomir, John Vladimir, and Vladislav.<sup>31</sup> He is described as a pious man of holy life, who made peace with all. However, this was not to the liking of the

<sup>26</sup> A. Vasiliev, *Bulgarski svetsti v izobrazitelnoto izkustvo*, Sofia, 1987, pp. 66–67. St Tsar David was portrayed standing between St Tsar Boris and St Theoctist on an icon from 1817 by Metrophan the Zograph, on the western wall in the narthex of the church in the Zographou monastery. We also find him portrayed on the northern wall in the narthex of the church of the Saint Archangels in the Rila Monastery, and on the western wall in the narthex of the church in the Troyan Monastery. Among the portrayals that Asen Vasiliev does not mention is that in the Orlitsa metochion of the Rila Monastery, on the western wall inside the church, where he is depicted next to St Sava. In all cases, the tsar is portrayed in monastic garb, which is connected with the tradition that he left the throne and withdrew to a monastery. In this respect, a certain ruler-monk paradigm is followed; also related to this model are the cults of St Tsar Peter and of St Symeon—Stephen Nemanja—Biliarsky, Yovcheva, “Za datata na uspenieto na tsar Peter i za kulta kām nego”, pp. 543–557.

<sup>27</sup> “Every kingdom, divided in itself, will be desolate”—Chr. Zhefarovich, *Stematografia. Facsimilno izdanie, komentirano ot A. Vasiliev*, Sofia, 1986, p. IIb.

<sup>28</sup> *Istorija slavenobolgarskaja, sobrana i narezhdena Paisiem ieromonahom v leto 1762*, ed. J. Ivanov, Sofia, 1914, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Istorija slavenobolgarskaja*, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> *Istorija slavenobolgarskaja*, pp. 63–64, 66, 75.

<sup>31</sup> Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, p. 636.

Bulgarian boyars, and they plotted against him. When he learned about this, he left the throne and withdrew to a monastery, and after his death, his relics remained uncorrupted. We should not miss the reference to Tsar David of Bulgaria in the *History* by Hieroschimonk Spyridon, where the familiar story is related that he was pious and a peace-maker, which was unbearable for the boyars, so they said evil of him, wherefore he decided to withdraw to a monastery, and, after death, his relics remained incorruptible.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, after this familiar account, Spyridon quotes John Zonaras, that after the death of Emperor John Tzimiskes the Bulgarians revolted and gave the power to four brothers, David, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, called Come-topouloi, because they were the sons of a dignitary called Comes; David died soon after, and Moses was killed by Serres. This particular account resembles contemporaneous historical writing and was evidently influenced by such literature. Tsar David of Bulgaria is also mentioned in an old beadroll from the Zographou monastery, and is listed there in the following series of rulers: Boris, Symeon, Peter, Boris, Roman, Shishman, David, Samuel, Gabriel, Radomir.<sup>33</sup> It is not hard to see some mutual relatedness between these texts and in the order in which the rulers are listed in them. The cited works have been thoroughly studied, so we need not analyse them here. I will only note that in the 18th–19th century there was evidently a great dissemination of some unofficial tradition of veneration for Tsar David of Bulgaria as a blessed person; the origin of this cult should be sought in earlier centuries.

After this discussion of our knowledge about the eldest of the Come-topouloi brothers and about the semi-official or unofficial religious tradition that regarded him as a tsar and saint, we may ask whether this is the unnamed tsar mentioned in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The text tells nothing more, so it would be hard to give a firm answer. Yet I shall propose some ideas on the question. The unknown person is explicitly indicated as a brother of the three sons of the widow, but only the eldest of these brothers, David, is not mentioned. His name could generally fit in with the Old Testament line in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and help in a fuller understanding of the text. Of course, even assuming that the character of the unnamed ruler was indeed based on a reminiscence of David, he remains a character, and not an authentic historical depiction of a real person.

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<sup>32</sup> Spyridon ieroschimonah, *Istorija vo krattse o bolgarskom narode slovenskom*, 1792, Sofia, 1992, pp. 127–128.

<sup>33</sup> Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, p. 489.

Now we come to the last mentioned of the Cometopouloi, Tsar Gagan, called Odelean.<sup>34</sup> This character is probably based on the existing memory of Peter Delyan, son of Tsar Gabriel Radomir and grandson of Tsar Samuel. Hence, he is also one of the Cometopouloi dynasty; the scholars who have written on this topic share this view unanimously.<sup>35</sup> It is worth noting that he is situated here in a different context. He is preceded by a person whom I am inclined to consider as based on a reminiscence of one of the *basileis*, and Tsar Arev, discussed above, and Tsar Turgius follow him; these two do not seem related to the family of *Comes* Nicholas and the latter's wife Ripsimia. Hence, we are left with the impression that Tsar Gagan Odelean really is placed in the time of Byzantine domination. The account of him is different in some respects from others: he is described as handsome (a detail untypical for this text), he destroyed two cities beyond the sea, but he also built three in the Bulgarian lands—the cities of Cherven, Messembria, and Štip; he reigned for twenty-eight years<sup>36</sup> and was slain by a foreigner at Ovche Pole (Sheep's Field). The founding of cities is a topic discussed elsewhere in this study, and the fact that he was slain by a foreigner has already been explained by scholars as a reference to the victory of the Byzantines and their Varangian mercenaries, led by Harald Hardrada, over Peter Delyan.<sup>37</sup> Here I would only like to try to explain the name as it appears in the *Tale*. "Gagan" is a name that occurs in various forms in other apocryphal texts as well.<sup>38</sup> The general opinion of scholars is that this is a distorted form of the title "khagan", which, for some reason unknown to me, is sometimes defined as a "Bulgar" title.<sup>39</sup> I accept this explanation, though its significance

<sup>34</sup> See in this book, p. 21 (f. 402d, lines 17–27).

<sup>35</sup> Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, p. 287 note 2; Dujčev, "Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha", p. 129; Kajmakamova, "'Bulgarski apokrifen letopis' i znamenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie", p. 58; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednoviekovna istoriopsis*, p. 131. See also: A. Miltenova, M. Kajmakamova, "The Uprising of Petăr Delyan (1040–1041) in a New Old Bulgarian Source", *Byzantinobulgarica*, VIII, 1986, pp. 227–240.

<sup>36</sup> We already mentioned the significance of the number 28, for this is also the number of years it took Tsar Symeon to build the city of Preslav. The number is a product of  $4 \times 7$ , and so is connected to the Creation and carries the notion of fullness, completeness. In any case, if the number of years here has any signification at all, it is strictly a positive one—Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 689–692.

<sup>37</sup> Miltenova, Kajmakamova, "The Uprising of Petăr Delyan (1040–1041) in a New Old Bulgarian Source", pp. 234 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Miltenova, Kajmakamova, "The Uprising of Petăr Delyan (1040–1041) in a New Old Bulgarian Source", p. 234; Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 187–188, 198, 211.

<sup>39</sup> Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. II, *Sprachreste der Türkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen*, Budapest, 1943, p. 117; Curta F., "Qagan, Khan, or King? Power in Early Medieval

should not be overestimated. In any case, this interpretation is important as evidencing that the son of Tsar Gabriel Radomir was perceived as a ruler, and connected to steppe culture. More interesting for me is the form “Odelean” used for the second name of Tsar Gagan. It obviously derives from Delyan, and I shall not repeat here all the arguments already provided in support of this view. However, I will point out that the name has undergone change by the addition of the Greek article to beginning of the name.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Δελεάνος has become “Odelean” passing through the form ὁ Δελεάνος. This is plain to see. The important thing is that, in my opinion, this transformation shows the name was borrowed from a Greek text. This conclusion casts additional serious doubt upon the assertion, arbitrary enough anyway, that the text is an “original Bulgarian” one, which supposedly reflects the national memory, moreover, a local memory from parts of the south-western Bulgarian lands. In fact, it is evident that a Greek text was used in the compilation, at least for the part that tells of Tsar Gagan Odelean.

### *Constantine*

A ruler by the name of Constantine holds a significant place in the narrative of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and he represents one of the most important ideological royal paradigms there. These paradigms and the “Constantinian” model of rulership are discussed elsewhere in this study. Here I should say by way of a preliminary remark, that although the story is rather confusing, full of inaccuracies and discrepancies, and bits of information taken from the lives of other personages with this same name, overall it strives to depict the image of the baptiser of the Roman Empire and to construct an ideological model based on the memory of him and on various scriptural motifs.

Some elements in the narrative about Tsar Constantine certainly point to the historical identity of this character with St Constantine the Great, though others are completely discordant with the historical facts. Among the former elements we may indicate the names of his parents given in

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Bulgaria (Seventh to Ninth Century)”, *Viator*, 37 (2006), pp. 1–31 (with the more recent literature cited there); Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 300 note 43. See the interesting interpretation of Nikolov, *Političeskata misāl v rannosed-novekovna Bulgaria*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>40</sup> This way of forming a person's name is familiar to historiography and has already been discussed: Bozhilov in: *Istoriija na Bulgaria*, t. I, 1999, pp. 396 ff. (see p. 412 note 12 with the cited literature).

the *Tale*: Constantine the Green (Constantius Chlorus) and Helena; the founding of Constantinople; the close connection of the character with the finding of the True Cross, and in general the link between the veneration of the Cross and that of Constantine. We see that the chief aspects of the historical emperor Constantine that were incorporated into the memory of Constantine depicted in the *Tale* were related to the cult of St Constantine and his mother. Further evidence of this is the fact that the name New Jerusalem is given to the Imperial City, and in general the connecting of the Empire, during and after the reign of Constantine, to the Old Testament royal tradition. This has been the general line of suggestive imagery ever since the time of Eusebius of Caesarea. Of course, there are other elements in the narrative that do not correspond to our historical knowledge about St Constantine, and that even indicate the character is being confused with other persons. Here we will not deal with the purely fantastic or the ideologically suggestive elements, such as the theme of the miraculous birth of the emperor and the founding of the city of Bdin, called Heptalophos Babylon (Babylon on Seven Hills). More important is the designation of the character as Constantine Porphyrogenitus—a name modern researchers usually connect with the *basileus* Constantine VII, probably because of his popularity as a writer.<sup>41</sup> This name coincides with the historical context in which Tsar Constantine is presented in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*—this is the time of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter, who lived in the 10th century and really was a relative by marriage, and a contemporary, of Constantine VII. That is why it has been proposed the character in our source should be identified with this historical emperor. Some remote connection cannot be completely excluded, precisely because of the coinciding historical period in question. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is a compiled work and different texts may have been used in constructing the character; the name of the son of Leo VI the Wise may have borrowed from one of these texts. This character is ideological in nature; his function is to build an idea of a certain type of reign, not to tell about a concrete person who really existed. Hence, we may note that the historical Constantine VII did not supply any special ideological paradigm, and at least in Bulgaria his image was never used to create one. The situation is quite different with St Constantine the Great, which is why it is his image we find reflected in our apocryphal source.

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<sup>41</sup> Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, p. 130; Kajmakamova, "Istoriograf-skata stojnost na 'Bulgarski apokrifen letopis'", p. 436.

It is also important to stress that the Tsar Constantine presented in the *Tale* is a single person, not several different people, as in the case of Symeon, about whom I write in the respective section of the present chapter. Hence, we should exclude the possibility that the reference is both to Constantine I and to Constantine VII. One other interpretation, proposed by Ivan Venedikov, is also to be excluded.<sup>42</sup> According to Venedikov, the character referred to in the *Tale*, although the historical basis of both St Constantine and Constantine VII may have been used for it, was in fact not a tsar but a provincial governor of Vidin from the time of Tsar Peter. This otherwise unknown person belonged to a whole dynasty of such local governors. His predecessor was Glad, and his successor, Achtum/Ohtum, who had a Bulgarian name. Evidently, in this case the scholar is combining data from the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* with data from the Hungarian Anonymous and the *Vita S. Gerhardi episcopi*, which mention these persons.<sup>43</sup> From the very start (p. 138) Venedikov calls his version “unquestionable”, with which I cannot but disagree. I shall not discuss this entirely fanciful argumentation, full of declared but unproven assumptions. I shall point out that practically the only connection of Tsar Constantine from the *Tale* with the city of Vidin (not to mention the other characters and events) is the indication that he founded this city, defined in the text as Heptalophos Babylon. This name figures only as a reference to biblical motifs and can by no means serve to prove Venedikov’s conclusions.

To conclude, I would like to say a few words about the “evil curator” sent by Tsar Constantine to Rome to chase away the Roman warriors, and who plots with the Hellenes to kill Tsar Constantine and his mother Helena. Ivan Venedikov sees in this character a reflection of John Tzimiskes.<sup>44</sup> This assertion is without basis so again it is useless to discuss it. Ivan Dujčev, who also considers *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* to be a source pointing to concrete historical events, has stated the opinion that this was Romanus Lakapenus, but this view is also difficult to accept.<sup>45</sup> Still more views have been expressed, but the problem with all such approaches to the source is

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<sup>42</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 138–147.

<sup>43</sup> *Fontes latini historiae bulgaricae*, vol. V, *Fontes hungarici historiae bulgaricae*, prima pars, Serdicae, 2001, pp. 9–12, 43 ff.; Chr. Dimitrov, *Bulgaro-ungarski otnoshenija prez Srednovkovieto*, Sofia, 1998, pp. 44 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> Dujčev, *Iz starata bulgarska knizhnina*, t. I, p. 240; Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 129; Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 34.

that the interpretations are centred only on the situation in Bulgaria during the second half of the 10th century, and upon the designation “curator”. The search thus reaches persons who occupied the throne as vicars or lieutenants of the under-aged *basileis*, and towards whom the local Bulgarians had a negative attitude due to the historical circumstances. Unlike previous scholars, we should base our investigation only on St Constantine and consider the question regarding the evil curator only in the context of this emperor. Constantine I is presented more like a model of a pious Christian ruler than a concrete, living historical figure, so we should look for his opponent in the contrary role. Hence, the evil curator is a reflection of the high-ranking persons who opposed the policy of St Constantine or who at some time were persecutors of Christians: such were Maxentius, Licinius, Maximinus Daia, and to some extent Galerius. Their conflicts with Constantine were in fact usually about Tetrarchic politics, not religion, yet they were remembered as opponents of the Christian faith in the memory and literature of the Christian Middle Ages. It is notable that the “evil curator” in Rome allies himself with the Hellenes against St Constantine. These Hellenes are not the Greek-speaking army of John Tzimiskes, as some authors have supposed, but pagans, as becomes perfectly clear from the context in which the word is used.

Therefore, we may assert that Tsar Constantine in the *Tale* is an ideological image of the pious Christian ruler (of the so-called “Constantinian type of rulership”) and does not present any concrete historical person outside an idealised and archetypal memory of St Constantine himself. The same is true for his mother Helena, while the mention of the father Constantius Chlorus is only for the sake of greater authenticity.

### *Nicephorus*

*Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* mentions Nicephorus<sup>46</sup> as the successor of a ruler, or rulers, named “Symeon”. Scholars have generally made two main assumptions regarding him: we can identify him with a Byzantine emperor or else with some Bulgarian figure—either a local ruler or a provincial governor. We know of no other rulers by that name that could possibly have been included in the narrative of our apocryphon. Further below I will present the existing standpoints on this question, but I should say before proceeding that in this

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<sup>46</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 3–10).

and other similar cases, the search for a precise historical identity is not only unnecessary, it is probably not possible. “Tsar Nicephorus” from the *Tale* is not a single historical person but a collection of memories of different people. Of course, the cited name itself cannot have been chosen in a completely arbitrary way: it stems from one or all of the mentioned persons, and that is why we must not overlook it.

Early historical research on the *Tale* naturally related Tsar Nicephorus to some Byzantine *basileus*, since there is no Bulgarian ruler by that name. Most authors were content with merely pointing out that this was the emperor Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969), who is referred to together with Basil II and Romanus III Argyros.<sup>47</sup> Practically they offer no supporting argumentation, and the assertion is meant to be self-evident. The only substantial exception is Venedikov’s eccentric thesis pointing to the dynasty of governors (called *olgou-tarkans* according to him) of the county (*comitatus*) of Skopje, one of whom was supposedly the above-mentioned Nicephorus, incorrectly cited as a tsar in the *Tale*.<sup>48</sup> This scholar firmly rejects the idea that the character is identical with Emperor Nicephorus Phocas and discusses a possible identity with the basileus Nicephorus I Genikos, who, according to him, was, in a way, popular in Bulgaria. Yet he rejects this possibility as well and looks for a namesake, unknown to history and not mentioned in any other source, who would be the son of the founder of this “olgou-tarkan dynasty”, the Kalou-tarkan Symeon, and also the father of the evil tsar (who is in fact not a tsar but also an olgou-tarkan) Symeon-Roman, cited in the *Tale* as Symeon the Wise.<sup>49</sup> This is so unsustainable, we should probably not discuss it. Yet I shall make some remarks, since the thesis comes from an eminent Bulgarian historian and is one of the few concrete statements on the issue.

It is explicitly stated in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* that the evil Tsar Symeon the Wise is the son of Nicephorus, but it is noticeably not indicated that the latter has any kinship with Nicephorus’ predecessor, also called Symeon. Though both belong to the same historical context, we should not believe this non-indication of kinship was simply coincidental. We will

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<sup>47</sup> Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 129; Kajmakamova, “Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’ i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie”, p. 58; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, pp. 130–131; Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 38; Kajmakamova, “Istoriografskata stojnost na ‘Bulgarski apokrifni letopis’”, p. 418.

<sup>48</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 125–132.

<sup>49</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 129–132.

discuss the persons named Symeon separately, but here I should say that the whole idea regarding some local dynasty of *olgou-tarkans* in Skopje to which the Tsar Nicephorus of the story might belong is quite unfounded, fanciful, and the product of the imagination of the author who proposed it.

Can we say anything with certainty about this character? We should mainly proceed from the name “Nicephorus” and from the source text itself. We find there are no Bulgarian rulers or important historical figures by that name. There is likewise none in the other countries, from which we might expect it to have been borrowed, except from the Empire; hence, our interest will be focused mainly on the Byzantine legacy. There we find three *basileis* by the name of Nicephorus, and they were precisely of the 9th–11th century: Nicephorus I Genikos, Nicephorus II Phocas, and Nicephorus III Botaniates. In order to reach some conclusion, we should compare with the other elements of the description of this mysterious tsar in the *Tale*. He “appeared” and “took over the Bulgarian kingdom” after Symeon; this statement should be taken as a refusal to give a justification of his rule and as a tacit denial of relatedness to the preceding ruler. The kinship with the next one, on the contrary, is emphasised, and he is said to be the “infant” of Nicephorus. Then it is said that Nicephorus destroyed the lawless Tsar Maximianus and his army, which places the character in a certain ideological context. The latter name points to events of the 4th century, to the memory of Maximinus Daia and the victory of Christianity over the lawless emperors. I am convinced that this detail should be interpreted in terms of ideology, not as a concrete historical reference. In this sense, Nicephorus appears to us as a righteous ruler of the Constantinian type, connected with the imperial paradigm that was typical for the Empire, for Bulgaria, and for all Christian Europe. He should be considered not a concrete historical person, but the personification (or one of the personifications) of this ruler archetype. The question remains, where did the name Nicephorus come from?<sup>50</sup> The general answer is not hard to find—it came from Constantinople—but then a new problem arises: which of the three *basileis* of that name was used as the model for the ideological image of the Constantinian-type ruler presented in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*?

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<sup>50</sup> We could consider whether the name “Nicephorus” might figure in the source due to its literal meaning. In Greek, it means “victory-bearing”. Could we relate it to the victory of Christianity, as a characteristic feature of the veneration of St Constantine and the True Cross? This is certainly an interesting direction for interpreting the mention of “Tsar Nicephorus” in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, but I shall refrain from taking it. We have no concrete indications of such a thing and we would risk falling into an arbitrary modelling of the facts based on one’s own reasoning, and this is something that some researchers have already done.

I already mentioned that Iv. Venedikov is inclined to consider the possibility this could have been Nicephorus Genikos, though he ultimately rejects this version. The name of this ruler was probably popular in Bulgaria due to his death at the hands of the Bulgarian army. Nicephorus Genikos was of Arab origin and the connection of the *Tale* with the Near Eastern tradition could support the variant that he was the ruler in question. Venedikov also makes a completely groundless claim that one other argument supporting this identification is the story of the cities founded by the character, for the historical Nicephorus I did in fact settle some towns on the shore of Macedonia and Thrace prior to his large offensive against Bulgaria. I do not believe we may identify the tsar Nicephorus of the *Tale* as the historical Nicephorus I Genikos, not only because of the different periods of history to which they belong (the chronology in this text is extremely unstable), but because of the fate of the basileus in the *Tale*, his positive image there and the account of his victories. Here I will not at all touch upon the question of his kinship with the others and the heirs to his throne, where no similarity whatever exists: the heirs of Nicephorus Genikos (Stauracius and Michael Rangabe) are well known in history and there is none among them that could remind us of the character in the apocryphon.

Nicephorus Phocas was a warrior emperor and noted for his asceticism. These characteristics and the similarity in time would make him the most acceptable prototype of the unknown person mentioned in the source. However, we have no information that positively confirms this conclusion.

The version that it might be Nicephorus III Botaniates may be proposed for discussion only because of the similarity in the name. I do not think this variant is at all acceptable. No other characteristics of this emperor support such a conclusion. Therefore, I will reject this possibility.

To summarise our observations about the character we are discussing, we may say that “Tsar Nicephorus” is not a concrete historical personality but the image of a righteous Constantinian type of ruler. This is evidenced by his victory over the “lawless Maximianus”, and by the long reign granted him by God, which lasted 43 years. An additional argument can be found in the account of the founding of cities. According to our source, he created the cities of Didymoteichon, Morunets (Kavala), and Serres in Macedonia, Belgrade (= Berat in Albania) and Kostur (Kastoria) to the West, and Nicopolis on the Danube. Elsewhere I have stated my position on the interpretation of these *topoi*. I shall express disagreement with I. Venedikov’s idea about the transference of Nicopolis from Moesia to Epirus, but shall stress once again that this is not a historical account of the facts. The founding of cities is a creative work that makes the tsar similar to God and once again points

to the Constantinian paradigm and the whole ideological complex related to the birth of Constantinople. As for the name, it was probably borrowed from Nicephorus II Phocas, but did not originate with him; the author simply turned to a familiar figure in looking for a name; in fact, any of the other two *basileis* of this name could also have been its source.

### *Roman*

A relatively large space is devoted to Tsar Roman in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.<sup>51</sup> He is described in the text as coming from “the same stock” as the preceding ruler; the latter is not mentioned by name but was evidently one of the brothers Cometopouloi. This unnamed ruler is said to be born “of the same widow” as the brothers Moses, Aaron and Samuel, which makes him their brother at least from the same mother. Roman is not indicated as son and heir of the preceding tsar but only as connected to him by kinship. This is an important point, especially when we consider the dire relations that had come about within the dynasty, relations to which several of its representatives fell victim. Later in the narrative, we learn that Roman “was furious” at the eastern king and sailed the seas to slay two tsars, yet lost his own army in the process. Then he returned to Preslav, reigned nine years,<sup>52</sup> and died.

Historians have attempted to identify this character, and there are two main results from these efforts. First Konstantin Jireček, and after him Ivan Dujčev, have expressed the opinion that the character Roman was the Byzantine emperor Romanus III Argyros.<sup>53</sup> They found arguments in support of this statement in the coinciding names and the chronological and historical context. In any case, the thesis is not thoroughly argued but rather just stated in passing. As for Ivan Venedikov, he discusses and proposes a solution that this was in fact Tsar Samuel’s son, Tsar Gabriel Radomir, known also as Roman.<sup>54</sup> I shall not present his arguments here, but I shall say that

<sup>51</sup> See in this book, p. 20–21 (f. 402c, last line–f. 402d, lines 1–9).

<sup>52</sup> Regarding the symbolism of the number 9 see: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 581–590.

<sup>53</sup> Dujčev, *Iz starata bulgarska knizhnina*, t. I, p. 240; Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 129; Kajmakamova, “Bulgarski apokrifen letopis’ i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie”, p. 58; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, pp. 130–131.

<sup>54</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 123–125. The commentary in the latest edition of the apocryphon agrees with this view: Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 41.

this view seems more acceptable to me. I am inclined to support it not only because of the explanation regarding the name but also because of the explicitly indicated family origin of Roman, who is presented as one of the Cometopouloi. It is worth noting the mention of the capital city Preslav. Of course, neither Romanus Argyros nor Garbiel Radomir is in any way connected with it, but the latter of the two is in a somewhat stronger position in this respect. The explicit indication of this city in the *Tale* could be considered a confirmation of the connection of “Tsar Roman” with the Bulgarian state and its tradition from the time of the dynasty of tsars Symeon and Peter. The military campaign to the East and the two slain tsars are part of the peculiar narrative of the apocryphon, and we should not necessarily look for corresponding historical facts.

Therefore, the memory of Tsar Gabriel Radomir probably served as the basis for the character of Tsar Roman, although the latter does not fully coincide with the historical personage. The author’s attitude to the character is not clearly displayed, not even hinted at, but I am left with the impression that Roman is placed rather in the category of righteous rulers than in the opposite group. The relation with the Cometopouloi and their tradition is clearly underscored.

#### *Seleukia Simeklit*

Regarding the Tsar Seleukia, nicknamed Simeklit, we read that he came down from the mountain Vitosha but he assumed the throne in Romania. He built five cities: Plovdiv (Philippoupolis), Srem (Sirmium), Breznik, Sredets (Sofia), and Niš; he reigned for thirty-seven years and his life ended near Breznik.<sup>55</sup> Though not explicitly indicated, we could place him in the category of the righteous rulers due to his construction activity and long reign. He is tsar of Bulgaria and his capital is Sredets. Importantly, his time is represented in the context of Constantine’s. The story about Tsar Seleukia is situated in the time of Tsar Constantine’s absence, when he is away searching for the True Cross. I agree with the authors who have written on this matter; that, in the story about Seleukia there is an indirect reference to military activity, evidenced most of all in the mention of “going to Romania”. It is to point out that most researchers are inclined to identify this tsar with

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<sup>55</sup> See in this book, p. 18–19 (f. 402a, line 32–f. 402b, line 8). Regarding the meaning of the number 37 see: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 708.

Samuel.<sup>56</sup> The argument for this is Seleukia's chronological place, according to the text of the apocryphon—he comes after Tsar Peter. Probably the identical first letter of their names also had some influence. Still, I do not find these arguments sufficient for justifying this identification. Essentially, the reason for it is the desire to relate the text of the *Tale* at all costs to Bulgarian history, and to equate the characters cited in the text (or at least the positive ones) to Bulgarian historical figures. Still, I would like to stress that Ivan Dujčev, in the cited book, strongly underscores the connection of Seleukia to the biblical tradition.

While these claims may be simply unproven and unconvincing, the argumentation of Iv. Venedikov surpasses all in this respect.<sup>57</sup> According to this scholar, the section about Tsar Seleukia actually indicates reminiscence of the battle at Trajan's Gates and of the great contribution to this victory made by a person who was provincial governor of Sredets and the surrounding district. This was Seleukia, whose position was subsequently inherited by Krakra. The choice of name is attributed to confusion and historical oblivion combined with a distorted association with the context of the story, i.e. the finding of the True Cross by Tsar Constantine. The Saviour suffered on the Cross in order to redeem Humanity from Original Sin; the Cross itself was made during the reign of Octavian Augustus or, according to some apocrypha, of Tsar Seleukia Semikley. According to Venedikov, this reference became part of the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

Ivan Venedikov's argument is obviously fancifully constructed, so we shall rather direct our attention to the earliest comments by scholars on the question, which seem to be the most adequate regarding the text. It is obvious there was no historical figure with which we may identify the cited Tsar Seleukia Simeklit. As correctly noted in the commentary on our apocryphon, this is a reminiscence of the name of the Seleucids, who were the Diadochi kings of Syria and heirs of Alexander the Great.<sup>58</sup> I would add that this could not have been a random choice. Though the character is not a concrete historical figure, the reference to Tsar Seleukia must have some ideological significance that we will try to discover. For that, we must rest our query on the only thing we have at our disposal: the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and the name of the character.

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<sup>56</sup> Dujčev, *Iz starata bulgarska knizhnina*, t. I, p. 240; Dujčev, "Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha", pp. 128–129; Kajmakamova, "Bulgarski apokrifni letopis' i znachenieto mu za bulgarskoto letopisanie", p. 57; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, p. 130.

<sup>57</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 132–138.

<sup>58</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 32.

The story in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* unquestionably connects Tsar Seleukia with western Bulgaria, especially the region of Kraishte and the vicinity of Sofia. Places indicated in the text are the mountain Vitoshka (according to Venedikov, this citation encompasses the whole of Sofia Valley) and the city of Sredets. A special place is assigned to Breznik, the city which Seleukia built and where he died.<sup>59</sup> The cited city of Niš is also not far away, while the mention of Plovdiv could be related to the passage about “going to the field called Romania”. The mention of the city of Srem is somewhat stranger. Iv. Venedikov invented the explanation that there was such a place in the river valley of Strema, the left tributary of the river Maritsa (Hebrus).<sup>60</sup> In my opinion Srem was most probably the city of Sirmium, which can likewise be related to western Bulgarian lands of the earlier Middle Ages, though it is distant from the region referred to in the text.

This information brings us no closer to identifying Tsar Seleukia, so we must pass on to his name. It is to point out that a name similar to this can be found in other texts as well. Foremost among these is the *Tale about the Cross Wood* by Priest Jeremiah.<sup>61</sup> There Seleucius is presented as the heir of Octavian Augustus, and as a pious man who lives in the expectation of God. Unfortunately due to an accident he risks becoming blind. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself saves him from this by sending Seleucius' son Prov (Probus) a medicament for the eyes of the ailing tsar. This account presents Tsar Seleucius in a very favourable light: he is heir to Octavian Augustus, he is pious, and he is healed by Jesus Christ; he thus becomes part of God's plan of salvation, not only because he himself has believed, but also for having become the cause of many others around him to believe. It is important to point out that there is another, parallel text in which this same king is designated as Semikley, which is quite similar to Simeklit, the second part of his name in the *Tale*.<sup>62</sup> The characteristics of this ruler coincide to a great degree with that of Tsar Seleukia in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

Noteworthy in this context is the presence of a certain Tsar Seleukia in *Slovenobulgarian History* by Father Paisius of Chilandari, where the rulers after Tsar Boris II are listed in the following order: Seleukia—Sabbotin—David—Samuel and the Cometopouloi in general.<sup>63</sup> In the *Zographou*

<sup>59</sup> I have further discussed the mention of the city of Breznik elsewhere in this book.

<sup>60</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, p. 133.

<sup>61</sup> Vatroslav Jagić in: *Starine*, 5, 1873, s. 83–95; M. Sokolov, *Materialy i zametki po starinnoj slavjanskoj literature*, Moscow, 1888, pp. 97, 170; *Stara bulgarska literatura*, t. I, *Apokrifi*, Sofia, 1982, pp. 282–284 (No 15).

<sup>62</sup> Sokolov, *Materialy i zametki*, pp. 97, 170; Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, p. 285 note 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Istorija slavenobolgarskaja*, pp. 31, 59.

*Bulgarian History* this tsar is placed likewise immediately after Tsar Boris II (here the events after the death of Tsar Peter are presented in a way that is largely true to history):

по негоже Селевкѣа, и онъ бѣ славенъ на войскѣхъ. и всюдѣ добиваше, и много кесарское войско порази, и оучевои Топлицѣ, и Сардикѣхъ близъ Царѣа града.<sup>64</sup>

Following him, Tsar Sabbotin is mentioned, who was not very fortunate in war and suffered defeat by the Greek tsars and died “в смущение” (“in disorder”). Tsar Seleukia also figures in *История во кратце* (*Brief History*) by Hieroschimonk Spyridon, where he is again placed immediately after Boris II and before Tsar Sabbotin. It is said there about him:

а по нѣ настѣ селѣвкѣа, и ѿ бѣ славенъ на войскѣхъ и всѣдѣ добивашей много кесарско войнство порази, топлицѣ и сардикѣхъ ѿ своѣи бѣ цри града.<sup>65</sup>

After him came Sabbotin, who was not good at warring and after living a while died in disorder. There followed Tsar David, who was peace-loving and therefore provoked resistance, but left the throne of his own will and withdrew to a monastery; after his death his relics remained intact. Having in mind that the tsars cited right after this group are Samuel, John Vladimir, Vladimir, and Vladislav, we have reason to believe that the first three, Seleukia, Sabbotin and David, were interpolated between the historical narrative about the end of Bulgaria of the Preslav rulers and that about the events related to the Cometopouloi. There are noticeably positive and individualised attitudes to them displayed in the story. The context of names is evidently connected to the biblical tradition, but this could be because all of *Comes* Nicholas's sons had Old Testament names. Yet I cannot help saying that, as a group, these three—Seleukia, Sabbotin and David—recall God's Chosen People, Israel. The first of them is the topic of this discussion, the second is related to the day of the Sabbath and the third bears the name of the king—prophet, author of several books of Holy Scripture, the man from whom the Saviour is descended in his human existence. All this gives us reason to see in the tsar by the name of Seleukia, cited in *Zographou Bulgarian History* a character originated from biblical history, and one with undoubtedly positive qualities as portrayed in the text.

We have reason to look for the origin of the character of Tsar Seleukia in the biblical context; and this leads to the conclusion that the name comes from the Seleucids, who for centuries ruled Antioch, Syria, and a large part

<sup>64</sup> Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, p. 636.

<sup>65</sup> Spyridon ieroschimonah, *Istorija vo kratse o bolgarskom narode slovenskom*, 1792, p. 127.

of the Middle East and Central Asia. The dynasty was named after one of the heirs of Alexander, Seleucus I Nicator (circa 356 BC–281 BC). This name is well known from biblical texts as well, especially from the Book of Maccabees, as a pagan Hellenistic ruler. A king by the same name figures in Holy Scripture: this is Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 BC),<sup>66</sup> son of Antiochus III the Great. Here we will not deal in detail with the events that caused the movement of the Maccabees, but I would like to try to solve an obvious contradiction in this respect between the two texts, that of the Bible and that of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Even though apocryphal texts generally agree with the standpoint expressed in the canonical text of the Bible, in this case they differ. The attitude to Tsar Seleukia (whom we somewhat relate to Seleucus, though they are not fully identical) is a positive one both in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and in *Tale about the Cross Wood*. In the former we see his reign described as blessed, constructive, and long, showing he is obviously granted protection by God, and in the latter story, he is linked with the Emperor Augustus who ruled at the time of the Incarnation, and he is healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. The biblical Books of the Maccabees are about the struggle of the Hebrews with the Hellenistic rulers, who are therefore more or less presented in a negative light. In order to explain for this discrepancy, we should analyse the story in Holy Scripture more carefully, a story that represents a larger and more complicated text than the mere mention of the character in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

We may pose the question whether all the Seleucids are presented in the same way in the Books of Maccabees and what attitude is shown there to Seleucus in particular. On one hand, it is clear that the problems connected with him begin precisely when he sends Heliodorus to plunder the treasures of the Temple. On the other hand, it seems to me the book avoids making a direct and very negative assessment of the king. He remains somehow aside from the flow of events that lead to the conflict, and intervenes only because of the intrigues stirred by some unrighteous Hebrew renegades and by some Gentiles subordinated to him. I should note that the good coexistence between the Seleucids and the Hebrews is specially indicated, as well as the ruler's donations to the Temple: Now when the holy city was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias the high priest, and his hatred of wickedness, It came to pass that even the kings themselves did honour the place, and magnify the temple with

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<sup>66</sup> *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Bd. II.A,1 (Sarmatia-Selinos), col. 1242–1245; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 18, pp. 260–261.

their best gifts; Inasmuch that Seleucus of Asia of his own revenues bare all the costs belonging to the service of the sacrifices. (2 Maccabees 3:1–3). The Gentile king is first presented in a favourable light, but all this changes after Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, intervenes: he has quarrelled with the priest at the city market and, motivated by hostility, informs the governor of Coele-Syria about the riches stored in the Temple, which could become the possessions of the king (2 Maccabees 3:4 ff.). That is why Heliodorus is sent to take away the treasures of the Temple. The account of these events (2 Maccabees, chapter 3) does not in itself present the Gentiles as very aggressive, or at least their actions cannot be compared with the atrocities committed by rulers, described in other parts of the Books of the Maccabees (see especially 2 Maccabees, chapter 7). Essentially, Heliodorus is stopped by Divine intervention, he has known the power of the Almighty, and he leaves the treasury intact. Moreover, at the request of his relatives, he is saved through the prayers and intercession of the high priest Onias, and, after rising he himself makes a sacrifice and makes vows to the Lord God of Israel, bearing witness to the greatness of His deeds (2 Maccabees 3:31–36); later he himself intercedes before the king, asking him to leave the Hebrews in peace and not plunder the Temple (2 Maccabees 3:37–40). History tells us it was precisely Heliodorus who would later kill King Seleucus IV Philopator,<sup>67</sup> but the story in the Book of Maccabees does not tell of this. This omission is because these events are not relevant to the purpose of the book, which is to show the humility of pagan rulers before the might of God.

The other mentions of Seleucus in the Bible are not very important and are, in a way, morally neutral: he is said to be the father of King Demetrius (1 Maccabees 7:1; 2 Maccabees 14:1), and his name is used as a reference for dating certain events by the name of the current ruler or as a reminder of what happened to Heliodorus (2 Maccabees 4:7, 5:18).

The city of Seleucia is also mentioned in the Bible, twice (1 Maccabees 11:8; Acts 13:4), and it may have some relevance for our study. This was a maritime city, called Seleucia Pieria,<sup>68</sup> situated on the sea not far from Antioch. It had the same name as the city of Seleucia on the Tigris,<sup>69</sup> which was in Mesopotamia, on the other shore of the river opposite Ctesiphon, and as

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<sup>67</sup> *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Bd. II.A,1 (Sarmatia-Selinos), col. 1244–1245; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 8, p. 783, vol. 18, p. 261.

<sup>68</sup> *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Bd. II.A,1 (Sarmatia-Selinos), col. 1184–1200.

<sup>69</sup> *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Bd. II.A,1 (Sarmatia-Selinos), col. 1149–1184.

several other cities<sup>70</sup> built by the founder of the dynasty, Seleucus I Nicator and bearing his name. However, it would not have been difficult to associate these cities with Seleucus IV as well. Thus, this king could fit into the series of the kings-founders of cities, of whom the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is full, and which are charged there with a special ideological significance in creating the image of the pious and God-protected ruler. This is one possible understanding of how this apparently positive evaluation of Tsar Seleukia Simeklit came about in the apocryphal text under discussion. In support of this view I should also point out that the founding and renovating of cities is mentioned in quite a few passages in the Books of the Maccabees, and certainly seems to be considered a very important activity for organising (or recreating) the country (see, for instance, 1 Maccabees 12:38, 13:33).

In conclusion, we may sum up that in the case of Tsar Seleukia, called Simeklit, we have once again a character who does not match a concrete historical person. He was probably constructed based on some interpretation of the image of the Hellenistic king Seleucus IV Philopator. The essential thing here is that this case also represents a reference to the Old Testament tradition and to the history of God's Chosen People. The character is based on the image of a ruler-builder who does not come from the People of Israel, but was ruler of the Hebrews and did not oppress them; instead, his fear of God stopped him from committing the unjust act he was planning. This is probably how this rather schematic but overall not negative character in the *Tale* was created.

### *Slav*

This tsar, Slav, is said to be the first ruler of the Bulgarian land, who reigned for one hundred and nineteen years.<sup>71</sup> Most scholars express the view that this is a legendary eponym of the Slavs who settled in the Balkan Peninsula,<sup>72</sup> and they take this view as being somehow self-evident. In my opinion, the

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<sup>70</sup> *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Bd. II.A,1 (Sarmatia-Selinos), col. 1200–1205; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 18, p. 260.

<sup>71</sup> See in this book, p. 15 (f. 401b, lines 11–20).

<sup>72</sup> Dujčev, "Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha", p. 126; Beševliev, "Nachaloto na bulgarskata istorija spored apokrifn letopis ot XI vek", pp. 41–42; Kajmakamova, *Bulgarskata srednovekovna istoriopsis*, p. 125. In the cited passage, Veselin Beševliev states the assumption that this was Sklavun, a Slavic prince and leader of the Severi tribe. For a general discussion of the earliest history of the Slavs, see: F. Curta, *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region, c. 500–700*, Cambridge, 2001.

problem here is that such a conclusion seems to be that of a 20th century historian, not of a mediaeval writer, especially not the one who compiled the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

Obviously, we need not look for a concrete historical personage to identify with Tsar Slav. He is a purely mythical character, and this should alone be clear from his one hundred and nineteen year reign. Our task should rather be to discover what precisely this tsar personifies. The text states that Slav is the first ruler of the newly settled Bulgarian land, personally “placed” in that position by the prophet Isaiah. He is the only tsar to be set on the throne by God’s prophet; as for the following ones, the word used is not “placed” but “was found”. This means it is precisely through Slav that God’s plan is accomplished, and the prophet Isaiah is the executor. This certainly makes Slav especially important in the context of this apocryphal story. Hence, I would not agree that the character “symbolises the Slavic principle in the formation of the Bulgarian nation”. This is an inverted perspective in which the view of the present-day scholar is ascribed to the compiler of the mediaeval text. This approach is typical for our historiography, especially with respect to the study of how the Bulgarian nation was formed.<sup>73</sup> Instead, I believe we should seek the meaning of Tsar Slav not in some sort of ethnic construction but in the ideological standpoint regarding the identity of royal power and its religious legitimisation. The presence of the prophet Isaiah is a sufficient argument supporting this line of interpretation.

A confirmation can also be found in the second notable detail about Slav in the narrative, regarding the settlement of the country. At first the prophet says “and I settled the land of Karvuna, called Bulgarian land”, and in the following sentence, describing the activity of Tsar Slav whom he has made tsar, we read that “this tsar settled regions and cities”. The question arises, who exactly was it who settled the land—the prophet Isaiah or Tsar Slav? I am inclined to think that just as the prophet was fulfilling God’s command to settle the Bulgarians in the Land of Karvuna, so too Tsar Slav served as the tool for fulfilling the will of the prophet who had placed him in power. In fact, he is likewise the tool of Divine Providence through whom the plan for a new “chosen people” is implemented.

Finally, I would like to make some remarks in connection with the “Hundred Mounds”. The text of the *Tale* states that Tsar Slav built these mounds.

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<sup>73</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, “Srednovekovna Bulgaria: tsarstvoto i naroda”, in: ΠΟΛΥΧΡΟΝΙΑ, *Sbornik v chest na prof. Ivan Bozhilov*, Sofia, 2002, pp. 25–40.

This signifies they were not a natural phenomenon but the work of man.<sup>74</sup> Hence, we should reject defining them as hills or mountains. On the other hand, the question arises what the writer may have meant by the term “*mogila*” (mound). This is something usually associated with a burial site (though this is not a necessary part of its definition) over which earth is piled on. Precisely this form is, in my opinion, the most characteristic feature of the object described here. Thus, in utilising some side data, we connect the idea of creating the “hundred mounds” with the building of cities, which is so characteristic for other rulers mentioned in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. In this sense, the creative activity of Tsar Slav is emphasised once again and complements certain other traits of the character as depicted.

I will conclude by saying that whatever our observations and remarks on the source, we cannot avoid the topic raised by the very name of this character. This name is not a memory of the arrival of the Slavs early on, before the Bulgars, nor is it a pronouncement about the fundamental role of the Slavic population in the formation of the nation. These conclusions are theses of present-day historiography. The mediaeval writer could not have had such distant memories, nor have devised such detailed national schemas. His was a different task: to present the country, the people, and its ruler according to the paradigm of the biblical tradition; in this respect the character of Tsar Slav represents a step in just this direction.

### *Symeon*

We find three tsars by the name Symeon in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Judging by the logic of the narrative, they appear to be different persons, at least within this story. The first of them is a tsar whose reign is described as pious, happy, and blessed.<sup>75</sup> This is evident especially by its length—one hundred and thirty years.<sup>76</sup> The text stresses the abundant prosperity of

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<sup>74</sup> This has not passed unnoticed—see Iv. Dujčev in: *Pärva nauchna sesija na Archaologicheskija institute, maj 1950*, Sofia, 1950, pp. 507–513; Dujčev, “Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha”, p. 126.

<sup>75</sup> See in this book, p. 16–17 (f. 401c, line 27–f. 401d, line 11).

<sup>76</sup> The number 130 is not mentioned often in the Bible (Numbers 7:13) and is significant chiefly as the sum of other numbers. I would mention that 130 were the years of the life of priest Jehoiada who lived in the time of Joash, king of Judah (2 Chronicles, chapter 24). He was a righteous man and helped restore the Temple, which, assuming it is relevant to our case, would carry a positive evaluation in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Regarding the number, see: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 807–808.

these times, and it is also indicated that he collected merely token taxes from all regions of his kingdom: one distaff-full of wool, one spoonful of butter, and one egg per year. Also indicative of his positive character are his constructions and the founding of cities, mentioned above. Symeon created many cities by the sea, and especially Preslav, which was built in the course of twenty-eight years. It is obvious that this idealised character is based on the historical Bulgarian Tsar Symeon (893–927), son of Khan Boris-Michael I (although he is presented as being the latter's brother here), and father of Tsar Peter, which provokes no discussion nor raises any particular problems for scholars seeking the prototype.

Such is not the case with the other two tsars in the text, Symeon II and Symeon III the Wise. The former is merely mentioned and no information is given about his reign except its duration: twenty years.<sup>77</sup> It is placed in time immediately after the reign of Tsar Constantine, but there is no indication that the two tsars are part of the same family or dynasty. Some authors have united him with Symeon the Wise as being the same character.<sup>78</sup> This is obviously inconsistent with the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, in which the two are clearly distinguished: between them is the reign of Tsar Nicephorus, and regarding Symeon II it is explicitly said that he died after ruling for twelve years, while Symeon the Wise, after a reign of four years.

Ivan Venedikov is the only scholar to propose a more extensive interpretation of the text and the historical identification of the characters, but what he offers is completely arbitrary. According to him, this Symeon II is the *Kalou-tarkan* Symeon, appointed by Tsar Symeon in 924, who became the founder of the dynasty of provincial governors of Skopje.<sup>79</sup> He was the father of Nicephorus (an assertion with no basis in the text!) and the grandfather of Symeon the Wise. The latter, for his part, is identical with Symeon-Roman,

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<sup>77</sup> See in this book, p. 19–20 (f. 402b, last line–f. 402c, line 2). The number 12 is very important in the biblical context. It is the number of the tribes of the Sons of Israel (i.e. of the sons of Jacob—Genesis 35:22) and indicates the fullness of the People. The princes, sons of Ishmael, are twelve (Genesis 17:20). This is also the number of the wells of water in Elim (Exodus 15:27), there are twelve stones on the altar in Sinai (Exodus 24:4) and on the altar in Gilgal (Joshua, chapter 4), there are twelve stones on the breastplate (Exodus, chapter 28), the sacrificial breads or animals are of that number (Leviticus 24:5, Numbers 7:3, 87), etc. It would be appropriate to discuss in this particular context the number of years of this ruler who is only slightly present in the source. Regarding the number, see: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, col. 620–645.

<sup>78</sup> See in this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 10–18). Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 299 note 37.

<sup>79</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, pp. 125–132.

governor of Skopje, who surrendered the city to the Byzantines, which supposedly explains the negative attitude towards him on the part of the apocryphon's author.

Venedikov's assertions regarding the two unfamiliar tsars by the name of Symeon are completely arbitrary, unproven, and untenable. I will not discuss the strange argumentation, based on a chain of assumptions, each of which is the basis of the next, about the position of the persons, the localisation of their activity, and the relations between them. The only concrete "evidence" of kinship between Symeon II and Symeon III that Venedikov indicates is the existing tradition for a grandson to bear the name of the grandfather.

As for the last one, the bad ruler Symeon the Wise, another and different interpretation of him has been given based on the very similar text of another apocryphon with a similar title, *Tale of Isaiah*, where a tsar with the very same name is mentioned. This other apocryphon relates<sup>80</sup> that the thirty-ninth tsar called Symeon the Wise will come with ships by sea. He will conquer the Bulgarian land, and also the New Jerusalem, will enter the latter city through the Golden Gates, and will penetrate into the repository. All will revolt and the Lord will strike down the people because of their pride and folly. Symeon the Wise will fall to the ground and will turn towards the New Jerusalem, saying that their laws have multiplied around him and he will spend six years in the kingdom. It is correct to say that the two tsars named Symeon the Wise, the one in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* and the one in *Tale of Isaiah*, are identical as imaginary persons. In the latter text the description is more detailed but we may say it contains all that the first text does, and does not contradict it in any way on this common topic. The basic points are the same: the name, the evil ruler, the destruction of the lands of Bulgaria, Jerusalem, and Rome, the relatively short reign (4 or 6 years). In *Tale of Isaiah* the tsar goes by sea with ships, and the New Jerusalem is presented with traits that are distinctly related to the Old Testament: the Law is mentioned, the "repository" suggests the Divine presence and the Holy of Holies of the Temple. The idea has been proposed that Symeon the Wise in *Tale of Isaiah* is Volodimer, son of the Grand Duke of Kievan Rus' Yaroslav the Wise, who undertook a military campaign against Constantinople in 1043.<sup>81</sup> This is a possible explanation but we should emphasise once again that the characters in both apocryphal texts are not historical persons

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<sup>80</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 188, 200, 212.

<sup>81</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 217 note 24.

but images of a certain type of ruler. However, this thesis certainly does not explain why this particular name was used.

Of all countries where we might seek comparisons in commenting on our source, only in Bulgaria was there a ruler—and just one—named Symeon. Therefore, we should ask why there are three characters by that name in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. I believe what we have in this case is three different perspectives on the same ruler, Tsar Symeon of Bulgaria. This is not a triple citation of his name but the construction of the image through representation of three different tsars derived from the perception of a single person. Elsewhere I have discussed the compiled nature of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, constructed from different texts of various origins. The most important source texts are related to the Near Eastern apocalyptic tradition, but practically all of them must have passed through the Empire, unless they were of local origin. The separate works may have presented a different image of the same Bulgarian tsar, which led to the depicting of three different rulers, one of whom is a clearly positive character; the other, neutral; while the third is obviously negative. We could hardly reconstruct the concrete path by which all this was achieved, or the possible sources.

#### *Theodora and Her Son the Tsar*

Theodora and her son the tsar are mentioned immediately after “Tsar Roman” and immediately before “Tsar Gagan Odelean”. The tsar himself is never cited by name, but is qualified as “pious and devout”, as son of the righteous Theodora; he built many monasteries in the Greek and Bulgarian land and reigned for twenty-three years<sup>82</sup> in great prosperity before dying. The indicated features are very vague and create great difficulties for the identification of these characters. The only concrete identification so far has been proposed by Ivan Venedikov, who discerns in the character of Theodora the daughter of Tsar Samuel, Theodora Kosara; and in that of her son, the husband of the historical Theodora, the Serbian prince St John Vladimir.<sup>83</sup> In their commentary to the edition of the text, the authors merely quote this view and seem to agree with it.<sup>84</sup> It is based only on the name of Theodora and the assumption that, due to some error, the husband was indicated as son.

<sup>82</sup> Regarding the number 23 see: Meyer, Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbe-deutungen*, col. 678–679.

<sup>83</sup> Venedikov, *Voennoto i administrativnoto ustrojstvo*, p. 124.

<sup>84</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, p. 300 note 42.

Anything could be explained using the error theory, but a convincing identification requires argumentation. In this case, the argument is based on the context of the Cometopouloi, and the generally positive attitude towards Theodora Kosara and especially towards her husband, the Prince of Zeta, who was proclaimed a saint. Ultimately, we have nothing to base our search on but the mother's name, however it must be said that it is not typical for a ruler to be designated only through his wife or mother. There had to be a special reason for this, and I cannot agree that the "Bulgarian origin" of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is reason enough for the daughter of the Bulgarian tsar Samuel to be considered the mother character. I do not find it likely for the canonised prince-martyr to figure only by the name of his wife, tsar's daughter though she may be.

There must have been some important reason for indicating the ruler's mother, and I am inclined to find it in her dominant position over her son or in her special merit for the reign and its achievements. Having this in mind, we may turn to history and trace the known empresses who carried the name of Theodora. Of course, they would have to be Byzantine, for Bulgarian history does not provide such cases.<sup>85</sup> There are two main figures I would like to consider: the empress Theodora (circa 815–after 867),<sup>86</sup> wife of Theophilus and mother of Michael III, who was her son's regent and contributed to the final restoration of Orthodoxy, and the other empress Theodora (984–1056),<sup>87</sup> who was the daughter of Constantine VIII and his wife Helena, and sister of Zoë, with whom they shared power at the decline of the Macedonian dynasty. The first of these is particularly popular among Orthodox Christians because of her part in overcoming the iconoclastic heresy. Adopting this version, it is easy to understand why she would be the leading figure, while the tsar is only defined as her son. All this evidence is in her favour when we seek to identify the character in *Tale*. As for Theodora, the daughter of Constantine VIII, she was one of the few women

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<sup>85</sup> Here I will not discuss the possibility of identifying Theodora with some Bulgarian tsarina of the age of the Second Empire. For that époque, we have data about Tsar John Alexander's two wives by that name, who evidently held positions of influence in the state. (Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460). Genealogija i prosopografija*, pp. 159 ff.). But the context of the *Tale* is completely different and I do not think we should turn to the time of the Late Middle Ages.

<sup>86</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, pp. 2037–2038; Bozhilov, Biliarsky, Dimitrov, Iliev, *Vizantijskite vasilevsi*, pp. 220 ff.

<sup>87</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, p. 2038; Bozhilov, Biliarsky, Dimitrov, Iliev, *Vizantijskite vasilevsi*, pp. 281–282, 288–289.

to have officially held the throne. She is not as popular as the other among ecclesiastics, but her historical context displays certain coincidences with what is presented in the *Tale*. I mean especially the fact that the preceding tsar is Roman, which coincides with the name of the emperor Romanus III Argyros (1028–1034)<sup>88</sup> who in fact preceded the historical Theodora. It could also be pointed out this Theodora had many husbands, and—assuming the error theory—we could say these men became the archetype of the nameless son. I will, however, refrain from further such assumptions so as to avoid making arbitrary, improvable, and uncertain claims.

Therefore, despite the proposed arguments, I would not dare to choose either of the two empresses as being identical with the mother of the nameless tsar. Inasmuch as I do not believe this was a specific historical person, it may be asserted that the two figures were combined to form this righteous mother of the pious and devout tsar of the Bulgarian and Greek land. She too is a character whose function is not to give us information about historical events, but to embody certain qualities of the woman in power.

### *Turgius*

The unknown tsar called Turgius in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is one of the most enigmatic figures in this narrative, which is confusing enough anyway. It is said about him that he “appeared”, after Tsar Arev, “from the southern countries” and took Tsar Constantine’s wreath of the whole Bulgarian and Greek kingdom and ruled for seventeen years and died (· ѿ ПОМ’ ВЪСТА ДРОСЪ ЦРЬ · ѿ ЮЖНІЕ СРАНИ · Н МЕНЕ ТЪСРГІНЪ Н Т’ ВЪЗЪЕ ВЪБНЦ’ КОСТАНТИНА ЦРІА , Н ПОМНЕ ВЪСЕ ЦРТВО ВЛГАРСКО · Н ГРЪСКОЕ · Н ЦРВЪЕ · ЛЪК · ЗІ · Н СКОУАЕТ’ СЕ ·).<sup>89</sup> Tsar Turgius comes after Arev but is not said to be his heir, nor is there any hint of the two being related in any way. On the contrary, whereas Arev “appeared from” Constantine-grade, Turgius is “from the southern countries”. No events are reported for his comparatively long reign, but it is the last one in the sequence we find in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*—after him “again appeared” the infidel lawless ones, the violators and deceivers, the Pechenegs; with this, the story ends. The ending seems rather apocalyptic and has been interpreted as such in studies, although the mention of

<sup>88</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III, p. 1807; Bozhilov, Biliarsky, Dimitrov, Iliev, *Vizantijskite vasilevsi*, pp. 273–275.

<sup>89</sup> See in this book, p. 21 (f. 402d, lines 30–35).

Pechenegs is usually considered concrete historical information and is related to the invasions of the late nomads in the 11th century.<sup>90</sup>

Turgius is said to be the bearer of Tsar Constantine's wreath, and a ruler who "accepted the whole Bulgarian and Greek kingdom". The latter is a kingdom defined by two ethnonyms or politonyms. Here the text evidences once again the unity of Bulgarians and Byzantines.

We find that the only specific data related to Tsar Turgius are his mentioned place of origin and his name. We will focus special attention on the name, and as for the "southern countries", we will say the reference remains a mystery. In my opinion, this passage only evidences that the standpoint assumed in the text was not a Bulgarian one. South of Bulgaria was only the Byzantine Empire, but the writer could hardly have had it in mind. This information is of such a kind that it is impossible to make any assertions without being quite arbitrary.

The name Turgius also fails to afford much opportunity for interpretation. There was a known prefect of Rome (*praefectus Urbis*) by the name of Turgius Apronianus, who held this post for three months under the emperors Constantius II and Constans in the year AD 339.<sup>91</sup> We do not know much about his activity and it is hard for me to imagine how this personage and his name could have reached the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

In connection with the martyrdom of St Irenaeus (not the famous bishop of Lugdunum but the deacon and martyr in Tuscany) and of St Mustiola, the name of the local governor Turgius or Turcius is mentioned,<sup>92</sup> who held this position in the year AD 275. He was evidently a pagan, for he took part in the beating to death of St Irenaeus.

Turgius, Leontius, and Marcianus are cited as proconsuls of Spoleto in some Latin hagiographical texts about martyrs (*Acta XII Sociorum, Acta Sancti Proculi, episcopi et martyris*),<sup>93</sup> but this person too seems unlikely to be related to the tsar from the apocryphal text.

In most of these sources, the personages have a name written "Turgius" in some cases, and "Turcius" in others.<sup>94</sup> The personage never holds a

<sup>90</sup> Jireček, "Khristijanskijat element", p. 266; Dujčev, "Edno legendarno svedenie za Asparukha", pp. 129–130.

<sup>91</sup> He is mentioned in the Chronicle of AD 354, part 10—List of the prefects of Rome from AD 254 to 354—*Monumenta Germaniae historica, Chronica minora*, I (1892), p. 68.

<sup>92</sup> G. Crabb, *Universal Historical Dictionary*, vol. I, London, 1833, sub nom. Irenaeus; L.S. Lenain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, Bruxelles, MDCCXXXII, vol. 3–4, p. 54.

<sup>93</sup> *Acta sanctorum, Acta sanctorum iulii*, vol. 27, Paris, 1868, pp. 9–13, 61–62, 641.

<sup>94</sup> *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. I (A. D. 260–395), by A.H.M. Jones,

particularly important position in the stories, and is usually on the side of the tormentors of some Latin saint. All this gives me little reason to believe the character in the *Tale* is a borrowed one, and based on these texts.

Therefore, Tsar Turgius mentioned in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* remains a mystery. He was hardly a historical person, but given the present state of sources, it is impossible for me to propose any particular character in historical memory, or one from religious texts who should express a certain ideological line of legitimisation of royal power.

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J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971, p. 925; vol. II (A. D. 395–527), by J.R. Martindale, Cambridge, 1980, p. 1133.



## CONCLUSION

This book set for itself two main tasks, which, I hope together have produced a unified and coherent result: namely, a new edition and interpretation of a rather complex work of mediaeval literature, and the positioning of this work in the context of the construction of a new Christian identity within the political ideology of Bulgaria after the Conversion to Christianity and in the centuries that followed.

The work itself is entitled *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an Angel Took him to the Seventh Heaven*. The title by which it is generally known in Bulgarian historiography was given it by Jordan Ivanov: "*Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle of 11th Century*"; I have not used the latter designation in this book because it is a misnomer. The text has been preserved only in a copy included in a Serbian 17th century manuscript, about which we know only that it was at some time in Macedonia. This manuscript volume contains a varied set of texts, and its detailed study could contribute some ideas regarding the path of the transmission of the text over the centuries. At present, I should limit my aims in that direction, as I have no access to the manuscript itself, which is in Moscow.

The source has been the object of many commentaries, most of which have been markedly nationalistic and have tried to uncover a "patriotic" Bulgarian tendency within the text. I have discussed such studies of the text and shall not retrace the topic again here. Nevertheless, I would like to sum up the data regarding the dating, localisation, and authorship of the text. I will begin with the latter two, which seem easier to cover, for I do not believe I can say anything about them particularly different from that already written. The localisation points to the western parts of the Balkan Peninsula. The manuscript is Serbian (although some of the texts in it are obviously connected with Bulgaria); it remained in Macedonia; the text itself refers mostly to the western Bulgarian lands, with a noticeable stress on the region of Kraishte and the Sofia region. All this is important for various reasons. On one hand, these territories were a secondary centre of Bulgarian culture with respect to northeast Bulgaria. On the other hand, they are interesting with respect to the dissemination there of early printed works, some of which display interesting similarities to the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. Now we come to the problem of the compiler. It is impossible to talk about real authorship here, not only due to the particular character

of mediaeval “creative work” in general, but also because of the compiled character of this particular literary work. It was obviously composed on the basis of different texts, produced in various ages and various cultural environments; yet here, they have formed a unified whole. Some of these texts were Near Eastern and deuterocanonical, and they most likely reached Bulgaria through Byzantine literature, while others retained a memory of the Bulgarian past. They have all been united into the text by a compiler who has composed a consistent and homogenous work conveying a single and consistent message. This general conclusion is not contradicted by the proposed supposition that there may have been some insignificant later interventions in the text.

We can estimate when the final text was completed by relying on data contained in the source itself, but also taking into account the history of the only copy that has reached us, that in the Kichevo manuscript. What is the nature of this text, what is its aim, what does it mean to suggest to the reader? This book itself has been devoted to answering these questions, and here I will summarise what I already endeavoured to say in it: this is a literary work that evidences the construction and maintenance of a Bulgarian Christian identity as the New Israel, God’s New Chosen People. This identity had its foundation in Holy Scripture, based primarily on ideas from the New Testament, but supported by images and paradigms that came predominantly from the Old Testament. The land of the Bulgarians is presented as a replica of the Holy Land both in the historical and in the geographical sense. The image of the people was modelled on Israel, the Chosen People from the Old Testament. It should be said here that this process of casting a people as the New Israel in a New Holy Land was widespread throughout Mediaeval Christendom, and there is nothing specifically Bulgarian about it. I find no special “national” particularities in the way in which the idea of the New Israel is presented. Perhaps the only difference, and one of the most outstanding particularities of the work, is the strongly emphasised unity between Bulgarians and Romans/Byzantines, and between Bulgaria and the Eastern Roman Empire (called Byzantium), which after a certain point in the narrative are represented together as a single state and unified society.

As for the state doctrine, one may say it is intimately connected to the construction of the Bible-based identity of the people as New Israel and of that people’s rulers as religious-political continuers of the anointed Old Testament kings of the Chosen People. This model was taken directly from the Old Testament, or indirectly perceived and mediated through the Byzantine tradition. This influence perhaps came from both interpretations of the

Bible and certain deuterocanonical texts in Bulgaria and from ideas coming out of Byzantium, The path of mediation through the Byzantine Empire was the more typical course, since the influence of Byzantine culture in Bulgaria was extremely powerful throughout the Middle Ages. *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not a political treatise and we could not expect to find in it a theoretical exposition of the problems of state power, its nature, origin, and mode of exercise. Far from this, we find only traces of different conceptions of power, which, however, are united, not mutually contradictory; all of them together are based on Holy Scripture and the idea of the New Israel. In my study, I have united them under two archetypes. The first is the image of the king chosen by God and obedient to God, embodied in the Bible chiefly by King David; within *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, his features are primarily embodied in the character of Tsar Izot, but to a lesser degree also in other pious rulers. The other image is that of the king-renovator, who, in the Bible, is most vividly embodied by Prophet Moses, who led his people out of bondage in Egypt. Through the Hellenistic Jewish authors, and after them through the late Roman and mediaeval theologians, the character of Moses acquired certain "royal" traits, and after Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea, who based his comparisons on him when lauding Constantine, Moses came to be a model for Christian rulers as well. In the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, these ideas were personified above all by Tsar Constantine and by Tsar Ispor, but to various degrees also by other historical or imaginary rulers depicted in this work.

These two images, that of the divinely chosen king and that of the king-renovator, are different but not mutually contradictory. Their presence—or more precisely the traces of their presence—together in the same literary work does not in any way diminish its unity and homogeneity. They could even be the characteristics of the same person. It is true that obedience to God and abidance by the Law, by His commandments, is essentially an Old Testament quality, while renovation is essentially a New Testament one, but they do not contradict each other, they are not irreconcilable. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself claimed that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew, 5:17). This explains the presence of both models in the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, a work that presents in an unsystematic form what the author knew about the situation in his times.

We thus come to the question of the dating. When was *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* composed, in the form in which we know it? The answer will depend on several preliminary specifications. First, we are referring not to when the separate parts that went into the compilation (for *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is just that) were composed, but when they were joined in a single work. Second, it is possible that we might not have the whole text of the work

at present—the ending is probably missing, and I have discussed this in the respective section of this book. Therefore, we cannot limit our dating only to the 11th century, when the latest identifiable historical data in the work are localised. Third, in solving the problem we have to proceed from two basic assumptions: *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* evidences the existence of a biblical-Christian Imperial identity, and the work probably aimed to maintain this identity by presenting and emphasising the unity between Bulgarians and Byzantines, built on an Orthodox Christian basis. Obviously, those features in Bulgarian culture that might provide a favourable milieu for the creation of such a text could be found as early as the 9th century and especially in the 10th century, but it is out of the question that the work could date from that age, for it contains indications and confused memories of events from the 11th century. So we should consider the latter century as the *terminus post quem* for the time of compiling.

Let us trace the available possibilities:

*First possibility*, the work is, of course, related to the 11th century, which is the predominant opinion in historiography; that is the time to which the last identifiable historical data cited in the text are dated. This possibility cannot be excluded, at least because it was the time of political unity between Bulgarians and Byzantines within a single Empire after the Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria. The fact that this unity, like nearly all political events in that age, was achieved through war and much suffering is no reason to disregard the fact that it existed. The idea of consolidation points to several possible periods, one of which is more specifically the last decades of the 11th century. An answer to this question will depend to a very great degree on the solution to another: whether we have the whole text of the apocryphal work, or whether its ending is missing. I am inclined to see the text in the Kichevo manuscript, the only one available to us, as being incomplete, and so I shall examine the two other possibilities which suggest a later dating.

*The second possibility* is to situate the works in the first decades of the 13th century, after the *Renovatio Imperii* in Bulgaria and the rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire. There are two factors present in that time which support this dating. The less certain factor is the flourishing of apocryphal literature in that age. This only adds to the other, more important factor, i.e. the consolidation of Orthodox people in the Balkans at that time, and the powerful trend of the Bulgarian state to construct an imperial identity, which inevitably had to pass through unity—political and spiritual—with the Byzantines. In a sense, this duplicates and confirms the Bulgarian-Byzantine unity we find in *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. We can see elements of such a policy in Tsar Kaloyan (despite his union with Rome), in Tsar Boril,

and especially in Tsar John II Asen. The latter achieved what was practically the full territorial unity of the Balkans after the battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230, a unity connected with the restoration of Orthodoxy, his visit to, and special consideration for Mount Athos, and his attempts to take control of Constantinople.

*The third possibility* for a later dating of the source is at the end of the 14th or in the 15th century. I would not say that this age was marked by intense copying or compilation of apocryphal works, but two other important factors *were* present: consolidation of the Orthodox Christians around Constantinople, and the passionate eschatological expectations in the face of infidel non-Christian conqueror. It hardly requires any proof that these two circumstances create a suitable environment for writing a work like *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. However, I admit that in the text itself there is no confirmation or indication of such a dating, so it cannot go beyond the limits of a hypothesis.

And so, we may claim that the 13th century, as well as the 14th–15th, seem quite appealing as a time to which to date the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, but the solution for this hypothesis entirely depends on confirming that the work, as we find it in the only copy that has reached us, is indeed incomplete. This would explain the absence of a memory of such remarkable images of kings-renovators of the state as the first Asenides, or as any tsar at all from the time of the Second Bulgarian Empire. In this book, I have stated an assumption supporting the view that the end of the text of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* has not reached us. This remains a topic for discussion, just like the other possibility of the possible influence of the early printed book upon the text of the Kichevo manuscript. A definitive and generally accepted answer to these questions will hardly ever be reached.

Nevertheless, I do not think this is the most important topic in this book, for which the exact dating of the work is not the most important problem. My main goal has been to publish the work in a form as close as possible to the original, and to state and try to prove two assertions. The first is that this is not some (semi)pagan, folkloric, patriotic, and original Bulgarian text, but is an apocryphon, based on an Old Testament tradition; the message and purpose of this work was to testify to the Christian identity of the people, of the state, and state power, perceived as a New Israel, and perhaps even to support and affirm this identity. The second assertion is that this identity was built on a religious-based unity of Bulgarians and Romans/Byzantines, and not at all on opposition between them, not on ethnic-national intolerance or any kind of “patriotism”.



## EXCURSUS ONE

### THE LIST OF NAMES OF THE BULGAR PRINCES: BETWEEN MYTH AND HISTORY

After the conversion to Christianity, Bulgarian society began constructing its own Christian identity. Although the dynasty and government were preserved, society now had new aims and ideals. This required the elaboration of a new doctrine of the state, or at very least a radical change of the old one. It was necessary to at least partially break away from the tradition of the Eurasian Steppe in order to embark on the road of building a Christian state; this process went on under the strong influence of Byzantium. Thus, Bulgarian society changed not only its religion, but its ethno-cultural characteristics as well.

This transformation required a new understanding and rethinking of history, inasmuch as identity is based on the past. On one hand, it involved a different interpretation of time and the adoption of the Judeo-Christian linear conception of historical time, and on the other, new ways had to be sought to incorporate the newly converted people into the sacred history of the Holy Scripture. In this excursus I will present certain observations specifically on the mechanism of Bulgarian adoption of Christian biblical history, history spanning from the Creation, the Fall, and the Covenant to the End of Days, the Last Judgment, and Salvation.

The main task of this study will be to trace certain characteristic manifestations of the concept of time and history among the Bulgars and the transformation of these views during the Christian age. Of course, this will not be a comprehensive presentation of the concept of time or of the problems surrounding the Bulgar calendar, but a presentation limited to the data provided in the *List of Names of the Bulgar Princes* (or *Khans*), and especially to the context in which it has come down to us within the manuscript heritage. Here we should recall that the copies of this monument known to us are all included as parts of late Russian manuscripts, the so-called *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, a complex compiled work that originated in a South Slavic, probably "Bulgarian", environment.<sup>1</sup>

The *List* has reached us in three copies:

1. The copy in the Count Uvarov collection, No 1334 (10), which is now kept in the manuscript department of the State Historical Museum (= GIM) in Moscow. This is a code of 432 sheets, semi-uncial script, dating from the end of the 15th century. The greater part of the manuscript contains the Hellenic Chronicle (ff. 1–422), followed by excerpts from the IV Novgorod Chronicle.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Popov, *Obzor chronografov ruskoj redaktsii*, t. II, Moscow, 1869, p. 19; archimandrit Leonid, "Drevnjaja rukopis", *Russkij vestnik*, 1889, 4 (April), pp. 3 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Archimandrit Leonid, *Sistematicheskoe opisanie slavjano-russkikh rukopisej sobranija*

2. A copy from the collection of the Holy Synod, No 280 (now in GIM again). This is a large collection comprising 728 sheets written in semi-uncial script and dating from the early 16th century. The beginning is missing, and the extant text begins with “*князи рустии*” (“Russian princes”) and the story of Pope Hippolytus about the Antichrist. The “Hellenic Chronicle” takes up the main part of the collection (ff. 4–407). Immediately after it come listings of the kings of Israel and the Roman emperors, followed by a list of the suffragan sees dependent on the Ecumenical Patriarchate (f. 411). After that we come to the texts of other works: a short chronicle (up to the year 1473), the Epistle of Patriarch Philotheus (f. 426), and the canons of the metropolitan Cyril (f. 428). The second part of the manuscript contains the text of the IV Novgorod Chronicle.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, the collection was created at the very end of the 15th century, after 1496, as evident both from the text on the Russian princes and the short chronicle.
3. A copy from the Pogodin collection, No 1437, preserved in the St Petersburg Public Library. This is a codex of 240 sheets, written in semi-uncial script in the 16th century.<sup>4</sup> A.N. Popov states that this copy is completely identical with that of the Holy Synod collection, but takes the history only as far as the death of Emperor Maximian (AD 310).<sup>5</sup>

Here I will not discuss in detail the question as to how, when and upon what material carrier the *List of Names* was created. I will refer to, and agree with V.N. Zlarski, who asserts that the original variant of the text was probably in Greek, inscribed on stone, and was an epigraphic work.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to answer the question as to when and along what path the text was included within the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, but we may be confident that it arrived in Russia as a work that was already a literary monument, i.e. as a manuscript, not a stone inscription, which would have been difficult to transport. The translation from Greek and the protograph of the Russian text were probably made in Bulgaria, in the Preslav circle of Tsar Symeon, as some scholars claim.<sup>7</sup> The composition of the world chronicle and the inclusion in it of certain texts was an event of significant ideological value. That is why our effort will be to clarify the problem as to the place of the *Bulgarian princes* in world history, in the history of the Universe created by God.

The title of the chronicle is the following: “*Летописецъ Эллинский и Римский. Сия книги списанны не из единех книг, но от различных, истинных, великих, но исправлению многу. Моисеева истинная сказания. и от четырех царствии и от пророчества георгиева по истине изложена. и от едры и от истории и*

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*grafa A. S. Uvarova*, vol. III, Moscow, 1894, pp. 25–26, No 1334 (10); M.N. Tikhomirov, “Imennik bolgarskikh knjazej”, *Vestnik drevnej istorii*, 3, 1946, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russoj redaktsii*, t. I, Moscow, 1866, p. 1; Tikhomirov, “Imennik bolgarskikh knjazej”, p. 83.

<sup>4</sup> Tikhomirov, “Imennik bolgarskikh knjazej”, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russoj redaktsii*, t. I, pp. 1ff.

<sup>6</sup> V.N. Zlarski, “Bolgarskoe letochislenie”, *Izvestija otдела russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj akademii nauk*, 1912, t. XVII, pars 2, pp. 28 ff.

<sup>7</sup> archimandrit Leonid, “Drevnjaja rukopis”, pp. 3–6.

от азмат азматских (= Song of Songs that is Solomon's—I.B.) и от патаукиха (= Pentateuchos—I.B.) и еще же от иоаннова granoграфa и антиохийскаго иже вся эллинская акы бляди и сплетения словесъ и капишь идольския требы приносимыа имы откуду и како беаше. сия книги писанны бытийския от тетровасилья".<sup>8</sup> The books are the following: 1. From the Pentateuch of Moses and other Old Testament books; 2. From the Chronicle of George Hamartolos; 3. From the Book of Ezra and others; 4. From the Chronicle of John of Antioch (Malalas).<sup>9</sup> All researchers of the text and its context indicate that the *List of Names* comes immediately after 2 Samuel. Regrettably, we do not have a detailed description of the manuscript in which the Uvarov copy was included. A. Popov gives a detailed inventory of the Synodal copy and confirms that the Pogodin copy is fully identical with it in this part.<sup>10</sup> In addition, no significant differences from the copy in the Uvarov collection have been indicated. On the contrary, all authors confirm the full similarity of the copies, which allows us to assume there was also a similarity of the contexts of the monument in question.<sup>11</sup>

Let us present the brief contents of the Holy Synod copy, limiting ourselves to the context of the *List*. Here I will cite the part of A.N. Popov's description of the copy:<sup>12</sup>

- f. 17<sup>r</sup>: About prophet Moses.  
About the pharaoh and how the Children of Israel escaped
- f. 18<sup>r</sup>: About Ruth
- f. 19<sup>r</sup>: About prophet Samuel. This section relates in brief of King Saul, King David, and King Solomon; the account begins with the following words: "Самоиль же по повелению Господню помаза имъ Саола на царство, сына Кисова ...".
- f. 19<sup>v</sup>–35<sup>v</sup>: Beginning from Rehoboam this part consists of excerpts copied in full, from 1 Kings (from ch. 12 to the end).
- f. 36<sup>r</sup>–67<sup>r</sup>: "Царство Давидово".<sup>13</sup> Placed here is the whole of 2 Kings. In his description, Popov definitely concludes the Slavic text of the biblical book is an ancient one, adducing relevant examples.<sup>14</sup>
- f. 68<sup>r</sup>: *List of Names of Bulgar Princes*.
- f. 69<sup>r</sup>: Part of the chronicle of George Hamartolos about Nebuchadnezzar.
- f. 70<sup>v</sup>: Story about Balthazar.

This context of the *List of Names* is quite indicative. The compiler has evidently followed the biblical account of the establishment of the Kingdom among the People of Israel, and hence the narrative includes the acts of the prophet Samuel (which

<sup>8</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russkoj redaktsii*, t. I, pp. 3–4.

<sup>9</sup> A.M. Istrin, "К вопросу о взаимоотношении Эллинических летописцев и Архивского (Иудейского) хронографа", *Izvestija otdela russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj akademii nauk*, 1911, t. XVI, pars 4, pp. 125–142.

<sup>10</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russkoj redaktsii*, t. I, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> I hope someday to be able to work with the manuscripts themselves, an opportunity that, I presume, may yield interesting results confirming my thesis.

<sup>12</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russkoj redaktsii*, t. I, pp. 21 ff.

<sup>13</sup> This is the 4 Kingdoms that corresponds to the 2 Kings.

<sup>14</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russkoj redaktsii*, t. I, p. 25.

was inevitable) and an enumeration of the kings with full quotations from 2 Kings. Immediately after this, the text presents the *List of Bulgar Princes*, beginning with the mythical Avitokhol. After the *List*, there follows the story of Nebuchadnezzar and the end of the kingdoms of Israel. We find that these kingdoms “end” with the Bulgarian rulers. It is notable that the *List* does not represent an independent section within the *Hellenic Chronicle*, and not being part of the chronicle of George Hamartolos either, the *List* was obviously perceived as part of the preceding biblical text.

What may we conclude from these observations? *First*, the *List of Names* is placed within the text of a world chronicle used in the late 15th century in Russia as a model by the author of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*. *Second*, this earlier chronicle, which has not come down to us, was probably composed in Preslav, then capital of Bulgaria. *Third*, the *List* was included at the end of 2 Kings, so that the Bulgar rulers appear to be in the same line as the kings of Israel and Judah.

There is no doubt that these facts express a certain attitude to world history and the place of the Bulgarians in it. Thus, an essentially pagan monument is found included in a Christian world chronicle, which is not only different from, but also even incompatible with the pagan concepts in its view of time and history. The joint presence of the two in the same, even though compiled, monument provides us a glance at how the new identity of the Bulgarians was constructed. This is one reason for us to believe that, after the conversion, the new converts looked upon themselves as New Chosen People, as New Israel, or at least were building elements of such a self-perception.

That there is a connection between religion and the view on time is indisputable and requires no special demonstration. The calendar is a religious phenomenon that marks the breakthrough of the sacred into the profane, and thus sets the rhythm of life for the whole society and for each of its members. It ensures meaning and reality for them. The very identity of a society is formed by its history, which provides the parameters of present, past and future. In this respect the two concepts of time—the cyclical (mythological) one and the linear (historical)—are particularly significant, but it is hardly the place to go into detail about them here.<sup>15</sup> They evidently exist jointly and can be separated only through speculative abstraction. For our discussion it is important to stress that both are religious in character and reflect the beliefs of society, while also determining the rhythm of that society. I will briefly discuss each of these concepts separately so as to ground the further presentation and conclusions.

It is a familiar fact that mythological thought is connected with interpreting the world in terms of a text (a story, a *myth*) that tells us about how the world was ‘organised’, ‘realised’, ‘created’ in some *initial time*. That time and the events that take place in it are repeated perpetually in order to maintain the *existence*

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<sup>15</sup> M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour. Archétypes et répétition*, Paris, 1969; B.A. Uspenskij, “Istorija i semiotika (Vosprijatje vremeni kak semiotičeskaja problema)”, in: idem, *Izbranye trudy*, t. I. Moscow, 1996, pp. 9–70.

of the world, its harmony and actuality. Thus, *cosmos* defeats *chaos* eternally and periodically, in cyclical stages, through repetition of the sacred event, and thus the sacral breaks through into the profane, imparting *reality* to the latter. From pure historical time such repetitiveness is missing, but this does not mean there is no sacral time there too. On the contrary, not only is sacral history present, but history itself—seen as a chain of events connected with and determined by links of cause and effect—becomes sacred.

The appearance of the concept of linear time is usually connected with the Hebrew religion, from which it passed into Christianity and Islam. The sacred in monotheistic religions is realised within the framework of history and historical causal ties, and in this sense history itself becomes sacred. This is evident at a first reading of the Holy Scripture, which, in the Old Testament, is actually the sacred history of the Chosen People and its Covenant with God. This nation has no other history than the sacred one, i.e. the story of the road leading to the Covenant and then of the people's obedience or disobedience to it, which result either in blessing or in punishments. Achieving harmony does not depend on the *repetition* of this type of relations: the Covenant is unique, it is not from eternity but has been concluded in historical time, which may be dated according to various calendar systems, and is an unrepeatably event. It is one of the events in the history of the Chosen People, and is simultaneously sacred and secular, thus erasing the sharp dividing line between these two spheres. It tells us about the relations between people and about their relations with God.

Here we should note that the celebration of Easter, of Christmas, of Hanukkah, or of other Christian or Hebrew holidays, is only a celebration, a commemoration of certain dates, not a repetition of some sacred event. Thus the exodus from Egypt, the acquisition of the Promised Land, the Babylonian captivity, the Nativity of the Saviour, His Passion, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, are single historical events. For Christians the history of the world embodies the history of Salvation. In Salvation lies the meaning of history<sup>16</sup> and Salvation is the final point of humanity's path through time, a path we call "history".

Together with this, despite the unity, the single direction and goal of the Path, each community has its own history as well. We may compare history to a mirror in which the community searches its reflection in order to find and maintain its self-consciousness, its identity. It is precisely in this respect that the two interpretations of time lead to different results. Mythological thought creates an integral, harmonious, and complete world in which we should not look for any difference between the mythical and the immanent. The mythical is perceived everywhere so that it imparts reality to the whole visible world. Thus 'history' assumes the form of an 'epos' in which each battle becomes a cosmic duel between the deity or the cultural hero and the powers of chaos, and each act of creation becomes an element in the Creation of the world, every forefather becomes an Ancestor and Creator. Thus, the community looks for harmony in the isolated group of the 'clan' and is always connected to the ethnic group, the clan, and the Ancestor.

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<sup>16</sup> N. Berdjajev, *Smysl istorii*, Obelisk, Berlin, 1923.

On the other hand, the history of the Hebrew people is a history of the Covenant between them and the Lord, while the history of Christians is that of Salvation, of the New Testament, of the Incarnation, and of Redemption through the Son of God. The meaning of this history lies in the future, in the fulfilment of the Covenant, in Salvation, in the Second Advent of the Saviour, the of days, and the Last Judgment over men. In this sense, the beginnings of Christian history coincide with the path of the Children of Israel through time, but the epoch after the Incarnation embraces all people without regard of ethnic affiliation. That is why a nation that builds its identity upon a Christian understanding of history would look upon itself not in the framework of clan or ethnic particularism but as a nation of the New Testament, i.e. as the New Chosen People, the New Israel, which, in St. Paul's words, comprises not only the blood descendents of the Old Testament patriarch but all the faithful embarked upon the road to Salvation.

This Christian (or Judeo-Christian) understanding of history finds literary expression in world chronicles. These are specific works of a chiefly religious character and focused on ideology and identity. They present world history not in order to inform us about some past events but to transmit an integral concept of the world, of the world's past but also its future and its meaning. That is why the presence of each component of the chronicle is of great religious-ideological significance; in my opinion, the inclusion of the *List of Names* in the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* has such significance.

The construction of the New Chosen People's identity assumed different forms among different nations. In the framework of Eastern Christianity, and as a result of the Empire's strong influence, it had a more distinctly universal character. After Constantine's time, Christianity came increasingly to be connected with the Roman Empire, even though the latter had persecuted Christians in previous centuries. The Saviour was born in the time of Octavian Augustus and was inscribed in the Roman taxation lists. Thus, the pagan empire and its emperor came to be sanctified by Christ's presence.<sup>17</sup> Christianity developed on Roman territory, and the triumph of Christianity in the 4th century was a triumph of the new faith throughout the world (insofar as the Empire coincided to a great degree with the known world at that time). Thus, the Holy Empire became the image of God's kingdom on earth<sup>18</sup> and enhanced its universality, while the Empire's people, which had never had a singly ethnic affiliation, only a political one as residents of the Roman Empire, became the new Chosen People, the New Israel.

The Bulgarians in the time of their conversion to Christianity found themselves in this Eastern Christian cultural environment and were certainly under the cultural influence emanating from Constantinople. This impacted their political ideology and identity formation by providing established models for the formation of a Christian identity. One of these models was the image of the New Israel, and this barbarian people embraced it.

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<sup>17</sup> B.A. Uspenskij, "Vosprijatie istorii v drevnej Rusi i doktrina 'Moskva-Tretij Rim'", in: idem, *Izbranye trudy*, t. I. Moscow, 1996, p. 96 (see notes 39 and 40).

<sup>18</sup> Iv. Biliarsky, *Hierarchia. L'Ordre sacré. Etude sur l'esprit romain*, Fribourg/Suisse, 1997, p. 11 ff.

The Bulgars crossed the Danube and settled in Moesia without breaking with their traditions in religion, religious cult, and the calendar connected with these. The Bulgar calendar has been the topic of many studies<sup>19</sup> and here we shall not discuss it except as regards certain elements related to the understanding of time and history. Specifically, we will discuss the recurring cycles, according to mythological thinking, that predetermined the rhythm of life, beliefs, and the ritual cycle of the Bulgar society that had originated in the Eurasian steppe. The representation of the world in Bulgar society was based on this conception of time. Its concrete manifestation in the *List of Names* suggests the eternally recurring victory over chaos and the creation of the cosmos.<sup>20</sup>

When we consider the *beginning of history* according to the *List*, we see that it is given in a purely mythological perspective. The first two rulers in the list, Avitokhol and Irnik of the Dulo clan, represent it.<sup>21</sup> Avitokhol lived/ruled for three hundred years, and his reign began dilom *tvirem*, i.e. in the ninth month of the year of the snake. Irnik, who appears to be his successor, lived/ruled a hundred and fifty years, also beginning *dilom tvirem*. Both were from the Dulo clan, and were probably father and son, though this fact is not mentioned. The following rulers in the list are presented in a considerably more realistic manner (by our modern standards) and the duration of their reigns is not that incredibly long; with the third on the list, Gostun of the clan of Ermi, the line of rulers of the Dulo clan ends.<sup>22</sup>

Who, after all, were Avitokhol and Irnik? Among historians, there is almost unanimity they were Attila, the ruler of the Huns, and his son Ernach.<sup>23</sup> Of course, we should specify that these were only the mythic figures of the historical personalities.

<sup>19</sup> J. Marquart, *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften*, Leipzig, 1898; J. Mikkola, "Die Chronologie der türkischen Donaubulgaren", *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, t. 30–33, Helsingfors, 1913–1918, pp. 1–25; O. Pritsak, *Die bulgarische Fürstenliste und die Sprache der Protobulgaren*, Wiesbaden, 1955, S. 19 ff.; M. Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove (Novo tǎlkuvane)*, Sofia, 1988; J. Bury, "Chronologičnija tsikal na bulgarite", *Minalo*, 1910, No 4, pp. 383–399; E. Georgiev, "Prabulgarskoto letopisanie", *Izsledvanija v chest na M. Drinov*, Sofia, 1960, pp. 369–380; J. Mikkola, "Tjurko-bolgarskoe letochislenie", *Izvestija otdela russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoj akademii nauk*, 18, 1913, No 1, pp. 243–247; K. Jireček, "J. Mikkola, Tjurksko-bolgarskoe letochislenie. Retsenzija", *Minalo*, 1914, No 2, pp. 81–88; Ja. Todorov, "Iztočnoaziatskija zhivotinski tsikal ot gledishte na strologičeskite vjarvanija. (Kǎm vǎprosa za Imennika na bulgarskite khanove)", *Godishnik na Sofijskija universitet, Istoriko-filologičen fakultet*, 27, 1931, pp. 3–40; G. Fehér, "Imennikǎt na bulgarskite khanove—letochislenieto na prabulgarite", *Godishnik na Narodnija muzej*, 1922–1925, No 7, pp. 237–313.

<sup>20</sup> M. Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour. Archétypes et répétition*, Paris, 1949, pp. 11–12, 63–65, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>22</sup> Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove*, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Marquart, *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften*, S. 72–78; A. Burmov, "Vǎprosi iz istorijata na prabulgarite", *Godishnik na Sofijskija universitet, Istoriko-filologičen fakultet*, 1948, 2, p. 6; Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove*, pp. 144–175. Contra: J. Mikkola, "Die Chronologie der türkischen Donaubulgaren", SS. 23–24; B. von Arnim, "Wer war Avitokhol? (Zur Fürstenliste)", *Sbornik v chest na prof. L. Miletich*, Sofia, 1933, pp. 573–577; Pritsak, *Fürsteinliste*, pp. 35–37.

More importantly for our topic, the two rulers were presented in the *List of Names* as founding fathers, as belonging to the category of Creator and Founder, who appears in the world, coming in repeated cycles out of his eternal sacred time in order to induce harmony in the chaos and set a new beginning in the world. In support of this view, I may indicate the length of their rule. Not only is it of incredibly long duration compared with the normal length of a human life, but also their lives coincide with the years of their reigns, as demonstrated by the fact that the years of their lives are divisible by the years of the twelve-year cycle.<sup>24</sup> They are thus presented as “born rulers”, which is one of the interesting variants for representing an Ancestor-Creator.

I have already noted that Avitokhol and Irnik assumed power on the same date, ‘*dilom tvirem*’. The 300 years of Avitokhol’s life, are a number divisible by 12, the number of years in a full cycle, so that the same year within the cycle is obtained, *dilom*. Nevertheless, this does not explain the coincidence of the month in which Irnik came to power, again ‘*tvirem*’.<sup>25</sup> The coinciding of both year and month cannot be accidental, especially as this is the same date and a date, which recurs cyclically. Thus, the conclusion imposes itself that Avitokhol and Irnik were born/came to power at the same moment due to the identity of cyclically recurring events. There could hardly be a more convincing illustration of the mythological thinking of the Bulgars, so clearly reflected in the interpretation, found in the *List of Names*, of the image of the ruler. The mythical ancestor rulers are presented in a sacred, eternal time, which does not really flow, and the date ‘*dilom tvirem*’ is essentially the point of their breakthrough and appearance in the profane time of earthly people. The eternal ancestors, for whose designation the transformed names of Attila and his son were merely borrowed, return repeatedly, again and again to set the beginning of a new line of khans. Thus begins a new, successive cycle or new era, which renews the world and imparts harmony to the chaos of earthly life.

The first cycle is closely connected with the clan of Dulo. It is worth emphasising that clan memory is generally of great significance for Central Asiatic peoples, for whom the knowledge and study of genealogy was always especially important.<sup>26</sup> The data from the *List of Names* and from some inscriptions testify that the Bulgars were no exception in this respect. Here we will not discuss the clan memory of

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<sup>24</sup> It is clearly stated in the text that “Avitokhol lived 300 years” and all researchers believe ‘*dilom tvirem*’ to be the date of the beginning of his rule (this is the case for all others on the list). Since Irnik began his reign in the same year ‘*dilom*’, Avitokhol must have died in that same year and his years must be divisible by 12, for that is how a whole number of cycles could have been completed. It turns out that 25 cycles later the year ‘*dilom*’ recurred, and that was when the successor of Avitokhol ascended the throne. This means that either the life duration of this khan coincided with that of his reign or there was a double coinciding in which *dilom* is the beginning of another cycle, which was divisible by 12 and lasted at least 300 years.

<sup>25</sup> Of course, we could assume a different version in which the ordinal numbers are not the names of months but some other classification of years in cycles larger than 12-year ones, as in China. However, the study of the Bulgar calendar is not the task of my research.

<sup>26</sup> Rashid ad-Din, *Sbornik letopisej*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1952, t. I, p. 153; L. Gumilev, *Drevnie tjurki*, Moscow, 1993, p. 21.

Turkic peoples, but we will note the special attitude expressed towards the clan of Dulo in the text we are considering.<sup>27</sup> To this clan belonged the founding ancestors and the first rulers of Danubian Bulgaria. It is hardly believable there could have been a detailed genealogy from Attila to Asparukh; more likely, the names in the list indicate that the prince who had brought his tribe across the Danube claimed descent from the mythical ancestor and so it was claimed that the early ancestors came from the same Dulo clan. Thus, with the second rise to power of the Dulo clan and the settlement in Moesia begins the second era in the framework of the *List of Names of the Bulgar Princes*.

According to most researchers, this literary monument was composed of two parts, one of which was created in the time of khan Asparukh, when he arrived on the right bank of the Danube, while the other was composed as a whole, or in several successive additions, in the second half of the 8th century.<sup>28</sup> After Bezmer, the fifth in the line of Bulgarian princes, a summing up is made of the past rulers, which is connected with the passage across the Danube and the settlement of the Balkans. A new cycle begins after that, likewise with the Dulo clan and its khan Asparukh. Thus, the time of this ruler and the settlement of the Balkans set the start of a new era in the history of the people. Asparukh differs significantly from other rulers, and is presented as someone far more similar to the sacred ancestors than to the rest of the princes, who are somehow more historical. His reign is shorter only than those of Avitokhol and Irnik, who are of the same clan as him, and he seems to represent a repeated breakthrough of the sacred into profane time.

We see that the *List* is one of the most important testimonies to the Bulgars' cosmological understanding of history, connected with cyclical time and recurrent return of the hero who triumphs over the powers of chaos and restores harmony in the world. This history relates to the eternally returning Ancestor-Creator who is usually the incarnation of the cultural hero. Thus, history is enclosed within the clan, the tribe, and the ethnos. The horizon is limited and does not allow society to look beyond 'our people', who are usually viewed in the categories of origin from the community based on common blood.

Together with this, we should point out that this mythological text, the most remarkable testimony to the Bulgars' conception of their identity as based on their pagan religion, became a bridge to the formation of a Christian identity by this same nation after the Conversion. The story of the eternally returning hero has reached us in a context representing a Judeo-Christian way of historical thinking and identity. I am referring to the above-mentioned manuscript tradition of the text of the *List*. The publisher of the source, the Russian 19th century scholar A.N. Popov, discovered

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<sup>27</sup> Liu Mau-tsai, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-kü)*, Buch I, Wiesbaden, 1958, S. 170, 221, 258, 605, 656 (cite: "To-lu"); Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, S. 61ff.; M. Kajmakamova, "Imennik na bulgarskite khanove"—nachaloto na bulgarskoto letopisno tvorcestvo", *Rodina*, 1997, 1–2, pp. 20 ff.

<sup>28</sup> Mikkola, "Die Chronologie der türkischen Donaubulgaren", p. 10; Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, pp. 13–14, 35 ff., 47.; Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove*, pp. 38 ff.; Kajmakamova, "Imennik na bulgarskite khanove"—nachaloto na bulgarskoto letopisno tvorcestvo", p. 29.

this monument as part of the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*.<sup>29</sup> Popov himself stated his opinion that Bulgarian chronicles were probably used in the composition of this Russian work.<sup>30</sup> We can hence guess how the text must have arrived in Russia. Nevertheless, this is not our task. What is relevant to the present study is that this most important of monuments of the Bulgar pagan thinking on statehood had become part of a Christian chronicle that was a synthesis of opposite very different way of thought, based on Holy Scripture. The mythological text that relates of the sacred events of the sacral eternity of the ancestors, creators, and cultural heroes, had become part of the Judeo-Christian sacred history, the history of Salvation.

We indicated that the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* was a compiled work consisting of parts of different origin. These were mostly biblical texts and also portions of the chronicle of George Hamartolos and John Malalas. The *List of Names* is in the second part of the chronicle, placed right after 2 Kings, and even considered by some authors to be its continuation.<sup>31</sup> This, together with the interesting conviction that the text had been placed within the chronicle earlier in Bulgaria, in the Preslav circle connected with Tsar Symeon in the early 10th century,<sup>32</sup> may lead us to conclusions that are important for our study.

The question of the relation of the *List* to 2 Kings within the chronicle was first raised by B. von Arnim, but the aim of his research was different from that of the present study: he tried to establish that the mythical Avitokhol was identical with a real historical figure.<sup>33</sup> For us, the important objective is to discover the message hidden in the context of the work and its relation to the great ideological and identity change that followed the conversion of the Bulgars. This work enables us to discern the mechanism by which this change was made.

In situating the list of Bulgarian princes (khans) right after that of the rulers of Israel and Judah, as if in continuation of their line, the work creates the impression that the Bulgarian historical process (and even sacred history) was identical with that of God's Chosen People, and that the rule in Bulgaria was identical with that of the two Old Testament kingdoms. Thus, the nomad people from the steppe became part of the history of the Covenant and of Salvation, part of the history of Israel, and of the universal Christian community. The Bulgars abandoned their enclosed clan-tribe world of myths, heroes, and ancestors, and became part of the causal chain that begins with the Creation, passes through Incarnation, and Redemption, and will finish with the Second Advent and the Last Judgment over men. They not

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<sup>29</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russoj redaktsii*, pp. 25–27; Tikhomirov, “Imennik bolgarskikh knjazej”, pp. 81–90; Kajmakamova, “Imennik na bulgarskite khanove”—nachaloto na bulgarskoto letopisno tvorcestvo”, pp. 7–8; von Arnim, “Wer war Avitokhol?”, S. 573 ff.; Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, S. 12 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Popov, *Obzor chronografov russoj redaktsii*, pp. 58–66.

<sup>31</sup> v. von Arnim, “Wer war Avitokhol?”, S. 574; Moskov, *Imennik na bulgarskite khanove*, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> B. von Arnim, “Wer war Avitokhol?”, S. 575; Pritsak, *Fürstenliste*, S. 13–14. In any case, the *List* (which probably was originally an inscription) clearly arrived in Russia as a literary not an epigraphic monument. This shows that its inclusion in the compilation must have occurred in Bulgaria.

<sup>33</sup> von Arnim, “Wer war Avitokhol?”, S. 573–575.

only acquired new conceptions of time and history, but a new idea of their place in history; they acquired a new *Christian identity*. In this way, the newly-converted Bulgarians became a New Israel as well as Orthodox Christians, in other words, a People of the Kingdom, of the Empire, like the Romans/Byzantines, without difference of ethnic or racial belonging. The *List of Names* became a testimony of this transformation and a path (or one of the paths) along which it was effected, though it was also the most remarkable monument known to us of the pagan thinking of this people before their conversion to Christianity.



## EXCURSUS TWO

### THE BIRTH OF THE FOUNDING KINGS

The problem of the birth of the hero is presented as connected with several elements of the *Tale*, and often these have been interpreted from a chiefly pagan-mythological perspective. I have expressed my opinion on this question elsewhere in the book and will not repeat it here. I will only point out several examples so that these may be discussed further on. The first example is the story of the child Ispor, who was carried in a *basket* (or in a “cow” according to a different reading) for three years. Of less interest to scholars who have examined the *Tale* are the other stories it contains of marvellous birth/appearance in the world: the children born of widows, a fact that implies the absence of a father. Such is the case of the birth of Tsar Constantine, although it is later said his father was Constantine the Green (Chlorus); of the three brothers, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, born by a widow prophetess. They have all been discussed in the respective sections of this book, and here I will be interested only in the theme of the miraculous birth of the hero and its importance in a religious-ideological context.

The basic message conveyed by the tales of miraculous birth of a hero is that his appearance in the world comes by the intervention of God or of a deity. This intervention usually has characteristics that fit into the framework of pagan or semi-pagan mythology, but we find similar tales in the Bible as well. Further below I will attempt to briefly trace this kind of *topos* both in a pagan and in a Judeo-Christian environment. This would help us understand the meaning of these texts and their emphasis of the power of God.

*The floating child.* The story of the child floating down the river in a basket is associated with the childhood of the Prophet Moses in Egypt; we saw that most authors believe this *topos* to be also present in the story of Tsar Ispor in the text of the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, a tsar usually identified foremost with Khan Asparukh. Thus, the legend of Tsar Ispor is situated in a long tradition of similar stories about the miraculous appearance in the world of a child that will become a hero. In addition to Moses, we may mention the kings Sargon and Cyrus, as well as Miletus, Oedipus, Romulus and Remus, all of which are actually images of rulers and founders destined to perform great deeds.<sup>1</sup> However, in discussing them we should make distinctions between the various tales of child-heroes; they may be divided into several groups: those of a miraculous birth; foundlings; and children floating on or brought by a river. The last category fully corresponds to the biblical story of the childhood of Moses.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Venedikov makes some interesting observations in two of his books (*Mednoto gumno na prabulgarite*, Sofia, 1983 and *Zlatnijat stozher na prabulgarite*, Sofia, 1987), but I find the ideas advanced there overall unacceptable. Regarding abandoned children, see Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 47–62.

We know the hardships undergone by Moses as a child from Holy Scripture (Exodus, 2:1–10).<sup>2</sup> In fact the story appears quite natural and seemingly without magical or miraculous elements in it. The events follow from Pharaoh's order that every newborn Hebrew male child must be slain and the girls alone left alive (Exodus, 1:16, 22). The purpose of this act was clearly to destroy the People of Israel, which threatened to become more powerful than the Egyptians. We then come to the birth of a male child from parents of the tribe of Levi; to avoid killing him, his mother placed him in a basket daubed with pitch and set him to float down the river. Pharaoh's daughter, as she was bathing in the river, found the child there and gave it for nursing back to its own mother. The latter named him Moses, a name thought to be derived from a verb close in meaning to "draw", "pull out", "depict", "describe" (see Exodus, 2:10).

Considering that the situation was controlled all along by Moses' mother and sister, there is clearly nothing extraordinary about the events. The child was left in a safe place and watched, and afterwards was raised by its own mother. Later it would grow into a man of high position in Pharaoh's court. Still, the part of the situation that all male children are ordered to be killed is out of the ordinary, and the saving of the child—as every extraordinary event—is accounted for by Divine intervention and connected with the prophet's mission.

It is the general opinion that the story of Moses' childhood is not an ordinary tale based on observation but a *topos* or wandering plot to be found as well in other texts of the literature of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean, telling of the miraculous appearing of heroes with a mission. In order to understand the special purpose of these divinely chosen men, we should examine other stories fitting the schema and seek the message they convey.

The story of Sargon, the founding king of the Akkadian state, is basically very similar to those of Moses and of Tsar Ispor, who according to the *Tale* founded the Bulgarian state. The legend relates that Sargon was born of a priestess who had vowed to remain a virgin and who, fearing punishment for having broken her vow, placed the child in a basket and set it floating on the river Euphrates. The goddess

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<sup>2</sup> Regarding the story of Moses' childhood a great amount of literature has been written, of which I will cite only some more recent titles and those which have been accessible to me; they, in turn, contain references to older titles: *Exodus 1–18. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* by W.H.C. Propp, The Anchor Bible, 1998, pp. 136–160; D. Redford, "The Literary Motif of the Exposed Child (cf. Ex. ii 1–10)", *Numen*, vol. XIV, Leiden, 1967, pp. 209–228; I. Willi-Plein, "Ort und literarische Funktion des Geburtsgeschichte des Mose", *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. XLI, 1 (1991), pp. 110–118; S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Story of Moses' Birth", in: idem, *From Babylon to Canaan. Studies on Bible and its Oriental Background*, Jerusalem, 1992, pp. 201–221; J.-D. Macchi, "Péricopes. La naissance de Moïse (Exode 2/1–10)", *Etudes théologiques et religieuses*, t. 69 (1994), pp. 397–403; P.E. Hughes, "Moses' Birth Story: A Biblical Matrix for Prophetic Messianism", *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. C. Evans and P. Flint, Grand Rapids-Cambridge UK, 1997, pp. 10–22; B. Gosse, "L'écriture d'Ex 2,1–10 en relation avec les rédactions des livres de la Genèse et de l'Exode", *Biblische Notizen*, 123 (2004), pp. 25–30; B. Gosse, "La naissance de Moïse, les premiers nés et la sortie d'Egypte, les plaies d'Egypte et le retour de la création au chaos", *Rivista biblica*, vol. LIV (2006), pp. 357–364.

to whom his mother was devoted saved Sargon, and later he fulfilled his mission by becoming the first king of Akkad.<sup>3</sup> Here we see many similarities to the biblical story: in both cases, the birth was problematic from a religious, legal, or political point of view, and the life of the child, or mother, or both, was similarly menaced. Therefore, the child was set in a basket on a great river, not to die, but to be saved. The motives are quite rational, but the saving of the child in any case is due to divine intervention. The meaning of this intervention is that the child has been chosen for a mission, but not because the birth was problematic. The hero has been chosen, and the problems surrounding the beginning of his life cannot harm him inasmuch as a higher power (the Lord God or some pagan deity) protects him. These are certainly common archetypes of narrative that show, to some degree or other, a common basic content, though we should take into account the specific readings and understanding of the story in a monotheistic religious environment, such as the Hebrew or the Christian ones. In any case, there can be no doubt that the Bulgarian legend of Tsar Ispor could not have originated from the myth of Sargon, which would have been completely unknown in mediaeval Bulgaria, but came from the Bible, the book that is basic to the themes of Bulgarian Christian literature.<sup>4</sup>

Children born in miraculous circumstances or foundlings are part of the same or a similar religious tradition as that of the children floating in a basket down the river. They represent a religious paradigm similar to the story of Moses, which is our basic example, and convey the same message, about the appearance of a hero entrusted from above with a special mission, usually a mission to create, save, or liberate.

Some of these legends are not about the founding of cities but tell of the foundations of a new state, but this basically amounts to the same thing. The founder is always a king, and the beginning of a state is presented as the building of a city (in other words, settling a location and fortifying it), the conquest of a kingdom, or the unification of a tribe. Even the start of the empire of Alexander the Great is described and presented in the *Revelation of St Methodius Patarensis* as a laying of the foundations of the great city of Alexandria.<sup>5</sup>

The founding of cities has a particularly important meaning in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, and is presented there as a royal act. Practically all founders are kings. All those of whom the stories tell are kings, but only some of them appear

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<sup>3</sup> L.W. King, *Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings*, II, London, 1907, pp. 87–96; *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie ...*, Bd. 11, col. 71–72; *Mify narodov mira*, t. II, pp. 409–410; B. Lewis, *The Sargon Legend: A Study of the Akkadian Text and the Tale of the Hero Who Was Exposed at Birth*. American School of Oriental Research. Dissertation Serries, No 4, 1980, XXI+295 p.; J.-J. Glassner, “Le récit autobiographique de Sargon”, *Revue d’assyrologie et d’archéologie orientale*, vol. LXXXII, 1 (1988), pp. 1–11; J.-J. Glassner, “Une naissance royale dans l’Orient Ancien: Sargon d’Akkadé”, *Le monde de la Bible*, No 101, Novembre-Décembre 1996, pp. 10–11; P.B. Adinach, “Estudio de la leyenda académica de Sargón”, *Orientalia Argentina. Revista del Instituto de Historia Oriental “Dr. Abraham Rosenwasser” del Universidad de Buenos Aires*, n. s. 11 (1994), pp. 67–83.

<sup>4</sup> On the text of Holy Scripture as a code for understanding the literary texts in a Christian environment, see N. Frye, *Velikijat kod. Biblijata i literaturata*, Sofia, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Tăpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova, *Historical and Apocalyptic Literature*, pp. 227, 247.

in the world in a miraculous way. Such is the case of Tsar Constantine and of the brothers Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, as well as their brother, who is not mentioned by name (probably David). Regarding them, the story relates that in the time of Tsar Basil three brother-kings appeared, born of a widow-prophetess (ὠκρῶτε ἰσὺς · τριῖν βρά ᾧ ἑόβησις πρῶνυῖα · μῶνσιῆ ἢ ἀρόνκ κάμῶνῆλῆ ·).<sup>6</sup> They had the names of great Old Testament prophets and were evidently persons with a mission but it is not indicated they were builders of cities, and so we will not discuss them for the time being. The only case left is that of Tsar Constantine, who is particularly important, both because the character refers to an important historical figure, the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, and because of the context and the mention of the New Jerusalem. According to the narrative, Constantine was born in the Bulgarian land, the son of “a widow ... young, wise, and very righteous” (ὠκρῶτε ἰσὺς ἡ ἐβὴ κα βόβησις · μῆλῆ ἢ μῆδρα · ἢ σῆλο πρᾶβεδῆλῆ).<sup>7</sup> A little further on in the narrative it is indicated he was the son of Constantine the Green (Chlorus) and Helena, and that he was designated as Porphyrogenetus. Evidently, the two statements are mutually contradictory, but we will linger on the first of them, because it presents a case of the miraculous birth of a hero. This is shown by the fact that the mother is a widow, and that she is wise and righteous. The latter quality, in the context of the *Tale*, is usually not connected with childbirth or reproductive functions. It thus appears that Constantine’s birth contains a distinctly miraculous aspect, which could be viewed as connected to his building a city. How, then, are we to explain the fact that the father Constantine the Green is explicitly mentioned by name a little further on, evidently with reference to the historical Constantius Chlorus? I prefer not to make guesses; but it stands to reason that this was a simple mistake due to the fact that at least two different works were used in compiling the *Tale*. There is an evident contradiction between the character’s birth from a widow and the indication of his father, but in the context of a compiled work we have reason to see this as the ideological theme of Divine intervention combined with a reference to a historical text.

*The child-hero*—an image closely linked to “miraculous birth”—is certainly a familiar theme in Bulgarian folklore. Ivan Venedikov focused attention on this and offered some interesting ideas, but these were regrettably placed in the framework of a problematic thesis.<sup>8</sup>

This character appears under different names in folklore texts. *Dete Golemeshe* (Child Big) is a central figure in the heroic epos, where he is sometimes presented as a demigod or a demon, who comes to fulfil a specific mission he is entrusted with. He is depicted in various songs, often according to a fixed schema that includes miraculous birth, usually a missing father, and a widow mother.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the child is not baptised, so he has no real name, but one designates him using various epithets.<sup>10</sup> At

<sup>6</sup> In this book, p. 20 (f. 402c, lines 29–31).

<sup>7</sup> In this book, p. 17 (f. 401d, lines 28–30).

<sup>8</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, pp. 47–71; Venedikov, *Zlatnijat stozher*, pp. 175 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Bulgarski junashki epos* (= *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija i narodopis*, vol. LIII), Sofia, 1971, No 201, pp. 366–367, No 205, pp. 372–373 etc.; Venedikov, *Zlatnijat stozher*, pp. 177–180.

<sup>10</sup> Venedikov, *Zlatnijat stozher*, pp. 180 ff.

times, his demonic nature is directly mentioned, as in the case of *Zmeyche Mihailche* (Little Michael, the Little Dragon).<sup>11</sup> It is to note that the child-dragon is called by the name of Archangel Michael, the supreme commander of the celestial hosts, a name also given to the eschatological king-saviour in some apocryphal tales.<sup>12</sup> The folklore tradition evidently presents a superhuman being similar to the leader of the celestial armies.

*Zmeyche Mihailche* belongs to popular religion, which preserves remnants of pagan beliefs and especially of the cyclical-mythological way of thought. Nevertheless, should we identify the inspiration of characters in a literary work of mediaeval literature with it, instead of looking to the Bible, which in that age was exceptionally influential? I have already expressed the opinion that we should not seek the prototypes of the kings that appear in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* in folklore. This is precisely what Ivan Venedikov proposes in connection with the character of Tsar Ispor (identified with Khan Asparukh), and he presents child-hero characters as images of this khan, the founder of Danubian Bulgaria.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the founding kings as we find them in the *Tale* are undeniably special in character. They are sacred persons with a mission, and their work is creative and assimilates them to the divine Creator. In order to situate them in their own environment, below we will trace the basic mythological and historical plots on this theme, as well as their counterparts from the Bible.

Let us begin with the legend of the birth of Cyrus, the founder king of the Persian state. Here I will present the variant of his story that has come down to us from Herodotus.<sup>14</sup> According to his *History*, the parents of Cyrus were well known (hence, his birth was quite ordinary, not a miraculous one), but the baby was to be killed at the order of his grandfather. In this case, the child's survival is not related to a river or to any miracle, but is the result of purely human deeds and good intentions. The child grew up thanks to the care of a woman called Kyno in Greek, and Spako in Median, meaning "bitch". This resembles the interpretation of the history of Romulus and Remus that we find in Constantine Manasses' Chronicle, according to which they were not nursed and raised by a she-wolf, but by a woman called "she-wolf", which means "loose woman", "adulteress" in Latin.<sup>15</sup> Here we find a similar story to that of the saved child destined to found the Persian state, but now in the context of ancient Italian culture.

<sup>11</sup> *Bulgarski junashki epos*, No 203, pp. 369–370; Venedikov, *Zlatnijat stozher*, p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> V. Tapkova-Zaïmova, A. Miltenova. "Political Ideology and Eschatology", pp. 441–451.

<sup>13</sup> Venedikov, *Mednoto gumno*, p. 71; Venedikov, *Zlatnijat stozher*, p. 191. Here I do not wish to even discuss the writings of T. Mollov, who carries the thesis about the cosmological and folklore character of *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* to an extreme.

<sup>14</sup> Herodoti *Historiae*, I, r. 107–113; v. *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie ...*, Bd. 6, col. 1014 ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Constantini Mannassis Compendium chronicorum ab exordio mundi usque ad dominum Nicephorum Botaniatem*, in: *Patrologia graeca*, t. CXXVII, Parisiis 1864, col. 280 v. 1604: ... Λούπα κατωνομάζετο τῇ γλώττῃ τῇ πατρίῳ "Ἦτοι κατὰ διάλεκτον Ἑλληνικὴν ἑταίρα · Ἐπει δὲ καὶ λύκαιναν σύνηθες λούπαν λέγειν τὴν ὕβριν τὴν τῆς γυναικὸς τινες ἐγνοηκότες. Here is the Slavic translation of this text: "... лѡпа нарицааше са азъикнѡ отечествоа си, еже по тазѡкъ елинзскомъ глеть етера, по нашемъ же гостниа, понеже зевъ и влъчицѡ обычаи есть лѡпѡ нарицаати, поношеніе жени." (*Srednebolgarskij perevod chroniki Konstantina Manasija v slavjanskikh literaturah*, ed. M.A. Salmina, Sofia, 1988, p. 134 (21)).

Here we may also mention the story of Miletus, founder and eponym of the city of Miletus in Ionia on the Anatolian shore: he was raised by wolves that saved him when he was an infant.<sup>16</sup> We now come to Romulus and Remus, which is in the special focus of our attention in this research.<sup>17</sup> According to Livy<sup>18</sup> and Plutarch,<sup>19</sup> they were twins born of a vestal virgin, in other words, a woman committed to virginity, and were thrown into the river Tiber so as to conceal that she had broken her vow. They were miraculously saved and raised by a she-wolf. Perhaps this story of a woman called “she-wolf” is similar to that about King Cyrus. They grew up to found the city of Rome, of which Romulus became the eponym.

It is not necessary to mention all the cases of child heroes; in fact, stories about them are numerous in different cultures and geographically widespread. It is particularly important for our study to emphasise that similar tales of children born in unnatural ways or by some miracle can be found in Holy Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments. We mentioned above story of the prophet Moses. I should also point out the story of Lot and his daughters, who took advantage of his inebriated state and had intercourse with him in order to conceive children and continue the lineage of his tribe (Genesis, 19:31ff.). Thus, they gave birth to Moab, from whom descended the Moabites, and Benammi, ancestor of the Ammon people. The births of the two are not miraculous but neither are they in the common course of things since they are the result of incest. This is how there appeared two ancestor king-eponyms of two peoples that were certainly related to God’s Chosen People.<sup>20</sup> In this case we certainly have yet another example of a royal paradigm, which becomes quite clear from the context in which the story is told in the Ethiopian book *Kebra Nagast* (= Glory to the Kings), based on the Old Testament story; it tells of the “transference” of God’s presence outside Israel. In other words, the Chosen People *lost* God’s presence after the Ark of the Covenant *left* the Hebrews and their Promised Land, and *was acquired* by the New Chosen

<sup>16</sup> *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie ...*, Bd. 8, col. 170; W.H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon des griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, Bd. II, 2, Leipzig, 1894–1897, col. 2970–2872; Venedikov, *Mednota gumno*, pp. 59–60.

<sup>17</sup> Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon des griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, Bd. IV, col. 164–209; *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie ...*, Bd. 10, col. 1130–1133.

<sup>18</sup> Titi Livi *Ab Urbe condita*. I, 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Romulus*, III ff.

<sup>20</sup> This plot has been the topic of several studies discussing its various aspects: *Genesis*, Introduc., transl. and notes by E.A. Speiser, New York, 1964, pp. 95–98, 136–147; Ad. Lods, “La Caverne de Lot”, *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, t. 95 (1927), pp. 204–219; A. Baumgarten, “A Note on the Book of Ruth”, *Journal of the Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, vol. 5 (1973), *The Gaster Festschrift*, pp. 11–15; J.R. Porter, “Genesis XIX:30–38 and the Ugaritic Text of šhr & šlm”, *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, 1981, pp. 1–8; K. Luke, “Indo-European parallels to Genesis 19:30–28”, *Indian Theological Studies*, vol. XXI, 3–4, September–December 1984 (Special Number on Indian Lines of Approach to the Bible), pp. 322–342; T. Alexander, “Are the Wife/Sister Incidents of Genesis Literary Compositional Variants?”, *Vetus Testamentum*, XLII, 2 (1992), pp. 145–153; Sh. Yoram, “Sperm Stealing. A Moral Crime by Three of David’s Ancestresses”, *Bible Review*, vol. 17, 1 (February, 2001), pp. 35–38 and 44.

People in a Christian kingdom in Africa.<sup>21</sup> One of the most important characteristics of the Ethiopian book is precisely this: the history of Mankind is presented as the history of the Kingdom of God's anointed, starting with the departure of the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem and down to the last days and the end of the world; this gives the book the kind of eschatological orientation that is noticeable in our *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* as well.

In fact, the biblical tradition—that of the Old and New Testaments alike—contains an abundance of stories of children born miraculously, when they are no longer hoped for after a long and passionate expectation, and generally by the intervention of God or in a way out of the usual order of things. This is considered to be the model for the appearance in the world of a man who will be leader of the Chosen People and will save that people from its enemies, or by whom God's assistance will come to the people. Scholars have expressed the view that this is how the image of the leader was built and this was the justification of Israelite theology for the divine rights of kings and of government power in general.<sup>22</sup> If we accept this view, we will have to discern a royal characteristic in the “miraculous birth”, the origin of which is in the Old Testament, and which is well represented in the apocryphal work we are dealing with, the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. This confirms also the basic approach of my research, which is to seek the basis of the work in the Old Testament.

Here I will cite several examples of miraculous birth taken from the Holy Scripture. The first of these is Isaac's birth when his mother Sarah was ninety years old (Genesis, 21). Similar to this is the story of Rachel, who was at first barren, and the numerous childbirths by Leah and the servants, told of in Genesis (29–30).

The prophet Samuel was also born through the intervention of God (1 Samuel, 1): his mother Hannah was long childless and believed she was permanently deprived of God's grace, but after the prophesy of Eli, the high priest and judge, she gave birth to a child, and a prophet at that, who was to establish the Kingdom among the Chosen People. He was the man who ruled Israel and who set kings on the country's throne but also deposed them. These examples suffice to convince us of the importance of miraculous birth in the Old Testament context.

We find similar stories in the New Testament, and one such is the story of the birth of the “last prophet”, St John the Baptist. He was the son of the priest Zacharias and of the righteous Elisabeth of the tribe of Levi. He came into the world by Divine intervention, evident from the fact that his parents were long childless, from the prophesy in the Temple, and from Zacharias' loss of speech in punishment for his incredulity that he would have an heir (Luke, 1). This is how John the Baptist and Prodromos was born, a figure of immense importance for Christians, and, though not possessing royal characteristics, certainly one of the leaders of the People of Israel.

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<sup>21</sup> G. Colin, *La gloire des rois (Kebra Nagast). Épopée nationale de l'Éthiopie*, Genève, 2002, § 78 ff., pp. 71 ff. On the significance of the book Kebra Nagast, see Iv. Biliarsky, “The Birth of the Empire by the Divine Wisdom and the Ecumenical Church”, pp. 23–43.

<sup>22</sup> Jarrell R.H., “The Birth Narrative as Female Counterpart to Covenant”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 26 (2002), pp. 3–18; Brett M.G., “Nationalism and the Hebrew Bible” in: *The Bible in Ethics: The Second Sheffield Colloquium*, ed. J.W. Rogerson and others, Sheffield, 1995, pp. 136–163.

Of course, the *topos* is closely related to the story of a miraculous birth by a virgin, exemplified in the Gospel story of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will not deal with this topic specially, as it is so well known. However, I will say this miraculous birth legitimates all the characteristics of Christ: that of king, of saviour, of leader, which to some degree or another appears in the Old Testament texts as well. In fact, the New Testament perspective on the Bible finds that a prophecy about the birth of Emmanuel from a Virgin was made by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah, 7:14). However, in this story we find an extremely important difference between biblical narratives and pagan stories of “miraculous birth of a hero”. In the latter there is some act of sexual intercourse clearly involved, performed in an unusual way, often connected with violence, rape, or deceit on the part of a male deity, which might appear in human or animal guise (e.g. Leda and the swan, Europa and the bull) or as some natural phenomenon (Danae, impregnated by Zeus appearing as rain, gives birth to Perseus, a story connected with patricide committed on Danae’s father Acrisius). This kind of stories in the Bible appears only as an exception (the story of Lot’s daughters is an example); the most important case here is Virgin birth, which carries a very different message. In Zoroastrianism, we find an interesting story of an eschatological Saviour, or Saoshiant, born of maiden who was never visited by a man: he is born after his mother entered a lake in which the semen of Zoroaster had been preserved. In this story, there is some element of virgin birth, but the birth is not exactly a result of divine intervention and is not supernatural, for the part played by the prophet’s semen is clearly indicated; what is important, and supernatural, is how it was preserved.

Here is not the place for me to address the question as to the cause of this wandering of the plot about the birth of hero, king, and leader.<sup>23</sup> Usually this similarity of plots is cited by some researchers in order to question the character of Holy Scripture as Revelation, to find loans of themes and plots from elsewhere, to point to the influence of folklore, etc. All this lies outside the topic of the present study. It is important to stress that we can find cases similar to the miraculous birth of the heroes in the *Tale*, not only in certain cosmological myths, but in the Bible as well. Moreover, in the typological aspect the story of the miraculous appearance of the children in the *Tale* is much closer to biblical stories than to pagan myths. The true cause of the appearance of the child is usually not announced, which is a sign of Divine intervention. There is only mention of floating in a basket or a widow mother (sometimes she is *wise*, and sometimes a *prophetess*). The physical elements of some of the cosmological stories are lacking, as are sexual or other such images.

Having said this, I should immediately make the reservation that, since we are working with such meagre data, we could hardly build complex or comprehensive theories on this basis. In addition, as long as we certainly cannot, I would like to urge that fantasised reconstructions should be avoided and the existing possibilities be examined in the already well-established context of the highly Christianised culture of mediaeval Bulgaria, and within the framework of the main code of this context, Holy Scripture.

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<sup>23</sup> O. Rank, *Le mythe de la naissance du héros*, Paris, 1983.

### EXCURSUS THREE

#### THE TABERNACLE OF THE EMPIRE OR THE STATE-CHURCH

Church-state relations in the Middle Ages are usually studied in terms of the issue of administrative and general power subordination of one to the other. Here I will try to avoid this approach and, instead, will share some of my observations as to how the State was interpreted during the Middle Ages, when it was thought of as being part of God's Creation, and as something that carries reflections of Divine Providence. The Terrestrial Kingdom, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, nature, and all Creation were conceived of as a hierarchical structure reflecting the Celestial Kingdom and its angelic orders.<sup>1</sup> Together with this, from an ecclesiological perspective, the Church alone was thought of as *Corpus Christi*, the Body of Jesus Christ, which unites the visible and invisible world; only the Church provides the possibility for life in God and communion, unity with Him. That is why the mediaeval theocracy, in striving to sanctify government authority, turned to the model of the Church, which was quite different from the religious models of previous ages, which, in pagan religions, involved the image of the king-priest or the king-god.

In the following presentation, I shall consider several texts connected with the history of the revival of the Second Bulgarian Empire, and one presenting the subsequent interpretation of the nature of this revival by one of the most prominent late mediaeval authors, St Euthymius, Patriarch of Tărnovgrade.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, given the actual condition of sources, we are compelled to work not with actual theoretical treatises but with concepts implied and suggested in various preserved works. The title of this section was suggested by a passage in the works of St Euthymius in which he clearly compares the Empire to the biblical Tabernacle, Alter and Temple, evidently conceived of as the receptacle of God.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, I would like to begin with a different story, chronologically older and containing the basic information relevant to our research. This is the story of the restoration of the independent Bulgarian state by the Asen brothers, aptly designated by Ivan Bozhilov as "*Renovatio Imperii*".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding these questions, see: I. Biliarsky, *Hierarchia. L'Ordre sacré. Etude sur l'esprit romainque*, Fribourg/Suisse, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> At first glance, it would seem not relevant to the text of the *Tale*, but I believe that we have here the same ideas regarding the biblical interpretation of royal power, which are therefore worth discussing.

<sup>3</sup> About the sacral topography of Tărnovgrade and mediaeval Bulgaria I would refer to the interesting article of the Serbian colleague Jelena Erdeljan, "Trnovo. Principi i sredstva konstruisanja sakralne topografije srednjovekovne bugarske prestonice", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, XLVII, 2010, pp. 199–214.

<sup>4</sup> Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460)*. *Genealogija i prosopografija*, p. 31; Bozhilov, "Asenevtsi: Renovatio Imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum", pp. 162 ff.

The prehistory of the events merits our attention. In the last decades of the 12th century, the Byzantine Empire fell into a deep crisis, which ended with the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. Before that, however, the Normans from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had attacked the Empire as well. In one of their regular campaigns, the Normans had seized Dyrrhachium in June 1185, and on August 24 of that year Thessalonica also fell to them. Contemporaneous witnesses, especially Eustathius of Thessalonica, describe terrible scenes of cruelty taking place in the second most important city of the Empire. These events had engendered the rumour that city's patron saint, its celestial protector and intercessor St Demetrius had abandoned Thessalonica. The sins of the inhabitants were so great that the saint turned away from the city he had protected for centuries. He must have moved elsewhere, so why not among the Bulgarians, who in fact had acquired an icon of St Demetrius, saved from the plunder of his city.<sup>5</sup> This became the spiritual basis for the providential and messianic ideas about the restoration of the Empire that are the object of the present research.

The events we are discussing are relatively well studied<sup>6</sup> and I will not present them here in detail, but I would like to touch upon the narrative that relates them. According to the account by Nicetas Choniates,<sup>7</sup> the Asenide brothers, after receiving a humiliating refusal to their demand that they be recognised as *pronoïars*, incited the people to a revolt or a defection (*ἀπόστασις*). They raised a house of prayer dedicated to St Great Martyr Demetrius, and gathered together around it many *possessed* persons (*δαμονολήπτοι*) from the both Bulgarians and Walachians, persons with bloodshot eyes and long hair, who repeated in a state of exaltation that God had allotted freedom to the Bulgarian and Walachian nation. That is why the martyr in Christ, Demetrius had abandoned Thessalonica, had ceased to dwell among the Byzantines, and instead had come among them to be their helper and patron in their undertaking (ὡς ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ τῶν Βουλγάρων καὶ τῶν Βλάχων γένους ἐλευθερίαν ἠδὲδοκῆσε καὶ τοῦ χρονίου ζυγοῦ ἐπένευσε ἀπαυχένισιν, οὐ χάριν καὶ τὸν Χριστομάρτυρα Δημήτριον ἀπολιπεῖν μὲν τὴν Θεσσαλονικέων μητρόπολιν καὶ νεῶν τὸν ἐκεῖ καὶ τὰς παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις διατριβὰς, εἰς δ' αὐτοὺς ἀφικέσθαι ὡς ἐπαρήξοντα καὶ συλλήπτωρα τοῦ ἔργου ἐσόμενον). Another source, the epigram of Theodore Balsamon, entitled *To St Demetrius, Found in the House of Slavopeter* tells us that this exaltation of the population was due to the miraculous arrival from Thessalonica in Tărnovgrade of an icon of the saint.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Istorija na Bulgarija*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 424–425.

<sup>6</sup> There is a very extensive literature accumulated on this topic, which I need not quote here. See: V.N. Zlatarski, *Istorija na bulgarskata dŕzhava prez srednite vekove*, t. II, pp. 410–483; Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460)*, pp. 27–28; *Istorija na Bulgarija*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 421 ff.; V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, “Quelques représentations iconographiques de Saint Démétrius et l’insurrection des Assenides—première scission dans son culte “œcuménique””, *Byzantinobulgarica*, V, 1978, pp. 261–267; Bozhilov, “Asenevtsi: Renovatio Imperii Bulgarorum et Graecorum”, pp. 136 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Nicetae Choniatae *Historia*, rec. J.A. van Dieten, Berolini et Novi Eboraci, 1975, p. 371.

<sup>8</sup> Iv. Dujčev, “Prouchvanija vărku bulgarskoto Srednovekovie”, *Sbornik BAN*, t. XLI, Sofia, 1945, N° 9, pp. 48–50 (text and translation); Tăpkova-Zaimova, “Quelques représentations iconographiques de Saint Démétrius”, pp. 262–263.

Two more things should be pointed out. Nicetas Choniates tells us that the leader of the defectors—Theodore—proclaimed himself emperor and donned the purple shoes as a symbol of his sovereign power (ἄτερος δὲ τῶν ὀμαιμόνων ὁ Πέτρος καὶ στεφανίσκῳ χρυσέῳ διαδεῖται τὴν κεφαλὴν, καὶ τοῖς ποσὶν ὑπορράπτει καὶ περιτίθησι κοκκοβαφῆς πέδιλον).<sup>9</sup> Before that, he had assumed the royal name of Peter after the St Tsar Peter, patron of the Bulgarian rulers of the First Bulgarian Empire. Another symbolic act of the first Asenides was their attempt to conquer the old capital of city Preslav.<sup>10</sup> The Byzantine historian's account of this is very brief: the Asenides set out for Preslav, but seeing that the city would be hard to take, they abandoned their plan.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, we know about the action of Tsar Peter and Tsar John I Asen only from some fragments of an official text presenting the spiritual (or “ideological”) aspect of the act of restoration of the Empire by the first Asenides. After the later accretions are cleared away, the following schema remains:

*First.* The act is represented as a restoration or second establishment of the state, and its continuity with the First Bulgarian Empire is emphasised<sup>12</sup> by the veneration of St Tsar Peter through the elder brother Theodore's choice of a new royal name for himself, and by the plan to conquer the old capital Preslav.<sup>13</sup> Here we can recognise the theme of *renovation* and the image of the *renewer kings* to which I have devoted a special chapter in this book. It is as such that the first Asenides are presented, a fact that is most clearly confirmed by the reference to St Tsar Peter. The brothers do not appear in the extant text of the *Tale*, either because it was written before their time (which is the prevalent opinion on the question) or because what we have is not the full text of the work.

*Second.* The act of *Renovatio Imperii* is attributed to the will of God. It is a direct result of the work of Divine Providence and is therefore a sacred act, the “political” importance of which is far lesser than its religious one. This is revealed in the source in several places that I would specially emphasise. Foremost is that the fact that the extant story depicts the act of Restoration of the Empire as an act of building a church. The two acts are so interwoven as to be inseparable. The temple (church), and simultaneously the empire, are raised among the Bulgarians for one and the

<sup>9</sup> Nicetae Choniatae *Historia*, p. 372.

<sup>10</sup> Erdeljan, “Trnovo. Principi i sredstva ...”, pp. 209–210.

<sup>11</sup> Nicetae Chiniatae *Historia*, p. 372; *Istorija na Bulgarija*, t. I, Sofia, 1999, pp. 427 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Iv. Dujčev, “Le problème de la continuité dans l'histoire de la Bulgarie médiévale”, *Aspects of the Balkans Continuity and Change*, Multon, The Hague-Paris, 1972, pp. 138–150; Iv. Dujčev, “Idejata za priemstvenostta v srednovekovnata bulgarska dărzhava”, in: idem, *Proučvanija vărkhū srednovekovnata bulgarska istorija i kultura*, Sofia, 1981, pp. 68–81; Chr. Kolarov, J. Andreev, “Certaines questions ayant trait aux manifestations de continuité d'idées en Bulgarie médiévale au cours des XIIe–XIVe siècles”, *Etudes historiques*, IX, 1979, pp. 77–97.

<sup>13</sup> Nicetae Chiniatae *Historia*, r. 372 Dujčev, “Idejata za priemstvenostta v srednovekovnata bulgarska dărzhava”, pp. 73 ff.; Bozhilov, *Familijata na Asenevtsi (1186–1460)*. *Genealogija i prosopografija*, p. 28; *Istorija na Bulgarija*, t. I, pp. 427–428. On the importance of the capital city and the court in the culture and political life of mediaeval Bulgaria, see V. Gjuzeliev, “Hauptstaedte, Residenzen und Hofkultur im mittelalterlichen Bulgarien, 7–14. Jahrhundert. Vom Nomadencampus bis zum Zarenhof”, *Etudes balkaniques*, 2, 1991, S. 82–105.

same reason: the presence of Divine grace has reached them through the saint's icon. In this same aspect, it is very important that the act of Restoration of the Empire is *announced and accompanied* by the prophecies of the possessed, who have the ability to *express Revelation* in human words so that it may reach people. Finally, but not least in importance, the act of the Restoration of the Empire is directly *accomplished from Heaven*: it is defined through the miraculous arrival of the icon of St Demetrius in Tărnovgrade, which is the main event in the whole narrative.

*Third.* The act of *Renovatio Imperii*, that we defined as *directly effectuated from Heaven* (by the arrival of the icon) is, in addition, carried out through the activity of the Asen brothers. What I insist on, and which is not present in the source text, is that the Asen brothers are three in number, not two: Theodore-Peter, Belgun-John and Ioanitsa (Kaloyan). All three—simultaneously and in succession—possessed the title of tsars and effectively occupied the throne and exercised power. It is clear that what we have here is not the dynasty's and Bulgarian Empire's own official version of events, but a Byzantine account.

Evidently, the narrative of the Renovation of the Empire is a *topos* and it repeats other known narratives of building and restoration of monasteries and cities. Particularly typical are those about Mount Athos.<sup>14</sup> The Athonite schema of the story is the following: three brothers, pious Christians, restored or built a monastery in strictly obeying the will expressed by God. This Divine will is usually indicated by the miraculous arrival of an icon that has either left its previous location due to the indignity of the Christians there, or appears, is created, by a miracle. As for the Hagiorite variant, the icon usually arrives by sea (floats or is caught in a fishing net) or is carried by a riding animal (mule, horse, ass) and decides by itself—through the animal—where to stop and settle. At that place, chosen by Heaven, the monastery or church in the story is raised. The icon is usually that of the Holy Mother of God or of the martyr saints George or Demetrius. Finally, the three brothers, executors of God's will as expressed through the icon, build the monastery, or temple, or city, thus accomplishing what has been indicated to them miraculously from above.<sup>15</sup>

I will not go into the details of the different stories; it will be sufficient to cite the building of cities, for instance Kiev;<sup>16</sup> the building of the Hagiorite monasteries

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<sup>14</sup> Iv. Bozhilov, "Osnovavaneto na svetata atonska bulgarska obitel Zograf. Legend ii fakti", *Svetogorskata obitel Zograf*, t. I, Sofia, 1995, p. 14; *Actes du Protaton*, ed. D. Papachryssanthou, Paris, 1975 (= *Archives de l'Athos*, VII), p. 91, No 312; V. Kravari, "Nouveaux documents du monastere de Philotheou", *Travaux et memoires*, 10 (1987), p. 273; Sp. Lampros, "Ta Patria tou Agiou Orou", *Neon Ellinonimion*, 9 (1912), pp. 116–161, 209–244; Erdeljan, "Trnovo. Principi i sredstva ...", pp. 210–211.

<sup>15</sup> The theme of the three brothers is widespread in Bulgarian folklore. We will not discuss the story of "The Three Brothers and the Golden Apple" here, but I cannot fail to mention a song from the Rhodope Mountains, from the area of the town of Ahri Çelebi, recorded from Mata Angelitsa of the village of Arda, according to which the three brothers are masons who wall up the beloved of one of them in building a city (*Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i knizhnina*, t. II, Sofia, 1890, p. 78). The two motifs are certainly connected and mutually influencing; but we will not discuss whether one of them originated from the other.

<sup>16</sup> According to the Russian chronicles, Kiev was founded by the three brothers Kyi,

Vatopedi,<sup>17</sup> Iviron,<sup>18</sup> Sauronicetas,<sup>19</sup> and, most importantly, Zographou,<sup>20</sup> the restoration of the Rila monastery in the 15th century and the translation to it of the relics of St John of Rila,<sup>21</sup> the restoration of the Troyan monastery, etc. Of course, each narrative gives a different version of the story, but they all generally follow the above-mentioned schema.

I should insist on two elements that I find to be essential in this story: the fact that the act of creation (restoration) is of the nature of a sacred ritual; and the veneration as protectors of the city of the Holy Mother of God and of the warrior saints.

The act of creating a city-temple-empire (state) is certainly sacral in character, and if archetypes for it are sought, it could be viewed as an act of the cultural hero, the creator, who organises the cosmos, as an act of creation of the world. There are numerous marks of such similarity: building itself as a sacral act; the placement of a centre and the organising of space around this centre, etc..<sup>22</sup> Though I will not deny this method in principle, I should stress that this concrete case (the restoration of the Empire and the arrival of the icon of the protector saint) is a Christian creative act, which we have no right to view in the perspective of cosmogony and its mythology. The difference is essential, for in our case this is a historical act accomplished in historical time and in the world—no matter if by divine intervention—and not a cyclically repeated breakthrough of sacral time into the profane time of the visible world.

In this connection, it is worth pointing out the sacral quality of the act of creation in our topos. Since most of the texts that present this narrative refer to the icon of the Holy Virgin, the story should be related to the cult of the Holy Mother of God and specifically to her function of city-protector, directly linked to the tradition of the Akathist Hymn. The historical roots of this veneration go back to the great siege of

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Shtek, and Khoriv (*Povest' vremennykh let*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, t. 1, pp. 12–13. See also *Istorija Kieva*, t. I, *Drevnij i srednevekovyj Kiev*, Kiev, 1982, pp. 48–51). There is a similar Armenian legend. In *History of Taron*, a compilation composed not earlier than the 8th century (M. Abegjan, *Istorija drevnearmjanskoj literatury*, t. I, Erevan, 1948, p. 346)—there is a story of three brothers, sons of king Vagarshak, who build three cities named after them: Kuar, Met'ti and Kh'orsan. Russian scholars, who are inclined to view the data of the Russian chronicles as historical in nature, have proposed that the Armenian narrative is the result of the penetration of Russian history into the Caucasus.

<sup>17</sup> P. Huber, *Athos. Leben, Glaube, Kunst*, Zürich, 1969, S. 69.

<sup>18</sup> Huber, *Athos*, S. 73.

<sup>19</sup> Huber, *Athos*, S. 110–111.

<sup>20</sup> Ivanov, *Bulgarski starini iz Makedonia*, pp. 540–541; *Actes de Zographou*, ed. W. Regel, E. Kurtz, V. Korablev, *Actes slaves, Vizantijskij vremennik*, 13 (1907), Suppl. 1, N° V, pp. 169–170; Bozhilov, "Osnovavaneto na svetata atonska bulgarska obitel Zograf", pp. 13 ff.; Iv. Dujčev, "Chilandar et Zographou au Moyen Age", in: IDEM, *Medioevo bizantino-slavo*, III, Roma, 1971, p. 490; Iv. Dujčev, "Le Mont Athos et les Slaves au Moyen Age", in: idem, *Medioevo bizantino-slavo*, I, Roma, 1965, p. 494; I. Mamalaki, *To Agion Oros (Athos) dia mesou ton aionon*, Thessalonica, 1971, pp. 36, 72.

<sup>21</sup> E. Kałużniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius (1375–1393)*, Wien, 1901, S. 409–410.

<sup>22</sup> M. Eliade, *Sakralnoto i profannoto*, Sofia, 1998, pp. 13–47 (especially, pp. 33–34, 38–41).

Constantinople by the Persians, Slavs, and Avars in AD 626.<sup>23</sup> The later development of this cult is the veneration for the Mantle of Our Lady, which was especially important for the ideology of Muscovite Russia.<sup>24</sup> All this indicates the image of the Mother of God as a prototype of the Church. The Holy Virgin, having given birth to the Saviour, is the abode of God, His receptacle, and her mantle is both her attribute and a symbol of her.<sup>25</sup> Both these symbols of the Church are rooted in the Old Testament tradition, which tells of the cloud and fire above the tabernacle (Exodus, ch. 40). This passage from the Old Testament has been interpreted as a prophecy about the Church and the Birth of the Saviour; the text was read at the holiday of the *Presentation of the Holy Mother of God*, a feast devoted to the Holy Virgin, who is herself a Church, animated by the presence of the Holy Ghost.<sup>26</sup>

In this connection, I should point out a curious text that provides very interesting information relevant to this investigation. It is, again, a work of Patriarch Euthymius, the *Praise of St Michael, the Warrior of Potuka*, which is combined with a homily for the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady.<sup>27</sup> The latter is entirely within the tradition of veneration of the Holy Virgin as protector of the city as well as the Holy Virgin as Church, as the receptacle of God. It is most important here that her cult is united with that of St Michael the Warrior, as both are royal cults that provide data about the concept of power. The cult of St Michael the Warrior should be understood as a form of the cult of the saintly dragon slayer, a cult that is important for understanding the tsar as protector of the faith. This also explains the great attention devoted in Bulgaria to this otherwise not very well-known saint, Michael the Warrior. He was a dragon slayer and the fact that his relics were preserved in Tarnovgrade is particularly indicative in this respect, inasmuch as he is the only dragon slayer represented in the capital city. Maria Pljukhanova has aptly defined the theocratic ideal of Moscow as a union between the Wisdom of God and the Dragon Slayer. In our case there is a combination of the veneration of the Holy Wisdom of God (whether it be interpreted as the Dwelling that the Holy Wisdom has made for itself in the person of the Holy Virgin—Church—Body of Christ—Receptacle of God, or as the concrete manifestation of the Mother of God as protector of the City-Temple-Empire) and of the dragon slayer as victor over the diabolical incarnation, and as protector of the Church and of Empire. Ultimately, the tsar in his quality of victor over the infidels and the heretics is also a reflection of this saint.

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<sup>23</sup> Fr. Barišić, "Le siège de Constantinople par les Avars et les Slaves en 626", *Byzantion*, 24 (1954), pp. 371 ff.; E. Wellesz, *Akathistos Hymn. Introduced and Translated*, Copenhagen, 1957; G. Ostrogorsky, *Istorija na vizantijskata dърzhava*, Sofia, 1998, pp. 159–160; J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 355 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Pljukhanova, *Sjuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva*, pp. 23 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Pljukhanova, *Sjuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva*, p. 28. Some traces of the cult of the Mantle of the Holy Virgin can be found in Bulgaria. I shall only point out the mention of the mantle in the prayer of St. Paraskeva-Petka in front of the Icon of the Holy Mother of God of Blachernes: Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 87.

<sup>26</sup> J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology (Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes)*, New York, 1974, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, pp. 166 ff.

The veneration for the Mother of God as protector of the city was not unknown to the Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, who were under the strong influence of Constantinople. The very fact that in Bulgaria the capital city Preslav, like Tarnovgrade after it, were conceived as replicas of Constantinople required a corresponding religious interpretation of the Bulgarian cities. This interpretation is revealed in the epithets “tsar’s city / imperial city”, “great” “mother of cities”, “city protected by God”, and in some indirect data. The accumulation of relics in the capital, which was certainly part of rulers’ policy during the Second Bulgarian Empire, testifies to such an attitude. This was also the basis of the royal cult of warrior saints like St Demetrius.

In discussing these problems, we should refer to the Orthodox understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ, consisting of the faithful, God’s people. The Church is a community of these people, which is shown most clearly by the liturgical texts where the *city* and *prince* are equated with the Eucharistic community, which is also the Church (i.e. the community of the faithful together with the Eucharistic presence of the Son, the Word).<sup>28</sup>

We find an interesting connection between the Empire and the Church, manifested through the symbolism of St Sophia Wisdom of God.<sup>29</sup> Churches dedicated to St Sophia are especially typical for capital cities in Orthodox countries, which are also cathedral cities. Here we may mention foremost Jerusalem (as the archetypal city of the Temple, the Crucifixion, and in a sense the receptacle of the Saviour’s earthly life), and also Constantinople and Kiev. In this respect Bulgaria is an exception—for it never had a patriarchal cathedral dedicated to the St Sophia, even though the designation “New Constantinople” was applied to Tarnovgrade.<sup>30</sup>

Here we will restrict the presentation to these observations and return to our basic topic, the founding of the Empire. The discussion presented above permits two conclusions regarding the story about the *Renovatio Imperii* by the Asen brothers:

1. The act of founding-restoring is depicted as an act of founding a church, i.e. as a certain category of religious act.

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<sup>28</sup> Pljukhanova, *Sjuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva*, pp. 30–31. It should be generally stressed that the reference to “emperor” and “the city” in liturgical texts deserves special attention. These testimonies should be viewed precisely as a semiotic problem, not as concrete historical source indications, as some authors are all too inclined to see them (for instances as some concrete tsar like John Shishman, warring against the infidels, or as some concrete cathedral city, etc.).

<sup>29</sup> It is worth mentioning the text of the Russian “*Story about the City of Jerusalem*”, in which “St Sophia’s cities” seem to be merged and made indistinguishable—F. Buslaev, *Povest grada Ierusalima. Letopis russkoj literatury i drevnosti*, Moscow, 1859, p. 41 (cited by F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, M.B. Pljukhanova, “Srednevekoveye istoricheskie formuly (Moskva/Tyrnovo—Novyj Car’grad)”, *Tekst-Kul’tura-Semiotika narrativa* (= *Trudy po znakovym sistemam*, XXIII, *Acta et commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis*, 855), Tartu, 1989, p. 83).

<sup>30</sup> Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, Pljukhanova, “Srednevekoveye istoricheskie formuly (Moskva/Tyrnovo—Novyj Car’grad)”, p. 83. Here we should not refer to the church of St Sophia in Ochrid as an example, because it dates from the 11th century and there was only a short tradition of this city as a Bulgarian capital.

2. The founding-restoring of the Empire is certainly linked to the idea of celestial protection for the city-community-Church in the ecclesiological sense of the word.

The defining of the Orthodox Empire as a “chosen vessel of Divine Providence” and, in some sense, a receptacle of God, goes back to an old tradition. The territory of the Empire is where the Saviour was born in the time of Octavian Augustus, and on its territory His teaching was disseminated.<sup>31</sup> The conclusion to which this discussion leads is that in Bulgaria we find traces of the view that interprets the Empire as a Church. In support of this, we could adduce other sources as well, that would allow us to trace the presence of this view over the whole period of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Here I shall cite some of these additional sources, without attempting a comprehensive list.

I will point out a notable passage in the *Vita of St John of Rila* by Patriarch Euthymius: “Not long afterwards, when God willed to renew the Bulgarian state and to raise, I would say, as it is written, the fallen tabernacle, ruined by Greek violence, He exalted the horn of the Bulgarian Empire under the most pious Tsar Asen, named John in holy baptism.”<sup>32</sup> This passage is certainly intensely charged semantically, and its meaning is indubitable. We find a direct reference to the “tabernacle”, the predecessor of the Temple and abode of God in the time of Moses and afterwards. In this sense, the comparison of the Empire to a “tabernacle” could only mean one thing: that the Empire is seen as a temple or Church. This is where God dwells and where the life in God is lived, where communion with Him occurs.

The other notable phrase in this *Vita* is “exalting the horn of the Bulgarian Empire”. In order to understand it, we should turn again to the biblical texts. Holy Scripture is full of references to “horn”. Some of them are irrelevant to our topic, but I shall try to group the relevant ones into several categories in order to better understand them. On one hand there are texts that tell of the sacrificial altar before the Ark of the Alliance (see especially Exodus, 30), which is directly relevant to the temple. The altar itself, though in its later variant (Deuteronomy, 27:5–6), is also connected with the veneration for the Holy Virgin, for the fact that is made of unchiseled stones, not touched by iron, presages the birth of the Saviour by a Virgin.

The other group of quotations comprises those related to the horn attributed to God’s anointed, i.e. to the king of the People of Israel, and also the indication that the horn is a vessel of holy chrism with which the king is anointed (1 Samuel, 2:10, 16:1, 16:13, 1 Kings, 1:39, etc.). An interesting reference is to Lord Himself, called the “horn of salvation” in two biblical texts: 2 Samuel, 22:3, and Psalms, 17/18:3; the two passages are obviously interconnected and are cited in the New Testament where this term is used to designate the Saviour, who became a man from David’s descent (Luke, 1:69). We should specially note the places in Holy Scripture directly referring to “exalting of the horn”, for they seem to have directly influenced the text

<sup>31</sup> E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem*, Leipzig, 1935, S. 66ff.; J.E. Karagiannopoulos, *Politicheska teorija na vizantijtsite*, Sofia, 1992, pp. 11–12.

<sup>32</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius*, S. 23 cap. XII; Patriarch Evtimij, *Sächinenija*, p. 55.

of Patriarch Euthymius. In Psalms 111/112:9 it is said that the horn of the good man will be exalted. An even more important reference is in Psalm 148:14, according to which God has exalted the horn of His people, Israel. A similar meaning is found in passages from the book of Jesus ben Sirach, 47:6 ff.<sup>33</sup> These observations can serve as a serious basis for conclusions regarding the concept of state in the works of Patriarch Euthymius, the most important Bulgarian writer of the late Middle Ages. The horn is part of the temple, the Saviour Himself is designated as “horn”; the horn is in Israel, God’s Chosen People. The association with the Church is very clear and has several aspects. Firstly, there is the temple, the allusion of which is obvious, since the church is also a temple, no matter what significant differences there might be between the two. Secondly, the identifying of the horn with the Saviour points to the same allusion, inasmuch as the Ecumenical Church is the *Corpus Christi*. Thirdly, the elating of the horn of God’s Chosen People Israel also has a relation to the Church, inasmuch as the Church is the New Israel: in the New Testament, the Chosen People is no longer ethnically defined but embraces all Christians united for life in God through the Church. This is how references to the Chosen People in the Middle Ages should be understood. Here we again see revealed a view of the state as Church, i.e. as an organism that not only unites a population on a certain territory politically but also gives it mystic unity with the reality of the visible and invisible world, leading it to Salvation and life in God.

Some interesting data relevant to the topic discussed here is to be found in the Eulogy of SS. Constantine and Helena by Patriarch Euthymius. In this work the building of Constantinople, the New Rome (which is semantically equal to the founding of the Empire, an act corresponding to that discussed in the case of the Asenides) is presented as closely related to the tradition of St Sophia—Wisdom of God. In this way the author explicitly informs us that in the City were built the churches of Holy Wisdom and of St Irene, with the clarification that the latter name did not refer to St. Irene the martyr but to “Jesus Christ, which signifies peace”.<sup>34</sup> All this can be related to the text of Proverbs that refers to “Wisdom building a house”;<sup>35</sup> the Empire itself is understood to be a house.<sup>36</sup> In a similar way may be interpreted

<sup>33</sup> See also Jesus ben Sirach, 49:7, where it is mentioned that the horn of the Testament with God is in the hands of the king of Israel as God’s anointed.

<sup>34</sup> Kałużniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius*, S. 118 (cap. XI); Patriarch Evtimij, *Sächinenija*, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup> Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. (*Proverbs*, 8:1–4). Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. (*Proverbs*, 8:14–16). Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ... (*Proverbs*, 9:1–5).

<sup>36</sup> S. Averintsev, “K ujasneniju smysla nadpisi nad konkhoj tsentral’noj apsidy Sofii

the text in the same eulogy that designates St Constantine the Great as “*a second Bezaleel*” (Exodus 31:2, 35:30, 36:1–2, 37:1, 8:22; 2 Chronicles, 1:5).<sup>37</sup> He is called by this name in his quality of organiser of the Christian empire and of the Universal Church: for Bezaleel was the craftsman to whom God assigned the task of building the Ark of the Covenant and the altar mentioned above. We have here the symbols of the king-builder and of the kingdom as Church and as the abode of God.

Of course, other texts could be cited here as well.<sup>38</sup> However, examining them or even listing them would far exceed the aims and subject of this presentation.

On one hand, the view of the Empire as a Church is directly connected to understanding it as the Home of Wisdom, referred to in Solomon’s Proverbs. On the other hand, it sets the dimensions of the concept of the state current in mediaeval Bulgaria. The Empire proves to be the Home of God, and in this perspective is conceived not as (or not only as) a political formation in the modern sense of the term, but as a mystical unity between the Divine and the human.<sup>39</sup> In any case, this concept excludes any particularism or any idea of a nation state. The State-Church, conceived of as the receptacle of God, as his home, is certainly universal in character. It thus presents itself as a continuation of the idea of the New Israel that we traced in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*.

As for the ideas of a state based on a people, I should only say that the idea of people is itself understood in the category of “*Thy People*”,<sup>40</sup> i.e. of the faithful, of all Christians, the Body of Christ, as manifest in the Eucharistic community illumined by the presence of the Saviour.

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Kievskoj”, *Drevnerusskoe iskustvo. Hudozhestvenaja kul’tura domongol’skoj Rusi*, Moscow, 1972, p. 42; Pljukhanova, *Sjuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva*, pp. 226–227.

<sup>37</sup> Kalužniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius*, S. 144, cap. XXVII; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 145.

<sup>38</sup> In the same text we also find an example of direct reception of a specific royal priesthood (the dignity of “bishops” received from God, in the words of the bishops) by the Emperor St. Constantine, which directly demonstrates the “ecclesiastic” character of the Empire (Kalužniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius*, S. 136–137, cap. XXI; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, pp. 139–140). Another symbolically significant fact is that St. Constantine gave up the ghost on the feast of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church (Kalužniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius*, S. 143, cap. XXVI; Patriarch Evtimij, *Săchinenija*, p. 145). In connection with the basic thesis of this book, I should also quote a folk tale about the founding of Constantinople, in which there is a direct and categorical indication that the founding took place during liturgy and the unequivocal indication that the cross and the sign of the bell are placed in the foundations of the City (“Tsar Konstantinovoto kale do Tsarigrad i sv. Ivanovata glava”, *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i knižnina*, t. XII, 1895, pp. 195–196). I shall not comment on these data, which speak for themselves. I shall only say that F. Badalanova prefers to see them not as ecclesiastic symbols but as motives which “reflect some Indo-European cultural archetypes” (F. Badalanova-Pokrovskaja, “Osnovanie Tsarstva” v bolgarskikh srednevekovykh predstavlenijakh”, *Mekhanizmy kul’tury*, ed. B.A. Uspenskij, Moscow, 1990, pp. 144–145).

<sup>39</sup> This is how Orthodox ecclesiology characterises the Church.

<sup>40</sup> “O Lord, save Thy People and bless Thine Inheritance” (Спаси Господи люди Твоя и благослови достояние Твое)—in the Holy liturgies of St John Chrysostom and of St Basil the Grand—*Sluzhebnik*, Sofia, 1998, pp. 109, 147; Bl. Chifljanov, *Liturgika*, Sofia, 1997, pp. 115–116.

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