

SLAVONIC TEXTS OF HARD FATE: THE PROPHECY OF SOLOMON AND SOME OTHERS

Toward a recent book:

Е. Г. ВОДОЛАЗКИН, *Всемирная история в литературе Древней Руси (на материале хронографического и палейного повествования XI–XV веков)*. 2-е издание, переработанное и дополненное (СПб.: Изд-во «Пушкинский Дом», 2008) (Серия «Библиотека Пушкинского Дома»). 494 с., 8 цветных илл. ISBN 978-5-91476-007-3.

Ye. G. VODOLAZKIN, *World History in the Literature of Old Rus' (according to the data of the Chronographs and Palaeas of the 11th–15th centuries)*. 2nd edition, reworked and augmented (St Petersburg: "Pushkinsky Dom", 2008) (Series "Library of Pushkinsky Dom"). 494 p., 8 colour ill., German *Zusammenfassung*, p. 468–472.

The author presents an improved and enlarged edition of his monograph, first appearing in 2000 in Munich under the same title, also in Russian (in the series "Sagners Slavistische Sammlung", Bd. 26). Despite the fact that it is focused on the problems of Russian medieval historical monuments, about half of the book is interesting in the larger context of the Christian Orient and the early Christian and Jewish pre-Rabbinical traditions.

The author, in collaboration with Tatiana Rudi, provides the first critical edition of the so-called *Prophecy of Solomon* (previously widely known under the title *Slovesa svjatyx prorok* "Words of Holy Prophets"), and this fact alone is enough to make his book worthy of the attention of anybody interested in Jewish and Christian pseudepigrapha. This is not the only interesting part of the monograph, though.

The two first chapters of the book (Introduction, p. 9–38, and "Historiography as Theology", p. 39–159), as well as the fourth ("Chronicle of Georges Hamartolos, the main source of Russian Chronography", p. 209–236) are deeply immersed in the centuries-

old discussions between specialists of Old Russian literature and are hardly comprehensible to outsiders. Some mentions of “theology” do not offer much: to put his observations into some methodological frame, the author quotes a few modern theological works, almost all of which belong to German scholars. However, where the author has no German book to quote, and so, remains free from his puzzling attraction to German theology, he is able to provide some sharp observations.

For instance, he makes an important conclusion on the nature of the calculations in the chronographs—that is, let us add, *a fortiori* applicable to the hagiography:

“In the chronographs, there are, in general, quite a few numbers. It is difficult to point out another genre where such an amount of dimensions, ages, dates, etc. is specified. At first glance, it could seem a bit odd given that we are dealing with very remote history, ‘epic’, having a highly symbolical sense. Nevertheless, from the theological tradition’s viewpoint, a number has been an especially important proof of the symbolical and multi-dimensional nature of a corresponding event. Despite its apparent belonging to ‘reality’, a number demonstrated the metaphysical essence of an object. It was a kind of code to the object, and this attitude toward numbers goes back to the Old Testament” (p. 89).

This is why, in chronographs, obvious contradictions between different modes of calculation are so often tolerated. Some numbers result from the calculations of an arithmetical nature, some others from symbolical considerations. The most known example is the date of the birth of Christ: AM 5500 according to most symbolical chronologies, but eight years later according to the most common Old Rus’ Byzantine chronology that was used for practical purposes.

Vodolazkin’s book is an important achievement in the systematic representation of the chronological data relating to Biblical and early Christian history. Even if we have here only the most obvious comparisons with the Byzantine sources (the author does not quote any study on the Byzantine chronology published after *La Chronologie de Venance Grumel*, 1958, nor any study at all on the chronologies of either the Christian Orient or late Judaism), Vodolazkin provides in a digestible form valuable raw material for students of Christian and Jewish chronological traditions. The pertinent parts of his monograph are chapter 3 (“Chronology of Russian chronography”, p. 161–208) and Appendices 1–3 (p. 319–388).

Another part of Vodolazkin's work is dedicated to matters related to the natural sciences (almost all of chapter 5 "Natural sciences', the supernatural, providential matters", p. 237–293). Here there are, among others, an interesting sketch on the sirens in Byzantine and Old Slavonic/Russian sources (p. 270–275) and an especially important essay on Arabic planet names in some Russian astronomical/astrological texts (p. 239–251). These names were identified as Arabic already by Gorsky and Nevostruev in 1862 and, since then, were studied in detail several times. Nevertheless, Vodolazkin managed to bring some new testimonies and, on their ground, to put forward important textological and palaeographical considerations helping to clarify the case very much.

Vodolazkin declines the hypothesis of the Bulgarian scholar M. Racheva (1981) that these Arabic names were borrowed through an intermediary of an oral tradition in either Persian or one of the Turkic languages of the Volga region, as well as the hypothesis of Franz von Miklosich (1884–1890) that the intermediary language was Osmanic Turkish. Vodolazkin is especially convincing in proving that the Arabic names were borrowed from a written tradition, and so, Racheva's arguments based on the pronunciation fail (p. 249–250). However, he has no idea about the precise source of the borrowing. As for the date, he limits himself to propose (from textological considerations) as a *terminus ad quem* the first half of the 15th century (p. 249). Vodolazkin is inclined to think that the source of the Russian borrowing was an astronomical treatise in Arabic, and so, he rejects Miklosich's hypothesis about an Osmanic Turkish intermediary as superfluous (p. 250–251).

From a linguistic viewpoint, Vodolazkin's exposition is rather vague; even the author's transliterations of Arabic words ignore contemporary conventions and are inadequate according to the standards of modern scholarly publications. He does not state clearly why these words should be considered as Arabic rather than taken from another Semitic language and why a Greek or Latin intermediary should be excluded. The cause of the latter is, however, obvious—presence of š in *šimes* or *šimos* "Sun" (cf. Arabic *šams*). The distinction between š and s in the name of the Sun could be considered as a marker of Arabic in contrast with Hebrew and Aramaic.

We know nothing about the historical situation underlying the appearance of such documents in Slavonic (Russian), and this is just another illustration of the fact that our knowledge of the cultural contacts of Old Rus' is severely limited. Be this as it may, one should add that there could be another possibility of an intermediary language that is

still unchecked, a European vernacular language. Indeed, a number of Arabic star names are preserved in European languages until today. This does not exclude the possibility that there was a vernacular European text containing an Arabic list of planet names produced with no Latin intermediary.

Here we can stop our review of the book as a whole and concentrate on its most important contribution, the publication of the *Prophecy of Solomon*. It occupies the final part of the fifth chapter (p. 293–311, an introduction to the publication) and Appendix 4 (p. 389–467, the publication itself). I will discuss the problems and the merits of Vodolazkin's and Rudi's publication of this important monument in a separate review published as a supplement to the present one.

In sum, the monograph is certainly a valuable contribution to the study of the afterlife of the Jewish and Early Christian legacy in the literature of Old Rus'. Its interest is not limited to Byzantine chronographic traditions and their derivatives in the East Slavic realm.

SUPPLEMENT

The Prophecy of Solomon, Another Case of the "Made in Russia" Problem

A long anti-Jewish treatise collecting prophecies ascribed to Solomon and some other prophets, was first noticed by students of the *Palaea Interpretata* (I. N. Zhdanov, 1881). It looks as if the *Prophecy of Solomon* continues a harshly anti-Jewish interpretation of the biblical and parabiblical topics from the very chronological place where the *Palaea Interpretata* stops, from Solomon. However, according to the scholarly consensus acquired in the early 20th century and supported by Vodolazkin, it is a different work of different origin. It is noticeable that almost all eminent authorities in Russian pre-revolutionary scholarship (including V. M. Istrin, the student of 2 *Enoch* M. I. Sokolov, M. N. Speranskij, A. A. Šaxmatov) have had a hand in the early studies of the treatise. In the *editio princeps* by I. Ye. Evseev (1907) not all evidence has been taken into account, and so, the task of a critical edition was pending.

Yevgenij G. Vodolazkin and Tatiana R. Rudi prepared the first critical edition based on all five manuscripts known to this date.¹ Evseev

(1) Previously published as E. Г. ВОДОЛАЗКИН, Т. Р. РУДИ, Из истории древнерусской экзегезы (Пророчество Соломона) [Ye. G. VODOLAZKIN,

based his edition on the earliest manuscript dated to 1452 (written in Lutsk, Western Russia, the modern Ukraine). All other manuscripts are of the 16th century. Four out of five manuscripts are Russian, one (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. Slav. 125, 16th cent.) is Serbian. According to Vodolazkin and Rudi, the best manuscript is that of the Russian National Library, St Petersburg, collection of St Cyril of White Lake monastery, Nr 67/1144, and this is the manuscript on which their edition is founded. Here, the treatise has the title, *The Prophecy of Solomon about Christ...* The title is somewhat different in other manuscripts. The title of Evseev's edition that follows another manuscript, *Words of Holy Prophets...* is more fitting for the real contents of the treatise. Despite this instability of the title, the content of the manuscripts is almost the same aside from final parts, where some manuscripts differ substantially, and so, must contain later additions from different sources (*Apocalypse* of Ps.-Methodius and others). However, Vodolazkin does not pretend to define the end of the original recension other than conjecturally (p. 309–310).

Vodolazkin offers his own identification of the *Sitz im Leben* of the treatise (p. 302–311). His main tool is linguistics: "What is the origin of the monument? Without doubts, Russian. First of all, it is confirmed by the data of language."² His second argument is based on the presence in the *Prophecy* of quotations (as he put them) from Russian chronographs (p. 302). Vodolazkin means the textual intersections between *Prophecy of Solomon*, on the one hand, and *Palaea Chronographica Completa*,³ and a chronograph of *Troitsky* type, on the other, which have been identified by B. M. Kloss (1972) and O. V. Tvorogov (1975), respectively (p. 306–307). Thus, Vodolazkin comes to the conclusion that

T. R. RUDI, *From the History of the Old Russian Exegesis (Prophecy of Solomon)*, *ТОДРА* 54 (2003) 252–303.

(2) «Каково же происхождение этого памятника? Несомненно, русское. В первую очередь это подтверждается данными языка».

(3) Not to be confused with *Palaea Historica*. *Palaea Chronographica* is a work combining the materials of chronographa with that of *Palaea Interpretata*. There is no commonly accepted date of this work. Vodolazkin in his ongoing studies (to appear in *ТОДРА*) is trying to demonstrate that the work is a Russian compilation of the early 15th century. Cf., meanwhile, his important (in many respects) article: Е. Г. ВОДОЛАЗКИН, Новое о палеях (некоторые итоги и перспективы изучения палейных текстов) [Something New on the Palaeas (Results and Perspectives of the Study of the Palaea-related Texts)], *Русская литература* (2007) Nr 1, 3–23.

the *Prophecy of Solomon* is a Russian (and, even more specifically, North West Russian, from the Novgorod region) work dated to the 14th or the early 15th century.⁴ This part of his study seems not exempted from methodological flaws, and here Vodolazkin's conclusions are not so convincing.

Vodolazkin's linguistic argumentation

Vodolazkin's use of linguistic argumentation is common in Russian (and even Western, but "Russian-dependent") studies in Old Russian literature. It goes back to the Russian scholars of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and remains unchallenged, within Russia, even in our time. Vodolazkin, along with his predecessors, points out many East Slavic/Russian features (especially lexical) in the four Russian manuscripts assuming, with no discussion at all, that this data is relevant to the definition of the *Sitz im Leben*. The only South Slavic (Serbian) manuscript, in such a perspective, must be considered as depending on the Russian manuscript tradition, while Vodolazkin says nothing about specific cultural circumstances allowing such an unusual trajectory of the text history (more often, it was Rus' who accumulated Slavonic texts produced by the South Slavs, and not *vice versa*).

Vodolazkin's argumentation based on intertextual connections

Vodolazkin's second line of argumentation is based on the intertextual connections of the *Prophecy of Solomon*. Here, his situation is even more delicate than that of both of his predecessors in the 1970s, Kloss and Tvorogov, and that of V. M. Istrin (1907). Istrin was the first to discover the textual intersections between the *Prophecy* and the texts of *Palaea*. However, Istrin dated the latter to the 13th century, and so, he was free to construct schemes where the *Prophecy* used *Palaea* among its sources. Vodolazkin in his ongoing research is redating the relevant recension of *Palaea* to such a late period that, for him, unlike Istrin, Kloss, and Tvorogov, this possibility is excluded. Therefore he needs to suppose that the *Prophecy* drew from hypothetical sources of the *Palaea*

(4) Vodolazkin's main reasons resulted from his analysis of the manuscript tradition (see below). There is an indication of the *terminus ante quem* in the context: "...the great kingdom of Rome that is standing up to present" (p. 417). This would imply a pre-1453 date, if not even earlier.

that have had to be available to the Novgorod scribes in the 14th or the early 15th century.

We are not in a position to evaluate Vodolazkin's argumentation concerning the date of the *Palaea Chronographica*, especially because it is not yet published in full. However, if he is right, his modification of Istrin's conception makes the latter even more fragile.

There are three kinds of explanation for the textual intercessions between different texts: dependence in one direction, dependence in the opposite direction, and dependence from common sources (whose mutual relations could also be very complicated). Istrin has opted for the dependence of the *Prophecy* on *Palaea* when applying the Ockham razor to the data available in his time.⁵ Now we have to found our conclusions on different grounds, and here, Vodolazkin's alleged redating of *Palaea Chronographica* is certainly not the main acquirement. Before turning to the facts that make Istrin's approach to the intertextuality of *Prophecy* rather unhelpful, I would like to point out that Vodolazkin's assumption of the dependence of our text on his own hypothetical construct is nothing but a further dilution of the initial idea, which is not very strong.

What is the problem "Made in Russia"

Here it would be useful to make a digression for those who, being acquainted with the history of texts in the medieval Christian Orient and the Second Temple period, are unfamiliar with the methods and standards of scholarship in the Russian school of philological studies pertaining to Old Russian literature. These standards, being very high in such areas as textology and palaeography, are quite peculiar as it concerns the search of the origin of a given work. I will illustrate this by a comparison with the standards in other areas of the studies of medieval literatures of the Christian world.

For instance, the so-called Coptic version of *Didaché* (liturgical part only) is known in a unique manuscript in the Fayyumic dialect, and the Coptic version of *Apocalypse of Peter* in a unique manuscript in the Akhmimic dialect. It is hardly imaginable that one could meet, in some study, the claim that *this means* that the translation from Greek

(5) Istrin did know neither the value nor the very existence of the South Slavic manuscript, nor existence of the Greek original of the inscription on the Chalice of Solomon, nor the Greek *Vorlage* of the part of the *Prophecy* containing catenae on the Canticle.

into Coptic was performed, correspondingly, in Middle Egypt for the *Didaché* liturgy, and in Upper Egypt, for the *Apocalypse of Peter*. It looks *a priori* more probable that the Coptic translations were initially made into Sahidic dialect (in Upper Egypt, too), while, of course, other possibilities are not to be excluded. Now let us change the problem specification. Let us imagine that instead of the Coptic version we are dealing with the Slavonic one, and instead of the Fayyumic dialect of Coptic, we have the Novgorod East Slavic *izvod* (variant) of Church Slavonic, and instead of Akhmimic Coptic, a Western Russian *izvod*. The South Slavic translations that form the majority of the translated Slavonic texts are, in this case, an analogue of the Coptic Sahidic ones. Thus, in Russian scholarship, we will presumably meet the claims, if not the common opinion, that the *Didaché* was translated in Novgorod, while the *Apocalypse of Peter* in the Russian West. This opinion would be even stronger if there were not unique, but several Russian manuscripts. In this case, even the existence of a minority of South Slavic manuscripts containing the same work changes nothing: the well known fact that the bulk of the South Slavic manuscripts are simply destroyed, and so, we have to read most of the works of South Slavic literature in the Russian manuscript tradition, is normally not taken into account by “mainstream” Russian scholars when treating such cases. Finally, let us imagine that we have no Greek texts for the *Didaché* or the *Apocalypse of Peter* (in both cases, the Greek texts survive only by chance because the Greek manuscript tradition was ceased: the unique manuscript of *Didaché* dated to 1056 was written for a bibliophile; the Greek of the *Apocalypse of Peter* is preserved in two short papyrus fragments). In this case, the predictable consensus of Russian scholars would be to declare both to be original Russian works, while, of course, containing borrowings from some unknown Greek sources.

This was the case of the *Prophecy of Solomon* in Istrin’s time. Vasilij Mikhajlovich Istrin (1865–1937) was one of the main founders of the philological school that I describe above. I have limited myself to a harmless caricature because a detailed analysis of the methods and achievements of this school from the viewpoint of modern scholarship has already been done by Francis Thomson, who has written at length how the manuscripts could differ in their dialectal features and how erroneous the localisations made on this “linguistic basis” could be. “A mere glance at the textual apparatus of any critical edition of an early Slavonic translation will reveal that scribes did not hesitate to alter the lexical material of their exemplars, either because a word was less

well known, or because the text was adapted to specifically East Slav circumstances".⁶ In his seminal 1993 paper Thomson deals with the translations allegedly "made in Russia", but tangentially touches upon a similar problem with many texts whose Greek original is unknown, as in the case of the *Prophecy of Solomon*. In such cases, unbiased pondering of the mere possibility of the existence of a Greek original would imply running counter to the "mainstream" of the "Russian school".

To scholars with a background in studies of early Byzantine, not to say early Christian or Second Temple Jewish texts, it is not always easy to grasp the internal logic of these Russian pre-revolutionary scholars. They are used to dealing with texts, whose origin is divided by many centuries and, often, by several language and civilization frontiers from the available recensions, and so, they could only seldom suppose to restore "the original recension". However, the Russian scholars like Istrin were living at the dawn of the systematic study of the history of texts within the medieval Christian civilisation, and, despite their false tacit presumptions, they contributed very much to our current understanding of this very history. Moreover, they were working in close contact with Byzantine scholars, and some of them, like especially Istrin, were also Byzantine scholars themselves. Istrin and his contemporary Russian colleagues could be reproached for a lack of theoretical intuitions and integral vision of the Christian world like those of the Bollandist Paul Peeters (1870–1950), but they are not guilty of the further theoretical backwardness of their school under the Soviet regime.

Vodolazkin's data back to the drawing board

Unfortunately, Vodolazkin is among those who turn a deaf ear to Thomson. His standards of logical demonstration are as vague as was common in philology one hundred years ago. It is quite symptomatic that the bulk of the passionate Russian critics of Thomson get caught

(6) F. J. THOMSON, 'Made in Russia'. A Survey of the Translations Allegedly Made in Kievan Russia, in: G. Birkfellner, hrsg. *Millennium Russiae Christianae. Tausend Jahre Christliches Russland 988–1988. Vorträge des Symposiums anlässlich der Tausendjahrfeier der Christianisierung Russlands (Münster 5.–9. Juni 1988)* (Köln, 1993) (Schriften des Komitees der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Förderung der slawischen Studien, 16) 295–354 [reprint in: IDEM, *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia* (Ashgate etc., 1999) (Variorum Collected Studies Series CS 590) Ch. V and Addenda, p. 16–48], here 299. In the additions to his paper made for its republication in the Variorum series, Thomson had the opportunity to reply to his Russian critics up to 1999.

in details but fail to meet—or, at least, recognise—his main argument that pertains to the logical standards of the scholarly demonstration as such.

It is interesting therefore to take a fresh look at the data collected by Vodolazkin and Tatiana Rudi. This data is quite important, regardless of not always helpful interpretations provided by Vodolazkin himself.

1. The Manuscript tradition

Vodolazkin and Rudi came to the conclusion that the earliest manuscript published by Evseev is not the best one, and such a kind of conclusion among the Slavists is rather unusual. Of course, nobody will argue against the theoretical possibility of meeting a better text in a later manuscript, but if a Slavic scholar needs to make practical use of this principle he must go into long explanations, if not excuses. After the publication of the first edition of his monograph, Vodolazkin was attacked by A. Pereswetoff-Morath.⁷ Among different points of their discussion, there was one about the relative priority of the texts preserved in different manuscripts, either the earliest one (Pereswetoff-Morath's opinion) or that chosen by Vodolazkin and Rudi. On this point, Vodolazkin stood firmly: the age of a manuscript has no necessary connection to the quality of the text that it preserves. It is a pity that, despite all of Thomson's warnings, he never made the further logical step, namely, to understand that the dialectal features of the oldest or the best manuscript or even the whole manuscript evidence have no necessary connection to the original dialect of the author, either.

Ironically, the new investigation of the manuscript corpus performed by Vodolazkin and Rudi has revealed another problem that so far has passed unnoticed. The best text is available not in one manuscript but in two, and the second manuscript is the South Slavic (Serbian) one.⁸

(7) A. PERESWETOFF-MORATH, *A Grin without a Cat. I. Adversus Judaeos texts in the literature of medieval Russia (988–1504); II. Jews and Christians in medieval Russia — assessing the sources* (Lund, 2002). Cf. a detailed answer by Vodolazkin: E. Г. ВОДОЛАЗКИН, Об улыбках и котах (по поводу книги А. Пересветова-Мората «A Grin without a Cat». Lund, 2002), *Русская литература* (2004) Nr 4, 198–204.

(8) «Самым полным и исправным списком П<ророчества> С<оломона> является, вопреки мнению И. Е. Евсеева, не Я, а КБ (наряду с В, содержащим сербский извод памятника)» [“The most complete and correct manuscript of the *Prophecy of Solomon* is, on the contrary to I. Ye. Evseev's

This South Slavic manuscript was discovered on an unknown (pre-revolutionary) date by Mikhail Nestorovich Speranskij (1863–1938), but first mentioned in press in his posthumous publication in 1960.⁹ It was never known to Istrin who operated with Russian evidence of the *Prophecy* only. Speranskij interpreted his discovery within already established lines of previous scholarship, and so, took it as evidence of a Russian work having leaked into the South Slavonic literatures. Such an attitude, uncritical as it is, could be, at least, partially justified by the commonly accepted, then, opinion of Evseev, that the best manuscript is that of his edition, and so, the recension presented in the South Slavic manuscript, was considered as corrupted. Vodolazkin deprived himself of such an excuse.

Given that, according to Vodolazkin's and Rudi's study, the best recension is presented in two manuscripts, one of them being South Slavic, we should expect a reopening of the discussion about the origin of the work. A hypothesis of the South Slavic origin of the Slavonic text should be carefully reviewed and, if necessary, rejected. Even if we have never read Thomson (while Vodolazkin has certainly read him)¹⁰ and do believe that the dialect features of the manuscripts could provide the clue to the very origin of a given work, it is obvious that, in the present case, some difficulty arises and the previous scholarly consensus is challenged by the new facts. However, Vodolazkin seems to not feel any discomfort with repeating Speranskij (p. 305).

opinion, not Я, but КБ (along with В that contains the Serbian recension of the monument)" (p. 311).

(9) In his article «Русские памятники письменности в югославянских литературах XIV–XV вв.» ("Russian Literary Monuments in the South Slavic Literatures of the 14th–15th cent.", autograph of 1938), in: М. Н. СПЕРАНСКИЙ, *Из истории русско-славянских литературных связей. Сб. статей. Предисл., подгот. к печати, ред. и прим. В. Д. Кузьминой* (Москва, 1960) [M. N. SPERANSKIJ, *From the History of the Russian-Slavic Literary Connections. Collected Papers*. Introduced, prepared to print, edited and commented by V. D. Kuz'mina (Moscow, 1960)] 55–130, esp. 85–89. Vodolazkin provides only a blind reference that does not allow for knowing which article is meant.

(10) Dealing mostly with the Russian prerevolutionary scholars, Thomson noticed that the "[a]ll too often claim of an East Slav origin has been made after the examination of only part, viz. the E<ast> Slav part, of the evidence" (THOMSON, 'Made in Russia' ..., 300). In the case of the *Prophecy of Solomon*, this was the situation of Istrin. However, Speranskij and especially Vodolazkin demonstrate that even the availability of the non-Russian part is not always of help.

For lack of any explicit discussion of the possibility of the South Slavic origin of the text, we are forced to extract Vodolazkin's implicit views on the matter. His first, linguistic, line of argumentation was crushed like the wall of a house where everybody was and remains sleeping.

The second line of Vodolazkin's argumentation that is based on textual intercessions could be considered now as the only grounds for rejecting, within the frame of Vodolazkin's approach, a hypothesis of the South Slavic original of the Slavonic text of the *Prophecy*. We have shown above how shaky this ground is. Every kind of textual coincidence between the *Prophecy* and Russian chronographic monuments can be treated in any way, because our present knowledge of the relevant textual traditions is too far from complete.

I do not see any further argument *for* a Russian or *against* a South Slavic origin of the Slavonic text of the *Prophecy*, neither in Vodolazkin's study nor elsewhere. Therefore we have to conclude that the possibility of a South Slavic origin remains open, especially because of the facts established by Vodolazkin and Rudi. If Vodolazkin refused to explore it, we have to do it instead of him.

2. Broader literary context

Vodolazkin discusses the *Prophecy* in the context of *Palaea* and its possible sources. This context itself leads to the South Slavic literatures and, through them, to the Greek originals, regardless of the complicated history of the *Palaea* texts on the Russian soil. In fact, the relevant context is broader.

A quite relevant context of the *Prophecy* is a very productive genre of South Slavic literatures, so-called *Erotapokriseis* ("Questions and Responses"), whose large part has been dedicated to the topics of faith and biblical exegesis. Most of this literature has been translated from the Greek. In some cases, where the Greek originals are unknown, there are reasons to presume original South Slavic compilations, but, even here, the sources should be considered as translated from the Greek.¹¹

(11) See now a large introduction to the whole this area, together with a critical edition of some important texts: А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Erotapokriseis. Съчиненията от кратки въпроси и отговори в старобългарската литература* (София, 2004) [A. MILTENOVA, *Erotapokriseis. The Works Containing Short Questions and Responses in the Old Bulgarian Literature* (Sofia, 2004)].

Another parallel presents the genre of the anonymous *Dialogue of Panagiotes with an Azymite*, a late 13th century Byzantine anti-Latin polemical treatise preserved in the original but also known in a South Slavic version (at least, its Slavonic version has never been included into the list of allegedly Russian translations). Here, the author makes use of many sources close to the *erotapokriseis* literature and *Palaea*, including some textual intercessions. The *Prophecy of Solomon* is structurally similar to the *Dialogue of Panagiotes with an Azymite*, while it is directed against the Jews instead of the Latins.

All this illustrates the fact that the *Prophecy of Solomon*, be it a South Slavonic translation from a Greek original, will never look strange within the context of South Slavic literature. However, in the context of Russian literature, it has affinities with only some *Palaea*-related texts, whose ultimate sources are unidentified but presumably are South Slavic translations from Greek, too.

Given that the best recension of the *Prophecy of Solomon* is available in a South Slavic manuscript, and not only in a Russian one, and, moreover, that the claims of the Russian origin of the *Prophecy* turned out to be unsubstantiated, we have here the second argument in favour of the South Slavic origin of the Slavonic text of the *Prophecy*.

So far we have not touched the question of whether the *Prophecy* is translated from the Greek. However, even now we can notice that this possibility is very likely, because most of the relevant South Slavic works are translations.

3. *Date and Sitz im Leben*

The text of the *Prophecy* contains its own date, admitted before Vodolazkin by all its students. Vodolazkin revised the previous scholarship on this point, too. This innovation seems to me rather unhelpful.

The relevant part of the text is preserved in only three manuscripts. It runs as follows (p. 446.4–6 of the critical edition; cf. p. 308, discussion of the date by Vodolazkin):

“Is this your retribution, oh Jew, that from that captivity by Titus up to the present year you are in servitude by us for years 1000 and 200 without *thirty* and three years?”

This is in the manuscript on which Vodolazkin’s and Rudi’s edition is founded. It contains an obvious scribal error corrected by all previous scholars and Vodolazkin and Rudi too: the word for “thirty” is spelled as *српудесямехъ* instead of *тридесатехъ*. Two other manuscripts (one of them is the Serbian one) contain simply “more than

1000 years". It is by no means obvious how we have to count from this "captivity by Titus" these 1000 plus 200 minus 30 minus 3 years. It is obvious, however, that this computing leads to some date in the 13th century.

Previous scholars, and especially I. N. Zhdanov (1881), V. M. Istrin (1906), and A. A. Šaxmatov (1904) considered the exact date as genuine. If so, the approximate date "more than 1000 years" is to be taken as an editorial updating of the text. Indeed, this is the most natural way of thinking. It is *a priori* unlikely that such a detailed and complicated *lectio difficilior* was added by a later editor, while, on the contrary, an elimination of a reading that loses its actuality would be quite common.

Vodolazkin is trying to date the *Prophecy* to a period closer to the earliest manuscript and to the date that he proposes for *Palaea Chronographica*. Thus, he tries to avoid the acceptance of a 13th century date. He needs to provide some strong evidence that the "natural way of thinking" of the previous scholars is here inapplicable. Instead, he limits himself to saying that the date in the best, according to his own evaluation, manuscript resulted from a computational error of the scribe.¹² It would be better, however, before starting to judge the scribe's computational ability, to answer the question why he would have a need to insert a chronological precision whatever. Vodolazkin is silent on this matter, and so, we are free to go back to the early scholars who took the precise date seriously.

There is another difficulty: what this precise date means? What is the date of "captivity by Titus"? And, more exactly, what is its date according to the chronology implied in the *Prophecy*? Three previous scholars have left us three different answers.

Zhdanov has interpreted "captivity" as the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and, placing the beginning of computation at AM 5500, dated the work to 1237. Then, Istrin corrected him as a historian, assuming that the correct date of the "captivity" (which is not "fall") is 75 AD. Thus, his date is 1242. Finally, Šaxmatov corrected Istrin recalling that

(12) «Учитывая многочисленные неточности, допускавшиеся древнерусскими книжниками в хронологических выкладках, ошибку в указании лет можно допустить и в расчетах КБ» ["Taking into account how many inaccuracies were committed by the Old Russian scribes in chronological computing, it is allowable to assume an error in the indication of years also in the computus of <the ms> КБ"] (p. 308).

the “correct” era starts at AM 5508.¹³ Therefore, his date (generally accepted by later scholars) is 1234.

Now we know that none of these dates could be accepted without additional evidence. The contents of Vodolazkin’s book is enough to realize that the eras of both AM 5500 and AM 5508 were actual to both Byzantine and Slavic scribes. It is also difficult to judge what event exactly is meant by “captivity”, and, moreover, what is its date implied by the *Prophecy*. The fall of Jerusalem could be considered as the most likely (*pace* Istrin, and so, also Šaxmatov) because this is the most remarkable event for chronology, but this is only a supposition and, even if it is right, we have no exact date of the fall of Jerusalem according to the *Prophecy*’s chronology. Our knowledge that this occurred in 70 AD, regardless of how exact it could be is not that we actually need.

Therefore, without additional evidence, we can with caution date the *Prophecy* to the interval between *ca.* 1220 and *ca.* 1245. The dates of 1237 (Zhdanov) and 1229 are especially probable. The latter date results from the same reasoning as Zhdanov’s one while supposing the era of AM 5508 instead of AM 5500. Istrin’s detailed knowledge of historical events of the first Jewish war seems to me hardly applicable to the reasons of the computists.

Our next step will be the most natural, but, oddly enough, has not been performed so far. We have to look for any remarkable conflict with the Jews in either Slavonic or Byzantine lands whose date fits our conditions.

The answer appears immediately, and it is only one: the beginning of the persecution of the Jews by the emperor of Epiros Theodore Komnenos Doukas when he conquered Thessalonica and was crown emperor, in 1229.¹⁴ By the way, such a successful expansion of Epiros would be a good occasion to recall “the great kingdom of Rome” that “stands up to the present” (p. 417).

(13) The *Prophecy* says that Christ “arrived after 5000 years and five hundred after the creation of world” (p. 432; the same thesis is repeated two times: p. 455 and 456–457), but this does not mean that the same chronology is applied to the non-symbolical chronography.

(14) P. CHARANIS, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire under the First Palaeologi*, *Speculum* 22 (1947) 75–77, here p. 75. Our source here is a Jewish document, a letter of Jacob ben Elijah to his cousin, a converted Jew, Dominican Friar Pablo Christiani, written in the late 1250s. Cf. R. CHAZAN, *The Letter of R. Jacob Ben Elijah to Friar Paul*, *Jewish History* 6 (1992) 51–63.

This observation would be almost enough to define the *Sitz im Leben* of *Prophecy*, but I will elaborate below on its Byzantine connections.

Greek Sources

The existence of Greek sources is not direct proof of the Greek original of the whole compilation, but it is, indeed, natural, if such an original did exist. In Istrin's time, such sources were known only for relatively little part of the work that depends on Josephus and some chronicles, as well as for several quotes from Byzantine hymnography (quoted along with other Christian Scriptures, as if a part of the New Testament), such as the canon for Easter of John of Damascus (p. 394–395) and the *Theotokia* stichera of the Octoechos (p. 392).¹⁵ All these Greek sources were presumably available in Slavonic translations from an early epoch.

The Story of the Chalice of Solomon, also included into the *Prophecy*, was unknown in Greek prior to 1967 and has been often considered as an original Slavic work (now two Greek manuscripts of the inscription on the Chalice of Solomon are available, while both contain a shorter text without any narrative at all¹⁶).

Unfortunately, there is no detailed inventory of the known sources of the *Prophecy*, and the critical edition does not contain any reference to the extra-biblical sources.¹⁷ This lack of references to the sources in the apparatus of a *critical* edition is not a particular sin of Vodolazkin

(15) Probably, a comparison with their earliest available translations would make sense. Despite the complete lack of references in the apparatus, this is not a difficult task for those who are acquainted, at least, superficially, with Byzantine hymnography.

(16) See, for the details, В. М. ЛУРЬЕ, Чаша Соломона и скиния на Сионе. Часть 1. Надпись на Чаше Соломона: текст и контекст [B. LOURIÉ, Chalice of Solomon and Tabernacle on Sion. Part 1. Inscription on the Chalice of Solomon: text and context], *Византиноворосика / Byzantinorossica* 3 (2005) 8–74. Here I make use of and quote the second Greek manuscript found by R. Stichel in the 1990s, but so far unpublished.

(17) Normally, Vodolazkin and Rudi provide the references to the biblical sources. I would add here several precisions, apart from those that are elsewhere in the present review: p. 411 слѣпшии прозрѣша и хромии протекоша ср. Mt 11:5 // Lk 7:22; p. 407 Господь бо, — рече, — крѣпок и силенъ: exact quote from Ps 23:8, while put into the mouth of Isaiah (editors' reference to "ср. Rev. 18.8" is erroneous); p. 438 «Се азъ послу, — рече, — глаголет Господь, духъ сыновьства отъ Дѣвы: безъ рала и безъ сѣмени мужеска родить младенецъ»: a paraphrase based on Gal 4:6 and Jn 1:13.

and Rudi, but just another expression of the philological standards of the whole school (such references were mostly considered as unnecessary by the Russian prerevolutionary scholars).

The work is constructed as several series of commentaries on the biblical prophecies of Solomon, Isaiah, and Daniel (the story of the Chalice of Solomon is considered on the same level, as a part of the Scriptures) and the history of the Jews under the Romans. Sometime these commentaries look as fragments of catenae, especially in the case of the Canticle whose text is covered in a large part. Presently none of these texts is identified. The study of the *Prophecy* within exegetical traditions remains a *desideratum*, and it is difficult to foretell the exact results of such research. My purpose here will be to point out several peculiarities.

Exegesis of Cant 5:10

Commentaries on Cant 5:10 (ἀδελφιδός μου λευκός καὶ πυρρός, ἐκλελοχισμένος ἀπὸ μυριάδων) occur two times in succession (p. 296 and 297), with a very short interval (filled by the commentary on Cant 2:3), but, the second time, the verse is quoted in an altered form, and so, passes as a different verse attributed to Solomon and remains unidentified by the modern editors. Instead of “My kinsman is white and ruddy, chosen out from myriads” (Brenton’s tr.¹⁸) the text runs as “Give me whiteness and fire chosen” (Дай ми бѣлостъ и огнь избранныи). One has cut off “from myriads” at the end and divided into two the word at the beginning. Thus, instead of ἀδελφιδός μου appears δός μου “give me”. Presumably, the initial part of the first word was understood as Nominative ἀδελφή “sister”, that is, an indication of the person to whom the following phrase is attributed. Needless to say that such an alteration is possible only in Greek.

The remaining words were reinterpreted accordingly. A usual expression in Septuagint λευκός καὶ πυρρός that means “white and red” has been reinterpreted in a literal way, so that the latter word acquired its etymological sense (from πῦρ “fire”). By the way, understanding of πυρρός as “of fire/fiery” became a common feature of the late Byzantine exegesis;¹⁹ however, we don’t know when it appeared

(18) Cf. new translation by Jay C. Treat in: A. PIETERSMA, B. G. WRIGHT (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (New York/Oxford, 2007) 664: “My brotherkin is radiant and ruddy, selected from ten thousands”.

(19) There is a slightly curious case in an oration of a 12th century rhetor, Michael Italicus, who applied his partial explanation of Canticle to the per-

first. In this exegetic tradition, the fire becomes a symbol of the Holy Spirit, while the white colour becomes a symbol of the flesh.²⁰ In the early Christian exegesis of this verse, it was an opposite understanding that dominated: the red colour was understood in the light of the famous “red garments from Bosor” (Is 63:1) as a symbol of flesh; thus, the white remained for the divinity.²¹

The first occurrence of Cant 5:10 in the *Prophecy* presents an undistorted text of the verse and goes in the line of the commentaries of Philo of Carpasius²² and Gregory of Nyssa²³ (“white” for flesh, but “red” for blood of Christ), both widespread in the catenae.²⁴

sonality of his addressee, the present Patriarch Michael II Oxeites (Kourkouas) (1143–1146); the exegetical tradition he relies on is nevertheless transparent: the Bridegroom is “white” because of his purity achieved by tears and ascetic life, and “fiery” because of the “fire of Spirit” that inflamed him. Cf. P. GAUTIER, Michel Italikos, *Lettres et Discours* (Paris, 1972) (Archives de l’Orient Chrétien, 14) 74.20–26 (*Oratio* 2). The same typology (“white” for flesh, “fiery” for Spirit) is in one of the greatest theological authorities of his epoch, Neophytos the Recluse (1134–1219): B. Σ. ΨΕΥΤΟΓΚΑ, Τὸ Ἄισμα ἀσμάτων, in: I. ΚΑΡΑΒΙΑΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Κ. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ, Δ. Γ. ΤΣΑΜΗ, Ν. ΖΑΧΑΡΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Ἀγίου Νεοφύτου τοῦ Ἐγκλείστου, *Συγγράμματα* 4 (Πάφος, 2001) 643–674 (TLG 3085.012); Ch. 3, lines 103–113.

(20) Probably, this tradition is already traceable in Didymus the Blind (4th cent.). See Didymus, *Commentarii in Psalmos* 40–44.4: ἀδελφίδους μ[ου] λευκὸς καὶ <πυρρός>”, οὐχ εἷς ἐστίν, ἄνθρωπος καὶ θεὸς ἐστίν; M. GRONWALD, Didymos der Blinde, *Psalmenkommentar*, pt. 5 (Bonn, 1970) (Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen, 12) 297.21–22. In this explanation, the phrase “man and God” follows the order of “white and red”.

(21) Cf. Origen, *Scholia in Canticum Canticorum*, PG 17, 273.51–53; Theodoretus of Cyrus, parallel commentaries in *Explanatio in Canticum Canticorum*, PG 81, 156–157, and *Commentary in Isaiah* (in 63:1): J.-N. GUINOT, Téodoret de Cyr, *Commentaire sur Isaïe*. T. 3 (Sections 14–20) (Paris, 1984) (SC, 315) (TLG 4089.008), tomos 19, lines 580–581.

(22) Philo Carpasiensis, *Enarratio in Canticum Canticorum*, PG 40, 108 B.

(23) Gregorii Nysseni Opera, Vol. 6: H. LANGERBECK, Gregorii Nysseni, *In Canticum Canticorum* (Leiden, 1960) 387.13–22, 388.5–6, 389.14.

(24) Including an especially influential work of Procopius of Gaza, *Catena in Canticum Canticorum*, PG 87/2, 1692 AB, and the only catena in a Canticle known in Slavonic translation (depending on the catena of Procopius): A. A. АЛЕКСЕЕВ, *Песнь Песней в древней славяно-русской письменности* (Санкт-Петербург, 2002) [A. A. ALEKSEEV, “Song of Songs” in the Ancient Slavo-Russian Literary Tradition (St Petersburg, 2002)] 110. Here Alekseev repeats his claim that not only the translation, but the very composition of this catena

We can conclude therefore, that the second intervention of Cant 5:10, unlike the first one, is, in several ways, anomalous. It trickles through on the surface of the 13th-century fashioned text from the margins of the contemporary Byzantine culture. Its ultimate source is still unclear.

An Introduction to the Story of the Chalice of Solomon

Before the Story of the Chalice of Solomon the *Prophecy* introduces a short passage (p. 391) that may be a part of the story and, in any case, is interesting *per se*.

“Solomon has received from God great wisdom, foreknowing with the Spirit that the Lord had to descend on the earth and to be born from the Virgin. Revealing the way (образ = τρόπος) of his descent,²⁵ he [Solomon] arranged the Church, according to the command of God, and called it Holy of Holies. ‘Holy’ he called the Virgin Theotokos, and with ‘of Holies’ he revealed the Holy Trinity as the tripersonal divinity, that God has *to dwell and to live in* her [in the Virgin].²⁶ It is in this way that Solomon arranged the Church, and

were performed by an East Slavic scribe (who would have known Greek and have access to the Greek manuscripts hardly accessible in Rus’) (АЛЕКСЕЕВ, *Песнь Песней...*, 59–61). This viewpoint has been sharply criticized by Horace Lunt and Francis Thomson. In his 2002 book Alekseev enumerates their critical publications (p. 60, n. 43–44, however, omitting the 1999 republication of Thomson’s “Made in Russia”, while here in Addenda, p. 23, Thomson provides some additional linguistic evidence related to this catena) and his own earlier answers, together with publications of other Russian scholars critically disposed to Thomson but without touching the problem of this particular catena (p. 61, n. 45). *À propos* this claim of Alekseev, Thomson sharply remarks: “It scarcely needs to be pointed out that the reasoning because the catena has not been traced in Greek, ergo *it is a Slav compilation is a non sequitur*” (THOMSON, ‘Made in Russia’..., 312, n. 96).

(25) Unlike the editors, I accept here the reading of ms Я, and so, I read образ схода (“way of descent”) instead of an obviously erroneous reading образ исхода (“way of exodus”) of the rest of the manuscripts. The general meaning of the phrase is that the Temple of Solomon was revealing the future *descent* (and not “exodus”, “disappearance” and the like) of the Lord. This is in full accordance with the first half of the verse 2 Cor 6:16 (“For we are the temple of the living God” NRSV), the second part of which is quoted below.

(26) The words яко хочет Бог вселитися и пожити в ней are a close paraphrase (unidentified by the editors) of 2 Cor 6:16: ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω, despite the fact that for the latter verb the most close Slavonic rendering would be походя. However, see, for the inter-

he established as well a chalice²⁷ for the service to God, revealing beforehand his birth, that he has to be born from the Virgin.”

The authentic meaning of the Hebrew idiom “Holy of Holies” that is a common superlative construction would be equally incomprehensible to either a Greek or Slav unlearned audience. It is worth noting, however, that, in Greek, our text would imply a shift of the accent in ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων: to be applied to the Theotokos, the first word must be read in the feminine, that is, as ἁγία. Such a shift would be negligible in writing, but not in utterance. In Slavonic, both feminine singular and neutral plural are spelled as святая and have no difference in pronunciation. I would prefer not to infer too much from this difference in the pronunciation of a bookish word.

The fragment as a whole is especially interesting as a hallmark of the milieu where our *Prophecy* appeared. It is, in no way, learned elite but some much more simple people, similar to the milieu of the origin of the *Dialogue of Panagiotos with an Azymite*. It is in this milieu that the texts already buried in oblivion by the intellectuals, continued to exist in the living manuscript tradition, and this is why such “unlearned” Byzantine texts are so precise to the hunters for early Christian or late Jewish traditions...

An unknown prophecy of Nathan

Our *Prophecy* quotes (p. 405–406) an unknown pseudepigraphon attributed to the prophet Nathan. It is an obviously Christian elaboration on Is 7:14 LXX, but it may go back to the early centuries of Christianity.

“Nathan the prophet in the reign of David prophesised about Christ that he has to be born from the Virgin, as follows: ‘I saw, he said, a Virgin holding an infant, without getting married by a man.’²⁸”

changeability between походитьи and пожити in the Old Slavonic, *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského. Lexicon linguae palaeoslovenicae* 3 (Praha, 1982) [reprint: *Словарь старославянского языка*, т. 3 (Санкт-Петербург, 2006)] 226–227, s.v. походитьи. The verse belongs to the passage 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 whose Pauline origin is disputed, but, in the case of our *Prophecy*, I see no grounds for supposing a source independent of Paul.

(27) The term used for “chalice” here (потир, from Greek ποτήριον) is different from the term used throughout the story itself (чаша, a word with Turkic etymology used along with потир in Church Slavonic texts). This could indicate a different origin of this introduction from the story itself.

(28) Original text of the Slavonic version of this Nathan’s *testimonium*: Видѣхъ, — рече, — Дѣвицу, держашу младенецъ безъ посяга мужеска.

Some *Book of Nathan the Prophet* is mentioned in 1 Chr 29:29 and 2 Chr 9:29. It is difficult to judge whether it is the same book that is meant in both cases, or not. In any case, however, these mentions form sufficient grounds for creating a pseudepigraphon to fill the void after this lost book.

A Byzantine source of the 6th century

One passage in the *Prophecy* is dedicated to a popular, since Proclus of Constantinople (430s), theme “the Virgin as the true Ark of Covenant”²⁹ (p. 434–435). Its wording would look shocking in Byzantium starting in, at least, the 530s, to both Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian milieus, unless it belongs to the Julianists:³⁰ here, the body of Christ as it has been born from the Virgin is called “incorruptible”. To both Chalcedonians and their opponents from the camp of Severus this term is applicable to the body of Christ after the resurrection (in some groups, with some reservations also during the three days of death), but, in no way, to the period before the death. However, our text insists, in the beginning and, again, in the end of the passage, that the Virgin gave birth to an “incorruptible” body: “...the pure Virgin from whom the incorruptible body of Christ issued...” and “...house of his [Christ’s] Mother, from whom [that is, from the Mother] his incorruptible body issued”.

A more close approach reveals, however, that the Virgin in this passage is a newcomer. The core of the passage is an explanation of Ex 25:11, the commandment to overlay the Ark with gold inside and outside (“You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside you shall overlay it” NRSV), and this symbolism is applied to the body of Christ directly:

“...the pure Virgin from whom the incorruptible body of Christ issued, decorated [*sc.*, body], as if with gold, outside by humanity and inside by the Holy Spirit, as Moses said: “Overgild inside, outside”. Because inside he became God by the godhead, and outside man by the humanity, both having perfected when he arrived. It is for this purpose, oh Jew, God commanded to Moses to create the Ark”.

(29) In general on this theme: M. VAN ESBROECK, *The Virgin as the true Ark of Covenant*, in: M. VASSILAKI (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot—Burlington, 2005) 63–68.

(30) The conflict between Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus (520s) became important, in the eyes of the official Church, at least, since the 530s.

In this exegesis, the Ark is the body of Christ itself, not the Virgin, and all the words around the quote above that, within our passage, apply the symbol of the Ark to the Virgin, resulted from an attempt to inscribe a strange exegesis into a familiar context.

The Ark, as composed from the “rot-resistant woods” (ἐκ ξύλων ἀσήπτων) (Ex 25:10 LXX; “wood of acacia” in MT), would be a natural symbol of the body of Christ, be this body considered incorruptible. We know many instances when the wood of the Ark is treated as ἄφθαρτος, but, in the most widespread exegetical tradition, this symbolism is applied to the Virgin and in a different context (when “incorrupt” means “virgin”).

The core quote of the above passage is easily recognisable. Most probably, according to modern scholarly consensus, it originally belongs to a lost commentary of Hippolytus of Rome, while it is more often cited in the Byzantine sources under the name of Irenaeus of Lyon³¹. The original text runs as follows:

Ὅσπερ γὰρ ἡ κιβωτὸς κεχρυσωμένη ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν χρυσίῳ καθαρῷ ἦν· οὕτω καὶ τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σῶμα καθαρὸν ἦν καὶ διαυγές· ἔσωθεν μὲν τῷ Λόγῳ κοσμούμενον, ἔξωθεν δὲ τῷ Πνεύματι φρουρούμενον· ἵνα ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων τὸ περιφανὲς τῶν φύσεων παραδειχθῇ.³²

This fragment is preserved exclusively in the documents of the polemics between the adherents and the adversaries of the Council of Chalcedon. It is quoted, in this context, by Severus of Antioch (preserved in the Syriac version only, in his work against the Chalcedonian John Grammaticus of Caesarea), Leontius of Byzantium, Anastasius the Sinaite (the author of *Hodegos*, 7th cent.), and John of Damascus. The Chalcedonians loved this quote because of the mention of “natures” in Christ in the plural.

The wording of this fragment is still recognisable in our passage of the *Prophecy*, while the changes are substantial. The authentic fragment says nothing about the humanity (instead, it speaks about the

(31) CPG 1882.2 — the main entry under the name of Hippolytus, *In I Reg., quae de Helcana et Samuele*; CPG 1315.3 — under the name of Irenaeus, *Fragmenta varia graeca*, fr. 8 Harvey.

(32) “In the same way as the Ark was overgilded inside and outside with pure gold, the body of Christ was pure and brilliant: from the inside it was decorated with the Logos, and from the outside [it was] kept with the Spirit, to show from both [inside and outside] the splendour of the natures”.

Logos), and the Holy Spirit is, in the authentic text, not inside but outside. The mention of the Holy Spirit in the *Prophecy* in the place where one should put such a word as “godhead” (that is, not the name of only one hypostasis) makes the point of the author of the *Prophecy* unclear, and so, he needs to make a clarification (thus, he adds: “Because inside he became God by the godhead, and outside man by the humanity...”). However, this mention of the Holy Spirit in our passage of the *Prophecy* betrays the ultimate source of the quote. But this source says nothing about the incorruptibility, either.

Further research leads to a Church Father as authoritative as causing problems for everybody who later was claiming for his authority, Cyril of Alexandria. He elaborated on Hippolytus’ previous commentary on the glided Ark in the sense of incorruptibility of the body of Christ from the very beginning. The pertinent exegesis occurs in the known works of Cyril only twice and has evident traces of being suppressed from the Chalcedonian tradition. One occurrence is contained in an exegetical work, another in a dogmatic one. The first work is preserved in the manuscript tradition in Greek (*De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*, CPG 5200) because the exegetical literature was less sensible to the changes of the conjuncture in dogmatics. The second is available in full in Syriac (unpublished) and Armenian only, but in Greek a lot of fragments are preserved (*Scholia de incarnatione unigeniti*, CPG 5225). However, the fragment about the body of Christ as incorruptible is preserved in Greek only by chance, within a florilegium of a unique destiny, the so-called *Florilegium Cyrillianum*.

In his exegetical work, Cyril follows Hippolytus’ fragment more closely, while without explicit reference to either Hippolytus or Irenaeus. The Ark is a testimony that Christ was the Logos of God; then, Cyril continues:

“The woods of the Ark are rot-resistant, and it [the Ark] was bound round with gold from the inside and from the outside — because the body of Christ is incorruptible, being hold in incorruptibility, as if with some gold, with the power and brightness of the indwelling Logos and by the nature and life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit”.³³

(33) PG 68, 507 CD: Καὶ ἄσηπτα μὲν ἦν αὐτῆς τὰ ξύλα, χρυσῷ δὲ τῷ καθαρῷ καὶ δοκιμωτάτῳ κατεκαλλύνετο, ἔσωθέν τε καὶ ἔξωθεν. Ἀφθαρτον γὰρ τὸ σῶμα Χριστοῦ, καθάπερ τινὶ χρυσῷ, τῇ τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος Λόγου δυνάμει καὶ λαμπρότητι, καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος φύσει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ ζωοποιῶ, πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν διακρατούμενον.

Hippolytus' pattern is here clearly recognisable: the Logos is the gold that is inside, and the Spirit is the gold outside. In our *Prophecy*, the Spirit will be shifted from outside to inside, and the Logos will be replaced with the humanity, but the vicinity of the theme of incorruptibility will remain as a mark that it is still Cyril who is paraphrased.

In the second Cyrillian quote, the exegesis itself is different (the gold outside is the body and the gold inside is the rational soul, ψυχὴ λογικὴ, of Christ), but it is clearly stated that the body of Christ is incorruptible ("But the rot-resistant wood would be a typos of the incorruptible body..."³⁴). Its destiny is interesting to us as a means for evaluating to what extent Cyril's words about the incorruptibility of the body of Christ were incompatible with the mainstream Byzantine tradition.

The *Scholia*, being a major dogmatic work of Cyril widely known in the epoch of the first Council of Ephesus (431), are preserved as a whole in the anti-Chalcedonian traditions only, including that of the Julianists (Armenian). *Florilegium Cyrillianum* where the place about the incorruptibility is cited was composed probably in Alexandria in the epoch of *Henotikon* of Zeno (482) and reached Rome in the luggage of John Talaia, the incorrectly consecrated Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria who preferred to fly to Rome instead of waiting to be deposed. Then, it was returned to Constantinople over the period 508–511, where Severus, future Patriarch of Antioch, composed his *Philalethes* as its refutation. The main purpose of the whole *Florilegium*, including our chapter 102, was to demonstrate that Cyril used the terms "nature" and "hypostasis" interchangeably, with no difference in meaning. In this epoch, nobody took care about Cyrillian "incorruptibility".³⁵

(34) The relevant passage is ch. 11 of the work (judging on the grounds of the Armenian version). The Greek is available as ch. 102 of the *Florilegium Cyrillianum*; R. HESPEL, *Le florilège cyrillien réfuté par Sévère d'Antioche* (Louvain, 1955) (Bibliothèque du Musée, 37) 155–156: Ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἄσηπτον ξύλον εἶη ἂν εἰς τύπον τοῦ ἀφθάρτου σώματος. The same is in the Armenian version: F. C. CONYBEARE, *The Armenian Version of Revelation and Cyril of Alexandria's Scholia on the Incarnation and Epistle on Easter*, ed. from the Oldest MSS. and englished (London, 1907) 178 (English tr.) / 105 (Armenian text) (separate paginations).

(35) See, on *Florilegium Cyrillianum*: A. GRILLMEIER with Th. HAINTHALER, *Christ in Christian Tradition*. Tr. P. Allen and J. Cawte, vol. 2/2 (London—Louisville, 1995) 22–23.

The situation changed after the polemics between Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus (520s) that affected the Chalcedonians not later than up to the Council of 536. After all this, the wording of such phrases of Cyril starts to sound Julianistic. This results in the expurgation of the “criminal” phrases from the Byzantine manuscript tradition, while, fortunately, not absolutely consecutive.

It is therefore reasonable to date the corresponding source of our *Prophecy* to the 6th century.

Varia

I would like to note several interesting features more or less important to our understanding of the text.

Poetic insertion. A relatively long passage (p. 400–401, from *пришедь и идольскый мракъ прогна... to ...и все древнее падение оправи*) seems to be a poetic insertion. Probably, it needs to be studied separately.

Φήλιξ αὐτοκράτωρ in Byzantine minuscule. The *Prophecy* lists the titles of Octavian Augustus as “*Filiz Utorator*, that is autocrat” (p. 415). A complete lack of editors’ commentaries leaves us in incertitude. What is *Филизь Утораторъ* [ms B: *Уториторъ*]? It is clear that one means here the official title *Felix Imperator*, or, in its Greek form, Φήλιξ αὐτοκράτωρ. Who is to be blamed for the obvious corruptions, the medieval scribes or the modern editors? At least, in the case of *Филизь*, left without any correction, one can suppose a misreading of manuscripts by the editors, when the letter *ksi* Ξ has been misread as *zemlja* з. It is otherwise unclear why the editors did not correct this reading, as they used to do elsewhere when their main manuscript was corrupt.

The case of *Утораторъ* is more complicated. This title is provided by a correct Slavonic translation, and so, its meaning was certainly clear to the translator. Nevertheless, this is not to exclude a misspelling on his part, if the initial diphthong αὐ- is read as οὐ- in minuscule, and κ was lost in a ligature. I think, this corruption could mean that the Slavic translator of the *Prophecy* had in his hands a Greek manuscript written in minuscule (where it could have been difficult to discern between αὐ and οὐ), and so, he transliterated the Greek term incorrectly.

A case of *téléscopage*: Pompey under Augustus in the role of Titus. This curious fragment runs as follows (p. 417–418):

“August has sent upon you Pompey, the Roman general, with a great force, and he has captured the whole of your city Jerusalem

and destroyed the Church, and he has killed you, and the remainder [of you] enslaved”.

This is, our text explains further, the final destroying of Jerusalem foretold by Daniel in his prophecy of the death of the Messiah and the subsequent fate of Jerusalem after the 62nd “week” (Dan 9:24–28 LXX). All this is said in the context of a rather detailed paraphrase of Josephus, without omitting even the names of high priests and other important personages. Josephus’ narrative seems to be here deliberately condensed. This kind of condensation is typical of the hagiography *épique*, as it was defined by Hippolyte Delehaye. The Bollandists coined it by the term *téléscopage*. In this procedure, all the events are projected onto the only epoch that is chosen in the same manner as the formative epoch in the epos. In our passage, this epoch is that of the birth of Christ, that of Augustus. This is the same epoch when Jerusalem was destroyed — according to the literalistic understanding of Daniel by our author. Therefore, it is clear to me why Titus disappeared from this picture, and why Augustus appears. However, why the deeds of Titus were attributed to Pompey (who entered into the Holy of Holies in 63 BC but, in other matters, was extremely respectful toward Jews and the Temple) is to me completely obscure.

Be that as it may, we have here, in our text, a curious epitome of Josephus’ *Wars*.

Conclusion

The critical edition of the *Prophecy of Solomon* is certainly a valuable contribution to our knowledge of several traditions of theological literature, namely, Russian, South Slavic,³⁶ and Byzantine. It opens new perspectives in the studies of pseudepigraphic and patristic texts as well. Vodolazkin and Rudi have failed to determine correctly which branch of the manuscript tradition is closer to the original Slavonic recension, either Russian or Serbian. Nevertheless, their edition is trustworthy, especially because the two best manuscripts, one of which is Serbian and the other Russian, present basically the same text.

The most important flaws of Vodolazkin’s study are those of the school of his background, that of Russian prerevolutionary scholar-

(36) The most comprehensive account of the South Slavic theological tradition does not take into account our text (presumably, because its author was relying on previous Russian scholarship): G. PODSKALSKY, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien. 865–1459* (München, 2000).

ship with its overestimation of the role of dialectal features in the definition of the origin of medieval Slavonic translations. The evolution of this school, quite legitimate in its own time, during the Soviet period transformed it into a backward methodology aggravated by decreasing of general competence in non-Russian Slavic and Byzantine literatures.

All this said, I consider Vodolazkin's book as a sign of the dawn of renewed Russian tradition of studies of the texts that are going back, though in a complicated way, to the early Christianity or the pre-Rabbinic Judaism.