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## ON THE PREHISTORY OF BOGOMILISM – THE HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTINUUM OF THE DUALISTIC GROUPS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL BULGARIA (8<sup>TH</sup>–10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

**Abstract.** The aim of the present article is to shed light on the prehistory of Bogomilism, in particular on the existence of an initial Proto-Bogomilian group from the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which subsequently gave rise to Bogomilism. For this purpose I will try to regard problems referring to the time and exact place of its emergence, the cultural and ethnical affiliation of its first adherents, its connection with previous dualistic teachings from the Near East and Anatolia. The final conclusions are:

- The roots of Bogomilism must be sought among the Syriac migrants who settled in Thrace in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.
- Groups which shared a different kind of dualistic ideas and notions existed among them. The group that can be identified as “Proto-Bogomilian” most likely inhabited the region of Philippopolis/Plovdiv and followed some branch of Paulicianism different from this of Paulicians who in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century built the “Paulician state” in Tephrike.
- The dualism of the Proto-Bogomilian group stemmed from Marcion’s doctrine with some Manichean admixtures. It had experienced the influence of Masallianism long before the migration of this group towards the Balkans. This can explain the differences with Marcionists and Paulicians. The radical asceticism of the later Bogomils most probably must be attributed to the influence of Masallianism on the initial Proto-Bogomilian group too.

**Keywords:** Bogomilism, Poto-Bogomilian group, Bulgaria, Manicheism, Masallianism, Marcionists, Paulicians

One of the most discussed problems concerning the mediaeval history of Bulgarian lands is Bogomilism – a dualistic heretic teaching that spread in different parts of the Mediterranean region between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century and influenced the religious and political situation on the Balkans, as well as in Anatolia, Northern Italy and Southern France. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bogomilism attracted the attention of different researchers from the Balkans, Russia/USSR and Western Europe. However, in many cases it was estimated in accordance with the 19<sup>th</sup> and

20<sup>th</sup> century ideological doctrines. Hypotheses of its original Bulgarian/Macedonian or anti-feudal nature became popular in historiography and continue to exert influence on historical studies even today. The hypotheses in question can shed light on different aspects of modern Balkan nationalisms – from their esoteric to their proletarian trends, but with respect to the medieval dualistic communities, they introduced a lot of anachronistic notions.

The aim of the present article is to shed light on the prehistory of Bogomilism, in particular on the existence of an initial Proto-Bogomil group from the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, which subsequently gave rise to Bogomilism. For this purpose I will try to regard problems referring to the time and exact place of its emergence, the cultural and ethnical affiliation of its first adherents, its connection with previous dualistic teachings from the Near East and Anatolia. In order to present and defend my theses I will use two kinds of analysis: historical – based on interpretation of the available sources concerning the early history of Bulgarian Bogomils and on the results of the archeological excavations and textological – concerning the only one certain Bogomil text.

### Sources of investigations

The sources used in the article are divided into six groups:

- These of Byzantine origin – the most important of them is the second letter of the Constantinople Patriarch Theophylact to the Bulgarian St. Tsar Peter I dated back to the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.
- Works of medieval Bulgarian origin – in the first place this is the well-known polemic work *The Sermon Against Heretics*, written by Presbyter Kozma in the first years after the emergence of Bogomilism in Bulgarian lands around the 940s–960s<sup>1</sup>. Other important source is the Bulgarian Synodic of Tsar Boril composed between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In spite of the relatively late time of its codification, it contains important data about the early history of Bogomilism, taken from unknown early medieval Bulgarian sources.
- Western sources – the most important of them is the work of Rainer Sacconi, *Summa fratris Raynerii de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*.
- The Latin variant of the so called *Secret Book of Bogomils (Interrogatio Iohannis)* or *Faux Evangile*. It is known in two Latin variants, but its Bulgarian original

<sup>1</sup> Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Старобългарска литература IX–XVIII век*, София 1992, р. 276–279.

is not preserved. At the end of the Carcassonne copy it is explicitly emphasized that the book was brought from Bulgaria: *Hoc est secretum hæreticorum de Concôrezio, portatum de Bulgaria Nazario suo episcopo, plenam erroribus*<sup>2</sup>.

### Prebogomilian dualism in Bulgarian lands

The Byzantine author Theophanes Confessor notices that in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Byzantine emperor Konstantinos V brought Syrians (Syriac speaking) and Armenians from Melitena and Theodosiopolis and settled them in Thrace. Judging from the immediate reactions of Bulgarians, this migration must have affected the border zone between Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire in Northern Thrace. Subsequently, again according to the chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, this population started to spread Paulicianism<sup>3</sup>. Second wave of Syrian “heretics” settled in Thrace in 776–777ies<sup>4</sup>.

The territories of Northern Thrace were gradually incorporated into Bulgaria in the second, the third and the fourth decade of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. One of the important monuments of the Bulgarian conquest is the stone inscription of the Bulgarian ruler Malamir (831–836), where the population of Philippopolis/Plovdiv is categorically distinguished from Greeks, from Bulgarians, and respectively from Slavs<sup>5</sup>. The most probable reason for this distinction is the Syrian and/or Armenian origin of the local population.

Besides the two “exoduses” recorded by Theophanes Confessor, there are some indirect evidences about other, non-recorded migrations of Syriac speaking groups (probably artisans and craftsmen) to the Balkans, or to be more exact, to the medieval Bulgarian state. For instance, as early as the 1970s, Stancho Vaklinov, in his investigation on the development of palace architecture in the First Bulgarian state, explicitly underlines the strong “Syrio-Arabic” influence on the earliest palace in Pliska, built in the 8<sup>th</sup> century; in fact, he expressed the opinion that this palace follows entirely the patterns of the palace architecture in Syrian lands in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>6</sup>. Another example is the famous polychrome art ceramic from Preslav (the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century). According to archaeologists, its origin is rooted in *the Near East – Samara, Damascus and Baghdad*<sup>7</sup>. However, the many Christian motifs weaved into the decoration of this ceramic obviously show that its masters

<sup>2</sup> In Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги и легенди*, София 1970, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> THEOPHANES CONFESSOR, *Chronographia*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. III, ed. I. DUJČEV et al., Sofia 1960 (cetera: THEOPHANES CONFESSOR), p. 269–270.

<sup>4</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. C. MANGO, R. SCOTT, ass. G. GREATREX, Oxford 1997, p. 623.

<sup>5</sup> В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Първобългарски надписи*, София 1992, p. 136–137.

<sup>6</sup> С. ВАКЛИНОВ, *Формиране на старобългарската култура VI–XI век*, София 1977, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Д. ОВЧАРОВ, *Художествената керамика в българските земи*, София 2010, p. 70.

were Christians. This circumstance indicates that the mediators between Preslav and “Samara, Damascus and Baghdad” in the sphere of polychrome art ceramic were representatives of the Christian Syriac speaking groups that inhabited the regions of modern Southern Turkey, Northern Syria and Iraq. Most probably the way of these groups of craftsmen to Bulgaria was different from those of the Syrian and Armenian heretics who spread the dualistic teachings in the Bulgarian lands.

In a series of publications Basil Lourié maintains the hypothesis that some Old Slavonic apocrypha and narratives that have no analogies or exact parallels in Greek are actually translations from Syriac made in Bulgaria in a relatively early period. Lourié lists six works among the supposed translations: *Ahiqar*, *The Twelve Dreams of Shahaisha*, *The Cycle of Solomon*, *The Thessalonica Legend*, and *Eleutherius Recension of the Twelve Fridays*<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, the Syriac prototypes of two of these works – *Eleutherius Recension of the Twelve Fridays* and *The Cycle of Solomon* are a matter of debate. The original (Bulgarian) character of *The Thessalonica Legend* is undoubted, despite the fact that the obvious parallels to Syriac which Lourié emphasized cannot be disregarded. It is possible for the author of the legend to have been influenced by apocryphal texts of Semitic/Syriac origin or even to have taken some motifs and even language constructions from similar texts. However, Lourié’s arguments in respect to *Ahiqar* and *The Twelve Dreams of Shahaisha* – two works which have their Syriac variants, are completely reasonable and, in my opinion, irrefutable.

However the most significant evidences indicating the existence of Old Slavonic – Syriac bilingualism in the anchoritic milieu of the early medieval Bulgarian state comes from the inscriptions of the rock monastery in Krepcha (modern North Eastern Bulgaria) dating back to the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Two of the inscriptions are in Cyrillic Old Slavonic (including the oldest Old Slavonic inscription with date) but according to the researcher of the Cyrillic inscriptions the others are in script resembling the Old Hebrew alphabet<sup>9</sup>. Actually the letters are mix between Hebrew Aramaic and West Syriac Aramaic (Sertā) alphabet.

On the basis of the linguistic analysis of the medieval Bulgarian anthroponyms of Syriac origin and the Syriac loanwords found in the language of the Protobulgarian epigraphy (the 9<sup>th</sup> century), old and middle Bulgarian manuscripts, it can be concluded that in the Early Middle Ages the Protobulgarian and Slavic population of the Bulgarian state interacted with a Syriac speaking groups belonged to different branches of Christianity, and only one part of them were followers of dualistic

<sup>8</sup> B. LOURIÉ, *Direct Translations into Slavonic from Syriac: a Preliminary List*, [in:] ΠΟΛΥΙΣΤΟΡ. *Scripta Slavica*. Mario Capaldo Dicata, ed. C. DIDDÌ, Moscow–Rome 2015, p. 162–168.

<sup>9</sup> К. ПОПКОНСТАНТИНОВ, *Рунически надписи от средновековна България*, [in:] *Studia protobulgaria et mediaevalia europensia*. В чест на професор Веселин Бешевлиев, ed. В. ГЮЗЕЛЕВ, К. ПОПКОНСТАНТИНОВ, Велико Търново 1993, p. 158.

religious systems. Theophanes Confessor calls their dualism “Paulicianism” but mentions nothing about the essence of this “Paulicianism”<sup>10</sup>. Having in mind the evidences of John Exarch and the character of the Bogomils’ teachings, it could be concluded that the religious ideas propagated by the new settlers were a very early form of Paulicianism, different from those of Tephrike, or most likely separate dualistic notions labeled as “Paulicianism”.

I will try to summarize the dualistic ideas condemned by John Exarch in his work *Shestodnev*, composed before 912<sup>11</sup>, in accordance with their places in the text of *Shestodnev*:

- Some heretics, whose names are not mentioned, asserted that night is created by evil creator<sup>12</sup> or identified the darkness and deep from the Biblical verse *darkness was over the surface of the deep* (Gn 1: 2) with the Devil and demons. They identified the Son of God with the light from the next verse – *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light* (Gn 1: 3). On this basis they assumed that the Devil is older than the Son<sup>13</sup>. According to others, the darkness from Genesis 1: 2 was “big evil” having given birth to itself and resisting to God<sup>14</sup>.
- John Exarch criticizes the notion of the primordial nature of evil, the identification of darkness with evil and the assertion that evil is older than good<sup>15</sup>.
- The waters in the sky have good nature, unlike depths, which are hostile powers<sup>16</sup>.
- According to Manicheists the sun is “autonomous/self-governing”<sup>17</sup>.
- In his dispute with astrology John Exarch mentions in a negative context that among astrologies there is an opinion, according to which the sun, the moon and the stars were created by other creator<sup>18</sup>.
- John Exarch asserts that Manicheists believe that the earth has a soul, and this belief originated from their interpretation of the verse *Let the land produce...* Genesis 1: 11<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> THEOPHANES CONFESSOR, p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> He constantly calls Simeon кѣнѣзь instead of цесарь, a title that he gained in 912.

<sup>12</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, *Шестоднев*, trans. Н. Кочев, София 1981 (сетера: Йоан Екзарх), p. 63.

<sup>13</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 88.

<sup>17</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 142, 151.

<sup>18</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 153.

<sup>19</sup> ЙОАН ЕКЗАРХ, p. 207.

As we can see from the above evidences, a big part of the dualistic and “Manichean” notions are based on the first book of the Old Testament that is generally rejected by many dualistic and Gnostic groups, including Paulicians and Bogomils. The notions of the “autonomous sun”, “depths” and “the evil creator” might have some connections with Manicheism and Paulicianism; however, the belief in “the autonomous sun” stays far from the later Bogomil cosmogony. “The depths” appear in the cosmological part of the *Secret Book* but in context which is very different from the descriptions in *Shestodnev*.

Generally it could be concluded that different dualistic notions at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century circulated in the first tsardom but did not enjoy great popularity. That is proved by the fact that the authors from the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (including John Exarch) did not pay much attention to this problem.

### The Proto-Bogomil group and the early Bogomil period

- Place and time of emergence

Contrary to some widely spread and established in historiography opinions that the territory of the region referred to as “Macedonia” in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century was the homeland of Bogomilism, the Serbian document of medieval origin explicitly notices that it appeared in *Bulgarian Macedonia, in Philippopolis and its neighborhoods*<sup>20</sup>. It is well known that in the Byzantine administrative terminology the region of Northern Thrace was referred to as “Macedonia” for a very long period<sup>21</sup>. This is the same region that was populated by Syrian and Armenian migrants in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was gradually annexed by the Bulgarian state between 811 and 834. In spite of that, the opinion that 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia became the initial cradle of Bogomilism is quite spread both in historiography and at popular level. I will try to provide additional evidence in favor of the hypothesis that this cradle was Northern Thrace.

At the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the area referred to as “Macedonia” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, without Thessaloniki and the districts of Seres and Drama, along with a big part of modern Albania and Kosovo, was part of the medieval Bulgarian state known in the modern historiography as the First Bulgarian tsardom. This region, along with present day North Eastern Bulgaria, became a center of Old Slavonic literary activity headed by the two disciples of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius – Saint Clement and Saint Naum. In their works as well as in the works of their disciples<sup>22</sup> there is no criticism against dualistic ideas. This

<sup>20</sup> A. SOLOVIEV, *Autour des Bogomilies*, B 22, 1952, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> К. ГАГОВА, *Тракия през българското средновековие*, София 2002, p. 79–84.

<sup>22</sup> At present only one work written by Saint Naum is known, but the number of works whose author is Saint Clement is about fifty. There are also a big number of works which by its language character-

is as an indication that dualistic beliefs were not strong at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and spread in the region long time after their deaths in 916 and 910. In fact, the Archbishop of Ohrid, Theophylact (1084–1107), in the short conclusion of the Greek biography of Saint Clement, explicitly calls on the saint to destroy “a disastrous heresy”, usually identified with Bogomilism, that appeared in his diocese after his death<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, Theophylact does not specify how long after 916 this heresy appeared.

There are strong reasons to think that the short passage containing the evidence in question was added by Theophylact and did not exist in the original Slavic proto-text<sup>24</sup>. For example, in this passage there is an obvious reference to the *Iliad*, and ethnonyms (Scythian) untypical of Bulgarian literature of the 10<sup>th</sup> century are used<sup>25</sup>. Besides, the author of the oldest Slavic biography of Saint Naum, who also wrote the lost Slavic biography of Saint Clement, says nothing about the appearance of a new heresy. However, he mentions that he was encouraged to write both biographies by Marko, the fourth bishop of “the Slavic people” or “in the Slavic language” in Devol<sup>26</sup>. The first bishop of Devol must have assumed the bishopric in the years after 893. This indicates that Marko headed the bishopric of Devol around 930–940. Therefore, it can be concluded that in the southwestern parts of the first tsardom, at least up to the beginning of 940s, the dualistic doctrines were not perceived as a significant threat to Orthodoxy.

Chronologically the writing of both biographies coincides with the activity of Saint John of Rila (in modern Western Bulgaria) – the most prominent Bulgarian anchorite. He wrote in 941 a Legacy in which he appealed to the monks from his monastery to avoid *foreign and different teachings*<sup>27</sup>. Eventually, they could be identified partly or entirely with the dualistic teachings of Paulicianism and Bogomilism but similar assumption needs more detailed evidences.

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istics and structure strongly resemble the works of Saint Clement and probably were created by its disciples before and after 916 – К. СТАНЧЕВ, *Творчеството на Св. Климент Охридски в научните изследвания и издания през последните 30 години (1986–2016)*, [in:] *Св. Климент Охридски в културата на Европа*, ed. С. КУЮМДЖИЕВА, София 2018, p. 31–44.

<sup>23</sup> THEOPHYLACTUS ACHRIDENSIS, ARCHIEPISCOPUS BULGARIAE, *Βίος και πολιτεία, ομολογία τε και μερικη θαυματων διηγησις του εν αγιοις πατροσ ημων Κλημεντος επισκοπου Βουλγαρων, συγγραφεισα παρα του αγιωτατου και αιδιμου αρχιεπισκοπου της πρωτης Ιουστινιανης και πασης Βουλγαριας, κυρου Θεοφυλακτου, χρηματισαντος εν Κωνσταντινουπολει μαιστορος των ρητορων*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. IX.2, ed., trans. I. ILIEV, Sofia 1994 (cetera: THEOPHYLACTUS ACHRIDENSIS), p. 41.

<sup>24</sup> The first Greek biography of Saint Clement was based on an initial Old Slavonic biography that was translated into Greek and supplemented with additional comments by Theophylact – А. МИЛЕВ, *Гръцките жития на Климент Охридски*, София 1966, p. 68. The Old Slavonic original was lost, but the text of the Slavic biography of Saint Naum is preserved. It becomes clear from the text of Saint Naum’s biography that its author had written the biography of Saint Clement earlier – Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Старобългарска...*, p. 166–167.

<sup>25</sup> А. МИЛЕВ, *Гръцките жития...*, p. 45–46, 163.

<sup>26</sup> Й. ИВАНОВ, *Български старини из Македония*, София 1970, p. 307.

<sup>27</sup> П. И. ДУЙЧЕВ, *Рилският светец и неговата обител*, София 1990, p. 140.



Much more interesting is the information of one of the services dedicated to Saint John of Rila. Its copy is preserved in a manuscript dated back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One of its verses calls on *let the heretical teachings of these who do not believe in resurrection disgrace*<sup>28</sup>. It is well known that Bogomils and Paulicians rejected the resurrection of bodies and this verse obviously refers to them. The services was discovered by Jordan Ivanov and published in 1931. On the basis of some chronological references in the text Jordan Ivanov regarded it as the earliest service appeared in the Rila monastery immediately after 946<sup>29</sup>. In this case that is the earliest evidence of spread of dualistic teaching (most probably Bogomilism) in the central lands of the first tsardom but the mountain of Rila lies close to Northern Thrace and it is not part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia.

Nerveless Stefan Kozhuharov – one of the most prominent modern researchers of the medieval Bulgarian hymnography, rejected the early origin of the service discovered by Ivanov and did not include it in his reconstruction of the earliest Rila service. On the other hand Kozhuharov did not exclude possibility the 15<sup>th</sup> century copy to contain passages of some early text<sup>30</sup>. Another researcher of the medieval hymnography – Veselin Panayotov, in publication from 2006, again defended the hypothesis of the early (Rila) origin of the verses with anti-Bogomilian and anti-heretical contents<sup>31</sup>. As whole the view that in the 940ies Bogomilism had strong positions in the central lands of the first tsardom remains possible but uncertain hypothesis.

On the other hand, evidences extracted from the most important source about the early stages of Bogomilism, the work of Presbyter Kozma, *A Sermon against Bogomils*, gives arguments in favor of the hypothesis that at the same time the situation in the eastern and north eastern parts of the first Bulgarian state was different. Kozma calls on the bishops and priests to follow the example of John who was *one-time pastor and exarch in the Bulgarian lands* (obviously John Exarch) and adds that *many of you knew him*<sup>32</sup>. John Exarch was Saint Clement's and Saint Naum's contemporary but lived and acted in the capital city of Preslav. This indicates that Kozma wrote his works in the same region two or three decades after the death of John Exarch.

There are three other arguments supporting the early date of Kozma's work: he calls the Bulgarian Tsar Peter I an Orthodox<sup>33</sup> but not a saint. He was canonized soon after his death in 969 and subsequently became one of the most popular

<sup>28</sup> In Й. ИВАНОВ, *Български старини...*, p. 358.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 345–346.

<sup>30</sup> С. КОЖУХАРОВ, *Проблеми на старобългарската поезия*, София 2004, p. 61–62.

<sup>31</sup> В. ПАНАЙОТОВ, *За един ранен пласт в службата на свети Йоан Рилски по преписа от 1451 година*, [in:] *Глџбини књижности*, vol. IV, ed. ИДЕМ, Шумен 2006, p. 222–225.

<sup>32</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, *Беседа против богомилитъ*, trans. В. КИСЕЛКОВ, София 1939 (cetera: ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА), p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 4.



Bulgarian saints. Kozma notices nothing about the existence of a “Bogomil church” or hierarchy; actually, he explicitly mentions that Bogomilians did not have their priests<sup>34</sup>, a circumstance indicating that his Sermon appeared in the early period of the Bogomil movement, when it was spread by means of the activity of separate charismatic preachers and hermits but still had not reached the stage of a separate organization. Besides, it seems that the Constantinople Patriarch Theophylact and Saint Tsar Peter also knew nothing about the existence of a Bogomil “church” because it was not mentioned in the Patriarch’s second letter, where different aspects of the heresy are discussed in response to a detailed description made by Saint Tsar Peter in the previous letter.

Milan Loos notices that *Cosma himself did not use the name Bogomils, which appeared in the Byzantine sources in the eleventh century*<sup>35</sup>. The same designation is known in the Bulgarian anti-heretical literature from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems that in the 10<sup>th</sup> century it was not used.

All of these support the assumption that Kozma wrote his work somewhere between 940–950, which roughly coincides with the correspondence between Saint Tsar Peter I and the Constantinople Patriarch Theophylact, whose pontificate covered the period between 933–956.

Besides the so called anti Bogomil (more correctly anti heretical) inscription of the monk Ananii which is dated back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century also originates from Moesia<sup>36</sup>.

Ayten Mustafova discovers the traces of dualistic and Massalian influence in the original (non-translated from Greek) supplements in the text of Codex Suprasliensis composed in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century somewhere in the Eastern Bulgarian lands<sup>37</sup>. In my opinion the supplements in question testify to the strong influence of ascetic and anchoretic ideas on the compiler of the codex. That probably reflects the sentiments of wider milieu – the earliest evidences about the initial history of Bogomilism indicate that it has spread among adherents of ascetic manner of life.

On this basis it might be suggested that territories of Moesia<sup>38</sup> were affected by the Bogomilian teachings earlier than the territories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia.

<sup>34</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 33.

<sup>35</sup> M. LOOS, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, Prague 1974, р. 60.

<sup>36</sup> В. КОНСТАНТИНОВА, *Някои бележки за противобогомилския надпис от Ескус*, Арх 3–4, 1982, р. 50–51.

<sup>37</sup> А. МУСТАФОВА, *Реликти на дуализма в Супрасълския сборник. Автореферат на дисертация*, Шумен 2015, р. 17–36.

<sup>38</sup> That is the territory of modern Northern Bulgaria – the former Roman province Moesia Inferior, where the main political and cultural centers of the First Bulgarian Tsardom were founded from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to 971. I will use this antique designation because, unlike the horonyms Macedonia and Thrace, it continued to be in use during the Middle Ages without significant geographical and historical changes in its meaning. Even sometimes the horonym Moesia was used as a synonym

The reason must be sought in the fact that “Philippopolis and its neighborhoods” lie close to Moesia and are relatively far from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia. Besides not only Codex Suprasliensis but the remains of rock monasteries dated back to the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and the epigraphic materials found in these monasteries show that several decades before the appearance of Bogomilism, Moesia had become a cradle of Bulgarian Christian (Orthodox) anchoritism.

- Northern Thrace in the 8<sup>th</sup> – the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries: the political, cultural and ethnical situation

The information from the Byzantine authors, the Protobulgarian inscriptions and the data obtained from the archeological excavations show that in the 8<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries Northern Thrace was sparsely populated, regularly devastated during the numerous military conflicts and clashes between Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire, and finally transformed into a border zone between these states. Archeological excavations show that some of the late antique cities and settlements completely disappeared in the 6<sup>th</sup> century as a result of Avar invasions, especially in the eastern part of the region; others, such as Beroe (modern Stara Zagora), Philippopolis, Diocletianopolis, in the central and western part, survived, but life continued in them on a very reduced scale<sup>39</sup>. In the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century the attempts of Byzantine authorities at restoring and reviving some of these strongholds by means of reconstruction of their walls and deportations of Syrians and Armenians from the Eastern provinces did not improve the situation. Many of the new inhabitants were resettled in Moesia and even north of Danube during the military campaigns of the Bulgarian ruler Krum in 811–813.

Archeologists register three types of settlements related to the period 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries: non-fortified villages, situated in the hinterland of Philippopolis/Plovdiv, Beroe and Adrianopolis (modern Edirne, Turkey) and having no connection with the previous epoch<sup>40</sup>, settlements built on the ruins of the late antique fortresses – mainly Konstantinia, Izvorovo and Karasura<sup>41</sup>, and settlements located within the boundaries of the former cities of Philippopolis, Beroe, Diocletianopolis. They were built as separated quarters, scattered around the walls (inside and outside the walls) and covered only part of the territory of the former antique cities<sup>42</sup>.

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of Bulgaria. The first example in this respect is the Service of Saint Methodius, written by his disciple Constantine of Preslav at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century – Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Старобългарска...*, p. 191.

<sup>39</sup> Г. ГРОЗДАНОВА, *Населението на Южна България VI–IX в. (По археологически данни)*, София 2018, p. 15–16, 18, 21.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 72–73.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 76–77.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77–79.

This is the period of relatively slow penetration of Slavic population into the region. Traces of this new population are found in the three groups of settlements, but obviously they prevail in the non-fortified villages. These traces are usually identified with one-room huts, dug into the terrain, with handmade pottery and crude pottery made with primitive manual pottery wheels – the huts and handmade pottery have the closest analogs in the archeological cultures spread in Central Europe<sup>43</sup>. On the territory of Philippopolis and Diocletianopolis, unlike Beroe huts and other traces of Slavic presence have not been found yet, but Slavic type of dwellings are excavated in their immediate vicinity<sup>44</sup>. The non-Slavic culture is presented by over-ground one- or two-room stone dwellings with mud mortar and also relatively crude pottery<sup>45</sup>.

There are examples of primitive handmade “Slavic” earthenware following the forms of antique pottery. This is a phenomenon known also from Dalmatia and Southern Greece. It is interpreted as evidence of interaction between Slavs and local “autochthonic groups”<sup>46</sup>.

The spread of the so called “grey polished pottery” in Northern and Eastern Thrace gives reasons to think that some Protobulgarian groups penetrated into the area at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> or in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It is concentrated in the region between the Black Sea and Nova Zagora, but fragments of such pottery are found also in Philippopolis. However, nowhere it is dominant, and in practice the hypothesis of lasting presence of a similar population only on the basis of this kind of pottery was rejected<sup>47</sup>. Most probably the pottery in question belonged to and was left by military units – wartime troops or border guards along Erkesiya (see below).

The region was slightly affected by the ambitious building policy of the Bulgarian rulers in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant construction from this epoch was the imposing rampart and trench known at present with its later Turkish name (Yerkesi)/Erkesiya. It lies from Black Sea to river Sazlijka (142 km) and marked a part of the Bulgarian-Byzantine border after 814. The early medieval reconstructions of some of the late antique fortresses located north of Erkesiya, as well as the construction of a new small stronghold near modern Haskovo, are also ascribed to Bulgarians<sup>48</sup>. The most significant reconstructions were undertaken in the fortress of Sliven. That circumstance makes historians and archeologists to think that Sliven became the administrative and military center of the Bulgarian

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81, 89–91, 99–100.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78–79.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 81–82, 100.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup> Б. БОРИСОВ, *Археологические свидетельства праболгарского присутствия на территории Южной Болгарии*, ПАрх 2, 2012, p. 56–62.

<sup>48</sup> Д. РАБОВЯНОВ, *Извънстоличните каменни крепости на Първото българско царство*, София 2011, p. 48–50.

part of Thrace<sup>49</sup>. Several stone bas-reliefs and other artifacts from Beroe (Stara Zagora) and Nova Zagora indicate connections with the pagan and Christian art of the political centers of the First Bulgarian Tsardom<sup>50</sup>. However, these artifacts cannot change the general impression of cultural isolation of the population inhabiting Northern Thrace in the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century. This is confirmed by the fact that the first Cyrillic inscription in the region is dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>51</sup>. The contrast with the numerous Glagolitic and Cyrillic epigraphic monuments originating from Moesia and the territories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia and dated back to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century obviously shows that Northern Thrace remained out of the scope of influence of the big monasteries built in Moesia and Macedonia, which became the main centers of Cyrillic and Glagolitic epigraphy. Epigraphy not only in Old Slavonic, but also in any other language, that can be attributed to the cultural activity of the local population before the 11<sup>th</sup> century are not found. Of course, this does not mean that in this period the population of the region was completely illiterate. For example, up to this moment no traces of Bogomil epigraphy have been found, but it is well known that Bogomils had their literature.

The earliest Old Slavonic epigraphic materials from the Eastern parts of the Rhodope mountains, a region located south of Northern Thrace and geographically much more isolated, chronologically precede those from Northern Thrace with one century. It is also interesting that these materials are amulets containing texts of apocryphal prayers whose contents have parallels to similar amulets from Moesia<sup>52</sup>. The amulets indicate that apocryphal prayers of eastern origin<sup>53</sup> were circulating in the eastern regions of the first tsardom in the 9<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

From the view of its political status, usually the population in the region is described as subject to the Byzantine Empire or to the First Bulgarian tsardom. Up to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century the district was divided between Bulgaria and Byzantium. The part belonging to the Byzantine Empire was included in a separate theme named “Macedonia”. The Bulgarian part named “Zagore” most probably formed one of the ten comitats mentioned in the sources.

Some authors maintain the view that a secondary influx of Slavic population occurred at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the Bulgarian part of Thrace. However, this time the new Slavic migration included Western Slavs of Moravian

<sup>49</sup> К. СТАНЕВ, *Сливен – административен център на областта Загора през IX–X век*, [in:] *България в световното културно наследство*, Шумен 2014, p. 544–546.

<sup>50</sup> И. ИВАНОВ, М. МИНКОВА, *Още веднъж за средновековните каменни релефи от Стара Загора*, ИСИМ 3, 2008, p. 177–183.

<sup>51</sup> Actually the inscription is bilingual – in Old Slavonic (Bulgarian) and Greek. It is found in Parvomay – about 35 kilometers east of Plovdiv – Й. ЗАИМОВ, *Нов старобългарски паметник. Първомайски надпис от XI–XII в.*, БЕ 4, 1983, p. 292–294.

<sup>52</sup> К. ПОПКОНСТАНТИНОВ, *Заклинателни молитви върху оловни амулети от средновековна България и паралелите им в Требници от средновековна Сърбия*, ЗРВИ 46, 2009, p. 344–346.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 349.

origin and was caused by the Hungarian penetration in Pannonia and the Carpathian mountains. This hypothesis is based on two main arguments – the spread of archeological material (predominantly pottery) indicating direct connections with Central European archeological complexes and the explicit evidence in the first Slavic biography of St. Naum and of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus that after the collapse of Moravia, many Moravians fled from Hungarians and sought asylum in Bulgaria<sup>54</sup>.

The exact status of Philippopolis and its lands after the Bulgarian advance in 833–834 is unclear. Actually the Shumen inscription of Malamir (831–836) dating back to 833–834 is the last source giving some piece of information about the events in the town during a very long period up to 970. However this information is unclear – according to inscription after military campaign in Eastern Thrace (modern Turkey) the Bulgarian army headed by Malamir and his regent Isbul reached Philippopolis. The Byzantine garrison (called Greeks) had fled and the Bulgarian ruler and the regent made meeting with the citizens<sup>55</sup>. The results of this meeting remain unknown. Theophylact notices that Bulgarians captured Philippopolis<sup>56</sup> and it seems that is confirmed by the fact that Philippopolis is not mentioned in the Byzantine rang lists from 899 and 921–941<sup>57</sup>. On the other hand, in 880 the name of Philippopolis' metropolitan Nikolay subjugated to the Patriarchy in Constantinople appears in the sources<sup>58</sup>. That might be regarded as an uncertain indication that Byzantine recaptured the town in 864/866 and kept control over it up to the end of the first Simeon's war against Byzantine that ended in 896. Probably that can explain the appearance of Philippopolis' eparchy in the lists (*notitias*) of Constantinople patriarchy in the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century but according to some opinions the lists (*notitias*) in question reflects older situation.

After 912, during the wars of tsar Simeon against the Byzantine Empire, all Thrace up to the vicinity of Constantinople was occupied several times by Bulgaria. After the peace treaty from 927, the Bulgarian-Byzantine border was removed south of Erkesiya and roughly coincided with the modern Bulgarian-Turkish border zone but its exact line is unknown<sup>59</sup>.

Simultaneously there are evidences that many of the communities in Thrace and the neighboring region of the Rhodope mountains led an independent or semi-independent manner of life. For instance in the peace treaty that Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire signed in 814 there is a special chapter concerning unknown from other sources independent Slavs inhabiting the coastal region of the Black Sea south of the Hemus mountain; according to treaty they had to be returned to

<sup>54</sup> К. СТАНЕВ, *Тракия през ранното средновековие*, Велико Търново 2012, р. 166.

<sup>55</sup> В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Първобългарски...*, р. 136–137.

<sup>56</sup> THEOPHYLACTUS ACHRIDENSIS, р. 63.

<sup>57</sup> А. ДАНЧЕВА-ВАСИЛЕВА, *Пловдив през средновековието (IV–XIV век)*, София 2011, р. 38.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, р. 326.

<sup>59</sup> К. ГАГОВА, *Тракия през...*, р. 47.

their initial settlements<sup>60</sup>. The above mentioned inscription of Malamir shows that the inhabitants of Philippopolis acted independently from any political center. In the Philippi inscription of Malamir's inheritor, Persian (836–855), Smolyans, a Slavic tribe inhabiting the southern part of the Rhodope mountains, are mentioned as a separate political unit<sup>61</sup>.

- Northern Thrace in the 8<sup>th</sup> – the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century: the religious situation

The archeological excavations of necropolises can shed light on the question about the religious affiliation of the population inhabiting Northern Thrace and the Rhodope mountains during this period. According to their results, in many regions of the Rhodopes there are visible elements of continuity with the funeral traditions of the late antiquity. The graves in which pagan ritualism is registered are relatively small and scattered among graves indicating connections with Christian funeral practices inherited from the previous epoch. That raises the hypothesis that the Slavs in the Rhodopes have actively interacted with the native population and prisoners of wars or have been objects of Christianization undertaken by unknown missionaries<sup>62</sup>. Several pagan graves were found in some settlements in the eastern parts of Northern Thrace – in the vicinity of Nova Zagora and Burgas. However, these graves are attributed to Protobulgarians and are explained with the early annexation of these lands by the medieval Bulgarian state in 705–706<sup>63</sup>.

The data from Beroe and Philippopolis are not as detailed as those from the Rhodopes, but the partial excavations show that their inhabitants continued to use the late antique necropolises without any change in the funeral practices<sup>64</sup>. Three recently found pagan graves in Plovdiv (Philippopolis) are ascribed to Protobulgarians and are used as a proof that between 834–866 Protobulgarian colonialists settled there<sup>65</sup>. If this interpretation is correct, the “Protobulgarian colonialists” must have belonged to population engaged in the military, which constituted a small pagan layer in the town.

Therefore it can be concluded that the population of Northern Thrace in the dark centuries (8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup>) was composed by remnants of the Greek or Romanic speaking late antique population<sup>66</sup>, a relatively big number of Syriac and Armenian

<sup>60</sup> В. БЕШЕВЛИЕВ, *Първобългарски...*, p. 166.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 142–144.

<sup>62</sup> Г. ГРОЗДАНОВА, *Населението...*, p. 154.

<sup>63</sup> Б. БОРИСОВ, *Археологические...*, p. 52–56.

<sup>64</sup> Г. ГРОЗДАНОВА, *Населението...*, p. 134–135.

<sup>65</sup> I. TOPALOV, K. STANEV, *Two Bulgar Pagan Burials from Plovdiv*, [in:] *Avars, Bulgars and Magyars on the Middle and Lower Danube*, ed. L. DONCHEVA-PETKOVA, C. BALOGH, A. TÜRK, Sofia–Budapest 2014, p. 85–87.

<sup>66</sup> Many late antique toponyms, hydronyms and oikonyms from Thrace are preserved in Old Slavonic, Middle Bulgarian and Modern Bulgarian with labial b or with old nasals, which excludes



migrants – concentrated mainly in the former cities that were in the process of ruralisation, Slavs who inhabited small newly formed villages and had started to adopt Christian rituals at least in their burial practices, and a tiny layer of Proto-bulgarians who continued to keep their pagan burial traditions.

The Slavic population from the presumed second migrant wave from Great Moravia (the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century) must have been Christians or in the process of Christianization.

One of the paradoxes of this situation are the very slight traces of new Christian temples in the regions of Philippopolis and the Rhodopes during the “dark age” (the 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century). There are evidences that some of the churches built in the previous centuries partly continued to function in this period or at least the collective memory of their locations was kept alive because some of the late antique necropolises were used in the whole medieval period<sup>67</sup>. However that was not a general phenomenon. It is strange that in spite of its closeness to Moesia, the region was not affected by the large scale construction of churches and imposing monastery complexes during the reign of St. Boris I, Simeon and St. Peter (855–969) in Moesia and in the lands of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Macedonia<sup>68</sup>. It seems that the construction of churches and monasteries in the region of Philippopolis was renewed after the Byzantine Reconquista in 970–971 and more exactly in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the possible explanations of this strange paradox – Christian burials and lack of new church buildings, directs to dualistic teachings. It is well known that they rejected temples and liturgy. On the other hand, graves or necropolises that can be identified as Bogomil/Paulician have not been found yet on the territory of Bulgaria. This indicates that the burial practices of these groups did not differ from these of Orthodox Christians, at least with respect to the position of the body and the lack of funeral gifts. On this basis, as well as on the basis of the evidences of Theophanes Confessor and the above mentioned Serbian document, it could be suggested that in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century dualistic sects spread their teachings among the population of Northern Thracian and partly in the Rhodope mountains. In fact, Philippopolis/Plovdiv, according to the testimony of Anna Komnene, up to the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century continued

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Greek among the possible donors of these toponyms. Most likely the donors were the local variants of Vulgar Latin or some of the old Balkan languages as Moesian or Thracian. In my opinion, the phonetic structure of the toponyms in question indicates Vulgar Latin mediation.

<sup>67</sup> Г. Грозданова, *Населението...*, p. 136–137.

<sup>68</sup> According to some interpretations, at least one part of the above-mentioned artifacts from Beroe (Stara Zagora), Nova Zagora and Sliven were part of the decoration of the churches. Some researchers even suppose that the churches belonged to monastery complexes or bishop residences similar to these excavated in Pliska, Preslav, Ravna, Varna and other parts of Eastern Moesia. However, ruins of similar buildings have not been excavated yet. Of course, they may be found in future excavations, but even then they will not change the general situation essentially.



to be a center of dualistic movements (including Bogomils), and the number of Orthodox Christians there was insignificant<sup>69</sup>.

- Connections of early Bogomilism with Messalianism and dualistic teachings

These connections can be reconstructed on the basis of a number of similarities existing between Bogomils' teaching and practices presented in the work of presbyter Kozma and the teaching and practices of the earlier heresies. Actually, Bogomilism from a doctrinal point of view cannot be attributed entirely to any of the earlier heretical groups and movements known from the sources. However, the connections with the dualistic doctrine of Marcion and respectively Paulicianism are obvious. In a previous publication I propounded the view that in the 7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> century in Anatolia and on the Balkans different dualistic communities identifying themselves or labeled as “Paulicians” existed. We have relatively detailed information about the group which in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century seized Tephrike and founded a Paulician quasi state. In the religious beliefs and practices of this group several layers can be distinguished – conscious Marcionism introduced by Constantine Silvan, “subconscious” Manicheism, sunny cult that might have connections with Manicheism, Mazdeism or some pagan remnants, rejecting of cross, icons, church, sacraments, liturgy – the latter could be due to the influence exerted by different factors – the Byzantine iconoclasm, Islam, dualism based on the Old Testament etc. However in my opinion that was a consequence of process of radicalization of the dualistic teachings themselves. Finally a tendency of religious authoritarianism – cult of religious leaders, took place among the Paulicians of Tephrike.

The main similarities of Bogomilism to Marcionism and Paulicianism can be summarized in the following range:

- Rejection of the Old Testament and the missions of the Old Testament prophets<sup>70</sup>.
- Rejection of the visible world. According to Marcionites and Paulicians, who were obviously influenced by Marcionites, the world was created by the God of law<sup>71</sup>, respectively by the God of evil (Paulicians)<sup>72</sup>. Bogomils recognized Satan as its creator<sup>73</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> ANNA COMNENA, *Alexias*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. VIII, ed. M. VOJNOV et al., Sofia 1972, p. 136–137.

<sup>70</sup> Презвитеръ Козма, p. 19–20, 23–24.

<sup>71</sup> П. СТЕФАНОВ, *Ялдаваот. История и учение на гностическата религия*, София 2008, p. 170.

<sup>72</sup> *Petri Siculi Historia Manichaeorum seu Paulicianorum*, Gottingae 1846 (cetera: PETRUS SICULUS), p. 11–12.

<sup>73</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 29.

- The God of law (Marcionism) – respectively Satan (Bogomilism) is the creator of the human body and soul, so both were infected by sin<sup>74</sup>. Presbyter Kozma notices that one part of the heretics considered devil not as a fallen angel but as a “non-righteous ruler”<sup>75</sup>. This view most likely has stemmed from Marcion’s concept by means of Paulician mediation. The strange Bogomil view of Satan as the younger son of God and brother of Jesus<sup>76</sup> probably also reflects some initial notion of the existence of two gods. That also confirms the hypothesis that the dualistic ideas were spread in Bulgarian lands by heterogeneous groups.
- Rejection of Saint John the Baptist – according to Bogomils he was forerunner of Antichrist<sup>77</sup>. It seems that this dualistic tradition is rooted in Marcion’s redaction of the Gospel of Luke – there the passages referring to the connections between Jesus and John the Baptist are missing<sup>78</sup>. One of the possible explanations of this strange missing is the negative attitude of Marcion and his followers towards Saint John the Baptist. Many historians of the early Christianity share opinion that Marcion abbreviated the beginning of Gospel of Luke in order to avoid the narrative of John the Baptist and its connections with Jesus<sup>79</sup>. As we see below the *Secret Book of Bogomils* indicates another source of this rejection but that does not disapproved the significance of Marcion’s redaction of the New Testament:
- The notion of ostensible birth and death of Jesus<sup>80</sup>.
- The exclusive respect to Saint Paul the Apostle was typical of Paulicians and that was inherited from Marcion’s doctrine too. According to Marcion St. Paul the Apostle received exclusive by its nature revelation that revealed him the essence of Jesus’ sacrifice<sup>81</sup>. Loos in his investigation on Bogomilism, on the basis of the evidences from Kozma’s work, asserts that Bogomils *did not follow the Paulicians’ emphasis on the teachings of St. Paul*<sup>82</sup>. In my opinion there are indirect indications that Bogomils also paid exclusive respect to Saint Paul. For instance Presbyter Kozma quotes passages from Saint Paul’s letters used by

<sup>74</sup> П. СТЕФАНОВ, *Ялдаваот...*, р. 174; ПРЕЗВИТЕРЬ КОЗМА, р. 26.

<sup>75</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЬ КОЗМА, р. 26.

<sup>76</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЬ КОЗМА, р. 29.

<sup>77</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЬ КОЗМА, р. 20.

<sup>78</sup> J. TYSON, *Marcion and Luke-Acts. A Defining Struggle*, Columbia 2006, р. 43–44.

<sup>79</sup> В. БОЛОТОВ, *Лекции по истории Древней Церкви*, vol. II, *История церкви в период до Константина Великого*, Москва 1994, р. 230.

<sup>80</sup> В. БОЛОТОВ, *Лекции по истории...*, р. 229; PETRUS SICULUS, р. 12; М. ПОПРУЖЕНКО, *Синодик царя Борила*, София 1928 (сетера: ПОПРУЖЕНКО), р. 42.

<sup>81</sup> В. БОЛОТОВ, *Лекции по истории...*, р. 230.

<sup>82</sup> M. LOOS, *Dualist Heresy...*, р. 59.

Bogomils against Orthodoxies<sup>83</sup>. Besides, Presbyter Kozma in order to disprove Bogomil doctrine, many times based his argumentation on Saint Paul's letters.

- Rejection of the Holy Cross, icons, the Orthodox Church and saints, liturgy and Orthodox church's sacraments – a common feature of both Paulicianism and Bogomilism<sup>84</sup>. Presbyter Kozma in his work sheds certain light on the reasons of this Bogomil rejection. He writes that the early Bogomils did not accept the cross because the Son of God was crucified on it<sup>85</sup>. In respect to icons they advanced arguments from Acts of the Apostles 17: 29 – i.e. they accepted icons as a kind of idolatry<sup>86</sup>, liturgy was rejected as innovation missing in the New Testament<sup>87</sup>. However it seems that all of these arguments were used in their disputes with Orthodoxies but the real reason was rooted in the process of radicalization of dualistic teachings that had taken place in the Near East and Anatolia before the migrations of the dualistic groups towards Balkans. For instance Presbyter Kozma in another place notices that Bogomils rejected everything animate and inanimate in the visible world<sup>88</sup> – therefore they accepted all material things as created by evil/Satan.
- There are similarities between Paulicians' and Bogomils' views about the substitution of sacraments with Gospels: Paulicians on the basis of Jesus' word about the living water, perceived listening to the Gospel as Baptism<sup>89</sup>. Bogomils asserted that the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles were the real communion<sup>90</sup>.
- One of the common features of Marcionism and Bogomilism is the lack of the classical Gnostic notions of aeons and their emanations in their dualistic doctrine. Official Paulicianism – this introduced with reform of Constantine Silvan, on this topic most probably also maintained views similar to Marcion's and Bogomil dualism.
- The information of Presbyter Kozma that Bogomils did not celebrate Sunday and kept the fast on Sunday also attracts attention<sup>91</sup>. The first peculiarity was due to the rejection of resurrection of bodies – one common feature for the dualistic and gnostic teachings. The second probably indicates traces of

<sup>83</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 16–17, 22.

<sup>84</sup> PETRUS SICULUS, р. 15; ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 9, 11, 14, 14–15, 22, 29.

<sup>85</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 9.

<sup>86</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 22.

<sup>87</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 14.

<sup>88</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 29.

<sup>89</sup> PETRUS SICULUS, р. 37.

<sup>90</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 13–14.

<sup>91</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 36.

Manichean influence<sup>92</sup>. However the Sunday fast might have stemmed from another gnostic traditions<sup>93</sup>.

On the other hand there are some significant differences between Bogomilism and Paulicianism:

- The nature of God's opponent: while Marcionites perceived him as a separate god (the god of law), opposed to the Heavenly Father<sup>94</sup>, most of Bogomils identified him with Satan – the rebellious angel created by God and rising against Him<sup>95</sup>. Probably Marcion's God became the prototype of the Paulician God of evil, but the prototype of the Bogomil inspirer of the evil is the Satan from the New Testament.
- Bogomils did not abridge the New Testament according to the model of Marcion and Paulicians. There is no explicit information that Bogomils removed books of the New Testament or abridged their texts, but they denied the passages telling about the miracles of Jesus<sup>96</sup>. Besides, it becomes clear from the so called *Secret Book of Bogomils* that they used additional entirely non-canonic texts that replaced to a certain degree the New Testament.
- Elements of sunny cult cannot be found in the practices or beliefs of Bogomilism.
- The Manichean elements in Bogomil doctrine are slight and uncertain.
- Unlike Paulicians, Bogomils have not developed practices of religious cult of their leaders.
- The total destructivism of Bogomilism – it was a natural consequence of the above mentioned radicalization of dualistic doctrine – a process that in my opinion was common for Protobogomils and Paulicians. However the Bogomil doctrine developed forms of destructivism that were unknown in Paulicianism. For example the rejection of Jesus' miracles and especially the miraculous healings and resurrections of bodies was provoked by the radical Bogomil view that bodies were created by Satan and therefore cannot be healed – they as the other parts of material world are condemned of destruction. Presbyter Kozma

<sup>92</sup> М. ТАРДИО, *Манихейството*, trans. М. ЙОНЧЕВ, София 2001, p. 86 (translation from French: M. TARDIEU, *Le manichéisme*, Paris 1997).

<sup>93</sup> At first glance the Sunday fast can be considered as an indication for existence of some sunny cult. It is known that Manicheans regarded sun and moon as divine spirits. However all sources – including the *Secret Book*, confirm that Bogomils categorically rejected all heavenly bodies as part of material world created by Satan. That makes me think that the source of the Sunday fast was not Manichean.

<sup>94</sup> П. СТЕФАНОВ, *Ялдаваот...*, p. 170.

<sup>95</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 26.

<sup>96</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 8, 36.

notices that Bogomils attributed all miraculous to Satan and asserted that the authors of Gospels have misunderstood their real meaning<sup>97</sup>.

- Another example is Bogomils' attitude toward children. According to Kozma, they abhorred them, turned to the other side and hid their faces when they saw children and called them little devils, Mammons<sup>98</sup>.

There are certain parallels between Masallianism and Bogomilism. The origin of Masallians is not completely clear, but the existing evidences indicate that it emerged around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century in the bosom of some radical trends of Syriac anchoritism and continued to exist up to and including the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>99</sup>. The similarities with Bogomilism can be found in the following beliefs and practices of Masallians:

- The human soul from birth is under the control of Satan and his demons, and man cannot free himself from them by means of church baptism and communion. The only way of liberation is prayer.
- Ascetics are not under obligation to participate in church rites.
- Negative attitude toward matrimony and secular manner of life.
- Rejection of manual labor<sup>100</sup>.
- Presbyter Kozma notices that Bogomils prayed four times in day and four times in night saying the Lord's Prayer<sup>101</sup>. Most probably this model copied some Masallian practice.

However, there are some significant differences between Bogomils and Masallians. For instance, Masallians did not preach against the cross and even expected during their prayers to see the Holy Cross in light<sup>102</sup>. There are no evidences that Masallians followed or adopted dualistic doctrines.

- Cultural and ethnical characteristics of early Bogomilism

The most important source about the cultural and social environment of early Bogomilism is the second letter of the Constantinople Patriarch Theophylact

<sup>97</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 8, 36.

<sup>98</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 33–34.

<sup>99</sup> А. МУРАВЬЕВ, *Мар Исхак Ниневиийский. Книга о восхождении инока. Первое собрание (трактаты I–VI)*, Москва 2016, р. 454–455; J. WOLSKI, *Autoproscopae, Bogomils and Messalians in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Bulgaria*, SCer 4, 2014, р. 233.

<sup>100</sup> А. МУРАВЬЕВ, *Мар Исхак Ниневиийский...*, р. 455–456, 478; ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 29–30, 37.

<sup>101</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, р. 35.

<sup>102</sup> А. МУРАВЬЕВ, *Мар Исхак Ниневиийский...*, р. 456.

to the Bulgarian Tsar St. Peter. In this letter the patriarch gives specific advice on the measures and punishments that should be undertaken against the spread of Bogomilism and its propagators. Theophylact repeats information given by the tsar himself in a previous non-preserved letter. According to this information, the conscious bearers and propagators of the heresy were priests and anchorites. For example, Theophylact, obviously relying on information obtained from St. Tsar Peter, mentions people who had followed anchorites but had not known that these anchorites were adherents of the heresy. The Patriarch also speaks explicitly about priests who have become *teachers of the alien to the church teaching* and priests who, together with ordinary people, because of *naivety and stupidity* had become adherents of the first group<sup>103</sup>.

This is supported by the fact that Bogomil, described in the sources as the first propagator and even founder of the heresy, was a priest<sup>104</sup>. Presbyter Kozma also mentions that among the followers of Bogomilism were priests who abandoned church and Orthodoxy<sup>105</sup> and that the propagators of the heresy led an ascetic manner of life, and because of that many people turned to them, thinking that they were pious Christians<sup>106</sup>.

The linguistic analysis of the names of the group headed by Bogomil, recorded in the Synodic of Tsar Boril, can shed additional light on the cultural characteristics of the first Bogomils. In my opinion, the wide spread of the heresy in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the data from Theophylact's letter, indicates that it was propagated by many groups of priests/anchorites and their followers. Most likely Bogomil and his group were the most active propagators of these ideas among Bulgarians, and that was a reason for his name to become synonymous with the heresy.

According to the 111 paragraph of the Synodic of Tsar Boril, the group led by Bogomil included the following people: Michael, Theodor, Dobri, Stephan, Vasiliy, Peter<sup>107</sup>.

- The name Bogomil (beloved by God): contrary to some views that it was created especially for the heresy, the name in its female form, Bogomila, is testified in the sources long before the emergence of Bogomilism. Bogomila was the name of one of the daughters of the Bulgarian nobleman and diplomat Sonodke, who visited Rome in 866 as a member of the official Bulgarian delegation<sup>108</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> *Theophylacti Constantinopolis patriarchae epistola Petro Bulgarorum regi*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. V, ed. V. ТАРКОВА-ЗАЙМОВА, Sofia 1964, p. 185–186.

<sup>104</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 33.

<sup>106</sup> ПРЕЗВИТЕРЪ КОЗМА, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> ПОПРУЖЕНКО, p. 82.

<sup>108</sup> L.C. ВЕТМАНН, *Die Evangelienhandschrift zu Cividale*, Hannover 1877 [= NAGÄDG, 2], p. 120.

Besides the Bulgarian researcher of the Old Bulgarian hymnography – Veselin Panayotov decodes the name “Priest Bogomil” in acrostic of hymnography work dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>109</sup>. Of course if the decoding is correct the author of this work cannot be identified with the founder of Bogomilism but this coincidence indicates that Bogomil was relatively popular name.

As for the origin of the name, there are two possibilities. According to the first one, Bogomil is an artificial loan translation of the Greek and Evangelic name θεόφιλος/Theophilus. Similar loan translations are a widely spread method used by Preslav bookmen in the process of creation of the theological and liturgical lexical layer of Old Slavonic. However, from a chronological point of view, the registration of the name in the sources precedes the activity of Preslav bookmen.

The second hypothesis directs to Slavic pagan anthroponymy. The Polish Bogumił and the Czech Bohumil are Western Slavic correspondences to the Bulgarian anthroponym. Besides, the medieval Czech name Ludmila shows a similar model of formation of composite names which are relatively popular in the 10<sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian anthroponymy<sup>110</sup>. In this case, as a result of Christianization, the name must have experienced religious transformation, acquiring a new Christian sense, identical with this of the anthroponym θεόφιλος.

- The names Michael, Peter and Stephen are typical Christian names taken from the books of the New Testament. The name of St. Archangel Michael is mentioned in some of the books of the Old Testament.
- The names Theodor and Vasilij also belong to the traditional Christian anthroponymy but do not stem from the Bible. Theodor and Vasilij are names of great Orthodox saints. It seems that similar names were spread among the Bogomils, regardless of the fact that they rejected the worship of saints. There are even more paradoxical cases – for example, Bogomil bearing the names Moses is mentioned in the 77<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the Synodic of Tsar Boril<sup>111</sup>. The name is in obvious contradiction with the Bogomil doctrine regarding the prophets from the Old Testament as “messengers of Satan”. In my view, there is only one possible explanation of this paradox – Bogomilism arose from dualistic groups who most probably inhabited Northern Thrace but from the very beginning attracted representatives of the Orthodox population<sup>112</sup>.
- The name Dobri is a typical Bulgarian name, a derivative of the adjective ДѢВРЪ (dobr – good). Names which were derivatives of this adjective enjoyed big popularity in Bulgarian medieval anthroponymy and still are in wide use

<sup>109</sup> V. ПАНAYOTOV, *An Acrostic with the Name of Priest Bogomil*, SHB 3, 2014, p. 146.

<sup>110</sup> Б. ЯНЕВ, *Система на личните имена в българския и немския език*, Пловдив 2009, p. 74.

<sup>111</sup> ПОПРУЖЕНКО, p. 68.

<sup>112</sup> Anthroponyms taken from the Old Testament were popular in Bulgaria in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. That gives reasons to think that Moses lived in this period.



among Bulgarians. Similar names are not registered in the other Slavic languages. That gives reasons to think that the name was invented in the process of Christianization and also belongs to the Christian layer of names.

It is remarkable that names of Slavic pagan origin (probably excluding Bogomil) are not found not only among the group of Bogomil but among all Bulgarian Bogomils whose names are preserved in the sources. That indirectly confirms the testimonies of Presbyter Kozma and Patriarch Theophylact that adherents of heresy were interested in an ascetic manner of life, i.e. Bogomilism gained popularity among circles which long time before its emergence had been connected with the Christian tradition, and indicates that the theories regarding it as an “anti-feudal” or “rural” movement are 20<sup>th</sup> century anachronisms. For the same reason some hypotheses about the role of the “Slavic pagan heritage” must be abandoned.

Besides, the names Bogomil and Dobri categorically point that some of the early Bogomilians were Bulgarian (Slavic) speaking. However, evidence from the Synodic of Tsar Boril gives arguments in favor of the hypothesis that people of Semitic, most probably Syriac origin, existed among the first Bogomils. Anathemas pronounced against a Bogomil leader called *ΜΑΝΔΕΛΕΪ* (Mandelej) of Radobol is recorded in the 78<sup>th</sup> paragraph of the Synodic of Tsar Boril<sup>113</sup>. Radobol can be identified with the modern village Golem Radibol in the vicinity of Prilep, modern Macedonia. The name is unknown in the anthroponymy of the Balkan peoples. Most probably it has originated from some Aramaic root like manda (knowledge) or like the Idish Mendel/Mendeley, appears to be a latter Aramaic adoption of some earlier Semitic anthroponym.

Peter, the leader of the Bogomil community in Sredets (modern Sofia) is called “Cappadocian” (from Cappadocia) the Synodic of Tsar Boril – a clear indication of his Anatolian origin<sup>114</sup>.

An interesting indication of the Near Eastern roots of Bogomilism is the term *babun*, preserved in Serbian sources from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century, where Bogomilians are often called Babuns and their sermons “Babun’s speech”<sup>115</sup>. Up to present day the etymology of the word remains unclear. The attempts at Slavic, Greek and even Paleo Balkan etymologizations are not convincing either from a historical or from a linguistic point of view. In my opinion, the word must be some popular designation of Bogomilians, stemming from the diminutive form of the Neo Syriac word – *bb?* (baba) – father – *babon/babona*<sup>116</sup>. The word *baba* is spread in many Turkic languages, Persian, Hindi and has obscure origin<sup>117</sup>. In Syriac

<sup>113</sup> ПОПРУЖЕНКО, р. 68.

<sup>114</sup> ПОПРУЖЕНКО, р. 68.

<sup>115</sup> Д. ДРАГОЙЛОВИЋ, *Богомилство на Балкану и у Малој Азији*, Београд 1974, р. 81–83.

<sup>116</sup> R. PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Oxonii 1879, р. 443.

<sup>117</sup> S. NIŞANYAN, *Sözlük. Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojisi*, <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=baba-&lnk=1> [21 III 2021]. Most probably it has appeared in the vocabulary of different peoples from the so called child (baby) languages.

it was registered for the first time in the Syriac translation of Khalila and Dimna<sup>118</sup>, made around 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>119</sup>. This makes quite possible its penetration into colloquial Syriac two or three centuries earlier. In this case Babun semantically stays very close to the Old Slavonic and Middle Bulgarian word дѣдѣць (dedets) – a term used only in the Synodic of Tsar Boril as a designation of the leader of the Bogomil community in Sredets<sup>120</sup>. The word stems from the Slavic word for grandfather – дѣдъ and the diminutive suffix -ѣць. The words babun and dedets indicate that Bogomils developed their own “church” terminology based on colloquial forms of their adherents’ languages. The Cathar-Provençal term ancia, which was used in the Medieval Cathar communities to designate a person saying “Pater Noster” and performing the ritual of the “spiritual baptism”, gives reasons for a similar hypothesis too. Etymologically the word comes from the Latin “antianus”, meaning “old”<sup>121</sup>.

### **The Secret Book of Bogomils (*Interrogatio Iohannis*)**

In my opinion, the so called *Secret Book of Bogomils (Interrogatio Iohannis)* or *Faux Evangile* can offer the most significant arguments in favor of the hypothesis of the Near Eastern origin of Bogomilism. Despite the fact that its Old Slavonic (Bulgarian) original is not preserved, there are a lot of proofs of its Bulgarian origin. First and foremost, this is the testimony of the Carcassonne copy, according to which the book has been brought to the dualists of Concôrezio from Bulgaria by one of their bishops named Nazarius<sup>122</sup>. A Cathar bishop with the same name is mentioned by Rainer Sacconi in his work describing Cathars’ beliefs. Rainer explicitly mentions that around 1190 Nazarius was in close contact with the spiritual leaders of the “church Bulgaria” and accepted their doctrines<sup>123</sup>. Therefore, the *Secret Book* originates from one of the two main dualistic churches in the Bulgarian lands. It was called “Bulgaria” and kept the initial “moderate dualism” of the first Bogomils, unlike the church “Dugunthia” that accepted the so called “extreme dualism”<sup>124</sup>, probably under Paulician influence.

<sup>118</sup> C. BROCKELMANN, *Lexicon Syriacum*, Halle 1928, p. 57.

<sup>119</sup> I.G.N. KEITH-FALCONER, *Kalilah and Dimnah or the Fables of Bidpai*, Cambridge 1885, p. XIV.

<sup>120</sup> ПОПРУЖЕНКО, p. 68.

<sup>121</sup> М. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Катарският требник и богомилската книжнина*, Pbg 26, 2004, p. 54.

<sup>122</sup> In Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 87.

<sup>123</sup> RAINER SACCONI, *Summa fratris Raynerii de ordine fratrum praedicatorum, de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugduno*, [in:] *FLHB*, vol. IV, ed. M. VOJNOV et al., Sofia 1981 (cetera: RAINER SACCONI), p. 177.

<sup>124</sup> Some researchers distinguish two types of dualism – “moderate”, according to which evil has secondary origin and is a consequence of Satan’s revolt, and “extreme”. According to the latter doctrine,

Jordan Ivanov, the first Bulgarian publisher of the text of *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) marked many language and thematic similarities between separate passages in the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) and apocrypha translated or compiled in Bulgaria during the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>125</sup>. That also gives reasons to think that the book was compiled in Bulgaria around the end of 10<sup>th</sup> or in the first decades of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the lack of any traces and mentions of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) in the medieval indexes of the forbidden books, in the anti-Bogomil polemic of the Bulgarian and Byzantine authors, in other Bulgarian apocrypha or in Bulgarian folklore, which was highly influenced by the medieval apocryphal literature, indicates that this Bogomil document was used in a very narrow environment. For instance, Rainer Sacconi notices that the total number of the members of the two “churches” – Bulgaria and Dughuntia, in the first decades of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was around 500 people<sup>126</sup>. Most likely he had in mind the number of these who entirely embraced the dualistic ideas and obviously the circulation of the *Secret Book* never went beyond the boundaries of these groups. The assumption that the book was a document accessible only to these who were entirely initiated into the secrets of the Bogomil faith also seems to be a possible explanation of the above phenomenon. In this case the book can be regarded as a document of secret Bogomil gnosis.

Simultaneously since the 1950s some European researchers of Catharism have introduced the hypothesis of the Greek origin of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) in spite of the unequivocal testimony that the book was brought from “Bulgaria”. Their arguments are based not on language analysis of the text but on the many resemblances which they find between the *Secret Book* and the Bogomilian myths presented by Euthymius Zigabenus in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>127</sup>. However, this hypothesis ignores many essential differences existing between the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) and the narrative of Euthymius Zigabenus. Below I will try to present some of them:

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there were two principles from the very beginning – the god of good and the god of evil. Bogomilians and the community “Bulgaria” were adherents of the “moderate dualism” – Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Богомилството*, София 1993, p. 141.

<sup>125</sup> Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 68–72.

<sup>126</sup> RAINER SACCONI, p. 170.

<sup>127</sup> All of these similarities are resumed by E. BOZÓKY in her book: *Le livre secret des cathares: Interrogatio Iohannis. Apocryphe d'origine bogomile*, Paris 1980, p. 200–202.

The Secret Book ( <i>Interrogatio Iohannis</i> )	Euthymius Zigabenus <sup>128</sup>
The description of divine earth	Without analogies
Satan is imitator of God and appears to be a master of heavenly virtues	Satan is the second after God and even second God
Immediately after Satan's revolt he and his angels lost their divine nature	Satan and his angels have preserved their divine nature for long time after the revolt
Spiritualization of corps: fallen angels closed in clay corps/heavenly virtues closed in dead bodies	God animates the corps after deal with Satan (there is not any mention of deal in the <i>Secret Book</i> )
Satan seduced Eve and Adam	Satan seduced only Eve and after this act lost his divine nature
Without analogies in the text of the Secret Book	The story of Cain and Abel
The story of primordial paradise	Without analogies
The story of Enoch	Without analogies

Both texts offer completely different Christology:

The Secret Book ( <i>Interrogatio Iohannis</i> )	Euthymius Zigabenus <sup>129</sup>
Jesus existed before the revolt of Satan and became an witness of his fall	Jesus emerged from Father 5500 years after the revolt of Satan
Without analogy	Jesus is identical with archangel Michael
Without analogy	Satan is the bigger brother of Jesus
Without analogy	Jesus is Father's word and the Holy Spirit is Jesus' word
Without analogy	Jesus and the Holy Spirit return to Father and become again one god (i.e. the Holy Trinity disappears)

<sup>128</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, *De haeresi Bogomilorum narratio*, [in:] *FGHB*, vol. X, ed. G. CANKOVA-PETROVA, P. KOLEDAROV, Sofia 1972 (cetera: EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS), p. 53–60.

<sup>129</sup> EUTHYMIUS ZIGABENUS, p. 57–60.

There are differences in many details in the narratives referring to the revolt of Satan, his creative activity, the creation of humankind, etc. All of these discrepancies indicate that the dualistic myths and teachings shared by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Bogomils in Constantinople stemmed from some dualistic tradition that is close to the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* but not identical with it.

Some adherents to the Greek hypothesis try to explain these differences in various ways which sometimes contradict one other. For example, Theofanis Drakopoulos asserts that the part referring to angelology is not found in Zigabenus' work because it was added later to the *Secret Book* by a monk who was under the influence of Neo-Platonism and Origen<sup>130</sup>. Indeed, the story of fallen angels and heavenly virtues resembles to a certain degree Origen's doctrine of souls, but Origen had never presented the bodies and the visible world as resulting from the act of evil creator or Satan. The same is valid for the Neo-Platonic doctrine too.

Besides, the hypothesis of the Greek origin of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* leads to the conclusion that the book was received in "Bulgaria" from Constantinople – i.e. it emphasizes the leading role of the Bogomil community in Constantinople. However, it is in obvious contradiction with the testimony of Rainer Sacconi, who explicitly notices that all dualist communities, including the church of Greeks in Constantinople, have originated from "Bulgaria" and "Dughuntia"<sup>131</sup>, and with the fact that western dualists were in contact with and under the influence of these two communities.

The other arguments that Greek was the classical language of gnostic literature and that many Slavic apocryphal works have their lost Greek originals<sup>132</sup> can be regarded as "indirect proofs" at best.

Finally, it is strange that many of the adherents to this hypothesis ignore the evidence of Presbyter Kozma, who had described many elements of the Bogomil doctrine two centuries before Euthymius Zigabenus and the similarities between the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* and Kozma's data. The adherents to the hypothesis of the Greek origin of the book have never commented in an adequate way the resemblances between the evidences coming from Kozma's work and from the correspondence between Patriarch Theophylact and Tsar Peter on the one hand and from Zigabenus' book on the other. All of these resemblances are related to different aspects of the social behavior and religious beliefs of Bogomils and give serious reasons to think that the social and religious "prototype" of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople Bogomils were the 10<sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian Bogomils. Of course it does not disprove the hypothesis that the western dualists accepted the *Secret Book* in a Greek variant and translation. For instance, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century Old Slavonic

<sup>130</sup> T. DRAKOPOULOS, *L'unité du bogomilo-catharisme. D'après quatre textes latins analysés à la lumière des sources byzantines*, Genève 2010 (dissertation), p. 251.

<sup>131</sup> RAINER SACCONI, p. 167.

<sup>132</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 184.

works, such as the biographies of the 10<sup>th</sup> century Bulgarian saints, were translated to Greek or included in the works of Byzantine authors.

- Structure of the book and its connection with other apocrypha

The text is in the form of pseudo conversation – during the last supper an apocryphal John the Apostle asks eleven questions, and an apocryphal Jesus answers. Some of the popular in Byzantine and Bulgarian literature apocrypha also share a similar structure, but there the number of questions is big and answers given by popular Orthodox saints are relatively short. The *Secret Book* to a certain degree resembles the apocryphal *Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian*, translated from Greek to Bulgarian in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century, where an apocryphal John the Theologian again asks questions and receives answers from God. No one of the Gnostic gospels and acts of Apostles composed after the 1<sup>st</sup> century shares a similar subject – a conversation during the last supper, although examples of conversations between apocryphal apostles and apocryphal Jesus in the forms of questions/answers are spread in Gnostic literature<sup>133</sup>.

The *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) is an obvious compilation and can be divided into several parts: cosmogonic, anthropogenic, the history of earth (the kingdom of Satan) and the mission of the apocryphal Jesus, the essence of baptism and the end of the world<sup>134</sup>. Every one of these parts is probably taken from different sources which are not harmonized with one another. For example, in the cosmogonic and anthropogenic parts two different stories about the origin of humankind and about the seduction of the first man and woman are presented. At the end of the narrative of the Satan's revolt it is said that God has deprived the rebellious angels of their clothes and crowns, but after several sentences it is said that Satan creates the sun, the moon and the stars, using the crown of the Angel of water. Similarly, the part describing the end of the world tells about the prophets killed by Jesus' enemies. The passage is obviously influenced by the texts of the canonic gospels where Jesus addresses Jerusalem (Lc 13: 34 and Mt 23: 37). It seems that the compiler(s) forgot that Bogomilism had rejected the prophetic traditions and that in the previous passages three of the most honored prophets of the Old Testament and John the Baptist were depicted as servants of Satan.

At first glance, the most significant similarity between the *Secret Book* and Gnostic works is the emphasis on cosmogony, creation and the primordial state of a human being, as well as on the end of the world. However, the cosmogony of the *Secret Book* is quite different from those in classical Gnostic literature – for example, the long and sophisticated history of aeons is completely missing.

<sup>133</sup> E. Bozóky, *Le livre secret...*, p. 211.

<sup>134</sup> Edina Bozóky distinguishes four parts: cosmological, anthropological, soteriological, eschatological – E. Bozóky, *Le livre secret...*, p. 213.

Edina Bozoky pays attention to some similarities between the creative activity of Satan after his revolt against God and the fall and the activity of the Gnostic Demiurge(s) but highlights the significant differences existing in details referring to the creation of the visible world and human beings<sup>135</sup>.

In spite of this, a more detailed reading of the text of the “Secret book” (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) can give some unexpected references to the Gnostic and Platonic views. For instance, the following sentence of the anthropogenic part directs to traces of Gnosticism:

Et dixit mihi Dominus: audi Joannes, dilecte Patris mei, *insipientes homines* [cursive is mine] ita dicunt in praevaricatione Patrem meum corpora lutea fabricare, sed Spiritu sancti propter praevaricationem inventi sunt habentes corpora lutea mortalia, et ideo morti traditi sunt (Carcassonne copy).

Et Dominus dixit mihi: audi, Johannes carissime, *insipientes homines* [cursive is mine] sic dicunt quod in praevaricatione Pater meus lutea corpora fecit, sed de Spiritu saneto *omnes virtutes caelorum* [cursive is mine] fecit, ipsi autem propter causam eorum inventi sunt habentes lutea corpora et morti traditi sunt (Vienna copy)<sup>136</sup>.

Here a typical Gnostic dichotomy – knowledge/ignorance, replacing the Christian concept of belief/unbelief, is introduced.

Edina Bozoky includes the seduction of Eve among the gnostic elements in the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*<sup>137</sup>. Actually, the seduction of Adam (Satan kindles sexual desire in Adam two times in the book) also has very close parallels in *The Secret Book of John*, which is one of the classical gnostic writings<sup>138</sup>.

Surprisingly, several moments in the history of Satan and “heavenly virtues” stay very close to Plato’s key ideas. For example, according to the narrative of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* the “demiurgic activity” of Satan had started long before his revolt, when he inhabited the kingdom of heaven. In this period he obviously acted as a “good demiurge” – a mythological character invented by Plato in *Timaeus* but unknown in the gnostic works. Moreover, similarly to Plato’s demiurge, who created the world on the model of the divine world and his own divinity, Satan in the primordial kingdom tried to imitate God in everything.

The term “heavenly virtues” also attracts attention. One of the mentions of “the heavenly virtues” – *sed de Spiritu saneto omnes virtutes caelorum fecit, ipsi autem propter causam eorum inventi sunt habentes lutea corpora et morti traditi*

<sup>135</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 189–190.

<sup>136</sup> In Ё. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 79–80.

<sup>137</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 201.

<sup>138</sup> М. ОРЕНБУРГ, *Гностический миф. Реконструкция и интерпретация*, Москва 2013, p. 51.



*sunstrongly* (Vienna copy)<sup>139</sup> partly resembles Plato's ideas about the origin and nature of human souls – immortal essence closed in the prison of the mortal body (*Phaedo*).

The next answer of Jesus, following immediately after the text concerning “the heavenly virtues” – *de caducis angelis de caelo ingrediuntur in corporibus mulierum et accipiunt carnem de concupiscentia carnis* (Carcassonne copy) / *de lapsis spiritibus caelorum ingrediuntur in corpora feminea lutosa et carnem accipiunt de concupiscentia carnis* (Vienna copy)<sup>140</sup>, indicates a connection with Philo's doctrine of angels, which was strongly influenced by Plato's teachings. According to his angelology, the angels from the five books of Moses are identical with the Greek “heroes”, and they can enter into mortal bodies. Philo distinguishes two types of angels entering into bodies – worthy and unworthy<sup>141</sup>. However, in this case the existence of connection with the teachings of Messalians, who preached that the human soul was possessed by demons, cannot be excluded.

On this basis, and having in mind the gnostic elements in the other parts of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*), concerning anthropogenesis, the seduction of Eve, rejection of law, Moses, John the Baptist, water baptism, the appearance of Christ<sup>142</sup>, it might be supposed that the cosmogonic and anthropogenic parts have partly stemmed from revised texts containing some Gnostic and Platonic ideas. The logical discrepancies in these parts indicate that the supposed texts have been at least two or more than two.

In my view the assumption is supported also by the first question and answer, which resemble Mark 14: 18–19, Mathew 26: 22–23 and John 13: 21–27 but have no exact parallels in no one of the canonic and non-canonic gospels. This gives arguments in favor of the hypothesis that the first three parts of the *Secret Book* might have stemmed from unknown Gnostic gospel(s), acts, letters or revelations.

Et dixit mihi: in tali gloria erat, quod ordinabat virtutes caelorum; ego autem sedebam apud Patrem meum (Carcassonne copy).

Et dixit: in virtutibus caelorum et in trono Patris invisibilis, et ordinator erat omnium; et sedebam ego apud Patrem meum (Vienna copy)<sup>143</sup>.

<sup>139</sup> In Ы. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 80.

<sup>140</sup> In *ibidem*.

<sup>141</sup> A. EVANS, *The Development of Jewish Ideas of Angels. Egyptian and Hellenistic Connections ca. 600 BCE to ca. 200 CE*, Stellenbosch 2007 (unpublished PhD dissertation), <https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/1398> [29 VI 2021], p. 175–188.

<sup>142</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 200–202.

<sup>143</sup> In Ы. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 74.

Bozóky tends to see traces of Manichean influence on the myth of imprisonment of the angel souls in material bodies<sup>144</sup>. In my opinion, the appearance of deeps in the narrative of Satan's revolt that started from the deeps partly reflects Manichean ideas too.

The connections with the other apocrypha, especially with these spread in Bulgaria, has been a matter of discussion since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. I could add several corrections to this discussion.

In the first place, the connections with the Old Slavonic version of Enoch and with the work of the priest Jeremiah<sup>145</sup> are entirely negative. The Bulgarian compiler or compilers of the *Secret Book* added passages from both apocrypha to the part describing the kingdom of Satan and the mission of Jesus. However, contrary to the Old Slavonic Enoch and the work of Jeremiah, which proceed from and support the Biblical and Orthodox views that Enoch is a prophet of God and the cross is a tree of salvation, the *Secret Book* radically changes the meaning of the loaned passages in a negative context – Enoch becomes “a prophet of Satan”; the cross becomes an instrument of torture, offered to Moses by Satan<sup>146</sup>.

The similarities in the cosmogony of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) and the Old Slavonic version of Enoch, suggested in 1910 by Matvey Sokolov and resumed by Jordanov<sup>147</sup> and some modern researchers<sup>148</sup> do not seem convincing. Excluding the notion of the seven heavens, which is extremely popular and might have come from different sources, the other presumed similarities between the cosmogonic notions of both works are the result of over interpretation of the texts.

There are some parallels in the description of Satan's revolt between the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) and the Old Slavonic and Greek “Palea”<sup>149</sup> – the desire of Satan to put his throne on the clouds, to become equal with God and the loss of his previous dignity and clothes. The parallels in question reflect identical notions about the universal dimensions and consequences of this event and describe it with identical or similar linguistic means. In this case the eventual adoptions in the *Secret Book* from “Palea” can be estimated as neutral, i.e. there is no change of the meaning of the loaned passages. However the supposed adoptions concern too small part of the text and cannot explain in a satisfactory way the origin of the first cosmological part of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*).

<sup>144</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 187.

<sup>145</sup> Jeremiah was a Bulgarian priest who lived at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of older apocrypha he wrote an apocryphal history of the Holy Cross, known at the present as *Novel of the Cross Tree*, Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Старобългарска...*, p. 261–264.

<sup>146</sup> In Ъ. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 80–82.

<sup>147</sup> In *ibidem*, p. 72.

<sup>148</sup> E. BOZÓKY, *Le livre secret...*, p. 216.

<sup>149</sup> Ъ. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 69.

Another example of neutral adoption is the loaned passage from the apocryphal *Revelation of John the Theologian*. That is the self-presentation of the author, the ostensible John the Theologian, made at the very beginning of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*<sup>150</sup>. According to some new text investigations, the same apocryphal Apocalypse has influenced (again in a neutral manner) the description of the apocalypse in the last part of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*<sup>151</sup>.

The adoptions from the Biblical and Gospel text (mainly in respect to the mission of John the Baptist and from the book of Genesis – the creation of the visible word and man, primordial paradise and original sin) are entirely in a negative context.

- The Proto-Bogomil texts

In my opinion, several parts of the *Secret Book* could be considered texts which initially belonged to and were used by the “Proto-Bogomilian” community, which must have been one of the Syrian groups which migrated to Thrace in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These texts were used by later Bogomilians to compile the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*, adding some passages from Bulgarian apocrypha or translated to Old Slavonic (Bulgarian) Greek apocrypha, mainly by means of negative interpretation of the loaned passages.

The first “Proto-Bogomil” text might have been the above mentioned initial passage of the book:

Ego Joannes, frater vester, particeps in tribulatione, et in regno coelorum ut essem particeps, cum recubuisssem supra pectus Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et dixi: Domine, qui est qui tradet te? Et respondens, dixit: qui intingit manum mecum in catino. Tunc introiuit in eum Sathanas, et quærebat ut traderet me (Carcassonne copy).

Ego Johannes, particeps in tribulatione et regno Dei ut essem particeps, qui et recumbens in cœna supra pectus Ihesu Christi Domini nostri, dixi: Domine, quis tradet te? Et Dominus dixit mihi: qui intinxerit manum in catino, et introibit in eum Sathanas, ille tradet me (Vienna copy)<sup>152</sup>.

As I noticed above, the question and the answer do not have exact parallels in the other canonic and non-canonic scriptures. This indicates that these passages could have originated from some unknown writing.

- The cosmogonic and cosmological part of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>151</sup> Я. МИЛТЕНОВ, *Апокрифният апокалипсис на Йоан Богослов – анализ на междутекстовите отношения*, Рбг 27, 2004, p. 85–102.

<sup>152</sup> In Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 73.

This part contains the II, III, IV and V sections according to the numeration introduced by Jordan Ivanov<sup>153</sup>. It presents two different universes – the first one which is primordial and refers to the time before Satan's revolt. It consists of more than five (most likely seven)<sup>154</sup> firmaments, water covering earth, a pair of fish, which are like a team of oxen put to the yoke, hold the earth from the west to the east, clouds which are the base of the sea and the underworld. It seems that separate angels have been responsible for each firmament. This model of the universe (excluding fish) stays close to the universe depicted in the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of the apocryphal *Apocalypse of Abraham*<sup>155</sup>. This work, written in Hebrew or Aramaic, is preserved only in Old Slavonic translation<sup>156</sup> but reflects Near Eastern notions of the universe.

Besides, the initial universe of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* strongly resembles the cosmological notions of Near Eastern Muslims from the early and the later medieval periods and can even be considered their variant. The Muslim interpretations on this topic include the seven firmaments<sup>157</sup>, a bull, gigantic fish and sometimes an angel sent by God to hold the universe, sand hill, a rock, hyacinth<sup>158</sup>. Probably there is a connection between the gigantic fish and the bull from Arabic stories and the pair of fish which are represented like a team of oxen from the *Secret Book*. In my opinion, all of these stories are rooted in the folklore and mythology of Semitic peoples from the Near East<sup>159</sup> and give serious reasons to think that the cosmologic part of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* originated from some of the Syrian groups that settled in Northern Thrace in the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>160</sup>.

The part telling the story of Satan's creative activity can be regarded as negative interpretation of the first part of the Book of Genesis. However in many details and especially in respect to the sequence of creations it differs from Genesis and shares certain similarities with the Phoenician myth of creation narrated by Philo

<sup>153</sup> In *ibidem*, p. 73–79.

<sup>154</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> firmament is mentioned in the part referring to the mission of the apocryphal Jesus.

<sup>155</sup> G. BOX, J. LANDSMAN, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, London–New York 1919, p. 42–43.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>157</sup> Actually the notion of the seven “skies” appears many times in Quran.

<sup>158</sup> K. CHALYAN-DAFNER, *Natural Disasters in Mamlūk Egypt (1250–1517). Perceptions, Interpretations and Human Responses*, Heidelberg 2013 (unpublished PhD dissertation), <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/17711/1/Chalyan-Daffner.pdf> [18 XII 2019], p. 214–217.

<sup>159</sup> Some of the deities of the Semitic peoples from Syrian territories had zoomorphic forms of fish and bull. Probably this cosmogony is rooted in ancient Semitic mythologies.

<sup>160</sup> The lands of Melitena and Theodosiopolis, where the Syriac population came from in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, were conquered by Arabs in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and up to the first decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when they were reconquered by Byzantine (for about 50 years), were under the domination of the caliphate.

of Byblos in his *Phoenician History*<sup>161</sup>. Philo wrote his work at the end of the first or at the beginning of the second century AD – an indication that the myth in question circulated in the region of the Near East in the first centuries AD. Later, in the first decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Philo's data were used by Eusebius of Caesarea in his critics against paganism<sup>162</sup>:

The sequence of creations	The Book of Genesis	The Secret Book ( <i>Interrogatio Iohannis</i> )	The Phoenician myth
1.	God creates the light, the day, and the night	Following Satan's orders, the angels of air and water bring the earth/land out of the primordial ocean	Air was the initial element in the primordial and dark chaos. The watery matter (called Mot), containing the nucleus of the future universe, emanates from air as a result of air's desire
2.	God creates the sky	Satan creates the light of the moon, the stars and the heavenly hosts	Mot, the sun, the moon, the great luminaries (constellations) <sup>163</sup> begin to shine
3.	God creates the land, the seas and the plants	Satan creates thunder, rain, hail and snow	Wind, clouds and <i>very great downpours and floods of the waters of heaven</i> <sup>164</sup> appear. After them thunder comes into being too
4.	God creates both luminaries (the big one and the small)	Satan orders land to produce "winged creatures", reptiles, trees and grass. Simultaneously he orders the sea to produce fishes and births	Thunder wakes animals in the land and in the sea up
5.	God creates the birds and the sea creatures	Satan creates the first man and woman	The first man appear as a son of one of the winds and the night
6.	God creates the wild animals, cattle and man		

<sup>161</sup> I used two parallel translation of the Old Greek text – in English: PHILO OF BYBLOS, *The Phoenician History*, trans. et praef. H. ATTRIDGE, R. ODEN, Washington 1981 [= CBQ.MS, 9] and in Russian. The Russian translation is partial but entirely contains the myth of genesis of our universe. It is included in monographic study on Phoenician mythology: Б. ТУРАЕВ, И. ШИФМАН, *Финикийская мифология*, Санкт Петербург 1999, p. 71–81.

<sup>162</sup> Ю. ЦИРКИН, *Мифы Финикии и Угарита*, Москва 2003, p. 6.

<sup>163</sup> The Russian translator uses the word "светило" – luminary (Б. ТУРАЕВ, И. ШИФМАН, *Финикийская мифология...*, p. 71) but the English translator gives the word "constellation" (H. ATTRIDGE and R. ODEN – PHILO OF BYBLOS, *The Phoenician...*, p. 37).

<sup>164</sup> H. ATTRIDGE, R. ODEN – PHILO OF BYBLOS, *The Phoenician...*, p. 39.

Other Near Eastern elements in the cosmogony and anthropogeny of the *Secret Book* can be found in the following resemblances with the Phoenician and North Mesopotamian mythologies:

- According to the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*), water covered the surface of the primordial earth. This notion is well-known from many Near Eastern myths. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century it was registered among different Slavic peoples, including North Slavs. Most likely its spread among Slavs was due to the influence of apocryphal texts, dualist myths and folk interpretations of Genesis 1:2. However, in the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) the primordial waters covered not only the surface of the earth but also the underworld and are carried by overhanging clouds. This resembles the Phoenician and the Ugaritic cosmological notion of the ocean which is found under the earth<sup>165</sup>.
- Satan created man in order to use him as a servant<sup>166</sup>. The myth according to which gods created men to serve them has been well known in the mythologies of the peoples from Mesopotamia since ancient times<sup>167</sup>.
- Satan creates the stars and the heavenly hosts from the gemstones of the crown taken from the angel of waters. The connection between stars/constellations and gemstones is a widely discussed subject in many astrological works, especially the ones stemming from the Hermeneutic branch of astrology. However, the same view appears in works that had been completed long before the emergence of the Hermeneutic tradition. For example, in the first century AD Josephus Flavius asserts that the gemstones attached to the clothes of the high priest symbolize the sun, the moon and the zodiac<sup>168</sup>.
- The revolt of Satan started from the primordial abyss. This myth strongly resembles Mazdaic and Manichean myths of the initial war between the worlds of good and evil. Both religions exerted strong influence on the religious and mythological notions of the population in the Near East in the Late Antique and Early Medieval epoch.

A careful analysis of the cosmogonic, cosmological and anthropogenic parts of the *Secret Book* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*) shows that they are an amalgam of myths and notions of different origin. The assertion that angels paid their tributes to God

<sup>165</sup> Ю. Циркин, *Мифы Финикии...*, p. 147, 400.

<sup>166</sup> In Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 78.

<sup>167</sup> М. ЕЛИАДЕ, *История на религиозните вярвания и идеи*, vol. I, *От каменния век до Елевсинските мистерии*, trans. Т. МИНЕВА, София 1997, p. 80 (translation from French: M. ELIADE, *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses*, vol. I, *De Page de la pierre aux mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris 1976).

<sup>168</sup> JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS, *Complete Works. Antiques of the Jews*, vol. I, trans. S. HAVERCAMP, New York 1900, p. 187.

with wheat and olive oil gives a reason to think that at least some of these myths were spread in and originated from rural communities. The explicit mentioning of olive oil preserved in jars – a technology in use for centuries in Near East and Anatolia, indicates connections of the text with these regions too. Simultaneously, such as in the case of the apocryphal writings concerning the Old Testament prophets, the anthropogenic and cosmogonic myths are interpreted entirely from a negative perspective, as part of Satan's activity. Eventually, this could be a sequence from Marcionist by its nature interpretation of the old pagan myths which might have circulated among the members of the initial "Proto-Bogomil" group.

Another interesting assertion is that separate angels rule over the elements – air and water. This notion has very close analogies in the Slavic version of Enoch and in Apocalypse of Abraham. However, it most likely appeared in the supposed "Proto-Bogomil" text independently of these apocrypha. In my view, the notion of the angels-rulers has come into being in Aramaic speaking milieu. Only in this language the words (emphatic states of the words) for angel – ml'k' (mal'aḳ, mal'aḳā)<sup>169</sup> and for king, provincial ruler, chief – mlk, mlk' (mleḳ, malkā)<sup>170</sup> phonetically stay very close and could give rise to the idea of angels-rulers. The emphatic states in the period of the late antiquity entirely replaced the absolute and started to be used as the only one available form<sup>171</sup>.

The second universe is the one created by Satan, and it contains the visible cosmos and the Biblical paradise. In the version of the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* there is a strange change. Reed appears in the place of the tree of life, whose fruit become the occasion for the original sin. In fact, reed is presented in many myths, including those originating from Mesopotamia<sup>172</sup>. However, in my opinion, in this case reed appeared again as a consequence of language misunderstanding due to the phonetical closeness in Aramaic between the emphatic states of the word for fruit – 'ebbā<sup>173</sup> and the word for reed – 'abbübā<sup>174</sup>. Most probably the dualistic "Proto-Bogomilian" group became acquainted with the Biblical version of the initial paradise not by means of the original texts of Genesis, rejected as a book inspired by Satan, but by means of oral tales that essentially had changed the subject of the initial story<sup>175</sup>.

<sup>169</sup> J. PAYNE SMITH, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford 1903, p. 275.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 277.

<sup>171</sup> T. MURAOKA, *Classical Syriac. A Basic Grammar with a Chrestomathy*, Wiesbaden 2005, p. 22.

<sup>172</sup> K. KLECZKOWSKA, *Comparative Analysis of the Motif of the Reed in the Mesopotamian Myth of the Flood and the Greek Myth of King Midas*, *ExN* 8, 2012, p. 93–94.

<sup>173</sup> J. PAYNE SMITH, *A Compendious...*, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>175</sup> Indeed in the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* it is mentioned that *Et intrabat et loquebatur ad eos, dicens: de omni fructu, qui est in paradiso, comedite, de fructu vero scientiae boni et mali nolite comedere* (Carcassonne copy), *Et introibat ad eos, dicens: de omni fructu comedite, qui est in paradiso,*



– The polemic against St. John the Baptist and his disciples

In my opinion, this passage from the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)* reflects some disputes of the Proto-Bogomil group with Mandaeans. This can explain the negative emphasis on the disciples of St. John the Baptist, the passage disproving the significance of the water baptism for salvation of people and the strange assertion that the disciple of St. John the Baptist get married and visit weddings. Of course these disputes occurred not on the Balkans but in the native lands of the group.

## Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the above analysis of the historical, archeological and text data:

- The roots of Bogomilism must be sought among the Syrian migrants who settled in Thrace in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Groups which shared a different kind of dualistic ideas and notions existed among them. The group that can be identified as “Proto-Bogomil” most likely inhabited the region of Philippopolis/Plovdiv. It is difficult to say whether they identified themselves as Paulicians or not. The analysis of the beliefs and practices of the early Bogomilians show a number of similarities between them and Paulicians who in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century built the “Paulician state” in Tephrike. However all of them concerns the Marcionist layer in dualism and the radical attitude toward church, the Holy Cross, icons and sacraments. That makes me think that the Proto-Bogomil community shared certain common features with the group of Constantine Silvan that initiated the Marcionist reform among the “Paulicians of Tephrike” but the religious doctrines of both groups were not identical.
- Its dualism stemmed from Marcion’s doctrine with some gnostic and vague Platonic admixtures of unknown origin. It had experienced the influence of Masallianism long before its migration towards the Balkans. This can explain the appearance of Satan in the place of the God of law/evil, as well as the other differences with Marcionism and Paulicianism. The radical asceticism of the later Bogomils most probably must be attributed to the influence of Masallianism on the initial Proto-Bogomil group too.
- Most likely this group used some scriptures of Gnostic origin, but in accordance with Marcionite teachings, their texts were purged from many classical Gnostic notions of aeons and their emanations. However, some elements of these

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*de fruetu iniquitatis ne comedatis* (Vienna copy). However, it seems that this sentence is a later interpolation made by Bogomils because the fruit of the tree of life and death does not play any role in this version of the original sin and breaks the logic of the entire narrative.

notions were preserved in the texts and subsequently appeared in the *Secret Book (Interrogatio Iohannis)*.

- One of the widely used methods in these scriptures is the negative interpretation of the Old Testament, the old cosmogonic myths, and even of some passages from the Gospels. The same method subsequently was inherited and used by Bulgarian Bogomils with respect to the apocryphal books of non-dualistic origin.
- These scriptures reflected cosmogonic, anthropogenic and cosmological notions spread in the Near Eastern mythologies, and most likely the members of the Proto-Bogomil group were the bearers of these notions.
- The archeological excavations give a reason to think that the supposed Proto-Bogomil group had disseminated its teachings among the Slavic population in Northern Thrace and probably in some regions of the Rhodope mountains before the formal Christianization of Bulgaria in 864. Therefore, one of the features of the Proto-Bogomil community was bilingualism, and some traces of this bilingualism can be found in the available sources concerning Bulgarian and Balkan Bogomils. It seems that this teaching started to penetrate into the other parts of medieval Bulgarian lands after the appearance of strong anchoritic trends among Bulgarian monks at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
- Obviously the radical asceticism and the total rejection of all religious, social and natural aspects of the visible world became the most attractive part of this teaching. However, asceticism, and especially the radical repudiation of matrimony and childhood, transformed Bogomils, and before them it must have transformed their predecessors – Proto-Bogomils, into a group reproduced entirely in an ideological and doctrinal way. This can explain the fast disappearance of the initial Syriac speaking elements, as well as the disappearance of Bogomilism itself, which unlike Paulicianism, did not survive till the end of the Middle Ages.

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