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THE NON-ORTHODOX IN THE MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE NEW BY GREGORY CAMBLAK PATTERNS OF DEHUMANIZATION*

Abstract. The image of the non-Orthodox in Camblak's work is unequivocally negative. Behind the abusive rhetoric lie patterns well known to social psychology. One can easily recognize the author's dehumanizing attitude, which reveals the meaning of many elements of Camblak's narrative in *The Martyrdom of John the New*. The concept of dehumanization is useful for the study of the attitude of medieval literate elites towards minorities. Although at its core it concerns cognitive phenomena it immediately makes us think about their behavioral implications.

Keywords: religious minorities, dehumanization, medieval hagiography, Gregory Camblak, John the New, heretics, infidels, heresiology

In 1359/1360 Tǎrnovo was the scene of violent and brutal events. This picturesque city had served as the seat of state and religious authority of the Bulgarian empire since its restoration at the end of the 12th century. Bishops, monks, and other clergy representatives were convened to Tǎrnovo for synods¹.

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I sincerely thank the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful reading of the text. Their comments forced me to rethink the entire argument. The text has been reorganized and supplemented in several places. I hope that I have managed to at least partially answer the doubts raised by them.

¹ For more on the role of the capital in the spiritual culture of Bulgaria at that time and the synods there cf. Д.И. Поливянни, *Средновековният български град през XIII–XIV век. Очерци*, trans. И. Илиева, София 1989, p. 141–163; Й. Алексиев, *За мястото и датата на църковните събори в Търново*, [in:] *Бог и цар в българската история*, ed. К. Вачкова, Пловдив 1996, p. 140–144; П. Стефанов, *Danse macabre: нов поглед към църковните събори в Търново през XIV в.*, [in:] *Теодосиеви четения. 640 години от успението на преп. Теодосий Търновски*, ed. Д. Кенанов, Велико Търново 2005, p. 75–88; К. Маринов, *Търново като свещен град през късното средновековие*, [in:] *Търновска Книжовна Школа*, vol. X, *Търновската държава на духа. Десети юбилеен международен симпозиум Велико Търново, 17–18 октомври 2013 г.*, ed. Д. Кенанов, Велико Търново 2015, p. 697–722.

Several events of this kind have been recorded in history: two assemblies judging the Bogomils, one in February 1211 and another probably in 1355, as well as the convention of 1359/1360, which will be elaborated on.

The synod was directed against the Jews. Three members of the community were tried. They were accused of blasphemy and the tsar sentenced them to death. It is not entirely clear what exactly their offenses were. The course of the synod and the circumstances of its convening are known only from the description of the Patriarch of Constantinople Callistus in the *Life of Theodosius of Tarnovo*². He records that the Jews *set their sights on the venerable icons of Christ and the Mother of God, showed contempt for God's temples and the sacrifices offered there, insulted priests, scorned monks, and committed other vile acts*³. Callistus probably based his tale on an account he heard about three years after the events from Theodosius (the protagonist of the *Life*), who was actively participating in the synod. The tsar took pity on the three convicts and commuted the death penalty to cutting off their tongues and ears. One of the Jews – out of fear – embraced Christianity. When the news that the other two did not want to *come into the true light, but preferred to remain in the darkness of their godlessness spread, the anger of the people turned against them. The people came together with a clamor and beat one so that he gave up his foul spirit; and the other was taken away from there and subjected to punishment*⁴.

The reasons for such a violent reaction of the inhabitants of Tarnovo are probably hidden in the circumstances of the case, which are not directly indicated by the hagiographer. The outrage of the people at the “ingratitude” of the judged, who did not take advantage of the “proposal” backed by the threat of torture to change their religion, was considerable. We can guess that this was not the first case that divided the neighboring communities of Christians and Jews, and the mutual hostility and distrust had already reached considerable proportions. Let us allow ourselves a little more speculation. The synod took place (according to Callistus) in the palace, the seat of the ruler⁵. And it was near the center of power and the place symbolizing its permanence that the people, in an act of collective

² В. ЗЛАТАРСКИ, *Житие и жизнь преподобнаго отца нашего Теодосия*, СЛУНК 20.2, 1904 (cetera: CALLISTUS), p. 1–41. Cf. also later editions, translations, and commentaries: В. КИСЕЛКОВ, *Житието на Теодосий Търновски като исторически паметник*, София 1926; К. РЕТКОВ, *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria. Seventh-Fifteenth Century. The Records of a Vanished Culture*, Leiden–Boston 2008 [= ЕСЕЕМА, 5], p. 287–314; ПАТРИАРХ КАЛИСТ, *Житие на препод. Теодосий Търновски. По единствения известен препис от Рилския панегирик на Владислав Граматик, 1479 г., л. 282а–294б*, ed. Д. КЕНАНОВ [in:] ИДЕМ, *Крилатият въздухоходец Теодосий Търновски*, Велико Търново 2010, p. 49–72; *Żywot św. Teodozjusz Tyrnowskiego (fragmenty)*, trans. J.M. WOLSKI, [in:] *Średniowieczne herezje dualistyczne na Bałkanach. Źródła słowiańskie*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, J.M. WOLSKI, Łódź 2015 [= SeCer, 1], p. 173–191.

³ CALLISTUS, XVIII, p. 25.

⁴ CALLISTUS, XX, p. 26–27.

⁵ CALLISTUS, XIX, p. 25.

aggression, challenged the tsar's decision to grant clemency to the condemned. What gave the crowd the courage to act against the verdict? Were they not afraid of punishment? Why did the tsar not give effective protection to his prisoners? We can go a little further in our musings – perhaps the people knew that their elites, along with the tsar, shared angry feelings toward the “hardened infidels”? At this point, let us abandon speculation and return to telling a verifiable story. What was the attitude of the elite toward the non-Orthodox and heretics? To provide an answer to this question, I suggest looking at one of Gregory Camblak's texts.

Camblak's works are of particular interest to us for several reasons. He was one of the most prolific authors of the Bulgarian Middle Ages and was eager to address themes related to the non-Orthodox⁶. As a result, he provides considerable materials for analysis. Moreover, he is the author of a text unique to the Slavic Middle Ages as far as the history of interreligious relations is concerned. In 1418 he delivered a speech to the Council Fathers gathered in Constance, in which he called for reconciliation between the divided Christian Churches – the Roman and the Eastern Patriarchates⁷. The fact that the medieval hagiographers of *Slavia Orthodoxa* were fundamentally hostile to heretics is obvious to anyone with even a passing

⁶ The topic of the image of heretics in Camblak's work has already been addressed, cf. Н. ДОНЧЕВА-ПАНАЙОТОВА, *Григорий Цамблак за Варлаам и неговата ерес*, Вbg 6, 1980, p. 95–114; Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Григорий Цамблак и ересите според литературните му произведения*, [in:] *Търновска Книжовна Школа*, vol. III, *Григорий Цамблак. Живот и творчество. Трети международен симпозиум, Велико Търново, 12–15 ноември 1980*, ed. П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, В. ТЪПКОВА-ЗАИМОВА, Г. ДАНЧЕВ, София 1984, p. 102–111; Б. НИКОЛОВА, *Варлаамитство в България според сведенията на Григорий Цамблак*, [in:] *Търновска Книжовна Школа*, vol. III..., p. 112–118; I. PETKOVA, *Grégoire Camblak: l'idée de l'unité orthodoxe*, EB 32.3–4, 1996, p. 104–122; А. НАУМОВ, *Wiarą i historią. Z dziejów literatury cerkiewnosłowiańskiej na ziemiach polskich*, Kraków 1996, p. 66–71; J. STRADOMSKI, *Ortodoksja i herezja/innowierstwo w twórczości literackiej Grzegorza Camblaka (relacje prawosławia z chrześcijaństwem łacińskim)*, [in:] *Religijna mozaika Bałkanów*, ed. M. WALCZAK-MIKOŁAJCZAKOWA, Gniezno 2008, p. 175–184. On the author himself and his work, cf., e.g. F.J. THOMSON, *Gregory Camblak: the Man and the Myths*, SGan 25.2, 1998, p. 5–149; Н. ДОНЧЕВА-ПАНАЙОТОВА, *Григорий Цамблак и българските литературни традиции в Източна Европа XV–XVII вв.*, Велико Търново 2004; Ю.К. БЕГУНОВ, *Творческое наследие Григория Цамблака*, Велико Търново 2005; А.А. ТУРИЛОВ, *Григорий Цамблак*, [in:] *Православная Энциклопедия*, vol. XII, Москва 2006, p. 583–592; J. STRADOMSKI, *Literacka, polityczna i cerkiewna działalność prawosławnego metropolity kijowskiego Grzegorza Camblaka w świetle współczesnych mu źródeł*, SRel 41, 2008, p. 167–182.

⁷ Т.М. ТРАЈДОС, *Metropolici kijowscy Cyprian i Grzegorz Camblak (bułgarscy duchowni prawosławni) a problemy Cerkwi prawosławnej w państwie polsko-litewskim i schyłku XIV i w pierwszej ćwierci XV w.*, BP 2, 1985, p. 225–231; А. НАУМОВ, *Metropolita kijowski Grzegorz (Camblak) na soborze w Konstancji (1418)*, LAS 5, 2014, p. 41–56; М. СПАСОВА, *Източници за речта на Григорий Цамблак пред църковния събор в Констанц*, [in:] *Сребърният век: нови открития. Посвещава се на 780 години от възстановяването на Българската патриаршия (1235 г.), 640 години от интронизацията на Патриарх Евтимий (1375 г.), 600 години от интронизацията за Киевски митрополит на Григорий Цамблак (1415 г.)*. Сборникът е съставен от доклади на международната конференция, състояла се на 10 и 11 май 2015 г. в БАН с благословението на българския Патриарх Неофит, ed. А. МИЛТЕНОВА, София 2016, p. 91–103.

familiarity with their work. Was the image of the non-Orthodox in Gregory's work somehow tempered by his "ecumenism"? *The Martyrdom of John the New* is an attractive subject for such a study, because one of the dissenter characters in it is a Catholic. How is he presented? To analyze the content of the work, we will use the concept of dehumanization – well-known from social psychology – transparently linking the perception of "the other" with the behavior towards them. The goal is not to examine the literary form of the text, but to discern what attitude is reflected in Camblak's work toward Catholics and other the non-Orthodox.

When the Târnovian events of 1359/1360 occurred, Gregory Camblak was most likely not born yet. A direct connection of the events discussed with the work of this author is probably not convincing⁸. This article is a fragment of a broader project aimed at revealing the place of heretics and non-Orthodox in late medieval Balkan societies. The starting point for this research is observed prejudice and interreligious violence. The synod against the Jews is an example of the tense relations between the various faiths in the region at that time, with perhaps the most documented sources, which is why I referred to it in this introduction.

The Martyrdom of John the New takes a unique place in Gregory Camblak's work in terms of the style, and language. There have even been doubts regarding the attribution of the text⁹. The arguments voiced in the discussion have their weight, but do they settle the matter? The majority of scholars have supported Camblak's authorship, and I also lean in that direction¹⁰. In the context of the

⁸ Alternatively: В. КИСЕЛКОВ, *Патриарх Евтимий*, София 1938, p. 31; Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Григорий Цамблук...*, p. 103–104: Gregory supposedly heard about these bloody events (as well as other anti-heretical undertakings of the Bulgarian Church of that era) from eyewitnesses, which influenced his own uncompromising attitude toward heresy.

⁹ Cf., e.g. В.С. КИСЕЛКОВ, *Проуки и очерти по старобългарска литература*, София 1956, p. 255–258; Ф. ТОМСОН, *Мъчението на Иоан Нови погрешно ли е приписано на Григорий Цамблук?*, СЛ 32, 2001, p. 63–74.

¹⁰ The manuscript tradition speaks unequivocally for the later metropolitan of Kiev (M. CAZACU, *Saint Jean le Nouveau, son martyre, ses reliques et leur translation à Suceava (1415)*, [in:] *L'empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine*, ed. P. GURAN, B. FLUSIN, Bucarest 2001, p. 140–141). Francis J. THOMSON (*Мъчението на Иоан Нови...*) was the last to critically discuss the linguistic peculiarities of the *Martyrdom* against Camblak's works, concluding that the language used does not allow to question Gregory Camblak's authorship. He wrote of the work's style that it is very simple, lacking any trace of Camblak's erudition. This observation is shared by other scholars, including Anatolij A. TURILOV (*Иоанн Новый, Сочавский*, [in:] *Православная Энциклопедия*, vol. XXIV, Москва 2010, p. 460), however, they come to different conclusions. While Thomson believes this to be sufficient reason to consider the text to be the work of another person, Turilov sees here a conscious stylization by Camblak, who addressed a specific audience: poorly educated, and not using the Slavic language on a daily basis: *Внешне убедительным выглядит аргумент о простоте стиля Жития, несвойственной Цамблаку, однако подобная особенность может объясняться ориентацией автора на неподготовленных читателей и слушателей, для которых славянский язык был неродным* (A.A. Турилов, *Иоанн Новый...*, p. 460). If we accept his argument, we should expect that the sermons preached in Suceava Cathedral will be all the more sub-

authorship dispute, the issue of the work's subject matter is not raised, but it also lends the *Martyrdom* its uniqueness. John is a “new martyr”, which traditionally includes all those who lost their lives for the faith in the period after iconoclasm¹¹. John meets this formal criterion and, moreover, gave his testimony of faith at a time close to the author. The hagiography dedicated to him was later contrasted by literary scholars with the later lives of George of Sofia and Nicholas of Sofia¹². The *Martyrdom*, however, is in some way inscribed in Gregory's writing program, as he devoted a large part of his works to the ancient martyrs¹³, while at various stages of his international career he tried to take up local themes. As the hegumen of the Dečani Monastery, he wrote the *Life of Stefan of Dečani*, and when applying for a position in the Rus' Church he created the *Funeral Oration for Metropolitan Cyprian*.

Gregory wrote the *Martyrdom* and *Office of Martyr John the New*, most likely while he was ministering at Suceava Cathedral, a period that began in 1401 and lasted at least several months¹⁴. His full monastic formation and his service to the Patriarch of Constantinople had already been completed. Having earned an education, he was gathering his first writing experiences. During his stay in Suceava he preached a series of sermons collected in the *Book of Gregory Camblak*¹⁵. What was

jected to a similar stylization. These, however, were created in accordance with the Byzantine-Slavic homiletic canon (cf., e.g. A. ANGUSHEVA-TIHANOVA, *The Mount Reflecting Heaven. The Sermon on the Transfiguration by Gregory Camblak in the Context of Byzantine and Medieval Slavic Literature*, Bsl 62, 2004, p. 217–238; M. КУЧИНЬСКА, *Гомилетика Йоанна Златоуста в творчестве Григория Цамблака. Тематические и формальные влияния на примере Слова о божественных тайнах*, ЕОР 36, 2017, p. 167–179; M. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблук*, София 2019, p. 17–19). They are filled with extensive excerpts from John Chrysostom, an author whose reflections addressed to a fourth-century Constantinopolitan reader familiar with Greek rhetoric were probably less likely to reach the “неподготовленные читатели и слушатели”.

¹¹ Г. ПЕТКОВ, *Цамблаковото Мъчение на Йоан Нови Сучавски – нов агиографски ракурс за мъченичество*, [in:] *Цамблакови четения. 600 години от избирането на Григорий Цамблук за митрополит киевски и руски*, ed. Д. КЕНАНОВ, Велико Търново 2019, p. 69–72. On the development of the literary image of neo-martyrs in late medieval literature, cf., e.g. M. BALIVET, *Chrétiens secrets et martyrs christiques en islam turc: quelques cas à travers les textes (XIII^e–XVII^e siècle)*, Isl 16, 1990, p. 91–114; S. VRYONIS, *The Byzantine Patriarchate and Turkish Islam*, Bsl 57.1, 1996, p. 103–108; T. KRSTIĆ, *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Stanford 2011, p. 121–164.

¹² E.g. П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, *Григорий Цамблук в Румъния и в старата румънска литература*, София 1966, p. 68.

¹³ I. ПЕТКОВА, *Grégoire Camblak...*, p. 118; J. STRADOMSKI, *Ortodoksja i herezja...*, p. 179.

¹⁴ Scholars often extend this period to several years, but there is not sufficient source basis for this. F.J. THOMSON, *Gregory Camblak...*, p. 39. A significantly different date of the work's creation was assumed, for example, by Matei CAZACU: the year 1415 (*Saint Jean le Nouveau...*, p. 142–146).

¹⁵ Н. ДОНЧЕВА-ПАНАЙОТОВА, *Сборниците „Книга Григория Цамблака” – възникване, съдържание, разпространение*, [in:] ЕАДЕМ, *Григорий Цамблук и българските литературни традиции в източна Европа XV–XVII в.*, Велико Търново 2004, p. 246–281; M. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблук...*, p. 9–32.

yet ahead of him were his sojourn in Serbia, becoming Metropolitan of Kiev, and his advocacy for the union of the Eastern and Western Churches at the Council of Constance, to name the most interesting episodes of his career.

Who was Saint John the New? He was an Orthodox merchant who gained the nimbus of sanctity through his martyrdom at the hands of the Tatar governor of Beligrad a few years before 1330¹⁶. All we know of him comes from the *Martyrdom*¹⁷. The narrative of Camblak's work begins while he is traveling on a ship carrying goods from Trebizond. This is where the plot thickens. John, a rich merchant, shows extraordinary piety, prays constantly, fasts, and helps others. Satan, who abhors such virtues, incites the ship's captain, a Latin (later also: a Frank), against John. He starts plotting against the saint. When they arrive in Beligrad, the captain tells the city's pagan governor (also: Persian, eparch, judge) that John wants to become a pagan¹⁸. Events then proceed quickly, following a predictable pattern. The city's ruler greets John with joy, praising his supposed intention. The man denies it, insults the eparch, laughs at his pagan beliefs, and encourages his interlocutor to convert to Orthodoxy. The eparch becomes enraged and orders the merchant to be severely beaten, trying unsuccessfully to make him change his position¹⁹. The eparch's brutal acts of cruelty are interspersed with discussions and persuasions (mutual) to change the other person's faith. Eventually, John is killed when, dragged behind a horse, he rides through a Jewish quarter and is decapitated by one of the locals. The tortured body is not buried; the first miracles take place at its side. The captain of the ship wants to take the relics with him, but due to the intervention of the saint he does not succeed, and John's body is laid to rest in the local church²⁰.

In Camblak's story there are three non-Orthodox characters: the Roman Catholic captain of the ship, the pagan (?) ruler of the town, and (a collective protagonist) the Jews of Beligrad. In the background remain the townspeople gathered in the square where John is martyred. This is a crowd of unspecified confession; it plays an important role in the narrative only once and serves to build a contrast with the attitude of the eparch²¹. Gregory portrays him as a sun and fire-worshipper;

¹⁶ John's death is dated in relation to the time when the *Martyrdom* was written (around 1401 or 1415, see note 14). As the author declared, the hero of the work died seventy-some years before his relics were transferred to Suceava, and the *Martyrdom* was written for that occasion.

¹⁷ ГРИГОРИЙ ЦАМБЛАК, *Мъчение на Иоан Нови*, [in:] П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 90–108 (cetera: САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*).

¹⁸ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 2.1 – 4.3, p. 90–92.

¹⁹ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 5.1 – 19.1, p. 92–100.

²⁰ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 25.1 – 30.8, p. 103–106.

²¹ We can find suggestions that the gathered residents were at least partially Orthodox. When John was subjected to cruel torture, people began to shout in protest. They could have protested regardless of their religion, but, as the narrator comments, the tortured John was “a sad sight for the pious” (САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 25.1–2, p. 102).

he evidently regarded him as a Manichaean²². We cannot exclude the possibility that he was right. However, some studies claim that he was a follower of the shamanism that dominated in the Golden Horde until the 14th century²³.

The image of the non-Orthodox in Camblak's work is unequivocally negative. The ship's captain is implicated in the course of events by Satan, who cannot stand John's virtuous way of life. Satan uses the Latin to deliver John into the hands of his persecutors. The captain proves to be a perfect tool of Evil: he is very stern and inhumane (*многo суровѣ и безчлoвѣчнѣ*)²⁴. The hostility he feels toward John while still on the journey is not provided with a backstory. It is only after arriving in Beligrad that the captain reveals his face and his attitude towards John. He employs lies to put the merchant's faith to the test. This episode highlights how devoted the captain is to Satan. The figure of the Latin appears towards the end of the work when he tries to steal the martyr's remains and take them to Trebizond²⁵. Did he realize his mistake and acknowledge John's sanctity, or did he perversely want to gain further from the plot he had concocted by kidnapping the precious treasure, which the relics were in those times? The interpretation of the event is left to the reader's own guess; the narrator does not comment on the captain's attitude in any way. Only in the epilogue does he vaguely allude to this event, claiming that John's body became a burden for the captain²⁶. Could it be that by trying to take it away he wants to cover up the traces of his "betrayal"?

²² САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 10.2, p. 96. The Manichaean identification of the city governor is also supported by the Persian origin attributed to him (САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 3.5, p. 92). We can find at least one other Manichaean in Gregory's work: Atticus King of Babylon, a fire worshipper, "of the Persian lineage". He martyred three brothers known from the Book of Daniel – Ananias, Azariah, and Mishael. Camblak borrowed this story almost verbatim from the apocryphal tale of the three young men attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem (*On Daniel and Three Youths, Великія миней четіи свбранныя всервссійскимъ митрополитомъ Макаріемъ. Декабрь, дни s-зі*, vol. XI, Москва 1904, col. 1179–1180). The Slavic version of Pseudo-Cyril's text can be found in the same volume of the Menaion, col. 1104–1106. The similarity of the two texts suggests that Camblak used a ready-made Slavic translation in his homily. On the Pseudo-Cyril text, cf., e.g. О.В. ТВОРОГОВ, *Апокрифы и сказания о Данииле*, [in:] *Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси (XI – первая половина XIV в.)*, ed. Д.С. ЛИХАЧЕВ, Ленинград 1987, p. 44–47.

²³ П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 64–65. The location of the execution site remains uncertain, "вѣлыи градъ сице нарицаемый ниже къ Евспороу" (САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 3.5, p. 92), which appears in the source, is usually located in today's Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy (formerly Italian Maurocastro, Turkish Akkerman, Romanian Cetatea Albă) lying at the mouth of the Dniester or near Kerch, located on the strait dividing the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea. P.Ş. NĂSTUREL, *Une prétendue oeuvre de Grégoire Tsamblak Saint Jean le Nouveau: le Martyre de Saint Jean le Nouveau*, [in:] *Actes du premier Congrès international des études balkaniques et sud-est européennes: Sofia, 26 août – 1 septembre 1966*, vol. VII, *Littérature, ethnographie, folklore*, Sofia 1971, p. 345–351; M. CAZACU, *Saint Jean le Nouveau...*, p. 138–139.

²⁴ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 3.4, p. 92.

²⁵ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 30.1–8, p. 105–106.

²⁶ САМБЛАК, *Martyrdom*, 35.3, p. 108. See below, note 56.

We do not know this. In the discussed episode, the figure of the Latin plays a secondary role. What becomes more important here is God's intention for the relics to remain in the city, in the hands of the local Orthodox Christians. Gregory refers to the captain's confession as a Latin heresy²⁷.

The image of the city governor is much more elaborate, but also unambiguously negative. His first statement is praise of John's alleged decision to change his faith and an apology for his own confession. In response, the future martyr accuses him of lying, because he has no intention of abandoning Christianity. Referring to a passage from John's Gospel (*When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it*, John 8: 44), he calls Satan – the enemy of truth – the father of the eparch²⁸. John continues that Evil has entered into him and speaks through him²⁹. Again the device is well chosen; the narrator regards the governor as unrighteous and perfidious³⁰. The catalog of epithets is rich: the "Persian" is an impure soul³¹, the fulfillment of all abominations³², a sinner (ДЪЛАТЕЛЬ НЕПРАВДЫ)³³, a savage/beast (ЗВЪКРОВИДНЫЙ)³⁴, and a mindless oppressor³⁵. Gregory makes a strong statement about the eparch's faith: obscurity of delusion, mindless idolatry, and fog of godlessness³⁶. The attitude of the godless executioner is contrasted with that of John: John speaks calmly, in a clear voice, and with a joyful expression on his face³⁷; the eparch, listening to him, gets carried away by his emotions, his face twists into grimaces, he is shaken by anger, and he shouts³⁸. John mocks the eparch and urges him: *put me to death, so that I no longer have to see your disgusting face and listen to your foul words*³⁹. He is unimpressed by the eparch's threats, which the latter intertwines with promises of wealth and status. John has the truth behind him, which encourages him (as Gregory presents it); his interlocutor has only deceit (tempting John with wealth and status) and cruelty at his disposal. John is poised, stays reasonable, and speaks openly; the eparch hides from the world his bestial character (dog-like and inhuman, as John describes it), which is revealed through outbursts of anger and acts of cruelty⁴⁰.

²⁷ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 3.4, p. 92.

²⁸ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 8.4, p. 94.

²⁹ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 8.5, p. 94–96.

³⁰ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 7.1, p. 94.

³¹ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 5.1, p. 92; 35.1, p. 108.

³² CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 14.1, p. 98.

³³ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 14.7, p. 98.

³⁴ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 20.1, p. 100.

³⁵ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 24.1, p. 102.

³⁶ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 8.8; 11.2, p. 96.

³⁷ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 20.2, p. 100.

³⁸ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 24.1, p. 102.

³⁹ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 14.9, p. 98; cf. 23.5, p. 102.

⁴⁰ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 14.7, p. 98; 24.1, p. 102.

Another dissenting character in the *Martyrdom* are the local Jews. They appear in the narrative at the end of the eparch's trial with John. When the martyred merchant is being dragged behind a horse and finds himself near a district inhabited by the Jews, the Jews contort their faces, laugh at the saint, and throw whatever they can at him⁴¹. One of the Jews cuts off the martyr's head. Then they (the torturers? the Jews?) untie John's dead body from the horse, after which they abandon it, leaving it unburied, and none of the "pious" dare to approach it⁴². When angels come to perform rituals over it at night (СВЯЩЕНОСЛОВСТВОВАТИ И КАЖДЕЊІА ТВОРИТИ), a Jew living nearby ("a degenerate descendant of the viper") decides to shoot at them with a bow. He is miraculously stopped – he is frozen with his bow stretched out in his hand and stays like that until the morning, bearing witness to what he saw⁴³.

The concept of dehumanization will allow us to organize the collected information. This notion from the field of social psychology describes cognitive patterns that make us perceive members of outgroups as less human than the people belonging to our ingroup⁴⁴. In popular perception, dehumanization is not the process of denying humanity per se, but its effect, the best-known example of which is the designation of disabled people, Jews, Gypsies, Russians, Poles, and other Slavs as subhuman. This was the foundation of the racist ideology that led to the crime of genocide. The purposeful, extremely negative portrayal of "the other" to further political goals will not be our point of reference. The process we are interested in, dehumanization, observed by social psychologists, is a common, everyday phenomenon that occurs not when we want to describe or evaluate "the other" but beforehand, because it conditions our perceptions⁴⁵. Assigning people to the categories of "us" or "them" is done reflexively, intuitively, but it is of great importance because it determines our attitude towards the categorized people.

A number of patterns are described that cause us to perceive others as having poorer inner lives: as less intelligent, less reflective, less moral, lacking in secondary emotions, agency, desires, and beliefs. Others seem less friendly and less open. It is more difficult for us to empathize and forgive "them". We associate negative behaviors with permanent traits of others and not with an accidental disposition (which we readily use to justify ingroups)⁴⁶. Dehumanizing processes intensify

⁴¹ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 26.1–2, p. 102–104.

⁴² CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 26.4–5, p. 104.

⁴³ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 27.1, p. 104.

⁴⁴ N. HASLAM, *Dehumanization. An Integrative Review*, PSPP 10, 2006, p. 252.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 260–262; L.T. HARRIS, S.T. FISKE, *Social Neuroscience Evidence for Dehumanised Perception*, ERSP 20, 2009, p. 192–231.

⁴⁶ J.-P. LEYENS, P.M. PALADINO, R. RODRIGUEZ-TORRES, J. VAES, S. DEMOULIN, A. RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ, R. GAUNT, *The Emotional Side of Prejudice: the Attribution of Secondary Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups*, PSPP 4, 2000, p. 186–197; J.-P. LEYENS, A. RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ, R. RODRIGUEZ-TORRES,

under conditions of a sense of threat and influence the behavior of groups, promoting the escalation of emerging conflicts⁴⁷. Moral norms are suspended in relation to the dehumanized, and they are more likely to face inhumane treatment. This phenomenon is invoked to show the causes of brutal violence in situations such as war. Groups that are of interest to social psychology include nations, social classes, adherents of one religion, but also less permanent groups, such as students of a single university, or even the so-called minimal group – formed for the purpose of a study on the basis of random determinants. Already in such completely incidental communities there appears the phenomenon of favoring one's own group and the homogenization of the other group, heralding the appearance of typical antagonisms (these processes should not be identified with dehumanization, which requires the appearance of additional stimuli)⁴⁸. Dehumanizing processes are also observed outside the group context, in the relations between self and others (including ingroups). Everyone believes that the most fully human representative of the *homo sapiens* species is them⁴⁹.

This is certainly a superficial description of the achievements of one strand of social psychology, but it should suffice for the purposes of this article. Within the framework of research on perceiving the others as less human, many detailed concepts have been formulated, proposing to distinguish mechanistic dehumanization from animalistic dehumanization, sometimes called infrahumanization (when a person is perceived more like a machine or an animal), or, within the framework of different theoretical approaches, the phenomena of dementalization or instrumentalization are put into focus. Dehumanization appears to be a common cognitive tendency of the human mind and as such, can be used to give context to past events and texts.

Let us trace selected aspects of dehumanization by juxtaposing them with excerpts from Camblak's text:

R. GAUNT, P.M. PALADINO, J. VAES, S. DEMOULIN, *Psychological Essentialism and the Differential Attribution of Uniquely Human Emotions to Ingroups and Outgroups*, EJSP 31, 2001, p. 395–411; N. HASLAM, P. BAIN, S. LOUGHAN, Y. KASHIMA, *Attributing and Denying Humanness to Others*, ERSP 19, 2008, p. 55–85; S. LOUGHAN, N. HASLAM, T. MURNAME, J. VAES, C. REYNOLDS, C. SUITNER, *Objectification Leads to Depersonalization. The Denial of Mind and Moral Concern to Objectified Others*, EJSP 40, 2010, p. 709–717; M. TARNOWSKA, P. SŁAWUTA, M. KOFTA, *Procesy dehumanizowania „obcych”: mechanizmy i funkcje*, [in:] *Poza stereotypy. Dehumanizacja i esencjalizm w postrzeganiu grup społecznych*, ed. M. DROGOSZ, M. BILEWICZ, M. KOFTA, Warszawa 2012, p. 131–165; J.P. LEYENS, M.P. PALADINO, J. VAES, *Esencja i umysł: w kierunku integracji unikalnie i typowo ludzkich aspektów człowieczeństwa*, [in:] *Poza stereotypy...*, p. 95–130.

⁴⁷ H. TAJFEL, *Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ARP 33, 1982, p. 1–39.

⁴⁸ T.M. OSTROM, C. SEDIKIDES, *Out-group Homogeneity Effects in Natural and Minimal Groups*, PBU 112.3, 1992, p. 536–552; M. TARNOWSKA, P. SŁAWUTA, M. KOFTA, *Procesy dehumanizowania...*, p. 142–143.

⁴⁹ N. HASLAM, P. BAIN, L. DOUGE, M. LEE, B. BASTIAN, *More Human than You: Attributing Humanness to Self and Others*, JPSP 98, 2005, p. 937–950.

Agency. The Latin and the eparch are devoid of it. Camblak presents them as tools in the hands of Satan, who is the real initiator of John's passion. This aspect is omitted in the case of the Jews⁵⁰.

Morality. The characters of the non-Orthodox are immoral, and their behavior is incompatible with the prevailing norms. Extraordinary cruelty of the eparch arouses the opposition of the townspeople; it is motivated not by the letter of the law or some values, but by outbursts of rage. The Latin, on the other hand, does not hesitate to lie about John's intention to change his faith. The Jews match the eparch's cruelty, dealing John more blows as he is dying, and then trying to prevent the martyr's body from being buried. The immorality is emphasized by the epithets: the fulfillment of all abominations, unrighteous, and perfidious (all referring to the eparch)⁵¹.

Intelligence, capacity for reflection, one's own convictions. In Gregory Camblak's work, the non-Orthodox are repeatedly portrayed as stubborn fools. Here this theme appears but is not developed. The eparch's religion is presented in a very unfavorable light. John's question "can a creature be God?", showing the futility of the Manichean worship of the Sun remains unanswered, but the eparch does not change his position. In another context, the narrator calls him mindless⁵². The dissenter characters appear to be deprived of their own thoughts and beliefs by the very fact of their complete submission to Satan.

Feelings. In social psychology research, it is the attribution of secondary feelings to people that is most often used to mark the degree of humanization. This criterion cannot be applied here. The eparch is attributed with anger (multiple times) and fear (once), which are basic feelings. Considering its spontaneous and uncontrolled expression (shouting, shuddering, grimacing), the eparch's anger should be considered rather as rage or wrath⁵³. There is no mention of the feelings of the other

⁵⁰ For this and the subsequent modes of presentation of heretics/non-Orthodox listed here, numerous parallels can be cited from works of the time. I will just point to a few examples from Camblak's texts. The idea that heresies are in fact the work of Satan can be found in *Sermon about the Dead* (М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 75) and *Sermon to the Reverend Fathers on Cheese-fare Saturday* (*ibidem*, p. 121).

⁵¹ In his other works Gregory attributed unrighteousness and perversity to pagans (*Sermon for St. George (III)*), П. ПЕТКОВ, К. ПОПОВСКИ, *Третото слово за св. Георги от Григорий Цамблак*, Pbg 40.3, 2016, p. 126) and Jews (*Sermon for Good Friday*, М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 163).

⁵² Stupidity is a typical trait of heretics and the non-Orthodox according to the way Camblak presents them: cf., e.g. *Sermon for Good Friday* (about Jews – mindless; М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 163; about heretics – despite the obviousness of the truth, they remain blind, *ibidem*, p. 167–168), and *Sermon for St. George (II)* (the stupidity of the pagans and the Greeks, А.И. ЯЦИМИРСКИЙ, *Изъ историю славянской проповѣди в Молдавіи. Неизвѣстныя произведенія Григорія Цамблага, подраженія ему и переводы монаха Гавріила*, С.-Петербургъ 1906, p. 22, 28).

⁵³ The unbridled anger attributed to pagan persecutors of Christians can be found in *Sermon for St. George (II)* (А.И. ЯЦИМИРСКИЙ, *Изъ историю...*, p. 25). We find the same sentiment in Jews turning against Jesus, cf. *Sermon for Palm Sunday (II)* (М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 150).

non-Orthodox. Camblak did not describe the secondary emotions of “the others”. However, secondary emotions do not appear in the *Martyrdom* at all, including in the case of the Orthodox, therefore their omission cannot serve as evidence of a dehumanizing view of the others.

Friendliness. From the course of events, we can deduce that the characters of other faith are alien to empathy (an ability we expect in humans) – this is evidenced by their unrelenting cruelty. Camblak wrote explicitly about the Roman Catholic captain that he was “very stern”, and about the eparch that he was “merciless and savage”⁵⁴. They are completely devoid of good will – just like the Jews.

While the above-described dehumanizing schemes work indirectly, in several places Camblak denies the humanity of his characters or compares them to animals *expressis verbis*. Let us recall the phrases he uses. He describes the ship’s captain as inhuman (3.4); he writes that the governor has a dog-like and inhuman character (14.7), his words are the venom of a viper (14.9), he is beast-like (20.1), and screams like a wild animal (24.1); and one of the Jews is characterized as a degenerate descendant of the viper (28.3)⁵⁵. The catalog is not very rich; I leave its analysis to scholars of medieval poetics. For us, it has only a supplementary meaning, dotting the i’s in recognizing Camblak’s attitude to the others as expressed in the *Martyrdom*.

Dehumanization reveals the logic behind Camblak’s abusive rhetoric, and shows how it resonates with the unfavorable presentation of the role of the non-Orthodox in the events discussed. Gregory is remarkably consistent: every appearance of a dissenter in the narrative is accompanied by a negative, degrading, or animal-like characterization. The course of events, in turn, depicts them without exception as mindless, demonic, cruel, lacking in good will, etc.⁵⁶ It is the task and reflex of the historian to look for what is unique, individual, and “real” in schematic and tendentious texts (the medievalist rarely has others at his or her disposal). To be fair, we cannot exclude the possibility that events happened more or less as Gregory described them: John was an angel in human flesh, the captain had a difficult character and a tendency to plot intrigues, the city governor had a short temper, and put John to death in a cruel manner. Historians make their reconstructions of events

⁵⁴ CAMBLAK, *Martyrdom*, 25.1, p. 102.

⁵⁵ This epithet was discussed by ПЕТЪР АНГЕЛОВ, *Анималистични представи за гърци, юдеи и западноевропейци в старобългарска книжнина от XIII–XIV в.*, VMd 4–5, 2013–2014, p. 143. He suggests it was a reference not to an ordinary viper, but a mythical beast, half man, half crocodile. The obvious point of reference for Camblak and his readers was certainly Jesus’ words to the Jews: Mt 12: 34, Lk 3: 7.

⁵⁶ The authors of later hagiographies dedicated to John of Suceava allowed the Latin ship’s captain to display shreds of humanity. Part of the change of the image is related to a different presentation of the episode at the end of his life, when the Frank tried to steal John’s relics. While Camblak does not provide a justification for this act, subsequent authors recognize that the Latin realized his mistake and acknowledged the martyr’s sanctity. Cf. A. NAUMOW, *Wiara i historia...*, p. 68.

plausible by attributing personal interests to the characters. This can also be done in this case: the captain, after getting rid of John, could intercept some of his merchandise, while the eparch wanted to strengthen his rule in the city by showing himself to be a strong leader... The fact that the characters played roles well-known in literature since early Christianity⁵⁷, and that their presentation fits into some cognitive patterns, does not immediately mean that we are dealing with fiction. The purpose of this article and the partial deconstruction of the text has been not to show that it has no historiographical value⁵⁸. The ubiquity of dehumanizing patterns should alert us to something else. Let us imagine that John's death was described by a "Persian" person who followed the same religion as the eparch. We might expect that in this hypothetical text, it would be John who would play the role of a savage, stubborn, and mindless provocateur with suspicious motives for his actions, while the city governor would probably be admired for his composure and restraint in the service of public order. And further: the propagation of this text would serve to strengthen the collective identity of the "Persians", as well as increase tensions between the Pagans (Manichaeans? Shamanists?) and Christians. The observation that the non-Orthodox are excluded from the group of fully-featured human beings is not new in medieval studies⁵⁹, but the achievements of social psychology allow us to learn more about the impact of dehumanization on the perception and representation of others.

In my introduction, I posed the question of whether Camblak's "ecumenical" orientation contributed to the softening of the image of the non-Orthodox (especially Catholics) in his work. The literature on the subject provides an affirmative answer to this question. Angel Davidov and Penjo Rusev believed that Camblak showed no hostility to Catholics and, in reporting on the Catholic captain's participation in John's martyrdom, took the delicate position of an impartial reporter⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ H. DELEHAYE, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, Bruxelles 1921, p. 236–315; W. MAYER, *Heirs of Roman Persecution: Common Threads in the Discursive Strategies across Late Antiquity*, [in:] *Heirs of Roman Persecution. Studies on a Christian and Para-Christian Discourse in Late Antiquity*, ed. É. FOURNIER, W. MAYER, London 2020, p. 317–339.

⁵⁸ E.g. П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 60, 73 believed in the credibility of the martyrdom. What is lacking in their work is critical reflection on this issue.

⁵⁹ *Религиозная концепция средневекового пространства выражалась также в делении мира на мир христиан и мир неверных, нехристиан. Хотя христианство мощно раздвинуло прежние представления о человеке, ограниченные горизонтом одного племени (у варваров), избранного народа (у иудеев) или единственного политического образования (Рим), провозгласив, что нет ни эллина, ни иудея, тем не менее средневековая антропология исключала из числа полноценных человеческих существ всех нехристиан, а также и часть христиан-еретиков, схизматиков.* А.Я. ГУРЕВИЧ, *Категории средневековой культуры*, Москва 1984, p. 80 (1st ed. 1972); cf. also N. SOHN, *Europe's Inner Demons. An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt*, London 1975.

⁶⁰ П. РУСЕВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 72. Camblak's restrained attitude toward the "Latin heresy" in the *Martyrdom* was similarly viewed in Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*; А. NAUMOW, *Wiara i historia...*, p. 67; J. STRADOMSKI, *Ortodoksja i herezja...*, p. 179.

His attitude was supposedly conditioned by the political circumstances then prevailing in Orthodox Moldavia. Threatened by the Turks, it could have counted on the help of Catholic states, which Gregory supported, as modern scholars speculate. Both my intuitive impression after the initial reading of the text and my reflection after the analysis of the captain's image make me disagree with the Bulgarian scholars' statement. The dehumanizing way of presenting the "Frank" and the role he played as a traitor show the narrator's aversion to this character. Indeed, the catalog of epithets hurled at the Latin is less ample than the one formulated against the pagan ruler of the city. I would attribute this only to the smaller size of the fragments devoted to the person of the captain determined by the logic of events, and not to the difference in the author's attitude⁶¹. In his work on the image of heretics in selected works of Camblak, Georgi Danchev noted that the latter, when presenting heresies and heretics, subordinates his message to one purpose: to arouse "hatred, hostility, and revulsion" in the reader⁶². This is also the case in *The Martyrdom of John*, and it applies to all three dissenter characters. The Latin was not favored in any way. The views linking the meaning of this text to Camblak's later political and religious program, in which he postulated the union of Churches, should be revised. It would be surprising if Gregory, as a Suceava preacher, instead of being strongly concerned about the purity of the faith of the congregation gave room in his speeches from the pulpit to uncertain projects. It is unclear whether the appealing but utopian ecclesiology, which we know from his later *Sermon to the Reverend Fathers*, had matured in him at that time (the two texts were written a dozen years apart). Even if this was the case, we should not expect to hear any echo of it in the Suceava Cathedral. That text called on both "Greeks" and "Latins" to come to their senses, abandon acrimony, and engage in fraternal dialogue. Camblak would probably have feared that by preaching such truths he would cause confusion in the minds of the faithful accustomed to a different presentation of the dispute between the churches of East and West. In one sermon, he advised the faithful not to delve too deeply into intricate dogma, but to adhere to the definitions preached to them, even if they were difficult to comprehend⁶³. We know from his subsequent statements that he fulfilled his role as pastor in an exemplary manner: he ripped apart the nets of heresy with his words, in accordance with how he presented the ideal of a pastor in *Panegyric of Euthymius*⁶⁴. In doing so, he did not

⁶¹ This argument will probably not be convincing to everyone. Ultimately, the text allowed for the development of anti-Latin themes, which was taken advantage of by later Greek translators of the *Martyrdom*. They described in greater detail the dispute between the ship's captain and John, putting on their lips a polemic focused on religious issues (Д. ГОНИС, *Новогръцки преводи – варианти на „Мъчение на Йоан Нови Бялградски“ от Григорий Цамблак*, [in:] *Търновска книжовна школа*, vol. III..., p. 139–140, 142).

⁶² Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Григорий Цамблак...*, p. 111.

⁶³ GREGORY TSAMBLAK, *Sermon about the Dead*, М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак*, p. 73–75.

⁶⁴ GEGORY TSAMBLAK, *Panegyric of Euthymius*, [in:] П. РУСЕВ, И. ГЪЛБОВ, А. ДАВИДОВ, Г. ДАНЧЕВ, *Похвално слово за Евтимий от Григорий Цамблак*, София 1971, p. 174.

spare the Latins⁶⁵. He unequivocally warned against them (as well as the other Azimites) in his *Sermon for Holy Thursday*. He compared heretics to Judas, harlots, pestilence, and wolves; he called them mindless, and urged for vigilance against their errors⁶⁶. To look for nuanced political declarations (the Latins were evil, but not as bad as pagans and Jews) in a work intended for the broad masses of the faithful is, in my opinion, misguided. Especially since these nuances are poorly delineated (I cannot see them). Demetrios Gonis seems to be closer to the message of the *Martyrdom*; he saw in the text another political-religious declaration: the unity of Orthodoxy in the face of its three “eternal” enemies: Catholics, Jews, and pagans (whom the Greek scholar substitutes with Muslims according to the political circumstances of the Balkans at the turn of the 15th century)⁶⁷.

Research on the image of heretics and persons of other religions in late medieval Bulgaria and neighboring countries should continue, taking into account different genres of writing. A broad comparative study of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of attitudes toward “the other” would probably be more useful than successive analyses of specific works or the entire output of a given author. Their literary image is only a part of the puzzle, which also includes violence and social ostracism (postulated by church canons), among other factors. The Tărnovo incidents mentioned at the beginning of the text, which culminated in the brutal lynching of the dissenter, should be considered in the context of the majority’s attitude toward minorities. This one has been presented here on the example of one work by Gregory Camblak. This author was an influential member of the elite of many countries in the Orthodox Southeast at the time and a prolific writer. He must have easily found common ground with members of his own stratum, since despite frequent relocations he always managed to occupy a prominent position. Similarly, according to the propagators of the faith of those times, his works must have resonated with the people, since they were copied eagerly. We can consider his position to be representative, and a comparison of his texts with other works of his time would lead to a similar conclusion.

⁶⁵ The work *On the Faith of the Germans*, consisting of excerpts from popular anti-Latin writings, is associated with Gregory Camblak’s name, G. PODSKALSKY, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien, 865–1459*, München 2000, p. 257–258.

⁶⁶ GREGORY TSAMBLAK, *Sermon for Holy Thursday*, М. СПАСОВА, *Книгата Григорий Цамблак*, p. 151–158.

⁶⁷ Д. ГОНИС, *Новогръцки преводи...*, p. 136–137, cf. I. РЕТКОВА, *Grégoire Camblak...*, p. 116–118.

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