



<https://doi.org/10.18778/2084-140X.15.05>

ZOFIA A. BRZOWSKA, *София – олицетворенная Премудрость Божия. История сюжета в византийско-славянской культуре* [Sophia – the Personification of Divine Wisdom. The History of the Notion in the Byzantine-Slavic Culture], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2024 [= Byzantina Lodziensia, 48], pp. 402, <https://doi.org/10.18778/8331-545-4>

The book under review appeared in print as part of the *Byzantina Lodziensia* series under No. XLVIII. It is a Russian translation of the monograph published in Polish in 2015 as an extended version of the author's doctoral thesis. The thesis was expanded to add an analysis of the sources introduced into scholarly literature in previous years. It was also supplemented by archaeological discoveries and codicological research. Jan Morawicki's translation of the monograph is a contribution to the project carried out under the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Poland (No. 21H 20 0042 88). The project was run from 2020 to 2024 by the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe, *Ceraneum* (University of Lodz). The original plan was for the Russian version of the book to be prepared with the support of Russian scholars and published by the St. Petersburg-based scientific publishing house Алетейя [Aleteya] as part of the *Византийская библиотека* [*Vizantijskaya biblioteka*] series. However, due to prevailing political circumstances, it was eventually published in the same series as the first edition of the book.

The monograph deals with representations of the figure of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, in various primary sources: historiographical works, old itineraries, writings of the Eastern Church Fathers and later Byzantine and Slavic theologians, hagiographic and hymnographic works in Slavic liturgical books, normative sources, as well as iconographic monuments and sphragistic and numismatic artefacts.

The work is divided into five main chapters, preceded by an introduction (p. 7–20) and followed by a summary (p. 325–331), a summary in English (p. 333–337), a list of abbreviations (p. 339–342), a bibliography of primary sources (p. 343–351) and of secondary literature (p. 352–377), abstracts in Russian (p. 379–380) and in English (p. 381–382), personal index (p. 383–388) and the index of geographical names (p. 389–392).

The first chapter (*Представления о Премудрости Божией в восточном христианстве*) [*Representations of the Divine Wisdom in Eastern Christianity*, p. 21–89] focuses on representations of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, within Byzantine-Slavic cultural settings. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Sophia was represented as an abstract concept and a figure. The author discusses the idea of identifying Sophia



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Conflicts of interests: None. External funding: None. Received: 2025-04-28. Verified: 2025-05-04. Accepted: 2025-05-04.

with Christ. This identification was built on biblical texts from the New Testament, including the Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles, texts of the Church Fathers, and Byzantine hymnography, which, according to the author, was greatly influenced by patristic literature. The reader is offered an account of how the identification of Sophia with the Saviour developed (beginning with the oldest works from the 2nd century and ending with writings from the 10th century), and of how the Eastern and Western Church Fathers came to differ in their views of the topic.

The chapter also outlines the development of the idea of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, from the 11th century to the end of the Middle Ages. In addition, it deals with the representations of it in art and architecture, paying special attention to the Eastern iconographic tradition and the temples of Hagia Sophia, which were dedicated to Christ. The second part of the chapter pertains to the sources referred to in the identification of the Divine Wisdom with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2 (*Источники женской персонификации Софии в византийско-славянской культуре*) [*Sources of female personification of Sophia in Byzantine-Slavic culture*, p. 89–124] provides a list of selected Old Testament texts containing depictions of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom's female personification. However, the analysis of the indicated passages is lacking with regard to the original. In the chapter, monuments of Old Church Slavonic writing and Slavic iconography are analysed from the perspective of their representations of Sophia as a goddess in Byzantine-Slavic culture.

Chapter 3 (*Христианская муза – София как вдохновительница святых в иконографии Восточной Церкви*) [*Christian Muse – Sophia as the inspiration of the saints in the iconography of the Eastern Church*, p. 125–202] deals with representations of Sophia as a source of inspiration and a muse in non-literary monuments, such as Byzantine paintings from the 6th through the 13th century, Byzantine sphragistics from the 6th through the 11th century, Ruthenian art from the 14th through the 16th century, miniatures found in Old Church Slavonic


manuscripts, and frescoes from the temples of southern Slavonia.

Chapter 4 (*Пир Премудрости (Притчи 9, 1–6). История мотива в письменности и искусстве ареала Slavia Orthodoxa*) [*The Feast of Wisdom (Proverbs 9: 1–6). History of the theme in the writing and art of the Slavia Orthodoxa area*, p. 203–262] discusses the motive of the feast of the Divine Wisdom and traces sources of interpretive patterns followed through the creation of the literary image of Sophia in texts produced in the area of Slavia Orthodoxa. It is also concerned with references made to those texts in various monuments of the Old Church Slavic literature and in the art of the Orthodox Slavs.

Chapter 5 (*София – персонифицированная Премудрость Божия в культуре Великого Новгорода (XII–XVI вв.)*) [*Sophia – personified Divine Wisdom in the culture of Veliky Novgorod (XII–XVI cc.)*, p. 263–324] is devoted to the image of Sophia created in Veliky Novgorod, a city known for Sophia's special cult. The image can be found in the city's monuments of Ruthenian writing (chronicles, statutes), the city's folk legends, numismatic artefacts, architecture, and the iconography of local temples dedicated to Sophia.

The monograph offers a comprehensive insight into the complexity of the topic of Sophia – the Divine Wisdom by examining a wide range of its representations in medieval literature, art and architecture from the areas of Byzantium and Slavia Orthodoxa. It shows a variety of forms which the Divine Wisdom assumed, having been identified with Christ, the Holy Spirit, a woman, and a goddess. The book is intended for anyone interested in the culture of eastern and southern Slavia and the history of biblical themes.

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