

SCRIPTOR LAVRENTIY AND HIS MISCELLANY OF 1348

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In a study published in 2005, the Russian Slavist A. Turilov¹ calls K. Kuev's² edition of the manuscript F.I.376 kept in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (RNB), known to scholars as Lavrentiy's (or Tsar Ivan Alexandār's) Miscellany of 1348 (hereafter *Lavr.*) "an honour paid but to a few fourteenth-century Cyrillic manuscripts". Over the past 25 years the number of editions of fourteenth-century Cyrillic manuscripts has increased³ and new editions of already published manuscripts have appeared, including those from the library of Tsar John Alexander⁴. More than thirty years have passed since Kuev's edition and during this period it has become increasingly clearer that the honour referred to by Turilov is completely justified, while ever more pronounced is the realization that Kuev's work has some flaws which make it necessary for a new edition to be prepared.

In 1981, when Kuev was working on his monograph, the research published that far made him conclude emphatically that nothing was known about the personality of the compiler Lavrentiy apart from the details given in the memorandum on f. 214,⁵ and that we do not know "what other books were produced by his hand."⁶ Today, although there is no new direct evidence concerning that man of letters, we can attempt to reconstruct some fragments of his portrait judging from the attributions of manuscripts made over the past decades. This is the reason why the present study undertakes to pay the hieromonk Lavrentiy

¹ [Турилов, 2005: 305–328].

² [Кув, 1981].

³ See e.g. [Stefanović, 1989; Мирчева, 2006; Vakarelijska, I, II, 2008].

⁴ [Дуйчев, 1963]. New edition of the same monument by Dzhurova, A. et al. Constantine Manasses, Synopsis Chroniki. Codex Vaticanus Slavicus 2, 1344–1345. Athens, 2007.

⁵ [Кув, К. Op. cit., p. 19].

⁶ [Кув, К. Op. cit., p. 20].

his due honour, singling him out as a primary focus of research interest. To this end, presented and summarized will be some new scholarship and new discoveries related to the person and work of this interesting Bulgarian writer, while some new observations and hypotheses will be advanced, as well.

It is a well-known fact that philological medieval studies – and any other area of research alike – get in contact with the public in whose interest the studies are conducted mainly by means of reference works. It is the specialized dictionaries and encyclopaedias that synthesize the unquestionable results of many years of research, presenting these in a comprehensible way, so far as the subject matter permits, to a wider group of users of the research product. Over the past two decades, the *Cyrillo-Methodian Encyclopaedia*⁷ of BAS has gained reputation as the most authoritative Bulgarian (and European) reference book on the issues concerning the deeds and traditions of the Slavic Apostles. In the said reference book, however, the reader will not find articles dedicated to the hieromonk Lavrentiy and his miscellany of 1348, although he will come across his handwriting on pages of *Lavr.* reproduced as illustrations to other encyclopaedia entries – e.g. in Vol. II, p. 789, to the article on *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* attributed to St. Cyril, or else in Vol. IV, p. 498, to the article on Chernorizets Hrabăr. To be sure, *Lavr.* has been mentioned also due to the fact that it contains one of the four extant copies of the translation of *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation (Historia ecclesiastica et mystica contemplatio)*⁸, made most probably by Constantine of Preslav. The presence of these illustrations is quite understandable: *Lavr.* contains the earliest extant transcript of Hrabăr's work *On the Letters*, and the transcript of *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* attributed to St. Cyril is the earlier of the two copies preserved up to the present day.⁹

The authors of the other modern Bulgarian mediævistic philological reference book, *Old Bulgarian literature. Encyclopaedic dictionary*,¹⁰ while having included a separate entry on *Lavr.*, have not considered it worth dwelling separately on its compiler. The article dedicated to the miscellany of 1348 contains only two sentences about hieromonk Lavrentiy. It is in two sentences only that Lavrentiy has been mentioned also in the article about Mount Athos in Vol. IV of the *Russian Orthodox Encyclopaedia*.¹¹ The foregoing should not be mistaken for criticism,

⁷ Кирило–методеиевска енциклопедия. Т. I–IV. София, 1985–2003.

⁸ In the scholarship in English the title is also rendered as *On the Divine Liturgy*. See: **Meyendorff, P.** *St. Germanus of Constantinople. On the Divine Liturgy*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, 107 p.

⁹ Actually, it can be argued that the transcripts of the translation of *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* are three, since one of the four extant translations is included in the so called *Barsov Miscellany*, which reproduces, with a few language redactions, the text and content of *Lavr.* This holds true also in the case of *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* the only preserved copies of which are in *Lavr.* and *Barsov Miscellany*.

¹⁰ Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник. София, 1992.

¹¹ Православная энциклопедия. Т. IV. Москва, 2002. Online edition, 2002. http://www.pravenc.ru/text/771_02.html. Viewed Sept. 22, 2014.

since the lack of scientific reflection on the person of the scribe is, apparently, a consequence of the lack of sufficient information. However, for the benefit of the Bulgarian historical memory scattered by the vicissitudes of our historical fate, we should not ignore even what small fragments that there exist which can help reconstruct a picture of the past, however pale and schematic one. In our case, this is the personality of an exemplary person who contributed enormously to the development of the Bulgarian culture.

The paramount significance of *Lavr.* is not to be reduced to the above described works, important as these are in the Cyrillo-Methodian Studies, and, for that reason, rather popular with the students of medieval literature. Besides being one of the most archaic manuscripts in terms of content, it includes the earliest preserved copies of the Old Bulgarian translation of the *Life of St. John the Merciful* by Leontius of Neapolis, the sermon *On the Eight Spirits of Wickedness* by St. Nilus of Sinai and the work of John Moschus *Pratum Spiritale* – a fragment consisting of 13 stories excerpted from the so called *Sinajskij Paterik*. The miscellany also contains the largest collection of *erotapokriseis* (readings the type of “questions and responses” in the Old Bulgarian literature),¹² some of which are also the earliest extant transcripts of these texts.

First in the history of Slavic Studies, K. Kuev, in his monograph on this literary monument,¹³ makes a review of the research dedicated to *Lavr.*,¹⁴ rightly notching up its fragmentary and incomplete state. The scholar suggests the following hypothetical reconstruction of the fate of the collection:¹⁵

- Written, according to the memorandum on f. 214, in 6856 AM (6856 – 5508 = 1348 AD);
- Intended for home reading of the royal family, and not for liturgical purposes;
- Kept as part of the royal library in Tărnovo till the last years of the reign of Tsar John Shishman (1371-1393);
- In all probability, transferred to the lands to the north of the Danube River (Moldavia) before the fall of the capital Tărnovo, which is suggested by the fate of other literary monuments, such as *Lovech Miscellany*, *Tetraevangelia of Ivan Alexandăr of 1356*, the *Synopsis of Constantine Manasses* etc.;
- Sometime later (in 16th or 17th century), possibly transferred again from Wallach-Moldavian lands to Mount Athos, St. Paul Monastery, St. John the Merciful Skete, via the same route travelled also by the *Tomić Psalter* and the *Tetraevangelia of Ivan Alexandăr of 1356*;

¹² For readings the type of “questions and answers” see: Лумерамурама пог формата на въпроси и отговори. Същност и състояние на проучванията. Класификация на паметниците. – In: Милтенова, А. *Еротарокriseis*. Съчиненията от кратки въпроси и отговори в старобългарската лумерамура. Sofia, 2004. pp. 5–39 ff.

¹³ **Киев, К.** *Op. cit.*, pp. 5-46.

¹⁴ **Киев, К.** *Op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁵ **Киев, К.** *Op. cit.* pp. 19-23.

- Taken away, in 7163¹⁶ (7163 – 5508 = 1655 AD), by the monk Arsenij Suhanov from the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius¹⁷ during his last journey around the Christian East and delivered to the Patriarchal (later Synodal) Library in Moscow;

- Unknown and unresearched from the middle of the 17th century up to the 20s of the 19th century;

- Opened for research to Slavists by the Russian scholar specialist in Bulgarian Studies, K. Kalaydovich, in his study on John (Ioan) Exarch, where the scholar has published the memorandum of Lavrentiy and Hrabār's work.¹⁸

Kuev traces the further travels of the Bulgarian medieval monument, as well, which passed through the hands, in the first half of the 19th century, of the theologian Innokentij Hersonskij¹⁹ and ended up in the collection of Ivan Saharov²⁰. The collection was, in its turn, purchased by Saint Petersburg Public Library, in 1863, and the manuscript was now available in a public book de-

¹⁶ The presence of *Lavr.* in St. John the Merciful Skete, on Mount Athos, and its transfer to Moscow is attested by two notes, written, (according to K. Kuev) on “the title page” (see: **Киев, К.** *Op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.). These marginal notes are missing on the microfilm available to me. The authors of the latest description of the manuscript have claimed that the marginal notes are to be found “on the first bookbinding sheet (1)” and read: 1. **Сѧ** книга стго Пѧвѧ цр(с)кѧе вшитѧли. Ивннъ Мл(с)ти(в) (in printed letters); 2. **Ѡ**г (= 1655 г.) **взѧта** из кѣльи гдѧря патриѧрха (скорописью). See: **Христова, Б. и кол.** Славянские рукописи болгарского происхождения в Россиѣской национальной библиотеке – Санкт-Петербург. Sofia, 2009, p. 69. The renderings of the text of the marginal notes in Kuev's work (*Op. cit.*, pp. 21-22) and that of Hristova (*Op. cit.*, p. 69) show considerable differences in terms of spelling. On the other hand, still different is the spelling in **Киев, К.** Съдбата на старобългарските ръкописи през вековете. Sofia, 1979, p. 39.

¹⁷ Arsenij Suhanov was a hieromonk at the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius near Moscow. At the request of Patriarch Nikon, he visited Mount Athos and many Christian Orthodox centres in Constantinople, on the island of Rhodes, in Asia Minor and Macedonia, wherefrom he collected (!) Old Greek and Slavonic church manuscripts needed for the reform of the liturgical books in Russia in the seventeenth century. The exact number of manuscripts taken by Suhanov from the monasteries of Mount Athos can only be assumed (ca. 156 mss. from Iveron, ca. 61 from the Great St. Athanasius Lavra, ca. 60 from Vatopedi, ca. 45 from Philotheou, ca. 30 from Pantokratoros, ca. 10 from Stavronikita, etc.). Many of them were in Old Bulgarian language. Thus the Synodal Library of Moscow obtained a number of valuable Greek and Slavonic codices. For the life and activity of Arsenij Suhanov see: **Белокуров, С.** Арсениѣ Сухановъ. Т. I–II. Москва, 1891–1894.

¹⁸ **Калайдович, К.** Иоанъ Екзархъ Болгарскѣи. 1824, pp. 189–192.

¹⁹ Under the guidance of Innokentij Hersonskij, in 1819, compiled was *Dogmaticeskij sbornik vostochnoj tserkvi* which contains, on ff. 1-6, the work of Chernorizets Hrabār *On the Letters* as rendered in *Lavr.* See: **Киев, К.** Черноризецъ Храбър, p. 395.

²⁰ Ivan Saharov (1807–1863) was a Russian ethnographer, archaeologist and, in 1837, he was accepted as a member of the Russian Society of Russian History and Antiquities; in 1848 he became a member of the Archaeological Society, and in 1850 – an honorary member of the Public Library in St. Petersburg. He amassed a collection of manuscripts, some of which were, after his death, purchased by A. S. Uvarov, and others - by the Public Library in St. Petersburg. See: *Русский библиографический словарь*. Т. 15. Санкт-Петербург, 1904, pp. 211–216.

pository.²¹ This whereabouts proved to be favourable for scholarly interest and the miscellany became direct and indirect object of research to K. Radchenko²² who focused his attention on the stories of *Pratum Spirituale* and the texts on ff. 204–213,²³ mentioning also their Greek sources; of S. Vilinskij²⁴ who discussed the transcript of *On the Letters* on ff. 101v–105; and of G. Ilinskij who studied the *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*²⁵ on ff. 93v–101v. Gradually, there began to form, in the scholarship, a ‘Bulgarian connection’, which was also initially associated with the work *Exposition of the orthodox faith* attributed to Constantine the Philosopher studied in papers by D. Dyulgerov²⁶ and Y. Trifonov.²⁷ This, in turn, stirred interest in the language in general, and particularly in the vocabulary of the miscellany, commented on by B. Lyapunov,²⁸ while P. Lavrov²⁹ discussed in brief the palaeographic features of *Lavr*.

By the time Kuev started preparing the edition of *Lavr*., this had been, more or less, the whole amount of preliminary information the Slavists had at their disposal (that is, apart from Kuev’s own publications³⁰). Kuev only knew that the miscellany was the work of Lavrentiy’s hand, while, concerning the personality of the scribe himself, he could only judge from the marginal note on f. 214. Here is the conclusion he reached on account of it: “The end of the marginal note reads that the compiler was hieromonk Lavrentiy. Today scholars know nothing about the personality of this writer apart from what has been written in the note. In all likelihood, he was among the clerics close to the royal court in Târnovo who had established themselves as literary men at the time. Hadn’t it been the case, it would be difficult to explain the fact that the tsar should assign to him such an important task as making a collection of different types of texts for home reading of the royal family”. The scholar also adds that “no

²¹ The report of the Director of Library, I. Delyanov, for 1863 places *Lavr*. in the sixth place, under letter “e”, and, for the first time, provides a description thereof (number of folia, handwriting, content etc.). The same report publishes the memorandum on f. 214. See: *Отчет Императорской Публичной библиотеки за 1863 год*. St. Petersburg, 1864, pp. 43–44.

²² **Радченко, К.** *Op. cit.*, pp. 69–79.

²³ In his edition of *Lavr*., Kuev calls them “Articles with different content”. See: **Киев, К.** *Иван-Александровият...*, pp. 380–384.

²⁴ **Вилинский, С. Г.** Сказание Чернорица Храбра о писменех. – In: *Летопись Историко-филологического общества при Императорском Новороссийском университете*. Т. IX. Одесса, 1901, pp. 97–152.

²⁵ **Ильинский, Г.** Написание о правой вере Константина Философа. – In: *Сборник в чест на професор В. Н. Златарски*. София, 1925, pp. 63–89.

²⁶ **Дюлгеров, Д.** Рим и св. братя Кирил и Методий. – In: *Год. Соф. унив., Богосл. фак.*, т. XI, Sofia, 1933–1934 (author’s copy, 68 p.).

²⁷ **Трифонов, Ю.** Съчинението на Константин Философ (св. Кирила) «Написание о правой вере». – In: *Списание на БАН*, № 52, 1935, pp. 1–85

²⁸ **Ляпунов, Б. М.** Несколько замечаний о языке и в особенности о словаре болгарского сборника 1348 г. – In: *Сборник в чест на проф. Л. Милетич*. 1933, pp. 95–107.

²⁹ **Лавров, П. А.** Палеографическое обозрение кирилловского письма у южных славян. St. Petersburg, 1914, pp. 153 – 155.

³⁰ **Киев, К.** Судьба сборника Ивана Александра 1348 г. – In: *Труды отдела древнерусской литературы*. Т. XXIV. 1969, 117–121; Киев, К. *Черноризец Храбър*, 1967 etc.

other books are known so far to have been written by Lavrentiy”.³¹ In his study, however, Kuev himself has challenged the aforementioned assertion more than once, its self-evidence being far from apparent and it being, in fact, rather imprecise. In actuality, the miscellany preceding the memorandum in question is in itself an important source of information about hieromonk Lavrentiy. From it various information can be derived – e.g. concerning the paper, the handwriting, the ornaments, the content and the language features – that can provide indirect evidence regarding its author. Kuev is clear that *Lavr. addresses the needs of the epoch*, that the selection of texts suggests certain *purposefulness on the part of the compiler*, certain *moral bias*, a tendency to satisfy the growing *interest in the past*, also *topicality*³² consisting in an attempt to express *an opposition against the strong heretical cross-currents*³³ etc. The inferences made by Kuev at the end of the part of the introduction devoted to the creation, fate and importance of the miscellany,³⁴ can be summarised as follows:

- In terms of variety of contents, *Lavr.* ranks immediately behind *Tsar Simeon's Miscellany* (among the manuscripts created prior to the fourteenth century).
- Its content touches issues topical for the epoch.
- The miscellany serves to strengthen the interests of the ruling elite.
- It features persons and writings related to the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

The ideological cliché about the interests of the ruling elite put aside – since it was, in all probability, included for reasons of censorship – all other claims concern mostly the compiler and then the text. They sketch the portrait of a knowledgeable literary man who was as well-acquainted with the literary heritage of the epoch as he was with its own time, demonstrating also an active social and moral position. Lavrentiy appears before us as a person with strong individual preferences for a particular Christian tradition and ability of formulating – with the very act of preparing the compilation – a clear message to the reader.

In the study of Kuev, the seemingly unknown hieromonk Lavrentiy plays another role, as well. In the articles accompanying the different readings in the miscellany, Kuev states more than once that, far from merely copying the texts, the compiler actively has interfered with these in terms of language, has edited them. Such is the case, for example, with the paterikon tales from *Pratum Spirituale*, to which the medieval scribe has introduced changes “prompted by his desire to make the text more understandable to the contemporary reader”.³⁵ Thus Lavrentiy stands out in another, regrettably so far poorly understood, aspect as a language-builder adhering to or introducing certain linguistic principles.

³¹ Кув, К. Иван Александрович..., pp. 21–22.

³² Кув, К. Op. cit., pp. 24–27.

³³ For instance, in the article preceding the text of *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, Kuev writes, “The presence of this work in the miscellany of 1348 shall not be considered as accidental. Here again ... observable is a method that serves a clear purpose, namely, to provide an orthodox guide to dogmatic issues in the struggle against the strong heretical discontent of the fourteenth century, which was intended to be a mainstay of Orthodoxy in that struggle”. (Кув, К. Op. cit., p. 148)

³⁴ Кув, К. Op. cit., p. 27.

³⁵ Кув, К. Op. cit., p. 115.

If the claim that our only source concerning the personality of Lavrentiy is the marginal note has indirectly been disproven by its very author, the development of the Slavic Studies over the past decades has strongly challenged the idea that the hand of the scribe produced only the miscellany of 1348. In the very year when *Lavr.* was published (1981) Kl. Ivanova³⁶ identified Lavrentiy as the writer of the initial 190 ff. of *Ladder of Paradise (Scala paradisi)* by St. John Climacus, contained in manuscript No 1054 of M. Pogodin's collection in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (Pog. 1054). In Ivanova's view, *Lavr.* and Pogodin's *Ladder* were created at the same time, the palaeographic data suggesting that they were probably produced by the same copyist. Ivanova also has admitted that *Pog. 1054* was ordered by a layperson of highest rank, probably by Tsar John Alexander himself. In her review of the inventory of the Slavonic manuscripts kept in the library of the Bulgarian Zographou Monastery on Mount Athos³⁷ (hereafter *Zogr.*), D. Karadzova confirms the idea of Kl. Ivanova, at the same time identifying Lavrentiy as the copyist of *Zogr. 24*, which contains *Tetraevangelia*. In Karadzova's view,³⁸ all three manuscripts have originated from the same centre and have been produced by the hand of the same scribe.

The above-mentioned study of A. Turilov³⁹ – which came as a by-product, as the scholar puts it himself, of his work on the preparation of the Union Catalogue of the Slavonic Fourteenth-century Manuscripts kept in the former Soviet Union republics⁴⁰ – maintains that, judging from the handwriting, six more manuscripts are likely, with a various degree of likelihood, to have been written by Lavrentiy.

The first is a transcript of the *Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph* kept at present in the State Archive of Moldova in Kishinev (Kishinev, State Archive of Moldova, Noul Neamţ Monastery fund, inventory 2, No 1, 225 ff., dating back to the 50s of the 14th century – hereafter Kishinev 2. 1). Turilov argues that the erroneous referring this manuscript to the fifteenth century, coupled with the fact that it has long been considered lost together with the whole collection, kept it away from the attention of the scholars for a long time. According to the Russian researcher, the codex was written ten or twelve years later than *Lavr.*, the *Ladder* and the *Tetraevangelia*. The Kishinev transcript of the *Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph* is, in itself, one of the two earliest copies of the monument,⁴¹ which contains a new version of the Old Bulgarian translation completed by making a comparison with the Greek text.⁴²

³⁶ **Иванова, Кл.** Български, сръбски и молдо-влахийски кирилски ръкописи в сбирката на М. П. Позогин. Sofia, 1981 г., pp. 309–310.

³⁷ **Райков, Б. и кол.** Каталог на славянските ръкописи в Библиотеката на Зографския манастир в Света гора. Sofia, 1994.

³⁸ **Караджова, Д.** Археографски приноси за ръкописното книгохранилище на Зографския манастир в Света гора. – In: Археографски прилози, 17, 1995, pp. 225–245.

³⁹ **Турилов, А.** Op. cit., pp. 308–316.

⁴⁰ *Сводный каталог славяно-русских рукописных книг, хранящихся в России, странах СНГ и Балтии. XIV в. Вып. I.* Москва, 2002.

⁴¹ The other one is in manuscript 3/14 from the 14th c. kept in the library of NMRM.

⁴² A. Turilov uses the term “Greek original” which is not quite appropriate in this case.

The second attribution concerns seven folia which contain part of the *Homily of St. Ephraem the Syrian on the Holy Transfiguration* bound, at the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century, within the sixteenth-century *Menaion-Triodion Panegyric* kept in the library of Zographou Monastery on Mount Athos (Zogr. 109, ff. 287–293). Its watermark suggests that this fragment should be dated to the sixth decade of the 14th century.

The third manuscript associated by Turilov with Lavrentiy is *Paterikon Compilation* (the so-called *Svoden Paterik*) kept in the same library (Zogr. 83) and used by Sv. Nikolova as a basic text for her publication of this medieval work.⁴³ The codex was worked on by several copyists,⁴⁴ and Turilov has emphatically identified the first handwriting indicated in the classification of the aforementioned library catalogue with that of Lavrentiy.

According to the Russian researcher, one parchment *Menaion* from the first half, or middle, of the 14th century also belongs to the group of the indisputable attributions. A page from this manuscript (f. 51) has been reproduced in A. Dzhurova's manual of codicology,⁴⁵ regrettably without any indication concerning its source. Despite the scanty material, the codex to which the page belongs is a unique piece of the literary heritage of hieromonk Lavrentiy and is identified as "one of the most calligraphically exquisite manuscripts of Lavrentiy ... superior, in this respect, even to the *Miscellany of 1348*."⁴⁶

With some reservations, to the group of manuscripts in the creation of which Lavrentiy took part Turilov has also attributed the miscellany *Margaritae* (*The Pearls*) – now kept in the Russian National Library – which contains sermons of John Chrysostom (*RNB F.I.197*), and is one of the oldest transcripts of the Old Bulgarian translation of the work. The manuscript was written on bombicina and for a long time was dated to the early 15th century. In 1899, N. P. Lihachev dated the codex ca. 1370 on the basis of the watermarks,⁴⁷ however this fact went unnoticed by the researchers till 1977, when Kl. Ivanova confirmed the correct dating.⁴⁸ The attribution in this case is based on the similarity of one of the four handwritings with which the codex was written to the above described first handwriting from the *Svoden Paterik* to which it shows a really close resemblance. This handwriting is characteristic of more than a third of the manuscript.

The last monument mentioned by Turilov is a *Ladder* on paper dating back to the second quarter of the fourteenth century (*RNB F.I.472*). In the case of the

⁴³ **Николова, Св.** Патеричните разкази в българската средновековна литература. 1980, pp. 147–397.

⁴⁴ Eight, according to Sv. Nikolova (**Николова, Св.** Op. cit, p. 385) and four, according to the authors of the catalogue of the Library of Zographou Monastery (**Райков, Б. и кол.** Op. cit., pp. 65–66).

⁴⁵ **Джурова, А.** Въведение в славянската кодикология. 1997.

⁴⁶ **Турилов, А.** Op. cit, p. 314.

⁴⁷ **Лихачев, Н. П.** Палеографическое значение бумажных водяных знаков. Ч. 1–3. St. Petersburg, 1899. Ч. 1., XCV–XCIX, pp. 19–198.

⁴⁸ **Иванова, Кл.** Об уточнении времени написания некоторых славянских рукописей XIV–XV вв. – In: Археологический ежегодник за 1976 (1977), pp. 148–152.

Ladder, the hypothesis of Lavrentiy's authorship has been rejected despite the close similarity of the handwriting and the layout of the work. The conclusion is based on the observation that only the initial six lines – which used to serve as a model for the scribes who worked on the entire codex – show a markedly close similarity to the handwriting of Lavrentiy. Judging from the watermarks, however, the manuscript dates back to 1331-1334, when it was too early, according to the Russian scholar, for Lavrentiy to have been regarded as such an authority by the younger copyists.

Summarising his observations and discoveries, Turilov adds some final touches to the portrait of Lavrentiy:

- Lavrentiy demonstrates a high calligraphic mastery;⁴⁹
- He is experienced in copying books intended for reading (among the extant works there is only one *Gospel* and one *Menaion*);
- As he is a typical representative of Tărnovo scriptorium, the repertoire of the texts copied by him attests to the overall change in the thematic orientation of this literary centre;
- The existence of three manuscripts written by Lavrentiy in the Zographou Monastery library attests to the close relation between that Bulgarian cloister and the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.⁵⁰

On the other hand, unreserved acceptance of the term 'Tărnovo royal scriptorium' is the starting point of the commentary of N. Gagova on *Lavr.* in the chapter of her monograph *Rulers and Books*⁵¹ dedicated to this literary monument. She starts from the assumption that the production of books at the time of John Alexander was not concentrated at a single literary centre that could be defined as belonging to the royal institution, correctly noticing that the manuscripts directly connected with the name of the ruler are considerably different in appearance, contents and purpose, and, most probably, were not prepared in the same centre.⁵² Judging from the ornamentation and watermarks, Gagova suggests the existence, around *Lavr.*, of a group of related manuscripts (*Lavr.*, *Pog. 1054*, *Zogr. 24*, *Barsov 115*, *Hludov 237* and *Zogr. 83*). The analysis of the marginal notes and other data from the rest of the manuscripts attributed to hieromonk Lavrentiy has led the author to formulate a hypothesis concerning the place of origin of the group of manuscripts formed around *Lavr.* and their

⁴⁹ Most probably, the headpieces in *Lavr.*, *Pog. 1054* and *Zogr. 24*, were drawn by Lavrentiy himself.

⁵⁰ Турилов, А. *Op. cit.*, с. 317.

⁵¹ Лаврентиевият сборник на цар Йоан Александър и проблемът за съществуването на български царски скрипторий през XIV в. – In: Гагова, Н. Владетели и книги. Участието на южнославянския владетел в производството и употребата на книги през Средновековието (IX–XV в.): Реценцията на византийския модел. Sofia, 2010, pp. 78–93. The book is available online at: <https://bas.academia.edu/NGagova>. Viewed Sept. 22, 2014.

⁵² Gagova also emphasizes the clear division of these manuscripts into two groups: on the one hand, there are the luxury parchment manuscripts, such as *The London Tetraevangelia* and the Vatican transcript of *Synopsis of Constantine Manasses*, and on the other hand – humble paper copies, such as Pop Filip's and Lavrentiy's miscellanies. See: Гагова, Н. *Op. cit.*, p. 78.

connection to the problem of the royal scriptorium. In general, the scholar suggested three possible places of origin of *Lavr.*, namely Mount Athos, Tărnovo and Paroria.

Gagova draws special attention to one fragment from the marginal note in *Lavr.*, which reads that the book has been intended not only for the monarch, but also *и възвѣкому христїаниноу въ ползѣ. ѿже съ вѣрою и любовию прочитающому.* This statement, coupled with the fact that the manuscript is on paper, substantiates the hypothesis suggested by the researcher that the book was not intended for personal use of John Alexander, but for a public library possibly existing at the time with the financial support of the tsar. On the other hand, the marginal note in *Barsov 115* – again dated to 1348 – written by its copyist, Father Theotokiy Psilitsa, which says that the manuscript was prepared at the request of the Tărnovo Patriarch, Simeon, can also be interpreted as an argument in favour of a Tărnovo origin. At the same time, the second marginal note from *Barsov 115*, according to which the book was sent as a gift to Zographou monastery by Patriarch Simeon’s successor, Theodosiy, provides an additional argument in the reasoning of Gagova on the possible location of the monastery where Lavrentiy worked, since it is unlikely for manuscripts that had been produced there to have been sent to Zographou. The last marginal note which drew Gagova’s attention is the popular – among the Slavists – text of Fudul on f. 203v from *Hludov 237*: “Fudul wrote these two chapters, translating them from Greek into Bulgarian, when we, all brethren, were in Paroria.”⁵³ The researcher is unwilling to accept unreservedly the usual interpretation of the statement as evidence for Parorian origin of *Hludov 237*, and interprets the phrase “when we, all brethren, were in Paroria” as an indication that the ‘brethren’, or at least some of them, did not reside in Paroria permanently but periodically travelled to the inner lands of the kingdom because of the Turkish raids. Thus the possibility for *Hludov 237* to have been brought to Paroria from Tărnovo during some of the returns of the monks is yet another indirect argument in favour of Tărnovo origin of *Lavr.* In conclusion, without making an explicit statement, Gagova points out that *Lavr.* was probably written in a monastic centre connected with Zographou and Parorian monasteries, where orders of the tsar and the patriarch were fulfilled. This centre could well have been Paroria, but it could also have been located in the vicinity of Tărnovo – that is, in Tărnovo Holy Mount – e.g. in St. Mary Hodegetria Monastery or the place ‘Uste’,⁵⁴ insomuch as the two cloisters were inhabited by prominent Parorian Hesychasts.⁵⁵ Thus Gagova recaps that at least part of the

⁵³ Гагова, Н. Оп. cit., p. 88.

⁵⁴ The place (or area) ‘Uste’ was also located on Tărnovo Holy Mount. This is where St. Romil was active. There prepared were *NMRM 3/11* (*Ladder* of 1364) and *Zogr. 138* dating back to the 60s or 70s of the 14th century which contains the sermons of abba Dorotheus.

⁵⁵ This information has been derived from the lives of St. Theodosij Tărnovski and St. Romil Vidinski. See: *Пространно житие на Теодосий Търновски от патриарх Калист.* – In: *Стара българска литература.* Т. 4. Житиенски творби. Съст. и ред. Кл. Иванова. София, 1986, pp. 443–468, 648–656; *Пространно житие на Ромил Видински от Григорий Добрунец.* Ibid., pp. 468–491, 656–661.

royal and patriarchal orders for books were not fulfilled in a royal scriptorium in the palace but in monasteries related to Tărnovo: either in the ktitor monastery of the Bulgarian tsar in Paroria, or in the cloisters near the capital city.

The aforesaid adds further details to the life of the hieromonk Lavrentiy, presenting him as a writer working in a Hesychast environment associated with both the royal and patriarchal institutions. Actually, it is highly probable that he used to be part of a community of scribes supported financially by the highest representatives of the secular and spiritual powers engaged, as early as the 40s of the 14th century, in proliferating new translations and editions, maintaining, at the same time, a library with royal books “available to the public”.⁵⁶

The studies discussed above show that, however scarce, the direct and indirect data concerning the personality of Lavrentiy have been increasing in number. Put together, they allow for some new conclusions and observations to be made. First, they shed light on the question of when the scholar lived. As a main source of information in that direction can be used the dating of his manuscripts presented in the table below:

Manuscripts of Hieromonk Lavrentiy

I. Indisputable attributions:

RNB F. I. 376	Lavrentiy's Miscellany	1348	214 ff.	paper (for Tsar John Alexander)
RNB Pog. 1054	Ladder	Late 40s of 14th c.	Late 40s of 14th c.	paper (for Tsar John Alexander)
Zogr. 24	Tetraevangelia	Late 40s of 14th c.	The whole codex (?)	paper
Kishinev 2. 1	Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph	Late 50s of 14th c.	225 ff.	paper
Zogr. 109	Homily of St. Ephraem the Syrian On the Holly Transfiguration	60s of 14th c.	7 ff. (bound within a 16-century Panegyric)	paper
Zogr. 83	Paterikon compilation (Svoden paterik)	Middle of 14th c.	Unspecified part of the manuscript	paper

⁵⁶ Гацова, H. Op. cit., p. 91.

2. Hypothetical attributions:

unknown	Menaion	First half or the middle of 14th c.	Unspecified part of the manuscript	parchment
RNB F.I.197	Margaritae	Ca. 1370	Around 2/3 of the codex	bombicina

This systematization makes it clear that the literary activity of the cleric falls around the middle of the fourteenth century. If we take the only categorically dated manuscript, namely *Lavr.*, as a reference point, we appreciate that this book could have been preceded only by the parchment *Menaion*, identified by A. Turilov according to the manual of codicology of A. Dzhurova. If we assumed that the codex – distinguished by exquisite calligraphic skill – was produced by the hand of Lavrentiy, this would imply that: a) prior to the creation of the miscellany, or simultaneously, Lavrentiy worked on liturgical books (and not just on books for reading, what is the prevailing opinion at present); b) his literary heritage could well include expensive codices ordered by the higher Bulgarian clergy.⁵⁷

Pog. 1054, *Zogr. 24*, *Kishinev 2. 1* and *Zogr. 83* could be identified as simultaneous, or somewhat later, than *Lavr.* This group includes three codices with texts for non-liturgical (and individual) reading, and one *Tetraevangelia* – a fact which, coupled with the presence of a *Menaion* in the theoretically formed earlier group, could be taken as an evidence for the existence of another, albeit a less manifest tendency, in the literary activities of the hieromonk associated with the proliferation of liturgical books.

Finally, the manuscripts *Zogr. 109* and *RNB F.I.197* mark a later stage in the professional biography of Lavrentiy, falling in the 60s and early 70s of the 14 century.

To the above information added should be the fact that in 1348 Lavrentiy was already a hieromonk, that is, he had spent part of his life as a cleric and had reached this position in the hierarchy. That same year he was already an experienced writer fulfilling an order directly related to the tsar, the kind of work he would hardly have been assigned in his youth. His maturity, experience and education are also attested by the quality of the miscellany of 1348. This evidence allows for the following hypothetical reconstruction:

- In 1348, Lavrentiy was around thirty years of age, which means that he was probably born in the mid, or late, 20s of the 14th century;
- His active literary activity covered the period from the mid-40s to the early 70s of the 14th century, when he most probably died;
- Everything considered, the life-span of Lavrentiy probably extended from the mid-20s to the early 70s of the 14th century.

⁵⁷ This hypothesis has been suggested by the material and the way of graphic realization of the manuscript, as well as by its function.

Provided the above conjecture is veritable, the scribe was a contemporary, and almost a coeval, of the monarch John Alexander. With a view to the fact that researchers have almost unanimously determined that the average life expectancy in the period was between 30 and 35 years,⁵⁸ it is safe to assume that Lavrentiy belonged to the upper social class (possibly the circles around the royal court in Tärnovo?) since the quality of life is among the basic factors determining its duration.

Secondly, the name of the cleric can also be used as a possible source of information. Today, we have at our disposal the well-established fact that, while he was working on the miscellany, Lavrentiy was a hieromonk, a position in the clerical hierarchy for which to occupy the Athonite tradition required a person of minimum 25 years of age. Therefore, by 1348 he had already gone through the stages of monk and deacon, and also had probably accepted the so called 'Great Angelic Schema', which was often associated with the adoption of a new name. In this case, it is irrelevant whether the choice of the name 'Lavrentiy' was made by the monk who received the Schema or by his spiritual mentor. There is, however, the curious detail of his adopting this particular name, which tempts us to hypothesize that the choice of the patron saint who was to play the role of a protector of the monk was for a good reason. In this regard, St. Archdeacon and Martyr, Lavrentiy, was particularly appropriate.⁵⁹ Legend has it that this Roman priest was martyred on 10 August, 258, during the persecution of Christians by Emperor Valerian (253-260). Because of his position as a guardian of the treasury and the books of the Roman Church, he, rather early, came to be considered also a patron saint of the librarians. This is evidenced by the fact that, even on his early images, besides the metal grill – on which he was roasted alive – he is depicted with a book. Although the cult of St. Lavrentiy was prevalent in the West – in Rome there were 34 temples bearing his name – it also spread in the East. According to the testimony of Anastasius the Librarian (Anastasius Bibliothecarius), Emperor Constantine the Great built a temple on the site of his martyrdom, which was the third one within the walls of Rome after those dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and under Emperor Theodosius II, part of the saint's relics were transferred into a temple in Constantinople especially built in his honour.

This said, it could be assumed that hieromonk Lavrentiy was a contemporary of Tsar John Alexander, close to the royal court in Tärnovo and fully and consciously dedicated to literary activity, perhaps also attending the 'public library' kept in the vicinity of the capital city the existence of which has been suggested by Gagova.

⁵⁸ See e.g.: **Laiou, A. E.** *The Economic history of Byzantium*. Vol. I. Harvard University press, 2002, pp. 51–52.

⁵⁹ See: *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*. Compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, 1275. Englished by William Caxton. Vol. 4, 1483, pp. 98–107. Online edition of Fordham University: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume4.asp>. Viewed Sept. 22, 2014; St. Lawrence. – In: *The Catholic encyclopedia*. Online edition: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09089a.htm>. Viewed Sept. 22, 2014.

The miscellany of 1348 and the marginal note, in particular, suggest a marked closeness between the capital and the monarch, on the one hand, and Lavrentiy, on the other. The main observations and hypotheses concerning the addressee of *Lavr.* are as follows:

- The book was intended for home reading of Tsar John Alexander and his family (K. Kuev,⁶⁰ argument: the marginal note to *Lavr.*).
- The book was not intended for the royal family (Y. Trifonov,⁶¹ argument: it was written on rough paper).
- The miscellany may have been intended for a monastery ‘public library’ kept in a cloister in the vicinity of Tărnovo (Gagova,⁶² arguments: a) the statement *въ свѣкомѹ хрїстіаниноѹ въ ползѣ. иже съ вѣроѣ и любовиѣ прочитаѣщомѹ* in the marginal note; b) the fact that it was written on paper).

However, I find another hypothesis more plausible: the manuscript was intended for some members of the royal family, namely, the heirs of John Alexander. To begin with, this thesis takes into account the material used for the preparation of the book, and prevents the tsar himself from being a direct addressee of the book. It is also supported by the detail in the marginal note used by Gagova, yet read together with the preceding phrase so as to form a complete semantic whole: *въ живѹтѣ и въ зрѣвнѣ и въ оутверждешии црѣвоѹ еговоѹ и дѣтемъ его. и въ свѣкомѹ хрїстіаниноѹ въ ползѣ. иже съ вѣроѣ и любовиѣ прочитаѣщомѹ*. The explicit mention made of the children of the tsar here could be interpreted as an indication of the purpose of the book: it is likely that it initially served as a kind of textbook,⁶³ as a ‘reader’ intended for education of young nobles. This could partly explain the diversity and the specific ‘encyclopaedic’ tenor of its content, and would add a nuance to the social portrait of the compiler as a person entrusted with the education of the royal heirs. Such interpretation also relies on the fact that the parts of the manuscript which bear greatest emphasis semantically, namely, its beginning and its ending, put the codex in a sui generis frame by using the name *John* (Ioan): the book starts with the *Life of St. John the Merciful* and ends with a dedication to Tsar John Alexander and his children. This fact, coupled with the frequent use of the name ‘John’ in the family of the ruler, as well as the presence of pictures of the royal family in the extant manuscripts, make us assume that *Lavr.* was intended for the royal descendants bearing the same name: *John Sratsimir* (1356-1396), *John Asen* († 1349?) and *John Shishman* (1371-1395).

To the above described sources shedding light on the personality of hieromonk Lavrentiy added should be a significant sphere of scholarly interest which

⁶⁰ Кѹев, К. Op. cit., p. 19.

⁶¹ Трифоноѹ, Ю. Op. cit., pp. 1–2.

⁶² Гагова, Н. Op. cit., p. 87.

⁶³ See: Зашев, Е. Размисли за тѣрновския книжовник Лаврентиѹ от XIV в. – In: Старобългарска литература, 39–40. Sofia, 2008, pp. 184–197. Of the same opinion are the authors of the inventory *Славянские рукописи болгарского происхождения в Российской национальной библиотеке – Санкт-Петербурге*. According to them “The book is a collection academic in content and, in all probability, was designed to educate the royal family of John Alexander.” See: Хрустоѹва, Б. и кол. Op. cit., p. 69.

has not been studied yet, namely, the textological and linguistic analysis of his literary heritage. In this respect, I can share here, in brief, my observations on a small part of *Lavr.*, namely, the *Paterikon* section containing thirteen stories from *Pratum Spirituale*.⁶⁴ The comparative analysis of the Slavic and Greek sources selected for the purpose showed that the interventions of Lavrentiy are numerous and are, for the most part, generally motivated by a desire to improve the protograph. It could be argued, with a great degree of probability, that in his work he used also a Greek copy of the work of John Moschus. The following features can be listed among the individual characteristics of the editorial style of Lavrentiy:

1. *A tendency to shorten the source text.* Lavrentiy's translation frequently omits certain passages as obscure – especially when the vagueness is caused by linguistic asymmetry in the mood and the syntactic relations; he also has not translated some minor details the lack of which does not seriously affect the general meaning of the relevant sentence or the plot of the story. The overall impression is that the author has tried to transform the text into a moral case – simple and clear to the reader, and so he has readily done away with the petty details and everyday-life particulars the original is saturated with.

2. *Stylistically motivated editorial decisions.* Though limited in number, there are examples of these in most of the stories. More often than not, the changes have resulted in creating anaphoric expressions or etymological figures. It should be noted that no such tendency is noticeable in the previous versions of the texts. The earlier scribes attempted to achieve only simplicity (and clarity) of expression, while Lavrentiy seems to have been tempted to use rhetorical devices.

3. *Archaization.* In most cases, it consists in the use of the dative absolute construction in clauses where neither the Greek sources, nor the protograph, show the use of this construction. There are also examples of replacement of descriptive future tense forms by perfect forms in the present tense; also prepositional expressions have been replaced by case constructions without prepositions, and 'da'-constructions by infinitives. However, it should be noted that this tendency is not absolutely consistent, the text containing a number of forms suggesting shakiness of certain grammatical concepts related to the case relations, especially with respect to the verbs of motion.

4. *Syntax simplification and clarification.* This process had started well before the activity of Lavrentiy as a result of two major factors: the colloquial features and the syntax errors in the Greek original, on the one hand, and the literal translation, on the other hand. The syntactic simplification and the discussed tendency of shortening the source text are correlated, to a great extent. However, the simplification has other aspects as well, such as a consistent preferential use of the coordinating conjunction 'u', rethinking and restructuring the overly complicated sentences and a segmentation of the larger syntactic groups.

⁶⁴ Зауев, Е. Патеричния дял в Лаврентиевия сборник. История и особености на текста. Sofia, 2012, 496 p.

5. *Redaction of the conjunctions.* In direct relation to Lavrentiy's pursuit of a clear syntactic structure of the text are the changes in certain components of the conjunction system. Most characteristic is the replacement of post-positioned conjunction devices with же (же, же оубо, ꙗко же оубо etc.) and u, as well as the addition of mo at the beginning of a main clause within a conditional sentence (аше...то) and of ТОГДА in complex-compound sentences with subordinate clauses of time (ѣгда ... ТОГДА).

6. *Lexical replacement.* This type of changes has supposedly been caused by the influence of the colloquial and literary usus characteristic of Lavrentiy's work. The language practice of the epoch, for instance, accounts for the presence in the text of the hapax вил'къ meaning 'military flag', 'military unit' which is of Turkic origin. The consistent replacement of Дѣл with РАДИ can also be imputed to Lavrentiy's usus. Lexical replacements occur in both passages edited in the chronologically intermediary versions and in such that have remained unchanged in these, thus reflecting the initial state of the translation. The analysis of these confirms the overall impression that Lavrentiy has sought to achieve a more succinct expression and one that is clearer to the reader. No matter whether he has complied with a colloquial norm or the literary one, the lexical replacements attest to his attempt at bringing the text home to his readers, making it more understandable.

To the features characteristic of the editorial style of Lavrentiy should also be added the specific nominative case forms of the Greek male names whose stems end in a vowel. These end in e (e.g. НИКОЛАЕ, ΔΕΥΡΑΜΙΕ) not only in the *Paterikon* part of the collection, but also in the *Life of St. John the Merciful* preceding it.

* * *

In conclusion, the following brief summary could be made:

In all probability, hieromonk Lavrentiy was a contemporary of Tsar John Alexander and lived from the mid-second decade to the early 70s of the 14th century. The manuscripts known today which show his handwriting suggest that the pick of his creative activity falls around the middle of the fourteenth century. Lavrentiy was a trained calligrapher working on copying and writing books for non-liturgical (individual) reading and liturgical books alike. It is highly probable that the literary man belonged to the upper social class and maintained connections with both the royal court in Tarnovo and the patriarchal institution. Lavrentiy was a member of a Hesychast community of scribes financially supported by representatives of the highest secular and spiritual powers, engaged, as early as the 40s of the 14th century, in producing and circulating new translations and editions, maintaining at the same time a library with 'publicly available' royal books. Lavrentiy himself was probably involved in the upbringing and education of the royal heirs and, in connection with this task, he compiled the miscellany of 1348 which may initially have served as a kind of textbook, a sui generis 'reader' for the noble youths. Far from being just a copyist, the scribe Lavrentiy was an exceptionally well-trained philologist with an admirable command of Greek.

This is the whole currently available information concerning Lavrentiy gained from the limited sources we have at our disposal. New attributions are

certainly possible, but even the scanty material we have at present is a serious challenge to the Slavic philologists who are still to establish the place and role of this remarkable cultural figure in the development of the Bulgarian language and in the Bulgarian medieval literary heritage.

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Abbreviations

- BAN – Bălgarska akademiya na naukite (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)
- SNG (CIS) – Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimiyih Gosudarstv (Commonwealth of Independent States)
- NMRM – National Museum Rila Monastery
- RNB – Russian National Library in St. Petersburg

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