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METHODIUS' CANON TO DEMETRIUS
OF THESSALONICA AND THE OLD CHURCH
SLAVONIC HIRMOI

Under October 26 the oldest Slavonic text of Menaia, the Novgorod manuscript of 1096, offers two canons to *Demetrius*. The first of these is a translation of the Greek song composed in the first half of the ninth century by *Theophanes*, whereas the second „*Graece praesto non est*“, as Jagić states in his edition of the Novgorod Menaia (pp. 524 and 186). This second, obviously original, Church Slavonic canon to Demetrius (reproduced on pp. 186—190) is supplemented in Jagić' publication by the minute variants from two precious northern Russian manuscripts of the twelfth century; the variants excerpted from the Menaia of St. Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod (see the description on p. XXXIV ff.) figure in the editor's footnotes, while the variants from the Synodal Library foliant (described on p. XLII ff.) are listed in the appendix (p. 259).

In the first translated Canon the praise of the martyr carries no local tinge and no environmental data, whereas the second Canon extols Demetrius first and foremost as a glorious patriot — отъчстволюбъца славна Селуню славному. It repeatedly employs this unusual compound, cites the name of city in both its Slavic and Greek forms (Селунь and Θεσσαλονικιαι), and lauds the whole city — весь градъ — and its church — храмъ твои святыи. The final ode of the Canon is a poignant, nostalgic yearning for a return to the native town: “Why, O wise [Demetrius], have we, thy poor slaves, been deprived of thy aura of splendor when, compelled, by the love of the Creator, we wander over strange lands and cities as warriors, battling, O blessed [Demetrius], for the humiliation of the cruel trilinguals and heretics?”

The connection of this ode with the Moravian and Pannonian activities of both Thessalonican brothers was noticed repeatedly by Slavists, in particular by A. Gorskij,² A. Sobolevskij,³ N. Tunickij,⁴ J. Pavić,⁵ Jordan Ivanov, who found the same text in a Bulgarian manuscript of the thirteenth century,⁶ R. Jakobson,⁷ K. Horálek,⁸ V. S. Kiselkov,⁹ D. Čyževskij,¹⁰ E. Georgiev,¹¹ and F. Grivec.¹²

This ode is intimately linked both with chapter XIV of the *Vita Methodii* (*VM*) (на всѣхъ же путѣхъ въ многы напасти въпадѣше отъ неприязни, etc.)¹³ and with Constantine's terminology as reproduced in his *Vita* (*VC*): и бравъ же се съ ними яко Давидъ с иноплеменники (cf. the image стлѣпъ давидовъ крѣпкъ in ode VII of the Canon), книжными словеси побѣждѣ е, нарече е триязычники, яко Пилату тако написавшу на титлѣ господни (XV); събраше се на нь . . . яко и враны на сокола и въздвигоше триязычную ересь (XVI); и погуби триязычную ересь и възрасти цркъвь твою (XVIII).¹⁴

Humiliation (посрамление) is the current designation of the triumph over the adversaries in both *Vitae*: Сими же словеси и инѣми болѣшими посрамивъ е, отиде (*VC*, XVI); Съ же молитвою а философъ словеси прекозеть я и посрамите (*VM*, IV); И посрамльше ся разидоша ся яко мъгла съ студьмъ (*VM*, XII).¹⁵

The motif of painful separation from Thessalonica (отълучихомъ ся далече суще) and of ardent longing for return (горячь вънутрь сръдца наша) testifies for the authorship of one of the two brothers, вы бо еста Селунянина (*VM*, V).¹⁶ Ivanov recognized an allusion to this Canon in the assertion of *VM* that, after having completed the translation of the Bible, Methodius сътвори память святаго Димитрия (XV).¹⁷

The troparia of the Church Slavonic canon which begin — in the initial ode — with the prayer for purification from the "cruel mist (отъ мъглы лютыя) and ignorance" and end — in the final ode — with a war-cry against the "cruel trilinguals and heretics" (триязычникъ и еретькъ лють) were indeed an appropriate symbolic epilogue to the assiduous, painstaking translation of the divine word into a vernacular proscribed by the "trilingual heresy". The warlike imagery of Demetrius' deeds merges with the martial metaphor depicting the Moravian mission (воини бывающе) and with Constantine's poetic vision of the Lord's Books transposed into Slavonic as "sturdy arms" which "mightily crush the head of the Enemy" (Прогласъ, lines 86—88).¹⁸ Cf. also the *Prolog Vita* of Methodius: яко славень воинъ на обѣ рущѣ стрѣляя: на жида же и на еретьки.¹⁹

The Menaia text of the Canon to Demetrius cites the incipits of its hirmoi. All of these hirmoi belong to the Canon for the Annunciation. The incipits in question closely agree with the standard reading of the Church Slavonic Hirmologium, as attested for instance by its Voskresenskij manuscript.²⁰ These hirmoi cannot be a later appendage in the make-up of our Canon, since noticeable textual correspondences appear between the hirmoi of all the odes and their subsequent troparia.

Thus, for instance, in Ode I the clause of the hirmos — и въспою радуя ся сия чюдеса — is echoed by the first and second troparia — даи въспѣвати . . .

твоя чудеса; and in Ode III (Ode II, according to custom, is omitted) the words of the hirmos — богородице... вѣнцѣмъ славы съподоби — reappear likewise in the first two troparia — подобно сътвори... вѣнць... подобникъ... рождѣшюму ся отъ дѣвы... славнь.

Our previous supposition that the Slavic version of the Hirmologion "originated in the Bulgarian Empire during the very late ninth or early tenth century"²¹ is apparently to be modified in favor of the Moravian mission of the late eight hundred seventies or early eighties. A still earlier dating is unlikely. As Grivec suggests,²² the statement of VC (XV) concerning Constantine's translation of the whole цркъвьныи чинь²³ in all probability refers to the basic liturgic books only.

The Old Church Slavonic Hirmologium was composed most likely in the Moravian archbishopric of Methodius and under his guiding participation. And since the composition of the Moravian Canon to Demetrius must have been antedated by the Church Slavonic version of the Hirmologium, Methodius appears to be the only one of the two Thessalonican brothers to whom the nostalgic encomium deploring the separation from Thessalonica and its church (яко отлучихомъ ся далече суще отъ свѣтла храма твоего) may be attributed. Georgiev accepts Methodius' authorship of this canon and quotes the eulogy to the Slavic apostles, composed shortly after the death of Methodius and praising him for having adorned Moravian churches пѣсньми... и пѣнии духовьными.²⁴

On the average, the 27 troparia of Odes III—IX exceed the length of the antecedent hirmoi only by one-quarter of a syllable, while in the three troparia of the first ode the average deviation from the hirmos reaches eight syllables.

The climax of the Canon — its final, ninth ode — demands particular attention. Each of its three troparia consists of 81 syllables and is subdivided into four periods of varying syllabic measure:

19	22	20	20
17	24	19	21
20	17	24	20

A strictly dichotomous division cuts across the tripartition and exhibits a striking correspondence between the first and the last six periods:

19	22	20		20	17	24
19	21	20		17	24	20

The second period contains one syllable more in the first half of the pattern than in its last half. Both halves, one of 122 and the other of 121 syllables, differ on one further point: while the first vicenary period of each half closes

its odd quarter, the second vicenary period opens the even quarter in the first half of the pattern (20+17+24), while closing it in the last half (17+24+20).

Since the ancient Russian recension of Old Church Slavonic hymnals persistently strives to preserve their original syllabic pattern, we merely transpose into modern Russian alphabet the text of 1096 with insignificant emendations supported by the two faithful sources of the twelfth century:

I

¹Престолу божию свѣтло предъстоя мудре Дѣмитрие
²не забуди насъ нѣ чѣстно моли ся о нашемъ окаании
³странньимъ святе нынѣ поющимъ твоя величья
⁴яко възирающе надѣемъ ся твѣрдо на твою мольбу!

II

⁵Услышь славное нищя твоя нынѣ умили ся
⁶яко отълучихомъ ся далече суще отъ свѣтла храма твоего
⁷и горять вѣнутрь сѣрдьца наша и желаемъ святе
⁸твоя цѣркѣве и поклонити ся кѣгда твоими молитвами!

III

⁹По чѣто мудре нищи твои раби едини лишаемъ ся
¹⁰твоя убо красоты любѣве ради зиждителя
¹¹по чюднимъ землямъ и градомъ ходяще на посрамление блажене
¹²триязычникъ и еретикъ лють воины бывающе?

An arresting link between the hirmos and any troparion of the ninth ode is their equal length of 81 syllables, which definitely proves that these troparia were actually modeled upon their hirmos and that, consequently, the Church Slavonic store of hirmoi antedates the composition of the Canon to Demetrius; this Canon could not have been written after the mid-nine hundred eighties, when the struggle in Moravia for the humiliation of the trilinguals was fatally crushed. The hirmos, in turn, consists of four periods, syllabic spans similar to those we encountered especially in the first and second troparia: 21+22+17+21. As the punctuation in the Grigorovič manuscript (10^v—11) indicates,²⁵ the first and second periods end with a fifteen-syllable colon, while the third period begins and the fourth finishes with a colon of twelve syllables:

Всякъ земьнь • да възыграеть ся духъмъ просвѣщаемъ •
 да ликъствуеть же • бесплътныхъ²⁶ умовъ родъ почитая •
 святое тѣржество божия матере • и да поеть
 радуи ся прѣблаженная • богородице чиста приснодѣвая ••

The grammatical texture of the three troparia shows several salient symmetrical features. A vocative epithet of Demetrius appears only in the odd lines of the troparia, once in each of these lines: first followed by the head word — ¹мудре Дьмитрие — later elliptically — ³святе; ⁵славьне; ⁷святе; ⁹мудре; ¹¹блажене (in each troparion this vocative figures once as the second word of a line and once at the end). Once in each troparion the epithet of Demetrius is immediately accompanied by the epithet of the worshipers: ³странньнымъ святе; ⁵славьне нищя; ⁷мудре нищии. Each troparion contains a reflexive finite verb in the first person plural combined with a gerund: ⁴яко възирающе надѣемъ ся твърдо; ⁶яко отьлучихомъ ся далече суще; ⁸по чьто... лишаемъ ся... ¹¹ходяще.

All the main clauses of these troparia are requisitive, namely, imperative in the first two troparia (²не забуди... моли ся, ⁵умили ся) and interrogative in the last one (⁹по чьто... лишаемъ ся). Thus the troparia of the Canon finish with a direct question, the only interrogatory sentence of the entire Canon. Both framing stanzas, the initial hirmos (да възыграеть ся, да ликъствуеть, да поеть, радуи ся) and the concluding formulaic stanza (даи) are in turn imperative and reinforce the requisitive character of the three troparia. The imperative troparia of the ninth, final ode, preluded by the imperative clauses of the two last troparia in the eighth ode (Въпиемъ ти... съпаси ны, Въсхвали... и ликуи же), agree with the initial troparion of the Canon (очисти... даи) and contrast with all its internal, consistently propositional sentences.

The imperatives in the last two troparia of the first, translated canon to Demetrius in the Менаіа (Растрьгни... устави... раздружи... утоли; Направи... настави) confront us with the question whether some dependence of the second, original canon on the first one may be admitted. Striking structural similarities of these two canons and textual correspondences between the translation and the original composition permit us to conclude that the entire Old Church Slavonic service to Demetrius was elaborated by one and the same writer.

The import of the final ode within the original canon is accentuated by the longer span of its troparia and likewise of its framing stanzas: the substitute for the "theotokion" (see below) amounts to 92 syllables. The troparia, theotokia and hirmoi of the preceding odes are considerably shorter.

The hirmos of the final ode is a prayer to the Virgin, and correspondingly the concluding богородичьнь is replaced by a троицьнь ("triadikon"). Like

both the introductory hirmos and the terminal theotokion of the preceding ode, each of the *three* troparia contains 81 syllables, i. e., *three* which is *three times* multiplied by itself. The *third* troparion of the *ninth* ode concludes with an evocation of the grave struggle against the *trilinguals* and is succeeded by an appeal for faith, hope and love, *three* inseparable gifts from the everlasting *Trinity* (безначальная троице еяже трепещуть ангели with a paronomastic confrontation of this verb with *тре-* 'thrice').

Describing the Synodal foliants of the Menaia for October and November, Jagić states: „Что особенное значение придает обеим рукописям и для па-леографии и для языка — это крюковые ноты, прибавленные к тексту тотчас же при первом написании его. Вследствие этого все слова выпи-саны целиком без сокращений, каждый слог снабжен своею нотой“ (p. XLIII). At present it must be added that a facsimile edition and analysis of these Menaia, with special reference to the oldest Slavonic Hirmologia and to the musical texts of the Greek Menaia and Hirmologia, will be of extreme importance for the study of the Old Church Slavonic neumes, music, metrics and word accents. In particular, the Canon to Demetrius, evidently linked with the Moravian mission, insistently demands a facsimile edition of the Synodal copy, its joint musical and metrical examination, and a careful compar-ison with the Greek and Slavonic hirmoi of mode IV which underlie the tro-para of this canon, their verse and melody.²⁷

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Памятники древнерусского языка, I (СПб, 1886). For the description of the manuscript of 1096, see p. IX ff.
- ² Кирилло-Мефодиевский сборник (Москва, 1865), 279 сл.
- ³ Русский филологический вестник, XLIII (1900), 153.
- ⁴ Святой Климент, епископ словенский (Сергиев Посад, 1913), 70 сл.
- ⁵ Bogoslovna Smotra, XXIV (1936), 82.
- ⁶ Зора, № 5404 (3. VII. 1937).
- ⁷ Lidové noviny (23. XII. 1937).
- ⁸ Časopis Matice moravské, LXV (1943), 118; Sborník filologický, XII (1946), 265—267.
- ⁹ Славянските просветители Кирил и Методий (София, 1946), 384.
- ¹⁰ Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie, XXIV (1956), 79—81.
- ¹¹ Кирил и Методий — основоположници на славянските литератури (София, 1956), 384.
- ¹² Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta, IV (1960), 234.
- ¹³ Radovi . . . , 163.
- ¹⁴ Radovi . . . , 131, 134, 141.
- ¹⁵ Radovi . . . , 136, 154, 162.
- ¹⁶ Radovi . . . , 155.
- ¹⁷ Radovi . . . , 164.

- ¹⁸ See St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly, VII (1963), 19.
- ¹⁹ P. Lavrov, Материалы по истории возникновения древнейшей славянской письменности (Ленинград, 1930), 103.
- ²⁰ Cf. S. Smolenskij, Краткое описание древнего (XII—XIII века) знаменного ирмолога, принадлежащего Воскресенскому, „Новый Иерусалим“ именуемому монастырю (Казань, 1887). Only for the hirmos of Ode IX — Всякъ земля — I was able to consult also the Grigorovič fragment of the late twelfth-century Chilandari Hirmologion (cf. Djordje Radojičić, Južnoslovenski filolog, XXII, 1957—1958, p. 265 ff.), whereas the other hirmoi of Mode IV referred to in the Canon to Demetrius have not been preserved in Grigorovič' manuscript.
- ²¹ „The Slavic Response to Byzantine Poetry“, XIIe Congrès international des études byzantines, Ochride 1961; cf. Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta, VIII (Beograd, 1963), 157 ff.
- ²² Konstantin und Method (Wiesbaden, 1960), 133.
- ²³ Radovi . . . , 131.
- ²⁴ See Lavrov . . . , 86.
- ²⁵ It is regrettable that Jagić' edition of the Canon to Demetrius and of the Novgorod Menaia in general does not reproduce the punctuation of the manuscript.
- ²⁶ Grigorovič: бесплѣтньихъ; but the Voskresenskij hirmologion presents here the hexasyllabic form бесплѣтньихъ with six neumes instead of the five neumes (omitting one^v) over the shortened adjectival form in Grigorovič' variant. A comparison of the text and notation in both manuscripts discloses the original hirmos pattern of 81 neumes and syllables.
- ²⁷ Some further questions connected with Methodius' Service to Demetrius of Thessalonica will be discussed in our paper on Old Church Slavonic poetry to appear in the Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae: Studies on the Fragmenta Chilandarica Palaeoslavica, II — Fundamental Problems of Early Slavic Music and Poetry.

