

SOLOMON'S CHALICE, THE LATIN SCRIPTURES AND THE BOGOMILS

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The two most significant contributions, in recent years, to a better understanding of the structure and function of 'Solomon's Chalice Story' in *Vita Constantini* (*VC*) are the studies by Ihor Ševčenko (1967) and Riccardo Picchio (1985).

Ševčenko produced an 11th century Greek fragment containing the equivalent of the inscription found in chapter 13 of *VC*, or rather of the first and part of the second 'line' or 'verse' of the inscription.¹ His analysis of both texts brought him to the conclusion (with which I agree) that the Chalice Story, available to the Hagiographer in its short Greek version, was inserted by him into the *VC*, with some additions from an unknown source, the whole as a proof of Constantine's superior intellectual powers.

Picchio's merit has been to trace the provenance of some of these additions and to establish their function in *VC*. He namely pointed out that the third line

¹ I reproduce here the Slavic text, as it appears in Vaillant's 1968 edition, along with the English translation given by Ševčenko (1967), as well as the Greek text published by Ševčenko (1967).

Есть же снче пръваа грань . . . Чаша моя, чаша моя . пророчан, дондеже свѣзда
вѣ пиво бѣдн, Господн пръвеньцѣ бдѣщѣ ношн . По сем же дрѣгаа грань . На
взкѣшеніе Господне сѣтворена дрѣва много . пнн и ѣпнн сѣ веселіемѣ, и възъ-
пнн алнлѣа . И по сем третнна грань . Се князь, и ѣзрнтѣ весь сѣнемѣ слабѣ
его, и давьнѣа цѣсарѣ по сѣдѣ нх .

The first line runs as follows: 'My cup, my cup, prophesy until the star; be unto a draught to the Lord, the first born, keeping vigil at night.' After that, the second line: 'created for the Lord's taste from another wood, drink and be drunken from exultation (in revelry?), and cry out Alleluiah.' And after that, the third line: 'Lo the Prince, and the whole assembly will behold his glory and King David (is) among them.'

Ἐπίγραμμα εἰς τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ Σολομῶντος
Κρατῆρ μου κρατῆρ μου προφήτευσον ἕως οὐ ἀστήρ,
εἰς πόμα ἔσω Κ(υρ)ίου πρωτοτόκου ἐρηγηρόντος ἐν νυκτί·
πνε μέθυσον τρυφῆς, ἀναβόησον ἀλληλοῦια.

of the Slavic text, without Greek equivalent, contained quotations, somewhat corrupted and contaminated, from the Old Testament (Isaiah 35:2 and Ezekiel 34:24), which prophesy the triumph of the Messiah – David. These, according to Picchio, were inserted into the *VC* so as to convey the message of the triumph of Christianity, which should be seen in the context of Constantine's imminent mission to the Slavs (chapter 14 of *VC*).

Quite naturally, when dealing with Biblical quotations in texts pertaining to the 'Slavia Orthodoxa' one refers to the Septuagint as source, and that is what Picchio did. However, with respect to the *VC* which, it is generally agreed, was written shortly after the events (i.e. 9th c.)² one should consider also other possibilities. It is doubtful that the author of *VC* had at his disposal all the books of the Old Testament in Slavic, especially those which were not of current liturgical use. The possibility of referring directly to the Hebrew original³, or to Judeo-Greek translations different from the Septuagint such as Aquila⁴, which may be justified for quotations assigned to Constantine himself in his discussions with the Khazars, is hardly relevant for the excerpts without Greek equivalent in the inscription which, it is assumed, were added by the Hagiographer. Assuming that the author of *VC* was a Slav, we are left with one more possibility – Latin.

Thus we read in the beginning of chapter 14 of *VC*, in the letter of Prince Rostislav to Michael, Emperor of Byzance: **ЛРОДЕМЪ НАШИМЪ ПОГАНЬСТВА СА ШТВОЗГШИМЪ И ПО ХРИСТИАНЕСКЪ СА ЗАКОНЪ ДРЪЖАЩИМЪ, ОУЧЕНТЕЛА НЕ ИМАМЪ ТАКОВАГО ИЖЕ БЫ НЫ ВЪ СВОИ РАЗЪИКЪ ИСТЪЮ ВЪРЪ ХРИСТИАНЬСКЪЮ СКАЗАЛЪ . . .** It may confidently be assumed, even if one does not accept the radical views of O. Kronsteiner 1985, that the Slavs mentioned in the letter, already christianized, possessed the Scriptures in Latin. A. Vaillant, though he was of the view that the *VC* was originally written in Greek, albeit by Slavs, namely by disciples of Methodius (1968, IIe partie p. 25), made use of the Latin Vulgate to point out Biblical quotations in *VC* for which he found no equivalent in the Septuagint.⁵ Other scholars, too, found traces of Latin sources in the *VC* (e. g. M. V. Anastos 1954).

There is much to be gained by adopting a similar approach to the inscription on Solomon's Chalice, and namely to the parts of it which do not figure in the

² A separate and much debated question is of course *where* the *VC* was written. Three locations are proposed: Great-Moravia, Rome and Ohrid. For an extensive, but far from impartial discussion, see Angelov and Kodov 1973:5ff.

³ Cf. Vaillant 1968, II:32, note 9 to chapter 12.

⁴ Aquila is expressly mentioned by Constantine as source of one of his quotations. See Vaillant 1968, II:29, note 17 to chapter 9.

⁵ Thus, for instance, note 45 to chapter 10 (1968, II:30).

Greek text produced by Ševčenko. Thus, with regard to the third line of the inscription, Picchio (1985:144-146) explains the wording of the quotations as follows:

И СЕ КНАЗЪ И ОУЗРИТЬ (ЗРИТЬ) ВЕСЬ СЗНЕМЪ (СОБОРЪ)
 СЛАВОУ ЕГО И ДАВИДЪ ЦАРЬ (ЦЕСАРЬ) ПОСРЕДЪ НЯЪ.

These words are quotations from: (a) Is. 35:2: »and my people shall see the glory of the Lord« (Septuagint: »καὶ ὁ λαός μου ὄψεται τὴν δόξαν κυρίου«); (b) Ezek. 34:24: »and I, the Lord, will be to them a God and David a prince in the midst of them« (Septuagint: »καὶ ἐγὼ κύριος ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ Δαυὶδ ἄρχων ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν.« Cf. also Ezek. 37:24,25).

It is clear that the Slavonic text contains a mistake. The initial words, **И СЕ КНАЗЪ**, do not belong to the text of Is. 35:2. They belong, instead, to the text of Ezek. 34:24. If we change their place according to their Biblical equivalence, we obtain the following reading:

(Is. 35:2) И ОУЗРИТЬ ВЕСЬ СЗНЕМЪ СЛАВОУ ЕГО
 καὶ ὄψεται ὁ λαός μου τὴν δόξαν κυρίου

(Ez. 34:24) И СЕ КНАЗЪ И ДАВИДЪ ЦАРЬ ПОСРЕДЪ НЯЪ
 καὶ ἐγὼ κύριος. ... καὶ Δαυὶδ ἄρχων ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

As to Is. 35:2, the non-literal rendering of »my people« (ὁ λαός μου) with **ВЕСЬ СЗНЕМЪ** may result from some scribe-compiler's or author's adapting this citation to a particular context. The Slavonic term **СЗНЕМЪ (СОБОРЪ)**, in any case is an exact conceptual equivalent of »God's people«. As to **ЕГО**, it is clear that it refers to »the Lord« (κυρίου).

In the Slavonic version of the citation from Ezek. 34:24, the equivalences **КНАЗЪ**-κύριος and **ЦАРЬ**-ἄρχων appear to be somewhat inaccurate. By inverting the position of these terms we would obtain a clearer reading.« (Picchio 1985:145).

It seems to me, however, that there is a less complex explanation than the one proposed by Picchio for the equivalence **ЦАРЬ**-ἄρχων. If we refer to the Latin version of the three verses from Ezekiel mentioned by Picchio, we read:

Ez. 34:24 et servus meus David *princeps* in medio eorum

Ez. 37:24 et servus meus David *rex* super eos.

Ez. 37:25 et David servus meus *princeps* eorum in perpetuum.

Here the Vulgate, like the Hebrew original, has twice *prince* and once *king*, while the Septuagint has in all three instances ἄρχων. As for the first part of the line, **И ОУЗРИТЬ. ВЕСЬ СЗНЕМЪ СЛАВОУ ЕГО**, it looks to me much

closer textually to Psalms 96(97):6 than to Is. 35:2. Thus, in the Psalterium Sinaiticum we read:

І ВІДѢШІА ВЪСІ ЛЮДИЕ СЛАВѢ ЕГО.

Even more significant would be the profit drawn from the comparison with the Vulgate, if applied to the part of the second line of the inscription which does not figure in Ševčenko's Greek text, **НА ВЪКОУШЕНІЕ ГОСПОДНЕ СЪТВОРЕНА ДРѢВА ИНОГО.**

The source of **НА ВЪКОУШЕНІЕ ГОСПОДНЕ** is still unclear to me, but the expression **СЪТВОРЕНА ДРѢВА ИНОГО** is, in my view, an allusion to a Biblical verse. This expression has been interpreted (e. g. by Lehr-Spławiński 1959, Grivec and Tomšič 1960, Ševčenko 1967, Vaillant 1968 and Udalъcova 1981) as meaning 'made from another wood' without further commentary. My proposal is to take **ИНЪ** as 'one', which is the primary⁶ meaning of this word. It is attested mainly in compounds such as **ИНОРОГЪ**, **ИНОДѢШНО**, **ИНОКЪ**, **ИНОГДА** etc. (cf. *Slovník Jazyka Staroslověnského*, s. v. **ИНЪ**; Vaillant 1950, t. I :143) but rarely also as a separate word. Thus, in Codex Vilnius # 262,⁷ in the part of Daniel which, unlike the rest of the codex, contains not a 15-16th century Jewish translation from the Hebrew into (White?) Ruthenian, but a rather faithful rendering (with some theologically justifiable exceptions) of what I. Evseev considers (1905: XLVII) to be the Methodian⁸ translation of the Theodotion version of Daniel, we read (Dan. 2:31): **И СЕ ШЕРАЗЪ ИНЪ ВЕЛІИ** which renders the Greek *καὶ ἰδὸν εἰκῶν μία μεγάλη*.

Assuming that **ИНЪ** does indeed mean 'one', we come up with an allusion to a part of a Biblical verse which figures in the Vulgate, but is omitted in the Septuagint. Thus we read in Ezekiel 37:19 (quoting from the 1914 edition published in Vienna by the British Bible Society, which is very close to the Hebrew original): **то скажи им: такъ говорить господь Богъ: вотъ, я возьму дерево Иосифово, которое въ рукѣ Ефрѣма и соединившихся съ нимъ колѣнь израилевыхъ, и приложу ихъ къ нему, къ дереву Иуды, и сдѣлаю ихъ однимъ деревомъ и они в рукѣ моей будутъ одно.** The *underlined* words are rendered in the Vulgate

⁶It is immaterial for the present discussion whether **ИНЪ** 'one' and **ИНЪ** 'other' are etymologically identical or not. For the different views, see A. Meillet 1902:158-9, 433-4; M. Vasmer, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, s. v. **ИНОИ**; F. Копеѣну 1980:313-320.

⁷An edition of the Five Scrolls from this Codex, by M. Altbauer, is now in press. For previous works on 262, see list of publications of M. Altbauer in *Slavica Hierosolymitana* 7 (1985).

⁸However, in the 1905 edition itself, unlike in the introduction Evseev does not use # 262 at all. For verse 2:31, his 'Methodian' text reads: **И СЕ ТѢЛО ЕДИНО ВЕЛИЕ.** Evseev provides the 262 text of Daniel in its totality in a separate study, 1902.

as: *et faciam eas in lignum unum*, but they do not appear in the Septuagint. The Hebrew word 'eš, signifying 'tree, wood, stick' which appears in this verse in the three instances where the Russian has дерево, is rendered in the Vulgate systematically by *lignum*, whereas in the Septuagint we have φηλή, ῥάβδος and once, as said, an omission.

The significance of the words 'I shall make them into one tree' fits in nicely with the Biblical allusions in line three of the inscription. Both refer to the prophecy in Ezekiel 37:15-28, about the future unification of God's congregation in one kingdom, with one king – David – the Messiah. In the context of the *VC* this should of course be interpreted as a prophecy about the Universal Church under the rule of Christ.

The interpretation of ДРЪВА ИНОГО as 'one tree' is profitable not only on the level of the canonical text and context of *VC*, but also on the level of the apocryphal tradition with which 'Solomon's Chalice Story' is linked through exegesis. The 'Story' occurs, as it is known, not only in *VC* but also in a number of manuscripts, most of them East-Slavic⁹, »either as separate narratives, or within an anti-Jewish polemical tract called *Sayings of the Holy Prophets*. Of the two versions, one agrees with chapter thirteen of *VC* almost verbatim, while the other, and prevailing one is expanded: it appends an exegesis, *tolkovanie*, to each of the three lines of the inscription« (Ševčenko 1967:1807-8). The regular exegesis of the expression СЗТВОРЕНА ДРЪВА ИНОГО is that it refers to the Cross. Thus, in Tsar Ivan Aleksander's 1348 *Sbornik* (Kuev 1981:385) we read: ДРЪВО ИНО ЕСТЬ КРЪСТЪ. А ВЪКОУШЕННЕ РАСПАТНЕ.

In my view, the Cross, 'made of one tree'¹⁰ is preferable to 'made of the other tree' although both interpretations make sense in the context of the apocryphal tradition. Thus, 'of the other tree' could be understood in the context of a dualistic approach, such as that of the Bogomils, who believed that the Cross was the handi-

⁹Not all of them, as Ševčenko would have it. Thus, the 'Story' appears, with a *tolkovanie*, amid a group of 'Questions and Answers', some of them apocryphal, on folios 209v. – 210r. of Tsar Ivan Aleksander's *Sbornik* (Kuev 1981:380-392).

¹⁰It is not evident what the participle СЗТВОРЕНА' refers to. If we take it for a Nsgf, then it has to refer to УАША, which is appropriate formally, but not semantically, for the cup was made, as indicated in the beginning of the 'Story', not of wood but ОТЪ КАМЕНИ ГА ДРАГАГО. Dr. Hugh Olmsted, during the discussion which followed the presentation of the present paper at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, proposed that СЗТВОРЕНА be interpreted as Gsgm/n, thus referring to ВЪКОУШЕННЕ. This interpretation seems to be supported by a variant in one of the mss. (Picchio 1985:136) which has here СЗТВОРЕНА-ГО.

work of the Devil and instructed their followers to hate it and not to venerate it. In priest Cosmas's *Sermon against the Heretics* (Begunov 1973:306) we read: **О КРЕСТѢ ЖЕ ГОСПОДНИ СИЦЕ БЛАЖНАЩЕ СЯ ГЛАГОЛЮТЬ: КАКО СЯ ЕМОУ ЕСТЬ КЛАНАТИ? СЫНА БО БОЖІА НА НЕМЪ РАСПАША ЖИДОВЕ, ДА ВРАЖДА ЕСТЬ ПАЧЕ БОГѢ КРЕСТЪ. ТѢМЖЕ НЕНАВИДѢТИ ЕГО С-ВОГА СИ ОУУАТЬ, А НЕ КЛАНАТИ СЯ . . .** Traces of this tradition are to be found in Slavic versions of the Story about the Cross. The tree from which it was made is said to stem from seeds planted in Paradise by Satanael (cf. e. g. Tichonravov 1863:306). The expression 'made from the other tree' would thus reflect a dualistic vision of the Universe, in which everything stems either from God's good 'Tree of Life' or from that other 'Tree of Death' which is the Devil's (Cf. V. Arnold-Döben 1978:8ff.)¹¹

Yet **СЪТВОРЕНА ДРѢВА ИНОГО** makes even more sense in the context of the apocryphal tradition if interpreted 'made from one tree'. In fact many of the stories about the Cross contain a motif of three seeds, or rods, being miraculously *united and growing into a single tree*, the tree of which eventually the Cross was made. This motif appears in Slavic legends about the Cross,¹² as well as in Cathar legends, some of them in books known to have been imported from Bulgaria (cf. R. Nelli 1957:9-10, 1964:140-147; E. Bozóky 1980:68-69, 146-148).

To conclude, the interpretation of **СЪТВОРЕНА ДРѢВА ИНОГО** as 'made of one tree' gives us a better understanding of the inscription in chapter 13 of the *VC*, in that it offers a common source for the two lines without Greek equivalent, namely Ezekiel's prophecy about the unification of God's assembly under a single ruler – David – the Messiah. This interpretation also provides some thematic clues which point to the affinity of the 'Chalice Story' in *VC* to apocryphal literature of dualistic nature, although the principal questions of the chronology, geography, direction and motivation of this affinity still remain unclear. Finally, this interpretation once again reminds us, linguists and philologists, of the necessity to take Latin language and texts into consideration when dealing with the earliest layers of Slavic literacy.

¹¹For another possible, though remote link of 'other' with Hebr. *aḥer* and the Sethian term *ἀλλογενής*, see Stroumsa 1981.

¹²See, e. g. Tichonravov 1863:309
и израсте древо изъ вѣнца. и бѣ въ велико висотою. и прѣвѣдано растомъ. на три растеше и в едно стораше.

See also Porfir'ev 1877:96, 102; Gaster 1887:36-7; Quinn 1962:51-56.

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Summary

The paper proposes a new interpretation for the second line of the inscription on Solomon's Chalice, mentioned in chapter 13 of the *Vita Constantini*. The interpretation of **СЪТВОРЕНА ДРЪВА ИНОГО** as 'made from one tree', instead of 'made of another wood' hints at Ezekiel 37, i. e. the prophecy suggested by R. Picchio as source of the quotations in line 3 of the inscription. However, this linkage requires that the source of the quotations is not the Septuagint but the Vulgate, since the corresponding expression in Ez. 37:19 *et faciam eas in lignum unum* is missing from the LXX.

On the non-canonical level, the 'Chalice Story' is shown to contain elements of dualistic (Bogomil) origin, or, at least, elements which were in time interpreted as such.

The possibility of Latin and of Bogomil sources in the 'Chalice Story' makes it desirable to reconsider the time and place of the composition (and translation?) of the *VC*, and in particular whether the 'Chalice Story' was an integral part of it from the beginning.

Sažetak

SALAMUNOV KALEŽ, LATINSKA BIBLIJA I BOGUMILI

U ovom članku autor predlaže novu interpretaciju drugog retka natpisa na Salamunovu kaležu koji se spominje u trinaestom poglavlju *Vita Constantini*. Interpretacija **СЪТВОРЕНА ДРЪВА ИНОГО** kao »načinjen od jednog stabla«, umjesto »načinjen od drugog drveta«, upućuje na 37. glavu proroka Ezekielia, tj. na proročanstvo koje R. Picchio smatra izvorom citata u trećem retku natpisa. To, međutim, znači da izvor tog teksta nije Septuaginta, već Vulgata budući da odgovarajući tekst iz Ez 37,19 *et faciam eas in lignum unum* u LXX nedostaje.

Autor pokazuje da priča o kaležu na nekanonskom nivou sadrži elemente dualističkog (bogumilskog) podrijetla, ili bar elemente koji su s vremenom bili interpretirani kao takvi.

Zbog mogućnosti latinskih i bogumilskih izvora u Priči o kaležu, trebalo bi preispitati vrijeme i mjesto nastanka (i prijevoda?) VC, a posebno je pitanje da li je priča o kaležu od početka bila njezin sastavni dio.

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