

## CONSTANTINE PAPOULIDIS

### THE BAPTISM OF THE RUSSIANS IN THE IVIRON CODICES 1317 AND 1319 OF THE 18TH CENTURY

The baptism of the Russians has somewhat occupied, and occupies, the attention of historians, theologians and philologists who study Byzantine, Russian and Balkan matters. The text of two 18th century codices belonging to Mount Athos, which we think the researcher into such subjects would find it worthwhile taking the trouble to see, is presented in this paper.

The first manuscript headed: «Περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἐχριστιάνησαν οἱ Ῥῶσοι» (= “Concerning when and how the Russians were baptised”) belongs to Iviron Monastery codex 1317 ff. 270-271 (Lambros 5437), has been described by Spyr. P. Lambros<sup>1</sup>, and belongs to the 18th century. *Beginning*: «Περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἐχριστιάνησαν οἱ Ῥῶσοι» (= “Concerning when and how the Russians were baptised...”). *Ending*: «...οὗς ὁ Κεδρινὸς ὀνομάζει Ῥώσους» (= “Cedrenus calls them Russians”).

The second manuscript headed: «Περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἐχριστιάνησαν οἱ Ῥῶσοι» (= “Concerning when and how the Russians were baptised”) also belongs to a codex of the Monastery of Iviron—1319 (ff. 165-166) (Lambros 5439), has been described by Spyr. P. Lambros<sup>2</sup>, too, and again belongs to the 18th century. *Beginning*: «Περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἐχριστιάνησαν οἱ Ῥῶσοι» (= “Concerning when and how the Russians were baptised”) *Ending*: «ἄλλοι δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτοὺς Ῥοξωλάνους» (“...others call them Roxalanoi”).

What has to be observed by the researcher is that in spite of all their insignificant variations these two 18th century manuscripts contain as a central theme the miracle of the saving of the Gospel from the fire, known to specialists as the basic part of the narrative of the Russians’ baptism in Vladimir’s time, in the books written by Constantine Porphyrogenitus<sup>3</sup>, Cedrenus<sup>4</sup>, Zonaras<sup>5</sup>, Michaelis Glycas<sup>6</sup> and, later in Western Europe, Anselmus

1. Spyr. P. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, II, Cambridge 1900, pp. 263-265.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-268.

3. “Historia de vita et rebus gestis Basilio in clyti imperatoris...” in *Theophanes continuatus*, Bonnae 1839, 97, pp. 342-344.

4. *Georgios Cedrenus*, II, Bonnae 1839, pp. 242-243.

5. Ioannis Zonarae, *Epitomae Historiarum Libri XVIII*, III, Bonnae 1897, VII, 10, 26-35, pp. 435-436.

6. Michaelis Glycae, *Annales*, Bonnae 1836, p. 553.

Bandouri(us)<sup>7</sup>.

The narrative about the baptism of the Russians was very late in becoming known, as much by the Greeks as by the Russians. The Byzantine texts could have been more numerous and richer in this subject. This narrative was presented, after the above mentioned Byzantine writers, in Western Europe when the Benedictine monk, Anselmus Bandouri(us) found the Parisian codex 4432 and published it in 1711 in Paris<sup>8</sup>, in 1779 in Venice<sup>9</sup>, and later in the Bonn editions<sup>10</sup>. From the Bonn editions the Russian historians knew and took the text of the Parisian codex 4432, as well as the observations of Anselmus Bandouri(us)<sup>11</sup>. And whereas the historian N. M. Karamzin citing the above text of the Parisian codex 4432, ascribes to it great historical importance<sup>12</sup>, the other historians, chiefly the ecclesiastical ones as A. A. Dmitrievskij<sup>13</sup> mentions, and especially E. E. Golubinskij, do not attribute any scientific value to the content of the Parisian codex 4432<sup>14</sup>. A. A. Dmitrievskij agrees with N.M. Karamzin and disagrees with E. E. Golubinskij<sup>15</sup>. A. A. Dmitrievskij wrote about this in 1891. Later, in 1901, E. E. Golubinskij, in the second edition of his work, referring again to the scientific value of the

7. "De Animadversiones in Constantini Porphyrogeniti, Libros de Thematibus et de Administrando Imperio", Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematibus et de Administrando Imperio*, III, Bonnae 1840, pp. 358-364.

8. The Greek text of the narrative with a Latin translation was published by Anselmus Bandouri(us) in "Animadversiones in Constantini Porphyrogeniti, Libros de Thematibus et de Administrando Imperio". In the Paris edition of the manuscripts of the Byzantine historians the "Animadversiones" of Anselmus Bandouri(us) form a special section in *Imperium Orientale*, II edition, 1711, pp.112-116.

9. The "Animadversiones" of Anselmus Bandouri(us) in the Venice editions in *Imperium Orientale*, II, in 1729, pp. 62-65.

10. In the Bonn editions the "Animadversiones" of Anselmus Bandouri(us) were published as a supplement to "De Animadversiones in Constantini Porphyrogeniti, Libros de Thematibus et de Administrando Imperio", Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematibus et de Administrando Imperio*, III, Bonnae 1840, pp. 271-378. (See also reference no. 7).

11. For more see W. Regel, *Analecta Byzantino-Russica*, Peterburg 1891, pp. XIX-XX.

12. N. M. Karamzin, *Istorija rossijskogo Gosudarstvo* (= History of the Russian State), I, Peterburg 1818, p. 170, note no. 447 and p. 212.

13. A. A. Dmitrievskij, "Otzv o brošjure I. Sakkeliona, izdannoj na grečeskom jazyke: "Točnaja istorija, kakim obrazom kreščen byl russkij narod..." (= Critical Review of the booklet as: "The accurate narrative, about the way in which the Russian people were baptised..."), *Trudy Kievskoj Duhovnoj Akademii*, 1891, Vol. 6, p. 336.

14. E. E. Golubinskij, *Istorija russoj Cerkvi* (= History of the Russian Church), I, 1, Moskow 1880, p. 116, note no. I and p. 216 and following.

15. "...Ne smotrija na eto nevysokoe mnemie naših cerkovnyh istorikov o naučnom interese razsmatrivaemoj povesti..." A. A. Dmitrievskij, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

content of the Parisian codex 4432, denies the existence of any scientific merit in this text<sup>16</sup> and maintains further that the narrative of the Parisian codex 4432 was invented by some Greek, and, examining the Greek sources mentioned in the baptism of the Russians, completes his remarks by saying that since there existed Greeks capable of inventing such texts as the contents of the Parisian codex 4432 there is no doubt that there would have been some other Greek who devised “The life of Vladimir”<sup>17</sup>. However, the well-known Byzantinologist W. Regel does not agree with E. E. Golubinskij and maintains that the writer of the text of the Parisian codex 4432 must be Russian<sup>18</sup>.

In the meanwhile in 1891 researcher I. Sakkelion published from the Patmos codex 634<sup>19</sup> the text: «Διήγησις ἀκριβῆς ὅπως ἐβαπτίσθη τὸ τῶν Ρώσων ἔθνος» (“= *The precise story of the baptism of the Russian nation*”)<sup>20</sup>. In Petersburg in the same year W. Regel<sup>21</sup> published the same text as that I. Sakkelion had published. Let it be noted that in the second edition of his work in 1901 E. E. Golubinskij mentions *only* the edition of W. Regel<sup>22</sup>, and does not appear to be acquainted with the edition of the Greek I. Sakkelion which came out in 1891 in Athens in the same year as W. Regel’s work. The justification that the edition of the Greek I. Sakkelion came out in Athens, far from Moscow, cannot stand up since, as was seen, in the same year, 1891, A. A. Dmitrievskij made the edition of I. Sakkelion known to the Russian academic world in his book review<sup>23</sup>.

The edition of I. Sakkelion has as much as that of W. Regel’s edition of what is absent from the beginning of the Parisian codex 4432.

Finally, we note that there exists also another pertinent manuscript at Mount Athos but we shall not be concerned with this since it is a copy of the text which I. Sakkelion published<sup>24</sup>.

16. “Skazanie ne iměet soveršeno nikakogo istoričeskogo značenija...” E. E. Golubinskij, *Istorija russkoj Cerkvi* (= History of the Russian Church), I, 1, Moscow<sup>2</sup> 1901, p. 248.

17. E. E. Golubinskij, *Ibid.*, p. 252.

18. W. Regel, *op. cit.*, pp. XXIII-XXIV.

19. I. Sakkelion, *Πατμιακὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (= The Patmos Library), Athens 1890, p. 254.

20. *Διήγησις ἀκριβῆς ὅπως ἐβαπτίσθη τὸ τῶν Ρώσων ἔθνος· ἐκ πατμιακοῦ χειρογράφου* (= The accurate narration of how the Russian nation was baptised, from the Patmos manuscript), Athens, 1891, pp. 23.

21. W. Regel, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. XIX-XXXII and text pp. 44-51.

22. “...naš russkij učenyj V. E. Regel’ našol’v odnoj rukopisi Patmosskago monastyrja...” E. E. Golubinskij, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

23. A. A. Dmitrievskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-340.

24. See codex 669 of Panteleimon Monastery Lambros 6176, *op. cit.*, II, p. 412.: “F. 29r: «Διήγησις περὶ τῆς βαπτίσεως τῶν Ῥώσων» (= Narrative about the baptism of the Russians). Copy of Amphilokhios 1890 from codex XΛΔ [of the Patmos Library] I. Sakkelion,

Let us now look at several probabilities according to which the writing or copying of the two narratives about the baptism of the Russians, which are presented here and which belong to the manuscript tradition of Mount Athos as was mentioned, could have been possible. The two manuscripts which we are examining derive from the ecclesiastical circles of the 18th century for whom the Russian Empire became the protective power in the consciousness of the Greek world, seeing that there was a common religion and doctrine between them<sup>25</sup>.

Another observation which could be made refers to the monastery to which the two manuscripts belong, the Iviron monastery of Mount Athos, where nothing else but the names: "Georgians", "Georgia", "Russia" and the properties of the monastery in the Russian Empire<sup>26</sup>, very frequently, recalled the great power of the north that shared the same religion. Besides, we know that in the 18th century the connections the monastery of Iviron had with Russia were greater than those of all the other monasteries of Mount Athos, even of the monastery of Panteleimon<sup>27</sup>. So great were the ties between

*Πατμιακή Βιβλιοθήκη* (= Patmos Library)..., p. 254." The codex is paper, it is of octavo size 0,225×0,18 and FF. 91 and is of the 19th century. Copied by the Patmiot, Amphilokhios. See Spyr. P. Lambros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 571.

25. Basically, a very detailed study of the knowledge the enslaved Greek world had in the 18th century, and even in the 19th century, of Russian military successes and failures would not only be very interesting but would be of immense assistance in the study of public opinion in the Greek world towards the co-religionist Empire of the Czars. For this study the material published will have to be studied as much as that unpublished, material which is so abundant in Greece and USSR.

26. *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov, Pervoe sobranie* (= Complete Collection of Laws, first collection), I, No 84 [1652-1653]. A. Natroev, *Iverskij monastyr' na Afone v Turcii na odnom iz vystupov Halkidonskago* (sic) *poluostrova* (= Iviron Monastery of Athos in Turkey on one of the promontories of the Halkidikian peninsula), Tiflis 1909, pp. 410-411; A.-E. Tachiaos, *Τὸ Γεωργιανικὸν ζήτημα (1868-1918). Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς ρωσικῆς πολιτικῆς ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ὄρει* (= The Georgian Question 1868-1918: Contribution to the history of Russian policy in Mount Athos), Thessaloniki 1962, p. 52 (Institute for Balkan Studies, 54). V. Langlois, *Le Mont Athos et ses monastères*, Paris 1867, p. 75. E. Amand de Mendieta, *La presqu'île des caloyeres: Le Mont Athos*, (Brussels), Desclée de Brouwer (1955), p. 161. I. Smolitsch, "Le Mont Athos et la Russie", *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos, 963-1963. Études et Mélanges*, I, Chevotogne 1963, p. 287, note 15. P. K. Christou-Th. M. Provatakis, *Τὸ Ἁγιὸν Ὄρος (Ἱστορία-μνημεῖα-ζωή)* (= Mount Athos (History-Monuments-Life)), Thessaloniki 1970, p. 53 (Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies). I. P. Mamalakis, *Τὸ Ἁγιὸν Ὄρος (Ἁθῶς) διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων* (= The Holy Mountain (Athos) through the centuries) Thessaloniki 1971, p. 301 and p. 459 (Publications of the Society for Macedonian Studies-Macedonian Library, 33).

27. It is well known that the monastery of Panteleimon on Mount Athos was presented

the monastery of Iviron and the Russian Empire in the 18th century that in the 19th century the Russians wanted to seize the monastery, chiefly, invoking the ties in the past with the Russian Empire<sup>28</sup>.

In the sphere of religious bonds the further fact must not be ignored that in the 17th century, i.e. a century before the writing of the two manuscripts we are examining, was written the «Ἱστορία» (= *History*) of Dionysios of Iviron<sup>29</sup>.

on the international stage as “Russian” only in the second half of the 19th century. See A.-E. Tachiaos, “Controverse entre Grecs et Russes à l’Athos”, *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos, 963-1963, Études et Melanges*, II, Chevetogne 1964, p. 177. The well-known article by A. Solov’iev (“Istorija ruskago monašestva na Afone”, *Zapiski Russkago Naučnago Instituta v Belgrade* 7 (1932) 137-156; the same article in French: “Histoire du monastère Russe au Mont Athos”, *Byzantion* 8 (1933) 213-238) presents the Russians at Mount Athos from the 11th century. It is true that any objective researcher would never deny the sporadic presence of Russian monastic elements on Mount Athos in the 11th century. But such a researcher could never accept that that presence of Russian monastic elements in the 11th century, or in the 12th century, too, had the same aim as was manifested in Russian foreign ecclesiastical policy in the 19th century.

28. See chiefly A.-E. Tachiaos, *Τὸ Γεωργιανικὸν ζήτημα (1868-1918). Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς ρωσικῆς πολιτικῆς ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ὄρει* (= The Georgian Question 1868-1918: Contribution to the history of Russian policy in Mount Athos), Thessaloniki 1962, Institute for Balkan Studies, 54). By the same author, “Ἀνέκδοτα ἑλληνικὰ καὶ ρωσικὰ ἔγγραφα περὶ τοῦ γεωργιανικοῦ ζητήματος” (= “Unpublished Greek and Russian documents concerning the Georgian question”), *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς* 17 (1972) 215-274 (The Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki).

29. «Ἱστορία, ἣτοι διήγησις περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν Ρωσσῶν· πόθεν κατάγονται οἱ ἀρχηγοὶ αὐτῶν καὶ περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἔλαβον τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα, καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου ἁποστόλου Ἀνδρέου, ὅπου ἦλθε σωματικῶς εἰς τὴν Ρωσίαν καὶ ἐκήρυξε τὸ θεῖον κήρυγμα· μεταφρασθὲν δὲ καὶ συλλεχθὲν ἐν συντομίᾳ ἐκ τῶν σλαβικῶν βιβλίων παρὰ ἐλαχίστου Διονυσίου ἀρχιμανδρίτου, τοῦ ἐκ τῆς ἱερᾶς καὶ βασιλικῆς μονῆς τῶν Ἰβήρων τῆς ἐν τῷ ἁγιωνύμῳ ὄρει τοῦ Ἁθῶνος, ὄντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν περίφημον καὶ βασιλεύουσαν μεγαλόπολιν Μοσχοβίαν, ἐν ἔτει σωτηρίῳ ἀχζη= 1688» (= History, namely a narrative of the beginnings of the Russians: from whence their leaders came and concerning when and how the holy baptism was received, and about the holy missionary Andrew who came in body to Russia and preached the divine sermon: translated and put together in brief from the Slavonic books by the most humble Archimandrite Dionysios, of the holy and royal monastery of Iviron of the holy mountain of Athos, residing, in the famous and reigning metropolis of Moscow, in the year of the Saviour, 1688”). For the codexes in which of the Ivironite Dionysios exists see V. N. Benešvič, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum graecorum qui in monasterio Sanctae Catharinae in Monte Sina asseruantur*, I, Petersburg, 1911, p. 488. Spyr. P. Lambros, *op. cit.*, II, p. 46, A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (= Library of Jerusalem), IV, Petersburg 1899, p. 37 and 306. M. I. Gedeon, *Ἁθῶς, Ἀναμνήσεις-Ἐγγραφα-Σημειώσεις* (= Athos, Recollections-Documents-Notes), Constantinople 1885, pp. 214-215. Ch. G. Patrinnellis, «Διονύσιος Ἰβηρίτης-μεταφραστὴς τῆς «Χρο-

The historical events of the 18th century form another element: basically the historical events concerning the connections of the Greeks and Russians in the Balkans in the 18th century and bounded by the Treaties of Karlovits (Karlovci) (1699) and Jassy (1792). The descent of the Russians to the Black Sea, which was a matter of vital importance for the Russians, was connected with the hopes and destiny of Hellenism. Of course, as a contemporary Greek historian mentions, Peter the Great was not only interested in descending to the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea because he was moved by historical recollections of the past but also on account of his economic needs<sup>30</sup>. The splendour of Peter the Great reached its apogee in the eyes of all the Orthodox world when he defeated Charles XII of Sweden in the battle of Poltava in 1709. The first disappointment, and also that of the Balkan peoples subject to the Turkish yoke, came in the Russo-Turkish war of 1711 when Russia was defeated by the Turks at Stanislavt and lost the outlet from the Russian Empire to the Black Sea. However, in the meanwhile, in spite of the fact that Peter the Great turned towards the Baltic Sea<sup>31</sup>, the Greeks did not lose hope that one day they would be liberated by the Russians<sup>32</sup>. Later, the Orloffs gave the Greeks the same disappointment as did the European Great Powers<sup>33</sup>, but, in spite of these things, with the appearance of Catherine the Great's<sup>34</sup> *Eastern Policy* the Greeks' faith in the foreign policy of the Russian Empire was revived and they both believed in and worked in favour of the Russian ties<sup>35</sup>. Besides, there is to be observed in the last quarter of the 18th century the strongest flow of Greeks emigrating to Southern Russia<sup>36</sup>. The treaties between the Russians and the Turks of Kiutsuk-Kainard-

νογραφίας του Δωροθέου» εις τήν ρωσικήν και μητροπολίτης Οδύγροβλαχίας» (= Dionysios the Ivironite-translator of "The chronography of Dorotheos" into Russian and bishop of Hungaro-Wallachia"), *Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 32 (1963) 317.

30. Ap. E. Vacalopoulos, «Ὁ Μέγας Πέτρος καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες κατὰ τὰ τέλη τοῦ 17. καὶ τὶς ἀρχὲς τοῦ 18. αἰ.» (= "Peter the Great and the Greeks at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th"), *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς* 11 (1971) 247-259 (The Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki). By the same author, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ* (= The History of Modern Hellenism), Vol. 4, Thessaloniki 1973, p. 69.

31. P. Kovalesky, *Manuel d'Histoire Russe*, Paris, Payot, 1948, p. 191.

32. For more see Ap. E. Vacalopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ*, Vol. 4, pp. 73-75.

33. For more see C. Papoulidis, "Le patriarche Oecumenique Sérapheim II et les Russes" *Balkan Studies* 17 (1976) 59-66.

34. For more see V. O. Ključevskij, "Imperatrix Ekaterina II 1729-1796" (= Empress Catherine, II (1729-1796)), V. O. Ključevskij, *Socinenija v Vos'mi tomah*, tom 5 (= Work of V. O. Ključevskij in 8 volumes, Vol. 5), Moscow 1958, pp. 309-371.

35. See C. Papoulidis, *op. cit.*

36. Ap. E. Vacalopoulos, «Ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς τῆς διασπορᾶς» (= The Hellenism of the

ji 1774 and of Constantinople 1788 also encouraged the hopes of the Greeks that they would be helped to be liberated by the “blond race”. Unfortunately, the 18th century closes with the treaty of Jassy (1792) between the Russians and the Turks whereby in some way the Russian foreign policy and strategy repeated the abandonment of dependents to the Sublime Porte as also happened under the Orloffs in 1770<sup>37</sup>.

In the context of the sequence of the events in the 18th century: when in Russia had started the revival of the idea of the formation of the Byzantine Empire by the Russians<sup>38</sup>, the naming of Catherine’s grandson Constantine, and the presence of the Russophile Patriarch Serapheim II<sup>39</sup> in the religious circles of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople as well as in Mount Athos, is presented by the above manuscripts the event reminding of the baptism of the Russians by the Greeks. Thus arose the hope that the Russians might liberate the Greeks from the Ottoman rule, since they owed much to them, even their baptism<sup>40</sup> and their initiation into Christianity.

Diaspora), *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, Vol. II, Athens, (Ekdotiki Athinon) (1975), pp. 237-238, and G. L. Arš, “Grečeskaja emigracija v Rossiju v konce XVIII-načale XIX v.” (= The Greek emigration to Eussia from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century), *Sovetskaja Ėtnografija*, 1969, Vol. 3, pp. 85-95.

37. For more see Ap. E. Vacalopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ*, Vol. 4, p. 578 and following, and Ap. E. Vacalopoulos-Stef. I. Papadopoulos, «Ἡ στροφή τῶν Ἑλλήνων πρὸς τοὺς Ρώσους» (= The turning of the Greeks towards Russia”), *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, vol. II, pp. 51-97.

38. V. O. Ključevskij, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

39. See C. Papoulidis, *op. cit.*

40. See the exhaustive analysis of the baptism of the Russians in the years of Vladimir together with the political disagreements in Byzantine-Russian relations, in A. Popper’s study, “The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus’: Byzantine-Russian Relations between 986-89”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976) 195-244.

We publish below the critical edition of the two manuscripts from codexes 1317 and 1319 of Iviron Monastery of Mount Athos. We warmly thank the Fathers of Iviron Monastery and Mr Gregory Stathis for the photographing of the texts.

*Sigla*

A: Codex Iviriensis 1317, saec. XVIII, ff. 270-271.

B: Codex Iviriensis 1319, saec. XVIII, ff. 165-166.

Περὶ τοῦ πότε καὶ πῶς ἐχριστιάνησαν οἱ Ῥῶσοι.

Εἰς τοὺς χρόνους τῆς βασιλείας Βασιλείου τοῦ Μακεδόνοιο, ἔστειλαν οἱ Σέρβοι, οἱ καὶ Χρωβάται καλούμενοι, ἀποκρισαρίους, ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ δηλαδὴ εὐρίσκωνται ὑποτεταγμένοι τῷ βασιλεῖ, καθὼς καὶ οἱ Βούλγαροι καὶ ἐχριστιάνησαν καὶ κατετροπώθησαν, καὶ Ἑβραῖοι πολλοὶ ἐχριστιάνησαν, τῷ ζ' καὶ η' ἔτει τοῦ Βασιλείου διὰ τὰ δῶρα ἅπερ αὐτοῖς ἐχειρίσατο, καὶ παρεκίνει αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν εὐσέβειαν. Ἄλλὰ καὶ οἱ Ῥῶσοι ἐχριστιάνησαν, καθὼς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Πορφυρογέννητος, ὅτι μετὰ τὸ φιλιωθῆναι αὐτοὺς μετὰ τοῦ Βασιλείου καὶ συμφωνῆσαι, ἀπεστάλη καὶ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἰγνατίου, ἵνα κατηχήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν χριστιανικὴν πίστην κατὰ τὸ σύνθηρος καὶ λοιπὸν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ Εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις διηγῆσατο αὐτοῖς καὶ τὸ θαῦμα τῶν τριῶν παίδων τῶν μὴ καέντων, ἀλλὰ μεινάντων ἄσινῶν καὶ ἀβλαβῶν ἔνδον ἐν τῇ φλογὶ τῆς καμίνου. Τότε ὁ τοπάρχης ἔκραξε τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ἐὰν μὴ ποιήσῃς καὶ αὐτὸς θαῦμά τι ἐξ ὧν λέγεις, καὶ διηγεῖται τὸ Εὐαγγέλιόν σου, ἡμεῖς παντελῶς οὐ πιστευόμεν σοι. Ὑπέσχετο ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, θαρρῶν εἰς τὰ ἀψευδῆ λόγια τοῦ Σωτῆρος, τοῦ εἰπόντος ὁ πιστεῦν εἰς ἐμέ, τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ κἀκεῖνος ποιήσει καὶ μείζονα τούτων ποιήσει—καὶ γὰρ ἡ σκιά τοῦ Πέτρου ἐθεράπευε κατὰ τὰς Πράξεις τῶν Ἀποστόλων—ὅθεν ὁ Αὐγουστίνος συμπεραίνει καὶ εἰ ἡ σκιά τοῦ Πέτρου ἦν τοσοῦτον ἰαματικὴ, τί ποιήσει ἡ εἰκὼν, τὸ λείψανον καὶ ἡ ἄλυσις αὐτοῦ; λαλήσουσι διαφόροις γλώσσαις, καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἑτέροις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἀποφθέγεσθαι—καθὼς ὁ θεοφάντωρ Βασίλειος ἐποίησε διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐδιδάχθη ὁ Σῦρος Ἐφραὶμ τὴν ἑλληνικὴν διάλεκτον, γινόμε-

2 Μακεδῶνος B || 6-7 τῷ ζ' καὶ η' ἔτει τοῦ βασιλείου διὰ τὰ δῶρα ἅπερ αὐτοῖς ἐχειρίσατο, καὶ παρεκίνει αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν εὐσέβειαν om. A || 8 ἐχριστιάνησαν A || 8-9 τῷ φιλιωθῆναι B || 10 δηδάξῃ B || 14 μινάντων B || 16 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς B || 16-17 διηγῆται A || 21 καὶ om. A.







μενος εὐθὺς θεοδίδακτος.—Ἐζήτησαν οὖν οἱ Ῥῶσοι ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἵνα  
 βάλῃ ἔνδον εἰς τὴν ἀνημμένην φλόγα τοῦ πυρὸς τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον αὐτοῦ,  
 καὶ ἂν μὴ καῖ, πιστεύσωσιν, ἂν δὲ κατακαῖ κατακαύσωσι καὶ τὸν  
 30 ἴδιον ἐπίσκοπον. Ὑψωσε τότε τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς πρὸς τὸν  
 οὐρανὸν καὶ εἶπε δεῖξον τὴν δυναστείαν σου Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ ὁ  
 Θεὸς Ἡμῶν καὶ ἀγίασον τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν τοῦ ἔθνους τού-  
 του καὶ ἔρριπεν τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον εἰς τὸ πῦρ καὶ ὦ τοῦ θαύματος, ἔμεινεν  
 ἀβλαβὲς ἕως οὗ ἐσβέσθη τὸ πῦρ, ἄνευ τοῦ παθεῖν τινα διαφορὰν, ἀ-  
 35 λύμαντον καὶ ἀκέραιον, ὅπερ θαῦμα ὡς εἶδεν ὄλος ὁ λαὸς τῶν Ῥώσων  
 ἐξεπλάγη καὶ ἐζήτησεν αὐθωρὸν τὸ ἅγιον βάπτισμα. Τὴν αὐτὴν ἱστορίαν  
 διηγεῖται καὶ ὁ Ζωναρᾶς ὀνομάζων αὐτοὺς Ῥωσικούς, οὗς ὁ Κεδρινὸς  
 ὀνομάζει Ῥώσους καὶ Ρουστίνους ὁ Νικηφόρος, ἄλλοι δὲ λέγουσιν  
 αὐτοὺς Ροξωλάνους.

33 ἔρριπε A || 33 ἔρριπεν αὐτὸ B || 34 ἐσβέστη B || 35 Ῥωσῶν A || 38-39 καὶ Ρουστίνους ὁ  
 Νικηφόρος, ἄλλοι δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτοὺς Ροξωλάνους om. A

## INTERPRETATION

### When and how the Russians became Christians

In the years of the reign of the king Basil the Macedonian the Serbians, also called Croatians, sent envoys seeking to place themselves under the authority of the king, as were the Bulgarians, and became Christians and subjects, as also many Jews became Christians, in the years 7 and 8 of the king's reign after the latter had exhorted to them piety and given them many gifts. As Porphyrogenitus narrates, the Russians became Christians, namely, after their reconciliation and their agreement with king Basil, [then] an archbishop was sent by Patriarch Ignatius in order to catechise them and to instruct them in the Christian faith according to custom. The bishop, then, was teaching them the [lessons] of the Holy Gospel and amongst others related to them the miracle of the "Three Children" who did not burn but remained unharmed amidst the furnace blaze. Then, however, the governor of the place they were in, called the bishop before the elders and told him: "If you also cannot perform a miracle like the ones you have related, and your Gospel describes, we shall not believe". The bishop then [based] his promise on certain words of the Saviour who said: "Whoever believes in me, the acts I perform he will also perform, but he will be able to perform them in an even greater fashion". The shadow of [the Apostle] Peter healed, according to the Acts of the Apostles.—From this [holy] Augustine conjectures that of the shadow of Peter was so curative how much so would his ikon, his relics and his chain be. According to the words of Saint Basil the Apostles would speak other languages and indeed they began to speak other languages in conformity with the inspiration they received from the Holy Ghost.—Just Saint Basil as did, and Ephraim the Syrian was taught the Greek language and became God inspired.—Then the Russians altogether demanded that [the bishop] threw his Gospel into the fire and if it did not burn they would believe, but if it burned they would burn the bishop himself. Then the bishop raised his hands towards the sky and said: Show us your magnificence Lord Jesus Christ Our God and sanctify your name in order that this Nation be restored [to you]. And he threw the Gospel into the fire and, what a miracle, it remained whole, untouched and without any damage until the fire was extinguished. As soon as all the Russians saw the miracle they were astonished and immedi-

ately sought the holy baptism. The same story is related by Zonaras who calls them *Rossikoi*. Cedrenus calls them *Rossoi* and Nikiphoros *Roustinoi*. Others call them *Roxolanoi*.-

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