

THE PROBLEM OF PROPHECIES IN BYZANTINE
AND BULGARIAN LITERATURE

When and in what connection did Medieval prophecies arise? The question has been raised and discussed on many occasions and in order to reach a broader range of comparison from a territorial and chronological point of view we need further studies. The questions posed here are: 1) The existence and distribution of this particular type of popular literature, i.e. to what extent is it connected with the official literary school, in what respect does it differ from them, and what are the common points? 2) Which is the link between Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian, Russian, etc. apocryphal literature with ancient beliefs, Eastern magic, etc.? 3) What world view does this literature reflect, how does it trace the evolution of the thinking of Medieval man? How does the political setting, the social setting of a given period appear in it?

Our study has the modest aim of presenting certain typological parallels between Byzantine and Bulgarian literature, for once again we should note that the so-called "prophecies" came from Byzantium and interest in them was considerable. For instance, they were translated in Latin during the Early Middle Ages (7th century), in Arabic, German, Flemish, etc. even up to the European Renaissance and Humanism¹. "Prophecies" naturally appeared in translations in Slav literature.

We should above all recall, that prophecies do not appear as a type in themselves. They are found throughout the Middle Ages in different kinds of Byzantine literature, and passed through translations, above all in *χρονογραφία*. This was quite natural for the *χρονογραφία*, as a genre, aimed at a more general circle of readers, and together with events of a political character contained considerable encyclopedic information of interest to "the average reader". Among the encyclopedic information, the chronicles abound in stories about two-headed monsters, children with the tail of a fish, as well

1. S. M. Oberhelmann, Prolegomena to the Byzantine Oneirokritika. *Byzantion* 50(2), 1980, p. 489; C. Mango, The Legend of Leo the Wise. *ZRV*, 6, 1960, p. 59-93; B. Knös, Les oracles de Léon le Sage. In: *Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη του Μανόλη Τριανταφυλλίδη*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1960, p. 155-188; G. Podalsky, *Bizantinische Reiche Eschatologie* München, 1972.

as acts of God and earthquakes². The “prophecies” also include information on the practice of magic, usually in the description of some inscription, containing a warning. These “prophecies” appear chiefly between the 4th and 5th centuries, and some are even based on material from 3rd century chronicles (Sextus Iulius Africanus). As a typical example we may point out the inscription, which according to contemporary sources, was found prior to the invasion of the Goths, during the reign of the Emperor Valens³ and foretold the catastrophe and death of the Emperor. We should however note that these “prophecies” always bear an element of retribution, that they come to meet certain attitudes, reflected in the respective literary work. Valens was an Arian, hence the prophecies of his death abound in the literature of his time. They were accompanied by instances of clairvoyancy of a certain monk Isaacius, who had been imprisoned by the Emperor.

Beyond separate illustrations, we could dwell on something of a more general character. It is an established fact, that Byzantine chronicles, or at least most of them, as well as the majority of the works of authors, recognized as historians, are permeated by the concept of the creation of the world in seven days and in its existence over a period of 700 years. It is from here that the persistent idea of the forecoming end of the world originates and the calculations of the precise timing of the event are drawn. And this material provides ground for eschatological predictions. However, in predictions of an early period, represented by an author such as John Lydos, (mid-6th century) the so-called omens have a more empirical character and reflect contemporary relations, with additions, standing for the experience of the Ancient East⁴; from the 7th century on they became considerably schematized.

P. Alexander⁵ drew attention to a type of literature, namely what is known as Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Citing Ch. Diel, he has proven the abundance of such elements in these works considerably more than in works, recognized as official or semi-official literature. Here we should note two principal points,

2. P. J. Alexander, *Historiens byzantins et croyances eschatologiques. Actes du XIIIe Congrès international d'études byzantines*, II, Beograd 1964, p. 4.

3. For the prophecy, connected with Valent see f.e. Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, PG, LXVII, col. 477.

4. M. A. Andreeva, *Političeskij i obščestvennyj element vizantijsko-slavijanskih gadatel' nih knig. Byzantinoslavica*, II, 2, 1930, p. 63; I. Dujčev, *Estestvoznanieto v srednovekovna Bălgaria*, S., 1954/XXII. Iz gadatelnite knigi, p. 390. sq. and literature indicated there.

5. R. J. Alexander, *The Oracle of Baalbeck, The Tiburtine Sibyl in Greek Dress*, Cambridge, Mass. 1967 (DOS 10), p. 3sq.

which attracted the attention of G. Dagron⁶. Not only does he state that the eschatological idea of the third Rome was widely shared in that "Patria", he shows, that in the complex interwoven prophecies, some are in line with the legal foundation behind the existence of Constantinople, the city of Constantine the Great, the Second Rome, and this legal foundation is realized not through the direct link of the pagan Roman Empire, but in the name of a new Christian "politia". The second line is related to the fate of Constantinople, the second Rome, and the second Jerusalem alike, which too shall come to its end, (a reminiscence of the idea of the 7000 years of existence), and this end is a kind of fulfilment of the Christian idea of the Second Advent of Christ and the end of the world.

We shall dwell on the second point, namely because it is these "Patria" which have been reflected in a number of chronicles, as has been pointed out, and referred to the successive existence of kingdoms (βασιλείαι)⁷ in later works, making up a category of special oracular literature.

Pure "prophecies" appear regularly in Byzantine literature after the above-mentioned "*De ostendis*", of John of Lydos, which had been translated into a certain Slavonic language, probably Bulgarian⁸. Ἀποτελεσματικὴ πραγματεία by Stephen of Alexandria, which is believed to have been written during the reign of the Emperor Heraclius, (in fact it dates from the 70-ties of the 8th century) is a familiar work, containing not only the "prophecy" on the advance of Islam, but also information on the relations with the Bulgarian state. A work, given as Pseudo-Methodius of Patara, is also well known. None less popular were "prophecies", appearing under the name of the prophet Daniel. Other "prophecies" are attributed to the Emperor Leo VI, who enjoyed the reputation of a scholar: hence his being called "the philosopher"⁹. However, according to C. Mango, Leo VI till the XIIth century was practically not considered to have been an astrologer, in other words the "prophecies" attributed to him appear chiefly after that period¹⁰. All oracles spread and appeared in Bulgarian translations, as well as in translations into other Slavonic languages, somewhat completed, for example with the well-known "prophecies"

6. G. Dagron, Représentations de l'ancienne et de la nouvelle Rome dans les sources byzantines des VIIe-XIIe siècles. *Séminaire International: Da Roma alla terza Roma*, I, Roma 1983, p. 295-306.

7. C. Trieber, Die Idee der vier Weltreiche. *Hermes*, 27, 1892, p. 321-344.

8. Fragments by John of Lydos in modern Bulgarian translation see in: *GIBI* (Fontes graeci historiae bulgaricae), III, 1958, p. 95-98.

9. See generally: Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, I, Berlin, 1958, p. 182, 275, 40, 404, 426, 512. The fragment by Stephen of Alexandria in Bulgarian translation see in: *GIBI* VI, 1959, p. 206-207.

10. C. Mango, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

of the Sybil (once again from the 11th-12th century and the 13-14th century) as will be shown further on.

Attempts have been made to classify Byzantine “prophecies” according to their subject matter. It has been noted, that Emperor Leo the Wise’s name was linked chiefly with Constantinople and its fate, while the remaining “prophecies” are largely connected with the idea of the end of the world. Miscellanies with a variety of subjects appear in Byzantine literature¹¹. Naturally, other collections, such as the *Oneirocritica*, *Brontologia*, etc., where natural phenomena are referred to, together with political events were created alongside with the above-mentioned principal subject matter, however, on a lower level¹². We could not, however, draw a precise distinction, as this literature was popular over several centuries, and frequently was included in Miscellanies regardless of its title.

We should dwell next on such events which, regardless of the general trend in this type of literature, provoked, at certain periods the creation of such works. We have already mentioned the existence of personages in official and semi-official literature, whose fate was explained by the presence of supernatural phenomena, in order to be understood by society of the day. The founder of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil I, who rose to the throne as a result of a palace coup, involving the murder of Michael III is a case in mind. It was namely about such a person, of obscure origin that legends were created, prophetic dreams were told, etc. Moreover, the legends about him abounded to such an extent, that Gy. Moravcsik even distinguishes an official layer, alongside with another layer, probably, a popular one¹³. And *vice versa*, parts of Chronicles, which were against Basil I, attribute eschatological features to Michael III “the Drunkard”. It is namely such features that Pseudo-Methodius of Patara resorts to, when he speaks, for example, of the deliverance of Constantinople from the Russians in 860¹⁴.

The confusion caused in the Byzantine capital by the campaigns of the Bulgarian ruler Simeon is a known fact. In this connection the 10th century Chronicle spread the “prophecy” about the statue in Constantinople, which

11. Α. Κομίνης, Παρατηρήσεις εις τοὺς χρησμοὺς Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ. *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, τ. 30, 1960, p. 398-412.

12. S. M. Oberhelmann, Prolegomena to the Byzantine *Oneirokritika*. *Byzantion* 50(2), 1980, p. 487-503.

13. G. Moravcsik, Lagen und Legender über Kaiser Basileios I, *Studia Byzantina* 1967, p. 147-220.

14. A. A. Vasiliev, The Emperor Michail III in apocryphal Literatur. *Byzantina-meta-byzantina*, I, 1946, p. 237-248.

symbolized Simeon; when its head was cut off, the Bulgarian Tsar departed from this world¹⁵. The same story, with oracular elements and magic is repeated on several occasions in later times, for example in Byzantine relations with Hungary, etc. However, while magic generally remains beyond the scope of literature, and is persecuted by the church, oracular elements remain a lasting feature here, even when they are linked with magic which frequently explains the political situation of a given period. Apparently the main periods of the appearance of "prophecies" are linked with a certain dangerous situation (overcome or realized) hanging over Constantinople. The first siege of the Avar and Slavs and Persians was in 626. On that occasion the capital was relieved miraculously by the Virgin Mary, to whom the Akathistos hymn is devoted. Prophecies in that line come from the reign of Heraclius. Constantinople's fall to the crusaders in 1204, also gave raise to many prophecies. The last blow to the Byzantine capital occurred in 1453, producing a flourishing literature with "prophecies" about the fate of the city, which continued during the Ottoman period, when prophecies began to refer to the expected liberation. The second moment, as has been pointed out on more than one occasion, was the fear of the impending end of the world, which was to take place in the year 1000. However, the idea of the end of the visible world bears an eschatological meaning, i.e. this is the Second Advent of Christ. In that sense the end of Constantinople is no catastrophe, but a particular mode of the realization of a mystic mission. The position with translated and compiled Bulgarian Miscellanies of prophecies is identical.

Many prophecies and charms are linked (according to some authors, this link is somewhat formal)¹⁶ with ancient magical practices, chiefly with Eastern Cabbala. Hence the references in Byzantine literature to "Haldean magic" resulting in the frequent instance of the Church pronouncing an anathema on those dealing with magic. Once again, we should draw certain distinctions here. On the one hand early Christian literature aims to prove, that the pagan oracles had lost their power, that their prophecies were invalid in a Christian context. For instance, as E. Thompson¹⁷ points out Theodore noted that the Delphic oracle (or respectively some of the famous oracles in antiquity) gave false prophecy to Julian the Apostate and he suffered defeat in

15. I. Dujčev, Appunti di storia bizantino-bulgara, I. La leggenda bizantina della morte del re bulgaro Simeone. *Studi bizantini e occidentali*, IV, 1935, p. 129-133.

16. C. Mango, *Discontinuity with the Classical Part in Byzantium. Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, Birmingham 1981, p. 56-57.

17. E. A. Thompson, The last Delphic Oracle. *The Classical Quarterly*, XL, 1946, no 1, 2, p. 34-36.

the well-known campaign in Persia, instead of achieving the expected victory. On the other hand, as we have already pointed out, the majority of the “prophecies” found in Byzantine literature are linked with ancient and Eastern prophecies. We can discern two aspects here. While in the first instance the aim is to prove the falseness and meaninglessness of paganism, the second case is a schematic linking of Biblical prophets with Hellenic deities, with the sages and great writers of Hellas, which is typical of poorly educated chroniclers. Thus we come to the well-known *topoi*, with ancient or Eastern elements¹⁸.

The following could be stated, turning to Slav and in particular Bulgarian literature. It has been established that oracular work has penetrated Old Bulgarian literature at a very early period, practically at its very inception. The apocryphs *The Vision of Daniel* and the *Revelation of Methodius of Patara*, known to Bulgarian scholars from Simeon’s circle, were particularly popular. The existence of MS of these two works in the Miscellany from the Chilendar Monastery No. 382/453, 13-14th century, with a Serbian orthography, and traces of the Bulgarian original, are evidence to that effect. The MS is of an encyclopaedic character, partly coinciding with the contents of the *Izbornik* of Svetoslav (Simeon), dated 1073. It also contains the oldest extant South Slav copy of the so-called *Zlatostruj*, in its complete version, translated and compiled during the reign of Simeon. The texts of the *Vision of Daniel* and the *Revelation of Methodius of Patara*, in their style and lexical features indicate the work of the same period and the same circle of translators¹⁹.

The Apocalypse of John the Baptist, a 13th century old Bulgarian copy, kept at the Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai, No. 34, 13th cent., could be added to the known 10th century prophecies²⁰. It should be noted, that the cited works, in their earliest translations are close to the Greek originals and entered Old Bulgarian literature with no historical interpolations or interpolations of a topical political nature. Thus they come to Old Russian literature, as is evident from a number of elements in the MS tradition. It is sufficient to recall that the author of the early *Pověst vremennih lět* is familiar with these works and makes use of these prophecies.

18. G. Moravcsik, *op. cit.*, p. 165 sq.

19. Kl. Ivanova, *Za Hilendarskija prepis na pŕvia Simeonov sbornik. Starobŕlgarska literatura*, kn. 5, 1979, p. 59, 67, 69-70. Fragments from *Revelation of Methodius of Patara* in Bulgarian translation see in: *GIBI*, V, 1964, p. 68.

20. V. M. Zagrebin, *O proizhoždenij i sud’be nekotoryh slavijanskih palimpsestov Sinaja*, in: *Iz istorii rukopisnih i staropečatnih sobranij|issledovanija, obzori, publikacii|*, L., 1979, p. 65. The text ed. by I. I. Sreznevskij, *Drevnije slavijanske pamjatniki jusovogo pis’ma*, Spb. 1886, p. 406-416.

The period between the 11th and 12th centuries, when official Bulgarian literature was nonexistent, as Bulgaria had temporarily lost its political existence, introducing new moments in the character of "prophecies". They represent a typical expression of literary life in the Bulgarian lands. Several original works were composed at that time - the *Bălgarski apokrifn letopis* (Bulgarian apocryphal legend), *Videnie i talkovanie Danailovo* (The Vision and Revelation of Daniel), *Skazanie Isaevo*, etc. and especially *Solunska legenda* (The Salonica Legend) - a remarkable monument of historical and legendary literature, close to them in spirit. These works reflect the general tendency of literature becoming more democratic, and closer to popular interests.

The prominent feature of these works is the close intermingling of the historical-chronicle tradition and legends, where Bulgarian rulers are idealized and events subjected to a messianic idea.

The text of *Skazanie Isaevo* (Miscellany No. 52)²¹, discovered by the author of this report, at the Nikoliats Monastery, Yugoslavia, is of particular interest in that respect. ("Svētogo Isaie proroka o buduštich lětěch i o carěm skazanie i o Antichrista, iže choštet byti"). (Serbian orthography with traces of the Bulgarian original and certain dialectical peculiarities of a West-Bulgarian dialect). The prophecy predicts the fate of the Balkan nations, above all touching on the Bulgarians. The *Skazanie* abounds in toponyms from South-West Bulgaria and in particular from the Sredetz (Serdica) region. A glance on the subject matter of this work shows the great similarity with other oracular works in Old Bulgarian, created during the 11-12th centuries, above all the cited *Videnie i Otkrovenie Danailovo* (Vision and Revelation of Daniel) and the *Apokrifna Bulgarska Hronika* (Apocryphal Bulgarian Chronicle).

No doubt the translations of the *Vision of Daniel*, the *Revelation of Methodius of Patara*, the *Apocalypse of John the Baptist*, etc., could be considered among the sources of the newly discovered *Skazanie*. An anonymous Bulgarian author has drawn on his source material making use of separate images and idioms, typical of the genre, placing a content, topical for the second half of the 11th century—chiefly the impact of Petar Delian's uprising of 1040. It is worth while noting however, that regardless of the composition date—the 11th century—it does not counterpose Greeks and Bulgarians, on

21. The Miscellany is described by V. Mošin, *Ćirilski rukopisi u manastiru Nikol'tzu kod Bijelog pol'a. Istorijski zapisi. Organ Istorijskog Instituta NR Tzárne gore i Istorijskog Društva NR Tzárne Gore*. XIV, 1961, kn. XVII, p. 697-698.

the contrary, both shall suffer from the raids of attackers, probably the “barbarians” beyond the Danube.

Oracular literature flourished anew during the Second Bulgarian State and bears the same spirit of a “chosen” people, which continue their historical mission. The raise and spread of certain extremely interesting “prophecies”, indicative of the trend, characterize the literary work of the period. Among the original works which had arisen towards the end of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century we should mention the cited “*Skazanie za Sybila*”, known in five South-Slav and four Russian copies from the 15th to the 18th century. The prophecy speaks of the future fate of many peoples, the Bulgarians being characterized by their “patriotism” and consciousness of being a “chosen” people: “A.rod’ slověne, rekse bl’gare, dobri, gostoljubivi i směreni, istinni, bezloblivi, ljubōšti, čjuždina i krstijan’stvo, sī vēra pravaa bogu prědadōt parēi vsego světa”. (Panagiurište Miscellany No. 433, National Library-Sofia). On the contrary the Greeks are given negative qualities, owing to the political situation of the period. “G. rod’ elini, rekše gr’ci, dvižōšti carō směšaōše sō s vsēm ožikom, chvalivi, l’žlivi svěděteliē, v’znoslivi, zlatoljubci, po moždē s’dešte, trišti vēro svoō smōtōt’ i carstvo prědadōt, cr’kvi ljubōšti” (same MS).

The contrast in the characteristics of Bulgarians and Greeks is not by chance. A similar tendency can be noted in the *Razumnik-ukaz*, a questions and answers work, placed in the MS close to the *Skazanie*. The idea of the prophecies in the *Razumnik-ukaz* is based on the concept of the existence of kingdoms, to be found in Byzantine oracular literature. However, here the author has presented his desire to emphasize the priority of the Bulgarians; the first kingdom is the Greek kingdom, (in some copies the Bulgarian is cited as first); the second—the Bulgarian, the third—the German. God-the Father-was with the Greek Kingdom, the Son with the German and the Holy Spirit with the Bulgarian Kingdom. Bulgarian ranks first among the Orthodox languages, and the Bulgarian book immediately following the Greek book (in some copies, they are first). The comparison of ideas conveyed by the considered texts with the idea of a Second Rome, also reflected in Bulgarian literature offers very interesting results²².

It is in the same spirit, however, expressed to a lesser extent during the 13th century that another oracular work was composed *Pandechovo proročeskoe skazanie*.

22. V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, *Les idées de Rome et de la seconde Rome, chez les Bulgares. De Roma alla terza Roma*, I, Roma 1983, p. 387-397.

It presents a general picture of the fate of many peoples, cities and states; Rome, Jerusalem, Babylon, Egypt, Lydia, etc. Prophecies on the fate of the Balkan peoples take a prominent place, with the characteristics of the Bulgarians and the Serbs coming out with their optimism and national consciousness. The prophecy runs to the effect, that the Bulgarian was young, and youth stood for a change in the kingdom, (“mladost’ že est’ přeměňuje carstva”) hence the Bulgarians would raise²³.

The compiling of Miscellanies of oracular works, for instance the *Dragolov Zbornik* along thematic lines during the 13th century, is indicative, of a trend²⁴. It not only is evidence of the popularity and topicality of the genre, but confirms the conclusion that “prophecies” were a mass literature depending on the socio-political situation both in Bulgarian literature and Byzantine literature, reflecting the ideas and attitudes of the circles where they arose and spread.

An upsurge in the copying of oracular works set in towards the mid 15th century, in connection with the fall of Constantinople. This event was reflected all over the Slav world. For instance the “Skazanie o padenii Car’grada” (Story of the Fall of Tsargrad) was compiled in Russian literature, using a number of prophecies on the fate of the city and the Byzantine empire. New translations from the Greek spread, such as the Revelation of Gregory Scholaris, dated 1421—where the prophecies recorded by the sages on the tomb of Constantine the Great are linked with the fall of Byzantium. New translations from the Greek were not made, nor did original works arise in Balkan literature, contrary to Old Russian literature. MSS translated and compiled in the past were copied. They were made topical once again in connection with the Ottoman invasion, on the one hand, owing to the markedly patriotic element they contain and on the other hand, owing to the popularity of the idea of the Second Advent of Christ and the coming of the Anti-Christ. The fall of Constantinople and the expected end of the world in 1492 (according to the prophetic paschalia) strengthened the pessimism among the Christian Balkan population. It is known that such attitudes were expressed in the work of some writers at that time for instance Demetrios Kantakuzenos (*Prayer to the Virgin, An Epistle to the Domesticus Isai*) as well as in a number of marginal historical works. We should note here, that similarly to the respective Byzantine literature the theme of the Second Advent of Christ is also linked with the revival of hiliasmus—the belief that the kingdom of God shall last

23. P. S. Srečkovič, Zbornik popa Dragol’a. *Spomenik SKA V*, Beograd, 1980, p. 15.

24. P. J. Alexander, Historical interpolations in the Zbornik popa Dragolia. *Actes du XIVe Congrès international des Etudes Byzantines*, III, 1976, p. 23-28.

a thousand years on earth as a compensation of the tragic present²⁵.

A number of miscellanies where the prophecies are grouped according to the thematic principle, dating from the 15th to the 18th century have reached us, similarly to late Byzantine literature²⁶. For instance, the cited Miscellany from the Nikolats Monastery, No. 52, dating from the 15th century, is remarkable with the number and character of the eschatological and legendary works included—alongside with *Skazanie Isaevo*, the earliest MS known so far of the *Skazanie za Sivila*, and the *Legends of Salonica* are inserted, together with *Videnie Isaevo*, *Videnie Pavlovo*, *Revelation Varuchovo*, the *Apocalypse of John the Baptist*, the *Life of St. Nicholas the Young*.

It is the same with a number of MSS, hence it is natural to consider the study of this type of miscellany, which contain “prophecies”. Miscellanies with oracular works have not been subjected to a structural-typological analysis and classification, and have not been examined from the point of view of the text or literary and historiological aspects.

These MSS which contain oracular works are in fact miscellanies with a mixed content²⁷, popular books with the task of offering edifying material, addressed to readers and audience alike. They were not connected with the liturgy and what characterizes them is their considerable variety. Apocryphs prevail, together with historical works, however, pateric stories, question and answer books, excerpts of the “*Physiologia*”, books on omen interpretation, together with a book of sermons and hagiographic prose are also found. The miscellanies with a mixed content appear as literary phenomena among the lower clergy, close to the commoners. Both style and content bear certain aspects of parallel phenomena in folklore. The ideas and the range of subjects reflect the interests and the aesthetic values of social communities which created and copied out MSS, including the “prophecies”.

The flow of literary miscellanies, seen from a structural point of view comprises three types of MSS, according to their content, also taking into consideration the genetic ties between their separate representatives. The first type of miscellany, with the oldest material, are characterized by translations of eschatological and apocalyptic works, with no historical interpolation; the *Apocalypse of John the Baptist*, the *Vision of Daniel*, the *Revelation of Methodius*

25. See S. S. Avernitzev, Hiliasm, in: *Philosophskaja entziclopedia*, t. 5, M., 1970, p. 435.

26. A. Μαρκόπουλος, “Ένα χειρόγραφο από Μελένικο στη Βιβλιοθήκη John Rylands του Μάντσεστερ. *Μνήμων*, Αθήνα, 1975, p. 35-48.

27. A. Miltenova, Kām literaturnata istoria i tipologia na sbornicite sās smeseno sādāržanie. *Starobālgarska literatura*, kn. 7, 1980, p. 22-36.

of *Patara*, etc. The second type of miscellany, which comprises *Miscellany No. 52*, from the *Nikolats Monastery*, 15th century, the *Tikveš Miscellany No. 677*, H KM, *Miscellany No. 1161* at the Church Historical Archaeological Museum, Sofia, 16th century, etc. also present a rather old core, which may have been formed between the 11th and 12th century, represented by the *Skazanie Isaevo*, the *Legend of Salonica*, etc.

The subject matter of the second type of miscellany was supplemented during the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century with new translations and original works, one of them being the well-known *Skazanie za Sibila*. The third type appears as a contamination of the two types during the 16th-17th centuries, when compilations began to prevail, and later parts are included in the Damascene MS.

Least, but not last, we should note existence of Bulgarian literature of miscellanies with omen interpretation, a branch which also is included in oracular works. Their analysis reveals a wealth of social and socio-political relations. Prophecies of forecoming war, unrest, invasions, etc., are included in the *Grămnik Brontologium* (an oracular work, with the interpretation of omen when thunder is heard), the *Lunnik* (omens related to the moon), the *Kolědnik* (omens related to Christmas), the *Trepetnik* (omens related to the quivering of parts of the body), etc. and offer information on topical political events and the communities the interpretation of these events served²⁸. As the majority of the copies of MSS in Old Bulgarian literature have not yet been published, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the direct dependence of Slav oracular books of omens on Byzantine originals. The supposition of the original compiled character of some of them, for instance the *Grămnik*, appears to be justified, taking into consideration the presence of geographical names related to the Bulgarian lands, as well as the abundance of data on the difficult times in the Bulgarian state and the danger of a foreign invasion. On these grounds it is quite probable that one of the most popular versions of the *Grămnik* and the *Kolědnik* was compiled during the 14th century and later won popularity through the Miscellanies²⁹.

28. M. A. Andreeva, *Političeskij i obščestvennij element vizantijskoslavijanskih gadatel'nih knjig. Byzantinoslavica*, 1, 1930, p. 47-73; 2, 1930, p. 395-415; 2, 1931, p. 430-461; 1, 1932, p. 65-84. K istorii vizantijsko-slavijanskih gadatel'nih knjig. - *ibidem* 5, 1933, p. 120-161.

29. See publication of the text by: N. S. Tihonravov, *Pamijatniki otrečenoj ruskoj literatury*. II. M., 1983, p. 361-374, 375-376, 377-381, 388-395, 396-397. V. N. Peretz, *Materiali k istorii apokrifa i legendi. K istorii Gromnika. Zapiski imp. philolog.fak. SPb. univ.*, LIV, 1899, 167 p.; II K istorii Lunnika. *Izv. ORJAS*, VI, 1, 1901, p. 9-126; III. K istorii Gromnika i Lunnika. *Izv. ORJAS*, VI, 4, 1901, p. 103-131. M. N. Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečenoj*

In conclusion we should touch briefly on oracular literature and Byzantine-Bulgarian relations. As long as we are speaking of a popular literature, in particular related to the late Byzantine period, we find common motives of an eschatological character, in the name of the future liberation from Islam and Ottoman rule. However, in the period when relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian State were more or less antagonistic, there appear prophecies, directed against one or the other side. Byzantine "prophecies" (for instance Stephan of Alexandria) refer to attacks by the barbarians, including the Bulgarians, while as was shown with Bulgarian literature, (regardless that it drew on Byzantine originals) we find an unfavourable characteristic of the subjects of the Empire³⁰. Should we turn to official or semi-official literature, for example chronicles or works of the "prophecies" of Leo the Wise, i.e. touching on the capital and its fate in Bulgarian literature we can only cite a marginal note from the Chronicles of Manasses, praising Tărnovo as the New Constantinople, which flourished and grew.

It is clear that in Bulgarian official literature these moments are rare, and it is here that they differ from Byzantine tradition.

In conclusion we could emphasize that prophecies, visions, revelations, etc. are worthy of special attention when examined in a comparative manner, with the aim not only to trace the literary relations between Byzantium and Slav countries, above all Bulgarian, but also consider the reflection of contemporary events, common or clashing interests, i.e. these works are a valuable literary source which fully presents the evolution of thought of medieval man, frequent conveying a fuller picture than that of official literature on the Balkans.

literatury. I. Gadanija po psaltiri. Pamijatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i isskustva. CXXXIX, 1899; II. Trepetniki. 1899; III. Lopatočnik, 1900.

30. D. Angelov, *Obštestvo i obštestvena misäl v srednevekovna Bălgaria/X-XIV v./*. S., 1979, p. 275-277.