ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЯТ ЮГОИЗТОК
ПРЕЗ ВТОРАТА ПОЛОВИНА НА X – НАЧАЛОТО НА XI ВЕК
ИСТОРИЯ И КУЛТУРА

ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЯТ ЮГОИЗТОК
ПРЕЗ ВТОРАТА ПОЛОВИНА НА X – НАЧАЛОТО НА XI ВЕК
ИСТОРИЯ И КУЛТУРА

9 789545 095405

ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЯТ ЮГОИЗТОК
ПРЕЗ ВТОРАТА ПОЛОВИНА НА X – НАЧАЛОТО НА XI ВЕК.
ИСТОРИЯ И КУЛТУРА

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE IN THE SECOND HALF OF 10TH –
THE BEGINNING OF THE 11TH CENTURIES:
HISTORY AND CULTURE

БЪЛГАРСКА
АКАДЕМИЯ
на НАУКИТЕ
1869

ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЯТ ЮГОИЗТОК
ПРЕЗ ВТОРАТА ПОЛОВИНА НА X – НАЧАЛОТО НА XI ВЕК
ИСТОРИЯ И КУЛТУРА

МЕЖДУНАРОДНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ
СОФИЯ, 6–8 ОКТОМВРИ 2014 г.

Съставители:

акад. Васил Гюзелев,
доц. Георги Н. Николов

София • 2015

ISBN 978-954-509-539-9

СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ

II. АРХЕОЛОГИЯ

III. ЕЗИК И КНИЖОВНОСТ

OLD BULGARIAN INSCRIPTIONS VIS-À-VIS THE ROMAN AND BYZANTINE ONES: THE QUESTION OF PERFORMATIVITY

Sergey A. Ivanov (Moscow, Russia)

Alexander Milne in his book on Winnie the Pooh describes how, during the flood, Piglet wrote a note, sealed it into an empty bottle and threw into the water. "He wrote on one side of the paper: "HELP! PIGLIT (ME)" and on the other side: "IT'S ME PIGLIT, HELP HELP!"

This inscription vividly conveys the hesitation of any person who sets to leave an epigraphic message: should he write in the first person or in the third? How the subject of the text and the author of the text are related to each other? And what information is supposed to have been known to the potential reader before he gets access to the message?

Yet, the Piglet had an immediate goal and did not intend his message to be read long afterwards. If we talk about an inscription chiseled or engraved in stone, the problem becomes more acute: an edict of a magistrate which he orders to be engraved, would in all probability expire long before the inscription will be expunged from stone by winds and rains. Why did Romans entrust to limestone, marble and even bronze the information which often needed to be simply read out loud by heralds on several squares? The applicability of any message is incomparable with the durability of the epigraphic medium. As a result, cities of the Roman empire were swarmed by thousands of asynchronous inscriptions, very often unreadable and incomprehensible for the inhabitants, who were still very used to such an outlook of their houses, streets and squares. This phenomenon, labeled as the Roman "epigraphic habit"[1], cannot be explained outside of the general consciousness of stability and eternity of the Empire, of the everlasting continuity of its institutions. In this respect any inscription did not only address the reading audience of contemporary local residents but made a modest contribution to the imagined pool in which all past, present and future inscriptions exist together constituting an unbreakable succession of power and a sort of guaranteed immortality to those who participated in this

[1] R. MacMullen. The epigraphic habit in the Roman Empire. – American Journal of Philology 103/3 (1982), p. 233–246.

process. In such prospective, it becomes understandable why the magistrates never address their audience in the first person – it was not them who were telling of their edicts, edifices and repairs to the contemporaries but it was the Roman empire itself that was telling about their achievements to the posterity. True, the first person occurs in the laws promulgated by emperors or edicts by praetorian prefects, which were originally issued on parchment, but additionally publicized in the form of inscription; in such cases we deal not so much with the addresses going from the carved stone directly to the reader[2] but of quotes from the legislation, which are forwarded by magistrates of a lower rank – it is noteworthy that a magistrate who puts the inscription in a public place always names himself in the third person.

Sometimes the author of the inscription cannot retain the aloofness demanded by a third person stature and his "I" slips to the stone[3], but such cases are rare and belong to avocational epigraphy. For example, if we take the corpus of the Greek inscriptions from Bulgaria, published by Georgi Mikhailov, which contains nearly three thousand inscriptions, I managed to find only 23 dedicatory inscriptions which would be written from the first person[4]: the number of such persons is even smaller since 4 of them were carried out by two people. All these 23 inscriptions are left either by private persons informing that they prepared the grave for themselves and their wives, or by priests erecting altars for their pagan gods. Thus, there is not a single official among the authors. The officials never address their messages directly from the surface of the carved stone.

The chapter of ancient epigraphy in which the first person inscriptions loom large is the epitaphs: here the deceased often address the passerby directly, asking him to wait for a moment, to read the inscription and to spare a moment of his time to commemorate the "author" talking to him from the grave. The same game is applied to the owners' inscriptions left on the items like tableware, jewelry etc., like, "I am the vessel of X", or "I am a ring owned by", or "I am a statue executed by X". In this realm there are no mediators, the contact with a reader is private, intimate and close, therefore the artful first person is completely natural and understandable. Of course, the literary convention of such a first-person address was obvious to any reader.

The most paradoxical category of epigraphy is the graffiti, in which authors on the one hand want to be personal and even intimate with their readership, like in the epitaphs, but on the other hand do not explain their

[2] The only first-person exception is such unique monument as Augustus' *res gestae*.

[3] Cf. W. Larfeld. Handbuch der griechischen Epigraphik. Leipzig 1907, S. 528–529

[4] G. Mikhailov (ed.), Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae, vols 1–4, Sofia. 1956, 70, NoNo 996, 1124, 1126, 1151, 1203, 1316, 1361, 1401bis, 1519, 1539, 1864, 1865, 1935, 1939, 1986, 2004, 2007, 2213, 2215, 2225, 2236, 2290, 2340.

details as regularly as the dead do in the epitaphs. An inscription like "I was here" or even "X was here" is addressed not to the next person on the same spot, who has no chance to know this X, but to God or to himself – writing "I was here" means to inscribe yourself into this landscape, to mark it with your ever-lasting presence, to be always able to remind yourself that you are sort of owning a vast space. The name of the inscriber is superfluous because he does not want to convey any specific information to the humankind. Who is supposed to be an addressee of such a Byzantine graffito from the Athenian Parthenon: "Health to the one who wrote, joy to the one who reads"[5]? Or another: "Whoever reads this, let him commemorate me, and let St. Mary help him"[6] ? Even if a passerby would volunteer to commemorate the author, he would be unable to do it, since he would not know his name. The message is self-referential, the mind which produces graffiti always bites its own tail, because in its very essence it is self-assertive, not communicative. This is why a graffitist can afford to be absolutely shameless: in the same Parthenon, which served as a church of the Virgin, there is the following graffito: "Saint Maria thou that art highly favored, (Lucae I, 28) do that he who sleeps with my girlfriend come down with ... hernia and make me a doctor so I would cut off his dick"[7]. Is it a sacrilege? In a sort, no, because this dreamer in the actual fact speaks to himself, not to the Virgin.

The Byzantine age brought about the drastic decrease of the Roman "epigraphic habit"[8]. Official inscriptions become rare. If we analyze the Byzantine inscriptions gathered in the famous "Recueils" by Henry Gregoire, we see that the inscriptions which memorialize the erection or repair of fortresses, walls, churches etc. are always written in the third person with only four exceptions[9]. From the time between 602 and the 12th century we have only one decree executed by the order of Justinian II in 688 in Thessaloniki [10] This inscription opens with the title of the decree in which the Emperor is mentioned in the third person, then the name of the local archbishop is stated, he also figures in the third person, and only later the actual text of the

[5] A. K. Orlandos. Ta charagmata tu Parthenōnos, Athenais 1973, p. 17, No 27.

[6] Orlandos, Ta charagmata, p. 6.

[7] Ibidem.

[8] C. Mango. Byzantine Epigraphy (4th to 10th C.). – Paleografia e codicologia greca. Atti del II Colloquio internationale/ed. D. Harlfinger, G. Presto. Vol. I. Alessandria 1991, p. 235–249.

[9] H. Gregoire. Recueil des inscriptions Grecques Chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure. Bruxelles 1922, Nos 119, 227–6, 338, 241bis.

[10] D. Feissel. Les actes de l'État impérial dans l'épigraphie tardive (324–610): prolégomènes à un inventaire. – Selbstdarstellung und Kommunikation: Die Veröffentlichung staatlicher Urkunden auf Stein und Bronze in der römischen Welt. [Vestigia. Beiträge zur alten Geschichte Bd. 61]. München 2009, S.98.

decree is reproduced where Justinian II begins to speak of himself in the first person: "We wish", "We are sure", "We donate". The conciliar edict of 1166[11] is the first document which has no introductory part from the third person and which simply reproduces from the parchment the first-person text authored by Manuel I. Otherwise, in Byzantium like in the ancient times, only private inscriptions which mention the donations of gardens, the purchase of burial places, the graffiti with prayers and curses, the epitaphs imitating Antiquity are using the first person. The third person reigns supreme.

As a specialist in the field aptly wore, «the integrity of monuments and memories can be threatened with by 'selfish' writing.»[12] The great satirist Lucian in his ironic description of the other world introduces a character, a freshly dead tyrant Megapenthes, who asks to be set free from Hades for a moment, "to erect a colossal monument to myself... and inscribe thereon the military achievements of my life"[13]. Such attitude is mocked as an utmost selfishness. Whatever selfishness and egotism distinguished Roman or Byzantine emperors, they preferred others to extol them for their achievements and victories.

Now we finally turn to the Bulgarian epigraphy. It was Veselin Beshevliev (1900–1992) who stated that the Proto-Bulgarian inscriptions, though written in Greek, do not look like the Byzantine ones.[14]. Beshevliev's hypothesis was that the khans decided to use the Greek language for their inscriptions because it was equally understandable to both the Turkic and the Slavic population – this supposition looks too optimistic, yet. In all probability it was hardly accessible even to the representatives of the nomadic aristocracy mentioned in the inscriptions, since the business inscriptions are carried out in the Protobulgar language, though in Greek letters, №№48-54. One also cannot agree with the assertion "They were meant to impress Byzantine envoys and guests."[15] It is really humiliating for the dignity of victorious khans to suppose that their inscriptions were carefully carved on stone with the only aim to be read once, in passing, by a Byzantine ambassador who could very well not even notice them. The subjects of the khans were nearly uniformly illiterate, so for the goals of propaganda among them such monuments as the Madara

[11] C. Mango. The Conciliar Edict of 1166. – DOP 16 (1963) p. 324–330.

[12] A. V. Zadorojnyi. Shuffling Surfaces: Epigraphy, Power, and Integrity in the Graeco-Roman Narrative. – Inscriptions and their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature. Oxford 2013, p. 376.

[13] Luciani Cataplus 9.

[14] В. Бешевлиев. Първобългарски надписи. София 1979, с. 84–85. Further references are given in the main text.

[15] U. Fiedler Bulgars in the Lower Danube region: A survey of the archaeological evidence and of the state of current research. – The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans, ed. by F. Curta, R. Kovalev. Leiden 2008, p. 191.

horseman were needed. As for the inscription around the same horseman, it is situated so high up that even literate people would be unable to read it. So, it was not intended for people[16]. It was not a prayer to Tengri either – the Turkic god was hardly believed to understand Greek. For whom then?

To try to recreate the possible audience of the khans' inscriptions, let's read them in an unbiased manner. In the inscription N1 Tervel mockingly calls the emperor Justinian II "the slit-nose emperor", in the inscription N2 Krum curses Nicephorus I as "bald-headed elders". But the inscription No 14 sounds most strikingly: Presian complains grumblingly: "God sees, if somebody is lying! God sees! The Bulgarians did a lot of good to the Christians, but the Christian forgot it. But God sees!" It sounds not like a victorious rhetoric but as bubbling under breath. We easily visualize a khan perambulating his hall and acridly murmuring something, while his Greek secretary minces behind the sovereign writing down his words verbatim. Then these very words go directly to the graver and finally appear on the stone. In these three inscriptions Tervel, Krum and Presian do not devote themselves to propaganda or nose-dive with the Byzantines. They talk to themselves in a manner of monumental "graffiti". Of course, this term can be applied here "cum grano salis": the khans' inscriptions were neither anonymous nor furtive, and they were executed in a language which was not native for the khan, but they remind "real" graffiti in being self-referential: they do not imply the existence of any public space or communicative situation.

The said does not mean that the khans never looked at their inscriptions from the point of view of the posterity: Omurtag in the inscription N 56 enters into a long digression: "A man, even if he lives well, dies, and another is born in his stead, and let one who will be born later, looking at this (palace), remember the one who erected it". Yet, Omurtag even in this philosophical text does not look at himself from the point of view of eternity, since he uses the first person: "I erected a tomb". It is very characteristic that khans in their inscriptions often resume to the I-forms in pronouns (Nos1, 4, 13, 47, 56, 59) .and in verbs (No 56, 57).

This tradition of the first-person addressing goes far beyond the khans and even the usage of Greek – in the Slavic-language inscriptions of both the First and the Second Tsardoms the tsars speak from the first person. The year 993: "I, Samuel, servant of God, placed this stone in memory of my father, mother, and brother"[17]; the year 1205: "I, Vranas, Great Duke, built

[16] The only group of inscriptions which must have been intended for the people is the epitaphs. Yet, even in them it is not the deceased who speak about themselves from the first person, but the khan himself tells kind words of his true servants (Nos 59–69).

[17] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh–Fifteenth Century. Leiden 2008, p. 38–39.

the fortress of Kritsuva on the twenty-first day of May on the request of Tsar Kaloyan"[18] ; the year 1230: "I, Ioan Asen, in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians, son of the old tsar Asen, built from foundations… the church...of Martyrs ... I went to war in Romania and routed the Greek army and captured tsar Theodore Comnenus himself and all of his bolijars. I conquered his entire land,"[19] the year 1231: "I, Asen, from God elevated Tsar of the Bulgarians and the Greeks, as well as of other countries, installed sevast Alexius and built this fortress,"[20]. The year 1341: "I attached this decoration... to this...icon...I, the beloved natural uncle of the most high tsar Ion Alexander, renewed the... temple,"[21] the year 1349: "I... pious and Christ-loving... of the most great tsar Ioan Alexander... niece of the great voevoda... came and found the Bulgarian land."[22]

This divergence of the Bulgarian tradition from the Byzantine pattern is all the more striking since the abundance of Greek inscriptions on the Bulgarian soil must have urged its new inhabitants to follow the prestigious example. In nearly all other spheres the Bulgarian authorities tried to imitate Byzantium, but in the realm of epigraphy they borrowed only the language as a medium but in their "facon de parler" rejected this role model stubbornly!

There is another genre of Bulgarian epigraphy which is also unique. In Pliska in the ruins of Great Basilica at least twenty-one columns were inscribed with word-groups like this: πόλεμος τῆς Σέρρης[23] – "The battle of Serres". Nearby were plaques commemorating the battles on the river Ticha and may be near Bersenike. In the same ruins numerous columns were found, inscribed in Greek with the place-names Kastron Bourdizou, castra Didimoteichon, Redesto, Theodorupolis, Theodospolis, Garales etc. (Nos 16–38). The fact that they were situated next to the previous ones proves that they were not the Byzantine road signs taken by khan Krum as a booty from the cities and fortresses of Thrace conquered by him, as some scholars tend to think[24], but the plaques executed especially by the Bulgarian carvers. Triumphal inscriptions is a widely spread phenomenon but they normally included some kind of description. What we have here is just a series of pure nominations of places, and such way of commemoration has no parallels in the Greco-Roman world. True, we know that in the Roman Forum of Augustus there were tituli of the

[18] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, 425, No 154.
[19] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, 425, No 155.
[20] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, 426, No 156, cf. No 157.
[21] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, 430, No 167.
[22] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, 431, No 168.
[23] В. Бешевлиев. Първобългарски надписи, с. 16.
[24] C. Asdracha, Ch. Bakirtzis, Inscriprions byzantins de Thrace. – Archaeologiko deltio 35 (1986), p. 264–265.

conquered nations and names of the provinces[25]. Scholars offered different interpretations of this statement: these tituli could be inscribed statues, clipei, or arms, in other words, some kind of personifications, but not bare names, as in Pliska. Here, once again, the most probable hypothesis would be that the khan devised the inscribed columns for... himself, as a sort of exteriorization of his vainglory, not as an act of communication. Such explanation would not seem too extravagant if we take into consideration what has been said earlier about the psychology of graffiti-writing.

If we deem the epigraphy left by the Bulgarian rulers as a sort of very specific graffiti, we could probably look at the inscription carved in 1254 by Michael II Asen (1246–156): "On this rock sat Tsar Asen when he took Kritchim."[26] – from a different angle. This inscription, which has no parallels in the ancient or medieval rulers' epigraphy, looks like a modern memorial plaque, but in fact it could very well be a product of "graffiti consciousness".

Старобългарските надписи в сравнение с римските и с византийските: въпросът за съставянето

Сергей А. Иванов (Москва, Русия)

Разгледани са формата и предназначението на римските и византийските епиграфски паметници според някои основни техни публикации. Първобългарските надписи на гръцки език, според техния издател Веселин Бешевлиев (1900–1992), не са възникнали под византийско влияние. Създаването им в повечето случаи от името на българските ханове на език, неразбираем за голяма част от населението на държавата, е било предназначено за увековечаване и регистриране на делата пред бъдните поколения. Това личи от надпис (№ 56 по изданието на Бешевлиев от 1979 г.) на хан Омуртаг (814–831). Традицията за поставяне на надписи от името на владетеля се запазва и при старобългарските надписи от X–XI в., както и през XIII–XIV в. Специално внимание се обръща на първобългарските триумфални надписи, свързани с битки и превземане на византийски крепости. Кричимският надпис (1254 г.), който се свързва от автора с цар Михаил II Асен (1246–1256), принадлежи към „възпоменателните графити".

[25] Velleius Paterculus, II. 39. 2.

[26] K. Petkov. The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, p. 427, No 158.