

Andrey VINOGRADOV

**SAINT PARASCEVE OF ICONIUM  
AND HER «LOST» GREEK ACTS**

Under the name of Parasceve the Church venerates several holy women: a less well-known martyr Parasceve, the companion of St. Photina the Samaritan (commemoration 20 March), a most famous martyr Parasceve of Sicily (comm. 26 July)<sup>1</sup>, a holy woman Parasceve of Tarnovo (comm. 14 October), very important for Bulgaria<sup>2</sup>, and finally the martyr Parasceve of Iconium (comm. 28 October), who was particularly revered in Russia, primarily as a patroness of trade. Despite these differences the cult of all SS. Parasceves (Pyatnica, Petka, Venus) is very close in the various countries, which is caused by the meaning of her name (“Friday”) being associated with the corresponding day of the week, which generates a lot of similar folk customs, often without any connection to their original source<sup>3</sup>.

According to a long-established view<sup>4</sup> the Greek original of the Acts of St. Parasceve of Iconium has not survived and is preserved only in the Slavonic translation<sup>5</sup>. This fact has completely excluded this saint from studies in Greek hagiography, which has, as we shall see, a very peculiar consequence. All attention was concentrated on the various versions of the Acts of St. Parasceve of Sicily. However, the absence of any dating for a majority of these Acts has led researchers to examine the few chronological references in the tradition.

One of these references was the authorship of John of Euboea, a Greek author of the 8<sup>th</sup> cent., who wrote an Encomium to St. Parasceve of Sicily (BHG 1420p), which was published by F. Halkin<sup>6</sup>. The text has survived

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. SCHARPÉ, *Parasceve – Veneris – Petkae – Vineri manipulus*, Diss., 4 vol., Leuven, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> Her Slavonic Life written by Euthymios of Tarnovo was translated in 17<sup>th</sup> c. into Greek (BHG 1421).

<sup>3</sup> See K. ONASCH, *Parasceva-Studien*, in *Ostkirchliche Studien*, 6 (1957), p. 121-141.

<sup>4</sup> Сергей (Спаский), архиеп., *Полный месяцеслов Востока*, t. 3, Moscou, 1997, col. 285-286; cf. the silence of BHG and its *Auctaria*.

<sup>5</sup> Великие Минеи-Четьи. Октябрь. М., 19. С. 1972-1979.

<sup>6</sup> F. HALKIN, *La Passion de Sainte Parascève par Jean d'Eubée*, in *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag (= Forschungen zur griechischen Diplomatik und Geschichte*, 1), Heidelberg, 1966, p. 226-237; reprinted in ID., *Recherches et documents d'hagiographie byzantine (= Subs. hag., 51)*, Bruxelles, 1971, p. 270-281.

in two witnesses: MSS. Neapol. II C 33, 1495 AD, ff. 114<sup>v</sup>-118<sup>v</sup> and Oxon. Bodl. Holkham gr. 24, from 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> cent., ff. 166<sup>v</sup>-173. The latter codex contains two additional chapters (7 and 8), written on a bifolium (ff. 170<sup>v</sup> and 171<sup>rv</sup>) inserted between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> leaves of the quire<sup>7</sup>. On the fourth page of this insertion the scribe went beyond the text field in order to complete the last episode and to link it to the following one.

In dealing with this oddity, F. Halkin cautiously suggested that despite the apparent inauthenticity of the fragment (as his colleague P. Devos thought), it was quite possible that the scribe of the Oxford manuscript had another, more complete version of the Encomium. J. Scharpé has established that these two chapters have no parallel in the entire tradition of St. Parasceve of Sicily and has tried to explain the origin of these motifs by an analogous imitation of other versions of the Acts. In fact, the answer to this question is much easier, but also much more interesting.

We need only refer to the Acts of another Parasceve, of Iconium, preserved only in Slavonic. There we will find a Slavonic text completely corresponding to these chapters. Thus it is clear that the scribe of the Oxford manuscript has enriched the Encomium of St. Parasceve of Sicily by inserting some passages from the Acts of St. Parasceve of Iconium.

Such an enrichment is not surprising: the most famous example is the Life of St. Nicholas of Myra enriched by material taken from the Life of St. Nicholas of Sion (*BHG* 1347)<sup>8</sup>. However, this fact poses a number of questions, the answers to which are not so easy.

First of all, what was the exact purpose of this insertion? It seems that the reason for it was the dialogue between the martyr and ἡγεμῶν Aetios about the meaning of the name Parasceve and its connection with Friday. Together with it were inserted also some other episodes: beating with ox sinews, planing of edges and smashing the statue of Apollo, also unknown in the Acts of St. Parasceve of Sicily. The omission of the miracle of the healing in prison could be explained by the desire of the editor to make room for a consistent link to the following text. At the end of the insertion it was not enough space for complete description; so whole phrases were omitted, some long expressions were replaced by shorter ones and two times the verbs get lost (in Ἡ δὲ ἁγία μάρτυς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Παρασκευὴ ἐπὶ τῷ πρῶτῳ εὐχομένη καὶ ψάλλουσα and in Δεῖξόν μοι τοὺς θεοὺς σου

<sup>7</sup> Established by Ruth BARBOUR, *Summary Description of the Greek Manuscripts from the Library at Holkham Hall*, Oxford, 1960, p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> Recent edition, with commentary by V. RUGGIERI, *La Vita di San Nicola di Sion. Traduzione, note e commentario*, Roma, 2013.

καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὸν ναόν). The fact that the scribe has not written his *addendum* on the following leaf (f. 172<sup>v</sup>) of the quaternion, shows that he made this insertion after finishing copying the text of the Encomium by using the margin at the end of the verso.

These considerations must be taken into account when solving the second problem: what are the differences between the Greek and Slavonic texts? Only this explains why exactly at the end of the insertion the editor cuts and omits more and more single phrases or episodes (see above). The techniques of editing the text are different (omissions, rewritings), but the anonymous editor never abandons his original. Very important are also the lexical equivalents: on their basis it is possible to reconstruct, albeit in a general way, the original Greek Acts of St. Parasceve of Iconium.

Finally, we have to answer the third question: which of the versions of the Slavonic translation of the Acts is closer to this Greek fragment? Unfortunately, we do not have a critical edition of the Slavonic Acts but even a glance at the manuscript tradition suggests that there are at least three versions: that in of Macarius' collection (also found in SHM Titov 1769 (2166), 17-18<sup>th</sup> cent., ff. 158-175), the second one, very different from the printed text (e.g. SHM Uvarov 1045 (613), early 15<sup>th</sup> cent., ff. 47<sup>v</sup>-53; RNL OLDP F 186, 16<sup>th</sup> cent., ff. 12-15<sup>v</sup>) and the conflated one (e.g. RNL OLDP Q 50, middle of 16<sup>th</sup> cent., ff. 21-30). The Greek text of the insertion is closest to Macarius' version but sometimes coincides with the second version (e.g. the second version retains the typical hagiographic words скверни иереи, i.e. μιερεῖς).

Thus we can clearly establish the existence of a Greek model of the Slavonic Acts. However, this fact surely does something more than confirm a conclusion that suggests itself? In our view there are at least two problems that this discovery may enable scholars to solve.

The first is the unknown significance of the cult of St. Parasceve of Iconium in the Greek world. In addition to these Acts there is also a Slavonic miracle of St. Parasceve saving Iconium from an Arabic siege, which was no doubt also translated from Greek. This text (still unpublished and existing in at least three versions) remains unknown not only to specialists in Byzantine and Slavonic hagiography. Secondly, the lack of any evidence for a cult of the Megalomartys (!) of Iconium in Greek has led art historians to attribute all images of St. Parasceve in Byzantine art to the Sicilian saint<sup>9</sup>. This problem also needs to be reworked, especially because

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. U. KNOBEN, art. *Parasceve (Pjatnika)*, in *Lexikon für christliche Ikonographie*, VIII (1976), col. 118-120.

some monuments clearly depict the Megalomartys from Iconium (e.g. the famous representation of St. Parasceve with the instruments of Passion in Cod. Paris. gr. 510, 880 AD, f. 285)<sup>10</sup>.

*National Research University*

Andrey VINOGRADOV

Higher School of Economics  
Faculty of History  
Chapaevski per. 8-68  
RU – Moscou 125057

*Résumé.* La présente contribution est consacrée au texte grec du *Martyre* de S<sup>te</sup> Parascève d'Iconium. Ce récit, qu'on croyait jusqu'ici connu exclusivement par la tradition slave, est en réalité partiellement conservé dans un manuscrit grec incluant un éloge de Jean d'Eubée (VIII<sup>e</sup> s.) dédié à sainte Parascève de Sicile (*BHG* 1420p). Il contient quelques épisodes du *Martyre*, abrégés en vue d'être insérés dans cet *encomium*. Le fragment retrouvé pose la question de la vénération de S<sup>te</sup> Parascève d'Iconium à Byzance, et de l'identification exacte de la sainte figurée dans l'iconographie byzantine.

<sup>10</sup> Reproduction available in L. BRUBAKER, *Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth-Cent. Byzantium: the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris (B. N. Gr. 510)*, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 39 (1985), p. 1-13, esp. p. 10 and plate 7.