

Towards a Greek-Slavonic Edition of the *Life of St Blasios of Amorion (BHG 278)*

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This contribution presents ongoing research on the Life of Saint Blasios of Amorion (BHG 278), a “new-saint” vita produced at the early tenth-century monastery of Studios and most probably translated into Slavonic in that same century. A critical Greek-Slavonic edition of the Life is currently being prepared by the authors, who address the vita’s place within Middle Byzantine hagiographical literature, the available manuscript evidence, and the historical and literary contexts of its composition, translation and revision in both the Greek and Slavonic traditions. We could rely on the hagiography section of Francis Thomson’s card index – in its digital form the Thomson Index of Slavonic Translation Literature, or ThISTL – as a valuable point of departure for the exploration of the Slavonic tradition. An edition sample of chapter 2 of the Life is appended as an illustration of the ongoing text-critical and editorial work. The article concludes with observations on the text’s development, pointing to (1) the probable existence of an earlier, now lost Greek Vita A that served as a basis for the extant Slavonic translation, and (2) traces of a programmatic abridgement in the Slavonic version, apparently aimed at the removal of Constantinopolitan and Studite elements from the text. Directions for future research include further comparative analysis that also takes into account related texts, such as the Life of Nicholas the Studite (BHG 1365), as the only way forward to arrive at an understanding of the complex and layered textual history of Saint Blasios’ Vita.

The hagiographical works produced during the Middle Byzantine period are a subject of study that is both fascinating and complex. In addition to commemorating early Christian martyrs, ninth-century hagiographers introduced the practice of praising individuals – referred to as “new saints” – immediately or shortly after their deaths. These texts, most of them composed in a learned and sophisticated style, typically depict characters and events (almost) contemporaneous with the hagiographer and their intended audience.¹

* We are grateful to the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung for funding the research of Giulia Gollo within the project “The Bible in Middle Byzantine Hagiography (8th–11th centuries).” We also thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

1 S. EFTHYMIADIS, Hagiography from the “Dark Age” to the Age of Symeon Metaphrastes (Eight–Tenth Centuries), in: idem (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, I, Farnham 2011, 95–142, see esp. 95–96.

Providing valuable insights into the Middle Byzantine period, which is marked by major (i.e., Iconoclasm, 754–787 and 815–843) and minor (e.g., the “Moechian affair”, 795–811 or the “Photian Schism”, 863–867) controversies,² Middle Byzantine hagiographies of new saints are deeply embedded in the politico-religious landscape of their time, which makes their interpretation particularly challenging. Although framed within a Christian religious discourse, new-saint hagiography also functions as a form of public rhetoric.³ Hagiographers employed the spiritual element required by the genre to advance the ideological agenda of their commissioners, who were typically prominent figures such as emperors, patriarchs, abbots, and other leaders.⁴

The early tenth-century *Life of Blasios of Amorion* (BHG 278), *VBA* henceforth, is a prime example of new-saint hagiography from the Middle Byzantine period.⁵ Composed in a high and refined style, *VBA* traces the biography of Blasios, a Studite monk allegedly active during the reign of Leo VI (r. 886–912), who was born in a village near Amorion and travelled extensively to Con-

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- 2 On Byzantine Iconoclasm, see e.g. L. BRUBAKER, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*, London 2012. L. BRUBAKER – J. F. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850. A History*, Cambridge 2015. M. T. G. HUMPHREYS, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850*, Oxford 2015. L. BRUBAKER – J. F. HALDON, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (c. 680–850). The Sources: An Annotated Survey*, London 2017. M. T. G. Humphreys (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Leiden 2021. On the Moechian affair, see e.g. P. J. ALEXANDER, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople, Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 1958, 82–84. P. HENRY, The Moechian Controversy and the Constantinopolitan Synod of January A.D. 809, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 20/2, 1969, 495–522. On the Photian schism, see e.g. F. DVORNIK, *The Photian Schism. History and Legend*, Cambridge 1948, 1–278. R. JENKINS, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries AD 610–1071*, London 1966, 168–182. J. M. HUSSEY, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 1986, 69–101. E. YBARRA, *The Papacy. Revisiting the Debate between Catholics and Orthodox*, Steubenville 2022, 587–615.
- 3 G. GOLLO, Reading the Proems of Middle Byzantine Hagiography through Biblical Intertextuality, in: K. A. Azar – M. Pelucchi – E. G. Simonetti – P. Zaccaria (eds.), *Networking through Proems: Proemial Strategies for Intellectual Networking in Antiquity*, Berlin – Boston 2025, 339–364, see 341.
- 4 S. EFTHYMIADIS, The Byzantine Hagiographer and his Audience in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, in: C. Hogel (ed.), *Metaphrasis. Redactions and Audiences in Middle Byzantine Hagiography*, Oslo 1996, 59–77, see 69–70. S. EFTHYMIADIS – N. KALOGERAS, Audience, Language and Patronage in Byzantine Hagiography, in: S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography II*, Farnham 2014, 247–284, see 264–265.
- 5 H. GRÉGOIRE, Les Acta Sanctorum, *Byz* 4, 1927–1928, 791–812, see 805–808. H. GRÉGOIRE, La vie de saint Blaise d’Amorium, *Byz* 5/1, 1929–1930, 391–414. C. ANGELIDI, Les vies des saints ne sont pas seulement des vies saintes, in: P. Odorico – P. A. Agapitos (eds.), *Les “Vies des saints” à Byzance. Genre littéraire ou biographie historique?* (*Actes du IIe Colloque International Philologique “Hermeneia”, Paris, 6-7-8 juin 2002*), Paris 2004, 73–86, see 74–79. A. KAZHDAN, Paul of Latros and Some Other Provincial Saints, in: C. Angelidi (ed.), *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, Athens 2006, 211–229, see 222–225. EFTHYMIADIS, Hagiography from the “Dark Age”, op. cit., 117–118. G. TSIAPLES, A Byzantine Emperor between Reality and Imagination: The Image of Leo VI in the Hagiographical Texts of the Middle Byzantine Period, *Parekbolai* 4, 2014, 85–110, see 91–93.

stantinople, Bulgaria, Rome, and Athos.⁶ The *Life* addresses issues that were significant at the time, such as the Bulgarian affair,⁷ and mentions prominent figures of the time (e.g., Patriarch Ignatius, PmbZ #22712; pope Formosus, PmbZ #22001; Patriarch Antony II Kauleas, PmbZ #20476; Emperor Leo VI, PmbZ #24311), while incorporating miraculous (e.g., the healing of a deaf-mute boy in §16) and novelistic (e.g., a pirate attack on the Danube in §9) episodes.

VBA lacks a critical edition and has never been translated.⁸ Unsurprisingly, existing scholarship on this text is poor. A close reading of the text would encourage scholarly attention. Next to its aesthetic merits, *VBA* reveals strong ideological purposes. The hagiographical praise of Blasios as a paradigmatic Studite monk is a deliberate effort to promote a specific image of the monastery of Studios under the leadership of Abbot Anatolios:⁹ Studios appears as a key supporter of the imperial and patriarchal decision-making.¹⁰

The interpretation of the text is not without its complications, as the evidence of an Old Church Slavonic translation of the *Life of Blasios* (*SIVBA* henceforth) must be taken into account. Remarkably, the text that is handed down to us in Slavonic agrees only in part with the *VBA* as we know it in Greek. To simply discard it as a corrupted derivative of the Greek fails to do justice to the *VBA*'s textual history. The differences between the Greek and the Slavonic versions can be situated at two different levels, first, at the level of style and specific wording, and second, at the structural level.

For the first, we observe a more sober style in the Slavonic text, which lacks much of the flourishes and verbosity of the Greek. The Slavonic version apparently reflects a more pristine version of the text, while the Greek betrays an attempt to bring the text in line with (1) a particular kind of 'literariness,' and (2) a moralizing tendency and a particular view on sainthood.¹¹ It is hard-

6 On St Blasios, see: G. M. FUSCONI, Biagio d'Amorio, in: F. Caraffa et al. (eds.), *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, III, Rome 1963, 154–156. A. KAZHDAN, Blasios of Amorion, in: ODB I, 294–295. PmbZ, #21177.

7 On the formation of the Bulgarian Church in the ninth century between Constantinople and Rome, see e.g. R. BROWNING, *Byzantium and Bulgaria. A Comparative Study across the Early Medieval Frontier*, London 1975, 145–158.

8 *Vita Sancti Blasii*, H. Delehayé (ed.), in: *Acta Sanctorum*, IV, Bruxelles 1925, 657–669. I. Polemis – E. Mineva (eds.), *Βυζαντινά υμνογραφικά και αγιολογικά κείμενα*, Athens 2016, 613–644. I. Polemis – E. Mineva (eds.), *Βυζαντινά υμνογραφικά και αγιολογικά κείμενα, νέα έκδοση*, Athens 2021, 619–668. See also S. ΕΦΘΥΜΙΑΔΙΣ, Hagiographica varia (9th–10th c.), *JÖB* 48, 1998, 41–48.

9 PmbZ, #20347.

10 G. GOLLO, Writers as Painters, Texts as (Colourful) Icons: Authenticity as Stylistic Strategy in the *Life of St Blasios of Amorion* (BHG 278), in: C. Sode – D. Wahlin (eds.), *Realism in Hagiography*, Changchun (forthcoming).

11 The Greek is more verbose (e.g. §15 “the leader and teacher of that holy assembly of brethren” – ὁ τῆς ἱερᾶς ἐκείνης τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὁμηγύρεως καθηγεμῶν καὶ διδάσκαλος vs “the abbot of that holy monastery” – σβατλαδο τορο манастирия игоуменъ) and features various, often edifying sidesteps (e.g. §15, where in Slavonic Blasios “took care of his immortal soul” – печалаше са о везъмръзътии доуши, in Greek “he took care of the beauty of his

er to determine the nature of the differences at the second, structural level. Considerable parts of the text known in Greek are not present in the Slavonic version. More in particular, most passages that relate to Constantinople and the Studios monastery are missing in *SIVBA*.¹² There is reason to accept that this is not a matter of coincidence, but rather a conscious attempt to alter the text, and that we are dealing, not with an innovative addition of Studite elements in the version as we know it in Greek, but rather with a conscious removal of references to the Studite tradition in the version handed down in Slavonic.¹³

immortal soul, dignifying the mortality and ugliness of the tent through the brilliance of the virtues. Because just as, through these, detachment from passion [attaches itself] to the soul, in the same way does what is useful in appearances attach itself to the body. Because indeed “pallor, covering of clothes and *step of the foot*” (Deut. 2, 5; Act. 7, 5) (cf. Sir. 19, 30), as it is written, procure good conduct and modesty.” – ἐπεμελεῖτο τῆς ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς τὴν εὐπρέπειαν, τὸ θνητὸν τοῦ σκίηνου καὶ δύσμορφον τῆ τῶν ἀρετῶν σεμνύνων στυλνότητι. Ὡς γὰρ ἐκ τούτων τῆ μὲν ψυχῆ ἡ ἀπάθεια, οὕτως αὐθις τῷ σώματι τὸ ἐπωφελές τῶν ἰνδαλμάτων προσγίνεται. Ἐνθεν γὰρ ὠχρότης καὶ ἐσθῆτος ἀμφίσις καὶ βῆμα ποδός, ὥσπερ γέγραπται, τὸ εὐσταλές τε καὶ μέτριον κέκτηνται). For a more detailed comparison of the two versions, esp. in §15, see L. SELS, *The Slavonic Life of St Blasios of Amorion. Biblical references as a Resource for the Assessment of its Relation with the Greek* (in preparation).

- 12 Missing in Slavonic are the second part of Greek §18, §19, and the first part of §20, which contain Blasios’ departure from Rome to Constantinople, his stay at the Studios monastery, and his audience with Emperor Leo VI. Greek §25, on Blasios’ return from Athos to Constantinople and his death at the Studios monastery, and §26, the epilogue, are absent in the Slavonic version as well. The absence of these passages was already pointed out by Vasil Gjuzelev – Evelina Mineva and Elka Mirčeva – see V. GJUZELEV, *Житието на Власий Аморийски като извор за българската история* (Vita Blasii Amoriensis als Quelle für die bulgarische Geschichte), *Годишник на Софийския Университет философско-исторически факултет* (Annuaire de l’Université de Sofia, Faculté de philosophie et d’histoire) 61/3, 1968, 21–33, see 23–24, and the slightly rewritten version, idem, *Данни за българското минало в житието на власий Аморийски (IX–X в.)* (Из византийската агиографска книжнина), in: *Средновековна България в светлината на нови извори*, Sofia 1981, 51–60, see 53. E. MINEVA, *Произход, датировка и характеристика на славянския превод на житието на Св. Власий Аморийски или Власий мних* (ВНГ 278), *Годишник на Софийския Университет “Св. Климент Охридски” център за славяно-Византийски проучвания иван Дуйчев* (Annuaire de l’Université de Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” Centre de Recherches Slavo-Byzantines “Ivan Dujcev”) 99/18, 2017, 459–469, see 463. E. MIRČEVA, *Ценни сведения за българската история в житието на един малко познат светец в българската книжнина*, *Български език* 4, 2018, 73–91, see 76–77, and its Russian version, eadem, *Ценные сведения по болгарской истории в житии малоизвестного святого и древнеболгарская литература*, in: I. A. Sedakova et al. (eds.), *Взгляд на славянскую аксиологию*, Moscow 2019, 36–48, see 38–39.

- 13 The arguments for this assumption will be dealt with at length elsewhere (SELS, *The Slavonic Life of St Blasios*, see fn. 11), but we can already point to some general observations. First, there is the blunt but targeted cut of §18b-20a and §25-26, with preservation and adaptation of the chapters in between, of which §23-24 are staged on Mount Athos, where, according to the Slavonic version, Blasios dies. This outcome can hardly be explained as the result of a mechanical or otherwise accidental omission. A second observation concerns passages in the Slavonic text that betray its abridged state, as some elements that refer to the omitted parts have been preserved in the text. One of these elements, the setting of §22 at the metochion of Phirmoupolis, points to the original presence of a Constantinopolitan passage and

At the beginning of the *Life* (§1–7, viz. the proem and the paragraphs on Blasios' childhood and early career, with the edifying tale on Euphrosynos the Cook in §3–6) the Greek and Slavonic versions mostly coincide, and the Slavonic seems to be a translation, with minor deviations, of a Greek text not unlike the one we know in the Greek tradition, though with less flourishes and contemplative digressions. From §7 onwards the text exhibits an increasing number of structural discrepancies on top of the ubiquitous stylistic differences. Apart from the omissions mentioned above, some shifts in sequence can be noted.¹⁴

Whereas the stylistic differences between the Slavonic and the Greek version can readily be explained as the result of early Studite rewriting,¹⁵ the origin of the (apparently anti-Studite) reduction of the text – either in the course of the Greek tradition, at the time of translation, or during the long Slavonic transmission process – is much harder to pinpoint.¹⁶ We are left to wonder whether in the original *vita* the passages now missing in Slavonic were all present in the same way and in the same place, and as elaborate as they are in the sole surviving witness of the Greek text. The different tone and bias of the Greek and Slavonic versions suggest that this might not have been the case: although the original Studite signature of the *vita* should not be doubted,¹⁷ the surviving Greek version points to an increased ideological framing of Blasios' *vita*.

a link with the Studios monastery. That the original *vita* already bore a Studite signature is further corroborated by the overtly Studite collection in which the Slavonic *Life* is found (see *infra*, page 187, n. 57).

- 14 The most conspicuous example of a change in the order of events is Blasios' vision in which the Theotokos commands him to abstain from wine, which is in §10 in Greek and in §15 in Slavonic.
- 15 For the context of such rewritings, see *infra*, page 185, esp. n. 48. Of special relevance is the related case of the *Life of Nicholas the Studite*, see D. E. AFINOGENOV, *Rewriting a Saint's Life in the Monastery of Studiou: Two Lives of St Nicholas the Studite*, in: E. Kountura-Galaki (ed.), *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church: The New Saints, 8th–16th c.*, Athens 2004, 313–322, see 321–322, and O. DELOUIS, *Écriture et réécriture au monastère de Stoudios à Constantinople (IXe-Xe s.): quelques remarques*, in: S. Marjanović-Dušanić – B. Flusin (eds.), *Remanier, métaphraser. Fonctions et techniques de la réécriture dans le monde byzantin*, Belgrade 2011, 101–110, see 108–109. Elka Mirčeva already suggested the Slavonic translation to go back on an earlier, now lost version of the Greek text – see MIRČEVA, *Ценни сведения за българската история*, op. cit., 77 and eadem, *Ценные сведения по болгарской истории*, op. cit., 40.
- 16 Terje Helland's remark on the frequent rewriting of Slavonic menologion translations is interesting in this respect: "[...] it can be shown that many of the texts that various scholars have claimed are different translations in reality represent one original translation into Church Slavonic, which was then revised, and possibly modernised and Russified to fit the tastes and abilities of a new audience in a different Slavonic area. [...] some pre-metaphrastic volumes of the reading menologia are, for example, available in Athonite monasteries to the present, and they may have been used to revise existing translations there or elsewhere." T. HELLAND, *The Slavonic Tradition of Pre-Metaphrastic Reading Menologia for March – Codex Suprasliensis and Its Russian and Ukrainian Parallels*, *Scando-Slavica* 53, 2007, 59–76, see 74.
- 17 See *supra*, n. 13.

The following presentation of our ongoing research treats (1) the available Greek and Slavonic manuscript witnesses, and (2) the historical and literary contexts of the *Life*'s composition, translation and revision, to try and come to grips with its complex textual history.

1. Evidence

1.1 Greek

The sole witness to the Greek *Life of Blasios of Amorion* is the manuscript *Parisinus graecus* 1491 (diktyon: 51108), hereafter referred to as *P*.¹⁸ This manuscript, a finely crafted parchment codex, consists of 245 *folia* (measuring 380 x 230 mm), and is written in *bouletée* up to folio 198.¹⁹ The text is organized into two columns per page, each containing 36 lines, with minimal decoration. Based on palaeographic evidence, scholars unanimously date the manuscript before the middle of the tenth century.²⁰

P contains a pre-metaphrastic menologion for the second half of the month of December. Its content, especially *VBA*, Theodore the Studite's *Funerary Catechism to His Mother* (BHG 2422), and the *Life of Markellos Akoimetes* (BHG 1027z), demonstrates Studite interests (see 2.1 below). This suggests that the menologion was likely compiled at Studios, though whether *P* itself was copied there remains a matter of debate.²¹ The text of *VBA* appears on *folia* 64v–86r and was intended for liturgical reading on December 20th. However, the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* designates March 31st as the feast day.²²

18 H. OMONT, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de Paris et des Départements*, Paris 1898, 188 (please note that this catalogue misattributes the *Life* to the wrong Blasios, namely Blasios of Sebaste instead of Amorion). A. EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig 1937, I, 512–516. F. HALKIN, *Manuscrits grecs de Paris. Inventaire hagiographique*, Bruxelles 1968, 182. M. L. AGATI, *La minuscola bouletée*, Vatican 1992, I, 127–128. D. JACKSON, *The Colbert Greek Library from 1676 to 1678, Codices manuscripti* 73/74, 2010, 43–57, see 51.

19 On the transition from the first (ff. 1r–198v) to the second (ff. 199r–245v) hand, see also E. V. MALTESE, *Il testo genuino di Teodoro Studita, Epitafio per la madre* (BHG 2422), e Giovanni Crisostomo: *Unicuique suum*, *Révue des Études Tardo-antiques* 3, 2014, 305–311, see 306.

20 AGATI, *La minuscola*, op. cit., 128.

21 EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, op. cit., 516. O. DELOUIS, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Stoudios à Constantinople: La contribution d'un monastère à l'histoire de l'Empire byzantin* (v. 454–1204), vol. II. (Unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris I-Sorbonne 2005), 358. Ó. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Hacia la reconstrucción del Menologion estudita: los testimonios manuscritos*, in: T. Martínez Manzano – F. G. Hernández Muñoz (eds.), *Del manuscrito antiguo a la edición crítica de textos griegos: homenaje a la prof^a Elsa García Novo*, Madrid 2019, 257–269, see 260–262. Ó. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Literary circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm: Patrons, Politics, and Saints*, Cambridge 2020, 32, 34.

22 *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, H. Delehaye (ed.), Bruxelles 1902, VII, 576, ll. 11–12.

1.2 Slavonic

The *SIVBA* found its way to the famous *Great Reading Menologion* (or *Великие Минеи Четвы* / *Velikie Minei Četii*, commonly abbreviated *VMČ*) of Metropolitan Macarius (Makarij) of Moscow (1482–1563)²³ *sub* February 18 and has been preserved in a limited number of pre- and post-Macarian East Slavonic menologia under that date. The most important witnesses are two 15th century copies,²⁴ both kept in the Russian State Library, viz. *cod. Mosquensis РГБ, f.173.I (МДА)* 92.1 (formerly 584),²⁵ on pages 202–225 (henceforth

23 The mid-sixteenth century *VMČ*, instigated by the then archbishop of Novgorod and later metropolitan of Moscow Macarius (Makarij), is the first menologion in Slavonic to contain a full cycle of hagiographic and homiletic texts for every day of the year. For the huge bibliography on Macarius and his hagiographical enterprise see N. F. DROBLENKOVA, ‘Великие Минеи Четви’ and ‘Макарий’, in: D. S. Lichačev (ред.), *Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси* (henceforth *СККДР*), II, 1, Leningrad 1988, 126–133 and II, 2, Leningrad 1989, 76–88, as well as D. BULANIN – O. TVOROGOV, Библиографические дополнения к статьям помещенным в ‘Словаре книжников и книжности Древней Руси’ (вып.2, части 1–2), in: *СККДР* II, 3, Sankt-Peterburg 2012, 3–426, see 48–51, 276–283. An overview with bibliography can also be found in the hagiography section of Francis Thomson’s card index, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18844 up to 18875. Unfortunately, the February volume of the *VMČ* fell out of the two great *VMČ* publication projects – the first under the auspices of the Russian *Archaeographic Commission* (1868–1917, months Sept.–Jan. and April), the second, initiated by prof. Eckhard Weiher at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau (1997–2013, months March and May) –, so for the text of *SIVBA* we rely on the three manuscript versions of the Macarian menologion for February, viz. Sophia (*РНБ Соф.* 1320, f. 333[327]–339[333]), Imperial (*ГИМ. Син.* 179, f. 691v–700v), and Dormition (*ГИМ. Син.* 991, f. 513–521).

24 See O. TVOROGOV, *Переводные жития в русской книжности XI–XV веков: Каталог*, Moscow – Saint Petersburg 2008, 36.

25 The earliest manuscript, now dated to the 1450s based on the watermarks, originally belonged to the Trinity Laura of St Sergius in Sergiev Posad and was integrated in the library of the Moscow Theological Academy in 1747 – see A. A. TURILOV, *Предварительный список славяно-русских рукописных книг XV в., хранящихся в СССР*, Moscow 1986, 207 (nr. 2091). Digital images are available on the webpages of St Sergius’ Trinity Lavra, <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/173-i/f-173i-92-1> (last consulted January 24, 2025). See for this manuscript esp. I. I. SREZNEVSKIJ, *Сведения и заметки о малоизвестных памятниках*, Saint Petersburg 1876, lxiv, 377–391 (who inserts a fragment from *SIVBA*, 387–391) and Archim. LEONID (KAVELIN), *Сведение о славянских рукописях, поступивших из книгохранилища СТСЛ в библиотеку Троицкой духовной семинарии в 1747*, I, Moscow 1887, 37–42 (who inserts a description of *SIVBA*’s contents, 40). See also Archiep. SERGIJ (SPASSKIJ), *Полный месяцеслов Востока*, Т. I, *Восточная агиология*, Vladimir 1901, 264. More recent references can be found in Ch. HANNICK, *Maximos Holobolos in der kirchenslavischen homiletischen Literatur*, (WBS, 14), Vienna 1981, 73, and in the articles by D. AFINOGENOV, *The Church Slavonic Life of St. Thaddaios, the Martyr of the Second Iconoclasm*, *AnBol* 119, 2001, 313–337, see 314–316, and D. AFINOGENOV, *Новгородское переводное четьеминейное собрание: происхождение, состав, греческий оригинал*, in: *Abhandlungen zu den Grossen Lesemenäen des Metropoliten Makarij. Kodikologische, miszellenologische und textologische Untersuchungen* 2, (Monumenta linguae slavicae dialecti veteris fontes et dissertationes, xlix), Freiburg im Breisgau 2006, 261–283, see 266–271. In Francis Thomson’s card index see *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18792 up to 18795 (last consulted January 24, 2025).

MDA 92.1), and *РГБ, f.113 (Iosifo-Volokolamskij monastyr')* 594 [196], on folia 156–174 (hencefort *Volok.* 594),²⁶ besides two 16th century pre-Macarian copies, one in the Russian National Library in St Petersburg, *cod. РНБ, f. 728 (St Sophia, Novgorod)* 1377 (henceforth *Sof.* 1377), f. 171–188,²⁷ and the other in the Russian State Library in Moscow *cod. РГБ, f. 98 (Egorov)* 167 (c. 1540), f. 292–317^v.²⁸ As for the post-Macarian reception of the *SIVBA* we may note its presence in the *Miracle menologion* (1599–1600) (February volume *Codex ГИМ [State Historical Museum], Ćudov* 311)²⁹ and (without the introduction³⁰) in the mid-17th century menologion of John Miljutin (February volume *Codex ГИМ, Synodal* 802).³¹

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- 26 See TURILOV, *Предварительный список*, op. cit., 207 (nr 2090). Digital images are available on the webpages of St Sergius' Trinity Lavra, <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/113/f-113-594> (last consulted January 29, 2025). See for this manuscript Ieromon. IOSIF, *Опись рукописей перенесенных из библиотеки Иосифа монастыря в библиотеку Московской Духовной Академии*, Moscow 1882, 250–253, as well as P. STROEV, *Описание рукописей монастырей Волоколамского, Новый Иерусалим, Саввина-Сторожевского и Пафнутиева-Боровского*, Saint Petersburg 1891, 21–23, and SERGIJ, *Полный месяцеслов Востока I, Восточная агиология*, op. cit., 517–521.
- 27 See D. I. АБРАМОВИЇ, *Описание рукописей С.-Петербургской Духовной Академии Софийская Библиотека*, вып. II, *Четьи Минеи. Прологи. Патерики*, Saint Petersburg 1907, 288–291.
- 28 See T. V. ANISIMOVA, *Каталог славяно-русских рукописных книг из собрания Е. Е. Егорова* (Catalogue of Slavic-Russian manuscripts from the collection of E. E. Egorov), т. 2, n° 101–200, Moscow 2019, 141–142. For digital images see <https://lib-fond.ru/lib-rgb/98/f-98-167> (last consulted February 6, 2025). Based on various publications on the pre-Metaphrastic menologion, published by T. HELLAND between 2006 and 2009 (see infra n. 64), we may assume that the *Life* is also found in a 16th century reading menologion from the Monastery of Cyril on the White Lake (Kirillo-Belozerskij monastyr'). For the present publication we did not have access to the February volume, now kept in the Russian National Library, viz. *cod. РНБ, f. 351 (Сур.-Bel.)*, 15/1254.
- 29 A 13 volume menologion (*ГИМ, Ćud.* 307-317), compiled at the Moscow Monastery of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael in 1600. For the *Miracle menologion* see N. F. ДРОВЛЕНКОВА, *Минеи Четьи Чудовские*, in: Lichačev (ред.), *СККДР* II, 2, op. cit., 114–116, as well as BULANIN – TVOROGOV, *Библиографические дополнение*, in: *СККДР* II, 3, op. cit., 299. See also F. Thomson's cards, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18908 up to 18909: "The aim was clearly to collect the vitae, eulogies and festal homilies in the Macarian menologium with special regard to Russian feasts, more of which not in the Macarian menologium were added". On the close connection with *VMĆ* see also N. A. KULĚVA, *К вопросу о формировании состава Минеи-Четьих (на примере февральского тома), Пространство и время* 3/21, 2015, 110–116, see 114, and eadem, *Минеи четьи xvii в.: К вопросу о работе троицких книжников (на примере февральского тома), Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики* 4/90, 2023, 171.
- 30 KULĚVA, *Минеи четьи xvii в.*, op. cit., 174.
- 31 A 12-volume menologion (*ГИМ, Syn.* 797-808) compiled by John Miljutin, a priest of the Church of the Nativity of Christ at Sergiev Posad, between 1646 and 1654. See IOSIF (Levickij), архим., *Оглавление Четиух-Миней свяц. Иоанна Милютина*, Moscow 1867, 168. See F. Thomson's cards, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18912 up to 18913. See also KULĚVA, *Минеи четьи xvii в.*, op. cit., 173–177, who arrives at the conclusion (page 176) that John Miljutin – who used source material from the collection of the Trinity Laura of St Sergius – used both *MDA* 92.1 (brought to Moscow only in 1747) and *VMĆ*.

Up till now, scholarship on *SIVBA* has mostly been based on the sole evidence of the codex from the *Moscow Theological Academy* (*MDA* 92.1). In the second half of the 19th century various fragments of the text were published by Russian scholars,³² and in 1887 Archimandrite Leonid (Kavelin) (1822–1891) – unaware of the existence of the Greek manuscript – published a diplomatic (but incomplete) edition of the Slavonic text on the basis of *MDA* 92.1.³³ In an article of 1968 and its slightly revised version of 1981 Vasil Gjuzelev drew attention to Blasios’ *Life* in the Academy copy as a source for Bulgarian history.³⁴ The subject resurfaced in 2016 with the work of Evelina Mineva, who also relied exclusively on *MDA* 92.1. Together with Ioannis Polemis she published the first edition of the Greek *Life* with reference to the Slavonic version (2016, second edition 2021),³⁵ followed in 2017 by an article on the origins and the particulars of the Slavonic translation,³⁶ which she characterized as a “rather inaccurate and incomplete version of the Byzantine original”.³⁷ In her articles of 2018 and 2019 Elka Mirčeva approached *SIVBA* once more as a historical source – also for the origins of the old Bulgarian menologion –, citing from the *Life* on the basis of *MDA* 92.1 but pointing to its occurrence in *Volok*. 594 [196] and *Sof.* 1377 as well.³⁸ Although recent work by Natalia Kulěva on the contents of the East Slavonic February menologia mentions *SIVBA* only cursorily, it does provide a broader picture of the vita’s reception in pre- and post-Macarican collections.³⁹ In spite of occasional references to the Slavonic

32 Not surprisingly the Bulgarian episode in Blasios’ vita was chosen. Both F. I. BUSLAEV, *Историческая хрестоматия церковно-славянского и древнерусского языков*, Moscow 1861, 429–434 and SREZNEVSKI, *Сведения и заметки*, op. cit., 387–391 chose to publish §8b–10a of the *SIVBA* as an excerpt.

33 Archim. LEONID (KAVELIN), *Житие преподобнаго Власия мниха. Памятник словено-болгарской письменности IX века из рукописной четы-минеи XV века (бывшей троицкой)* (Памятники древней письменности, lxxv), [Saint Petersburg] 1887, i–viii (introduction) and 1–22 (edition). Blasios’ vision of the Theotokos in §13, which contains a barely veiled castration scene, was left out by Leonid (page 14), with the note “Здесь следует сказание о чудесном избавлении Власия от обуревания страсти за молитвы Богородицы” (“Here follows the story of Blasios’ miraculous deliverance from overwhelming passion for his prayers to the Mother of God”).

34 GJUZELEV, *Житието на Власий Аморийски*, op. cit., 21–33 and *Данни за българското минало*, op. cit., 51–60.

35 I. POLEMIS – E. MINEVA, *Βυζαντινά υμνογραφικά και αγιολογικά κείμενα*, Athens 2016, 610–644 (text 613–644), and second edition, *νέα έκδοση*, Athens 2021, 619–668 (text 637–668).

36 MINEVA, *Произход*, op. cit.

37 POLEMIS – MINEVA, *Βυζαντινά υμνογραφικά*, op. cit., 463: “един доста некачествен и непълен вариант на византийския оригинал”.

38 MIRČEVA, *Ценни сведения за българската история*, op. cit., 79. Eadem, *Ценные сведения по болгарской истории*, op. cit., 40.

39 See KULĚVA, *К вопросу о формировании состава Минеи-Четых*, op. cit. Eadem, *Минеи четы xvii в.*, op. cit.

Life in recent Byzantinist publications,⁴⁰ often based on the earlier work of Dmitry Afinogenov,⁴¹ the Slavonic evidence has never been studied in depth, nor systematically compared to the Greek.

2. Context

2.1 Greek

Few places are as emblematic of Byzantium as the Monastery of Studios. Far more than merely a religious institution, Studios played a pivotal role in Byzantine politics, society, and culture since its foundation in the fifth century A.D.⁴² It was under the exceptional figure of Theodore the Studite (758/9–826)⁴³ that the monastery began to cultivate a distinct collective identity, emerging as a key participant in Byzantine public discourse. Within this cultural context, Studios produced an extensive body of literary works during the ninth and tenth centuries, giving rise to what can be identified as a distinct “Studite literature”, particularly in the genre of hagiography.

As Delouis describes, the monastery functioned as a “*fabrique de saints*”,⁴⁴ fostering the veneration of newly canonized Studite saints, including Theodore the Studite himself, his mother Theoktiste, Nicholas the Studite, Blasios of Amorion, and others. This liturgical renovation led to the development of a Studite menologion – the set of monthly collections of Passions and Lives organised around the local saints’ feasts. In these compilations, Studite saints were placed alongside early Christian martyrs, thereby acquiring liturgical

40 Cf. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Literary circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm*, op. cit., 28–40, 78–80. O. DELOUIS – A. PETERS-CUSTOT, Le voyage de Rome dans la fabrique des saints moines byzantins, in: O. Delouis – M. Mossakowska-Gaubert – A. Peters-Custot (eds.), *Les mobilités monastiques en Orient et en Occident de l’Antiquité tardive Au Moyen âge: IVe–XVe Siècle*, (Collection de l’École Française de Rome, 558), Rome 2019, 311–336, see 319–320. DELOUIS, *Écriture et réécriture*, op. cit., 108–109.

41 AFINOGENOV, The Church Slavonic Life of St Thaddaios, op. cit. D. AFINOGENOV, Rewriting a Saint’s Life in the Monastery of Studiou: Two *Lives* of St Nicholas the Studite, in: E. Kountura-Galaki (ed.), *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church: The New Saints, 8th–16th c.*, Athens 2004, 313–322. AFINOGENOV, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit.

42 See e.g.: DELOUIS, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Stoudios*, op. cit. A.-M. TALBOT, *Varieties of monastic experience in Byzantium, 800–1453*, Notre Dame 2019, 16–25.

43 PmbZ, #7574/corr. The bibliography on Theodore the Studite is immense. See e.g.: T. PRATSCH, *Theodoros Studites (759–826) zwischen Dogma und Pragma: der Abt des Studiosklosters in Konstantinopel im Spannungsfeld von Patriarch, Kaiser und eigenem Anspruch*, Frankfurt am Main – New York 1998. R. CHOLIJ, *Theodore the Stoudite: The Ordering of Holiness*, Oxford 2009. T. T. TOLLEFSEN, *St Theodore the Studite’s Defence of the Icons: Theology and Philosophy in Ninth-Century Byzantium*, Oxford 2018.

44 DELOUIS, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Stoudios*, op. cit., 310.

legitimacy. Although the existence of a singular Studite menologion remains unproven, it has been partially reconstructed by scholars, though many aspects of its formation continue to elude definitive answers.⁴⁵

The development of the Studite menologion must have been a complex, multi-stage process initiated by Theodore the Studite, which subsequently evolved under the leadership of different abbots. While the Studite menologion was conceived as a spiritual handbook for the Studite community, it also served as a platform for the leaders of the monastic community to advance their ideological agendas.⁴⁶ Through this medium, they presented a crafted image of themselves and the broader community to its members.

Notably, Abbot Anatolios (886–916)⁴⁷ appears to have played a pivotal role in accelerating and reshaping the development of the Studite menologion. Relying on a group of affiliated hagiographers, he directed the compilation of the November menologion *Vaticanus Graecus 1660* and promoted the rewriting of older Lives and Passions.⁴⁸ These revised texts, integrated into the *menologia*, exhibit distinctive aesthetic and ideological features reflective of Anatolios' vision. Among his collaborators, Michael the Monk,⁴⁹ a Studite monk with connections to the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, seems to have made the most significant contributions to Anatolios' liturgical-ideological program.

Anatolios is known to have commissioned Michael to rewrite key hagiographical works, including what is now referred to as *Vita B* of Theodore the Studite (BHG 1754) and possibly a revised *Life of Nicholas of Studios* (BHG 1365). The latter case is particularly significant, as is clear from the groundbreaking research of D. Afinogenov, who, on the basis of the Church Slavonic translation, established the greater antiquity of a now-lost shorter Greek *Life of Nicholas* compared to the extant, longer version.⁵⁰ The *Life of Blasios of Amorion* fits within this context as well. Likely written during Anatolios' hegumenate, it shares notable similarities with the *Life of Nicholas*, leading to the hypothesis that both texts as we now know them in Greek may have been written by the same author, Michael the Monk.⁵¹

45 PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, Hacia la reconstrucción, op. cit. Idem, *Literary Circles*, op. cit., 31–40.

46 PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, Hacia la reconstrucción, op. cit., 266.

47 See supra note 9.

48 AFINOGENOV, Rewriting a Saint's Life, op. cit., 321–322. DELOUIS, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Stoudios*, op. cit., 305–373. EFTHYMIADIS, Hagiography from the “Dark Age”, op. cit., 117. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Literary Circles*, op. cit., 307–308.

49 PmbZ #25099. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Literary Circles*, op. cit., 302–319.

50 AFINOGENOV, Rewriting a Saint's Life, op. cit.

51 H. GRÉGOIRE, La vie de saint Blaise d'Amorium, *Byz* 5, 1929, 391–414, see 413–414. AFINOGENOV, The Church Slavonic Life of St Thaddaios, op. cit., 318. AFINOGENOV, Rewriting a Saint's Life, op. cit., 322. PRIETO DOMÍNGUEZ, *Literary Circles*, op. cit., 314. Polemis – Mineva (eds.), *Βυζαντινά υμνογραφικά νέα έκδοση*, op. cit., 622–636. Cf. instead D. KRAUSMÜLLER, Reconstructing the Hagiographical Oeuvre of Michael Monk of Studios,

2.2 Slavonic

Leonid, who edited the *SIVBA* without knowledge of the Greek codex *Parisinus graecus* 1491, believed the original text to have been written in Slavonic, probably on Athos already during Blasios' lifetime, and to have circulated more broadly in Slavonic literature no later than the 12th century.⁵² More recently Vasil Gjuzelev, Evelina Mineva, and Elka Mirčeva have suggested mid-10th century Bulgaria (and the last two more specifically the capital Preslav) as the most likely locus of translation from Greek,⁵³ in line with the observations made by Izmail Sreznevskij in 1876. As stated above, *SIVBA* evidence is limited to late, exclusively East Slavonic copies. Its earliest copy, 15th century *MDA* 92.1 – our key witness – already attracted scholarly attention in the 19th century because of the archaic traits of its contents and language.

A linguistic investigation, also with regard to the lexicon of the *Life of St Blasios*, led Sreznevskij to conclude the codex to be an indirect copy of a companion volume for February to the March collection in the famous 10th century *codex Suprasliensis*.⁵⁴ Following Sreznevskij, both Nicolaas van Wijk and Angel Davidov arrived at similar conclusions, pointing out lexical similarities between *Suprasliensis* and (*SIVBA* in) the Russian menologia for February.⁵⁵ Sreznevskij's observation that the collection of *MDA* 92.1 consists exclusively of translations from Greek,⁵⁶ without works originally written in Slavonic, was

Archimandrite of Dalmatos and Patriarchal Synkellos (9th /10th centuries), *Parekbolai* 10, 2020, 1–42, see 20–21 speculating about "... another Stoudite monk who took his inspiration from Michael's texts."

52 LEONID, *Житие преподобнаго Власия мниха*, op. cit., iv–viii.

53 GJUZELEV, *Житието на Власий Аморийски*, op. cit., 24 and 32. Idem, *Данни за българското минало*, op. cit., 54. MINEVA, *Произход*, op. cit., 461–462. MIRČEVA, *Ценни сведения за българската история*, op. cit., 80 and *Ценные сведения по болгарской истории*, op. cit., 41–42.

54 SREZNEVSKIJ, *Сведения и заметки*, op. cit., 382–387, conclusion 391. The collection of the *codex Suprasliensis* is treated in EHRHARD, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, op. cit., 593–603. On various aspects of the famous codex, scattered in pieces over various libraries but listed in the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register since 2007 and currently published online in full (<http://suprasliensis.obdurodon.org>), see A. Miltenova (ed.), *Preotkrivane: suprasalski sbornik starobalgarski pametnik ot X vek / Rediscovery: Bulgarian Codex Suprasliensis of 10th century*, Sofia 2012). See also Thomson's cards, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18748 up to 18788 (last consulted February 15, 2025).

55 See N. VAN WIJK, *Zur Herkunft dreier Legenden des Codex Suprasliensis*, *Archiv für Slavische Philologie* 42, 1929, 289–295, esp. 293–295. See his conclusion, 294: "Die lexikalischen Übereinstimmungen zwischen den Februar-Menäen und den letzten drei Legenden des Suprasliensis sprechen für die Annahme, dass die Februar-Menäen einen Teil einer größeren, lexikalisch verhältnismäßig homogenen, vielleicht sogar von ein und demselben Übersetzer herrührenden Sammlung bilden, welche auch März-Menäen erhalten hat." Also A. DAVIDOV, *Някои лексикални особености на минея за месец февруари от Руската национална библиотека в Санкт Петербург (Соф. 1377)*, *Кирило-Методиевски студии* 17, 2007, 191–196, which, 196, "confirms Sreznevskij's and Van Wijk's claim about the close relation between the F[ebruary] M[enologia] and Suprasliensis."

56 SREZNEVSKIJ, *Сведения и заметки*, op. cit., 381.

taken up again by Dmitry Afinogenov, who also pointed to the markedly Studite content of the codex.⁵⁷ Indeed, apart from earlier texts, *MDA* 92.1 contains no less than four texts directly connected to the Studite milieu, viz. the *Life of St Nicholas the Studite* (Feb. 4),⁵⁸ the *Life of St Blasios of Amorion* (Feb. 18), the *Passio of St Thaddaeus* (Feb. 27) – which has not survived in Greek at all⁵⁹ –, as well as Theodore the Studite’s *Sermon on the discovery of the head of John the Baptist* (Feb. 24).⁶⁰ Afinogenov assumed the collection to go back on a single Greek model, viz. an early pre-metaphrastic menologion for February,⁶¹ as part of a complete cycle of pre-Metaphrastic menologia for the whole year, the compilation of which he situated in the first half of the 10th century, in the Studios monastery in Constantinople.⁶² He also assumed that this Greek collection was translated to Slavonic in the 12th century in that same Studios monastery, “wahrscheinlich aufgrund eines speziellen Auftrags aus Novgorod,” by Bulgarian monks.⁶³ The latter assumption has rightly been refuted by Terje Helland on several occasions.⁶⁴ Even if we assume that a full cycle of reading menologia per month existed in early Slavonic literature, they have been preserved only in part. Helland points out that the individual menologia for each month can only partially be recovered, to a greater or lesser extent depending

57 AFINOGENOV, *The Church Slavonic Life of St Thaddaios*, op. cit., 316–317, and AFINOGENOV, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit., 270–271.

58 Cf. *BHG* 1365. For the two Slavonic translations of the *Life of St Nicholas the Studite* see AFINOGENOV, *Rewriting a Saint’s Life* op. cit., and idem, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit., 268–270; also, the Thomson’s cards, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/19108 up to 19114 (last consulted February 15, 2025).

59 The brief martyrion of Thaddaeus the Studite, only preserved in Slavonic, was published together with an English translation by Afinogenov based on *MDA* 92.1, *Volok* 594, and State Historical Museum, *Synod* 991 (witness to the *VMĀ*) with as his aim “supplying Byzantinists with a Church Slavonic text of the Life of St. Thaddaios in such a way it will facilitate the reconstruction of the Greek original” – see AFINOGENOV, *The Church Slavonic Life of St Thaddaios*, op. cit. See also Thomson’s cards, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/19602 up to 19604 (last consulted February 15, 2025).

60 Cf. *BHG* 841. For the Slavonic tradition of this text – found *sub* 24.2 in the same witnesses as listed above for the *SIVBA* – see the recent publication by N. A. KULĒVA, *Сказание о втором обретении главы Иоанна Предтечи в истории церковнославянской книжности*, *Вестник ПСТГУ*, (St Tikhon University Review), *Серия 3: филология* вып., Series 3, Philology, vol. 74, 2023, 31–40.

61 For the most recent listings of the content of *MDA* 92.1 see AFINOGENOV, *The Church Slavonic Life of St Thaddaios*, op. cit., 314–315. Idem, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit., 267–268. KULĒVA, *Минеи четъи xvii в.*, op. cit., 169. See also Thomson, *ThISTL*, thomsonindex.org/card/18792 up to 18795 (last consulted February 16, 2025).

62 AFINOGENOV, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit., 275–283.

63 AFINOGENOV, *Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание*, op. cit., 284 (from the German summary).

64 Esp. T. HELLAND, *Some Remarks Regarding the Place and Date of the Translation of the Slavonic Reading Menologia and Their Transmission to Russia*, *Palaeobulgarica* 31/1, 2007, 27–39. Idem, *The Slavonic Tradition of Pre-Metaphrastic Reading Menologia for March*, op. cit. Idem, *The Church Slavonic Reading Menologia Covering October as Indirect Witnesses to the Pre-Metaphrastic Byzantine October Menologion*, *Byz* 78, 2008, 239–253.

on the month. For March, he argues that the core texts in the Russian reading menologia go back to the same tradition as those in the *codex Suprasliensis*, which puts their translation in 10th century Bulgaria⁶⁵ (so in line with the position of Gjuzelev, Mineva, and Mirčeva).⁶⁶ Afinogenov’s hypothesis relies heavily on the evidence of the Volokolamsk menologion, the earliest surviving East Slavonic multi-tome menologion for the whole year, of which our witness *Volok. 594* is the February volume.⁶⁷ It is interesting to note, however, that the contents of the May and March volumes of the Volokolamsk menologion have also been linked to *codex Suprasliensis*.⁶⁸

The question of the original content and translation of the February volume leaves ample room for further investigation, and the same goes for the particular translation of *SIVBA*. We are inclined to believe that the collection of *MDA 92.1* was the result of a single translation of a similar Greek February collection, which, judging from the language, indeed goes back to 10th century Bulgaria. This would mean that *SIVBA* was made shortly after the time of composition of the early 10th century original Greek *VBA* (and the fact that part of the narrative is set in Bulgaria adds interest to that observation).

When it comes to the nature and structure of the original Slavonic translation, especially with regard to the missing Constantinopolitan/Studite passages, we are not on firm ground. The evidence does not allow us to decide when and where the abridgement occurred, which, however, was clearly based on some anti-Constantinopolitan, perhaps anti-Studite or pro-Athonite, sentiment. The abridgement may, or may not, go back to the early stages of the *VBA* – that is, to the Greek translation model or to the Slavonic translator –, or to any point in the long (both South and East) Slavonic transmission history that separates the 10th century from the common archetype of our earliest, 15th century, Russian witnesses.

65 Esp. HELLAND, The Slavonic Tradition of Pre-Metaphrastic Reading Menologia for March, op. cit.

66 Even if Mirčeva nuances the direct link between the Russian February menologion and *codex Suprasliensis* – see MIRČEVA, Ценни сведения за българската история, op. cit., 87.

67 A year collection in nine instead of twelve volumes (РГБ. *Volok. 590-598* [192-200]), with a few texts for June and August added to the July volume, which, according to Afinogenov, was due to the fact that the pre-metaphrastic menologia for June and August were not available in the Studios monastery in the 12th century at the moment of their alleged translation – see AFINOGENOV, Новгородское переводное четъеминейное собрание, op. cit., 263–266. Cf. the argument of HELLAND, Some Remarks Regarding the Place and Date, op. cit., 30, that “the Russian menologia reconstructed in the 15th century were based on books that originally came to Russia at different points in time.” For the differences in content between *MDA 92.1* and *Volok. 594*, see KULĚVA, К вопросу о формировании состава Миней-Четъих, op. cit., 113.

68 See T. P. LĚNNGREN, Следы минейной части Супрасльского кодекса в древнерусской книжности, *Palaeoslavica* 21/1, 2013, 1–14.

3. Edition

The sample added to this contribution – viz. *VBA*'s brief chapter 2, in which Blasios is presented to the reader by means of his provenance, descent, and moral character – is meant to announce the full synoptic Greek-Slavonic edition that is currently being prepared by the authors. Within the structure of the *Life*, this chapter follows a lengthy preface (§1),⁶⁹ and is followed by the *Tale of Euphrosynos the Cook* (§3–6), an edifying tale inserted into the narrative,⁷⁰ which gives chapter 2 the character of a false start. This part of the *vita* belongs to the beginning of the text, in which the Greek and the Slavonic versions are still very much in agreement.

The edition is meant to serve a mixed audience of scholars, with an English translation to enable any reader to compare the two text versions. The edition of the Greek text is based on *codex unicus Parisinus graecus* 1491 (*P*), with references to the existing editions of Delehay and Polemis – Mineva, as well as the corrections proposed by Efthymiadis in the apparatus.⁷¹ Notable deviations in the Slavonic text have also been indicated in the Greek apparatus, where possible with a Greek retroversion.

As the Slavonic manuscript evidence can be split up in two branches, the first represented solely by our earliest witness *MDA* 92.1, and the other by the remaining witnesses, headed by *Volok*. 594 and including *VMČ*,⁷² the edition of the Slavonic text is based on the two earliest witnesses, *MDA* 92.1 (sigl. *M*) and *Volok*. 594 (sigl. *V*), with the Macarian reading also included in the apparatus

69 The remarkable parallels between the preface of the *Life of St Blasios* (cf. DELEHAYE, *Vita Sancti Blasii*, op. cit., 657–658) and the preface to the *Life of Nicholas the Studite* (cf. *PG* 105, 863–868) deserve further investigation.

70 *BHG* 628. Note a similar procedure in the *Life of St Nicholas the Studite* with the embedded tale of the soldier Nicholas (*BHG* 2311/1317h). Remarkably, the two *Lives* introduce the edifying tales in similar terms: as “useful” (ὠφέλιμον) for and “unknown” (ἄγνωριστον) to most.

71 See supra, page 177, n. 8.

72 It has been noted that the Russian menologion for February has remained remarkably stable in the pre-Macarian period – see KULÉVA, К вопросу о формировании состава Миней-Четьих, op. cit., 111, and eadem, Миней четьи xvii в., op. cit., 170. A similar stability, extending even into the Macarian and post-Macarian tradition, can be seen in the text of *SIVBA*, as all later copies stay close to the text as attested in the Volokolamsk menologion and in *VMČ*. The close ties between those two menologia for the full year, *Volok*. and *VMČ*, have often been pointed out: see *СККДР*, II, 2, op. cit., 125–126. AFINOGENOV, Новгородское переводное четьеминейное собрание, op. cit., 263. T. P. LÉNNGREN, Волоколамские источники Великих Миней Четьих, in: J. Besters-Dilger – A. Rabus (eds.), *Text – Sprache – Grammatik. Slavisches Schrifttum der Vormoderne. Festschrift für Eckhard Weiher*, Munich – Berlin 2009, 225–237, and eadem, Источники жития Арсения Великого в Великих Миней Четьих, *Вестник “Альянс-Архео”* 3, 2014, 25–39. KULÉVA, К вопросу о формировании состава Миней-Четьих, op. cit., 113, and eadem, Сказание о втором обретении главы Иоанна Предтечи, op. cit., 34, 37–38. The Miljutin menologion text occupies a special position, as Miljutin drew on both *MDA* 92.1 and *VMČ* for his work, as already noted supra, n. 29. Our earliest witness *MDA* 92.1 stands apart as an isolated, and hence valuable, testimony to another, independent strand in the tradition of the *SIVBA*.

on the basis of a collation of the Sofia, Imperial, and Dormition versions (sigl. *VMČ^{SID}*). The edition published by Leonid – which does not always render the text of *MDA* 92.1 correctly – has also been given a place in the apparatus (*L^{ed}*).

Collation with the Greek has made it clear that *MDA* 92.1 on the one hand and the *Volok.-VMČ* branch on the other complement each other for the reconstruction of the translation's archetype. In the edition sample added to this article, for instance, the reading *рождениѣ и възспитаниѣ* (§2, l. 3) of *VVMČ^{SID}* clearly reflects the Greek *θρέμμα καὶ γέννημα* against the secondary reduction *рождениѣ* found in *ML^{ed}*. On the other hand, *тыѣа славыныѣа въз тѣхъз дънехъз ѣавлааше* (§2, l. 4-5) of *ML^{ed}* agrees perfectly with the Greek *τούτους ἀρίστους ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐδείκνυεν* against the smoother but apparently secondary reading *такѡ тѣхъз въз тыѣа дънии славыныиъз ѣавлааше* of *VVMČ^{SID}*, just as the particle *ѣавивъз сѣ* (§2, l. 6) of *ML^{ed}* agrees with Greek *χηματίσας* against the aorist *ѣави сѣ* of *VVMČ^{SID}*.⁷³ Generally speaking, *MDA* 92.1 stays closer to the Greek, and hence to the Slavonic archetype, while the *Volok.-VMČ* branch testifies to some rewriting, often, apparently, to arrive at a more ornate, explicit or smoother wording – a few examples from our brief edition sample: *ἡ καλοκαγαθία* > *добраѣа благость* [*ML^{ed}*] > *благопрозѣавъ* [*VVMČ^{SID}*] (§2, l. 4); *Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τῆς προσηγορίας τῆν πρᾶξιν κατάλληλον* > *Имѣаше же и имѣнни (pro имени) ѣго дѣтѣль сѣличънѣ* [*ML^{ed}*] > *Имѣаше же отрокъз сѣ по имени ѣго и дѣтѣль сѣличънѣ* [*VVMČ^{SID}*] (§2, l. 5); *κατάκαρπος* > *плодънъз* [*ML^{ed}*] > *мъногѡплодънъз* [*VVMČ^{SID}*] (§2, l. 6).

4. Conclusions

Even though, at this point, we are unable to fully untangle the knot of the *VBA*'s textual tradition for lack of evidence, our present knowledge of the Slavonic tradition allows us to assume that the extant Greek *VBA* is, in all probability, a *Vita B* – the result of Studite rewriting, probably by Michael the Monk – while the Slavonic translation was made early on the basis of a now lost *Vita A*. The extant Slavonic version indeed allows us to discern a stylistically more sober and less pedantic *Vita A* (and the addition of literary and ideological garnish in our extant Greek *Vita B*), but the precise nature of that original *Vita* in part escapes us due to a programmatic abridgement of the text, the time and place of which remain elusive.

Further investigation is needed, ideally including a more in-depth comparative analysis of related texts such as the *Life of Saint Nicholas the Studite* and its Slavonic translations. Following this path, it may become possible to identify the ideological motifs underlying the various rewritings of the narrative. Among

⁷³ Note that the reconstructed archetypal text of the edition is orthographically normalized according to the standard of the Prague Dictionary (J. KURZ et al., *Slovník jazyka staroslověnského*, Prague 1958–1997), while variant readings in the *apparatus criticus* are rendered in the orthography of the manuscript witness.

other things, it could enable us to identify the key features of Anatolios' ideological program as it emerges in *VBA*, and to trace a demarcation between the pre- and post-Anatolios Studios, to enhance our understanding of the text and pave the way for future research into tenth-century Studite hagiography. Clearly the establishment of a complete and reliable bilingual edition is a *conditio sine qua non* to solve the many questions that still surround the textual history of the *Life of Saint Blasios of Amorion*.

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2. Ὁ ἐν ἁγίοις πατὴρ ἡμῶν Βλάσιος χώρας μὲν ἦν τῆς Ἀνατολῆς, ἐκ τῆς τῶν Ἀμορραίων πατρίδος ὀρμώμενος. Εὐσεβῶν δὲ γονέων ὑπῆρξε θρέμμα καὶ γέννημα, ὧν ἡ καλοκαγαθία, τὴν εὐτεχνίαν αὐξήσασα, τούτους ἀρίστους ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐδείκνυεν. Ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τῆς προσηγορίας τῆν πρᾶξιν κατάλληλον, 5 ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς μητρῴας νηδύος βλαστὸς χρηματίσας κατάκαρπος, τῇ τῶν ἡθῶν καταστάσει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῶν πολλῶν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐφελκόμενος. Δύνανται δὲ καὶ οἱ τοῦ σώματος χαρακτηῆρες 10 πολλακίς τὸ ἀφανὲς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ κρυπτόμενον ἐπιδείκνυσθαι (δεῖναι γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ὄψεις κατὰ πάντα τὸ μέλλον τεκμήρασθαι), οἳ δὲ τῇ διαθέσει τῆς πίστεως [καὶ] τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης οἱ ἄνδρες πεφύκασιν. Δίκαιον οἶμαι, ὥσπερ τινὰ στεφάνην προεισόδιον 15 μικρὸν παρεκβατικώτερον διελθόντας, τινὰ τῷ βίῳ τοῦ μακαρίου τούτου προθεῖναι διήγησιν ὠφέλιμον τοῖς πολλοῖς οὖσαν ὡς εἰκὸς καὶ ἀγνώριστον.

10 δεῖναι – τεκμήρασθαι] cf. *Vita Antonii Junioris* 10 (ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ Ὁσίου Ἀντωνίου τοῦ νέου*, in *Pravoslavniĭ Palestinskij Sbornik* 19/3 [1907], 193-194).

2,2 πατρίδος] гpaдъ [= πόλεων] *Slav* **5** τῆς προσηγορίας] “τῇ προσηγορίᾳ expectaveris” *Polemī – Mineva* **8** Δύνανται] γνωμικόν *in marg. P*; “γνώμη *in marg. cod.*” *Polemī – Mineva* **10** ἀνδρῶν] мзногoвpъмeнънннчъ мъжъ [= πολυχρονίων ἀνδρῶν] *Slav*; “fort. ἐφημέρων post ἀνδρῶν addendum, cf. *Vitam slavonicum*” *Polemī – Mineva* **11** καὶ] *om. Slav* **12** ὥσπερ – προεισόδιον] ꙗко нѣкънѧ горы прoдъ [= ὥσπερ τινὸς ὄρους πάροδον] *Slav* **13** τῷ βίῳ] “τοῦ βίου expectaveris” *Polemī – Mineva* **15** καὶ] *om. Slav*

2. One among the Saints, our father Blasios was from the Anatolian district, hailing from the homeland of the Amorites. He was offspring and progeny of pious parents, whose goodness made them even more blessed with children and demonstrated their exemplary character in those days. He also conducted himself in a way that matched his name, and from the maternal womb on was called a fruitful shoot, drawing the eyes of many to himself because of his ethical conduct. The features of the body can often reveal what is invisible and concealed of the soul (as the appearances of men can indicate much about the future), and what kind of men with a good disposition of faith came from that land. I think it is proper that we – as if we set out to pass **briefly, more by way of digression, through the foothills of some mountain** – make a narration precede the Life of this blessed man that is useful for the many, as it is fitting and unknown.

2. Иже въ сватынхъ отьць нашъ Власии земля бѣаше
 въсточьныа, отъ аморренскыихъ градъ сыи. Благоустьивоу же
 родителю бѣаше рождение и възпитание, ихъже | добраа
 5 дьнехъ являаше. Имѣаше же и имени его дѣтѣль сзличьнѣ,
 отъ самоа матерьна жтробы садъ явивъ са плодѣнъ,
 обычьными оуставы очи мзюгыихъ къ себѣ привода. Можтѣ
 же и тѣлеснии образи мзюгашьды невидимое доуша и тайное
 10 являати (мзюговрѣмьныихъ во мѣжь възори можтѣ по
 всемоу бѣдѣщею назнаменати), а яци же прилежаниемъ вѣры
 земля тоа мѣжи бѣша. Правдѣно мѣнѣ, яко нѣкыа горы
 проходѣ малыи възкорѣ прошьдѣшемъ, нѣкою житию блаженааго
 сего приложити сѣказание пользно мзюсѣмъ сѣще якоже въ
 лѣпотѣ (<и> неавляено.

2,1 Власии] власии *VMČ^{SID}* 2 аморренскыихъ градъ] аморренскыи
 градъ *M Lnd*, аморренскыихъ градъ] *et sim. V VMČ^{SID} Eg*
 3 рождение – възпитание] роженіе *M Lnd* 4 благость] блгопръзавль
V VMČ^{SID} Eg въздрастивъши] възрастивша *V VMČ^{SID} Eg*
 4/5 тыа – дьнехъ] тако тѣхъ в тыа днїи славныхъ *et sim.*
V VMČ^{SID} Eg 5 и имени] и имѣнїи *M Lnd*, отрокъ сѣ по имени *V*,
 отрокъ сѣ по имени *et sim. VMČ^{SI}*, отрокъ сѣи по имени *VMČ^D Eg*
 него] и *add. V VMČ^{SID} Eg* 6 матерьна] мѣтре *M Lnd* явивъ са] явиса
V VMČ^{SID} Eg плодѣнъ] многоплоденъ *et sim. V VMČ^{SID} Eg* 7 очи]
 учеса *et sim. V VMČ^{SID} Eg* 8 мзюгашьды] мзюгажы *et sim.*
V VMČ^{SID} Eg тайное] таемое *et sim. V VMČ^{SID} Eg* 10 яци]
 каковїи *et sim. V VMČ^{SID} Eg* 11 мѣжи бѣша] мѣжи бѣша *M Lnd*,
 мѣжїе бѣаше *V*, мѣжїе бѣша *et sim. VMČ^{SID} Eg* яко] акы *V*, акы
VMČ^{SID} Eg 12 прошьдѣшемъ] прошедшимъ *M Lnd*

2. One among the Saints, our father Blasios was from the Eastern
 land, being from the Amorite cities. He was offspring and progeny of
 pious parents, whose goodness produced a good child and
 demonstrated their glorious character in those days. He also conducted
 himself in a way that matched his name, and from the maternal womb
 on showed himself to be a fruitful shoot, drawing the eyes of many to
 himself because of his ethical conduct. The features of the body can
 often reveal what is invisible and concealed of the soul (as the
 appearances of men **of old times** can indicate much about the future),
 and what kind of men with a good disposition of faith came from that
 land. I think it is proper that we – as if we set out to pass **quickly
 through a small passage of some mountain** – make a narration
 precede the Life of this blessed man that is useful for the many, as it is
 fitting <and> unknown.