

# BULGARIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE SUPRAŚL MONASTERY IN THE MID-16TH CENTURY

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A 1557 inventory shows that 129 books, including 5 prints<sup>37</sup>, were collected during the first three to four decades of the Supraśl Monastery. According to Flavian N. Dobrjansky, the monastery library then had 131 manuscripts and printed books in its possession. [5]<sup>38</sup> This number is confirmed by Michał Bobrowski in his description of a Supraśl library catalogue from the 1820s. He took note of a sixth Gospel – gilded, with fittings – from the Orthodox Church of the Resurrection, which was not included in the 1532 inventory,<sup>39</sup> as well as the omission in the original text and later inclusion of “Книги Десятого” created in Supraśl in 1507.<sup>40</sup> This manuscript was added to the inventory in 1557 as “Книга Матвея Десятого”. [4] Larisa Shchavinskaya believes that this manuscript was kept in the abbot’s or another monk’s cell and was therefore not listed in the earliest description of the library. Both manuscripts were added after the catalogue was created in 1557. Nineteenth-century publishers of the Supraśl library catalogue did not analyze when the two manuscripts were added to the list and published the inventory together with the addition of the 1532

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<sup>37</sup> “А всихъ книгъ старыхъ 129”. [4], [31]

<sup>38</sup> On the same subject cf.: [21], [38], [32], [31]

<sup>39</sup> The same view was expressed by Michał Bobrowski. His description indicates that two manuscripts were added to the 129 books, including “Шестое Евангеліе у церкви Воскресенія Христова, окованое, позлоченое”. [4] In the original registry, after the fifth Gospel is mentioned, there is a note: “у святыхмученикахБориса и Глеба” along with the monastery’s seal, which may be covering information about the last richly decorated Gospel. [11, № 24.4.28]; [32]

<sup>40</sup> Michał Bobrowski had in his private collection a detailed description of the Supraśl books, based on the original catalogue. Based on two copies of this description – “red” and “white” - L. L. Shchavinskaja and J. A. Łabyncew determined that M. Bobrowski did indeed find 129 “old books”. It was only later that two more books were added to the original registry: “Шестое Евангеліе у церкви Воскресенія Христова, окованое, позлоченое” and “Десятоглав” by Mateusz Dziesiąty.

manuscripts. This is indirectly confirmed by the note made on the 1631 Supraśl parchment book *Субботника или Поминника* about the family of “Матвея Иоанновича, написавшего и надавшего в монастырь Супрасльский книгу великую рекомую *Десятоглав*”. This information does not appear in the first, oldest version of *Субботника или Поминника*. [32] The view Larisa Shchavinskaya is strongly opposed by Sergey Temchin, who believes that the Gospel missing from the inventory was in the possession of another church. [18]

Sergey Temchin believes that the gilded Gospel was given “от Кмиты по души Коробки, архимандрита Троецкого, ись Слуцка”. [4] It appears on the collection list only before 1532. It seems to have been given to the library in the times of the archimandrite Kimbar, because the archimandrite of the Holy Trinity monastery in Slutsk was buried in Supraśl in 1569. [4]<sup>41</sup> Archimandrite Kmita, mentioned in the registry, was the head of the Slutsk monastery before Nicander. Was the gilded gospel given over before 1532? It is hard to say. Both hypotheses – L. Shchavinskaya’s concerning the gilded Gospel added to the list later, which refers to a book from the Church of the Resurrection – and S. Temchin’s concerning a Gospel with silver fittings and gold decorations, which could be found on the altar of the great church – require further study.

S. Temczin, L. Shchavinskaya and J. Labintsev take up one more problem – the “славное памяти Евангелие”, which the monks “упросили” from Aleksander Chodkiewicz. [4], [32] He received it from the king’s treasurer and steward Stefan Andrzejewicz Bielkiewicz. Stefan Bielkiewicz was the archimandrite of the Holy Trinity monastery in Vilnius and in 1556 became the metropolitan of Kiev, assuming the monastic name of Macarius. “Да упросили есми у господара пана его милости славное памяти Евангелие, коим его милость даровалъ нынешній митрополит и оправив сребром с позолотою, положил есми оное Евангелие на престоле великое церкви у место Жабинских двух, што митрополит невинне отнял”. [4] The metropolitan of Kiev Macarius II took away two “Żaba gospels”, because the archimandrite of the Supraśl monastery Sergius Kimbar was accused of introducing changes into liturgical texts. In the early 1530s a copyist monk Arsenius informed the metropolitan of Kiev Macarius II that the Supraśl archimandrite Sergius Kimbar was changing the order of liturgy and adding corrections to Slavic manuscripts, including Gospels. In his letters Arsenius accused Sergius Kimbar of creating non-canonical translations from Greek and Hebrew into Slavic languages. Both laymen and clergy would participate in these translations. [48], [49], [50], [31] It

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<sup>41</sup> Nicander became archimandrite of the monastery in Slutsk before 1558. [35]

is also mentioned that “благочестивый христолюбец Григорий Жаба” participated in translation.<sup>42</sup> It can be presumed that it is because of these accusations that metropolitan Macarius II asked for these “corrected gospels” to be sent to Kiev and, having read them, returned them to the monastery.

This mention of the two “Żaba gospels” means that they came to the monastery before 1532 along with the other manuscripts, which the monks received from Grzegorz Żaba. [40], [38]<sup>43</sup> Grzegorz Zofoniewicz Denisowicz was, since 1513, the owner of Klewinów, which he sold in 1528 to Aleksander Chodkiewicz. He was also the owner of Markowszczyzna (Mielkowszczyzna), Korejwoszczyzna, and Bielewszczyzna, which he received from Sigismund I in 1518. [42, f. 16, nr 134, k. 12-13], [1] The Smolensk boyar appears in the documents for the last time in 1529. [1] The two “Żaba gospels” received from Grzegorz Żaba were in the monastery before 1532 and, after a brief stay with the metropolitan of Kiev Macarius II, returned to Supraśl before 1549. On the altar of the cathedral church they were replaced by a book obtained from Aleksander Chodkiewicz after 1536 but before the death of the ktitor in 1549. Taking all this into consideration, as well as the constant replenishing and depletion of the collection, one has to agree with S. Temchin’s conclusion that the Supraśl monastery was in possession of not exactly, but at least 129 books. [38] F. I. Dobrijansky placed the number of manuscripts at 131, because he included two manuscripts which left the monastery and were later returned to it.

During the period when Sergius Kimbar was the archimandrite (1532-1565), up until 1557, the monastery obtained a further 74 manuscripts. According to Ł. Shchavinskaya and J. Labyntsev over the span of 25 years Sergius Kimbar obtained 80 new books (“книги новыя”). They further add that after the inventory listing 74 volumes was created, six new books were added, as is indicated by the following notes: “А потом прибавлено книг новописаных” and “а то Яцка, подскарбьего бывшего, книги, которыя ся по смерти его оставили”<sup>44</sup>. Overall, the catalogue of the monastery library in 1557 [42, F58-7, B

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<sup>42</sup> “Жабинское Евангеліѣце и з Апостолом и Апокалисією” appear in descriptions of the monastic library from 1532. Cf. [42, F58-7, B 1993, k. 4v], [4], [31]. The Żabiński family is mentioned as distinguished in the Supraśl *Субботнике или Поминнике*.

<sup>43</sup> J. Labyntsev states that the “Żaba gospels” could have been a gift from Wasyl Konstantynowicz Żaba, the vice-steward of Troki (1516-1547), but provides no evidence to support this hypothesis. [10] There is also no other evidence for the vice-steward’s connection to the Supraśl monastery.

<sup>44</sup> *Требникъ в дестъ, Книга Лествица в полдестъ, Панахидникъ у полдестъ новыи, Христианская топография Козмы Индикоплова с дополнениями, Житие Андрея*

1993, k. 1-4v], [4]<sup>45</sup> lists 204 manuscripts (including five in Greek and one in Latin) and five printed books. In the times of archimandrite Kimbar the number of books in the monastery library almost doubled. This increase was not only due to acquisitions and gifts. The number of copyists in the monastery also increased. In 1645 the monastery library had 587 manuscripts and printed books.

According to S. Temchin, 11 manuscripts were obtained by Sergius Kimbar from other libraries. Some of the manuscripts were created at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> or in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in other places and brought to the Supraśl library not until after 1532. Among the manuscripts obtained by archimandrite Kimbar there are books belonging to the metropolitan Józef Sołtan and Iwan Semenowicz Sapieha (1450-1517)<sup>46</sup>. These were: *Книга Феодора Студита* (late 15<sup>th</sup> c.). [42, f. 21, nr 798] *Книга Бытия, Книга Иисус Навин и Царства в ней написаны, в десть*. [42,

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*Юродивого*, cf.: “Wypis z Regestra czyli Inwentarza, który po ruski spisał Sergi, archimandryta supraski, w chorobie przed śmiercią r. 1557 pod pieczęcią cerkiewną Zwiastowania Najświętszej Marii – na pergaminie tureckim, skoropis półustawny” based on the original catalogue by Michał Bobrowski, cf.: [42, F58-7, B 1993, k. 4-4v], [4], cf. [31], [32] According to the note, three books were given by the ex-treasurer Jacek. It is unlikely that this refers to the crown treasurer Jacek Młodziejowski, who held the office in 1580-1604 and was the owner of the paper mill using the *Ślepowron* watermark at the Młodziejowice manor. “Polski Słownik Biograficzny”, t. XXI, Wrocław 1976, p. 432-435. The offering of these books would have had to take place in 1565. Therefore, this note must apply to another unknown person, unless one assumes that the notes concerning “the treasurer Jacek” were added to the original catalogue later. Concerning the manuscript itself and its dating cf.: [1], [39]

<sup>45</sup> For comparison see “Опись Супрасльскаго монастыря составленны 1829 года за настоятеля преосвященнаго Льва Яворовскаго”, Roman Catholic Diocese Archive in Białystok, nr 245, k. 23v-24v, 26-60v; “Wiadomość o stanie Klasztoru Opatskiego Supraskiego w Obwodzie Białostockim i tymże powiecie diecezji litewskiej położonego. Roku 1830 miesiąca stycznia 25 dnia sporządzona”, Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas, f. 634, op. 1, nr 3, k. 14v-41v; Description of the Supraśl monastery as of 1836 Российский Государственный Исторический Архив в Санкт-Петербурге, ф. 823, оп. 3, № 3317.

<sup>46</sup> Iwan Semenowicz Sapieha, scribe to the grand duke of Lithuania Alexander, the voivode of Vitebsk (1511-1517) and Podlasie (1513-1517). From 1501 Sapieha had been the chancellor to queen Helen. In 1507-1508 he stayed with duchess Helen in Bielsk in Podlasie. “Polski Słownik Biograficzny”, t. XXXIV, Wrocław-Warszawa 1993, p. 613-618. It was probably Iwan Sapieha who presented the monastery with a precious liturgical dish emblazoned with his coat of arms – Lis. The colophon of the manuscripts informs that it had been copied by a servant named Iwańczyk at the request of Iwan Semenowicz Sapieha. [52], [53]

f. 19, nr 52] Nothing is known of the circumstances under which these books found their way to Supraśl in 1532-1557. It is only known that they were not donated by their former owners, because both had passed away by 1532. Perhaps the books belonging to Iwan Sapieha were donated by his son Paweł Iwanowicz Sapieha (1490-1579)<sup>47</sup>, but this is mere speculation with no confirmation in the sources. [39] Three manuscripts: *Книга Лествица в полдесть*, [4] *Христианская топография Козмы Индикоплова с дополнениями* (early 16<sup>th</sup> century) [42, f. 19, nr 77] and *житие Андрея Юродивого* (early 15<sup>th</sup> c.) [11, ф. 98, №39] were given to the monastery before the death of archimandrite Sergius Kimbar and were therefore added to the 1557 registry.

It is interesting to make a comparison of the kinds of books stored in the library. Up to 1532 the monastery library contained 56 (43.4%) liturgical books, 67 (51.9%) works of literature, and 6 (4.7%) texts on Orthodox church law or statutes, acts, or canons. [32] Among the liturgical books there were 13 (23%) psalters and 12 (21%) menaia. This proportion is similar to other monasteries at the time<sup>48</sup>. The 67 literary manuscripts included: *Книга пророчеств*, *Книга Иов*, commentaries to the Holy Bible, *Книга Патерик Печерский*, *Поучения Кирилла Иерусалимского*, *Царственик с летописцем*. This shows that these were religious, polemical, and historical works. This group of manuscripts includes 34 codices, which until 1532 formed over a quarter of the collection.

As was established by J. Labyntsev, 42 of the 80 books collected in the times of Sergius Kimbar were liturgical books (books of the apostles, agendas, gospels, horologions, menaia, psalters), 34 religious literary works (the Works of the Church Fathers: *Книга Василия Великого о постничестве с дополнениями*, [42, f. 19, nr 53] of John Chrysostom and John of Damascus, etc.), as well as 4 other books (acts, canons, regulations). Five of the newly obtained books were in Greek. [4], [31]

## OLD BULGARIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE SUPRAŚL COLLECTION

In the 16th century the Supraśl monastery maintained close contacts with leading Orthodox centers in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and abroad. Close contacts with monasteries in Kiev, Slutsk, Moscow, Bulgaria, and Serbia

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<sup>47</sup> Paweł Sapieha, court martial of Lithuania (1519-1557), voivode of Podlasie (1555-1558), voivode of Nowogród (1558-1579), benefactor of the Orthodox church in Kodeń, as well as other churches and monasteries. "Polski Słownik Biograficzny", t. XXXV, Warszawa-Kraków 1994, p. 128-131.

<sup>48</sup> A 1514 description of the Solovetsky monastery indicates that among 73 liturgical books there were 19 psalters and 17 menaia. Cf.: [51]

allowed for the heritage of many nations to be concentrated in the monastery. The Supraśl Lavra became a center of theological thought. The monks, while defending the Orthodox canon, remained open to new philosophical and religious ideas. The open character of this center was undoubtedly influenced by its position on the border of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – at the meeting point of various religious and philosophical currents in eastern and western Christianity. The influence of Eastern-Slavonic and Balkan cultures evinced itself in the monastery's library collection, its architecture, and icons.

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the collection of the monastery library included the following liturgical books: mid-16<sup>th</sup> century *Евангелие толковое*, late 15<sup>th</sup> century *Апостол толковый*, [42, f. 19, nr 21], [21] three *Сборника*, [42, f. 19, nr: 257, 258, 262] two copies of early 16<sup>th</sup> century *Маргарит*, [20, f. 19, nr: 250, 251]<sup>49</sup> *Книга Григория Богослова* [42, f. 19, nr 56], [21] from the same period, *Псалтырь великая келейная*, [4, № F.I.738], [24], [47], [2] *Книга пророчеств*<sup>50</sup>, and two books of *Златоустпостный* including 16 homilies and used from the third Sunday of Lent through St. Thomas' Sunday. [21] *Златоустпостный* included fragments copied from the 11<sup>th</sup> century Old Bulgarian *Минеи четъи*. It has so far not been established where the second volume of *Златоуст постный* was kept.

Among the manuscripts kept in the monastery library in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century there was the early 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Минея четъя*<sup>51</sup>. This oldest example of Old Bulgarian writings had been brought to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and finally reached Supraśl from Kiev in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. [37], [41] The view of some scholars, who claim that *Минея четъя* came to the monastery library in 1582 with the metropolitan of Serbia and Bulgaria Gabriel, has to be discarded, because it can be found in the oldest library catalogue from 1532. The manuscript on parchment contained 24 hagiographies and sermons for the month of March (John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, patriarch Photios, and Epiphanius of Cyprus). *Минея четъя* from the Supraśl collection was the

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<sup>49</sup> The book was copied again when Sergius Kimbar was the archimandrite. [21]

<sup>50</sup> Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Manuscript Collection, f. 19, nr 48.

<sup>51</sup> "Книг великих в десть соборников 4, а пятый на паркмамене". [32] "Kodeks supraski" – the oldest example of Cyrillic writings – was reprinted in Bulgaria. *Супрасълски или Ретков сборник*. ЗАИМОВ, Й. 1982. *Увод и коментар на старобългарски текст*, М. Капалдо, *подбор и коментар на гръцкия текст*. Т. I. София, 1982 and Т. II. София, 1983. [34] According to latest research the manuscript was created in mid-10<sup>th</sup> century (941) in Bulgaria. [9] This view however is still only a research hypothesis and is not final.

prototype for three more, ones which were found in the libraries of Petersburg, Vilnius, and Kiev. [33], [21], [31], [3] The Old Bulgarian codex was given to the monastery on the occasion of a ceremony of the Annunciation (to which the cathedral church was dedicated) on 25 March. It is possible that *Минеи четъи* was given to the monastery by the metropolitan of Kiev Joseph during the consecration of the temple when construction began in 1511.<sup>52</sup> There were four other *Минеи четъи* in Supraśl, including some created after 1530: for the months of December-February from 1518, for the months of March-August, November-June, and September-November from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup>

The Supraśl monastery also had in its possession *Патерик Римский, или Беседы Григория, папы Римского с архидьяконом Петром о жизни италийских отцов*. This medieval manuscript on parchment, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, was written in Old Bulgarian in one of the monasteries on Mount Athos, as is suggested by its binding and language. The spelling of the manuscript includes the Athos-Tirnovο spelling reforms from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> Roman Patericon (lives of Holy Fathers, monks) – four books of *Dialogues* of Roman Pope Gregory with archdeacon Peter on the lives of Italian Fathers in Middle Bulgarian translation from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The text of the fourth book ends on p. 57. The Patericon was written in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century in Old Bulgarian in one of the monasteries on Mount Athos. The spelling of the manuscript follows the Athos-Tirnovο spelling reforms from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript was brought to the Supraśl monastery before 1532, probably by one of the monks from Mount Athos. It remained in the collection there until 1877, when it was brought to the Vilnius Public Library. In 1915 it was taken to Moscow. It returned to Vilnius in 1945-46 and is now in the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. [20] There was another 16<sup>th</sup>-century copy of this manuscript in the Supraśl monastery library. [42, f. 19, nr 58]<sup>55</sup>

In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the Supraśl monastery received *Поучения Кирила Ерусалимскаго*. In the first catalogue this manuscript is listed under the title

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<sup>52</sup> Currently the Supraśl *Минея* (Menaion) can be found in three parts in the following libraries: Ljubljana University Library (Cod. Kop. 2. k. 118), the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (Q.п.I.72, k. 16) and in the National Library in Warsaw (BOZ 201, k. 151). Cf.: [7], [14], [8]

<sup>53</sup> [42, f. 19, nr-y: 80, 105, 258, 79], [21], [46]

<sup>54</sup> [42, f. 19, nr 3], [44], [21], [32]

<sup>55</sup> In the first description this book is listed under the title “Книга Григория Двоеслова”. [21]

*Книга Кирила Ерусалимскаго*. [42, f. 19, nr 71], [21] At the same time, the monastery came into possession of *Книга Ефрема Сирина*, which is composed of two books of St. Ephrem. [42, f. 19, nr-y: 62, 85], [21] The Parenesis of Ephrem the Syrian (chapter 1–101); p. 221v– 294: *Книга Ефрема Сирина* contains the teachings of Ephrem the Syrian (which are not part of the Parenesis), Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Dorotheus and others. The text of the Parenesis includes eight unfinished chapters, the ninth chapter is missing, as is the beginning of the tenth. The manuscript was written in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century in one of the Bulgarian monasteries and it came to the Supraśl monastery along with other Bulgarian and Serbian manuscripts before 1532. It remained in the monastery library until 1877 when it was brought to the Vilnius Public Library. In 1915 it was taken to Moscow or to Yaroslavl. It returned to Vilnius in 1945–46 and is now in the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. [20] As for other liturgical books, two editions of *Патерик скитский* were brought to Supraśl, probably from Volhynia, after 1532 and *Псалтирь* before that year. [42, f. 19, nr-y: 87, 88, 49], [21]

Another 16<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript from Bulgaria was *Pisma Ojców Cerkwi: św. Jana Chryzostoma (Złotoustego)*. Златоустый contained the teachings of St. John Chrysostom composed by the tsar of Bulgaria Simeon and the words of Macarius of Alexandria on the death of the soul. [20] Also from Bulgaria came the original of *Пролог тишиной, на сентябрь–февраль*. The prologue in verse of the Bulgarian edition for September–February ends with hagiography of Proterius the martyr (28 February). On the added (after 1541) p. 478–479 there is a hagiography of the martyr Antoni of Supraśl. The manuscript is the first part of the 1496 *Prologue* for the whole year. The prologue contains short hagiographies for each day of the liturgical year with troparions in verse and some instruction. The Supraśl edition of the *Prologue* is a compilation of the Bulgarian and Nowogród prologues in verse and some other editions of prose prologues (without the troparions in verse). The better-known hagiographies were supplemented with the lives of holy Moscow metropolitans Peter and Alexius, ten ascetics (“podwiźnik”) from the Kiev Pechersk Lavra, three new instructions, and two miracle descriptions. [20] In the early 1540s the hagiography of Antoni of Supraśl was added. [45], [40], [36], [12]

The manuscript was written in Bielsk on a Bulgarian original at the request in 1496 of the son of Sołtan Aleksandrowicz, the starosta of Bielsk– Sołtan Sołtanowicz. It was given to the Supraśl monastery in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. It became the basis for the creation of a prologue for the whole year, along with a part for the months March–August. It remained in the monastery until 1877, when it was brought to the Vilnius Public Library. In 1915 it was taken to



Moscow where it remains to this day in the collection of the State Historical Museum.

The monastery library collection included works of medieval Bulgarian literature pertaining to the work of the students of St. Cyril and Methodius. The Supraśl monastery retained close contacts with monastic centers in Serbia and Bulgaria. The tradition of maintaining contacts between Orthodox centers in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and those in Serbia and Bulgaria go all the way back to 1415, when Gregory Tsamblak became the metropolitan of Kiev. [43] Particularly popular among the Supraśl manuscripts were Kliment Ochridski's words of praise, *Поучение Дорофея и з житием Саввы Освещенного и Иоана Златоустого*<sup>56</sup> and the writings of metropolitan Gregory Tsamblak (*Похвала трем отрокам, Толкование о кубке Соломона і Житие славянского святого*), especially his holiday sermons: *На рождество Иоанна Предтечи, На Успение І Похвальное слово Евфимию Тырновскому*. [5] These books were already in the monastery library in the first half of the 16th century. [42, f. 19, nr: 61, 62], [21] The works of Gregory Tsamblak *Похвальное слово митрополиту Киприану* and *Похвальное слово Евфимию Тырновскому* contain Orthodox religious terms, as well as Serbian and Bulgarian words.

The connection to Bulgarian and Serbian centers was confirmed by the inclusion in a 16th century *Codex* of the hagiography of St. Sava the Illuminator, and in a menaion for the month of February (mid-16th c.) of an office of Saint Symeon the Myrrh-streaming. [5] Next to the office one of the readers from the Supraśl monastery wrote: "По рассуждении иску с нинейших не празнуется сей Симеон число 13 дня" and further, in another place: "св. Симеона Сербского не празнуется". These notes suggest that not everyone in the monastery accepted the cult of the Serbian saint. The cult of St. Simeon was very popular in the Grand Duchy of Moscow, but not in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This was caused by the attitude of the saint himself, who was known for his anti-Arian activity. [5] In the 16th century Arianism was common in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and therefore it would make sense that a Serbian saint who was known for opposing it would not be promoted. A Menaion for October (mid-16th c.) contains an office of St. Arsenius of Serbia with a characteristic note: "в сей же день святого Уроша караля ктитора места сего, паче же новые сей церкви". This note was copied from a Serbian manuscript which probably originated in the Church of the Dormition in Nerodimla in Kosovo Polje or the monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Skopje. [30], [25] Both Orthodox

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<sup>56</sup> Księga *Дорофей и з житием Иоана Златоустого* była już w monasterze przed 1532 r. [4, т. IX, р. 54], [42, f. 19, nr 61], [21]

centers were founded by the canonized king Stefan Uroš IV. The manuscripts which found their way to the Supraśl monastery lost their South-Slavonic origin and assumed an Old-Russian form. In this version – rewritten and often re-edited – they were disseminated in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. Polemic works created in the Supraśl monastery are an example of this. [6], [15]

A codex from the library of the Kiev monastery of St. Michael contained eight texts originating in Supraśl in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, [28], [18] most of which confirmed close relations between the Supraśl monastery and Mount Athos:

1) *A letter to an unnamed Latin archbishop from 1511*<sup>57</sup>

2) *A message from the Hungarian king John Zápolya to the monks of Mount Athos from 1534*<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> In the register this book is listed as “Книжка на латину”. [4, т. IX, p. 54] The *Letter* consists of two parts: 1) the first presents sermons by the Church Fathers, excerpts from the Gospels, apostolic commissions and teachings about the Holy Spirit and God the Father; 2) the second is a polemic with the teachings of the Catholic church on papal primacy and shows the Roman church as departing from the decisions of the seven ecumenical councils. It is put in the form of an answer to a letter from a Catholic archbishop. According to N. Petrov the polemic was written by a monk from Supraśl as a response to a letter from an archbishop who wanted to encourage Aleksander Chodkiewicz to support the union. [28] The ktetor of the monastery had hegumen Kalist review the letter and write an answer. The archbishop in question was the archbishop of Gniezno Jan Łaski (1510-1531), who presented the *Posłanie o błędzeniu narodu ruskiego* at the Lateran council. Cf.: Central Scientific Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kiev (further: CSLASU), 475п/1656, л. 1-21. [6] The author of the Supraśl polemic masterfully described the Orthodox understanding of the origin of the Holy Spirit and God the Father and pointed out the errors in the teachings of the Latin church about Apostle Peter as Christ’s Vicar and about papal authority. А. Белецкий. *Митрополитъ Иосифъ II Солтанъ иотношение его къ Супрасльскому монастырю*, p. 34; [15], [16], [19]

<sup>58</sup> It describes events which took place in the Kseropotamou monastery on Mount Athos. During the reign of byzantine emperor Romanos (1028-1034) a mushroom with forty tips would grow every year on the day of the Forty Martyrs (9 March). It was in this church, during the reign of emperor Michael VIII Paleologos (1258-1282), that the church union established at the council of Lyon was announced in 1276. Following this announcement, the mushroom stopped growing and the church was destroyed by an earthquake. It was rebuilt during the reign of emperor Andronicus II (1282-1328). CSLASU, 475 п/1656, л. 21v-26; [28], [15], [16], [17]

3) *The monks' answer to the message from king John Zápolya of Hungary from 1534*<sup>59</sup>

4) *Повесть о разорении Афона латиномудрствующими в 1276 году, copied in the Supraśl monastery in 1546*<sup>60</sup>

5) *Adiscussion between a Christian and a Jew concerning faith and icons*<sup>61</sup>

6) *A message to the Roman Catholics from 1581*<sup>62</sup>

7) *Сказание на богомерзскую, на поганую латину, которую папежи, хто в нихвымыслили в их поганой вере*<sup>63</sup>.

8) *Новоизложенное поучение во Литваниии нарицаемым Логофетом. [28]*

Some of the fragments of the first five texts are repeated in the second edition added to the monastery collection in 1578 and copied in 1580. They are a sharp polemic with Protestantism, Judaism, Catholicism, and Islam. *Списание против*

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<sup>59</sup> It is a polemic with reformatory slogans. The *Answer* was a reaction to the development of Lutheranism in Hungary (1534). John Zápolya (to whom the *Answer* was directed) became king of Hungary (1526-1540) elected by some of the magnates after the death of Louis II (1526). The other candidate was Ferdinand I Habsburg. Both pretenders reached an agreement in 1538. John Zápolya received Transylvania and a part of Hungary, as well as the title of king for life. As the king of Hungary, he wanted to use some of the organizational and ceremonial elements of the Orthodox and Lutheran Churches to reform the Catholic church. For that purpose, he established contacts with the monks of Mount Athos, asking them to indicate the differences between the three churches, as well as opinion on the project of calling a council of the leaders of Eastern and Western Churches in Hungary. The Greek monks listed the departures of the Catholic Church from the decisions of the seven Ecumenical Councils and the dogmatic differences between Christian denominations. This part of their message was frequently used by monks in Supraśl in polemic writings. CSLASU, 475 п/1656, л. 26v-96; [15], [16], [17]

<sup>60</sup> *Повесть о разорении Афона латиномудрствующими в 1276 году и о восстановлении Ксиропотамской обители императором Андроником* made its way to Supraśl from Mount Athos. Cf.: [26]

<sup>61</sup> CSLASU, 475 п/1656, л. 198-201; [15], [16], [17]

<sup>62</sup> *Message to the Roman Catholics...* from 1581 was a polemic with the writings of the Jesuit Piotr Skarga, who was preparing the groundwork for church union. It was an answer to Skarga's "O jedności Cerkwi Bożej..." published in 1577. The Supraśl *Message* contains a sharp polemic with the dogmas of the Catholic Church. CSLASU, 475 п/1656, л. 157-169; [28], [27], [15], [16], [17]

<sup>63</sup> *Сказание на богомерзскую, на поганую латину...* written after 1586 was an answer of the Supraśl monks to Piotr Skarga's book. Both texts (*Сказание* and *Послание*) were written in the times of archimandrite Tymoteusz Złoba (1575-1589), a keen defender of the Orthodox Church. CSLASU, 475п/1656, л. 205-208; [28], [15], [16], [17]

лютров, written in Supraśl in 1570, which opposed reformation, was popular in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Its author was a “священноинок” (a monk ordained as a priest) Eustace<sup>64</sup>. He brought a 13<sup>th</sup> century *Gospel* written on parchment and kept it in his cell when he was the archdeacon. [15], [16], [17], [31]

Close contacts between the monks from Supraśl and Mount Athos can also be seen in the afore mentioned *Повесть о разорении Афона*. “Сия повесть принесена бе из Святое горы Калугери у монастырь Супрясльский в лето от создания миру 7054-е [1546] и в то же лето в сию книгу вписана, а когда она содеашеся перед концем выобразена суть, еже о обители Ксиропотамстеи, иже в святой горе сбысться от латиномудрствующих (...)”. [11, № 31, л. 41] *Повесть* relates the disastrous (for the Orthodox Church) results of the Roman Catholic take control of Mount Athos and the creation of the Latin Empire (1204-1261). The tale was to be a warning to everyone who would want to abandon the Orthodox Church. The text was copied numerous times in the Supraśl monastery and disseminated in other monastic centers. [15], [16], [17] Other polemic texts were also written based on originals brought from Mount Athos.<sup>65</sup>

There were also examples of lay Old Bulgarian literature in the Supraśl library. *The Life of Alexander the Great*, published in Cracow in 1500, in Belarusian lands was appended with Bulgarian notes. A Serbian original of the tale Tristan and Iseult was known in Supraśl. The title of the manuscript provides hints as to its origins: *Починается с повести о витезях с книг сербских*. [30] In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the monastery library obtained *Тайная тайных или Аристотелевы врата*. This manuscript was written in Old Belarusian and contained astrological texts, which were original interpretations of Greek, Jewish and Arabic astrological treatises. [22, № 094/276K], [31] These examples testify not only to the unusual character of the Supraśl library, but also to the significant influence of Bulgarian religious and lay literature in Belarus. Serbian and Bulgarian influences can be found in the subject matter, form, and vocabulary of the literary texts.

## SUMMARY

It is probable that some of the Bulgarian and South Slavonic manuscripts were brought to Supraśl by church officials who visited the monastery. No

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<sup>64</sup> The text including fragments of the messages of father Artem was re-edited in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Cf.: [29], [15], [23]

<sup>65</sup> The *16 слов Григория Богослова с толкованиями Никиты Ираклийского* and the *Сборник* written in Supraśl were probably based on Greek originals. The latter of them consisted of religious texts copied by many authors. [42, f. 19, nr: 57, 103]

wonder therefore, that the rich library collection included numerous books of Bulgarian, Greek, Moldavian, Ruthenian, and Serbian origins. Thanks to its contacts with other Orthodox centers, the monastery became a significant theological center, with a rich library of historical, hagiographic, literary, philosophical, and liturgical manuscripts.

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## BULGARIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE SUPRAŚL MONASTERY IN THE MID-16TH CENTURY

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### Abstract

Supraśl monastery was in the 16th century an important center of religious and cultural life of the surrounding region. A 1557 inventory shows that 129 books, including 5 prints, were collected during the first three to four decades of the Supraśl Monastery. The monastery library then had 131 manuscripts and printed books in its possession. Manuscripts was kept in the abbot's or another monk's cell and was therefore not listed in the earliest description of the library. Up to 1532 the monastery library contained liturgical books, works of literature and texts on Orthodox church law or statutes, acts, or canons. The Supraśl monastery maintained close contacts with leading Orthodox centers in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and abroad. Close contacts with monasteries in Kiev, Slutsk, Moscow, Bulgaria, and Serbia allowed for the heritage of many nations to be concentrated in the monastery. The Supraśl Lavra became a center of theological thought. The monastery library collection included works of medieval Bulgarian literature pertaining to the work of the students of St. Cyril and Methodius. The Supraśl monastery retained close contacts with monastic centers in Serbia and Bulgaria. Close contacts between the monks from Supraśl and Mount Athos can also be seen in the afore mentioned *The story of the devastation of Athos* (*Повесть о разорении Афона*).

### Keywords

Supraśl monastery, manuscript, Orthodox church, Bulgaria, library