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Georgi Minczew (Łódź)

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S TALE ON HOW MICHAEL VANQUISHED SATANAEL – A BOGOMIL TEXT?¹

I. Manuscripts and studies.

This still not properly investigated Old Bulgarian literary monument (also known as *How Michael Vanquished Satanael*, *The Tale of the False Antichrist* and *The Fight of Archangel Michael and Satanael*) first came to light in the 1930s, through Jordan Ivanov's edition based on late copies from *Punčo Codex* (1796) from the collection of the St.St. Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia (НБКМ no. 693) and the so-called *Prvan Vlčov Codex* (1820), stored at the Church Historical and Archival Institute of the Bulgarian Patriarchate in Sofia (ЦИАИ no. 232). J. Ivanov was the first to claim that *The Tale...*² reflected the dualist views of the Bulgarian Bogomils³. The early 1980s saw the publication of two studies reporting a newly discovered copy of the monument (roughly two hundred years older). In the 1981 announcement, Anisava Miltenova provides an edition of *The Tale...* based on a copy from a late 16th century codex of mixed content (ЦИАИ no. 1161)⁴, describing it as the first version, reflecting an "earlier state of the text"⁵. A further, little-known Serbian version of *The Tale...*, found in manuscript no. 82 from the monastery in Nikoljac and described by Vladimir Mošin, is also referred to here⁶.

One more study by A. Miltenova also appeared at around the same time, expressing the opinion that *The Tale...*, as a work featuring an interesting plot, is a text connected with the ideological views of Bogomil communities, but was not designed for the 'Perfect'; rather, it was meant for the ordinary, 'non-consecrated' adepts of the heretic movement⁷.

¹ A variant of the text, entitled *Един богомилски текст? Слово на св. Йоан Златоуст за това, как Михаил победи Сатанаил*, has been published in Pbg 34.4, 2010, p. 18–46.

² [The term 'tale' is used here to render Slavic *slovo* (literally 'word') – MM.]

³ Й. ИВАНОВ, *Старобългарски разкази*, София 1935, p. 18–25.

⁴ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата на архангел Михаил със Сатанаил в две редакции*, СЛ 9, 1981, p. 98–113.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 99.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 113. Cf.: В. МОШИН, *Гирилски рукописи у манастиру Никољуцу код Бијелог поља*, ИЗ.ОИИЦГ 18, 1961, p. 704. Text edition: Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, *Траг апокрифа о борби са ђаволом у српској народној књижевности*, КњЈ 43.3/4, 1995, p. 33–55.

⁷ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Неизвестна редакција на апокрифа за борбата на Архангел Михаил със*

A number of years later, the same indefatigable student of this text published – in collaboration with Dmitrije Bogdanović – a new, Serbian version of the work, even older (dating back to the 14th century), though unfortunately fragmentary⁸. The precise attribution of the text (based on the extant part of the ending) is in fact, a difficult task; far-reaching differences exist between this and all the other known Slavic variants:

F. 145: стратиже Михаиле поч'то скръбьнь ѡсы, властелинѣ мои прѣви кайрономѣ поч'то скръ-
виши ѡ пронорьливѣмь Сатанаилѣ како онь оставить тебе, а ти ѡвниень до кон'ца. тогда
михаиле рече: владыко азъ зато скръбень ѡсмы господь глагола ѡмо слыши др'хистратиже ми-
хаиле лючичиты хоче родъ чловѣчь сотона нь не вѣчно боудеть и створи... пророцы апостолаы
и люченицы иерархы и поустыинныкы. и оудиножоу число ангель моихъ. тогда слышавъ
Михаиле и дасть славоу богоу въ вѣкы аминь⁹

According to the authors, the excerpt belongs to the so-called 'first', oldest version, dating back to the 13th century, and shares common features with the copy known from ЦИАИ no. 1161. The two resemble each other as far as the content is concerned: the latter text also mentions (albeit in a different place) Archangel Michael not comprehending why God never ultimately deprived Satanael of his power to do evil. Prior to entrusting Michael to recovering the robe, wreath and sceptre, God explains that he is not irrevocably stripping Satanael of his force so that the latter can do evil for a further seven ages – until the end of the world, when the righteous shall be separated from the unjust. Following the final victory of good over evil, God will create a new, just world¹⁰. It remains to be seen whether the preserved excerpt from Savina monastery can be ascribed to the so-called 'first' version in view of its formal and linguistic characteristics.

Donka Petkanova utilizes the ЦИАИ no. 1161 manuscript as the basis for her Modern Bulgarian translation of the work, but she imports the title *The Tale of the False Antichrist, Godless Satanael, How He Was Subdued by Archangel Michael, the Leader of All Angels* (Слово за лъжливия Антихрист, безбожния Сатанаил, как го плени Архангел Михаил, воевода на всички ангели) from the *Punčo Codex*. In the commentary, she questions J. Ivanov's assertion about the text's ultimate Bogomil origin; she remarks that "the work probably cannot be regarded as truly Bulgarian, since it contains ideas and motifs also known from other apocrypha"¹¹.

Сатанаил, [in:] *Литературознание и фолклористика. Сборник в чест на акад. Петър Динев*, София 1983, p. 121–128. Abbreviations in the text have been resolved according to the orthographical principles of the so-called Resavian recension of the Old Church Slavonic language, which the copy of *The Tale*... represents.

⁸ Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифният сборник от манастира Савина XIV в. в сравнение с други подобни южнославянски ръкописи*, АрП 1, 1987, p. 3–27.

⁹ Quoted after: Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 15–16.

¹⁰ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 100, 113.

¹¹ *Стара българска литература в седем тома*, vol. I, *Апокрифи*, ed. Д. Петканова, София 1982, p. 41–48.

In 2005, Tomislav Jovanović published his Serbian translation of the text under the title *The Fight of Archangel Michael and Satanael* (*Борба арханђела Михаила са Сатанаилом*)¹². As the basis for the translation of the so-called first version, the Serbian scholar chooses the text of ЦИАИ no. 1116 (following the edition by A. Miltenova)¹³, whereas the second version is translated from the text of the manuscript from Nikoljác monastery, no. 82 (following her own 1995 edition)¹⁴.

The so-called first version, as found in the codex ЦИАИ no. 1161, served as the basis for a new translation of *The Tale...* into Polish¹⁵.

Another scholar to have taken part in the discussion 'for or against' the Bogomil connections is Klimentina Ivanova. According to her, the presence of quotations from John Chrysostom's anaphora (Твоѡ ѿ твоиѡхъ тебѣ приноситъ естъ, ѿ всѣхъ и за вась; Тебѣ поемь, тебе благосвещемь. Благодаримъ те, владико всѣдръжителъ, люлимъ ти се коже нашъ)¹⁶ renders the assumption concerning the heretic provenience of the text rather problematic, as the Bogomils rejected the sacraments and the Orthodox rite; thus *The Tale...* cannot have been written by a 'Perfect' Bogomil¹⁷.

Recently, the issue of the originality or non-originality of the work has been raised in two studies: by Olga Afinogenova¹⁸ and Małgorzata Skowronek¹⁹.

The Russian scholar, publishing a similar Greek pseudo-canonical work (long known to specialists in Byzantine literature)²⁰, puts forth an interesting hypothesis concerning the relation between the Slavic and the Greek texts:

¹² *Апокрифи старозаветни према српским преписима (Стара српска књижевност у 24 књиге, књига 23, 1 том)*, ed. Т. Јовановић, Београд 2005, p. 99–113.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 486.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 486–487.

¹⁵ The first Polish translation of the work, based on the texts known since the times of J. Ivanov: *Siedem niebios i ziemia. Antologia dawnej prozy bułgarskiej*, ed. Т. DAŃBEK-WIRGOWA, Warszawa 1983, p. 22–27. The new translation by A. MICHAŁOWSKA in: *Апокрифы и легенды старотестamentowe Słowian południowych*, ed. G. MINCZEW, M. SKOWRONEK, Kraków 2006, p. 12–25.

¹⁶ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 104. Further quotations from *The Tale...* in both versions will follow this edition, however with simplified spelling, resolved abbreviations and superscript letters (including word-final ones) appearing in the normal line of type, without special indication.

¹⁷ К. ИВАНОВА, *Един литургичен паралел към апокрифа „Как Михаил победи Сатанаил“*, [in:] *Civitas divina-humana. In honorem annorum LX Georgii Bakalov*, София 2004, p. 397–404.

¹⁸ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *Греческий вариант апокрифа о борьбе архангела Михаила и Сатанаила*, SeS 3/4, 2006, p. 329–348.

¹⁹ M. SKOWRONEK, „Świat cały ma Cię za obrońcę”. *Michał Archanioł w kulturze Słowian prawosławnych na Bałkanach*, Łódź 2008.

²⁰ In a Greek codex of mixed content, dating back to 1542, stored in the Vatican Library under the signature Vat. Gr. 1190a, the work is structurally close to the two Slavic versions. The Greek *Tale...* is to be found in the BHG under the signature no. 1288n, entitled Λόγος τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου Μιχαήλ, ὅταν ἐπήρεν τὴν στολήν. Text description: A. ERHARD, *Überlieferung und bestand der hagiografischen und homiletischen Literatur der Griechischen Kirche*, vol. III, Leipzig 1937, p. 870–871.

Явных признаков того, что греческий текст представляет собой не оригинал, а перевод со славянского, мною не обнаружено. Однако вероятность того, что перед нами именно перевод славянского богомильского апокрифа на мой взгляд выше, чем самостоятельное существование апокрифа на греческом языке, хотя последнее исключить нельзя²¹.

Especially noteworthy in O. Afinogenova's study is the parallel with Balkan sacred painting that she points out, namely the visualization of *The Tale...* in the St. Archangel Michael Church in Lesnovo, dating back to the middle of the 14th century²².



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On the other hand, in her analysis of the structure of the work, the Polish Paleo-Slavicist shows the connection between *The Tale...* and the Biblical story (as well as the canonical depictions) of the leader of the heavenly armies as the intermediary and defender of the cosmic harmony established by the Lord. At the same time, she notices that elements of “dualist Gnostic thought” may be detected in the text²³.

²¹ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

²² [See ill. 1] О. Afinogenova publishes the fresco entitled *The Fall of Satan* after: С. Габелић, *Византијски и поствизантијски циклуси арханђела XI–XVIII в.*, Београд 2004, p. 94, ill. 102. On the iconography related to the fight between Archangel Michael and Satanael cf. subchapter VI.

²³ М. SKOWRONEK, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

The above survey of editions and studies devoted to the monument does not aspire to being exhaustive – encyclopaedia entries or historical works in which *The Tale...* is analysed in the context of Bogomil writings have not been included²⁴. Nevertheless, even the studies mentioned in the preceding provide a fairly complete picture of the history of the text and the wide range of hypotheses based on its analysis:

– the time of the creation of the Slavic text: 14th cent.; according to A. Miltenova – 13th cent. The five known extant copies of the work have been ascribed by the scholar to two ‘versions’, the relationship between them being close and evident. The older one is represented by the variants found in the manuscript from Savina monastery (?) as well as ЦИАИ no. 1161; the more recent one by the copies stemming from Nikoljac monastery, the *Punčo Codex* as well as ЦИАИ no. 232. The older texts represent the Serbian recension of the Old Church Slavic language, the newer ones come close to the Bulgarian one. The small number of existing copies makes it impossible to determine exactly when “before the 14th century” the Slavic text was completed; however, some indirect evidence for the existence of an earlier translation/compilation, possibly associated with the first stage of the reception of pseudo-canonical literature in Bulgaria, is provided by the increase of interest in the cult of the leader of the heavenly armies during the reign of prince Boris-Michael – particularly in the diocese administered by St. Clemens of Ohrid²⁵;

– the relation to the Greek text: on the macro-textual level, similarities can be seen between the Slavic and the Greek texts (especially in the construction of the plot), which makes the editor of the Greek work – O. Afinogenova – claim that the latter might actually be a t r a n s l a t i o n of the Slavic text, since it only dates back to the half of the 15th century. To support her hypothesis, Afinogenova also adduces a number of arguments referring to the micro-textual level (the affinities between particular phrases), which, however, do not appear clinching. The claim is rather bold and would be regarded as a sensation in both Byzantine and Paleo-Slavic studies – if there is indeed truth in it, since the similarities are scarce, and translations from Slavic into Greek are – generally speaking – exceptionally rare. Rather, the Slavic *Tale...* probably got translated in Bulgaria or Serbia no later than towards the end of the 12th or in the first decades of the 13th century from a Byzantine work which is yet to be discovered. It is conceivable that the text does not constitute a close translation but rather a compilation of a number of works, provided with some ‘personal’ commentary by the translator (a well-known practice in the world of the Balkan Slavs,

²⁴ Cf. А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Слово за лъжливия Антихрист*, [in:] *Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник*, ed. Д. Петканова, Велико Търново 2003, p. 466; Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Богомилството в България*, София 1981, p. 213–214; Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Богомилството*, София 1993, p. 157–158.

²⁵ Д. ЧЕШМЕДЖИЕВ, *Към въпроса за култа на княз Борис-Михаил в средновековна България*, ИП 1999, 3/4, p. 158–176.

especially in the sphere of pseudo-canonical literature). As for the Greek text from Vat. Gr. 1190a, it appears to represent a copy of a thematically related, but ultimately different Greek literary monument;

– the discussion ‘for’ or ‘against’ the Bogomil origin of *The Tale...* There is no unquestionable evidence proving that the work stems from a heretic environment. The dualist elements in the text cannot be treated like an evident, direct confirmation of its Manichaean ancestry. Old dualist Gnostic ideas permeate later monuments in the entire Christian East; cosmogonic and anthropological depictions, as well as Gnostic angelology of a markedly dualist character, mix into pseudo-canonical works – and even if the latter have been considered heretic, it would be an overstatement to ascribe them to Bogomilism. Moreover, some of them, superficially ‘Christianized’, found use in the official rite. In the particular case at hand – that of *The Tale...* – it would perhaps be necessary to take into account the quotations from the holy Liturgy, which provide the work with ostensible ‘canonicity’ and render it appropriate for liturgical use.

In order to resolve the question about the degree to which *The Tale...* mimics earlier, pseudo-canonical patterns known from Byzantine literature and whether it can be viewed as a ‘Bogomil work’, one should first analyse the text (alongside its Greek counterpart of similar content) in a wider context of the Judeo-Gnostic tradition and the Byzantine-Slavic heretic, pseudo-canonical and heresiological literature. And since both versions of the Slavic text are genetically related, they are treated as variants of one and the same work in the following; preference will normally given to the older version.

II. The plot of the Slavic and Greek *Tale...*

The Tale... may be regarded as a paraphrase of Isaiah 14, 12–15 – the passage on the fall of the Son of the Dawn from heaven, as well as an apocalyptic angelomachy against the Old Testament beast (Revelation 12, 7; 20, 1–3). The text boasts a well-thought-out composition as well as a quite moving narration, in particular in the passages describing the Commander of the heavenly armies’ stay on earth and the cosmic battle between the good and the evil principle – both on earth and in the vast spaces of heaven.

The Slavic text according to ЦИАИ no. 1161; Nikoljac no. 82; the <i>Punčo Codex</i> ; ЦИАИ no. 232 (following the editions by A. Miltenova i T. Jovanović)	The Greek text according to Vat. Gr. 1190a (following the edition by O. Afinogenova)
1. Jesus Christ (!) creates the world, the angels, paradise and man. Satanael envies man of being the master of all creation and cannot bear the fact that even the angels bow down to him. Satanael’s refusal to bow down to Adam becomes the reason of his fall.	1. The initial part is more rhetorical in character; God creates the world. The cause of Satanael’s downfall is pride. Quotations from the Psalms, Luke 14, 11, Luke 18, 14 and Matthew 23, 12 introduce the idea of a future punishment for the haughty Satanael.

<p>2. Satanael's resolution to cut his ties to the Lord, win over the angels to his side, steal "the robe woven for God, the widely worshipped wreath plaited for God and the sceptre of the angelic armies", set a throne above the tops of the clouds, make himself like the Most High²⁶. Satanael as a demiurge: after his downfall he creates his heavens – a dark sun, a dark moon and stars.</p>	<p>2. Satanael lies to some of the heavenly armies and comes down to earth. He determines to forge his own heavens, where he intends to set his throne and make himself like the Most High. As a punishment, "The Lord and our God Jesus Christ" deprives him of his angelic look (as well as his robe) and takes his glory away from him. A fragment is missing from the text at this point – without doubt Satanael decides to steal the heavenly robe.</p>
<p>3. God the Father summons four archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael, reveals Satanael's transgression to them and orders Gabriel to come down to earth and retrieve the robe woven for God, the widely worshipped wreath plaited for God and the sceptre of the angelic armies. Gabriel refuses, terrified by the might of the deadly-looking Satanael: "one hundred ells long, and fifty ells broad²⁷; his lips like a great table, his gaze like a viper's, and with three heads".</p>	<p>3. The missing text probably contained a passage recounting the Lord's monologue on Satanael's crimes and Gabriel's task to come down to earth. <i>The Tale...</i> continues at the moment in which Gabriel declines to obey God's order, because "[Satanael's] leg measures six spans, his insatiable throat – two spans, his jaw is like a limitless abyss, and his teeth like huge rocks in this chasm".</p>
<p>4. At this point the Lord turns to Archangel Michael. Though fearing Satanael as well, he agrees to come down to earth and recover the robe woven for God, the wreath and the sceptre. However, he asks the Lord to be allowed to employ deceit (in order to outwit Satanael), since "if I do not lie to him, how am I going to outsmart him?". God blesses Michael, promising him that he would make the earth extremely hot, placing a cooling cloud above Michael's head.</p>	<p>4. The dialogue between the Lord and Archangel Michael is longer, though the message is retained: Michael consents to obey the order and recover the stolen angelic image and the robe, on condition that the Lord grants him the right to use his guile against Satanael and blesses the Archangel's wreath, using which he is to burn the evil and Satanael.</p>
<p>5. Michael descends to the second heaven, sharpens his sword, spreads out his 40-ell broad wings and comes down. Heavens and earth begin to tremor, the sea recedes, and Satanael's servants are filled with fright.</p>	<p>5. Michael takes hold of his sword, spreads out his 300-ell broad wings and descends to earth. All creation and the earth shake. The Antichrist commands his minions to face Michael, but they cannot stand the unimaginable heat and the sight of the Archangel.</p>

²⁶ Cf. Isaiah 14, 13–14: *You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High'* [This and all the following quotations from the Bible follow the *New International Version*, quoted after <http://www.biblica.com/bible/browse-books/> – M.M.].

²⁷ In the Punčo Codex the length is given as 100 ells, the breadth as 8 ells, while the neck measures 12 ells. No doubt the copyist confused Cyrillic н (50) with и (8).

<p>6. Archangel Michael deceiving Satanael. Michael praises the “artful” creation of Satanael (the heavens, bright sun and shining moon, beautiful stars and blowing wind) and tells him that he had run away from God, lured by the power of Evil. Delighted, Satanael orders the Archangel to be seated on a second throne, alongside his own, and takes him by the hand.</p>	<p>6. Michael “confesses” to Satanael that he has come to him drawn by the might of the demiurge, who has created a heavenly vault, stars, sun, clouds and pouring rains. In a long monologue, Satanael addresses the fallen angels, encouraging them to rejoice as “the first Archistratege of the invisible God” has now joined the unclean forces. In any case, differently than in the Slavic <i>Tale...</i>, Satanael is hesitant to receive the Archangel right away: he attempts to cunningly probe his sincerity.</p>
<p>7. God sends unbearable heat down to earth, at the same time placing a cooling cloud above Archangel Michael. The unclean forces, including Satanael, almost faint from the heat. They willingly accept Michael’s proposal to go to the lake to cool down. The Archangel is overjoyed, hoping that he will be able to capture Satanael and reclaim God’s insignia there.</p>	<p>7. Michael puts on the wreath blessed by the Lord and his godly glory blinds the demons. All of the Antichrist’s creation is burnt to ashes. Satanael suggests bathing in a lake hidden behind some rocks (one of which comes from the Biblical Valley of Josaphat) to cool down.</p>
<p>8. On their way to the lake, Satanael, still somewhat doubtful of Michael’s sincerity, orders his minions to keep watch of him. When the two stand by the lake, Satanael suggests that the Archangel enter the water first; Michael, however, refuses, as <i>no servant is greater than his master</i>. Satanael takes off the robe and wreath and puts down the sceptre, warning Michael not to deceive him and steal them. Following the first dive, he makes Michael swear that he will not run away. The latter, in accord with his licence to lie granted him by God, utters the oath. Then, Satanael dives once again and reaches the bottom of the lake, where he combats an enormous beast.</p>	<p>8. When they both arrive at the bank of the lake, the Antichrist offers Michael to enter the water first. Michael replies with words similar to those from the Slavic <i>Tale...</i>: <i>a servant is not greater than the one who commands him</i>. Satanael forces the Archangel to swear that he will not betray him – to which Michael consents. Subsequently, God’s messenger offers the Antichrist to hold his clothes. Satanael hands them over to him, dives, and appears on the surface; seeing Michael, he dives again, undisturbed.</p>
<p>9. Michael prays to the Lord, makes a sign over the lake and covers it with ice. He kills Satanael’s minions, grabs the robe, wreath and sceptre and flies towards the heavens, where the angels praise the Lord, while the earth tremors. Satanael hears the angels’ praising and understands that he has been deceived. He abandons the fight against the monster and attempts to return to the surface – to no avail. Then, he takes a huge rock, crushes the ice and flies up following Michael.</p>	<p>9. Michael prays to God, spreads out his wings and flies to the heavens. The Antichrist realizes that he has been outwitted and tries to get back to the surface of the lake, but it is covered by an enormous rock, on which Satanael hits and hurts his head.</p>

<p>10. Satanael catches up with Michael in the third heaven and grabs him by the heel and the robe woven for God. Michael prays to the Lord for help and hears a voice advising him to strike Satanael's sight with his sword – which he does. As a result of the strike, Satanael falls into the abyss.</p>	<p>10. The Antichrist follows Michael, who prays to the Lord for help. God opens the heavens and leaves ajar the gates to paradise. Satanael, however, catches up with Michael and grabs him by the leg. Michael strikes him and the Antichrist falls down into the chasms of hell.</p>
<p>11. Michael hands the recovered insignia over to the Lord. The whole army of the angels rejoices at Michael's victory over the Evil.</p>	<p>11. Archangel Michael reaches the heavens, bows down to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, returns the <i>divine angelic robe</i> to the Lord, and God rewards him by appointing him as <i>the second God and judge, helper and commander of the armies</i>.</p>

The comparison of the Slavic versions with the Greek one reveals far-reaching similarities on the level of the plot, but the texts differ significantly as far as the use of the language is concerned. As a result, it is difficult to determine that the Slavic text is a translation of the Greek or *vice versa*. Nonetheless, numerous traces of old Gnostic beliefs and Medieval Bogomil dualist views can be detected, demonstrating the connection with the Manichaean doctrines and heresies. Isolating them from the texts and analysing them in a broader context of Judeo-Christian heterodoxy is hardly a simple task – due to at least three reasons:

- firstly, Gnostic doctrines are so numerous (often contradictory) and formulated in such unclear, metaphorical and prophetic language that already the Church Fathers complained on how difficult it was to systematize them. St. Irenaeus of Lyons compares them to a many-headed hydra²⁸;

- secondly, Early Christian heresiologists, and subsequently Medieval Byzantine authors exert influence upon each other, so that characteristics drawn from older sources are not infrequently ascribed to Bogomilism and other Neo-Manichaean teachings;

- thirdly, both the Slavic and the Greek texts are literary, pseudo-canonical works, in which Christian elements (quotations from the Bible and the liturgy) – providing the texts with an ostensibly Orthodox character and transforming them into 'tales'²⁹ suitable for potential liturgical use – have been superimposed on heterodox doctrines.

Irrespective of any difficulties in the analysis of the texts, separating Gnostic ideas from Bogomil beliefs and the Orthodox liturgical context could facilitate an-

²⁸ IRENAEUS, *Adversus haereses*, I, 30, 15. Quoted after: *Five Books of S. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Against Heresies*, ed. J. PARKER, Oxford 1872 [= A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, 42], p. 90.

²⁹ Cf. an. 1 – M.M.

swering the question concerning the ‘originality’ of the Bogomil teachings, as well as of the adaptation of heretic doctrines in the Medieval society.

III. Dualism. The ‘Invisible God’ and the creator of matter, Satanael-Antichrist.

In the Greek *Tale...*, the Almighty is customarily referred to as the ‘Lord’ (Κύριος), ‘Lord God’ (Κύριος καὶ Θεός) or ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός)³⁰. One single time Michael addresses the Lord using the word ‘Ruler’ (δέσποτα)³¹.

In both the first and second version of the Slavic *Tale...*, on the other hand, the creator of heaven and earth is Jesus Christ: Господь Богъ нашъ Исусъ Христосъ, Господь творць небъ и земли, всакому сзданиею (ЦИАИ nr 1161)³²; Господь нашъ Исусъ Христосъ, цото е направилъ небо и земли ꙗ свичкѣа свѣтъ... (the *Punčo Codex*)³³. Despite that, further in the text God is called “Father”, “Upper Father”, “Father Above” (вишныи отьць), “Lord”, “Ruler” (much more frequently than in the Greek text and not merely in the vocative):

И прости же владыко...; Рече Архангелъ Михаилъ: Владыко...; Тогда Михаило благослови се в владыке...³⁴

It can be assumed that it was of little importance to the author of the Slavic text which person of the Holy Trinity was the creator of all things – differently than in the Greek version, which from the very outset carefully distinguishes between the Old Testament Creator (Lord God – Κύριος καὶ Θεός) and ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ’, who taught the apostles that *all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted*³⁵ – a quotation absent from the Slavic *Tale...* If interconnections are to be sought between the dualist ideas of the ‘external God’ (God ‘from outside’), they are hardly detectable in the terms ‘Upper Father’, ‘Father Above’ – found infrequently, but not necessarily associated with heretic teachings, since they may be employed in Biblical and liturgical context.

Still, the Greek *Tale...* includes a passage which indubitably preserves traces of the ancient Gnostic faith in the good God, the God ‘from outside’, in opposition to the demiurge – often identified with the Hebrew Sabaoth (Yaldabaoth)³⁶ – the creator of

³⁰ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 331–332.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 333.

³² А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 99.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 101.

³⁵ Luke 14, 11; Matthew 23, 12 (quotation from Luke).

³⁶ *Yaldabaoth* may mean ‘a parent of Sabaoth’ and “is a synonym of the Biblical God”, cf. П. СТЕФАНОВ, *Ялдаваот. История и учение на гностическата религия*, София 2008, p. 263. The book also provides a reliable survey of the literature on the creator of matter.

the despised matter. Having realized that Michael had decided to come to the earth, Satanael turns to the fallen angels, informing them that Michael has arrived, *the first Archistratege of the invisible God*: ὁ πρῶτος τοῦ ἀοράτου Θεοῦ ὁ μέγας ἀρχιστράτηγός³⁷.

Although no similar expression is found in the Slavic *Tale...*, other works, whose relation to the communities of the Bulgarian Bogomils is beyond doubt, do mention the 'invisible God'. It is the case e.g. in the *Secret Book*, where Satanael tempts the *angels of the invisible Father (angelos invisibilis Patris)*³⁸.

It has long been recognized that Late Ancient Gnosticism – irrespective of its internal diversity and the common inconsistencies among the particular schools – is a soteriological doctrine under strong influence of the Platonist and Neo-Platonist conception of eternal spiritual ideas and their material, spatial 'reflections'³⁹. Nevertheless, differently than the Platonists and Neo-Platonists, for whom the cosmos – consisting of widespread projections of spiritual ideas – is not evil from the beginning, Gnostic ideas are quite radical in their 'anticosmicity': it is not only creation and matter that are evil, but also the creator of matter – the demiurge, referred to in different ways by the various denominations. Two prominent hierarchs of the 2nd century, Basilides and Marcion, speak of a 'nonexistent', invisible God, a perfect Aeon, concealed and residing in the 'fullness' (*pleroma*), God-redeemer, the antithesis of the evil God-creator. The Gnostic monuments uncovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi confirm the cosmic pessimism of the early dualist heresies. Both in the *Gospel of Philip* and in the short version of the *Apocryphon of John (The Secret Book of John)*⁴⁰, God is also called *the invisible, who is over the all*⁴¹.

This belief also reaches the Neo-Manichaean communities. In the 11th century, Michael Psellus, in his work *On the Operation of Demons* (also known as *A Treatise on Demons; De Operatione Daemonum, Περί ἐωεργετίας δαιμόνωνων*), attributing eternal cosmic dualism to Mani, notes that the prophet "mistakenly contrasted god and God, the creator of evil and the creator of good, the ruler of evil on earth and the ruler of good in heavens"⁴².

³⁷ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 335. O. Afinogenova translates: ...первый у невидимого Бога великую архистратигу (roughly ...the great Archistratege, first with the invisible God).

³⁸ Ы. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги и легенди*, ed. photot., София 1970, p. 75. Polish translations: *Tajna księga*, trans. T. DĄBEK-WIRGOWA, [in:] *Siedem niebios i ziemia...*, p. 15–21; *Tajemna księga, czyli Zapytania Jana zadane w wieczniku Królowi niebieskiemu*, trans. A. SARWA, [in:] A. SARWA, *Tajemna księga katarów*, Sandomierz 2006, p. 93–101. English translation: *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, ed. W. WAKEFIELD, A. EVANS, New York 1991, p. 458–464 (no. 56 B).

³⁹ Cf. e.g. G. QUISPÉL, *Gnosis als Weltreligion*, Zürich 1951, p. 16–27; K. RUDOLPH, *Gnosis. The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, trans. R. MCLACHLAN WILSON, San Francisco 1983, p. 60–62.

⁴⁰ Berlin Codex (BG 8502, 2); Nag Hammadi codex III, 1. Quoted after: *The Apocryphon of John (II, 1, III, 1, IV, 1, and BG 8502,2)*, trans. F. WISSE, [in:] *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. J.M. ROBINSON, San Francisco 1990 (cetera: *The Apocryphon of John*), p. 104–123.

⁴¹ *The Apocryphon of John*, 1, 4. Cf. also: K. RUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁴² Most of Michael Psellus's work was made available in: P. GAUTIER, *Le 'De demonibus' du Pseudo-*

At around the same time, the Old Bulgarian author known as Presbyter Cosma cries: *Вамъ же еретици, кто оуказа, како вогъкъ нѣкътъ сотвори нътъ твари евоу всѣа*⁴³. It could, therefore, be surmised that the phrase *ὁ πρῶτος τοῦ ἀοράτου Θεοῦ ὁ μέγας ἀρχιστράτηγός* contains a certain Gnostic term for an ‘invisible’ God ruling in the pleroma, which ‘infiltrated’ the Greek *Tale...* but failed to find its way into either version of the Slavic text (more standard appellations of God the Father, drawn from the official literature, being preferred in the latter).

God’s antagonist – the demiurge, known in the Slavic and Greek versions of the *Tale...* as ‘Sata nael’ (more often in ЦИАИ no. 1161) or ‘The Antichrist’ (more frequently in the *Punčo Codex* and in the Greek text), basically corresponds to the concept of God’s adversary, familiar from Gnostic texts and treatises by polemic Early Christian and Medieval heresiologists. The evil principle is not an eternally existent power (a view endorsed by radical dualists, e.g. the Manichaeans); Sata nael belongs to the angelic army, he is even a *commander of the angels*⁴⁴ – this concept might have appeared in the Hebrew intertestamental apocryphal tradition⁴⁵ and was especially popular in the views of moderate Medieval dualists. The Tempter of the first humans was expelled from heavens (in the Slavic *Tale...* from ЦИАИ no, 1161, from the seventh heaven), leading part of the heavenly army after him. The demiurge creates his own, material cosmos on earth: a dark sun, moon and stars, subsequently placing his throne upon the clouds⁴⁶. This concept is still not absent from the oldest Gnostic writings as well; there, all elements of cosmos under the pleroma constitute the home of demons – archons or spirits. The throne of the highest archon, the creator of the visible universe, is located in the seventh heaven (alternatively, below it; in any case under the *pleroma*), while he himself rules his creation (seven heavens, earth and the hell under it). The closer to earth each of the seven heavens (associated with the seven planets) is, the worse, darker and more hostile towards the invisible God its archons (and the material world

Psellos, REB 38, 1980, p. 94–105. Bulgarian translation: Д. АНГЕЛОВ, Б. ПРИМОВ, Г. БАТАКЛИЕВ, *Богомилството в България, Византия и Западна Европа в извори*, София 1967 (p. 70). English translation (extracts) in: *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World c. 650 – c. 1450: Selected Sources*, ed. J. HAMILTON, В. HAMILTON, Y. СТОУАНОВ, Manchester 1998, p. 227–232.

⁴³ Quotation following: Ю.К. БЕГУНОВ, *Козма Пресвитер в славянских литературах*, София 1973, p. 306.

⁴⁴ *ὁ μέγας στρατήγος τῶν ἀγγέλων*, cf. О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ю. СТОЯНОВ, *Другият бог. Дуалистичните религии от Античността до катарската ерес*, София 2006, p. 83–84. Cf. also: П. СТЕФАНОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 259; the author, accepting the view of the renowned student of Gnosticism Hans Jonas, calls extreme dualism “Iranian” (more precisely, “Persian”), while the other variant is referred to as “Syro-Egyptian”.

⁴⁶ The Greek *Tale...* is much more economical in relating the demiurgic functions of Sata nael, who is characterized (in accord with the categories of Christian tradition) as an apostate, expelled by God due to his haughtiness. The evil principle merely swears that he will create heavens. О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

under their protection) are. Between the first heaven and earth, among the clouds, is located the kingdom of the mythical beast – Behemoth. The material world is to a Gnostic a world of violence, which can only be described negatively as “darkness” or “death”⁴⁷.

A comparison of Gnostic cosmogonic views with the two versions of the *Tale...* reveals certain affinities. Satanael is thrown down from the seventh heaven – the one closest to God. Following the act of creation – not unlike Behemoth – he places his throne upon the clouds, but he is able to penetrate the upper heavens as well. In the Slavic *Tale...*, Satanael follows Michael, reaches the third heaven and manages to grab the Archangel by his leg and right arm: И трепетнѣхъ криломъ своимъ и стигна ꙗко емь небесе, и захвати его за стѣпало и за деснѣхъ рѣкъ лоукавою своею десницею⁴⁸.

A hint pointing to the fact that the lower heavens were regarded as ‘unclean’, as the home of evil forces, is also present in the Slavic *Tale...* Prior to descending to earth, Archangel Michael stops briefly in the second heaven in order to sharpen his sword and prepare for the fight against Satanael:

Тогда Михаило благослови се в владике цара и съниде на .б.-ро небо, и зе съмьртоносни мачь свои, и наостри его. И простри крили свои .лѣ. лакать къ ширинѣ, и потрѣви трѣвою своею; и трепетнѣхъ крилома своимъ и поде съ небесниихъ висотѣхъ.⁴⁹

Thus, according to what is said in *The Tale...*, there is a boundary between the second and the third heaven to which God’s power reaches. The first heaven – and to a certain degree also the second – are already located in the sphere of Satan’s dominance.

In other pseudo-canonical works Satan’s kingdom also reaches above earth. In *The Vision of Isaiah, the Son of Amos* the prophet describes the way from the earth to the first heaven in the following way:

И възидохъ же и азъ и онъ на твърдь, и видѣхъ тоу брань согоноу и силы его и противѣща съ благочестию и единою единого завидѣши; тако же есть на земли, тако и на твърди⁵⁰

[And we climbed the firmament, he and I, and I saw a great fight there: Satan and his powers opposing that which is righteous, since one envied the other. For as it is on earth, thus it is

⁴⁷ K. RUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, p. 69–70.

⁴⁸ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 101.

⁵⁰ Edition of the copy from the so-called Uspienski Codex (12th cent.) in: Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 136; modern Bulgarian translation: И. ДУЙЧЕВ, *Из старата българска книжнина*, t. I, София 1940, p. 146. The same translation was published in *Стара българска литература в седем тома*, t. I, *Апокрифи...*, p. 65. Polish translation: *Widzenie, które miał Święty Izajasz prorok, syn Amosa*, trans. I. ПЕТРОВ, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...*, p. 53–61.

also on the firmament.^{51]}

The expression ‘на твърдьдъ’ refers to the “firmament” – certainly not the earthly, but the heavenly one – which is corroborated by the following phrase: **ТАКО ЖЕ ЕСТЬ НА ЗЕМЛИ, ТАКО И НА ТВЪРЪДИ**; thus also in the Latin text of the *Vision*...:

Ascendimus ego et ille super firmamentum, et vidi ibi prelium magnum sathane et virtutem ejus, resistantem honoratæ Dei, et unus erat prestantior alio in videndo, quia sicut est in terra, tanto est in firmamento...⁵²

The belief that the demiurge is the creator of the visible heavens was exceptionally robust in Bogomil communities. In his 12th century polemic with the dualists (also called Manichaeans in the text) of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, St. Hilarion of Moglena cries in anger:

НѢЦІИ ЖЕ ѿ вас и то самое небо, и также въ немъ все, творенїа вражїа быти глаголають. Яще оубо есть небо по вашейоу словоу дѣло ажкавааго, како благый богъ на небесе почиваетъ, съдѣбаныхъ ѿт ажкавааго⁵³.

[Some of you even speak of heaven itself and everything that is in it that it is a creation of the Enemy. So if heaven, according to your words, is the work of the Evil One, how can the good God reside in heavens created by the Evil One?^{54]}

The Bulgarian bishop's indignation is only natural: he takes as his basis the quotations from the Holy Scripture and interprets them literally, concluding that the heavens cannot have been created by the devil if God abides in them. This is a logical opinion of an adversary of the dualist heresy, who cannot have known that the Gnostic demiurge rules over as many as seven heavens, associated with the seven planets.

It is not inconceivable that the passage from the Slavic *Tale*... reflects some more archaic beliefs that infiltrated Greek literature – beliefs according to which the authority of the evil archon is limited to the lower heavens. This cosmogonic vision was widespread enough to survive in all Neo-Manichaean communities of the Balkan Peninsula.

The angelomachy is depicted in a different way in the Greek *Tale*... Fighting also takes place in the air, but no particular heaven is specified – God bends the heav-

⁵¹ [Translated from the original and the Polish translation by I. Petrov to be found in: *Widzenie, które miał Święty Izajasz prorok, syn Amosa*, trans. I. PETROV, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...*, p. 55 – M.M.].

⁵² Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 137.

⁵³ E. KALUŽNIAČKI, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius (1375–1393)*, London 1971, p. 34.

⁵⁴ [Translated from the original as well as the Polish translation by the author – M.M.].

ens, their doors are opened, and Michael, having struck the Antichrist in the head, enters through them and stands in front of God's throne:

καὶ ἐκλίναν οἱ οὐρανοὶ, καὶ ἠνοίχθησαν αἱ πύλαι τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ ἐδέχοντο τὸν λειτουργιὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τῶν ἄνω ταγμάτων καὶ ταξιαρχῶν τῆς δυνάμεως Κυρίου⁵⁵.

The Greek phrase is, in a way, closer to the Gnostic beliefs concerning the demiurge's sovereignty over all spheres of the heavens – up to the *pleroma*.

As has already been said, both the two Slavic version of *The Tale...* and the Greek text feature a paraphrased Biblical quotation legitimizing Satanael's resolution to found his kingdom in the highest:

You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High' (Isaiah 14, 13–14).

The same quotation recurs in heretic and pseudo-canonical texts. In *The Secret Book (Interrogatio Joannis)* and both copies – from Vienna and Carcassone – Satanael's kingdom is located in the clouds: *...et cogitavit sedem suam ponere super nubis coelorum et volebat Altissimo similis esse*⁵⁶.

The phrase appears in a similar context in the Old Testament apocryphon called *On The Sea of Tiberias*⁵⁷, in the Slavic⁵⁸ and Greek⁵⁹ Palaea, as well as in later copies of pseudo-canonical works treating on cosmogony⁶⁰.

It is perhaps worth noting that the quote in question represents a topos, and its presence is by no means limited to heretic and pseudo-canonical texts. Attempting to compromise the Euchites' (Messalians') belief in the evil principle, Michael Psellus refers to the same quotation from the *Book of Isaiah*⁶¹.

A few decades later, Euthymius Zigabenus, at the beginning of his treatise entitled *Dogmatic Panoply of the Orthodox Faith, or The Armory of Dogmas (Panoplia*

⁵⁵ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

⁵⁶ Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 77.

⁵⁷ ...и помысли быти равенъ Богъ и помысли своєю гордостью: поставлю престолъ на облацехъ и вѣдъ подобенъ вышнему, Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 291.

⁵⁸ А. ПОПОВ, *Книга Бытия небеси и земли*, Санкт-Петербург 1881, p. 2. Cf. also: Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 69.

⁵⁹ Θήσω τὸν θρόνον μου ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔσομαι ὁμοίος τῷ ὑψίστῳ, Cf. A. VASILIEV, *Apocryphal Graeco-byzantina*, Москва 1892, p. 189.

⁶⁰ И.Я. ПОРФИРЬЕВ, *Апокрифические сказания о ветхозаветных лицах и событиях*, Санкт-Петербург 1877, p. 86.

⁶¹ "[Satan – G.M.] boasted, *I have put my throne above the clouds, and, I shall be like the most High*" – *Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 228. Cf. Also: Д. АНГЕЛОВ, Б. ПРИМОВ, Г. БАТАКЛИЕВ, *Богомилството в България...*, p. 71.

dogmatica, Πανοπλία δογματική) also quotes Isaiah 14, 13–14. Samael entices part of the angels with his promise: Θήσω, γὰρ, φησι, τὸν θρόνον μου ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ἔσομαι ὁμοιος τῷ Ὑψίστῳ, συνάπα⁶².

It can be assumed that Michael Psellus's work was familiar to Euthymius Zigabenus, and served as the source from which the latter carried over the quotation from the *Book of Isaiah* (14, 13–14). All the same, the presence of this very quotation in a whole array of heretic and pseudo-canonical works, in two versions of the Slavic *Tale...*, in the Greek pseudo-canonical text, as well as in two anti-heretic treatises shows that the Biblical text is being used as a *topos*, frequently resorted to in the polemic of the Medieval dualists with the official doctrine. Byzantine heresiologists may have been acquainted with dualist texts (variants of the Greek *Tale...?*) in which the Biblical passage from Isaiah served as an illustration of Satanael's decision to rebel against the Lord. An alternative explanation is also thinkable: they might have heard from Bogomil preachers an interpretation of Satanael's fall based on the quotation from Isaiah. One of the oldest Byzantine works, the letter of monk Euthymius of Acmonia against the dualist heresy of the Fundagiagites (Bogomils from Asia Minor) is constructed as an account of what the right-believing monk has heard from a certain heretic⁶³. Conversely, the treatise by Michael Psellus has the form of a dialogue, in which he the teachings heard from the heretics are recounted, after which the true nature of the heresy is exposed. Euthymius Zigabenus repeatedly uses expressions such as "they also say" in his treatise. The possibility that the persecutors of the heresies constructed their accusations basing themselves on the writings of their predecessors and the accounts orally transmitted among their opponents is not negligible, especially if one considers the fact that the Bogomils relied primarily on oral communication in their teachings, trying to win followers. In any case –

⁶² PG, vol. CXXX, col. 1296; *Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 183; cf. also: Д. АНГЕЛОВ, Б. ПРИМОВ, Г. БАТАКЛИЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 74. The *Panoplia dogmatica* got translated into Slavic probably towards the end of the 14th century. We know of one (or two?) Slavic manuscripts from the end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th century, preserved in two fragments and containing parts of Euthymius Zigabenus's work. According to some authors (K. Ivanova), the translation was completed before the beginning of the 15th century, and it is most probably connected with the school of patriarch Euthymius. Cf.: К. ИВАНОВА, *О славянском переводе „Паноплии догматики” Евфимия Зигабена*, [in:] *Исследования по древней и новой литературе*, Ленинград 1987, p. 101–105. The hypothesis of the Trnovo translation is challenged by Nina Gagova, according to whom the translation, displaying linguistic features characteristic of Serbian, would stem from Mount Athos, cf. Н. ГАГОВА, *Владетели и книги. Участието на южнославянския владетел в производството и употребата на книги през Средновековието (IX–XV в.): рецепцията на византийския модел*, София 2010, p. 132–139.

⁶³ The letter, dating back to the beginning of the 11th century, published in: G. FICKER, *Die Phundagiagiten*, Leipzig 1908, p. 3–86. A Bulgarian translation following the above-mentioned edition in: FGHB, vol. X, p. 9–49. English translation: *Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 143.

the fact that the same quotation is found again and again in an almost identical context in both heretic and anti-heretic writings makes it plausible that authors such as Michael Psellus and Euthymius Zigabenus had been exposed to written dualist texts treating on cosmology.

The majority of scholars analysing the commented texts speak of vestiges of moderate dualism in the Greek and Slavic *Tale*... In the dialogue between God and the angels (before Michael is given the mission to recover the stolen robe, wreath and sceptre), when they ask how long he is going to tolerate the impious deeds, the Lord answers in the following way:

Глаголю ками: егда Сатананъ съблазни се, ѿбеже и болезни въ прѣст на чловѣка положи, егоже азъ сътворихъ своимъ рѣкамъ; нъ и тѣ хощеть частнѣ бити въ второе лице пришествіе... И потомъ сътвори другъ свѣтъ безъ данн, иже и бесѣмрътнн и безъскочани; и тви вѣдѣть радостъ и животъ вѣдѣть.⁶⁴

When Michael entreats God for the utter destruction of the unclean force, He commands him: Не тако, Михаиле, нъ тако рекохъ ти - .ѿ. силн дахъ еми прѣжде ѿннани ѿ него .ѿ. силъ а остави еми .ѿ. силъ.⁶⁵ And further – according to the same (first) version of the *Tale*...: Тако сътвори Михаило, тако не дасть еми Господь погвѣбити Сатананла до конца.⁶⁶

Neither does evil exist eternally, nor will its rule be eternal. God has allotted seven ages⁶⁷ for Satan's kingdom. This is how the symbolism of the number in the second excerpt is to be understood: Michael deprives Satanael of five forces, leaving him with seven (i.e., the seven ages). After the apocalyptic combat at the end of times, a “world without days” will ensue, “immortal and infinite. There will be bliss and life in it”, which the righteous will enjoy, while the unjust will perish.

In the Greek *Tale*..., the angels do not ask the Lord for explanations this straightforwardly; even there, however, the idea of the ultimate triumph over evil is expounded clearly, and moderate dualism is again noticeable. Here, the elucidation does not assume the form of a question addressed to the Lord by the angels; God bespeaks Archangel Michael directly, saying:

καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ποιήσοθιν ὄπλον κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργῶσιν αὐτον ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ὕστερον κληρονομήσοθιν τὴν αἰώνιαν καὶ ἀτελεύτησον κόλασιν τὴν οὐκ ἔχουσαν τέλος.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, р. 100.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, р. 105.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*

⁶⁷ Or rather seven epochs, *αἰών* denoting here not the Gnostic 'spiritual forces', but an 'epoch'.

⁶⁸ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, р. 333.

The views of moderate dualists were fairly well known to Byzantine heresiarchs. In his *Panoplia dogmatica*, Euthymius Zigabenus emphasizes:

...дяволите имат голяма и непобедима сила да вредят. Срещу тях бил безсилен както Христос, така и заедно с Него Светият Дух, понеже Бог-Отец все още ги щадял и не им отнемал силата, но им е отстъпил управлението на целия свят чак до свършека му. И Синът отначало, изпратен на света, поискал пълното им премахване, но не го получил поради добротата на Отца⁶⁹.

The reader is once again left with the impression that the opponents of Neo-Manichaeism were quite well informed not only in orally transmitted stories, but also in texts – such as *The Tale...* – and, summarizing them, they provided literary fiction with the characteristics of ‘scientific discourse’.

IV. Christology and angelology. Archangel Michael – ‘the second God’

Heterodox angelology is at pains to differentiate between dualist, cosmological and anthropological depictions of Gnostic and Neo-Manichaeism communities, since the spiritual powers participate in a cosmic drama: some of them will follow the evil archon in his downfall, and will take part in repairing the visible world rules by the demiurge – the creator of the human body. At any rate, the Slavic and Greek *Tale...* contain two episodes that can shed further light on pseudo-canonical angelology.

At the beginning of the Slavic *Tale...*, Satanael blames God for having elevated the newly created Adam and obliged the angelic armies to bow down to him. The evil archon’s outrage is so violent that he cries out: *ЯЗЪ ЖЕ ЗРЕТИ ЕГО НЕ МОГЪ, НИ ПОКЛОНИТИ СЕ ЕМЪ*.⁷⁰

It is through his hatred towards Adam that Satanael justifies his choice to lure the angelic armies and abandon the heavens. The Greek *Tale...* displays further-reaching ‘canonicity’ – there, the downfall of part of the spiritual powers is brought about by sheer pride and willingness to compete against God⁷¹.

Already in the Hebrew apocryphal tradition we find the story of the angels being discontent by Adam’s being appointed as the master of all spiritual powers and all created beings. In the opinion of Y. Stoyanov, the topic arises *in the apocryphal literature from the times of the Second Temple, and the history of the Observers’ sin is described in great detail – the fall of the evil angels is ascribed to cupidity, haughtiness*

⁶⁹ Д. АНГЕЛОВ, Б. ПРИМОВ, Г. БАТАКЛИЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 79. ...*The demons [...] have great and irresistible power to harm. Neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit with Him can stand against this, since the Father still spares them and does not take away their strength, but allows them the government of the whole cosmos until the consummation. When the Son was sent down into the world at the beginning, He asked for their complete destruction, but did not gain his request through the goodness of the Father – v. Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 191–192.

⁷⁰ А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 99.

⁷¹ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

or envy against Adam⁷². The origin of such texts is undoubtedly Judean; it is conceivable that they appeared in the times of the Second Temple, but at least in some of them Adam is envied not only by the 'Observers', but by all spiritual powers. A certain Hebrew legend⁷³ gives an account of how after the act of creation the live beings approached Adam with fright, mistaking him for the Creator. However, he reprimanded them and urged that they should go and bow down to God together. The Lord was so pleased with the deed that he dispatched angels to pay homage to Adam. So they did, roasting meat for him and bringing him wine. In an alternative variant of the legend, the angels serving Adam came to hate him because of his likeness to God, and attempted to scorch him with fire. The upset God stretched His arm over Adam and restored peace between him and the angels.

The intricate relations between the proto-human and the heavenly hierarchy are also reflected in Medieval Slavic writings. This issue is addressed in M. Skowronek's study⁷⁴. She adduces a quotation from a 17th-century Russian manuscript entitled **СЛОВО СЪТГО ИВАНА ФЕОЛОГА. ШСНОВАЕ НБѸ, И СѸДАНІЕ ЗЕМЛИ, О СѸВОРЕНИ ЯДАМЕ, Ш СВЕЖЕЕ СОТОНАИЛОВЕ, СПАДШАГО С НБСЪ, И ШГНАНИЕ ЯДАМОВО Й РАГА. GOD**

ѸЕ КО ВСЕ ЧИНО АРГЛСКИИ: ПЕВОМУ ЧИНѸ СОТОНАИВ, И ДРѸГОМУ МИХАИЛУ, И ТРЕЕМУ ГАРНАЛУ, ЧЕВЕТОМУ РАФАИЛУ, ПАТОМУ ОУРИЛУ, ДА ШЕД ПОКЛОУСА ЯДАЛУ, И КОЖДЫ СЪ СВОИНАЪ ЧИНО, У ВСЕКИ НИ ПО .Ѹ. ЧИНО, А ШНИ СЪ НЕСНЫ ВОЕВОДЫ, ШЕШЕ ПОКЛОУНИТИ ЯДАЛУ.⁷⁵

Regrettably, the text is fragmentary and it is far from clear whether the angelic choirs are merely being enumerated or the conflict between them and Adam is being described; the latter interpretation is at least a possibility.

The other episode is connected with Archangel Michael's position in the heavenly hierarchy. At the end of the Greek *Tale...*, God, in exultation over the victory against evil, addresses the Archistrategē, shouting: *εἶπὼ Θεὸς δεῦτερος*.

Archangel Michael – 'the second God'? In order to comprehend the seeming paradox in this expression, it is once again indispensable to turn to the ancient Gnosis and the Medieval polemic literature.

In the Qumran apocrypha, Michael is the prince of light, the protector of the just against the kingdom of Belial. On the arrival of the "last age" and the "eternal world", Michael's authority will be augmented among the angels of Israel, and he will be elevated "over all creation"⁷⁶. His function as the guardian of the just is also high-

⁷² Ю. СТОЯНОВ, *Другият бог...*, p. 85.

⁷³ R. GRAVES, R. PATAI, *Hebrew Myths. The Book of Genesis*, Garden City 1964, p. 62.

⁷⁴ M. SKOWRONEK, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁷⁵ Manuscript description and edition of some excerpts from the text in: А.Т. БЫЧКОВ, *Описание церковно-славянских и русских рукописных сборников Императорской публичной библиотеки*, Санкт-Петербург 1882, p. 483–488.

⁷⁶ Ю. СТОЯНОВ, *Другият бог...*, p. 88–89.

lighted in the Old Testament tradition, e.g. in Daniel 12, 1.

Michael assumes an exceptional position among the angels already during the creation of the world, *not anymore as merely one of the thousands of beings praising God, but as someone possessing individual features. This is connected with his being entrusted with the role of a co-organizer of the world, alongside God or the remaining archangels*⁷⁷.

The special function of Michael as God's primary aide and intermediary between people and the Lord⁷⁸ leads to his 'deification' and identification with Christ. In his study on the cult of St. Nicholas in Rus', B.A. Uspensky provides a number of notable examples of the identification of Archangel Michael with Christ: in certain Medieval texts, the Archistratege is called the Son of God⁷⁹.

It appears that this belief was exceptionally vigorous in the Bogomil communities, since Euthymius Zigabenos remarks, that In the year 5000, God sent from his heart the Word, that is the Son, who is God. The heretics claim that this Word and son is archangel Michael. And his name will be angel of good council [Isa. 9.6.]. They believe that he is called archangel because he's more divine than the angels. And Jesus because he cures all weakness, and Christ – because he is anointed with flesh.⁸⁰

D. Angelov, linking (somewhat one-sidedly) the identification of Michael with Christ with the myth about Satanael's expulsion from the heavens, mentions the same fragment from the *Panoplia dogmatica*⁸¹.

Within the framework of the Judeo-Gnostic tradition, the Lord's call ἔση Θεός δεύτερος in the Greek *Tale...* may be elucidated. Michael's being promoted to the dignity of the 'archistratege' and the 'prince of light' in the texts from Nag Hammadi, his being appointed the defender of the just and of the chosen people in the Hebrew tradition, and finally his functioning as the intermediary between God and people (supplemented by the Christian faith) logically lead to his identification as the 'second God' and 'Son of God' in heterodox texts.

A thought-provoking breach of the canonical understanding of the spiritual nature is found at the end of the Slavic *Tale...* Heaven's armies stand in front of

⁷⁷ M. SKOWRONEK, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁷⁸ More on the functions of the Archangel in the Byzantine-Slavic tradition cf. in: M. SKOWRONEK, *op. cit.*, p. 175–180.

⁷⁹ Б.А. УСПЕНСКИЙ, *Филологические разыскания в области славянских древностей*, Москва 1982, p. 24.

⁸⁰ FGHB, vol. X, p. 57: *In the year 5000 he sent from his heart the Word, that is the Son, who is God [...]. They [the heretics – G.M.] claim that this word and son is archangel Michael. 'For his name shall be the angel of good counsel' [Isa. 9, 6]. They believe that he is called archangel because he is more divine than the angels, Jesus because he cures all weakness, and Christ because he is anointed with flesh – Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 186.

⁸¹ Д. АНГЕЛОВ, *Богомилството в България...*, p. 135.

Michael to extol him for his success against Satanael: И шерадовахъ се приходяща и зрѣхъ его поникала лицель его тако зногано⁸²

The Archangel's countenance *stiffened as if from fatigue*. The further away he gets from the *pleroma* and the closer he is to earth, the more carnal and material he turns. He suffers from the heat sent by God just as the demons do, and after the fight with the Antichrist his face is burnt. This distinguishing feature of the Slavic text (there is no mention of Michael's face being *stiffened as if from fatigue* in the Greek version) is a commentary of sorts on the spiritual nature of the heavenly powers, which 'materialize' when coming into contact with matter.

During his journey 'downwards' to the earth, and back 'upwards' to the *pleroma*, Archangel Michael assumes the role of an arbitrator between the extra-terrestrial and the terrestrial: a function that was exclusively Satanael's prior to his fall (cf. *The Secret Book*, where Jesus explains to John that Satan covered the distance to the earth and back before deserting God)⁸³. Michael replaces the demiurge, albeit already as the souls' guide to the nether world – as the *psychopompos* – which is a distinctive characteristic of his cult, connected with the teachings on the soul in non-orthodox doctrines, but also remarkably popular in sacred writings and folk beliefs.

V. The robe, wreath and sceptre – an allegory of the soul.

Considerations on the soul assume a vital position in the Gnostic religion, being closely associated with the soteriology of ancient dualist teachings. Gilles Quispel writes: *Soteriology governs cosmology. Gnosis intends first of all to be a way, a way into the ego (Selbst), a way to God*⁸⁴. Or – to use the words of the Gnostic Valentinus – having come to itself, the soul heads towards the *pleroma*⁸⁵.

This time, the path – to the internal 'I' and simultaneously to the *pleroma* – is covered by the soul: the non-material spark of God, lost in the chaos and darkness of matter, in the carnal grave. The language of the Gnostic works, charged with symbolism and not always transparent, constructs an image of the soul by means of an antithesis: in its fall, it is 'defiled', enters the 'dark', 'murky' chaos of matter, after which it cleanses itself, clothing a white, shiny robe, and illuminates with God's light on its way towards the Creator.

In one of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts (II, 6), entitled *The Exegesis on the Soul*⁸⁶, the soul in its earthly life is identified with a harlot. Having fallen into the

⁸² А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 105.

⁸³ Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги и легенди...*, p. 74.

⁸⁴ *Die Soteriologie beherrscht die Kosmologie. So will denn die Gnosis vor allem ein Weg sein, ein Weg zum Selbst, ein Weg zu Gott* – G. QUISPEL, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁸⁵ [D]er Geist, zu sich selbst gekommen, ist hinaufgeschnellt zum Pleroma – *ibidem*, p. 43.

⁸⁶ Cf. М.К. ТРОФИМОВА, *Историко-философские вопросы гностицизма*, Москва 1979, p. 110–121, 188–193. Cf. also: П. СТЕФАНОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 271–274. English translation and commentary in: *Gnostic Writings on the Soul: Annotated & Explained*, ed. A. P. SMITH, Woodstock Ver. 2007, p. 1–44.

hands of robbers, she is tempted and imprisoned. Her rebirth into a new life follows after a second turn to God, when – cleansed – she marries Him to find peace and eternal happiness in the pleroma.

The soul covers two paths – downwards, to the dark prison of the body and upwards, to the luminous residences of God. It embarks on the latter path after death, when the ‘luminous part’ is separated from the body. Gnostic texts borrow the notion of the soul’s journey to the afterworld from other sources. Customarily the soul is accompanied by an angel, who assists it in getting through the heavenly spheres, guarded by the archons. The angel, and in some texts – Jesus, is a ‘benevolent helper’, without whom the soteriological act is unattainable. The Redeemer pilots the soul to the *gates of knowledge*, ‘where the bright light is’⁸⁷.

Is the claim that the Slavic and Greek *Tale...* reflect the views of dualist heresies on the soul legitimate? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to analyse the symbols contained in the robe, wreath and sceptre, stolen by Satanael and given back to God following the cosmic struggle between Archangel Michael and the demiurge.

A comparison of the Greek text with its Slavic counterparts exhibits numerous discrepancies as far as the list of the stolen objects is concerned. The Greek *Tale...* merely mentions the “angelic robe”, “image of the angelic robe” or “divine angelic robe”. After the fall of Satanael,

ὁ Κύριος καὶ Θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός... ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς ἀγγελικῆς στολῆς καὶ κατέλιπεν αὐτὸν ἄμορφον καὶ ἄδοξον.⁸⁸

Afterwards, God orders Michael to recover the “angelic image and robe” stolen by the Antichrist⁸⁹, while in his attempts to outwit Satanael on earth, the Archangel only speaks of the “angelic robe”: οἶδα ὅτι μεμνηῶς εἰς καὶ δύνασαι καὶ τῇ σῇ δύνασταιά συνέλαβες τὴν ἀγγελικὴν⁹⁰.

In the final stages of the work, Archangel Michael gives the “divine angelic robe” (τὴν θεόμορφον καὶ ἀγγελικὴν στολὴν) back to the Holy Trinity⁹¹.

Both versions of the Slavic *Tale...* have longer lists of divine attributes. The robe becomes “woven for God”; similarly, the “wreath plaited for God” and “sceptre of the angelic armies” appear. Satanael swears that: И ВЪЗМѢ ВОГОПКАНВЮ ВДѢЖДѢ И ВЪСКЪ ЧЪСТНИ БОГОПЛЕТЕПЕНИ ВЪКНЦЪ, СКИПЕТРА АРЪХАНГЛЪСКИХЪ ЧИНОВЪ.⁹²

In the second version, further items are added: “прилики царски” – ‘royal signs’, ‘royal insignia’:

⁸⁷ K. RUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁸⁸ О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 333.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 334.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 339.

⁹² А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Апокрифът за борбата...*, p. 99.

ТА ДА ѿКРАДЕНЕЪ БОГЪ БОГОТКАНА ПРЕМЕНА И СВЕТАИ БОГОПЛЕТЕНИ КЕНЪЦЫ И ПРИЛИКИ ЦАРСКИ И СКИПТРИ АРЪХАНГЕЛСКИ ЧИНОВЕ...⁹³

Further in the text, the phrase “the robe woven for God, the widely worshipped wreath plaited for God and the sceptre of the angelic armies” recurs almost unaltered in the text of the first version, whereas the second has “royal signs, insignia” added. The latter sometimes become the signs of angelic choirs: *скиптри аггелски прилики*⁹⁴.

A literal reading of the Greek would link the phrases “angelic robe”, “image of the angelic robe” and “divine angelic robe” directly with the angels – an angelic robe as an allegory of the immortality and spirituality of the heavenly powers. The wrathful God sends Michael to recover the robe from the Antichrist, since the antagonist has been expelled from God’s army and is not entitled to wear the signs of immortality and spirituality. A view of this kind is also confirmed by the *Panoplia dogmatica*, which says, that after the act of creation, Samael had the same dress as He, who sat at His right hand and received honour next after Him.⁹⁵

The “image and robe” may be interpreted as an allegory of immortality and the non-material essence of the angelic army. It is most certain that the Slavic translator/compiler of the unknown Greek work (closely related with regard to the plot) understood the text in exactly this way, and added (or copied) – for greater clarity – the “robe woven for God”, wreath plaited for God and sceptre of the angelic choirs as the signs, or insignia, belonging to Archangel Michael – the commander of the heavenly army. Such an interpretation functions especially neatly in the later text of the *Punčo Codex*, where the enumerated objects are termed ‘прилики царски’; still, it must be stressed that the earlier Bogomil tradition describes the angelic robes, thrones and wreaths as attributes of angels. In *The Secret Book*, the Lord instructs the angels: *tollite vestimenta eorum. Et tulerunt vestimenta eorum et coronas eorum (et tronos eorum), omnibus angelis qui eum auderunt*⁹⁶.

One more plausible analysis comes to mind. Euthymius Zigabenus provides an interesting testimony on the beliefs of the Bogomils concerning the afterlife: they used to believe that the “Perfect” ones don’t die, but are changed, as if in sleep, and that they take off this covering of clay and flesh without pain, and put on the incorruptible divine robe of Christ.⁹⁷

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

⁹⁵ FGHB, vol. X, p. 53. *They tell the story that the good God and Father, when He had created thousands upon thousands and ten thousands upon ten thousands of angels, had Samael as second to himself, his steward, who had the same dress and shape as He, who sat at His right hand and received honour next after Him – Christian Dualist Heresies...*, p. 204.

⁹⁶ Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги и легенди...*, p. 76.

⁹⁷ FGHB, vol. X, p. 79. *They say that people of this sort [the ‘Perfect’ Bogomils – G.M.] do not die,*

The “covering of clay and flesh” unmistakably refers to the body, which a Bogomil abandons after death to put on the “incorruptible and divine robe of Christ” – an allegory of the soul.

The words of Euthymius Zigabenus are corroborated by the heretic *Secret Book*. There, the creation of the first people is explained as a demiurgic act of Satan, who orders two angels to assume a clay body:

Et praetera excogavit et fecit hominem ad similitudinem ejus vel sui, et praecepit angelo tertii coeli in corpus luteum. E tulit de eo et fecit aliud corpus in formam mulieris, et praecepit angeli secundi coeli introire in corpus mulieris. Angeli vero ploraverunt videntes in se formam mortalem et esse dissimilis forma.⁹⁸

It is scarcely coincidental that the angels burst out crying having recognized that their spiritual nature is locked within a clay body, and that they consequently take on a mortal form.

The heretic cosmogony and cosmology often assume a literary form: *the interpretative method of allegory and symbolism, widely diffused in the ancient world, was freely employed. That is, a statement of the text was given a deeper meaning, or even several, in order to claim it for one’s own doctrine or display its inner richness*⁹⁹. This multifacetedness, metaphoricality and unclear symbolism of dualist heretic texts, so bemoaned by the Church Fathers, only grants limited possibilities of unravelling the meaning of their writings. This is especially true of the later literary monuments, only remotely echoing Gnostic ideas. Anyhow, the comparison of literary texts with other works from the period allows for a fairly comprehensive image of the Medieval Neo-Manichaean teachings on the soul. In the case at hand, two distinct interpretations come into question. According to the first, more literal one, the “angelic image and robe”, as well as the wreath and the sceptre, serve as an allegory of the spiritual nature of the angels and – simultaneously – the insignia of the Archistratege of the heavenly armies, who has vanquished the Antichrist. The second reading is an arcane heterodox commentary on the teachings on the soul: Michael-Christ is dispatched by the good God in order to free the ‘divine spark’, which has fallen into the matter, on earth, under the rule of the evil archon. Having liberated it, the guide of souls – the *psychopompos* – Michael-Christ leads it through the heavens and restores it to the pleroma.

but are changed, as if in sleep. They take off this covering of clay and flesh without pain, and put on the incorruptible divine robe of Christ – Christian Dualist Heresies..., p. 192.

⁹⁸ Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги и легенди...*, p. 78.

⁹⁹ K. RUDOLPH, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

VI. The 'liturgization' of the Slavic *Tale*.... The motif of the cosmic angelomachy in Medieval visual arts and folklore.

As has been mentioned above, K. Ivanova – analysing the liturgical quotations in *The Tale*... – reaches the conclusion that their presence in the text deals a fatal blow to the hypothesis positing the Bogomil provenance of the work. Indeed, all available sources (both heretic and anti-heretic) reaffirm the negative attitude of the Neo-Manichaean communities towards the church rite. Nevertheless, if we juxtapose the Byzantine *Tale*... with the Slavic versions, it turns out that the liturgical quotes are absent from the Greek text. Even if we endorse the (entirely likely) possibility that the latter represents a copy of another work – with similar content, but ultimately different than the Slavic *Tale*... – it appears most bizarre that it does not utilize a single liturgical quote, even in the concluding part, where the angels applaud Michael's deed as participants of the heavenly liturgy. Possibly, the justification for the presence of quotations from the anaphor of John Chrysostom's liturgy in the Slavic *Tale*... is to be sought elsewhere – namely in some later, fully conscious tampering with the text, aimed at making it more 'canonical'. It is quite believable that the original Slavic translation, following the unknown Greek text more or less literally, underwent a kind of 'liturgization' in its later revisions, performed in order to adapt it to the official rite. And since the celebration of the Synaxis of the spiritual powers is devoted precisely to the victorious fight of the heavenly armies against Satan, it may be inferred that the Slavic work – befittingly supplemented with liturgical quotes – could function as a sermon for this occasion. Needless to say, it is just as well imaginable that the Slavic text mimics the unknown Byzantine original; however, since no reference to the Orthodox religious practice is found at least in the only Greek work closely related to the Slavic *Tale*... known today, the notion of a later, 'liturgical' revision of *The Tale*... is not illogical.

The Tale... was no doubt heard in churches, well before the 14th century. If this had not been the case, it could not have been visualized in the St. Archangel Michael Church in Lesnovo, whose mural paintings were completed by 1349 [see ill. 2, ill. 3 - p. 48-49]. O. Afinogenova publishes a scheme of the fresco, following the 2004 publication by S. Gabelić¹⁰⁰, but this is not the only visualization of *The Tale*... In some of her other studies, Gabelić cites parallels with little-known icons, proving the interest in this topic at later times, in the region confined between Lesnovo, Skopje and Sarajevo¹⁰¹. According to the Serbian scholar, the iconographical cycle devoted to the

¹⁰⁰ С. ГАБЕЛИЋ, *op. cit.*, no. 102. Cf. also the illustrations in the article: О. АФИНОГЕНОВА, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ S. GABELIĆ, *The Fall of Satan in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, Зор 23, 1993/1994, p. 65–74; С. ГАБЕЛИЋ, *Лесново*, Београд 1998, p. 94–96. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Elka Bakalova, who directed my attention to those publications, as well as the editor of the journal „Зорграф”, Dr. Miodrag Marković, for his permission to reproduce S. Gabelić's illustrations in the present study.



ill. 2

combat between Archangel Michael and the archon of evil is thematically divided into three parts: in the older depictions (of the first and second type) the visualization of the motif is associated with the Biblical story about the fight between the heavenly armies and the fallen angel. Here belong the frescos from Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, from the monastery in Mirož (11th–12th cent.), the depiction on the metal doors in Monte Gargano (1076) and the south entrance to the cathedral in Suzdal (1230). The third type of visualization is the oldest and directly connected with the narrative of *The Tale...*

The oldest fresco from the Lesnovo monastery belongs to this very type. It features all the elements of the plot of the second part of *The Tale...* In a vertical order from top to bottom, the following scenes have been depicted: Satanael imprisoned under the ice in the lake; the struggle between Michael and Satanael – the naked antagonist is trying to wrest the white robe and crown from the Archangel's hands;



ill. 3

Michael offering the robe and the crown to the Lord. The following caption is placed above the image: [ПАДЕН]ИЕ И ПОМРАЧЕН[ИЕ САТАН]НИЛОВО¹⁰².

S. Gabelić describes the scene in detail, providing parallels with its liturgical prototype from *The Tale...* In her earlier works, she points to other examples of the visualization of a cosmic angelomachy: from the icon from Skopje (1626) and the icon of the archangels Michael and Gabriel from Sarajevo (1723)¹⁰³. The icon from Skopje could be treated as a variant of the Lesnovo fresco – the same elements from the second part of *The Tale...* are present in it, while the composition is likewise exceptionally close: Satanael, emerging from the lake, stretches his arms towards Archangel Michael; the Archistratège flies toward the heavens, holding the robe and the crown; the adversary attempts to snatch them away from him; Michael gives the robe and the

¹⁰² С. ГАБЕЛИЋ, *Лесново...*, p. 95.

¹⁰³ S. GABELIĆ, *The Fall of Satan...*, p. 69–70.

crown back to God¹⁰⁴. On the other hand, the Sarajevo icon presents a divergent approach to the liturgical material. The two archangels Michael and Gabriel are found in the heavens, facing one another. Gabriel is holding a sword; Michael has the crown in his right hand, and a horn in the left, announcing the triumph over the powers of evil. Below, on earth, Satanael is raising the same crown above his head¹⁰⁵. Here, the iconographical history is more fragmentary and merely contains two of the plot's key elements: Satanael as the possessor of the crown stolen from God and the fortunate finale of Michael's battle against the adversary (the crown is returned to the heavens).

The popularity of *The Tale...* is clearly detectable from its reception in the folklore environment. South and East Slavic (Ukrainian) legends are known about the fight of an angel ('saint archangel', saint) with the devil, and even a Serbian folk song with a similar content¹⁰⁶. The folklore texts in fact represent the *process* motif of Satanael stealing God's insignia, but with an etiological exegesis in the spirit of folk culture. Once again, all the vital components of the plot of the literary text are found here: the opponents trying to outsmart one another, the lake being covered with ice, and the heavenly angelomachy. Donka Petkanova takes notice of some of those stories¹⁰⁷, maintaining that *The Tale...* is the "most faithful source" of the folk legends¹⁰⁸.

The proximity of the orally transmitted folk tale and the plot of the literary *Tale...* is self-evident. Still, a number of non-trivial dissimilarities are also visible, 'objectifying' the folklore narrative and occasionally providing it with ethnocentric qualities. The opponents of the devil include: Jesus Christ¹⁰⁹, an angel¹¹⁰, Archangel Michael¹¹¹, St. Peter¹¹², John the Baptist or St. Sava¹¹³. The divine robe, wreath and

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 70, ill. 11.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, ill. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Цар Дукљан и Крститељ Јован, [in:] В. КАРАЦИЋ, *Српске народне пјесме*, vol. II, Београд 1985, no. 17, p. 67–69.

¹⁰⁷ Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Апокрифна литература и фолклор*, Софија 1978, p. 171–182.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁹ Господ и дјаволом го делеле светот, [in:] Т. ВРАЖИНОВСКИ, *Народна митологија на македонците*, vol. II, Скопје–Прилеп 1998, no. 15. The legend was recorded in the Republic of Macedonia in 1995. Polish translation: *O tym, jak Pan Bóg i diabeł dzielili świat*, trans. А. КАВЕСКА, [in:] *Апокрыфи и легенды старотестamentowe...*, p. 228.

¹¹⁰ The legend was recorded in the 1950s in the Panagyurishte region (in Bulgaria). The story of the angelomachy belongs to a larger motif of the creation of the world, cf. *Българска народна поезия и проза*, vol. VII, Софија 1983, p. 137–139.

¹¹¹ Како је свети Рангел украо сунце од ђавола, [in:] *Српски Етнографски Зборник*, vol. CX-IV.4, *Српске народне приповетке и предања из Лесковачке области*, ed. Д.М. Ђорђевић, Београд 1988, no. 49, p. 468–469. Polish translation: *Jak Święty Archanioł ukradł diabłu słońce*, trans. А. КАВЕСКА, [in:] *Апокрыфи и легенды старотестamentowe...*, p. 232.

¹¹² Й. ИВАНОВ, *Богомилски книги...*, p. 337–342. Ivanov publishes two variants of the legend: the first, recorded in Panagyurishte and later reprinted in the volume *Българска народна поезия и проза* (cf. fn. 109), and the second, recorded in Ustovo, at the beginning of the 20th century.

¹¹³ *Зашто у људи није табан раван*, [in:] В. ЧАЈКАНОВИЋ, *Српске народне приповетке*, Бео-

robe are substituted by the keys to hell, a document written for the devil by Adam, a standard¹¹⁴, and most often – the sun, stolen by the devil and brought down to earth. In a legend from the vicinity of Leskovac, the devil proudly carries the sun (stuck onto his sword) around his burnt earth, while in the text noted down by Veselin Čajkanović the devil – having stolen the sun – takes it to earth and installs it in a beech tree, so that it might shine exclusively for him. Especially interesting is the moment of exchanging the insignia in the Serbian song *Tsar Dukljan and John the Baptist*. The saint snatches the crown away from the emperor, but when he reaches the heavens, he gives the “shiny sun” (сјајно сунце) to God. Annoyed with this inconsistency, Vuk Karadžić notes below the line: *До сад свуда бјеше коруна (corona, круна), а овдје сунце!* [“So far it has been a crown everywhere, and here the sun!”], and subsequently publishes a legend in which Archangel Michael descends to earth to recover the sun stolen by the devil – a text remarkably close to the legend recorded around Leskovac¹¹⁵.

Most of the legends have an etiological ending: an explanation for the fact that human feet are not flat. Just before Saint Sava opened the gates of paradise, the devil caught him by the heel and ripped off a piece of flesh. Since then, human feet have had a small hollow. Saint John the Baptist – in the song and legend published by V. Karadžić – reaches the Lord injured as well.

The legend from Panagyurishte also features an etiological finale. The devil catches up with the angel in heaven, catches him by the heel with his claws, but he can no longer drag him back to earth, since the angel is already in God's domain:

Когато ангеля пристъпил със записа пред Бога, той куцал с левия крак и оплакал се Богу, че дявола му обезобразил ногата.

Нема нищо! – рекъл Дядо Господ. – Аз ща да направя на сичките хора така и теб не ще да е срамота.

От онова време е остало да ни са стъпалата вдлъбнати¹¹⁶.

град 1929, no. 162, 2. The legend was recorded in Serbia in the first years of the 20th century. Polish translation: *Dlaczego ludzie nie mają płaskich stóp*, trans. M. LEWIŃSKA, [in:] *Apokryfy i legendy starotestamentowe...*, p. 233.

¹¹⁴ *Как свети Иван взема от дявола знамето (How Saint John Took Away the Standard from the Devil)* – a legend from the vicinity of Sofia, published in: СБНУ 44, 1949, p. 485–486. Cf. also: Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, *Апокрифна литература и фолклор...*, p. 172.

¹¹⁵ В. КАРАЏИЋ, *op. cit.*, p. 68–69.

¹¹⁶ *Българска народна поезия...*, p. 139: *When the angel appeared with the document in front of God, he limped on his left leg and complained to God that the devil had deformed his leg.*

- *Don't worry!* – said Grandfather God. – *I will do the same to all people, and you won't have to be ashamed.*

Since that time we have had hollows in our feet. The legends published by J. Ivanov end in an analogous fashion.

It is difficult to determine to what extent folk legends about the struggle of the good angel with the devil directly influenced literary or iconographical works. Still, their closeness is manifest – a fact that once again renders the established contrast between the folk (oral) narrative and the literary (written) tale rather dubious.

VII. Final remarks.

The study on the two Slavic versions of *John Chrysostom's Tale on How Michael Vanquished Satanael* and the Greek Λόγος τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου Μιχαήλ, ὅταν ἐπήρην τὴν στολήν, though by no means aspiring to being viewed as complete, provides an impression of how pseudo-canonical texts functioned and disseminated across the Medieval Byzantine-Slavic cultural community.

The doubts regarding the time and place of the composition of the Slavic translation/compilation are yet to be clarified; in any case, this issue is not the principal topic of this study. Anyhow, taking into account the peculiarities of the historic and cultural situation in the Balkans after the 10th century, it can be supposed that the original text arose as early as before the 10th century and might possibly have been linked to the increasing interest in the cult of Archangel Michael in the First Bulgarian Empire, particularly in the Ohrid diocese. Such a location would be indirectly confirmed by the widespread attestation of the iconographic interpretations of *The Tale...* (Lesnovo, Skopje, Sarajevo), as well as the places where the folklore 'replicas' of the literary text have been recorded: Leskovac, the Skopje region, western Bulgaria.

I reckon, however, that the importance of the historical and textual remarks is outweighed by the comparative and typological analysis of *The Tale...* and the Greek work against the background of heterodox ideologies. Certain Gnostic ideas, connected with dualist cosmology, cosmogony, angelology and anthropology enter the Byzantine literature and culture from the Judeo-Christian world. Having undergone a transformation of sorts in the Neo-Manichaean communities of the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, they formed the foundations of the Medieval dualist cosmogony, angelology and anthropology. Spreading through oral and written transmission, the views on the invisible God, Archangel Michael as the 'second God', or the soul's journey to paradise become so popular that they are found not only in heretic texts, but also quoted almost verbatim in anti-heretic treatises.

The continuity of Gnostic beliefs in the Medieval Neo-Manichaean communities in the Balkan Peninsula is the cause for considerations regarding the established opinion on the originality of the Bogomil doctrine. The views of the world, the two principles, angels and the soul characteristic of Medieval heretics are in fact a transmission of old dualist myths, and it seems inappropriate to speak of 'original Bogomil theology'. Thus, the authors of anti-heretic treatises, speaking of Bogomil cosmogony, might have been right in referring to Early Christian heterodox

teachings, from where the Medieval heretics drew the story of the origin of the world and the origins in general.

The plot and later textual changes in the Slavic *Tale...* make its Bogomil origin doubtful. Furthermore, it is not possible to determine the extent to which works such as *The Tale...* were made use of in (moderate?) Bogomil communities. Still before the 14th century, the text underwent the processes of liturgization and folklorization, which is proved by the existence of liturgical quotations (absent from the Greek texts), the visualization of the plot in sacred space and the etiological legends on the fight between Archangel Michael and the devil.

The existence of ancient Gnostic ideas in the beliefs typical of the Balkan Neo-Manichaean heretic teachings, and their widespread occurrence in both high and low cultural texts of Medieval communities, show that any radical assessments of the purported mutual antagonisms in these domains are highly improper. Instead, the situation requires Medieval culture to be viewed as a broader, syncretic phenomenon, where the borders between the spheres of canonicity, pseudo-canonicity, heresy and folklore are not always clear-cut.

Illustrations:

1. *The Fall of Satan*, fresco from Lesnovo monastery, 1346 (after: S. GABELIĆ, *The Fall of Satan in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, 3or 23, 1993/1994, ill. 10).
2. *The Fall of Satan*, an icon of Christ alongside the archangels Michael and Gabriel, Skopje, 1626 (after: S. GABELIĆ, *The Fall of Satan in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, 3or 23, 1993/1994, ill. 11).
3. *The Fall of Satan*, an icon of the archangels Michael and Gabriel, Sarajevo, 1723 r. (after: S. GABELIĆ, *The Fall of Satan in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art*, 3or 23, 1993/1994, ill. 12).

Abstract. The study is an attempt at a comparative analysis of two pseudo-canonical texts: the Slavic *Homily of John Chrysostom on How Michael Vanquished Satanael* (in two versions) and the Greek Λόγος τοῦ ἀρχηστρατήγου Μιχαήλ, ὅταν ἐπήρεν τὴν στολήν (BHG 1288n). Both texts, very close to each other in terms of the plot, relate an ancient *angelomachia* between a heavenly emissary and a demiurge expelled from the angelic hierarchy. When examined against the background of dualistic heterodox doctrines on the one hand, and compared to other medieval cultural texts (be they liturgical, iconographical or folkloric) on the other, these works enable insight into how heterodox and pseudo-canonical texts functioned and were disseminated in the medieval Byzantine-Slavic cultural sphere.

The Slavic *Homily...* is not genetically related to its Greek counterpart, which is only preserved in a lat, 16th century copy. Rather, it was composed before the 13th century on the basis of another, non-extant model with a content similar to the pseudo-canonical Greek *Homily...* It is probable to a certain degree that the emergence of the Slavic work is connected