

# Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova

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Studia Ceranea : journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the  
History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe 5,  
337-356

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2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova (Sofia)

## THE IMAGE OF THE TOWN: MEDIEVAL SOFIA IN ORIGINAL BULGARIAN WORKS FROM THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The connection between text and image was an invariable feature of the medieval cultural model. Although, in its time, medieval Sofia was never portrayed in visual images, if we undertake what M. Stančeva has figuratively called “a search for the vanished image”<sup>1</sup>, we might discover a reliable way for reconstructing images on the basis of the verbal material contained in Slavic manuscripts. In addition to the architectural legacy and various types of literary documents (travel literature by foreigners, Ottoman-Turkish registers, chronicles), this city is present in various ways in Slavic manuscripts as well – ways ranging from brief mention of the city’s toponyms to comprehensive description. These textual sources are ample enough, and they not only enable us to reconstruct the image of Sofia on the basis of the linguistic means by which it was designated, but also permit drawing more general conclusions about the city’s place in the broad picture of the world as a semiotic model for acquiring knowledge about the daily life, spiritual culture and ethnic consciousness of Bulgarians during the period of Ottoman rule. This chronological cross-section was not selected accidentally. The time in question was a transitional period both as regards the processes of renaming the city of Sofia, and as concerns the creation of a new type of cultural situation in which the political-ideological emphasis on the medieval city (especially a capital city) as a fortress, a throne city, the embodiment of the royal institution, had changed due to objective causes. Moreover, after the fall of Constantinople under Ottoman rule in 1453, the Byzantine prototype itself was destroyed, i.e., the spiritual image of the mother-city and center of the Orthodox world. An interesting question is to what extent a new, different value model of the city was created in the Bulgarian cultural area and how the tradition was reproduced in that model.

According to the collected information, the name Sofia was documented as early as in 14<sup>th</sup> century written sources. Those are a Latin document from Dubrovnik and two Slavonic documents. The first of them, a Tetraevangelium with marginal note from 1329, was lost after the fire in the National Library in Belgrade during

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<sup>1</sup> М. СТАНЧЕВА, *София в отдавна минало време*, София 1999, p. 20.

the Second World War. The second, however, was published several times. This is the so called Vitoša chart of tsar John Šišman, a chrysobull for Dragalevtsi monastery “St. Theotokos of Vitoša”, undated precisely, but probably issued between 1378–1385<sup>2</sup>. This document of the Bulgarian royal chancellery testifies the twofold use: in the typical formula *въ градѣ црѣва ми Софини*; in the expression that raises various interpretations – *то ни да иматъ власти стѣа софинѣ на люди прѣвнестъ въ ѿматѣре*. Most probably, the second example refers to the church “St. Sofia”, metonymically designating the metropolis of Sredets, which, viewed in the context, had not rights over the monastery property. Besides neither the church authorities, nor the civil power of Sofia town had. The later was presented by the mentioned title in the Chart *кефалине срѣдешьское*, from Greek κεφαλότης, that is to say the regional governor. To conclude, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the renaming of Sardikia, Serdika–Sredets to Sofia was in progress, as for a long period of time the three denominations coexisted.

Similar onymic references can be found in the five original Bulgarian works, dedicated to the neo martyrdom against Islam, which constituted the survived legacy of the Sofia literary school from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These are two Vita: of Saint George the New Martyr of Sofia by priest Peyo<sup>3</sup> and the Vita of Saint Nicholas the New Martyr of Sofia by the great lampadarius (the person who carried candles in Church processions) of the Church “St. Sofia”, Matthew the Grammarian<sup>4</sup>; two services for the same new martyrs. While the Service for St. George the New Martyr presumably came from the same author<sup>5</sup>, the attribution of this for St. Nicholas the New Martyr was proved and ascribed to another hymnographer from Sofia, monk Andrew<sup>6</sup>. The fifth work is an anonymous Eulogy for all Sofia

<sup>2</sup> А. ДАСКАЛОВА, М. РАЙКОВА, *Грамоти на българските царе. Увод. Текстове. Речник. Библиография*, София 2005, р. 11, 47, 355–356.

<sup>3</sup> Д. БОГДАНОВИЧЪ, *Житије Георгија Кратовца (Житие Георгия Нового)*, ЗИК 10, Београд 1976, р. 203–267.

<sup>4</sup> П. СЫРКУ, *Очерки из истории литературных сношений болгар и сербов в XIV–XVII веках. Житие св. Николая Нового Софийского по единственной рукописи XVI в.*, СОРЯС 71.2, 1901; А. БУЮКЛИЕВА, *Житие на Николай Нови Софийски от Матей Граматик в контекста на житийната традиция*, София 2008; П. ДИНЕКОВ, *Софийски книжовници от XVI в.*, vol. I, *Поп Пейо*, София 1939; М. ЙОНОВА, *Софийската книжовна школа*, [in:] *Старобългарска литература. Енциклопедичен речник*<sup>2</sup>, ed. Д. ПЕТКАНОВА, Велико Търново 2003, р. 279–280; И. КАЛИГАНОВ, *Георгий Новый у восточных славян*, Москва 2000; А. МИЛТЕНОВА, *Литературата през XVI в.*, [in:] *История на българската средновековна литература*, ed. А. МИЛТЕНОВА, София 2009, р. 695–707.

<sup>5</sup> Б. АНГЕЛОВ, *Служба на Георги Софийски*, [in:] *Из старата българска, руска и сръбска литература*, vol. III, София 1978, р. 131–155.

<sup>6</sup> С. КОЖУХАРОВ, *Тах Андрей – един незабелязан химнописец от XVI в.*, СЛ 18, 1985, р. 150–160; ИДЕМ, *Химнографска интерпретация на софийските мъченичества от XVI век. Инок Андрей. Служба за Николай Софийски*, [in:] ИДЕМ, *Проблеми на старобългарската поезия*, vol. I, София 2004, р. 259–278; В. РОЗОВ, *Служба и канон св. Николи Новом Софийском*, Бог 5.3, 1930, р. 205–219; И. СНЕГАРОВ, *Поглед към изворите за св. Никола Софийски*, ГСУБФ 9, 1931–1932, р. 1–58.

martyrs<sup>7</sup>. It is to point out that the works, dedicated to St. Nicholas the New Martyr, as well as the Eulogy are preserved with only one copy each, in one and the same manuscript from 1564. The manuscript itself is kept under № 1521 in the repository of the Church Historical and Archive Institute by the St. Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Sofia (onward CHAI 1160)<sup>8</sup>.

In all these original works, the sacred place of the martyrdom was depicted by concrete verbal marks. If one summarizes the nominative facts about the name of the city from the quoted sources, the following picture is to be viewed:

In the Vita of St. Nicholas the New Martyr while still in the title: *въ славномъ градѣ сардакѣиѣ. глѣмѣ средцѣ;* in the text *срѣдъцьскѣ страни; срѣдѣць; прѣдреченнемъ средци; въ сардакѣи глѣмемъ срѣци; гра̑ софѣа иже и сардикѣиѣски и срѣдъцьскѣи именуѣми дѣнь; ѿ срѣцьскѣ прѣреченнемъ градѣ; срѣцьскому словоѣному градуу,* and other.

In the Eulogy for the Sofia martyrs: in the title *иже въ градѣ сардакѣиѣскѣ, глѣмѣки Софѣа;* in the text *градѣ Софѣа.*

In the Vita of St. George the New Martyr: in the title *въ сардакѣиѣстѣмъ градѣ;* in the text *влизь Софѣи; въ срѣдъцьскын градъ нарицаемн Софѣа.*

In the Service for St. George the New Martyr: *въ Сардакы; Сардакыскѣи людѣи, градѣ Софѣе, къ градѣ Сардакыскомѣ; къ Срѣцьскомѣ пришль юсе градѣ; въ Сардакѣиѣстѣ градѣ.*

In the Service for St. Nicholas the New Martyr by monk Andrew: *гра̑ Софѣа; гра̑ Софѣю.*

The first conclusion confirmed in this study is that, during the period in question, the triple designation of the city was in effect, which reflected three stages in its diachronic onymy: its Thracian name *Serdika* (*Sardica* during the Roman period), the Slavic name *Sredets* (*Triaditsa*), and the new name *Sofia*. Moreover, there is no doubt that the compilers of original written works felt “Sofia” was the contemporary name for them. There were two important proves for that. The first was the glossing and the double or the triple denomination (as in Matthew Grammarian’s work), more often introduced by participles of the verbs *глаголати*, *именовати*. Once Matthew the Grammarian use the expressive adverb “today”, *дѣньсь* – *гра̑ софѣа иже и сардикѣиѣски и срѣдъцьскѣи именуѣми дѣнь*, in order to outline the equal status of the three denominations and their synchronic existence. The second conclusion regards the connotative content of the name *Sardakia* (*Sardikia*),

<sup>7</sup> М. Райкова, *Похвална беседа за софийските мъченици – издание на текста и изследване*, Рбг 34.1, 2010, р. 61–94.

<sup>8</sup> А. Николов, Л. Герд, П. А. Сырку в България (1878–1879), SMSB 3, 2012, р. 75–77; Б. Христова, Д. Караджова, А. Икономова, *Български ръкописи от XI до XVIII век, запазени в България. Своден каталог*, vol. I, София 1982, р. 99; Х. Темелски, *Храмът св. Николай Нови Софийски*, София 2000, р. 119–120; А. Буюклиева, *op. cit.*, р. 51–52; М. Цибранска-Костова, *Към езиковата практика на Софийската книжовна школа от XVI век: синаксарните жития в ръкопис ЦИАИ 1521*, Приложението на БЕ за 2014 г. по повод 145 години БАН, р. 200–213.

the function of which was to express two things: on one hand, this name encoded some important historical messages from the settlement's distant past; on the other hand, it marked genre-related purposes in hagiographic works and especially in hymnography. In the second case, as concerns the original services, some scholars presumed the influence of other hymnographic works, from which the Sofia man of letters borrowed models. This was the cycle for Saint John of Rila to have been pointed as example. However, the use of Sofia without synonyms in the Service for St. Nicholas the New Martyr by monk Andrew contradicted to this presumption. The different type of naming reflected the different approach and the personal preferences of the authors. It may justifiably be assumed that, in the linguistic thinking of clerical circles, the triple designation system applied to Sofia was the result of their awareness of the connection with the historical tradition and the stress they placed on the present day of the city, which had acquired an even greater sacred status thanks to a contemporaneous 16<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon – the new martyrdom. The topic of new martyrdom in the copyist works in the region of Sofia reproduced one of the most important ideological themes of Orthodoxy, that of holiness. The Christian communities had a real need for this in relation to their contact with Islam. This predominant idea was developed both in original Slavic manuscripts and in translated works. Through the new martyrdom, a typical phenomenon for the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Balkans under Ottoman rule, Divine grace was bestowed on Sofia, which transformed the city into a smaller model of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the God-chosen site and God's home, whose celestial inhabitants and patrons, the saints, fueled Orthodox believers with spiritual energy. The new martyrs, whether natives of the city or people who had perished there, imbibed some of the historical holiness of a place that had been sacred since the dawn of the Christian era; by their courageous death, they added even more holiness to that place. It was not hazardous that in the Service for St. Nicholas the New Martyr one can read the following exclamation: *ῥάδουσι σε ο ἱ γῆν γρά Σοφῖα καὶ κρᾶσουσι σε. Блаженна бо зѣмля ꙗко напивѣши се мѣникъ крѣви*<sup>9</sup>. Among the canonic works from Sofia, dedicated to the neo martyrdom, one can not neglect another written (somewhat ignored) source about the sacralization of the Late Medieval city's history. This is the Greek Life of George the Oldest from Sofia, who was born in Sofia town, but martyred by the Muslims in Adrianopolis in 1437. In the unique 16<sup>th</sup> century copy of this work, the native place of the hagiographic hero was named ἐκ τῆς Σοφίας πόλεως οὕτω λεγομένης<sup>10</sup>. Despite the possibility the later copy to have been influenced by vive linguistic processes, one can suppose that the name Sofia increased its civil legitimating for the whole Orthodox community in the Ottoman Empire because of its holy and recognizable connection with the spiritual pillow, the namesake Church. I allow myself to express, as a matter of principle,

<sup>9</sup> С. Кожухаров, *Химнографска интерпретация...*, р. 267.

<sup>10</sup> А. Михайлов, *Един неизвестен софийски мъченик*, СЛ 1, 1971, р. 403–411.



НИЖЕ КЪ ЗАПАДОУ ПАКЫ ЛЕЖИТЬ. НЪ ПОСРѢ НЕКАКО ШЕОИХЪ<sup>14</sup>. In his description, the name Sardikia applied to key events of the Christian being of this centuries-old town. Sofia acquired its Christian identification in/through basic historical facts and some important legendary piece of information. In the tradition of Bulgarian historical research, the description of Sofia has long been pointed out as, indisputably, a particular feature of the *Life*. But until now, the stress has primarily been placed on the following artistic devices: idealization of the city, hyperbole, the author's patriotic motivation and the veracity of the hagiographic narrative, which is viewed as an element of the democratization trend in the descriptive prospective of the Sofia literary school in general. Matthew the Grammarian's description of Sofia, however, can be interpreted in the context of hierotopy and the creation of a sacred space. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Sofia was an Ottoman city; consequently, the *translation (translatio) of holiness* as a founding concept in the medieval spiritual paradigm turned in this case into *a copying of the model of holiness*. Martyrdom was so essential to the Christian value system that each new example was subsumed under the model, set by the first early Christian martyrs, who had affirmed the same values under different conditions, thereby setting an example worthy of emulation. The early Christian model of martyrdom had a connotation that made it particularly appropriate to be emulated in the struggle against pagans and people of other faiths (heretics). Matthew the Grammarian consciously strove to integrate his new work into the traditions of martyrology, for his writing appeared amidst a new socio-cultural environment, under conditions of intense religious confrontation; and he was free of the mandatory norms stemming from specific textual categories. He

chose the model of projecting saintliness and forming a sacred space by taking these from history and situating them in the contemporaneous 16<sup>th</sup> century, and from an outward geographic location to an internal sphere of spiritual content.

The City was a dominant mark to organize the holy space. The description distinguished by its double structure: a use of images and symbols taken from the Biblical semantic code, from one hand, and some kind of historical authenticity, from another. The very terms of geographic space varied from *ЗЕМЛЯ, СТРАНА, ПРѢДѢЛЪ* to *ГРАДЪ*, in purpose of giving the most comprehensive view of the holy space the center of which was taken by the City. In the beginning of his description the author placed the Sredets land on a broad historical and geographic background not only in *МАКЕДОНИИ*, as in the literature of the period this large area of the Balkans was named, but by using the denomination "Europe" (*ВЕЛИЦЕН ЕВРОПИИ*) – even on the very continent, on the crossroad of the ancient Roman routes *Via diagonalis* and *Via militaris*, that connected Central Europe with Constantinople,

<sup>14</sup> П. СЫРКУ, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

and Danube with Thessalonica. Sofia town had a reputation for its natural beauties, mountains, cold springs and healing thermal waters. Its external beauty was so irrefutable that outrivaled many other places in Arabia, Palestine, the Roman province Illyricum, Egypt, Italian lands. It is interesting to stress that it is namely in the geographic localization and the comparisons with others faraway places the author leaned on already existing texts, borrowing literally a passage from the *Life* of king Stephen of Dečani, compiled by Gregory Tsamblak<sup>15</sup>. But once again, the geographic landmarks were merely external projections of the internal continuum of the Orthodox holiness from far times. Thus, aware of how much Sofia exceeded “not with wideness and great building”, but with piety, the author went further fostering some chronological reference points from the early-Christian history of faith and its greatest defenders which left traces in one-time Sardikia, as well as another crucial examples of the Christian being of the city. Respecting the chronological succession, Matthew the Grammarian offered to his readers one sacralized history of Sofia, making references to such historical personalities or realia, which incarnated the very notion of Christian sanctity:

– The convocation of the Church Council of Sardika in 343, which confirmed the Nicean Symbol of Faith and released 20 rules of the Saint Ecumenical Christian Church. It has been attended by distinguished Christian thinkers and ecclesiastical figures, among which St. Athanasius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria. The historical frame of this event imposed the milestone personality of Constantine the Great (306–337) to be mentioned. His figure was an image-symbol of the beginning of the new Christian era in the history of the humankind; he was glorified as the first Christian ruler, *rex and pater Europae*<sup>16</sup>. Since then, the Byzantine cosmopolitanism gave rise to the idea of the Constantinople’s supremacy as Center and Core of the Christian world.

– The martyrdom from the past and the present of Sofia was also connected with the sacred history of the town. While Matthew the Grammarian reproduced the legend about the early-Christian martyr St. Therapont of Sardakia, suffered in Phrygia about 250–260, which connected him with 16<sup>th</sup> century Sofia as place of his martyrdom, the reminding of Sredets as holy place for the hermit Saint John of Rila, together with the exploits of George New of Sofia and George the Newest of Sofia, had real historical localization. The basic idea was to foster the vision of how the ever burning holiness was always present from the early Christian times to those of the contemporary 16<sup>th</sup> century Sofia martyrs. Undoubtedly, this part of Matthew the Grammarian’s description acquired a supplemental historical

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<sup>15</sup> *Стара българска литература*, vol. IV, *Житиенписни творби*, coll. et ed. К. ИВАНОВА, София 1986, p. 616.

<sup>16</sup> M. STANESCO, *L’Europe médiévale*, [in:] *Précis de littérature européenne*, ed. B. DIDIER, Paris 1998, p. 291–308.

value, because of the fact it gave the most detailed information about George the Newest, another sufferer from Sofia, for whom neither self-dependent images, or texts had been discovered insofar<sup>17</sup>. The 26<sup>th</sup> of May was the date of his death, but the year still remains unfixed. A lot of details led to the conclusion that the author of St. Nicholas of Sofia's Vita was also an witness of his martyrdom, and transmitted first-hand data about what happened. That placed the consecutive Sofia exploit of Christian faith before 1555.

– Two projections of sanctity drew attention further in succession of the hagiographic narrative: the multiple churches in Sofia, and the network of monasteries in the surroundings which won the privilege to be called Little Holy Mountain of Sofia. After the Athonite model<sup>18</sup>, the monastic agglomeration around Sofia reproduced the holy space as an isle of Orthodoxy in a foreign religion environment. Usually in researches, this passage from the Life of St. Nicholas the New was quitted to adduce arguments in favor of the mentioned techniques of hyperbole and idealization, mostly because Matthew the Grammarian spoke about “the every day rising and imposing of holy churches in town and all around”<sup>19</sup>. However, it contained something more important and, to some extent, symbolic. This was the allusion to the Great Saint Apostolic Church of God shining amidst town. Did the compiler refer to a concrete church? According to the given description, the church in question sheltered the wonder-making relics of Serbian king Stephen Uroš II Milutin (about 1253–1321), the knowledge about involved the Sardiki-an metropolitan Siluant who transferred them from Trepča in Sofia in 1459. The same church kept also “the honest relics of the above-mentioned martyrs”<sup>20</sup>. It was called “dressed bride of Christ” and a breeder with “the milk of Spirit”; it beatified with the Divine light of the righteous man of clergy – bishops, priests, deacons, lectors, domestics, and with uninterrupted liturgy<sup>21</sup>. From one hand, the Great lampadarius might have depicted the church “Saint Sofia” he was devoted to. As it was stressed, the original Lives of Sofia martyrs George the New and Nicholas the New contained real loci of the contemporary topography of the city. In the Vita of Saint George the New of Sofia, two churches took place in the narrative, namely “St. Sofia” and “St. Marina”<sup>22</sup>; in the second Vita of St. Nicholas the New of Sofia,

<sup>17</sup> И. ГЕРГОВА, *Софийски светци*, [in:] *София – 120 години столица*, ed. А. ПОПОВ, Е. ТОНЧЕВА, София 2000, p. 307–312.

<sup>18</sup> И. БИЛЯРСКИ, *Света гора като свещено място за Православието (Богородичният култ и имперската идеология)*, [in:] *Proceedings from the 5<sup>th</sup> International Hilandar Conference*, Beograd–Ohio 2004, p. 1–10.

<sup>19</sup> *Стара българска литература*, p. 320.

<sup>20</sup> The Church “Св. Неделя”, where today the saint relics of king Milutin are kept, existed all 16<sup>th</sup> century long, but the relics of St. Nicholas the New were first of all put in the church “St. Archangel Michael”.

<sup>21</sup> *Стара българска литература*, p. 320.

<sup>22</sup> А. БУЮКЛИЕВА, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

the church of “Ascension of Our Lord to Heaven” was mentioned<sup>23</sup>. However, we are allowed to ask ourselves whether this description was not a general symbolic picture of the Church of Christ with its most important characteristics according to the Symbol of the Faith. Among them should be placed the spiritual pillar of the city and its Orthodox community, by the help of what the spatial continuum of Sofia’s Orthodox holiness realized its grounds once again. In case this subsequent bipolar image-symbol looks plausible, it is to conclude that, in specific way, the design of the sanctity in the Life of St. Nicholas the New represented an echo of the established Byzantine Orthodox concept of the Church-City, as it was depicted in the iconography<sup>24</sup>. For a town whose name derived upon the concept of the Sofia as the Great Wisdom of God, a similar perception was of especial significance. This supposition seems not deprived of logical grounds, taking into account the fact that the passage relied upon three quotations from the Psalter and two from the Canticle of Canticles, reproduced literally or in paraphrases. They all praised “the God’s courts, abodes, the Holy Church of God” (Ps 44, 15, Cant 4, 1; 7, 7; 2, 5; Ps 15, 3; 83, 1–2). They also matched with the obligatory co-going Biblical topos of light. It seems to me that, from the prospective of the so called hierotopy approach, this passage deserves a special attention, so that I cite it in original shape:

Онѣхъ разоумѣете, вратѣе, въ лѣпотоу, и тѣхъ ради похваляетъ се страна ѿна и красует се. ѿкоже и милотѣе слово сказа. Нѣ и прѣстынь вѣтъвнынь црквамъ по въсьемоу градоу же и шкртъ, въздвизаемоу же по въсе днѣи и назаваемоу. Отъ въсьемъ испльненіемъ своимъ прѣспевающе шкртны, непрѣстанно бо днѣвное глаго и ношно славословіе въ нѣ, ген боу възсилаютъ се. Блаже и велика стѣа вѣта и аплака црква посрѣ грд стѣающи, ѿко невеста прѣиспрѣщренна красующи се исправаеніемъ своимъ женихоу своѣмоу хоу прѣстоитъ. и прроческы възываетъ пѣкни. оураси се моа доврота паве въсакоу грд. и пакы оуразвих се ѿ женише моа любовію твоѣю азъ. Таже въ срѣдоу нѣдръ своихъ прѣиши съхраняетъ чюдотворивіе мѣщи ѿтнѣ стго и великаго иже въ црехъ крапа стѣфана иже и милотина, и прѣреченны сткы линикъ чѣстны мѣщен. и тѣни въсегдѣ блгооуханѣа и чюдесъ испльнат се, и красует се, ѿкоже некою вѣлисоу оутварію цркову. и щеніе подаваетъ пристоупающѣи съ вѣроу къ нѣи. и кое провее покажоу вамъ богатство вѣе дховное и въ лѣпотоу прѣвѣщеннниа бо архіерейни стѣа и на пажити своѣ тѣни оупасаеетъ своѣ агнице и съсцие своѣ дѣти доврѣ въздойше и непрѣстанно доитъ млѣкѣо дха. и прѣреченны линикъ тѣ млѣкомъ въздой своимъ. аплаское пакы ликостѣаніе, щенникъ глаго и клирикъ къ сѣвѣ притрѣже. блгооукрашенихъ же и блгоговенны аггловенны дѣаконъ съ нѣи. непорѣчнхъ же и правѣврѣны чѣтць риторѣи же блганскоуснхъ же и цѣломоудрѣи пѣвць же и доместигъ съ въсьемъ по рѣдоу сткы причтоу въ сѣвѣ имать.

<sup>23</sup> *Стара българска литература*, p. 273.

<sup>24</sup> A. Лидов, *Heavenly Jerusalem: the Byzantine Approach, Jewish Art*, Jerusalem 1998, p. 341–353; А.М. Лидов, *Иеротопия. Пространственные иконы и образы-парадигмы в византийской культуре*, Москва 2009; *Новые Иерусалимы. Иеротопия и иконография сакральных пространств*, ed. А.М. Лидов, Москва 2009; J. ЕРДЕЛЪАН, *Изабрана места. Конструисање Нових Јерусалима код православних Словена*, Београд 2013, p. 43–44.

– The holiness as basic concept of the Christian thinking realized itself by other Biblical topoi. The hagiographic scheme often shadowed this second, symbolic stratus of the description, which seemed so natural that often does not need any further analysis. However, I would like to outline only three of the most important key concepts. First one is this of *the Divine Grace*, to be detected in the special narrative stress upon the concentration of churches in town and of monasteries around. The concept of Good and Grace is a basic characteristic of the God’s energy and power, and of its life-saving influence over the human kind. It is understandable way, for instance, the massive amount of composite words in the Old Slavonic literature gathered resources from the semantic specter of unities with first component благо-. I mention the composites because they were not merely signs of the cultivated literary norms and discursive stylistic peculiarity of the high Medieval genres, but linguistic markers to reproduce the Biblical ideological and thematic paradigm (see the composites in the original works from Sofia literary school, as БЛАГОВѢРНІЕ, БЛАГОВОБѢЖИТЕСТВО, БЛАГОВОБѢЖИТЕЦЪ, БЛАГОВОБѢЖИТЕЦЪ, БЛАГОДАРИТИ, БЛАГОДАТЕЛСТВО, БЛАГОДАТЬ, БЛАГОДѢТЬ, БЛАГОМАСТИЕ, БЛАГОСЛОВИЕ, БЛАГОУХАНІЕ, БЛАГОУЧИИЦЪ, БЛАГОУЧИИЦЪ, БЛАГОУЧИИЦЪ and others, as well as the rare word БЛАГОМАСТИЕ which entrusted the martyrs’ blood – a symbol of the exploit in the name of Christ, with the essence of supreme substance, outranking all fragrances in the world)<sup>25</sup>. In spite of being calques or semi-calques upon well known Greek models, or bringing to life as simplex of two words, the lexemes of the given group contributed to a special textual core of holiness to be shaped. *The Divine Grace* was an emanation of the spiritual content which bound in a compulsory entity the sacred place and the sacred man. БѢЖИТЕЦЪ БЛАГОДѢТЬ was the common verbalized expression in the cultural vocabulary of the scribes and compilers from Sofia Literary School, with particular frequency in hynography. In the prolegomena of the St. George the New’s Life, priest Peyo registered different human qualities from humbleness and mildness to humiliation which incarnated the projections of the God’s energy upon the human kind, and made possible the transformation of man into God’s creation. In the same work, *the Divine Grace* found other symbolic incarnations, as the white cloud over the martyr’s stake, or the dew fallen from the skies<sup>26</sup>. In the Matthew the Grammarian’s work, *the Divine Grace* upon Sofia town was *as out of time and continuous, as well as reproduced here and now* thanks to the “flourishing piety of the city”: И ДА СЪКРАЩЕНІЕ РЕКОУ, ПО ВЪСОУ. ЦВѢТОУЩЕЕ ЗРИТ СЕ БЛГОУЩІЕ. НА ВЪСАКЪ ДНЬ ПРѢВЪСХОДѢЩЕ<sup>27</sup>. The author called the Grace “New-Testimonial” in order to follow the tradition and to rise up the New Testament’s knowledge of God over that of the

<sup>25</sup> М. РАЙКОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 80; М. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Композитите като маркери за святост в “Похвална беседа за софийските мъченици” от XVI в.*, SMer (in press).

<sup>26</sup> Д. БОГДАНОВИЧ, *op. cit.*, p. 231; *Стара българска литература*, p. 306.

<sup>27</sup> П. СЫРКУ, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Old Testament, and to liken the new martyrs to the hypostases of Christ, binding together the apostolic and the martyr's nature. The second basic concept was the mentioned Upper Jerusalem not in the very description of the town, but as a final stop in the road of the hagiographic hero. Despite the lack of this topos, formally speaking, and its replacement with the "stencil" medieval expression *цѣсарьство, царьство небесною*, the allusion with the celestial home was present in all literary works from Sofia, to compare the especially important quotation from the Gospel of Matthew 5, 14–15 in the St. George of Sofia's Life: *понеже не възможе градъ съкрити се връху горы стѣе, ниже свѣтильникъ подъ спѣдомъ полагает се, нь на свѣщникъ въз'льгает се, да възходещи свѣтъ видѣтъ*<sup>28</sup>. In the Life of St. Nicholas the New, the reproduction of the Orthodox ideologem of sanctity leaned on the presentation of the martyrs' town as a small model of the God's kingdom, of the God chosen place and God's home, in terms of confirming the Divine predestination in the hero's road, who, leaded by the Divine providence and the Angel guardian, came into from elsewhere place to absorb from Sofia's holiness and, by means of his sufferance, to impart more sanctity to. According to the hagiographic schema, the birthplace of the future martyr is, by definition, holy and pious. Hence, the author calls Yanina, the native city of St. Nicolas of Sofia, "gradina" (a garden). But Sofia is the place raised to a higher rank in Matthew's work, and compared by him to the "Covenant land", richly watered like God's Paradise. The hagiographic hero walks the road to the place of his earthly death in order to continue his eternal life in heaven. It is hardly necessary to stress that the connotation "Sofia – Covenant land" was particularly topical for religious circles in the city under the conditions of intense religious opposition since the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The people in this milieu were the actual readers of this *Life*, and it is justified to assume the work was meant for personal reading or for being read, in parts, to listeners at a local church.

As concerns the concept of the Heavenly Jerusalem, I think that the analogies made insofar between the City's descriptive model in the Vita of St. Nicholas of Sofia and other hagiographic works could not be accepted without reservations. Some scholars consider Matthew the Grammarian well acquainted with the description of Belgrade from the Life of despot Stephen Lazarevič (1402–1427) by Constantine of Kosteneč, as well as with the Torture of John (Yoan) the New from Sučava by Gregory Tsamblak<sup>29</sup>. However, the difference with the detailed description of Belgrade is not only in the rhetoric style and the concentration of Biblical topoi, but in *the use of a disparate hierotopy model*. The seeking for a "Jerusalem identity", according to E. Erdeljan's apt expression<sup>30</sup>, was unfit to the historical situ-

<sup>28</sup> Д. БОГДАНОВИЪ, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>29</sup> А. БУЮКЛИЕВА, *op. cit.*, p. 169, 174–175.

<sup>30</sup> J. ЕРДЕЉАН, *op. cit.*, chapter dedicated to Belgrade: p. 169–189, especially p. 175. Original text in: К. КУЕВ, Г. ПЕТКОВ, *Събрани съчинения на Константин Костенечки. Изследвания и текст*,

ation and the lack of ruler's institutional marks. Matthew the Grammarian wrote about an Ottoman city that was his birthplace and a city of martyrdom, but he did not directly use the ruler paradigm related to power in order to convey a similarity. In this sense, I believe we should give him full credit for his original descriptive programme regarding the city, which combines three sources: the Bible, history and legend. The verbal description of Sofia in the *Life* by Matthew the Grammarian is one of the most recognizable creative elements in this work and his original contribution to hierotopy in the Balkans from the period of "Byzantium after Byzantium".

The third concept is this of the specific status of *Sofia's citizens*. The topic of the citizenship loaded down with double sense again. It combined two lexemes overcharged with special connotation in the all works from Sofia Literary School, namely *жИТЕЛЬСТВО* and *ГРАЖДАНСТВО*, together with their derivatives. For instance, the anonymous compiler of the common Eulogy for all Sofia martyrs, made repeatedly use of the word *гражданинъ*, and it should be taken in double meaning, in both concrete and metaphoric way. Citizens were the peoples from the procession who followed Nicholas the New and opposed to the Ishmaelite crowd; but *граждани небесные* were also the martyrs, crowned with their exploit. The double structure of nomination put under doubt the hypothetic civil status of the compiler, as some scholars claimed, because it did not result from the simple use of the word *гражданинъ*<sup>31</sup>. To be a citizen of a holy place in the Middle Ages, meant to be a cosmopolite in the Christian sense, for what the terrestrial confines were narrow borders before the infinite space of the God's kingdom of Spirit. As early as in the beginning of his description of Sofia, Matthew the Grammarian gave a characteristic of his co-citizens: *таковаа ѿже въ нѣ бл҃гоу҃стины и бл҃гог҃овинныи моудрой житель добродетелии живоу҃ще*<sup>32</sup>. Stronger the following rhetoric expression was: *ѡ жителѣ е҃гда слышиши, да не нещю҃еши ѡ здѣшныи. нѣ ѡ нѣныи граждань вывшии некогда жителни нами*<sup>33</sup>. In this way, the citizenship on the earth compared to the spiritual model of the holy God's town; peoples and images of saints braced in a union, which the man of letters called "Orthodox synod", that is to say the whole Christian community of laity and clergy (see in the St. George of Sofia's Service *православни събори въ градѣ прѣмоудрости тѣзоименитель живѹщеи*)<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, the idea of the City as a unifier of the Orthodox community and a creator of identity took its place in the hierotopic scheme.

The concrete geographic descriptions and the data about the natural resources of Sofia, the abundant historical information were just a starting point for

София 1986, p. 314–328, 366–375; П. Русев, А. Давидов, *Григорий Цамблак в Румѣния и в старата румѣнска литература*, София 1966, p. 36–37, 90–91.

<sup>31</sup> М. Райкова, *op. cit.*, p. 66, 84.

<sup>32</sup> П. Сырку, *op. cit.*, p. 36; *Стара българска литература*, p. 315.

<sup>33</sup> П. Сырку, *op. cit.*, p. 39; *Стара българска литература*, p. 317.

<sup>34</sup> Б. Ангелов, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

shaping out of the *sacralized image of the City as a spiritual space*. Hence, in the Vita of St. Nicholas the epithets varied from denominations of basic qualities to stable trapharets composite, which had been inherited from the city's descriptive tradition in the Byzantine and the Slavonic literature. Since this topic traced out separate and quite voluminous, I shall give only one comparison. In the copy of the Chronicle of Manasses from the priest Philip's miscellany from 1344–1345, a gloss-encomium (panegyric speech of praise) took place to glorify Tǎrnovo as a new Constantinople<sup>35</sup>. As the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses was one of the so-called “royal manuscripts”, this insertion deemed appropriate to the court rhetoric about the Ruler. The encomium carried out the typical expressive setting of pathetic epithets and other artistic devices: “And our new Constantinople flourishes and grows, straightening and rejuvenating. Let it growing until the end. You, king, who governs upon all peoples... etc.” Such literary uses imposed a model of the city that legitimizes the Ruler's power through its throne residence. This could happen on Biblical example of the Upper, Celestial Jerusalem with God's inhabitation, but another example was the first and the unique capital of the world Rome. This town engendered all capital traditions and gave birth to the concept of the Constantine the Great's town, officially called by the Church “New Rome”. Praising Tǎrnovo as “New Constantinople”, that is to say a second Constantinople, was one of the features of the ruler's ideology and broadly speaking state's ideology of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, a synthesis of Rome imperial and Biblical tradition. Tǎrnovo became a “new” frequent object of description in the literature and art of the 14<sup>th</sup> century as an element of the verbal incarnation of the ruler's ideology, known by combination of verbal and iconic signs, text and image<sup>36</sup>. It was not hazardous that Tǎrnovo fortifications were even illustrated in a 14<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian chronicle<sup>37</sup>.

The city praising model changed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century hagiography in terms of ruler's institution, but it preserved the connection with the tradition in terms

<sup>35</sup> И. Дуйчев, *Из старата българска книжнина*, vol. II, *Книжовни и исторически паметници от Второто българско царство*, София 1940, p. 97.

<sup>36</sup> Е. БАКАЛОВА, *Аспекти на съотношението словесен текст-изображение в Българското средновековие (песеннопоетична образност – визуални съответствия)*, ПИ 1, 1991, p. 3–20; ЕАДЕМ, *The Image of the Ideal Ruler in Medieval Bulgarian Literature and Art*, [in:] *Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale*, ed. I. VAINOVSKI-МИХАИ, Bucarest 2007, p. 34–80; I. BILIARSKY, *La ville, les héros et l'Univers*, [in:] *Forma Formans. Studi in onore di Boris Uspenskij*, ed. S. BERTOLISSI, R. SALVATORE, Napoli 2010, p. 63–76; ИДЕМ, *La translation des reliques à la capitale du Second Empire Bulgare et les idées du pouvoir*, [in:] *Liturgia e agiografia tra Roma e Costantinopoli. Atti de I e II Seminario di Studio Roma-Grottaferrata, 2000–2001*, ed. K. STANTCHEV, S. PARENTI, Grottaferrata 2007, p. 329–338; М. ТСИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, I. BILIARSKY, *Verbal formulae and images for glorification of the ruler in Medieval Bulgaria*, ЦСТУ 7.7, 2010, p. 245–266.

<sup>37</sup> Й. БЪОДЕЙ, *Непозната миниатюра за Търново в унгарската илюстрирана хроника*, Век 4, 1987, p. 33–38.

*of fidelity to Orthodoxy*. The predominant verbal expression glorified Sofia as великѣ, дивьнѣ, достохвальнѣ, нарочитѣ, приснословоуемѣ, прѣкрасьнѣ, прѣславьнѣ, свѣтлѣишии, славьнѣ, словоуемѣ град. On linguistic level, they created an image of exclusiveness, uniqueness and highest level of possession of the given qualities at such point that the text said не быти глѣють прѣреченноу мѣстоу тѣуиство ни гдѣже (to say that there was not likeness anywhere)<sup>38</sup>. The very word тѣуиство 'likeness, equality, similarity' was unknown to the Old Bulgarian manuscripts and remained poorly documented in dictionaries. But the qualities were not merely external marks. They followed the same double fold descriptive programme to depict the holy status of the city. This continuous Orthodox sanctity of Sofia untouched for centuries and even under Ottoman domination guaranteed lack of oblivion not because of the passing material beauty, but above all, because the Faith was alive. As Matthew the Grammarian said: не ѡскоудеѡаетъ вѣтъ вжїа ѡ него (*the Divine Grace* never quit the city)<sup>39</sup>.

The hymnographic material from the Sofia literary school uses two-part adjectival modifiers for the city, verbs, and specific stylistic-rhetorical forms in the praises (encomiums) of Sofia, shaped through an anaphora of the imperative "Rejoice, city", or the so-called heretisms. This was a favorite device of the Old Bulgarian writers and became a major rhetorical convention in a number of works. It is worthy to point out that the verbal formula of that kind made part of both hymnographic works and the anonymous Eulogy as an example of oratory prose. Being only one of many other similarities, this feature proved the unanimity in artistic principles and the reproduction of the Old Bulgarian examples the Sofia man of letters followed up. To illustrate the encomium as an artistic device, I shall quote a passage from the common Eulogy for all Sofia martyrs according to Ms. Slav. CHAI 1521:

Рѡчи се градѣ Гофїа прѣмноудрости въ истинѣ тѣзоимѣните. ꙗко такоѡие лоуѣ въ послѣкнѣи лѣ ис тѣвѣ истекоше многозрачїе. и елико по сподѡлѣ пльти соуѣши, на свѣщнице разума рѡ и видѣнїа сеѡвѣ въжїише. Сѡвѣшъ масель прѣблѡжише нашѣ. ꙗко да вси въхлѡдѣши въ мрѡ страстей захлѡдѣшаго слнца. Сѡвѣтомъ невѣрнѣи Осїают се, прѣемлюще въ себе хл. Сѡвѣтъ ꙗвленїемъ въ ѡкрѡвѣнїи разума дѡвѣннѣи радїи боудѣтъ~

Рѡчи се градѣ многокрасне, и неꙗвленнѣи нна ꙗвленїе. много ꙗвѣ заꙗвленїе стрти, иже въ тѣвѣ пролїавшїи се новѣи ѡнкѣ крѡвы~

Рѡчи се градѣ дѡимѣните, ꙗко не тѣкмо иже въздѡи млекѡ разума. нѣ и страннѣи и пришлѡце тѡрѡдѣи вѣщи въкѡсѡ блгоучїа вѣспїта. Сѡвѡдѡчнїи и повѣдою гражканы невѣие быти тѣ прѣпосл. Въ истинѣ въ лѣпотѣ похлѡла градѣ иже нѣкогда мѡенѣ. ꙗко такоѡѣи стрѡицель съѡвѣкѡспѡелны и съгражкѡнѣ вѡвѣшен. и ктѡ сѡтъ сїи, прїспе вѡ вѡрѣме сїи ѡтна и мнѡгострѡлна изгѡвїити тѣхѣ именѡ:~

<sup>38</sup> П. СЫРКУ, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

Another linguistic picture of the city is supplied by a new type of original source for the period under study: the western Bulgarian beadrolls of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In them, the triple onymy is dropped and only the name Sofia is used. In our study, a special attention is paid to: Boyana bedroll from the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>40</sup>; the bedroll part of 26 folia in the so called miscellany from Kokalyane monastery from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (№ 368 in the repository of CHAI in Sofia)<sup>41</sup>, which has not been published insofar. While the old synodics and dip-tychs contain the names of rulers, ktitors, and ecclesiastics, starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, beadrolls listing the names of lay persons came into use; through them, ordinary Christians expressed their religious identity and their practices related to religious rituals. The structure of beadrolls indicates the connection of beadroll listings to concrete geographical territorial locations. For instance, in the Boyana beadroll the name Sofia holds a place of honor among the names of tsars and patriarchs; its central importance is confirmed by the fact that 39 villages from the Sofia region are mentioned, as well as several neighborhoods of the city itself. The fact that Sofia was an important point on the route of pilgrimage from the Serbian lands to Thessalonica and Mount Athos, contributed to the city's being mentioned in many entries from the period under study. It is understandable that in such not strictly religious books, it would be designated by its most recent name. The compiler of the oldest part of Boyana bedroll, released by the first writing hand, was identified with the Serbian scribe Job of Temešvar, who called himself *странѣи пришлъць*, and shared that he stopped relaxing from the exhaustive journey *влизъ града того Софїа*<sup>42</sup>. The evident trend in the earliest separate beadroll is confirmed from Kokalyane beadroll, where Sofia is not only designated by that single name but the mention of the city becomes a reference for its lively economic activity, as the text lists the names of craftsmen from important Sofia neighborhoods in which the respective craftsmen's guilds were situated. (**ИВАНЪ ДОГАНЦІА 66, ТОДОРЪ ВЪКОМАНОВЪ 96, НИКОЛА КОВАЧЪ 10а, БЕЛУЧО ТКАЧЪ 11а, МИТАРЪ ТЕРЗНИА, НИКОЛА ТЕКИЦІА, СТОИЧО БОСТАНЦІА, ЛАЗАРЪ ЧИВЪЧИА 186**). In the 16<sup>th</sup> century,

<sup>40</sup> М. СТАНЧЕВА, С. СТАНЧЕВ, *Боянски поменик*, София 1963; И. ГЕРГОВА, *Боянският поменик като свидетелство за истроията на храма*, [in:] *Боянската църква между Изтока и Запада в изкуството на християнска Европа*, ed. Б. ПЕНКОВА, София 2013, p. 48–55.

<sup>41</sup> Б. ХРИСТОВА, Д. КАРАДЖОВА, А. ИКОНОМОВА, *op. cit.*, p. 193; В. АТАНАСОВ, *Урвич и Бистрица: Кокалянският манастир и Мала Света гора. Археологическо-исторически бележки*, София 1905; М. СКОВРОНЕК, *Урвичкият (Кокалянският) сборник и локалният култ на св. архангел Михаил в Кокалянския манастир*, *Pbg 34.3*, 2010, p. 49–85; М. ЦИБРАНСКА-КОСТОВА, *Поменалната част на Кокалянския сборник от XVII век през призмата на историческата лексикология*, [in:] *70 години българска академична лексикография. Доклади от Шестата национална конференция с международно участие по лексикография и лексикология, Институт за български език «Проф. Л. Андрейчин»–БАН, 24–25 октомври 2012 г.*, coll. et ed. Л. КРУМОВА-ЦВЕТКОВА, Д. БЛАГОЕВА, С. КОЛКОВСКА, София 2013, p. 563–570.

<sup>42</sup> М. СТАНЧЕВА, С. СТАНЧЕВ, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

there were namely the craftsmen from Sofia who by their gifts contributed the Kokalyane monastery “St. Archangel Michael” to be restored.

Thus, as early as the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to the already familiar basic descriptive topoi (geographical location, historical heritage, Orthodox holiness), the linguistic picture was enriched by the *representation of the actual urban environment*, which was a centre of crafts and commerce, and of multi-ethnic and multi-confessional diasporas. Even the names of persons in the beadroll now linked the population of the city to places of residence in full, organic unity. This confirms the information, known from a number of other sources, that, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sofia had completely consolidated its status as the administrative capital of the Rumelia beylerbey and a uniting centre of the surrounding settlements; that it was famed for its economic prosperity and the extraction of ore; that it was a cultural centre comprising various ethnic communities (Bulgarians, Turks, Serbs, Wallachians, Saxons, people from Dubrovnik, and Jews – in fact, it was one of the three largest cities in the Bulgarian lands to have a Jewish population, together with Nikopol and Vidin).

Returning to Matthew the Grammarian, we believe it was not accidental that he praised the virtues of the residents of the “most glorious city of Sredets” and their piety in diligent service to God and the Orthodox faith. In Matthew’s description, economic data are only an accompanying element in the hagiographic model of holiness, and the emphasis is placed on the model itself. In the beadrolls, on the contrary, it is the Christian lay population of Sofia and the vicinity that reproduces the Orthodox religious paradigm and leaves testimonies of its ethnic affiliation through lexical facts regarding its everyday life, livelihoods, religious ritual practices and anthroponymic system.

The notes of scribes and the various marginal material on the leaves of manuscripts from Sofia region bear witness to the use of the same triple nomination, which allows to clear up that the actual civil name Sofia did not contradict to the older names Sredets, or Sardikia, but their use depended on the level of canonicity of the note, the written purposes and the literacy of the person living the note. The Gospel from Dragalevtsi monastery belongs to the earliest data with priest Nicholas’s note from 1469: *ТОГДА ДРЪЖЕЩЕ ПРЪКСТОЛЬ СВЕТИТЕЛСТВА ВЕЛИКЪЕ САРДАКИВЕ МИТРОПОЛИТА КИРЬ СИЛЬВЕСТРЪ*<sup>43</sup>, from where came that in this way the metropolis was named (so, we have a connotation upon the high status of the described realia). In 1578, priest Peter from the village of Proleša, made a copy of Gospel in the region of Sardikia<sup>44</sup> (type of connotation from a cleric to the Church diocese). One short inscription from 1658 in a Mineia from the Bulgarian National Library “St. St. Cyril and Methodius” is a real find in terms of description, because it made an expressive metaphors, comparing Sofia with a ship floating in the sea

<sup>43</sup> Й. ИВАНОВ, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

<sup>44</sup> *Писанме да се знае*, p. 66.

of white tents, when the Vizir passed by and “there was a great calamity”<sup>45</sup>. The examples are all too many. I must conclude with an invaluable testimony to the role of historical memory in the creation of the “searched for image”. In 1900 E. Sprostranov noted that an elderly citizen of Sofia had personally told him the legend according to which, before the Turks, there were only three villages – Yana, Boyana, and Poduyane – and that everything else was covered by a lake. This land was called Zerdekia < Sardikia<sup>46</sup>.

In conclusion, it may be said that the material, presented above, which is only part of that provided by Slavic manuscripts, is a reliable source for the study not only of the literature of Sofia and its region but of the city’s history as well. The written word created an image. In 16<sup>th</sup> century Sofia, the last great achievements of original Bulgarian hagiographic and hymnographic literature appeared, and then declined; an independent literary school was created, and the whole copyist production in the region gravitated around that school – having these facts in mind, we should look upon every surviving text as a verbal semiotic system that carries messages from the past.

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<sup>45</sup> М. Стоянов, Х. Кодов, *Опис на славянските ръкописи в Софийската народна библиотека*, vol. IV, София 1971, p. 17.

<sup>46</sup> Е. СПРОСТРАНОВ, *Бележки и приписки от софийските църкви*, СБНУ 22/23, 1906/1907, p. 30.

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**Abstract.** The paper follows out the way of denomination and description of Sofia town in manuscripts from different genre during the period of the 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, namely: the original hagiographic and hymnographic works of the men of letters from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sofia literary school; the bedrolls; some marginal notes. This type of sources is rich enough not only for shaping the image of the town according to the linguistic evidences it was depicted with, but for making some general conclusions about its place in the so called “linguistic world view” as a semiotic model for approaching the lifestyle, the spiritual culture and the Bulgarian ethnic consciousness during the Ottoman domination. The chosen frame of time is not hazardous. It was a transitory period for both naming process and the creation of a new cultural situation, when the ideological and political dominant of the medieval town (the capital in particular) as an incarnation of the ruler’s institution has been already changed. Moreover, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the very Byzantine prototype of the town-mother and the spiritual center of the Orthodox world were destroyed. It is a matter of scholarly interest to give an idea on how another, different (new) model of the town was created in the Bulgarian cultural space to replace the past glorious vision, and how it reproduced the tradition. Briefly, how does the text create an image? It is a way to introduce the notion of hierotopy and its language in the original Bulgarian works of the given period.

The specifically Bulgarian material inscribes itself in the common typological frames of the Balkan medieval culture in Ottoman times. The paradigm of holiness and the formation of the holly space require those aspects to be carried out in the light of the complex interdependency between the text, the image and the historical context – a binding triad that will be the base for the attending presentation.

**Keywords:** Medieval Sofia, original Bulgarian works, hierotopy.

**Mariyana Tsibranska-Kostova**

Institute for Bulgarian Language at the  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
52 Shiptchenski prohod, bl. 17  
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria  
m.tsibranska@gmail.com