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International symposium

CONSTANTINE,  
SIRMIUM AND EARLY  
CHRISTIANITY  
(Proceedings)

Sremska Mitrovica, 2014



## FOREWORD

International scientific symposium „*Constantine, Sirmium and early Christianity, 1700 years of Milan edict*“, which was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 in Sremska Mitrovica in the organization of the *Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments Sremska Mitrovica* and the *Faculty of Philosophy Novi Sad* and with comprehensive support from the municipality Sremska Mitrovica, represents a significant contribution to the studies of the late antique period and the beginnings of Christianity in this area. The intention of the organizers of the assembly was to once again interpret historical sources about this extraordinary period in relation to an important jubilee, 1700 years since the Edict of Milan. Eight scientists from the *Faculty of Philosophy Novi Sad, State University of New York* and the *American Research Center in Sofia* took part in this symposium.

The huge significance of Constantine I the Great for the rise of Christianity in the Roman empire was placed by the scientific papers from the assembly in the context of Sirmium. This city, after the defeat of Constantine's rival Licinius in 316 A.D. became the occasional residence of Constantine the Great but also a space which saw a significant advancement of Christianity in the upcoming years. In the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, during the time of the rise of Arian heresy, many significant church councils were held in the town. Transformation of Sirmium into a religious center will be of great significance for later Christianization of Slavic peoples that moved there afterwards.

Of the eight scientific papers presented at the assembly five are dedicated to the activities of Constantine (Michael R. Werner, *Constantine, Sirmium and the beginnings of Christianity*, Eric C. De Sena, *Constantine in the imperial palace at Serdica*, Snežana Vukadinović, *An imperial biography dedicated to Constantine the Great*, Svetozar Boškov, *Constantine the Great in Serbian 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography*, Aleksandra Smirnov – Brkić, Ifigenija Draganić, *The Edict of Milan – authorship*), two to the first Sirmium bishop Irenaeus (Aleksandra Smirnov – Brkić, Ifigenija Draganić, *Latin and Greek recensions of the passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium*, Boris Stojkovski, *The life of Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium in the Ethiopian Synaxarium*), and one to the relationship between Sirmium and the Slavic Cyrilomethodian church tradition (Nenad Lemajić, *Sirmium and Chyrlomethodian heritage*).

In this proceedings six papers are being published and for the two that have not arrived to the editorial office only the abstracts are given (Michael R. Werner, *Constantine, Sirmium and the beginnings of Christianity* and Aleksandra Smirnov – Brkić, Ifigenija Draganić, *The Edict of Milan – authorship*).

By publishing the proceedings from the assembly, which had been somewhat delayed due to financial issues, its results are presented to the broad scientific public. At the assembly, the knowledge has been extended

regarding the perception of the processes in the period of the late Roman Empire and early Middle Ages as well as the long-term influence of the events from the era of Constantine the Great on these processes. The organizers of the symposium owe significant gratitude for the organization of the event and the publishing of the proceedings to the *municipality of Sremska Mitrovica* and the *Museum of Srem, Sremska Mitrovica*.

Editorial office

Eric C. De Sena, Ph.D.  
American Research Center in Sofia

## CONSTANTINE IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE AT SERDICA

**Abstract:** This paper concerns the presence and activities of Constantine the Great in Serdica as well as in the provinces of Dacia Mediterranea, Dacia Ripensis and Thracia AD 316-330s. The paper begins with a historical overview of Constantine's activities in the region, followed by an archaeological overview of Serdica and other areas within the modern territory of Bulgaria, which Constantine may have had a role in developing. In particular, the question of where the Imperial Palace of Serdica may have been located is addressed.

**Keywords:** Serdica, Constantine the Great, Bulgaria

### I. Introduction.

Born in or near Naissus ca. AD 272, Constantine is best known for his support of Christianity, wars against rival emperors and building campaigns in Rome and Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> We know little of his upbringing and his story begins for us in the late 3rd century when his father served as a Tetrarch in the northwestern territories of the Empire. During the Tetrarchy Constantine spent some of his formative years in Nicomedia; he also campaigned for Diocletian and Galerius in the East and along the Danube. A year after joining his father in Gaul and Britain, Constantine was proclaimed emperor. The new Caesar immediately set upon consolidating his power in the northwestern provinces and engaged in his first power struggle which peaked in 308 and was concluded on October 28, 312 at the Milvian Bridge, near Rome. The tyrant Maxentius had been overcome and Constantine added Italy to his imperial holdings. Licinius crushed Maximinus Daia the next year, while, in the meantime, Galerius died in 311.

The eight year struggle, 316-324 between Constantine and Licinius brought Constantine to the Balkans; at the same time, he campaigned

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<sup>1</sup> Literature regarding Constantine is extensive; classic biographies are Baker 1931; Burckhardt 1949; MacMullen 1969; excellent modern accounts include Barnes 2006 and 2011; Odahl 2004; Van Dam 2008.

against the Sarmatians and Goths. The first battle against his new rival occurred in October 316 at Cibalae, resulting in Licinius's withdrawal to eastern Thrace. In December, to keep Licinius in check, Constantine wintered at Serdica. This paper concerns Constantine's activities in Serdica and the territory of modern-day Bulgaria: military campaigns, building at military centers and cities, and his role in Serdica. A key question concerns the identification of the imperial residence in Serdica.

## II. Constantine in the territory of modern Bulgaria.

There is no direct indication of Constantine's presence in the territory of modern Bulgaria prior to December 316 (FIG. 1). During the Tetrarchy, Constantine was a member of Diocletian's court, in Nicomedia and often with Diocletian or Galerius on military campaigns. In this regard, it is likely that Constantine engaged with Galerius in battle against the Sarmatians in 294. Given the location of the Sarmatians in the Pannonian plain, however, the focus of any military endeavor would have been centered between Carnuntum, Singidunum and Viminacium. Constantine may have been involved in campaigns against the Goths in the lower Danube region in the late 290's, which would have brought him into the territory of modern-day Bulgaria. Beyond these episodes, he was frequently in Asia Minor and the Roman East until 305.

Having consolidated his power in the West and commissioned and dedicated a number of important building projects in Rome, Constantine was based at Verona in September 316. By this time Constantine and Licinius were preparing for a military confrontation. The first battle between the two armies occurred a month later, in October, at Cibalae.<sup>2</sup> While details lack, Constantine took the upper hand in battle and Licinius, who had been based at Sirmium, withdrew to eastern Thrace, allowing Constantine to claim Sirmium and then move to the eastern fringes of Dacia Mediterranea. Constantine arrived in Serdica in December, where he wintered in preparation for continued hostilities against Licinius. The exact date of the battle on the *campus Ardiensis*, near Hadrianopolis, is unknown, but it must have occurred in February 317 as the treaty between Constantine and Licinius was agreed upon on March 1 in Serdica. This, of course, marks the day when Constantine's sons, Crispus and Constantine II, were named Caesars as was Licinius's young son whose mother was Constantia. By June 317, Constantine was in Sirmium<sup>3</sup> and may have been outside our territory for about two years.

We can more easily trace the emperor's movements beginning in 319. Passages in the Theodosian Code place Constantine in Serdica between November 319 and January 320.<sup>4</sup> By March 320, he was at Sirmium,<sup>5</sup> but returned to Serdica in June and then again between December 320 and

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<sup>2</sup> Barnes 1973, 36.

<sup>3</sup> CTh.11.30.7.

<sup>4</sup> CTh.2.10.1, CTh.4.12.3 and 8.16.1.2.

<sup>5</sup> CTh.6.4.1.



February 321.<sup>6</sup> He then transferred to Sirmium where, in March, he formally broke ties with Licinius by withdrawing his nomination of Licinius I and II as consuls and proclaiming his own sons Crispus and Constantine II as consuls for the year. The next moment we can ascertain that the emperor was in Serdica was in December 322.<sup>7</sup> During much of that year, Constantine was in Sirmium as well as in the middle Danube region fending off the Sarmatians, led by King Rausimodus.<sup>8</sup> The winter of 322/323 in Serdica was cut short when the Goths stormed into the lower Danube region; Constantine's army was victorious and the emperor may have bolstered Rome's defenses in this region. This clearly displeased Licinius as Constantine technically operated in northern Thrace, part of Licinius's domain. Following the Gothic episode, Constantine moved with his soldiers and court to Thessalonica, the city he would use as his primary base for the next few years. He wintered at Sirmium 323/324 and returned to Thessalonica in February to prepare for what would be his final confrontations with Licinius.

We are aware of Constantine's activities in the territory of modern Bulgaria, again, in 328. The emperor had a brief sojourn in Serdica in May 328 en route to Rome for the funeral of Helen.<sup>9</sup> A bridge he had commissioned to cross the Danube from Oescus was completed in July of the same year. Constantine tested the bridge with his army, reclaiming a small portion of the former Roman territory of Trajanic Dacia and restoring the fortress at Romula. The final instances that we can place Constantine in Serdica are September 329<sup>10</sup> and February 330.<sup>11</sup> Constantine spent at least 15 months in Serdica, primarily in winter, during the middle years of his reign and while we are aware of general events in the military campaigns of Constantine within this region, we lack many details, such as building activity.

In addition to Constantine's cumulative 15+ months in residence at Serdica, he also campaigned along the Danube and against Licinius. In defending against the Goths and in combat against Licinius, he must have commissioned architectural works, whether for defense or to reward allied cities. Scholars working in modern day Bulgaria have demonstrated that several Roman cities and military centers have phases corresponding to the early to mid 4th century, but in most cases there is no direct evidence for direct intervention by this emperor. The remainder of this section presents one certain and several possible building campaigns by Constantine in the region under question.

Given the heavy military interventions in the lower Danube region against the Goths, it should not be surprising to find bolstered fortifications

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<sup>6</sup> CTh.9.3.1.1, CTh.16.10.1, CTh.2.19.2 and CTh.9.42.1.4.

<sup>7</sup> CTh.3.32.1.

<sup>8</sup> MacMullan 1969, 134.

<sup>9</sup> Van Dam 2008, 52.

<sup>10</sup> CTh.12.1.16.

<sup>11</sup> CTh.16.2.7.

along the river and the second line of defense. Constantine's biographers were not as interested in details of such mundane events as warfare as were the early and middle imperial historians; therefore, we have no mention in the literature regarding specific sites of confrontations. The strengthening of fortresses may not have been an occasion to post dedicatory inscriptions by the emperor. We can only assume that certain features dated archaeologically to the period of Constantine's reign were, in fact, commissioned by the emperor. In this regard, a late Roman fortification at **Durostorum** is presumed to be Constantinian. Moreover, a base camp at the same site is very likely from Constantine's Danubian campaigns.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, fortifications of early 4th century date and *horrea* at the inland defensive base at **Abritus** are assumed to date to the Constantinian period.<sup>13</sup>

The only building project in Bulgaria, also located along the Danube, that can be attributed with certainty to Constantine is a concrete and wood bridge constructed at **Oescus**.<sup>14</sup> The bridge, which joined Oescus with Sucidava in modern-day Romania, was completed in July 328 as a result of continuous hostilities by the Goths and other tribes in the Danube region. Constantine crossed the bridge with an army and re-conquered a small area of Trajanic Dacia. He re-fortified the military base at Romula, ca. 40 km north of the Danube. A fortified extension of Oescus dating to the 4th century is also assumed to be Constantinian.

**Philippopolis**, situated in the south-central Thracian valley, was always an important city and, appears to have been even more opulent than Serdica.<sup>15</sup> Although this city fell within the domain of Galerius and then Licinius, it appears that Constantine was based here briefly in 317, prior to Battle at *campus Ardiensis*. There are a number of important building projects that can be dated to the period of Constantine; whether or not the emperor was involved is another question. Among the presumed Constantinian programs is the fourth and final phase of the agora.<sup>16</sup> The monumental Eastern Gate may be of Constantinian date; more questionable are the restoration of the Western Baths, the construction of the Eastern Baths and the building of new *insulae*. The chronologies are not well-established and some scholars point out that these are more likely the result of building campaigns by Galerius.<sup>17</sup>

### III. "Serdica is my Rome".

A Late Antique source designated as *Anonymus post Dionem* or *Dio Continuatus* reports in a very brief section on Constantine that the emperor frequently declared "Serdica is my Rome."<sup>18</sup> This source can be

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<sup>12</sup> Ivanov 2012b, 56.

<sup>13</sup> Ivanov 2012c, 180 and 189-89.

<sup>14</sup> Ivanov 2012a, 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Topalilov 2012a, in particular 372-414; and Topalilov 2012b.

<sup>16</sup> Topalilov 2012b, 118.

<sup>17</sup> Topalilov 2012a, 413-414.

<sup>18</sup> Müller 1851, 199. 15 Constantinus. 1. Constantinus principio consilium ceperat sedem regni in urbem Sardicam transferendi; captusque eius urbis amore semper iterabat: « Roma mea

characterized as anecdotal or satirical; thus, we cannot guarantee the authenticity of the statement. Regardless of the degree to which he loved and regarded this city, Constantine resided intermittently in Serdica between 316 and 323 and 328-330, as indicated in the previous section, and, therefore, required a palace.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Athanasios, Bishop of Alexandria, writing about the Council of Serdica (343), mentions that a contingent of several dozen participants resided in the imperial palace.<sup>20</sup> There is no description of the palace or hints as to its location within Serdica.

By Late Antiquity, the city of Serdica consisted of two adjacent walled areas. The oldest section of the city, founded in the 1st century AD and first fortified in stone during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, has an area of 166,000 m<sup>2</sup>. Approximately 15% of this area has been explored archaeologically. To the north was another fortified sector, more than double the size of “Old Serdica”, which is largely uncharted. Scholars suggest that a complex within the old section of the city was the residence of Constantine, although there is no direct evidence. Before discussing the possible location of the imperial residence in Serdica, it is appropriate to review knowledge of contemporary Tetrarchic palaces.

The size of aristocratic domus and villae in Italy and other parts of the Roman world was often substantial, but the residence of an emperor was, to say the least, particular. We know from evidence at Pompeii, for example, that aristocratic houses were large enough to host a family and servants, while Cato the Elder writes that a villa can only be managed with a staff of about 15 in addition to the family.<sup>21</sup> Evidence from late Roman domus at Ostia Antica indicates a similar pattern of families and servants residing together. While the “House of Augustus” on the Palatine hill was quite modest, it still would have accommodated the imperial family and servants. On a much different scale, scholars estimate that the Flavian Palace in Rome and the Villa of Hadrian in Tivoli would have held a hundred or more people. With the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the emperor no longer had the luxury of residing for long periods of time in Rome or on a country estate. From the 160’s the emperor was more frequently in the frontier regions of the empire with armies, defending Rome against hostile neighbors, and later, defending himself against rivals. In this context, the emperor would have been stationed within a permanent fortress, such as at Carnuntum, or in a temporary field camp. Middle Imperial period emperors and their families had estates, but it was not until the Tetrarchy that a wave of palaces were constructed in the new administrative cities or in places that emperors would chose to retire. At this period in time, an imperial palace no longer only served luxury and state purposes; emperors had large followings

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Sardica est. » 2. Constantinus decessorum suorum res gestas obscurare studens, horum virtutes iocularibus quibusdam epithetis vilipendere studebat. Scilicet Octavianum Augustum fortunae mundum appellabat, Trajanum herbam parietariam, Hadrianum pictoriam officinam, Marcum ridiculum, Severum...

<sup>19</sup> The author of a recent volume on Serdica suggests that Helen and/or Constantine may have been born in or near Serdica (Vachkova 2012, 73-89).

<sup>20</sup> *Historia Arianorum* 15,5.

<sup>21</sup> *de Agri Cultura* 10 and 11.

of soldiers during these tumultuous times, soldiers who required barracks, food and other supplies. An imperial entourage easily numbered in the thousands of individuals.

Constructed by Diocletian with modifications by subsequent emperors, the palace at **Antioch** is not well known as the remains lie deep below the modern city.<sup>22</sup> Our best information is found in the writings of Libanius who discusses the “New City” on an island near the Hellenistic city. Libanius states that the palace was surrounded by a fortification wall and was organized internally in the manner of a military base, with two colonnaded streets with a four-way arch at the intersection. The palace was reportedly in close proximity to a circus.

The best known of the Tetrarchic palaces is Diocletian’s grand residence at **Split**.<sup>23</sup> This sub-rectangular complex is contained within a massive fortification wall with intersecting roads in military fashion. Along the walls in the northern half of the palace are chambers consistent with barracks, where soldiers and servants would have resided. These NW and NE sectors had courtyards at the center with spaces for storage and, presumably cooking and dining. The southernmost part of the complex along the sea wall served as the residential area and also contained two basilican ceremonial chambers. Preceding the residential zone are a mausoleum and an opposing temple.

Used first by Constantius Chlorus and later by Constantine and his own sons, the palace at **Trier** was a crucial administrative center.<sup>24</sup> While the overall plan of this palace has not been ascertained, several features are well known. The well-preserved “basilica”, constructed in brick, served as an audience hall with a residential area to the north. To the south was an imperial bath complex, much of which is preserved, at least in plan. Traces of a circus were identified to the NE of the baths. The city was surrounded by a massive fortification wall, attested by the Porta Nigra; however, there do not appear to be any internal fortifications separating the city from the premises of the palace.

The imperial palace at **Sirmium** is also well known thanks to the efforts of Serbian and American archaeologists.<sup>25</sup> The palace, located in the southeastern-most part of Sirmium, and the adjacent circus, to the north, were constructed in the late 3rd or early 4th centuries, consistent with the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, who both spent substantial time here; the palace shows signs of modification through the late 4th century. The circus has been investigated through a series of sondages, while components of the palace have been explored through both sondages and an extensive excavated area that has recently been restored and preserved within a museum setting. This large excavated area contains a peristyle courtyard, an apsidal hall and ancillary chambers. Storage facilities are located to the west

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<sup>22</sup> Downey 1963, 117-19; Ćurčić 1993, 68-69.

<sup>23</sup> Ward-Perkins 1970, 454-59.

<sup>24</sup> Ward-Perkins 1970, 442-49.

<sup>25</sup> Recently, Jeremić 2009 and Werner 2010.

of the palace. In order to defend the emperor, the original fortification wall of the city was enlarged and an internal wall built to enclose the palace.

One of the most important palaces from an administrative point of view, that at **Thessalonica**, has also been studied despite most of it lying beneath the modern city.<sup>26</sup> Several components of the palace are known, the most prominent of which is the Church of St. George, which may have originally been intended as a mausoleum. A colonnaded road leads south to the via Egnatia, to the south of which is a hippodrome. Abutting the hippodrome to the west are a series of structures, including an apsidal audience hall, a courtyard flanked by small chambers and a large domed space that was part of a bath complex. At the intersection of the via Egnatia and the roads leading into the areas of the palace is the Arch of Galerius.

Finally, the grand “retirement” palace of Galerius at **Romuliana** is, perhaps, the most extensively explored of all the Tetrarchic palaces, given its location in the countryside of eastern Serbia.<sup>27</sup> The palace of Galerius is surrounded by a robust fortification wall with massive circular towers. The internal organization is by no means based upon a military system. A road between the only two gates near the center of the west and east walls separate the “public” and “private” areas of the palace. To the south, in the “public” sector, are storage facilities, a large bath complex, a temple and other structures. The residential complex appears to be situated in the NE corner of the palace, while a series of ceremonial and recreational spaces fill the central and western portion of the north half of the palace. A hill to the east of the palace is the site of the burial mounds of the emperor and his mother.

Despite the differences, there are many common patterns and components. All of the palaces, save Romuliana and Split, were located within the context of cities and they were all heavily fortified. The palaces at Split and Romuliana were contained within massive perimeter walls, while the others relied upon the city fortifications, in some instances with segments added to the original defensive system. All have domestic and public spaces, including an apsidal aula. The dimensions of the palaces vary, ranging from the modest 31,000 m<sup>2</sup> of the palace at Split to the palace at Thessalonica whose features are arranged within an area of cca. 120,000 m<sup>2</sup>; half are organized in military fashion with intersecting roads. Four of the six palaces are located in close proximity to a circus, while there is no such feature at the “retirement” palaces at Split and Romuliana.

Returning to **Serdica**, if we imagine Constantine residing with an entourage of thousands, including soldiers, a possible location of the imperial residence may be in the Late Antique section of Serdica (FIG. 2). As noted above, “Old Serdica” (Serdica I) has an area of ca. 16.6 hectares and was first fortified during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, as archaeological indicators and a well-preserved inscription attest;<sup>28</sup> there was a major mid/late 4th century rebuilding of the city wall and subsequent

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<sup>26</sup> Ward-Perkins 1970, 449-54.

<sup>27</sup> Recently, Vasić 2006 and Popović 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Stancheva 1975.

repairs, but no clear Constantinian phase (FIG. 3). Another fortification wall (Serдика II), with round towers, was constructed to the north of “old Serдика” in the Late Antique phase, tripling the size of the city.<sup>29</sup> We have very little archaeological knowledge of the structures within the walls of this “new” region of Serдика, but there would have been ample space in “new Serдика” for members of an imperial court and even a circus. Scholars such as Kirova (2012), however, point out that “old Serдика” contains primarily public buildings and that the walls of “new Serдика” may have been constructed around what had been an undefended residential district. Nevertheless, given that this was a massive undertaking, an imperial commission seems likely.

Another hypothesis is based upon very recent, unpublished, excavations. An area of ca. 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> in the northeastern section of “old Serдика” has not been extensively explored. In addition to a series of walls whose function is not determined, a section of a bath is known in proximity to a still-flowing spring of hot mineral water. Of the Roman phase bath there is an octagonal chamber paved with marble and slightly larger than the St. George rotunda; adjacent to this is a semi-circular basin. In the Ottoman period, the baths were restored and a mosque, Banya Bashi Camii, was constructed. The very recent “West Gate” excavations have revealed a large Christian basilica (estimated length 30 m.) with mosaic floors, which has been provisionally dated to the time of Constantine based upon coin evidence.<sup>30</sup> The basilica is located some 20 m. north of the bath complex and overlies two insulae and sections of road, suggesting the importance of this basilica.

While no direct evidence is available, most scholars, however, consider all or some of the structures in the east-central and southeastern sectors of “old Serдика” to have served as the residence of the emperors Galerius and Constantine (FIG. 4). The structures, all of which have an early 4th century phase, were excavated in the 1950’s when the new Socialist government under Georgi Dimitrov built a series of administrative buildings. There has been subsequent, small-scale archaeological work. Many of the remains were demolished in the 20th century or remain inaccessible beneath modern constructions. One area is well known and represents an important tourist attraction in Sofia, namely, the architectural features surrounding the Church of St. George Rotunda; further south are features consistent with an elite residence, a bath and some presumed utilitarian structures.

Set within a courtyard between the Presidential Palace and the Sheraton Hotel, one of the iconic monuments of Sofia is the church of St. George Rotunda (fig 4, no. 4).<sup>31</sup> The brick church, which was consecrated in

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<sup>29</sup> Kirin 2000, 262-69; Kirova 2012, 206-08.

<sup>30</sup> Personal communication with Dr. Todor Chobanov, Vice Mayor, Municipality of Sofia; the “West Gate” excavations are funded by the Municipality of Sofia and directed by Iliyana Borisova and Andrey Aladzhov.

<sup>31</sup> Ivanov and Bobchev 1964, 17-20; Venedukov and Petrov 1964; Kirin 2000, 157-256; Kirova 2012, 227-29.

the mid 5th century, is an adapted *caldarium* of an early 4th century bath complex. The bath, in turn, overlies a 2nd-3rd century *insula*. One approached the baths from the *cardo maximus* and entered a courtyard, which may have served as a palestra. The interior plan of the baths is symmetrical and follows a W-E axis. From the palestra one entered a large rectangular chamber with apsidal ends, ca. 20 x 13 m. Given that this is the first space after the courtyard and there are no apparent water features, this appears to have served as a grand entrance vestibule. Proceeding east, the next chamber is roughly square with tapered corners and rectangular extensions at the north and south ends with basins; the lack of a hypocaust indicates that this was the *frigidarium*. Three small chambers on a N-S axis were all heated, the central one designated by scholars to be a *tepidarium* and the smaller ones presumed to have served as *apoditeria*. The rotunda, a *caldarium*, has four apsidal niches with easily recognizable hypocaust pillars. To the north and south of the rotunda, communicating with the presumed *apoditeria* are a pair of rectangular rooms with apsed ends, also heated. To the east of the eastern perimeter wall of the bath is a road running N-S.

East of this road is another monumental complex, also aligned in a W-E manner, with several Late Antique phases (fig 4, no. 5).<sup>32</sup> We are, of course, interested in the early 4th century phase. Because of modifications in the 5th, and possibly 6th, century as well as recent “restorations” for visitors it is not simple to describe this feature. There are eight primary chambers. Situated adjacent to and parallel with the road is a long feature with a pair of steps, which may have been a porticus. Today, there is a single entrance from this stepped feature into the building, which leads into a large “basilican” hall within which the excavators suggest had two rows of three columns. When one proceeds straight between the rows of columns, one enters an apsidal chamber with an octagonal atrium. To the south of this is a small apsidal chamber. Along the southern limits of the excavated area are three rectilinear chambers with a hypocaust system. The building extends south below the current pavement; a corridor at the SE of the structure appears to continue south to the “building with rotunda”. At some point in Late Antiquity or the Middle Ages a small chamber was added, using spolia, in the NW corner, adjacent, but with no access to the road, and overlying a portion of the presumed porticus. This chamber is at the level of the porticus and one entered from the “basilican” hall; there are four small arched niches and a circular aperture in the west wall and two more circular apertures in the north wall. The function of this room is not clear.

The “building with rotunda” is known (but?) not well documented (fig 4, no. 7).<sup>33</sup> It seems to be part of a large complex that begins near the eastern wall of Serdica and ends at the southern extension of the *cardo maximus*. The westernmost section hosts a series of large rectangular chambers. The eastern portion has four long, parallel W-E walls; at the east end are two parallel walls that run north toward the building with apsidal

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<sup>32</sup> Stancheva 1994, 58-61; Kirin 2000, 302-07; Kirova 2012, 226-27.

<sup>33</sup> Kirin 2000, 307-309.

hall. Also at the east end is a circular feature whose diameter is ca. 10 m. Only half of this rotunda was excavated. There is a horizontal gap in the archaeological record of Serdica of ca. 20 m. until the next feature to the south is known.

The remains of another, seemingly identical rotunda was revealed to the south of the previously mentioned one.<sup>34</sup> The excavated remains are ca. 20 m. distant; however, the gap between the full rotundas was about 15 m. This southern rotunda is an extension of a large structure designated as the “residence below Corecom” (fig 4, no. 8). This residential building is incompletely excavated and the roughly 40 x 35 m area gives a sense of opulence. The largest space measures ca. 28 x 17 m. and is considered to have served as a peristyle; it was paved in mosaic, although little of the floor remained intact. To the north are a series of rectangular rooms with evidence of a heating system; to the west was a large, incompletely excavated courtyard. The eastern extremity is lined by a pair of corridors that join at their short ends through a doorway; they are paved with colorful mosaics. Finally, to the south are a series of five chambers – at the ends are irregularly-shaped rooms, the central chamber is octagonal and communicates with the “peristyle”, the two rooms in between are circular. These too were paved with polychrome mosaics. The building clearly continues north, south and west.

After another horizontal gap in the archaeological record of ca. 20 m. is a complex that includes a small bath, excavated in the 1950s and not well documented (fig 4, no. 9).<sup>35</sup> The western part of this building consists of an elongated atrium with a row of pillars that are not centrally positioned. To the north and south are small rectangular rooms and to the east is a larger, rectangular chamber. While there is no evidence, the configuration of this space conforms to a small barrack or a suite for guests, such as the *hospitalia* at Hadrian’s Villa in Tivoli. The smaller chambers can be interpreted as bedrooms and the eastern chamber as a *triclinium*. The eastern portion of this building is a *balneum* and there is no evidence that a direct passageway joined the two sections. It appears that one entered from the north into a corridor running W-E that was partially excavated. A door on the southern wall led to a rectangular room with an elaborate floor consisting of mosaics and *opus sectile*. To the south of this is another rectangular room with a small water basin. From the “mosaic room” a doorway on the east wall led to an octagonal *caldarium*, which has an irregular pattern of niches: two large apsidal niches, a small apsidal niche and a large rectangular niche. There is a small doorway on the northeast wall leading into a corridor that merges with the northernmost W-E corridor.

In addition to these important features are architectural features in the southeastern-most part of Serdica and also to the west of the *hospitalia/balneum* complex. The latter may have been a continuation of the

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<sup>34</sup> Stancheva 1994, 61-63; Kirin 2000, 310-14; Kirova 2012, 229-30.

<sup>35</sup> Stancheva 1994, 60-61; Kirin 2000, 314-19; Kirova 2012, 230.



*hospitalia*. The former may have served utilitarian or residential functions (fig 4, no. 10).

There are no traces of a circus or mausoleum. The latter is not problematic as not all the tetrarchic residences were furnished with a mausoleum. Galerius had planned to be buried at Romuliana and Constantine planned Rome and, later, Constantinople to be his eternal resting ground. Of the functional administrative palaces, Trier, Sirmium, Antioch and Thessalonica all had a circus; the Villa of Maxentius and Constantinople also had a circus. The lack of a circus in Serdica may signify that archaeologists simply have not identified its location, or that there was no circus. As indicated above, “new Serdica” had ample space for a circus; scholars have also suggested that a relatively level area to the east of the city may have hosted a circus. Given the relative brevity of Constantine’s sojourns in Serdica and his focus during this time on Licinius, however, a circus may not have been constructed. Instead, the emperor may have utilized the amphitheater, constructed in the 2nd century and situated just 250 m. to the east of “old Serdica” along the immediate suburban extension of the *decumanus maximus*.<sup>36</sup> The amphitheater would still allow the emperor to greet the citizens and orchestrate processions into Serdica.

Despite the lack of these two features, many architectural spaces described here conform to the kinds of components found in the other Tetrarchic palaces. The size and opulence of the residential area is suitable for an emperor. What may have been the audience hall, to the east of the St. George bath was functional, albeit somewhat small. The feature termed here *hospitalia/balneum* would have been a key component – whether this served permanent residents of the complex or guests. The arrangements of the baths are somewhat problematic. On the one hand, it appears that the *balneum* actually communicated with the “residence below Corecom”; hence, a private bath. The larger, “St. George”, bath does not communicate with any areas described here, but should be viewed as a public bath as the entrance was from the *cardo maximus*. Certain comparisons, for example, to Constantinople or Split, are unfair, but when we compare the remains in the SE sector of Serdica with the architecture of the imperial palace at Sirmium (overall size and features), however, there are many similarities. Until archaeologists working in Sofia unearth epigraphic or otherwise concrete evidence, the notion of the SE sector of Serdica having served as the imperial residence of Constantine will remain speculation.

#### IV. Summary.

This paper, while not conclusive, traces the history of Constantine in the territory of modern-day Bulgaria, suggests evidence of building campaigns along the Danube River and some interior military centers and cities, and supports the common idea that the SE region of Serdica served as the imperial residence.

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<sup>36</sup> Kirova 2012, 233-37.

Constantine played a strong role in the region of modern Bulgaria and the region played a strong role in his consolidation of power. Dacia Mediterranea, Thracia and Dacia Ripensis were strategically located between West and East and between the Roman Empire and *Barbaricum*. Given the circumstances of his dealings with Licinius, the Church and the western part of the Empire, Constantine was frequently on the move; he did reside in Serdica for at least 15 months, primarily during the winters of 316/17 – 322/23. Scholars have revealed evidence of early 4th century phases throughout the territory; however, few were clearly commissioned by Constantine. During his campaigns against the Goths, we are aware of the construction of a bridge across the Danube River at Oescus in 328. Several possible building projects are briefly described, particularly construction campaigns at key military centers, such as Durostorum and Abritus. The opulent city of Philippopolis also has a number of early 4th century phases; however, we lack direct connections to Constantine.

In a letter regarding the Council of Serdica (AD 343), Athanasios of Alexandria mentions an imperial palace; the question remains, where was the residence located? There are several areas within “old” and “new” Serdica spacious enough host a residence for the imperial court. Only one of these areas, namely the southeastern section of “old Serdica”, has been significantly explored. This area of the city, approximately 29,000 m<sup>2</sup>, contains many features consistent with an imperial palace: two baths, ceremonial spaces, opulent living quarters, storage areas and an area for servants or members of the court. Based upon the evidence available to us at present, this seems to be the most likely location for the imperial palace in Serdica. Due to the difficulties involved in excavating within the living city of Sofia, the connections between the structures described above are not clear; moreover, we lack literary or epigraphic evidence that might link Constantine with this area of Serdica.

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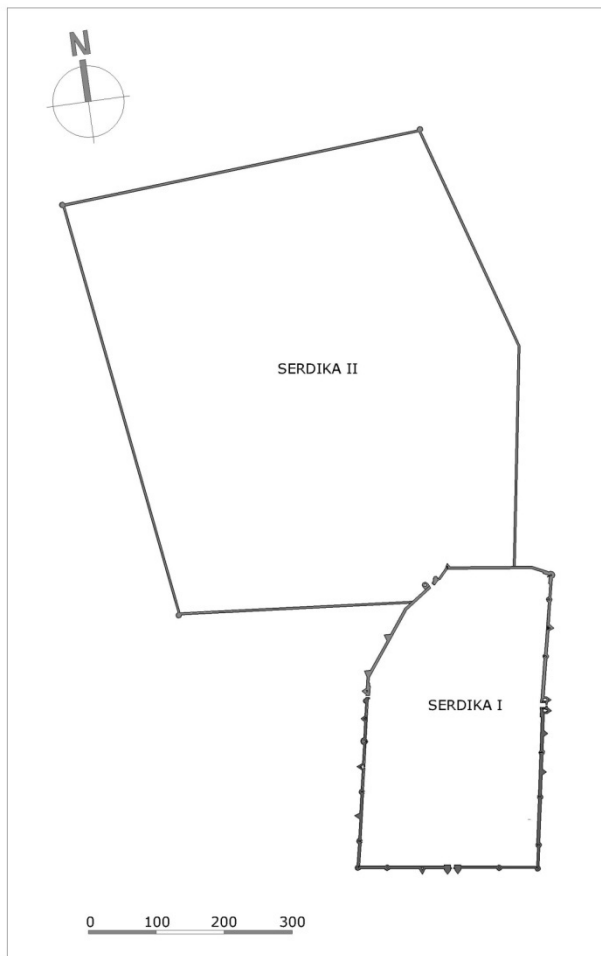
The author is especially grateful to Prof. Michael Werner, who introduced De Sena to the history of Rome long ago at the University of Albany and invited him to participate in the conference in the pleasant city of Sremska Mitrovica, and Mrs. Slobodanka Werner, who led De Sena and ARCS fellows on an unforgettable tour of archaeological sites in Serbia in October 2012.

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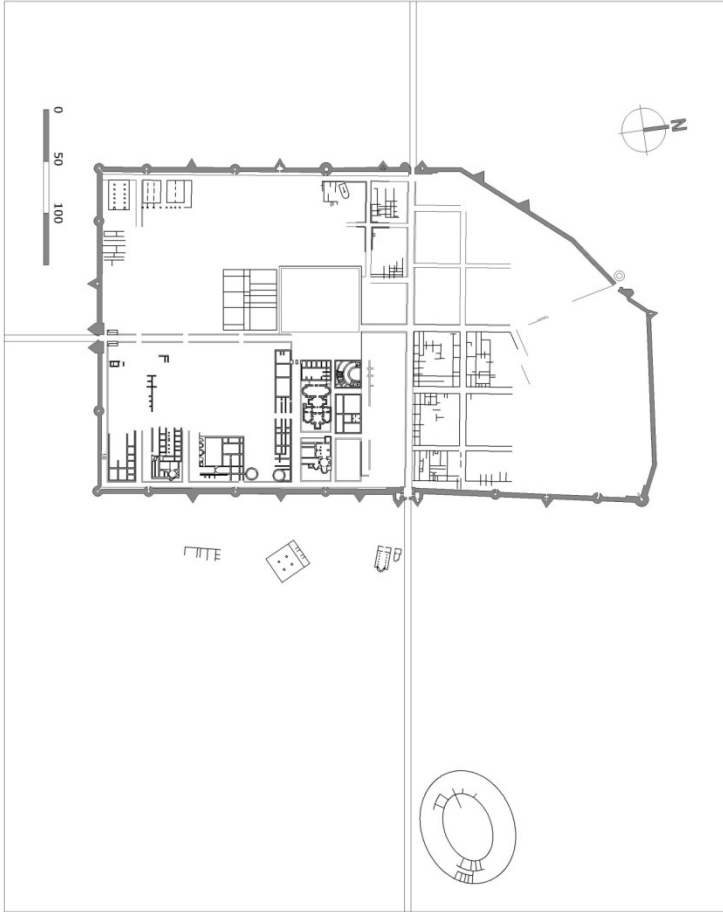
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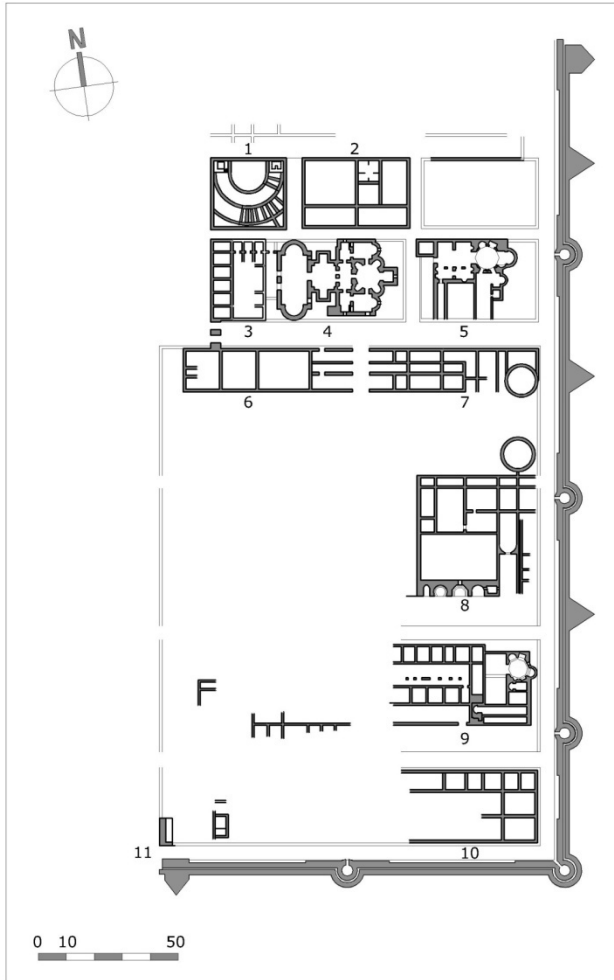




**Figure 2. Plan with Serdica I (“old”) and II (“new”)**  
(image by Dimitrina Popova after Boyadzhiv 1959, fig. 8)



**Figure 3. Plan of “old Serdica” with amphitheater**  
(image by Dimitrina Popova after Shalганov 2008)



**Figure 4. Detailed plan of SE area of “old Serdica”**  
 (image by Dimitrina Popova after Kirin 2000, figs. 4, 15, 20, 62, 63, 72, 74  
 and Kirova 2012, fig. 13)



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## LATIN AND GREEK RECENSIONS OF THE *PASSION OF ST. IRENAEUS OF SIRMIIUM*

**Summary:** According to expert opinion, the passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium (†304) falls into the category of passions whose literary core was based on Roman court proceedings (*acta proconsularia*) against the first historically asserted bishop of Sirmium. The passion is preserved in two recensions, Latin and Greek, which served as the basis for transmission into other European languages during the Middle Ages. Renowned Italian expert in early Christianity and Patristics, Manlio Simonetti, was the only scholar to conduct a comparative analysis of the two recensions of the Passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium more than half a century ago. Considering the fact that there is still no consensus on Simonetti's conclusions in the contemporary scientific literature, this paper re-examines the topic, conducts comparative analysis of the Latin and Greek texts of the passion, and offers new solutions regarding the original language of the passion and the relation between the Latin and Greek recensions.

**Key words:** *The Passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium*, Greek recension, Latin recension, hagiography.

When studying the early days of Christianity in the territory of Roman province Pannonia Secunda, the scholar is overwhelmed by the abundance of documents that mention the martyrdom of the Pannonian martyrs in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>, compared to the centuries of silence in both written and material sources<sup>1</sup>. However, the scholar soon understands that this enticing

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the quotes from martyrologies and preserved descriptions of martyrdoms in Pannonia, we know of 22 named martyrs as well as several those who anonymously suffered for their faith. Although Pavle Miler, the abbot of Mitrovica (19<sup>th</sup> century) lists about 200 martyrs in Sirmium between 304 and 308, this data is not historically grounded, see Радомир Прица, *Хришћански мученици у Сирмијуму*, in: Душан Познановић (ур.), *Sirmium и на*

fund of sources is mainly comprised of hagiographies (martyrologies, passions, legends, miracles, lives of saints), which, as alluring as they might be with their detailed narratives, precise dating and numerous names, present perhaps one of the most controversial historical sources of dubious provenance and even more dubious content, and, as such, require the scholar to be extremely critical and use a well-founded methodology. Passions of Pannonian martyrs (*Quattuor Coronati*)<sup>2</sup>, Irenaeus of Sirmium, Pollio of Cibalae, Syneros of Sirmium, Quirinus of Cibalae) executed between 286 and 308 AD<sup>3</sup> form the basis of knowledge on the early Christian churches and communities in the area.

Let us first introduce passion as a genre, since it has limited value as a historical source. Their credibility depends on the possibility cross-referencing with the data from other sources (martyrologies, historiographies, epigraphic data and material remains of the cults of the martyrs). Hippolyte Delehaye (1859-1941) made the first steps for classifying the literature on saints together with the guidelines for a critical approach to this rich, but unreliable and occasionally utterly fictitious source of Christian history<sup>4</sup>. Delehaye divides the writings on the lives and martyrdom of Christian martyrs into six groups based on their historical value. The most valuable are the original Roman court records or their transcripts (*Acta martyrum*)<sup>5</sup>, followed by the witnesses' accounts. The third group is comprised of the descriptions of martyrdom, in temporal proximity to the event, and based on court documents incorporated into the narrative (*Passiones* or *Gesta martyrum*). The fourth group consists of literary essays which do not rely on documents (*Vitae sanctorum*), but are based on

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небу и на земљи (1700 година од страдања хришћанских мученика), Сремска Митровица 2004, 27-30.

<sup>2</sup> Although they cannot be related to Pannonia with certainty, the Pannonian origin of this cult is certainly a legitimate hypothesis. See Никола Вулић, *Passio sanctorum IV coronatorum*, Глас СКА 82, 1934, 1-22; Фрушкогорски мученици, Гласник Историског друштва у Новом Саду IV, 1934, 359-373; Павле Мијовић, *Сирмијски скулптори и каменоресци - Quattuor coronati*, Старинар XVII, 1966, 53-59; Vesna Lalošević, *Problemi vezani uz mučeničku grupu Svetih Četvorice Ovjenačanih*, Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest 38, sv. 1, 2006, 59-72; Darija Damjanović, *O ranokršćanskoj pasiji Četvorice Ovjenačanih (Passio ss. Quattuor Coronatorum)*, Scrinia Slavonica 9, sv. 1, 2009, 337-350; Jovan Maksimović, Marko Maksimović, *Early Christian martyrs who refused to worship the cult of Asclepius in the times of Diocletian*, Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica 8, sv. 2, 2010, 239-260.

<sup>3</sup> For the quoted chronology see Mirja Jarak, *Ranokršćanski mučenici Panonije*, y: Darija Damjanović (ur.), *1700 godina svetih srijemskih mučenika*, Zbornik radova međunarodnog znanstvenog simpozija, Đakovo, 2004, 51-71; *Martyres Pannoniae – the Chronological Position of the Pannonian Martyrs in the Course of Diocletian's Persecution*, y: Rajko Bratož (hrsg.), *Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätrömischen Zeit*, Ljubljana 1996, 263-290.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, Bruxelles 1921; *Les légendes hagiographiques*, Bruxelles 1955; *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, Bruxelles 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Latin Christian poet Prudentius was the first to notice in his anthology of poems dedicated to martyrs of the early church that the court documents were lost, because they were allegedly destroyed by a soldier who wanted to prevent their dissemination. He calls those fundamental texts *tenaces libelli* and they were the foundation for martyrological literature since 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Prudentius, *Peristeph.* I 76-77).

historical events<sup>6</sup>. The last two groups are non-authentic narratives which are either a product of literary creation or they are deliberate forgeries. All groups except for the first two are characterised by a panegyric tone. According to Delehaye's classification, the Passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium falls into the third group<sup>7</sup>, whose literary core was based on Roman court documents from the proceedings against the first historically attested bishop of Sirmium, and, in expert opinion, it is historically more valuable than the passions of other Pannonian martyrs<sup>8</sup>.

As we will show, this judgement primarily refers to the Latin redaction of the passion, as the passion of Irenaeus was preserved in two recensions, Latin and Greek, which served as the basis for transmission into other European languages during the Middle Ages<sup>9</sup>. This passion clearly corresponds to the other passions from this group. To illustrate this, we will highlight typical passages from some passions, such as that of Justin the Philosopher (2<sup>nd</sup> century), stressing the characteristic vocabulary found also in the passion of Irenaeus:

... **comprehensi** Justinus, et qui cum illo erant, **adducti sunt ad** Romae Praesidem, Rusticum nomine. Quibus ante tribunal constitutis, Rusticus **Praeses dixit** Justino: Age, esto **diis ipsis obediens**, et **Imperatoris edictis**. Illi autem Justinus **respondit**: Nemo unquam reprehendi aut condemnari poterit, qui Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi praeceptis

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<sup>6</sup> Compare Tomislav Šagi-Bunić, *Povijest kršćanske literature*, sv. 1, Zagreb 1976, 203-223.

<sup>7</sup> For other sources on Irenaeus of Sirmium see Александра Смирнов-Бркић, *Писани извори о Св. Иринеју Сирмијском у контексту најстарије црквене организације Срема*, у: Ђура Харди (ур.), *Средњовековна насеља на тлу Војводине, историјски процеси и догађаји*, Сремска Митровица 2013, 71-96; Svetozar Ritig, *Martyrologij srijemsko-pannonске metropolije*, Bogoslovska smotra 2-4, 1911, 353-371; Jacques Zeiller, *Les origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'Empire romain*, Paris 1918, Жак Зелер, *Почеци хришћанства на Балкану* (прев. Корнелија Никчевић), Подгорица 2005, Радомир Поповић, *Рано хришћанство на Балкану пре досељења Словена*, Београд 1995; Милена Миљин, *Пасија св. Иринеја Сирмијскога*, Источник 45/46, 2003, 156-161; Владислав Поповић, *Блажени Иринеј, први епископ Сирмијума*, у: Душан Познановић (ур.), *Sirmium и на небу и на земљи (1700 година од страдања хришћанских мученика)*, Сремска Митровица 2004, 81-86.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Musurillo, one of the contemporary editors of *Acts of the Martyrs*, classifies the passion of Irenaeus as the oldest type; see Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford 1972, xliii.

<sup>9</sup> The oldest copy of the passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium in Old Slavonic is in the *Codex Suprasliensis*, originating from the end of 10<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Codex is divided into three parts which are kept in the National Library in Warsaw, the National Library in Sankt Petersburg and the National and University Library in Ljubljana. The part with the passion of Irenaeus is in the Sankt Petersburg manuscript and it is based on the translation from a Byzantine menology, see R. Abicht, *Quellennachweise zum Codex Suprasliensis*, Archiv für slavische Philologie 16, 1894, 140-153; Иван Добрев, *Гръцките думи в Супрасълския сборник и втората редакция на старобългарските богослужбени книги*, Български език 28, St. 2, 1978, 89-98.

obedierit... cooperante gratia **Domini nostri Iesu Christi, cui gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.**  
(*Acta s. Iustini et sociorum*)<sup>10</sup>

*Acta SS. Martyrum Scilitanorum* is considered to be the oldest document of the *Acta martyrum* type. They were executed on 17<sup>th</sup> July 180, as the document precisely states at the very beginning. The original Latin document is rather short, without the introduction and conclusion typical of passions, or any biblical quotes put in the mouth of martyrs.<sup>11</sup> We cite certain passages here to facilitate a comparison with the passion of Irenaeus:

Praesente bis Claudiano consulibus, xvi Kalendas Augustas, Kartagine in secretario inpositis Sperato, Nartzalo et Cittino, Donata, Secunda, Vestia, Saturnius proconsul dixit: Potestis indulgentiam domni nostri imperatoris promereri, si ad bonam mentem redeatis... Speratus dixit. Christianus sum... **Fac quod vis...** Speratus iterum dixit: Christianus sum: et cum eo omnes consenserunt... Saturninus proconsul decretum ex tabella recitavit: Speratum, Nartzalum, Cittinum, Donatam, Vestiam, Secundam et ceteros ritu Christiano se uiuere confesses, quoniam oblata sibi facultate ad Romanorum morem redeundi obstinanter perseuerauerant, gladio animaduerti placet... Et ita omnes simul martyrio coronati sunt, et regnant cum Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto per omnia **saecula saeculorum. Amen.**

(*Acta SS. Martyrum Scilitanorum*)<sup>12</sup>

There are evidently fewer similarities between the passion of Irenaeus and *Acta SS. Martyrum Scilitanorum* in terms of both form and contents.

## 1. THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION

Although the first printed editions of the so-called *Acta Martyrum* date back to the very discovery of printing,<sup>13</sup> the first printed edition of the passion of Irenaeus was prepared by the Bollandist Association, named after Dutch Jesuit Jean Bolland (Lat. *Johannes Bollandus*) (1596-1665), who was the originator of the famous edition *Acta Sanctorum*. In 1668, Godfried Henschen (1601-1681) and Daniel van Papenbroek (1628-1714) presented the first critical edition of the Latin and Greek recensions of The Passion of

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<sup>10</sup> Gerardus Rauschen et alii (ed.), *Florilegium Patristicum*, vol. 3, Bohn 1904, 113-119; quote according to Theodore Ruinart, *Acta martyrum*, Ratisbone 1859, 105-107.

<sup>11</sup> For some time it was believed that a Greek manuscript was the original that all the other versions derived from, see Hermann Usener, *Acta martyrum Scilitanorum Graece edita*, Bonn 1881. The oldest manuscript is a Latin text from 9<sup>th</sup> century stored in the British Museum Library in London (*Codex Brit. Mus.* 11880), see J. A. Robinson, *Texts and studies: contributions to Biblical and Patristic literature*, V/2, Cambridge 1891, 112-116.

<sup>12</sup> Idem.

<sup>13</sup> Mombritius's (around 1480) and Surius's (16<sup>th</sup> century) editions did not include the passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium, see Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu Vitae Sanctorum*, t. 1, Paris 1910 (reprint); Laurentius Surius, *De probatis Sanctorum historiis*, II, Köln 1570-1575 (reprint 1875).

Irenaeus of Sirmium within volume three of the *Acta Sanctorum* for March.<sup>14</sup>

The Bollandist edition of the Latin recension of the passion of Irenaeus was primarily based on the manuscript found in *Legendarium Bodecensis* (around 1460),<sup>15</sup> destroyed in 1945.<sup>16</sup> However, modern science is now questioning the credibility of the Bollandist editions of manuscripts comprising *Acta Sanctorum*.<sup>17</sup> *This is why the first critical edition of the Latin recension of the Passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium by the standards of modern science is considered to be the one given by Mabillon's disciple Theodore Ruinart, where he compares the manuscripts of the six codices of higher credibility than the Bollandist collection.*<sup>18</sup> Ruinart estimates that the passion emerged "ex Praesidialibus Actis", which were then copied in most Latin manuscripts within martyrologies under 25<sup>th</sup> March<sup>19</sup>. Today we know of 41 Latin manuscripts which contained or contain the Passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium,<sup>20</sup> the oldest of which dates from the late 8<sup>th</sup> century and is kept in the Bavarian State Library<sup>21</sup>. The mentioned number of manuscripts stands as evidence that the passion was widespread in the west. It is of great significance to note that it has been concluded that the Latin recension of the passion is homogenous and that it comes from the same original text, and that the numerous manuscripts show no considerable deviation in terms of form and content, thus uniformly opening with: *Cum esset persecutio sub Diocletiano*, and ending with: *in fluvium* (in some variations *qui*) *Savi*

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<sup>14</sup> *Acta Sanctorum* (hereinafter *AASS*) Martii, pars III, Parisiis et Romae 1865, 556-557 (Latin recension), App. \*23 (Greek recension).

<sup>15</sup> See *Analecta Bollandiana* (hereinafter *AnBol.*)27 (1908) 295.

<sup>16</sup> *Comp. AnBol.* 52 (1934), 196.

<sup>17</sup> François Dolbeau, *Les sources manuscrites des Acta Sanctorum et leur collecte (xvii<sup>e</sup> - xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, y: Robert Godding, Bernard Joassart, Xavier Lequeux, François de Vriendt (éds), *De Rosweyde aux Acta Sanctorum. La recherche hagiographique des Bollandistes à travers quatre siècles, Actes du Colloque international, Bruxelles, 5 octobre 2007*, Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes 2009 (Subsidia Hagiographica 88), 105-147.

<sup>18</sup> T. Ruinart, *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta*, Paris 1689. Ruinart used the following manuscripts: Codd. mss. S. Remigii Remensis (lost); S. Cornelii Compendiensi (lost); S. Michaelis in Periculo maris (Avranches, Bibl. mun. 167, f. 114v-115, 13th century); Ruinart used a copy saved in a Parisian manuscript ms. de Paris, B. N. F. lat. 11763); Bibliothecae Colbertinae (Paris, B.N.F. lat. 5297, f. 159v-160, 13th century); Monasterii Ursicampi (lost); RR. PP. Fuliensium Parisiensium (Paris, B.N.F. lat. 17004, f. 176rv, 13th century).

<sup>19</sup> In addition to the above mentioned issues see Daniele Farlati, *Illyrici sacri tomus septimus: Ecclesia Diocletana, Antibarensis, Dyrrhachiensis et Sirmiensis*, Venetia 1842, XIV, 488-489; Oscar von Gebhardt, *Acta martyrum selecta. Ausgewählte Märtyreracten, und andere Urkunden aus der Verfolgungszeit der christlichen Kirche*, Berlin 1902, 162-165; Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford 1972, 294-301; Anton Benvin, *Muka Sv. Ireneja srijemskoga. Ranokršćanski portret biskupa mučenika*, Diacovensia 1, 1994, 84-87.

<sup>20</sup> For the list of manuscripts, see François Dolbeau, *Le dossier hagiographique d'Irénée, évêque de Sirmium*, *Antiquité Tardive* 7, 1999, 205-214.

<sup>21</sup> München, Bayerische Staatsbibl. Clm 4554, f. 89v-91, VIII-IX century (Benediktbeuern); published in *Münchener Museum* 1, 1912, 194; *Analecta bollandiana* 114, 1996, 155-156 (=Codices latini antiquiores, n° 1241).

(variation *nuncupatur*). *Martyrizatus est famulus Dei sanctus Irenaeus episcopus civitatis Sirmiensem, die VIII Idus Aprilis sub Diocletiano et Maximiano imperatoribus, agente Probo Praeside, regnante Domino nostro Iesu Christo cui est gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.* (BHL 4466).

Professor emeritus François Dolbeau,<sup>22</sup> *the last publisher of the Latin recension of the Passion of Irenaeus*,<sup>23</sup> points out the flaws of the Bollandist collection of the Latin manuscripts, due to the fact that *Codex Bodecensis* is of a later date and with numerous mistakes.<sup>24</sup> Dolbeau prepared his edition by comparing the four oldest groups of manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> Dolbeau's selection was based on the thesis that the Munich and Vienna manuscripts originate from the same tradition as the manuscripts used by Ruinart. The other two groups belong to a separate branch, which can be seen from a passage of the passion 3.3 which in this case cites biblical psalms from *Mt* 10:37-38, while the first group cites *Mt* 10:33 in that place. Dolbeau consulted the Greek tradition in case the manuscripts were conflicting, but this was limited to the Bollandist edition. The authors of this paper used primarily Ruinart's and Dolbeau's editions as the source of the Latin recension (hereinafter *BHL* 4466), but we deemed it necessary to re-examine them and, in certain, places give precedence to the Munich manuscript (hereinafter *Minh. MS.*).

While the Latin recension seems quite clear on the issue of provenance, distribution, and critical analysis of the text, the situation is rather different with the Greek recension of the Passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium, starting from the fact that the full list of known manuscripts featuring this recension<sup>26</sup> is missing, to the fact that this recension appears in three independent branches: 1. The Passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium which opens with: Ὅτ' ἄν τρόποις ἀγαθοῖς εὐσεβῆς συνασκηθῆ, τῶν κρειττόνων ἐπίμενος, ends with: a) ταῦτα πάσχω<sup>27</sup>. Καὶ πληγῆς τῷ ξίφει ἐπέμωθη εἰς τὸν Σαδὸν ποταμόν. Ἐπράχθη δὲ ταῦτα . . . ἡγεμονεύοντος Πρόβου, κατὰ δὲ ἡμᾶς βασιλεύοντος . . . Ἀμῆν (*BHG* 948),<sup>27</sup> or b) πληγῆς τῷ ξίφει ὑπὸ τοῦ σπεκουλάτορος εἰς τὸν ποταμόν λεγόμενον Σαδὸν τὸν ὄντα ἐώ. Ἐπράχθη δὲ ταῦτα μὴν Ἀυγούστῳ εἰκάδι πρώτῃ, ἐν τῷ Σερμίῳ . ἐτελειώθη δὲ ὁ ἅγιος...

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<sup>22</sup> Nous remercions sincèrement le professeur de son conseil généreux sur les manuscrits utilisés par Bollandistes dans *Acta Sanctorum* pour passion d'Irénée, évêque de Sirmium.

<sup>23</sup>F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*, 211.

<sup>24</sup>F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*, 208-209.

<sup>25</sup> These are: München, Bayerische Staatsbibl. Clm 4554, f. 89v-91, 8-9th century (Benediktbeuern); Torino, Bibl. naz. F. III.16, f. 31-32v, 10th century (Bobbio), see *AnBol* 28 (1909), 432; Wien, Österreichisch Nationalbibl. 371, f. 77-78v, 10th century (Salzburg); S. Michaelis in Periculo maris, Bibliothecae Colbertinae (Paris, B.N.F. lat. 5297, f. 159v-160, 13th century (Foucardmont); RR. PP. Fulienisium Parisiensium (Paris, B.N.F. lat. 17004, f. 176rv, 13th century (Feuillants); Dublin, Trin. Coll. Libr. B. 1. 16 (cat. 171), 106-108; 13th century (Jervaux), see *AnBol* 46, 1928, 85.

<sup>26</sup> For the most comprehensive list of the manuscripts of the Greek church tradition from the beginnings up to the 16th century see the monumental work by Albert Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, I-III, Leipzig-Berlin 1937-1952.

<sup>27</sup> This version was published by the Bollandists, see *AA SS*, Martii III, \*23.

ἀμὴν (*BHG* 949)<sup>28</sup>; however, there is another variation of the passion which does not show any connection to the aforementioned, and opens with: Ἄρτι τῶν ἐπι τη κακία περιβοητῶν Διοκλητιανοῦ φεμι καὶ Μαξιμιανοῦ, and ending πάντων ἐφετῶν τὴν ἀκροτάτην δόσιν καὶ βασιλείας Θεοῦ τὴν κληρουχίαν... ἀμὴν. (*BHG* 949e)<sup>29</sup>;

2. The passion of two Irenaeuses, of Sirmium and of Lyons (*Passio duorum Irenaeorum*), which opens with: Οὗτος ὁ ἅγιος ἱερομάρτυς Εἰρηωαῖος ἐπίσκοπος ἦν τοῦ Σιρμιίου, and ends with: ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης μηχανῆς τοῦ ἀντικειμένου (*BHG* 950)<sup>30</sup>;

3. *Passio Irenaei, Or et Oropsaei*, which opens with: Τὸν τῆς εἰρήνης ἐπώνυμον καὶ γενναϊότατον μάρτυρα, and ends with a) τῷ ποταμῷ Σάω οὐτως ὀνομασίμῳ ῥιπτοῦνται καὶ νῦν τῷ θρόνῳ παρίστανται τοῦ παμβασιλέως Θεοῦ ἡμῶν... ἀμὴν (*BHG*951) or b) πάντων ἀγαθῶν μεμεστωμένην καὶ τῆς ἐκεῖθεν τὴν χάριν... ἀμὴν (*BHG*951b)<sup>31</sup>.

Evidently, the situation with the Greek recension is much more complex. To be more precise, almost all previous research of the passion of Irenaeus referred to the Latin recension, and at the very mention of the Greek, it was always, without exception, referred to the text designated 1a in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* and published by the Bollandists (hereinafter *BHG* 948). So far the only person to conduct a comparative analysis of the texts of both recensions is the renowned Italian expert in early Christianity and patristics, Manlio Simonetti<sup>32</sup>. However, Simonetti relied only on the Bollandist Greek edition (*BHG* 948), without any insight into the manuscripts and variations *BHG* 949, 950, and 951, while Dolbeau, who criticises Simonetti's conclusions, being a Latinist, compared only the Latin manuscripts, while *BHG* 948 was, as before, referred to as the Greek recension.

This is why we deemed it necessary to re-examine the issue of the recensions of the passion of Irenaeus and then conduct a comparative analysis of the Greek and Latin texts in all variations. Such a methodology implies an extensive and complex research, starting from the collection of the data on manuscripts all the way to text analysis of all the listed variations. This paper demonstrates the preliminary results of the research based on the Greek recensions whose manuscripts we managed to consult before the paper was published.

The point of departure was that it was essential which manuscripts were going to be compared, and so we first examined the disputable Bollandist text *BHG* 948 and established that it is primarily based on the manuscript designated 174 at the time of the first edition (1668) and kept at the then Royal Library in Paris (*Ex MS. Regis Christianissimi Parisiis signato*

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<sup>28</sup>Petrus Lambecius, Adam Franciscus Kollarius, *Commentariorum de Bibliotheca Cæsarea Vindobonensi*, VIII, Vindobonae 1782, 436-441; Comp. Albert Ehrhard, *op.cit.*, I, 685:57.

<sup>29</sup> This recension originates from an anonymous Byzantine menologion from the 10th century, published in Basiliius Latyšev, *Menologii anonyimi byzantini saec. X quae supersunt*, I, Petropoli 1912, 281-283.

<sup>30</sup>Lambecius-Kollarius, *op.cit.*, 441-442.

<sup>31</sup> B. Latyšev, *op. cit.*, II, 310-311.

<sup>32</sup>Manlio Simonetti, *Studi agiografici*, Roma 1955, 55-75.

174).<sup>33</sup> The Bollandist publisher explained that all Greek menologies list 23<sup>rd</sup> August as the date of Irenaeus's execution, except for the manuscripts of the menology of the *Cryptae-ferratae* abbey, the Clermont Collegium, the Masarene's Library, and *PP. Dominicanorum reformatorum Parisiis*, where it was later moved to 28<sup>th</sup> August. Although there was an inventory<sup>34</sup> of the entire collection of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century thanks to Henry Hammond (1857-1940), unfortunately, we have not been able to identify a single 17<sup>th</sup> century manuscript under the designation the Bollandists referred to. However, the National Library in Paris does hold the following codices containing the passion of Irenaeus: *Grec 548* – previously *Reg. 2481* (11<sup>th</sup> century), under 22<sup>nd</sup> August *Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Εἰρηναίου*, parchment, medium size, 190v-192 v; *Supplément grec 241* – previously *San Germanensis n. 885* (10<sup>th</sup> century) under 21<sup>st</sup> August lists *Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγίου ἱερομάρτυρος Εἰρηναίου*, parchment, large size, 215-216v; *Grec 1177* – previously *Fontenblaudensis 87, Regius 2447* (11<sup>th</sup> century) under 21<sup>st</sup> August *Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Εἰρηναίου*, parchment, medium size, 211-3 v.<sup>35</sup> Of all the listed titles, the only one that could correspond to *BHG 948* considering that it begins with the same title is the last manuscript, but the date does not match as the Bollandists listed 23<sup>rd</sup> March. To find a solution, we contacted the library in Paris, but as waiting for response, we expect new information on the Paris manuscripts of the passion of Irenaeus to be published in the next stage of our research.

The Bollandists used another Greek manuscript from the Milan Library (*Biblioteca Ambrosiana*), and upon examining their funds, we established that the aforementioned manuscript is still in this library under the same designation *Fol. N num. 152*.<sup>36</sup> The author of this manuscript was a monk by the name of *Laurentius* who wrote it in a monastery in Calabria ("in Rutiensi Calabriae monasterio"), as the Bollandists note "ante annos quingentos", therefore in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it contains the lives of saints for the month of August, including the passion of Irenaeus, which opens with: *Τὸν τῆς εἰρήνης ἐπόνυμον καὶ γενναϊότατον μάρτυρα, Ἐιρηναῖον τὸν μέγαν ἢ τοῦ Σιρμίου πόλις πρόεδρον ἔσχε* therefore matching *BHG 951* which does not correspond to either *BHG 948* or *BHL 4466*.

Next we considered the *BHG 949* variation, a copy of which is kept in the Austrian National Library (Die Österreichische Nationalbibliothek). This library, as we will prove, holds one of the most important manuscripts

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<sup>33</sup>Paul M. Priebe, *From Bibliothèque du Roi to Bibliothèque Nationale: The Creation of a State Library, 1789- 1793*, *The Journal of Library History* (1974-1987) 17/4, Fall 1982, 389-408.

<sup>34</sup>Henri Auguste Omont, *Facsimilés des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du IXe et XIVe siècle*, Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes, Paris 1891; *Facsimilés des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du IVe et XIIIe siècle*, Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes, Paris 1892; *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum graecorum Bibliothecae nationalis*, Paris 1896; *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs*, Paris 1897.

<sup>35</sup>H. Omont, *Catalogus*, 108.

<sup>36</sup>C. Pasini, *Inventario agiografico dei manoscritti greci dell'Ambrosiana* (Subsidia hagiographica 84), Bruxelles 2003.



of the Greek recension (*Cod. Hist. Gr.* 45, Bl. 246r-247v)<sup>37</sup>. This manuscript dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and it contains the menology for the month of August which lists the passion of Irenaeus under 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The manuscript was purchased in Constantinople for the court in Vienna by a famous diplomat of Flemish origin, Ogier Gisleen van Busbeke (lat. *Augerius Gisleenius Busbequius*; 1522-1592).<sup>38</sup> The *BHG* 949 in Vienna is a considerably longer and more elaborate variation of *BHG* 948.

## 2. TEXT ANALYSIS OF *BHL* 4466, *BHG* 948 AND *BHG* 949<sup>39</sup>

As a literary unit, based on recensions *BHL* 4466, *BHG* 948 and *BHG* 949, the passion of Irenaeus can be divided into the introductory note by the editor, description of the martyrdom and the concluding remarks. The central part, which may have originated from court records or witnesses' accounts, has the greatest historical value. The introductory and concluding notes are doubtlessly subsequent remarks by the editor, whereby *BHL* 4466 uses first-person narration (*pandam/ostendam*) and mentions *vobis*, which indicates the presence of an audience, in this case probably a congregation gathered in a martyrdom or a basilica, which makes this passion part of the liturgy<sup>40</sup>. *BHG* 949 and *BHG* 948 use the general and neutral tone of third-person narration to speak of Irenaeus's example of martyrdom. The passages mentioned here also determine the historical and geographic framework of the central event, *BHL* 4466: *persecutio sub Diocletiano et Maximiano imperatoribus... die VIII Idus Aprilis sub Diocletiano et Maximiano imperatoribus, agente Probo Praeside*, *BHG* 948: τοῦ γενομένου ἐπὶ Διοκκλητιανοῦ καὶ Μαξιμιανοῦ καὶ Κωνσταντίου τῶν βασιλέων... Ἐπράχθη δὲ ταῦτα μηνὶ Αὐγούστῳ εἰκάδι πρώτῃ, ἐν Σεμίῳ, ἡγεμονεύοντος Πρῶβου, *BHG* 949: τοῦ γενομένου ἐπὶ Διοκκλητιανοῦ βασιλέως... μηνὶ Αὐγούστῳ κγ', βασιλεύοντος Διοκκλητιανοῦ, ἡγεμονεύοντος Πρῶβου.

<sup>37</sup> We are indebted to the Department of Manuscripts of the Austrian National Library for sending us the manuscripts of the passion of Irenaeus.

<sup>38</sup> For Busbeque's antiquarian activities see Ifigenija Draganić, *Turciacae Epistulae: Busbeque's Views on the Power of the Ottoman Empire in his Letters*, in: *Power and Influence in South-eastern Europe: 16-19th Century* (eds. Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev, Vania Racheva), *Geschichte: Forschung und Wissenschaft*, Bd. 38, Berlin 2013, 221-229.

<sup>39</sup> The following lexicons and handbooks were used in the analysis of the passion: *Jan Frederik Niermeyer, Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, Leiden 1976; Du Cange et al., *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, 1-10, Niort 1883-1887; Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik*, I-II, München 1939, 1950; G. W. H. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961; Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford 1879; Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996 (9th ed.); E. A. *Sophocles, Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*, New York 1887; Andrew L. Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, Oxford & New York 1995; Viktor Emil Gardthausen, *Griechische Palaeographie*, Bd. 2: *Die Schrift, Unterschriften und Chronologie im Altertum und im byzantinischen Mittelalter*, Leipzig 1913.

<sup>40</sup> Anton Benveniste assumes that the form the passion was preserved in was written for the very purpose of services in the churches in Sirmium dedicated to Irenaeus, where this was read as part of liturgy on the day of the martyr's death (lat. *dies natalis*), see A. Benveniste, *op.cit.*, 84-87.

The introductory part already shows considerable differences between the Latin and Greek manuscripts, as well as between the manuscripts in the very Greek tradition. Namely, each recension lists different emperors who reigned when the martyrdom took place. Simonetti considers this to be the crucial moment in comparative analysis of the passion and determining seniority, because from a later perspective, after cessation of the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, Constantius, father of Constantine the Great, was always depicted in church tradition as the protector of Christians.<sup>41</sup> This is why mentioning his name among the so-called emperors persecutors could indicate a formal naming of the ruler in archetypical court proceedings against Irenaeus. Still, one must ask, if the sequence is the typical chronological formula which lists all the tetrarchs, why then Galerius is not listed, since he is commonly labelled as one of the perpetrators of the Christian persecution, who also ruled the territory of Sirmium in the system of tetrarchy.

Simonetti's thesis is founded on the authenticity of the passion *BHG* 948, whose provenance essentially remains unknown to date. The first to offer a solution was the educated friar Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri (1869-1960), who suggested that the original, which both traditions derived from, had the names of all four tetrarchs Διοκλητιανού καὶ Μαξιμιανού, Μαξιμιανού καὶ Κωνσταντίου, and that a palaeographic error known as *homoeoteleuton* occurred, whereby analogies merge or cancel each other out, and as a result, Marcus Aurelius Valerius **Maximianus** and Gaius **Galerius** Valerius Maximianus became one person.<sup>42</sup> It should be added that later church tradition introduced the shift of responsibility for persecutions during the tetrarchy from Diocletian to Galerius, and so, for example, quite early, the martyrology of Beda Venerabilis states the following for Irenaeus: "Et apud Sirmium natales. Irenaei Episcopi, qui tempore **Maximiani** imperatoris, sub praeside Probo, primo tormentis acerrimis vexatus, deinde diebus plurimis in carcere cruciatus, novissime abscisso capite cosummatum est".<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the introductory parts are different in scope and content. While the Latin recension starts with a very short introduction aimed at dating the martyrdom and defining the personality of Irenaeus, the Greek recension *BHG* 948 and especially *BHG* 949 are far more flamboyant, lengthier and more general in order to present the behavioural paradigm of the martyrs:

Cum esset persecutio sub Diocletiano et Maximiano imperatoribus, quando diversis agonibus concertantes Christiani, a tyrannis illata supplicia devota deo mente suscipientes, praemiis se perpetuis participes efficiebant. Quod et factum est circa famulum dei **Irenaeum episcopum urbis Sirmiensem**, cuius iam nunc vobis certamen pandam victoriamque ostendam; qui pro modestia sua ingenita et **timore divino cui operibus rectis** inserviebat, dignus nominis sui inventus est.<sup>44</sup>

*BHL* 4466

<sup>41</sup>M. Simonetti, *Studi agiografici*, 60.

<sup>42</sup>Pio Franchi de' Cavalieri, *Note agiografiche*, vol. 9 (Studi e Testi 175), Roma 1952, 26.

<sup>43</sup>According to S. Ritig, *op. cit.*, 362-363.

<sup>44</sup>F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*, 211.

Ὅτ' ἂν **τρόποις ἀγαθοῖς** εὐσεβῆς συνασκηθῆ, τῶν κρειττόνων ἐφιέμενος, καὶ **φόβον Θεοῦ** προσλάβηται, τότε πάντων ἀθρόως τῶν ἐν τῷ δὲ τῷ βίῳ καταφρονήσας, πρὸς τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων ἀγαθῶν τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν ἀπειγεται καὶ ἄπερ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρόντα, πίστει βεβαία θεώμενος, ἐπεθύμησεν, ταῦτα θάπτον διὰ αὐτῆς τῆς αὐτοψίας ὑπολαβὼν ἔχειν, δοξάζει τὸν κύριον. Ὁ δὲ γέγονε καὶ περὶ τὸν μακάριον **ἐπίσκοπον Εἰρηναῖον τῆς τοῦ Σιρμίου πόλεως**. Οὗτος γὰρ δι' ἐπιείκειαν ὑπερβάλλουσαν καὶ τὴν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐλάβειαν, τοῖς ἔργοις κυρῶν τὴν προσηγορίαν, καὶ νέος τῆς προεδρίας ἀξιωθείς, καταλαβόντος αὐτὸν τοῦ διωγμοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐπὶ Διοκλητιανοῦ καὶ Μαξιμιανοῦ καὶ Κωνσταντίου τῶν βασιλέων, ἀκάμπτω καὶ ἀνεנדότῳ προθυμία χρώμενος, καὶ τοῖς ἐμπροσθεν ἐπικτεινόμενος, ἔσπευδεν ἐπὶ τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως.<sup>45</sup>

BHG 948

The only thing that truly matches in these preambles is Irenaeus's name and status, the mention of fear of God and righteous deeds (bold in quotation), but in a different context. Simonetti claims that the Latin preamble is typical of the passions of Greek origin and illustrates this with the introduction to the passion of St. Julius of Silistra, also executed under Diocletian (direct analogies are bold, and indirect underlined):

*Tempore persecutionis, quando gloriosa certamina fidelibus oblata perpetua promissa expectabant accipere<sup>46</sup>.*

Cum esset **persecutio sub Diocletiano et Maximiano imperatoribus, quando** diversis agonibus concertantes Christiani, a tyrannis illata supplicia devota deo mente suscipientes, praemiis se **perpetuis** participes efficiebant.

BHL 4466

Ὅτ' ἂν **τρόποις ἀγαθοῖς** εὐσεβῆς συνασκηθῆ, τῶν κρειττόνων ἐφιέμενος, καὶ φόβον Θεοῦ προσλάβηται, τότε πάντων ἀθρόως τῶν ἐν τῷ δὲ τῷ βίῳ καταφρονήσας, πρὸς τῶν **ἐπηγγελμένων ἀγαθῶν**<sup>47</sup> τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν ἀπειγεται καὶ ἄπερ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρόντα, πίστει βεβαία θεώμενος, ἐπεθύμησεν, ταῦτα θάπτον διὰ αὐτῆς τῆς αὐτοψίας ὑπολαβὼν ἔχειν, δοξάζει τὸν κύριον...**τοῦ γενομένου ἐπὶ Διοκλητιανοῦ καὶ Μαξιμιανοῦ καὶ Κωνσταντίου τῶν βασιλέων**, ἀκάμπτω καὶ ἀνεנדότῳ προθυμία χρώμενος, καὶ τοῖς ἐμπροσθεν ἐπικτεινόμενος, ἔσπευδεν ἐπὶ τὸ **βραβεῖον** τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως.

BHG 948

With regards to the date of Irenaeus's martyrdom, we encounter the following variations in the Latin tradition: 25<sup>th</sup> March (**VII Kal. Apr.**)<sup>48</sup> and

<sup>45</sup> AA SS, Mart. III, App. \*23.

<sup>46</sup> R. Knopf, G. Krüger, *Ausgewählte Märtyrerakten*, Tübingen 1929, 105.

<sup>47</sup> Same meaning, but a different context.

<sup>48</sup> AA SS, Martii III, 555.

6<sup>th</sup> April (VIII Id. Apr.)<sup>49</sup>. An even greater confusion is caused by the dates in the Greek tradition where we find 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August,<sup>50</sup> while the Slavic sources, being on the border of the eastern and western Christian tradition, have double dates. 25<sup>th</sup> March is the result of confusion between the Ides and Kalends, while 23<sup>rd</sup> August is the consequence of mistaking Irenaeus of Sirmium for Irenaeus of Lyons, who was executed on that date. The year of Irenaeus's martyrdom is undoubtedly the spring of 304 after the issuing of the fourth edict on the persecution of Christians.<sup>51</sup> Such a chronology is also confirmed by the preamble to the passion of another Pannonian martyr – Pollio from Cibalae:

**Diocletianus et Maximianus regnantes...** quo tempore haec praereceptio cum venisset ad Sirmiensem civitatem; Probus Praeses imperata sibi persecutione, a clericis sumisit exordium, et comprehensum sanctum Montanum presbyterum ecclesiae Singidunensis, diuque Christianae fidei virtutibus conversatum, jussit necari. **Irenaeum quoque Episcopum Sirmiensis ecclesiae,** pro fide et commissae sibi plebis constantia fortiter dimicantem...

The content of the central part of the passion is largely identical. However, the length of the narrative is different. *BHL* 4466 has a shorter preamble, but its central part is longer compared to *BHG* 948 and it is also in the form of a dialog, which resembles court proceedings. Due to the form of a dialog, which is not present in *BHG* 948 and *BHG* 949, researchers have given precedence to the Latin over the Greek recension. Simonetti, however, claims that both the Latin and the Greek recension that we have in our possession originate from a lost Greek original.<sup>53</sup> As an argument to support the theory of a common Greek original, Simonetti states that the territory of the Roman Pannonia was bilingual. He further arguments the thesis with a premise that the language of early Christians in Sirmium was Greek. Opinions on ethnic origin of the first Christians in the Roman Pannonia are still opposed scientifically. Judging by the number of Greek names on Christian epitaphs and the hypothesis that Christianity penetrated into this area from the southeast one group<sup>54</sup> claims that the first Christians

<sup>49</sup> It is mentioned on this date by the oldest written sources on Irenaeus of Sirmium, *Martyrologium syriacum* and *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, see *AASS*, Novembris II, Bruxelles 1894, LV.

<sup>50</sup> The famous Menologion of Basil II (*Ms. Vat. gr.* 1613) from the 10th century lists it on the 23rd August.

<sup>51</sup> H. Musurillo, *The Acts*, xliii.

<sup>52</sup> *Passio S. Pollionis et aliorum*, према Т. Ruinart, *Acta martyrum*, 434-436.

<sup>53</sup> **M. Simonetti, *Studi agiografici***, 60, бел. I. Tillemont was the first to present the idea of the Greek original, see L. Lenain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, t. 5, Paris 1698, 250-254. This stance is supported by Milena Milin, see М. Милин, *Пасуја*, 161. Dolbeau opposes Simonetti's opinion stating that in bilingual environments the relationship between the two official languages has to be mutual, which therefore makes it impossible to establish which language was the primary, F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*, 206.

<sup>54</sup> Péter Kovács, *Christianity and the Greek Language in Pannonia*, *Acta Antiqua Hungarica* 43, 2003, 113-114.

in Sirmium were of Greek origin. Others<sup>55</sup> still, rightfully claim that there is abundant epigraphic evidence in the form of Latin names, especially of Christians from Sirmium, as well as that, on the whole, there is more preserved martyrological literature from this area in Latin than in Greek. Additionally, the oldest martyrologies list more Christian martyrs from this area with Latin names (Rutinus, Montanus, Maximus, Donatus, Secundus, Candidian, Quirinus, Pollio, Romulus). It is our opinion that these judgements dismiss chronologies, as there is a considerable difference between the great ethnic diversity of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Sirmium, ruled by Byzantine administration with Greek as the official language, and the early 4<sup>th</sup> century when Sirmium was undisputedly under Roman administration, with one of the tetrarchic courts located in the city itself.

However, Simonetti points out that the comparison of the Greek and Latin recensions is in certain places indicative of translation from Greek to Latin, such as *iratus super fiduciam* as a poor translation of the Greek ὀργισθεῖς... ἐπὶ τῇ παρρησίᾳ, as well as the use of Latin *regalis* instead of *imperialis* as a literal translation of the Greek βασιλικός.<sup>56</sup> Dolbeau presents a counterargument stating that *iratus* followed by the preposition *super* could be the evolutionary form of the classical *iratus de*, and with regard to the Hellenised *regalis*, Dolbeau gives a parallel from the passion of St. Quirinus of Siscia (ch. 4 final sentence) which does not have a Greek recension, and the use of that adjective in the passion of St. Vincent of Saragossa *regalis decreta*<sup>57</sup>.

At this point we would like to underline another passage of the passion at the end of the first chapter of *BHL* 4466 which is indicative of an older Greek recension or at least a Greek editor of the passion: *dignus nomini sui inventus est* shows that the editor interpreted the Greek name Εἰρηναῖος as "peaceful, serene."

*BHG* 948 and *BHG* 949 could have greater historical significance if they did not feature the biblical quotations found in *BHL* 4466. However, all but one can be noted in all three recensions:

*Qui diis et non Deo sacrificat eradicabitur (1 Moj 22:20)*<sup>58</sup>  
*BHL* 4466

*BHG* 948, *BHG* 949

*Si quis me negaverit coram hominibus, et ego negabo eum coram Patre meo qui in caelis est (Mat 10:33)*  
*BHL* 4466

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<sup>55</sup> М. Милин, *Зачеци култова ранохришћанских мученика на тлу Србије*, in: Мирјана Детелић (ур.), *Култ светих на Балкану*, Крагујевац 2001, 9-24.

<sup>56</sup> М. Simonetti, *Studi agiografici*, 63.

<sup>57</sup> F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*.

<sup>58</sup> This biblical quote is also found in other passions regardless of whether their origin is Greek or Latin, comp. passions of Peter Apselamus, Pollio of Cibalae, Phileas and Philoromus, Montanus and Lucius, and it can therefore be considered commonplace.

Ἐάν τις ἀρνησεται με ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀρνήσομαι καὶ γὰρ  
αὐτὸν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Πατρὸς μου ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς  
*BHG 948, BHG 949*

*Qui qui diligit patrem aut matrem aut uxorem aut filios aut fratres aut  
parentes super me, non est me dignus (Mam 10:37)<sup>59</sup>*  
*BHL 4466*

Ὁ φιλῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμέ, ἢ ἀδελφούς, ἢ γυναῖκα, ἢ τέκνα,  
οὐκ ἔστι μου ἄξιος.  
*BHG 948, BHG 949*

It can be concluded that the recensions are compatible in the central part, but we will extract several details in which they differ. The scene with relatives is presented in the Latin text as part of Probus's interrogation, while in the Greek recension it is at the very beginning, it does not even mention the governor, and instead states that the relatives begged and mourned him. Simonetti insists that this is also indicative of a Greek origin of the Latin recension, since in *BHL 4466* Irenaeus allegedly answers Probus's non-existent question<sup>60</sup>:

*Et Probus ad eum dixit: Iam sacrificia, Irenaeae, lucrans pœnas. Irenaeus  
respondit: Fac quod iussum est<sup>61</sup> vis. Hoc a me ne expectes. Probus  
iterum eum fustibus cædi præcipit. ¶ Irenaeus respondit: Deum habeo  
quem a prima ætate...  
*BHL 4466**

This is somewhat clearer in the Greek recension thanks to the narrative:  
Ἐκ πλειόνων δὲ ἡμερῶν ἐν τῇ τῆς εἰρκτῆς φρουρᾷ παραδοθεῖς, μέσης  
νυκτὸς προκαθίσαντος τοῦ ἡγεμόνος προσήχθη πάλιν ὁ μακάριος  
Εἰρηναῖος, καὶ ποικίλας βασάνους ὑπομείνας καὶ ἐρωτώμενος διὰ τί  
οὐκ ἐπιθύει, ἀπεκρίθη, ὅτι: “Θεὸν ἔχω, ὃν ἐκ παιδικῆς...  
*BHG 948*

Still, the oldest Latin manuscript *Minh. MS.* aids comprehension, as, unlike in the Dolbeau's and Ruinart's editions, *praecipit* is followed by different text, which was probably lost in transcriptions:

*Probus iterum eum fustibus cædi præcipit. Ille autem in medio  
pœnarum constitutus, dixit Irenaeus: Deum habeo quem a prima  
ætate...  
*Minh. MS.**

Also, by comparing the texts of *BHG 948* and *BHG 949* in order to establish their mutual relation, we reached a conclusion that *BHG 948* is dependent on *BHG 949*, which discredits its seniority, and, in our opinion, some of Simonetti's arguments on the Greek original of the passion of

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<sup>59</sup> *Minh. MS.* quotes *Mam 10:37-38* in combination with *Luk 14:27*: *qui amat patrem aut matrem aut uxorem aut filios super me non est me dignus et qui non tollet crucem suam et sequitur me non potest meus esse discipulus.*

<sup>60</sup> M. Simonetti, *Studi agiografici*, 66.

<sup>61</sup> *Minh. MS.*: *Fac quod iussum vis.*

Irenaeus. Namely, as a result of examining the manuscript itself, the far longer text of *BHG* 949 helped us interpret two ambiguous places in *BHG* 948 as potential scribal errors. In the introductory part of *BHG* 948 there is a verb ἀπείγεται<sup>62</sup>, which does not exist in this form in Greek. However, the *BHG* 949 manuscript from Vienna uses ἐπείγεται in this place (from ἐπείγω "rush, hurry"). It is possible that the scrivener replaced the initial ἐ with ἀ(ἀπείγεται < ἐπείγεται) or it could be the verb ἀφηγέομαι, seldom ἀπηγέομαι "take away", whereby the sound "i" was mistaken through metathesis ει in the place of η (ἀπείγεται < ἀπηγείται). We believe that neither the meaning of ἐπείγω nor ἀπηγέομαι fits here: πρὸς τῶν ἐπηγγελμένων αγαθῶν τὴν ἀπόλαυσιν ἀπείγεται καὶ ἄπερ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρόντα, and therefore that what was originally here was the verb ἀπέχω "refrain", whereby the scrivener replaced ιχ with γ (ἀπείγεται < ἀπέχεται).

The following is an even more significant place in the introduction of *BHG* 948: καὶ ἄπερ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρόντα, πίστει βεβαία θεώμενος, ἐπεθύμησεν, ταῦτα θάπτον διὰ αὐτῆς τῆς αὐτοψίας ὑπολαβὼν ἔχειν, δοξάζει τὸν κύριον. Ὁ δὲ γέγονε καὶ περὶ τὸν μακάριον ἐπίσκοπον Εἰρηναῖον τῆς τοῦ Συρμίου πόλεως, which hardly makes a meaningful unit, but in *BHG* 949 instead of τῆς παρόντα we have τὰ μένοντα and in the place of ἰ the following is added: **Τὰ δὲ παρόντα εἰς οὐδὲν ἡγεῖται, ὡς φθορὰ, καὶ οὐδενὸς ὄντα ἄξια.** When examining the manuscript from Vienna we realised that the παρόντα in the column of the *BHG* 949 manuscript, which distorts the meaning in *BHG* 948, and τὰ μένοντα are found in the same place only four rows down. This indicates that the editor of *BHG* 948 could have used *BHG* 949 and accidentally skipped lines. This would result in another *homoeoteleuton*. Another possibility is that this was a less successful attempt of shortening. Our thesis that shortening *BHG* 949 gave birth to *BHG* 948 is partially confirmed by the mentioned Slavonic recension of the passion from the *Codex Suprasliensis*<sup>63</sup> done after the Greek model. The reconstructed Greek model is even shorter than the Bollandist *BHG* 948.

What in our opinion adds to the historical value of the *BHG* 949 text from Vienna is the use of the Roman term σπεκουλάτωρ (from Lat. *speculator*), one of the magistrates under the provincial governor and in charge of executions, which is not in use later, and it does not appear either in *BHL* 4466 or in *BHG* 948. As noticed early on by Adam František Kollár (18<sup>th</sup> century), imperial librarian and historian from the reign of Maria Theresa, in his comments to the Vienna manuscript of the passion, the Bollandists used 'some' (*quodam*) Greek manuscript from the royal library in Paris, but this manuscript of the passion is different from the Vienna one in several places.<sup>64</sup>

Among the differences in the recensions, the name of the bridge that Irenaeus was executed on occupies an important place. The Latin recension *BHL* 4466 calls it *pons Basentis*<sup>65</sup>, and the Greek *BHG* 948 and *BHG*

<sup>62</sup> E. A. Sophocles, 494.

<sup>63</sup> See note 9.

<sup>64</sup> Lambecius-Kollarius, *op. cit.*, 439.

<sup>65</sup> There are variations in manuscripts: *Basartas* (Cod. Michaelin.).

949Ἀρτεμις. There were two bridges in Sirmium, one in the west, on the way to the *Ad Bassante* station, and the other east of the city towards Singidunum. It was believed that *pons Basentis* was a bridge on the river Bosut (Lat. *Bacuntius*),<sup>66</sup> which had a different course in Roman times and joined the Sava at Sirmium. This data was based on the etymological probability as well as on the quote of Pliny the Elder: "amnis Bacuntius in Saum influit, ubi civitas Sirmienseium et Amantinorum" (Pl. *N. H.* III 148). Vladislav Popović relates the hydronym *Basentis* to the western Sirmium bridge and the river Bosna.<sup>67</sup> It has not been explained why this bridge is called the Artemis bridge in Greek manuscripts.

Let us point to another important difference between the Greek and the Latin text. When Irenaeus claims he cannot bow *deos manu factos*, the Greek counterpart says τοῖς λεγομένοις θεοῖς, which indicates that the two recensions are unrelated. Benveniste emphasises the significance of using the originally Greek verb *martyrizare*,<sup>68</sup> which opens the conclusion of the passion *BHL* 4466 *Martyrizatus est* which remained "untranslated"<sup>69</sup> in *BHG* 948 and *BHG* 949. This verb appears in the late Latin period,<sup>70</sup> which corresponds to the time when the passion was written. This part can be significant in the context of the emergence of the Latin recension of the passion, but neither of the preserved Greek recensions features this verb.

At the end of the passion, in Irenaeus's prayer, some manuscripts mention the church of Sirmium. Musurillo<sup>71</sup> and Milin<sup>72</sup> believe that the prayer referred to the Sirmium cathedral, and Dolbeau<sup>73</sup> to the church in the generic sense and that the adjective *sirmiensis* was a subsequent interpolation. The word choice here is rather indicative, because, if the original text of the passion was Greek, then the Greek *καθολικὴ* would be translated to Latin as *catholica*, but Milin points out that this could refer to the cathedral as a building.

When it comes to the general features of the passion of Irenaeus, Simonetti pointed out that that this very passion follows the rules of its literary genre<sup>74</sup>. Contrary to this, Dolbeau points out that this passion does not have the common features of a hagiography, because it was written before the 5<sup>th</sup> century hagiographic cliché was formed.<sup>75</sup> Walter Berschin categorised this passion as "biblischer Hintergrundstil"<sup>76</sup>, or the narrative

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<sup>66</sup> S. Ritig, *op. cit.*, 367.

<sup>67</sup> Vladislav Popović, *op. cit.*, 81-86.

<sup>68</sup> From Greek *μαρτυρέω*, comp. E. A. Sophocles, *op. cit.*, 734.

<sup>69</sup> A. Benveniste, *op. cit.*, 93.

<sup>70</sup> J. F. Niermeyer, *op. cit.*, 658, according to whom the verb *martyrizare* was first testified in the work of a 6th century church author Theodosius, *Theodos. Itin.*, 2 (CSEL, t. 39, 137).

<sup>71</sup> H. Musurillo, *The Acts*, xlii.

<sup>72</sup> M. Милин, *Пасуја*, 161.

<sup>73</sup> F. Dolbeau, *Le dossier*, 214.

<sup>74</sup> M. Simonetti, *Qualche osservazione sui luoghi comuni negli atti dei martiri*, *Giornale italiano di filologia* 10, 1957, 147-155.

<sup>75</sup> F. Dolbeau, *op. cit.*, 207.

<sup>76</sup> Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter I: von der Passio Perpetuae zu den Dialogi Gregors der Großen*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie der Mittelalters 8, Stuttgart 1986, 66-74.



emulating the *Bible*. Analysis of the language in the passion of Irenaeus showed that it follows the literary pattern of the letters Cyprian of Carthage sent to Fortunatus<sup>77</sup>. Not only is there a large number of concurrent choices of biblical quotes, but they even occur in the same order. One example is the identical combination of biblical quotes used by Cyprian's and Irenaeus's passions: *2Mos* 22:20 (*Fort.* III.1)<sup>78</sup> and *5 Mos* 32:17 (*Fort.* III.1). Such a combination is not typical of hagiographic citations. This connection can be explained by the popularity of Cyprian's letters to Fortunatus, which was distributed among Christians, and so it might have reached Irenaeus himself or the editor of the passion.

While Manlio Simonetti concluded that the Greek and Latin recensions of the passion of St. Irenaeus "concordano sostanzialmente fra loro nei tratti fondamentali del racconto, ma divergono in piu di un particolare"<sup>79</sup>, this paper has established the relation between the three recensions of the passion of Irenaeus of Sirmium designated as *BHG* 948, *BHG* 949 and *BHL* 4466 as the first stage of the research of the Greek tradition of the passion. We stated the conclusion that so far the most widely used recension was the Bollandist Greek recension *BHG* 948 based on the manuscript of yet undetermined origin, as well as that this manuscript represents a derivation of the Vienna *BHG* 949. Moreover, we believe that Simonetti's comparative analysis method is fundamentally wrong and incomplete, as it is based solely on *BHG* 948. Simonetti concluded that all places appearing in *BHL* 4466, and missing in *BHG* 948, are nothing more than *loci communes* which were interpolated by the Latin editors. However, he neglects some passions exclusively Latin in origin which show analogies with the passion of Irenaeus, as well as the fact that almost the entire martyrological literature of the first four centuries was based on the cases from the eastern part of the Empire, therefore implying the absence of a proper referential model in Latin which is required to make such a ruling.

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<sup>77</sup>Henrik Hildebrandt, *Early Christianity in Roman Pannonia – Facts among Fiction*, y: F. Young, M. Edwards, P. Parvis (eds.), *Studia Patristica: Papers presented at the Forteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003*, vol. XXXIX (Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA 2006), 60.

<sup>78</sup>Robert Weber, *Sancti Cypriani episcopi opera*, vol. 1, Turnhout 1972, 181-216.

<sup>79</sup>M. Simonetti, *Studi agiografici*, 55.

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## AN IMPERIAL BIOGRAPHY DEDICATED TO CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the extensive imperial biography of Emperor Antoninus Elagabalus. The biography was written by an undistinguished writer Aelius Lampridius. Elagabalus was also the last emperor named Antoninus to rule the Roman Empire. He is remembered in history as the emperor unworthy of the Roman throne. The biography of this controversial teenage emperor is dedicated to Constantine the Great.

**Key words:** *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Varius Avitus Bassianus, Antoninus Elagabalus, Julia Soaemias, Julia Maesa Julija Maesa, Constantine the Great.

Among the preserved remains of Roman literature there is a collection of imperial biographies from Hadrian to Carus and their sons Carinus and Numerianus, covering the period between 117 and 284. The part for years 224 to 253 was lost. The main manuscript in *Codex Palatinus* from the Vatican Library holds a collection of imperial biographies titled: VITAE DIVERSORUM PRINCIPUM ET TYRANNORUM A DIVO HADRIANO USQUE AD NUMERIANUM DIVERSIS COMPOSITAE. This collection of biographies is widely known as *Augustan History*, as Casaubon<sup>1</sup> calls it, while the original title was probably DE VITA CAESARIUM or VITAE CAESARUM. Although disputed in some scientific circles<sup>2</sup>, *Augustan History* has always been a subject of scientific research and an important source of 2nd and 3rd century history.

The collection contains thirty biographies, majority of which describe the life of one emperor, while some include two or more, who were put together because they were contemporaries or relatives. They were not just the reigning emperors but also their successors, co-ruler Caesars, and

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<sup>1</sup> David Magie, *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol.3, London-Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1921, xxix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

various claimants to the throne. In line with manuscript tradition, the biographies were co-authored by six different writers: Aelius Spartianus, Vulcacius Gallicanus, Aelius Lampridius, Iulius Capitolinus, Trebellius Pollio, and Flavius Vopiscus. Each of these undistinguished writers dedicated their biographies to an emperor or a potentate. Aelius Spartianus dedicated four biographies to Diocletian, Iulius Capitolinus dedicated three to Diocletian and another three to Constantine; Vulcacius Gallicanus dedicated his only biography of Avidius Cassius to Diocletian, and Aelius Lampridius wrote two biographies at the request of Emperor Constantine himself. Trebellius Pollio's biographies, however, were not dedicated to an emperor but to a respectable friend whose name is now lost since it was most likely in the preamble of one of the lost biographies. Flavius Vopiscus's biographies were not dedicated to emperors either but to a city prefect who held that office in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

I wrote about the importance of this book in my paper *Historia Augusta, the significance of the writing as a historical source* (Serb. *Historia Augusta značaj spisa kao istorijski izvor*) published in 2008 in the Collection of the Serbian Ancient Studies Society. This research was preceded by my translation of two biographies into Serbian; Emperor Caracalla's, a comprehensive biography, and his brother Geta's, a brief biography. Translations of the biographies were partially published in the Sunčanik magazine for literature and culture. Then, in 2009, Žarko Petković and Miroslava Majher prepared and published a book titled *Imperial Histories* (Serb. *Carske povesti*). This monograph, which provides an expert preface and an extensive commentary, also contains four biographies of famous emperors from the Antonine dynasty: Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. This is the reason our Serbian readers are somewhat familiar with this work.

This time my translation efforts were focused on the great imperial biography of Antoninus Elagabalus, written by a certain Aelias Lampiridius<sup>3</sup>. Elagabalus was also the last emperor named Antoninus to rule the Roman Empire. This would make a full circle of emperors with the name Antoninus. The Antonines are remembered in Roman history as good rulers. Constantine the Great himself was very fond of them. This is also noted by the author of Elagabalus's biography:

..quamvis sanctum illud Antoninorum nomen polluerit, quod tu, Constantine sacratissime, ita veneraris, ut Marcum et Pium inter Constantios Claudiosque, velut maiores tuos, aureos formaveris, adoptans virtutes veterum tuis moribus congruentes et tibi amicas caras.<sup>4</sup>

...Although he desecrated<sup>5</sup> Antoninus's respected name, which you, holiest Constantine, respect so much that you had Marcus's and Pius's golden portraits made together with Constantines and Claudiuses, as if they

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<sup>3</sup> The writer is completely unknown, just like the other authors of the *Augustan History*

<sup>4</sup> *SHA*, Antoninus Elagabalus, II.

<sup>5</sup> He is referring to Elagabalus

were also your ancestors, accepting even the virtues of our ancestors, which correspond to yours, and you find them agreeable as dear friends too.

The rule of Antoninus Elagabalus remains remembered in history as the rule of an emperor who was unworthy of the Roman throne. The biography of this controversial teenage emperor is dedicated to Constantine the Great as Aelius Lampridius says in the final chapter of the biography:

Mirum fortasse cupiam videatur, Constantine venerabilis, quod haec clades, quam rettuli. Loco principum fuerit, et quidem prope triennio; ita nemo in re publica tum fuit qui stum a gubernaculis Romanae maiestatis abduceret, cum Neoroni, Vittelio, Caligulae ceterisque huiusmodi numquam tyrannica defuerit. Sed primum omnium ipse veniam peto, quod haec, quae apud diversos reperi, litteris tradidi, cum multa improba reticuerim et quae ne dici quidem sine maximo pudore possunt. Ea vero, quae dixi, praetextu verborum adhibito, quantum potui texi. Deinde illud quod Clementia tua solet dicere credidi esse respiciendum “Imperatorem esse fortunae est.” Nam et minus boni reges fuerunt et pessimi. Agendum vero quod Pietas tua solet dicere, ut sint imperio digni quos ad regendi necessitatem vis fatalis adduxerit...<sup>6</sup>

Some might find it odd, respected Constantine, that such evil as I described it ever sat on the imperial throne, no less than almost three years. Such was the shortage of people in the country, at the time, who would remove him from the position of the emperor, while nobody sought a liberator from tyranny in the cases of Nero, Vitellius, Caligula and other such emperors. But first I must seek forgiveness for writing what I found in different authors, although I turned a blind eye on many sordid details which cannot even be spoken without great shame. But everything I have written I covered, as best I could, by using other terms. In addition, I always believed that we must remember what your grace usually says: “It is fortune that makes a man an emperor.” Indeed, there were unjust rulers, even those entirely corrupt. But as your piety usually says, one has to believe that those who were destined to be emperors were, indeed, worthy of this title...

Antoninus Elagabalus's biography is classified as an extensive imperial biography. It is divided into thirty-five chapters. The composition should follow Suetonius's model of writing but Elagabalus's biography does not have this preserved and recognisable model encountered in other biographies in the *Augustan History*. This is not a biography in a modern sense but rather a collection of materials arranged into certain categories. Suetonius's composition method is also applied by other authors of the *Augustan History*. The life of an emperor or a claimant to the throne is divided into the following sections: life prior to his ascension to the throne, events which marked the arrival of the new emperor, politics and events during his reign, his personality, physical appearance, death and remains. In addition, it was common for Suetonius to supplement biographies using

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<sup>6</sup>*SHA*, Antoninus Elagabalus, XXXIV.



gossips or rumours, anecdotes and documents, but nowhere in their lives were they used as loosely as in the lives of Augusts. Authors of the *Augustan History* took a special pleasure in introducing the material on the personality of their hero, with separate sections on personality traits where they list the qualities or weaknesses of the emperor, and dedicate long passages to details from their private lives, especially prior to the ascension to the throne. There was far less available material for those juicy intimate details than for public events. The career of early departed emperors and claimants offered little material of public importance and this is why their biographies included trivial anecdotes. The model of emphasising the emperor's private life was more typical of Marius Maximus<sup>7</sup> than Suetonius. Wishing to become as popular as possible, Maximus added details from the private life of emperors. He was outdone in trivia and indecent data by Aelius Junius Cordus<sup>8</sup>: appearance, weaknesses, diet, bulimia, debauchery, etc. The method used by Maximus and Cordus has caused even more damage to the *Augustan History*, by adding unreliable documents into many biographies. As Hadrian's secretary, Suetonius had access to imperial archives and enjoyed a certain credibility, but the same cannot be said of Maximus and Cordus. As mentioned above, in many respects, the composition of Elagabalus's biography is incoherent. The narration has no continuity. The biography is interspersed with interpolations which contain numerous, eccentric, and extravagant anecdotes from the emperor's private life. It contains little history, and plenty of trivia. Still, he will be remembered in history for numerous shenanigans and desecration of Roman customs, and as the only emperor whose body was dragged down the streets, tossed in the sewer, and then into the Tiber.

Who is Antoninus Elagabalus? His real name was Varius Avitus Bassianus. He was the son of Julia Soaemias<sup>9</sup> and Sextus Varius Marcellus. He was of Syrian origin and from early childhood he served the Oriental god El-Gabal. Intending to strengthen his claim to the throne, his grandmother Maesa proclaimed him the son of Caracalla and he became Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, as he was officially known.

He was entered in the Roman registry books as the son of Antoninus Caracalla and the grandson of Severus. As the successor of the priests of Elagabalus, the patron deity of the city of Emesa<sup>10</sup>, he was named after his god, but this never became official and there is no evidence that this name was used in his lifetime.<sup>11</sup> Latin writers like Eutropius<sup>12</sup> always

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<sup>7</sup> Milan Budimir – Miron Flašar, *Pregled Rimske književnosti, DE AUCTORIBUS ROMANIS*, Beograd, 1978, 589.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> The proper form of her name is Julia Soaemias Bassiana. On the coins with her face she is regularly called Julia Soaemias Augusta. The male form Sôaimooj or Suhaim is a frequent Syrian name. The unusual form Symiamira, as she was called in this biography, and Symiasera, as Eutropius calls her (VIII, 22), is not explained in a satisfactory manner. They could be derived names of the Syrian goddess Simea. See: O.F. Butler, *Studies in the Life of Heliogabalus*, New York, 1910, 120.

<sup>10</sup> Today this is the city of Homs in Syria.

<sup>11</sup> O.F. Butler, *Studies in the Life of Heliogabalus*, New York, 1910, 119.

repeat this name in its incorrect form Heliogabalus. He was sometimes also called Bassianus, for example by Herodianus,<sup>13</sup> but there is not a single piece of real evidence that he ever went by this name. Lampridius says the following about his name:

...Igitur occiso Macrino eiusque filio Diadumeno, qui pari potestate imperii Antonini etiam nomen acceperat, in Varium Heliogabalum imperium conlatum est, idcirco quod Bassiani filius diceretur. Fuit autem Heliogabali vel Iovis vel Solis sacerdos atque Antonini sibi nomen adsciverat vel in argumentum generis vel quod id nomen usque adeo carum esse cognoverat gentibus, ut etiam parricida Bassianus causa nominis post Heliogabalus a sacerdotio dei Heliogabali, cui templum Romae in eo loco constituit in quo prius aedes Orci fuit, quem e Syria secum advexit. Postremo cum accepit imperium, Antoninus appellatus est atque ipse in Romano imperio ultimus Antoninorum fuit.<sup>14</sup>

Since Macrino was assassinated, as was his son Diadumenus who was given equal power and also named Antoninus, the title of emperor was given to Varius Elagabalus, solely because he was the son of Bassianus. In fact, he was a priest of Elagabalus or Jupiter or the Sun, and he accepted the name Antoninus only to prove his ancestry or because he realised that people are fond of that name and that, thanks to it, Bassianus, who murdered his relatives, was highly respected. He was later called Elagabalus, because he was a priest of that god – whom he later brought with him from Syria to Rome, building his temple in the former places of the altar to Orcus. Finally, when he was bestowed with imperial power, he took the name Antoninus and was the last of Antonines to rule the Roman Empire.

And so, emperor Caracalla was assassinated in 217 and praetorian prefect Opellius Macrinus took the throne as the new emperor. But Caracalla's rich aunt on this mother's side, the abovementioned Julia Maesa, successfully bribed the Third Legion who then appointed her oldest grandson Avitus Varius Bassianus emperor. Macrinus was beaten in the battle of Antioch on 8th July 218, after which his son Diadumenus was killed. This is how Elagabalus got to the throne and started his reign littered with scandals. He became the emperor at the early age of fourteen. Since the emperor was underage, his mother assumed the role of the regent. This was a fateful beginning, Lampridius writes:

Hic tantum Symiamirae matri deditu fuit, ut sine illius voluntate nihil in re publica faceret, cum ipsa meretricio more vivens in aula omnia turpia exerceret, Antonino autem Caracallo stupro cognita, ita ut hinc vel Varius vel Heliogabalus vulgo conceptus putaretur....<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Eutropius., *Breviarium Historiae Romanae*, VIII, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Herodian, *Historia Augusta*, V, 3, 6,

<sup>14</sup>*SHA*, Antoninus Elagabalus, I.

<sup>15</sup>*SHA*, Antoninus Elagabalus, II.

He was entirely under the influence of his controlling mother Symiamira, so much that he would not perform a single imperial duty without her consent. This woman lived as a prostitute and practiced all forms of sexual activities in her palace. Her affair with Antoninus Caracalla was well known, and so Varius, or Elagabalus, was naturally considered his son.

On his arrival to Rome, he put all the provincial affairs on the backburner. He brought with him to Rome the holy stone of El-Gabal and built two temples, one called Eliogabalium on the Palatine near the imperial palace and the other, known as *Ad Spem Veterem*, in a suburb east of the city, near present-day Porta Maggiore. His plan was to unite all cults and make El-Gabal Rome's supreme deity. He wanted to make a union between his god and Vesta as the representative of Rome, and to do that he transferred Vesta's fire to Eliogabalium, together with the sacred objects kept in her temple. Elagabalus additionally symbolised the union between the two deities by marrying a Vestal priestess. Lampridius writes:

...In virginem Vestalem incestum admisit. Sacra populi Romani sublatis penetralibus profanavit. Ignem perpetuum extinguere voluit. Nec Romanus tantum extinguere voluit religiones, sed per orbem terrae, unum studens, ut Heliogabalus deus ubique coleretur. Et in penum Vestae, quod solae virgines solique pontifices adeunt, inrupit, pollutus ipse omni contagione morum cum iis qui se polluerunt. Et penetrale sacrum est auferre conatus cumque seriam quasi veram rapuisset, quam ei virgo maxima falsa monstraverant, atque in ea nihil repperisset, adplosam fregit. Nec tamen quicquam religioni dempsit, quia plures similes factae dicuntur esse, ne quis veram umquam possit auferre. Haec cum ita essent, signum tamen quod Palladium esse credebat abstulit et auro tinctum in sui dei templo locavit.<sup>16</sup>

...desecrated the Vestal's virginity<sup>17</sup>, and by removing the sacred chests he also violated the sacred rites of the Roman people. He even wanted to put out the eternal fire. In fact, it was his desire to abolish not only Roman religious ceremonies, but all other, worldwide, intending to make Elagabalus the only worshiped god. He went so far as to break into the Vestal temple, which can only be entered by Vestal virgins and priests, and dishonoured himself morally by keeping the company of those who were already like that. He even tried to take away the sacred chest, but instead of the real one he grabbed the clay one pointed to him by the chief Vestal in order to deceive him, and when he found it was empty, he smashed it. The cult itself, however, did not suffer much, because several identical chests were made, as story has it, in order to prevent the real one from being taken away. Despite this, he took the statue that he believed to be Paladium. He had the statue gold-plated and placed it into the temple of his god.

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<sup>16</sup>SHA, Antoninus Elagabalus, VI.

<sup>17</sup> The Vestal's name was Aquilia Severa. He married her in early 221, after he divorced his first wife Paula.

The emperor desecrated almost everything Romans considered sacred, so that no god would be worshipped except for Elagabalus. Other nations that lived in Rome also had to abide by this.

...dicebat praeterea Iudaeorum et Samaritanorum religiones et Christianam devotionem illuc transferendum, ut omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium tenerat.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, he proclaimed that the religion of Jews and Samaritans as well as Christian rites also had to be transferred to this place so that the Elagabalus clergy could incorporate the mysteries of all forms of worship.

Every rite or celebration involving lack of decent behaviour or plenty of sexual licentiousness was accepted by the young emperor. For instance he celebrated the Florea festival, an ancient ritual, which took place between 28<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The theatre plays organised on this holiday were known for their bacchanalian and licentious nature. This ancient festival was criticized by early Christian writers<sup>19</sup>. He also introduced the worship of the Great Mother and conducted the taurobolium ritual<sup>20</sup>. He participated in the ritual and did everything the eunuch-priests would do:

...lactavit autem caput inter praecisos fanaticos et genitalia sibi devinxit et omnia fecit quae Galli facere solebat...Salambonem etiam omni planctu et iactatione Syriaci cultus...<sup>21</sup>

He would prostrate with his head towards the castrated worshipers<sup>22</sup> of the goddess with tied foreskin on his genitals and do everything the Gauls would... He also celebrated the goddess Salambo<sup>23</sup> with all the lamenting and falling into trance as part of the Syrian cult...

Cecidit et humanas hostias, lectis ad hoc pueris nobilibus et decoris per omnem Italiam patrimis et matrimis, credo ut maiore esset utrique parenti dolor. omne denique magorum genus aderat illi operabaturque cottidie, hortante illo et gratias dis agente, quod amicos eorum invenisset,

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<sup>18</sup> SHA, Antoninus Elagabalus, III

<sup>19</sup> See: Lactantius, *Divinis Institutionis*, I, 20, 10.; Tertullianus. *De Spectaculis*, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Worshiping of the Great Mother was a very popular ritual in Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Originally it featured sacrificing a bull and a ram, and it gained special significance as a purification and initiation ritual. The novice would stand in a pit covered with perforated wood boards which the bull was slaughtered on. The blood pouring down onto the man in the pit would symbolise his purification and spiritual rebirth and at the same time his initiation into a priest of the Great Mother. See: G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 1902, 268.

<sup>21</sup> SHA, Antoninus Elagabalus, VII.

<sup>22</sup> Ritual orgies, including the act of castration, which were performed in different eastern cults, and especially in the cult of the Great Mother, seem to be part of worshiping Elagabalus. It was believed that magical rituals were also performed and children were sacrificed in his honour.

<sup>23</sup> She is a Semitic deity, most likely a counterpart of Aphrodite or Tanith-Caelestis, related to mourning ceremonies such as the one for Adonis.

cum inspiceret extra puerilia et excrucialet hostias ad ritum gentilem suum...<sup>24</sup>

Elagabalus also made human sacrifices, and for that purpose, from across Italy, he would bring children of noble birth and good looks, whose mothers and fathers were still alive, presumably intending to intensify the sadness as both parents would mourn.

He also surrounded himself with different sorcerers and demanded that they make daily sacrifices, and he forced them to do this and thank the gods because he found that gods listen to these people, and all the while he would examine the children's vital organs and torture the victims using routines of his own invention.

All of his actions contrary to the sacred rituals and the religion of the Roman people embittered the senatorial aristocracy, especially when he issued the order for his mother<sup>25</sup> to attend all sessions of the senate and become a consul. This is how she came to take part in drafting laws. Elagabalus was the only emperor who allowed a woman to participate in the work of the Senate as if she was in the rank of senators. She had a hand in adoption of absurd decrees which dealt with trivial laws, e.g. a dress code for women in public, or who should kiss whom or who is allowed to ride chariots, or ride a horse or a donkey or whether sedan chairs can be made of leather or bone or ivory, etc.

However, Elagabalus Antoninus was remembered for his sexual perversion. In chapters five and six, Lampridius gives juicy descriptions of sexual machinations and a very rough and shameful attitude towards soldiers. The mad emperor enjoyed group sex, especially preferring men with large penises. He would reward anyone who would indulge his lust. He used to move around the brothels disguised as a woman. He often organised orgies in his palace where he would greet guests dressed as the goddess Venus. In one such party the emperor took off his clothes and ran around the palace naked while his numerous lovers would run after him and penetrate into him. He appeared in public with his favourite lover, charioteer Hierocles, whom he even tried to make his heir, which appalled the people, Lampiridius writes. Perhaps the crown of his sexual perversion was Elagabalus's wish to become a woman, which is why he ordered his doctors to make him a womb. Since they could not make the emperor's wish come true, the doctors were punished by castration. Based on this preserved source, Elagabalus was apparently the first open transsexual in western history.

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<sup>24</sup> *SHA*, Antoninus Elagabalus, VIII.

<sup>25</sup> In the second chapter the writer says that Elagabalus's mother had special duties in the senate that were approved by her son, while in chapter twelve those same duties and obligations at the senate are ascribed to his grandmother Maesa. This makes it difficult to draw a conclusion as to which of the two women had the right to participate in decision making during Elagabalus's reign.

He appointed his immoral plebeian friends as governors, legates and consuls, thereby disgracing all important offices and institutions in Rome.

Ad praefecturam praetorii saltatorem, qui histrionicam Romae fecerat, adscivit, praefectum vigilum Cordium aurigam fecit, praefectum Claudium tonsorem. Ad honores reliquos promovit commendatos sibi pudibilibus enormitate memorarum. ad vicensimam hereditatum mulionem curare iussit, iussit et cursorem, iussit et cocum et claustrarium artificem...<sup>26</sup>

A dancer<sup>27</sup> who performed in Rome was appointed the commander of the praetorian guard. A charioteer called Cordius was appointed the prefect of the guard, a barber called Claudius became the prefect for wheat procurement, while other prominent positions were filled by men whose sole quality was the size of their penises. Mule drivers, couriers, cooks, locksmiths, etc. were put in charge of collection of the five percent inheritance tax.

And despite all the baseness and negligence of state affairs and military and foreign politics, his grandmother Maesa still wanted to keep him in power. She suggested that he adopted his cousin Alexander, favoured among the praetorians and soldiers. This would in a way redeem his seriously damaged reputation, as well as ensure the safety of the throne. This enraged the deviant emperor even more. Seeing that everyone was turning to Alexander, Elagabalus, in his sheer envy, dismissed him of his duty as Caesar and informed the praetorians that Alexander was sentenced to death. On 11<sup>th</sup> April 222, the praetorians invited Elagabalus and Alexander to their camp. They all hailed Alexander and asked that he be proclaimed emperor. By all odds, Elagabalus had a nervous breakdown. The emperor and his mother were killed that same day. Their heads were cut off and the headless bodies were dragged down the streets of Rome only to be tossed into the Tiber in the end while the people cheered.

From the description offered by this historical source it can be concluded that Elagabalus was not ready to take on the tasks and duties of a Roman emperor. His oriental background was the key to understanding many of his failed attempts at totalitarian and absolutist system with one man as the ruler and god. He tried to dissolve an already obsolescent government body such as the senate. He wanted one man to have a direct relation with the people rather than through the institution of the senate. However, the elite of the Empire would fall with the senate, which would lead to the downfall of the aristocracy. Rome of 222 was not ready for a Dominate, and this would only happen some sixty years later with Diocletian's rise to power, when everyone would understand that the era of the Senate and restoration of the Republic was long gone. Therefore, this

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<sup>26</sup>SHA, Antoninus Elagabalus, XII.

<sup>27</sup> Most probably Valerius Comazon Eutychianus, a freed slave. He helped to overthrow Macrinus and he was then appointed a praetorian commander. He later received the title of consul and in 220 he performed that duty together with Elagabalus. He was the city prefect three times. See: Dio Cassius., V, 31,1; Herodian., V, 7, 6.

hedonistic biography is a good example of how not to rule an empire, and an excellent example of the hypocrisy of the Roman empire. It was not by chance that Aelius Lampiridius dedicated it to Constantine the Great.

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## SIRMIUM AND CYRILOMETHODIAN HERITAGE

**Summary:** The paper looks at the issue of the seat of Methodius's Pannonian Archdiocese. In the opinion of a number of scientists, the seat of the archdiocese was located in the city of Sirmium, i.e. modern day Sremska Mitrovica. Based on rather scarce narrative, diplomatic, and archaeological sources, the author concludes that the seat of the archdiocese could not have been in Sremska Mitrovica. The paper presents the conclusion that any church organisation that was likely to have existed in the territory of Srem, now and then, was more likely to have been in connection to the church organisation of the Bulgarian state than it would represent a remnant of the abandoned Methodius's Pannonian Archdiocese.

**Key words:** Sirmium, Cyrilomethodian tradition, Methodius, Bulgarian church, Mitrovica, Great Moravia, Pannonian Archdiocese

The heritage of the Roman Empire, whose cultural origins were Greek and Roman, and whose linguistic roots were Greek and Latin, has had an impact on the history of Europe and the world to this day. The differences that existed between the Latin west, which was transformed into a series of barbarian medieval countries, and finally into present-day Western and Central Europe, and the Greek East, which outlived it in one part of the territory by nearly a thousand years, only to try and find some form of its restoration which came as late as the decline of the Ottoman Empire over the last two centuries, took on a specific form in the part of the Slavic world which accepted the eastern religious and spiritual influence, creating an almost new civilisation framework whose foundations were based on the Cyrilomethodian tradition.

Cyrilomethodian tradition has roots in the activities of the Thessalonikan brothers Cyril and Methodius, as well their disciples' activities in the wider territory of Pannonia and the Balkans. It remains unclear to this day how significant Sirmium was in the initial phases of spreading this tradition. The data on the activities of the holy brothers are somewhat contradictory.



The reliable facts are that Methodius and Constantine were born in Thessaloniki and were most probably Greeks, and not Slavs. As the sources state, just like all other Salonicians, they were fluent in the language of Slavs from the outskirts of Thessaloniki. At the request of prince Rastislav of Great Moravia, Byzantine emperor Michael sent them to Moravia in 863. On that occasion, Constantine created the Slavic script and established the fundamentals of the grammar of the Slavic language. After Methodius's death in 885, his disciples left Moravia and the recently converted Bulgaria became the centre of the Cyrilomethodian tradition. This paper analyses whether the eastern church organisation in Srem and south Pannonia, whose existence was recorded in the early Middle Ages, is a continuation of the Cyrilomethodian church organisation or a consequence of the later Bulgarian, that is, Byzantine church expansion into this territory.

In order to answer these questions, made difficult because the sources are so scarce and unclear, the first thing to do is to define the church organisation in the territory of Pannonia at the time of Methodius' activities. This task is almost impossible to complete based on the sources from that time. A rather limiting factor is the very geographical definition of Moravia, which is highly contradictory since the term is mentioned in the wide area of Pannonia, from north to south, which caused significant discussions among the scientists in the 1970s, but has been left without a final resolution to this date. What remains an undisputable fact today is that Moravia was a term used not only to refer to certain parts in the territory of modern-day Czech and Slovak Republic and northern Hungary, but it also included some areas in the south of Pannonia, which are now part of Serbia. However, this cannot lead to the explicit conclusion that Cyril's and Methodius's activities took place exclusively, or mainly in the territory of south Pannonia. A rapid change of political and state circumstances in Pannonia upon the arrival of Hungarians in 896 additionally hazed any chance of analysing the previous church structure.

The theses from the 1970s on locating Moravia in the territory of south Pannonia, that is, the territory of the present-day valley of the Morava, Srem, Slavonia and Bačka, caused an interesting debate among scientists.<sup>1</sup> The results of the debate have not confirmed these hypotheses but they resulted in interesting conclusions on the organisation of the Pannonian territory prior to the arrival of the Hungarians.<sup>2</sup> It is beyond

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<sup>1</sup>Imre Boba, *Novi pogled na povijest Moravske, preispitivanje povijesnih izvora o Moravskoj, Rastislavu, Sventoplku i sv. braći Ćirilu i Metodu*, Crkva u svijetu, Split, 1986; English version by Imre Boba, *Moravia's history reconsidered, A reinterpretation of medieval sources*, Hag, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Ratkoš, *The territorial development of Great Moravia (fiction and reality)*, Studia historica slovaca XVI, 1988.; Peter Ratkoš, *Anonymove Gesta Hungarorum a ich pramenna hodnata (Gesta Hungarorum by Anonymous and their source value)*. Historicky časopis, 31, 1988, pp. 825 – 870. To understand the problems causing debates among scientists and their argumentation, see Florin Curta, *The history and archaeology of Great Moravia: an introduction, Early Medieval Europe* 2009, 17, (3), 2009 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 238 - 247; Martin Eggers, *Das "Großmährische Reich" - Realität oder Fiktion? Eine Neuinterpretation der Quellen zur Geschichte des mittleren Donauraumes im 9. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1995, (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. 40);

doubt that during Easter Pope Hadrian II awarded Methodius the title of Pannonian bishop, successor to the chair of Saint Andronicus. As for the structure and depth of the church organisation created by Methodius in the territory where his Pannonian diocese was active, it is hard to draw any conclusions based on the existing, unclear and contradictory sources. It is undoubtful that following the death of Methodius in 885, the better part of it or, perhaps all of it, deteriorated. The Life of Methodius is somewhat indicative of what happened to it after 885. Cyrilomethodian heritage was renewed in the centres of the newly Christianised Bulgaria, and perhaps in the territory of the west Balkans. Historical sources offer no direct conclusions as to the role of Sirmium in this process. At the time of Methodius's death, Srem does not appear to have been part of Bulgaria, and all there is on the political and government structure is a mere hypothesis.

After the fall of Sirmium into the hands of the Avars, the city remains within the Avar Khaganate all until its downfall in the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> century. With the fall of the Khaganate, different Slavic tribes surface together with the beginnings of the first Slavic countries, the most important of which is Moravia in the north. Very soon the Avaric influence is replaced by Frankish, mixed with Bulgarian in the southeast. We know for a fact that the Bulgarians and the Franks battled in Srem and the territories west of Srem. The rise of Bulgarian power becomes significant after the victory over Byzantium in 811 in the mountain passes following the destruction of Pliska, where emperor Nikephoros I was killed. Peace of Aachen (part of Pax Nicephori) signed in 812 between Byzantium and Charles left it with no influence on the circumstances in Pannonia and the western Balkans for a longer period. Bulgaria was the only one that could put up some form of successful resistance to the penetration of the Franks in the east. In 818 Slavic tribes Timočani and Braničevci offered to be vassals to the Frankish emperor Louis in an attempt to relieve the pressure from Bulgaria. On the other hand, Slavs in the Frankish zone of influence

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Gerhard Birkföllner, *Methodius Archiepiscopus Superioris Moraviae oder Anmerkungen über die historisch-geographische Lage Altmährens (Vorläufige Stellungnahme zu jüngsten hyperkritischen Lokalisierungsversuchen)*, in Evangelos Konstantinou (ed.), *Leben und Werk der byzantinischen Slavenapostel Methodios und Kyrillos. Beiträge eines Symposiums der Griechisch-deutschen Initiative Würzburg im Wasserschloß Mitwitz vom 25.–27. Juli 1985 zum Gedenken an den 1100. Todestag des hl. Methodios* (Münsterschwarzach, 1991), pp. 3–8; Walter K. Hanak, *The Great Moravian Empire: An Argument for a Northern Location*, *Mediaevalia historica Bohemica* 4 (1995), pp. 7–24; Срђан Пириватрић, *Византјска тема Морави и "Моравије" Константина VII Порфирогенита*, *Зборник радова Византолошког Института* 36 (1997), 173–201; Eduard Mühle, *Altmähren oder Moravia? Neue Beiträge zur geographischen Lage einer frühmittelalterlichen Herrschaftsbildung im östlichen Europa*, *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 46 (1997), pp. 205–23; Herwig Wolfram, *Moravien-Mähren oder nicht?*, in Richard Marsina and Alexander Ruttikay (eds), *Svätopluk 894–1994. Materiály z konferencie organizovanej Archeologickým ústavom SAV v Nitre v spolupráci so Slovenskou historickou spoločnosťou pri SAV*. Nitra, 3–6. október 1994 (Nitra, 1997), pp. 235–45; Henrik Birnbaum, *Where was the Missionary Field of SS. Cyril and Methodius?*, in Thessaloniki Magna Moravia (Thessaloniki, 1999), pp. 47–52.

organised an uprising known as the movement of Louis, the duke of Lower Pannonia, whose centre was in the city of Sisak. After this uprising was crushed, the Frankish and Bulgarian countries come into direct contact. Negotiations which were to define the borders or, perhaps, zones of influence dragged on until 827, but yielded no results. Then a war broke out in which the Bulgarian army took their boats and sailed up the Danube and the Drava. They devastated parts of Pannonia and replaced the dukes loyal to the Franks with their own supporters. Duke Ratimir (829 - 838) of Lower Pannonia is mentioned as a Bulgarian vassal. After 839, count Ostmarke Ratbod conquered the territory of duke Ratimir but it remains unclear where the new Frankish-Bulgarian border was established. The new war that the Bulgarians waged in Pannonia in 853 with support from the Slavs did not result in a change of circumstances. The hagiography confirms that the Bulgarians held Belgrade as their easternmost city, but this does not lead to a reliable conclusion as to who ruled Srem.<sup>3</sup> Although the sources do not tell us about the situation in Srem in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it most likely remained in Bulgarian hands throughout that period and later during Samuel's rule founded on Bulgarian state traditions. After 1018, Byzantium holds Srem for nearly an entire century.

### **Srem Church Organisation in the late Antiquity**

Sirmium church organisation in the late Antiquity is not too well known. From the few patristic, often contradictory sources we can assume that the first bishop of the city was Saint Andronicus, who was mentioned in the Epistle of Apostle Paul. More data on the church organisation is from the time of Diocletian's and Galerius's persecutions of Christians. The bishop at that time was Irenaeus, who was executed together with some other prominent members of the community in the city. Fourth century sources testify to several Sirmium bishops. Among them especially stand out Arian supporter Fotin (343-351) and openly Arian bishop Germanius (351-376), during whose term of office Nicene Creed was rejected with Constantius's support at the 357 Sirmium Council. Still, the Arian heresy was also quickly overpowered in Sirmium itself. In the 395 division of the empire, Sirmium and the entire province of Pannonia Secunda went to the western part of the empire. Several decades later, the province was turned over to the eastern empire. It was within the Illyricum prefecture. The former centre of the prefecture was moved from Thessaloniki to Sirmium. The Miracles of Saint Demetrius note a story about the transfer of prefect Leontius from Thessaloniki to the new centre Sirmium, and in relation to this also about the transfer of relics of martyr Demetrius. When the Justinian's novel proclaimed the establishment of archdiocese in Justiniana Prima, under whose authority were some significant areas of the Balkans,

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<sup>3</sup>On the issue of Bulgarian-Frankish borders and zones of influence in the 9th century see Hrvoje Gračan, *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antici i ranom srednjovjekovlju (od konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)*, Zagreb, 2011, 172-175, and 188-193. It also lists numerous literature on the affiliation of Srem in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Being founded on scarce and unclear sources of the time, this literature often reaches contradictory conclusions.

Sirmium probably was not among them as it was under Gothic rule, but, it could have happened several decades later in 567, after the reestablishment of the rule of eastern emperors in the city. Christianity was preserved in the vicinity of the city for a long time judging by the story also taken down in the Miracles of Saint Demetrius about a certain Kuver, who ruled Christians in Lower Pannonia around 680 and then moved away with them to the hinterland of Thessaloniki.

### **Historical and archaeological testimonies to the Srem church organisation in the early Middle Ages**

There are no historical testimonies of the Srem church organisation in the early Middle Ages. At the time of the Avar state in this territory there is no confirmation of the existence of an organised church. Narrative sources mention Christians in this area, but they were mostly foreigners. The first church organisation confirmed in written sources is Methodius's Church of Pannonia, but its location and reach is impossible to determine. The belief that its centre was in Srem is founded on the faulty premise of equalling Sirmium with the chair of Saint Andronicus. Not a single document mentions Sirmium as the seat of Methodius's Pannonian Diocese. The most important artefact on this issue is the letter of Pope John VIII to Svatopluk in 880, where he titles Methodius as the bishop of the Moravian church.<sup>4</sup> The Life of Constantine and Methodius mentions that Pope Hadrian appointed blessed Methodius as archbishop to the chair of Andronicus.<sup>5</sup> The data on Methodius as archbishop in Pannonia on the chair of apostle Andronicus is also mentioned in The Life of Methodius – appendix to the Life of Constantine.<sup>6</sup> Pope John VIII's letter to Prince Mutimir in March 873, which is listed in part of the literature as proof for the existence of the Sirmium Diocese, mentions only the Pannonian Diocese, just like the other documents, with no note of Sirmium.<sup>7</sup> In his paper *Territorial Development of Great Moravia*, Peter Ratkoš refuted the theses which identify Sirmium as the centre of the Moravian Archdiocese, rightly pointing out that it was a matter of forging facts without any respect for the principles of the science of history.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Bláhová, Marie- Hrdina, Karel, *Kosmova kronika česká, Praha - Paseka, 2005*. *Industriae tuae*, letter from the Pope John VIII

<sup>5</sup>*Проложно житије Константина и Методија*, „*Тирило и Методије*“, Српска књижевна задруга, Београд, 1964.

<sup>6</sup>*Житије Методија – додаток Житију Константина „Тирило и Методије*“, Српска књижевна задруга, Београд, 1964.

<sup>7</sup>Šišić pl. Ferdo, *Priručnik izvora hrvatske historije, dio I čest 1 (do god. 1107)*, Zagreb, 1914, 200.

<sup>8</sup>Peter Ratkoš, *The territorial development of Great Moravia (fiction and reality)*, *Studia historica slovacca* XVI, 1988, 137. Similar conclusions are found in Henrik Birnbaum, *The Location of the Moravian State – Revisited*, *Byzantinoslavica*, 54 (1993), pp.336–8; A directly opposite opinion is found in Martin Eggers, *Das Erzbistum des Method. Lage, Wirkung und Nachleben der kyrillomethodianischen Mission*. Munich: Otto Sagner, 1996 (Slavistische Beiträge, Bd. 339). More on his attitudes and the entire issue of Great Moravia see Martin Eggers, *Das "Großmährische Reich" - Realität oder Fiktion? Eine Neuinterpretation der*

Archaeological findings from Mačvanska Mitroviца confirm the continuity of the cult location, but there is no confirmation of the continuity of church organisation, and especially the existence of a diocese from the time of Methodius and Methodius's alleged grave.<sup>9</sup> Clear argumentation of the impossibility to relate medieval church in Sirmium to Methodius's Moravian diocese through the results of archaeological research in Sremska and Mačvanska Mitroviца was presented in Vladislav Popović's papers *Sirmium Diocese and Medieval Church in the Balkans* and *Methodius's Grave and The Diocese Church in Mačvanska Mitroviца*.<sup>10</sup> The excavations in Mačvanska Mitroviца were performed in the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>11</sup> They undoubtedly confirmed the existence of three medieval churches and alongside them a medieval settlement and necropolis. All three churches were erected one on top of the other in the place of an early Christian cult building.<sup>12</sup> The sterile layer between the oldest Antiquity church and the first medieval church testifies of discontinuation of church activities over a longer period of time. The first medieval church erected on the sterile layer cannot be precisely dated, but researchers agree that it belongs to the era preceding Samuel's state. The structure of this church is rather simple, with a rustic baptismal font in the nave.<sup>13</sup> The other medieval church is more complex with three horseshoe shaped apses, but it too classifies as a small basilical construction. Based on the findings of Byzantine coins, it is dated to the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century or, possibly, the first quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Auxiliary dating, performed based on a silver cross with a crucifixion, corresponds to similar specimens found in the Balkans which have been dated to 11<sup>th</sup> century. What can be ascertained with good authority is that this iconographic type of cross with dead Christ does not appear before Foti's era.<sup>14</sup> The youngest medieval church was not

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*Quellen zur Geschichte des mittleren Donauraumes im 9. Jahrhundert.* Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1995, (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. 40)

<sup>9</sup>For more details see Dušica Minić, *Le site d'habitation médiéval de Mačvanska Mitroviца, Sirmium XI*

<sup>10</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Сирмијска епископија и средњовековна црква на Балкану*, Sirmium XI, 1980. (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003.) and Владислав Поповић, „*Методијев гроб и епископска црква у Мацванској Митровици*, Старинар, XXIV - XXV (1973 – 1974), 1975, 265-270. (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003.)

<sup>11</sup>Dušica Minić, *Le site d'habitation médiéval de Mačvanska Mitroviца, Sirmium, XI*, pp. 1-80.

<sup>12</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Сирмијска епископија и средњовековна црква на Балкану*, Sirmium, XI, 1980, I-IX, (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003.) For reports from the first excavations see V. Popović, *Arh.* pr. 8, 1966, 136 – 137 i 9, 1967, 131- 138. also J. Guyon, *Mélanges de l' Ecole Française de Rome, Antiquité*, 86, 1974, 629 – 632.

<sup>13</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Сирмијска епископија и средњовековна црква на Балкану*, Sirmium, XI, 1980, I-IX, (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003, 291-2)

<sup>14</sup>Владислав Поповић, „*Методијев гроб*“ и *епископска црква у Мацванској Митровици*, Старинар XXIV-XXV (1973-1974), 1975, 265 -270, (published in *Sirmium – град царева и*

constructed before the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the fenced off part in the nave is indicative of western models.<sup>15</sup>

When the restoration of the Christian organisation in Sirmium took place, or whether there was any discontinuation in its operation, remains unclear. There are opinions that the restoration of organisation must be related to the establishment of Christian church in the Christianised Bulgarian state after 864. As it was included in the system of the Constantinople church hierarchy, it was given a somewhat more prominent position within it. The archbishop of Bulgaria had a higher rank compared to the other archbishops and metropolitans of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.<sup>16</sup> He was 16<sup>th</sup> in the hierarchy among the Byzantine secular and spiritual dignitaries, immediately after patriarch's Syncellus (*Syngkellos*). Other metropolitans of Constantinople were 58<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup>, while bishops were 60<sup>th</sup>. Byzantium had to recognise the independent Patriarchate of Bulgaria at the beginning of the rule of Bulgarian emperor Peter. The date when it seceded from the Church of Constantinople is not known, but it most likely happened in the final years of Simeon's rule when he fiercely struggled for the royal crown.<sup>17</sup>

It is possible that Srem was part of Bulgaria for the best part of or throughout the entire period between the third decade of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and 1018. In the period after the arrival of Hungarians into Pannonia, Bulgarian rule in Srem was confirmed throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> century. This is why it is much more probable that the Cyrilomethodian church expanded from Bulgarian centres than from the remains of the Cyrilomethodian church from the time of Methodius's activities in Pannonia. The claim presented by V. Popović in *Sirmium Diocese and Medieval Church in the Balkans* on „leaning of Samuel's diocese and Byzantine Archdiocese of Ohrid on Methodius' Pannonian-Moravian tradition, which was the root of the early Christian rights of the Sirmium metropolis“ can be accepted only as a hypothesis with logical elements but no corroboration in the sources.<sup>18</sup> Also, there is no proof to corroborate his claim that "the first medieval church, whose emergence could perhaps be related to western missions, which, after the fall of the pre-Slavic Bulgaria, in 971, came through neighbouring Hungary".<sup>19</sup> These claims are largely contradictory to the logical and well-balanced conclusion the same author made on the issue in *Methodius's*

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мученика (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003.), 297- 302.

<sup>15</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Сирмијска епископија и средњовековна црквана Балкану*, Sirmium, XI, 1980, I-IX, (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003, 292.)

<sup>16</sup>Георгије Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, 231,232

<sup>17</sup>Георгије Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, 258.

<sup>18</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Сирмијска епископија и средњовековна црква на Балкану*, Sirmium, XI, 1980, I-IX, (published in *Sirmium –град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003, 296.)

<sup>19</sup>Владислав Поповић, *Културни континуитет и литерарна традиција у цркви средњовековног Сирмијума*, Sirmium, XII, 1980, I-VII, (also published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003, 306.)

*Grave and The Diocese Church in Mačvanska Mitrovica*, that today it is impossible to determine the extent to which the Bulgarian, and then the Greek diocese on the right bank accepted Methodius's Pannonian traditions present in Ohrid, whose jurisdiction will also include the Diocese of Sirmium".<sup>20</sup>

A reliable confirmation of the Bulgarian Cyrilomethodian church in Srem dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but certain eastern bishops are also mentioned in the immediate neighbourhood of Srem in 878 in Belgrade bishop Sergey and in 879 Moravian bishop Agaton.<sup>21</sup> The oldest data on the church organisation of the Diocese of Ohrid was preserved in the charter issued to the Archdiocese of Ohrid in 1272 by the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus.<sup>22</sup> It actually represents a copy of three older charters by Basil II to this church, which most likely date to somewhere between 1018 and 1020. The first charter also mentions the Diocese of Sirmium among others.<sup>23</sup> That is undoubted confirmation that the Diocese of Sirmium had previously been part of the Bulgarian church organisation.

### Conclusion

It cannot be determined reliably whether and from which starting date parts of Methodius's Pannonian church belonged to the Church of Bulgaria during the expansion of Bulgaria in Srem (which is also disputable as it is not even clear who held Srem in the 9<sup>th</sup> century). Moreover, there is not a single reliable confirmation of the existence of such an organisation in the territory of Srem. It is quite certain that there is no way to reliably prove the existence of a Pannonian church organisation in Srem from the time of Cyril and Methodius. None of the documents referenced by the proponents of the thesis mention Sirmium as the seat of the Diocese of Pannonia. The only thing they mention is the seat of Saint Andronicus. Archaeological sources confirm the existence of a Christian cult continuum but not the continuum of a church organisation in the territory of Sirmium. Archaeological material does not even provide the chronological precision required for more serious conclusions. The first reliable piece of

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<sup>20</sup>Владислав Поповић, „Методијев гроб“ и епископска црква у Маџванској Митровици, Старинар XXIV-XXV (1973-1974), 1975, 265 -270, (published in *Sirmium – град царева и мученика* (сабрани радови о археологији и историји Сирмијума), Сремска Митровица, 2003.), 302. Compare to Andrić Stanko, *Bazilijanski i benediktinski samostan sv. Dimitrija u Srijemskoj Mitrovici*, Radovi, Zavod za Hrvatsku Povijest, vol. 41, 2009, 115-185

<sup>21</sup>Константин Јиречек, *Историја Срба*, Прва књига, до 1537. године (Политичка историја), Друго, исправљено и допуњено издање, Слово љубве, 1978, 103.

<sup>22</sup>Gelzer H, *Ungerduckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse*, BZ, 2, 1893, 42 / 46 and *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae constantinopolitanae*, ed. J. Darouzés, Paris, 1891, 13.834 / 856

<sup>23</sup>Тибор Живковић, *Црквена организација у српским земљама (Рани средњи век)*, 2011, 156. The first charter lists the bishoprics of Ohrid, Kastoria, Glavinica, Moglen, Bitola, Strumica, Morovižd, Velbuzd, Trijadica, Niš, Braničevo, Belgrade, Sirmium, Skopje, Prizren, Lipjan i Servia. Each seat of the diocese came with a census of all the cities it encompassed. Apart from these 17 dioceses, the second charter also mentions another 14 dioceses, which makes a total of 31 diocese under the authority of the autocephalous Arhdiocese of Ohrid.

information from written sources on the church organisation in Srem dates to the early 11<sup>th</sup> century and it does not allow for a conclusion as to when it was established, but only that it belonged to the autocephalous Church of Ohrid.

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## THE LIFE OF SAINT IRENAEUS OF SIRMIIUM IN THE ETHIOPIAN SYNAXARIUM<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper analyses the brief hagiography of Saint Irenaeus, the first historically verified bishop of Sirmium, which was recorded in an Ethiopian synaxarium. This hagiography is completely unknown to our professional community, and it has not even been used in analyses by foreign researchers exploring the topic of the life and suffering of this bishop of Sirmium. The paper will present a translation of this hagiography with explanatory notes, emphasising the likely sources of its origin and the analysis of the structure of the very appearance of bishop Irenaeus's suffering in the Ethiopian synaxarium.

**Key words:** Saint Irenaeus, Sirmium, Ethiopian synaxarium

In church literature, especially medieval, synaxarium represents a collection of short, prologuesque hagiographies for each day of the year. The term synaxarium (Gr. συναξάριον, Slavic *пролог*), especially in the Byzantine church, was often used for compilations of short prologuesque hagiographic notes, i.e. prologue hagiographies. The most famous

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<sup>1</sup> From the rich literature we highlight a few key works with basic information about the ancient synaxarium calendars in general: H. -G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München, 1959, 251-252, ср. annotation 3; Ђорђе Трифуновић, *Азбучник српских средњовековних књижевних појмова*, Београд, 1990, 317-321 with rich bibliography; *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, volume 3*, ed. by Alexander Kazhdan, Oxford, 1990, 1991 with bibliography; *Rečnik književnih termina*, gl. i odg. ur. Dragiša Živković, Београд, 1992, 470, 776 (author of both entries, the menologion and the synaxarium is Dimitrije Bogdanović); Дејан Михаиловић, *Византијски круг*, Београд, 2010, 179; Тања Поповић, *Rečnik književnih termina. Drugo izdanje*, Београд, 2010, 424.

Byzantine synaxarium was written at the time of Emperor Basil II the Bulgar-slayer in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but there is of course a number of them, in all Christian countries.<sup>2</sup>

This time, our attention is focused on an especially interesting synaxarium. It is an Ethiopian synaxarium where, amongst numerous hagiographies, we find a short, prologuesque hagiography of Saint Irenaeus, the first bishop of Sirmium whose existence is supported by historical documents. Therefore, we will begin with a few introductory remarks on the very edition of this synaxarium, the Ethiopian calendar in general, and the synaxarium we used as the source for this hagiography. This is followed by the Ethiopian original, as well as the translation of this hagiography, which will be accompanied by appropriate notes and analysis.

When it comes to the edition of this synaxarium, it was published in several versions. It was back in 1928 when Wallis Budge, probably one of the best experts on ancient Egypt, issued a four-volume Ethiopian Menologion, based on two manuscripts from the British Museum. Although it was done based on just two manuscripts, this fact does not diminish the value of this substantial effort. This edition also has appendixes containing list of patriarchs of Constantinople, Jacobite, of Melkite, of Alexandria, of Antioch, and the list of Roman Popes. To this date, the famous edition *Patrologia Orientalis* remains the best and most comprehensive critical edition of this Ethiopian synaxarium, based on several manuscripts. Back in 1897, René Graffin, the founder and the first editor of this voluminous edition, proposed to Ignatius Guidius, famous Italian Orientalist and professor at the University of Rome, to publish the Ethiopian synaxarium. Moreover, volume one of *Patrologia Orientalis* contains several introductory pages by Ignatius Guidius and an edition of the synaxarium for the month of sana. He began this endeavour based on three manuscripts of this synaxarium. The other person who deserves the credits for publishing this synaxarium is another great expert on Ethiopia, Sylvain Grébaud, also important for the text we are interested in. Gerard Colin made the biggest contribution to the contemporary critical edition of the largest portion of the synaxarium, which he worked on in the 1980s and is currently without a doubt the biggest name amongst the researchers of this synaxarium. The oldest manuscript dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it was kept in the library of the famous researcher of Ethiopia, Antoine D'Abadi. As for the other two manuscripts, one is in the Parisian National Library, and the other in Oxford, in the Bodleian library. Both date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, probably from the period 1730-1755, i.e. the rule of Iyasu (Joshua) II. The former of the two manuscripts is actually a translation from Arabic to Ge'ez, while the other two also reflect the influence of Arabic synaxaria, but the text somewhat deviates from D'Abadi's manuscript. These new age manuscripts are most similar to all other known manuscripts from the Ethiopian synaxarium. They are not the only editions of this synaxarium. It appears that some Arabic recensions date all the way back to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. We know that this one was created between 1383 and 1392,

while the first full manuscript of the synaxarium originates from the period between 1563 and 1581. This second synaxarium is under a considerably weaker Coptic influence and has fewer Arabisms, which dominated medieval manuscripts. Early recensions, such as D'Abbad's manuscript contain ample data on ancient Christian Egypt, while later manuscripts record an increase of information related to Ethiopia. For our topic, that is, the edition of the synaxarium for the month of Nehasa which contained the prologuesque hagiography of Saint Irenaeus, it is important to say that it is based on the first three mentioned manuscripts - D'Abbad's, the Oxford and the Paris one.<sup>3</sup>

The Ethiopian calendar, called የኢትዮጵያዘመን አቆጣጠር in Amharic (transcribed *yä'Ītyōppya zāmān akōtaṭār*), is also known as Ge'ez, i.e. Gez calendar, after the language that names of the months came from, and it is the main calendar used in Ethiopia, but it is also used in liturgies in various Christian churches and denominations in Eritrea. It is based on the Alexandrine, that is, the Coptic calendar, which originates from the ancient Egyptian calendar. In fact, most Coptic months have ancient Egyptian names. As with the Julian calendar, every fourth year is a leap year. The year starts on 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> August in the Julian calendar. The difference of seven or eight years between the Ethiopian and Gregorian calendar comes from the differences in the calendar. Namely, the Ethiopian Tewahedo church follows the old Alexandrine calendar, which creates a gap of seven-eight years in relation to the calendar of Dionysius Exiguus. As with the Coptic or old Armenian calendar, the year only has 12 months of 30 days, plus five or six so-called epagomenal days, which are usually called the thirteenth month. The months begin with the same days as the Coptic, and except for the different names, the Gez or Ge'ez language is still the language of liturgies in the Ethiopian orthodox Tewahedo church. The sixth epagomenal day is added every four years on 29<sup>th</sup> August of the Julian calendar, six months before the Julian leap day. This is how the first day of the Ethiopian year, 1<sup>st</sup> Maskaram (called Enkutatash), actually falls on 11<sup>th</sup> September according to the Gregorian calendar, that is, 12<sup>th</sup> September before the Julian leap year.<sup>4</sup>

The month of Nehasa, that is Nāhase (Ethiopian ነሐሴ) corresponds to the Coptic month of Misra, or Mesori/Mesore. This is the period between 7<sup>th</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> September. The name of this month originates from ancient Egyptian *Mes-en-ra* which means *birth of the Sun*, i.e. the birth of god Ra. In the calendar of ancient Egyptians this was the month dedicated to harvest.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>*Le synaxaire éthiopien Les mois de sanē, hamle et nahasē. I mois de sanē*, Publiés et traduits par Ignazio Guidi, traduits en français par Sylvain Grébaud, *Patrologia Orientalis*, tome I, Paris, 1907, 523-525; Gérard Colin, *Le synaxaire éthiopien. Index généraux, annexes*, *Patrologia Orientalis* Turnhout, 1999, 5-10.

<sup>4</sup>The basic data on the Coptic calendar, which the Ethiopian also derived from, is given in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, volume 2, Aziz S. Atiya (editor in chief), New York, 1991, 433-436 with additional literature on p. 436.

<sup>5</sup>From the plenitude of literature on ancient Egyptian culture, and related to the calendar, we refer the readers to a work by Marshall Claggett, *Ancient Egyptian Science, volume II*

According to the Ethiopian calendar, the day when Saint Irenaeus, the bishop of Sirmium is celebrated is 29<sup>th</sup> Nehasa, that is, 23<sup>rd</sup> August (Gregorian 5<sup>th</sup> September). Before we start analysing the hagiography itself, let us first present the original Ethiopian text of the synaxarium prologuesque hagiography of Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium:<sup>6</sup>

**[ወበዛተ፡ ፅለት፡ ካዕበ፡ ኮነ፡ ስምዓ፡ ቀዱስ፡ ሄሬኔዎስ፡ ኤጲስ፡ ቆጶስ፡ ዘሦር  
ሦ፡ ወለዝን፡ ጥጥ፡ ለገዝሦ፡ ዘዋጥ፡ በንተ፡ ሌሊተ፡ ወለብጽሐዎ፡ ውበተ፡**

19 a. ምክናን ። ወይቤሎ ። መኩንን ። ሠ-ፅ ። ለአማልክት ። ወይቤ ። ሄሬኔዎስ ። \*አንሰ ። ኢይ  
ሠውፅ ። አስመ ። ፈራሄ ። አግዚአብሔር ። አነ። ወአዘዘ ። መኩንን ። ያሰጥምዎ ። ውስ  
ተ ። ፈለግ ። ወበጸሐ ። ማዕደተ ። አውፅእ ። ልብሶ ። ወጸለየ ። ኅበ ። አግዚአብሔር ። ከ  
መ ። ይትወከፍ ። መንፈሶ ። ወይዕቀብ ። ሕዝቦ ። ዘውስተ ። ሦርም ። ወየሀብ ። ሰላመ ። ለ  
አብያተ ። ክርስቲያናት ። ወእምዝ ። ይቤ ። አአምን ። ብከ ። አግዚአየ ። ኢየሱስ ። ክርስ  
ቶስ ። ወአስተብቀዓክ ። እንዘ ። አሐምም ። ወበጊዚሃ ። ወደይዎ ። ውስተ ። ፈለግ ። ወተ  
ከለለ ። በረከቱ ። ትኩን ። ምስሌነ ። ለዓለመ ። ዓለም ። አሚን ።]

**[ሰላም ። እብል ። ለሄሬኔዎስ ። አስቁፍ ።  
አበ ። ብዙኃን ። አእላፍ ።  
አመ ። ያሰጥምዎ ። በባሕር ። አንበለ ። ሐዳፍ ።  
ጸርሐ ። እንዘ ። ይብል ። ኅበ ። መኩንን ። ቁላፍ ።  
አስተብቀዓክ ። ይኩን ። ሞትየ ። በሰይፍ ።]**

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Below we present the translation of this hagiography. The notes on language and style, primarily related to their adjustment to the language of liturgies, are provided in footnotes. Other comments, mainly related to the date when it is celebrated, as well as notes on the hagiography itself and its relation to the known versions of the passion of Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium accompany the text:<sup>7</sup>

*Calendars, clocks, and astronomy*, Philadelphia, 1995, 1-48, specially on the month of mesore see 196-197, 206-211. Over a century ago Alan A. Gardiner wrote about the month of mesore in *Mesore as First Month of the Egyptian Year*, in: *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 43, 1906, 136-144. Also see Leo Depuydt, *Civil Calendar and Lunar Calendar in Ancient Egypt*, Leuven, 1997, passim.

<sup>6</sup>Taken from: *Le synaxaire éthiopien III. Les mois de nahasê et de paguemên*. Édités par Ignazio Guidi, traduits en français par Sylvain Grébaut, *Patrologia Orientalis*, tome IX, fascicule 4, N° 44, Turnhout, 1981 (reprint of the 1943 edition), 417-418.

<sup>7</sup>Translation according to *Le synaxaire éthiopien III. Les mois de nahasê et de paguemên*, 417-418.

On this day is also<sup>8</sup> martyr Saint Irenaeus, bishop of Sorem.<sup>9</sup> He was imprisoned in the first hour of the night and taken before the court. The judge said to him: make an offering to the gods! Irenaeus said: I do not make offerings, because I fear the Lord. The judge ordered to sink<sup>10</sup> him into the river. As he reached the other river bank<sup>11</sup>, he took off his clothes and prayed to the Lord to take his soul, to protect the people who lived in Sirmium and to give peace to his churches, he added: I believe in you my Lord Jesus Christ, and I call upon you and pray unto you, (even) as I suffer! Immediately after that, he was thrown into the river and crowned.<sup>12</sup> May his blessing be with us<sup>13</sup> forever and ever. Amen!

Hail Irenaeus,  
Father of many thousands,  
As he was thrown into the river with no oar,<sup>14</sup>  
He cried at the uncircumcised judge<sup>15</sup>  
I beg of you, let me die from a sword!

Something should be said about the date first. The synaxarium of the Constantinople church mentions Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium under this date, but also Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, which is not the only case when these two namesake saints were mistaken for one another, that is, when they were both listed to have died on the same day. The Greek Orthodox Church celebrates them together. With an overlap in names and dates they are celebrated on in the Greek church, the bishop of Sirmium was placed in the Ethiopian synaxarium under the date of suffering of another important champion of faith - Irenaeus of Lyons<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>We would rather say *is also celebrated*.

<sup>9</sup>We left the original form given in the hagiography, but it is certainly Srem.

<sup>10</sup>Perhaps it is more in the spirit of the Serbian language to say *thrown into the river*.

<sup>11</sup>This seems to be the scrivener's error, and it is about him being brought to the river bank or a bridge.

<sup>12</sup>This refers to the the crown of martyrdom. In the original, and the French translation as well, it literally says *coronated*, but it is more in the spirit of the church, that is, liturgy language to use the term we chose in our translation.

<sup>13</sup>Although there is *with us* in the original text, this translation is more in the spirit of the church language and liturgy practice.

<sup>14</sup>The construction itself is slightly awkward, but there is no doubt it is trying to say that he was thrown into the river with no chance of rescue or swimming across. There is a contradiction in the hagiography itself, as it mentions him being thrown into the river, but also that he reached the other side and that he was apparently thrown into the river again. An obvious copying error.

<sup>15</sup>A rather interesting phrase. Obviously the uncircumcised are considered pagans, i.e. infidels. The Coptic and Ethiopian orthodox church have preserved many of the early Christian traditions, amongst which circumcision of boys. B. *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, volume 4, Aziz S. Atiya (Editor-In-Chief, New York, 1991, 1106.

<sup>16</sup>Hippoliti Delehay, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris, Bruxellis, 1902, 917 where Saint Irenaeus of Lyons is mentioned on 23rd August. It seems that the confusion dates back to Basil's Menologion from the 10th century, where the suffering of this bishop of Sirmium is mentioned twice, first in March (when it is normally celebrated), and then the second time in August, just like in the Ethiopian synaxarium, see *Menologii anonymi Byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt*. Fasciculus prior,

In the very life of Irenaeus, that is, in this prologuesque hagiography from the Ethiopian synaxarium, it is mentioned that a Christian had been caught, and then interrogated by Probus, i.e. the judge, as the Ethiopian author says. As regards his capture in the middle of the night, the passion (that is the largest portion of the manuscript, but this is something all recensions agree on) states that after the interrogation he was thrown into a dungeon and tortured. When he was brought before the judge for the second time, he was taken before Probus in the middle of the night. Probably due to the need to shorten the hagiography for the purpose of liturgies, it was cut at this point. Probus's name is not mentioned in the Ethiopian synaxarium, it only says *judge*, and the interrogation, in the life of Irenaeus, that is, the most important part in almost all versions of his passion is reduced. Both the Latin and the Greek version of the suffering of the bishop of Sirmium dedicate the largest part of the text to the very conversation between Probus and Irenaeus. Moreover, modern science believes that this part is authentic and that it represents one of the best examples of interrogation in the great prosecution of Christians under Diocletian and his co-regents. It is especially interesting that the author of the prologuesque hagiography in the Ethiopian synaxarium does not mention the bishop's conversation with his family, who, as stated in nearly all manuscript recensions of his passion, tried to persuade him to renounce his beliefs. As regards his suffering, that is, his death, the bishop of Sirmium was, according to his passion, that is, the usual version of his suffering, cut down with a sword and thrown into the river from the bridge of Artemis (pons Basentis). That is not mentioned here, nor is it stated that he was thrown into the Sava. It was on that bridge that he took off his clothes, crying out to God, and not on the bank, as the Ethiopian synaxarium states. He asked God to keep faith strong in people (some versions state people of Sirmium), which corresponds to the citation in the synaxarium where he prayed for the citizens of Sirmium to be protected.<sup>17</sup>

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februarium et martium menses continens : sumptibus Caesareae Academiae Scientiarum e Codice Mosquensi 376 Vlad, edidit Basilius Latyšev, Petropoli, 1911, 281-283; *Menologii anonymi Byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt*. Fasciculusalter, mensesiunium, iulium, augustumcontinens: sumptibus Caesareae Academiae Scientiarum e Codice Mosquensi 376 Vlad, edidit Basilius Latyšev, Petropoli, 1912, 310-311. For other examples of his suffering, as well as the confusion about the dates also see François Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica Graeca*, TomeI, Aaron-Ioannes Baptista, Bruxelles, 1957, 41 (no. 948-951b).

<sup>17</sup>To this day the most complete text of the passion is provided by François Dolbeau, *Le dossier hagiographique d'Irénée, évêque de Sirmium*, *Antiquité tardive*, 7, 1999, 205-214, hagiography in Latin, with a French translation (211-214). This French author consulted a large number of manuscripts on the passion of Saint Irenaeus; amongst Serbian editions, which are mostly founded on the text from *Acta Sanctorum*, see Јустин Поповић, *Житија светих за месец март*, Београд, 1973, 481-485; Милена Милин, *Пасија Св. Иринеја сирмијскога, Sirmium и на небу и на земљи, (1700 година од страдања хришћанских мученика)*, Сремска Митровица, 2004, 185-187. Justin Popović's translation is archaic, but somewhat better than the one by Milena Milin, who insisted on modern Serbian, even where it does not fit in. An important overview listing a number of various versions of the passion of the bishop of Sirmium is also provided by Anton Benveniste, *Muka Sv. Ireneja srijemskoga. Ranokršćanski portret biskupa-mučenika*, Diacovensia, 1, Đakovo, 1994, 82-109. He also collected a number

Unfortunately, the death of the first bishop of Sirmium does not have much to do with the suffering of Irenaeus of Lyons, whose death remains a mystery, except for the fact that he fell victim to Christian prosecution,<sup>18</sup> but under Roman Emperor Septimius Severus, sometime around 202. This means that the motif was not taken over from the life of Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, and that the confusion did not occur in the same manner as the confusion about the dates. Therefore, we can classify all discrepancies with the standard text on the suffering of Irenaeus of Sirmium as scrivener's oversights.

It is difficult to trace the source for this synaxarium hagiography of Saint Irenaeus. It is likely based on a Greek, that is, Byzantine Menologion. The suffering of the bishop of Sirmium is rather short both in the *Synaxarium* found in Constantinople and the famous *Menologion of Basil* from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, in the part that mentions both saints named Irenaeus (therefore in August). What is more, August prologues in both Byzantine synaxaria provide even shorter notes on Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium than this Ethiopian synaxarium. It is mentioned that he is a bishop and a holy martyr from Srem, in Pannonia. It states that Irenaeus was tortured by Probus, and that he was thrown into the river Sava.<sup>19</sup>

Considering all this, it could be presumed that some of the Byzantine menologions served as the basis for this synaxarium hagiography. Taking into account the extremely short form of the suffering of the first bishop of Sirmium, it is likely that it was taken from a menologion for August. It is well known that it was no other than Greek tradition that joined the two bishop namesakes. In that way the author of this synaxarium was able to take over and adapt the hagiography of the bishop of Sirmium for his needs, that is, for this synaxarium. Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium was entered into the Ethiopian church synaxarium perhaps because for a long time the Coptic Christians used to count years according to the so-called *Anno Martyrum* that is *The Era of Martyrs*, or *Diocletian's Era*. This is the era which encompasses the great prosecution of Christians under this Roman emperor. Since Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium was also executed during his rule, we should not dismiss the possibility that this was the reason he was entered into the Ethiopian synaxarium. As a victim from the time of the biggest persecution of Christians, he was far more significant than his namesake, also a saint, Irenaeus of Lyons.

The brief prologuesque hagiography of Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium in the Ethiopian synaxarium is a very interesting indicator of the cult of this early Christian bishop and martyr from Sirmium which spread to some far, but, in terms of importance, without a doubt, most significant ancient Christian countries.

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of historiographic works on this subject, he even listed some Spanish manuscripts. This contains a good Croatian translation of the Latin version of the suffering of Saint Irenaeus.

<sup>18</sup> Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Saints*, New York, 2001, 157.

<sup>19</sup> H. Delehay, *ibid.*, 917; *Menologii anonymi Byzantini saeculi X quae supersunt*. Fasciculusalter, 310-311.



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## CONSTANTINE THE GREAT IN SERBIAN 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY HISTORIOGRAPHY

**Summary:** Numerous historiographic works which appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century deal with ancient history. This is the same time that Serbs embarked on systematic studying of ancient history. This paper will present the most important 19<sup>th</sup> century works which talk about Constantine the Great and his era, and special attention will be paid to the works used in Serbian schools at the time – history textbooks, history readers and reference books.

**Key words:** Constantine the Great, historiography, history, Antiquity, textbooks.

Serbian 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography featured several monographs dedicated to studying Antiquity. They were mainly *Histories of the World* which resulted from the need of Serbian students, primarily grammar school pupils, to study from textbooks in the Serbian language.<sup>1</sup> Since they described the period from the ancient times, large portions were also dedicated to Antiquity, and a mandatory part was the era of Constantine the Great (306-337) and passing of the Edict of Milan in 313, which is nowadays considered to be one of the most significant periods in the Christian world. The following will present the manner and the extent to which the Serbian people of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were familiar with this important period of Roman and world history.

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the appearance of several *Histories of the World* which inevitably contained a chapter dedicated to Constantine the Great and the Edict of Milan. The first book we will present was written by Stojan Bošković in 1866.<sup>2</sup> He described Constantine the Great as a wise and brave emperor who seized power with the help of Christians amidst the

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<sup>1</sup>С. Бошков, *Античка прошлост у Историји света Александра Сандића*, Истраживања 21, Нови Сад 2010, 55.

<sup>2</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света за народ и школу у четири књиге*, књига 1, Историја старог века, Београд 1866.

unrest and wars that broke out after Diocletian's stepping down.<sup>3</sup> According to the data Bošković left behind, the crucial moment was in 312 when he saw a cross in the sky with the inscription *In this sign thou shall conquer*. Based on this data we can notice that Bošković was using Eusebius of Caesarea<sup>4</sup> (Εὐσέβιος τῆς Καισάρειας) as a historical source, although he did not cite him or list him as a reference. Bošković attributes special merit to Constantine's mother, Empress Helen, who was Christian, and this very fact led many Christians to join his army.<sup>5</sup> Because of the assistance he was given in his seizing of power, Constantine declared freedom of religion for all Christians, and later accepted Christianity as his own religion.<sup>6</sup> Bošković also notes that Constantine founded a new city, which later became the centre of Byzantium, but he does so without specifying the year of founding or the exact location.<sup>7</sup> Based on this data, we notice that S. Bošković does not pay too much attention to the Late Roman Empire, as we can see that a lot of the important data was left out of this chapter. For example, he does not mention Constantine's rivals for the throne, or the decisive battle that Constantine won in 312. The crucial moment for him was highlighting the role that Christians had in Constantine's struggle to seize power and he presents this as a wise political decision made by Constantine. However, it is unusual that not once does he mention the passing of the Edict of Milan as a milestone in the freedom of religion for Christians in the territory of the Roman Empire. Bošković finishes presenting the history of the Roman Empire with the chapter on Constantine the Great and spares no more than a few sentences on the migration of peoples and the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476.<sup>8</sup>

Three years later, a new *History of the World* appeared in Novi Sad, written by Aleksandar Sandić<sup>9</sup>, where we also encounter some data on Constantine the Great. It too is dominated by data on Constantine's attitude towards Christians, but Sandić takes a different approach from Bošković. Unlike Bošković, he does not write about the role of Christians in taking over the power, but rather speaks of Constantine's merits in granting Christians the freedom of religion and finally, after two centuries of persecution, saying that: "*for Emperor Constantine Christianity shall be a state religion.*"<sup>10</sup> In particular he emphasises the role of his mother Helen. However, he does it in an extremely unusual way by listing Constantine's merits without much information, leaving out both the important figures who participated in those historical events and the years. For example, in a short separate passage, with no chronological order, he writes about the legend that had been written down by the aforementioned Eusebius of Caesarea and merely says that, amidst a military campaign, emperor Constantine saw in the sky, or a cloud, a cross with the inscription *In this*

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<sup>3</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света*, 361.

<sup>4</sup>Euseb. *Vit. Const* I 28-29.

<sup>5</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света*, 361.

<sup>6</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света*, 361-362.

<sup>7</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света*, 362.

<sup>8</sup>С. Бошковић, *Историја света*, 362-363.

<sup>9</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, књига 1, Стари век, Нови Сад 1869

<sup>10</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, 250.

*sign thou shalt conquer*<sup>11</sup> without any explanation as to the battle in question or the opponent Constantine fought. Without previous knowledge that this fact refers to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, which took place in 312, when Constantine defeated Maxentius, one cannot understand this data. Taking into account that before this Sandić writes about Constantine's efforts and merits in organising the First Council of Nicaea in 325,<sup>12</sup> it appears that it was not his intention to delve deeply into the issue, as he obviously only wanted to emphasise Constantine's role in granting freedom of religion to Christians in the territory of the Roman Empire.<sup>13</sup> This is probably the reason why in Sandić's work we do not find any data on 313 and the Edict of Milan. So, he writes about Constantine proclaiming Christianity as state religion, but he does not give the details of how it came to pass. There is no mention of Licinius or his role and attitude towards Christians.

Unlike Bošković, Sandić also writes about the administrative division of the Empire into, as he says, 13 dioceses and 116 provinces, which continued the reforms Diocletian started. This administrative division also conditioned the founding of a new city Constantinople, which Sandić says is the New Rome. The only negative thing Constantine did, in Sandić's opinion, is the tax increase at the expense of the people.<sup>14</sup>

The third book we will present here, and which describes Constantine the Great and his era, is the *History of the Old World* by Miloš Zečević, which came out in 1896.<sup>15</sup> In this book too, Christianity has a crucial role in Constantine's rise to power. At the beginning of the chapter which speaks of Constantine we find out that he was born in Niš, which we could not have read in a 19<sup>th</sup> century book. Zečević begins his narrative with a description of Constantine's rise to power assisted by the military, who proclaimed him emperor in Britain. He then continues on to describe the struggle for power over the western part of the Roman Empire, which ended with the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, when Constantine the Great defeated Maxentius, who drowned in the Tiber during the battle.<sup>16</sup> Zečević further describes Constantine's struggle for power in the territory of the Empire. His opponents in the east were Licinius and Maximinus Daia. Zečević writes that in his struggle for power, Constantine chose Licinius as his ally in the east, and to seal the alliance, he gave him the hand of his sister.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting that Zečević points out that this marriage was the reason behind the strong connection between Constantine the Great and Licinius, without even mentioning the Edict of Milan, which they issued together in 313. The same year Licinius defeated Maximinus, who died soon afterwards. Two years later, there was a battle between Constantine the Great and Licinius not far from Sirmium on the river Sava, where

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<sup>11</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, 244.

<sup>12</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, 243.

<sup>13</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, 243.

<sup>14</sup>А. Сандић, *Историја света*, 243-244.

<sup>15</sup>М. Зечевић, *Историја старог века*, преглед за вишу наставу, Београд 1896.

<sup>16</sup>М. Зечевић, *Историја старог века*, 299.

<sup>17</sup>М. Зечевић, *Историја старог века*, 299.

Constantine was victorious.<sup>18</sup> The conflict between them did not end then, and Zečević presented this conflict as a conflict of Christians, who were on the side of Constantine the Great, and Licinius's supporters, who believed in ancient Roman gods. Probably trying to emphasise the significance and importance of this conflict between Christians and those who believed in ancient Roman gods, Zečević describes the legend according to which Constantine saw a cross in the sky with the inscription *In this sign thou shall conquer*<sup>19</sup> after this battle although, according to historical sources, it all happened before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge when he fought Maxentius. The deciding battle between Constantine and Licinius took place in 324 at Hadrianopolis.<sup>20</sup> After the description of Constantine's victory over Licinius, just like all previous authors, Zečević describes the founding of the city of Constantinople.<sup>21</sup> Like Sandić, Zečević also describes the administrative reforms Constantine the Great implemented in the Roman Empire. The data he presents is slightly different from Sandić's and he says that, following Diocletian's model, Constantine divided the state into 4 prefectures, 14 dioceses and almost 120 provinces. The country was ruled by the emperor with the advisory assistance of the Imperial Council, which Zečević calls *Sacrum Consistorium*.<sup>22</sup>

At the end, Zečević also gives a negative comment on Constantine's rule because of the reforms implemented at the time he began his independent rule. First of all, he accuses him of having the country resemble eastern despotisms and of giving away titles to even the lowest-ranking court administrators, which, as he says: "...we can barely find in our democratic language suitable words to translate, something like holy, respectable, outstanding, most gracious, most noble, most perfect, etc. (*illustris, spectabilis, egregius, clarissimus, nobilissimus, perfectissimus, etc.*)"<sup>23</sup> Further on, he describes Constantine's bad features stating that he is responsible for the death of his father-in-law, brothers-in-law, his wife, nephew, and son. Because of all this, he compares Constantine to Persian ruler Artaxerxes. Similar to Sandić, his biggest objection is the tax increase for funding the great administrative staff. Still, as Zečević says, all this did not prevent Christians to list him, together with his mother Helen, among saints for passing the Edict of Milan, which granted Christians free confession of their religion.<sup>24</sup>

In the last book we will present here, and which was written by O. Varga,<sup>25</sup> Constantine is described in two separate chapters. In the first chapter, titled *Constantine the Great (323-337)*, the author talks about the organisation of the Roman state during his rule. As Constantine's most important contribution, the author mentions the founding of the new city of

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<sup>18</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 300.

<sup>19</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 300.

<sup>20</sup>Present-day city of Edirne in Turkey.

<sup>21</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 300.

<sup>22</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 301.

<sup>23</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 301.

<sup>24</sup>M. Zечевић, *Историја старог века*, 301.

<sup>25</sup>O. Варга, *Историја света по наставном плану и упутству за средње школе*, Прва свеска, стари век, Нови Сад 1898.

Constantinople, which was located in the ideal geographic position, between east and west, and whose splendour, palaces and public buildings resembled Rome. The administrative division of the empire into four prefectures, dioceses and provinces introduced by Diocletian remained during Constantine's rule.<sup>26</sup>

In this chapter we also find a piece of information which was not present in the other books. It is the word *emperor*. O. Varga writes that this term no longer represents a commander as during the republic, but that in the late Roman Empire, at the time of Constantine the Great, this signified a state commander, ruler, that is emperor in the modern sense. Varga says: "*that he is no longer the first citizen of the country, but the lord of the country, flattery first calls him our lord, our emperor, and later this word also entered laws.*"<sup>27</sup>

Another new piece of information is found in Varga's work. He describes the changes in the military organisation started by Diocletian, and completed by Constantine. The military was now divided into two big groups, border and mobile units, or, as Varga calls them, court and border army. He believes that the differences in funding of these military units, seeing how the border troops were paid less, and the fact that Germanic peoples now partly belonged to these border troops, resulted in their poor guarding of the borders. Half a million border soldiers still failed to keep the borders of the Empire safe from barbaric raids.<sup>28</sup> Maintaining such a large army and court administration of the new city encouraged Constantine to increase the taxes, which is the only measure introduced by Constantine and mentioned by Varga in a negative context.

Varga speaks of Constantine in another chapter titled *Christianity and the Roman Empire*. In this chapter he writes about Christianity and describes, as he puts it, the legend of Constantine's battle against Maxentius. Alongside the event mentioned by other authors where just before the battle with Maxentius he saw in the sky a cross with the inscription *In this sign thou shalt conquer*, Varga also tells us that Constantine had a dream before the battle in which the Saviour came to him and told him to put the new sign on his flag and that in that sign he would conquer.<sup>29</sup> This is the first time we see this data originally written down by Lactantius.<sup>30</sup> The last event described by O. Varga is the convocation of the First Council of Nicaea in 325 aimed at, as Varga says: "...*stopping the altercaçions, which then took place in the new religion and jeopardised unity.*"<sup>31</sup>

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We have seen that the rule of Constantine the Great is a compulsory part in 19<sup>th</sup> century monographs. Although there are noticeable differences between the data we find in monographs which appeared in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the ones from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and despite the

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<sup>26</sup>O. Bapra, *Историја света*, 183.

<sup>27</sup>O. Bapra, *Историја света*, 183.

<sup>28</sup>O. Bapra, *Историја света*, 184.

<sup>29</sup>O. Bapra, *Историја света*, 188.

<sup>30</sup>Lact, *De mort. pers.* XLIV 1-6.

<sup>31</sup>O. Bapra, *Историја света*, 188.

different approach and presentation of the political and religious role that Constantine the Great had, their common feature is the description of Constantine the Great as the ruler who granted Christians freedom of religion. However, it is interesting that none of the above listed authors specifically mention the 313 Edict of Milan, except for Zečević, who mentions it casually, without information on when it was passed, and it remains unclear why this edict on tolerance, issued by Constantine the Great and Licinius, was not given much spotlight. Most data found in 19<sup>th</sup> century monographs comes from contemporary textbooks and monographs, such as the founding of Constantinople<sup>32</sup> or the Battle of the Milvian Bridge,<sup>33</sup> but each of them inevitably mentions the 313 Edict of Milan<sup>34</sup> as the edict on tolerance, which allowed Christians to practice their religion, equalling Christianity with the ancient Roman religion in the eyes of the law. Whether it was political interest or religion and beliefs that influenced the decisions of Constantine the Great, he will be remembered in the Christian world and in history in general as the first ruler to allow Christians freedom of religion.

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## THE EDICT OF MILAN – AUTHORSHIP

**Abstract:** The original document of the so-called Edict of Milan has not been preserved, but the text as it is known is based on the transcript by Lactantius (De Mort. Pers. 48.1-13) and Eusebius (HE 10.5.2-14). The text of the edict, as it was generally accepted in the tetrarchy, lists the emperors Constantine and Licinius as authors. Christians were promised religious tolerance *de iure* in the earlier decree of Galerius (311). The analysis of the historical circumstances in the paper will explain the causes for the enactment of the new decree of religious tolerance – the Edict of Milan, and indicate that most likely emperor Licinius, supported by Constantine, issued the edict due to political circumstances in his part of the empire. In the later Christian tradition texts about the Edict of Milan were edited, so the name of Licinius was misrepresented or even omitted, and the role of Constantine was overstated.

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## CONSTANTINE, SIRMIIUM AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

**Abstract:** This paper will examine the historical and archaeological evidence for the condition of the Christian community in Sirmium during the early fourth century. The discussion will include the effects on local Christianity of the so-called “Great Persecution” (decree of the emperor Diocletian, February 24, 303 A.D., including the Sirmium martyrs) and the decrees of religious toleration issued by Galerius, Constantine and Licinius. The growth of early Christianity will be considered in the context of the well documented sojourns of the Emperor Constantine in the Imperial Palace in Sirmium. This is an illustrated lecture (PowerPoint).



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