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Beatitudes in the Church Slavonic *Acts of Paul and Thecla*: Translation and Interpretation[1]

One of the most interesting, controversial, and variable parts of the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (APTh) is the beatitudes, the sermon Paul delivered in the house of Onesiphorus shortly after his arrival in Iconium. There are thirteen macarisms which evoke associations with the *Sermon on the Mount* according to Gospels of Matthew (Mt 5:3–12), or the *Sermon on the Plain* according to Luke (Lk 6:20–22). At the very beginning of the APTh, they put into words a kind of teaching which has significant meaning for

[1] I have been working on the topic of the beatitudes in the Church Slavonic *Acts of Paul and Thecla* for several years, publishing an article on the subject in Ukrainian (Сироїд, 2023). This topic is also covered in a subchapter of my book on Thecla in the Kyivan tradition (Сироїд, 2025, pp. 137–144). Some of the insights from these publications are included in this article. However, I have only recently had the opportunity to read Amber Ivanov's dissertation and consider her findings on the first translation of the *Passio Theclae* into Old Church Slavonic (Ivanov, 2023). I have also developed some new ideas regarding this fragment of the APTh. Therefore, this article represents a new step in my research on this topic.

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the entire composition of the text and for the interpretation of all the actions and developments of the main characters. When the issue of Encratism (an extreme ascetism) in the APTh is in focus, the beatitudes are specifically discussed. Another interesting aspect of the beatitudes in the APTh is how much this passage varies across different manuscripts, particularly in the translations. This is also true of the Church Slavonic translation of the APTh, which has a shorter version of the beatitudes in all the manuscripts under study, and almost every manuscript has its own interpretation.

In this article, I start with the question of the literary form of the beatitudes – namely, ascription – followed by the meaning and interpretation of the Greek beatitudes in their complete thirteen-statement form, as found in Lipsius's edition (Lipsius, 1891, pp. 238–240). I then discuss the question of Encratism and the reasons for considering it in relation to this fragment. Thereafter, I shall move on to the Church Slavonic translation to gain an understanding of the kind of text that circulated in Church Slavonic manuscripts. Having clarified the nature of these changes – or at least formed some assumptions about them – I will attempt to explain the reasons behind them. After evaluating the accuracy of the translation, I will examine how translating this text into another language may result in a different interpretation, even if the translation is very close to the original Greek.

Manuscripts

The most comprehensive research on the medieval Slavonic translation of the APTh to date relied on forty-seven manuscripts (Ivanov, 2023), but I would guess that the number is even larger as I know of at least one additional manuscript that is not included in Ivanov's list (manuscript G, see below).

In this study, I refer to twelve manuscripts for two reasons: firstly, they were accessible to me; secondly, I was initially interested in exploring Thecla's cult in the Kyivan Metropolitanate. This means that most of them belong to this tradition in various ways, while the Bulgarian and Serbian manuscripts provide a broader context. Unfortunately, the earliest surviving Church Slavonic APTh manuscript (eleventh century) that actually represents the Kyivan tradition is incomplete; only the ending has remained, meaning it does not contain the beatitudes (Syroyid, 2023). So, my list includes twelve Cyrillic

manuscripts from the 15th to 17th centuries (one of which was available to me only in a 19th-century publication):

Manuscript B, 15th c. (Bdynsky), Library of Gent University, № 408, fol. 39–58;

Manuscript Ć, 15th c., Library of Belgrad University, Ćorović collection, MS 30, fol. 49v–51v;

Manuscript C, 15th c. museum collection of Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, f. 304, № 666 (1618), fol. 91v–104;

Manuscript D, 15th c. museum collection of Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, f. 304, № 755 (1628), fol. 230–243;

Manuscript D-2, 16th c. museum collection of Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, f. 304, № 663 (405), fol. 373v.–396;

Manuscript E, 16th c., Vrublevsky's Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, F19–79, fol. 167–174;

Manuscript F, 16th c., Vrublevsky's Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, F19–103, fol. 167–172;

Manuscript S, 16th c. (Zamoysky'), Scientific library of Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, 203, III, p. 180–198;

Manuscript G, 16th c., Library of the Serbian Patriarchate in Belgrade, BSP-67, fol. 112–122v;

Manuscript O, 17th c. (1603), Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, Oss. 38, fol. 301–308;

Manuscript H, 17th c., British Library, UK; Slavic and East European manuscript, Harley MS 7630, fol. 99v–147v;

Great Minea by metr. Makariy, 16th c., Velikiye minei chetii, sobrannye Vserosiyskim mitropolitom Makariem. V. 2. Sentiabr. Dni 14–24. (Sankt Peterburg 1869) 1376–1390.

Ivanov's research clearly shows that the manuscripts can be divided into two distinct groups because the APTh was translated once and then revised based on a different Greek manuscript (Ivanov, 2023, pp. 241–326). The manuscripts listed here belong to both of these branches.

The ascriptions, or the form of beatitudes

The beatitudes are embodied in the literal form of ascription (Mullins, 1973). Besides the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, beatitudes (or macarisms) can be found in the Old Testament (Psalms or Proverbs), but also in other traditions, in particular Hellenistic literature (Hagner, 1993, pp. 88–89). However, they are most closely associated with Jewish tradition, as Daniel J. Harrington highlighted:

"The Beatitudes are thoroughly Jewish in form and content"; "they remind Christians today of the Jewish roots of their piety" (Harrington, 1991, p. 84). As Joseph A. Fitzmyer has noted, the New Testament alone contains approximately 52 ascriptions (Fitzmyer, 2000, pp. 111–118). However, there are not many examples of macarisms in the list except those in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke mentioned above. One such list was revealed in the Dead Sea Scrolls (it consists of 5 ascriptions, but due to the damage to the text the researchers assumed the possibility of a bigger number) (Fitzmyer, 2000, pp. 114–116). The pseudepigraphic 2 Enoch also contains something resembling a list of macarisms (Fitzmyer, 2000, p. 118). The APTh offers another example of beatitudes.

According to T. Y. Mullins, the literary form of ascription was used to ascribe "a condition to a person or to a people because of a relationship which the person or group exhibits", and it was usually embodied in "a fairly clearly structured form" (Mullins, 1973, p. 195). Besides beatitudes, this literary form is used for woes and eulogies. Its structure consists of "the ascriptive word, the object of the ascription, reasons for the ascription, and a commentary" (Mullins, 1973, p. 195).

Beatitudes in the Greek APTh

The Greek APTh contains thirteen beatitudes,[2] and they have a special place in the textual structure – at the very beginning of the text. People had gathered in the house of Onesiphorus to listen to Paul. Paul's word was on "self-control and resurrection" (λόγος θεοῦ περὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ ἀναστάσεως). Thecla, a young girl, lived in the neighbourhood, and when Paul was teaching the people (τῆς ἐκκλησίας), she sat immovably by the window and listened to Paul. It was after the proclamation of the beatitudes that a change happened in her: she ceased to live her former life, refused to marry her fiancé, and thought only of the new Christian faith. In other words, these beatitudes set the plot in motion. As Korinna Zamfir put it: "They function as a programmatic speech: the message will be developed in detail in the narrative"

[2] Sometimes they are reduced to twelve, but in meaning they correspond to thirteen (see more: Barrier, 2009, p. 85).

(Zamfir, 2010, p. 284). They "will become visible in the lives of Paul, Thecla, Onesiphorus and his family" (Zamfir, 2010, p. 287). For example, the fact that Thecla remained alive and unharmed after all the torture and executions can be seen as a state achieved by living according to these ascriptions. The beatitudes, along with other narrative elements, play a special role in the construction of Paul's image: "The decision to adopt a genre typically associated with Jesus is a major step in the systematic assimilation of Paul with Jesus" (Zamfir, 2010, p. 284).

The Greek text of the APTh counts 13 beatitudes (APTh 5–6)[3]:

1. Μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
   Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
2. μακάριοι οἱ ἁγνὴν τὴν σάρκα τηρήσαντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ναὸς θεοῦ γενήσονται.
   Blessed are those who have kept the flesh chaste, for they will be a temple of God.
3. μακάριοι οἱ ἐγκρατεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοῖς λαλήσει ὁ θεός.
   Blessed are the self-controlled (continent), for God will speak to them.
4. μακάριοι οἱ ἀποταξάμενοι τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ εὐαρεστήσουσιν τῷ θεῷ.
   Blessed are they who are set apart from this world, for they will be well-pleasing to God.
5. μακάριοι οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὸν θεόν.
   Blessed are they who though having a wife are as those not having a wife, for they will inherit God (they shall experience God).
6. Μακάριοι οἱ φόβον ἔχοντες θεοῦ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ γενήσονται.
   Blessed are they who have a fear of God, for they will be angels of God.
7. Μακάριοι οἱ τρέμοντες τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
   Blessed are those who tremble over the words of God (who respect the word of God), for they shall be comforted.

[3] For the Greek text, see the edition by Lipsius (1891, pp. 235–272). For the English translation, I use the version by Jeremy Barrier (2009, pp. 78–85) and another by J. K. Elliott (2005, pp. 364–372). In the case of slightly different interpretations, the extra one is added in brackets.

8. μακάριοι οἱ σοφίαν λαβόντες Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ ὑψίστου κληθήσονται.
   Blessed are those who receive the wisdom of Jesus Christ, for they will be called sons of the Most High.

9. μακάριοι οἱ τὸ βάπτισμα τηρήσαντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἀναπαύσονται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.
   Blessed are those who have kept their baptism, for they shall be refreshed by the Father and the Son.

10. μακάριοι οἱ σύνεσιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ χωρήσαντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐν φωτὶ γενήσονται.
    Blessed are those who have taken hold of the knowledge (have come to a knowledge) of Jesus Christ, for they shall be in the light.

11. μακάριοι οἱ δὶ ἀγάπην θεοῦ ἐξελθόντες τοῦ σχήματος τοῦ κοσμικοῦ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἀγγέλους κρινοῦσιν καὶ ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς εὐλογηθήσονται.
    Blessed are they who have come out of the image of this world (no longer conform to the world) through the love of God, for they will judge angels and they will be blessed on the right hand of the Father.

12. μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται καὶ οὐκ ὄψονται ἡμέραν κρίσεως πικράν.
    Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy and will not see a bitter day of judgment.

13. μακάρια τὰ σώματα τῶν παρθένων, ὅτι αὐτὰ εὐαρεστήσουσιν τῷ θεῷ καὶ οὐκ ἀπολέσουσιν τὸν μισθὸν τῆς ἁγνείας αὐτῶν· ὅτι ὁ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς ἔργον αὐτοῖς γενήσεται σωτηρίας εἰς ἡμέραν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν ἕξουσιν εἰς αἰῶνα αἰῶνος.
    Blessed are the bodies of the virgins, for they will be well-pleasing to God and they will not lose the rewards of their chastity, because the word of the Father shall be to them a work of salvation in the day of his Son, and they shall have rest for ever and ever.

Despite these beatitudes being different from those in the Gospel of Matthew (and also the Gospel of Luke), there are many correspondences to them and, especially, some utterances from Paul's epistles. *The first one* sounds identical to Mt 5:8. *The second one* echoes the words from 1 Cor 6:19: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (*Bible*: *New Revised*

Standard Version Catholic Edition, n.d., 1 Cor 6:19).[4] *The fifth beatitude* recalls 1 Cor. 7:29: "those who have wives be as though they had none". *The seventh one*, in its second part, echoes Mt 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (παρακληθήσονται). The second part of *the eighth* beatitude repeats Mt 5:9. *The eleventh one* closely echoes the words of 1 Cor 6:3: "Do you not know that we are to judge angels?". The twelfth one corresponds to Mt 5:7. It is possible to find many more similarities and Bible utterances that became a seed for these APTh beatitudes. Eventually, as Outi Lehtipuu rightly notes by giving examples from Acts 24:24–25 and 1 Corinthians (Lehtipuu, 2010, p. 365), the APTh "is not the only writing that portrays Paul as a preacher of asceticism combined with an eschatological message".

Macarisms and encratism

All of these statements are built around the idea of purity and give reason to discuss Encratism as a possible doctrine of the APTh. In fact, the word οἱ ἐγκρατεῖς is mentioned in the third beatitude. This can be translated as "those who are continent" or "those who are self-controlled". Apart from that, it can be related to radical Christian asceticism (traces of which can be found in other apocryphal Acts, such as the Acts of Thomas). Indeed, Encratism has a complicated nature, as described by Andrew R. Guffey (2014).

The standard definition of Encratism was set by the International Colloquium in Encratism in 1982:

> By Encratism we understand self-restraint (enkrateia) in its radical form, which goes so far as to repudiate marriage (gamos). Marriage is identified from the start with harlotry (porneia) and corruption (phthora), which entails and presupposes a negative estimate of human existence, including birth and procreation (genesis). This position is often accompanied by abstention in matters of food, with specific reference to meat and wine, together with a renunciation of the things of this world. (Guffey, 2014, p. 517)

As Guffey noted, maybe this teaching is meant in I Timothy 4:1–5 and I Timothy 5:23 (Guffey, 2014, p. 523).

[4] In quotations of the Bible in English, I use the *New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*.

For the sake of balance, I will also quote the Catholic Encyclopedia's recognition of asceticism in the New Testament:

> In the Gospels asceticism is presented under the concrete theme of following the historical Christ and thus sharing the hardships, dangers, and penalties that loyal discipleship to Him exact; in the Epistles of St. Paul asceticism is described principally in the image of the spiritual athlete who consciously and constantly disciplines himself in a strong effort to live more fully in docile obedience to the Spirit of Christ, to attain not only his on salvation but also that of the community. (Lachowski, 2003, p. 776)

The theological aspect of asceticism supposes "conscious self-control and systematic exercise of the Christian life" (Häring, 2003, p. 777).

However, it is also worth noting that various factors fuelled the spread of Encratism in early Christianity. According to Robert C. Cecire, "Greek ascetism influenced the syncretistic Hellenistic culture of the Roman Empire while ascetism within Judaism directly influenced Christian Encratism through Jewish Christianity" (Cecire, 1985, p. 5). This researcher convincingly showed that the Churches of Ephesus, Corinth, Edessa and Alexandria were influenced by Encratism (Cecire, 1985, pp. 2, 48–64). Cecire described this movement as "spirituality which developed within Jewish-Christianity" (Cecire, 1985, p. 2). Jewish Christianity emerged because "Christianity, born in Semitic surroundings, was from the very outset deeply immersed, sociologically and culturally, in the Jewish world" (Daniélou, 1968, p. 163). However, it is important to note that Jewish Christianity not only formed the historical basis of Christianity but also influenced Gnosticism. This is particularly applicable to Encratism. As Jean Daniélou clarified, both Christians and Gnostics followed this movement (Daniélou, 1964, p. xi), which is a significant detail for further interpretation of textual changes in the beatitudes.

The question of how radical the asceticism in the APTh is, and whether it can be described as Encratism, remains open. Clearly, this has nothing to do with the full form of Encratism, which involves dietary restrictions (the descriptions of Paul's meals are very sparse; little is known about them except for the sharing of bread, which does not give reason to think of intentional restrictions). The list of "encratic things" may include references to bodily chastity, as well as mentions of angels and baptisms. It may also cover the fifth macarism relating to marriage. However, it is possible that none of these references have a specific meaning, primarily because some of them overlap with words from 1 Corinthians.

Another question that might arise is to whom these ascriptions refer (Kaestli, 1990, p. 284). Married men are mentioned in the fifth beatitude, and Onesiphorus and his family's example possibly illustrate this ascription. However, "Onesiphorus and his Household" should be understood primarily as an example of a house church rather than of radical asceticism.

Glenn E. Snyder (2013, pp. 126–127) links the third beatitude (οἱ ἐγκρατεῖς) with the ninth and proposes interpreting the entire story in the light of baptism (or, in Thecla's case, self-baptism), which could be regarded as the climax of the narrative or its key turning point. This perspective highlights the development of Thecla's image towards something resembling an "angelic state", as her teacher is described at the beginning of the text: "for some times he appeared as a man, but at other times he had the face of an angel" (Ποτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἐφαίνετο ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ποτὲ δὲ ἀγγέλου πρόσωπον εἶχεν – APTh 3).

Many arguments could be found in favour of Encratism in the APTh, as well as for the idea that nothing here is related to it. So, I agree with Jeremy Barrier, who resolved this issue in such a way: "The beatitudes are both encratite and not encratite depending on how you read them. At a more nuanced level, the ambiguity is due to the fact that one's interpretation will change depending on which manuscripts are being read" (Barrier, 2013, p. 165). Barrier illustrated his statement by comparing the Greek eclectic text with the Coptic Heidelberg papyrus, thereby showing that the latter is "clearly encratite" (Barrier, 2013, p. 178).

APTh beatitudes in Church Slavonic translation

The beatitudes do not always look the same in different language versions of the APTh. Their number may be less than that of the original Greek text (13 beatitudes); they may also include some other interpretations that have arisen due to mistranslations or other reasons. For example, as J. W. Barrier notes, the Latin APTh contains only six beatitudes, along with some changes in the Coptic APTh (Barrier, 2009, p. 132). Moreover, some Latin manuscripts do not emphasise the connection between chastity and resurrection (Zamfir, 2024, p. 60).

In general, the Church Slavonic translation of the APTh contains 12 beatitudes. In some cases, there are slightly distinctive interpretations as compared to the Greek translation. In fact, this is the point at which the text has different versions in different manuscripts. In the following text, I have used the spell-

ing typical of Early Modern Church Slavonic manuscripts of the Ruthenian redaction as these are the basis of my study.[5]

слово божїе о оудержании плотьстемь и о воскресенїи
God's Word on restraint of the body and resurrection

1. Блажени чисти сердьцемь яко тїи бога оузрать
   Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
2. Блажени съхраньшеи тѣло свое чисто . яко тїи церкви божїи боудоуть.
   Blessed are those who have kept the flesh pure, for they will be churches of God.
3. Блажени оудержавшеи плоть свою . яко к тѣмъ богъ възглаголеть.
   Blessed are those who have restrained their body, for God will speak to them.
4. Блажени w̃рекшеисѧ мира сегw, яко благооугодать богоу
   Blessed are those who have renounced this world, for they will be pleasing to God.
5. Блажени имоуцеи жены . яко неимоуце . яко тїи наслѣдници божїи боудут.
   Blessed are they who though having a wife are as those not having a wife, for they will inherit God.
6. Блажени имоуцеи страх божїи. яко тїи аггели боудоуть.
   Blessed are they who have a fear of God, for they will be angels.
7. Блажени трепещоуцеи словесъ божїихъ . яко тїи оутѣшени боудоуть.
   Blessed are those who tremble over the words of the Lord, for they shall be comforted.
8. –
9. Блажени съхраньшеи крещенїе чисто . яко тїи почїють оу w̃ца . и сина възлюбленнаго.
   Blessed are those who have kept their baptism pure, for they will rest with the Father and his beloved Son.
10. Блажени вымѣцѣшеи вса разоумъ іс҃ъ хс҃товъ яко тїи во свѣте боудоуть
    Blessed are those who have taken hold of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for they shall be in the light.

[5] Reconstructions of Old Church Slavonic spelling can be found in Ivanov's research (Ivanov, 2023, pp. 501–502).

11. блажени изшедшеи из образа мира сего любве ради христовы яко тїи аггеломъ соужитници боудоуть и wдесноую w҃ца благословени боудоуть.
Blessed are they who have come out of the image of this world through the love of God, for they will be cohabitants of angels, and they will be blessed on the right hand of God.

12. блажени милостиви яко ти помиловани боудоуть и не имоуть видѣти дьне горкаго соуда.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy and will not see a bitter day of Judgment.

13. блаженн телеса дѣвъ и дуси . яко ти добрѣ оугодѧть богоу. Не имоуть погоубити мъзды своея яко слово w҃тее дѣло спасенїю имъ боудеть . вь день соуда єго. и покой имоуть имѣти в вѣкъ вѣкоу.
Blessed are the bodies and spirits (souls) of the virgins, for they shall be well-pleasing to God and they will not lose the rewards because the word of the father shall be to them a work of salvation in the day of his judgement, and they shall have rest forever.

Even at first glance, it is clear that this version of the beatitudes differs from the one in Lipsius's edition. The most notable feature is the absence of the eighth beatitude.[6] The first seven beatitudes generally correspond to the Greek text, but some interesting details may provide clues as to how asceticism was understood. From the ninth to the thirteenth beatitudes, small additions or corrections were made, also influencing perception and changing the whole picture. However, this does not mean that all changes occurred through translation. Although "the relationship of the Slavonic translation to this Greek text will remain unsettled" (Ivanov, 2023, p. 175) and a new critical edition of the Greek text is still forthcoming, it is evident that certain changes have already emerged in the Greek text, but let's proceed step by step.

The most likely explanation for the absence of the eighth statement (with οἱ σοφίαν λαβόντες) is that it did not appear in the Greek manuscript used for the translation. This possibility is at least suggested by the comments in Lipsius's edition. Curiously, the tenth macarism (which may somehow compensate for the absence of the eighth) is missing in some of the manuscripts

[6] See also Ivanov's research (Ivanov, 2023, p. 347).

examined (manuscripts D, D-2, F, and H; also, in some manuscripts consulted by Ivanov (2023, p. 348)). But it has undoubtedly been translated (see also Ivanov, 2023, p. 348).

Of course, some absences may be accidental, but there are reasons to consider these corrections intentional, even though they were introduced at more than one stage. Firstly, Wisdom (Σοφία) has its roots in Jewish Christianity and is an important concept in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Daniélou, 1964, pp. 311–314). Secondly, there is also nothing wrong with the concepts of knowledge or understanding (σύνεσις) of Jesus Christ. Initially, these concepts probably meant nothing more than they do in Christianity, but at some point, they could have been perceived as Gnostic (Daniélou, 1964, pp. 362–369). Actually, as Daniélou concluded, "this Jewish Christian gnosis was adopted by Gnosticism, which drew its inspiration from it but at the same time modified it profoundly" (Daniélou, 1964, p. 369). Amber Ivanov also noticed another interesting feature in the Church Slavonic translation: in all manuscripts where this tenth beatitude is preserved, the pronoun "entire" is added to the phrase "the knowledge of Jesus Christ". The researcher interpreted this addition as possibly referring to Gnostic "pure knowledge" (Ivanov, 2023, p. 239).

An interesting change occurred in the eleventh beatitude, where the words "they will judge angels" (ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἀγγέλους κρινοῦσιν), which echo 1 Corinthians 6:3, were changed to "they will be the cohabitants of the angels". It is tempting to assume that the word was translated correctly but changed when the manuscript was copied out again as the words "judge" and "cohabitants" (сѹдити and сѹжитници) have many of the same letters. However, Amber Ivanov showed that both branches of the Old Church Slavonic translation offer the word "cohabitant", albeit with different spellings. But this is not the end of the story. The group of later manuscripts offers another version: "they will serve the angels" (for example, manuscripts E and F). In any case, this change mirrors the growing modesty of those "who have come out of the image of this world through the love of God". Initially, it was promised they would judge angels, then live with them, and finally only serve them. As angels were interpreted in different ways by various Christian (and non-Christian) movements, this change may also indicate an attempt to make the text more orthodox, a process which had probably already occurred in the Greek manuscript from which the translation was made. However, this issue requires further attention.

All manuscripts, except B and Ć, have an interesting complement in the thirteenth beatitude. To the words Μακάρια τὰ σώματα τῶν παρθένων дуси is added ("souls" is a better translation than "spirits", although both are possible). This supplement likely originates from a Greek manuscript (Lipsius, 1891, p. 240) and was prevalent in both branches of the Old Church Slavonic APTh (Ivanov, 2023, p. 351). Without a doubt, this was another refinement of the text in an Orthodox direction, removing the special emphasis on the body/flesh alone.

Some additions were also made to the ninth beatitude, in which it is said that baptism should be kept "pure" and that God's Son is "beloved". These both probably come from the Greek text and reflect the general trend. However, referring to Christ as the beloved Son of God is also very typical of the APTh; this is repeated several times and establishes a strong connection with the biblical text (Mt 3:17).

In the final stage, the reward for chastity (τὸν μισθὸν τῆς ἁγνείας αὐτῶν) became a simple reward (мъзды своея), without emphasising chastity – ἁγνεία. The phrase εἰς ἡμέραν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ has two versions: the precise translation (въ дн҃ь сн҃а его) and an interpretative one (вь дн҃ь соудa его or вь дн҃ь соудныи). As Amber Ivanov indicated, in this latter instance we are dealing with discrepancies between the two branches of the Old Church Slavonic translation (Ivanov, 2023, p. 352).

While none of the above alterations are directly connected with Encratism, they were probably made to align the text more closely with orthodox beliefs, even when the original text was orthodox and similar to biblical quotations. This process began with the Greek text and continued after it was translated, as evidenced by changes in later manuscripts.

Now, keeping in mind the problem of Encratism, let us look at the entire list of the beatitudes in detail. The first two macarisms were translated quite precisely, as the word "pure" (чистии) embraces both καθαρός, and ἁγνός (οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ and οἱ ἁγνὴν τὴν σάρκα were translated as чистии сердцемъ and тѣло чисто). Also, these words are synonymous in Greek, and καθαρός has a large spectrum of meanings. However, the word ἁγνός applies first of all to the purity consecrated to God, and this very word significantly influences the perception of the Greek beatitudes. Actually, as Korinna Zamfir assumed, the first macarism

> should be read in the light of the ἐγκρατεία mentioned in the introductory words and taken up again in the third beatitude. This conception of purity is further defined by the subsequent ascetic demands. Thus ἁγνεία is a central concept that explains καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. In the second and the last beatitude ἁγνεία is a quality of the body (σάρξ

and σῶμα, B 2 and 13, respectively), meaning virginity and/or secondary renunciation to sexuality. They create a kind of interpretative frame. (Zamfir, 2010, p. 285)

Because this word is translated in the second beatitude without any particular emphasis (and without any association that arises with the Greek ἁγνός), and in the thirteenth beatitude it is missing in the Slavonic version, this explanation cannot be applied to the beatitudes in the Church Slavonic translation. This is the first and most convincing argument for why there are no traces of Encratism in the translated text.

The same word οἱ ἐγκρατεῖς (third beatitude) is translated with the phrase: оу҆державшеи плоть свою, meaning "who restrained their bodies". This testifies to the absence of a specific word (and the basis for its emergence) and, at the same time, to a very deliberate and consistent approach to translation (the "title" of Paul's sermon is also about "restraining the body").

Conclusion

The comparison of the Greek and Church Slavonic texts can serve as another argument for Jeremy Barrier's idea that the interpretation of the beatitudes depends on how we read them and which manuscript we use. The text that was circulating in Church Slavonic manuscripts offered a slightly different version from that found in Lipsius's edition of the Greek text, which was the result of many different processes that had already begun in the Greek manuscripts. It can be assumed that many changes were made intentionally in order to remove possible misinterpretations from the text. This particularly concerns all words connected with gnosis (such as "wisdom", "knowledge" and "understanding"), which, for various reasons, could give the impression that the text is gnostic when it is not. Such changes to the wording occurred several times at different stages in the development of this Church Slavonic version.

Some changes in perception were caused by translation. The Church Slavonic text smooths out details that could be interpreted as a manifestation of Encratism. In addition, the use of other words (as is always the case with translation) interrupts the associations and allusions connected with the tradition of using words that were in the original text ("chaste" – "pure", for example). What might look like extreme asceticism in the Greek text became in Church Slavonic only the asceticism inherent to many hagiographical texts in particular.

Another interesting conclusion that follows from this observation is that the variability of the beatitudes that manifests itself in other translations also appeared in the Church Slavonic. Moreover, all statements that differ from the Greek text exhibit numerous further variations in later manuscripts, unlike those passages in which the text corresponds closely to the Greek. All these local interpretations can provide valuable evidence when each manuscript is studied separately within its historical environment and local tradition (as the various Slavonic traditions had their own peculiarities). However, it could also be argued that, in their rendering of the text, they all sought to adapt it to what they understood to be the traditional Church understanding of asceticism.

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Błogosławieństwa w *Dziejach Pawła i Tekli* w języku cerkiewnosłowiańskim. Tłumaczenie i interpretacja

Artykuł poświęcony jest najbardziej zróżnicowanemu fragmentowi *Dziejów Pawła i Tekli* w przekładzie na język cerkiewnosłowiański. Na podstawie dwunastu rękopisów cyrylickich autorka komentuje cerkiewnosłowiańską wersję Błogosławieństw oraz rozważa tę część tekstu w świetle pytań dotyczących oryginalnego tekstu greckiego. Porównanie tekstów greckich i cerkiewnosłowiańskich oraz analiza znaczeń słów w ich kontekstach kulturowych potwierdza, że czytanie tekstów w różnych językach może zmieniać interpretację, nawet jeśli tłumaczenie jest poprawne. Zostało wskazane, że cerkiewnosłowiańska wersja Błogosławieństw jest wynikiem długiego procesu ich „uortodoksyjniania", który rozpoczął się na etapie spisania rękopisów greckich i trwał nawet po ich przetłumaczeniu, o czym świadczą późniejsze rękopisy.

Słowa kluczowe: błogosławieństwa; makaryzm; przypisania; enkratyzm; chrześcijaństwo judaistyczne; ascetyzm; tłumaczenie; język cerkiewnosłowiański; Dzieje Pawła i Tekli; apokryfy

Beatitudes in the Church Slavonic *Acts of Paul and Thecla*: Translation and interpretation

This article focuses on the most variable section of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* in the Church Slavonic translation. Not only does it evaluate the version of the beatitudes that circulated in Church Slavonic based on twelve Cyrillic manuscripts, but it also considers this part of the text in light of questions raised about the original Greek text. Comparing the Greek and Church Slavonic texts and analysing the meanings of words in their cultural contexts reveals that reading texts in different languages can alter interpretation, even when the translation is accurate. However, it's not just about translation. The Church Slavonic version of the beatitudes is the result of a lengthy process of making them "more orthodox", which started with the Greek manuscripts and continued even after they were translated, as evidenced by later manuscripts.

Keywords: beatitudes; macarism; ascription; Encratism; Jewish Christianity; asceticism; translation; Church Slavonic; Acts of Paul and Thecla; Apocrypha

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