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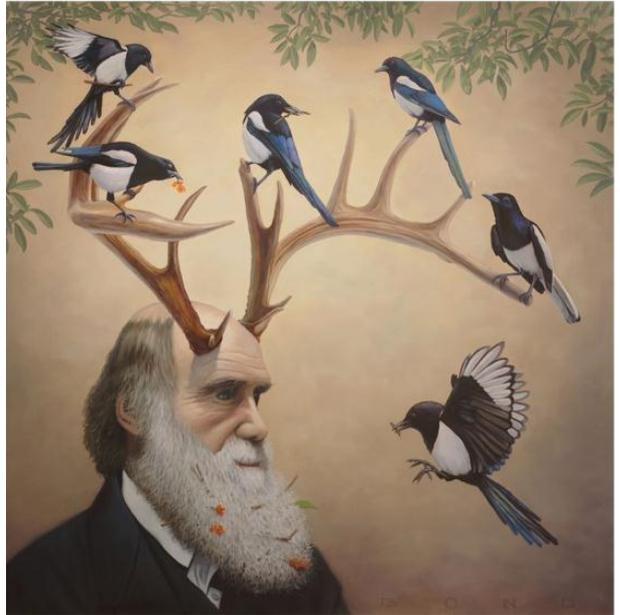
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The miracle of the dead lad in the Sofia Second Chronicle

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Abstract

The article interprets the Miracle of the Dead Lad in the Sofia Second Chronicle via hermeneutic and semiotic analysis, as well as a historical and anthropological approach. In result, this same miracle, probably based on the text of Rodion Kozhuch, will later be added by Pakhomiy Logofet (Serb) to his version of the Life of Varlaam Khutynsky. The conclusion is made about the complex structure of the text of the Miracle of the Dead Lad in the Sofia Second Chronicle, which contains both ideas about illness, healing, holiness, and the chronicler's assessment of ecclesiastical, political and eschatological problems.

Keywords: Miracles, Historical, Anthropology, Sophia, Ancient.

El milagro del muchacho muerto en la *segunda* crónica de Sofía

Resumen

El artículo interpreta el Milagro del muchacho muerto en la Segunda Crónica de Sofía a través del análisis hermenéutico y semiótico, así como un enfoque histórico y antropológico. Como resultado, este mismo milagro, probablemente basado en el texto de Rodion Kozhuch, será luego agregado por Pakhomiy Logofet (serbio) a su versión de la Vida de Varlaam Khutynsky. Se llega a la conclusión sobre la compleja estructura del texto del Milagro del muchacho muerto en la Segunda Crónica de Sofía, que contiene ideas sobre la enfermedad, la curación, la santidad y la evaluación del cronista de los problemas eclesiásticos, políticos y escatológicos.

Palabras clave: Milagros, Histórico, Antropología, Sophia, Antigua.

1. INTRODUCTION

When reading the chronicles, one can note the strong emotional tension of the plots, which are connected with miracles, signs, natural disasters, fires, etc. The chronicler makes us empathize with our heroes - real people of the past, often ordinary citizens, who appear on the pages of the chronicles very rarely. Therefore, we turn our attention to the stories about miracles that can be found in almost every chronicle. The Sophia Second Chronicle is rich in reports about miracles as no other annals. The chronicle was published in Volume 6 of the Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles. The Sofia Second Chronicle has two redactions: The Archival redaction from the first quarter of the 16th century and Voskresenskii (Resurrection) Redaction from the middle of the 16th century. The problem of the sources of the given chronicle is rather complicated. Shakhmatov considers as the source of the Sofia Second Chronicle the version of 1518.

In his turn, Nasonov notes that the 1518 Corpus is based on the Metropolitan Code of 1489, which states that the Second Chronicle displayed opposition to the prince's power. Lurie concludes that the Archival redaction of the Chronicle lists the texts of the Moscow Code of the end of the 15th century, from the Typographical and Yermola Chronicles. This makes the Sofia Second Chronicle similar to

unofficial monastic chronicles. The fact that the chronicle came out of the church environment is proved by a number of original plots in the chronicle. Thus, in the text of the Second Sophia Chronicle the hagiographic stories of Rodion Kozhukh, Metropolitan Deacon are included. Kloss designates the Chronicler of the 15th century created by a cleric of the Moscow Assumption Cathedral as a protograph of the Sofia Second Chronicle.

Thus, the problem of the sources of the Sophia Second Chronicles lies in the field of their origin: metropolitan or monastic. In the preface to the publication of the chronicle in the Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles, it is shown, that the Chronicler of the 15th century, written by an unknown cleric of the Assumption Cathedral, served as a protograph for the Second Sophia Chronicle and the Lviv Chronicle which was similar to it. In our article, we also consider this statement. The question about the purpose of creation and the nature of the Sofia Second Chronicle remains open. The results of the study by Lurie look convincing. According to Lurie Corpus 1489-1490 was an unofficial chronicle from the environment of the opposition clergy. The goal of the Chronicler, according to the scientist, was to condemn the Grand Duke, whose behavior did not correspond to the moral ideals of the Chronicler. Lurie believes that the Chronicler, in this case, is on the orthodox-church position. Considering the above, let us turn to the extensive story of the Miracle of the Dead Lad in the Sofia Second Chronicles from 1460.

2. METHODS INFORMATION

In order to interpret the plot of the story, certain research tools are needed, including hermeneutic and semiotic analysis, as well as a historical and anthropological approach. The problem of understanding the chronicle text is largely formulated by DANILEVSKY (2004). He noted the need to study individual chronicle plots for their further interpretation from the standpoint of hermeneutics. According to DANILEVSKY (2004), it is the approach that will allow us to understand the meaning of the chronicle text. Old Russian culture was symbolic. A huge number of different symbols is contained in the chronicle texts, in particular in the Sofia Second Chronicles. In the story about the miracle of 1460, everything is symbolic: the route of Grigory Tumgan, the Khutyn monastery, the icon of Varlaam Khutyn, dreams and visions of Gregory, etc. Each symbol can be interpreted if it is inscribed in the iconic culture of Rodion Kozuch, the author of this episode.

In our opinion, TOPOROV (1995), a prominent representative of the Moscow-Tartust semiotic school, applied this technique successfully. The methodology for analysing scenes dealing with miracles in medieval texts can be traced in the works of ARNAUTOVA (2004), MEDVED (2017), dedicated to the anthropology of the disease in ancient Russia and medieval Western Europe. Taking into account the fact that the miracle of healing was the main miracle of the Middle Ages, it is possible to identify the hypothesis of the most valuable source potential of scenes about

miracles in Russian chronicles, which helps understand the standpoint of chroniclers, their relationship and the relationship of their contemporaries to the disease and to the miracle itself.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author of *The Miracle of the Dead Lad* was Rodion Kozhukh. Little is known about this man. It is assumed that in the 1460s he was a Metropolitan deacon in the Assumption Cathedral. It should be noted that Rodion Kozhukh had an unquestionable literary talent: his legend is not only diverse in its content, but also full of various details, the author's reasoning and direct references to the sacred texts, which certainly show the author's attitude to the event being described. LIKHACHEV (2014) wrote that when it comes to the holy in ancient Russian literature, the canons of life become mandatory. The corresponding situation is also observed in the episode we are studying: since we are talking about the resurrection of a young man at the tomb of St. Varlaam Khutynsky, the canon of life is at the heart of the story. In other words, the sequence of events and the structure itself are typical for Life miracles (MALAKHOVA & MALAKHOV, 2014).

In the winter of 1460, Vasily II arrived in Novgorod. Gregory Tumgan (a bed-mate) also turned out to be in Novgorod. After staying in the city for several days, Gregory became very ill. However, he knew that the Khutynsky monastery was located near Novgorod,

where the miraculous relics of the Novgorod Saint Varlaam rested. Displaying faith to the monk, Gregory went to the monastery, but died on the way. The servants of the bed-mate still got to the monastery, with the body of the deceased. Close to the monastery Gregory came to life. Such, in brief, is the main outline of events, described in the hagiographic tradition. We assume that in this plot there are three semantic levels. The first is a private history of illness, death and resurrection of a young man. Here we would single out at least two questions that might interest us:

- 1) The causes of the disease and the attitude of Gregory to it;
- 2) Why and how the resurrection/healing took place.

So why did Gregory get sick, how was he resurrected and healed? It can be assumed, following Joseph Volotsky, that the death of a young man was a sign that God for saw the tendency to a sinful life. Despite his young age, Gregory had sins. The fact is that after the miraculous resurrection, the abbot of the Khutynsky monastery, Leonty and the priests began to question Gregory about what had happened to him in his dream. The boy said that after his death his soul separated from the body and was surrounded by a multitude of evil forces, who began to interrogate him, reading all the evil deeds and thoughts of Gregory from the scroll. According to the author, it is possible that the illness and death of the lad were caused by these sinful acts (BORISOV, 1986).

In addition, in the Gospel of John, Jesus makes it clear to the disciples that a person can fall ill so that God could reveal his power on the example of the miracle of healing. The central figure of the narration is the saint (Monk Varlaam). It is through his saint Varlaam that the Lord reveals his power. The author does not give explicit indications of the cause of illness and death of Gregory. However, it is stated why the lad was healed. While being ill, Gregory saw Varlaam in his dream who promised him full recovery due to the fact that Gregory prayed to Nicholas, but called the Novgorod saint for help. Gregory had never seen the image of this saint before. Indeed, the first and strongest desire of the lad was to see the icon of the monk. Incidentally, after the resurrection, Gregory was numb for some time, but after the attachment to the icon of Varlaam, Gregory's voice returned to him (DMITRIEV, 1973).

In these details one can note a curious thing: for the people of that time, external signs of the holiness of healers and miracle-workers were very important, namely: the presence of imperishable relics, the church in honour of the saint, his icons. Moreover, Pachomius Serb, a well-known hagiographer and a contemporary of Rodion Kozhukh, even condemns the people because they do not believe in the holiness of the relics unless they see that the relics are imperishable. MEDVED (2017), who studies the anthropology of the disease in Ancient Russia, notes that the medieval integrity of the saint was especially esteemed by medieval patients. This could be manifested in the imperishable relics or in the icon. It is important to refer to Levi-Strauss here: the

patient has a lack of self-identity, while the healer has an excess of self-identity. Balancing occurs in the process of healing.

In the legend, Gregory strove to reach the Khutynsky monastery, to get attached to the relics and to see the icon of the saint. In the dream, Varlaam Khutynsky himself appeared to him and marked him with a cross. Further, the priests of the Khutynsky monastery marked the youth with the cross of Varlaam Khutynsky. This moment may also indicate the need for tangible symbols for healing: the church of the saint, the icon, relics, the cross (NOURI, BRAUMANN, CHAMPIRI, SCHRÖDER & AKOCHAKIAN, 2018; SELOMO & GOVENDER, 2016). Everything that happens to Gregory after a vision is symbolic. Apparently, the combination of different activities is a healing ritual. Moreover, these activities are manifested in his dream, since there is no real healer. So, after the vision, the youth is smeared with holy oil, thus getting acquainted with the fullness of the Orthodox ritual. Further, the path of Gregory to the monastery is described.

This path is deeply symbolic: from Moscow to the church of Varlaam Khutynsky, from the earthly world to where he, thanks to the monk, is attached to the divine world. TOPOROV (1995) would call it a sacralisation of space. A disease is a trial through which, with the help of faith, one can come to physical and spiritual recovery. Not without reason, the condition of the patient before and after healing is very emotionally contrasted. Lad Gregory was tormented by his illness, his illness was hard, he was exhausted because of his illness.

After healing, the healthy ones rejoice, give praise to Varlaam, kiss the icon and the holy shrine. On the way, Gregory is resurrected. He is attached to the tomb of the saint, the priests read the prayer service and signify the lad with the cross mentioned above.

The ritual ends with a feast. The most important thing in the understanding of the resurrection of St. Gregory is his story about the posthumous vision, about a kind of duel between demons and angels for the soul of the lad. Those evil forces, which have already been mentioned, are banished by Nikola, the miracle-worker, by his appealing to the guardian angel with a scroll, where the good deeds of the bed-mate are recorded. Demons cannot take Gregory, because, according to Nikola, the minor virtue of the lad and his confession to the spiritual father, that is Varlaam, overcome the demonic power. After that, Gregory goes to heaven, where he meets Varlaam. The monk marks the lad with the cross and the icon of Nikola and disappears. So Gregory returns to life.

This scene of the struggle between good and evil for the soul of the deceased is characteristic of healing rituals, since the patient explains his condition in the language and images available to him: illness and death are a trial before the court. Keeping faith to the holy wonder-workers Nikola and Varlaam, Gregory receives their intercession in the face of evil demons, after which he is resurrected and healed (TORQUATO, ARAUJO, UMESH & MACIEL, 2018; TURAL, 2018). Thus, a direct reference to the authoritative life of Christian saints - the seven Ephesus youths - was probably used in the

chronicle plot about the miracle with Tumgan, first, to make the earthly being closer to the divine, through the repetition of the Sacred History, when for the faith of Vasily II, his servant Gregory is resurrected from the dead through Varlaam. Secondly, to emphasize the piety of the Great Prince of Moscow. Even here, we see that the political meaning of the miracle is inseparable from the religious one.

The truly deep, religious meaning of the plot about the resurrection of Gregory Tumgan is revealed in the following. It is possible to assume that the author of this story was inspired by the Life of Vasily the New, namely, by Theodora's going through the ordeals. Theodora was a disciple of St. Vasily the New, who lived in the 10th century. Once she was very sick and was dying. Theodora had a vision of how her soul separated from the body and was surrounded by many efiopes who brought a charter where all her deeds were recorded. In the same way, as in the case with Gregory, the evil spirits began to pull Theodore.

But suddenly there appeared two angels, who took Theodora in their arms and began to lift her to heaven. In her further visions, Theodora continued going through the ordeals. The scenes of a court, described in the Life of Vasily the New and in the story of the resurrection of Gregory Tumgan, are very similar and permeated with eschatological moods. VILINSKY (1913), a researcher of the Life of Vasily the New and ancient Russian editions of the chronicles, notes that the cause of interest in the Life and its spread is not the life of the saint, but eschatological information contained in the episodes of

Theodora's going through the ordeals and Gregory's Visions Referring to ALEKSEEV (2002) writes: In the Middle Ages especially at the time of the coming End of the World, the need for self-calm existed.

The source of the Sofia Second Chronicle was created on the eve of the End of the World expected in Russia. Creating the Legend of the miracles of the great miracle-worker Varlaam, the chronicler was guided first by this need for self-calm in the darkest times, the Lord shows a miracle through his saint Varlaam, strengthening faith and hope for salvation: We ask God in the End Times to glorify his saint on our land, the saint who is the last of our kind. It is important to note that this same miracle, probably based on the text of Rodion Kozhuch, will later be added by Pakhomiy Logofet (Serb) to his version of the Life of Varlaam Khutynsky. It is noteworthy that in his version of the legend, there is no reference to the Seven Ephesian youths, and the eschatological orientation of the Kozhuch text is less pronounced, in particular, there is no maxim about the End Times.

The aim of Pakhomiy Logofet, in our opinion, is to prove the truth of the holy scripture. That is why he cites several examples of miraculous healings from antiquity. It can be assumed, that aim of Kozhuch was to calm the believers on the eve of the End of the World.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Miracle is a category that allows you to embrace both everyday notions of illness and holiness, and to reveal the peculiarities of the

political and religious consciousness of the inhabitants of medieval Russia. In the plot of the Sofia Second Chronicle about the miracle of 1460 with Gregory Tumgan, the disease is a test for a person, which he must overcome with the help of faith. At the same time, it is important to have undoubted faith and to serve a particular saint (in the case of the miracle of 1460 – Varlaam Khutynsky) through the attachment to his icons and miraculous relics. The physical and spiritual strength of the saint complements the physical and spiritual weakness of the patient.

Through direct references to the Sacred Texts, Rodin Kozhukh places ideological accents in the time relevant for him: the importance of Vasily II and his princely house is emphasized, and the subordination of Novgorod to Moscow is justified. In contrast to the life of Varlaam Khutynsky, a chronicle episode about his miracle in 1460, is intended not only to glorify the saint, but also to inspire tranquillity in his contemporaries who live in anticipation of the imminent End of the World.

Summing up, it should be noted that the legend of Rodion Kozhukh in the Sofia Second Chronicle is rather an exception than the norm. Chronicle plots about miracles are usually rather small in volume and rather scarce in details. However, the attempt to make the Russian chronicles talk deserves attention. Moreover, belief in miracles is one of the key components of religious consciousness. Old Russian people were expecting miracles to come and they occurred.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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