

“AND THEY JOINED HIM IN ELPHEGOR”: ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE ROMANIAN TRANSLATION OF THE *PALAEA HISTORICA*
AND ITS SLAVONIC MODEL

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The *Palaea Historica*, a Byzantine apocryphal text from the 9th century, was translated into Romanian between the late 16th century and the early 17th century via a Slavonic intermediary. Although the Romanian text was edited and published in full in 2001, recent developments in the academic discussion around the Slavonic version of the *Palaea Historica* have led to the publication of an edition of the second Slavonic translation in the year 2016, thereby raising the question of whether the Romanian text was solely influenced by the first redaction or not. This study is a continuation of the author's previous research on the Romanian version's relationship with the two Slavonic redactions, with more focus being given to grammatical peculiarities and *loci obscuri* that were highlighted by the editors of the Romanian manuscripts as having been stemmed from the Slavonic text's influence. These passages are analyzed in comparison with the two Slavonic translations and the Greek original, allowing for a better perspective on how dependent the Romanian grammatical constructions were on their Slavonic model. Finally, this study refers to an onomastic confusion between Abraham's brother and Abraham's father, which is avoided or possibly corrected in the Romanian version.

Keywords: biblical apocrypha, biblical genealogies, Byzantine literature, linguistic calques, Romanian translations, Slavonic translations.

1. INTRODUCTORY NOTES ON THE *PALAEA HISTORICA*

The so-called *Palaea Historica*, which owes its current name to modern academics who wished to distinguish it from the *Palaea Interpretata* and the *Palaea Chronographica*, is a 9th century Byzantine text containing a retelling of the events of the Old Testament from the creation of the world to David's rule, peppered it with apocryphal episodes and commentaries on the Psalms. This text gained considerable popularity in the *Byzantine-Slavic Commonwealth*, especially as an alternative to the Old Testament itself¹, although its exact relationship with the *Palaea Interpretata* remains a complicated subject, given the “entanglement” between their respective titles in Slavonic manuscripts, which usually refer to

¹ Émile Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1981, p. 392.

either of them as *книга бытия неба и земли* (*The Book of the Creation of Heaven and Earth*)². In its essence, the *Palaea Historica* is more focused on the narrative elements (as opposed to the more polemical *Palaea Interpretata* and the more historiographical *Palaea Chronographica*)³, although it did not lack its own polemical passages, some of which indicating which interpretations of the biblical events were anathema.

The Greek text (henceforth PG) was edited by Athanasius Vassiliev in 1893 based on a 16th century manuscript (Cod. Theol. 247 Nessel, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), collated with the 15th century Cod. Otthobonianus⁴, both of which are fairly lacunose, as noted by William Adler in the preface to his 2013 translation of the text⁵, where he argued that a new edition of the PG was thoroughly necessary. By 2020, when Adler penned an article on the textual transmission of the PG, he had identified more than twenty manuscripts, “the majority of which are relatively complete, and in some cases textually superior to Vassiliev’s witnesses”⁶. Despite the problems posed by the manuscripts used in the 1893 edition, Adler recognizes Vassiliev’s merits in making certain emendations based on intuitions that would be confirmed over one hundred years later, based on the unpublished manuscripts⁷.

In June 2022, William Adler shared his most recent update on his edition on the website of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies of NC State University, stating his intention to continue his work during a research leave at Dumbarton Oaks in 2022/23. On his progress, he said the following: “I have already transcribed all but one of the manuscript witnesses and entered variant readings for about 1/3 of the entire document”⁸. As a result, the edition has not yet been published, and while its existence will prove to be most helpful – if not thoroughly necessary to future research on the relationship between the PG and its translations – this study will go on to refer to Vassiliev’s edition. Nevertheless, as will become apparent later on, certain deviations from the Greek text in the

² This subject is discussed in considerably more detail in Ростислав Станков, Слово *Памѣти* в древней славянской письменности, in Светлана Арнаудова, *Якы бѣчѣмъ любодѣльни. Юбилеен сборник в чест на доц. д-р. Цветанка Янакиева, ст. н. с. II ст. д-р Павел Георгиев и доц. Валентин Кулев*, Shumen, Научен център “Преславска книжовна школа”, 2010, p. 67–80.

³ Małgorzata Skowronek, *Palaea Historica. The Second Slavic Translation. Commentary and Text*, Łódź, 2016, p. 21–22.

⁴ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota graeco-byzantina*, Moscow, 1893, p. 279.

⁵ W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica* (‘The Old Testament History’)”, in Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, Alexander Panayotov (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. More Noncanonical Scriptures*, Grand Rapids (MI), William B. Eerdmans, 2013, p. 585.

⁶ W. Adler, Observations on the Textual Transmission of the *Palaea Historica* in Greek, In: C. Böttrich, D. Fahl, S. Fahl (ed.), *Von der Historienbibel zur Weltchronik. Studien zur Paleja-Literatur*, Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2020, p. 65.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 65–66.

⁸ The full text of his update can be found on this page: <https://philrel.chass.ncsu.edu/news/2022/06/03/work-in-progress-adler-on-the-palaea-historica/> (consulted on March 7, 2024).

Slavonic and Romanian versions might indeed be explained through the newly published Greek manuscripts, so that – pending tantalizing observations by Adler on his current work – our observations will have a provisional character.

The first Slavonic translation of the *Palaea* (henceforth PH I) was edited by A.N. Popov in 1881⁹, based on three manuscripts redacted in the Russian recension of Slavonic. This text contains traces of the Bulgarian protograph¹⁰, whose existence was confirmed through the Bulgarisms identified by T.A. Sumnikova¹¹ and Rostislav Stankov¹². On its dating, Emil Turdeanu argued that the PH I was redacted in Western Macedonia in the 12th century at the latest, from where it reached Russia via a Middle Bulgarian copy¹³. Its *terminus post quem* was set as far back as the late 10th century or the early 11th century, although the *terminus ante quem* still caused some disagreement among researchers, with Sumnikova assuming the 13th century and Johannes Reinhart arguing, based on the linguistic traits of the language used in the Slavonic translation, that it could not have been later than the 11th century¹⁴.

M. Speranskiy posited the existence of a second Slavonic translation (henceforth PH II) following his study of the 16th century ms. 24 from Krušedol Monastery¹⁵. While Speranskiy believed it to have been redacted around the 15th – 16th century as a result of the loss of access to the PH I, Reinhart identified a much older copy of a portion of the *Palaea* in the Vindob. slav. 158, which could be dated to 1385¹⁶. The PH II was edited by Małgorzata Skowronek in 2016, following the discovery of multiple copies, four of which were complete and written with the Rashkan orthography (the earliest being from around the end of the 14th century; the latest, from the beginning of the 17th)¹⁷.

The Romanian translation (henceforth PHR) was edited by Alexandra Moraru and Mihai Moraru in 2001, based on manuscripts 469 (first half of the 17th century) and 5054 (18th century) from the Library of the Romanian Academy. The presence of the *Palaea Historica* in manuscript 469 was first noted by Moses Gaster in 1882, although by the time he published his *Literatura română populară* the following year, he had already lost access to this copy. The manuscript would elude future generations of Romanian philologists until its return in 1957, after

⁹ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия небеси и земли (Палея историческая) с приложением сокращенной палеи русской редакции”, In: Чтения въ императорскомъ обществѣ Истории и Древностей Россійскихъ при Московскомъ Университетѣ, v. I: January – March, 1881, p. 1–172

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. XXIX.

¹¹ Т.А. Сумникова, “К проблеме перевода Исторической палеи”, in *Изучение русского языка и источниковедение*, отв. ред. В.Ф. Дубровина, Moscow, p. 27–39.

¹² Ростислав Станков, *Лексика Исторической палеи*, Veliko Tarnovo, 1994.

¹³ E. Turdeanu, *Apocryphes...*, p. 393–394.

¹⁴ See M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 24–25.

¹⁵ М. Н. Сперански, “Историјска Палеја, њени преводи и редакције у старој словенској књижевности”, in *Споменик српске краљевске Академије* XVI, 1892, p. 13.

¹⁶ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14–19.

having been sent to Moscow during the First World War¹⁸. This manuscript, however, is acephalous (as it starts with the life of Abraham), which made the discovery of the *Palaea* in ms. 5054 by Luisa Valmarin all the more important, especially given that the felicitous event took place shortly before Alexandra Moraru and Mihai Moraru had finished their edition of the then single manuscript of the PHR¹⁹. Both manuscripts are assumed to have been based on a Moldavian copy, although the archetype is believed to have been redacted in Western Transylvania (based on linguistic traits)²⁰, in the early 17th century, if not even as early as the 16th century²¹.

I have published two studies on the relationship between the PHR, the PG, the PH I, and the newly edited PH II. The first of them was dedicated to the opening chapters of the *Palaea Historica* in the four versions, based on the reasoning that the most noticeable divergences between the PH I and the PH II were to be found in that passage²², and that the analysis of the PHR would benefit from a thorough comparison with the two Slavonic versions that were now available. What became apparent was that although the Romanian text did not follow the currently edited manuscripts of the PH I verbatim, it was still far closer to it in form and content than it was to the PH II²³. In the second study, I took a different approach, as I analyzed the manner in which the four versions depict two biblical episodes (namely the Tower of Babel and Noah's Ark) that had essentially the same content. In this case, too, it was possible to note that the PHR contained word choices or expressions that were calqued after the PH I²⁴.

2. GRAMMATICAL PECULIARITIES IN THE ROMANIAN VERSION OF THE *PALAEA HISTORICA* (PHR)

Another possible direction in which the comparative analysis of the PHR and the Greek and Slavonic versions can be taken consists in discussing peculiar grammatical constructions that may have been directly caused by the original source's influence on the translator. For instance, in the linguistic study dedicated

¹⁸ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, Bucharest, 2001, p. 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²² See Вася Велинова, “И ннѣ бжстєнїе добродѣтели сладьченїеже сладсти меловнїе и богатєнїе паче множество златикъ (За литературния контекст на втория превод на Историческата палея”, in A. Тотоманова, M. Тотоманова-Панева (ed.), *Осми международен колоквиум по старо-българистика. Сборник доклади*, Sofia, 2022, p. 139.

²³ M.-G. Hâncu, “‘Begin as You Mean to Go On’: The Opening Chapters of the *Palaea Historica* in Greek, Slavonic, and Romanian”, *Études balkaniques* (Sofia), LVII, 2, 2021, p. 227–250.

²⁴ M.-G. Hâncu, “«And the Lord God Confused the Tongues on the Whole Earth»: Noah's Ark and the Tower of Babel in the *Palaea Historica* and Its Slavonic and Romanian Translations”, in Cătălina Vătăşescu (ed.), *Relațiile etnice și culturale în Europa de Sud-Est oglindite în limbile și literaturile regiunii. Actele Colocviului româno-bulgar, București, 15 iunie 2022*, Cluj-Napoca, 2023, p. 61–78.

to the PHR, the two editors note several syntactical constructions which they describe as being specific to the Greek text and having entered through the intermediary of the Slavonic source of the Romanian translation, since they can be found in the copies written in the Ukrainian recension (i.e. in the PH I). Given that the edition of the PHR predates the edition of the PH II by nearly two decades, it stands to reason that the parallels should be expanded to include the equivalents from this separate Slavonic translation of the *Palaea Historica*. Nevertheless, as shall be seen, some of the observations made by the editors of the Romanian will have to be presented in a somewhat more nuanced manner, often due to differences in interpreting the grammatical phenomena in the text.

The first pattern consists in instrumental constructions such as *cu frică fusei ținut* (“I was held with fear”), *cu blagoslovenie te voi blagoslovi* (“I will bless you with a blessing”) or *cu cercetare va cerceta pre voi Dumnezeu* (“God will visit you with a visit”). The editors proceed to cite the counterparts from the then available editions of the PG and the PH I, to which we will be adding the corresponding passages from the PH II, which will hopefully provide us with a more complete image of how these instrumental constructions were rendered in the three languages. The first example is quoted from the episode where Moses takes Joseph’s bones upon leaving Egypt:

PG: ἐπισκοπῇ ἐπισκέπεται ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός²⁵ (lit.: “God will visit you with a visit”²⁶)

PH I: посѣщеніємъ ѿмже посѣтитъ васъ г҃ъ б҃ъ²⁷ (lit.: “with the visit with which God will visit you”)

PH II: посещениємъ ѿмже посѣтитъ васъ г҃ъ б҃ъ²⁸ (lit.: “with the visit that God will visit you with”)

PHR: *cu cercetare va cerceta pre voi Dumnezeu*²⁹ (lit.: “God will visit you with a visit”)

This example is fairly straightforward from a morphological point of view: both Slavonic versions render the Greek dative noun ἐπισκοπῇ through an instrumental form, which is then rendered literally in Romanian through a prepositional phrase. The only perceivable difference between the four versions, on a syntactical level, is that the PH I and PH II also contain a relative pronoun (ѿмже) in agreement with the instrumental noun, which complicates its translation. It is unclear whether this relative clause reflected some variation in the Greek textual tradition, but for the time being, suffice to say that the PHR does not conserve this

²⁵ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 235.

²⁶ Unless stated otherwise, all English translations are my own. For the PG, I will also be referring to Adler’s translation from W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica...*”, apart from cases where a literal translation is more helpful.

²⁷ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 74.

²⁸ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 106.

²⁹ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 167.

syntactical development, instead translating the rest of the sentence literally, as if the relative pronoun did not exist.

Nevertheless, the second example cited by the editors of the PHR should be regarded with considerably more prudence, as the syntactical parallels between the Romanian text and the PG and PH I (which are quoted verbatim in the edition) are less obvious:

PG: φορικὴ συνέχει με³⁰ (lit.: “Fear gripped me”³¹)

PH I: страѣ въдержитъ мѧ³² (lit.: “Fear held me”)

PH II: трепетѣ ѡдръжимъ есмъ³³ (lit.: “I am held by fear”)

PHR: *cu frică fusei ținut*³⁴ (lit.: “I was held with fear”)

In the PG and the PH I, the equivalent of the Romanian instrumental construction *cu frică* is consistently rendered through a nominative noun, while the subject in the PHR (implied through the verb *fusei*) is the direct object in the accusative case in the PG (με) and the PH I (мѧ). Both changes can, of course, be explained through the change in verbal voice between the PG/PH I and the PHR: the former use active forms (συνέχει, въдержитъ), the latter uses a passive form (*fusei ținut*). The PH II is extremely similar to the PHR from this point of view, as it uses an analytic passive construction (ѡдръжимъ есмъ), while the counterpart to *cu frică* is in the instrumental case. In this situation, the instrumental case is used in order to render the agent of the passive verb, which is quite frequent in Old Slavonic – indeed, from that point of view one may assume that the Romanian translation had had access to a Slavonic text that changed the verbal voice and used this instrumental agent, which was rendered accurately *as an instrumental*, but maybe less transparently *as an agent*. Conversely, while the PHR agrees (coincidentally or not) with the PH II, it is difficult to say that the PG and the PH I, which the editors quote in their study, used the instrumental construction that was supposedly transferred to Romanian. From this point of view, our access to the text of the PH II does help shed light on the source for a somewhat unusual phrase from the PHR.

Another case in which the editors imprecisely cite instrumental constructions as directly reflecting the PG and the PH I is the following:

PG: εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε... πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου³⁵

PH I: вѣла вѣла тѧ... оумножа оумножю сѣмѧ твоѧ³⁶

³⁰ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 205.

³¹ I have opted to provide a literal translation (instead of using Adler's) due to the differences in verbal voice between the available edited texts.

³² А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 26.

³³ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 73.

³⁴ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 120.

³⁵ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 221.

PH II: БЛѢ БЛѢЮ ТЕ... ОУМНѠЖѸ ОУМНОЖѸ СЕМЕ ТВОЕ³⁷

PHR: *cu blagoslovenie te voi blagoslovi... cu mulțime voi înmulți sămânța ta*³⁸

I will bless you with blessings... I will multiply your seed with a multitude.

Here, the Greek and Slavonic versions are in perfect agreement with each other on a syntactic level, but not with the PHR, as the instrumental's supposed counterpart is actually a present participle (εὐλογῶν... πληθύνων; БЛѢА... ОУМНОЖА; БЛѢЕ... ОУМНѠЖѸ). One may note that in the PH II, ОУМНѠЖѸ ОУМНОЖѸ has the appearance of a repetition or, at best, a sequence of homonyms. This is likely due to the difficulty that was posed by the orthographical interpretation of the nasal А, which is the standard ending for the nominative singular form of the masculine present participle. The loss of the nasal characteristics of nasal vowels in Church Slavonic led to differing results in different recensions: thus, the PH I, which was conserved and edited in the Russian/Ukrainian recension, can render А as Ѧ, which, in conjunction with a palatal consonant, is then rendered as ҃, hence ОУМНОЖ҃ (although one may equally note that the present participle БЛѢА is written with its original nasal. Meanwhile, in the Serbian recension, А is normally rendered as ҃ (see БЛ҃Е), but here one might assume that was А misread as Ж, which was then transformed into ҃, as per the normal phonetical rules of the Serbian recension. As a result, the present participle ends up being homonymous to the present form ОУМНОЖѸ, whose ending originally was the other nasal, Ж. This confusion between the two nasals equally occurs in the example from the PH I, where БЛ҃҃҃҃҃҃ is used instead of БЛ҃҃҃҃҃҃ or БЛ҃҃҃҃҃҃҃ for the indicative present form. It is not impossible that these orthographic shifts and possibly unclear passages may have played a part in the use of the instrumental construction in the PHR, but at the very least one should discount the possibility that the currently edited Greek and Slavonic texts contain an instrumental counterpart to the Romanian version. Conversely, considering that this passage is a quote from Gen. 22:17, it might also be useful to compare with other Romanian translations of the Bible from that period. Thus, in the Bucharest Bible of 1688, the phrasing is *blagoslovind te voi blagoslovi... mulțind voiu mulți seminția ta*³⁹, which is much closer to what can be seen in the PG, the PH I and the PH II, since it renders the present participles through the Romanian gerund, which is, to this day, one of the closest functional equivalents of the active participle in general⁴⁰.

³⁶ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 53.

³⁷ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 92.

³⁸ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 141.

³⁹ *Biblia adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului și a Noului Testament: tipărită întâia oară la 1688 în timpul lui Șerban Cantacuzino, Domnitorul Țării Românești și cu osârdia logofătului Constantin Brâncoveanu*, Bucharest, 2018, p. 15.

⁴⁰ Pandele Olteanu (ed.), *Slava veche și slavona românească*, Bucharest, 1975, p. 142.

Regardless, pending the discovery or the editing of a Greek or Slavonic manuscript that uses the same type of structure as the PHR, it is perhaps more prudent to assume that these are not exclusively syntactic calques based on the text that the translator will have had before his eyes. Instead, the particularities of Greek and Slavonic syntax had a more general influence on the Romanian translation, which used the instrumental construction to render a type of phrase that couldn't be calqued in Romanian as easily as it was calqued in Slavonic from Greek. Alternatively, one may assume that the participle was misinterpreted as an instrumental form, but given the currently available material, this explanation feels unlikely and somewhat unfair towards the Romanian translator, whose efforts are certainly worthy of praise.

On the other hand, it should equally be noted that, on a stylistic level, all versions of the *Palaea Historica* rely on the same fundamental structure, namely the use of two words derived from the same root. This sort of paronomasia, more famously illustrated by the so-called “oriental” or “biblical superlative”, tends to carry an augmentative note, as it expresses the maximal degree in which an object has a certain, often implied, trait⁴¹. In her exhaustive study on the expression of grading in Arabic, Ioana Feodorov dedicates a subsection to such paronomastic structures, illustrating several variations thereof with numerous examples. According to her, one of the more frequent patterns involved a verb and a verbal noun derived from the same root, called an “internal object” or, per the terminology used by Arabic grammarians, an “absolute complement” (*al-maf'uul al-mutlaq*), whose frequency of use in expressing augmentation was such that they were preferred to adverbial constructions⁴². It is difficult to make a perfect parallel with the examples from the participle + indicative constructions in the PG, PH I, PH II and the Bucharest Bible, on the one hand, and the instrumental + indicative construction in the PHR (even if only due to my own inexperience with the particular traits of Arabic grammar). However, it is important to note that the process is not only similar in its general traits but may have reflected a relatively popular stylistic option in religious writings based on Semitic texts such as the Bible. In other words, in the absence of a direct counterpart to the instrumental structure in the PHR, one should remain open to the possibility that the translator himself had made this choice based on his previous experience with this such texts (thereby reusing the type of instrumental construction attested in the first example, *cu cercetare va cerceta pre voi*⁴³), which had made him consider the instrumental as an equally good solution in rendering the paronomastic participle as the gerund would prove to be in the Bucharest Bible.

⁴¹ I. Feodorov, *Exprimarea gradației în limba arabă. Studiu comparativ*, Bucharest, 2003, p. 322.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 276–277.

⁴³ I have discussed this possibility in previous studies on the Romanian translation of the Akathist Hymn from a bilingual manuscript from the end of the 17th century, where certain syntactic constructions that were initially calqued from the Slavonic text are then reused more frequently throughout the text, including in passages where the Slavonic model does not have a direct syntactical counterpart. See M.-G. Hâncu, “*Acatistul Maicii Domnului* într-un manuscris bilingv din 1683: probleme ale traducerii din slavonă în română”, *Romanoslavica* LVIII, 2, 2022, p. 20–40.

Another frequent construction underlined by the editors of the PHR as stemming from an equally frequent phrasing in the Slavonic model is the reflexive passive⁴⁴, which, in turn, renders the mediopassive voice in Greek. Although one may think, at first glance, that this is ultimately the same type of syntactic structure with a different name, it should be emphasized that Slavonic and Romanian do have actual separate passive forms – albeit analytical (namely with the indicative form of the auxiliary verb “to be” and the passive participle) – and that the use of the reflexive verb is an alternative *option*, unlike in Greek, where most verbal tenses don’t distinguish between the synthetical middle and the passive voice on a formal level.

Nevertheless, it is possible to cite another example that illustrates the differences between the PHR and the two Slavonic versions:

PG: Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἀβραάμ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀπολλύομαι ἄτεκνος⁴⁵

And Abraham said: “Behold, I will perish without children.

PH I: И ре(ч) Авраамъ се азъ погымаюся безчаденъ⁴⁶.

And Abraham said: “Behold, I will be released [sc. from life] childless”.

PH II: Ре(ч) же Авраамъ се азъ погыбаю сдѣ⁴⁷.

And Abraham said: “Behold, I will perish here”.

PHR: *Și dzise Avram: „Iată, eu mă voi lăsa fără de roadă”*⁴⁸.

And Abraham said: “Behold, I will be released [sc. from life] without children”.

Upon comparing the four versions, one may note several differences: first of all, the PH II is the only one to not render the Greek word ἄτεκνος, which the PH I conserves as a composite adjective (formed from без “without”, чадъ “child”, and a suffix, thus being a calque). The calqued form from the Slavonic version is translated literally and rendered as a prepositional phrase (*fără de roadă*) in the PHR. The verb, however, seems to have posed a greater problem in interpreting the Greek text, as the options made by the two Slavonic versions are quite different from one another. The currently edited text of the PG does not include other variants for ἀπολλύομαι, whose meaning is certainly closer to the translation in the PH II (although it should be noted that погыбаю is a purely active form). Pending the new edition of the PG, I believe it would be possible to suggest that the model used by the PH I had a different spelling, ἀπολύομαι, which would make the verb appear to be derived not from ἀπόλλυμι, “to perish”, but from ἀπολύω, “to release”, which would be consistent with the use of the verb погыпати in the PH I⁴⁹. It is this form that was then rendered just as literally in the PHR.

⁴⁴ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 63.

⁴⁵ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 211.

⁴⁶ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 36.

⁴⁷ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 80.

⁴⁸ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 129.

⁴⁹ This is, in fact, the primary Greek gloss provided for the perfective verb погытити: see P.M. Цейтлин, Р. Вечерки, Э. Благовой, *Старославянский словарь (по рукописям X–XI веков)*, Moscow, 1994, p. 556.

3. VERBAL CONSTRUCTIONS WITH THE DATIVE INSTEAD OF THE ACCUSATIVE

Among the syntactical characteristics of the Romanian translation, the editors also note the presence of unusual case constructions of certain verbs which use the dative instead of the accusative (as would be the case in modern Romanian). This switch from a direct object to an indirect object is attributed to a Slavonic or a Greek model⁵⁰.

PG: τὸ δὲ ἔθνος ὃν ἐνδουλεύσωσιν κρινῶ ἐγώ⁵¹

PH I: ꙗзыкъ ꙗмоуѣ ꙗрабѣтаютъ сѣдѣ азѣ⁵²

PH II: ꙗзык/ꙗзыкы/ꙗзыкѣ/ꙗзыкѣ ꙗмоуѣ ꙗрабѣтаютъ соудѣ⁵³

PHR: *limbii ceea ce vor sluji giudeca-voi eu*⁵⁴

The people to whom they will be enslaved I will judge⁵⁵

In this example, the PG does not use any dative forms, as both verbs (ἐνδουλεύσωσιν and κρινῶ) take direct objects in the accusative (ὃν and τὸ ἔθνος respectively). Conversely, the PH I constructs the corresponding verbs (ꙗрабѣтаютъ and сѣдѣ) with dative objects (ꙗмоуѣ and ꙗзыкъ respectively), while the manuscripts of the PH II hesitate between the accusative (singular: ꙗзык, plural: ꙗзыкы) and the dative (ꙗзыкѣ, with the orthographic variant ꙗзыкѣ). The verb сѣдити is equally attested with the accusative and the dative, which explains the copyists' hesitation. Conversely, I would like to draw attention to the relative clause, whose predicate is ἐνδουλεύσωσιν in Greek and ꙗрабѣтаютъ in the two Slavonic versions. Here, the relative pronoun around which it is built is thoroughly consistent in the PH I and the PH II, but the PHR does not follow the Slavonic use of the dative, instead opting for what appears to be the accusative (even though the verb *a sluji* allows a dative object). For the sake of comparison, one may quote the translation of the corresponding passage in Gen. 15:14 from the Bucharest Bible of 1688: *Iară limbii căriia vor sluji voiu judica-o*⁵⁶. Here, like in the PHR, the object of *a judica* is in the dative, but the object of *a sluji* is in the same case as in the PH I and the PH II. It may, however, be noted that the reduplicated pronominal clitic in *limbii... voiu judica-o* is in the accusative instead of the dative (i.e. *o* instead of *ii*), which may indicate that while the Romanian translators of the late 17th century did strive to

⁵⁰ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 87.

⁵¹ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 213.

⁵² A.H. Попов, "Книга бытия...", p. 39.

⁵³ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 82.

⁵⁴ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 131.

⁵⁵ W. Adler, "Palaea Historica...", p. 617. All four versions have the same semantic content, so there was no need for separate translations.

⁵⁶ *Biblia adecă Dumnezeiasca Scriptură...*, p. 10.

follow the Slavonic tradition according to which *сѣдѣти* is constructed with the dative, it was archaic enough to cause confusion.

The editors also cite the construction *nu-m apăra mie* (“do not forbid it to me”), which is used in the following context:

Iară oamenii aceia, adecă Svânta Troiță, să apropiară de poartă. Și unul dintr-acei trei vru să deșchidă poarta. Iară Lot nu-i lăsă pre înși, ce grăi: „O, domnii miei și stăpânii miei, nu ieșiți, ca să nu vă apuce acești oameni vicleani! Iară unul dentr-inși răspunse și dzise lui Lot: „Nu-m apăra mie, o, ome, ci deșchide ușa; și vei vedea ce le voi răspunde lor”⁵⁷.

And those men, namely the Holy Trinity, approached the door. And one of the three wanted to open the door. And Lot did not let them, and said: “Oh, my sirs and lords, do not go out, lest these wicked men seize you!” And one of them answered and said to Lot: “Do not forbid it to me, oh, man, but open the door; and you shall see what I will answer to them”.

First of all, some questions may be raised concerning the perceived difference between the use of the verb *a apăra* with the dative case and its use in the modern language, which, as noted above, is the main reason these examples are cited in the syntactical analysis of the Romanian text of the PHR. While it is perfectly true that *a apăra* with the meaning “to defend” is a transitive verb constructed with a direct object in the accusative case, it is difficult to argue that, in this context, the dative pronouns *-m* and *mie* strictly replace the direct object in the accusative, unless one assumes that the intended meaning was that Lot was trying to protect them from the wicked men (i.e. “do not defend me”). On the other hand, it is far more likely that the verb is to be understood in its figurative sense of “to forbid”⁵⁸, which can be constructed with an indirect object in the dative *and* a direct object in the accusative or an equivalent phrase, as per the *Dictionary of the Romanian Language* (henceforth *DLR*)⁵⁹. In this case, one may assume that the direct object is only implied – “do not forbid to me [that I open the door]” – and that the indirect object does not replace it but coexists with it on a syntactical level. This type of construction is also mentioned in the *DLR*, based on a quotation from a *Tetraevangelion* from 1574: *lăsați ficiorii și nu apăra lor să vie către mine* (Mt. 19:14), „let the children and do not forbid them to come to me”. In this case, the direct object is expressed through a dependent clause (*să vie către mine*), while the indirect object is expressed through a dative pronoun.

⁵⁷ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 136.

⁵⁸ *Dicționarul limbii române*, vol. I: A–B, Bucharest, 2010, p. 186.

⁵⁹ As noted in the *DLR*, this type of construction is comparable to the French *défendre quelque chose à quelqu'un*, where the verb has the same semantical change from “defending” to “forbidding”. Similarly, the direct object can be replaced with a dependent clause: e.g. *je lui ai défendu de parler*, cited in the *DLR* lemma for *apăra*.

Nevertheless, it should be equally noted that the *DLR* refers to a 17th century manuscript containing the *Legend of the Apostles Peter and Paul*⁶⁰ (f. 655) quoted by Hasdeu in his *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*, where the verb is used in a relatively similar context, but instead uses an accusative pronoun instead of the dative: *Pentru ce mă apărăți și nu mă lăsați să intru*, “Why do you stop me and do not let me enter?”. The same manuscript is cited by Hasdeu for a passage from the *Legend of Saint Mary of Egypt* (f. 371): *nu era nime să mă înpîingă sau să mă apere să nu intru în beserecă*, “There was nobody to push me or to forbid me to enter the church”, where the accusative pronoun is unambiguously used in conjunction with the complement clause, unlike the previous example, where it could still be argued that *să intru* depended on the transitive verb *nu mă lăsați* and not *mă apărăți*. It is, therefore, difficult to believe that the use of the dative in the PHR is to be perceived as an unnatural phrasing that should be contrasted with the modern use of the verb, given the difference in meaning and syntactical make-up.

Concerning the possible influence of the Greek or Slavonic model, the comparison with the Greek text and the two Slavonic translations may present us with an answer:

PG: Οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες ἦλθον εἰς τὸν πυλῶνα καὶ βουλευθεὶς εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀνοῖξαι τὴν θύραν τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ οἴκου οὐκ ἤφηνεν τούτους ὁ Λῶτ λέγων μὴ, Κύριε, μὴ βουλευθῆς αὐτοῖς ἀνοῖξαι τὴν θύραν καὶ ἀρπάσωσιν σε οἱ πονηροὶ ἄνθρωποι τούτοι. Ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει τῷ Λῳτ ἕασόν με ἀνοῖξαι καὶ ἴδης πῶς ἔχω αὐτοῖς ὀμιλέσαι.⁶¹

RH I: Могъжи же прѣидоша къ вратомъ и вѣсхотѣ единъ ѿ нихъ ѡверсти дверь. не вставаше его Лотъ глѣ не гѣ не вѣсхотѣ ѡверсти, вѣсхитѣтъ та лоукавіи си члѣци. ѡнъ же ѡвѣщаваъ рече Лотѣ. встави мѧ ѡверсти и видиши како имамъ бесѣдовати имъ.⁶²

RH II: Могъже же пришьдше къ вратѣ, и вѣсхоте единъ ѿ нихъ ѡворити врата дворѣ, и не вставаше его Лотъ глѣ да не ѡвориши, и похитѣтъ <те> [лѣкави си] мѣжнѣ. ѡнъ же ѡвѣща глѣ къ Лотѣ, встави мѧ ѡворити, и видиши како хощѣ бесѣдовати имъ.⁶³

The men went to the gate-house, and one of them wanted to open the door of the courtyard of the house. But Lot did not allow them, saying, “Sir, please don’t open the door for them and let these wicked men seize you.” In response, he said to Lot, “Allow me to open it, and you will see the means I have to deal with them”⁶⁴.

⁶⁰ This text is described by Hasdeu as being conserved in a miscellaneous codex from the St. Nicholas Church in Șcheii Brașovului. See B.P. Hasdeu, *Scrieri*, vol. 13: *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae. Dicționarul limbei istorice și poporane a românilor, Tomul II: Amuși – ânger*, edited by Grigore Brâncuș, Chișinău, 2013, p. 137.

⁶¹ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 216–217.

⁶² A.H. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 45.

⁶³ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 87.

⁶⁴ W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica...*”, p. 620. There are no significant differences in content, so we will be citing one translation for the three versions.

Most strikingly, none of the three versions use the construction from the PHR, but instead opt for a verb which demands an accusative pronominal object (the pronouns *ме* and *мѧ/мѣ*) and an infinitive. One may, therefore, assume that the Romanian translator rephrased the original Slavonic text (which, based on current evidence, closely followed the Greek text), replacing the affirmative imperative with negative, antonymic form, while the subordinate infinitive is changed into an imperative, raised to the same level as its former regent verb, with which it is coordinated through a conjunction.

The third example of dative constructions mentioned by the editors of the PHR which we will be discussing is similar to the second, in that the syntactic construction does not have a direct counterpart in the Greek and Slavonic texts that would allow us to postulate the direct influence of the model text on the translation. The expression is found in the episode depicting Joseph’s childhood and him being sold by his brothers:

*Și vădzu și alt vis și-l spuse părinților și fraților lui, zicând: „Vădzui unde mi să închină soarele și luna și 11 steale”. Și-i **conteni lui** tată-său, dzicând: „Deci știi tu visul carele ai vădzut ce easte”⁶⁵*

And he saw yet another dream and told his parents and brothers, saying: “I saw how the sun and the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me”. And his father **stopped him**, saying: “So you know what the dream you saw is”.

The use of *a conteni* with the dative is, doubtlessly, archaic and is presented as such in the *DLR*⁶⁶, where it is marked with an obelus as an obsolete construction that is to be contrasted with the more recent use of *a conteni* with the meaning of “to stop someone” and a direct object in the accusative, for which the lexicographers cite examples from Dosoftei (*Pre voievodul cetății l-au contenit dela porneală*, “they stopped the lord of the citadel from leaving”), Dimitrie Cantemir (*însă nici razele soarelui a nu lovi oprește, nici pașii celui ce prin casă împlă continește*, “however, the rays of the sun do not stop striking, nor do they stop the steps of he who walks through the house”) or Petru Maior (*Stările împrejur ale Misiei îi contenea ca să nu meargă în Misia*, “the circumstances of Moesia stopped them from going to Moesia”). In the older syntactic structure, the verb is both transitive and intransitive, taking an object in the dative, with the meaning of “forbidding someone to do something”, “rebuking someone” or “preventing someone from doing something”. The lexicographers cite several examples that function in the same manner as the passage from the PHR: *cuntirit-ai limbilor* (Ps. 9:6, “you rebuked the nations”, from the 16th century *Psaltirea Scheiană*), which is compared to the corresponding passage from Coresi’s *Psalter* from 1574 (*contenit-ai limbilor*). Similarly, as noted in the *DLR*, Varlaam uses this

⁶⁵ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 150.

⁶⁶ *Dicționarul limbii române*, vol. II: C, Bucharest, p. 745–746.

type of construction several times, e.g.: *Cum au oprit Dzău celuia ce fură să nu fure, așea au cuntenitū și celuia ce face strâmbătate* (“The same way that God stopped the thief from thieving, so did he stop the one who does wicked things”)⁶⁷. Thus, although the use of the dative is clearly of a much earlier date – given its attestation in some of the oldest Romanian texts – it was nevertheless still in use as late as the early 17th century.

4. JOSEPH’S BROTHERS AND THEIR MOTHERS: DISAGREEMENTS IN GENEALOGY

The rather substantial passage about Joseph’s childhood in the PHR cannot be compared to the Greek original or to the Slavonic translations because, after presenting the sons of Jacob and their respective mothers, the PG, the PH I and the PH II all immediately move on to the episode where Joseph is sold by his brothers:

PG: Ἰωσήφ καὶ Βενιαμὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Ραχὴλ, οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ Ρουβὶμ, Συμεὼν, Λεὺί, Ἰούδας καὶ ὁ Ἰσ(σ)άχαρ ὑπῆρχον τῆς Λίας. ὁ δὲ Ζαβουλὼν καὶ Νεφθαλίμ, Δὰν [ὑπῆρχον τῆς] Ζελφᾶς. Γὰρ [καὶ] Ἀσὴρ ὑπῆρχον τῆς Βάλας. καὶ [ἡ] μὲν Ζελφὰ ἦν θεράπαινα τῆς Λίας, ἡ δὲ Βάλα τῆς Ραχὴλ. Ἐφθόνησαν δὲ οἱ δέκα ἀδελφοὶ τὸν Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἐπώλησαν αὐτὸν τοῖς Ἰσμαηλίταις καὶ ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ⁶⁸

And Joseph and Benjamin [were] from Rachel. As for the remaining sons, Reuben, Symeon, Levi, Judah and Issachar were from Leah. And Zebulun, Naphtali and Dan were from Zilpah. Gad and Asher were from Bilhah. Zilpah was a maidservant of Leah, whereas Bilhah was a maidservant of Rachel. The ten brothers were jealous of Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who led him away to Egypt⁶⁹.

PH I: и бѣ Иωсифъ и Бенѣаминъ ѿ Рахилѣ. Рувимъ же и Симѣонъ и Левѣи, и Юда, и Заблонъ, и Невталѣ ѿ Лїѣ. Исхааръ и Данъ ѿ Зелѣфы. а Гадъ и Асиръ ѿ Балы. Зелѣфа же бѣ рабыни Лїїна, а Бала бѣ Рахилина. Завидѣху же ѿ брѣи Иωсифоу и продаху бѣ Измаилѣаномъ и ведоша его въ Египетъ⁷⁰.

And Joseph and Benjamin were from Rachel. Reuben and Symeon and Levi and Judah and Zebulun and Naphtali were from Leah. Issachar and Dan were from Zilpah. And Gad and Asher were from Bilhah. Zilpah was a maidservant of Leah, whereas Bilhah was a maidservant of Rachel. The ten brothers were jealous of Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who led him away to Egypt.

PH II: и бѣше Иωсифъ, и Бенѣаминъ ѿ Рахиль. Прочи же, Рувимъ, Симеонъ, Леви, Юда, Исхааръ бѣше ѿ Лїѣ. И Зелѣа оубо бѣше раба Лїїна, Бала же

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 746.

⁶⁸ A. V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 225.

⁶⁹ W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica...*”, p. 626.

⁷⁰ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 58–59.

Рахилина. И позавидѣвъше еѡи на десетѣ братиѣ Иосѣфѣ продаше его исмаилѣтиномъ и ѡведеше его въ Егѣпѣ⁷¹.

And Joseph and Benjamin were from Rachel. As for the remaining sons, Reuben, Symeon, Levi, Judah and Issachar were from Leah. And Zilpah was a maidservant of Leah, whereas Bilhah was a maidservant of Rachel. The eleven brothers were jealous of Joseph and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who led him away to Egypt.

Although I had included the genealogies simply to show the sudden transition to the selling of Joseph in the Greek and Slavonic versions of the *Palaea*, it is the structure of this family tree that illustrates some of the inconsistencies between the Greek and Slavonic texts of the *Palaea*, which are sometimes at odds with the Old Testament itself. This variability was not underlined in any of the available editions, nor, to my knowledge, in other studies. While Joseph’s and Benjamin’s ascendance is unchanged across the three versions, Leah’s descendance is not, to the point that even the number of her children varies. In the PG, she has only five children, while her sixth child, Zebulun (as per Gen. 35:23) is attributed to Zilpah, who now has three children. Meanwhile, the PH I gives Leah the correct number of children, but in the process of doing so reattributes Issachar to Zilpah, who now has two children (which corresponds to the biblical text only on a numerical level).

The PH II follows the PG relatively closely, although it should equally be noted that it omits the sentences specifying Zilpah’s and Bilhah’s sons, possibly due to a copyist’s mistake that was carried over to the available copies of this version, since it is still mentioned that they were the maidservants of Leah and Rachel, respectively. There is also the possibility that the omission was caused by the fact that the *Palaea* misattributes Zilpah’s and Bilhah’s sons to begin with: per Gen. 35:26, Gad and Asher are not Bilhah’s children (thus being contrary to the genealogy in the PG and the PH I), but Zilpah’s, while Bilhah’s children are, in fact, Dan (who is attributed to Zilpah in the PG and the PH I) and Naphtali (who, as seen, is misattributed to two different mothers in the PG and the PH I, respectively). It would, then, be possible to say that the omission of the two sentences in the PH II occurred during a revision of the text of the *Palaea* (be it in the model of the PH II or in the text of the PH II itself), following the realization that Zilpah’s and Bilhah’s sons were switched around. This explanation might, however, be too charitable, given that the PH II still attributes only *five* sons to Leah, as in the PG.

Furthermore, the PH II disagrees with the PG and the PH I on the subject of how many of the brothers hated Joseph. The text of the *Palaea* does not specify that only Joseph’s ten half-brothers were guilty of selling him (thus excluding Benjamin), which might explain why the available manuscripts of the PH II are consistent in stating that all *eleven* brothers shared this guilt – one may assume that

⁷¹ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica*..., p. 95.

the translator had based this assessment on the preconception that “all the brothers” hated Joseph, and thus possibly corrected the numeral “ten” from his model (unless his model had already contained this error, which was then not corrected by the translator of the PH II).

Taking the differences between the Greek and Slavonic versions into account, it is now possible to ascertain the extent of the changes that took place in the Romanian version of this passage:

Iosif și Veniamin era din Rahilia; iară Ruvim, și Simeon, și Levie, Iuda și Zavulon și Neftalim era din Lia. Isahar și Dan era din Zelfia. <Gad> i Asir era din Vala. Zelfa era roabă Liinei. Și urără cei 10 fraț pe Iosif. Și era Iosif de 17 ani. Și era de păștea cu frații săi oile părinților săi [...] ⁷². Și deaca trecură neguțătorii Madiamului, ei scoaseră pre Iosif din groapă. Și-l deaderă pre îns ismailteanilor. Și-l duseră în Eghipet ⁷³.

Joseph and Benjamin were from Rachel; meanwhile Reuben, Symeon, Levi, Judah and Zebulun and Naphtali were from Leah. Issachar and Dan were from Zilpah. <Gad> and Asher were from Bilhah. Zilpah was Leah's maidservant. And the ten brothers hated Joseph. And Joseph was 17 years old. And he was tending his parents' sheep with his brothers [...]. And when the Midianite merchants came by, they pulled Joseph out of the hole. And they gave him to the Ishmaelites. And they took him to Egypt.

The genealogy is consistent with the changes from the PH I: Leah has six sons (including Naphtali) and Issachar is attributed to Leah's maidservant, while maintaining the peculiarities that were common with the PG, most notably the misattribution of Zilpah's children to Bilhah. Additionally, the Romanian version follows the PG and the PH I in counting *ten* brothers who hated Joseph. On a linguistic level, the clearest sign of the PH I's direct influence on the PHR is provided by the genitive form *Liinei*, which the editors also underlined in their philological study⁷⁴, noting that this was not a spelling error, but an adaptation of the possessive adjective derived from the proper noun according to the rules of Old Slavonic⁷⁵. This form is unique to this single place in manuscript 469, while manuscript 5054 uses the corrected form *Liei*, likely following the intervention of its scribe.

Moreover, the PHR contains a substantial interpolation between f. 87^v (after *Și urără cei 10 fraț pre Iosif*) and f. 93^v (before *Și-l deaderă pre îns ismailteanilor*), which seems to be based on *Genesis* 37:2–28. The editors imprecisely note that the interpolation ends on f. 94^r instead of 93^v, and that *Și-l deaderă pre îns ismailteanilor. Și-l duseră în Eghipet* is a part of it⁷⁶. Considering that this entire passage, including the unusual use of *a conteni* with the dative on f. 89^v, is

⁷² I have opted to omit the large interpolation between f. 87^v and f. 93^v, which is discussed below.

⁷³ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 149–151.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁷⁵ See Pandelescu Olteanu (ed.), *Slava veche...*, p. 92.

⁷⁶ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 149.

completely absent from the PG and the PH I (as was also noted by the editors of the PHR), as well as the PH II (as we were able to confirm), it becomes necessary to nuance the observation from the linguistic study of the Romanian text according to which the use of the dative was due to the influence of the Greek or Slavonic models. If there was a syntactical model for the Romanian phrasing, it was likely not in the *Palaea Historica*, but in the source text for the interpolation, unless it was simply a type of construction that was already a part of the Romanian translator’s arsenal, seeing how it is attested as early as the 16th century.

5. Belphegor in Elphegor: A *LOCUS OBSCURUS* IN THE SLAVONIC AND ROMANIAN VERSIONS

Another influence of the Greek and Slavonic models may be identified in the so-called *loci obscuri* of the PHR text. For example, the editors⁷⁷ note that a possible translation error in the Slavonic model will have been the cause of such a phrasing in the Romanian text:

PH I: и съсѣкоша ихъ. Се бо естъ, иже глѣють книги псалмьскыя о сихъ скончашася въ Елфегорѣ яко снѣша жрътвѣмъ мртвы(х) мртва бо нарече Крона, сему же сѣчу бывшу на юдеахъ⁷⁸

And they cut them down. This is what the books of the Psalms say about them: “and they met their ends in Elphegor because they ate the sacrifice of the dead”, for the dead are said to belong to Cronus. And after this cutting down happened to the Hebrews...

PH II: и съсѣкоше ихъ, се бо ѿ еже глѣють пѣвцы и скончаше се въ Елфегорѣ и снѣдоше жрътвоу мртвыи(х) мртви бо соуть иже ѿ Кронѣ. се и пагоубѣ бывши въ юдеихъ⁷⁹

And they cut them down. This is what the singer says about them: “and they met their ends in Elphegor because they ate the sacrifice of the dead”, for the dead are those around Cronus. And after this cutting down happened to the Hebrews...

PHR: *Și tăiară dintr-înși până la 24 de mii, că scrie și David proroc, de zice: „Și i să împreună lui în Elfegor și mâncară jirtvele morților, adecă a idolilor și mâniară pre Dumnezeu întru începăturile sale” i pro(č) psłoma; pentru aceasta fu tăiare în jidovi*⁸⁰.

And they killed up to twenty-four thousand of them, and the prophet David himself writes so, saying: “And they joined him in Elphegor and ate the sacrifices of the dead, that is of the idols, and angered God in his beginnings” and the Psalm continues; because of this, there was much cutting down among the Hebrews.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64–65.

⁷⁸ А. Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 106–107.

⁷⁹ М. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica*..., p. 136.

⁸⁰ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 196–197.

that they “joined him (i.e. the pagan god Beelphegor) in Elphegor”, in which case one will indeed have to assume that the Romanian translator did not misread a potential **въ Бѣлфѣгѣ**, but that the locative construction **въ Ѣлфѣгѣ** was already present in the Slavonic model.

A stronger argument against the Romanian translator’s personal misinterpretation of Belphegor as “Elphegor” is to be found on the preceding folio, where the event alluded to in the Psalm quotation is depicted: *Și mâncară jirtvele bozilor și băură vinul lor și să închinară idolilor, adecă bozului Velfegor, ce să spune Cron; așa să zice, Velfegor, iară elineaste să chiamă Cron*⁸⁴ (“And they ate the idols’ sacrifices and drank their wine and bowed to the idols, that is to the idol Belphegor, who is called Cronus; that is what he is called, Belphegor, and in Greek he is called Cronus”). The Romanian translator is visibly aware of the existence of the name “Belphegor” in this passage, which faithfully follows the almost redundant phrasing from the PG, the PH I, and the PH II (all of which use variants of the name “Baal”):

PG: καὶ ἔφαγον ἐκ τῶν θυσιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπιον οἶνον καὶ προσεκύνησαν τὸν Βῆλ τοῦτέστιν τὸν Κρόνον. οὕτως γὰρ ἐρμηνεύεται ὁ Βῆλ ὁ παρ’ ἑλλήσιν λεγόμενος Κρόνος⁸⁵.

PH I: ꙗдоша ѿ жертвъ ихъ и пиша вино, и поклонишася Билѣ, иже естъ Кронуѣ. сице бо сказаетсѧ Билѣ. еже ѣ ѿ елинь нарицаемьхъ Кронѣ⁸⁶.

PH II: и ꙗдоше ѿ жрътвъ ихъ и пише вино и поклонише се Былоу рекше Кронуѣ. тако бо тьлкоует се Билѣ. егоже елини глѣють Кронѣ⁸⁷.

They ate from their offerings and drank wine and worshipped Baal, that is Cronus. This is the translation of Baal, who is called Cronus by the Greeks⁸⁸.

As a result, one may say that the PHR is loyal to its Slavonic model, even if it means that it does not make any corrections to **въ Ѣлфѣгѣ**, despite having used the correct form of the name on the immediately previous folio and despite this error occurring in a quotation from the *Psalms*. Nevertheless, the editors of the PHR note that the orthographic error in the Slavonic text may have been tied to the fact that Elphegor was an alternate name for the place where this version of Baal, Belphegor, was worshipped⁸⁹. I believe this to be a line of argumentation that should be followed through, especially if one refers to the full context of the corresponding passage in the PG:

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁸⁵ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 255.

⁸⁶ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 106.

⁸⁷ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica...*, p. 136.

⁸⁸ W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica...*”, p. 645.

⁸⁹ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 65.

Τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ὃ λέγει ὁ ψαλμοδός καὶ ἐτελέσθησαν τῷ Βεελφεγὼρ καὶ ἔφαγον θυσίας νεκρῶν, τουτέστιν εἰδωλόθυτα τοῦ Βῆλ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ Φεγὼρ, [ὅτι δὲ ἔφαγον θυσίας νεκρῶν] νεκροὶ γὰρ οἱ περὶ τὸν Κρόνον. ταῦτα καὶ τῆς θραύσεως τῆς γενομένης εἰς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους αἰνίττονται⁹⁰.

This is what the psalmist says, “Then they joined to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices of the dead”, that is to say they ate sacrificial meat of the idol Baal in the place of Peor. And (the psalmist states) [that “they ate sacrifices of the dead,”] for those associated with Cronus are dead. These words also allude to the plague that befell the Jews⁹¹.

The Greek text provides a gloss to the theonym Belphegor (rendered by Adler, as per the modern translation of the Psalms, as “the Baal of Peor”) as the Baal/Bēl (Βῆλ) in the place of Peor/Phegor (Φεγὼρ). If there was an error in the PH I, the PH II, and, consequently, in the PHR, it was likely not due to a mistaken segmentation (as first suggested by the editors of the PHR), but due to a possible omission of the passage between τῷ Βεελφεγὼρ and τοῦ Βῆλ, which may have been due to a faulty Greek or Slavonic manuscript or to the translators’ option to simplify this passage and focus on the place name. It is, indeed, peculiar that none of the available manuscripts of the PH I and the PH II attempted to change this citation by comparing it to the actual biblical text that was being quoted⁹². Regardless, if we limit ourselves to the edited text of the *Palaea* itself, then “in Elphegor” is likelier to stem from “in Peor/Phegor” than from “in Belphegor”, thus explaining the apparently contradictory use of Belphegor and Elphegor on consecutive folios in the Romanian version.

6. ABRAHAM’S BROTHER AND FATHER

The editors identify another textual corruption towards the beginning of the chapter referring to Abraham⁹³, this time concerning an anthroponym: *Deci să sculă Aran, fratele lui, tatul lui Lot și îndrăznind, dede năvală, să scoată bozii din foc* (“And so Aran, his brother, Lot’s father, got up and daringly barged in to retrieve the idols from the fire”). Per their footnote, “Aran” is a corrupt form which can be contrasted with the PG (Φάρα) and the PH I (Φαρα) but can be tied to a variant of the PH I from manuscript 548 from the Synodic Library in Moscow (manuscript B in Popov’s edition, which is also how it is cited by the Romanian editors) of Popov’s edition (Аронъ), which is described as being as corrupt as the

⁹⁰ A.V. Vassiliev, *Anecdota...*, p. 255.

⁹¹ W. Adler, “*Palaea Historica...*”, p. 645–646

⁹² Meanwhile, the Romanian version does note the source in the textual margin, but equally makes no correction.

⁹³ This passage bears the titles Περί τοῦ Ἀβραάμ in the PG and О АБРААМѢ in the PH I, but not in the PH II and the PHR.

Romanian counterpart *Aran*, while also underlining its strangeness with an exclamation mark⁹⁴. The PH II, on the other hand, only features forms such as *Ταρρα* and *Φαρα*, both of which are consistent with the Greek original. The orthographic variants used in the PG, the PH I (except for the variant with *Αρον*) and the PH II all render the biblical name Terah, whereas *Αρον* would appear to have resulted from the confusion with Aaron. Strictly speaking, one would find no fault in the observation that the PHR follows the tradition conserved in manuscript B of Popov’s edition.

However, the editors failed to mention that Popov himself noted in his edition of the PH I that *Αρον* was the correct form of the name (правильно)⁹⁵, and, while the Russian scholar did not go into further detail, the main reason for this observation was that it was closer to the anthroponym “Haran”. This provides a very important nuance to the matter, as the biblical name Terah belonged to Abraham’s *father*, whereas Haran was, indeed, Abraham’s brother and Lot’s father. One result of this misidentification is provided by the PH II, which does name Abraham’s father as Nachor on two occasions earlier on, unlike all other edited versions, which do not refer to him by name: *роди се Аврамъ и дастъ се ѿ ѿца своего Нахара обучити се звѣздочьстию ... ѿца же его Нахоръ бѣше идоли творѣ*⁹⁶ („Abraham was born and was sent by his father Nachor to learn astronomy... His father Nachor was a maker of idols”). In providing this further detail, the PH II maintains its consistency with the information provided by the PG in the episode that follows: if Abraham’s brother is Terah, then Abraham’s father must be someone other than Terah. Nachor is obviously not the correct name of the biblical character, although one would have to wonder who he was being confused with: one option is that this is the name of Abraham’s and Haran’s other brother, while the other, possibly likelier, explanation, is that this is the name of Abraham’s grandfather, Terah’s father. Given that the *Palaea Historica* sometimes omits the genealogical passages of the Old Testament, it is to be assumed that the misidentification will have initially occurred due to anything ranging from the author’s faulty memory to a faulty copy of the Old Testament⁹⁷; meanwhile, the PH II (or rather its model) did not correct the error from the PG and instead provided further details that did not contradict the erroneous naming of Abraham’s brother. Adler notes in his study from 2020 that “copyists troubled by the apparent error either emended the name from Terah to Haran, or tried in some other way to reconcile the contradiction”⁹⁸, citing Greek manuscripts for each case. The

⁹⁴ A. Moraru, M. Moraru (ed.), *Palia istorică*, p. 117, n. 36: “Aronă (!), care explică forma, de asemenea coruptă, din rom.”.

⁹⁵ А.Н. Попов, “Книга бытия...”, p. 22, n. 1.

⁹⁶ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica*..., p. 71.

⁹⁷ Of course, given the variations that appeared in Jacob’s family tree in the *Palaea Historica*, there is no guarantee that the confusion between Abraham’s brother and his father would have been avoided through the inclusion of Abraham’s own genealogy.

⁹⁸ W. Adler, “Observations on the Textual Transmission...”, p. 72.

reconciliatory option did, indeed, involve identifying Abraham's father with Nachor, although it appears that in said manuscript, Haran is correctly named as Lot's father⁹⁹. At the very least, we are provided with more reasons to look forward to Adler's edition, as it will most certainly provide answers to similar dilemmas in the Slavonic textual tradition.

While it is not wholly impossible to question the specific form *Аронъ* from the variant of the PH I as a corrupt form reflecting a confusion with the name of Aaron (Moses' brother)¹⁰⁰, more caution should be exercised in judging the PHR form *Aran* as being "equally corrupt". On the contrary, even if one were to accept that manuscript B from Popov's edition misspelled the name of Abraham's brother (thus rejecting the editor's assessment that it was *правильно*), one would then have to surmise that the PHR *corrected* that possible error from its Slavonic model and provided its readers with a more biblically accurate form.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the Romanian version of the *Palaea Historica* is based first and foremost on the Slavonic text. Whether that text stemmed from the PH I or the PH II is a question that the editor of the PH II, Małgorzata Skowronek, provided two answers to. In 2016, she suggested in the introduction to her edition that it was a translation of the PH I¹⁰¹, while in 2024, that position became more nuanced, as she observed that the Romanian translation "does not fully correspond to any Slavonic copy known today"¹⁰².

Following my own research on the PHR's relationship with the two Slavonic versions, I am tempted to agree with Skowronek on both accounts: on the one hand, the Romanian text tends to be structurally closer to the PH I than to the PH II, and I have identified several passages containing calques based on the phrasing from the PH I. It must, however, be emphasized that not all grammatical constructions that reflect a Slavonic model reflect *the* Slavonic model of the translation. A number of examples cited by the editors of the PHR showed, for example, that some of the more peculiar constructions did not have perfect equivalents in the currently available editions but might nevertheless have stemmed *as structures* from Slavonic sources. In other words, it is possible that those turns of phrase were analogous to other phrases that did have direct counterparts and were adopted and used more extensively in the Romanian text, as would also

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁰ As a matter of fact, Aaron's name is rendered in the PH I as *Аронъ* and *Аранъ*, depending on manuscripts, as is noted in A. Н. Попов, "Книга бытия...", p. 79.

¹⁰¹ M. Skowronek, *Palaea Historica*..., p. 21.

¹⁰² M. Skowronek, "Genres and Translations: The South Slavonic Versions of the *Palaea Historica*", in Maria Alessia Rossi, Alice Isabella Sullivan (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Byzantine Visual Culture in the Danube Regions, 1300–1600*, London, 2024, p. 354.

happen with the Romanian translation of the Akathist Hymn, a text whose Slavonic translation had been built on a very close rendering of the exact wording of the Greek text in order to maintain at least some of its metric qualities¹⁰³.

Another strong point of similarity with the PH I is provided by the genealogy of Joseph and his brothers, where the Romanian text follows its model both in its correction of the number of children that Leah had and in its erroneous attribution of Issachar, Leah’s son, to Zilpah, and of Zilpah’s children to Bilhah. Meanwhile, the PH II follows the PG (as we know it for now) in leaving Leah with just five children (including Issachar) and implicitly agrees with the Greek text on the subject of Zilpah’s and Bilhah’s sons (in that they include Leah’s missing son Zebulun, even though none of the manuscripts contain the actual sentences detailing which of the maidservants gave birth to him).

On the other hand, it must be noted that the PHR avoids a confusion that appears in nearly all of the currently edited versions of the *Palaea Historica*, namely the identification of Abraham’s brother with their father’s name. Only one manuscript from the PH I appears to provide the model for the correct identification in the Romanian version, although the PHR rectifies the form *Аронъ* into *Aran* (i.e. Haran, Abraham’s brother). Skowronek’s brief assessment that the Romanian text does not fully correspond to any of the Slavonic versions also finds support in the fact that the PHR contains interpolations that are absent in all the available texts of the Greek and Slavonic traditions: such was the case of the story of Joseph’s childhood, which likely stems directly from the corresponding passage from the Old Testament.

With all these aspects in mind, the textual transmission of the *Palaea Historica* in Greek, Slavonic and Romanian remains, in several aspects, an open question. While the PH II and the PHR benefit from modern editions from the 21st century, for the other two versions, researchers are forced to rely on the editorial prowess of two scholars from the 19th century, who did their best with the limited number of manuscripts they had at their disposal, sometimes intuiting emendations that would only be confirmed over a hundred years later.

The PG will most certainly benefit from William Adler’s upcoming edition, which will offer a more solid base for the study of the Slavonic and Romanian versions, possibly even allowing researchers to identify the extent to which these translators innovated the Byzantine text. The edition of the PH I, which predates that of the PG by more than a decade, would also welcome a revision that would account for the Serbian and Russian manuscripts identified by Sumnikova in 1969 and Reinhart in 2007. Unfortunately, in the absence of contemporary editions for the PG and the PH I, the analysis of the PHR and its ties to the Greek and Slavonic models can only be provisional.

¹⁰³ This was a subject I studied within the UEFISCDI exploratory research project titled “The Oldest Romanian Manuscript and Printed Versions of the Akathistos Hymn (17th C). The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece Between Text and Image” (2021–2023). The result of the grammatical analysis will be published in *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* in a collaborative article with Emanuela Timotin (the project coordinator) and Irina Nicula, bearing the title “Grammatical Changes in the Seventeenth-Century Romanian Translation of the Slavonic *Akathistos Hymn*”.

