

# Two fragments of Suida's *Lexicon* in Dosoftei's *Parimiile preste an*

**Mădălina UNGUREANU**

*Le prophetologium est un texte liturgique, un recueil de péricopes bibliques, la plupart extraites de l'Ancien Testament, destinées à être lues à l'église, aux vêpres des grandes fêtes de l'année. Le spécifique de la structure du texte de Dosoftei, *Parimiile preste an* (Iași, 1683), consiste à l'insertion, dans le texte du prophetologium qu'il traduit, de toute une série de fragments d'origines diverses, parmi lesquels deux extraits du Lexicon de Suidas, célèbre encyclopédie byzantine composée probablement vers la fin du X<sup>e</sup> siècle. On va suivre dans cet article l'insertion textuelle de ces fragments et leur spécifique en ce qui concerne le contenu et la manière de traduction.*

*Mots-clés : Dosoftei, textes liturgiques, péricopes bibliques, histoire de la langue roumaine*

1. The Prophetologion (*prophetologion* in Byzantine culture and *parimejnik* in Slavonic) is a type of liturgical book presumed to have appeared in Constantinople in the eighth century as part of the Church reforms; it is a Lectionary appointed at Vespers and consists in fragments of the Old Testament, especially of the Prophets' books, as well as of the historical and sapiential ones. There are certain presumptions according to which the Slavonic variant was translated by Chiril and Metodiu in the ninth century. A specific feature of its history comes from the fact that until the Modern Era it has never been printed, being perpetuated exclusively by means of manuscripts, both in Byzantine and Slavonic tradition. A second feature which confers this text a unique character lays in the fact that the Prophetologion, unlike the other types of Lectionaries (the Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles), is not used any more in the Church practice. There are only few local uses in Serbian and Bulgarian Church which makes the scholar's interest towards it rather poor.

The printing of Dosoftei's *Parimiile preste ani* in Iasi in 1683 is not surprising even in the said context (the information gathered insofar on the history and circulation of this kind of lectionary reveals that Dosoftei's Prophetologion is the only complete lectionary of this kind printed before the Modern Era) since it is obviously part of the program aiming to translate into Romanian and publish the most important religious books within the process of affirmation of the Romanian as language of church service (though, most probably, the Prophetologion was not used in the Romanian church during the service in Romanian language which also explains the small number of Romanian Prophetologions that were all kept as manuscripts, except for Dosoftei's book). The comparison between the structure

and content of the *Parimiile preste an* and the structure and content of Byzantine and Slavonic manuscripts, as they are presented in the critic editions published so far, shows that the text of the Moldavian Metropolitan Bishop represents, in what concerns the Biblical periscopes, text organization and even most of the ritual insertions, a translation of and equivalent text (Greek, most likely, or Slavonic), and not – as ascertained in the specialty literature – an own compilation according to the model of a Prophetologion, eventually based on Nicolae Milescu's translation of Septuagint from which Dosoftei might have taken the fragments of the Old Testament<sup>1</sup>.

The comparison with critical editions of Byzantine and Slavic Prophetologions shows, on the other hand, the degree of originality that characterizes *Parimiile preste an* consisting of insertions in the Prophetologion, based on thematic criteria, of other types of texts different from the Bible: original poetic texts, hymns (rarely, hymns are present in some manuscripts of the Byzantine Prophetologion), oracular texts (prophecies of Sivila Eritrea, processing according to chapters 15-16 of the *Institutionum Divinarum* by Lactantius Firmianus, fragments of Suidas's *Lexicon*), all placed before the Canon dedicated to the Feast of the Annunciation. Their integration in the Prophetologion (which means: overcoming the frames and restrictions imposed by this kind of liturgical text) seems to indicate that the Prophetologion's destination intended by Dosoftei was aiming less to a public reading during the Vespers, and rather to a private, individual reading.

2. Suida's *Lexicon* (Suda or, as stated by other authors, Suidas) is a large Byzantine encyclopaedia, dating probably from the tenth century, a compilation based on sources that were lost. The first edition of the *Lexicon* is made by Demetrius Chalcocondylos (1499); it is followed by the editions of Aldus, Venice, 1514, reprinted in 1544. The first Latin translation belongs to Hieronimus Wolf (1564, 1581), and the first bilingual edition, in Greek and Latin, belongs to Aemilius Portus, Geneva, 1619.

*Parimiile preste an* includes two fragments of this encyclopaedia.

2.1. The first (III 139<sup>r</sup>-139<sup>v</sup>) is a rather large fragment (one page) in Slavonic, about the origin of which Dosoftei says nothing (be it an own translation or a translations taken from someone else). The hypothesis of an own translation is not hazardous, if we consider that the Bishop had good knowledge of Slavonic, a language into which he also made translations of dogmatic texts from Greek during

<sup>1</sup> The assumptions belong to N.A. Ursu (well known statement according to which Dosoftei would have reviewed consistently Milescu's translation, which was unsatisfactory, and would have picked up from it Old Testament fragments of the Prophetologion), Eugen Munteanu respectively (who thinks that Dosoftei used the model of a Slavonic Prophetologion).

<sup>2</sup> According to Mihai Moraru, *Manierisme formale. Acrostihul sibilin la Dosoftei*, in *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 1997, p. 127: "The presence of these texts in Dosoftei's printing is motivated by the fact that the Sibylline Oracles, in medieval art and literature, had been connected with the prophets' texts [...]. In chronographs and interpretations, the sibylline oracles and figures are included in programs focused on Christ's birth announcement".

the Second Polish exile. In the *Lexicon*, this fragment stays under the entry' Ιησοῦς δ̄ Χριστός καὶ θεός ἡμῶν. We hereinafter reproduce the fragment:

[139r] From Súida's:

Въ дн̄и благочъстивагѡ 18стпна црж въше нѣкто начальнкъ 18дѣшь именемъ Феодосиѣ. Йже въше знаемъ многими и самѡмъ црви. И имѣше дрѣга Христелнина. Срѣбро квзинца именемъ филиппа. Ехжже ѿбѡн писменити зѣлѡ. Нѣкогдаже порицажи 18дѣннви христіанинъ, ѿнѣвѣренин въ Ха ба нашегѡ, шиже, вѣрж мѣ имѣи дрѣже, такѡ излѡ извѣстїхса спасенїи съшеди, ѿ ба ѿца, извѣстїи вѣрївсѧ. Нѣ наслѣдими пристрѣстїе вогатъстїа, ислава приврѣменнаа. Вѣмъ въ ѿце кръцижса, несъпиврѣтима патріарха. Нѣ єще дася 8вѣрїши ѿмнѣ иже єсмъ извѣщень, слыши ѿ мѣнѣ, крѣпсѧ вънашемъ рѡдѣ свѣтшнъ кондїчнїй вънѣмже єгда въше цѣла црковь Соломониша, въ Йерасалимѣ. Писвѣахжасѧ свѣтици поймени кѣ сѫще числъмъ, почислѣ вѣквамъ. И почислѣ книгамъ стпмъ. (поликѡ въ книгъ стпихъ въвѣтїи) и єгда ктп ѿтпѣх єв 8мираш. Съвирѣахжасѧ прѣчии, исѣдѡмъ ижрѣбѣемъ ѹнгѡ ѿбирахж, и исплѣнѣхж тѣстѡ трѣтвагѡ. Йтакѡ прилѹчисѧ Христови, избрѣтисѧ сѣдѡмъ тѣхъ ка сїници и єгда въсехштѣша 8пксасти єгѡ, призваша мѣтерь. (Іисиѳ въ 8же вѣше 8мрль) Ивъпросиша ж и исповѣда, такѡ ѿца наzemли сиѣ Марійскіи неимѣть. Нѣ аггль вѣгѡ вѣстїми, и имѣ емѣ парече. Тѣмже дѣвж породиխ, и прѣбнѣх порождествѣ єгѡ дѣвож доселѣ. Йпризваше баби и испитавше, ѿврѣтѡша тѣкѡ. Да тѣкѡже 8 вѣрївшесѧ въписаше зѣлѡ дивившесѧ, сиѣ начъртавше. Въ ѿнъ сица днѣ скончасѧ ѿнъ сица сїници, извѣнѣгѡ тѣстѡ бѣстъ ѿбцимъ нашимъ изволненїемъ сиѣ сиѣ ба живагѡ, идѣвію Марія. Извѣтшкъпъ сирѣчъ квдикъ даке до ийтѣ хранеанъ єстѣ въцѣлости вътиверїадѣ зѣлѡ таиѣстїви, именѣ сподобиша видѣти єгѡ.<sup>2</sup>

The (approximate) translation of this fragment is as follows: During the reign of the faithful Emperor Justinian there was a Jewish leader named Theodosius, known to all and to the king himself, and had a Christian friend, a silver worker, with the name of Philip. They were both very educated. At that time the Jews did not believe the new Christians, since they did not believe in Christ, our God. But he had friends of faith, since the news about Christ who was truly the Son of God, the salvation of all world nations, came from God the Father, who incarnated. But he [the other] was subjugated to the love of money and fleeting glory because he had to baptize the patriarch of the undone. But in this respect he became sure that I was the chosen one. Listen to me. The Law Parchment which was in the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem at that time was hidden from our people. 22 priests were assigned by name, holy number, number of letters and number of holy books (that many holy books were accepted) and when one of those 22 died, acquaintances gathered and who was chosen by lot was put in place of the dead. And so Christ came to be chosen by lot together with the 21 priests. And when they wanted to

<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to Father Srdjan Stefanov, PhD student within "Dumitru Staniloae" Faculty of Letters, for his precious help in deciphering the text.

register him, they called [his] mother (Joseph was already dead at that time). And they asked her and she said that "My son has no father on earth. But the angel preached and told me his name. [...]" And they called for the midwives and asked them and found that it was so. In order to make sure, they wrote a lot, wondering, and they learned the same. Instead of the one who was named priest that day, based on our general will, Jesus the son of God and Virgin Mary was appointed that day. And this whole document, that is Kontakion, until now secret, can be found in Galilee; and I was allowed to see it.

The comparison with the full text shows that the page of the *Parimiile preste an* combines the summary translation with the omission process; therefore, from the text of Suidas only the reference to the divine origin of Jesus is kept, while all the rest is omitted.

2.2. The second piece, a translation of the last portion of the introduction Aŭgustos in the *Lexicon*, falls under the same theme of the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, justifying thus its placing before the canon of the Annunciation (immediately after the Slavonic fragment discussed above).

### [139<sup>v</sup>] *Din a lui Suida:*

*Oti Avgust Chésari, deaca stătu împărat, mearsă la capiștea idolească să-nstreabe pre Pythia idolul cine va-mpărăți după dînsul. Și-i dzisă: „Cucon evreu îm porunceaste, a dumnaďzai fericiț ce-mpărăteaște, această casă să lipsăsc și la iad de-acmuș să lăcuiesc. Deci te du mîlcom din capiștile noastre.” Și ieșind de la vraje Avgust, au rădicat în Capetolie oltariu și au scris deasupra lătineaște: „Oltariul acesta-i a-născutului Dumnaďzău: O domos utos esti tu protogonu Theu”\*\*\*<sup>3</sup>.*

The original version seems to have been Greek, this explains why the inscription, which we are told that was written in Latin, is reproduced by Dosoftei in Greek: *O domos utos esti tu protogonu Theu*. What is interesting is the attempt of the Metropolitan Bishop to resume the words of Pitie in verse: *Cucon evreu îm porunceaste, a dumnaďzai fericiț ce-mpărăteaște, această casă să lipsăsc și la iad de-acmuș să lăcuiesc* (although the Greek version does not contain verses: παῖς Ἐβραιος κέλεταί με, θεοῖς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσων, τόνδε δόμον προλιπεῖν καὶ ἀοιδὸν αὐθις ἵκέσθαι).

<sup>\*\*</sup> Oti Augustus Cesar, when he was crown as an emperor, went to the gods' sanctuary to ask Pythia, the god, who would rule after him. And [she] said [to him]: „A Jewish child orders me, who is the ruler of blessed gods, to leave this house and go live in Hell from now on. So leave our sanctuaries peacefully.” And after he left the sanctuary, Augustus built a sanctuary in the Capitolium and above it he wrote in latin: „This sanctuary belongs [is dedicated] to the first born God.”

<sup>3</sup> Given that he only had access to the Cyrillic writings, Dosoftei reproduces the phonetic aspect of the Greek words. In Suida's text, that sentence is: ο& bwmoV" ou[to" e\*sti tou' prwtogovnou qeou` (cf. Suida, *Lexicon*, vol. 1, p. 411).

If he translates by a Greek source, Dosoftei takes a certain freedom compared to the original by introducing phrases or terms with an explanatory role: „deaca stătu împărat”, „Pythiia *idolul*”.

What is intriguing here is the presence of the conjunction *ὅτι*, preserved in Greek. It would be inappropriate for us to say that it was mistaken by Dosoftei with a proper name (the Metropolitan Bishop had a good command of Greek). We would rather say that it is due to an error imputable to the typographer or the clerk of a possible autograph manuscript containing the text of the *Parimiile preste an*, although the question why would they have access to the Greek text still remains unanswered. Another hypothesis, equally hard to sustain for now, is the use of a Slavonic original which would have contained the conjunction in question.

3. The presence of the excerpts from Suidas's *Lexicon* in *Parimiile preste an*, a liturgical book specific to the Orthodox Church, raises several questions. First, there is the question whether they existed in the original document translated by Dosoftei or not. We would say no to this matter; the consultation of the monumental critical edition of the Byzantine Prophetologions and the few editions of Slavic Prophetologions made us conclude that these fragments were not part of the structure of the liturgical text. Without completely eliminating the extreme hypothesis of the existence of a Prophetologion manuscript, be it Byzantine or Slavonic, containing them, we would rather say that their presence in Dosoftei's Prophetologion must be attributed to the Metropolitan Bishop, who does this also with other types of texts (hymns, original poetic texts, processing according to other oracles).

Another question concerns the presence of the page in Slavonic; it either belongs to the Metropolitan Bishop or is taken from the Slavonic original, as the conjunction *ὅτι*.

The fact that Dosoftei knew Suidas's *Lexicon* may be relevant for another aspect: in his PhD thesis, Florin Florescu showed that the translator of Septuagint, the version of Ms. 45 (or maybe the editor?) use this dictionary-encyclopaedia<sup>4</sup> in order to clarify the meaning of some Greek words; one can speculate, therefore, the idea of a link between the authors of the two texts.

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<sup>4</sup> Florin Florescu, *Literalism și traducere liberă în tradiția biblică românească*, Doctoral thesis, Iași, 2011.

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