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**For the Issue of the Sources
of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*¹**

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Abstract: The issue of the authorship of the Greek text of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* has been a subject of great interest of medieval Studies scholars for many decades. The present article considers the sources used in the "Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph", on one hand and the author's specificity while using these sources, on the other.

Keywords: "*Barlaam and Ioasaph*"; *authorship*; *Euthymius the Athonite*; *Sources*.

The issue of the authorship of the Greek text of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* has been a subject of unquenchable interest of medieval Studies scholars for many decades. In the studies carried out during this period, various authoritative figures of the Middle Ages were named as the authors of the text, with appropriate arguments: John of Damascus, John Sinaites, Euthymius the Athonite, unknown monk John the Sabaite and others. The history of the study of the issue includes several stages.

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At the modern stage, the point of view regarding the authorship of Euthymius the Athonite is generally shared but with one clarification: Euthymius is the translator of the text, which was later reworked by another writer; according to one of the views, Symeon the Metaphrast (K. Kekelidze) – the founder of the metaphrastic style; and, according to another opinion, one of Symeons' followers (D. Lang).

We consider it particularly important to study the sources of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, on the one hand, and to compare the specificity revealed by the author of the Greek text in the process of working on these sources with the translation method of Euthymius the Athonite, on the other.

K. Kekelidze's assumption that the author of the Greek text could have been Symeon the Metaphrast is based on the opinion that the Greek text represents a metaphrastic hagiography. The fact that *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* is a metaphrastic hagiographical text is justified by E. Khintibidze in his studies.

The researcher draws our attention to the author's reference in the introduction to *The Story* that his work is a "metaphrase from reliable sources": "ἐξ ὑπομνημάτων ταύτην ἄψευδὼν μεταφράσαντες". The verb "μεταφράζω" in the mentioned context, according to the scholar, has the meaning of paraphrasing, processing, and not only "translation" (the mentioned word was also used in the meaning of "to translate" in Byzantine period Greek). Therefore, *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* was considered to be a reworking and paraphrasing of old readings by the author of the Greek work. In the same study, the author associates the creation of the metaphrastic edition of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* with Euthymius the Athonite, and not with Symeon the Metaphrast, or any representative of his school, taking into account, among other important facts, the specificity of the translation method of Euthymius the Athonite which was noticed early by Ephrem Mtsire (he – Euthymius the Athonite – could "add and deduct skillfully" [3, pp. 361-372]).

The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph uses a variety of sources, the study of which was given attention from the beginning. Determining the sources of the works turned out to be particularly important for the question of the authorship of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*. For example, Prof. Dölger, who considered John of Damascus to be the author of the text, cited the use of the *Apology of Aristides* in *The Story* as one of the significant arguments to justify his point of view. The

Apology of the second-century Athenian philosopher Aristides, which was considered lost to the Greek world, was included in *The Story*. According to F. Dölger, the Greek version of Aristides' text, lost in the 5th century, could not have been available to Euthymius. The researcher rightly points out that the mentioned text is not lost to the Eastern Christian world – the full version of the text is preserved in Syriac, a fragment – in Armenian. Moreover, the *Apology of Aristides* has been known within the Georgians since the 6th century and is used in Georgian hagiography as well (*The Martyrdom of Eustathius of Mtskheta*, *The Martyrdom of Abibos of Nekresi*) [3, pp. 300-301]. F. Dölger also considers Similarities between *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* and the writings of John of Damascus to be such an argument. However, Euthymius the Athonite not only knew the writings of John of Damascus perfectly but even translated into Georgian [9, pp. 320-321].

Revealing the sources of the Greek text of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* brings the work even closer to the Georgian world and to Euthymius the Athonite. It is noted that most of these sources are either directly related to the name of Euthymius the Athonite, or Mount Athos. D.M. Lang, the translator of the Georgian *Balavariani* into English, points to these relations. It clearly shows that the sources of Greek writings are connected with the Georgian world, Mount Athos and Euthymius the Athonite.

We shall name a few: Basil the Great's treatises – "On the Holy Spirit" (*De Spiritu Sancto*) and "On Sorrow" (*De Tristitia*), which Woodward and Mattingly identify as the source of *The Story of Barlaam*, were translated into Georgian by Euthymius. Also, as the source of Barlaam's story has been identified (according to Woodward and Mattingly's research) On the Great Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (*Oration XXI*) by Gregory of Nazianzus', translated into Georgian by Euthymius the Athonite [9, p. 322].

In addition to the mentioned writings, D. Lang, on the basis of the works of Woodward and Mattingly, as well as Dölger, names several other sources of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* that are connected either directly to the name of Euthymius the Athonite or to the monastery of Iviron on mount Athos. These are: *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by John Climacus, translated by Euthymius the Athonite into Georgian; *The Life of Martiniane*, the Georgian translation of which (according to K. Kekelidze may belong to Euthymius the Athonite – I. M.) is kept in the Monastery of Iviron (Athos); works of Maximus the Confessor: a

collection of his works, compiled and translated into Georgian by Euthymius the Athonite, is kept in the Georgian Library of Iviron. *Catechetical Orations* of Cyril of Jerusalem is preserved in the Georgian collections of Mount Athos and Mount Sinai [9, pp. 323-324].

In the latest scholarly studies, *Works about the monastic life* by Nilus of Sinai translated into Georgian by Euthymius the Athonite, has been identified as one of the sources of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* [1, p. 204; 9, p. 315]. The said essay, which is used in Chapter XII of *The story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, where Barlaam talks about the monastic life, was considered by Dölger to be the individual point of view of John of Damascus. In fact, as R. Volk mentions and even cites relevant parallel fragments from the work of Nilus of Sinai and *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, the latter stands very close to the source [6, pp. 118-119]. Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus* is named by R. Volk as the source of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, too [6, p. 118]. It is preserved in the Athonian manuscript (ath. 49) and its translation is attributed to George the Athonite [2, p. 14]. The named work is interesting to the extent that its Georgian translation, like several other works, is not directly related to the name of Euthymius the Athonite, but to the Georgian monastery of Mount Athos and the Athos translators. A compiled work from the homilies of John Chrysostom by Theodore Daphnopates (IX-X centuries) is also named by R. Volk as one of the sources [6, p. 120]. Interestingly, the same type of work was carried out by Euthymius the Athonite. He compiled and translated into Georgian the collection "Pearl", which is a kind of compendium based on the works of John Chrysostom.

The identification of sources still plays an important role in the research process of the authorship of the Greek "Barlaam and Ioasaph". It was especially important for the modern stage to reveal the coincidence of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* with the *Menologion* of Symeon the Metaphrast. This connection was noticed at the early stage of the research on the issue. For example, in *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* traces of Symeon Metaphrastes reworking of the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine* were noted [9, p. 319].

The mentioned point of view is no longer considered to be questionable at the modern stage of research. Coinciding episodes between Symeon the Metaphrastes' *Menologion* and *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* were widely presented by R. Volk. But Volk's conclusions that Symeon Metaphrastes used

certain passages of *Balavariani* of Euthymius and not vice versa have already been regarded as non-valid in the scholarly literature [7, pp. 87-94; 8, p. 355; 5]. I think it is interesting to take into account the chronology of Euthymius the Athonite's literary activity in this regard. As K. Hogel (accordant with K. Kekelidze's research) points out, Euthymius the Athonite began his translation activity around 975. Symeon the Metaphrast (died in 987) was supposed to complete the *Menologion* in 982. Thus, the scholar believes that only 12 (or at least 7) years remain for the translation of *Balavariani* by Euthymius and the use of this translation by Symeon the Metaphrast (who, at the same time, must have shown great sympathy for the newly translated *Balavariani*), whatever period this kind of work duly required [8, p. 356]. Regarding this issue, in our opinion, it is no less important to take into account the reason why Euthymius the Athonite started his translation activity. According to the hagiographical work of George the Athonite, John of the Athonite calls to his son Euthymius the Athonite: "My son, the land of Kartli is greatly lacking in books and many books are missing, and I see the God blessed you with the possibility to translate. Get here, so that you can multiply the gift from the God" ("Life of John and Euthymius"), and Giorgi Mtsire wrote about Euthymius: "By the space and height of the holy books translated upon the God's will, he filled the deficiency of the language. And those of us who were called barbarians by the Hellenes because of the lack of education and ignorance, were filled with the wisdom given by God" (*The Life of George the Athonite*). The quoted fragments also clearly show that the main goal of Euthymius the Athonite was the translation activity to provide the Georgians who were in the intellectual "deficiency" (Ephrem Mtsire) with the most important works of Byzantine literature. Thus, at the dawn of his translation activity, it is less expected that Euthymius, struggling with this huge task, would take up the translation from Georgian into Greek. His main focus, especially at the beginning of his activity, would be to fill the serious gaps in the Georgian intellectual space, and not the other way round. Besides, it is also necessary to consider how possible it is that Euthymius, at the very beginning of his translation career, gained such a level of publicity that his work was recognized and widely used by the famous representative of Byzantine literature and the highest official of the imperial court – Symeon the Metaphrast.

K. Hogel's article emphasizes the special popularity of Symeon the Metaphrastes' *Menologion* among the Georgian monks of Athos [8, pp. 358-

361]. In this regard, more can be said. Symeon the Metaphrastes' mentioned work is also known to the contemporary translators of Symeon working in Georgia: Davit Tbeli (Bishop of Tbeti) and Stephane Sananoisdze (Bishop of Chkondidi), who, according to some sources, had active contact with the Georgian monks of mount Athos (John and Euthymius of Athonites), back in the last quarter of the tenth century, shortly after the creation of *Menologion*, several metaphrastic texts were translated into Georgian [1, pp. 178-182].

Thus, against R. Volk's point of view (Symeon the Metaphrastes' *Menologion* is influenced by Euthymius' work. The mere presence of such passages does not prove that Symeon the Metaphrast was well aware of Euthymius' translation and not the vice versa), one more fact should be taken into account: while none of the ancient sources indicates that Symeon the Metaphrast knew the work of Euthymius (*The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*), Georgian sources, on the contrary, show unambiguously that Symeon the Metaphrast was a very popular author not only in the circle of Georgians living on mount Athos but even among his contemporary translators working in Georgia.

In this context, it is also important to mention that the majority of metaphrastic texts translated by Euthymius from Symeon's *Menologion* into Georgian have been identified as the sources of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*. For example, as R. Volk notes, there are quite a lot of coincidences between *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* and the *Life of Anthony the Great* by Athanasius of Alexandria [6, p. 115]. The latter, according to K. Kekelidze, was translated into Georgian by Euthymius. The prologue to "The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph" is greatly indebted to the *Life of St Mary of Egypt* by Sophronius of Jerusalem, from which the author cites quite extensive excerpts. On the basis of Tarkhnishvili's report, R. Volk notes that this text was also translated into Georgian by Euthymius [6, pp. 115-117]. In *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* the Martyrdom of Eustace and his companions and *Martyrdom of Clement of Ancyra* are also used [6, pp. 188, 142]. Both works were translated into Georgian by Euthymius [1, p. 208]. Also, R. Volk names *The Martyrdom of Procopius* as the source of the Greek work. In connection with the latter, we have a report by Ephrem Mtsire, according to which Euthymius translated it into Georgian: "The holy father Euthymius has translated *Clementhos* and *Procopius* from the works of Symeon Logothete". R. Volk names the *Martyrdom of St. George* as the source of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* [6, p. 142], "described by Symeon

Logothete, which is read in the majority of the churches of Greece" [1, p. 207] – Euthymius himself adds such a note to his own translation.

R. Volk considers the Georgian *Balavariani* as the main source of the Greek *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*. He also mentions that in the process of translation, the text was purposefully reworked by Euthymius and many changes were introduced. Relevant examples are also cited [6, pp. 101-105]. This specificity of the Greek text has been noted by another researcher – V.A. Simpson as well. The scholar observes how the author of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* uses sources. He cites three rather extensive parallel passages from *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* and the work of John of Damascus. By observing the parallel texts, he concludes that in the entire text of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph* we have only three examples where the author quotes very precisely and extensively from the relevant passages of the work of John of Damascus, but even in these cases, he makes at least certain minimal changes (theological changes; also, small additions or deductions from the quoted text) [10, pp. 187-191]. By the same principle, the researcher observes the case of using several other sources in *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*. This time, his observations on the used fragments from Symeon the Metaphrastes' *Menologion* are of special interest to us. The author of the Greek text does not betray his style in this case either, and even here he makes changes in the quoted texts (removes or adds information). This fact raises a legitimate doubt for the researcher: if Symeon the Metaphrast was the author of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*, would he change the text quoted from his work if he used it again? [10, pp. 191-197].

In this context, it is natural to take into account the specifics of the translation method of Euthymius the Athonite. "Euthymius, in his translations, followed the principles of free translation and took this principle of translation to the highest level. Euthymius' translation method was justified by the purpose: Euthymius, as Ephrem Mtsire points out, paid attention to providing a diluted and explained text to the Georgian readers, because at that time "his kinsmen being on a lower intellectual level had to be fed simplified materials." Besides, he tried to fill up the deficiency of Georgian literature as fast as possible. For the practical needs of Georgian religious life, a very large portion of literature was to be digestible at once. That is why Euthymius made abbreviated translations. The abbreviated text naturally required even more explanation. For this

purpose, Euthymius, (as the great successor of his work, Ephrem Mtsire noted) translated the texts by using the "deduction-addition method" [4, p. 546]. We think that the given quotation clearly shows the similarity of the translation method of Euthymius the Athonite with the working style of the author of *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*.

Hence, taking into account various aspects highlighted in modern scholarly studies further connects Euthymius the Athonite with the metaphrastical edition of the *The Story of Barlaam and Ioasaph*. This connection is particularly clear when looking at the sources of the Greek text, many of which are related either to Mount Athos or to Euthymius the Athonite personally. On the other hand, the specificity that the author of the Greek text shows in the treatment of the given sources can also be explained by taking into consideration the translation method of Euthymius the Athonite.

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