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НА КАТРИН МЕРИ МАКРОБЪРТ*



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QUESTIONS ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS IN SIMEON'S MISCELLANY¹

Marcello Garzaniti (Italy)

Scholars addressing the Slavic manuscript tradition of Simeon's Miscellany, and in particular its oldest witness the *Izbornik 1073* (GIM, Sin. № 1043 (31-d)), generally highlight the encyclopaedic character of the work. Enumerating the sources and main themes of the work, G. M. Prochorov considers the miscellany from the perspective of an encyclopaedia of Christian culture (Прохоров 1987). K. Ivanova does not depart from this approach in the entry "Izbornik 1073", published in the *Кирило-Методиевска енциклопедия*, which speaks of the "encyclopaedic principle in the content and arrangement of materials" (Иванова 1995: 52), nor in the subsequent entry written together with A. A. Turilov, published in the *Православная энциклопедия* (Иванова, Турилов 2014). M. V. Bibikov, in his monograph *Византийский прототип древнейшей славянской книги. Изборник Святослава 1073 г.*, shares this interpretation connected with the concept of Byzantine encyclopaedism (Бибиков 1996: 319–320).

More recently D. T. Sieswerda expressed the same opinion. Focusing on the Greek manuscript tradition of the work, the scholar places it in the Byzantine tradition of monastic florilegia (Sieswerda 2001: 296–297, 310–311). P. Yaneva moves in the same direction and, in the introduction to the edition of the Greek text of the miscellany, trying to combine its different aspects she defines it as "a universal anthology" with a dogmatic, exegetical and ethical multifunctionality that lends itself to the development of various possible purposes (Янева 2015: 69, 99). It can therefore be concluded that the Slavic miscellany and its Greek original are interpreted in the light of "medieval encyclopaedism" – and

¹ A brief preview of this analysis is contained in Гардзанити 2017: 309–311.

in this case of “Byzantine encyclopaedism” – a concept canonized by P. Lemerle in his famous monograph (Lemerle 1971; Ceulemans, Van Deun, 2017: 361).

I believe that Thomson’s definition is more appropriate, speaking of a “manual of the Christian faith” that aims to illustrate traditional doctrine in several respects on the basis of quotations from Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers. A “well-planned and carefully constructed whole” the work appears to be “suited to the needs of the emerging Bulgarian Church” (Thomson 2007: 751–752).

The praiseworthy study of the patristic sources over recent decades has highlighted that, according to the Greek and Slavic witnesses, the core of the miscellany consists of a collection of 88 questions and answers of which only 29 date back to Anastasius Sinaita (d. after 700). The majority of the questions are the result of the reworking that took place in Constantinople in the second half of the 9th century, attributed to the so-called Pseudo-Anastasius. The collection also spread independently and in the Byzantine area enjoyed much greater popularity than the original work of the monk of St Catherine’s. Thanks to the further additions that precede and follow the collection of 88 issues, a complex anthology has been formed that has engaged generations of scholars.

The first detailed description of *Izbornik 1073* was produced by A. V. Gorskij and K. I. Nevostruev and occupies considerable space in their famous catalogue of the Synodal Library, with an indication of the patristic sources and a long appendix on its linguistic peculiarities (Горский, Невоструев 1859: 365–405). The second phototype edition of *Izbornik 1073* (1983, the first dates to 1880) contains a detailed table with the titles of the texts and their numbering (Изборник 1073 г.).

Later in his aforementioned monograph Bibikov, after identifying twenty-two witnesses of the Greek manuscript tradition of the miscellany, provided a useful table in which he compares its contents with *Izbornik 1073* (Бибиков 1996: 248–255). More recently Thomson has developed a comparison between the two Slavic versions of the florilegium taking the complex Greek tradition into account. This study represented a further step forward in the systematic analysis of the structure of the work in the Greek and Slavic manuscript traditions. The table that lists all the texts contained in the miscellany, with an indication of the available Greek edition and a series of observations on individual texts, is particularly helpful (Thomson 2007: 724–751).

The recently published third volume of the Bulgarian edition of Simeon’s Miscellany contains the edition of the Greek text closest to the first Slavic version, edited by Yaneva with a comprehensive introduction, and in parallel the corrected Slavic text compared with the previous edition (Симеонов сборник 2015). This work, the result of many years’ commitment, provides detailed indices of the Slavic version and its principal Greek sources, edited by Yaneva, including in particular a table in which the contents of the Greek miscellany are compared pursuant to the various Greek witnesses, starting from Coislianus 120 (early 10th century), and the various Slavic sources, starting with *Izbornik 1073*,

as well as an index of sources, an index of biblical citations and an index of the names of the Greek version (Симеонов сборник 2015: Appendices 2–3, 6–7).

Already in the early nineties, in his succinct presentation of the main topics of the work, Thomson had discerned a logical order in the structure of the miscellany: “In fact an analysis of the contents of the florilegium reveals it to be no chance collection of snippets of knowledge, but a well-planned and carefully compiled work built up around Anastasius Sinaita’s *Interrogationes et responsiones de diversis capitibus a diversis propositae*. The first section consists of ten prefaces to Anastasius’ *Interrogationes* summarizing the Christian faith in a very logical order... Then follow Anastasius’ *Interrogationes* in their commonest redaction in 88 questions. Once again the selection and order of the questions follow a logical order... The final section of the florilegium consists of 24 appendices to Anastasius’ *Interrogationes* once again no mere random selection...” (Thomson 1993: 45–46).

Unfortunately, no one has systematically studied this logical consequentiality.

Here I intend to examine the content of the central part of the miscellany, taking into account the Greek and Slavic manuscript traditions, in order to identify its overall design and in the hope of overcoming the traditional interpretation that considers it a philosophical-theological anthology of generic didactic orientation or a mere expression of the monastic culture of the early Byzantine era.

Simeon’s Miscellany has a sort of prologue that contains a series of introductory texts in which the doctrine of the Trinity is expounded on the basis of patristic reflection.² There are both Greek and Slavic witnesses that completely omit this first part. The question remains whether the prologue was expanded through the addition of new texts and extended as compared to the original project, or whether, on the contrary, the first part was conceived from the start with its set of fragments and was then reduced or omitted. The following central part of the work, as we said, consists of the collection of 88 questions and answers attributed to Anastasius Sinaita. In reality, if we exclude questions 1–23, 40, 55, 60 (142), 63–64 (145–146) and 81 (128) which go back to Anastasius himself, they mostly belong to the so-called Pseudo-Anastasius (Thomson 2007: 721).³ Therefore, in all, only 29 issues are attributable with certainty to the monk of St Catherine’s.⁴

² Thomson made an in-depth examination of it mainly to study the relations between the Greek and Slavic texts (Thomson 2009: 256–264).

³ I adopt a sequential numbering of the 88 questions different from that of the Migne edition, which is based on Gretser’s edition of 1740, indicated in parentheses (PG 89: 312–842; Sieswerda, Thomson 2004: 567–568, no. 3). For a comparative table of the different numbers see Thomson 2009: 294.

⁴ Previously Sieswerda and Thomson had pointed out that, if the first 23 questions are excluded, there are about ten of them – of which only half are certainly of Anastasian origin and which in any case had been subjected to a more incisive reworking than the first – while the other five retain only an echo of Anastasius’s questions (Sieswerda, Thomson 2004: 567).

According to Thomson's interpretation, in questions 1–22 ethical problems prevail, while those that follow deal with the exegesis of difficult passages from the Old Testament (23–53) and the New Testament, from the Epistles first (54–61) and then from the Gospels (62–88) (Thomson 1993: 46). Bibikov offers different indications on the extent of the questions regarding the Epistles (54–59; 60–69) and the Gospels (70–80, 81–84, 85–88) with references to further subsections (Биби́ков 1996: 258). Thomson himself later slightly modified the division of comments on the New Testament, articulating them differently: questions 24–53, 54–59, 60–87 (Thomson 2007: 751–752). In the Greek manuscript tradition there are different numbers in the three sections and the cod. Vaticanus gr. 423 even provides ornamented bars between questions 23 and 24 and between questions 53 and 54 (Sieswerda 2001: 305–306).

The first twenty-three questions, to be attributed to Anastasius, represent a description of Christian life in the light of the indwelling of the Spirit, thus continuing the reflection adequately introduced in the prologue. In *Izbornik 1073*, question 20 is interrupted to make room for four fragments of Oration 40 *On Baptism* by Gregory of Nazianzus (ff. 120v–122v), followed by the index of the second part of the codex. The answer to question 21, questions 22 and 23 and the beginning of 24 are omitted. The break dividing the work into two parts comes approximately halfway through the miscellany.⁵ I believe that the inclusion in the Slavic version of some passages from the Oration *On Baptism* is an editorial operation rather than a corruption and ought to be better studied at a functional level.⁶

Question 23, again of Anastasian origin, constitutes a premise to the Old Testament questions and addresses the problem of the sensitive or spiritual existence of the earthly paradise, with an interesting list of the names of rivers and mountains, which perhaps at the beginning of the Greek tradition was merely a gloss. The *raison d'être* of the question relates not only to the believer's "spiritual journey", as its editors have suggested,⁷ but more importantly to the illustration of the correct exegetical method. The distinction between the material and spiritual reality of the earthly paradise in fact marks the delicate boundaries between the historical and the allegorical (spiritual) interpretation of Holy Scripture that permeates the entire following section.

This section, mostly of Pseudo-Anastasian attribution, presents a series of explanations of biblical passages with the help of other passages from Holy

⁵ Thomson studied the issue, hypothesizing that the interpolation between the two questions took place in a very ancient phase, prior to the division of the work into two volumes, and could theoretically go back to the Greek original used for the first Slavic version (Thomson 2006; Thomson 2007: 731–734).

⁶ See Thomson 2006; Thomson 2007: 731–734. In any case, these are extracts from the already existent Slavic version of the Oration.

⁷ Sieswerda and Thomson have published the edition of the Greek text (Sieswerda, Thomson 2004).

Scripture and patristic writings. Biblical issues are presented not according to the order of Holy Scripture, but according to the order of the liturgy (Old Testament, Epistles, Gospels).⁸ In the overall perspective of the history of salvation, the question of the earthly paradise (23) assumes, as mentioned, an introductory character, while the detailed reflection on the image of the church and on the liturgy (88) provides its perfect epilogue.⁹ On the basis of patristic scriptural exegesis – illustrating both the historical and the ethical and spiritual meanings – the fundamental questions of Christian life are presented always in the light of the action of the Spirit and of spiritual discernment. As I have stressed, the close connection between exegetical practice and ethical and spiritual reflection emerges from the very beginning of the miscellany.

There are numerous issues concerning the Old Testament. Here I briefly present the content of the individual questions indicating the progressive number in brackets. They begin with the divine image and likeness in the creation of man (24); the nature of angels and men with reference to Gen. 6:2 (25); the goodness of the whole of creation and the question of unclean animals (26).

The miscellany then illustrates the sacrifice of animals offered by Abraham according to the allegorical interpretation (27); the Abrahamic circumcision, a sign of the separation of the Jews, with a long excursus on Noah and the distribution of peoples over the earth (28); the hardening of Pharaoh's heart as exemplary punishment (29); Job's curse on the day of his birth (30). Addressed after this are questions on the subordinate function of the devil in the divine providential plan with reference to Job 1:6 (31); the biblical image of the King of Babylon, a figure of the devil, who works as a divine minister with reference to Jer. 34:6, 2 (32);¹⁰ the blessing of Israel by the soothsayer Balaam (33); the divine blessing that deprives the human curse of any value (34);¹¹ personal responsibility for faults, apparently contradicted by Exod. 20:5–6 (35); the expressions “harden the heart” or “darken” as metaphors, stressing that God has granted faculties and senses to man so that he can believe using his free will (see Deut. 29:3 (36); the divine allowing of Moses to see the Promised Land, but not to bring the people there since God is very demanding towards those to whom he has given much (37); the concession of the human sacrifice to Jephthah, but not to Abraham: the former did not possess the same piety as the latter (38); Samuel's evocation of the Witch of Endor who, like Balaam, becomes a divine instrument (39).

⁸ Yaneva rightly points out the overall exegetical problem but does not explain the strange order in which the exegesis of the Epistles precedes that of the Gospels (Янева 2015: 62).

⁹ On the presence of authentic liturgical texts in the Greek manuscript tradition of the miscellany see Янева 2015: 67–68.

¹⁰ In *Izbornik 1073* (f. 144a) it is not indicated as a separate question.

¹¹ In *Izbornik 1073* (f. 146a) it is not indicated as a separate question.

The text then presents the allegorical interpretation of the priestly ephod used for divination and an excursus on the virtues of precious stones with an annotation by Theodoret of Cyrrhus on the tetragrammaton of the name of God (in this case the author is Anastasius Sinaita) (40); the qualities of the wood of trees in relation to the construction of the temple of Solomon, with an excursus on the books attributed to Solomon with reference to 1 Kings 5:13 (41); the Wisdom that builds the house (Prov. 9:1) in relation to the mystery of the Incarnation and the Eucharist (42). It continues with the spiritual interpretation of “eating and drinking” of Eccles. 2:24 (43); the measurements of the Temple of Solomon (44); the origin of the name of Samaritan (guardian of the land and of the Law) (45); the Old Testament sacrifices that do not depend on a divine commandment, but represent only a divine concession with reference to Jer. 7:22 (46). Turning to the figures of the prophets, the miscellany offers a list of the wonders performed by Elijah and Elisha (47); presents the image of the statue that appeared to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:31) pursuant to the Christian exegesis of Hippolytus and Origen, with an annotation by St Basil on the essential conformity with Holy Scripture of the masters’ teaching (48),¹² and the description of the seven-branched candlestick according to the vision of Zechariah from an allegorical perspective, symbolizing the seven phases of the history of salvation or the seven gifts of the Spirit (49).

Finally the work presents the difference between law and commandment (50); personal names that change in Holy Scripture (Eve, Abraham, up to Peter and Paul; 51); the praise of sinners and the blessing of the iniquitous (see Ps. 10:3, 52); the invitation not to praise the wicked man and his deeds which ends with an exhortation to careful discernment (see Ps. 76:11, 53).

As we can see, we are very far from an encyclopaedic approach, even if overall there is no lack of elements serving to build Christian erudition. Bearing in mind the general perspective of the divine providential plan, already summarized in the profession of faith on which the first part is centred, the beginning of this central section addresses questions relating to the interpretation of the Old Testament, considered fundamental.

Firstly, the miscellany speaks of the creation of man, focusing on his image and likeness, but also on the goodness of creatures in a clearly anti-dualist interpretation. The work then moves on to issues related to the traditional allegorical interpretation of Old Testament sacrifices or circumcision and to the examination of some difficult expressions – for example hardening of the heart – to better define the relationship between God and man. The anthology then illustrates the role of the devil and of those who make themselves his instruments, from the

¹² In *Izbornik 1073* both this conclusion and the following questions from 49 to 52 are missing (if a short appendix is excluded), an omission that depends on the Greek original used since the Parisinus gr. 922, and the later witness, Esc.gr. R III 2 (14th century) connected with it, reveal the same lacuna (Thomson 2007: 738).

conquering kings to the soothsayers, in the perspective of the divine providential plan and God's blessing, forcefully reasserting man's freedom of choice and his moral responsibility, despite the diversity of individuals who may be more or less aware of it.

The Old Testament wisdom, which Solomon interprets in his books, is related to the Temple, its construction materials and its measurements, and to the Old Testament sacrifices, in the classic allegorical vision of the Christian tradition. About the prophets the anonymous author is mainly interested in the miracles that they performed, focusing solely on the prophecy of Daniel regarding the succession of kingdoms. There is no shortage of more detailed explanations of the concepts of law and commandment and of biblical onomastics, in particular the alternation of names (for example Simon / Peter; Saul / Paul).

Questions 51–53 mark the passage to the examination of the New Testament. In particular, question 52 deals with the delicate issue of the necessary discernment of human actions on the basis of a difficult passage from Psalms (Ps. 10:3, according to the version of the Septuagint), which can represent a valid key to reading the entire Old Testament section.

The slightly more numerous questions relating to the New Testament begin with the interpretation of several passages from the Apostolic letters. In particular, the following questions are examined: prayer for the brother who has not fallen into mortal sin (see 1 John 5:16, 54); the divine predetermination of saving or ruining a man, with the important quotation of 1 Tim. 2:4 (the question dates back to Anastasius Sinaita; 55); salvation through fire apropos 1 Cor. 3:15 (56); reconciliation by means of the blood of the cross on the basis of Col. 1:20 with a new quotation from the speech against the iconoclasts by the Patriarch of Constantinople Nicephorus (57); the relationship between knowledge and charity regarding 1 Cor. 8:1 (58); the prohibition on women teaching, a broad reflection that focuses on the passage in 1 Tim. 2:12 (59); foolishness and prudence apropos Eph. 5:17 and Rom. 12:16 (the question dates back to Anastasius Sinaita; 60); the Adam-Christ parallel based on 1 Cor. 15:22) with reference to the Council of Carthage on the necessity of infant baptism (61).

This short section on the Pauline letters – evidently centred on the concept of “salvation” clearly evoked in the title of the Greek version of the miscellany – illustrates a special focus on individual destiny, with insights indicating the particular sensitivity of the Eastern tradition towards the relationship between knowledge and charity, the teaching of women and the theology of baptism. It is interesting to observe the centrality of the first letter to the Corinthians and the first letter to Timothy, in particular 1 Tim. 2:4 (55), so important in the teachings of Constantine-Cyril (Garzaniti 2012: 386–388; Гардзанити 2014: 37–40).

The section that examines questions relating to the Gospels appears much broader. At the beginning, the miscellany addresses the number of the Gospels, the symbols of the four evangelists, offering the image of Jesus enthroned and

quoting the prologue of John, as well as the beginning of the other gospels (62). Individual questions are then examined: the flesh of Jesus's foreskin in the light of the resurrection (63); the Jews killed by Pilate (with reference to Josephus) regarding sacrifice to be made only to God and not to the emperor (64); blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (65); the gift of the Spirit through baptism (66); judgement and justice following an allegorical interpretation of the parable of the unjust judge (67); the tunic and the sword in Luke 22:36 (68); the concept of the loss of the soul in John 12:25 (69).

The miscellany continues with a series of interpretations of passages mostly from the Gospel of Matthew from a spiritual perspective and dealing with moral discernment: the right eye and the right hand (Matt. 5:29–30) with many biblical quotations, especially from the books of Proverbs, Sirach, Psalms, and finally from the prophets (70); the agreement of two people in “asking”, understood as mutual forgiveness (Matt. 18:19; 71); binding and loosening (Matt. 18:18) in the sense of the curse and blessing of the saints (72); their faculty to forgive or retain sins (John 20:23) which is confirmed in correct penance, with a reflection on the blessing and curse of men towards patriarchs, apostles and just men (especially Job), who have received divine blessing (73); contaminated foods (Matt. 15:11) with an examination of abstention from meat and a digression on the liturgical calendar (fasting, main feasts, liturgy of the hours, readings for the passion) (74); the treasure of the scribe (Matt. 13:52) with an extensive apology of Holy Scripture which, by putting the Old and New Testaments in close relationship, is centred on the concept of wisdom with quotations from the books of Proverbs, Sirach and Wisdom, through the mouth of Solomon, and of Pauline doctrine, beginning with the First Letter to the Corinthians and continuing with the Letters to the Romans and the Colossians (75); the status of eunuch for the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:12) in an allegorical sense (76); the scandal of the little ones (Matt. 18:6, 77); the obligation to “go a mile” (Matt. 5:41) interpreted in the light of following Christ (78); material concerns (Matt. 6:31, 79); the judgement of one's neighbour (Matt. 7:1, 80); the parable of the talents (Matt. 25) in an allegorical sense in view of the usefulness of many (81).

Finally, regarding the final events of history and the Last Judgement, the questions consider, again from an allegorical perspective, the flight in winter or on the Sabbath (see Matt. 24:20, 82) and the image of the two surprised in the field (see Matt. 24:40, 83); the thief's entry into heaven before the resurrection of the dead (84);¹³ the new heaven and the new earth (85). The text then addresses the calculation of the three days preceding the resurrection (86) and demonstrates the agreement between the Evangelists regarding the resurrection of Jesus

¹³ In *Izbornik 1073* there is a further lacuna in question 84 and a repetition of the end of question 83 that could derive either from the Greek original or from the translator (Thomson 2007: 742–743).

(87), showing how the final events of history (*novissimi*) must be interpreted in the light of the resurrection of Christ.¹⁴

The final question is devoted to the image of the universal church, with a reflection on the symbolism of the Christian temple, understood as the image of man, and an extensive exploration of the liturgical celebration, the sacraments and Sunday pursuant to the apostolic tradition in which the bishop is the image of Christ himself (88). A few brief conclusive passages of this question take up certain topics of the introduction regarding Trinitarian theology and the Incarnation and prefigure the reflections developed in the appendix.

As can be seen, this long series of questions on the Gospels – which with some exceptions must be attributed to the Pseudo-Anastasius – present the Christian message in a particular perspective. Excluding a few rare references to historical reality, the predominance of spiritual and ethical interpretation is evident, based especially on the Gospel of Matthew. The exegetical effort is not so much oriented towards clarifying the content of the commandments as to analysing difficult questions concerning delicate operations of discernment regarding forgiveness, blessing and curses, etc. As shown by a series of digressions and insights, the reflections are developed within a patently ecclesiastical framework, in which the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments assumes a fundamental role. In this sense, as already demonstrated in detail by analysing question 75 (65 according to the numbering in PG) – although the same could also be done for question 62 on the number of the Gospels – there are a series of thematic affinities that they share with the Life of Constantine-Cyril and his own teaching. In this section too, as in the previous ones, we can observe a general design of the central part of the work that proceeds with the exposition of the history of salvation, ending in the last chapters of this section where the question of eschatological judgement is addressed. If we consider the original collection of Anastasius, it is evident that the work of Pseudo-Anastasius is characterized above all by the large number of biblical and patristic citations that follow the answer (Sieswerda, Thomson 2004: 578).¹⁵

The final section, which is the least stable part in the Greek manuscript tradition, in the testimony of *Izbornik 1073* can be divided into three different sections; it contains a series of tools necessary for the interpretation of Trinitarian theology and the biblical message, and represents the appropriate completion of the first two parts. Up to now, scholars have mostly limited themselves to extracting individu-

¹⁴ In *Izbornik 1073* there is a further lacuna between questions 86 and 87. Here too, the omission could derive either from the Greek original or from the translator (Thomson 2007: 743–744).

¹⁵ Thomson noted that the abundance of citations, present in certain questions, created serious difficulties for Gretser, the editor of the Greek text, who left out several passages (Thomson 2007: 740). See, for example, question 70, concerning the interpretation of the passage on the right eye and the right hand (Matt 5:29–30), which deserves further study.

al texts, underlining their elevated philosophical or historical content rather than highlighting the eminently didactic and exegetical purpose of this part.¹⁶ It must be underlined, however, that most Greek witnesses omit it, in whole or in part.¹⁷ We refer the analysis to a more comprehensive study on the structure of the work.

As already said, the initial prologue and the final section reveal notable compositional variations already in the Greek tradition with evident editorial intervention (Биби́ков 1996: 254–255). With regard to the central part, to the best of my knowledge no one has developed a systematic comparison between the work of Anastasius and the reworking by the Pseudo-Anastasius,¹⁸ who, I would again emphasize, was working in the environment of late ninth-century Constantinople. The principles followed in the readjustment of the work of the Sinai monk to the new historical context, marked by the strong personality of Photius, have remained obscure. Bibikov speaks above all of a strengthening of the “exegetical and polemical aspects” in the re-elaboration of Pseudo-Anastasius (Биби́ков 1996: 327). While the short answers of the Sinaite monk appear to be directed above all to the secular milieu, and a preponderance of Old Testament quotations is identified, as the questions relating to women and marriage demonstrate, in the Constantinopolitan re-elaboration numerous additions from the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers can be noted, which reinforce interest in the exegesis of Holy Scripture in the context of a “circle of professional theologians” (Биби́ков 2004: 6–7).

The question of the identity of Pseudo-Anastasius clearly remains open, who, as Sieswerda suggests, could also plausibly be identified as a group of people (Sieswerda 2001: 296). Certainly such a complex reworking of Anastasius Sinaita’s authentic questions assumes a knowledge of Holy Scripture and patristic exegesis. This not only confirms the origin in the Constantinopolitan environment, as the Greek manuscript tradition attests, but also refers to the specific milieu of the patriarch Photius, whose erudition and knowledge of the sources is well known.¹⁹

In this respect, it would be useful to make comparisons with other miscellanies in circulation at the time, in particular with the *Amphilochia* of the patriarch Photius, which belong to the same literary genre. The work contains not only topics similar to the miscellany in question, but even some questions and answers attributed to Anastasius Sinaita (Биби́ков 1996: 323–324).²⁰ The *Amphilochia*,

¹⁶ Thomson offers a brief summary of the different issues discussed in the different sections, which can help to explain their purpose (Thomson 2007: 744–752).

¹⁷ The structure of the work in the Greek manuscript tradition deserves a specific study, taking into account textual transformations and adaptations that testify to the different purposes assumed by the miscellany over the centuries.

¹⁸ Sieswerda has announced a study on the subject (Sieswerda 2001: 297, no. 14).

¹⁹ On the circle of students and “readers” gravitating around Photius see Canfora 1998; Ronconi 2012; Markopoulos 2017, in particular pp. 66–67.

²⁰ See Laourdas, Westerink 1983–1988 (*Amphilochia*, ed. L. G. Westerink. vols. 3–6).

which address themes of a theological, philosophical and philological nature, were written by Photius in the years following his expulsion from the patriarchal throne (867), so that chronologically their composition would roughly coincide with the years of the successful reworking of the erotapocritical work of Anastasius. Bibikov proposed further exploring this topic (Бибиков 1996: 325), while Yaneva tackled this aspect, analysing certain issues in relation to our miscellany and admitting its affinity, but underlining in general the distance of sensitivity and theological thought between the works and ruling out that the patriarch may have been the inspiration for it (ЯНЕВА 2015: 79–80).

Another important clue is offered by a short text from the Slavic version of the commentated Book of Job, unpublished until a few years ago. This is an excerpt from Photius's *Amphilochia* (152), expounding the various causes of the obscurity of the biblical text. According to its translation, a witness of elevated workmanship, it dates back to the time of Methodius or to the circle of his disciples (Алексеев 2004). Thus, it is possible to ascertain the existence of a relationship between the work of Photius and the oldest Slavic version of the Bible precisely on the question of biblical exegesis which, as we shall see, represents the leitmotif of our miscellany.

Considering the solid core of 88 issues, it can be said that the material offered by Anastasius Sinaita's questions on spiritual life, especially that of the laity, has been reutilised and reorganized within the broader context of issues referring to the Old and the New Testaments, with a clear distinction between Epistles and Gospels. The solid arrangement based on Holy Scripture makes it possible, not only to experience the unity of the Old and New Testaments on the basis of historical and allegorical interpretation, but also to follow the chronological development of the history of salvation from a Trinitarian perspective.

Anastasius's reflection on spiritual life, in which discernment already plays a fundamental role, continues to be the leitmotif of the work, which however is enriched by a constant exegetical practice of patristic origin supporting an ethical and ecclesiastical interpretation. This casts light on the particular role of the Sapiential Books, albeit in the interpretative key of the Christian wisdom of Pauline doctrine, but casts light also on the textual composition of the appendix with its series of interpretative tools.

Consequently it is easy to see why the work cannot be defined as a treatise on Christian erudition in encyclopaedic form or even a catechesis aimed at the unlearned or neophytes. Especially following the reworking by the Pseudo-Anastasius, this collection of theological texts, which refer to the more classical tradition of patristic thought, offers a series of indispensable tools for illustrating the Trinitarian doctrine in the wake of the conciliar debates through the exegesis of Holy Scripture. The issue is addressed both in terms of contents, in its doctrinal and moral aspects, and in terms of forms of communication. The work appears, therefore, extraordinarily useful for the training of clergy engaged in pastoral activities or on missions, offering as it does the fundamental message of Eastern Christian doctrine on the model of the Church Fathers.

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QUESTIONS ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS IN SIMEON'S MISCELLANY

(Summary)

The purpose of this paper is to present the central part of Simeon's Miscellany containing the Questions on the Old and New Testaments, primarily the result of the reworking of the so-called Pseudo-Anastasius. In the light of this analysis, it is evident that Simeon's Miscellany offers a series of tools to illustrate Christian teaching

from a Trinitarian perspective at the doctrinal and ethical level through the exegesis of biblical passages that are often difficult to interpret.

Keywords: Simeon's Miscellany, *Izbornik 1073*, Slavic Bible, Byzantine exegesis, Anastasius Sinaita.

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