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**GREEK WRITING ON THE NORTHERN PERIPHERY OF THE
BYZANTINE WORLD AND ITS CONTACTS WITH THE FOREIGN
LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT**

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Publications

Seven publications were selected for the defense:

1. Vinogradov A., Korobov M. Gothic graffiti from the Mangup basilica // *NOWELE*. 2018. Vol. 71. No. 2. P. 223-235.
2. Vinogradov A., Korobov M. The early Christian history of the Black Sea Goths in the light of new Gothic inscriptions from Crimea // *Byzantion: Revue Internationale des Etudes Byzantines*. 2019. Vol. 89. P. 33-48.
3. Vinogradov A. Iu., Korobov M. I. Bravlin — branliv ili krotok? // *Slověne*. 2017. T. 6. № 1. S. 219-235.
4. Vinogradov A. Iu. O khristianskoi epigrafike Severnogo Prichernomor'ia v novoi knige V. P. Iailenko (V. P. Iailenko. *Istoriia i epigrafika Ol'vii, Khersonesa i Bospora VII v. do n.e. — VII v. n.e.* SPb., 2017) // *Vestnik drevnei istorii*. 2018. T. 78. № 3. S. 738-745.
5. Chitaia G., Papuashvili R., Vinogradov A. A new complex of Greek inscriptions from Machkhomeri fortress in Lazica // *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. 2020. Bd. 214. S. 169–178.
6. Vinogradov A. Iu. O khronologii russkikh mitropolitov XI v. (po povodu novoi gipotezy A. P. Tolochko) // *Slověne*. 2019. T. 8. № 1. S. 477-485.
7. Vinogradov A. Iu., Gippius A. A., Kiziukevich N. A. «Nadpis' na plinfe iz Grodno (Ps 46: 5) v kontekste vizantiisko-russkikh epigraficheskikh sviazei» // *Slověne*. 2020. T. 9. № 1. S. 427-436.

The results of the present study have also been presented in the following papers:

1. Vinogradov A., Korobov M. Gotische Graffito-Inschriften aus der Bergkrim // *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur*. 2016. Vol. 145. P. 141-157.
2. Vinogradov A. St. Parasceve of Iconium and her "lost" Greek Acts // *Analecta Bollandiana*. 2013. Vol. 131. No. 2. P. 276-279.

3. Vinogradov A. Iu. Den' osviashcheniia khrama v traditsii Vostochnoi Tserkvi (IV–XIII vv.): strategii vybora // Srednie veka. 2012. T. 73. № 1-2. S. 154-177.
4. Vinogradov A. Iu. Bogoroditsa-Zastupnitsa i zakazchik: vizualizatsiia idei nebesnogo pokrovitel'stva (Vizantiia, Rus', Kavkaz) // Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. 2020 (in print).
5. Vinogradov A. Iu., Dobychina A. S. “Erinii i vakkhanki”. Kto stoial u istokov novoi bolgarskoi obshchnosti v 1185–1186 gg.? // Slověne. 2018. T. 7. № 1. S. 41-54.
6. Vinogradov A. Iu., Zheltov M. S. «Pervaia eres' na Rusi»: russkie spory 1160-kh godov ob otmene posta v prazdnichnye dni // Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki. 2018. № 3(73). S. 118-139.
7. Vinogradov A. Iu., Zheltov M., sviashch. Zhizn' i smert' Feodortsa Vladimirskogo: pravo ili rasprava? // Elektronnyi nauchno-obrazovatel'nyi zhurnal "Istoriia". 2019. T. 10. № 10 (84).
8. Vinogradov A. Iu., Zheltov M., sviashch. Tserkovnaia politika Konstantinopol'skoi patriarkhii pri Manuile I Komnine i krizis Russkoi mitropolii v 1156–1169 gg. // Elektronnyi nauchno-obrazovatel'nyi zhurnal "Istoriia". 2019. T. 10. № 9 (83). S. 1-18.
9. Vinogradov A. Iu., Korobov M. I. Gotskie graffiti iz Mangupskoi baziliki // Srednie veka. 2015. T. 76. № 3-4. S. 57-75.
10. Vinogradov A. Iu., Korobov M. I. Dva kriticheskikh otklika na publikatsiiu gotskikh graffiti s Mangupa // Srednie veka. 2018. T. 79. № 1. S. 176-188.

Conference presentations

The main results and conclusions of the present study have been presented in 2014–2018 in 55 oral and poster presentations at 50 international and national conferences, including:

- The Goths Revisited: An international workshop on Gothic language, history and culture (2016)
- The Goths Compared: East Germanic communities between Balticum, Pontus and the West (2019)
- Vortragsreihe “Byzanz in Mainz” (2019)
- Συμπόσιον Βυζαντινής και Μεταβυζαντινής Αρχαιολογίας και Τέχνης (2019)
- Indoevropeskoe iazykoznanie i klassicheskaia filologiia (Chteniia pamiati I. M. Tronskogo) (2018)
- «Drevniaia Rus' i germanskii mir v istoriko-filologicheskoi perspektive» (2016–2018)
- «Vostochnaia Evropa v drevnosti i Srednevekov'e. Antichnye i srednevekovye obshchnosti». Chteniia pamiati V. T. Pashuto (2015–2019)
- Byzantinoslavica: Chteniia pamiati akademika Gennadiia Grigor'evicha Litavrina (2013–2019)
- «Kompleksnyi podkhod v izuchenii Drevnei Rusi» (2017, 2019)
- Mezhdunarodnyi Peterburgskii istoricheskii forum (2019)
- Krupnovskie chteniia po arkheologii Severnogo Kavkaza (2014, 2016, 2018)

1. Introduction

The use and adaptation of Greek writing is studied on the material of various societies and cultures: Lazica, Abkhazia, Alania, Kabarda, the Hellenized population of the Northern Black sea region, the Crimean Goths, pre-Mongol Rus', based mainly on lapidary inscriptions and manuscripts. Three main aspects are considered: the use of Greek as the main written language, including for liturgical and commemorative needs; the use of the Greek alphabet for local languages; the use of Greek models when creating texts in local languages.

Main results of the research are as follows:

1. Greek was the only written language in Christian Lazica from the 5th to 7th c., Abkhazia of the 6th – mid-11th c. and Kabarda of the 14th–17th c. It was used as the language of epigraphy and worship of local Churches subordinate to the Patriarchate of Constantinople.
2. In Alania, there was an actual adaptation of the Greek script for the local language. The Greek alphabet was used both in epigraphy (although the question of the language of the Zelenchuk inscription should be reconsidered) and in parchment manuscripts (only for glosses).
3. In Kabarda, literary and epigraphic texts in Greek and an unidentified North Caucasian Turkic language bear traces of the Circassian vocalism (confusion between *e* and *i*, *o* and *u*). In addition, this manuscript's *e* case demonstrates a lack of understanding of the original Greek and a magical attitude to its pronunciation.
4. In the Northern Black sea region, Greek writing and language were dominant and show a wide range of types and formulas of inscriptions in epigraphy, closely related to the tradition of the Byzantine Empire, but with their own local specifics. Clear dialect features are, however, not traceable.
5. In the Crimean Mountains, the Greek writing could not completely replace the Gothic one, whose monuments are known both in the high and later Middle Ages.

However, Greek literary and epigraphic formulas significantly influenced the written Crimean Gothic.

6. In the Crimean Gothic, there is a phenomenon of secondary influence of Greek writing, when acronyms of Greek theological formulas were written with Gothic letters. This phenomenon is probably connected with the “Nicaeanization” of the Black sea Goths in the framework of the missionary policy of John Chrysostom.

7. In pre-Mongol Russia, Greek was widely used as the language of church graffiti, and their paleography shows that they were written by both Greeks and Slavs who learned Greek. Some of these graffiti are “literary” in nature.

8. In the early period of the Russian Church, the Greek epigraphic usage had an impact on Slavic inscriptions. Thus, only the Byzantine influence can explain the appearance and the formula of a unique Russian inscription about the consecration of the St. Sophia of Kiev in 1052.

2. Greek writing in the Caucasus

Paper selected for the defense: [Chitaia, Papuashvili, Vinogradov 2020].

2.1. Lazica and Kartli

Until 2018, only two 6th-c. inscriptions from Sepieti and Vashnari were known in Lasica, and one from Kvatsiskhevi in Kartli. The new complex of Greek inscriptions from the Basilica in the Machkhomeri fortress is a unique evidence of the Christianization of Lazica in the 6th c. Three lapidary inscriptions have different characters: one is an invocative and building inscription, another an invocative-prohibitive one, the third is prohibitive; there are also graffiti on the slab, possibly educational. The dedicants' names, Gorgonius and Theonas, are of Christian origin, not local. Important parallels to the formulas of the Machkhomeri inscriptions are found in the epigraphic traditions of Asia Minor and the East (Arabia and Syria), which may indicate the origin of the founders and carvers.

2.2. *Abkhazia*

From the early Byzantine period, we know a fragment of a lapidary inscription from Tsandrypsh, with a mention of Abasgia, and a mosaic inscription from the church 2 in Pitious, with the dedication of a certain Orel.

After the Abkhazian Kingdom returned to the alliance with Byzantium in the 880s, we again see here only Greek epigraphy: the tombstone of a cleric of the archbishopric of Anakopia (929 AD), as well as inscriptions in the churches of St. Simon (899 AD) and St. Theodore (10th c.). In the inscription from Bambora, the independent Abkhazian king (probably George I) prefers to be represented by the Byzantine title of Magister.

The next period of Greek writing in Abkhazia is linked with the Byzantine theme of Anakopia in the mid-11th c. In Anakopia, we know of two complexes of Greek epigraphy: lapidary inscriptions from the Anakopian mountain and graffiti in the church of St. Simon. In addition to important historical data, Anakopian inscriptions inform us that until the mid-11th c., Greek remained the only written language in Abkhazia.

2.3. *North Caucasus*

The Greek alphabet began to be used here no later than the 14th c., and probably earlier, for writing short texts (memorial inscriptions, calendar notices) in the Alanic language. Prophetologion BAN gr. Q 12 (1275 AD) with Alanic scholia indicates also that in the late 13th – 14th c. the Alans continued to perform services in Greek.

The analysis of the Zelenchuk inscription, which contains Greek formulas and Alanic personal names with patronymics, shows that it cannot be considered a clear monument of the Alanic language. On the contrary, on a stone cross, we first read the word ΔΖΟΥΒΑΡ (= Osset. *dzuar* “cross, sanctuary” < Georg. *džvari* “cross”).

Even after the defeat of Tamerlane and the disappearance of the Byzantine hierarchs in the North Caucasus, the Greek language continued to be in use for a long time to create lapidary inscriptions and amulets. One of the reasons for this was the preservation of Orthodox priests in this region. In 2017, in the Russian national library in St. Petersburg, we found a late Greek manuscript (F. 946, op. 1, d. 1093)

of the late 17th – early 18th c. These are fragments of an abbreviated Greek Lectionary, a calendar with troparia for selected holidays and paschalia. The Greek text contains numerous deviations from the “norm.” The main part of them is regular and concerns vowels – confusion between *e* and *i*, *o* and *u*. We can explain this phenomenon as an influence of the Kabardian language with its distinctively poor vocalism characteristic of all Circassian languages. Of particular interest is the text of Christian origin on the last page, which is written in a Turkic language – a Kipchak dialect, which shows greater affinity to the modern Crimean Tatar language than to the Turkic languages of the North Caucasus.

In the monumental inscriptions from Kuban region and Kabarda of the 14th–17th c., we find a similar confusion between *e* and *i*. This fact shows that here Greek texts could be written phonetically.

3. Greek epigraphy in the Byzantine Northern Black sea region and its interaction with the Gothic writing

Papers selected for the defense: [Виноградов 2018; Виноградов, Коробов 2017; Korobov, Vinogradov 2018; Korobov, Vinogradov 2019]

3.1 Greek inscriptions of the Byzantine Northern Black sea region

Byzantine inscriptions are the main source of our knowledge about Greek writing in the medieval Northern Black sea region. All the monuments of the Byzantine epigraphy of the Northern black sea region, collected by us in the first full corpus¹, can be distributed sequentially across 6 regions, representing geographical and/or historical and cultural unities: the Dniester Mouth, Cherson and the Heracleian Peninsula, the Crimean Mountains, the southern shore of Crimea, Kerch, the Taman Peninsula, and Kuban.

We offer our own version of the typology of inscriptions, taking into account the features of the local epigraphy. In the period under consideration, we see two local

¹ *Inscriptiones orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini, editio tertia, volumen V*, available on the Internet at: <https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/corpora/byzantine/index.html>.

palaeographic traditions: of Cherson and of Bosporos. In the Middle Byzantine inscriptions, several styles can be distinguished, sometimes crossing the borders of regions, primarily of Bosporos and Cherson, which arose under the influence of Asia Minor. Even less uniformity is shown by the palaeography of the 13th–15th c., which is divided into several local, short-lived schools: coastal, mountainous of the 13th–14th c., early and late Theodoritan.

The Greek language of the inscriptions corresponds to what we know about the development of the Greek language in the 4th–15th c. The phonetics of the inscriptions goes through three main stages: in the 4th–15th c. we see a complete loss of vowel length, the monophthongization of the diphthong *ai* to *e*, $\eta = e$ and *i*, $\epsilon\iota = ei$ and *i*; later characteristic features of itacism start to appear, except for ypsilon = *i* which definitely occurs from the 9th c. Only the late Byzantine confusion between theta and tau, which is also known in the North Caucasus, can be considered a specific phenomenon, but the material here is insufficient. The language of the Byzantine inscriptions of the Northern Black sea region is close to *koine*, but at the same time it contains a number of specific features, none of which can, however, be considered dialectal, also in comparing with the later dialect of the Crimean Greeks.

3.2. Interaction of Greek and Gothic writing in the Crimea

To fill the gap between the archaeological evidence of the Goths' presence in the Early Byzantine Crimea and the recording of the Crimean-Gothic language in the mid-16th c. by Busbecq, Gothic personal names in Greek inscriptions help: Χουϊτάνη < Goth. **Heita* (IOSPE³ V 176), Ιρπανα < Goth. **Airpa* (IOSPE³ V 197), Βανφα|ρηξ < Goth. ?-*reiks* (or *Wamba* + ῥήξ) (IOSPE³ V 272); Αβικα < Goth. **Abika* (IOSPE³ V 296). On the other hand, we should exclude from their number the name of Bravlin (from the “Life of St. Stephen of Sougdaia”) < Μπραῦλις < Πραῦλις.

Contrary to *communis opinio*, that Crimean Gothic was only a spoken vernacular, we were able to find 5 graffiti from Mangup written in Gothic in the archaic variant of Wulfila's alphabet (the so-called Σ-type). The graffiti were written between the mid-9th and the early 10th c. and confirm the bilingualism in the Crimean Mountains and the use of Gothic writing for different purposes. Liturgical texts attest to the

existence of church service in the Gothic language of the Byzantine type; the epigraphic culture of the Crimean Goths was also close to the local Byzantine culture. There are no noticeable differences between the language of Wulfila's Bible and that of the Mangup inscriptions – on the contrary, there are particular similarities even with individual codices of the Gothic Bible; only the occasional shortening of \bar{i} may be a dialectal trait. The initials in the graffiti suggest the existence of a Gothic script culture in the Crimea.

The acrostic in the first four lines of graffito I.1. contains the Greek formula $\Theta(\epsilon\delta\omicron)\zeta$ $\bar{\Gamma}(\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon)\zeta$ “God Jesus,” written in Gothic letters. In a late medieval inscription from Bakhchisarai we see the Greek formula $\Sigma(\omega\tau\eta\rho)$ $\Theta(\epsilon\delta\omicron)\zeta$ $\bar{\Gamma}(\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon)\zeta$ “Savior God Jesus” in a Gothic transmission. Such formulas in Gothic inscriptions from the Crimea, reflecting the dogma of the Council of Nicaea in contrast to the “Homoian” teaching about the subordinate status of Jesus relative to God the Father, can be interpreted as an echo of the policy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, to convert the Goths to Nicaean creed.

4. Greek epigraphy in pre-Mongol Rus' and its influence on the old Russian inscriptions

Papers selected for the defense: [Виноградов 2018; Виноградов, Гиппиус, Кизюкевич 2020].

Greek graffiti in pre-Mongol Rus', outside of St. Sophia of Kiev, were almost never studied, although they sometimes provide valuable material. Especially interesting are those Greek graffiti that deviate from standard formulas and have a kind of “literary” character. These include a fragment from the Tithe Church in Kiev with Ps 78, 10 (= 113, 1). From the 80 Greek graffiti in St. Sophia of Kiev, we should note the “literary” ones (no. 74–76), prayers composed *ad hoc* by a Greek who visited Kiev around 1276. Of the 10 Greek graffiti of St. Sophia of Novgorod, two have a “literary” character: Ps 7, 2 and Gen 20, 4. So, on the walls of Russian churches, not only separate words and invocations were scratched, but also quotations from the Holy Scripture, and even independently composed prayers.

There are also several graffiti where the Greek text is written clearly by a Russian and, moreover, sometimes even in Cyrillic (in Sofia of Novgorod: *ο χερεμισ(μός)*; *μνηρῶ μαχοστραμυζο* < Т(ѣ) ἡπερμάχο στρατηγο). A similar phenomenon of recording Greek chants in Cyrillic is known in Bulgaria. However, in Russia of this period there are no monuments of Greek lapidary epigraphy, in contrast, for example, to the First Bulgarian kingdom, although there is a large number of Greek-language seals.

Of Byzantine origin are also the most frequent formulas in old Russian inscriptions, such as “Lord help,” etc., which came to Rus’ perhaps via a South Slavic medium. One case of this influence is graffiti 1541 from St. Sophia of Kiev, about its consecration by Metropolitan Ephraim on November 4, 1052. The only Russian inscription about the consecration of the Church was made as a part of the activities of the Greek Metropolitan. In general, the practice of consecrating churches in pre-Mongol Rus’ was quite in line with the Middle Byzantine tradition. The text of the inscription, which has no analogues in Russian epigraphy, accurately reproduces the formula of the Byzantine inscriptions on the consecration of churches, which, in turn, go back to the liturgical and documentary consecration formulas.

Another case of this influence is Ps 45: 6 written on a late 12th c. brick from Grodno. This tradition goes back to the “Diegesis of the Great church” which ascribes such practice to Justinian I. We can see the same inscription in Greek over the main apse of St. Sophia in Kiev, but the Grodno inscription goes back rather to the Byzantine tradition to inscribe bricks in this way, that we know from a Middle Byzantine brick in the Archeological Museum in Istanbul.

Conclusion

Comparing the traditions of using Greek writing in various regions on the Northern periphery of Byzantium we see both differences and similarities between them. Radically different from other regions is the Northern Black sea region, where the majority of the population in the Byzantine period was Greek-speaking, and therefore Greek epigraphy was most common. In Lazica, the Abkhazian Kingdom

and Kabarda, Greek was the main language of worship and writing. In Alania, the existence of Greek worship and writing led, on the contrary, to the emergence of the practice of writing short texts in Alanic with Greek letters. Finally, in pre-Mongol Rus', Greek, which came here as the language of the Church, began to play a modest role as compared to Church Slavic and old Russian. However, everywhere we see an active spread of Greek writing in the framework of the missionary Hellenization. However, given the absence of political dependence on Byzantium and the presence of a local written language, the use of Greek was slightly reduced (unlike in Bulgaria).

On the other hand, throughout the Northern periphery of the Byzantine world, we see the influence of Greek writing on local written cultures. In the North Caucasus, Greek writing was adapted to write texts not only in Alanic, but also in a Turkic language. In the Crimean Mountains, we see the use of Greek formulas and even Greek acronyms in Gothic epigraphy. In pre-Mongol Rus', Greek epigraphy affects not only the formulas of inscriptions, but even the appearance of a whole new type of them, which closely fits into the context of the activities of Greek hierarchs in Russia.

As for the comparative research of our material, despite its specificity, we can compare it with the typologically similar medieval phenomenon of the use of Greek writing in the Slavic Balkans. On the one hand, this reveals a number of significant and even essential parallels: not only the impact of types and formulas of Greek inscriptions on the local ones (Slavic in the Balkans and Rus', Gothic in Crimea), but also the penetration of Greek words and expressions into the epigraphy in local languages, and vice versa: from these into Greek inscriptions (from Turkic into "Protobulgarian" ones and from Alanic into the Greek epigraphy of Alania). On the other hand, significant differences in the adaptation of the Greek script are also revealed: e.g., nowhere else is known the Balkan phenomenon of bilingual, Greek-Cyrillic inscriptions, usually with parallel texts, apparently going back to the Slavic-Greek bilingualism in Bulgaria. However, some phenomena of this kind can be very

local, such as specific adaptation of the Greek text to the Circassian phonetics, which is not the case in “Probulgarian” inscriptions.

So, at the level of theoretical generalization, we can distinguish three basic types of using Greek writing in a foreign-language environment on the Northern periphery of the Byzantine world. The first type (Lazica, Abkhazia) is characterized by the use of Greek as the only written language (including worship), constituting the identity of local elites, almost without any contact with the local language environment (even in the onomasticon). In the second type (Alania, Kabarda), where the Greek alphabet also remains the only one in use, it was adapted, on the one hand, to the needs of local languages (Alanian, Turkic), and on the other, the local realities (onomastic constructions, titles, etc.) and phonetics (in Kabarda) penetrate actively into Greek texts. The third type is distinguished by the coexistence of two written cultures, the Greek and the local one: Gothic in the Crimea, Cyrillic-Glagolitic in Russia (as well as in the Balkans), with a significant influence of the first on the second, but not vice versa. In turn, the Northern Black sea region, where (except for the Crimean Mountains) Greek remained for a long time the only written language of the predominantly Greek-speaking population, also demonstrates a significant influence of non-Greek realities on Greek writing.