

THE ARABIC VERSION OF
THE LIFE OF SAINT PARASKEVI THE NEW
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A common name in Eastern onomastics, very frequent to this day, is the Christian name Paraskevi (Romanian *Paraschiva* for women, or *Paraschiv* for men). In its literal translation this name designates Friday (the word means "preparation" in Greek, *i.e.* the preparation for Saturday). The veneration of two figures of the Orthodox hagiography has largely contributed to the spread of this name: first, the Virgin and Martyr Saint Paraskevi of Rome, born during the rule of Emperor Hadrian, a victim of the persecutions against Christians; and second, Saint Paraskevi the New, born in Thrace (town of Epivates), who lived towards the end of the 10th century. Famous for her ascetic life, devoted to prayer and virtuous deeds, it is to this latter Paraskevi that the worship of Eastern Christians is primarily devoted.

Showing a particular piety ever since she was ten years old, this Paraskevi left her family for a monastery, then she made a pilgrimage to Constantinople. After a journey through Asia Minor and Jerusalem, having spent a long, severe period of asceticism in the desert of Jordan, she returned to her country where she died two years later in the small town of Callikrateia. After her relics were discovered towards the end of the 12th century, they proved to have miraculous powers, which led to the canonization of this Saint Paraskevi by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The veneration of these relics was the cause of their wandering far and wide, first within the Bulgarian Empire, to Tirnovo and Vidin, then to Belgrade, where they were kept until the Ottoman conquest (1521), when Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent transferred them to Constantinople as a gift to the Christian community there (certain historians claim that he sold the relics for a large sum of money). In Constantinople they were kept successively in several famous Christian churches, while around 1601 they arrived at the Church of Saint George in the Fanar, the residence of the Ecumenical Patriarch. It was from this place that Vasile Lupu, prince of Moldavia (1634-1653), obtained their transfer in 1641 to his new foundation in Jassy, a monastery devoted to the Three Holy Doctors of the Church (a monument of particular beauty, which to this day adorns the capital of Moldavia, in North-East Romania).

The Life of Saint Paraskevi the New has known several versions ever since the second half of the 12th century. Two of them are lost, another one was written in Church Slavonic by Eftimios, patriarch of Tirnovo in the 14th century, and was quite widespread in the Eastern world. The transfer of the relics to Moldavia led to the writing of another biography of the Saint, this time in Greek.

The author of this new version is Matthew, a scholar born towards the middle of the 16th century in Pogoniana (a town in Epiros), who possessed a solid religious education and remarkable skills as a calligrapher and miniaturist. After years of service for the Patriarch of Constantinople and journeys to Moscow and Lvov, Matthew took up residence in Wallachia, where he was appointed head of the Monastery of Dealu, a princely foundation near the former capital of the country, Tirgoviste. The artistic manuscripts that he produced are nowadays preserved in all major museums in the Near East, and also in Europe¹. His scholarly talents brought him the high appreciation of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who bestowed upon him the rank of bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia and a famous diocese while it was governed by Saint Nicholas, but lost long since, as a result of the Islamic expansion.

His hagiography of Saint Paraskevi was written in Wallachia, probably later than 1605 (when he became bishop of Myra). The text became well-known thanks to the repute of its learned author, but it was first published only in 1891, by the Greek scholar A. Papadopoulos Kerameus. As expected, this Greek biography was very popular in the Eastern Church, since the Saint's relics were surrounded by deep veneration. The origin and sources of Matthew's work have been studied extensively and thoroughly, but this is not our subject here. In the context of this conference, we only wish to point to the circumstances in which the above-mentioned biography was transferred into Christian Arabic literature, and in what form.

The Romanian Principalities had long been in contact with the Christian East, especially the Patriarchy of Antioch. These contacts were strengthened in the middle of the 17th century by the historical voyage of Makarios az-Za'im al-Halabi to the capital cities of Wallachia and Moldavia, *i.e.* Bucharest and Jassy. The journey took him no less than six years. Of this long period, he seems to have spent around three years and a half among Romanians. His status as a high ecclesiastical dignitary, his scholarly education in Greek and Arabic and his characteristic curiosity explain why this journey left such deep marks in all Makarios's subsequent works.

While visiting the Romanian Principalities, he was for the first time in a Christian country that enjoyed a certain freedom, considering the relative autonomy of Wallachia and Moldavia within the Ottoman Empire. During his travels he met many intellectuals and scholars, not only Romanian, but also Greek and Russian, who had similar interests. He searched the rich libraries of the bishoprics and monasteries, and even those of wealthy aristocrats (boyars). He purchased or received printed books and especially copies of manuscripts of rare ecclesiastical works.

Helping and stimulating Makarios's contacts in the Romanian Principalities was a phenomenon that was taking place simultaneously here and in the Christian East. Ever since the 15th century, the Romanians had been struggling to replace the lan-

¹ For further information, see Gratziou 1982.

guage they used in administration, culture and ecclesiastical rites (Church Slavonic) with the vernacular language, *i.e.* Romanian. Likewise, in the Patriarchate of Antioch the Orthodox Arabs endeavoured to replace the Syriac language with Arabic. Both these languages (Church Slavonic and Syriac) enjoyed great literary prestige, and age-old use. Nevertheless, they had become incomprehensible not only to the common believers (who had never understood them), but also to the officiating clergy.

Makarios was a devoted disciple of another Syrian scholar, Patriarch Meletios Karme, who strongly promoted the introduction of Arabic in all activities connected with the Church and religious literature within the Patriarchate of Antioch. For this reason, Makarios tried hard to transfer, by translating, as many texts as possible from the Orthodox tradition to the re-emerging Christian Arabic literature, conventionally called *melchite*².

Makarios went to Jassy in February 1653, where he visited the monastery of the Three Holy Doctors of the Church and prayed before the relics of Saint Paraskevi. Only twelve years had passed since these relics had been brought to the capital of Moldavia. Naturally, he was told many things about this Saint Paraskevi, whose worship did not seem to have penetrated the ecclesiastical rites of Antioch. Wishing to obtain a rigorous and well-documented text about her life, he was provided with Matthew of Myra's written work. Makarios had a good knowledge of Greek, from which he had translated a great many works. Undoubtedly his only written source was Matthew's text, present in many of the libraries that he visited in the Romanian Principalities. Still, he did not translate Matthew's text in its entirety, but abridged it and adapted it, also adding certain parts which make the Arabic version of Saint Paraskevi's life a personal piece of literature.

Makarios's Arabic version, included by its author in a *Miscellany* of religious writings that he produced during his journey to Wallachia, *Mağmū' latīf*, remained unpublished until now. The title of this text is included, as expected, in the contents of the manuscript, published by Joseph Nasrallah in 1965⁴. The first scholar who, some thirty years ago, mentioned the source used by Makarios, *i.e.* Matthew's text on the *Life of Saint Paraskevi the New*, was Virgil Căndea (1970:71), who did not, however, study the precise results of this transfer.

² *Melchites* (< Arabic *malik*, "king") is the name given in the 5th century to the Christians who embraced the religious beliefs of the community ruled by the Byzantine emperor. They follow the Orthodox Eastern liturgy, ceremonial and calendar.

³ *Mağmū' latīf* ("Pleasant collection"), included in an 810 pages manuscript copied in 1670 by Marqos the Priest after Makarios's autograph work. Until 1974 the manuscript belonged to the library of the Greek Catholic monastery of Saint George in Deyr eš-Šir (Bmakkin, Lebanon). The *Life of Saint Paraskevi the New* constitutes chapter 15 of this manuscript, pages 128-132.

⁴ Nasrallah 1965:111. The manuscript is also quoted by Graf 1949: III, 101.

The Arabic version of Saint Paraskevi's *Life* closely follows the order of events and historical information mentioned in Matthew's text. In the English translation that we provide as follows, accompanied by the Arabic text, we print in italics the paragraphs which reproduce almost literally the Greek version, indicating obvious borrowings from it. The notes refer to the afore-mentioned Greek text published by Papadopoulos Kerameus.

In short, the Arabic version deals with the following topics, also found in the same sequence in Matthew's Greek text:

1. Saint Paraskevi's place of birth, parents and the education she received while they were alive;
2. Her brother Eftimios, his education, virtues and fame among Christians, which led to his appointment as Bishop of the city of Maditos;
3. Saint Paraskevi's life at the monastery, then her departure to the desert, which she left subsequently in order to return to her country, as advised by God's Angel who appeared to her while she was in the desert;
4. Her journey to Constantinople, praying before the Virgin's icon in the church of Saint Sophia;
5. The return to her country, where she lived in prayer and fasting, unknown to anyone, until her death. Here, Makarios introduces the information on the actual day of her death, October 14, which is commemorated by the Christians;
6. The transfer of the Saint's relics from Epivates to Constantinople, then to Belgrade;
7. The wars between the Ottomans and the Slavs, and the transfer of the relics to Constantinople, by order of Sulayman the Magnificent, who was impressed by the miraculous powers of the Saint and the deep devotion she enjoyed.

Makarios is not interested in the wandering of the relics through the South Slav states (Bosnia, Serbia), so he passes over long paragraphs of the Greek text. Similarly, he does not retain the details about historical events which had taken place within the Orthodox Church during Matthew's life. From this point on, Makarios mentions various details given to him while he was visiting Saint Paraskevi's relics in Jassy, on February 9, 1653, accompanied by his son, Paul of Aleppo⁵. They include:

- the transfer of the relics to Jassy at the request of Vasile Lupu, Prince of Moldavia, who had paid the overwhelming debts of the Patriarchate of Constantinople;

⁵ His son wrote a long account of this memorable journey (Paul of Aleppo, *Voyage*). See also Féodorov 1996.

- the great importance given to this event: three archbishops accompanied the relics⁶, together with a procession of priests and other clergymen, while Prince Vasile Lupu gave a celebratory welcome to the Saint's relics, placing them in his own foundation at the monastery of the Three Holy Doctors of the Church⁷;
- description of the celebrations taking place in Jassy, every year on October 14 (to this day!), and especially the ones organized during Prince Vasile Lupu's reign;
- Makarios's own visit to the church and prayer before the Saint's relics, their place in the church and the devotion shown to her by the people;
- details about the other Saint Paraskevi, of Rome, celebrated on July 26;
- the existence of a Greek text about the life of Saint Paraskevi the New, which Makarios states he knew and used in writing his own version of her life (but he does not mention the author's name).

Finally, Makarios states his purpose in writing this hagiographic work by shortening the Greek version: "so that we would not forget what we know and what we have learned about her and her life".

The original parts of the Arabic version, that rely on Makarios's own information gathered while travelling through Moldavia, amount to at least one third of the whole text. Some of these remarks are also to be found in his son Paul's account of their visit together in Jassy to the monastery of the Three Holy Doctors of the Church (*Voyage XXII/1,182-192*). He wrote a detailed description of the place where the relics were kept, the chest they were placed in, the amount that Prince Vasile Lupu had paid to discharge the debts of the Patriarchate in Constantinople (two to three hundred thousand piastres), the bishops who accompanied the relics to Jassy, etc. Obviously, the two important ecclesiastical dignitaries were given first-hand information by eye-witnesses of these events, which had taken place only twelve years before.

The supposition that Makarios used Matthew of Myra's Greek text is supported by several facts that involve his choice of words and expressions in his Arabic version. First of all, the fact that he uses the word *new*, Ar. *ḡadīda*, instead of *al-ḡadīta* ("the recent"), or *al-muta'abbira* ("the later"), which would have better expressed the fact that this Saint Paraskevi is different from the Martyr Paraskevi of Rome (of earlier times)⁸. Still, he translates as such the Greek *hē nea* ("the new") used by Matthew,

⁶ Like most of the information given by Makarios, this is also confirmed by documents of the time: the three archbishops were Ioannichios of Heraclea, Parthenios of Adrianople and Theofan of Palaioparas.

⁷ As a sign of great joy and piety, Prince Vasile Lupu, together with the Romanian bishops, also greeted the Saint's relics twice during their journey, in Galatzi and in Ismail.

⁸ We express our gratitude to Prof. Cornelis Nijland for pointing out this particularity to us.

without seeking to give more precision to the meaning of this word. Furthermore, he gives identical equivalents to many of the Greek words, in occurrences such as:

- Gr. *hê Hosia* > Ar. *al-bârra*, "the Pious";
- Gr. *philotheos* > Ar. *muhibbîna li-llâh*, "God-loving";
- Gr. *eusebês* > Ar. *hasanîna l-'ibâda*, "very pious";
- Gr. *en pasais tais hodois Kuriou porenomenous* > Ar. *mustaysirîna fî wašâyâ Allâh*, "walking in the paths of God (observing all His commandments)";
- Gr. *kai to poimnion kalôs kai orthodoxôs poimanas* > Ar. *ra'â ru'yata l-Masîh fî murûğ al-fadîlat*, "he governed the flock of Christ in the ways of righteousness";
- Gr. *pros Kurion exedêmete* > Ar. *intaqala ilâ r-Rabb*, "he passed away to God".

Makarios's use of the Greek source is also confirmed by the form that have taken most of the proper names included in the text. Only the Greek pronunciation of these words can account for the Arabic form appearing in the text:

- Gr. pron. *Paraskevi* > Ar. *Bârâskâfi*
- Gr. pron. *Epivaton* > Ar. *Abîfâtûn*
- Gr. pron. *Eftimios* > Ar. *Aftîmyûs*
- Gr. pron. *Vlabernas* > Ar. *Flâsirnâs*
- Gr. pron. *Klêros* > Ar. *iklîrus*

The ways and means used by Makarios in transferring this hagiographic text from Greek to Arabic are common to the great majority of writings that he produced, as well as to the writings of the Christian Arab writers in general. We have recently had the opportunity to study this process in detail by editing another of Makarios's texts, the *Chronicle of Wallachia (1292-1664)* (Makarios, *Chronique*). Publishing such texts will probably take a long time, considering the large number of Christian Arabic manuscripts registered by Georg Graf and Joseph Nasrallah in their histories of Melchite literature. These written works contribute to the study of the spiritual realm of the Arab Christians in the Middle East and, at the same time, to the better knowledge of the Christian expression of literary Arabic.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Ms. Deyr eš-Šîr (128, l. 7 - 132, l. 20)

The life of our Pious Mother Saint Paraskevi the New, also called "the Bulgarian", whose feast is celebrated on October 14

This Pious Paraskevi was born and educated in a town called Epivates, near Constantinople, at one day distance from it. She was the daughter of God-loving parents, very

*pious, walking in the paths of God by fasting, prayer, charity and all the virtues*⁹. This blessed Paraskevi was dedicated to God since her young age, and the two of them raised her in Christian ways, to be pure and virtuous, and [then] they died in peace.

They also had a son called Eftimios¹⁰. He agreed with his pious sister Paraskevi that they would both follow God's commandments and never look back on things of this transitory world. They did this, for Eftimios went and became a monk in a monastery for monks, while the blessed [Paraskevi] became a nun // (129) in a monastery for nuns. They both did virtuous deeds pleasing to God.

As for Eftimios, he went far in doing good works and his name became well-known to everyone as a symbol and example of all virtues. *In those days, the bishop of the city of Maditos*¹¹ *died and the people of that city immediately appointed the Pious Eftimios and made him bishop instead of the deceased.* He managed to carry the burden that was given him and governed the flock of Christ in the ways of righteousness. *Finally he passed away to God, and after his death he performed great miracles* (Matthew, *Life* 414, ll. 1-2 and 10-11).

The Pious Paraskevi, after doing all the virtuous deeds together with the nuns in the monastery, went out to the desert, all by herself, to struggle for virtue, and she performed there all sorts of abstinence, for many years. Then the Angel of God appeared to her and brought her good tidings of the happiness that was destined to her. He ordered her to leave the desert and go to her country, lest the Christians be deprived of her blessings. Then he disappeared from her sight quickly (Idem, 442, ll. 25-31.). She left the desert and first went to the city of Constantinople, to kneel at the Agia Sophia and all the other holy churches that are there. *{Then she went to the church of Blachernae and she knelt before the icon of the Virgin that is there}*¹² and she begged her much to intercede on her behalf with Christ. *Then she went to her country, [the town of] Epivates, and she resided there as a stranger, hiding herself from them [all], so they would not know her* (Matthew, *Life* 444, ll. 4-8). *She remained there for many years, increasing in her ascetic ways and all her virtues.* // (130) *Then she passed away to God* (Idem, 444, ll. 24-25), accompanied to the Heavens by the same Angel who had brought her good tidings at first, in the desert. She died on October 14. The Lord God made her do countless miracles.

The emperors of Byzantium transferred her saintly relics, by God's will, from the above-mentioned city of Epivates to the city of Constantinople, with great honour

⁹ The paragraphs in italics outline the parts that are to be found, almost identically, in the Greek edition of Papadopoulos Kerameus. This first part relates to pages 439, ll. 4-7.

¹⁰ A Bishop known as Euthymios the Taumaturge governed for forty years in the second half of the 10th century. He is celebrated by the Eastern Church on May 5.

¹¹ Port-town in the Thracian Chersonesus on the Hellespont (Gr. *Madytos*).

¹² Addition on the margin, cf. Matthew, *Life* 443, ll. 20-21.

and respect. On the way to Constantinople, the Lord God made her do many miracles which are registered in her well-known *Life*. Her saintly relics were kept in Constantinople for many years, performing wonderful miracles.

When the Bulgarians started to believe in Christ and have faith in him, abandoning their old ways, sincere affection was established between them and the Byzantines, after that old enmity and the continuous wars. Their emperor went to the city of Constantinople, became a good friend of the emperor there and married into the family of the emperor. Many young Bulgarians then married the Byzantines' daughters, and many Byzantines married the Bulgarians' daughters. The friendship and the love between them grew stronger. Afterwards the emperor of Byzantium gave the relics of the Pious Paraskevi to the emperor of the Bulgarians, as a precious gift. The Bulgarians took her with them to their country, with much respect, and placed her in the church of the Belgrade citadel. There she did countless miracles.

After years of well-being, the Turks came and surrounded the citadel for a long time, but they could not conquer it // (131) due to the Saint's protection over it. Finally, the Bulgarians transferred her relics to the city of Sophia. *{Then the Turks finally came and conquered the city of Belgrade, with God's permission, and afterwards Sultan Sulayman came and conquered the city of Sophia}*¹³. *When they entered the Great Church there and he saw the relics of this Pious [Paraskevi] placed in a precious casket, after he learned about her life from the Byzantines who were with him in the army, he sent them as a gift to the Patriarch of Constantinople, because he was his friend. They remained there with the other saintly relics that were placed in the Patriarch's church*¹⁴, to the present day. These are the Saint Asmunit (?), the martyr Euphymia and the Blessed Empress Teofana¹⁵.

After a long period, when the debts of the See of Constantinople had increased to the amount of two hundred thousand¹⁶ and their situation had badly deteriorated, Prince Vasile, who was then the voyvod of Moldavia, sent to Constantinople and paid the said debts that [the See of] Constantinople owed. The Patriarch sent him her saintly relics as a gift, from Constantinople to the well-guarded [capital] of Moldavia, together with three bishops and their retinue of priests and other important clergy. Prince Vasile gave her a very fine welcome, with utmost respect and honour, he and all his court and the whole people. He placed her saintly

¹³ Addition on the margin.

¹⁴ Matthew, *Life* 450, l. 7 ff. (not textually).

¹⁵ In the Eastern Church, two Saint Euphymia are celebrated: one on November 22, and the other (a local saint) on January 6. Saint Teophana was the wife of emperor Leon VI the Wise, and she was famous for her ascetic life. She is celebrated on November 16. We were not able to identify Saint Asmonit.

¹⁶ The currency is not mentioned. Radu suggests *piastre* in his translation of the *Voyage* (XXII/1,188), where the currency is also missing from Paul of Aleppo's text.

relics at the monastery of the Three Patriarchs that he had founded there, which is famous for its splendour. The Lord made her do great miracles there for all those who approached her with faith. Prince Vasile had a celebration organized for her every year, // (132) great and beyond description, with all the people of the country. On that day, they used to bring out her saintly casket, where her saintly relics were placed, and they walked through the whole city with it, so that [the city] would be protected and preserved. The said Prince Vasile would bear her casket himself, together with the important priests and head of monasteries and churches. They would prepare a great feast for her, then they would return her to her place and put her there. The place is in the middle of the church, to the right.

This [happens] because all the Christian countries, including the Bulgarians and the Serbs, respect this Pious [Paraskevi] as much as they respect our Lady, and on her celebration day they perform indescribable charities and good deeds. She is present there in Moldavia to this day, and her saintly relics remain completely unspoiled. We have seen them and we received blessing from them.

You must know that the Saint Blessed Martyr Paraskevi of Rome is different from this one. Her celebration takes place with us on July 26. This Pious Paraskevi we mentioned [before] is different from that one, and her celebration takes place on October 14. The former does not have a *Life* in the Greek ecclesiastical books, only a few Greeks know her. [The other one] has a written *Life* in Greek, and the Bulgarians, Serbs, Moldavians and Wallachians, together with Greater and Lesser Russia, respect them very much. She has countless churches and monasteries [dedicated to her]. Her *Life* is very long. It comprises the instructive story of her life and her numerous miracles. We have shortened [the story of] her *Life* on purpose and we have written a little of it, so that we would not forget what we know and what we have learned about her and her life. We pray the Lord to bestow upon us her saintly works, amen. // (133)

ARABIC TEXT

Preliminary note:

Since the writing particularities of the dialectal Arabic used by the copywriter of Makarios' text are not essential to our study here, we have restored the *hamza* wherever necessary, such as in: (in the text *فضائل، عجائب، سائر، حينئذ (فضائل، عجائب، سائر، حينئذ* as well as in initial position: *أخذ، أهل، أيضا، أم*).

We have also replaced ا by *ى* in words such as *تحصى (لا تحصى)*.

These alterations only mean to facilitate the access to the text, allowing for the correct reading of certain words that may otherwise be difficult to recognize. Except these, all the other misspelled words that we have corrected are registered in footnotes. The page of the manuscript is mentioned in brackets.

(١٢٨) خبر البارّة¹⁷ أمّنا القديسة باراسكافي الجديدة الملقّبة بالبلغاريّة الكائن تذكّارها في الرابع عشر تشرين الأوّل

هذه البارّة باراسكافي فكان مولدها وتربيتها في بلدة تسما ابيفاطون، وهي بقرب مدينة القسطنطينية يوما واحدا، ابنة والدين محبّين لله حسنين العبادة، ومستيسرين في وصايا الله بالصوم والصلاة والصدقة وبكافة الفضائل وكانت¹⁸ هذه المغبوظة باراسكافي منتخبة لله منذ نعومة اظفارها¹⁹، فربّياها كما يليق بالمسيحيّين بالعفة وبباقي الصالحات وتوفى بسلام، وكان لهما ولدا أيضا اسمه افثيموس، فاتفق مع البارّة أخته باراسكافي، بأن يكونا منعكفين على وصايا الربّ، ولا يلتفتا إلى أمور هذا العالم الزائل وهكذا عملا، لان افثيموس ذهب وصار راهب في دير الرجال، والمغبوظة فصارت راهبة // (١٢٩) في دير النساء، مستيسران بسائر الفضائل المرضية لله، فأما افثيموس فانه تراقى²⁰ إلى الصعود في الأعمال الصالحة، وصار اسمه مشهورا عند الكل ورسما وقدوة لكل فضيلة، وفي تلك الأيام توفي أسقف مدينة ماديس، وللوقت أهل تلك المدينة انتدبوا البار افثيموس، وعملوه أسقفا عوض المتوفى، فأنجح فتح في الوزنة المعطاة له ورعا رعية المسيح في مروج الفضيلة، وأخيرا انتقل إلى الربّ، وبعد وفاته صنع عجائب عظيمة، وأما البارّة باراسكافي فبعدما أكملت سائر الفضائل مع الراهبات في الدير خرجت إلى القفر متجرّدة بجهاد الفضيلة، وأظهرت هناك صنوفا من التشقق والإمساك سنينا كثيرة، ثم ظهر لها ملاك الربّ وبشّرها بالفرح المعدّ لها، وأمرها بان تترك القفر وتمضى إلى بلدها، لكي لا يعدموا المسيحيين منفعتها. ثم غاب عنها بغتة، وإنها تركت القفر، فذهبت أولا إلى مدينة القسطنطينية، وسجدت في اجيا صوفيا، وفي باقي الهياكل المقدسة التي هناك، > ثم ذهبت²¹ إلى هيكل فلاسرناس وسجدت قدام ايقونة السيدة هناك < وتضرعت إليها كثيرا بأن تتشفع من أجلها عند السيد المسيح، ثم ذهبت بعد ذلك إلى بلدها ابيفاطون، وقطنت هناك مثل غريبة وأخفت نفسها عنهم حتى لا يعرفوها، ومكثت هناك سنينا كثيرة، متزايدة في إفراط نسكها وباقي فضائلها، // (١٣٠) وانتقلت إلى الربّ مرافقة ذلك الملاك الذي كان بشّرها أولا في القفر إلى ملكوت²² السماء، وكان نياحها في اليوم الرابع عشر من تشرين الأوّل، وأظهر الربّ الله بها عجائب لا تحصى، وإن ملوك الروم نقلوا جسدها المقدس بإعلان إلهي من مدينة ابيفاطون المذكورة إلى مدينة القسطنطينية، بإكرام وتوقير عظيم، وأظهر الربّ بها في الطريق وفي القسطنطينية عجائب كثيرة مديونة في خبرها المشهور. وأقام جسدها المقدس في القسطنطينية سنينا كثيرة، فاعلا للمعجزات البديعة، فلما آمنوا البلغار بالمسيح واعتمدوا واتركوا ظلالتهم، وصار بينهم وبين الروم محبة وكيدة²³، بعد تلك العداوة القديمة والحروب المتصلة، ثم ان ملكهم جاء إلى مدينة القسطنطينية، وعمل مع ملكها محبة عظيمة، واتزوج من بيت²⁴ الملك واتزوجوا أكثر شباب البلغار بنات الروم، وأكثر شباب

17 غلط: البارّة

18 غلط: كانه

19 غلط: اضفارها

20 غلط: اتراقا

21 غلط: ذهب

22 غلط: ملكوة

23 أكيدة؟

24 غلط: بنت

الروم اتزوجوا بنات البلغار، وتوطدت الألفة والمودة فيما بينهم. ثم إن ملك الروم أوهب جسد هذه البارة باراسكافي لملك البلغار كهدية ماثورة وأخذوها البلغار معهم إلى بلادهم بتوقير كثير، ووضعوها في كنيسة قلعة بلغراد وعملت هناك عجائب لا تحصى، وبعد سنينا جزيلة أتوا الترك وحاصروا المدينة كثيرا، فلم يقدروا أن يفتحوها // (١٣١) لعناية القديسة بها، وأخيرا البلغار نقلوا جسدها إلى مدينة صوفيا، > ثم إن الترك أخيرا ذهبوا وفتحوا مدينة بلغراد بمسامحة من الله وبعد ذلك جاء السلطان سليمان وفتح مدينة صوفيا <، فلما دخلوا إلى الكنيسة العظماء التي هناك، ونظر²⁵ جسد هذه البارة موضوعا في تابوت كريم وعرف خبرها من الروم الذين كانوا معه في العسكر، وانه أرسله هدية الى بطريك القسطنطينية لأنه كان صديقه. ولبت هناك مع غيره من جساد القديسين الكائنين في كنيسة البطرک إلى الآن وهم القديسة اسمونيت والشاهدة اوفيميه والملكة المغبوبة ثاوفانو. وبعد زمان طويل لما تزايدت الديون على كرسي القسطنطينية إلى مقدار مائتين ألف وضاق حالهم كثيرا، فحينئذ باسيل بيك ويوضة البغضان وقتئذ، أرسل إلى القسطنطينية وأوفى الديون المذكورة التي كانت على القسطنطينية، وإن البطرک أرسل له جسدها المقدس من القسطنطينية إلى محروسة البغضان مع ثلاثة مطارنة كبار وما يتبعهم من الكهنة والإكليروس هدية، فاقبلها باسيل قبولاً حسناً بغاية التوقير والإكرام، هو وسائر حاشيته وكافة الشعب. ووضع جسدها المقدس في دير الثلاثة بطاركة الذي اعتمره هناك، المشهور ببهائه²⁶، وصنع الرب الله بها هناك عجائب عظيمة لكل من يقصدها بأمانة. وكان باسيل بيك يعمل لها في كل سنة عيداً // (١٣٢) عظيماً فائقاً على الوصف مع كل أهل بلاده، وكانوا يخرجوا في ذلك اليوم تابوتها المقدس الموضوع فيه جسدها المقدس ويطوفوا به كل المدينة، لأجل حفظها وصيانتها، وكان باسيل بيك المذكور يحمل بذاته²⁷ لتابوتها، مع رؤساء الكهنة والديورة والاكانس²⁸، ويعملوا لها باعوث عظيم، ثم يعاودوا فيها إلى مكانها ويضعوها هناك وهو في وسط الكنيسة من جهة اليمين، لأن كل بلاد النصرارة مع البلغار والسرب بيكرموا هذه البارة، مثل كرامهم لستنا السيدة، وبيعملوا يوم عيدها صدقات وخيرات لا توصف، وهي إلى الآن موجودة هناك في البغضان، وجسدها المقدس باقى صحيحاً بجملته، ونحن نظرناه وتباركنا منه، اعلم بأن القديسة الشاهدة في الأبرار باراسكافي الرومية فهي غير هذه، وتذكارها عندنا فهو في السادس والعشرون من تموز، وأما هذه البارة باراسكافي المذكورة فغير تلك وتذكارها في الرابع عشر من تشرين الأول، وهذه فليس لها في الكتب الكنائسية الرومية خبر، ما خلا بعض أناس من الروم يعرفوها، ولها خبر خط في الرومي، وأما البلغار والسرب والبغضان والأفلاخ، مع الروس الكبرى والصغرى، فلها عندهم إكرام عظيم ولها كنائس وديورة لا تحصى، وخبرها طويل جداً، وهو يشتمل على سيرتها النافعة وعجائبها الغزيرة، فنحن قصدنا الاختصار من خبرها وكتبنا منه اليسير حتى لا نعدم معرفتها وخبرها، فنسأل الرب بأن يرزقنا شغلها المقدسة أمين // (١٣٣)

25 غلط: نضر

26 غلط: ببهاه

27 غلط: بداته

28 غلط: الاكابس

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