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## The Study of Serbian Medieval Apocrypha

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The study of Christian apocrypha is globally on the rise, which speaks of the particular importance of apocryphal materials both within different cultures and as a focus of scientific insight, whether that academic interest follows a historical, linguistic, theological or literary perspective. The number of original apocrypha, as well as their transcriptions, translations, and variants indicate the complexity of their geographic distribution and duration in particular environments. Slavic apocrypha constitute a special, very rich, and diverse group of writings, written in the Old Church Slavonic literary language and Slavic languages in general.

When we talk about apocrypha, we often speak of narrative literary types in which only the characters of the biblical tradition appear. It was not uncommon in literary research to generalize the term apocrypha, and to assume that it stood for a literary species that contained apocryphal motifs, thereby implying an apocryphal tradition, but that do not deal with biblical characters nor have a narrative character, and so do not belong to an apocryphal tradition. Very often there was an conflation of apocrypha and generally forbidden books (Jovanović 2005a).

The lists of forbidden books were being composed as far back as the Council of Laodicea (360 CE) and the forming of the first list of canonical books. The first well-known list of forbidden books in the Slavic world is found in the *Izbornik of Sviatoslav* from 1073 CE.

Although they have been translated from Greek into Slavic, after which they have not changed much, the lists of “false” books nevertheless provide the opportunity to establish a relationship with the preserved state of apocrypha in certain Slavic environments. On the basis of these lists, we learn that a certain number of apocrypha are not preserved in any Slavic transcript (Jovanović 2005a, 15).

The awareness of the notion of forbidden books among the Slavs, and the need for their study, dates back more than a century among researchers, of which the following works are particularly significant:

Bonj Angelov, *Списъкът на забранените книги*

*в старобългарската литература* (The list of prohibited books in Old Bulgarian literature).

Ivan Duichev, *Най-старият славянски списък на забранени книги* (The oldest Slavic list of forbidden books).

Alexander Ivanovich Jacimirski, *Южно-славянские и восходящие к ним списки индекса отреченных книг* (South Slavic and ascending index lists of renounced books).

Vatroslav Jagic, *Slovenski tekstovi kanona o knjigama staroga i novoga zavjeta podjedno s indeksom lažnih knjiga* (Slavic canonical texts on the books of the Old and New Testaments together with the index of false books).

Natalya Adolphova Kobjak, *Индексы „ложных“ и „запрещенных“ книг и славянские апокрифические евангелия* (Indexes of “false” and “forbidden” books and Slavic apocryphal gospels).

Alexander Nikolaevich Rypin, *Для объяснения статьи о ложных книгах* (Further explanations of false books).

Boris Arievidh Semenovker, *Греческие списки истинных книг и их рецепция на Руси* (Greek lists of true books and their reception in Russia).

Michael Nestorovich Speranski, *Сербские списки книг истинных и ложных* (Serbian lists of true and false books).

Anthony Arkadyevich Turilov and Sevir Borisovich Chernetsov, *К изучению „отреченных“ книг* (To the study of “renounced” books).

Although the total number of Slavic apocrypha is rather elusive, the most complete list was compiled by A. I. Jacimirski in his work which dealt with a

bibliographical overview of the apocrypha in South Slavic and Russian literature (Jacimirski 1921).

According to the tables of Slavic false books indexes, which are in the list given by Jacimirski, there are 122 individual apocrypha, along with the other aforementioned constituents, which are too broadly classified in this literature. Such a large number certainly does not represent the real frame of the texts that are apocrypha in the narrow sense, because such texts are far fewer. In spite of this expanded number of everything considered apocryphal, the index of false books has shown that the preservation of these writings in the Serbian manuscript tradition is quite good but, on the other hand, that some of these works have not been confirmed in any transcript (Jovanovic 2005a, 9).

Apocryphal literature is a very important part of the Serbian written medieval heritage, as is the case with the East Slavic and South Slavic literatures of the same period. Therefore, researchers deal in apocryphal literature that often appears in various Slavic languages in order to determine in a better way the similarities and differences occurring within the translation or transcription of apocryphal material. In general, the study of apocrypha began in the nineteenth century, when Slavic studies was on the rise. Unfortunately, despite the rise in Slavic studies there were few nineteenth-century researchers who managed to compile complete translations, lists, and critical studies of apocryphal material. The exceptions were the Russian and Ukrainian philologists who first made advances in the scientific study of apocryphal texts, and published works that are still crucial when researching the subject. We primarily refer to Alexander Nikolayevich Pypin (1861, 1862), Ivan Yakovlevich Porfiriev (1877, 1890), Ivan Yakovych Franko (1896) and Pyotr Alexeyevich Lavrov (1899). Similar works were attempted by Bulgarians and Croats, but most of the material was still published sporadically.

Translations of apocrypha that are known in the Serbian Slavonic (the Serbian recension of Old Church Slavonic) language, in their diversity, rank as one of the richer Slavic traditions. This diverse and precious literary heritage among the Serbs is insufficiently and fragmentally studied. The apocrypha are far less studied than in most of the other Slavic countries. (Jovanović 2005a, 27)

Very often, Serbian scholars of medieval literature found it appropriate to deal with certain apocryphal works, both by their publication, and by translating them into modern language, but only because they

were a part of a certain text written in Serbian Slavonic. We observe such activities of scholars from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Among them, especially important to mention are Djura Danicic (1872), Stojan Novakovic (1904), and Ljubomir Stojanovic (1885).

As we have mentioned, Russian philologists of the end of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century occupy a special places in the study of the apocrypha written in the Serbian Slavonic recensions. Therefore, it is necessary to mention P. A. Lavrov's late-nineteenth-century work *Апокрифни текстови* (Apocryphal texts) (1899), in which was published an incomplete Serbian transcription of the sixteenth-century *Јеванђеља младенства* (The gospels of youth), a text which is preserved today in the Sofia National Library (Bulgaria), number 309 (68). Along with this undertaking, we also note a description of the extensive Moscow collection of Slavic manuscripts owned by Alexei Ivanovich Khludov. This description, written by Andrey Nikolaevich Popov, and titled *Description of manuscripts and catalog of books of the library of A. I. Khludov* is significant because here we find some of the manuscripts which belong to the Serbian tradition: *Исаијино виђење* (The vision of Isaiah), *Слово Јована Богослова о другом Христовом доласку* (The sermon of John the theologian on the second coming of Christ), *Плач Јеремијин* (The lamentation of Jeremiah) и *Јеванђеље младенства Исуса Христа* (The gospel of the youth of Jesus Christ) (Popov 1872, 320–25, 339–44, 406–13, 414–19).

A significant work for studying the apocrypha was published in 1863 by Nikolai Savvich Tikhonravov in two volumes, titled *Памятники отреченной русской литературы* (Monuments of renounced Russian literature). Although it has many shortcomings and does not represent a list of the entire Slavic apocryphal heritage, the work has sparked interest for the study of this type of literature (Jovanović 2005a, 21). The unification of the Serbian transcripts of the apocrypha existed as an idea in Serbian literary research, but it did not occur, although sporadically several individual apocrypha were published. We encounter such a tradition with Dj. Danichic and V. Jagic's *Novi prilozi za literaturu biblijskih apokrifa* (New contributions to the literature of the biblical apocrypha).

Of all Serbian researchers, Stojan Novakovic (1842–1915), who was also a brilliant historian, statesman, and president of the Serbian Royal Academy, studied the apocrypha the most, and in his scientific efforts, we recognize the idea of unifying and publishing Serbian apocryphal material. Jovanovic summarized Novakovic's contribution to the study of Serbian apocrypha:

Up until the present day, Stojan Novakovic is the greatest Serbian scholar of apocrypha. Through his dedication, beside the listed apocrypha, these works were also published:

*Дванаест петака (Twelve Fridays), Апокриф о Афродитијану Персијанцу (The apocrypha of Afroditian the Persian), Апокриф о Асенети (The apocrypha of Aseneta), Јаковљево протојенђеље (Jacob's proto-gospel), Апокриф о Јову (The apocrypha of Job), Слово о Антихристу (The sermon on the Antichrist), Авгарева посланица (The epistle of Avgar), Отписаније Исуса Христа цару Авгару (The reply of Jesus Christ to King Avgar), Чудо о светом убрусу (The miracle of the holy cloth), Енохова књига тајни (Enoch's book of secrets), Преписање Исуса Христа са ђаволом (The arguing of Jesus Christ with the devil), Апокрифне молитве (Apocryphal prayers), Слово Јована Богослова о Богородичином успењу (The sermon of John the theologian on the dormition of the Theotokos), Слово апостола Томе како подиже панагију (The sermon of Thomas the apostle on meeting the Panagia), Питања пресвете Богородице о седам грехова (The questions of the Theotokos on the seven sins), Откровење Варухово (The revelation of Baruch), Апокрифно житије свете Петке (The apocryphal hagiography of Saint Parasceva), Апокрифно житије светог Василија Новог (The apocryphal hagiography of Saint Basil the New).* His intention to gather the apocrypha resulted in the book *Примери књижевности и језика старог и српско-словенског (Examples of Old and Serbian-Slavonic literature and language)* published in Belgrade in 1904. in which he presented a number of their passages. (Jovanovic 2005a, 29–31)

As far as the medievalists of the newer generations are concerned, there have been few researchers who paid special attention to apocryphal materials. Papers that dealt with apocryphal themes are most often encountered in the work of George Sp. Radojichic, George Trifunovic, Janko Radovanovic, Chelica Milanovic, Dimitrye Bogdanovic, Biljana Jovanchevic Stilchevic, Radoman Stankovic, Zorica Vitic, Vukica Martinovic, and Maja Andjelkovic.

A positive change and remarkable contribution was made by Tomislav Jovanović (born in 1949, Belgrade, Serbia), a professor of Serbian medieval literature at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Philology, who managed to compile, translate and publish the Serbian medieval apocrypha in its entirety (Jovanović 2005a, b). He primarily defined the term apocrypha for Serbian scholarship, moving beyond the basic division of the Old Testament (Jovanovic 2005a) and the New Testament apocrypha (Jovanovic 2005b) to establish a set of thematic cycles within these two basic categories.

In Old Testament apocrypha, he distinguishes eight thematic cycles (*Почетак света (The beginning of the world); Виђење небеса (Visions of the heavens); Хероји (Heroes); Пророци (Prophets); Прекрасни Јосиф и Асенета (The beautiful Joseph and Aseneta); Аврамов циклус (Abraham's cycle); Давид и Соломон (David and Solomon); and Завети дванаест патријарха (The covenants of the twelve patriarchs).* In the New Testament apocrypha he identified four thematic cycles: (*Богородица и Исус (The Theotokos and Jesus); Дела апостолска (The works of the apostles); Путовање у загробни свет (Journey into the afterlife); and Будућност света (The future of the world).*

The publication contains a comprehensive foreword by Jovanović, which is his doctoral thesis, in which he clarifies the notion of apocrypha, their significance, use, development, connections with heretic teachings, along with their linguistic and spatial distribution. In addition, he enumerated his predecessors in apocrypha studies, both Serbian and foreign, with reference to the sources he used. Thus, he managed to present the tradition of the study of Serbian, partly Bulgarian and Russian apocrypha, as well as the apocrypha from the entire Yugoslav region.

All the apocrypha were published with a translation into a modern language, which finally, for the first time in the Serbian study of these themes, provided an opportunity for the modern reader to become acquainted with this medieval literature. Until then, as we mentioned, the apocrypha were translated very rarely into modern languages, making accessibility and comprehensibility very limited. A very significant component of Jovanović's work is his dedication to the study of variations in the apocryphal texts, and the presence of an overview of the linguistic and stylistic changes that occurred in the various transcripts. His works' footnotes cite the exact sections of text which differ in certain variants, in relation to the apocrypha which is the subject of the paper. Such details are always followed by the information on the location of the apocrypha in question, and its possible signatures. This text-critical detail achieved exceptional transparency and created a basis for easily detecting differences between variants and transcripts.

At the end of both books there is a list of all published apocrypha, a brief summary of each individual text, its topic, the number of known transcriptions, the century of origin, and its current location. The index of apocryphal motifs is given, along with the list, which enables easier reference to the material and a possible incentive for new studies of individual texts. With such a scientific and comprehensive ap-

proach, Jovanović has enabled younger generations of researchers to gain a very concrete overview of apocryphal material and thereby he has opened the door for new research on this Serbian material. Although the foreword of Jovanović's work defined the apocrypha, its purpose, and information on the origin and the number of known transcriptions, the poetics are not commented upon in detail. He dealt with such subjects in his individual works, however, where he considered certain motifs, their origins and connections with other traditions, the variation of transcripts, the distribution, and the linguistic characteristics.

For foreign scholars, Jovanović has compiled some of the transcripts of Serbian medieval apocrypha in his work *L'étude des apocryphes dans la tradition manuscrite serbe médiévale* (The study of the Apocrypha in the medieval Serbian manuscript tradition) (Jovanović 1997), but also wrote papers for the significant European journal *Apocrypha*, dedicated to the study of apocryphal texts and themes. The *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha* monograph series, published by Brill, allows the study of certain groups of related apocrypha. Some of these publications are dedicated to individual texts (Jovanović 2005a, 20). The contribution of papers on the topic of Serbian medieval apocrypha to international journals is of great importance for Slavic studies, but also for individual researchers, who would gain much from a comparative overview of different apocryphal traditions. A more collaborative, international approach to the study of apocryphal traditions has arisen with Serbian scholarship playing an increasingly significant role. Taking into consideration all we have stated, we consider Tomislav Jovanović to be the most important researcher of Serbian medieval apocrypha in that that he was the first to systematically approach Serbian apocryphal material and significantly contributed to spreading the awareness of its significance. Without his work, most Serbian medieval apocrypha would be lost or remain unknown to the broader world of apocrypha scholarship.

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### The Role Of Apocrypha and Saints’ Lives, Their Transmission and Readership in The history of Childhood and Family: Methodological Challenges and the State of the Art

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Apocrypha and saints’ lives appeared in the early Christian centuries as an output of a distinct culture. Both literary genres call for their proper definition at the outset and before one says more about them. The designation and content of apocrypha are incredibly complicated to delineate. It is a challenge to specify the body that belong to this genre, to determine whether we should label them “Early Christian Apocrypha,” or “New Testament Apocrypha,” whether they are contrary or complementary to canonical writings, whether they are “secret” and “hidden” literature, and what is the exact time that they appear. Both apocryphal and canonical writings surface soon after Christians fashioned their communal identity; these writings are the materialization of this identity. Early Christian congregations wrote various books. They also exchanged books between communities when no standardized Christian canon existed. Among them, many writings later were labeled as apocryphal, “non-canonical,” books that do not belong to the canon of the Bible, even if they “have had the form of biblical texts which became canonical, or told stories about characters in the biblical texts which became canonical, or conveyed words purportedly spoken by these characters” (Tuckett 2015, 8).

Saints’ lives are commonly thought to have emerged in the fourth century. Hagiography, a genre broader than saints’ lives, appears already in the second century with martyrdom narratives, or “acts and passions of the martyrs.” As the literature that explains the holy, martyrdom narratives stand at the threshold of hagiography. Saints’ lives, a sub-genre of hagiography, evolved in the fourth century when hagiographical expression generally flourished, and multiple other forms appeared, such as miracle stories, encomia, panegyrics, and other.

Scholars nevertheless have had different attitudes regarding the integration of martyrdom narratives in hagiography. Many studies of hagiography do not cover martyrdom narratives. Some scholars consider the *Life of Antony* the commencement of the literary genre of hagiography proper in the form of a saint’s life (Harvey 2008, 608). Robert Bartlett has asserted that hagiography begun with the *Life of Antony* and the *Life of Martin* (2013, 19–22). In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography II*, Martin Hinterberger points to the “passions” as the sub-genre of hagiography (2014 a, 28). Timothy D. Barnes clarifies that the term “hagiography” designates the evidence relating to both saints and martyrs (2010, IX).