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Mental Illnesses in the Middle Ages and their Reflection in the South Slavonic Hagiographic Literature

Abstract. The main points are related to the cultural-anthropological (Michel Foucault) and theological contextualization of diseases (Jean-Claude Larchet) and their treatment in the Middle Ages. Based on the South Slavonic hagiographic literature, the terms *physician* and *healer* are defined and specified. The study focuses on the mental disease (insanity), which according to the methodology of Larchet is three types: somatic nature of madness, the madness of demonic origin, and madness of spiritual origin. Also partly concerns the problem of God fools' insanity.

Keywords: mental illness, demon-possessed, healer, treatment, saint

The idea of medical knowledge and practices, spiritual and physical diseases, and their treatment from the Middle Ages in hagiographic manuscripts are still insufficiently studied mainly due to the diversity of topics. Throughout the Middle Ages, the archetypal model of the healer was undoubtedly Jesus Christ. This gives a high impact on the hagiographic literature created in Slavia Orthodoxa in 13th–17th centuries. The Bulgarian scholar Stefan Mutafov[1] points out that in the four Gospels there are over 50 cases where healings performed by Christ are specifically mentioned. The treatment he provides affects two groups of patients: with specified diagnoses, miraculously cured, and treatment of people without specifying the specific method of treatment. From the point of view of modern medicine, the patients treated by Christ suffered from diseases mainly from the following four groups:

1. Mental and neurological diseases;
2. Sensorimotor and speech defects – blind people, stuttering, patients with a dry hand, partial or complete paralysis, etc.;
3. Other diseases – treatment of bleeding, severe fever, treatment of gout;
4. Resurrections (i.e. resuscitation probably from clinical death).

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[1] С. Мутафов, *Медицината в българската иконопис*, София 1992, p. 97–98.

Some of these diseases have their specific terminology, which is described in the Gospel text. For example, patients from the first group, i.e. with mental and neurological diseases are designated as follows:

1.1. Possessed by evil spirits (i.e. mentally ill, including oligophrenics and epileptics) – Jesus Christ healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman from an evil spirit (Mt. 15: 22, 28; Mk. 7: 25, 30). He also exorcised the impure spirit from a man in the Capernaum Synagogue (Lk. 4: 33–35), he exorcised the "Legion" demon from a man in the Gerasenes country (Mk. 5: 1–15; Lk. 8: 27–39), he restored two demon-possessed men from the region of the Gadarene (Mt. 8: 28–33).

1.2. Paralyzed people (including other neurologically ill people) – he heals the paralyzed man in the bath in Bethsaida (Jn. 5: 2–15), someone else paralyzed man (Mt. 9: 2, 7), he also healed the man who had fallen through the roof of the house (Mk. 2: 1–12; Lk. 5: 18–25). It is no coincidence that the Fourth Sunday after Easter is called the 'Sunday of the Paralytic' and the church honors the miraculous healing of the paralyzed for 38 years at the Bethsaida bath. *Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you"* (Jn. 5: 14). In this context, the idea of the moral determinism of the disease and its only possible cure – faith in God's grace – is clearly seen.

1.3. Somnambulism – Jesus Christ heals a lunatic epileptic boy (Mt. 17: 14–18; Mk. 9: 17–27; Lk. 9: 38–42).

The diseases from the other groups are presented descriptively. A special place is given to the fourth group, the resurrection because it has a certain theological significance and is associated with the Resurrection of Christ himself. Other similar cases are either anticipation of this event (the Resurrection of Lazarus) or a consequence of prayers by the righteous, sometimes healers, but done only at God's discretion. Because people can heal if God allows them, but they cannot give life.

The topic of madness, mental illness and their treatment in connection with the question of the functioning of the cult of saints in society as a whole is rarely addressed in the researches. Since 1960, in Europe, this issue has been developed within the framework of socio-anthropological research. From the Bulgarian research in this direction in recent years should be mentioned the book *Medicine in Bulgarian Icon Painting* by St. Mutafov[2], where the issue of patronage of saints-healers over the mentally ill is mainly based on murals and icons. He describes in more detail the places of treatment and the healing procedures themselves: the chains to which the madmen were attached, bathing springs in some of the Bulgarian monasteries: Rila Monastery, Monastery of Kuklen,

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[2] *Ibidem.*

Monastery of Bachkovo. He notes that saint-healers of mental illness are considered St. Terapontus, St. Anthony the Great.

Another interesting opinion is given by Bulgarian scholar Galina Valchinova[3], who, studying the interpretations of madness in traditional medicine and in particular the cult of St. Terapontus, says the following:

> …the saint in whose name the healing is performed gives the object 'miraculous' healing. Thus it becomes an inalienable element of the whole ritual-ideological complex, within the framework of which the mentally ill person finds or regulates his sexual identity, regains or acquires marital status…

In 2011, one of the latest studies on medical texts and knowledge in Bulgaria is Mincho Georgiev's book *Old Bulgarian Medicine*[4], which offers a broader view of the medieval Slavonic, and in particular, Bulgarian knowledge about the human body, its diseases and ways of their healing.

Such studies reflect a broader, sociocultural approach to the subject of mental illness and the saints – their healers. They fit into the context of a number of studies of European science, which seeks to reconstruct the anthropological and socio-psychological model of medieval society and the mechanisms it has developed to deal with this type of disease. The search is in two directions – to a philosophical understanding of the phenomena and to highlight the Christian-theological basis of their healing.

The first direction is very indicative of the works of Michel Foucault, who studied mental illness in detail in his book *History of Madness in the Classical Age*[5] tracing from the Middle Ages the signs of madness and its connection with the social and physical exclusion of lepers. According to him, after the disappearance of leprosy, insanity begins to take the place of exclusion. For him, it is an "absence of action". In 17th century Europe, in a movement that M. Foucault called the Great Prison, "unreasonable" members of society were imprisoned and institutionalized. In the 18th century, madness became the opposite of Reason, and only in the 19th century was it defined as a mental illness. In *The Birth of the Clinic. An Archaeology of Medical Perception*[6], M. Foucault continues the line of the history of mentality, aiming to understand how and when the space of disease coincided with the space of the human body. In Bulgaria, the main publication in this direction is the encyclopedia *The Mythology of the Human Body. Anthropological Dictionary*[7],

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[3] Г. Вълчинова, *Светецът и трактовката на лудостта в традиционната култура*, БЕт 2, 2005, p. 15.

[4] М. Георгиев, *Старобългарската медицина*, София 2011.

[5] М. Фуко, *История на Лудостта в класическата епоха*, trans. А. Колева, Плевен 1996.

[6] Idem, *Раждане на клиниката. Археология на медицинския поглед*, trans. В. Градев, И. Кръстева, София 1994.

[7] *Митология на човешкото тяло. Антропологичен речник*, ed. М. Георгиев, София 2008.

which describes the notions of the human body in its most common uses as part of traditional cultural knowledge (anatomical body, sick, sexual, the sacred body, etc.). Such researches allow us to trace the mental stereotypes in which the idea of mental illness is situated.

Representative of the second direction in the study of the notions of disease in the Middle Ages is Jean-Claude Larcher, a prominent scholar studying diseases from the point of view of Christian theology and the concept of body and disease developed in the patristic and hagiographic texts of the Christian East. As he points out[8], *Christian thought has developed a complex concept of mental illness, which identifies three possible causes of their origin: organic, demonic, and spiritual, and they also imply specific therapeutic approaches.* He divides madness into three types: *somatic madness*, *demonic madness*, and *spiritual madness*.

Somatic madness is caused by a typical physical illness. Often its source is fever, a common symptom of many diseases. It is actually a disease of the body that is treated on a physiological level. The treatment is carried out by taking medicines based on plant, mineral and animal extracts, baths, and diets. St. St. Cyrus and John (January 31), as doctors, heal physical ailments, including fever. In the seventh century, Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, described approximately 70 miracles performed by these saints.

The *madness of demonic origin* is caused by the direct intervention of demons. Numerous such cases are presented in hagiographic texts, clearly defined as insanity under the direct influence of one or more demons. In the Christian interpretation, this is a disease – a test of faith. Through the power of Jesus Christ, expressed in the invocation of his name, all demons are cast out. Usually, healers make a cross sign to cast out demons. Also used is oil for rubbing and anointing (e.g. St. Barypsabas uses the blood of Jesus, which he mixes with oil and heals with this mixture), and holy water. The laying on of hands is also often used – a traditional form of exorcism, which commands the demon to get rid of. In order to expel the demon, the patient was often tied to a pole with chains (similar practices were carried out in Bulgaria: Monastery of Kuklen, the Monastery of St. Anthony in Melnik).

The last kind of madness is the *madness of spiritual origin*. If for the first type of madness the cause of the disease is fallen human nature, for the second – the demons, then the third type of madness stems from the free will of man – depression, drooping, and sadness. The first possible cause of sadness is the disappointment of some available or expected pleasure. In this case, healing is done by renouncing carnal desires and pleasures (e.g. St. Anthony). The second main cause of sadness is anger as a reaction or consequence of an insult. Meeting another person allows for faster healing than loneliness. Prayer in all its forms is a basic remedy for sorrow, as is psalm-singing. There are four main methods of treating

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[8] Ж.-К. Ларше, *Терапия на менталните болести. Опитът на християнския Изток от първите векове*, trans. Ю. Талева, София 2013, p. 16.

depression – the first is that one must fight alone to resist it (and mainly through prayer), i.e. treatment of the disease should be sought in the attitude of man to himself and not to others. The drooping can be overcome through the second method of treatment – hope. The third remedy is repentance, repentant weeping, and contrition. The fourth cure – is that of labor of the hands, through physical labor.

As a special kind of madness, J.-C. Larcher brings out the holy foolishness, because the foolishness for Christ actually pretends to be crazy. As he notes[9], the biographer of St. Simeon the Holy Fool from Edessa repeatedly emphasizes the imaginary nature of his madness. The main biblical reasons for foolishness to Christ must be sought in the New Testament. Thus, in his epistle to the Romans and in his first epistle to the Corinthians ap. Paul emphasizes the complete opposite between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1: 18; 20; 27; 1 Cor 2: 14; 1 Cor 3: 19; Rom 1: 22).

Madness corresponds to the conversion of values made by Jesus Christ, which is illustrated in the Gospels of the Apostles (Mt. 18: 4; 20: 16; Mk. 9: 35; 10: 44; Lk. 14: 11). The madness in its use must be understood in a spiritual sense, not in a psychopathological one. I must note that the phenomenon of foolishness has been studied in great detail. It is most fully presented in the research of the Russian Byzantine historian Sergey Ivanov through his books *Byzantium Foolishness*[10] and *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*[11]. These are God's Fool's saints whose vita have been translated and their cults spread among the southern and eastern Slavs. They do not need the intervention of other people, as long as they control their madness. Recent studies of this type of madness show that the attitude towards them is not always unequivocally positive. As Polish scholar Cesary Wodziński notes[12], *the demons in the space of madness for Christ's sake are completely devoid of the semi-divine and Hermes character of the Greek mediators between the divine and the human world.* He[13] also emphasizes the fact that the treatment of demon-possessed people is a part of the typical repertoire of miracles of Russian foolishnesses. Something like their professional duty. But in general, they are beyond the specific object of the present presentation of mental illnesses and their treatment in the South Slavonic medieval literature. The focus of my research is the madness of a demonic nature, described both in the translated Bulgarian hagiography and in the original Bulgarian vita basically during 14ᵗʰ–15ᵗʰ centuries. The reason for this madness is the demons (δαίμων)[14]. But who are they? In different historical

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[9] *Ibidem*, p. 159.

[10] С.А. Иванов, *Византийское юродство*, Москва 1994.

[11] Idem, *Блаженные похабы. Культурная история юродства*, Москва 2005.

[12] Ц. Воджински, *Светият идиот. Проект за апофатична антропология*, София 2004, p. 70.

[13] *Ibidem*, p. 87.

[14] A detailed review of research on demonology can be found in the book by Gerasim Petrinski: Г. Петрински, *Образът на демона във византийската житиепис (VI–X в.)*, София 2018, p. 20–29.

epochs, demons have specific transformations of perception. In the Homeric age, the demon is an unknown and irrational force that fatally affects human life, causing diseases and natural disasters such as storms. Hesiod for the first time creates specific demonology, and according to him they are of mortal origin, inhabit the earth. In his interpretation, demons are entirely useful to human beings – they are keepers of mortals and protectors of evil. In late antiquity, the idea of a keeper-demon was probably mixed with various magical notions. A magic papyrus mentions the so-called δαίμων-πάρεδρος – a powerful air spirit that can be summoned and subdued by the Magus or his client through certain spells for a certain period of time or for in all born days. He has to be inseparable from his master and fulfill all his desires. In connection with this purpose, the air spirit has its power and numerous servants – evil demons who help him to carry out the commandments[15]. Such similar supernatural helpers of magicians are also mentioned in Christian hagiography (for example, Heliodorus, described in Vita of St. Leo of Catania[16], with the help of a Jewish sorcerer summons the devil who comes through the air, a riding deer, who gives him the demon Gaspar as his helper). In the demonology that developed Christianity from the first century onwards, the notion of a certain enemy, personification and original source of Evil in the world occupies a central place, and the notions of it are formed gradually over many centuries. Demons in Christianity are seen as servants of the Devil and generally have more masculine than feminine features. They are both anthropomorphic (e.g., black Ethiopian, the female demon Gello, and many others) and zoomorphic (a snake, a dragon, a scorpion, etc.), and sometimes even phytomorphic (for example, a tree).

Briefly, I would like to clarify exactly how demons are cast out, which implies the method of healing the sick person. One of the most common methods is the prayer by which Jesus Christ is called and by the power of the verbal word the demons are cast out. Healing saints often resort to the following methods of healing: oil for rubbing and anointing, holy water for sprinkling, laying on of hands, sleeping in Christian temples. More radical methods of treatment are also possible, such as shackling the patient, striking with a scepter – all this, of course, accompanied by the main method of struggle – the healing prayer. As the Bulgarian researcher M. Georgiev[17] notes, *with prayers to God the saints give health to all who have sought their intercession in faith… Prayers for healing assimilate pagan spells and thus form an array of medieval texts of spells with mentions of saints in them.*

During the Christian era, saints were the ones who fought fierce battles with demons, both in life and after death, through their relics. Their feat is accomplished by renouncing worldly temptations, following Christ through fasting and prayer. But in this research I will not pay attention to the internal struggle with

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[15] *Ibidem*, p. 139.

[16] *Житие на свети Лъв, епископ Катански*, [in:] Чети-миней за ноември–декември от манастира Драгомирна от 15 в., Драг706/1795.

[17] М. Георгиев, *Старобългарската…*, p. 150.

my own demons, but only to the external struggle, which, of course, is also part of the healing process. Here is the moment to give a few examples of the exorcism of demons by saints from the translated hagiography from Greek in various South Slavonic manuscripts.

Such a saint is, for example, Symeon of the Wondrous Mountain, which is venerated by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches on May 24. The nickname 'Wondrous Mountain' ('Divnogorets', 'Дивногорец') is due to the fact that he struggles on a pillar tower located in the mountain 'Divna'. He was born at Antioch in 522. As a child he was brought up to be educated by the stylist John and he himself devoted himself to pillar-dwelling. Later he went to Wondrous Mountain near Antioch, where he founded a monastery and built a pillar on a rock. Many people come to him for healing. Saint Simeon was honored by God with the gift of miracles and foresight because he foretold many future events. He was ordained a priest at the age of 33 by Bishop Dionysius of Seleucia. At age 75 St. Symeon was warned by the Lord of his impending end. The saint is considered a reverend. In addition, his exploits place him in the category of stylites. When examining his character, I use his Vita structured by the new Jerusalem typikon panegyricon of January–May from the 14th century (Zogr90[18]). The vita is on ff. 198 – 217б[19] and the end is missing. Saint Symeon heals people suffering from various diseases, as well as an obsessed man with the help of prayer: та же приведень бы(с) нѣкыи къ немоу бѣсноуꙗсꙗ… и того ѿ имени х͞вѣ призвавь… знаменїе възложь, и ѿтждоу изгнавь, з(д)рава ч͞лка ѿпоусти (ff. 205 – 205б).

The memory of the Venerable Euphrasia of Constantinople is venerate by the Orthodox Church on July 25 and by the Catholic Church on March 13. Euphrasia was the only daughter of Antigonus – a nobleman of the court of Emperor Theodosius I, to whom he was related – and of Euphrasia, his wife. With her mother, who remained a widow when she was young, they moved to Egypt and traveled over the monasteries there. At the age of seven, Reverend Euphrasia became a nun. He leads a strict and ascetic life. Honored by God with the gift of miracles and healing, the Reverend died in 413 at the age of 30. In this research I will present the Vita of the Venerable Eupraxia[20] (ff. 267 – 285б) from Gilf58[21]. A significant topic

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[18] *Житие на преподобен Симеон Дивногорец*, [in:] Новоизводен панигирик минеен за януари–май от 14 в., Зографска електронно-научна библиотека, Зогр90. Menaion Homiliary structured by the new Jerusalem typicon for January–May, 14th century from Zograf Monastery, No. 90. The manuscript contains 217 fol. Without beginning and end. With many gaps inside. It is written with semi-uncial. The manuscript has been digitized and can be found in the Zographou Electronic Research Library at Sofia University.

[19] К. Иванова, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica*, София 2008, p. 535.

[20] *Житие на преподобна Евпраксия Константинополска*, [in:] Сборник, съдържащ патерик и извлечение от новоизводен панигирик, 15 в., РНБ, Гилф58.

[21] The miscellany contains the Paterikon and an extract from homiliary structured by the new Jerusalem typikon with not following a calendar order and with other additional texts. The manuscript dates from the 15th century. The miscellany probably was created by a copyist from the Rila Monastery. It is written with semi-uncial.

(ff. 279б – 282) of the structure of Gilf58 is the story of the treatment of the demon obsessed woman, who is living in the monastery: бѣ же въ монастыри нѣкаа жена ѿ мл(д)ньства бѣснꙋющи се и свезана, мꙋщи дꙋхь началныи • вꙋжи желѣзними окована по роукꙋ и по ноогꙋ• и бѣ пѣны тѣщеци и зꙋбы скрьжещꙋщи… (f. 279). As J.-C. Larcher notes[22], tying the demon obsessed is a common practice. After some hesitation, the saint decided to try. Initially, she makes the sign of the cross to the sick woman, but the devil does not want to come out, and then the saint takes the wand and strikes the devil three times: и оударивши за ланитꙋ трищи, гла емꙋ • изыди ѿ създанїа бжїа нечистыи дꙋше… и изыде ѿ нюе невыдимы бы(с) • и исцѣлѣ жена ѿ часа много (ff. 281б – 282). The episode of casting out the demon is reminiscent of the more famous casting out of the demon from St. Margarita (Marina), where she fights him by hitting him on the head with a hammer, and given the similarity between the two episodes, it is obvious that this is a topoi.

Hilarion the Great cast outs many demons. His feast day is celebrated on October 21. Saint Hilarion the Great was born in 292 AD at Tabatha, a town near Gaza in Palestine. His family was pagans. He converted to Christianity and was baptized after studying in Alexandria. While he was in Egypt he became a disciple of St. Anthony the Great, an event that inspired him to devote himself entirely to the ascetic life. When his parents died, he returned to Gaza and sold all of his inheritance, distributing all of his wealth to the poor. After this he departed for the desert of Palestine, devoting himself entirely to prayer and fasting. His asceticism was based on St. Anthony the Great's model. God rewarded his spiritual efforts and bestowed upon him the grace to perform miracles. His fame spread throughout Palestine, and it was not long before he fled these distractions and settled eventually in Cyprus. St. Hilarion departed from this world in 372 AD at age of 80. St. Hilarion is considered by some to be the founder of Palestinian monasticism and venerated as a saint by the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church. I will give examples from the saint' vita (ff. 246б – 276)[23], from Reading Menaion for September–November from the last quarter of the 15th century (Drag700[24]). The Christian healing art applied by Hilarion works only if the patient is also a Christian. Such is the case with the strategus from Gaza Italicus, who drives a chariot and is possessed by a demon in such a way that he even paralyzes the whole (topic 16): оударень бывь бѣсw(м). и ослаблень бывь весь оцѣпѣнѣ. не могы ни единѣм же оудь свои(х) двизатиса (f. 252б). And only after receiving baptism is he healed by the saint: и абїа дшеа и тѣломь зр(д)авь бы(с) (f. 252б). Another demon-possessed man finds his healing (topic 17). Again, a very powerful youth called Marsitas was afflicted with a grievous demon: свѣрѣпством же бѣса (f. 252б). The demon

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22 Ж.-К. Ларше, *Терапия на менталните болести*…, p. 95.

23 *Житие на преподобен Иларион Велики*, [in:] Чети-миней за септември–ноември, последна четвърт на 15 в., Зографска електронно-научна библиотека, Драг700.

24 In the Reading Menaion is used semi-uncial. Contains a total of 48 works. The manuscript is kept in the Dragomirna Monastery in Moldavia.

is so strong that the youth has to be chained and brought to the saint in chains. Hilarion the Great makes him bow his head: и он же поклонь главж въсе сверѣп-ствовое оукротивь (f. 253). The healing process in this patient includes prayer and the laying on of hands: …мⷧса w немь · и възложь на нь ржцѣ (f. 253). However, the Venerable took more radical measures in the treatment of the wealthy man named Orion, possessed by many demons and all chained (episode 18): свꙁ-ꙁань по нⷢгама и повыи веригами… очи же его бѣха ꙗко же кръвь (f. 253). To defeat the demons, the saint resorted to physical violence against Orion: …и ꙁа власы връже прѣ(д) нⷢгама своима на ꙁемла. и ржкама стиснжвь его. и настжплъ на нь нⷢгама (f. 253б). Then he ordered the demon to come out, и иꙁыде ѿ него (f. 253б). Another demon-possessed is helped by the saint who како ѿ единого тѣлесе, мнжжьство различныи(х) гласѡвь… слышано бывааше (f. 253б). To heal him, he lays his hands on: …и въꙁложи на нь ржцѣ, и ꙁⷬ(д)авь бы(с) (f. 254). An youth is possessed by the "demon" of love for a lass (topic 21): одⷬъжжщаго бѣса (f. 255) and goes to a famous magician in Memphis, Egypt: иде въ мемфие егvпетскыꙗ, къ единому влъѳвꙋ именитоу (f. 255б), to help him. Learned by the devil's wizard, he returns home and paints various images on a copper plate and buries her in front of the girls' doorstep: …прїиде въ дѡ(м) свои отрокь, и искова дъсчицж мѣдѣнж. и написавь на неи ѡбраꙁы бѣсныꙗ. и того ꙁлочьстїа обрꙗченаа словеса и ископавь по(д) прагомь домꙋ тоꙗ дѣвцж, ѿа и погребь ꙗ ѿиде (f. 255б). As a result of this pagan love magic, the girl is possessed by a demon: смꙗщена бы(с) дѣвица оумомь, начꙗть неистовитиса и очи раꙁвращати… и съ събе бес мѣтати покровы срамныꙗ, и главж ѿкрывати. и скрежетати ꙁжбы… (f. 255б). Her compatriots brought her to the monastery of St. Hilarion. And he ordered the board to be taken out: велишими иꙁыти… дъсчици по(д) прагw(м) (f. 255б). The saint spoke to the demon, and in order to heal her, he laid his hands on her: повелѣно бы(с), се исповѣдати, и въꙁложь ржцѣ на главж дѣвици, въ има г҃а і҃v х҃а wчистина… ѿпоущена же бывши отиде вь домь свои (f. 256). In this regard, attention should be paid to the function and meaning of Egyptian magic. Magic is essentially a sign of one of the oldest steps of religious consciousness. Egyptian magic is characterized by three main principles that determine the magical ritual system in general[25]: the principle of similarity, the principle of substitution and the principle of the miraculous power of words. Egyptian magicians had the fame of great magicians. The Exodus (7: 10–23) of the Bible describes a contest between the Egyptian court pharaoh magicians, Moses and Aaron. In Greco-Roman times, magic, in its various aspects, became especially popular in Egypt. The ancient Egyptians believed that if a wizard-healer could cure diseases, then he could cause them. The magic is also used for the man to win the love of the chosen one of his heart[26] (as described in topic 21 of Drag700) or to accelerate his movement up the social hierarchy.

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[25] М. Коростовцев, *Религията на древен Египет. Богове, жреци и магия*, София 1999, p. 49.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 55.

By laying on of his hands, the monk healed a person close to Emperor Constantius, who was possessed by a demon who would not let him sleep at night: иже творѣше ємоу по въса нощи, вънезаапѫ въскриати велми, и стенати, и скрежетати зѫбы и валѣтиса (f. 256б). Upon learning of the saint's power, he begged the Emperor to let him go to the Palestinian lands. Upon arrival, he finds the saint by the sea and confesses to him about his illness, исповѣдовати ємоу о недѫзѣ (f. 257). This demon is very different. It makes a person speak languages hitherto unknown to him. The demon knows many languages: …и римсы начать бесѣдовати. противѫ въпрошенїю стго. палестинсымь ѧзыкw(м) никакоже знаѫща. Ѿвѣщаваше ємоу, бѣсъ сирскы… начать гръчьскым въпрашати єго блженыи. також(д)е єже и тъ нача(т) гръчьскы Ѿвѣщавати. ѣко творенїємь чаровь, въниде въ нь (f. 257). Gerasim Petrinski[27] notes that in hagiography demons who speak foreign languages remained a relatively rare phenomenon until the seventh century, and from the seventh to the tenth century they did not occur at all. And all this in the text is compared to magic (творенїємь чаровь). By the power of the name of Jesus and the laying on of hands, this demon is cast out: възлѫжи рѫцѣ на нь въ имѧ га іса и абїе мѫжь wчистиса (f. 257). Hilarion heals not only demon-possessed people, but also demon-possessed animals (topic 24). Such is the case with the camel (велбѫда) in which a demon inhabits, бѣс же лютъ (f. 257б). The saint orders the demon to come out, and it happens: и изыде ѿ него (f. 257б).

Saint Aberkios of Hierapolis is venerated by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches on October 22. He was a bishop of Hierapolis at the time of Marcus Aurelius (161–180). Abercius is said to have evangelized Syria and Mesopotamia and is on that basis referred to as one of the Equals-to-the-Apostles. He died about 167. Here I will use the vita of the saint[28] from Stanislav's Reading Menaion from the 14th century (NBKM1039[29]). He heals human diseases and, in particular, cures a demon-possessed youth: и сице помливь се и възрѣвь на бѣсныє и ѹдарь жьзломь вь главы ихь и рече. вь име га ис ха живаго бга, излѣзыте нечистыи доусы ѿ юношь… юноше же исцѣлѣвше падоше на ногоу стдаго аверкыѣ… и сташе юноше зр(д)ави и сь оумомь (f. 261б). The emperor's daughter Luciada, who is engaged to Leucir, is possessed by a demon: и въниде вь дщерь антwнина цра єи же име лоукыада… нь ѣко wброучення бѣ моужеви двца левкироу… wтроковица же бѣсновата. власы свои трьзаюци, и плы(т) св(о)ю грызоуци (f. 268). The treatment of the emperor's daughter is done through verbal prayer: възрѣвь же на нбw стыи помли се (f. 270б) и… излѣзоу из нею (f. 271).

[27] Г. Петрински, *Образът на демона…*, p. 209.

[28] *Житие на равноапостолен Аверкий Йераполски*, [in:] Станиславов чети-миней от 14 в., Национална библиотека "Св. св. Кирил и Методий", НБКМ1039.

[29] Stanislav's Reading Menaion (NBKM1039) contains old versions hagiographic texts. He was named 'Stanislavov' after one of the copyist. The manuscript is digitized and can be found on the website of the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius".

Our venerable and God-bearing Father Ioannikios the Great was an ascetic who lived during the eighth and ninth centuries. His feast day is celebrated on November 4. Ioannikios was born in the village of Marikata in the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor. He was raised by his father Myritrikios and mother Anastasia as a shepherd. As an adult he was called to duty as a soldier and served with courage, particularly in the wars with the Bulgarians. After his military service, Ioannikios became an ascetic, withdrawing to Mount Olympus in Asia Minor. There, he was tonsured a monk. Having taken an active part in the destiny of God's Church, he entered the iconoclast controversy, first supporting iconoclasm, but finding himself deceived, he tore himself away from the iconoclast position and became an ardent iconodule who championed the veneration of icons. Ioannikios reposed peacefully in the Lord in the year 846, having lived 94 years. I will give an example of the expulsion of demons from his vita[30] from the Reading Menaion for September–November of the 15ᵗʰ century from the monastery in Dragomirna, No. Drag700[31]. It mentions how the saint heals a woman possessed by demons through the communicative act of prayer: жена нѣкаа окѫжена ѿ бѣсовыа мнѡгы… сь же, гви помлившса… жена ге стр(с)ти избавьшиса. и възвращьшиса въ домь (f. 359).

In this study, I would like to draw attention to St. Daniel the Stylite as I will use the vita of the Venerable[32] (ff. 2496 – 3106 from the Reading Menaion for November–December of the Zograf Monastery from the 14ᵗʰ century (Zogr94[33]). He is commemorated on 11 December. St. Daniel was born in a village in upper Mesopotamia near Samosata in present-day Turkey. He entered a monastery at the age of 12 and lived there until he was 38. During a voyage he made with his abbot to Antioch, he passed by the city of Telanissos (today 'Deir Semaan') and received the benediction and encouragement of St. Symeon the Stylite. St. Daniel established his pillar north of Constantinople. Daniel lived on the pillar for 33 years Daniel died in 493 and became the best-known Stylite after St. Symeon Stylites the Elder. He healed a demon-possessed young man named John, whom his father brought to the saint:

…прїиде нѣкыи старець ѿ страны тарсїискыж хытростїа… имыи с собѫ сна едино чада… именемъ іѡана. ѿ бѣса люта мѫчима… гла къ старцоу блаженыи данїиль. іаже сь вѣрѫ просите, въсе прїимите ѿ бга. аще ѕбо вѣроуеши. іако мнѡж грѣшниль исцѣлить въ сна твоего… и повѣлѣ ѡтрокѕ вънити прѣ(д) нимь… напоити то(г) ѿ дрвѣно маслинніа стхь, и бы(с) тако. повръже и бѣсъ на землѧ тоу и валѣаше(с) та(ж) въставь въпіаше заклинажса бѣсъ іако сыи днь изыдж (ff. 3036 – 304).

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[30] *Житие на преподобен Йоаникий Велики*, [in:] Чети-миней за септември–ноември, новоизводен от 15 в., Зографска електронно-научна библиотека, Драг700.

[31] К. Иванова, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica*…, p. 68.

[32] *Житие на преподобен Даниил Стълпник*, [in:] Чети-миней за ноември-декември от преходен тип от 14 в., Зографска електронно-научна библиотека, Зогр94.

[33] Reading Menaion for November–December from Zograf Monastery, 14ᵗʰ century (Zogr94). Written by several copyists. This is a Bulgarian manuscript, probably written on Mount Athos.

The demon can only be defeated if the sick person is a Christian. In this "classic" exorcism process, the so-called wood oil or unction is used. Also Alexandria, the daughter of Emperor Theodosius is possessed by a demon: имѣще дъщере именемь алеѯандрїѧ и та ѿ доуха зла мѫчима (ff. 304 – 3046). She is taken to Daniel to read prayers to her so that the wicked spirit may be cast out. That's what happens. He comes out of it: …въ з҃ дныи ѿ вѣса свободи (f. 3046). The saint also managed to heal a demon-possessed man posthumously: на преставленїи его… исцѣли мѫжа вѣсноужщасѧ (f. 309).

Of course, there are many more examples in which Christian saints cast out demons from possessed people and thus cure them of this mental illness. Although the main focus of this study is on the examples of demon casting, reflected in the translated hagiographic literature distributed in the southern Balkans, I would like to briefly turn to this practice, reflected in the Bulgarian original hagiography in the person and through the healing activity carried out by St. John of Rila (9th–10th cc.), a widely revered saint in Bulgaria from the Middle Ages to the present day. The main sources for it are the so-called "Popular Vita of St. John of Rila" (11th–12th cc.)[34], the Greek Vita by George Skylitzes (12th century), two Vita probably written in the 13th century) and the later Vita by Patriarch Euthymius (14th century). He was the first Bulgarian hermit. St. John was born app. 876 in Skrino, Bulgaria. At the age of 25, St. John of Rila became a priest. After accepting the life of a monk, he left the monastery in order to continue his life in solitude and prayer. According to legend, Saint John of Rila was known to have performed a multitude of miracles in order to help the people. Shortly before his death (August 18, 946) St. John of Rila wrote his Testament (Zavet). As the patron saint of the Bulgarian people, his dormition is commemorated each year on August 18 and October 19.

In the various vita of the saint there are descriptions of the casting out of demons. For example, in the St. John of Rila's Vita[35], written in the 12th century by the Byzantine writer and high dignitary George Skylitzes (ff. 54a–746)[36], in addition to fighting one's own demons, the expulsion of a demon by a man through prayer is also described:

мѫ(ж) нѣкто единоселникь д҃хѡ(м) лѫкавыимь злѣ ѡземьствовань раздираѧ ризы своѧ, и въ домѣ не живѣше, ни врача обрѣсти не надѣаше(с)… на н҃бо очи свои възве(д), и рѫцѣ простерь. възва страждѫщаго именень. прѣпо(д)бныи же възв(д)иже его рѫкож. и въсемꙋ

[34] The subject of the saint's struggle with his own demons is widely used in the Popular Vita, but not the topoi of casting out demons from the sick. The central episodes include the meeting of the anchorite with Tsar Peter and the transfer of the relics of the saint from the king to Sredets. The lack of this hagiographic topoi could be explained by the fact that in the 13th century a rethinking of the cult of the saint began, which became local from national.

[35] *Житие на св. Иван Рилски от Георги Скилица (пространно).*

[36] The collection containing canons, offices and vita about St. John of Rila from the last quarter of 15th c. (NMRM 1/26), dating 19 October, fol. 54a–746, http://www.scripta-bulgarica.eu/bg/sources/zhitie-na-sv-ivan-rilski-ot-georgi-skilica-prostranno [15 III 2021].

мнѡжьствꙋ възьпити повелѣ. Ги помлꙋи люде(м) же ꙋбо прѣпо(д)бнаго творꙗщемь по-
велѣнїе… себѣ Бꙋ млꙗ сꙗ. бѣше бо и сице съ въсѣми бесѣдꙋꙗ. и ѿтолѣ лꙗкавомꙋ дꙋхꙋ
мꙗчити того и съкрꙋшити запрѣщено бы(с). нꙗ тъ ꙋбо прогнань бы(с).

In the St. John of Rila's Vita from the Fist Verse Prologue[37] it is noted that the saint posthumously healed demon-possessed people: бѣснїи исцѣлѣваат[38]. The vita includes a biographical part, hermit exploits and miracles in Rila, gathering of students and founding of the monastery, election of a new abbot, death of the saint, transfer of the relics of St. John in Sredets (10th century), in the Hungarian town of Ostrog (between 1173 and 1183) and in Tărnovo (in 1195 by King Ivan Asen I), miracles with relics and final prayer. And Patriarch Euthymius in his version of Vita[39] also describes the exorcism of a demon by a man during the saint's lifetime: мꙗжꙗ нѣкии дꙋхѡмъ нечистыимъ лютѣ ѿ многъ лѣ(т) съмꙗ-щаемъ… они же свꙗзавше егѡ влѣчахѡ… помолившꙋ сꙗ, абїе бѣсъ изыде ѿ члка и здрава бы(с)… (ff. 98 – 986).

Here, of course, I will only briefly note that examples in this direction according to the model set by St. John of Rila is also found in the Vita of the other Slavonic hermits: Prohor of Pčinja, Joachim of Osogovo and Gabriel of Lesnovo.

At all historical stages, diseases initially occupy a middle ground between human life and death. The hagiographic texts provides extremely detailed information related to the diseases, and in particular to the mental illnesses. Of course, it largely transfers the diseases of the soul and its healing to the realm of the wonderful. The demon in the Middle Ages was the enemy of man and of the Good – he was both an internal and external antihero. At the same time, hagiography constantly emphasizes that the saint is a mediator between God and people in their healing. That is why he healed people from both physical and mental illnesses during his lifetime and posthumously through his relics. In the examples I have given, it is clear that the healing is carried out through the power of Christian prayer (Symeon of the Wondrous Mountain, Hilarion the Great, John of Rila), which is sometimes accompanied by the laying on of hands by the saint on the sick person (Hilarion the Great), or baptism (Eupraxia of Constantinople), anointing with oil (Daniel the Stylite), and sometimes more radical measures are applied – e.g. beating with a scepter (Eupraxia of Constantinople). And the demon possessing the pagan can be cast out only by accepting the new Christian faith (Hilarion the Great, Daniel the Stylite).

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[37] *Житие на св. Иван Рилски от Стишния пролог (първо).*

[38] Verse Prologue for September–February, 1368/76, BAN 73, 86a–886, http://www.scripta-bulgarica. eu/bg/sources/zhitie-na-sv-ivan-rilski-ot-stishniya-prolog-prvo [15 III 2021].

[39] *Пространно житие на свети Патриарх Евтимий*, [in:] Й. Иванов, *Български старини из Македония*, София 1908, p. 116–134, https://archive.org/details/libgen_00283897/page/n11/mode/2up [15 III 2021].

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