

THE LETTER OF THE CHURCH IN GOTHIA, ABOUT MARTYRDOM OF ST. SABAS THE GOTH

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SCRISOAREA CĂTRE BISERICA DIN GOȚIA ÎN CEEA CE PRIVEȘTE SACRIFICIUL SFÂNTULUI SAVA GOTUL

Rezumat: Viața Sfântului Sava Gotul a făcut subiectul lucrărilor mai multor teologi români și continua să ne preocupe deoarece ne dezvăluie o parte a istoriei răspândirii și consolidării creștinătății în zona locuită de predecesorii noștri. Acest articol cuprinde prezentarea textului grecesc al *Scrisorii adresate de Biserica din Gotia către Biserica din Cappadocia*, cu versiunea în latină a *Acta sanctorum*, o traducere în limba română și una în limba engleză, precum și unele observații la final. Această Scrisoare a fost publicată parțial, textul în limba greacă și o traducere, în *Fontes Historiæ Dacoromanæ*, vol. II.

Cuvinte cheie: scrisoare, sacrificiu, istorie, creștinătate

Introduction

The life of St. Sabas the Goth was a subject in many Romanian theologians' work, and continues to preoccupy us because it reveals a piece of the history of the penetration and consolidation of the Christianity in the area inhabited by our antecessors.

This article comprises the presentation of the Greek text of the *Letter of the Church in Gothia to the Church in Cappadocia*, with the Latin version of *Acta sanctorum*, a translation to Romanian and one to English, as well as some commentaries at the end. This Letter was partially published, the Greek text and a translation, in *Fontes Historiæ Dacoromanæ*, vol. II. It was also presented earlier, by the H. E. Bishop Gherasim of Timiș (1891). Pr. Prof. Dr. Ioan Rămureanu translated and commented the *Letter* as *The Martyrdom of St. Sabas the Goth* (*Martiriul Sfântului Sava Gotul*, in "Actele Martirice", 1997). My work in this paper does not underestimate the translation or the comments of the professor. On the contrary, I appreciated and used them, not to copy, but to offer another perspective. He used mainly the edition of Tübingen (1929), while I used *Acta sanctorum*, without any glance into the professor's translation

before the completion of my translation, with the purpose that the sources could be also compared. The reason why I added my efforts to the same subject was because I considered that this text and its historical implications deserves new full investigations and presentations, so it could be used in the light of the advancements of the historical knowledge. The final commentaries in this article are just a preamble that invites ulterior discussions.

Keywords

Sabas the Goth, The Letter of the Church in Gothia, hagiography, martyrdom, Christianization, Romanization, Paleochristianity

Greek text of *Acta sanctorum*

The text below is taken from J. Bollandus, *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 11, Aprilis, Tomus II, Editio nova, 1866, pp. 960/ 2-4* (2*: Prologue-3; 3*: 3-8; 3-4*: note). The text is partially given by Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, pp. 710-715.

Titlu: “Μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγ. Σάβα τοῦ Γότθου (Ex Ms. Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ num. 1600).” Prologue: “Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡ παροικοῦσα Γοθία, τῇ Ἐκκληδίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ παροικουσίᾳ Καππαδοκία καὶ πάσαις ταῖς κατὰ τόπον τῆς ἁγίας καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας παροικίαις, ἔλεος, εἰρήνη, ἀγάπη Θεοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πληθυνθεῖη.”¹

“1. Τὸ εἰρημένον τῷ μακαρίῳ Πέτρῳ, καὶ νῦν κραταιῶς ἀποδέδεικται, Ὅτι «ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ὁ φοβούμενος» τὸν Κύριον, «καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην, δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστίν»². ἐπιστώθη γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ μακάριον Σάβα, ὅς ἐστιν μάρτυς Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Οὗτος γὰρ Γότθος ὢν τῷ γένει, καὶ διατελῶν ἐν τῇ Γοθία, ἐν μέσῳ γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, ἐφάνη ὡς φωστῆρ ἐν κόσμῳ, μιμούμενος τοῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ Χριστὸν κατορθώμασιν διαπρέπων. Οὐ γὰρ τινος ἐτέρου γέγονεν ἐξ ἐπινηπίου ζηλωτῆς, ἀλλὰ τῆς εἰς τὸν Σωτῆρα καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν εὐσεβείας, ταύτην ἠγησάμενος³ ἀρετὴν τελείαν, φθάσαι⁴ εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον πρὸς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῖς ἀγαπῶσι τὸν Θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, ἔφθασεν εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως, ὅπερ ἐκ νεότητος ἐπόθει, εἶτα ἀγωνισάμενος ἀντικρυς κατὰ τοῦ ἀντικειμένου, καὶ περιγενόμενος⁵ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον κακῶν, πρὸς τε πάντας εἰρηνικὸς γενόμενος.”⁶

“2. Μνήμης καὶ οἰκοδομῆς τῶν θεοσεβῶν χάριν, μετὰ τὴν ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀνάλυσιν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἠρεμεῖν ἡμῖν ἐπέτρεψεν, ἀλλὰ γράψαι τὰς ἀριστείας αὐτοῦ· γεγένηται γὰρ ὀρθὸς τῇ πίστει, εὐλαβῆς, πρὸς πᾶσαν ὑπακοὴν τὴν ἐκ

¹ J. Bollandus, *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 11, Aprilis, Tomus II, Editio nova, 1866, p. 960/ 2*.

² *Acta* 10,35: «ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστίν.»

³ In text: ἠγασάμενος.

⁴ In text: φθάσαι. Below: ἔφθασεν. Thus, I think here it is φθάσαι.

⁵ In text: περιγενόμενος.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 2*.

δικαιοσύνη ἔτοιμος, ἐπιεικής, ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ ἀλλ' οὐ τῇ γνώσει, ὑπὲρ ἀληθείας φθεγγόμενος, ἐπιστομίζων τοὺς εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ οὐχ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἀλλ' ὡς πρόπον τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενος, ἡσύχιος, καὶ οὐ προφητῆς λόγῳ,⁷ πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν σπουδαιότατος, ψάλλων ἐν Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ τοῦτο πάνυ ἐπιμελῶς, οὐ χρημάτων, οὐ κτημάτων πλὴν τῶν πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν φροντίζων, νεφάλεος ἐγκρατῆς ἐν πᾶσιν, γυναικὸς ἀμύητος, ἀπεχομένος, νεστεύων παρέχοντα⁸, δεήσεσιν ἀκενοδόξως παραμένων, καὶ τῇ αγαθῇ προθέσει πάντας ὑποτάσσειν, ἐργαζόμενος τὰ καθήκοντα, καὶ μὴ περιεργαζόμενος τὰ μὴ συμφέροντα, καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἄμεμπτων πίστιν ἔχων δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένην, ὡς μηδὲν διστάζοντα αὐτὸν παρῤησιάζεσθαι πάντοτε ἐν Κυρίῳ.”⁹

“3. Οὐχ ἅπαξ γὰρ ἀλλὰ πλεονάκις, πρὸ τοῦ τελειωθῆναι αὐτὸν, ἐν πίστει ἔργον ἐπεδείξατο εὐσεβές: πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἤρξαντο οἱ κατὰ τὴν Γοθίαν Μεγιστάνες κινεῖσθαι κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ἀναγκάζοντες αὐτοὺς ἐσθίειν εἰδωλόθυτα, ἔδοξεν τισιν ἐθνικοῖς τῶν κατὰ τὴν κόμη, ἐν ἧ διήγεν ὁ Σάβας, ἵνα κρέα¹⁰ μὴ εἰδωλόθυτα ἀντὶ εἰδωλοθύτων ποιήσωσιν τοὺς προσήκοντας αὐτοῖς Χριστιανούς φαγεῖν, ἐπὶ τῶν¹¹ διωκτῶν δημοσίᾳ, ἐπὶ τὸ τοὺς μὲν ἰδίους ἀμώμους φυλάξαι, τοὺς δὲ διώκτας ἀπατήσαι ὅπερ γνοὺς ὁ μακάριος Σάβας, οὐ μόνον αὐτὸς οὐκ ἔφαγεν τῶν ἀπρημένων βρωμάτων, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρελθὼν εἰς τὸ μέσον διεμαρτύρατο τοῖς πᾶσι λέγων, Ἐάν τις φάγη ἐκ τῶν κρεῶν ἐκείνων, Χριστιανὸς οὗτος εἶναι οὐ δύναται, καὶ διεκώλυσε τοὺς πάντας μὴ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς τὴν παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου. Τούτου γοῦν ἕνεκεν οἱ τὴν τοιαύτην ἀπάτην μηχανόμενοι ἐξέβαλλον αὐτὸν τῆς κόμης, εἶτα δὲ μετὰ χρόνον τινὰ ἐπέτρεψαν αὐτὸν ἐπανελθεῖν.

Πάλιν δὲ κινήεντος πειρασμοῦ¹², κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς ὑπὸ τῶν Γόθων, τινὲς τῶν ἐκ τῆς προειρημένης κόμης ἐθνικῶν, θυσίας τοῖς δαιμονίοις προσάγοντες, ἔμελλον ὀμνύειν τῷ διώκτη, μὴ εἶναι τινὰ Χριστιανὸν ἐν τῇ κόμῃ αὐτῶν. Ὁ δὲ Σάβας παρῤησιασάμενος πάλιν, καὶ παρελθὼν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ συνεδρίου ἔλεγεν, Ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ μηδεὶς ὁμώσῃ, ἐγὼ γὰρ Χριστιανὸς εἰμι. Τότε, ἐπιστάντος τοῦ διώκτου, ὤμοσαν οἱ κωμῆται, τοὺς ἰδίους ἀποκρύπτοντες, μὴ εἶναι ἐν τῇ κόμῃ αὐτῶν Χριστιανὸν πλὴν ἑνός. Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ ἄρχων τῆς ἀνομίας, ἐκέλευσε παραστῆναι τὸν Σάβαν. Ὡς δὲ παρέστη, ἐπηρῶτα τοὺς

⁷ In text: *προφητῆς*.

⁸ In text: *παρέκαστα*. But I think it is *παρέχοντα*, from *παρέχω*, “to surrender, to subdue”.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 2*.

¹⁰ In text: *κρία*. Below: *τῶν κρεῶν*. Thus, I think here it is *κρέα*.

¹¹ Note *a*: „*Publice coronam persecutoribus, quod omissum in Latina Zini versione, uti et alia quaedam aequae levis momenti, quae pinget annotare.*“ Notes *a-e* of the Greek text are final notes in *Acta sanctorum*. Note *a* in *ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

¹² Note *b*: “*Prout Gotthis in usu erat: quo videtur indicari velut annua persecutio, circumcuntibus inquisitoribus de fide.*” Notes *b-e* in *ibidem*, p. 960/ 4*.

παραστήσαντας, εἰ ἔχοι τι ἐν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτῶ. Τῶν δὲ, μηδὲν ὦν περικέκληται πλεῖον, εἰπόντων, ἐξουδενώσας αὐτὸν.”¹³

“4. Μετέπειτα δὲ διωγμοῦ μεγάλου κινυθέντος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων ἐν τῇ Γοθθία κατὰ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἐκκλησίας, ὡς ἡ ἀγία ἡμέρα τοῦ Πάσχα ἤγγικεν, ἐβουλήθη ἀπελθεῖν εἰς ἑτέραν πόλιν Γουθθικᾶν τὸν Πρεσβύτερον, μετὰ τοῦ ἐπιτελέσαι τὴν ἑορτὴν. Πορευομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, ὤφθην ἀνὴρ τις, ὑπερμεγέθης καὶ λαμπρὸς τῇ εἰδέᾳ, εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ, Ὑπόστρεψον καὶ ἄπελθε πρὸς Σανσαλὰν τὸν Πρεσβύτερον. Ὁ δὲ Σάβας ἀπεκρίθη λέγων αὐτῷ, Σανσαλὰς ἀποδημεῖ· ἦν δὲ ὁ Σανσαλὰς διὰ τὸν διωγμὸν φυγὼν, καὶ χρονήσας ἐν τῇ Ῥωμανίᾳ.¹⁴ τότε οὖν, διὰ τὴν ἀγίαν ἡμέραν τοῦ Πάσχα, ἐληλύθη προσφάτως εἰς τὰ ἴδια· δι’ ὃ μὴ εἰδὼς ὁ Σάβας περὶ τῆς ἐπανόδου αὐτοῦ, ταῦτα ἀπεκρίθη τῷ ὠφθέντι αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐπολέμει πορευθῆναι πρὸς Γουθθικᾶν τὸν Πρεσβύτερον. Μὴ βουλομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ πειθῆναι τῷ προστάγματι, ἄφνου εὐδοίας οὔσης κατὰ τὴν ὥραν ἐκείνην, ὤφθη πλῆθος ἄπειρον χίονος ἐπὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς, ὡς ἐμφραγῆναι τὴν ὁδὸν, καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν διελθεῖν. Τότε συνῆκεν θέλημα Θεοῦ εἶναι τὸ κωλύον αὐτὸν, περαιτέρω¹⁵ διαβῆναι κελεῖον, ἀλλὰ ἀναλύσαι πρὸς τὸν Πρεσβύτερον Σανσαλὰν· καὶ εὐλογήσας τὸν Κύριον ὑπέστρεψεν, καὶ θεασάμενος τὸν Σανσαλὰν ἐχάρη, καὶ ἀπήγγελεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἄλλοις πλείοσι τὴν ὄπτασίαν, ἣν εἶδεν κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν. Ἐτέλεσαν δὲ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ Πάσχα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ· τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ νυκτὶ μετὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν, ἰδοὺ ἐκ τοῦ τάγματος τῶν ἀσεβῶν, Ἀθάριδος υἱὸς Ῥωθεστέον τοῦ Βασιλικου, μετὰ φάλαγγος ἀνόμων ληιστῶν, ἐπέστη εἰς τὴν κώμην ἐκείνην, καὶ εὐρὼν τὸν Πρεσβύτερον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ καθεύδοντα, ἐποίησεν δεθῆναι· ὁμοίως καὶ τὸν Σάβαν, γυμνὸν ἀρπαγέντα ἀπὸ τῆς στρωμνῆς¹⁶ δεσμοῖς περιέβαλεν. Καὶ τὸν Πρεσβύτερον ἐπ’ ἀμάξης κατεῖχον· τὸν δὲ Σάβαν, γυμνὸν ὡς γεγέννητο· καὶ ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν διὰ τῶν ναπῶν,¹⁷ ἃς προσφάτως ἦσαν φλογήσαντες, διώκοντες καὶ τύπτωντες ζύλοις καὶ φραγέλλαις, ὁμως καὶ ἀνηλεῶς φερόμενοι κατὰ τῶν δούλων τοῦ Θεοῦ.”¹⁸

“5. Ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀπηνὲς τῶν ἐχθρῶν τὴν ὑπομονὴν καὶ πίστιν συνέστησεν τοῦ δικαίου· ἡμέρας γὰρ γενομένης ἔλεγεν, ἐν Κυρίῳ καυχόμενος τοῖς διώξασιν αὐτὸν, Οὐχὶ διὰ χρέων κεκαυμένων ἐπὶ τὰ ὄξέα τῶν σκολόπων τύπτοντες ἤλασάτε με γυμνὸν καὶ ἀνυπόδετον, ἴδετε εἰ ἐβλάβησαν οἱ πόδες μου, καὶ εἰ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου ἔχω μόλαπας, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, ὧν ἐπενέγκατέ μοι. Ἰδόντες οὖν ὡς οὐδὲν ἐφαίνετο εἰς τὴν σάρκα αὐτοῦ ἐξ ὧν ἀνηλεῶς πεποιήκησαν, ἄραντες ἄξονα ἀμάξης, καὶ ἐπιθέντες τοῖς ὤμοις αὐτοῦ, διέτειναν τὰς χεῖρας

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 2-3*.

¹⁴ In text: Ῥωμανία, even it misses the rough breathing and it seems it was replaced with an accent on ω.

¹⁵ In text: περετέρω. The correct form is περαιτέρω.

¹⁶ In text: στρωμνῆς.

¹⁷ In text: νάπων.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ ἄκρα τοῦ ἄξονος, ὁμοίως καὶ τοὺς πόδας διατείναντες ἐτέρω ἄξονι προσέδησαν, καὶ τέλος ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄξονας ῥήξαντες αὐτὸν, εἶων κεῖσθαι ὑπτιον ἐν τῷ ἐδάφει¹⁹, καὶ μέχρι πλείστον τῆς νυκτὸς μέρους οὐκ ἐφείσαντο βασανίζοντες αὐτόν. Ἀποκαθευδησάντων δὲ τῶν δημίων, προσελθοῦσα γυνή τις ἔλυσεν αὐτόν, ἣτις ἦν ἐγερθεῖσα νυκτὸς, ἵνα ἐτοιμάσῃ βρώματα τοῖς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ. Ὁ δὲ λυθεὶς διέμεινεν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ἀφόβως, μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐργαζόμενος τὸ ἔργον αὐτῆς· ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης γνούς τοῦτο ὁ ἀσεβῆς Ἀθάριδος, ἐκέλευσεν δεθῆναι αὐτοῦ τὰς χεῖρας, καὶ προσκρεμασθῆναι αὐτόν τῇ δοκῷ τῆς οἰκίας.”²⁰

“6. Καὶ μετ’ οὐ πολὺ ἦλθον οἱ ἀποσταλέντες παρὰ τοῦ Ἀθαρίδου, φέροντες βρώματα εἰδωλόθυτα· εἶπον δὲ πρὸς τὸν Πρεσβύτερον καὶ τὸν Σάβαν, Ταῦτα Ἀθάριδος ἐκέλευσεν ὑμῖν κομισθῆναι, ἵνα φάγητε, καὶ ῥύσησθε ἐκ θανάτου τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν. Ἀποκριθέντος δὲ τοῦ Πρεσβυτέρου καὶ λέγοντος, Ταῦτα ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσθίομεν, οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν, ἀλλὰ παρακαλέσατε Ἀθάριδον ἵνα κελεύσῃ ἡμᾶς σταυρωθῆναι, ἢ ἄλλως ὅπως βούλοιο ἀναιρεθῆναι. Εἶπεν δὲ καὶ ὁ Σάβας, Τίς ὁ ἀποστείλας ταῦτα; Οἱ δὲ εἶπον, Ὁ δεσπότης Ἀθάριδος. Ὁ δὲ Σάβας εἶπεν· Εἷς δεσπότης Θεὸς ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἐστίν, Ἀθάριδος δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἀσεβῆς καὶ ἐπικατάρατος· καὶ ταῦτα ἀκάθαρτα ἐστίν καὶ βέβηλα τῆς ἀπολείας τὰ βρώματα, ὡς καὶ ὁ ἀποστείλας ταῦτα Ἀθάριδος. Λέγοντος δὲ ταῦτα τοῦ Σάβα, ἐκκαυθεὶς εἷς τῶν παιδῶν Ἀθαρίδου ἐν ὀργῇ, καὶ λαβὼν ὑπερον, ἐῤῥιψεν εἰς τὸ στήθος τοῦ Ἁγίου, ἀκοντίσας εἰς ὄξυ, ὡς τοὺς παρόντας νομίσει ὅτι τῷ ῥύματι τῆς πληγῆς συντριβεῖς τεθνήξεται παραχρῆμα. Ὁ δὲ τῷ τῆς εὐσεβείας πόθῳ νικήσας τὸν τῶν ἐπιφερομένων πόνον, εἶπεν τῷ δημίῳ, Νῦν σὺ νομίζεις ὅτι ἐπληξάς με τῷ ὑπέρω, τοῦτο δὲ γίνοσκε, ὅτι εἰς τοσοῦτον οὐκ ἤλγησα, ὡς νομίζεις με ὅτι μήρυμα ἐρίου ἠκόντησας κατ’ ἐμοῦ. Καὶ φανερόν τεκμήριον τῶν εἰρημένων ἔργῳ παρέστησεν· οὔτε γὰρ ἀνέκραξεν, οὔτε ἐστέναξεν ὡς ἐν πόνῳ, οὔτε πληγῆς ὄλωσ ἵχνος ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐφάνη.»²¹»7. Τότε γνούς ταῦτα Ἀθάριδος, κελεύει ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτόν. Οἱ γοῦν ὑπηρεταὶ τῆς ἀνομίας, ἐάσαντες τὸν Πρεσβύτερον Σανσαλὰν δέσμιον, περέλαβον τὸν Σάβαν, καὶ ἀπήγαγον πνῖξαι²² παρὰ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν καλούμενον Μουσέον. Ὁ δὲ Μακάριος μεμνημένος τῆς ἐντολῆς τοῦ Κυρίου, καὶ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλήσιον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, εἶπεν· Τί ἡμαρτεν ὁ Πρεσβύτερος, ὅτι σὺν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει; Ἀπεκρίθησαν δὲ αὐτῷ, Οὐ σὸν ἐστι περὶ τούτων διατάσσεσθαι. Τοῦτο εἰπόντων αὐτῶν, ἀνέκραξεν ἐν ἀγαλλίασει πνεύματος ἁγίου, καὶ εἶπεν· Εὐλογητὸς εἶ Κύριε, καὶ δεδοξασμένον τὸν ὄνομα σου Ἰησοῦ, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν, ὅτι Ἀθάριδος μὲν ἑαυτὸν θανάτῳ αἰωνίῳ καὶ ἀπολείᾳ περιέπειρεν, ἐμὲ δὲ εἰς ζωὴν τὴν αἰετιμένην παραπέμπει, ὅτι οὕτως εὐδόκησας ἐν τοῖς δούλοις σου, Κύριε ὁ

¹⁹ In text: ἐδύφει.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

²² In text: πνῖξαι. The form πνῖξαι (2nd. sg. aor. imper. middle, 3rd. sg. aor. opt. act., or aor. inf. act.) comes from the verb πνίγω, „to drown, to strangle“.

Θεὸς ἡμῶν. Καὶ δι' ὅλης τῆς ὁδοῦ ἀπαγόμενος, ἠὺχαρίσται τῷ Θεῷ, οὐκ ἄξια ἠγούμενος τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν εἰς τοὺς ἀγίους ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξαν. Ἦνίκα δὲ ἤχθη ἐπὶ τὴν ὄχθαν τοῦ ποτάμου οἱ κατέχοντες αὐτὸν ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, Δεῦτε τὸν αἰθῶν τοῦτον ἀπολύσωμεν· πόθεν γὰρ γνῶσεται τοῦτο Ἀθάριδος; Ὁ δὲ μακάριος Σάβας εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς, Τί ματαιολογεῖτε, καὶ οὐ ποιεῖτε τὸν προστεταγμένον ὑμῖν; ἐγὼ ὄρω ὅπερ ὑμεῖς οὐ δύνασθε ἰδεῖν· ἴδου ἄντικρυς ἐστήκασιν ἐν δόξῃ οἱ ἐλθόντες ὑποδέξασθαι με. Τότε κατάγουσιν αὐτὸν τίς τὸ ὕδωρ εὐχαριστοῦντα καὶ δοξάζοντα τὸν Θεὸν (μέχρι τέλους γὰρ ἐλειτοῦργησεν αὐτῷ τὸ πνεῦμα) καὶ ῥίψαντες αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπιθέντες αὐτῷ ξύλον κατὰ τοῦ τραχήλου, ἐπέεζον εἰς τὸν βάθος· καὶ οὕτως τελειωθεὶς διὰ ξύλου καὶ ὕδατος, ἄχραντον ἐφύλαξεν τῆς σωτηρίας τὸ σύμβολον, ὧν ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ὀκτώ. Ἐτελειώθη δὲ πέμπτη τοῦ σαββάτου τῇ μετὰ τοῦ Πάσχα, ἣτις ἐστὶν πρὸ μιᾶς εἰδῶν Ἀπριλλίου²³, ἐπὶ Οὐαλλεντινιανοῦ καὶ Οὐαλεντος Αὐγουστων²⁴, ὑπατεύοντος Μοδέστου καὶ Ἀρινθέου.»²⁵

«8. Εἶτα ἐξεκλύσαντες αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οἱ φονεῖς, ἀφῆκαν ἄταφον, καὶ ἀνεχώρησαν. Ἄλλ' οὔτε κύων οὔτε τι θηρίον τὸ σύνολον ἤγατο αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ διὰ χειρὸς μῶν ἀδελφῶν συνεστάλη καὶ ἀπετέθη τὸ λείψανον, ὅσπερ²⁶ Οὐνιος Σωρανός, ὁ λαμπρότατος Δούξ τῆς Σκυθίας, τιμῶν τὸν Κύριον, ἀποστείλας ἀξιοπίστους ἀνθρώπους, ἐκ τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ εἰς τὴν Ῥωμανίαν²⁷ μετήνεγκεν· καὶ χαριζόμενος τῇ ἑαυτοῦ πατρίδι δῶρον τίμιον, καὶ κάρπον πίστεως ἔνδοξον, εἰς τὴν Καππαδοκίαν, πρὸς τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀπέστειλεν θεοσέβειαν, διὰ θελήματος τοῦ Πρεσβυτερίου, οἰκονομοῦντος τοῦ Κυρίου τὰ πρὸς χάριν τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ φοβούμενοις ἀδελφοῖς. Ἐπιτελοῦντες οὖν, ἐν ἧ τὸν στέφανον ἀγωνισάμενος ἀπειλήφεν ἡμέρα, σὺναξιν πνευματικὴν, καὶ τοῖς ἐπέκεινα ἀδελφοῖς σημάνατε, ἵνα ἐν πάσῃ καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀγαλλιάσεις ἐπιτελῶσιν, δοξάζοντες τὸν Κύριον τὸν ἐκλογὰς ποιούμενον τῶν ἰδίων δούλων αὐτοῦ. Προσαγορεύεται πάντας τοὺς ἀγίους· ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ὑμῖν δεδιωγμένοι προσαγορεύουσιν. Τῷ δὲ δυναμένῳ πάντας ἡμᾶς εἰσαγαγεῖν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χάριτι καὶ δωρεᾷ εἰς τὴν ἐπουράνιον βασιλείαν, δόξα, τιμὴ, κράτος, μεγαλωσύνη σὺν Πατρὶ μονογενῇ, καὶ ἀγίῳ Πνεύματι, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.»²⁸

Latin text of *Acta sanctorum*

Title: “Acta: Ab Ecclesia Gotthiæ ab Ecclesiam Cappadociæ scripta. Ex. MS. Vaticano Græco, collato cum versione Latina MS. Veneti per Franciscum Zinum apud Lipomanum et Surium.”²⁹

²³ Note c: „Delevi sequentia verbu ut sensum non facientia, ἐπὶ ὑπατείας Φλαβίου.“

²⁴ Note d: „Item hæc ἐυρίσκονται οὗτοι“

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

²⁶ Nota e: „In MS. Veneto Zinus legit Ἰούνιος, quod magis placet.“

²⁷ In text: Ῥωμανίαν, even it misses the rough breathing and it seems it was replaced with an accent on *ω*.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 960/ 3*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 89. Notes for the latin text are presented in Romanian.

“Ecclesiae Dei quae est in Gotthia, Ecclesiae Dei quae est in Cappadocia, et omnibus Ecclesiae Catholicae Christianitatis, ubique gentium habitantibus, misericordia, pax, et caritas Dei Patri et Domini nostri Jesu Christi impleatur.”³⁰

“1. Quod a B. Petro dictum est, In omni gente, qui tenet Deum et operatur justitiam, acceptus est ei; nunc etiam verum esse declaratur.³¹ Hoc enim in B. Sabas confirmatum est, qui est Martyr Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Cum enim genere Gotthus esset, [N: Genere Gotthus] et in Gotthia in medio generationis parvae³² atque perversae vitam ageret, ita viros imitatus est sanctos, et cum ipsis omni genere virtutum Christum coluit,³³ ut in mundo tanquam stella fulgeret. Jam inde enim ab ipsa infantia Domini nostri Jesu Christi religionem complexus,³⁴ virtutem perfectam existimavit,³⁵ per filii Dei cognitionem evadere in virum perfectum. Quia autem diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum, strenue adversus hostem pugnans, et hujus vitae malis superior existens, atque pacem cum omnibus habens, ad supernae vocationis bravium³⁶ pervenit.”³⁷

“2. Memoriae igitur gratia et aedificationis piorum, posteaquam ipse in Dominum conquevit, tacere et quiescere nequaquam permittimur: sed ad praecleara ipsius facta conscribenda impellimur. Fuit enim fide rectus, ad obediendum in omni justitia promptus, mitis, religiosus, imperitus sermone, non autem scientia: cum omnibus pacificus,³⁸ pro veritate loquens, os idololatriis

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

³¹ N. M.: “Act. 10,35”. N. M. = notă marginală. Notele marginale sunt plasate de obicei deasupra locului din text la care se referă. Aici, “Act. 10,35”, trimite la un citat din Sf. Petru.

³² Cuvântul latin *parvae* ar trebui luat ca „umil, inferior”. Expresia latină *parvae atque perversae* o traduce pe cea grecească: *σκολιάς καὶ διεστραμμένης*. Cele două cuvinte grecești sunt sinonime parțiale, *σκολιός* însemnând „curbat, îndoit”, iar *διεστραμμένης*, ca participiu (sg. perf. mp. fem. gen.) al lui *διαστρέφω*, însemnând „a se întoarce pe alte căi, a se suci”, aici amândouă înțelese cu o conotație morală. Dacă *perversus* redă mai bine *διεστραμμένης*, *parvus* are o legătură mai slabă cu *σκολιός*. Astfel, traducerea mele în română și engleză vor urma mai degrabă o mai bună aproximare a textului grec.

³³ Fraza “et cum ipsis omni genere virtutum Christum coluit” se traduce: “el a cultivat, ca și ei (laolaltă cu ei), toate felurile de virtuți în Hristos”. Totuși, textul grec este “καὶ μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ Χριστὸν κατορθώμασιν διατρέπων”, însemnând mai degrabă: “și cu (laolaltă cu, ca) ei, în cele privitoare la Hristos, s-a distins (pe sine) cu succes (implinire)”. Așadar, în traducere voi aproxima mai degrabă textul grec.

³⁴ N. M.: “sed ab infantiam Christianus”.

³⁵ Cuvântul *existimavit* înseamnă “el a valorizat, apreciat”. Corespondentul grecescului *ἡγησάμενος* (redat corupt ca *ἡγσάμενος*) este un participiu (sg. aor. mediu) al *ἡγέομαι*, însemnând „a conduce”. Astfel, propoziția „ταύτην ἡγησάμενος (ἡγσάμενος) ἀρετὴν τελείαν” ar însemna mai degrabă: „el s-a condus (călăuzit) de această virtute supremă”.

³⁶ Cuvântul *bravium* este o formă târzie a *brabeum* sau *brabium*, „distincție, premiu la jocuri”, Cf. Jacob, 1883, pp. 106-107. *Ibidem*, p. 106: „Prix du combat. ÉTYM. βραβείον”. Cuvântul latin este copia exactă a celui grecesc (ἔφθασεν εἰς τὸ βραβείον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως).

³⁷ J. Bollandus, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

³⁸ În timp ce textul grec are doar *ἐπιεικής* înainte de “ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ ἄλλ’ οὐ τῇ γνώσει”, versiunea latină are “mitis, religiosus, imperitus sermone, non autem scientia: cum omnibus

obstruens; non superbus, sed (quod humiles decet) subjectus, non petulans in loquendo sed quietus; ad omne opus bonum propensissimus: psallens in ecclesiam, ejusque magnam curam gerens; pecuniam possessionesque despiciens, nisi quatenus necessitas exigebat; sobrius, et omnibus in rebus continens, maxime autem a feminarum abhorrens consuetudine³⁹; precationibus et jejuniis quotidie incumbens,⁴⁰ ab inani gloria alienus, omnes ad recte vivendum incitans, quæ ex virtute atque officio sunt exequens, fugiensque contraria; integram denique fidem, quæ per dilectionem operatur, observans, ac numquam desinens in Domino cum libertate loqui. Neque enim semel, sed sæpe, antequam pro fide martyrem coronaretur, reipsa seipsum veræ pietatis acerrimum defensorem ostendit.”⁴¹

“3. Cum enim Gothiæ principes et magistratus cœpissent Christianos homines insectari, et cogere ut ederent idolis immolata; et gentiles quidam consilium inissent, ut Christianis propinquis suis pro immolatis proponerent quæ immolata non essent, itaque propinquos suos servarent ac persecutores deciperent; re cognita, B. Sabass non solum ipse comedere cibos vetitos recusavit, sed in medium prodiens, protestatus est omnibus; Si quis, inquit, ex carnibus illis comederit, Christianus esse non potest; atque ita cavit, ne omnes in diaboli laqueum inciderent.⁴² Hac de caussa, qui fraudem hanc moliebantur, eum ex illo vico expulerunt: sed postea revocarunt. Ceterum cum rursus mota esset persecutio quidam ex ejusdem vici gentilibus, victimas dæmonibus oferentes, jurejurando volebant affirmare neminem in vico suo Christianum hominem reperiri. Verum Sabass cum fiducia iterum in medium prodiens, et ad consensum illorum accedens; Nemo, inquit, pro me juret: ego enim Christianus sum.⁴³ Denique, instante persecutore, prædicti gentiles celatis propinquis suis, jurarunt, non esse in vico suo, nisi unum Christianum. Quo audito, Princeps iniquitatis jussit, unum illum (hic autem erat B. Sabass) adduci. Et cum esset adductus, ex iis, qui circumstabant quæsit, quid haberet in bonis: illis autem respondentibus, nihil amplius, quam id, quo erat indutus, contempsit enim vir *pacificus*“. Cuvântul grec *ἐπιεικής* înseamnă “potrivit, adecvat”. Atributul redat în latină după “imperitus sermone, non autem scientia” este un ecou al unei calități menționate în paragraful anterior: „atque pacem cum omnibus habens“.

³⁹ Expresia greacă „γυναικὸς ἀμύητος” înseamnă: “neinițiat în privința femeilor”. A fost redat în latină ca: “maxime autem a feminarum abhorrens consuetudine”, însemnând: „dar având o mare aversiune față de intimitatea femeilor”. Expresia greacă redă o calitate ascetică, în timp ce cea latină denotă o abordare mai puritană. Mai exact, expresia greacă un trădează o reacție de repulsie față de femei, spre deosebire de cea latină, ci puritatea unei persoane feciorelnice, neatinsă de o astfel de patimă, neafectată de o asemenea experiență, sau o astfel de ispită.

⁴⁰ Versiunea latină nu are traducere pentru *ἀπεχομένος*, “retras (i. e., din frământările lumii)”, și combină rugăciunea, redată de expresia grecească ulterioară, cu postul.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁴² N. M.: „Dissuadet Christianis ne gentilium fraudi consentiant“.

⁴³ N. M.: „PER PRES. GOTTHIÆ EX MS. GR. seque publice fatetar Christianum:“.

iniquus; Neque prodesse, qui ejusmodi est, inquiens, nec obesse potest. Atque ita locutus, jussit eum extrudi.⁴⁴ ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵

“4. Postea cum ingens rursus in Gotthia a peccatoribus persecutio moveretur, et sanctus Paschæ⁴⁶ dies appropinquaret, ad aliud oppidum voluit proficisci, ut cum Gutthica Presbytero sanctum illum diem celebraret. Sed iter facienti apparuit vir procerus corpore aspectuque splendido venerabilis, et dixit: Revertere, et vade ad Sansalam presbyterum. Sabass autem respondit: Abest, inquiens, Sansalas.⁴⁷ Fugerat enim propter persecutionem, et in Romania commorabatur: sed tunc propter diem Paschæ domum redierat. Quambobrem Sabass, cum ejus reditum ignoraret, ita responderat, et ad Gutthicam Presbyterum ire contendebat. Verum cum mandato illius magni viri a se conspecti parere nollet, repente cum serenum tunc esset, magna nivis copia terræ faciem sic occupavit, ut iter intercluderetur, et Sabass progredi non posset. Intellexit igitur se Dei voluntate ab itinere prohiberi, jubentis ut ad Sansalam Presbyterum se conferret. Quare Deo gratias agens, reversus est; et con gaudio Sansalam conveniens, narravit ei et alii pluribus id quod in via perspexerat. Simul igitur Paschæ diem celebrarunt: tertia autem post celebrationem nocte, ex impiorum decreto, Atharidus, Rhotesti Reguli filius, cum magna impiorum latronum manu in pagum irruit: et domi suæ Presbyterum dormientem offendens, eum vinciri jussit simul cum Sabas, quem e lectudo nudum sustulerant.⁴⁸ Ac presbyterum quidem in curru collocarunt: Sabasm autem nudum, ut erat genitus, per spinas,⁴⁹ quas nuper succederant, pertraxerunt, comprimentes eum, et fustibus ac flagellis verberantes: adeo erant adversus Dei servos immites et sævi.”⁵⁰

“5. Sed hostium crudelitas viri justii patientiam ac fidem exercuit. Cum enim dies advenisset, in Domino glorians, persecutores suos allocutus est ad hunc modum: Nonne me per loca aspera et spinosa nudum et sine calceis pertraxistis? cernite, an pedes mei læsi sint; et utrum in corpore meo appareant verberum signa, quæ mihi inflixistis. Illi vero nullum in ejus carne videntes vestigium extare crudelitatis suæ, sublatum et curru axem super humeros ejus imposuerunt, et ad extremas axis partes manus ipsius extenderunt; pedes quoque similiter ad alterum axem alligarunt: et denique super axes ipsum

⁴⁴ Următoarea inserție latină nu are correspondent în textul grec: „Neque prodesse, qui ejusmodi est, inquiens, nec obesse potest. Atque ita locutus, jussit eum extrudi”.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁴⁶ Nota *a*: „Die 8 Aprilis celebrandus”. Notele *a-k* sunt note de final în *ibidem*, p. 90. Le-am plasat ca note de subsol.

⁴⁷ N. M.: „et apud Sansalam Presb. Pascha celebrans”.

⁴⁸ N. M.: „rapitur nudus e lecto”

⁴⁹ Nota *b*: „Zinas vertit quas nuper inciderant: minus apte ad textum originalem, quo indicator familiaris consuetudo Scythis et aliis nationibus non admodum operose agros colentibus, sed quantum terræ destinant sementi faciendæ adhibito igne simul stirpantibus et fumigantibus: quæ loca post incendium, stirpum radicibus ubique extantibus, admodum aspera sunt.”

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 89.

projicientes, ut humi supinus jaceret, effecerunt; nec prius eum torquere destiterunt, quam maxima noctis pars præterisset.⁵¹ Verum, ministris dormientibus, mulier accessit, et solvit eum: nocte enim excitata fuerat, ut domesticis cibum pararet. Ille vero solutus, eodem in loco mansit intrepidus cum muliere, et eam adjuvabat. Sed posteaquam illuxit, re cognita, crudelis Atharidus manus ejus vinciri jussit, eumque ad trabem domus suspendi.”⁵²

“6. Nec multo post venerunt quidam ab Atharido missi, et cibos idolis immolatos attulerunt, sic Presbyterum et Sabasm alloquentes: Hæc vobis magnus Atharidus mittit, ut comedatis, et animas vestras a morte liberetis. Hæc nos, respondet Presbyter, non edimus: neque enim nobis licet. Quamobrem Atharidum cohortamini, ut nos poteat jubeat crucifigi, aut alio genere mortis interfici. Beatus autem Sabass: Quis, inquit, hæc misit? Responderunt: Dominus /p. 90/ Atharidus. Unus, inquit Sabass, est Dominus Deus, qui in cœlis est. Impuri et profani sunt isti perditionis cibi, quemadmodum et Atharidus ipse, a qui missi sunt. Ita loquente Sabas, unus e servi Atharidi ira inflammatus, in sancti viri pectus⁵³ pili sui cuspidem sic intorsit, ut adstantes omnes crederent, eum statim ex ictus⁵⁴ violentia interiturum.⁵⁵ Verum ille pietatis studio superans plagæ dolorem: Nunc, inquit, tortori, arbitraris ictu me tuo sustulisse? Sed ita habeto, me adeo non doluisse, ut mihi videaris lanæ floccum in me conjecisse. Cujus rei perspicuum illud indicium fuit, quod nec exclamavit, neque (ut in dolore fieri solet) ingemuit, neque ullum in ejus corpore plagam vestigium apparuit.”^{56,57}

“7. Tunc, his omnibus cognitis, Atharidus eum jussit interfici: et iniquitatis ministri, dimisso Sansala Presbytero, traxerunt Sabasm ad fluvium qui vocatur Musæus ut ibi eum suffocarent.⁵⁸ At beatus vir, præcepti dominici memor, et proximum diligens sient seipsum: Quid, inquit, peccavit Presbyter, quia mecum non moritur? Non est tuum responderunt ministri, istud præcipere. Tunc ille exultatione Spiritus sancti exclamavit, ac dixit: Benedictus es, Domine, et laudabile nomen Filii tui in secula, Amen; quoniam Atharidus quidem se ipse morte damnavit atque interitu sempiterno, me autem ad vitam mittit perpetuam. Sic enim tibi complacuit in servis tuis, Domine Deus noster. Et cum duceretur, numquam cessavit Deum collaudare; dignas non putans afflictiones hujus

⁵¹ N. M.: „et tota nocte cruciatur aribus alligatus“.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 89.

⁵³ Nota c: „Ita explico, quod Græce est, λαβὼν ὑπερον, ἔρριψεν εἰς τὸ στήθος τοῦ Ἁγίου, ἀκοντίσας εἰς ὄξυ: quod non satis explicavit Zinus dicendo, vas in viri pectus conjecit. ὑπερος quidem Græcis pistillum est: sed hic vel pro pilo accipitur, vel pro fuste cujus una extremitas crassa et nodosa, altera teres et acuminata, etiam in bello teli usum præstare potuerit, nomen autem habuerit a forma pistilli, quali ad fruges in mortario comminuendo utimur.“

⁵⁴ Nota d: „MS. ecgraphum, ρύζηματι quod quia latratum significat, expuncta syllaba abundant, correximus ρύματα.“

⁵⁵ N. M.: „pilum intorquet barbarus;“

⁵⁶ N. M.: „eoquem nil læsum“

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 89-90.

⁵⁸ N. M.: „flumine mergi jubet tyrannus“.

temporis ad futuram gloriam, quæ in Sanctis revelabitur. Cum autem ad fluminis ripam ductum esset, ministri inter se: Cur non, inquiunt, dimittimus hominem hunc innocentem?⁵⁹ Numquam enim Atharidus hoc est resciturus, Sed Beatus Sabass dixit ad eos: Quid nugamini, ac non potius facitis quod vobis est imperatum? Ego video id, quod vos non potestis intueri. Ecce stant e regione, qui me suscepturi sunt in gloria. Tunc eum ad aquam perduxerunt, gratias agentem Deo atque eum collaudantem (spiritus enim ejus ad finem usque non destitit id facere) et in flumen projectum, eo ligno, quod collo ipsius alligaverunt, in profundo suffocarunt: ita per lignum et aqua defunctus, in se verum salutis⁶⁰ symbolum expressit.⁶¹ Erat autem annorum octo et triginta. Martyrio coronatus est quinta die ⁶² sabbati post Pascha, id est, pridie idus Aprilis,⁶³ Valentiniano et Valente Imperatoribus, Consulatum gerentibus Modesto et Arintheo.”⁶⁴

“8. Deinde extraxerunt illum homicidæ ex aqua, et insepultum relinquerunt. Verunt nec feræ nec volucres ejus reliquias attingere, sed a piis fratribus servatæ sunt, easque clarissimus Dux⁶⁵ Scythiæ Junius Soranus, Deum colens, missis viris fide dignis, e loco barbaro in Romaniam transtulit; et gratificari volens patriæ suæ, pretiosum munus, fructum fide gloriosum, misit in⁶⁶ Cappadociam ad vestram religionem, [ex voluntate Presbyterorum,]⁶⁷ sic ordinante Domino, qui gratiam suam largitur sustinentibus et timentibus ipsum.⁶⁸ Quamobrem, quia die Martyr coronatus est, sacrificantes, hoc reliquis fratribus nuntiate, ut in omne Catholica atque Apostolica Ecclesia exultantes, collaudent Dominum, qui proprios servos suos elegit. Salutate omnes Sanctos. Salutant vos hi, qui

⁵⁹ N. M.: „ministros Sanctum volentes dimittere“

⁶⁰ Nota e: „Crucem scilicet et baptismum“.

⁶¹ N. M.: „ipse ne sibi pareant deprecatur.“

⁶² Nota f: „Id est, hebdomadæ“.

⁶³ Nota g: „In Græco additur: ὑπατείας Φλαβίου, Consulatu Flavii: et rursum post nomina Imperatorum additur, εὐρίσκονται οὗτοι, Hi inveniuntur: quæ, ut nullum commodum sensum facientia, ideoque etiam a Zino præteritu, omisimus.“

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 90.

⁶⁵ Nota h: „Zinus solus legit Dux Jossoranus: sed magis placet lectio nostri MS. et Romanum nomen: ut fuerit Dux rerum militum, quos in subsidium Phritigernis in Scythiam sive Gothiam miserat Valens isque genere Cappadox; hoc enim clare indicat textus Græcus χαρισάμενος τῇ ἐαυτοῦ πατρίδι: licet Zinus sensum obscurum reddiderit, cum scripsit, pretiosam patriæ suæ munus... misit in Cappadociam: (...?) patriæ videtur esse genitivi casus et Jossoranus Gothus fingi“.

⁶⁶ Nota i: „Etsi tota Thracia, Galatia et Bythinia inter Gothiam et Cappadociam interjectæ sint, ex Danubio tamen, quem victores obtinebant Christiani, per Euxinum pontum, rectissimum et facillimum iter de hac in illam erat, et multa sacrorum communicatio: nam et Ulfilam genere fuisse Capadocense Philostorgius asserit.“

⁶⁷ Nota k: „Græce διὰ θελήματος Πρεσβυτερίου quod Zinus omisit.“

⁶⁸ N. M.: „corpus in Cappadociam mittitur“.

nobiscum⁶⁹ persecutionem patiuntur.⁷⁰ Ei autem, qui potest nos omnes gratia et benignitate sua in cœleste regnum perducere, gloria, honor, imperium, majestas cum Filii unogenitu et Sancto Spiritu in secula seculorum Amen.”⁷¹

Translation from Greek to Romanian

Titlu: “Martiriul Sfântului Sava Gotul (Ex Ms. Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ num. 1600).” Prolog: “Biserica lui Dumnezeu, care se află în Goția, Bisericii lui Dumnezeu care se află în Cappadocia, și tuturor Bisericilor locale ale Bisericii universale: mila, pacea și dragostea lui Dumnezeu Tatăl și a Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos să sporească.”

“1. Cuvântul fericitului Petru, că «în orice neam, cel ce se teme» de Domnul «și face dreptate este primit de El»,⁷² acum se împlinește cu putere. Căci s-a adevărit aceasta și în cazul fericitului Sava, care este martirul Dumnezeului și Mântuitorului nostru Iisus Hristos. Căci acesta, got fiind de neam, și petrecându-și viața în Goția, în mijlocul unor neamuri sucite și stricate⁷³, s-a arătat ca un luminător⁷⁴ în lume, imitându-i pe sfinți și, asemenea lor, s-a remarcat izbândind în cele după Hristos. Căci nu în altceva a devenit râvnitor din copilărie, ci în evlavia pentru Mântuitorul și Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos. S-a călăuzit de această virtute desăvârșită ca să ajungă bărbat desăvârșit, prin cunoașterea deplină a Fiului lui Dumnezeu.⁷⁵ De asemenea, cu iubitorii de Dumnezeu conlucra în toate spre bine, ajungând la răsplata chemării de sus, după cum năzuia din tinerețe, și lupta pe față împotriva vrăjmașului, ridicându-se deasupra răutăților vieții, având pace cu toți.”

“2. Harul pomenirii și lucrării celor evlavioși, precum și săvârșirea lui în Domnul, nu ne lasă să le trecem sub tăcere, ci vom consemna meritele lui. Căci a fost drept în credință, evlavios, gata spre toată ascultarea cea după

⁶⁹ Expresia grecească „οἱ σὺν ὑμῖν δεδιωγμένοι“, „cei ce erau persecutați împreună cu voi“. În latină *nobiscum* „cu noi“. Spre deosebire de alte dăți, urmează aici versiunea latină în traduceri, pentru că pare mai logic să considerăm o proximitate între cei care erau persecutați în Gothia și autorul acestei scrisori, decât între martirii din Gothia și cappadocieni, care nu erau supuși acelei persecuții.

⁷⁰ N. M.: „annuo festo honorandum“

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 90.

⁷² *Fapte* 10,35: «Ci, în orice neam, cel ce se teme de El și face dreptate este primit de El.»

⁷³ Traducerea latină *perversæ* este potrivită pentru *διεστραμμένης*, deci ar putea fi tradus prin „perverse“. Am evitat, însă, în traducerea românească acest neologism, întrucât cuvântul tradițional „stricate“ redă îndeajuns toate nuanțele semantice necesare pentru înțelegerea textului.

⁷⁴ Termenul *φωστήρ* poate fi tradus și ca „stea“ (ca în varianta latină, *stella*), dar am preferat termenul generic de „luminător“, în spiritul în care s-a tradus în mod tradițional în *Facerea* 1,14. De remarcat că și acolo textul original preferă *לְאֵלִים*, respectiv *φωστῆρες*, „luminători“, și nu cuvintele obișnuite pentru „stea“ (*כוכב*, respectiv *ἄστρον*, cf. *Ἀσθήρ*, ca în *Numerii* 24,17), întrucât se cuprinde și Luna sau alte obiecte cerești care pot reflecta lumina spre Pământ (e. g. Venus sau alte planete).

⁷⁵ Cf. *Efeseni* 4,13: «μέχρι κατανήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ» = «Până vom ajunge toți la unitatea credinței și a cunoașterii Fiului lui Dumnezeu, la starea bărbatului desăvârșit, la măsura vârstei deplinătății lui Hristos.»

dreptate, cinstit, nemeșteșugit în cuvânt, dar nu în știință, grăind adevărul, reducându-i la tăcere pe idolatri, fără să se mândrească, ci, cum se cuvine celor smeriți, fiind supus, liniștit, iar nu îndrăzneț în cuvânt, râvnitor în tot lucrul bun,⁷⁶ cântând în Biserică, în aceasta fiind foarte priceput, fără averi, fără proprietăți, decât cele socotite de folos, treaz, cumpătat în toate, neînvățat cu femeile, depărtat de lume, ținând posturile, stăruind în rugăciuni fără de slavă deșartă și bunei socoteli pe toate supunându-le, lucrând pe cele cuvenite, fără să-l intereseze cele nefolositoare și având credință întru totul fără prihană, lucrătoare prin iubire,⁷⁷ după cum nimic nu-l tulbura în a vorbi mereu deschis în Domnul.”

“3. Pentru că nu o dată, ci de mai multe ori, înainte de săvârșirea sa, lucrând cu credință, a dovedit evlavie. Căci atunci când au început, pentru prima dată, mai marii Goției a se porni împotriva creștinilor, obligându-i să mănânce cele jertfite idolilor, au învățat unii păgâni din satul unde petrecea Sava, ca să-i facă pe creștinii dintre ei care erau de față să mănânce din carnea care nu era jertfită, în locul celei jertfite idolilor, pentru cei prigoniiți din popor, pentru cei ce se păzeau neprihăniți, ca pe prigonitori să-i înșele. Aflând, însă, aceasta, fericitul Sava, nu doar că nu a mâncat din mâncărurile amintite, ci venind între ei, a mărturisit tuturor, zicând: «Dacă mănâncă vreunul din cărnurile acelea, acela nu poate fi creștin.» Și i-a oprit pe toți să cadă în capcana diavolului. De aceea, cei ce au urzit această înșelăciune l-au alungat din sat, dar, după ceva vreme, l-au convins să se întoarcă.

Iarși săvârșindu-se viclenia, după obiceiul goților, unii păgâni din satul amintit, aducând jertfe demonilor, tocmai se jurau prigonitorului că nu mai este nici un creștin în satul lor. Dar Sava, arătându-se din nou, și, venind în mijlocul adunării, a zis: «Pentru mine nimeni să nu mărturisească, pentru că eu sunt creștin.» Atunci, stând înaintea prigonitorului, au jurat sătenii, pe aceia ascunzându-i, că nu mai este niciun alt creștin în satul lor. Auzind aceasta prințul fărădelegii, a poruncit să i-l înfățișeze pe Sava. Când l-au adus, i-a întrebat pe cei de față dacă ar mai avea alte bunuri. Dar, răspunzând că nu mai are nimic pe ce să se sprijine, l-au disprețuit⁷⁸.”

“4. După aceea, pornindu-se o prigoană mare, din partea păcătoșilor din Goția, împotriva Bisericii lui Dumnezeu, înaintea sfinteii zile a Paștelui, a vrut să meargă în alt oraș, la preotul Gutthica, pentru a săvârși sărbătoarea împreună cu el. Ieșind el pe cale, a văzut un bărbat, foarte mare și luminos la înfățișare,

⁷⁶ Cf. 2 *Timotei* 2,21: «εις πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον» = «pregătit pentru tot lucrul bun». 2 *Timotei* 3,17: «ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.» = «Astfel ca omul lui Dumnezeu să fie desăvârșit, bine pregătit pentru orice lucru bun.». *Tit* 3,1: «πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἑτοιμὸς εἶναι» = «să fie gata la orice lucru bun».

⁷⁷ *Galateni* 5,6: «ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομή τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι’ ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.» = «Căci în Hristos Iisus, nici tăierea împrejur nu poate ceva, nici netăierea împrejur, ci credința care este lucrătoare prin iubire.»

⁷⁸ ἐξουδενώσας αὐτὸν – “l-au făcut (considerat) (ca) de (pe) nimic”.

care i-a spus: «Întoarce-te și mergi la preotul Sansala». Dar Sava a răspuns, zicându-i: «Sansala a plecat de acasă». Pentru că Sansala fugise din cauza prigoanei și a rămas în Imperiul Roman.⁷⁹ Dar atunci, pentru sfânta zi de Paști, s-a întors de puțin timp. Pentru că Sava nu știuse despre întoarcerea lui, i-a răspuns așa celui ce i s-a arătat, și, împotriviindu-se, a continuat spre preotul Gutthica. Ne dorind să se supună poruncii, dintr-o dată, fiind vreme bună în ceasul acela, a apărut o mulțime nesfârșită de zăpadă pe fața pământului, care împiedica drumul, încât nu se putea trece prin ea. Atunci, înțelegând că voia lui Dumnezeu era să-l împiedice să meargă mai departe, dar să-l lase (să meargă) spre preotul Sansala. Și, binecuvântându-L pe Dumnezeu, s-a întors, iar văzându-l pe Sansala s-a bucurat și le-a povestit, lui și multor altora, vedenia pe care a avut-o pe drum. Și a petrecut ziua de Paști la el. Iar în a treia noapte după sărbătoare, iată că, din partida necredincioșilor, Atharid, fiul căpeteniei Rhotheos, năvălind cu armata nelegiuitorilor, s-a oprit în satul acela, și, găsindu-l pe preot dormind în casa sa, a pus să fie legat. La fel și în privința lui Sava, pe care, scoțându-l gol din pat, l-a aruncat în legături. Pe preot l-au legat de șasiul carului. Pe Sava, gol cum s-a născut, l-au tras prin spini, care fuseseră arși de curând, fugărit și lovit cu lemne și cu bice. Acestea le-au făcut, fără milă, împotriva robilor lui Dumnezeu.”

“5. Dar îndurarea cruzimii vrăjmașului și credința se împletesc la cel drept. Și, venind ziua aceea, a zis, lăudându-se în Domnul⁸⁰ către prigonitorii săi: «Nu pentru a-mi pricinui chinuri, lovindu-mă de ascuțiturile spinilor, m-ați târât gol și desculț? Vedeți dacă picioarele mele se împiedică, și dacă pe trupul meu am urmele sau rănilile pe care mi le-ați pricinuit!» Deci, văzând ei că nimic nu se arată în trupul lui din cele ce i-au făcut fără milă, au înălțat osia carului și, punându-l pe umerii lui, i-au întins mâinile pe capetele osiei, la fel și picioarele, întinzându-le pe altă osie, le-au legat. Iar după ce l-au ațintit de osii, a fost întins pe spate, pe pământ, și aproape toată noaptea nu au mai încetat să-l chinuie. Iar când au adormit cei de față⁸¹, a venit o femeie și l-a dezlegat, aceea fiind trează noaptea ca să pregătească mâncarea celor ce erau în casă. Dar el, fiind dezlegat, a rămas pe loc, fără teamă, lucrând împreună cu femeia lucrul ei. Și, venind dimineața, a aflat aceasta necredinciosul Atharid, a poruncit să-i fie legate mâinile și să-l atârne de grinda casei.”

“6. Nu după multă vreme au venit trimiși de la Atharid, aducând mâncăruri jertfite idolilor. Atunci le-a spus preotului și lui Sava: «Atharid a poruncit ca acestea să vă fie date vouă, ca să le mâncați, și să izbăviți de moarte sufletele

⁷⁹ În text: ἐν τῇ Ῥωμανίᾳ.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Galateni* 6,14: «ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι’ οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται καὶ γὰρ κόσμος.» = «Iar mie, să nu-mi fie a mă lăuda, decât numai în crucea Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos, prin care lumea este răstignită pentru mine, și eu pentru lume!»

⁸¹ τῶν δημίῳν – “publicul, spectatorii”.

voastre.» Răspunzând, preotul a zis: «Pe acestea noi nu le vom mânca, căci nu ne este îngăduit. Dar îndemnați-l pe Atharid să poruncească să fim răstigniți sau în orice fel ar vrea să ne nimicească.» A zis și Sava: «Cine le-a trimis pe acestea?» Ei au zis: «Stăpânul Atharid!» Sava, însă, a zis: «Singurul Stăpân, Dumnezeu, este în cer, iar Atharid este om necredincios și blestemat. Iar aceste mâncăruri sunt necurate, nesfințite și de dat pieirii, ca și cel ce le-a trimis, Atharid.» După ce le-a spus Sava pe acestea, s-a aprins tot de mânie unul dintre slugile lui Atharid și, luând măciuca⁸², a izbit-o de pieptul sfântului, împungându-l cu ascuțișul sulitei, încât cei de față au crezut că, datorită mulțimii rănilor ce i-au fost pricinuite, va muri pe loc. Dar el, biruind prin dorul credinței chinul călăilor, a zis în auzul celor de față:⁸³ «Acum tu crezi că m-ai rănit cu măciuca, dar înțelege că nu m-a durut aceasta, ca și cum un fir de lână m-ar fi împuns.» Și ca semn văzut al celor spuse, a demonstrat cu fapta: căci nici nu a strigat, nici nu a gemut, ca în chinuri, și nici vreo urmă de rană nu s-a arătat pe trupul său.

7. Atunci, văzând aceasta Atharid, a poruncit să fie ucis. Așadar, slujitorii fărădelegii, l-au chinuit pe preotul Sansala legat, iar pe Sava l-au luat și l-au dus să-l înece într-un râu, care se numește Mouseos (Musæus). Iar fericitul, amintindu-și porunca Domnului, și iubindu-și aproapele ca pe sine însuși,⁸⁴ a zis: «Ce a păcătuțit preotul, încât să nu moară împreună cu mine?» Dar i-au răspuns: «Nu ține de tine să te îngrijești de aceasta.» Acestea zicând ei, a strigat întru bucuria Duhului Sfânt și a zis: «Bindecuvântat fii, Doamne, și Cel slăvit în numele Tău, Iisus, în veci, Amin. Că Atharid pe el însuși morții veșnice și pieirii s-a ținut, dar pe mine mă trimite vieții care rămâne în veci. Căci astfel ai binevoit⁸⁵ în robii tăi, Doamne, Dumnezeul nostru.» Și toată calea săvârșind,

⁸² Sau: *buzduganul, ghioaga*.

⁸³ *Ad litteram*: „a zis publicului“. Dar este clar că s-a adresat celui care l-a rănit, în auzul publicului.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Matei* 19,19; 22,39 etc.

⁸⁵ Aici, *εὐδόκησας* (ind., aorist, activ, 2 sg.). Traducerile ortodoxe în limba română preferă expresia „am binevoit“ pentru *εὐδόκησα* (*Matei* 3,17; 17,5; *Marcu* 1,11; *Luca* 3,22; 2 *Petru* 1,17). Cornilescu folosește „îmi găsesc plăcerea“, iar variantele protestante îi urmează exemplul. Realitatea este că verbul grec *εὐδοκέω* nu este ușor de tradus în orice altă limbă. Traducerile ortodoxe încearcă să evite o interpretare hedonistă, întrucât plăcerea pe care o evocă verbul în acest caz este mai degrabă o bucurie. De aceea am urmat și eu varianta ortodoxă, pe care o consider a fi potrivită pentru limba română în acest context. Acolo unde verbul este folosit în propoziții negative, cu referire la dezaprobarea unor păcate, și traducerile ortodoxe folosesc „a plăcea“ (*Evrei* 10,6 – cf.: *Psalmii* 39/40,10/7; 50/51,18/17). Cercetând problema în Biblia ebraică (*Psalmul* 51,18 este, în Biblia ebraică: «כִּי לֹא-תִרְצֶה עֹלָה לֵאלֹהִים וְיִבְרַח יְהוָה מִן-הַצָּרִים», *lit.*: „Că nu-Ți place sacrificiul, iar arderile de tot nu te încântă“), vom constata că ambiguitatea (productivă, de altfel) începe, și aici, cu termeni care exprimă voința, dorința și plăcerea în același timp. Cuvântul *רָצָה* înseamnă „dorință, plăcere, voie, scop...“, respectiv, în formă verbală, *רָצָה* / *רָצָה*, „a vrea, a dori, a-l interesa, a găsi plăcere în ceva“. Al doilea verb ebraic din versetul citat este *רָצָה*, de la *רָצָה*, „a fi încântat de, a se bucura de, a accepta“. Substantivul din aceeași familie de cuvinte, *εὐδοκία*, este de asemenea folosit în *Biblie* (*Matei* 11,26).

a mulțumit lui Dumnezeu că, prin pătimirile nemeritate din vremea de acum l-a călăuzit spre slava care se descoperă în sfinți. Când a fost dus pe malul râului, cei ce îl țineau au zis unul către celălalt: «Hai să-l dezlegăm pe nevinovatul acesta! Căci de unde va afla aceasta Atharid?» Dar fericitul Sava le-a spus: «De ce vorbiți deșertăciuni și nu faceți ce ați fost însărcinați? Eu văd ceea ce voi nu puteți vedea. Iată cum stau înaintea, în slavă, cei ce au venit să mă primească pe mine.» Atunci, l-au coborât în apă, iar el mulțumea și Îl binecuvânta pe Dumnezeu. Căci duhul lui a liturghisit până la sfârșit. Și l-au aruncat și, punându-i un butuc⁸⁶ de gât, s-a scufundat în adânc. Și astfel s-a săvârșit prin lemn și apă, nepătat păstrând simbolul mântuirii, când avea treizeci și opt de ani. S-a săvârșit⁸⁷ în joia din săptămâna de după Paști, în ziua dinaintea idelilor lui aprilie,⁸⁸ sub împărații Valentinian și Valens, fiind consuli Modestus și Arintheus.⁸⁹ Apoi scoțându-l din apă ucigașii, l-au lăsat neîngropat și au plecat de acolo. Dar nici un câine și nicio fiară nu l-au atacat defel. Iar frații au căutat să preia moaștele, ca să le sustragă și să le învelească. Junius Soranus, cel mai luminat comandant⁸⁹ al Sciției, cinstitor al Domnului, a trimis oameni vrednici de încredere și l-au trecut din ținuturile barbarilor în Imperiu Roman⁹⁰. Și l-a oferit ca dar de preț patriei sale, și ca rod slăvit al credinței, pentru Cappadocia, l-a trimis pentru evlavia voastră, prin voia preoțimii⁹¹, acestea rânduindu-le Domnul, prin har, celor ce îi sunt alături și fraților ce se tem [de El]. Plinind așadar, în ziua în care a luat cununa muceniciei⁹² sale, adunarea duhovnicească, să-i vestiți și pe frații aflați departe, ca, în toată Biserica universală⁹³ și apostolească, să săvârșească [slujba] bucuroși, slăvindu-L pe Domnul, Cel care i-a ales El Însuși pe slujitorii Săi.⁹⁴ Salutați-i pe toți sfinții; pe voi vă salută toți cei ce au fost prizoniți împreună cu noi. Celui ce pe toate le poate să ne călăuzească pe noi cu harul și darul Său în împărăția cea mai presus de ceruri, slavă, cinste, putere, mărire, împreună cu Pruncul Cel Unul Născut și cu Duhul Sfânt, în vecii vecilor. Amin.”

⁸⁶ ζύλον „un instrument de pedeapsă, un butuc de lemn, pus pe gâtul prizonierului; obezi, în care erau legate picioarele; spânzurătoare“. Dar, dacă butucul ar fi fost într-adevăr din lemn, plutind pe apă, doar fiind pus într-o anumită poziție, care ar fi forțat capul să stea sub apă, ar explica modul în care s-ar fi putut îneca.

⁸⁷ Varianta latină aici surprinde foarte bine sensul grecesc, chiar dacă într-o traducere interpretativă: „Martyrio coronatus est ...“, „s-a încununat ca martir“.

⁸⁸ Idele (lat. *idus*) marcau jumătatea lunii: 15 martie, mai, iulie, octombrie; 13 în celelalte luni. Așadar, martiriul a avut loc în 12 aprilie.

⁸⁹ Δούξ „duce, comandant militar“.

⁹⁰ Romania: εις τὴν Ῥωμανίαν.

⁹¹ τοῦ Πρεσβυτερίου, „presbiteriului, clerului, preoțimii“.

⁹² Lit.: ἀγωνισάμενος, „luptând“, „în ziua în care a dobândit, luptând, cununa“. Sensul este, însă, bine surprins în text, ca și în versiunea latină: „quia die Martyr coronatus est“.

⁹³ Grecește: καθολικῆ, dar fără sensul confesional modern al cuvântului.

⁹⁴ Lit.: „τὸν ἐκλογὰς ποιούμενον τῶν ἰδίων δούλων αὐτοῦ“, „Care a făcut alegerea propriilor Săi slujitori“.

Translation from Greek to English

The Greek and Latin texts of *Acta sanctorum* are given in the Romanian version of this article.

Title: “The Martyrdom of the Saint Sabas the Goth (Ex Ms. Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ num. 1600).” Prologue: “The Church of God, which is in Gothia, to the Church of God which is in Cappadocia, and to all the local Churches of the universal Church: the mercy, the peace, and the love of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ shall increase.”

“1. The word of the blessed Peter, that «in every nation, he that fears» the Lord «and works righteousness, is accepted by him»,⁹⁵ now it is utterly fulfilled. For this became true also in the case of the blessed Sabas, who is the martyr of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Because, being Goth by his kind, and spending his life in Gothia, in the middle of some twisted and perverted ⁹⁶ peoples, he showed himself as a luminary⁹⁷ into the world, imitating the saints and, like them, he remarked himself triumphing in those in accordance with Christ. Because he became zealous from his childhood in no other things but in his devotion for our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. He led himself by this perfect virtue to become a perfect man, through the full knowledge of the Son of God.⁹⁸ He also cooperated, in everything, for good, with those who love God, reaching the reward of the calling from above, as he longed from his youth; and he fought openly against the enemy, prevailing over the wickedness of life, being in peace with everybody.”

“2. The grace of the commemoration and of the work of those devoted, as well as his conclusion into the Lord, do not let us to pass them over in silence, but we shall record his excellence. For he was righteous in his faith, pious, ready for all the correct submission, fair, unskilful in his speech, but not in knowledge, speaking the truth, silencing the idolaters, without prouiding himself, but, as it is proper for the humble ones, being obedient, peaceful, and not

⁹⁵ Acts 10:35: «But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.»

⁹⁶ The Latin translation *perversæ* is good for *δισεστραμμένης*, so it could be translated also in Romanian with „perverse“. I avoided, however, this neologism in the Romanian translation, because the traditional word „stricate“ (broken, spoiled, corrupted) gives enough all the semantic shades necessary for the understanding of the text.

⁹⁷ The word *φωστήρ* can also be translated with „star“ (like in the Latin version, *stella*), but I preferred the generic term „luminator“ (luminary, light), as it was traditionally translated it into Romanian in *Genesis* 1:14. Notice that the original text also prefers there *מְאֹרֹת*, and *φωστήρες*, “luminaries” (KJV: “lights“, but I wanted to be even more specific), and not the usual words for the “star” (*כוכב*, and *ἀστρον*, cf. *ἀστήρ*, as in *Numbers* 24:17), because it is included the Moon, too, and other celestial objects that can reflect the light towards the Earth (e. g. Venus or other planets).

⁹⁸ Cf. *Ephesians* 4:13: «μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ» = «Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:»

audacious in his speech, earnest for all the good work,⁹⁹ singing in the Church, being very skilled doing this, without wealth, without possessions, except of some who are thought to be necessary, sober, moderated in everything, uninitiated with the women, retreated, observing the fastings, insisting in prayers without vanity, and subjecting everything to the good reason, working those which are proper, without being interested in those which are useless, having a faith entirely without reproach, working through love,¹⁰⁰ and nothing could disturb him to speak always freely in the Lord.”

“3. Because not just once, but many times, before his passing, working with faith, proved devotion. For when they started, for the first time, the rulers of Gothia to turn against the Christians, forcing them to eat from those that were sacrificed to the idols, some of the heathens from the village where Sabas was living, advised to make the Christians among them, which were present, to eat from the meat that was not sacrificed, instead of that which was sacrificed to the idols, for those which were persecuted among the people, for those which were keeping themselves pure, to deceive the persecutors. But, finding this out, the blessed Sabas, not only he didn't eat from the mentioned foods, but coming among them, he confessed to everyone, saying: «If someone eats these meats, he cannot be a Christian.» And he stopped everybody to fall into the trap of the devil. Because of that, those who plotted that fraud banned him from the village, but, after a while, they convinced him to come back.

The cunning being committed again, according to the custom of the Goths, some heathens from the mentioned village, giving sacrifices to the demons, they were just about to swear to the persecutor that there is no other Christian in their village. But Sabas, showing himself again, and, coming in the middle of the gathering, said: «Nobody should swear for me, because I am a Christian.» Then, standing in front of the persecutor, the villagers swore, hiding them, that there is no other Christian in their village. Hearing this, the prince of the iniquity ordered to be brought Sabas to him. When they have brought him, he asked those which were present if he had any more goods. But, answering that he had nothing else to rely on, they despised him.¹⁰¹”

“4. Later, starting a big persecution, from the part of the wicked ones in Gothia, against the Church of God, before the holy day of the Easter, he wanted

⁹⁹ Cf. 2 *Timothy* 2:21: «εις πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἡτοιμασμένον» = «prepared unto every good work». 2 *Timothy* 3:17: «ὥς ἄριστος ἢ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.» = «That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.». *Titus* 3:1: «πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐτοίμους εἶναι» = «to be ready to every good work».

¹⁰⁰ *Galatians* 5:6: «ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομὴ τι ἰσχύει οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη.» = «For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.»

¹⁰¹ ἐξουδενώσας αὐτὸν – litt. “they made (considered) him as nothing”. The following Latin has insertions with no correspondent in the Greek text: “Neque prodesse, qui ejusmodi est, iniquis, nec obesse potest. Atque ita locutus, jussit eum extrudi”.

to go to another city, to the priest Gutthica, to celebrate the feast along with him. Getting out, on the way, he saw a man, very big and bright in his appearance, who said to him: «Return and go to the priest Sansala». But Sabas answered, saying: «Sansala had gone away from home». For Sansala ran away because of the persecution and stayed into the Roman Empire.¹⁰² But then, for the holy day of the Easter, he turned back recently. Because Sabas didn't know about his return, this is why he answered that way to him whom appeared to him, and, fighting against it, he continued towards the priest Gutthica. Not willing to subject himself to that commandment, suddenly, having a good weather in that moment, an endless amount of snow appeared on the face of the earth, and it was blocking the way, as no one could pass through it. Then, understanding that the wish of God is to stop him to go further, but to let him go to the priest Sansala. And, blessing God, he went back, and when he saw Sansala he rejoiced, and he told, to him and to many others, the vision that he had on the way. And he spent the Easter day with him. And in the third night, after the feast, behold that, from the party of the wicked, Atharid, the son of the chief Rhotheosteos, rading with the army of the wicked, he stopped in that village, and, finding the priest sleeping in his house, he ordered to be bound. The same for Sabas, who was pulled out naked from his bed, and thrown into ties. They tied the priest of the chassis of the chariot. They got Sabas, naked as he was born, dragged through thorns, which have been recently burnt, they chased and hit him with woods and whips. They have done these, without mercy, against the servants of God.”

“5. But enduring the cruelty of the enemy and faith are interweaved in the righteous man. And, once that day had come, he said, praising himself in the Lord, facing his persecutors:¹⁰³ «Not to torment me, pushing me over the edges of the thorns, you dragged me naked and barefoot? Notice if my legs are stumbling, and if I have on my body the traces and the wounds that you have inflicted to me!» Therefore, after they have seen that nothing shows on his body, of which they have done to him without mercy, they raised the axle of the chariot and, putting it on his shoulders and they stretched his hands on the ends of the axle, the same with his feet, stretching them on another axle, they tied them. And, after they bonded him on the axles, they laid him down, on his back, on the ground, and, almost all the night, they didn't stop torturing him. And when the public¹⁰⁴ went to sleep, a woman came and untied him, for he was awaken all the night, to prepare the food for those which were in the

¹⁰² In text: ἐν τῇ Ῥωμανίᾳ.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Galatians* 6:14: «But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.» - «Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ».

¹⁰⁴ τῶν δημίῳν – “the public, the audience”.

house. But he, being untied, stood in his place, without fear, doing her job, together with the woman. And, coming the morning, the faithless Atharid learnt this out, and he ordered to be tied on his hands and hung on the beam of the house.”

“6. Not long afterwards they come some emissaries from Atharid, bringing foods that were sacrificed to the idols. Then they said to the priest and to Sabas: «Atharid ordered for this to be provided to you, for you to eat them, and to save your souls from the death.» Answering, the priest said: «We shall not eat these, because this is not allowed to us. But urge Atharid to order for us to be crucified, or any other way in which he would like to destroy us.» And Sabas said, too: «Who sent these?» They said: «The master Atharid!» But Sabas said: «The only Master, God, is in heaven, and Atharid is a faithless and accursed man. Also, these foods are impure, unholy and to be doomed, as the one who sent them, Atharid.» After Sabas said these, one of the servants of Atharid burnt by anger and, taking the mace¹⁰⁵, he hit it on the chest of the saint, piercing him with the point of the spear, so the public thought that, for the multitude of his wounds which were inflicted to him, he was going to die on the spot. But, triumphing through the passion of his faith over the torture of the persecutors, he said for the hearing of the public: ¹⁰⁶ «Now you think you wounded me with the mace, but you must understand that this didn’t hurt me, as if I would be stung by a thread of wool.» And, as a seen sign of his words, he demonstrated it by deeds: for he didn’t cried out, neither did he groan, as in torments, and there was no trace of a wound on his body.”

“7. Then, seeing this Atharid, he ordered him to be killed. Thus, the servants of the misdeed tortured the priest Sansala tied, and they took Sabas and got him to be drown into a river, called Mouseos (Musæus). And the blessed, remembering the command of the Lord, and loving his neighbor as himself,¹⁰⁷ a zis: «What sin did the priest, that he could not die with me?» But they told him: «It is not up to you to be concerned about these.» After they said these, he cried in the joy of the Holy Spirit and he said: «Blessed be Thou, Lord, and The One Who is hallowed in Thy name, Jesus, for ever, Amen. Because Atharid stocked himself still into the eternal death and destruction, but he is sending me to the ever lasting life. For thus Thou findest comfort¹⁰⁸ in Thy servants,

¹⁰⁵ Or: *bludgeon*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ad litteram*: “he said to the public”. But it is clear that he addressed to the one who wounded him, in the hearing of the public.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Matthew* 19:19; 22,39 etc.

¹⁰⁸ Here, *εὐδόκησας* (ind., aor., act., 2nd, sg.). The Romanian Orthodox translations preferred the expression “am binevoit” (I am well pleased) for *εὐδόκησα* (*Matthew* 3:17; 17:5; *Mark* 1:11; *Luke* 3:22; 2 *Peter* 1:17). Cornilescu used “îmi găsec plăcerea” (I found my pleasure), and the Protestant versions follow his example. The fact is that the Greek verb *εὐδοκέω* is not easy to be translated in any other language. The Orthodox translations tried to avoid a hedonist interpretation, because the pleasure evoked by the verb in this case is rather a joy. This is why I followed myself

Lord, Our God.» And walking all the way, he thanked God that, through the undeserved passions he suffered in this time, He led him to the glory which reveals itself in the saints. When he was taken on the riverside, those who held him said to each other: «Let's untie this innocent man! For where would Atharid learn this from?» But the blessed Sabas said to them: «Why do you talk nonsens and do not what you were ordered to do? I see what you cannot see. Behold, how they stood forward, in grace, those who came to welcome me.» Then, they got him down, into the water, and he was thanking and blessing God. For his spirit served God¹⁰⁹ until the end. They therew him and, putting a wood¹¹⁰ on his neck, he had sunk to the deep. And so he passed away,¹¹¹ in the Thursday of the week after the Easter, in the day before the ides of April,¹¹² under the emperors Valentinianus and Valens, consuls being Modestus and Arintheus.”⁸. Then, dragging him out of the water, the killers disbanded him unburied and they retired from there. But no dog and no beast attacked him at all. And the brothers sought to take the relics, to remove and wrap them. Junius Soranus, the most enlightened commander¹¹³ of the Scythia, worshiper of the Lord, sent trustworthy men to carry him across from the lands of the barbarians into the Roman Empire¹¹⁴. And he offered him as a precious gift to his homeland, and as a glorious fruit of the faith for Cappadocia, he sent him for your devotion, through the will of the clergy,¹¹⁵ these being arranged by God for those who stand by Him and for [His] worshipers¹¹⁶. Completing thus, the Orthodox version, which I consider to be appropriate for the Romanian language and the context. Where the verb is used in negative sentences, referring to the disapproval of some sins, the Orthodox translations use also “a plăcea” - “to please / like” (*Hebrews* 10,6 – cf.: *Psalms* 39/40,10/7; 50/51,18/17). Investigating the problem in the Hebrew Bible (the *Psalms* 51:18 is, in the Hebrew Bible: «כִּי לֹא-תִחַפֵּץ בְּזֶבַח וְאֶתְנֶה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה», *lit.*: “For Thou are not delighted by the sacrifice, and Thou are not pleased by the whole burnt-offering”), we could notice that the ambiguity (productive, otherwise) starts here, as well, with words that express the will, the desire and the pleasure in the same time. The word רָצָה means “desire, want, wish, purpose...”, and, in verbal form, רָצָה / רָצָה, “to want, to be interested in, to take pleasure in”. The second Hebrew verb in the quoted verse is הִרְצָה, from רָצָה, “be pleased with, enjoy, accept favorably”. The noun of the same word family, *εὐδοκία*, is also used in the Bible (*Matthew* 11:26).

¹⁰⁹ Greek *ἔλειτοδρησεν*, Romanian “a liturghisit”.

¹¹⁰ *ζύλον* „an instrument of punishment, a wooden collar, put on the neck of the prisoner; stocks, in which the feet were confined; gallows“. However, if the collar would have been really made of wood, floating on the water, only placing it in a certain position that would force the had to stay below, would explain how would this make him drown.

¹¹¹ The Latin version expresses here very well the Greek meaning, even if as an interpretative translation: „Martyrio coronatus est ,, „he was crowned as a Martyr“.

¹¹² The ides (Lat. *idus*) were marking middle of the month: the fifteenth day of March, May, July, and October; the thirteenth of every other month. Thus, the martyrdom took place in the 12th of April.

¹¹³ Δούξ „duke, military commander“.

¹¹⁴ Romania: *εἰς τὴν Ρωμανίαν*.

¹¹⁵ *τοῦ Πρεσβυτερίου*, „presbyterium, clergy“.

¹¹⁶ *Lit.*: *φοβούμενοις*, „fearing“.

in the day he took the crown for his martyrdom¹¹⁷, the spiritual gathering, announce the brothers that are far away, so that, in all the universal¹¹⁸ and apostolic Church, so they could fulfil [the service] rejoicing, praising God, Who chose His own servants by Himself.¹¹⁹ Salute all the saints; you are saluted by all those who were persecuted along with us. To Him, Who can always lead us with His grace and gift to the kingdom above the heavens, glory, devotion, power, [and] majesty, together with The Only Born Son and with the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.”

Commentaries

The letter (referred here as “the *Letter*”) translated in this paper belongs to a correspondence that most probable was preserved only partially, between Saint Basil the Great and some officials of “Gothia” and “Scythia” – names which designated, in the 4th century AD, the territories around the lower Danube, to the north, and to the southeast, respectively.

Establishing the authorship of the *Letter* is not an easy task, even knowing the opinion of previous scholars that debated it.

Fr. Prof. M. Păcurariu thinks that the author of this *Letter* was, most likely, the one identified by: the bishop Betranion of Tomis, in which town the holy relicts would have stationed for a while.¹²⁰ Junius Soranus is mentioned at the end. The letter was written in the name of the Church, thus, by a bishop, which couldn’t be Ascholius of Thessalonica, but only the bishop of Tomis, the only one close enough of Gothia, to consider himself its shepherd.

Fr. Prof. I. Rămureanu, expressing an opposite opinion, that the *Letter* was written by the priests north of Danube, wrote that if the bishop would have written it, there wouldn’t have been necessary to mention the «college of the priests» (*πρεσβυτέριον*) as the author – this situation would have been possible only if the authors were the priests in Gothia (Dacia), north of Danube.¹²¹ Good argument, I may say, but it doesn’t explain a few expressions in the text, which appears as written by someone stranger to the realm north of Danube, such as: “spending his life in Gothia, *in the middle of some twisted and perverted peoples*” (& 1); “to carry him across *from the lands of the barbarians* into the Roman Empire” (& 8). As I wrote in the note to “twisted and perverted”, “The Latin translation *perversæ* is good for *διεστραμμένης*, so it could be translated also in Romanian with „perverse“. I avoided, however, this neologism in the Romanian

¹¹⁷ Lit.: *ἀγωνισάμενος*, „fighting“, „in the day he took, fighting, the crown“. The meaning is, however, well captured in the text, as in the Latin version: „ quia die Martyr coronatus est“.

¹¹⁸ Greek *καθολικῆ*, but without the confessional meaning in the modern use of the word.

¹¹⁹ Lit.: „τὸν ἐκλογὰς ποιούμενον τῶν ἰδίων δούλων αὐτοῦ“, „Who made the choice of His own servants“.

¹²⁰ Păcurariu, 1992, pp. 112, 144-145.

¹²¹ Rămureanu, 1997, p. 310.

translation, because the traditional word „stricate“ (broken, spoiled, corrupted) gives enough all the semantic shades necessary for the understanding of the text.” Fr. Rămureanu translated with a different nuance, “nestatornic și viclean” = “unstable and cunning”. It is possible that the priests were critical about the people among whom they served, but these words still seem to come from an author somewhat from a bit of distance. There is another possibility: that the beginning and the end suffered additions from Bretanion, while the corpus was written by the priests north of Danube. Anyway, the *Letter* clearly highlights the subordination of the *presbyterium* north of Danube to the bishop in Tomis.

A very good chronological account of the events in the *Letter* in Romanian we find in Rămureanu’s introduction to his translation, with many remarks that will be considered in the following commentaries. However, I will try to cover rather a larger the historical context of the events.

St. Basil wrote to the governor of Scythia Minor, Junius Soranus, “also a Cappadocian and maybe a relative of him”,¹²² among others, these words: “You’ll do a good work if you’ll send to their home the relics of the martyrs. According to your writings to us, the persecution makes there martyrs of the Lord even today.”¹²³ He referred, as the Romanian editor put it (*Letter CLV*, to Ascholius), to those “Deceased during the persecution of Athanaric, in 372, when died also Sabas the Gothian, in the 12th of April.”¹²⁴ The editor of the Loeb Classical issue noted for this letter: “Written in 373. According to the Benedictine edition the person addressed [by *αὐτοῦ*, n. n.] is Junius Soranus, a relative of Basil and a duke of Scythia. The sub-title may have been added by a copyist. It applies to Soranus, inasmuch as he was «a trainer» (*ἀλείπτης*) and encourager of martyrs. In *Letter CLXIV* Basil calls Ascholius «trainer» of the martyr Sabass. On the present letter and *Letters CLV*, *CLXIV*, and *CLXV*, which have to do with transferring the remains of the Gothic martyr Sabass (died April 372) to Caesarea in Cappadocia, of G. Pfeilschefer ...¹²⁵ This letter is one of the earliest references to the preservation of the relics of martyrs.”¹²⁶

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¹²² Păcurariu, 1992, p. 112. Cf. id., 2009, pp. 21-27.

¹²³ *Letter 155*, in Migne, vol. 32, 1886, 613-614. Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 88-89.

¹²⁴ Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 89. Saint Basil, 1928, note to *Letter CLIV* (pp. 376-380), pp. 380-381: „Written in 373. According to the Benedictine edition the person addressed [by *αὐτοῦ*, n. n.] is Junius Soranus, a relative of Basil and a duke of Scythia. The sub-title may have been added by a copyist. It applies to Soranus, inasmuch as he was „a trainer“ (*ἀλείπτης*) and encourager of martyrs. In *Letter CLXIV* Basil calls Ascholius „trainer“ of the martyr Sabass. On the present letter and *Letters CLV*, *CLXIV*, and *CLXV*, which have to do with transferring the remains of the Gothic martyr Sabass (died April 372) to Caesarea in Cappadocia, of G. Pfeilschefer, *Ein neues Werk des Wulfila, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Kirchenhistor*, Seminar, München, 1907, pp. 192-224. This letter is one of the earliest references to the preservation of the relics of martyrs.”

¹²⁵ Editor’s note: G. Pfeilschefer, *Ein neues Werk des Wulfila, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Kirchenhistor*, Seminar, München, 1907, pp. 192-224.

¹²⁶ Saint Basil, 1928, note to *Letter CLIV* (pp. 376-380), pp. 380-381.

From the Apostolic century to the time of Constantine the Great, the Christianity was spreading gradually, but constantly, both inside and outside the Roman Empire, especially in provinces and countries neighboring the empire. To shorten the speech about such developments in Dacia, we take, for now, a brief conclusion of I. D. Mureșan: “The archaeologists may debate if a certain object has or has not a Christian function; but the long series of martyrs at the end of the third century in the towns of the Lower Danube is indisputable proof that the new religion already had a solid foothold in the region (...). The list begins with Epictet and Astion, martyred in 290 at Halmyris; the same source also provides the name of the first bishop of the region, Evangelicus of Tomis (Constanța). The historicity of this source was confirmed when the *martyria* of Niculițel and of Axiopolis (Cernavodă) were unearthed: all of the martyrs found there were also recorded in written testimonies.”¹²⁷ Thus, the archaeological data completes, by the time it grows, and if carefully examined, in this and many other cases, the historiographical information.

The Goths, coming from the shores of the Baltic Sea, reached the northern shores of the Black Sea in the first part of the third century AD. In the middle of that century, the Visigoths conducted, from their base in the Chersonesus Tauricus (Crimea) plunder expeditions, to Moesia and Asia Minor. They took prisoners from the Roman Empire, among whom a significant number of Christians. Some of the Goths became Christians even while they were stationed in Crimea.¹²⁸ Some of those prisoners were taken to Moldova and Muntenia, along with the penetration of the Germanics towards west. The Visigoths penetrated in Moldova (understood in its historical borders, from the Eastern Carpathians to Dnister river) in the 3rd century, and then in the east of Muntenia (Walachia, from the Southern Carpathians to the Danube), over a Dacian population with rare Sarmatian intrusions: “Regarding the extracarpathian space, starting with the 3rd century, at first in Moldova and then in the east of Muntenia, one can notice, on archaeological grounds, the penetration in the local, Dacian and Sarmatian environment, of the German elements, among whom the major role was played by the Visigoths (...). These changes generated, at the beginning of the 4th century, the cultural synthesis of Mureș-Cerneahov (...).”¹²⁹ Thus, “the Christian communities from the north of the Danube remained, the entire fourth century, strongly connected to the Church in Cappadocia and Phrygia.”¹³⁰ In their raids south of the Danube, the Goths continued to bring north of the river prisoners, among whom many Christians. The Goth soldiers also made contact with the Roman world, already significantly Christianized, while the Roman traders brought with them north of the

¹²⁷ Mureșan, 2012, p. 142.

¹²⁸ Robinson, 2016, 15.

¹²⁹ Opreanu, 1995, p. 228.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

Danube not only pots, jewelry and Roman cloths, but also their beliefs, some of them contributing to the spread of the Christianity.

As I wrote in another paper: “The first penetrations in the Dacian *province*, after the Aurelian’s retreat, were of some Dacians (Ciplău-Gârle, Stolniceni), and a few relocations of some Roxolan Sarmatians (Ploiești-Triaj, Târgșor, Smeeni, Dorobanțu, Râmnicelu). Only later, after 350, it could be seen a sporadic penetration of Goths and Alans from their preferred lands in Moldavia, in specific and restrained areas in the south-east Transylvania and Muntenia, but not west of *limes transalutanus* until the 5th century AD. This means that Aurelian’s criterion was rather a strategic retreat than the coming of the Goths, seen in the perspective of a better restoration, the forts on the left bank of the Danube being kept. While some sites north of Danube, in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, show a clear Roman influence (e. g. Bratei ...), others show no such influence, mostly in sites of the Gothic penetration (Palatca, Sântana de Mureș). The German populations in Dacia are associated from the 4th century AD on with the culture of Sântana de Mureș. This culture shows, however, in other circumstances, an evident influence from the surrounding Daco-Roman population (e. g. Smârdan, Gherăseni, Hărman).¹³¹”¹³²

An important change regarding the Christianity in the Roman Empire and in the surrounding regions took place with the ascending of Constantine the Great to the throne. He granted to the Goths north of the lower Danube the statute of *foederati* in 332 AD.¹³³ This agreement between the Empire and the Goths allowed a peaceful period for the Christians north of Danube, until the persecution of Athanaric.¹³⁴

Constantine the Great (ruled over the entire empire 324-337 AD) reoccupied, in 336 AD, for the empire, important territories north of Danube: a great part of Banat, Oltenia, Muntenia and even of the south of Moldavia.¹³⁵ The Constantinian policy marked so pregnant the beliefs of the eastern Romance population, that the Romanians, its main cultural descendants, are the only ones to use *basilica* (> Romanian: *biserică*) for the name of the Church, both for the institution and for the building, when other European people derived the name(s) from the Greek *ekklesia*. D. I. Mureșan shows that the only place and time when this could have occurred were the lower Danube region, during the fourth to sixth centuries. Constantine gave the imperial buildings called *basilicae* to the Church in the fourth century, and after the sixth century the Greeks ceased to use the word in this manner. This means that the ancestors

¹³¹ Bârzu, 1980, pp. 56-60.

¹³² Drugaș, 2016, p. 105.

¹³³ Opreanu, 1995, p. 228.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 229. Popescu, 1994, p. 162.

¹³⁵ Mureșan, 2012, p. 142.

of the Romanians were profoundly influenced by the activity of the empire and of the Church in their space in the time of Constantine the Great.¹³⁶

“The Christianity spread in Dacia from cities to villages (e. g. the late pagan character of the cemetery Bratei 1), and from the Roman and Romanized population first to Dacian and then to the German population. The lack of Christian evidences among the sites of Sântana de Mureş culture, the most associated with the German population, in parallel with some written witnesses which support the diffusion of the Christianity to those populations (e. g. Ulfilas, the martyrdom of St. Sabbas), shows that this phenomenon doesn’t always have a thorough archaeological cover – principle applicable to the Daco-Roman population as well.^{137,138}

However, considerable progresses have been made by archaeology in proving the reception of Christianity north of Danube in the 4th century AD (and afterwards). For instance, Vlad Vornic argues for this, based on the V-E orientation of some burials (although acknowledging the objections usually made), as well as on other conjectures.¹³⁹

The Church was well organized along the lower Danube, from Pannonia to Scythia. The bishops residing in the cities on the south bank of the Danube and further south, in the Balkan Peninsula, exerted an active role in spreading the Christianity north of Danube. The government of Constantine the Great, which expanded, again, the direct and active rule of Rome north of Danube, had a catalytic role in this respect. However, the mission of the mentioned bishops and their delegates, *chorepiscopi*, continued under the rule of the Germanic *foederati*, these being either sympathetic or persecutors of the Christians. Each Roman province had one or more bishops. Scythia had, at first, just one bishop, in Tomis (Constanţa),¹⁴⁰ and then appeared others.¹⁴¹

According to *Acta sanctorum*,¹⁴² after 319, the Christianity flourished in Gothia, Theophilus became Metropolitan, while other bishops were under his jurisdiction. The editor wrote that “the series [was] maybe uninterrupted since the times of St. Apostle Andrew, who drew the lots of the provinces of Scythia, as it is believed in the common tradition of the Church.”¹⁴³ Because of the last persecutions of the Roman emperors, especially that of Diocletianus, many

¹³⁶ Mureşan, 2012, p. 142.

¹³⁷ Bârzu, 1980, pp. 66-67.

¹³⁸ Drugaş, 2016, p. 109. Cf. Opreanu, 1995, p. 230.

¹³⁹ Vornic, 2010, pp. 189–216.

¹⁴⁰ Bingham, 1845, Book IX, Ch. 7, 375-376: “For the bishop of Tomi was the sole bishop of this whole region, as is noted by Sozomen (lib. 6. c. 21. lib. 7, c. 19), and Theodoret (lib. 4. c. 35), and other ancient writers (...)”. Păcurariu, 1992, 115-116.

¹⁴¹ Păcurariu, 1992, 116.

¹⁴² Bollandus, vol. 11, Aprilii, II, Editio nova, 1866, 87: Anno CCCLXXII, XII Aprilii, „De S. Sabas Gottho, Martyre in Cappadocia“.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*.

Christians moved from Thracia to the neighboring Gothia (“ex Thracia in proximam Gotthiam”),¹⁴⁴ multiplying there the faith of the local barbarians. After the Orthodox Theophilus, came Ulfilas and then Philostorgius, both Arians.¹⁴⁵

“Ulfilas, who was born about 311 and was brought up amongst Goths, was sent by them, in 332, either as an envoy, or as a hostage, to Constantinople, where he learnt Latin and Greek. After working as a missionary amongst his own country-men in Constantinople and its neighbourhood, he was consecrated as a bishop in 341, and for the next seven years he served as a missionary in Dacia, which includes modern Romania, but in 348 so bitter a persecution was raised against the Christians that Ulfilas sought and obtained permission for the Christian Goths to cross the Danube and settle within the borders of the Roman Empire (...)”¹⁴⁶ Some authors argue that Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had become bishop of Constantinople in 338, consecrated Ulfila¹⁴⁷ in 338 or even in 336 AD “as a bishop «of all the Christians on the Getian soil».”¹⁴⁸

According to the *Letter* of Auxentius of Durostorum (381-397), Ulfilas became a bishop at the age of 30. Auxentius “was probably a local man, from the Romanized population near the lower Danube, and about 380 he became a bishop in Durostorum, after he lived for a while on the left side of the Danube, as an apprentice of the bishop Ulfilas. Between 381-397 he wrote a *Letter* about the faith, the life and the death of Ulfilas, in a simple and coherent enough Latin language.”¹⁴⁹ He wrote in Latin, in a vulgar manner, i. e., using simple constructions, and replacing *Christus, Graece* or, at least, *graecam, ecclesia* etc. with *Cristus, greca, ecclesia* etc. The same contemporary witness wrote that Ulfilas, after being ordained as a bishop in Constantinople, he served in this position for the Goths north of Danube for seven years, where “he preached, through the apostolic grace, without interruption, in the Greek, Latin and Gothic tongues...”¹⁵⁰ He did a great work as a bishop, attracting many to the Church, and traducing the Bible in Gothic – of which there remained the four Gospels.¹⁵¹ After that, he crossed the Danube, with a lot of followers, because of a persecution that made many martyrs, being received with honor

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Bollandus, vol. 9, Martii, III, Editio nova, 1865, 617: *Aerae Christianae CCCLXX, XXVI Martii*.

¹⁴⁶ Robinson, 2016, 15.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Mureșan, 2012, p. 142.

¹⁴⁸ Opreanu, 1995, p. 229: “ca episcop „al tuturor creștinilor de pe pământ getic“ (Thompson 1963, 63; Wolfram, 1990, 89).”

¹⁴⁹ Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 111.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 110-111: “apostolica gratia grecam et latinam et goticam sine intermissione in una et sola ecclesia Christi predicavit...”

¹⁵¹ Bollandus, vol. 11, Aprilii, II, Editio nova, 1866, 87: Anno CCCLXXII, XII Aprilii, „De S. Sabas Gottho, Martyre in Cappadocia“.

by the emperor Constantius, and served as a bishop for other 33 years, “in the mountains” (*in montibus*).¹⁵² At the end of his 40 years as a bishop, he fought, by the order of the emperor, in Constantinople (surnamed as *Cristianopolis*), against the *pneumatomachi*, the heretics that didn’t recognized the divinity of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³

Eusebius of Nicomedia had clear Arian influences, and thus, it is supposed the same for his apprentice, Ulfilas, from whom we have a partial translation of the Bible in Gothic. The name of Ulfilas is a clear Germanic one, coming from *Wolf*. He was sent to watch over the Christians that were already present among the Visigoths and the local populations (mainly Dacians and Sarmatians). However, his zeal to convert much more people, and a conflict between the Visigoth chieftain Aoric and the Constantinople, led to his expulsion south of Danube in 348.¹⁵⁴

The Goth lord Athanaric conducted, north of Danube, between 369 and 373 AD, another persecution against the Christians. This means that the Christianity was still vivid north of Danube after the time of Ulfilas, and the Orthodox community continued there, under the leadership of the bishop Athanasius. Many of his followers suffered martyrdom during this persecution, among whom also St. Sabas, in 12 April 372.¹⁵⁵

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Saint Sabas, is called “the Goth”. The author of the epistle that narrated his life wrote that “being Goth by his kind, and spending his life in Gothia, in the middle of some twisted and perverted peoples, he showed himself as a luminary into the world ...” (& 1). There are reasons to consider that St. Sabas had his origins in Cappadocia, which explains the increased interest of the Cappadocians for his relics, and the choice made by Junius Soranus to send the relics of this particular martyr to St. Basil the Great – according to Pr. Prof. M. Păcurariu.¹⁵⁶

For the ethnic background of St. Sabas “the Goth” we have the following possibilities: a Gothic, a Dacian, a generally Roman, or a Cappadocian origin. Neither of them could be completely excluded in the present state of the historical knowledge on this topic. We can, at most, speculate about what could be more plausible. If he had a Cappadocian origin, he could have been: a man conducting a Christian mission north of the Danube, a descendant of some prisoners, or one of the prisoners of the Goths from the Empire. The last version doesn’t seem to me a credible one, because St. Sabas lived as a free man, he traveled through the villages as he pleased and he didn’t have had much contact with the Gothic authorities before the persecution. If he would have been a

¹⁵² Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, 112-113.

¹⁵³ *Ibidem*, 112-113.

¹⁵⁴ Opreanu, 1995, p. 229.

¹⁵⁵ Robinson, 2016, 16.

¹⁵⁶ Păcurariu, 1992, p. 112.

prisoner from the Empire, the rulers of the Goths wouldn't have let him to have a free life, being only 38 in the moment of his martyrdom. This means he was born in 333/334 AD. St. Sabas could have had his origin from among the prisoners taken by the Goths from the Empire, maybe from Asia Minor, and thus maybe Cappadocians. He could have been from an ulterior generation: either his parents or even his grandparents could have been such prisoners. This version seems more probable to me, for someone disposed to endorse a Cappadocian origin, especially that the relationships between the Goths and the Empire fluctuated, from a generation to another, from the plunder raids that led to the taking of many prisoners to the accepting of their role as *foederati*, given to them by Constantine the Great in 332.¹⁵⁷ It would be hard to imagine that he would have been taken prisoner as a child in such a short time after the moment when the Christians became tolerated by the Goths, because of this pact with the emperor Constantine. From the text of the *Letter* about his martyrdom, St. Sabas was a Christian from his childhood, raised in the Orthodox faith, practicing the virtue (fating, praying, making mercy), and singing psalms, often in the church of the priest Sansalas.¹⁵⁸ In the variant of a Cappadocian origin it is rather that his parents or grandparents were among the Christian prisoners, which were liberated and tolerated for the mentioned agreement. But, in this case, nothing could guarantee that St. Sabas had not a mixed origin, with one of his parents coming from the nations north of the Danube: Dacians, a few Sarmatians and the newcomer Goths, all on the course of their Romanization, under the influence of the Empire.¹⁵⁹

The version that St. Sabas would have crossed the Danube in his adulthood, coming maybe from Cappadocia, for a Christian mission, is highly unlikely. Fr. Prof. Păcurariu wrote, too, that St. Sabas must have been a *descendant* of the prisoners taken by the Goths from the Empire, most probable from Cappadocia.¹⁶⁰

However, St. Basil the Great didn't ever call St. Sabas a fellow countryman of his. The connections of Junius Soranus with Cappadocia as his homeland are clearly revealed by this correspondence, of St. Basil, but when he expressed, to (*Letter CLXIV*), the joy to receive the relics of the martyr, he made no reference to the origin of this martyr, and wrote only this: "It is revealed to us a martyr, who came to us from the midst of the barbarians from beyond the Ister [Danube, n. n.], and it is made known to us, through his own life, the strength of the faith the people live there".¹⁶¹ If St. Sabas would have been a Cappadocian doing mission north of the Danube, this fact was most unlikely

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Mansuelli, vol. 2, 1978, p. 250.

¹⁵⁸ Rămureanu, 1997, p. 306.

¹⁵⁹ Drugaș, 2016, pp. 104-107.

¹⁶⁰ Păcurariu, 1992, p. 113.

¹⁶¹ Mihăescu *et alii*, 1970, p. 89. PG 32, col. 636.

to be omitted by St. Basil when he referred to his provenance “from the midst of the barbarians”. Also, when St. Basil just asked to receive the relics from the martyrs whose passion have had recently taken place, he expressed himself in the plural, as in the above quoted *Letter CLV*: “the relics of the martyrs”. This shows that St. Basil had no knowledge about any fellow countryman of his to have died as a martyr during the last persecution in Gothia and he didn’t interested himself, either, about any countryman of his, which would have gone into a mission in Gothia in those times. The Christians in Cappadocia, along with St. Basil the Great, are eager to receive some relics from the new martyrs – any martyrs, no matter what ethnical origins would they have had. The homeland to which St. Basil refers to is his own and of Junius Soranus, not of the martyrs, that were killed in Gothia, which were, no doubt, of diverse ethnic background.

Writting that St. Sabas was a “Goth by his kind” the author of the *Letter of the Church in Gothia* couldn’t have made an estimation of his ethnic origin, but it shows that the saint didn’t arrived north of the Danube in his adulthood. On the contrary, he lived in “Gothia” from his childhood. He was a Christian from his childhood, most probable from a Christian family, which might be related to a descendent from the prisoners from Cappadocia. We can’t forget, either, the activity of the Orthodox bishop Athanasius among the Goths, or the easiness with which the Christians crossed the Danube and came back to their villages when it was possible (e. g. Sansalas, *The Letter of the Church in Gothia*, & 4), thus, the active connections between the Carpathian-Danubian space and the Empire, including in this respect. We should remind ourselves, also, of the detail that Ascholius, bishop of Thessalonica, was named by St. Basil (*Letter CLXIV*) the «trainer» of St. Sabas, which shows the vivid relationships of the bishops in the Balkan Peninsula and the Christian communities north of the Danube. It is most probable that St. Sabas reached Thessalonica during his teenage, in a time of peace for the Christians north of Danube, being interested to grow in Christian training. The connection of Ascholius with St. Sabas, and of Junius Soranus with other Christians that died as martyrs in Gothia demonstrates the decisive influence, in the 4th century, of the Church centers in Dobrogea (Tomis) and even deep in the Balkan Peninsula (Tessalonica) over the Christian communities north of Danube.

The mere existence of the *dux* Junius Soranus, a Christian relative of St. Basil the Great, and its top position as a governor of Scythia Minor¹⁶² constitutes an evidence for the magnitude of the Christian life in Scythia Minor and neighborhoods in that time. Junius Soranus had vivid connections with the Christians north of Danube, the province formerly named Dacia, now Gothia, not because the Goths were a majority population, but because they took the

¹⁶² Rămureanu, 1997, p. 305.

leadership role, and their chieftains even represented the Roman power, as *foederati*. The relation of the bishopric of Tomis with the Church north of Danube is also visible, the first actually being the center of the later, which had a hard time organizing itself at the episcopal level due to the instability generated by the migratory people crowding at the border of the Roman Empire.

This situation sends us to other witnesses about the Christianity in the 4th century, in this region – let’s think, for example, only to the gift preserved from Zenovius at Biertan (the *donarium* with the inscription “Ego Zenovius votum possui”¹⁶³) or to the pot with Christ’s monogram of Porolissum, with a similar inscription, which indicates the fact that in those places were Christian communities with churches and priests to whom those foundations could have been made. Some of such churches (*basilicae*), of the 4th century, were even unearthed by the archaeological researches, at Morisena (Cenad, Timiș), Slăveni (Olt), Porolissum (on an old heathen temple).¹⁶⁴ Innocens is the first Christian Dacian-Roman known by his name north of Danube, from the 3rd century, being buried with his hands crossed on his abdomen, in the inhumation grave no. 7 of Tirighina-Bărboși, oriented VNV-ESE, with mixed Dacian-Roman features, containing ivory crossed, an amphora with Christ’s monogram, and a gem with his name graved on it (Ion T. Dragomir and Silviu Sanie, 1976-1979).¹⁶⁵ By the objects around, it’s very possible he could have been a priest. But also among the earliest priests known by their name, north of the lower Danube, were Guththicas și Sansalas, who were mentioned in the act of the martyrdom of St. Sabas (the *Letter* presented in this article), most probably Goths.¹⁶⁶ The churches, the villages and even the cities were built of wood. St. Sabas visited the priest Guththicas in such a “city”,¹⁶⁷ north of Danube, most probable in the same district, at the confluence of Transylvania, Muntenia and Moldova, where the river Buzău (Mouseos) flows. St. Sabas was hanged for a while by a beam of such a construction, at its entrance, in the village where Sansalas had his church. The persecutor Atharid, son of the officer Rothesteus, finding that St. Sabas had helped the woman who cooked for them and didn’t run, “ordered that St. Sabas be tied by his hands and hanged by a beam of the house, which shows that the inhabitants of this village, without any doubt Geto-Daco-Romans, had houses with ceilings of wooden beams, since the Goths were living in tents.”¹⁶⁸ Hironymus wrote, at the end of the fourth century AD: “We receive daily groups of monks from India, Persia and

¹⁶³ Păcurariu, 1992, p. 96.

¹⁶⁴ Cioabă, 2014. Teodor, 2006. Vasile, 2006. Păcurariu, 1992, pp. 96-100. Bârzu, 1980, pp. 64-67. Stoicescu, 1980, p. 154.

¹⁶⁵ Pricop, 2008.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Păcurariu, 1992, p. 113.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Rămureanu, 1997, p. 307.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 1997, 307.

Etiopia. The Armenians dropped their quivers, the Huns learn the Psalter, the cold clime of Scythia heats the blaze of the faith, the reddish and blond army of the Getians [i. e., Goths] surrounds the tents of the churches.”¹⁶⁹ The editor adds in note: “Between 392-400, when the Christianization of the Goths achieved great successes.”¹⁷⁰

However, the perception about the barbarians living in tents – although occasionally true – was mainly that of a scholar born south of Danube like Hieronymus, since the Goths started catalyzed and created altogether with the local populations, after their arrival north of the Black Sea, in the middle of the second century AD,¹⁷¹ the formation of the culture Sântana de Mureş – Cerneahov. Although its Gothic element and contribution became evident, the researchers came to the conclusion that Sântana de Mureş – Cerneahov sprang from the contribution of the Goths, Geto-Dacians (and Romanised Daco-Romans), Sarmatians and Slavs. L. Bârzu commented: “D’ailleurs aussi bien les informations littéraires¹⁷² que les découvertes archéologiques incontestables confirment la présence dans les zones susmentionnées de la population dace ou daco-romaine et leur influence sur la culture de Sântana de Mureş est évidente¹⁷³. Il nous semble cependant excessif de soutenir qu’il a existé une sorte de communion gotho-dace, dans le cadre de laquelle les deux cultures matérielles se seraient fondues au point d’aboutir à une variante unique, la seule qui ait assuré la continuité dace en Moldavie et en Munténie¹⁷⁴. Des établissements dans le genre de ceux découverts à Smîrdan, Gherăseni ou Hărman¹⁷⁵ offrent une autre solution de continuité et un critère sûr pour faire la distinction entre les établissements typiques pour la culture Sântana de Mureş et ceux appartenant à une communauté autochtone.”¹⁷⁶

About this culture, we know it had characteristic hut housings, with a rectangular shape, most of them half buried, some completely buried or partly buried. Their roof was made of straw and reed, often set on some poles that indicate it wasn’t put directly on the soil.¹⁷⁷ In Mallory & Adams’ encyclopedia, we find that “Clay ovens were also regularly found in the houses. Only a few sites show evidence of defence, such as earthen walls with timber palisades

¹⁶⁹ Hieronymus, CVII, 2, 1970, p. 187. Cf. Rusu, 1997, pp. 232-233.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Mansuelli, vol. 2, 1978, p. 249.

¹⁷² Gh. Diaconu, 1964, p. 195 etc. [author’s note].

¹⁷³ I. Ioniță, 1972, p. 183 [author’s note].

¹⁷⁴ M. Comșa, 1966 etc. [author’s note].

¹⁷⁵ K. Horedt, D. Protase etc. [author’s note].

¹⁷⁶ Bârzu, 1980, p. 60.

¹⁷⁷ Barbu, 1988, p. 173. Mallory & Adams, 1997, p. 104-106. Pătrașcu, 2005, pp. 25-32. Mircea, 2005, pp. 33-42. Vornic, 2006. Szekely, 2007, pp. 34-40. Schuster, 2007, pp. 42-54. Halsall, 2007, p. 132. Vornic, 2010, p. 189-216. Ciucălău, 2015, 485.

or stone-huilt walls.”¹⁷⁸ – a settlement with such buildings would stand for the “cities” north of the inferior Danube in the times of St. Sabas. Sometimes these more advanced building techniques was imported into “more” rural areas.

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The persecution of the Christians in Gothia, in the time of the emperors Valentinian I (emperor 364-375) and Valens (and Gratianus) made, north of Danube, many other martyrs. *Around 370, Acta sanctorum* recorded *other martyrs* (celebrated on 26th of March) in the Goth land, next to Danube: “Martyres in Gotthia ad Danubium”.¹⁷⁹ On this occasion, the editor comments: “Quando et per quos Christiana fides primum fuerit annuntiata Gotthis, non reperitur litteris consignatum: tantum scimus nationem universam ab origine gentilem et ulularum addictam cultus, aliquam orthodoxae predicationis culturum longe praesuscepisse, quam illi, qui primos tenere videbantur et Gotthici nominis terrorem per Occidentis provincias (...) postea circumtulere (...) Arianismum susciperent ab Vulphila Episcopo Arriano persuasi. Etenim S. Sabasm Gothum insignis coronatus Martyrio praecipitatumque in flumen Musaei (ejus forte cum hodiernam Walachiam intersecans Missow nominatur in tubulis) videbimus ad XII diem Aprilis et passionem ipsius historiam dabimus.”¹⁸⁰ It results from here that, although the heathens there received the Gospel orally, and Ulfilas was an Arian, the Christianity was still vivid north of Danube after the time of Ulfilas, and the Orthodox party persisted there, under guided by the bishop Athanasius, many of whose followers suffering martyrdom during this persecution, as also did St. Sabas, in 12 April 372.¹⁸¹

The martyrs celebrated on 26th of March died around 370, in a persecution led by a local leader, named Juncheric, being burned alive in a church. They were mentioned 26: “S. Bathuses sive Anathuses et S. Vercas sive Vericas Presbyteri, SS. Filii duo, SS. Filii duae, S. Arpylas (Solitarius), S. Abepas sive Abippas, S. Constans, S. Hagnas sive Hagias, S. Rhyas sive Vias, S. Hegathrax sive Egathrax, S. Hescous sive Iscoes, S. Sylas sive Silas, S. Sigetzas sive Siditzas, S. Sverilas, S. Suimblas sive Suimplas, S. Thermas sive Thertas, S. Philgas, mulieres ... S. Anna, S. Allas sive Hallas, S. Baris / Paris sive Barka, S. Moico, S. Mamyca sive Mamica, S. Virco sive Vico, S. Animaux”.¹⁸² Their names are, with a few exceptions (Constans, Anna), of a barbarian origin. To speculate how much they have a Germanic or a Thraco-Dacian origin would be a theme for another discussion. However, it seems to me they had a mixed ethnic background, not entirely Gothic, but also autochthonous of Dacian-

¹⁷⁸ Mallory & Adams, 1997, p. 104.

¹⁷⁹ Bollandus, vol. 9, Martii, tomus III, Editio nova, 1865, p. 617, *Aerae Christianae CCCLXX, XXVI Martii*.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*. Cf. Păcurariu, 1992, p. 110.

¹⁸¹ Robinson, 2016, 16.

¹⁸² Bollandus, *loc. cit.*

Sarmatian stock. A Goth Christian noble woman collected their relics (*lipsana*, from Greek *λείψανα* “remains, relics”), crossed into the empire (“in provinciam Romanorum venit”), and went with them to Cyzicus (port at Propontis, in Asia Minor). The noble woman, named Gaatha, her daughter, Dulcilla (notice the Romanization process in this name!), and a Christian named Vellas, came into the Empire, and gave some of the relics of the martyrs to the Christians in Cyzicus – among whom many were Goths. Gaatha and Vellas returned north of the Danube, where they were killed by lapidation.¹⁸³

The introduction to the martyrs celebrated on 26th of March refers, as we could see, to St. Sabas the Goth, and to the place where he suffered his martyrdom: “Etenim S. Sabas Gothum insignis coronatus Martyrio praecipitatumque in flumen Musaei (ejus forte cum hodiernam Walachiam intersecans Missow nominatur in tubulis) ...”. The *Letter of the Church in Gothia* gave the same river name: “they took Sabas and drove him to be drowned in a river, named Mouseos (Musæus).” (& 7). This river, in Wallachia, is Buzău, the two labials *m* and *b*, being often interchangeable with respect to the real pronunciation of the Greek-Latin transliterations of the Dacian names, as it happened, for instance, with Tibiscum (*river*, then *castrum* and Roman *municipium*), spelled in Romanian Timiș. The fact that the martyrdom of St. Sabas took place so deep in the north-Danubian territory is significant, adding itself to the witnesses, some of which mentioned above, for the penetration of the Christianity on the territory of the old Dacia in the 4th century AD. The river Buzău is placed in an area upon which the maximum control was of Athanaric, the ruler of the Thervingi, the one who decided to revolt against the Empire and, thus, against its cultural values, among which, the most precious was the new religion, the Christianity.

As a curiosity about the river Mouseos, we can say it has a Dacian name, with the characteristic hesitation *b/m* of this language, especially in the words initially having an *m*. This Dacian river name comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **meu-* / *meuə-* “to push, to move”,¹⁸⁴ as intuited by I. I. Russu (*Mouseos* - “river, **meu-s?*”¹⁸⁵). It would suppose the existence of some Dacian words to make the hydronym possible, such as: *múšěō* > *múš'ō* „to move“, **múškō* „to push“. It has cognates as: OInd. *mīvati* „to push, move“, *muṣṇāti*, *móṣati* „steal“, *móṣa-* „robber, thief“, Gk. *ἀμεύσασθαι* (*ἀμεφύσασθαι*) „excell“, *ἀμύνω* „turn away“ etc., Lat. *moveō*, *-ēre*, Lith. *máuju*, *máuti* „spread, streak“, *rañktų užmovā* „muff“, MLG *mouwe* „muff“. I would also support a Romanian heritage of the Dacian word, such as. *a (se) mișcă* “to move (oneself)” (classified as “unknown etymology” by the dictionaries), *a (se) mișcoti* “to move (oneself) to and fro”.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁴ Pokorny, 1959, II, 743 (also the cognates).

¹⁸⁵ Russu, 1967, 147.

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Fritigern, also a Therving leader, confronted Athanaric at first north of the Danube (until the Gothic civil war in 375), and, defeated, crossed the Danube with his men, subjected himself to the emperor Valens, received the Christianity in Arian form, and settled in Thrace. The Huns, which have already subjected the Greuthungi (east of the Dneister), defeated the Thervingi (west of the Dneister), too, in 376, for which reason Athanaric retreated with his men in Caucaland (southeast of Transylvania). The relationships between the Goths in Thrace and the emperor deteriorating, Fritigern won the battle of Adrianople (378), where Valens died, after which the Goths did plunder expeditions in the Balkan Peninsula.¹⁸⁶

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