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THE OLDEST ROMANIAN HAGIOGRAPHIC COLLECTION AND ITS TIES TO THE SOUTH SLAVIC LITERATURE

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Abstract: This article examines the relationship between the oldest Romanian collection of Lives of saints and its South Slavic prototype. Little known, Rom MS BAR 2602 is a hagiographic miscellany containing *vitae* for the months of September through December, written at Cozia Monastery (Wallachia) in 1675. Its main source is the South Slavic Verse Prolog (translated from the Greek Συναξάριον μετὰ στίχων in Tarnovo in the 14th century), which circulated in the Romanian lands between the 15th and the 17th centuries. The monks at Cozia either used a corrupted version or selected only one Life of a Tarnovo Saint, namely that of Michael the Soldier (22 November), and refrained from translating any verse. From time to time, the translator also consulted a printed Greek Menaion (Venice, 17th century), as evidenced by recurring translation errors. The practice of translating from mixed Slavonic and Greek sources is analysed within the context of the Romanian translation tradition from the 16th to the 18th century. The particular case of the translation produced at Cozia Monastery, based primarily on Slavic and, to a lesser extent, Greek sources, is linked to the emergence of Greek as a language of culture and church services in Wallachia in the mid- to second half of the 17th century.

Keywords: Romanian Lives of saints; South Slavic source; Verse Prolog; mixed sources; Greek in Cyrillic script.

Introduction to hagiography in Old Romanian Literature (14th–17th century)

As narratives of "the joining of Heaven and Earth" that inspire pious admiration and exemplary behaviour, shape habits and rituals, and reshape both geographies and mentalities[1], saints' Lives were very much present in Old Romanian Literature. Their Slavic prototypes were copied and read since the 14th–15th centuries[2]. At the same time, works emerged, recounting the lives of contemporary saints through both written narratives and icons, such as the *Life of St John the New of Suceava*[3]. Such works had been translated into Romanian starting from the 16th century, a period marked by the emergence of the vernacular – books in Romanian, mostly written and printed in Cyrillic script and, in exceptional cases, in the Latin alphabet[4].

The Greek Synaxarion – a collection of short narratives about Christian saints and martyrs displayed in a calendar sequence – was translated into Slavic somewhere at the end of the 11th century – beginning of the 12th century and spread in the Balkans, incorporating Slavic saints, in the following century. In the 14th century, the Verse Prolog, including verses at the beginnings of the narratives (Greek Συναξάριον μετὰ στίχων), emerged in the Tarnovo School. It incorporated accounts of local saints that were preserved, omitted or amplified in later manuscript copies and editions of the Russian Prolog[5].

Most of the synaxaria copied in the Romanian Principalities between the 14th and 17th centuries followed the South Slavic Prolog, providing Lives, martyrdoms and miracles of long-revered saints, such as Petka (14 October), Demetrius of Thessaloniki (26 October), Nicholas (6 December), and Mary of Egypt (1 April), among others[6].

The *vitae* of these four saints were translated from Slavic into Romanian in Transylvania (most probably Brașov) at the end of the 16th century, representing the first Romanian hagiographic texts written in the vernacular (Rom MS BAR

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[1] B r o w n 1981: 1–22; D e l e h a y e 1906.

[2] P i s c u p e s c u 1939: 64–73; T e o t e o i 2008: 371–398; C a z a c u 1997: 87–92.

[3] Ș t e f ă n e s c u 1884: 163–174; Б а к а л о в а 1991: 56–77; F i r e a 2012: 85–124.

[4] G h e ț i e, M a r e ș 1985:130–176.

[5] See the bibliography of this vast subject in S t a n k o v a SESDIVA.

[6] See the inventory of manuscripts in M i r c e a 2005: 163–197. Further studies must focus on the Slavic hagiographic manuscripts copied and diffused in Moldavia and Wallachia, in order to clarify their typology.

5023)[7]. These translations testify to the strong adherence to the South Slavic models, respected as such since the 14th century[8].

In the 17th century, the flourishing culture of Wallachia and Moldavia, defined by tendencies of late Humanism and Renaissance[9], reshaped the process of translating hagiographic works. During this time, the first Romanian hagiographic collections were published in Iași (The Principality of Moldavia) and Buzău (Wallachia): *The Lives of the Saints* by Metropolitan Dosoftei of Moldavia (1682–1686) and the Menaion printed by Mitrofan, disciple of Dosoftei (1698). These editions have been studied extensively by Romanian philologists who identified their sources, examined the connection between the two collections and edited some *vitae* or the entire anthology[10].

Pioneering the vernacularisation of the Divine Office, traditionally performed in Church Slavonic, Dosoftei of Moldavia (1671–1673; 1675–1686)[11] was one of the most prominent figures of 17th-century Romanian literature. He is known for his poetic inclinations, akin to the Baroque (he translated and versified the *Psalter* in 1673)[12], as well as for his keen interest in *miracula* narratives[13] and tendency towards typological reading and interpretation[14].

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[7] For a description of Rom. MS BAR 5023 (1578–1606), see M a r e ș 2005: 54–83. For the *Life of Saint Petka*, see A g a c h e, M a r e ș, S a v a, S t a n c i u - I s t r a t e, T i m o t i n 2016: 112–116. For the *Life of Saint Mary of Egyp*t, see M i h ă i l e s c u 2008.

[8] See the 14th-century hagiographic collections of South Slavic origin described in I u f u 1963: 512–513.

[9] C â n d e a 1979; M o r a r u 1986: 644–672, M a z i l u 1984.

[10] V o r n i c e s c u 1991: 10–13; V e l c u l e s c u 1984: 77–78. For the link between Dosoftei and Mitrofan's Synaxarion, and the sources of the former collection, see M i h ă i l e s c u 2011: 116–126; M i h ă i l e s c u 2014: 419–432; D i m a 2014: 97–132. See also M i h ă i l e s c u 2008: 248–261; M a r i n - B a r u t c i e f f 2014: 31–33, 245–254; F r e n ț i u 2002.

[11] He was born in 1624, became a monk at Probota Monastery (1649), bishop of Huși (1658–1659) and Roman (1659–1671) and was twice elected metropolitan (1671–1673; 1675–1686). Because of his anti-Ottoman stance, which he shared with Prince Ștefan Petriceicu (1672–1674), he took refuge in Poland (1673–1674). After returning to Moldavia, he put his extensive translations of liturgical texts into practice. Seeking political help from Russia, he attempted to reach Moscow but was stopped in Kyiv in 1684. The unsuccessful attempt by King John III Sobieski to drive the Ottomans out of Moldavia forced Dosoftei to go into exile in Poland once again (1686–1693). On his life and his connections with the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Moscow and the metropolitan of Kyiv, see M a z i l u 1997; U r s u, D a s c a l u 2003.

[12] M a z i l u 1994: 393–414; M a z i l u 1998: 28–40, 48–56.

[13] For instance, he chose to include in his *Lives of Saints* the version of the *vitae* of Macarius of Mesopotamia which had common scenes with the *Alexander Romance* (M o r a r u 2005: 77–80). See also M a r e ș 2006: 217–221.

[14] D i m a 2022: 216, 220–224; D i m a 2023: 15–21, 52–54.

Dosoftei managed to create a genuine *Acta Sanctorum* which blends Lives of saints, chapters from *Paterika*, "edifying discourses", short poems, *Miracles of the Theotokos* and even a personal recount of the miracles of contemporary and local saints – all mirroring the peculiar taste and personality of this erudite clergyman[15]. Incompletely published in Iași between 1682 and 1686 (CRV 73)[16], the anthology reflects the Humanistic approach of the metropolitan towards sources which encompass Slavonic (Prologs printed in Moscow, around 1641–1685 and 1685), printed books in Ancient and Modern Greek (16th–17th century)[17], and Latin and Polish archetypes (15th–16th century)[18].

In Wallachia, the Menaion (CRV 111) was published in 1698 by Dosoftei's disciple, Mitrofan, who had been elected bishop of Huși (1683–1686) before moving to Wallachia, where he became bishop of Buzău (1691–1702). He translated, revised, and printed more than 31 volumes[19]. The translator of this anthology was Radu Greceanu, prolific and learned logothete of the Princely Chancellery, who based his "translation" on the above-mentioned *Lives of the Saints* printed in Iași (1682–1686).

The oldest Romanian manuscript collection of Lives of saints

However, there is another manuscript hagiographic anthology which was rendered into Romanian before the translation of Dosoftei (1682–1686) and the rework of Radu Greceanu and Mitrofan (1698). Little studied[20] and only recently described[21], Rom MS BAR 2602 is a miscellany which gathers together short Lives and commemorations[22] of saints only for the months of September to December[23]. There is evidence that manuscripts containing the remaining months

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[15] A general overview is given in M a z i l u 1998: 206–216.

[16] Due to his exile in Poland, Dosoftei was unable to print the third and fourth volumes in their entirety. The third volume, containing the Lives for March–June, ends with 10 June, while the fourth ends with 12 July. These narratives were, nevertheless, preserved in a manuscript from the end of the 17th century (M i h ă i l e s c u 2011: 121–123).

[17] The Greek Menaion (Venice, 1678), modern Greek Synaxarion of Maximos Margunios (Venice, 1607), *Paradise*, *Eklogion*, *Kalokairini* and *New Paradise* by Agapios Landos (Venice, 1641, 1656, 1663, 1664), St. Damaskinos' *Treasure* (Venice, 1558), the *Universal Chronicle* (Venice, 1637) (M i h ă i l e s c u 2014: 419–427).

[18] *Universal History* by Johannes Nauclerus (Köln, 1544), *Revelationes caelestes* by Bridget of Sweden (Lübeck, 1492) and Piotr Skarga's *Lives of the Saints* (Vilnius, 1579) (M i h ă i l e s c u 2014: 427–430).

[19] D i m a - D r ă g a n 1982: 457–467.

[20] Some brief information is given in V o r n i c e s c u 1991: 10–13; V e l c u l e s c u 1984: 76–77; M i h ă i l e s c u 2011: 123; D i m a 2014: 104–106.

[21] M u t a l â p 2026: 129–168.

[22] Each Life is followed by a list of the saints commemorated on that day.

[23] Ș t r e m p e l 1983: 332.

once existed, as the second quire of Rom MS BAR 339 (c. 1690) preserves some *vitae* for the month of March in the very same translation[24]. However, these presumed manuscripts are now lost. Despite its fragmentary content, Rom MS BAR 2602 represents the first attempt to systematically translate a hagiographical corpus into the vernacular, as it can be seen in the colophon: "This was written in Romanian with the knowledge of father Anania, hegumen of Cozia Monastery. And it was written, so to be known, in the days of the Christian Prince Duca Voivode, in the year 1675" (f. 225r). Thus, the translation was produced at Cozia Monastery, one of the oldest and most influential cultural centres in Wallachia, built around 1388–1391 by Mircea the Elder (1386–1418)[25]. Consequently, the translation from Cozia is partially preserved nowadays in the manuscript from 1675, and some *vitae* are found in a quire of Rom MS BAR 339 (c. 1690).

According to the palaeographical analysis, the codex was written by two scribes: scribe A (ff. 1r–137r), who records his name in the margin on f. 136r ("hieromonk Leontie"), and scribe B (ff. 137v–225r), still unidentified. The scribes were most likely part of the monastic community of Cozia, engaged in copying the translation and carefully revising it by adding marginal glosses with various functions[26].

The emergence of the first Romanian corpus of Lives of saints within the walls of Cozia Monastery overlaps with the development of this scriptorium in the 17th century, in the context of the cultural flourishment promoted by Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688) and Metropolitan Varlaam of Wallachia (1672–1679), a monk from Cozia himself[27]. These socio-cultural realities are mirrored in the attitude of the Romanian translator towards the sources that he consulted.

The South Slavic source

Romanian scholars advanced the hypothesis that the hagiographic collection from Cozia was translated from the South Slavic Simple Prolog[28] without providing any philological or linguistic arguments.

In order to scrutinize this theory, I have compared the Romanian manuscript with Greek and Slavic sources, including both manuscripts and printed editions. The following examples are relevant:

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[24] For the analysis of the quire, see M i h ă i l e s c u 2011: 121–123.

[25] See S t o i c e s c u 1970: 205–210; B a r b u 1986: 56–74; V a i d a 1986; P o p a, B e d r o s, I a n c o v e s c u, N e g r ă u 2008: 257–288, 147–177.

[26] M u t a l â p 2026: 135–139, 158–160.

[27] P a p a c o s t e a 1996: 7–63; G i u r e s c u 2019: 117–150; Ș e r b ă n e s c u 1958: 1120–1158; M u t a l â p 2026: 130–133.

[28] V o r n i c e s c u 1991: 10; V e l c u l e s c u 1984: 76–77; M a z i l u 1998: 210; V e l c u l e s c u 2018: 13.

Table 1

No.	Rom MS 2602	Date/*Vita*	Greek (17th c. Menaion)[29]	Russian Prolog (1642/ 1675)[30]	Verse Prolog (Tarnovo, 14th c.)[31]
1.	*Iar într-aceasta zi Sfântul și Dereptul Mihail slujitoriul* "This day, Righteous Michael the Soldier" (f. 149r–150v)	22 November	–	Въ тоиже дн҃ь оуспенїе ст҃аго и прв(д)наго Михаила воина (f. 305v)	Въ тъж(д)е дн҃ъ Успенїе ст҃го и праведнаго Михаила воина (p. 77)
2.	В нє(д)лѧ сты҃(х) пр҃ѣо(т)ц҃ъ (f. 196r–199r)	16 December (Sunday of the Forefathers)	–	–	В недѣлѧ сты҃хъ пр҃ѣоц҃ь (p. 59–74)
3.	*zilele petdeseadniței* "the days of *Petdeseadnitsa*" (f. 172r) [in the margin: *rusaliilor* "of the Pentecost"]	4 December (*Life of John of Polybotum*)	πεντηκοστῆς (p. 19)	пѧтьдесѧтницы (f. 350r)	пѧ(т)десѧтниц҃ѫ (p. 18)
4.	*Vacho Novii* (f. 195r) [in the margin: *cel nou* "the New"]	15 December (*Life of Bacchus the New*)	Βάχου τοῦ Νέου (p. 127)	–	вакꙋхо новыи (p. 56)
5.	*Vâlf* [in the margin: *vrăjător* "wizard"] (f. 214v)	25 December (Nativity of Jesus)	μάντις (p. 238)	волхвъ (f. 436r)	влъхвъ (p. 99)

[29] I used the volume printed in Venice in 1678, preserved at BAR under call number CR III 173900. There is evidence that the Venetian edition was accessible to the Romanian translators from the 17th century (See footnote no. 42).

[30] I have used the digitised version of the volume (https://viewer.rsl.ru/ru/rsl02000026604?page=1&rotate=0&theme=white, accessed on 04.07.2025). Online call number: RSL Marc21.

[31] Петков, Спасова 2010. I am very grateful to A. Miltenova and G. Petkov for their generous help to access the bibliography.

Lexical options such as "petdeseadniței", "Vacho Novii" and "vâlf" clearly reflect a Slavic rather than a Greek source (Table 1, no. 3, 4, 5). All of them were clarified by marginal glosses such as "*rusaliilor* / of the Pentecost", "*cel nou* / the New" and "*vrăjător* / wizard" (Table 1, no. 3, 4, 5). Moreover, the title of the feast of the Sunday of the Forefathers (16 December) was left in its original Slavonic form (Table 1, no. 3). The same phenomenon can be found in small fragments from the *vitae* of bishop Alexander of Jerusalem (12 December – ми(ꙋ) вьсѣм; cf. Rom MS BAR 2602, f. 189r) and Bacchus the New (15 December – и съ дх҃о(м) твои(м); cf. Rom MS BAR 2602, f. 195r).

Additionally, the presence of the *Life of Bacchus the New* (15 December) and the feast of the Sunday of the Forefathers (16 December) signals that the Romanian translator could not have used the printed edition of the Prolog (Moscow, 1642 or 1675), preferred, as I have pointed out, by Dosoftei of Moldavia. The source for the translation from Cozia was rather a version of the Verse Prolog, a collection of abridged hagiographies accompanied by verses, translated in the first half of the 14th century in the School of Tarnovo[32]. This is supported by recent studies that have documented the dissemination of the Verse Prolog in some Slavic manuscripts from the Romanian lands dating from the 15th to the 17th century[33].

The incorporation of one of the saints from the Tarnovo cycle, Michael the Soldier, inside in the Romanian collection (Table 1, no. 1), together with the Life and the feast from the 15th and the 16th of December (Table 1, no. 4, 2) suggests that the monks of Cozia Monastery had a version of the Verse Prolog at their disposal. The manuscript was either a corrupted one, which did not include the Lives of Paraskeva of Tarnovo (14 October), John of Rila (19 October) or Hilarion of Meglin (21 October), or the translator omitted these narratives. The second explanation is reinforced by the fact that no verse was included in the Romanian manuscript, so the translator chose certain feasts and genres according to the immediate needs of his community.

Furthermore, the Verse Prolog used by the Romanian monk did not follow the exact Tarnovo text, as evidenced by the following omissions from the *Life of Michael the Solider*:

M: Тъ҃ сѵ̑тыи бж̑їи Михаиль бѣше въ лѣта благоч(с̑)тиваго цр̑ѧ Михаила, ѿ града Потоꙋкы, ро(м̑) сы҃и блъгарынь[34]

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[32] П е т к о в 2000: 17–27. See also S t a n k o v a SESDIVA; С т о й к о в а SB.

[33] П е т к о в 2023: 101–117.

[34] П е т к о в 2023: 111. M signifies here Sl MS Dragomirna 1770/681 (15th century), 1794/705 (15th century), 1876/787 (15th century), 1785/696 (16th century), BAR 544 (end 15th – beginning of the 16th century), 55 (17th century) studied by П е т к о в 2023: 101–117. See the edition of the *Life of Michael the Soldier* in П е т к о в 2023: 111–112.

T: Тъи сѣтыи бж҃їи Михаилъ. бѣше въ лѣта бл҃гочъстиваго цр҃ѧ Михаила, ѿ гра(д) Потѹкы, ро(д)мъ сыи҆ блъгаринъ[35]

Rom: Acest sfânt dumnezeiescul Mihail era den cetatea Potuchi, de neam fiind bulgariu (BAR 2602, f. 149r)

M: ра(б҃) его ды(м҃) при езерѣ и *прїе(м)* ѩстїе, тече сътворити идеже бѣше ды(м) исходѣ[36]

T: рабъ его дымъ при езерѣ и *прїемь наскорѣ* ѩстїе, и иде тамо идеже бѣше ды(м) исходѣ[37]

Rom: sluga lui văzând fum lângă baltă și alergă să facă bucate domnu său, unde văzu că iase fumul (BAR 2602, f. 149v)

The Romanian translation lacks an entire phrase (see бѣше… Михаила) and sometimes omits words which are either found in the Moldavian manuscripts (прїемь) or in the version from Tarnovo (прїемь наскорѣ). However, the translation is closer to the Verse Prolog manuscripts from Moldavia, as it includes a phrase which cannot be found in the Tarnovo recension (тече сътворити – "*alergă să facă* / hastened to do").

It is not at all surprising that the monks from Cozia Monastery chose to use a Slavic book as their main source of translation. The Slavonic language, already used in Church and in the Princely Chancellery, was well-known to the brethren of the Wallachian community. In 1649, the monk Mardarie from Cozia copied – and most probably composed – a Slavonic-Romanian Dictionary (Rom MS BAR 450), an instrument used to prepare the future translators inside the monastic community[38].

Symbolically, the reverence towards the Slavic tradition can be traced back to the foundation of the monastery. The mural paintings of Cozia Monastery (c. 1391) were most likely executed by Bulgarian painters well-versed in Greek, who used a Greek Menaion to inscribe the names of the saints in Slavonic in the *Menologion* painted on the eastern wall of the pronaos[39]. Its composition and style point to the school of Constantinople (14th century), while also displaying affinities with those of the Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Veliko Tarnovo[40].

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[35] T stands for the Tarnovo recension (П е т к о в, С п а с о в а 2009: 77).

[36] П е т к о в 2023: 112.

[37] П е т к о в, С п а с о в а 2009: 78.

[38] For the activity of this learned monk, see M a r e ș 2010: 121–134.

[39] Based on the Grecized orthography of the Slavonic inscriptions, inexistent in the Slavic tradition, the hypothesis of a Slavonic written source was left out. The Greek Menaion used by the painters was linked to a group designated as M by H. Delehaye, and most probably is the Athonite Greek *Paris Coislin* 223 from 1301 (N e g r ă u 2018: 121, 124–126).

[40] N e g r ă u 2018: 122–123, 126.

The painted *Menologion* at Cozia contains a very rare scene, placed after the icons of the Martyr Eleutherios (15 December) and the Prophet Haggai (16 December), and before those of Daniel and the Three Young Men (17 December), as shown below:



15, 16 and 17 December (@ D. Constantinescu *apud* Negrău 2018: 121)

The third image reveals the peculiar depiction of a movable feast, namely the Sunday of the Forefathers. The fourteenth-century mural fixes the holy day on 16 December, exactly as in the Romanian translation of the Verse Prolog (1675). The icon bears the title нє(д҃) сты(х) пр҃ѣщь, close to the Romanian manuscript: ѣ нє(д)лѧ сты҃(х) пр҃ѣо(т)ц҃ъ (See Table 1, no. 2). The detail is even more interesting if one recalls that preserving the Slavic title inside the Romanian collection is a very rare exception. Last but not least, three figures can be distinguished from the group of patriarchs depicted in the icon, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Symmetrically, the short sermon which prefaces the litany of the forefathers starts by evoking the very same three patriarchs (Rom MS BAR 2602, f. 196r–v). Without establishing a direct link between the Slavic archetype of the Romanian manuscript and the fourteenth-century mural ensemble at Cozia, I believe that this continuity across the centuries reflects a well-established liturgical practice. From letters carved in stone to those committed to paper, it is clear that the memory of the Church's liturgical office was grounded primarily in Slavonic, while at times returning to its Greek roots.

The Greek counterpart

Paying careful attention to the entire corpus of the *vitae* from the Romanian collection from Cozia (1675), another lexical stratum comes to surface. Here are some relevant instances:

Table 2

No.	Rom MS 2602	Date/*Vita*	Greek (17th-c. Menaion)	Slavonic	
				Russian Prolog (1642/1675)	Verse Prolog (Tarnovo, 14th c)[41]
1.	*Mamantos* (f. 2v)	2 September	Μάμαντος (f. 8r)	Мамантꙗ (f. 4v)	Мамантꙗ (p. 24)
2.	*Patriarhu de la Ţarigrad Ioan Nisteftu* (f. 2v)	2 September	Ἰωάννου τοῦ Νηστευτοῦ (f. 8r)	Їоанна арχїеп(с̑)кпа Константина града постника (f. 4v)	Їоанна арχїеп(с̑)кпа Костантина гра(д̑) постника (p. 25)
3.	*mnistira* (f. 34r) = “fiance”	St. Thecla (24 September)	μνήστρα (f. 78r)	обрꙋчена (f. 67v)	обрѫчена (p. 82)
4.	Des.: *Şi-i duseră la Nicomidiia de le tăiară capetele acolo. Iar marele Grigorie Bogoslov zice că acesta au iubit pre fată nu altul, face-se adunarea lui unde s-au muncit dencolo de solomoneştile* (f. 51r)	Martyr Cyprian (2 October)	Des.: καὶ ἐπὶ Νικομήδειαν ἀπαχθέντου, τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀφαιροῦνται. ὁ δὲ μέγας Γρηγόριος ὁ θεολόγος, οὐχ ἑταῖρον, ἄλλ’ ἀυτὸν ἐραστὴν τῆς παρθένου φησί. τελεῖται δὲ ἡ ἀυτῶν σινάξις, ἐν τῷ ἀυτῶν μαρτυρίῳ, τῷ ὄντι πέραν ἐν τοῖς Σολομῶντος:~ (f. 12r)	Des.: и в Никомидїи ведена бꙑста и главы има ѿсѣкоша (f. 135v)	Des.: и въ Никомидїѣ ведени главы имь ѿсѣкоша (p. 9)
5.	*pantocrator* (f. 111v) *odejdiile liturghiei* (f. 113r)	4 Baruch (4 November)	παντοκράτωρ (f. 78r) σκεύη τῆς λειτουργίας (f. 78v)	–	въсєдръжителъ (p. 15) съсѫды слоꙋжебныѧ (p. 17)

[41] I used Петков, Спасова 2008; Петков, Спасова 2009a; Петков, Спасова 2009b.

Spellings such as the names *Mamantos*, *Nisteftu* and the noun *liturghiei* are very close to the Greek words (Μάμαντος, Νηστευτοῦ, λειτουργίας; cf. Table 2, no. 1, 2, 5), as opposed to their Slavic counterparts (Мамантъ, постника слоужебныа; cf. Table 2, no. 1, 2, 5). In addition to that, some were preserved unaltered in the Romanian translation: *mnistira* (< μνήστρα vs. обр҃ѣчена; cf. Table 2, no. 3); *pantocrator* (< παντοκράτωρ vs. вьседр҃ьжителъ; cf. Table 2, no. 5). The case of the *Life of Martyr Cyprian* (Table 2, no. 4) testifies a different textual tradition, as the ending of the Romanian version can be found only in the Greek Menaion and not in the Russian Prolog or the Tarnovo Verse Prolog (see Table 2, no. 4).

The monks from Cozia must have had access to the seventeenth-century Venice edition due to the vast library of the prodigious and learned nobleman and humanist scholar Constantin Cantacuzino (1639–1716)[42]. I believe that the Menaion was used by these monks as a secondary source of translation. My conclusion is based on the recurrent errors made in the translation of these texts.

Menaion: εὐαγγελιζόμενος (p. 34)
Rom MS: mângâie-i de le zi cuvinte bune "comfort them and tell them good words" (BAR 2602, f. 113r)
Dosoftei: binevestindu-le "preaching the good news to them" (CRV 73, f. 105v)

Menaion: τῶν δὲ ὀκτῷ καὶ δεκάτῳ ἔτει (p. 32)
Verse Prolog: въ осмое же и десѧтое лѣто (p. 15)
Rom. MS: Iar în 11[43] ani (BAR 2602, f. 111v)

Menaion: δωδέκατος (p. 35)
Verse Prolog: два на десѧтыи (p. 19)
Rom. MS: […] (BAR 2602, f. 114v)
Dosoftei: făurariul "February" (CRV 73, f. 106v)

The first example illustrates a hesitant way of rendering εὐαγγελιζόμενος to Romanian. The choice of the monks from Cozia is rather odd: "comfort them and tell them good words" (BAR 2602, f. 113r). In contrast, Dosoftei would grasp the evangelical nuance, and choose "preaching the good news to them" (CRV 73, f. 105v).

The second and third instances reveal a common error. Greek numerals are either mistranslated (eleven instead of eighteen) or not translated at all. However, δωδέκατος, in the context of the parabiblical 4 Baruch would be a challenge for any translator. The short version of the text preserves only this numeral, in the reply of the old man whom Ebed-Melech inquired about the month which they were in. However, the long version of the apocryphon provides more details:

[42] See D i m a - D r ă g a n 1974: 40–56. From his library, 11 Greek Menaia are left to Mărgineni Monastery (Prahova county) (D i m a - D r ă g a n 1974: 161).

[43] Written in Cyrillic letters: а҃ї.

Νισσάν· καὶ ἐστιν ἡ δωδεκάτη "the 12th of Nissan" (5:33)[44]. Metropolitan Dosoftei is the only one able to render a close month to Nissan, namely February. That is thanks to his "dialogical reading", as his interpretation is influenced by another Greek source – the *Universal Chronicle* of Kigalas-type (Venice, 1650) – which states: δωδέκατος ἤγυν Φεβρουάριος (p. 218)[45].

Finally, and no less importantly, the rather tentative manner in which the Greek text is embodied in the script. Towards the end, the *Life of Roman the Melodist* (1 October) recounts that the saint returned to the church "and he started to sing the Greek *kontakion*, namely и παρθενος симерон тон иперѳсион тикти, and in Serbian: дв҃аа дн҃е" (Rom. MS BAR 2602, f. 50v)[46]. The "Serbian" – a common way of denominating Slavic language – hymn is preserved, substance and form, while the Greek one is transcribed to Cyrillic script. It is evident that, in the eyes of the brethren from Cozia, the former prevails over the latter.

Mixed sources and entangled traditions

The oldest Romanian hagiographic collection, preserved in MS BAR 2602, was translated primarily from a Slavic source, with additional consultation of a Greek archetype, in Cozia Monastery (Wallachia) before 1675.

The practice of using multiple sources in the translation process is attested in the Romanian lands from the 16th century onwards. It was usually linked to the biblical texts, such as *Palia de la Orăștie* (Transylvania, Hunedoara county, 1581–1582), which included the Book of Genesis and the Book of Exodus, involving a Hungarian *urtext*, the Vulgate and a Slavonic Scripture[47]. It was also employed in the translation of the New Testament (Alba Iulia, Transylvania, 1648), for which the team of translators, supervised by Metropolitan Simion Ștefan (1643–1656), consulted Latin, Greek, and Slavonic books and manuscripts. The same approach can be observed in the translation of the *Bucharest Bible* (1688) into Romanian, which drew on Greek, Slavonic, and Latin sources, including editions containing a critical apparatus[48]. Besides the manifold genres and species consulted by Dosoftei of Moldavia (1671–1673; 1675–1686) in order to create the most complete Romanian volume of Lives of

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[44] H e r z e r 2005: 18.

[45] I used the volume which bears Dosoftei's reader notes, namely BAR CR 170343.

[46] „mearse de-ntră în besearică și începu a cânta condacul greceaște, adecă *iparthenos simeron ton iperusion ticti*, iar pre sârbeaște: дв҃аа дн҃е" (Rom MS BAR 2602, f. 50v).

[47] P a m f i l 1968: V–IX.

[48] Șerban and Radu Greceanu, from the princely court of Wallachia, used the translation of the Old Testament by Nicolae Milescu *spatharion* (Moldavia) and the *New Testament* form Alba Iulia (1648) (see the entire process in C â n d e a 1979: 79–171).

saints (1682–1686), his careful and Humanistic analysis of the sources is also visible in another instance. In rendering the Psalter into Romanian, he revises errors from the Slavic versions of the Psalter, comparing it with "the book of Saint Jerome which is in Greek, Latin and Hebrew"[49]. Further on, the 18th century perfects this minute and comparative analysis of the mixed sources, focusing on the differences between textual traditions, as attested in the ascetic school of Paisius Velichkovsky from Dragomirna, Secu and Neamț (1763–1794)[50].

The simultaneous use of Slavonic and Greek sources is, therefore, not surprising when it comes to the Lives of saints from Cozia (1675). However, I believe that this instance is different from those listed above.

The monks from the community of Cozia must have had some knowledge of the Greek language[51]. Their attempts to translate a few *vitae* from the Venetian Menaion could be regarded as errors, but the reasons underlying these translation choices require further examination. Most likely, these choices reflect an ongoing process of learning and assimilating a foreign language. Unlike Slavonic, Greek required sustained practice and active engagement. If we accept this line of reasoning, another question arises: why did the monastic community at Cozia turn to the study of Greek during this period?

This language gained increasing prominence in the seventeenth century, when members of the nobility studied Greek in Constantinople, and prominent Greek churchmen were active in Wallachia[52]. Most of them were associated with the court of Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–1688) and, later, of Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714). According to Anton Maria del Chiaro, Brâncoveanu's "secretary for European languages", the growing use of Greek in the Wallachian Church service was due to the presence of high-ranking clergymen of Hellenic descent in the principality[53]. In his memoirs, he recounts with no little astonishment how Wallachian festive offices were held both in Slavonic (*per norm*) and in Greek[54], a practice attested also in Paul of Aleppo's travel account[55]. One can observe the growing preference for Greek in the increasing number of theological books

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[49] See the note at the end of the *Psalter to Understanding* (Iași, 1680) in C o b z a r u 2007: 701. See also the comparative use of different textual traditions of the Slavic *Akathistos Hymn* in the Romanian translation from the first part of the 17th century, preserved in its earliest form in Rom MS BAR 540 (1633–1639) (T i m o t i n, D i m a, H â n c u, M u t a l â p 2026: 56–64).

[50] M u t a l â p 2024: 293–315.

[51] Hegumen Varlaam, the future metropolitan, signed his name in Greek (Ș e r b ă n e s c u 1958: 1125). There are also some Greek mural inscriptions which were dated in a later period than the production of the hagiographic codex (see P o p a, B e d r o s, I a n c o v e s c u, N e g r ă u 2008: 267–284).

[52] R u s s o 1912: 51–54.

[53] D e l C h i a r o 2012: 86–87.

[54] D e l C h i a r o 2012: 96–97.

[55] O l a r 2014: 275–287.

printed in Greek between the 1680s and 1700, amounting to almost twenty titles. I would also recall here the Greek-Romanian *Gospel* (Bucharest, 1693), whose preface states that the Greek text could be used to correct possible errors in the vernacular version. It further explains that "although you will not understand what you read, the thorough reading itself brings sanctification; and also Origen says that snakes do not understand the language of their charmers but hearing their voice they go numb and motionless; in the same way, those who read or listen to the Holy Gospel, whether they understand the written word or not, the bodily passions and desires and the urgings of Satan are killed simply through reading and listening to it"[56].

The preparation to employ Greek as a liturgical language within a milieu accustomed to Slavonic is a tempting theory. Caught between the Protestant influences and its orthodoxy, Eastern Christianity faced trials and tribulations in the 17th century. The echoes of the controversies surrounding Kyrillos Loukaris, Patriarch of Constantinople (1620–1638), reverberated throughout the epoch, catalysing the consolidation of the religious communities. The push towards reading and using this language reinforced the strong adherence to the Greek Church and its rite, shaping its identity under Ottoman rule[57].

The earliest use of the bilingual liturgical chant is attested in Putna Monastery (Moldavia) in the 16th century, where monks used peculiar songbooks that combine Greek and Slavonic, using Greek, Cyrillic and Glagolitic letters. Another illustrative example is the trilingual *Liturgikon* or *Sluzhebnik* of Metropolitan Stefan of Wallachia (1648–1653, 1655–1668)[58]. It preserves the Slavonic text of the Liturgy (in Cyrillic script), accompanied by Romanian Typikon instructions (in Cyrillic script) and Greek *ekphoneses* written in Cyrillic characters and in phonetic transcription, masterfully intertwined with lavish illuminations[59].

The bilingual, or rather trilingual, chant was thus accompanied by a distinctive scriptural phenomenon: Greek transcribed phonetically in the Cyrillic alphabet. It is understandable that such transcriptions must have been made for clergymen who were not very well acquainted with Greek. Whether read silently or aloud, chanted or listened to, Greek must have gradually established itself as a language of culture in the seventeenth-century Romanian lands. Beyond facilitating the reading of Greek, the "cross-alphabetic" phenomenon also served a functional purpose: preserving adherence to the "authentic" tradition while enabling the celebration of the Divine Office in the multilingual context of Wallachia during the second half of the 17th century[60].

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[56] See the full preface in B i a n u, H o d o ș, S i m o n e s c u 1903: 331–334.

[57] O l a r 2026: 451–488; O l a r 2019.

[58] V e l c u l e s c u, M i h a i l, S t ă n c u l e s c u, O l a r 2010; D u m i t r e s c u 2017.

[59] For the study of this phenomenon and further bibliography, see O l a r 2025.

[60] O l a r 2014: 278, 285; O l a r 2025: 188–198.

Coming back to the oldest Romanian collection of Lives of saints (1675), the resort to both Slavonic and Greek sources can be seen as a translation practice adopted by the monks from Cozia Monastery within the context in which the growing prominence of Greek was associated with the preservation of the Church's orthodoxy. Printed, read and sung, it needed to be intelligible or at least readable, especially in the plurilingual milieu from the second part of the 17th century. In this light, the gradual effort to move away from the Slavic sources and translate some *vitae* from Greek into Romanian demonstrates the monks' responsiveness to the cultural tendencies emerging around the Princely Court and the Metropolis. As Roman the Melodist, whose Life they translated from Greek (Rom MS BAR 2602, f. 50v), the brethren from Cozia sang "the Serbian дв҃аа дн҃е" within the walls of their monastery, but they must have heard the Greek chant from outside and one can only imagine how the foreign sound was fixed in Cyrillic letter by letter: и пар҃ѳенос симерон тон иперѳсион тикти.

ABBREVIATIONS AND INVENTORY OF CONSULTED MANUSCRIPTS

BAR (Romanian Academy Library, Bucharest) = 339, 2602, 5023.
CRV (Old Romanian printed book) = 73, 111
CR (Rare Book, Romanian Academy Library) = 170343, III 173900
BCU (Central University Library, Bucharest)
SB (Holy Synod Library, Bucharest)
Dragomirna (Dragomirna Monastery Library)
Putna (Putna Monastery Library)
Sucevița (Sucevița Monastery Library)
Brașov (Șcheii Brașovului Museum, Brașov)
RSL (Russian State Library/RGB, Moscow) Marc21

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TRANSLITERATION OF THE NON-ROMAN REFERENCES INTO ROMAN SCRIPT

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