

BIBLICAL AND PATRISTIC REFERENCES IN THE *LIVES* OF MUSCOVITE SAINTS (14-15TH CENTURY)

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Abstract: This study addresses the usage of biblical and patristic references in the 14-15th century *Lives* of local Muscovite saints. It aims to provide an overview of Muscovite hagiography, from the earliest anonymous texts to the works of Pachomius the Serb. The *Lives* were transformed over time, in numerous redactions intended for different use. They were introduced into liturgical practice, private devotion, or chronicle writing. I will focus on three cases, the first anonymous redaction of the *Life of the Holy Metropolitan Peter*, the second redaction of the *Life of Peter*, written by the metropolitan Cyprian, and the *Life of Saint Sergii of Radonezh* written by Epiphanius the Wise in order to discuss the cultural milieu which influenced each author's choice of references.

Keywords: Muscovy, hagiography, Metropolitan Peter of Kyiv, Sergii of Radonezh, Church history.

1. Introduction

One of the most interesting characteristics of 14-15th century Muscovite hagiographical writings is the constant rewriting of the *Lives* of saints, in successive redactions. Extensive philological and historical analysis has uncovered the various redactions of *Lives* and the historical context generating the rewritings. Publications such as the *Dictionary of scribes and bookishness of Ancient Rus'* are essential tools for understanding the complexity of such texts, which found their way into various collections, from Menologia to official court chronicles, and, in some cases, had a decisive impact on the Muscovite conceptualization of political power. For example, the *Life of the Holy Metropolitan Aleksii* is considered to have five successive redactions between the late 14th century and the end of the 17th century. The reasons for rewriting a saint's life can differ. From a religious perspective, new redactions could record new miracles or the discovery of relics. From a political perspective, the saints' lives could be introduced into official chronicles and portrayed as protectors of the city and of the grand prince.

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This article aims to provide an introduction to 14-15th century Muscovite hagiography through the Biblical and Patristic references introduced into the redaction of *Lives* of local saints. I've selected this timespan as it best illustrates the transition from the oldest extant hagiographical texts, written in a simple style, to the literary changes of the late 15th century, culminating with the first complete translation of the Bible into Slavonic, in Novgorod, under the supervision of Archbishop Gennadii. Throughout these two centuries, the selection of Biblical and Patristic references was directly influenced by the texts available to the authors, and by their cultural activity. To illustrate these characteristics, I decided to focus on the *Lives* of two of the most revered Muscovite saints, the holy Metropolitan Petr (1308-1326) and Sergii of Radonezh (†1392). As this article aims to provide an analysis of the cultural context that shaped these choices, and not a thorough philological analysis, I've decided to use the editions of Boris Kloss for the first anonymous redaction of the *Life of the Holy Metropolitan Petr* (Kloss 2001, 27-31), the second redaction of Petr's *Life*, written by Metropolitan Kiprian (Kloss 2001, 35-47) and the *Life of Saint Sergii of Radonezh*, written by Epifanii the Wise (Kloss 1998, 285-343). The authors of these texts were coming from different cultural backgrounds and had different work styles. For this reason, they managed to introduce new literary devices, such as "word weaving" (*pletenie sloves*), used in South Slavic writings, and to introduce a series of references and topoi that would define the veneration of the saints in question.

2. *Life of the holy Metropolitan Petr, first redaction*

Chronicles present Petr as the first metropolitan of Kyiv and all Rus' who decided to settle in Moscow in 1325, after spending most of his tenure traveling throughout the Rus' polities under his jurisdiction (PSRL 25, 168). At the metropolitan's request, the Grand Prince Ivan I built a cathedral dedicated to the Dormition of the Theotokos in Moscow's Kremlin. After only one year in Moscow, the metropolitan died and, according to his *Life*, was buried within the new, still under construction, cathedral, in a tomb near the altar, which Petr had prepared with his own hands (Kloss 2001, 30). At the beginning of the 14th century, Muscovy was one of the many Rus' polities that appeared after the Mongol invasion. It developed as an independent polity under Daniil Aleksandrovich (1282-1303) and became a regional power under his son, Ivan I (1325-1340), also known as "Kalita" (moneybags). Thus, as Muscovy's power grew, monasticism in the northern areas would develop and great monasteries would appear, such as the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergii of Radonej, or the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery.

The first redaction of the *Life of the Holy Metropolitan Petr* appeared only one year after the saint's death. Kloss considered it to be the oldest example of a Muscovite hagiographical writing. Initially, the author was believed to be

Prokhor, bishop of Rostov, as his name was mentioned on some manuscripts containing the text. However, recent research uncovered new manuscripts that suggested the author was, most likely, an unknown member of the clergy from the Dormition Cathedral. The text was copied in numerous extant manuscripts beginning with the second half of the 15th century, and the oldest is assumed to have been produced in the 1470s. (SKKDR 1987, vol. 1, 163-164).

The author explained the writing the *Life* as a consequence of the many miracles happening at the holy metropolitan's tomb. Petr was born in a pious family from Volynia, today's western Ukraine (according to the second redaction). His holiness was foretold to his mother, while she was carrying the baby. In a prophetic dream, she saw herself holding a lamb adorned with flowers. The young Petr joined a monastery when he was twelve, where he worked hard in the kitchen and humbly served the brothers. He learned the skill of icon painting and eventually left the monastery for a secluded life. But other monks gathered around him and a new monastery appeared. Due to his piety, when Maksim, the metropolitan of Kyiv and all Rus' died, God chose Petr for the office. The divine will manifested itself through a double miracle: the ship taking Petr to Constantinople, to be confirmed as metropolitan by the patriarch, arrived swiftly, while the ship carrying Gerontii, Petr's competitor, was delayed in a storm. While sailing, Gerontii had a miraculous vision. The Theotokos from an icon painted by Petr showed Herself to him, announcing that God chose Petr, the icon's painter, as the new metropolitan. After the official appointment, Petr returned to Rus' where he travelled widely and preached with great zeal. Tempted by the devil, Bishop Andrei accused the metropolitan of simony, but a synod found the metropolitan to be innocent. Finally, he reached Moscow and decided to stay there. When an angel foretold his death, the metropolitan left his final teachings. He was buried with great ceremony in the tomb he prepared, which became a pilgrimage site for those seeking to be healed.

The text's style is simple, focused on the events, with little stylistic embellishment, resembling to some extent chronicle writing. It contains only two direct Biblical references. When describing the divine election of Petr as the new metropolitan, it references the Gospel according to Matthew 5:14-15: "A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket"² ("Не может град укрытися верху горы стоя, ни светильника вжег покрыти его сосудом"). Kloss used a manuscript dated in the first half of the 16th century, where the name of the Evangelist was included "яко же бо еуангелист Лука глаголетъ" ("as the Evangelist Luke says"), probably referencing Luke 8:16, "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed" or Luke 11:33, "No one after lighting a lamp

² For Biblical references I used the *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* 2018. Translations of hagiographical texts are my own.

puts it in a cellar”, both partially containing the reference. Other text editions, using different manuscripts, did not provide the Evangelist’s name. (Sedova 1993, 24). As this article does not aim to provide a comparative analysis of all manuscripts containing the *Life of Petr*, we cannot conclude when or why such a change appeared. However, it should be noted that towards the end of the 15th century, both the Evangelist Luke and Metropolitan Petr were revered as painters of two wonderworking icons hosted in the Dormition Cathedral. The icon that foretold Petr’s election as metropolitan to his competitor, Gerontii, was probably placed at Petr’s tomb. Muscovite chronicles mention it together with the well-known Theotokos of Vladimir (PSRL 25, 287). Although the latter had arrived in Vladimir from Byzantium in the 12th century, the tales of its apostolic origin appeared in the 15th century. Probably the oldest mention of the icon as painted by the Evangelist Luke was connected to the emergence of the *Tale of Temir-Aksak*. The text detailed the miracle of the icon of Vladimir, which was brought to Moscow on the eve of the 1395 attack of Tamerlane and saved the city (Shhcennikova 1996, 252–286). The second biblical reference in the *Life of Petr* appeared when describing the saint’s death: “The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” (“Праведникъ яко финикъ процвететь и яко кедр, иже в Ливане, умножится”) Psalms 92:12.³ The text continues by listing the miracles happening at Petr’s tomb, the first one taking place twenty days after the burial. This narrative style, with little emphasis on the text’s literary qualities, seems to be specific to early Muscovite literature. For example, the first redaction of the *Life of the holy Metropolitan Aleksii*, written in the 1380s, does not contain any direct Biblical reference (Kloss 2001, 53-55).

The *Life*’s first redaction also offered a reference that would directly impact the subsequent veneration of Moscow-based metropolitans. After his return from Constantinople, the text informs the reader, that the metropolitan began to preach and interpret the “Apostolic writings and the Gospel like Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Gregory the Theologian” (“[...] апостольская писания и еуангельская, яко же Василеи Великыи и Иоан Златоуст и Григорей Богослов”). The individual veneration of the Metropolitans Petr and Aleksii developed already in the 14th century. However, in the 16th century, the Metropolitan Iona began to be venerated as a saint and shortly the three wonderworking Moscow-based metropolitans Petr, Aleksii, and Iona would be referenced together. The event that sparked this interest was the 1472 miraculous discovery of relics of the metropolitans buried in the Dormition Cathedral. The metropolitan Filipp and the Grand Prince Ivan III wished to rebuild the old, decaying cathedral. The late 15th-century Muscovite chronicles carefully describe the succession of events. When the rebuilding started, the

³ Psalm 91 in *Biblia* 2015.

old tombs had to be opened and the remains relocated. But the bodies of the metropolitans Petr, Kiprian, Fotii, and Iona, buried inside the Cathedral, were found to be uncorrupted. Moreover, when the tombs of Iona and Petr were opened, a pleasant smell filled the cathedral (PSRL 25, 294-297). Iona was the first metropolitan elected by a synod of local bishops and without the traditional confirmation from the patriarch of Constantinople. Unlike Petr and Aleksii, who had been revered as wonderworkers and saintly protectors of the city even before their relics were discovered, the veneration of Metropolitan Iona was established only after the 1472 events.⁴ After this moment, the three metropolitans are often referenced together in chronicle writing, political treaties, and documents issued in the metropolitan's chancellery. The connection between their common veneration and the model of the three holy Byzantine hierarchs was emphasized. In a 1552 letter included in the *Nikon Chronicle*, Metropolitan Makarii named the three holy wonderworkers, together with Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, and a series of other local saints as saintly intercessors on behalf of the Muscovites, helping Ivan the Terrible in his military victory over the Tatars. (PSRL 13, vol. 2, 491). In 1595, Patriarch Iov established the common celebration of the three Moscow-based metropolitans on 5 October (18 October, Gregorian Calendar). Although we cannot argue for a direct connection between the hagiographical comparison and the veneration of the three Muscovite hierarchs, the celebration's founding was directly influenced by the development of the Russian Church, as it was an attempt to consolidate the newly emerged patriarchate. The new celebration did not spark new hagiographical writings, but collections of saints' lives do explicitly pinpoint the influence of the celebration of the three Byzantine hierarchs. One such example would be the popular Menologium of Saint Dmitrii of Rostov, compiled in the second half of the 17th century.

3. *Life of the holy Metropolitan Petr, second redaction*

The second redaction of Metropolitan Petr's *Life*, written in 1381, reflects the transformations the Muscovite culture and hagiographical writing would undergo in the 15th century. Its author was one of Petr's successors, the Metropolitan Kiprian Tsamblak (1375-1406). Due to the military conflicts between Lithuania and Muscovy, he was appointed metropolitan in Lithuania while Metropolitan Aleksii was still in office, and was expected to reunite the metropolitan see under his leadership when Aleksii died. Kiprian was a Bulgarian with a remarkable monastic career, spanning over monastic centres in Bulgaria, Constantinople, and Mount Athos. He was a disciple of the

⁴ Metropolitan Aleksii was buried in the Chudov Monastery, which he founded. His relics were discovered in the 1430s.

Bulgarian Patriarch Euthymius of Tarnovo (1375-1393) and was in the service of the Patriarch of Constantinople Filotheos Kokkinos (1353-1354/ 1364-1376) (Meyendorff, 1989, 200-261). Kiprian had a vast cultural activity and became one of the most remarkable actors of what historians called “the second South Slavic influence” in Rus’. The *Life of the holy Metropolitan Petr* was his only hagiographical work, but through it, Kiprian introduced two important characteristics of Byzantine and South Slavic hagiography, namely a rich rhetorical style known as “word weaving” (*pletenie sloves*) and the description of the saint as practicing hesychasm.

When compared to the first redaction, the new text is much more extended, comprises Byzantine stylistic elements, and reflects the cultural environment that had shaped the author’s worldview. The oldest manuscript containing the *Life* is a *Menaion* kept in Harkiv, which was considered to have been produced in Kiprian’s circle, while the Greek marginalia could have been written by the author himself. The text was included as part of a liturgical service dedicated to Petr, on 21 December, the day of his celebration (SKKDR 1987, vol. 1, 165). Without introducing new events into the saint’s *Life*, the text is much more intricate, due to rhetorical elements, comparisons, alliterations, tautologies, and rhythm. All these elements are characteristic of “word weaving” (Sedova 1983, 263-264). Beginning with the works of Dmitrii Likhachev, a long historiographical tradition aimed at explaining these elements as literary expressions of an hesychast worldview (Likhachev, 1960). Recent studies, however, proved the continuity between this writing style and Byzantine rhetoric that developed already in the 8th century and had been integrated into hagiographical works beginning with Symeon the Metaphrast, in the 10th century (LeBauve, 1992, 258).

In Kiprian’s work, Biblical references are also much more common. As an abbot preoccupied with the monks’ salvation, Petr is described through a reference to Proverbs 19:17 “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.” (“Милуяи ницаго, Богу в заимъ дает”). When discussing Petr’s appointment in Constantinople, a reference to Psalm 51:17 is introduced: “a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (“Сердце скрушено и смирено Бог не уничижить”).⁵ The moment when the Grand Prince Ivan I rejoices at the miracles happening at Petr’s tomb a reference to I Kings 2:30 is used: “for those who honor me I will honor” (“Прославляющих бо Мя, – рече Господь, – прославлю”). The references to the New Testament are also more common. The abbot Petr is merciful, just as God urged, referencing Luke 6:36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (“Будете щедри, яко же Отець вашъ небесный щедр есть”). The letter to the Romans 9:16 “So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who

⁵ Psalm 50:18 in *Biblia* 2015.

shows mercy.” (“Ни хотящему, ни текущему, но милующему Бору”) explains why Petr and not his competitor Gerontii became a metropolitan. The holy metropolitan defends himself against the accusations of bishop Andrei referencing the New Testament: Romans 8:31 „If God is for us, who is against us?” (“Аще Бог по нас, то кто на ны”). He shows he does not need anyone else to defend him by “imitating his teacher Christ, when he said to Peter: put your sword into its sheath” (“подражая своего учителя Христа, внегда к Петрови рече: «Вонзи ножь свои в ножницу»)” It references the moment when Christ was caught, John 18:10-11: “Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, «Put your sword back into its sheath».” And when the metropolitan decided to settle in Moscow, Matthew 10:40: was referenced “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me” (“Приемляи вас, Мене приемлет”).

The Biblical references Kiprian used were also an allusion to his own cultural interests. When Metropolitan Aleksii died, Kiprian went to Moscow to claim the seat of the metropolitan, but the Grand Prince Dmitrii Donskoi did not accept him. After a brief tenure (1381-1382), he returned to Constantinople, to the Studion Monastery. There, he spent most of his time translating and copying patristic works. He would continue this activity after his return to Moscow as metropolitan (1389-1406), where he spent the rest of his life. He is considered to be the author of a Psalter manuscript, kept at the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergii of Radonej. In its synaxis appear for the first time South Slavic saints such as Saint Paraskeva, Ioan of Rila, or Saint Sava of Serbia, together with the holy metropolitan Petr (Dimitriev 1963, 223-224). Several of his works have survived, among them letters, teachings, prayers, and manuscripts he is assumed to have copied. One such example would be a manuscript of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, to which Kiprian added his own commentaries. Probably his most noteworthy manuscript was a copy of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, by John Climacus, finished in 1387. The metropolitan’s interest in this work might have been the reason why the *Life of Petr* references the *Ladder*. Kiprian used a reference to John Climacus to explain how the holy metropolitan was performing his functions, “God rests in the hearts of the meek” (“В сердце кротких почиет Богъ”). When describing the progress of the young monk Petr, his obedience and asceticism had the explicit goal of attaining perfection “as with a ladder ascent he had in his heart, as the Climacus has shown” (“яко же некоею лествицею въсхождения в сердци полагаше, по Лествичника указанию”).

Although the attempt to explain “word weaving” as a literary style emerging from a Hesychast worldview has been disproven, describing the saint whose *Life* they were writing as practicing hesychasm was common with some authors, such as Euthymius of Tarnovo. The references were subtle, usually

implied by including a series of topoi related to the search for isolation and the desire to practice asceticism, any type of abstinence, but these practices which could be considered to be specific to monastic life would culminate with the vision of the Taboric light (LeBauve 1992, 435-461). Metropolitan Kiprian, Euthymius' disciple, used such references in his *Life of Petr* (Børtnes 1998, 119-122). The text constantly reinforces Petr's obedience and asceticism during his first years in a monastery, his uninterrupted work, and his obedience towards his teacher. The references to silence and quietude are constant throughout the text, from its intro "and the right, if he reaches perfection, he will be in silence" ("И праведник, аще достигнетъ скончатися, в покои будетъ"), to the time he spent as abbot: "in all silent" ("молчалив же во всем"). Seeking isolation, an ascetic lifestyle, and silence, he left the monastery. Shortly, his fame attracted other monks and a new monastery appeared and Petr turned into the ideal mentor, preoccupied with the salvation of his disciples' souls. Even though the vision of the Taboric light was not referenced directly, the description of Petr's activity as an icon painter seemed to get the closest to such an achievement. While painting, the *Life* said, Petr was completely void of worldly thoughts, thus becoming deified in spirit ("весь обоженъ бывааше умом"). As a result, one of the icons of the Theotokos he painted proved to be wonderworking.

Although the two redactions of Petr's *Life* were copied in manuscripts in parallel throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, Kiprian's version became the favoured one. It was copied in menologia, chronicles, and it served as a model for iconographical representations of the *Life*. In the 16th century, it was the version copied in the great compilations aiming to present a unified history of the Rus' polities, Great Meanion Reader (*Velikie Chet'i-Minei*) of Metropolitan Makarii and the Book of Royal Degrees (*Stepennaia kniga*).

4. *Life of Saint Sergii of Radonezh* written by Epifanii the Wise

It was not by chance that the manuscripts Metropolitan Kiprian copied were kept in the Trinity Lavra of Saint Sergii. They were the most important figures of the 14th-century monastic revival in North-Eastern Rus' and had a decisive influence over the spread of Hesychasm. What is more, extant letters of Metropolitan Kiprian addressed to Saint Sergii show that the initially rejected metropolitan was thinking of Sergii as an ally in Moscow, willing to help him claim the office. At the beginning of the 15th century, the monk Epifanii the Wise (*Premudrii*) wrote the *Life of Saint Sergii of Radonej*. In the intro, the author expressed his puzzlement that the *Life* of such an important saint had not been written yet. Most of the information we have on Epifanii comes from the autobiographical notes he included in his works. Thus, we find out he was a disciple of Sergii and lived at the Trinity Lavra. Towards the end of the 14th century, he went to Moscow where he entered the service of Metropolitan

Kiprian. Epifanii died no later than 1422 when the relics of Sergii were discovered. Three of the hagiographical texts he wrote had reached us, the *Life of Saint Stefan of Perm*, *Prase of Saint Sergii*, and the *Life of Saint Sergii*. The style of his writings was the reason behind his sobriquet “the Wise”. In complete opposition to the first Muscovite hagiographical writings, Epifanii’s works are brimming with Biblical and Patristic references. For example, researchers have identified around 340 biblical references in the *Life of Saint Stefan of Perm*, and most of them were probably written from memory (Børtnes 1998, 141-142). The references Metropolitan Kiprian introduces in his texts came from an extensive experience with the written text, which made the references much easier to identify and more accurate to the Biblical manuscripts in use at the time. Epifanii, however, introduced references memorized from liturgical practice (but not exclusively) and it is assumed they were not confronted with a written text (Kitch 1976, 111-130).

To exemplify Epifanii’s style, I will discuss several cases from the *Life of Saint Sergii*. According to the introduction, the text was written around 1418, based on notes the author had gathered over the years. Sergii was born in Rostov and his parents named the child Varfolomei. His future sainthood was foretold when his pregnant mother attended church service and the child screamed in the womb three times. After birth, he refused milk from his mother on Wednesdays and Fridays and on instances when the mother did not respect Lent. The child was sent to a teacher when he was seven, but he could not keep up with the other children. After meeting a monk who recognized the divine spark in him, he could sing the Psalms by heart and learn. Due to political circumstances, namely Tatar and Muscovite persecutions in Rostov, the saint’s family moved to Radonej. Varfolomei refused to get married as his brothers had done, wishing to become a monk. His parents asked him to wait until they die, to help them in their old age, and the saint agreed. After their parents died, together with his brother Stefan left their home and built cells and a small church in the forest. Over time, this small settlement would become the Trinity Lavra. Stefan could not bear life in the wilderness and went to a monastery. Alone in the forest, Sergii was constantly attacked by demons and shares his bread with a bear. Over time, more and more monks came and settled there, and, when the one serving as abbot died, they decided to elect Sergii in his place. The saint refused, but he was convinced by Archbishop Atanasii. The text continues with a description of Sergii’s way of running church activities and teachings.

One of the ways Epifanii manages to introduce so many Biblical references is by inserting them in long explanations of the moments he described. After the child was baptized, the priest explained the miracle of the child’s cry in his mother’s womb by referencing Psalm 139:16 “Your eyes beheld my unformed

substance.”⁶ (“Несъделанное мое видеста очи Твои”), John 15:27 “because you have been with me from the beginning.” (“Вы же яко искони с Мною есте”), Galatians 1:15-16 “But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles” (“Бог, отець Господа нашего Исуса Христа, възвавый мя из чрева матере моеа, явити сына своего в мне, да благовестую в странах”), but also Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (“в Ветхом законе, Иеремя пророк в чреве матерни освятися” trans. “in the Old Testament the prophet Jeramiah was blessed in his mother’s womb”). Also in this context, Epifanii shows his deep knowledge of hagiography, by including a series of saints who were announced in a similar manner: the Prophet Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, the Prophet Elijah, the saints Nicholas, Ephrem the Syrian, Alypius the Stylite, Simeon Stylites, Theodore the Sykeote, Euthymius the Great, Theodore, Bishop of Edessa, and the holy Metropolitan Petr. After his parents died, Sergii decided to become a monk, remembering the teachings of the holy books, referencing Isaiah 52:11 “Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing” (“Изыдете от среды их, и отлучитесь, и нечистем мире не прикасайтесь”) Psalm 63:8 “My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me”⁷ (“Прилпе душа моа възслед Тебе, мене же прият десница Твоя”), Luke 14:33 “So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.” (“Иже кто хочеть възслед Мене итьти, аще не отречеться всех, яже суть въ мире сем, не может быти Мой ученикъ”).

In an extensive passage, Epifanii exemplifies the importance of the number three, to show how the saint was a disciple of the Trinity already since his birth:

трижды Господь Самоила пророка възва; трею камению пращею Давидъ Голиада порази; трижды повеле възливати воду Илия на полена, рек: «Утройте», – утроиша; трижды тожде Илия дуну на отрочища и възкреси его; три дни и три нощи Иона пророк в ките тридневнова; трие отроци в Вавилоне печь огньную угасиша; тричисленое же слышание Исаию пророку серафимовидцу, егда на небеси слышашесья ему пение агельское, трисвятое възпиющих: «Свят, свят, свят Господь Саваоф!» Трею же лет въведена бысть в церковь Святаа Святых пречистаа дева Мариа; тридесяти же лет Христос крестися от Иоанна в Иердане; три же ученикы Христос постави на Фаворе и преобразися пред ними; тридневно же Христос из мрътвых възкресе; трикраты же Христос по възкресении рече: «Петре, любиши ли Мя?»

⁶ Psalm 198 in Biblia 2015.

⁷ Psalm 62 in Biblia 2015.

three times God called the prophet Samuel (1Rg 3:4-8), with the sling with three stones David struck Goliath (1 Rg 17:49), three times Elijah ordered water to be poured over the wood saying: "three times" and three times (they poured) (3Rg 18:33), also three times Elijah breathed on the boy and resurrected him (3 Rg 17:21), three days and three nights the prophet Jonah (was) inside the fish (Jonah 2:1), three young men in Babylon put out the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:13-27), three times did Isaiah the prophet, he who saw the seraphim, hear the singing of the angels from heaven, calling the holy name three times: «Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts» (Is. 6: 2-3) At the age of three the Blessed Virgin Mary was taken to the church, in the Holy of Holies, at the age of thirty Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan (Mat. 3:13-17), three disciples Christ put on Tabor and transfigured before them (Mat. 17:1-2), after three days Christ rose from the grave, three times after the resurrection Christ said: «Peter, Do you love me??» (John 21: 15-17).

Among Epifanii's works, the *Life of Saint Stefan of Perm* attracted the most scholarly interest, especially for his use of "word weaving" and Hesychast references (Mayhew, 2017). This choice was influenced by the manner in which the texts were transmitted. *The Life of Saint Sergii* has survived only in the rewritten redaction of Pakhomii the Serb and the original version had to be reconstructed by researchers. Pakhomii was probably the most prolific author of *Lives* in the second half of the 15th century. He went to Novgorod from Mount Athos and he was entrusted by Archbishop Eftimii with writing the *Lives* of a series of local saints. He also worked in the Trinity Lavra and in Moscow, where he produced new redactions of the *Lives* of some of the most venerated Rus' saints, such as Saint Sergii, Saint Kirill of Beloozero, or Metropolitan Aleksii. He also wrote the canon of the transfer of Petr's relics, after the miraculous discovery of 1472, in the Dormition Cathedral. In most cases, Pakhomii's redactions were intended for liturgical use. In the case of the *Life of Saint Sergii*, Kloss identified five successive redactions, simplifying Epifanii's text, to which he added the discovery of relics and posthumous miracles (Kloss 1998, 129-130).

5. Conclusion

The development of the Muscovite hagiographical tradition can be outlined together with the polity's political evolution. At the beginning of the 14th century, Moscow was not yet a recognized cultural and political centre. The writings of this time cannot be examined as successors of the rich Kyivan tradition. The anonymous authors of works such as the first redaction of the *Life of the holy Metropolitan Petr* were using a simple style, with little to no Biblical or Patristic references, focused on the series of events. At the same time, during the 14th century, much fewer Patristic texts were available in a Slavonic translation. For example, the three holy Byzantine hierarchs Basil the

Great, John Chrysostom, and Gregory the Theologian were known primarily through the apocryphal text *Conversation of the Three Hierarchs* (*Беседа трёх святителей*), written in the form of questions and answers, then through translations of their own works.

The late 14th and 15th-century, the influx of South Slavic authors and texts had a decisive influence on the Muscovite culture in general, and on the hagiographical writings in particular. The *Life of the holy Metropolitan Petr* rewritten by the Metropolitan Kiprian shows how the same succession of events was completely changed in form by the use of a different stylistic approach. The references to the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, a treatise that spread in Rus' beginning in the second half of the 14th century, are linked to the author's cultural activity. They also reflect the common practice of the time, when treatises translated into Slavonic in South Slavic polities would reach Rus'. At the same time, Kiprian's redaction had a political function. When the text was written, Petr was already recognized as the prototype of the legitimate metropolitan of all Rus', an office for which Kiprian was struggling to be accepted in Moscow. The saint's image as an intercessor for his successors is thus shaped. This image would culminate with the 1472 discovery of relics of all the metropolitans buried in the Dormition Cathedral. The South Slavic influence of the late 14th century led to the spread of Hesychasm in Rus' and also brought new stylistic influences, such as "word weaving". In his writings, Epifanii the Wise displays not only his vast erudition but also the impact cenobitic monasticism and the development of monastic libraries had on the selection of references.

The saints Petr and Sergii are probably the most influential Muscovite saints of the time. Both were born in other polities, but their activity remained linked to Moscow and after their demise, they were revered as saintly protectors of the city. Their veneration, however, followed different paths. Due to the tomb's proximity to political and ecclesiastical power, the holy Metropolitan Petr became an intercessor for the metropolitan in office and for the grand prince. Sergii's cult became a popular one, as the Trinity Lavra was much more accessible to ordinary pilgrims. Towards the end of the 15th century, various hagiographical redactions were included in chronicle writing and in other works meant to glorify Muscovy as the political and cultural centre of all Rus'. This also meant a new interest in the systematization of the *Lives* of local saints, as the new redactions of Pakhomii the Serb show. This interest would culminate in the 16th century with the *Great Menaion Reader* of the Metropolitan Makarii.

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