

MASĂ ROTUNDĂ/ ROUND TABLE

IS THERE AN ECCLESIASTICAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE?

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Keynote speakers:

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Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: First of all, thank you for the invitation, for this discussion. The theme will be *The Ecclesiastical Text of the Bible, of the Old Testament and of the New Testament*.

I am very pleased to announce you the presence of Monk FILOTHEU BĂLAN, who is also very interested in this problem, of Professor SYSSE G. ENGBERG from the University of Copenhagen, who is the editor of the *Prophetologion*, of the professor SEBASTIAN BROCK, and Professor CATHERINE MARY MACROBERT. First of all, I would like to explain what we understand through this ecclesiastical text, what our concern is, what our question is, I will start by defining this ‘ecclesiastical text’ by a text which is read and used in the Greek speaking church, so in the Byzantine Church. My question: how can we define, how can we find, how can we make a profile of this ecclesiastical text? And, of course, we will find many variations, many different readings, and my question will be: can we make a hierarchy of these variants, can we find a specific Byzantine type for the biblical texts? For the New Testament it is a little bit easier, because we have a critical edition, the so-called Byzantine text, or majority text; in 2005 there was a critical edition published by Robinson and Pierpont, so it is possible to have a glimpse over this standard Byzantine text type. For the Old Testament, the problem is a little bit more difficult, because the Orthodox Church, the Eastern Church, only a small percent of biblical text is used in the liturgical ritual in the cult, perhaps 10% or 15%. Perhaps in the 8th or 9th century a new liturgical book was born and this is the *Prophetologion* – Professor Engberg could explain us better – and this book means that not all the books of the OT are read, or used. For example, there are many books that are completely out of use. I think that only the Book of Jonah is entirely read in the Byzantine cult, but otherwise many texts are completely unknown. James Miller suggests that this *Prophetologion* is actually the Old Testament of Byzantine Christianity. If this is correct, and I feel it is, it is a little bit disappointing for us that only a small percentage from the OT is used in the church. I suppose that standardization of the biblical text occurs. When exactly, father Filotheu Bălan will give us some information, and how can we consider this standard Byzantine text. Let me give you only this glimpse, speaking about

the publishing phenomenon which for the Greek text is a little bit complicated, because under the Ottoman rule it was forbidden to publish in Greek. That's why the first Bible which was published in Greek by the Orthodox was actually outside Greece, outside the Ottoman Empire. This occurred in Venice in 1687, and we must add that this was a project initiated by Romanian Voivode Șerban Cantacuzino, and it's actually a double project: he published a Greek Bible and also a Romanian Bible, a Romanian translation of the whole Bible, and this was actually the first Bible in Romanian. Which texts were used for this project? It was actually a republishing of the Frankfurt Bible which has many Catholic influences, and also has some Protestant influences, because all the books which were not found in Septuagint were grouped at the end as *Apocrypha* – this term is used in the Protestant milieu. The second Bible in Greek sponsored by the Orthodox was the Moscow Bible in 1821, and this was possible after the Greek revolution. The Greek brothers, Zosimas brothers, published this project in Moscow, and the text used for the Old Testament was actually the *Codex Alexandrinus* (Oxford, 1707-1720), as published by Ernst Grabe in the 18th century, so published by a German scholar, and what it is interesting that they published small glosses inserted by Grabe, and this was not in fact the *Codex Alexandrinus*, but the *Codex Alexandrinus* with many insertions. Then, this Moscow Bible was republished many times in Greece. In 1928, the Theological Brotherhood called Zoe 'life', which actually was a Brotherhood composed of laymen, but also included a small percent of priests, published another edition based on Tischendorf critical text, published in Leipzig. This was another direction in searching for what we can call the ecclesiastical text, and another step was the publishing in 1939 by the same Zoe Brotherhood, in Athens, of Septuagint with Rahlfs' critical text (1935), in which Professor Panagiotis Bratsiotis, a professor of Old Testament Studies, replaced some biblical passages with readings taken from the liturgical books. So, actually it was an influence of the *Prophetologion* over the actual text of the Septuagint. It was a mismatch, a confusion - may I say, but let us think a little bit if this principle, this methodology is correct, or it could gain some arguments, some support from this search of the ecclesiastical text. I might say that this edition marks also the switch from the focus on the *Alexandrinus* of the OT to the *Vaticanus*. This choice was followed by the other editions up until the final edition of the Septuagint, published by the Orthodox Church in Greece, which in 1997 was published by the Apostoliki Diakonia. So, the focus was initially on the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and then, through the edition from 1939, it was switched to *Vaticanus*. And my question is: Can we find some directions in this search? Can we find any answers about the ecclesiastical text? Question 1: Is the Byzantine text published in the critical edition of Robinson & Pierpont (2005) suitable for real Byzantine text? Why? Because in Greek-speaking churches, there are also influences from the *textus receptus*,

which appeared through reformation in the Middle Ages. So, actually, in the Greek speaking church there is not a pure preservation of the Byzantine text, so there could be a difference between the real Byzantine text and what we should call the ecclesiastical text. And the problem is more difficult for the OT... So, I dare to put these questions and I try to find some answers from you, what would be this text? What would be the standard text used by the church? Of course, there are many versions, perhaps it is better to of about many versions of this ecclesiastical text. But also, I spoke with Father Filotheu, there was a standardization, some people think that this standardization appeared in Constantinople, in the Studion Monastery, there is a theory that also the *Prophetologion* appeared as a product of the Studion Monastery. Is it true that the standard ecclesiastical text appeared in the 9th century? So, because professor Brock will leave us soon, I would like to ask him about the standard ecclesiastical text. What do you think, Professor Brock?

Professor SEBASTIAN BROCK: You put the problem very well. I had not realized that is even more complicated than I thought. I suppose one could gain some idea from the edition of the Göttingen Septuagint, as you can actually see the manuscript evidence, and one could locate, at least, for certain books, a group of manuscripts which one could perhaps describe as the standard ecclesiastical text, but because I have always been interested in the earliest stages of the Septuagint textual history, I have not given thought to this particular problem. And, I must say, in many ways one needs to work book by book, because even in the oldest manuscripts, for example, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, each book has a different textual character and sometimes is radically different, and that needs to be taken into account. So I think one needs to have an edition of individual books, and only then, based on the very large manuscript tradition that exists, let the Byzantine text emerge from the evidence of these editions. That is a big task for the future.

Pr. Prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: One question if I may: would it be possible to make up a critical ecclesiastical text of the OT starting from critical edition Professor Engberg's of the *Prophetologion*? Is it correct to start from the liturgical use of the text?

Professor SEBASTIAN BROCK: I suppose that could be a possibility for the books that are in the *Prophetologion*, one could see what text or character is, looking against the critical editions of the Göttingen *Septuagint*, and then identify some sort of texts which were accepted as liturgically suitable at a particular time, because that is again to limit you to a very small number of books. So, personally, I think that in a long run it would be more suitable to have editions of individual books based on a selection of manuscripts from this formative Byzantine period. And it is not an impossible task, one would perhaps need to do some experiments in the selection of manuscripts. I would

not think to have all the manuscripts available. That would be rather a waste of time for this purpose ... I am sure there are better solutions.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: It would be very interesting to hear what Professor Sysse Engberg would say, but Father Filotheu has a question...

Father Filotheu: ... for Professor Brock. I saw some lectionaries with Syriac texts that correspond to all the Syriac translation from the 2nd–3rd centuries... Syriac lectionaries containing the old translation into Syriac, I mean *Curetonian*, *Sinaitic* and so forth for the NT. Is it the same with the lectionaries for the OT, for the *Prophetologion*? Do they use the first Syriac translation or some of the others?

Professor SEBASTIAN BROCK: Normally, for the OT they used *Peshitta*, but there are quite a number of passages which are from the *Syriac Hexapla* from the 7th century version. Also, one needs to remember that in the Syriac lectionary tradition there is a huge variety, and there is no single system like the *Prophetologion*, there are many different systems in the Middle Ages. It is only in modern time that there was an official lectionary and the fact that north Orthodox Church is currently producing a new lectionary. So I think the situation is rather different from that of the Greek tradition.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Ok. Thank you! Professor Sysse Engberg, please share with us some of your experience, in editing the *Prophetologion*. What do you think, what is the ecclesiastical text from the point of view from the *Prophetologion* edition?

Professor SY SSE ENGBERG: May I start somewhere else and just comment on the Syriac Lectionaries? The Greek *Prophetologion* has been translated into Syriac, so this is a part of the tradition, I guess. I do not know if there is any influence on the Syriac OT text as such from the Syriac *Prophetologion* and I don't think anybody has looked into that; I have only done a little bit of work on Syriac *Prophetologion* with Grigory Kessel, and the manuscripts we looked at reproduced the Byzantine tradition as to the selection of pericopes, but we did not examine the text; this would be a large project. If I may say something about my esteemed colleague Miller, he has not done research on the *Prophetologion*, he writes on the basis of published sources, some of which are outdated; that the *Prophetologion* could have been created in the Stoudion monastery was just guesswork of Høeg and Zuntz back in the early 20th century, for which there was no evidence. The edition of the *Prophetologion* began in 1939, the year I was born, so I was not part of that, but out of eight fascicles I did the last three, which contain the *Pentecostarion* and the *Menologion*. There is great variation in that part of the book, whereas the first five fascicles, which cover Lent, are much more stable and homogeneous in many ways. But this part made me wonder...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: For the audience, first part was published during the 30s by Professor Günther Zuntz...

Prof. SYSE ENGBERG: Yes, Carsten Høeg and Günther Zuntz...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: ...and in the 80s you finished the critical edition of the *Prophetologion*. In the Orthodox cult we have all the components scattered in other liturgical books, for example in the *Menaia*, in the *Triodion*, in the *Pentecostarion*, it is what we call *Paremiar* or *Paremijnik*, in the Slavic or Romanian traditions. So the *Paremiar* is actually this *Prophetologion*. It contains all the readings which are taken from the OT and it is used in the Byzantine culture. Please continue.

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: Thank you for this. Dosoftei calls the book *Paremiile* in his translation from the 17th century, but he actually also uses the word *Prophetologion*. This is probably the first occurrence we have of the title *Prophetologion*, which he explains as *Paremiile*. I must say that I do not agree very much with what is said normally about the *Prophetologion*: it was not created in the 9th century, it was not created in one go, and, if you read what some scholars have written about this in the past, it's rather surreal. I don't believe that they created a liturgical book from scratch in the Middle Ages by setting up a committee. It is a rather anachronistic thought, to my mind. On the other hand, as Alfred Rahlfs already pointed out in 1916, we have around the year 400 a continuous reading from *Genesis*, the first book of the *Pentateuch*, on the weekdays of Lent, and if you study Rahlfs's analysis of John Chrysostom's homilies on Genesis, you cannot find a specific system of OT reading behind this, but if you turn to his contemporary, Severian of Gabala, who actually preached in Constantinople around 400 AD, you can see a pattern that corresponds quite nicely to the pattern of readings that we find later. It seems that this part of the *Prophetologion*, the Genesis reading of text sections in a sort of *pseudo-lectio continua*, where you read the whole book, but with large omissions, that this does go back to the late fourth-early fifth century in Constantinople, and the selected pericopes were perhaps already in place by then.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes, I totally agree. This was actually only the sort of official, classic, outdated theory about the origin of the *Prophetologion*. Of course, the history of *Prophetologion* is much more complicated. But, what do you think, is it ok to start from the *Prophetologion* in searching this ecclesiastical text?

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: That depends on what you mean by ecclesiastical text. Because if you look at what was recited in Hagia Sophia, the Cathedral of Constantinople, to my mind that is the *Prophetologion*, a book that in the beginning just had this small nucleus, but grew slowly in size over the

centuries. So the OT readings constitute the ecclesiastical text in that sense. The OT readings were very important, they were recited slowly and with ecphronesis and so on. Even if, as you said, only part of the OT was recited, for some books it is quite a large amount, especially during Lent: for instance, something like 40% of Genesis is read, about a third of *Isaiah*, and almost 70% of Proverbs. And then, of course, the whole Book of Jonah, but from here it becomes more scattered, obviously. I feel very certain that this was the text that was recited in Hagia Sophia. So, if that is what you are after, the *Prophetologion* is the text you should choose. Perhaps not the edition of Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae alone, because the edition is a little bit tricky.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Have you studied what kind of recension was used for *Prophetologion*? I mean, for the OT we know that the *Septuagint* had many recensions, revisions. Did you study what kind of text was used for the *Prophetologion*?

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: I have not compared the *Prophetologion* text systematically to the *Septuagint*. My project was a different one. I wanted to describe the history, the tradition of this liturgical book, the *Prophetologion*. I have only compared to the *Septuagint* sporadically. But an American scholar, Norman Ericsson, has done this: he compared the *Isaiah* readings for Lent from twenty *Prophetologion* manuscripts with the Göttingen edition. I believe that the text, generally speaking, is lucianic, and the texts from Daniel are mainly theodotian. But that is a different question. My point is really...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: I should also add that for the Book of Job we have these insertions made by Origen, which also proves that the text was not a pure *Septuagint*, but a *Septuagint* insertion made by Origen... So, it is the *Septuagint* with an asterisk material which became the text used for the pericope in *Prophetologion*.

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: As you say, it is all very complicated, which is why I have not started this research at all, because I have just this one short life. Others must do this. What I think I can show is that the *Prophetologion* grew slowly and once the text entered the *Prophetologion*, it remained very stable. So you do have a tradition, but...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: This is an important issue, because through this standardization you mean that all variations are out.

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: Not necessarily... For instance, the South-Italian *Prophetologion* manuscripts tend to use a different tradition in some places. Which is why the MMB edition of the *Prophetologion* is difficult to use: it tries to show everything, so it shows too much. And if one includes the South-Italian manuscripts which is tempting to do, because they are early,

dated to the 10th century, you find that in some respects their text traditions is different from the Hagia Sophia text. Unfortunately, the book of *Genesis* has been lost from the *Vaticanus*, so we cannot compare to the *Prophetologion*. Incidentally, the *Vaticanus* manuscript was used liturgically in the eighth or ninth century: it has lection marks which show that it was used for reciting the pericopes from Isaiah and other parts of the OT, in church.

But from where was the traditional text for the pericopes taken? I think one might find out by studying the readings from Genesis, and probably also Proverbs, because I think that the readings from Proverbs must be as old, or almost, as those from Genesis; the Lenten *Isaiah* readings were probably selected almost two centuries later. Were they taken from the same manuscripts as the Genesis and Proverbs readings? What manuscripts did they have in the Patriarchate, and in Hagia Sophia? We do not know that. Later, new readings were added, up until the 10th-11th centuries, but the text was hardly taken from the same manuscripts as were the Lenten readings many centuries earlier. After this it stops and there are no new texts entering the lectionary, but the already existing readings are just reused for the new feasts added to the book; you do not find new text, just reused texts that are already there. But they must have had the complete Septuagint in the Patriarchate, maybe in many separate volumes. Liturgical notes in the book tell us that between services there was what is called *proanagnosis*, a kind of free reading, which could be from the OT; but the manuscripts do not give details, just say προανάγνωσις ἐκ τῆς Παλαιᾶς. So, which manuscript, or manuscripts, did they have for that? They probably had several manuscripts containing single OT books, or a *Pentateuch* and single Prophet manuscripts. One can only speculate.

We know at least that the body of the *Prophetologion* is... at least I know, I am sure, I am certain, I hope I can persuade everybody that the body of the *Prophetologion* originated in Hagia Sophia, and remained fairly stable over the centuries. The same texts are found in the old printed *Menaia*, *Triodia*, and *Pentecostaria*, but the Greeks did not seek out those old liturgical texts when they printed a *Prophetologion* in the late 20th century, but printed the standard text of Rahlfs/ Bratsiotis. I mean, they did not use their own tradition. There is a *Prophetologion* printed in Venice in 1595...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: This was the first?

Professor SYSSSE ENGBERG: I think there was one before that, which has been lost, an edition printed in 1545, also in Italy, because we have a manuscript that is copied from this printed book. So there were two printed *Prophetologia* in the sixteenth century, both following the manuscript tradition. But the Old Testament texts became included in the printed *Menaia*, *Triodia*, and *Pentecostaria*, with the result that the book *Prophetologion* was forgotten.

Today, one might use the lectionary in order to get to the ecclesiastical text, but you will only find the parts chosen for recitation in Hagia Sophia, and subsequently in all Chalcedonian churches, that is, only a smallish part of the Old Testament.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: So, you think it is safe to apply the reading from the *Prophetologion* upon the critical edition of the Septuagint as the Greek did in 1939?

Professor SYSSE ENGBERG: How is that?

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: They took out the readings from the *Prophetologion* and they applied them to Rahlfs' edition...

Professor SYSSE ENGBERG: Oh yes, but only in a few places, as I understood you.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: It was a composed Bible – an edition with readings from the *Prophetologion* and...

Professor SYSSE ENGBERG: That is a somewhat strange thing to do. I mean, the *Prophetologion* is an edition of the lectionary text that one should treat as a separate, probably independent tradition, maybe refer to it in the critical apparatus of a *Septuagint* edition, but I do not think you should just pick and choose and mix selected texts parts with Rahlfs's text. I do not believe that anything good comes out of that.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you for your discussion! Professor Catherine Mary MacRobert, what do you think? Can you join us?

Professor CATHERINE MARY MACROBERT: What I can contribute to this discussion is, of course, indirect, because I do not work directly on the Greek tradition, but on the Slavonic translated tradition. What I think I find there is that there are several slightly different versions of the Psalter, textually speaking. Naturally there are versions accompanied by commentaries, commentary of Theodoret of Cyrus, and these go way back and they have some, not very many, but some distinctive readings. And then, there is the tradition of the liturgical and devotional Psalter, the Psalter used or drawn on for church services, but also used for private devotion especially, they are not exclusively by monks. And there, from my point of view, is that revisers went back to Greek, of course, they took a version of the book of Psalms in Greek, that was current or even authoritative at that time, and they corrected their translation to bring it in line with that version, and each time you get a new revision which is well attested, you can see that it reflects a small number of distinctive readings in Greek. The problem is that the further back you go in the Slavonic tradition, the less clear things are, because we did to the first translation a gap of probably at least 200 years separates the first translation of

Psalter into Church Slavonic and the manuscripts which we actually have. In that time, there must have been many copyings, probably there were people who checked against Greek, and so the early part of the tradition is more complicated, textually speaking, than the later traditions. When you get to the 14th century, we have manuscripts which were written very soon after a new revision and they agree with each other. But the early manuscripts are much less homogenous. It has been suggested that some of the distinctive readings in the early manuscripts may actually come from a Western, either Latin or Greek, but Western Greek tradition. My position on that is agnostic, I think there are complications about that. What I think one can say is that, as times goes on, the choice of variants which must go back to Greek, which are not simply the result of translation from Greek into Slavonic, but our genuine Greek variants come more and more in line with what Rahlfs' labels the Lucianic tradition. So, I think there is a movement towards something which for the *Psalter* at least in aroused time could be called Lucianic. But even so, in the 14th century, in the different revisions which you emerge in the 14th century, you do get some differences that probably go back to Greek. So, it is genuinely difficult, I think, to talk about a Byzantine liturgical type for the *Psalter*; rather, I think at different times one has very slightly different types, which presumably replace each other. And, by the time you get to the 16th century, you have printed books. You have Maximus Trivolis, Maximus the Greek who worked first of all in Italy and later in Athos. And he produced a bilingual or a version of the *Psalter*, Church Slavonic revised against a Greek version of his time, which is slightly different, again, from what obviously underlies the religions of the 14th century. So it is really complicated, and I think if you wanted to have a standard Byzantine liturgical version of the *Psalter* again you would need to have a critical apparatus and you might want to decide which period of time you are interested in, whether you are interested in the standard of the 14th century or the 16th century, or, as far as you can discern it, descend to the 11th century. This is not a cheerful conclusion...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: What do you think about the Jewish influence upon this Slavonic translation of the Bible?

Professor CATHERINE MARY MACROBERT: I think some Jewish influence has been demonstrated in the 16th century, I am not aware of earlier Jewish influence. I see no reason to suppose direct Jewish influence in the case of the *Psalter*. It is the case of Cyril, new Jewish is much less likely, I think, that the subsequent revisers did so. And I would be surprised myself if Cyril had particularly worried about the Greek, the Jewish version of the *Psalter*, but after all the Septuagint had its own status and I would have expected him to start from the Septuagint.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Ok, thank you. What do you think about the standardization of the biblical text if you view this from the Slavonic tradition? Is there a standardization in the Slavonic tradition? Is there a quest of the standard ecclesiastical text in the Slavonic tradition?

Professor CATHERINE MARY MACROBERT: Definitely. And this is what lies behind these revisions. You have a translation which is used for a number of generations copied manually of course, copied in manuscripts and in the process of copying obvious mistakes creep in, but sometimes the copyists in Greek try to improve their text a little bit, but the result of this uncoordinated copying is that the manuscripts come to disagree with each other more and more. They certainly seem to have thought this in the early 14th century. And people who have sufficient authority - quite, it is thought that perhaps people on Athos organize as forums authoritative - but as long as you have a manuscript tradition rather than printed books it is very difficult to maintain that authoritative text unaltered. So it is really when print comes in and you get an authoritative standard text which continues unaltered. And the interesting thing there is that in the South side lands, there was one version of the *Psalter*, a little bit later in the 16th century in the East of Latins, with the help of print, you get the institution of an authoritative version of the *Psalter* which is different from what the southern *Psalter* are using.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you! Father Filotheu, please feel free to join our discussion.

Professor SYSE ENGBERG: May I ask something about the Slavic *Psalter*? Because I should have said that the tradition of the *Psalter* and that of the rest of the Old Testament are completely different. In Hagia Sophia the *Psalter* was never read, only sung, so it gives a different tradition, I suppose, with a sung text, which you remember perhaps in different ways than you do the recited text. Also, the *Psalter* was recited very often, whereas most of the Old Testament readings occurred just once a year. But the question I wanted to ask is: Was there a tradition for using the *Psalter* to teach people to read in Slavonic and Romanian society? This usage remained in Greek society up until the 19th century. Therefore many people knew the *Psalter*, or large parts of the *Psalter*, by heart and that must have influenced the tradition and made it even more complicated, I suppose.

Professor CATHERINE MARY MACROBERT: If I may attempt an answer to that, yes, the *Psalter* was used for educational purposes in the same way, the Slavonic *Psalter*, in the same way, as among the Greeks. In addition, of course, it was recited as part of private devotion particularly in monastic circles. It was used as fortune-tending book. So there were several ways apart from the apparently liturgical familiarity with the *Psalter* in which people came to know these *Psalms* very well indeed. And this, as you say, does complicate the tradition.

Because what you find - you can see this already in the critical apparatus to Rahlfs' edition of the Psalter, but you see it very frequently in the Slavonic tradition - is that copyists operate partly by memory and they confuse places in the Psalter that are similar with each other, they transpose phrases from one psalm to another because of textual similarities, and this is quite a significant complicated factor in the textual tradition.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you! Now I invite Father Filotheu Bălan, who has also something else to say.

Father FILOTHEU BĂLAN: Yes. Professor Sebastian Brock said earlier that the Syriac manuscripts also belong to different ecclesiastical jurisdictions, there are different traditions, and we cannot know for sure which kind of text belongs to which kind of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. So we might suppose that the same thing happened in the Greek world around the Mediterranean Sea, so that is my first observation. We might find in the manuscripts and in the fragments of manuscripts remains of different textual traditions for the lectionaries of the Old and the New Testament. From what we have said to this point, there is one conclusion, I am sorry to start with the conclusion, that we need the Byzantine edition of the OT, and the recent Göttingen edition of the Septuagint is not helping very much for this, only to point out some different lections, but not always pointing out that those lections belong to the Byzantine text. Earlier today, Professor Sebastian Brock talked about the last main Syriac translation of the NT, the Harklean translation made in the second decade of the 7th century A.D. (*Anno Domini*), near Alexandria, which also shows that at that moment, at the beginning of the 7th century, and it may be assumed suppose it was also true for the centuries before, the Byzantine text was the standard text of the Alexandrian church, not only for Constantinople and Antioch. So we might suppose that the Byzantine text was also the standard text for the lectionaries after the years 400-500 A.D. Also, there are some things to understand about what happened in Constantinople after the year 800 A.D., and also before that, we all supposedly know that the minuscule writing replaced the old uncial writing. That happened because of the influence of the books of Studite monks from the Studion Monastery; they were adopted by almost every scriptorium in Constantinople and also outside the capital of the Empire after the year 843 A.D. (and in some cases even before this year). So, from this point of view, Studion Monastery should be one of the most important influences after the era of Saint Theodore the Studite, and this can also be seen in Palestine as Daniel Galadza showed some years ago, with his studies about the Byzantinisation of the Palestinian church, that started in the same era, at the beginning of the 9th century. And it is also true for the other churches, even if they remain small churches, I mean Alexandria and Antioch. These are my observations to be made, and if we need a standard text for the

lectionaries, either for the OT, or for the NT, we should take into account the standard of the Byzantine text after the 6th century.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you! Now I invite everybody who is present here to join our discussion, either by questions or by direct intervention.

Professor JERZY OSTAPCZUK: Thank you very much for organizing this round table, and this is a very important question for all of us. First of all, do we talk about ecclesiastical text or a liturgical text? If we could think about ecclesiastical text, I think that every book that is accepted and allowed to be used in the church for liturgy and also for personal reading is ecclesiastical, but if we have in mind liturgical texts, I mean the text that is used during the services in the Church, so we have to limit this, and in this distinction we also have to think about the *Book of Revelation*, which belongs to the NT, because it was used sometimes in the Orthodox tradition during the liturgies, and Serbian manuscripts for the 14th century prove that it was used during the liturgies, I have no idea about the Greek tradition or the East Slavonic tradition. In what concerns the Byzantine edition text of the NT published by Pierpont Morgan: as far as I know, there is a limited number of the lectionaries were used. In the Greek tradition, it is not only the *Tetraevangelion* with the liturgical rubrics, but also a huge number of liturgical texts, not only for the Gospels but also for the Apostles. We also have to keep in mind this tradition of the text that was researched to some extent by the Chicago lectionary program in the middle of the previous century. *Prophetologion* in Slavonic tradition it is called *Paremijnik*. But should we treat some fragments that were taken from the *Chronicals*, historical books, or from Menander because in Slavonic tradition in the *Prophetologion* there are some fragments from these two books. Is it an ecclesiastical text? is it a liturgical text? During my first trip to Santa Caterina Monastery to research Slavonic Gospel manuscripts, I also asked for the Greek, the oldest, lectionaries, and what was interesting is that there are some Greek lectionaries dated to the late 9th or early 10th century that they do not show us, they do not confirm a Byzantine liturgical tradition, but the local one. And there are also, as far as I know, at least two manuscripts that confirmed the mixed tradition, some of the lectionaries follow the Palestinian tradition and another one follows the Byzantine. So it is the witness of the period on the turn from the old into the Byzantine tradition. Also, we have to bear in mind that at least in the Slavonic tradition there are several types of texts, at least I can say this about the Gospel text. Because we have a liturgical text, which is confirmed by the *Tetraevangelia* and the lectionaries, we have text for personal reading, and we have a text also with the explanations, with the commentaries. So, a lot of different texts used not only for the Liturgy, but also for personal reading and for the teaching the catechumens, a lot of problems and I think it

is very interesting, very important, and we must organize a lot of conferences devoted to these different small topics.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you! I completely agree, in defining this ecclesiastical text we must take into account the fact that the biblical text also could be used in personal devotion. If I want to have a Bible, but this is actually the question, if I want to have a Byzantine Bible, which text should I have as a reading text?

Father FILOTHEU BĂLAN: Your observations about the differences between ecclesiastical and the church text is very important because, as we showed earlier, if we have different traditions, Palestinian, Constantinopolitan, and so forth, we also have different traditions inside the Constantinopolitan tradition itself. So, church Slavonic tradition is one of the branches and it is very important from this point of view and it comes with the Saints Cyril and Methodius in the second half of the 9th century, and I can also add that they brought not only these types of texts, these branches of texts, but they also brought some musical notations that survived only in Slavonic milieu.

Prof. SYSSE ENGBERG: Could I comment?

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes, please.

Prof. SYSSE ENGBERG: I forgot to stress that, if you want the authoritative text of the Cathedral of Constantinople, for parts of the Old Testament you have the *Prophetologion*, and there is no much variation as to the text. What variation there is, concerns the number of fixed feasts and their pericopes, and this turned out to be, not geographical, but chronological, it is variation over time in the same location, which is Constantinople. The earliest complete *Prophetologion* manuscripts are from the 9th-10th century, but we do have two manuscripts that represent an earlier tradition from before the *Isaiah* readings were added in the seventh century. Unfortunately, both manuscripts are palimpsest and difficult to read, but it would be very interesting to know whether the text in these two is the same as in the later manuscripts. So, your question about standardization: there might have been a standardization at some point. We cannot know, but if we could read these two palimpsests, we might be a little bit wiser as to the answer to that. About the Stoudion idea, just a short comment: some scholars talk about influence from Palestine as regards the *Prophetologion*, but the point is that, in spite of the fact that liturgical influence from Palestine may have begun earlier than we used to think, this does not affect the lectionary. The Old Testament lections of the *Prophetologion* remain the same, unaltered by changes in the liturgical setting.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Ok, thank you! Mr. Conțac...

Professor EMANUEL CONȚAC: I watch this debate from the outside, because this is not a concern which is particularly present in a Protestant context, but my question from the outside would be: what would be the objective which you would seek, is there the idea of actually obtaining a critical edition at some point, because to me it seems obvious that there is a wide diversity in the same place across time, and also a wide diversity of readings, variations across the geographical space. And at the same time there is a force of tradition and the centre of authority which radiates across a certain area, and then the question is, well, there is of course not a single ecclesiastical text or ecclesial text, but a diversity of ecclesiastical texts. And now what, is there, should there be an attempt to actually establish a critical edition, and then the question is what should be the criteria to use in an attempt to distil a possible critical edition reflecting a certain period, because I do not think you could ultimately go back to an original since you have so many various traditions. So, in a sense, to me it is like trying to square the circle, like how can we get to a standard text, but at the same time realizing that it is impossible to actually get to a standard text.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: My point is that: if I try to use the critical editions of Rahlfs and Hanhart or the Göttingen edition, I have this problem: they do not follow the same methodology as I am trying to. Why? They are searching for the earliest texts, but I am searching for something different. I am searching for a standard text which was supposed to function in the Byzantine Church. And you are right, this is also this question of criteria. I am trying to understand which criteria I should use for finding this standard text, from which period. Father Filotheu says that after 800 or 900, and there are some arguments for this standard text after this time. So this is my concern about having, why not, a critical edition of the Byzantine tradition, which is easier in the NT, but a little bit more complicated regarding the OT. That is why we have this discussion.

Please feel free to intervene if you have something to say.

Father FILOTHEU BĂLAN: In the last centuries, there were critical editions for the patristic texts. They are very important also from the scriptural point of view, because not all the manuscripts of the Fathers present the same text. And if you can see revisions made by scribes during the ages, and if we find differences in one author, we should use them as testimony for some changes that happened during that era when the scribes operated these changes. We are compelled to use also patristic testimonies from the scriptural point of view. Going back to the question of our colleague from Poland, there are three types of NT and OT manuscripts: the first type is the text as it is, the second one, there is the lectionary, and the third, there is the collection of katene. All three should be taken into account when we are searching for a standard text.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: I should add something else: also, the quotation from the Church Fathers or theologians.

Dr. CĂLIN POPESCU: I want to present some ideas from different angles. For instance, you started from the idea of an agreement between the *Prophetologion* and the entire *Bible*. But the first point, the first problem is that, for instance in Romanian, we had an entire Bible before having a service in the vernacular. So, our Bible was an Orthodox Bible, it was a standard *Bible* without any official service in Romania. Besides, even in the NT we have the Revelation which is never read in the *Bible*, and yet, the NT also includes the Revelation and I do not know why you equate a liturgical Bible with the Orthodox Bible. I mean I do not see; it would be easier of course. When I was in Spain, I do not know Spanish, I tried to buy a *Bible* which is read in the Liturgy, because I thought that it would be the standard, or they say: we have a lot of other *Bibles* that we read. Maybe the problem will be solved in time, I mean there is a lot of historical hazards in this. For instance, our current Synodal *Bible* was shaped by a Patriarch who was not quite a biblical scholar at all, and he did it and we use it even now. On the other side, we have the example of Antimus, who was a martyr and who shaped the *Psalter*, which is pretty the same sort of like today. Maybe we are looking for an illusion, a chimera. I mean a consensus between the Fathers and the liturgical texts there is not such a thing...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: The question is: can I find something similar to the Byzantine text of the NT in the OT? So, there is a critical edition of the Byzantine text for the NT. Is it possible to get a similar critical edition of the OT for the entire Bible?

Dr. CĂLIN POPESCU: Critical does not mean standard, the critical edition is not a standard, it is not a liturgical. We cannot read a critical edition in church.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes, you are right.

Dr. CĂLIN POPESCU: And in 2023 I do not think we can have a Bible without footnotes. I mean, it is too late to have it, maybe in the first century they had such a traditional text. My paper tomorrow will also focus on these topics in some points. So, in my opinion, we have the old manuscripts, *Vaticanus* and *Alexandrinus*, and *Sinaiticus*, and we have all the research done by all the honest scholars. There is no such thing as an Orthodox scholarship in Bible fields. I mean, you have to look at every research if it has a proselytizing secret agenda, and if it is so, you see it and you do not rely on that research, but otherwise this is a field where all denominations can contribute. And we should...

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes and no. Because, for example, I feel very comfortable with your point, but in the Catholic Church there was such a quest after the authentic edition and this is the *Nova Vulgata*. Now, it was the

Old Vulgata and then *Nova Vulgata*. I think this quest is legitimate, it is a good quest. Is there an ecclesiastical text in the East? The question is which criteria should I use in searching this kind of text.

Dr. CĂLIN POPESCU: Maybe time will decide.

Professor EMANUEL CONȚAC: I just wanted to point out that maybe the structure of authority not being the same, it would be difficult to attempt something along the lines of *Nova Vulgata*, because you have the popes who want to publish a *Septuagint* or a critical edition of whatever, and they decree that and then there is an effort in that direction, and of course it is not perfect, but it is still a kind of central authority, which I think is a bit different, and maybe trying to attempt that within the province of Byzantine studies would be difficult. I would still have a question: the Romanian version which you published under the auspices of Vatoped Monastery, is that a critical kind of text, the Greek text, or is it just the manuscript which was adopted as the source text?

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Actually, this has as a basis the edition of the Ecumenical Patriarchate which was published in 1904. It was prepared by Professor Antoniadès, but this was actually a thing after searching through 100 manuscripts. So, the search basis was not so great, but it was an attempt supported by the Orthodox Church to have a standard Byzantine text.

Professor EMANUEL CONȚAC: And does it differ much in that regard from the critical edition?

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes, I can give you an example. *Comma ioaneum* is present as an influence from the *textus receptus*, or from the Eastern tradition, because it is older and this *comma ioaneum* is present in the patriarchate edition, but it is not present in the Byzantine texts published by Robertson and Pierpont. So, it is not part of the critical edition, and this is only one example. There are many, I think dozens of examples, little examples where there are some differences between the critical edition of the Byzantine text and the Vatoped edition. This 1904 edition has been republished until today, for example in the Vatoped Monastery on Holy Mountain.

Professor JERZY OSTAPCZUK: I just wanted to add to this Antoniadès edition: when the Chicago lectionary project was being prepared, they compared the edition of Antoniadès with *Textus Receptus*. And probably in the first volume there is an enumeration of the differences that concerned the gospel books. So, this work was done, and for sure there are a lot of differences in this text. And Antoniadès probably, as one of the first Greek scholars, also included about 20 Greek lectionaries for preparing this edition. Because in the 19th century, lectionaries were mostly disregarded and no one wanted to use them.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Yes, I say that his method was safe, but he did not have so many manuscripts; the focus was not on the earliest form of the text, but on the standard text, on the liturgical text, or on the ecclesiastical text.

Professor JERZY OSTAPCZUK: And what is very important is that Antoniades, his text, continues the Byzantine tradition, but the critical editions published by the Bible Society, they do not have an idea to publish a text that is a continuation. Their goal was to restore the oldest version of the NT. So, this is the difference between these two.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: There are two different methods. So, we are searching for the living texts, so to say, if it is correct, I do not know, or for a Byzantine text type and the critical editions of Göttingen or Rahlfs edition are searching for the earliest form.

Dr. CĂLIN POPESCU: A little idea. You asked whether or not the *Prophetologion* should be used in the translation of the Bible and this is that exactly what Antimus said when he published the *Book of Hours* in the services, including the songs. He always improved the translation of the *Psalter* which is natural, because he was a translator, this is the same part of the Bible. If you find it in the *Book of Hours* or in the *Bible* it is the same translation, the same work. Of course, you can use any one of them for the other.

Pr. prof. ALEXANDRU MIHĂILĂ: Thank you very much for this discussion. Let us say that the conclusion is 'unconcluded' and that our quest could gain some arguments. Thank you, Professor Mary Mac Roberts, thank you, Professor Sysse Engberg! Thank you everybody for joining our discussion and let us see what the result will be later.

Father FILOTHEU BĂLAN: Amen!