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# INTRODUCTION

When Constantinople was consecrated on May 30, 330, the Balkans suddenly became part of the hinterland of the new world capital. The impact on every aspect of the daily life of the local population was tremendous and initiated a series of radical changes. This transformation was combined with the coming of turbulent years and created the preconditions for the exceptional dynamic in regard with the development of the region during Late Antiquity. The dynamics of this development are revealed by the written sources and the results of archaeological excavations. It could be even stated that the Late Antique studies has recently been given a new impetus in all Balkan countries. Unfortunately, for various reasons, but mainly because of the geographical location of the modern Balkan states, the research has its limitations, including linguistic ones. That is why the Institute of Balkan Studies & Center of Thracology has established a *Laboratory for the Study of Late Antique Balkans*, which aims to unite the efforts of researchers from all Balkan countries and major research centers of Western Europe and North America in order to encourage the study of the Late Antique Balkans. The coordination of research experience of scholars from different Balkan countries is a necessary condition for the successful completion of this effort. In the process of establishing the Laboratory, we held a number of colloquia and conferences dedicated to various aspects of Late Antiquity the results of which would be published in the newly established Series *Annales Balcanici*. The Series will be annual and its purpose is to present the academic results of the various initiatives of the Laboratory.

The current volume is the first one in this Series and contains most of the papers presented at the colloquium *The Creation of the Late Antique world in the Balkans*, which took place in October 2018 in Sofia.

Ivo Topalilov  
Zlatomira Gerdzhikova

# STUDIES IN LATE ANTIQUE CHRISTIANITY IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AT THE AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES A short history of research

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**Abstract:** The article offers a short overview on the studies in Late Antiquity and early Christianity in Southeastern Europe, carried out by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. These activities do/did not include only archaeology and classical studies but rather also disciplines like Byzantine Studies, Epigraphy, History, Historical Geography, Numismatics, Papyrology and Sigillography, etc. Due to the numerous topic-specific enterprises only a characteristic selection will be described briefly – supplemented with a detailed bibliography.

**Key words:** Christianity, Late Antiquity, Southeastern Europe, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Archaeological Institute.

## *Introduction*

The Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS) is Austria's biggest non-university research and science institution. Founded in 1847 as a learned-society,<sup>1</sup> the Academy currently has over 760 members, 1,800 employees and 25 research institutes dedicated to innovative basic research, interdisciplinary exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of new insights with the aim of contributing to progress in science and society as a whole.<sup>2</sup> The institutes are the result of substantial reform activities that have been carried out in the last 15 years. Within the frame of this re-organization, former research units, so-called commissions, were discontinued and merged into institutes step by step. Only to name one example: the nowadays Institute for the Study of Ancient Culture (IKAnt) was founded in 2000 by converting the former "Forschungsstelle Archäologie" which for its part is based on the merger of several older commissions.<sup>3</sup> Since 2016 the Institute

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiserlich-königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften; 1918 renamed in "Akademie der Wissenschaften;" 1947 rebranded in "Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften."

<sup>2</sup> In general, cf. the "almanac" of the AAS, which has been published annually since 1851 and contains the most important information on the members and the commissions and their staff as well as activity reports.

<sup>3</sup> For example: *Commission for the Study of the Roman Limes* (founded in 1897), *Commission for Practical Archaeology* (founded in 1954), *Commission for Asia Minor Studies* (founded in 1890), *Commission for Numismatics* (founded in 1970), *Commission for Ancient Law and Papyrology*

# TODAY'S BULGARIAN TERRITORY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

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**Abstract:** With the territorial and administrative reforms at the beginning of the Late Antiquity (284–610 AD), and especially with the emergence of the new capital *Constantinopolis* in 330, the Balkan Peninsula became a major geopolitical priority of the Empire. Given the configuration of the Imperial boundaries and the routes of the main roads, and in view of its immediate proximity to *Constantinopolis*, today's Bulgarian territory has a special position in the peninsula and acquires strategic importance that it did not have before. This article presents a summary of its development during the two main stages of Late Antiquity – Late Roman epoch (284–395 AD) and Early Byzantine epoch (395–610 AD), with an emphasis on settlement life, urbanism and architecture.

**Key words:** Late Antiquity, Dacia, Thracia, Urbanism, Architecture, Christianity.

In this study I do not intend to discuss the definitions and terms used in recent centuries for the development of the ancient world. I will only point out that definitions such as “Late Antique,” “Late Roman,” “Proto-Byzantine” or “Early Byzantine,” and respectively – “Late Antiquity,” “Late Roman Empire,” “Early Byzantine Empire” or “Early Byzantium” were unknown at the time for which they are used today, and are the result of a modern scientific convention. It is generally agreed that the lower chronological limit of Late Antiquity should be linked to the rule and reform of Emperor Diocletian (284–305). Due to the changes in the Roman state formation, Diocletian's rule marks the end of the Principate and the beginning of the Dominat. There are more problems that arise from the upper chronological limit of Late Antiquity. The differences in the historical fate of the separate parts of the vast Roman Empire predetermine the existence of regional discrepancies in this respect. For the Eastern Empire, including the Balkan Peninsula, this limit coincided with the beginning of the reigns and reforms of emperor Heraclius (610–641), that is, the Late Antiquity covered the period from 284 to 610.

In modern historiography this period is defined as a transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages. This is undoubtedly the case, but it must be added that Late Antiquity has a huge significance by itself for the development of the

# EARLY CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE IN BULGARIA TWENTY YEARS LATER: I. EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES ALONG THE BLACK SEA COAST

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**Abstract:** In this article the author presents eleven recently discovered Early Christian Churches and monasteries located along the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. They all have been excavated re-investigated and data about their excavations can be found in the archives of the period 1999–2020. For some of them there are yet no detailed publications.

**Key words:** Early Christian, Basilica, Monastery, Black Sea Coast, Bulgaria.

The Early Christian archeology in Bulgaria has a history of over 130 years. The first who partially discovered and described Early Christian basilicas of 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD during the 1880s are the founders of Bulgarian archaeology – Hermin and Karel Škorpil.<sup>1</sup> The first attempt to summarize the available data was made by V. Ivanova in 1925. She compiled and described most of the Early Christian- and Medieval churches and monasteries discovered in Bulgaria until around 1920.<sup>2</sup> It took over more than a hundred years since the beginning of the Christian archaeology in Bulgaria before an explicit study on the Early Christian architecture to be completed by N. Chaneva-Dechevska in 1999. All known information, which covers about 160 Early Christian churches in the country with descriptions, plans (when they are available) and occasionally some photos were collected in her book *Early Christian architecture in Bulgaria (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> c. AD)*.<sup>3</sup> The study was published in Bulgarian and the author discussed short certain general topics of the Early Christian architecture and its impact in Bulgaria, which in that period was part of the Early Byzantine Empire.

This article is the first in a series that is planned by the present author to be written as addition to Chaneva-Dechevska's important study, which is partially outdated.

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<sup>1</sup> Minchev 2009, 29–30 and bibl.

<sup>2</sup> Ivanova 1925, 429–583.

<sup>3</sup> Chaneva-Dechevska 1999.

# ON SOME ISSUES RELATED TO THE CHRISTIANISATION OF THE TOPOGRAPHY OF LATE ANTIQUE PHILIPPOLIS, THRACE

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**Abstract:** The present article deals with some issues related to the *visible* Christianisation of the topography of Late antique Philippopolis. The scanty epigraphic and archaeological data as well as written sources allow to trace some of main features of the process that started at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century as well as identify the driving forces for them which are locals, but also imperial.

**Key words:** Christianisation, Urban Topography, Philippopolis, Late Antiquity, Thrace.

The issues related with the Christianisation of the topography of Philippopolis have not been the subject of a special study for a long time (fig. 1). Usually they were considered from the perspective of individual monuments and their architectural<sup>1</sup> or decorative specificities,<sup>2</sup> and less through the scarce written sources<sup>3</sup> and epigraphic monuments.<sup>4</sup> Recently there have been studies in which the process of Christianisation of the topography of Philippopolis is more closely represented, while some of them concern the specifics of the *interpretatio christiana* in individual monuments,<sup>5</sup> and other individual cases of this process.<sup>6</sup> Preliminary remarks on the process of Christianisation as a whole are presented in a separate study by the author, which is also incomplete.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, a complete study of the process in question in Philippopolis is impossible for objective and subjective reasons. Among the first we could point the scarce epigraphic and written sources,

<sup>1</sup> See for instance the description of the individual monuments in Kesyakova 1989a; Kesyakova 2006; Chaneva-Dechevska 1999; Bospachieva-Kolarova 2014; Martinova-Kyutova & Pirovska 2011 etc.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Kessiakova 1994, 165–170; Kessiakova 1989, 2539–2559; Kesyakova 2011, 173–210; Bospachieva-Kolarova 2014; Bospačieva 2005, 24–55; Topalilov 2015 etc.

<sup>3</sup> Markov 1995; Gramatikov 2006; Gramatikov 2019; Sharankov 2015 etc.

<sup>4</sup> Markov 1995; Gerassimova 2002; Sharankov 2007; Martinova-Kyutova & Sharankov 2014.

<sup>5</sup> See problems, discussed in Pillinger *et al.* 2016; Popova 2016a.

<sup>6</sup> Topalilov 2016a; Topalilov 2016b; Topalilov 2016c; Topalilov 2018a; Topalilov 2020a; Ljubenova 2013 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Topalilov 2020b.

# THE DEGREE OF RESEARCH OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN NIŠ

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**Abstract:** *Naissus* not only occupies an important place in the history of Christian archeology and art but also in the development of Christian thought. The effects of religious debates stemming from different theological concepts were strongly reflected in *Naissus* during the first centuries of Christianity. Heretical thought here has always been met with fertile soil. Historical sources and archaeological excavations have greatly elucidated the early Christian history of the city of Niš. Thanks to the archaeological material that has come to us, we possess reliable evidence about the church life in the city, its bishops and priests, all of whom carry Latin names, as well as the information of its martyrs or, perhaps, saints. In relation to the beginning and development of religion in this region, we have found confirmation through the exhaustive analyzes of material traces from architecture and painting, to the selected mobile material which is an integral part of a particular object.

**Key words:** Naissus, Christianity, Late Antiquity.

The city of Niš (*Naissus*, *Ναισσος*)<sup>1</sup> occupied the central position in the Roman province of Upper Moesia (*Moesia Superior*). It was situated at the crossroads of the main roadways connecting the Southern (*Thessaloniki*, *Skupi*, *Ulpiana*) with the Northern cities (*Singidunum*, *Viminacium*), while to the East, *Naissus* was on the main Balkan road artery towards *Sardica* and *Constantinople*, which connected Western Europe with the Middle East. According to Ptolemy, *Naissus* belonged to the land of the Dardans.<sup>2</sup> The writers Olympiodor and Hierocles place *Naissus* in Mediterranean Dacia (*Dacia Mediterranea*).<sup>3</sup> *Serdica* was the administrative and religious center of the new province, which, along with *Naissus*, encompassed the cities of *Pautalia* (Kyustendil) and *Remesiana* (Bela Palanka), each of which has their bishop.<sup>4</sup> Stephen of Byzantium considered *Naissus* a Thracian city, while Priscus said it was a city of Illyrians (*πόλις τῶν Ἰλλυριῶν*).<sup>5</sup> According to Hierocles, the only two *civitates* on the road to *Jerusalem* were *Serdica* and *Naissus*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TIR 1976, 89, 90.

<sup>2</sup> Tomović 1991, 21–23.

<sup>3</sup> Škrivanić 1974, 16, 37, 45.

<sup>4</sup> Popović 1990, 80, 87; Zeiller 1918 = Zeiller 2005, 216–218.

<sup>5</sup> Barišić, *Prisk*, 1955, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Zeiller 1918 = Zeiller 2005, 45.

# SOME REMARKS ON THE CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY OF DACIA RIPENSIS (SECOND HALF OF THE 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES)

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**Abstract:** Dacia Ripensis is among the less well known Late Roman provinces of the Danubian world. Several reasons can explain this situation, the state of the textual sources which mention this province (they are few and not eloquent) in the first place. Relying on some results of the DANUBIUS project of the HALMA-UMR 8164 research centre of the University of Lille, this paper proposes some thoughts and hypotheses about a specific aspect of the history of *Dacia Ripensis*, viz. its Christian topography. Four major historical problems are discussed: (1) the prominence acquired by the episcopal see of *Aquae*, (2) the possible identification of the see of *Meridio*, (3) the Christianisation of *Romuliana* and (4) the fortified outposts of *Vajuga* and *Sucidava*.

**Key words:** Dacia Ripensis, Christian Topography, Ecclesiastical Organisation, Episcopal Sees, Fortified Sites.

The Roman provinces of the Danubian world, long neglected by most scholars of Western Europe and North America, although they were the subject of very thorough scholarly studies in Central and Eastern Europe, are currently the object of more global interest. For proof, see the unprecedented multiplication in the last years of archaeological and historical studies, as well as research projects on that region.<sup>1</sup> Among these research programs, one is more specifically devoted to the study of the ecclesiastical organisation and Christian topography of the north-eastern Balkans in Late Antiquity, viz. the DANUBIUS project, which is based within the HALMA-UMR 8164 research centre of the University of Lille (<https://danubius.huma-num.fr/>).

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<sup>1</sup> It would be futile to attempt a complete list of works published in Western Europe and North America, on the Roman Balkans, in the last 30 years. Suffice to say that it was both the French-Yugoslavian, then French-Serbian archaeological mission at Caričin Grad/*Iustiniana Prima* and the British-Bulgarian archaeological mission at *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, and their respective research programmes on the transition to Late Antiquity that really renewed the historical approach to the region.

# RECENT LATE ANTIQUITY RESEARCHES IN TURKEY WITH THE SCOPE OF BITHYNIA

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**Abstract:** Archaeological studies begun by foreigners as early as 18<sup>th</sup> century followed by excavation works in the Ottoman territory. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century first Turkish excavations commenced only to be followed by the new regime in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Late Antiquity is still considered to be a new field, hence, studies directly aiming at it are limited.

**Key words:** Late antiquity, Laodikeia, Bithynia, Christianity, Basilica.

Archaeology in Turkey, parallel to the world, commenced in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Late Antiquity as its branch is a rather new phenomenon. This article intends to shed light on the development of archaeology and its system in Turkey with a few new discoveries of Late Antique period.

Recent researches in the Ottoman archives indicate that as early as 15<sup>th</sup> century there was a ban on selling ancient artifacts to foreigners.<sup>1</sup> Despite such a ban there was an immense interest in “the historical pieces” by Europeans. Travelers of 16<sup>th</sup> century described ancient cities of the Ottoman empire. Later, in 18<sup>th</sup> century, artists such as Luigi Mayer depicted ancient cities and remains of them. (fig. 1) This paved the way for the expeditors including James Turtle Wood, Charles Newton, Heinrich Schliemann. Although early expeditions ended up having artifacts brought to the country of the excavator, after 1840 it was compulsory to obtain a license.<sup>2</sup> Only after 1869 there was an official regulation. According to this regulation it was banned to take any object out of the country. Unfortunately with the pressure of foreign missions, several sites have been excavated and archaeological pieces were brought out of the country. Due to urgent need, a much more detailed regulation was made in 1874, according to which 1/3 of the items were reserved for the excavator the other 2/3 was shared by the state and the owner of the land equally.<sup>3</sup> 1881 was a turning point in the cultural policies of the Ottoman empire since Osman Hamdi bey was appointed as the director of the newly established Imperial Museum. He had a new regulation on archaeology in 1884 which was renewed in 1906.<sup>4</sup> This regulation remained in effect until 1973.

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1 Paksoy 1993, 202–203.

2 Su 1965, 8.

3 Şimşek & Güven 2009, 110.

4 Önge 2018, 10.

# THE DESTRUCTION OF PAGAN SANCTUARIES IN THRACE AND DACIA (ACCORDING TO DATA FROM THE TERRITORY OF PRESENT-DAY BULGARIA)

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**Abstract:** The article examines the issue of the destruction of pagan sanctuaries in the territory of present-day Bulgaria. This issue is not new to the Bulgarian historiography while significant progress has been made so far in raising and resolving a number of important questions. The determination of the time of destruction of the sanctuaries was to some extent facilitated by the intensive coin circulation in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which led to the accumulation of tens, and sometimes hundreds and even thousands of coins in the cult sites. Nonetheless the interpretation of these findings – from those deposited in operating sanctuaries to those that are thrown on the ruins of already destroyed ones – is contradictory. In specific cases, both explanations have their grounds, but the conclusions from a particular worship site should not be generalized.

In one group of sanctuaries, which probably have been destroyed and abandoned around or soon after the mid. 4<sup>th</sup> century, it can be assumed that the latest coins are of Constantine I and Constantius II. In most cult sites, however, the latest coins date from the period of Valens, Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius. Probably, the active anti-pagan policies dating from the time of Theodosius led to the destruction of most of the extra-urban sanctuaries in the Thracian lands.

**Key words:** Pagan Sanctuaries, Thrace, Dacia, Anti-pagan Policy.

The pagan sanctuaries that existed in the Roman provinces of Thrace, Lower and Upper Moesia have always been the subject of research by the Bulgarian archaeologists and historians. Already at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, researchers such as Vaclav Dobruski,<sup>1</sup> Gavril Katsarov<sup>2</sup> and others raise a number of important issues in relation with the cult sites of the Roman period. However, the issue of the destruction of the sanctuaries based in scientific research is a relatively recent question in Bulgarian historiography. Publications over the last two decades by authors such as Ludmil Vagalinski,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dobruski 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Katsarov 1914; Katsarov 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Vagalinski 1997.

# CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM IN THE EPIGRAMS OF PALLADAS OF ALEXANDRIA

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**Abstract:** The present paper treats the attitude towards Christianity and paganism in the epigrams of Palladas of Alexandria, a 4<sup>th</sup>-century poet who probably saw the destruction of the Serapeum in the city by Christian monks in 391 AD. Although a cultural conservative and a self-identified “Hellene” in some of his works, Palladas is seen as a representative of neither the new Christian faith nor the fervent adherents of the old gods concentrated mainly around the Neoplatonic circles that defended the Serapeum in its final days. After close examination of some of Palladas’ poems, he is identified as an exemplary, although socially marginal, figure of an eclectic common-sense traditionalism. Implications from these observations are made concerning the way identities are constructed, applied and opposed against each other in Late Antiquity.

**Key words:** Christianity, Paganism, Palladas, Epigrams, Late Antiquity.

## *1. Introduction: pagan and Christian identities*

As in other fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences, so in historical and philological research, including the study of Late Antiquity, the issue of essentialism and constructivism has become increasingly crucial in the recent decades.<sup>1</sup> It is both particularly relevant and especially complex when it comes to self-defined religious and ideological groups. In such cases, it is easy to dismiss a more crude and straightforward type of essentialism with its either/or distinctions and its presupposition that opposing group identities are not only sharply outlined from the outside but also homogenous on the inside.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps no period in the history of the Mediterranean world shows clearer evidence against this presupposition than Late Antiquity. The more thoroughly we study the literary and archaeological signs of the times, the more closely we can observe how the monolithic notion of Christianity from later periods can only be applied to the religious attitudes of the 4<sup>th</sup> century with a pinch of anachronism; and, on the other side, how a common self-identification of all “pagans” was always even more problematic.<sup>3</sup> Even if we manage to distinguish, from a bird’s-eye view, the broad outlines of these two opposing entities of the period, their boundaries still seem fluctuating and permeable. This

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<sup>1</sup> Berg-Sørensen *et al.* 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Berg-Sørensen *et al.* 2010, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Sandwell 2007, 100–111; Dimitrov 2005, 77; Chuvin 2003, 19–22.

# “WISDOM OF GOD” IN THE ANTIOCHIAN THEOLOGY

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**Abstract:** Theodore of Mopsuestia is the most prominent representative of the Antiochian Theological School. He offers an innovative approach to the subject in question. In his works ‘Wisdom of God’ means God’s providence and wise management of this world in the context of Divine economy of Salvation. It has nothing to do with the Christological interpretation one could find in a lot of patristic sources from the Late Antiquity. He has serious theological reasons to interpret the Scriptural texts about ‘Wisdom’ in such a way. His specific concept about σοφία θεοῦ is based on his doctrines on creation, image of God in the human being, the man as ‘binding connection’ of the universe, his understanding of Biblical canon and perhaps his theological position during the Arian controversy.

**Key words:** *Antioch, Theology, Early Church, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodore of Tarsus.*

In Orthodox Christian context, Father George Florovsky is one of the most prominent Christian thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who explored the topic about the Wisdom of God. In two articles, published only in Bulgarian and Russian, he reflects on the Orthodox tradition of worship and theology of Wisdom of God. The first text is “Human Wisdom and Wisdom of God”<sup>1</sup> and the second one is “On the Worship of Sophia in Byzantium and Russia.”<sup>2</sup> In both he makes a selective overview of sources which confirm a personalistic view on the basis of Christological reading of the Orthodox tradition in this field. In both texts he examines modern, patristic, historical and liturgical sources supporting his point of view of full identification between Son of God and Wisdom of God. Having in mind that the Orthodox theology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates a very rare interest in this subject, his texts became an important element of the Orthodox theological reflection on the Wisdom of God in the modern epoch.

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<sup>1</sup> The text was published first time in Bulgarian in the periodical *Duhovna kultura* 11-12 (1922, 85–96); the same year it was published in Russian by the emigre periodical *Mladoruss* 1 (1922, 50–62). The text was published again in a modern Bulgarian redaction in Florovsky 2009, 135–152).

<sup>2</sup> The text was published first in Bulgaria, in Russian in the *Miscellanea: Florovsky* 1930, 485–500; and again, in Russia in the periodical *Alfa i Omega* 4 (1995, 145–161), and in Bulgarian in G. Florovsky 2009, 153–177.