



## Discourse on Angels and Pagans | "Якоже пишеть премудрый Епифаний"

### Text Information

Author | Anonymous

Language | East Slavonic/Church Slavonic

Period | 12th Century

Genre | A theological discourse interpolated into a chronicle

Source | Tvorogov, O. V., ed. *Povest vremennykh let*. Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi, vol. 1, edited by D. S. Likhachev et al. St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1997, pp. 62-315. The entries for 1110-1111 are found on pp. 296-304.

Collection | Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Premodern World; Prayer, Spirituality, and Life after Death: Global Medieval Perspectives

URL | [sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/discourse\\_angels\\_pagans/](https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/discourse_angels_pagans/)

Transcription by O. V. Tvorogov. Translation and introduction by Yulia Mikhailova.

### Introduction to the Text

The "Discourse on Angels and Pagans" is found in the entries for the years 1110 and 1111 in the *Hypatian Chronicle*, an East Slavonic compilation believed to have been produced in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The first part of the *Hypatian* is the text conventionally called the *Russian Primary Chronicle* in English. "Russian" in this case is a misnomer, because it refers to Rus (Rus'), the medieval realm whose heritage is claimed by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

The scholarly consensus is that the *Primary Chronicle* was compiled in Kiev (Kyev) in the 1110s; its earliest surviving copy is from 1377. There are several redactions of the *Primary Chronicle*. Differences between them are rather minor, with the exception of the entries for 1110 and 1111.

In all the redactions, these entries report a military expedition into the steppe launched from Kiev, with the intention to retaliate for past, and prevent future, raids by the Cumans (also known as Kipchaks, Qipchaqs, and Polovtsians), a pagan nomadic people living to the south of Rus. According to the chronicler, the chief organizer of this expedition was Prince Vladimir Monomakh (1152–1125). He was inspired to fight the Cumans by an angel who appeared in the Kievan Caves monastery in the form of a fiery pillar; during the battle, angels helped the Rus troops. This narrative is present in all the redactions of the *Primary Chronicle*. However, only the version found in the *Hypatian* compilation contains the lengthy discourse on angels and pagans presented here.

Its manner of argumentation is typical of medieval treatises: the author interprets quotations from Christian Scripture, patristic literature, and other authoritative texts; however, it is hard to find parallels to the subject matter and main thesis of this discourse.

The author begins with a quotation from the fourth-century church father Epiphanius of Salamis, stating that the elements and forces of nature each have their own angel; he then extrapolates from this statement to argue that, therefore, angels are also appointed to countries and peoples, including the Cumans. To refute an objection that pagans cannot have angels, the author uses the medieval legend about an angel guiding Alexander the Great in his conquests. Next, to argue that an angel can be appointed to a collectivity and not only to an individual, he refers to the "angel of the church in Smyrna" from the New Testament (Rev 2:8), and then uses Biblical quotations to show that the Archangel Michael was appointed as the angel of the Jewish people as a whole, and that another angel was appointed to the Persians.

Apparently, the argument is as follows. If angels were appointed to the Jewish people and to churches, then it is possible for a collectivity to have an angel. If Alexander the Great was led by an angel, then it is possible for a pagan to have an angel. Therefore, it is possible for a pagan collectivity to have its own angel, which is further confirmed by references to the angel of the Persians. Likewise, the Cumans have their own angel, who leads them when they make war on Rus, which they do on God's command, as punishment for sins of the Rus people.

The unknown medieval Christian author offers an inclusive, integrative view of the world, where God-appointed angels



watch over every force of nature and every ethnic group, regardless of its religion. Pagans, including those fighting against the Christians, are not inherently evil; they play a role in God's plan for humanity. The example of Alexander the Great, whose portrayal in the *Primary Chronicle* is very laudatory, shows that pagans sometimes represent forces of good. A parallel with Alexander casts a positive light on the Cumans, which, taken together with the fighting against them reported in the same chronicle entries, creates a complex, rich picture of relations between Christian Rus and the pagan steppe.

So far, this text has received very little scholarly attention. Back in 1957, André Vaillant made an important contribution when he identified the sources of some of the erudite quotations in the entries for 1110–1111. However, he viewed the discourse as a whole as an inept string of random passages from unrelated texts. The next work on the subject appeared in 2001, when Alan Timberlake interpreted the entries for 1110–1111 as evidence for a "dialectic" worldview of the chronicler, who believed that angels may sometimes be "malevolent," although the angel of the Cumans is never described as malevolent in the original text.

Yulia Mikhailova (the present translator) interprets the discourse on angels as a statement on the inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations in southern Rus, which was a borderland between the Christian sedentary agriculturalists and pagan nomadic pastoralists. Their relations included not only military conflicts, but also alliances, intermarriages, and other peaceful interactions. The discourse on angels and pagans explained how such interactions were possible in spite of intermittent hostilities.

The *Hypatian Chronicle* compilation containing the redaction of the *Primary Chronicle* with the discourse on angels and pagans survived in the *Hypatian Codex* (datable to the 1420s), the *Khlebnikov Codex* (datable to the 1550s–1660s), and in several copies of the *Khlebnikov*. It is unknown when the discourse on angels and pagans was composed. Numerous errors of inattention suggest that the *Hypatian* scribe copied an earlier text rather than composing the discourse himself. The discourse is placed at the end of the text of the early twelfth-century *Primary Chronicle*, which, in the *Hypatian*, transitions into the *Kievan Chronicle*, believed to have been compiled in 1198/9. Both of these twelfth-century chronicles, the *Primary* and *Kievan*, devote much attention to relations with the pagan neighbors of Rus, making it probable that the "Discourse on Angels and Pagans," which conceptualizes these relations, was composed in the twelfth century.

### About this Edition

The original text presented here is based on the edition by O. V. Tvorogov: *Povest vremennykh let*. Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi, vol. 1, edited by D. S. Likhachev et al. St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1997, pp. 62–315 (available as an [electronic text](#)). The translated entries are found on pp. 296–304. The "Discourse on Angels and Pagans" apparently went through an unknown number of copying stages, accumulating scribal errors. It includes quotations from Greek texts in sometimes awkward Slavonic translations. The original does not have sentence breaks, and the syntax is often ambiguous. Where possible, I checked the quoted passages found in the discourse against the other known Slavonic translations of the same texts and/or the Greek originals. A long quotation from a Slavonic translation of the Byzantine chronicle of George Hamartolos is represented in italics. Words and phrases supplied by me to clarify the text for the reader are put in square brackets. Emendations are noted and explained. To render Church Slavonic Biblical quotations, I used the corresponding passages from the King James Bible.

### Further Reading

De Boor, Carl, Peter Wirth, eds. *Georgii Monachi chronicon*. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1978.

- *The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. The Chronicle by George Hamartolos, p. 225.*

Dean, James Elmer, ed. and trans. *Epiphanius's Treatise On Weights and Measures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935.

- *The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. An English translation of On Weights and Measures by Epiphanius of Salamis.*

de Muralt, E. G., ed. *Khronograf Georgiia Amartola*, Uchenyia zapiski vtorago otdelenia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk 6. St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademia nauk, 1861.

- *The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. The Chronicle by George Hamartolos in Greek, pp. 162–163.*



Golden, Peter. "Nomads and Their Sedentary Neighbors in Pre-Činggisid Eurasia." *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 7, (1987–1991): 41–81.

- See pp. 54–68 for an overview of relations between Rus and the steppe nomads.

Griffin, Sean. "The Rus Primary Chronicle." In *The Liturgical Past in Byzantium and Early Rus*, pp. 35–61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

- Provides a general information on the Primary Chronicle.

Istrin, V. M., ed. *Khronika Georgiia Amartola v drevnem slaviano-russkom perevode: Tekst, issledovanie i slovar'*, vol. 1. Petrograd: Rossiiskaia Akademiia nauk, 1920.

- The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. A Slavonic translation of the Chronicle by George Hamartolos, pp. 160–162.

Matveenko, Vera, and Liudmila Shchegoleva, eds. *Vremennik Georgia Monakha (Khronika Georgia Amartola)*. Moscow: Bogorodskii pechatnik, 2000.

- The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. A modern Russian translation of the Chronicle by George Amartolos, pp. 140–141.

Mikhailova, Yulia. "Christians and Pagans' in the Chronicles of Pre-Mongolian Rus: Beyond the Dichotomy of 'Good Us' and 'Bad Them'." In *Geschichte der Slavia Asiatica: Quellenkundliche Probleme*, edited by Christian Lübke, Ilmira Miftakhova and Wolfram von Scheliha, pp. 22–51. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2013.

- Examines representations of the steppe nomads in the twelfth to early thirteenth-century East Slavonic sources. For the "Discourse on Angels and Pagans", see p. 73.

Mikhailova, Yulia. "Angels for Pagans: The Discourse on Angels in the Hypatian Codex as a Conceptualization of Cooperation between Christian Slavs and Pagan Turks in Southern Rus." Paper presented at Midwest Slavic Conference, Ohio State University, 2014.

Ostrowski, Donald, and David Birnbaum, eds. *The Povest' vremennykh let: An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis*. Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, Text Series 10. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

- Introduction, pp. xvii–lxxii, provides general information on the Primary Chronicle.

Shakhmatov, A. A., ed. *Letopis' po Ipat'evskomu spisku*. Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei, vol. 2. St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Arkheograficheskaia Komissia, 1908, columns 262–264, 268–273.

- The source used for the translation.

Timberlake, Alan. "Redactions of the Primary Chronicle," *Russkii iazyk v nauchnom osveshchenii* 1 (2001): 196–218.

- For the "Discourse on Angels and Pagans," see pp. 217–18.

Tvorogov, O. V., ed. *Povest' vremennykh let*. Biblioteka literatury drevnei Rusi, vol. 1, edited by D. S. Likhachev et al, pp. 62–315. St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1997.

- The source of the transcription. The entries for 1110–1111 are found on pp. 296–304. The series *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (The Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles) cited below contains the best scholarly editions of East Slavonic chronicles, including A. A. Shakhmatov's edition of the Hypatian. However, the old Cyrillic script and representations of ligatures and other features of medieval manuscripts present in this edition make it very difficult to use it as a basis for a transcription that would be readable with most internet browsers. Therefore, for the transcription, I used the online open-source edition by Tvorogov, which presents the same text as Shakhmatov's edition, but employs modern Cyrillic characters, simplified orthography, sentence breaks, and modern punctuation. Sentence breaks and punctuation in my transcription are slightly different from those in Tvorogov's edition.

Tvorogov, O. V., and S. A. Davydova, eds. *Letopisets Ellinskii i Rimskii*. Vol. 1. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 1999.

- The sources used to check quotations found in the translated text. *Greek and Roman Chronicle*, p. 3.



## Discourse on Angels and Pagans | "Якоже пишеть премудрый Епифаний"

Якоже пишеть премудрый Епифаний: «Къ коей же твари ангелъ приставленъ: ангелъ облакомъ и мъгламъ, и снѣгу, и граду, и мразу, ангелъ гласомъ и громомъ, ангелъ зимы, и зноеви, и осени, и весны, и лѣта, всему духу твари его на земли, и тайныя бездны, и суть скровены подъ землею, и преисподьнии тмы, и сущи врѣху безны, бывшия древле верху земля, от неяже тмы, вечеръ, и ночь, и свѣтъ, и день».

Ковсимъ тваремъ ангели приставлени. Такоже ангелъ приставленъ къ которой убо земли, да соблюдаютъ куюжто землю, аще суть и погани. Аще Божий гнѣвъ будетъ на кую убо землю, повелѣвая ангелу тому на кую убо землю браню ити, то оной землѣ ангелъ не вопротивится повелѣнью Божью. Яко и се бѣше, и на ны навелъ Богъ, грѣхъ ради нашихъ, иноплеменики поганыя, и побѣжахуть ны повелѣниемъ Божиимъ, они бо бяху водими аньеломъ по повелѣнью Божью.

Аще ли кто речеть, яко аньела нѣсть у поганыхъ, да слышитъ, яко Олександру Макидоньскому, ополчившу на Дарья и пошедшу ему, и побидившу землю всю от вѣстока и до запада, 15. и поби землю Егупетъскую, и поби Арама, и приде в острова морьская; и врати лице свое взыти въ Ерусалимъ, побидити жиды, занеже бяху мирни со Дарьемъ. И поиде со вси вои его, и ста на товарищи, и почи. И приспѣ ночь, и лежа на ложи своемъ посреде шатра, отверзъ очи свои, види мужа, стояща над нимъ и мѣчь нагъ в руцѣ его, и обличие меча его яко молонии. И запряже мечемъ своимъ на главу цареву. И ужасеся цесарь велми и рече: «Не бий мене». И рече ему ангелъ: «Посла мя Богъ уимати цесарь великии предъ тобою и люди многи, азъ же хожу предъ тобою, помагая ти. А нынѣ вѣдай, яко умрѣши, понеже помыслилъ еси взити въ Ерусалимъ, зло створити ерѣмъ Божиимъ и к людемъ его». И рече царь: «Молю тя, о Господи, отпусти нынѣ грѣхъ раба твоего, аче не любо ти, а ворочюся дому моему». И рече ангелъ: «Не бойся, иди путемъ твоимъ къ Иерусалиму, и узриши ту въ Ерусалими мужа въ обличии моемъ, и борзо пади на лица своемъ, и поклонися мужу тому, и все, еже речеть к тобѣ, створи, не прѣступи рѣчи ему. В онъ же день приступиши рѣчь его, и умрѣши». И вѣставъ, цесарь иде въ Ерусалимъ и, пришедъ, въспроси ерѣвѣ: «Иду ли на Дарья?» И показаша ему книги Данила пророка и рекоша ему: «Ты еси козель, а онъ овень, и потолчеши и возмѣши царство его».

As the wise Epiphanius<sup>1</sup> writes, "An angel is appointed to each creation, to clouds, and fogs, and snow, and hail, and frost. There are angels for sounds and for thunders, angels of winter, of heat, of autumn, spring, and summer. [And angels are appointed] to all the spirits of His creation on the earth, and to secret abysses, and to what is hidden under the earth, and to the darkness beneath the earth, and to the darkness in the abyss that was once above the earth which gave origin to the evening, and the night, and light, and the day."<sup>2</sup>

Angels are appointed to all creation. In the same way, an angel is appointed to each land, to guard all lands, even if they are pagan. In the case of God's anger at a certain land, God commands one of those angels to wage a war against that land, and the angel of the land [commanded to wage a war] does not disobey God's command. Likewise, God sent pagan aliens<sup>3</sup> against us on account of our sins, and they won by God's command, for they were led by an angel by God's command.

If someone says that pagans do not have angels, let him hear how Alexander of Macedon,<sup>4</sup> while preparing to fight against Darius, after he defeated the whole earth from East to West, 15. crushed Egypt and Aram, arrived to the sea islands and turned toward Jerusalem, to crush the Jews because they were on friendly terms with Darius. And when he was on the march with all his soldiers, he pitched a camp and went to sleep. The night came, and, when he was lying in his bed inside the tent, he opened his eyes and saw a man standing above him, a naked sword in his hand, and the appearance of the sword was like lightning. And this man made to strike the emperor's head, and the emperor was terrified greatly and said, "Do not strike me!" And the angel said, "God sent me to subdue great emperors and many people before you. Indeed, I walk before you, assisting you. However, now learn that you will die because you want to take Jerusalem and to harm God's priests and His people." And the emperor said, "I pray you, oh Lord, forgive your servant's sin now. If this does not please you, I will return home." And the angel said, "Do not fear, proceed on your way to Jerusalem, and you will see there, in Jerusalem, a man with the same appearance as me. Fall down on your face at once and bow down before that man. Do everything that he tells you and do not disobey his words. On the day you disobey his words, you will die." The emperor got up and went to Jerusalem, and after he came there, he asked the priests, "Should I go against Darius?" And they showed him the books of the prophet Daniel and told him, "You are the goat, and he is the ram, and you will stamp upon him and will take over his empire."<sup>5</sup>





Се убо не ангель ли вожаше Олексанѣдра, не поганѣ ли побѣжаше и вси елини кумиролужьбники? Тако и си погании попушени грѣхъ ради нашихъ. Се же вѣдомо буди, яко въ хрестыанехъ не единъ ангель, но елико крестися, паче же къ благовѣрнымъ княземъ нашимъ. Но противу Божью повелѣнью не могутъ противитися, но молятъ Бога прилѣжно за хрестыанскыя люди. Якоже и бысть: молитвами святыя Богородица и святыхъ ангель умилисердися Богъ и посла ангелы в помощь русьскимъ княземъ на поганя. Якоже рече и Моисѣви: «Се ангель мой прѣдъпойдетъ предъ лицемъ твоимъ». Якоже рекохомъ прѣже, зънаменье се бысть мѣсяца февраля въ 11 день, исходяще сему лѣту 18. [*An account of the expedition to the steppe and a victory over the Cumans follows, which is omitted here.*] И въпросиша колодникъ, глаголюще: «Како васъ толкасила многомножество не могосте ся противити, но воскорѣ побѣгостъ?» Си же отвѣщеваху, глаголюще: «Како можемъ битися с вами, а дружины ѣздяху верху васъ въ оружьи свѣтлѣ и страшни, иже помагаху вамъ?» Токмо се суть ангели, от Бога послани помогать хрестыаномъ. Се бо ангель вложи въ сердце Володимеру Манамаху поустити братью свою на иноплеменики, русьскыи князи. Се бо, якоже рекохомъ, видинье видиша в Печерскомъ монастыри, еже стояше столпъ огнь на трапезници, таже преступъ на церковь и оттуда к Городцю; ту бо бяше Володимеръ в Радосыни. И тогда се ангель вложи Володимеру въ сердце, нача понужати, якоже рекохомъ.

Тѣмже достойно похваляти ангелы, якоже Иоанъ Златоустецъ рече: ибо ти Творцю безначално поють, милостиву ему быти и тиху челоукомъ. Ангелы бо, глаголю, наша поборники, на противныя силы воюющимъ, имже есть архангелъ Михаилъ, ибо со дьяволомъ тѣла ради Моисиева противяся, на князь же персыйскыя свободы ради людскыя противяся. Повелѣнемъ Божиимъ всю тварь раздѣлити. И языкомъ старишины наставляюще, симъ же нѣкоего персямъ презрѣти оправда, Михаила же сущимъ обрѣзаномъ людемъ схранити повелѣ. Съставити же предѣлы ихъ прогнѣваньемъ, не по грѣховныя ярости, но от божественнаго нѣкоего неизреченнаго слова; сему же работати иудѣемъ персямъ нудящю, сему же на свободу извлекущю и прилѣжно к Богу молитву приносящю, глаголюще: «Господи вседержителю! Доколѣ не помилуеши Иерусалима и градъ иудовыхъ, ихже презрѣ сѣмьдесятное лѣто?». Его же видѣ видиньемъ и Даниль летяща лице его, яко видѣ молыный, рещи, очи его, яко свѣщи, и мышды его и голени, яко видѣ мѣди блещашеся, и гласъ слова его, яко гласъ многоаго народа.

Therefore, was not this an angel who led Alexander? Did not he win his victories while being a pagan, as all the Greeks were idol-worshippers? In the same way, these pagans<sup>6</sup> were allowed to win on account of our sins. Let it be known that there is not just one angel among the Christians, but there are as many of them as there are baptized persons; in particular, [guardian angels are appointed] to our pious princes. But these angels cannot act contrary to God's command; but they ardently pray to God on behalf of the Christian people. This occurred when God showed his mercy because of the prayers of the Holy Mother of God and the holy angels, and He sent angels to help the Rus princes against the pagans,<sup>7</sup> in the same way as when He said to Moses, "Behold, my angel shall go before you."<sup>8</sup> As we said above, this portent occurred on the eleventh day of February at the end of this [66]18th year<sup>9</sup>. [*An account of the expedition to the steppe and a victory over the Cumans follows, which is omitted here.*] [After the battle with the Cumans, the Rus princes] asked the prisoners and said, "How come there was such a great force and such a great multitude of you, and you could not resist us and fled so soon?" And they answered, "How could we fight against you when some others rode above you, terrifying, with shining weapons, and helped you?" These could only be angels sent by God to help the Christians. For it was an angel who inspired Vladimir Monomakh to call on his brethren, the Rus princes, to go against the aliens.<sup>10</sup> As we mentioned above, we had a vision in the Caves monastery, when a fiery pillar stood on the refectory and from there it moved towards Gorodets, for Vladimir was there in Radosyn.<sup>11</sup> Behold, it was then that the angel inspired Vladimir, and he started to urge [other princes to make an anti-Cuman campaign], as we mentioned above.<sup>12</sup>

*This is why we ought to praise angels, as John Chrysostom<sup>13</sup> said, for they forever sing praise to God so that he might show mercy and peace to humans. For angels, I say, are our defenders when we fight against our enemy's forces, and their commander<sup>14</sup> is Michael because he fought with the Devil over Moses's body,<sup>15</sup> and he took arms against the Persian prince [that is, the angel of the Persians] for the sake of the [Jewish] people's freedom. Angels divided<sup>16</sup> all of creation according to God's command. While appointing governors to peoples, God judged that one of the angels should watch over<sup>17</sup> the Persians, and he commanded Michael to guard the circumcised people,<sup>18</sup> He established boundaries for them<sup>19</sup> in anger, but not in sinful furious anger, but according to a certain secret divine<sup>20</sup> word.<sup>21</sup> The former [angel of the Persians] forced the Jews to be the Persians' slaves; the latter [Michael] led them to freedom, praying to God ardently, saying, "Lord, Ruler of the Universe! When will you show mercy to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah from which you have turned away for seventy years?"<sup>22</sup> Daniel had a vision of him<sup>23</sup> flying, his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet similar to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude<sup>24</sup>.*



Отъ нихъ есть осла отвращая и Валама от нечистого  
вольшѣвльнѣя праздно творяя; отъ нихъ же и мѣчь  
извлѣкъ противу Иисусу Наугину, помощи ему на  
противныя образомъ повелѣвая; Отъ нихъ есть 100 и 80  
тысящъ сурийскихъ единою ночью поразихъ и сонъ  
варварьскихъ смѣси смертию; отъ нихъ же есть, иже  
пророка Амбакума въздухомъ принесъ скочениемъ, да  
пророка Данила посредь же левъ прѣпитаеъ. Таковии  
же убо и тации на враги изыществууютъ. Также есть  
и боголѣпный Рафаилъ: отъ единыя рыбы урѣза  
утреники, бѣснующися отроковицю ицѣли и слѣпа  
старца сълѣнѣца видѣти створи ему. Убо не великихъ  
ли честий достойни суть, нашу жизнь храняще?

Не токмо бо хранитель языкомъ повелени быша  
ангели, якоже речено бысть: «Егда раздѣляше Вышний  
языки, ихъже разсѣя сыны Адамовы, постави предѣлы  
языкомъ по числу ангелъ Божиихъ, но и вѣрнымъ  
человѣкомъ комуждо достася ангелъ. Ибо отроковица  
Роди изглаголавши апостоломъ, предъ дверьми  
стоящую Петру, Иродова лица избѣгъ, глаголаху, не  
имущи вѣры: «И ангелъ его есть». Свидетельствуетъ  
же и симъ Господь, глаголя: «Видите и не нерадите  
единого отъ малыхъ сихъ: глаголю бо вамъ, яко  
ангели ихъ видятъ лице воину Отца моего, сущаго  
на небесѣхъ». Еще же у коейждо церкви хранителя  
ангелы пристави Христосъ, якоже открываетъ Иоанъ,  
глаголя: «Рци ангелу, сущему въ церкви Измуреньстѣ:  
видихъ твою нищету и скорбь, нѣ богатъ еси». Доброизвѣстно убо есть любящимъ насъ ангеломъ,  
яко насъ ради къ Владыцѣ молящимся. Ибо служебнии  
дуси суть, якоже и апостоль глаголетъ: «Въ служенье  
слеми хотящимъ ради наслѣдити спасенье». Ихъ же и  
поборники, и споборники, якоже и нынѣ слышалъ еси  
Данила, како въводи архангела Михаила персемъ в  
часъ прогнѣванья нашей ради свободы. Се бо людемъ  
работати персямъ нужаше, якоже речено бысть, се же  
раздришити пленныя тщашеся. И одалаетъ Михаилъ  
противнику, ибо Ефратъ жидове пришедше, отъне  
паки селенье прияша, и градъ и церковь създаша.  
Тако же и великий Епифаний вѣща: «Коемуждо языку  
ангелъ приставленъ». И Списание бо к Данилу глагола:  
«Ангелъ и властеля елиномъ и Михаила властеля  
иудѣемъ»; глаголетъ же: «И постави уставы по числу  
ангелъ».

И се паки, якоже Иполитъ глаголетъ, толкуеть Данила:  
«В лѣто третѣе Кура цесаря, азъ Данилъ плакахъся  
три недѣли. Перваго же мѣсяца смирихся, моля Бога  
дѣний 20 и 1, прося отъ него откровенья тайны.

*The one who turned back the donkey and made Balaam stop his  
impious sorcery was one of them [angels];<sup>25</sup> and the one who  
drew out the sword in front of Joshua, in this manner promising  
him help against the enemies, was also one of them;<sup>26</sup> and the  
one who slaughtered 180,000 Assyrians and turned the sleep of  
the barbarians into death was one of them;<sup>27</sup> and the one who  
transported Prophet Habakkuk through the air so that he gave  
food to Daniel in the lion's den was one of them.<sup>28</sup> They also excel  
against the enemies. Similarly, divine Rafael cut fat from fish and  
healed the possessed girl and allowed the old blind man to see  
the sun.<sup>29</sup> Do they not deserve great honor, those guarding our  
lives?*

Not only were angels commanded to be guardians of the peo-  
ples, as it was said, "When the Most High divided the peoples,  
the descendants of Adam whom he had dispersed, he set the  
boundaries for each people according to the number of angels,"<sup>30</sup>  
but also each faithful person received an angel. For, when the  
girl Rhoda told the apostles that Peter was standing at the door,  
having escaped from Herod, they said, not believing her, "This  
is his angel."<sup>31</sup> The Lord testifies to this as well, when He says,  
"Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I  
say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my  
Father, who is in heaven."<sup>32</sup> And Christ also appointed a guardian  
angel to each church, as St. John reveals, saying, "To the angel of  
the church in Smyrna say, 'I saw your poverty and tribulation, but  
you are rich.'"<sup>33</sup> It is well known that angels love us, because they  
pray to the Lord for us. For they are ministering spirits, as the  
apostle says, "They are sent to serve those who will be saved."<sup>34</sup>  
Angels are their defenders and helpers, as you have just heard  
from the Book of Daniel how God led the Archangel Michael to  
the Persians at the hour of wrath for the sake of our liberation.  
For that one [the angel of the Persians] forced the people to be  
the Persians' slaves, as mentioned above, and [Michael] strove  
to liberate the prisoners. And Michael defeats the enemy, for the  
Jews, having crossed the Euphrates, settled [in their homeland]  
again and built the city and the temple. And great Epiphanius  
said, "An angel is appointed to each people." For [in] the Scrip-  
ture, [it is] said to Daniel, "The angel and the prince of the Greeks,  
and Michael, the prince of the Jews."<sup>35</sup> And also, "And established  
boundaries according to the number of angels."<sup>36</sup>

Also, as Hippolytus<sup>37</sup> says, interpreting the Book of Daniel,  
"In the third year of the reign of Emperor Cyrus, I, Daniel, was  
mourning for three weeks. And in the first month I humbled my-  
self, praying to God for twenty-one days, asking him to reveal  
the secret.



И, услышавъ, Отецъ пусти слово свое, кажа хотящее быти имъ. И бысть на велицѣ рѣцѣ, лѣпо бяшеть ту ся явити, идѣже хотяше и грѣхи отпущати. И возведъ очи свои, видѣхъ: и се мужъ одѣнъ в багоръ. Первый рече видѣнемъ, аки Гавриль ангелъ летя, сдѣ же не тако, но видъ самого Господа, видъ же не свершена челоуѣка, но образомъ челоуѣкомъ являющаяся, якоже глаголетъ: "И се мужъ одѣнъ въ пѣстро, и лядвия его припоясани златомъ чистомъ, и тѣло его, аки фарсисъ, и лице ему, аки молнья, и очи ему, яко свѣщи огненѣи, и мышци ему плещи подобни мѣди чистѣ, и глас его, аки народа многа." И падохъ на земли, и се я мя аки рука, речи, челоуѣку, и еще вѣстави мя на колѣну и рече ко мнѣ: "Не бойся, Даниле, вѣси, что ради приидохъ к тобѣ? Брань хочю створити съ княземъ перьскимъ. Но повѣдаю ти писаное в писаньи истинномъ, и нѣсть никогоже прящася о сѣмъ со мною, развѣ Михаила князя вашего, того бо оставихъ ту. От него же бо дѣне устремися молити предъ Богомъ твоимъ, услыша молитву твою, и пущенъ есмь азъ брань створити со княземъ прѣскимъ, съвѣтъ нѣкоторый бысть не отпустить люди. Да скоро убо будетъ молитва твоя свершена, противихся ему и оставихъ ту Михаила князя вашего». Кто есть Михаилъ, развѣ анягела, прѣданого людемъ? Яко и к Моисиеви глаголетъ: «Не имамъ с вами ити на путь, занеже суть людѣ жестокою выею», но «ангелъ мой идеть с вами». Якоже и се с Божьею помощью, молитвами святыя Богородица и святыхъ ангелъ, възвѣратишася русьстии князи вѣсвоиси съ славою великою къ своимъ людемъ; и ко всимъ странамъ далнимъ, рекуще къ Грекомъ и Угромъ, и Ляхомъ, и Чехомъ, дондеже и до Рима проиде, на славу Богу всегда и ныня, и присно во вѣки, аминь.

And the Father heard me and sent his<sup>38</sup> word to me, showing by it what shall happen. This occurred by the side of the great river.<sup>39</sup> It was fitting for God to reveal himself there, where he would in the future forgive sins.<sup>40</sup> 'And I raised my eyes and saw a man clad in purple.' At first sight,<sup>41</sup> he said, he had the appearance of the flying Angel Gabriel, but this was not so in this case, [as] it was the appearance of the Lord himself, not the appearance of the perfect Man, but appearing in the image of a man, as he [Daniel] says, 'And behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold, his body like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet are similar to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.'<sup>42</sup> And I fell to the ground, and behold, it was as if a hand, similar to a human hand, touched me and set me upon my knees.<sup>43</sup> And he said unto me, 'Fear not, Daniel. Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? I will fight with the Persian prince. But I will tell you that which is written in the Scripture of Truth: and there is none that holds with me in these things, but Michael your prince,'<sup>44</sup> for I left him there. 'From the first day that thou began to pray before thy God, thy words were heard,'<sup>45</sup> and I was sent to make war against the Persian prince. There was a certain counsel not to let the people go. So that thy prayer may be granted soon, I resisted it, and I left Michael there, your prince." Who is Michael if not an angel appointed to the people? As [God] says to Moses, "I will not go with thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people, but my angel will go with thee."<sup>46</sup> And likewise, with God's help and through the prayers of the Holy Mother of God and the holy angels, the Rus princes returned home, to their people, with great glory, [which] reached all the distant lands, that is, Greeks, and Hungarians, and Poles, and Bohemians, and even up to Rome, for God's glory now, forever and ever, amen.

## Critical Notes

- 1 The fourth-century church father Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403 CE).
- 2 A quotation from *On Weights and Measures* by Epiphanius. The corresponding Greek passage in an English translation reads: "God did twenty-two works between the beginning and the seventh day, which are these: On the first day, the upper heavens, the earth, the waters - of which consist snow, ice, hail, frost, and dew - and the spirits that minister before him. They are the angels before his face, the angels of glory, the angels of the winds that blow, the angels of the clouds and of the cloud-darknesses, of snow and hail and frost, the angels of sounds, of the thunders and the lightnings, the angels of the cold and of the heat, of winter, fall, spring, and summer, and of all the spirits of his creatures in heaven and on earth."



- 3 These "pagan aliens" are Cumans (also known as Kipchaks, Qipchaqs, and Polovtsians), a pagan nomadic people living in the steppe to the south of Rus, on the territory of modern-day Ukraine and southern Russia.
- 4 Alexander the Great.
- 5 Dan. 8.
- 6 Cumans.
- 7 Cumans.
- 8 Ex. 23:20.
- 9 The fiery pillar that appeared in the Kievan Caves monastery, which the *Primary Chronicle* interprets as an appearance of an angel. Year 6618 "from the creation of the world" corresponds to 1110 CE.
- 10 Cumans.
- 11 Radosyn was a settlement near the fortress Gorodets on the Dnieper River.
- 12 The following text in italics is based on the Slavonic translation of the ninth-century Byzantine Chronicle by George Hamartolos.
- 13 The work quoted by Hamartolos is *Oratio in Synaxin Archangelorum* by the early Christian author known as pseudo-Chrysostom. André Vaillant, "Les citations des années 1110–1111 dans la chronique de Kiev," *Byzantinoslavica*, 18 (1957): 18–38, at p. 24.
- 14 The word in the original is "archangel," apparently used in its literal Greek meaning, "chief angel," thus "their archangel" is "their leader" or "commander."
- 15 Jude 9.
- 16 In the original, the word is *razdeliti*, "to divide." The corresponding passage in the Slavonic translation of Hamartolos has *razdelivshe*, "having divided;" *razdeliti* apparently is a scribal error. Furthermore, in the Slavonic translation, the syntax of this sentence is very awkward, and "having divided" appears to lack the grammatical referent. In the Greek text by Hamartolos, angels, according to God's command, divided all of creation, including the most important peoples/ethnicities, each of which received their own angel.
- 17 In the original, the word is *prozreti*, "to foresee, to prophesize;" the corresponding passage in the Slavonic translation of Hamartolos has *prezreti*, "to watch over;" *prozreti* apparently is a scribal error.
- 18 The Jews.
- 19 The Slavonic translator misinterpreted the Greek text here and translated the Greek *eforois* (guardians) as "limits." In the Greek text, God established one angel as the guardian of the Persians and Michael as the guardian of the Jews. See Vera Matveenکو and Liudmila Shchegoleva, eds., *Vremennik Georgia Monakha (Khronika Georgia Amartola)* (Moscow: Bogorodskii pechatnik, 2000), 398.
- 20 In the original, the word is *blazhenago*, "blessed;" the corresponding passage in the Slavonic translation of Hamartolos has *bozhestv'nago*, "divine." Both words were often written in an abbreviated form, making it easy to confuse them. In the Greek original of Hamartolos, the word translated into Slavonic as "divine word" is *logos*, which in Greek also meant "reason."
- 21 In the original Greek text by Hamartolos, God commanded the angel of the Jews, Michael, to contest with the angel of the Persians over the freedom of the Jewish people. This contest was ordained for a mysterious reason (*aporreton logon*); apparently, the author sought to express the idea of God's inscrutable ways. One redaction of Hamartolos adds that God commanded this contest in anger (*kata pathos orges*). This remark may have been based on Zech. 1:12, where the prayer of the angel, whom Hamartolos identifies as Michael, mentions that God has been angry with the Jews for seventy years. The Slavonic translator elaborated on the short phrase *kata pathos orges* explaining that God's righteous anger was different from sinful anger (fury) of humans. This explanation is not present in Hamartolos.





- 22 Zech. 1:12.
- 23 The referent of "him" in this sentence is unclear. The nature of Daniel's vision described in Dan. 10 has been subject to different interpretations. Below, in the quotation from Hippolytus of Rome, it is interpreted as a vision of God.
- 24 Dan. 10:6.
- 25 Num. 22:21-41.
- 26 Josh. 5:13.
- 27 2 Kings 19-20.
- 28 Dan. 6:16-22.
- 29 Tob. 8.
- 30 Deut. 32:8.
- 31 That is, Peter's angel. Acts 12:12-17.
- 32 Matt. 18:11.
- 33 Rev. 2:8.
- 34 Heb. 1:14.
- 35 Dan. 10:20.
- 36 Deut. 32:8.
- 37 Hippolytus of Rome (c.170–c.235 CE), a theologian, whose works include *The Commentary on the Prophet Daniel*.
- 38 In the original, the word is *tvoe*, "your," apparently written accidentally instead of *svoe*, "his."
- 39 Dan. 10:1-4. The word "river" is omitted in the original.
- 40 According to Hippolytus, the Tigris, the "great river," on the bank of which Daniel had his vision, prefigures the River Jordan. Philip Schaff, *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 182.
- 41 The *Khlebnikov* manuscript has "at first sight"; the *Hypatian* has "the first one," probably referring to Daniel's previous vision of the Archangel Gabriel (Dan. 8:16). Both versions convey the idea that this vision looked similar to the appearance of Gabriel, but was, in fact, a vision of God.
- 42 Dan.10:5-6.
- 43 Dan. 10:10.
- 44 Dan. 10:20-21.
- 45 Dan. 10:12.
- 46 Ex. 33:2-3.