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<Ü1> Martyrs from the northwest Balkans in the Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition: patterns and mechanisms of cult transfer [1]

Religious cults, like most aspects of human culture, are composite structures, consisting of different elements which belong to the domains of belief (legends), material culture (holy sites, relics, images, and other paraphernalia), and social practices or customs (festivals and other public or private devotional practices). These elements can be affected, transformed, or obliterated by the transfer of a cult from region to region, or by its development through time. The notion of cult transfer as a mechanism of expansion and transformation of religious traditions and communities has been widely utilised in the study of religion in the ancient world[2], but its application in the field of Christian hagiography and the study of the cult of saints has been limited. This paper will use it as an interpretative tool for five martyr cults of the Byzantine Greek tradition associated with the northwest Balkans.

The northwest Balkans can be rightfully described as a border-zone *par excellence,* standing on the divide between the Roman East and West, and between the Roman world and the Barbaricum. During Late Antiquity, this region was the only officially Latin speaking part of the otherwise mostly Greek-speaking East Roman Empire, and was in close interaction with both the Latin and Greek cultural and religious environments surrounding it. Its rich Christian traditions included, since in the fourth century, a remarkable number of local cults of martyrs. From the fifth century on, however, successive conquests by the Huns, Goths, Gepids, and Avars created a new framework of influences, disruptions, and transformations, involving substantial waves of immigration, and causing the gradual decline of the local religious traditions and institutions[3]. The memory of the early Christian traditions of the northwest Balkans, however, was preserved in a number of transferred cults in the

[1] This article was written within the framework of the European Research Council-funded project 'The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity', based at the University of Oxford. I wish to thank Aleksandra Smirnov-Brkić, Jean-Michel Spieser, Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, and an anonymous reviewer for their suggestions. I am grateful to the organisers for their kind invitation to the conference and their generous hospitality in Serbia.

[2] E. SCHMIDT, Kultübertragungen (Tübingen 1909); E. R. GEBHARD, The gods in transit: narratives of cult transfer. In: A. Y. Collins, M. M. Mitchell (eds), Antiquity and Humanity: Essays on Ancient Religion and Philosophy, Presented to Hans Dieter Betz on his 70th Birthday (Tübingen 2001), 451-476; J. B. WEAVER, Plots of Epiphany: Prison-Escape in Acts of the Apostles (Berlin 2004), 219 ff.

[3] R. BRATOŽ, Die Auswanderung der Bevölkerung aus den pannonischen Provinzen während des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts. In: M. Konrad, C. Witschel (eds), Römische Legionslager in den Rhein- und Donauprovinzen – Nuclei spätantik-frühmittelalterlichen Lebens? (München 2011), 589-614, esp. 600-601; F. LOTTER, Völkerverschiebungen im Ostalpen-Mitteldonau-Raum zwischen Antike und Mittelalter (375-600) (Berlin 2003).

Mediterranean, which provide a particularly rich set of examples for the study of the phenomenon of cult transfer in the Christian world.

<ü2> A set of late fourth-century Latin *passiones* from Sirmium

According to the fourth-century martyrologies (the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* and the Syriac Breviary), Sirmium honoured the memory of several tens of martyrs[4]. The cult of some of them (Irenaeus, Syneros, and Anastasia) is attested by a number of fourth century-inscriptions mentioning their cemeterial shrines[5], an unusual level of epigraphic visibility for the cult of martyrs in the fourth century. Judging from the concentration of festivals mentioned in the early martyrologies, we can infer that one of busiest periods of the ecclesiastical year of Sirmium was late March and early April, when the city celebrated three clerical martyrs, the presbyter Montanus (26 March), the bishop Irenaeus (6 April), and the deacon Demetrius (9 April). Two weeks later, on 26 April, the neighbouring city of *Cibalae* (today Vinkovci) celebrated the memory of the lector Pullio, alongside an earlier martyr, the bishop Eusebius[6]. It is most likely that all these figures had martyrdom accounts (*passiones*), composed in Latin, two of which have survived more or less intact, the *passiones* of Irenaeus of *Sirmium* (BHL 4466), and of Pullio of *Cibalae* (BHL 6869)[7]. The recently published critical edition of the *passio* of Pullio by Hajnalka Tamás gives a new reading of its opening paragraph, which contains a succinct reference to the three Sirmian martyrs of late March and early April (Montanus, Irenaeus, and Demetrius) which is worth quoting[8]:

'During their reign, Diocletian and Maximian ordered that a persecution be started and that they should either kill all Christians or make them leave the faith. In that time, when this decree reached the city of Sirmium, Probus, the governor, inaugurated the persecution mandated to him with the clerics. And he arrested Saint Montanus, presbyter of the church of Singidunum, who endured for long by the power of the Christian faith, and he threw him into the river. Also bishop Irenaeus of the Church of Sirmium, who contested mightily on account

[4] On the martyrs of *Sirmium*, see: J. ZEILLER, Les Origines chrétiennes dans les provinces danubiennes de l'empire romain (Paris 1918) 73–104; R. BRATOŽ, Die diokletianische Christenverfolgung in den Donau- und Balkanprovinzen - Verzeichnis der Opfer der Christenverfolgungen in den Donau- und Balkanprovinzen. In: A. Demandt, A. Goltz, H. Schlange-Schöningen (eds.), -Diokletian und die Tetrarchie. Aspekte einer Zeitenwende (Berlin/New York 2004) 115-252, esp. 126-127, 214-223 (with references to the sources); M. JARAK, Martyres Pannoniae: the Chronological Position of the Pannonian Martyrs in the Course of Diocletian's Persecution. In R. Bratož (ed.), Westillyricum und Nordostitalien in der spätrömischen Zeit. Situla 34 (Ljubljana 1996) 263-290.

[5] CIL III 10232, 10233, 14340; N. DUVAL, Sirmium «ville impériale» ou «capitale»? Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e byzantina XXVI, 1979, 53–90, esp. 83 f.; P. KOVACS, Christian Epigraphy in Pannonia. In: Ch. Franek et al. (eds), Thiasos. Festschr. für Erwin Pochmarski zum 65. Geburtstag (Wien 2008) 495–501; I. POPOVIĆ, A new inscription from Sirmium and the basilica of St. Anastasia. Starinar 63, 2013, 101–114. – See also the contribution of I. Popović and M. Vuković in this volume.

[6] See the contribution of H. Vulić in this volume.

[7] BHL = *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis* (Bruxelles 1949).

[8] H. TAMÁS, Passio Pollionis (BHL 6869) Introduction, Critical Text and Notes. Sacris Erudiri 51, 2012, 9-34.

of the faith and the people entrusted to him; the bitter man sent him to heavenly victory by a similar sentence. Also Saint Demetrius, deacon of the same church, who renounced the idols and disdained the impious decrees; he treated him with various kinds of torments, and delivered him to a temporal death, that he might gain victory in eternity"[9].

The placement of these references in the opening of the *passio* of Pullio reveals that the four martyrdoms were closely related with each other, both at the level of historical narrative and, very probably, at the level of cult. They were linked by a common historical reference to the persecution of AD 304, which in Pannonia was reportedly directed by the provincial governor (*praeses*) Probus who also features in the same role in the *passio* of Irenaeus of *Sirmium* (BHL 466) and in the Roman account about the Sirmian martyr Anastasia (BHL 400–401). It has been suggested that the persecutor's name was inspired from Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus who served as Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum in AD 368-375 and 383-387[10]. Probus was blamed for ruining Pannonia through excessive taxation, and it is just possible that his name was deliberately used by the hagiographer in the role of the persecutor, as a peculiar *damnatio memoriae*. The *passio* of Pullio is thought to have been originally written between the reign of the emperor Valentinian I (AD 364–375) and the first decade of the fifth century.[11] Its reference to Montanus, Irenaeus, and Demetrius probably suggests that their hagiographies were already in existence or were produced at the same time. The only one of these to survive is the *passio* of Irenaeus.

<ü2> Irenaeus of Sirmium

According to his martyrdom account (BHL 4466), Irenaeus, the young bishop of *Sirmium*, was arrested by Probus, and refused to yield, preferring to die, even though he was implored by his wife and children to change his mind. He was decapitated on a bridge of the Sava and his body was thrown into the river[12]. His *passio* is also the only work of Pannonian hagiography, for which we also have a Greek version (BHG 948-949)[13] – essentially a paraphrase of the extant Latin text, preserving much of its structure, basic information, parts of the dialogues, and all the important names of

[9] *Passio Pollionis* I (ed. Tamás 2012 [note 8] my translation).

[10] TAMÁS 2012 (note 4) 16. On the historical Probus, see:A.H.M. JONES/J.R. MARTINDALE/J. MORRIS, Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (Cambridge 1971–1992) (in follow PLRE) here 1 (1971) 736–740. BRATOŽ 2011 (note 2) 590-591; V. LALOŠEVIĆ, Progonitelji kršćana u legendama o mučenicima Dioklecijanovog doba na području između Akvileje i Dunavskog limesa (Persecutors of Christians of the Diocletianic Period in Legends about Martyrs of the region between Aquileia and the Danube Limes), PhD Thesis, University of Zagreb, 2012.

[11] TAMAS 2012 (note 4) 12–18.

[12] F. DOLBEAU, Le dossier hagiographique d'Irénée, évêque de Sirmium. Antiquité Tardive 7, 1999, 205–214 (critical text edition and French translation of BHL 4466); H. MUSURILLO, The acts of the Christian martyrs (Oxford 1972) 294–301 (Latin text and English translation).

[13] BHG = F. HALKIN, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* (Bruxelles 1957).

persons and places[14]. A few minor differences (notably, the name of a bridge) may suggest that the Greek version was based on a model text which was slightly, but not substantively, different from the extant Latin *passio*. As with all *passiones* surviving in both languages, the relationship between the Latin and Greek hagiography of Irenaeus is a difficult philological problem, starting with the question of which version precedes which. Simonetti favoured the precedence of the Greek *passio*, but his arguments were convincingly rejected by Dolbeau in favour of the Latin[15]. Given the provenance of the text from Latin-speaking Pannonia and its close links to the already mentioned Latin hagiography of Pullio of Cibalae, one would expect that also this text was originally published in Latin.

With regard to the date and origins of the Greek version, two possible contexts can be suggested. One possibility is that the translation was produced in Late Antiquity, perhaps during the brief Byzantine occupations of Sirmium in the fifth and sixth centuries. Another, preferable, scenario is that a version of the Latin *passio* of Irenaeus was translated into Greek in the seventh to ninth centuries, when several Latin hagiographic texts were translated into or paraphrased in Greek, by Greek monks of Rome and southern Italy. This translating activity focused predominantly on saints from Rome and southern Italy, reflecting the needs and preferences of the Italo-Greek communities of the time. Yet, the texts translated also include a selective number of hagiographies of north Italian and non-Italian Western saints, such as Perpetua and Felicitas, the Scillitan Martyrs, Ambrose of Milan, Apollinaris of Ravenna, Vincent of Saragossa, Dionysius of Paris, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Martin of Tours[16]. These translations account for almost all the knowledge of the Byzantine Church about Western saints[17].

The possibility that the *passio* of Irenaeus of Sirmium was produced in this early medieval context is suggested by the fact that his hagiography and feast were liturgically associated with the saints of Lyon in the Byzantine tradition: instead of keeping the feast of the Sirmian bishop on 6 April, the tenth-century *Synaxarium* of the Church of Constantinople aggregates the memory of Irenaeus of

[14] The Greek text is preserved in five manuscripts of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and one of the seventeenth/eighteenth: http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/oeuvre/16506/ (accessed 23 May 2016). An edition of BHG 948 can be found in: Acta Sanctorum (in follow AASS) Mart., pars III (Atnwerp 1668), Appendix, col. 23A-23F.

[15] DOLBEAU 1999 (note 12) 206-207; M. SIMONETTI, Studi Agiografici (Roma 1955) 55-75. For an analysis and bibliography on the Greek hagiography of Irenaeus, see: A. SMIRNOV-BRKIĆ/I. DRAGANIĆ, Latin and Greek recensions of the passion of St. Irenaeus of Sirmium. In: N. Lamjić (ed.), Constantine, Sirmium and Early Christianity (Sremska Mitrovica 2014) 25–45; A. SMIRNOV-BRKIĆ, New Insight in the Latin and Greek recensions of the Passion of Saint Irenaeus of Sirmium. In: Đ. Hardi (ed.), The Cultural and Historical Heritage of Vojvodina in the Context of Classical and Medieval Studies (Novi Sad, 2015) 59-74.

[16] X. LEQUEUX, Latin Hagiographical Literature Translated into Greek. In: S. Efthymiadis (ed.), The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography I: Periods and Places (Farnham 2011) 385-399.

[17] S. PASCHALIDIS, Un mode de relation entre Rome et Constantinople: la vénération commune des Saints. Revue des Sciences Religieuses 89.4, 2015, 461-479.

Sirmium with the feast of Irenaeus of Lyon and the Martyrs of Lyon on 23 August[18]. The liturgical association of these ancient Western martyrs seems to reflect philological antiquarianism rather than active cult: none of these saints had church or chapel dedicated to them, there seems to have been no *synaxis* held in their memory, and there is no evidence for the presence of their relics. The transmission of their cult into the Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition seems to have been purely textual, without being followed by any other elements. Even so, however, thanks to the existence of his Greek *passio*, Irenaeus was the only martyr of *Sirmium* whose memory survived fully in the Byzantine Church.

<ü3> The two Demetrii

We are faced with a much different situation, when investigating the case of the second Sirmian martyr of early April, the deacon Demetrius. His ancient *passio* has been lost, and, until recently, we knew virtually nothing about him, except that he was a deacon celebrated on 9 April. The recent critical edition of the *passio* of Pullio of *Cibalae*, however, has brought to light a passage which illuminates for the first time the profile of the martyred deacon: '(…) *Also Saint Demetrius, deacon of the same church [of Sirmium], who renounced the idols and disdained the impious decrees; he [Probus] treated him with various kinds of torments, and delivered him to a temporal death, that he might gain victory in eternity*'[19]. Thanks to this brief note, Demetrius of Sirmium now emerges from the obscurity of a faceless entry in the martyrologies to having a coherent story: he is a deacon of *Sirmium*, arrested under Diocletian by Probus; he is interrogated by him and makes a brave confession of the Christian faith, publicly renouncing the pagan gods and the imperial decree; he suffers manifold tortures and dies. The text is not clear about the mode of his execution, which may have been in the river Sava like the executions of Montanus and Irenaeus, or in jail as a result of a long torturing. This story must have been recorded in a Latin *passio*, most probably contemporary with, and perhaps similar to, the surviving *passiones* of Irenaeus of Sirmium and Pullio of Cibalae. All this suggests that Demetrius was not as obscure as assumed so far, but rather one of the most prominent martyrs of the Pannonian capital, with a fully developed cult and hagiography by c. AD 400. Accordingly, the accuracy and significance of his recording in the early martyrologies cannot be doubted. Yet beyond this point, we have no later reference to this saint in the sources.

[18] *Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (in follow SEC), ed. by H. Delehaye et al., Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris (Bruxelles 1902) Aug. 23, 917. The liturgical coexistence of the feasts of the two Irenaei gradually led to the fusion of their hagiographies into new accounts, the *passio* of the two Irenaei (BHG 950), and the *passio* of Irenaeus, Or and Oropsaeus (BHG 951, 951b).

[19] *Passio Pollionis* I (ed. Tamás 2012 [note 8] my translation). For a full quotation of the paragraph, see above, p. 2-3.##?##

Towards the end of the fifth century, the cult of another martyr called Demetrius emerges in Thessalonike. Our main textual source for the establishment of the Thessalonian cult is the *passio* of Demetrius of Thessalonike, which is preserved in two versions[20]. The shorter one, known as the *passio prima* (BHG 495), is generally thought to be the earlier one, possibly dating from the sixth century. It seems to have had a broad circulation by the ninth, as it was known to Photius and Anastasius Bibliothecarius[21]. It is preserved in sixteen manuscripts, the earliest of which dates from the eighth or ninth century. The longer recension, known as the *passio altera* (BHG 497), is likely to be later than the short one, but probably no later than the seventh century. It could be chronologically close to the First Collection of the Miracles of Demetrius[22]. In Byzantine times, the *passio altera* became the most popular version of the saint's hagiography, being preserved in fifty-six manuscripts starting from the ninth century.

Both *passiones* indicate that Demetrius' cult acquired a public and official character after the building of his basilica by a Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum called Leontius. Therefore, the emergence of Saint Demetrius' cult in Thessalonike presupposes the building of the basilica, which does not seem to predate the late fifth century[23], and the presence of the Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum in the city, which was based at Sirmium until AD 395, but moved to Thessalonike in the early to mid-fifth century[24]. To put the events in a chronological order: the cult and hagiography of Demetrius of

[20] For the manuscripts of the *passio prima*, see http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/oeuvre/15312/ (accessed 20 May 2016). For the text, see: H. DELEHAYE, Les legends grecques des Saints Militaires (Paris 1909) 259–263. For the *passio altera*: http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/oeuvre/15314/ (accessed 20 May 2016). Text: J.-P. MIGNE (ed.) Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca (Paris 1857-1866) (in follow MPG) vol. 116, 1167–1171.

[21] *Photius Bibliotheca*, ed. R. Henry (Paris 1974) 255. On the Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, see: AASS (note 14) Oct. 8–9, vol. 4, p. 87–89; J.-P. MIGNE (ed.) Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina (Paris 1841–1865) (in follow MPL) 129, 715–717; F. A. BAUER, Eine Stadt und ihr Patron. Thessaloniki und der heilige Demetrios (Regensburg 2013) 318–320; R. FORRAI, Byzantine Saints for Frankish Warriors: Anastasius Bibliothecarius' Latin translation of the Passion of Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki. In: S. Brodbeck et al. (eds), L'héritage byzantin en Italie (VIIIe-XIIe siècle). vol. 3. Décor monumental, objets, tradition textuelle (Rome 2015) 185–202.

[22] BAUER 2013 (note 21) 33 ascribes the *passio altera* to the ninth or tenth century, but this is inaccurate, since the manuscript tradition of the text starts from the ninth century, and its actual date of composition is likely to be much earlier. Lemerle left it open that it predates the First Collection of the Miracles of the saint. P. LEMERLE, Les plus Anciens Recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius, II, Commentaire (Paris 1981) 197-202.

[23] BAUER 2013 (note 21) 127–129; J. M. SPIESER, Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle. Contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne (Paris 1984) 165–214. Admittedly, the possibility of an earlier phase in the basilica cannot be excluded. The excavations of G. Soteriou failed to investigate and record phases predating the five-aisled basilica in a satisfactory way. G. & M. SOTERIOU, Ἡ βασιλικὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης (Athenai 1952) 58-63. The scenario of an early fifth-century basilica of three aisles has been proposed by V. POPOVIC, Die süddanubischen Provinzen in der Spätantike vom Ende des 4. bis zur Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts. In: B. Hänsel (ed.), Die Völker Südosteuropas im 6. bis 8. Jahrhundert. Südosteuropa-Jahrbuch 17 (Berlin 1987) 95-139, esp. 112-117.

[24] M. VICKERS, Sirmium or Thessaloniki? A critical examination of the St. Demetrius legend. Byzantinische Zeitschrift 67, 1974, 337-350, esp. 345-346; J. M. SPIESER, Le culte de Saint Démétrius à Thessalonique. In: J.-P. Caillet et al. (eds), Des dieux civiques aux saints patrons (IV-VII siècle) (Paris 2015), 275–291, esp. 277. The

Sirmium are developed during the fourth century, in which period, the Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum resides at Sirmium; in the early to mid-fifth century, the Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum moves to Thessalonike, and, in the late fifth or early sixth centuries, a cult of a martyr called Demetrius is established in this city. In its own right, the sequence of these events could suggest that, during the fifth century, a transfer of cult from Sirmium to Thessalonike took place, probably in association with the move of the Praetorian Prefecture[25]. This hypothesis is also supported by a note of the *passio altera* of Demetrius of Thessalonike, which claims that the founder of the saint's basilica in Thessalonike, the Praetorian Prefect Leontius, also built a basilica for the saint in Sirmium. Essentially, this passage tells us that, for the hagiographer, both Thessalonike and Sirmium honoured the same martyr whose cult was closely connected with, and sponsored by, the Praetorian Prefects of Illyricum.

This possible cult transfer, however, is difficult to prove positively, since the legend of the Thessalonian cult preserves no obvious memory of the legend of the Sirmian deacon. The Thessalonian Demetrius is not a cleric; he is not interrogated nor does he make a confession before a provincial governor; Probus is not mentioned in his story; the martyr is imprisoned, but no torturing

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Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum and Africa was based at Sirmium until AD 395 when, with the division of the Empire into East and West, it moved its headquarters to the East Roman territories, as Pannonia Secunda and the city of Sirmium were assigned to the West. However, this move was probably not to Thessalonike: recording the administrative structure of c. AD 395, the Notitia Dignitatum states that the civil diocese of Macedonia was administered by a vicar, which suggests that the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum resided in Dacia, and the most important city of that region was Serdica: Not. Dign. (Oc.) II.29 ed. C. NEIRA FALEIRO, La Notitia Dignitatum. Nueva edición crítica y comentario histórico, Nueva Roma 25 (Madrid 2005) 41-43; J. R. PALANQUE, Essai sur la préfecture du Prétoire du Bas-Empire (Paris 1933) 123-124. Sirmium was annexed by the Eastern Empire at some point in the 420s or 430s, and it is recorded among the cities of the East by the Synekdemos of Hierocles, a document dating from the reign of Theodosius II (404-449): Hierocles, Synekdemos, 657.8: ed. Honnigmann (Bruxelles 1939); on the date of the Synekdemos, see: A. H. M. JONES, The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: a social, economic and administrative survey (Oxford 1964) vol. 3, 381. It appears unlikely that the Praetorian Prefecture would return its seat to Sirmium in that turbulent period. Of course, Justinian's Novel 11, of AD 535, tells us that the Prefecture of Illyricum moved from Sirmium to Thessalonike during Attila's invasions (AD 441/2), under a Prefect called Apreaemius. Yet the reliability of the historical statements of that text is notoriously limited: the name of Prefect Apraeemius is completely unattested in Latin onomastics and looks suspiciously like a miscopying of the name of Apodemius, the last recorded Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum and Africa prior to the division of 395, on whom, see: PLRE (note 10) 2, 82-83 (Apodemius 3). Justinian's statement is most probably just a historical error, confusing the departure of the Prefecture from Sirmium in 395, with its relocation to Thessalonike. This event may indeed have taken place during the wars with the Huns, but the Prefecture is unlikely to have moved to Thessalonike directly from Sirmium.

[25] For the main proponents of the hypothesis of cult transfer from Sirmium: E. LUCIUS, Die Anfänge des Heiligenkults in der christlichen Kirche (Tübingen 1904) 227–228; DELEHAYE 1909 (note 20) 108; VICKERS 1974 (note 24) 337–350; ZEILLER 1918 (note 4) 81–83; P. TÓTH, Sirmian martyrs in exile: Pannonian case studies and a re-evaluation of the St. Demetrius Problem. Byzantinische Zeitschr. 103,1, 2010, 145–170; BAUER 2013 (note 21) 27–37. – For the main objections, see: G. I. THEOCHARIDIS, Σίρμιον ἢ Θεσσαλονίκη; Ἐπανεξέτασις μιᾶς κριτικῆς ἐξετάσεως τῆς περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Δημητρίου παραδόσεως. Makedonika 16, 1976, 269–308; A. MENTZOS, Το προσκύνημα του Αγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης στα βυζαντινά χρόνια (Athens 1994); J. SKEDROS, Saint Demetrios of Thessaloniki: civic patron and divine protector, 4th-7th centuries CE (Harrisburg 1999); POPOVIC 1987 (note 23).

is mentioned. Furthermore, Thessalonike did not adopt the feast of Demetrius of *Sirmium* on 9 April, even though that would have been convenient, since the Macedonian capital already had a major Christian festival in the first week of April, celebrating the martyrs Agape, Eirene, and Chione on 2 or 3 April, and Saints Theodoulos and Agathopous on 4 or 8 April[26]. The feast of the Sirmian deacon could have been added to this week of celebrations, but, instead, the celebration of the new saint was established on 26 October. The complete absence of a memory of the original legend and feast is remarkable, especially if we compare Demetrius with the other known cases of migrant cults from the north Balkans, whose legends contain readily recognisable elements from the source stories[27].

In conclusion, although we have strong indications for a cult transfer from Sirmium to Thessalonike in the fifth century, the accuracy of this hypothesis cannot be confirmed in full confidence. It is clear that Sirmium had a cult for a martyr called Demetrius much earlier than the establishment of the cult of Thessalonike, and that the latter appeared in an era of turbulence and migrations from north to south. Yet the possibility of two homonymous, yet unrelated, cults, resulting from a pure coincidence, cannot be excluded.

Whether we accept the scenario of cult transfer or not, the absence of foreign elements in the Thessalonian legend compels us to investigate the local factors which affected the development of the cult in Macedonia. If Demetrius was a transferred cult, what caused such a radical transformation? If not, what caused his invention in this particular form? This fundamental question was first addressed by Ernst Lucius who, more than a century ago, argued that the cult of Demetrius was established by a Praetorian Prefect who brought relics from *Sirmium,* with the purpose of Christianising the surviving remnants of the cult of the tutelary deity of Thessalonike, Cabirus. One may raise objections to the details of this reconstruction of the events, but Lucius' thesis relies on a fundamentally correct principle: the understanding of cult as a cultural construction, consisting of different elements which can be both local and imported, Christian and non-Christian[28]. This principle has found little application in most of the scholarship dedicated to the problem of Demetrius so far, which has confined itself to a sterile debate about the reliability of the early martyrologies and the Thessalonian *passiones*. As Jean-Michel Spieser recently put it, a refocusing of the discussion is urgently needed: « *En l'absence d'indications qui permettent de décider si le culte*

[26] Martyrologium Hieronymianum (in follow MH), fol. 76a-c, Apr 3, 4: ed. by I. B. De Rossi, L. Duchesne, AASS (note 14) Nov. II (Bruxelles 1894); Breviarium Syriacum, ed. B. Mariani, Breviarium Syriacum. Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Subsidia 3 (Freiburg 1956) Apr. 2, 3 (33–34). – The feast of Theodoulos and Agathopous is placed on 3 and 4 April by the martyrologies but on 8 April by their *passio* (BHG 1784). Fluctuations in feast-dates are not uncommon, partly because the festival of a martyr could often last for more than a day. On the martyrs of Thessalonike, see BAUER 2013 (note 21) 47–50.

[27] See the other cults discussed in this paper, and the Latin hagiographies of the Quattuor Coronati, Hermagoras, Anastasia, and Quirinus discussed by TÓTH 2010 (note 25) 154–163.

[28] LUCIUS 1904 (note 25) 1-3, 224.

du saint de Sirmium a passé à Théssalonique d'une manière ou d'une autre, ou si le culte d'un homonyme s'est développée à Thessalonique, le questionnement doit se porter sur le développement du culte à Thessalonique et sur l'originalité du saint de Thessalonique »[29].

The passiones of Demetrius of Thessalonike suggest that a defining factor in the formation of his cult was the topographical setting of his shrine which took over the remains of a monumental public bathhouse, adjacent to a stadium, in the centre of Thessalonike. These buildings constitute the setting of the account of the *passiones* of Saint Demetrius, which focus on a festival of gladiatorial games taking place in the stadium, where the emperor's favourite gladiator, Lyaios, is unexpectedly defeated by a young man called Nestor. The story about the games in the stadium is the main theme of the account, while Demetrius' martyrdom is a brief secondary episode taking place in the vaults of the bathhouse, where Demetrius is summarily executed after being falsely accused of magic. Although the main hero of the story, Demetrius hardly features in his own martyrdom account: one is left with the impression that the author knows nothing about the saint, but has a lot to say about the site. In other words, memories concerning the site and context of the cult substitute for a memory about the figure of the saint. The use of contextual information in supplement to unsatisfactory knowledge concerning a saint is not uncommon in hagiography, as we can see, for example, in the martyrdom accounts of Niketas the Goth (BHG 1339) or Marcianus and Martyrius the notaries (BHG 1028).

The stadium and the baths were closely linked into the pre-Christian civic and religious traditions of Thessalonike, which may have been a source of influence for the cult of Demetrius. The stadium, in particular, was probably the venue of the main religious and athletic festival of the city in the Roman period, the sacred Pythian Games, which were celebrated in honour of the emperors and the tutelary deity of the city, Cabirus, in late September, and which are epigraphically documented in the AD 240s. Could the memory of this pagan civic celebration have been a target of the new Christian cult of Demetrius, and could it be echoed in the story of Nestor and Lyaios[30]? The baths also seem to have been a site of peculiar cultic importance, since the martyrdom of the saint unfolds entirely in their underground vaults: Demetrius is arrested in the vaults of a bathhouse near the so-called Colonnade of the Coppersmiths, and he is imprisoned in the vaults of another bathhouse next to the stadium, where he is killed and buried; this site hosts the informal cult of the saint, prior to

[29] SPIESER 2015 (note 24) 278.

[30] P. M. NIGDELIS, Ο Νέστωρ, ο Λυαίος και τα Πύθια. Ο Βίος του Αγίου Δημητρίου υπό το φως των νέων επιγραφικών ευρημάτων. In: S. Drougou et al. (eds), Κερμάτια Φιλίας. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Ιωάννη Τουράτσογλου (Athens 2009) 151–159; P. ADAM-VELENI, Εικονογραφημένη πρόσκληση σε μονομαχικούς αγώνες από την Αγορά της Θεσσαλονίκης και ρωμαϊκά θεάματα στη Θεσσαλονίκη. In: M. Tiverios/P. Nigdelis/P. Adam-Veleni (eds), Θρεπτήρια – Μελέτες για την αρχαία Μακεδονία (Thessaloniki 2012) 278–316; G. VELENIS, Επιγραφές από την αρχαία αγορά της Θεσσαλονίκης. In: Ancient Macedonia 6 (Thessaloniki 1996) 1317–1327.

the foundation of the basilica by the Prefect Leontius. Could this repetitive reference to underground vaults reflect the existence of an early cult practised under conditions of secrecy? The text wants us to believe that this was the cult of a neglected Christian martyr, but, in a city with a powerful Christian Church and a fully developed cult of martyrs, such a claim appears suspicious. It is tempting to assume that the clandestine cult described by the *passiones* did not have the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, and perhaps was not Christian[31].

The conundrum of the two Demetrii is further complicated by the fact that, besides the possible transfer from Sirmium to Thessalonike, the cult also travelled the other way around, and Demetrius of Thessalonike was eventually established at Sirmium itself. As already argued by James Skedros and Peter Tóth, the first encounter of the new Thessalonian cult with the older Sirmian one must have taken place during the re-occupation of Sirmium by the Byzantines in 567-582. This may indeed be the event echoed in the note of the *passio altera* about the prefect Leontius founding the church in Sirmium[32]. Whatever the effect of this encounter may have been, however, it was probably short-lived, since, with the Avar conquest of 582, Sirmium lapsed out of Christian control for several centuries. During that time, the late antique ecclesiastical institutions were dissolved and the local Christian traditions declined. In the ninth century, the Christianisation of the Danubian lands was resumed by competing missions of the Byzantine and Frankish Churches. According to the *Life of Methodius*, Pope Hadrian II (AD 867–872) consecrated Methodius, the Apostle of the Slavs, as archbishop of Pannonia. The text does not name the seat of Methodius' bishopric, but it is usually thought to have been Sirmium[33]. In the following centuries, the town retained some prominence as an ecclesiastical centre, passing to the domination of the Christian states of the Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Byzantines. We have virtually no information about cults of saints in Christian-dominated medieval Sirmium, until the Byzantine occupation of the city in the eleventh century, when monasteries were dedicated to Saint Irenaeus in Mačva and to Saints Demetrius and Anastasia

[31] On the connection between Demetrius and Cabirus, also see: Ch. EDSON, Cults of Thessalonica. Harvard Theological Review 41, 1948, 203–204; I. TOURATSOGLOU, Του αγιωτάτου πατρίου θεοῦ Καβείρου. He Thessalonike 1, 1985, 71–77; Ch. BAKIRTZES, Le culte de Saint Démétrius. In: E. Dassmann/J. Engemann (eds), Akten des XII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie, Bonn 1991 (Münster 1995) Bd. 2, 58–68. For objections to the connection between the saint and the deity, see: J.-M. SPIESER, Continuity or not? Christian Figures and Old Divinities, In: Proceedings of the conference Debating Religious Space and Place, University of Leicester, 22-23rd November 2014 (forthcoming).

[32] SKEDROS 1999, 27-29 (note 25); TÓTH 2010, 167-168 (note 25). Vladislav Popović proposed a literal reading of the *passio altera* as referring to the building of contemporary early fifth-century basilicas at both Thessalonike and Sirmium: POPOVIĆ 1987, 112-122 (note 23).

[33] Vita Methodii viii.17. Text: F. GRIVEC, F. TOMSIC, Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes. Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta 4, 1960, 228,. The text does not clarify if Methodius took up residence at his see. A detail of major interest is that Methodius' project of translating the Bible from Greek into Slavonic was completed on 26 October, when Methodius is said to have offered a liturgy of thanksgiving on the feast of Saint Demetrius (Vita Methodii xv.2).

in Srem[34]. Although dedicated to martyrs associated with Sirmium since Antiquity, these medieval shrines do not seem to have emerged in continuity from late antique predecessors, as demonstrated by the excavations at Mačvanska Mitrovica[35]. They therefore do not represent a revival of ancient cults in the sense of direct local continuity. What they rather suggest is a fresh establishment of these cults under the influence of the Greek hagiographic tradition. By the ninth century, the hagiographic memory of Sirmium in the Greek Church had been reduced to three saints and three texts: the Greek *passio* of Irenaeus of Sirmium (BHG 948-949)[36]; the note of the *passio altera* of Demetrius of Thessalonike, stating that the Prefect Leontius founded a basilica for Demetrius next to the basilica of Saint Anastasia in *Sirmium*; and the Greek translation of the Roman *passio* of Anastasia mentioning the saint's arrest and interrogation at Sirmium (BHG 81)[37]. The dependence of the Byzantine revival of Christian Sirmium on these three texts is suggested by the fact that it ignored all the other martyrs of early Christian Sirmium known from the Latin tradition. Consequently, the fact that Sirmium became the city of Saint Demetrius of Thessalonike (Mitrovica, Szávaszentdemeter) probably goes back to the foundation of these Byzantine monasteries, and it pertains to the expansion of the saint's legend and cult in the Middle Ages. Accordingly, the association of Srem with Demetrius of Thessalonike should have no bearing on our understanding of the relationship between the cults of Sirmium and Thessalonike during Late Antiquity.

<ü2> Hermylus and Stratonicus of *Singidunum* in Constantinople

The third Sirmian martyr associated with the persecution of Diocletian and the activity of the provincial governor Probus was the presbyter Montanus from Singidunum. Since his hagiography has not survived, our information about his figure is confined to the brief reference of the *passio* of Pullio to him, and to a short *elogium* inserted in one of the recensions of the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*: according to these two references, Montanus was a presbyter flying from *Singidunum* (Belgrade) to *Sirmium*, where he was arrested and thrown into the river; his body was found nine miles downstream[38].

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[34] S. ANDRIĆ, Baziljanksi I Benediktinski samostan sv. Dimitrija u Sremskoj Mitrovici. Radovi Zavoda za Hrvatsku Provijest Filozofska Fakulteta 40, 2008, 115-186; idem, Srednovjekovni samostani u Srijemskoj Mitrovici. Diacovensia V.1, 1997, 93-111; GY. GYÖRFFY, Pregled dobara Grčkog Manastira u Svetom Dimitriju na Savi (Sremska Mitrovica) iz XII veka. Spomenica Istorijkog Arhiva "Srem" 1, 2002, 7–64, esp. 34.

[35] V. POPOVIC, Continuité cultuelle et tradition littéraire dans l'église médiévale de Sirmium. Préface in: S. ERCEGOVIC-PAVLOVIC, Les nécropoles Romaines et médiévales de Mačvanska Mitrovica. Sirmium : archaeological investigations in Syrmian Pannonia, vol XII (Beograd 1980) I–VII, I–VII.

[36] Supra p. 3-5.

[37] Infra p. 13-15.

[38] MH (note 26), Mar.26; f. 75b (Cod. Bern.): *VII KI. Apr. (...) IN SIRMIA. Munati presbiterri delingidonis; cum Sirmium fugisset conprehensus est et missus est in fluuium; nono lapide inuentum est corpus eius; et maxime uxoris eius*.

A possible memory of this story is preserved in the legend of one of the most flourishing Constantinopolitan cults of martyrs associated with the northern Balkans, that of Hermylus and Stratonicus of *Singidunum*, whose feast was celebrated on 13 January and 1 June. The cult of these saints was apparently relatively popular in Constantinople, since three *synaxeis* were celebrated in their memory, and there were also relics of their heads, which, in AD 1200, were seen by Antony of Novgorod as part of the collection of relics of Saint Sophia[39]. The story of Hermylus and Stratonicus is recounted in an extensive Greek *passio* (BHG 744y, 744z, and 745) according to which, Hermylus was a deacon from *Singidunum,* arrested under Licinius and tortured several times. His guard, the soldier Stratonicus, moved by Hermylus' suffering, confessed to being a Christian himself, and was condemned to die with Hermylus. Both were thrown into the Danube, and their bodies were found three days later and buried eighteen stades away from *Singidunum*[40].

It is not known whether the cult and story of Hermylus and Stratonicus was known in this form in fourth-century *Singidunum* or *Sirmium*: the two martyrs are unknown in the Latin tradition and they are not mentioned in the early martyrologies. Their hagiography was probably written in Constantinople, no earlier than the sixth century, but it clearly preserves memories from the hagiography of the Middle Danube. The mode of execution in the river and the recovery of the relics several miles outside the city most probably echo the story of Montanus. The name and profile of Hermylus, a deacon from *Singidunum*, however, also recalls Hermogenes, a lector of *Singidunum*, who appears alongside the Pannonian martyrs Donatus, Romulus, Sylvanus, and Venustus, whose cult was transferred to Friuli (BHL 2309).

To sum up, the cult of Hermylus and Stratonicus centred on the veneration of relics which were probably brought from the Middle Danube to Constantinople. Its legend combined elements of Sirmian hagiographic legends, without corresponding fully to any of the known early Christian cults of the area. It is probable that these elements were synthesised into a new hagiographic profile and cult in Constantinople, which, although consisting of imported material, was most probably a new religious product of the capital.

<ü2> Anastasia of *Sirmium* in Constantinople and Rome

[39] SEC (note 18) Jan. 13 and Jun. 1; B. DE KHITROWO, Itinéraires russes en Orient (Genève 1889) vol. I.1, 89.

[40] F. HALKIN, Trois textes grecs inédits sur les saints Hermyle et Stratonice martyres à Singidunum (Belgrade). Analecta Bollandiana 89, 1971, 20–39; IDEM, Le ménologe impérial de Baltimore. Subsidia Hagiographica 69 (Bruxelles 1985) 157–164.

Perhaps the most successful migrant martyr of *Sirmium* was Anastasia, whose cult provides a most instructive example with regard to the different ways cult transfer could follow and the different results it could lead to[41].

The transmission of Anastasia's cult from Sirmium to Rome and Constantinople was partly favoured by a purely coincidental event: since the fourth century, and long before the cult of the Sirmian martyr became known at them, both Rome and Constantinople had had ancient churches known by the name 'Anastasia', neither of which was related to the martyr of *Sirmium*.

The Church known as the 'Anastasia' by the Porticoes of Domninus in Constantinople began as a hall built for the gatherings of the then dissident Nicene community led by Gregory of Nazianzus in AD 379–381. As Gregory's autobiographical poems suggest, the Anastasia of the dedication was not the Sirmian martyr, but a personification of the orthodox faith and church, which he had seen in a dream vision[42]. Later the hall was replaced by a grand church, which became one of the main churches of central Constantinople[43]. Writing in the mid-fifth century, the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen reports that the Anastasia had acquired a reputation for miracles ascribed to the Virgin Mary, but his account appears to be unaware of the association of the church with the martyr Anastasia[44]. This is first documented in two much later texts which tend to confirm that the cult of Anastasia of *Sirmium* was introduced to the Anastasia Church of Constantinople in the late 450s or 460s. A passage in the late eighth- or early ninth-century *Chronographia* of Theophanes reports that the relics of the martyr Anastasia were brought from *Sirmium* to Constantinople under Leo I (AD 457–471) [45]. *Sirmium* was controlled at the time by the Pannonian Gothic king Theodemir the Amal, and the transfer of the relic must have taken place with Gothic approval in a period of stable relations with Constantinople, perhaps between the *foedus* of AD 461 and the murder of Aspar in 471[46]. This chronology agrees with the account of the Life of Markianos the Presbyter (BHG 1034, tenth-century in its extant metaphrastic form, but paraphrasing an earlier hagiographic text) which reports that the Anastasia

[41] On the cult of Anastasia in Rome and Constantinople, see: T. VEDRIŠ, Štovanje sv. Anastazije u Sirmiju, Carigradu I Rimu u Kasnoj Antici I ranome Srednjem Veku. Diadora 22, 2007, 191-216.

[42] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina de se ipso* 16, ed. MPG 37 (note 20), col. 1254. On the use of the name Anastasia as a title for congregational churches, see: J. GASCOU, Notes d'onomastique ecclésiale ancienne (à propos de P. Lond. III 1303 descr.), Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 96, 1993, 116- 124; J. M. SPIESER, Les fondations d'Ambroise à Milan et la question des martyria. Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας 20, 1998, 29-34, esp. 34.

[43] R. JANIN, La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin I. Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat œcuménique III: les églises et les monastères (Paris 1969) 22–25.

[44] Sozomen, Ecclestical History 7.5.1-4, ed. J. BIDEZ (Berlin 1960).

[45] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. J. Classen, I. BEKKER (Bonn 1838) AM 5950 (9, 172).

[46] W. HERWIG, Die Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie (4. Auflage, München 2001), 259-277; H. GRAČANIN, J. ŠKRGULJA, The Ostrogoths in Late Antique Southern Pannonia. Acta Archaeologica Carpathica 49, 2014, 165-205, esp. 174; I. POPOVIĆ, S. FERJANČIĆ, A new inscription from Sirmium and the basilica of St. Anastasia. Starinar 63, 2013, 101-114, esp. 104.

Church was monumentalised under the direction of the wonder-working priest Markianos during the Patriarchate of Gennadios (AD 458–471); the rebuilding of the church was reportedly richly endowed by the Gothic patrician Aspar and his son Ardabur (both murdered in AD 471), in whose honour it was established that the scriptures be read in the Gothic language during festal services held in the church[47]. It seems plausible that this Gothic endowment is connected with the translation of the relics of the martyr Anastasia from Sirmium, and the conversion of the old Anastasia church into a *martyrium* dedicated to her. It seems that, based on the name, the Arian Gothic community had associated a church emblematic of the anti-Arian struggle with one of the most revered Sirmian martyrs who now found a new home in central Constantinople[48]. The transfer of Anastasia's cult clearly involved the translation of her relics, but there is currently no evidence to suggest that the Sirmian legend of the saint was known or used in Constantinople.

In Rome, the church of Sant' Anastasia al Palatino is mentioned in the mid-fourth century as one of the three titular churches renovated by Pope Damasus (AD 366–384). Its original title must have been related to its founder, apparently a lady who bequeathed the property to the Church. In Late Antiquity, it was one of the most important parish churches of the city, directly adjoining the seat of the imperial authorities on the Palatine. It is not known when and how the Titulus Anastasiae became associated with Anastasia of *Sirmium*, and there is no record of her relics having been brought from *Sirmium* to Rome[49]. Despite the absence of her relics, however, it is clear that Anastasia's Pannonian hagiography was known in Rome. At an unknown point, before AD 800, a long hagiographic account was produced in Rome (BHL 400), which consists of a compilation of the hagiographies of Anastasia of *Sirmium*, Chrysogonus of *Aquileia*, Eirene, Agape and Chionia of Thessalonike, and Theodote of *Nicaea*.[50] This text includes a section which recounts Anastasia's arrest and interrogation by Probus in *Sirmium*. That is most probably based on the original Pannonian *passio* of the martyr, and may indeed preserve large sections of its text[51]. Otherwise, the text as it stands is an important example of a hagiographic product resulting from the collation of a series of initially independent texts, probably reflecting some form of linkage among their cults, which currently eludes us. The Roman legend of Anastasia was translated into Greek in AD 824, and

[47] Vita Marciani Presbyteri 5, 7, 21; edition: MPG 114 (note 20), 436–437.

[48] The devotion of the Goths to the Pannonian martyrs is otherwise also attested in Ostrogothic Ravenna, where one of the Gothic Arian churches was known as Sancta Anastasia Legis Gothorum: F. DEICHMANN, Ravenna, Hauptstadt des christlichen Abendlandes II.1 (Stuttgart 1974) 244.

[49] H. BRANDENBURG, Die frühchristlichen Kirchen in Rom vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert (Regensburg 2013) 140–142 (with references to the sources).

[50] P. F. MORETTI, La Passio Anastasiae. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione (Roma 2006). H. DELEHAYE, Étude sur le légendier romain. Les saints de Novembre et de Décembre. Subsidia Hagiographica 23 (Bruxelles 1936) 236–240; P. DEVOS, Sainte Anastasie la vierge et la source de sa passion. Analecta Bollandiana 80, 1962, 33–51; F. HALKIN, Légendes grecques de «martyres romaines». Subsidia Hagiographica 55 (Bruxelles 1973) 88–178.

[51] Passio Anastasiae, 20–25, ed. Moretti 2006 (note 50).

was fully adopted in Constantinople, providing a narrative for the cult of Anastasia the Widow or Pharmakolytria.

To sum up, the transfer of Anastasia's cult to Constantinople involved the transfer of her relics in the fifth century, but there is no evidence for her early hagiography having been translated into Greek. By contrast, in Rome, we have no evidence for relics of Anastasia, but it is clear that her Sirmian hagiography was known and elements of it can be recognised in the long Roman legend of Anastasia. The independent, but parallel, trajectories followed by Anastasia's relics from *Sirmium* to Constantinople, and by her hagiography from *Sirmium* to Rome, are particularly instructive for our understanding of the mechanisms of cult transfer, and of the relations between the transfer of relics and the transmission of hagiography: apparently, these elements did not necessarily move together.

<ü2> The martyred stonecutters

A particularly interesting cult from the north Balkans, gaining great popularity in the Byzantine Church, was that of Florus and Laurus of *Ulpiana*, two martyrs celebrated on 18 August, who had their own martyrium/monastery in the western part of Constantinople. Relics of their heads were kept in the Pantokrator[52]. Their rich hagiographic dossier includes five recensions of a *passio* (BHG 660-664), recounting the following story, summarised here [53]:

Florus and Laurus are twin brothers from Byzantium, stonemasons by profession, and pupils of the martyrs Proklos and Maximos (otherwise unattested). They move from Byzantium to *Ulpiana* in Dardania where they work at the local quarries, under the governor Lykon/Lykion. Likinnios, son of queen Elpidia, writes to Lykon asking for two good craftsmen to help him build a large temple at a place called Gracious Valley, and Lykon sends Florus and Laurus. Likinnios receives them with joy, and grants them money and workers. The saints distribute their wages to the poor, and spend their nights in prayer. Their work progresses much faster and more accurately than that of all the others, because they bless the stone with the sign of the cross before cutting it. While they work at the quarry, a chip of stone hits Anastasios/Athanasios, son of the pagan priest Merentinos, and removes his eye. Enraged, the priest reports this to Likinnios, but the prince does not believe him, and refuses to condemn the saints. Instead, he intends to punish Merentinos, but the saints request his pardon. They miraculously heal Anastasios/Athanasios, and finish building the temple within two days, although it was due to be delivered in six years. Followed by a crowd of poor men, they enter the building at night and consecrate it as a church, destroying all the idols. Encouraged by his son and by

[52] SEC (note 18) Aug. 18.

[53] Two of these texts have been published. BHG 664: AASS (note 14) Aug. III, d. 18, 522–524. BHG 662z: F. HALKIN, Une passion inédite des saints Florus et Laurus, BHG 662z. Jb. Österr. Byz. 33, 1983, 37–44. Italian translations of the main recensions, without the Greek text, can be found in: A. BRESSI/S. VOTTO, I santi Floro e Lauro (Napoli 1998).

a menacing dream vision, Merentinos becomes a Christian. Likinnios hears about the events, and orders that Florus and Laurus be arrested, and their followers be burned alive. A great storm extinguishes the martyrs' pyre and drowns many pagans. Likinnios flees to the mountain, and orders that Merentinos and Anastasios/Athanasios be fettered and dragged into the forest where they are buried under a mound of earth and thorns. The palace collapses and kills the wife and children of Likinnios. He sends Florus and Laurus back to Lykon, in *Ulpiana*. On the way, they convert their guards, and, at *Ulpiana*, they report that they have completed the work they had been sent for, namely to build and consecrate the temple. Lykon throws them into gaol, and, instigated by the evil Gerontios, he decides to have them thrown and buried in a deep well. In their final prayer, the saints request the following: that perjurers who have taken an oath over their bodies should suffer in this life but be pardoned after death; that those offering their first-born and first fruit to their church should reap abundance; and that, after their death, all people should become Christians. A voice from heaven accepts the request, and the saints are thrown into the well, while an angel holds their bodies. The pagans dump sand into the well and bury them. The author of this martyrdom account is a certain Alexios, a companion and friend of the saints. He writes the text after having had a vision of the saints who promise him promotion by the Prefect of Thessalonike, and prophesize the triumph of Christianity and the opening of the orthodox churches under the emperor Theodosius I (AD 379–395). Alexios entrusts his text to a pious woman called Sophronia who lives by one of *Ulpiana*'s gates. Many years later, while at *Dasaritia* (or in *Amphipolis*, according to one version), Alexios receives the news of the liberation of Christianity by Constantine. He goes to *Ulpiana*, where he meets Phokas, a Christian missionary miraculously brought from Africa to Christianise the city. They find Zosimos, the man who had thrown the martyrs into the well, and who had been blind ever since. With his help, they find the well and recover the fragrant relics of the saints. Zosimos is miraculously healed from his blindness and becomes a Christian. Later, the saints' relics are brought to Byzantium.

Much like the hagiography of Hermylus and Stratonicus, there seems to be no record of these martyrs in the early martyrologies and the Latin hagiographic tradition, although their cult reportedly came from the Latin-speaking province of Dardania. Their *passio* also belongs to the so-called epic category, very probably produced in Constantinople no earlier than the sixth century. Although written in the capital, however, the text demonstrates knowledge of the geography of north-western Illyricum. The specific geographical association of the cult with the city of *Ulpiana* (near present-day Gračanica, Kosovo) in the late Antique province of Dardania is particularly striking, given the dearth of our knowledge about early Christian saints and martyrs in Illyricum. We know very little about late antique Christian cults from the cities and regions between *Sirmium* and

Thessalonike, with the curious exception of *Ulpiana*. The text places much of the action in an area called the 'Gracious Valley' (Εὔχαρις or Χαρίεις Κοιλάς). This name could possibly refer to the valley of the river *Valbona*, a tributary of the Drin on the borders of present-day Albania and Montenegro: the modern name, of Latin origin (*vallis bona*), means 'the Good Valley', and is accessible some 150 km west of *Ulpian*a. Alternatively, the 'Gracious Valley' may refer to the whole plateau of Kosovo, whose main city was *Ulpiana*. We should remember that the area between the Adriatic coast and Kosovo (present-day Montenegro and northern Albania) was known in Late Antiquity as *Praevalis* or *Praevalitana* ('the region before the valley'). In the last chapter, we are told that Alexios received the news about the liberation of Christianity by Constantine, while being in Dasaritia, which apparently refers to *Dassaretia* or *Dassaretis*, an ancient region between northwest Macedonia and Epirus.

The core narrative of the hagiography of Florus and Laurus is essentially the same as that of the Latin legend of the *Quattuor Coronati*, namely the martyrdom of Christian stonemasons who were employed in building a temple[54]. Apparently, the two cults were shaped by the transfer of the same Balkan legend, from Dardania to Constantinople and from Pannonia to Rome. Yet there is no reason to follow the dominant view that the Latin legend of the *Quattuor Coronati* is more ancient than the story of Florus and Laurus, and, for that matter, more reliable, or that the Greek legend reproduces the Latin one. Both hagiographies can be dated to the latter part of Late Antiquity, and belong to the same legendary category of writing, sharing the same degree of credibility and historical value. It is safer to regard them as derivatives of a common legendary source, reflecting the cultural background of the Middle Danube and its hinterland.

In Rome, the Pannonian legend was associated with the figures of the four Roman martyrs Claudius, Nicostratus, Simpronianus, and Castorius, whose veneration is documented from the mid-fourth century onwards[55]. It seems that their cult was associated with a Pannonian migrant community, which must have united it with legends and probably relics brought from its homeland. Something similar is likely to have also happened in the case of Florus and Laurus in Constantinople: their *passio* presents them as natives of Byzantium, who moved to *Ulpiana* for business, were martyred there, and their relics were later brought back to Byzantium. A detail of interest is that they are presented

[54] HALKIN 1983 (note 53) 37–38; ZEILLER 1918 (note 4) 88–104; J. GUYON, Les Quatre Couronnés et l'histoire de leur culte des origines au milieu du IXe siècle. Mélanges de l`École Francaise de Rome. Antiquité 87.1, 1975, 505–561. Since the nineteenth century, the legend of the *Quattuor Coronati* has been associated with the region of *Sirmium* and the stone quarries of the Fruška Gora. P. MIJOVIĆ , Sirmijski skulptori i kamenoresci – Quattuor Coronati. Starinar 17, 1966, 53-60; M. TOMOVIĆ, The Passio Sanctorum IV Coronatorum and the Fruška Gora hypothesis in the light of archaeological evidence. In: Akten des IV. Internationalen Kolloquiums über Probleme des provinzialrömischen Kunstschaffens (Celje 1997) 229-239; V. LALOŠEVIĆ, Problemi vezani uz mučeničku grupu Svetih Četvorice Ovjenčanih. Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest 38, 2006, 59-72. The *passio* of the Quattuor Coronati circulated also in a Greek translation (BHG 1600) which was probably used only by the Italo-Greek communities, since the cult does not seem to have reached Constantinople, and is not mentioned in the Synaxarium of the Constantinopolitan Church.

[55] H. DELEHAYE, Le culte des Quatre Couronnés à Rome. Analecta Bollandiana 32, 1913, 63–71.

as pupils of the martyrs Proklos and Maximos, whose names are invoked together with that of John the Evangelist in the final prayer of Florus and Laurus. These two martyrs are otherwise unknown, but it seems that they were venerated as the presumed Byzantine seniors and masters of the two stonecutters. This seemingly obscure detail may suggest that the cult of Florus and Laurus was merged with other pre-existing cults and shrines in Constantinople.

The fact that the cult of Florus and Laurus was brought to Constantinople by people from the northern Balkans is not only suggested by their hagiography, but also by their iconography, as attested by portable icons from Russia, the earliest of which is a fifteenth-century icon from Novgorod, today in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow (Fig. 1). These icons depict the two saints flanking the figure of Michael the Archangel, who holds the bridles of their horses[56]. According to tradition, this scene is supposed to be a miracle of Michael, teaching Florus and Laurus how to tame horses. Yet this story is completely unattested in their hagiography: how did it acquire such a central importance in their cult[57]? Although only known from late Russian icons, this particular imagery seems to have had much deeper roots, beyond fifteenth-century Russia: the pictorial synthesis of the Russian icons is strikingly similar to the iconography of the metal tablets and stone reliefs of the so-called Danubian Horsemen, an obscure cult of deities of horses and nature, which spread through the Danubian and Balkan provinces in the second to third centuries AD. The central theme of the Danubian Horsemen tablets consists of two male figures on horses flanking a female figure wearing a tunic (Fig. 2)[58]. Despite the wide chronological gap between the latest of the tablets depicting the rider deities and the earliest surviving icons of the rider saints, the iconographic similarity is close enough to suggest a connection. One of the main centres of the production of lead tablets of the Danubian Horsemen was the city of Sirmium, where these objects have been found in domestic contexts as late as the fifth-century AD. This suggests that the circulation of these devotional objects, and perhaps the cult itself, continued into the time when the Christian cult of Florus and Laurus is likely to have emerged[59].

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[56] V. N. LAZAREV, Новгородская иконопись (Moskva 1976) 32 f., 39 f.; pls .44, 64; G. L. MACICKII, Древнерусские культы сельскохозяйственных святых по памятникам искусства. In: Известия гос. Академии истории материальной культуры, 11.10, 1932, 21–26

[57] BRESSI/VOTTO 1998 (note 53) 137–139.

[58] On the Danubian Horsemen, see: D. TUDOR, Corpus monumentorum religionis equitum Danuuiorum. Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain 13 (Leiden 1969); B. PLEMIĆ, Contribution to the Study of the Danubian Horsemen Cult: Iconographic Syncretism of the Danubian Goddess and Celtic Fertility Deities. Arch. Bulgarica 17,2, 2013, 59–72; M. TATCHEVA, Le syncrétisme religieux dans les provinces balkaniques de l'Empire romain. Les reliefs des soi-disants cavaliers danubiens. Živa Antika 50, 2000, 231–245. – In general on the Dioscuri: W. KRAUS, Dioskuren. In Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum 3, 1957, 1122–1138.

[59] I. POPOVIĆ, Pagan Cults and Christianity in Sirmium from the 3rd to the Middle of the 5th Century. In: I. Lazar (ed.), Religion in Public and Private Sphere, Acta of the 4th International Colloquium "The Autonomous Towns of Noricum and Pannonia" (Koper 2011) 235-249, esp. 238-239.

It is reasonable to assume that the imagery, and perhaps other aspects, of the cult of the Danubian Horsemen were absorbed into the cult of Florus and Laurus. The Danubian Horsemen were probably a local variant of the Indo-Germanic cult of the divine twin helpers: in other words, a Danubian avatar of the Greco-Roman Dioscuri or Cabiri. Indeed, Florus and Laurus share a number of features with the Dioscuri, from the obvious fact that they are described as twin brothers to their specialisation as miraculous avengers of perjury. What is most striking about these pagan reminiscences, however, is that they partly survive in the iconography and folklore of this cult, independently of its hagiography: the saints are venerated and depicted as protectors of horses, even though they are nowhere associated with horses in the texts. It was more than one century ago that James Rendel Harris first associated Florus and Laurus with the Dioscuri, but his arguments have so far been unanimously rejected by hagiographers[60]. Although Rendel Harris did make a number of mistakes in his analysis, his thesis was in principle correct, and the connection he made cannot be dismissed as coincidental. The iconography, legend, and customs of the cult of Florus and Laurus indeed incorporated aspects of a version of the cult of the Dioscuri specific to the Roman Danube. The source of the Constantinopolitan cult of Florus and Laurus and of its Roman counterpart of the Four Crowned Martyrs seems to have had deep roots into the culture and traditions of the northwest Balkans. These associations may explain the remarkably dynamic transfer of this cult to both Constantinople and Rome, in both its textual and material manifestations: the legend about the martyred stonecutters was accompanied by presumed relics and, at least in Constantinople, by images preserving the iconography of the pre-Christian element of the cult. Upon their arrival at Rome and Constantinople, the communities which practiced this cult were associated with pre-existing shrines and cults of local martyrs: the four soldiers Claudius, Nicostratus, Simpronianus, and Castorius in Rome, and the martyrs Proklos and Maximos in Constantinople. The final result of this transfer and resettlement was two very similar, but different cults, practiced under different names. Are we to ascribe this differentiation to the area of origin or to the final destination of the two migrant cults? The answer is probably to both: this already complex religious tradition is likely to have been practiced in more than one centre and under different names already before its migration. This is suggested by the fact that its Roman version associates itself with Pannonia, while its Constantinopolitan one with Dardania.

<ü2>Concluding remarks

[60] J. RENDEL HARRIS, The Dioscuri in the Christian Legends (Cambridge 1903) 1–19. Criticism: H. DELEHAYE, Castor et Pollux dans les légendes hagiographiques. Analecta Bollandiana 23, 1904, 427-432; IDEM, Le culte des Quatre Couronnés à Rome. In : Analecta Bollandiana 32, 1913, 63-71; ZEILLER 1918 (note 4) 103; HALKIN 1983 (note 53) 37–38; BRESSI/VOTTO 1998 (note 53) 85–88.

Based on examples of Christian cults from the northern Balkans in the Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition, this survey has identified various patterns of cult transformation under the impact of transfer. In the case of Irenaeus of Sirmium, we have the successful transmission of the original legend, thanks to the translation of the text from Latin into Greek. However, it seems that no other element of that cult – e.g. relics – was known to the Byzantine Church and there is little evidence to suggest that the saint had a particularly active or popular veneration. Quite the opposite seems to have been the cases of Demetrius and of Hermylus and Stratonicus: both cults were highly active and popular in Thessalonike and Constantinople, centring on the veneration of relics, which may have been brought from Sirmium; yet, neither of them preserved the clear memory of a Sirmian legend. The absence of hagiographic memory is particularly problematic in the much discussed case of Demetrius of Thessalonike: if this cult resulted from a cult transfer, the role of the source-cult of Sirmium seems to have been minimal and completely overshadowed by the input of the new home of the saint. Yet 'hagiographic oblivion' was one of the possible effects of cult transfer, as illustrated by the example of the cult of Anastasia and its parallel developments in Rome and Constantinople: Rome knew her legend, but seems to have acquired no relics, while Constantinople had her relics, probably without knowing the saint's hagiography. Cult transfer could indeed be partial, taking the form of a translation of relics devoid of accompanying narratives, or it could involve the mere transmission of stories without relics or other material paraphernalia. But, of course, the fullest and most successful examples of cult transfer involve the transmission of several, or all, of the components of the source cult, namely texts, relics, holy objects, images, and customs. An example of such a remarkably successful transfer is provided by the cults of Florus and Laurus and the Four Crowned Martyrs, which were transmitted with their legends, imagery and presumed relics, to Constantinople and Rome.

The variety of these cases demonstrates that cult transfer rarely was a straightforward process of mere transplanting, but it rather involved a dialogue between the old and new homes of a cult. It is therefore not enough to ask which elements of a migrant cult belong to its source, but we should rather take account of the creative and transformative input of its receiving environment. This is most obvious in the case of Demetrius of Thessalonike whose profile is totally dominated by Thessalonian elements, to the extent that the probable transfer of the cult from Sirmium cannot be regarded as certain. A different case are Hermylus and Stratonicus, whose legend contains recognisable elements from the Middle Danube, but it is a creation of Constantinople, constituting no direct offspring of any known early Christian cult of the Balkans. The transformative role of the cult's new home could affect even the most successful cult transfers, such that of the martyred

stonecutters, which, although stemming from the same legend, resulted into two distinctive cults in Rome and Constantinople, partly due to its association with other cults in the two capitals.

((Summary))
This article examines different mechanisms and patterns of cult transfer, based on five cults of martyrs of the Byzantine Greek ecclesiastical tradition, associated with the late antique north-west Balkans: Irenaeus of Sirmium, Demetrius of Thessalonike, Anastasia of Rome, Hermylus and Stratonicus of *Singidunum*, and Florus and Laurus of *Ulpiana*. In the case of Irenaeus of Sirmium, we have the successful transmission of the original legend of the cult, thanks to the translation of the text from Latin into Greek. However, it seems that no other element of that cult – e.g. relics – was known to the Byzantine Church. Quite different seems to have been the case with Demetrius, and Hermylus and Stratonicus. Both cults were highly active and popular in Thessalonike and Constantinople, centring on the veneration of relics, which may have been brought from the region of Sirmium, but neither of these cults seems to have preserved a direct memory of the original legends of Sirmium. The cult of Anastasia and the way it developed in Rome and Constantinople demonstrates that relics could be transferred without being followed by a legend, and legends could be transmitted without accompanying relics. Finally, the cult of Florus and Laurus, which seems to have been related also to the pre-Christian traditions of the *limes* provinces, offers an example of remarkably successful cult transmission, including legends, imagery and relics.

((Zusammenfassung))
Märtyrer aus dem Nordwest-Balkan in der byzantinisch- griechischen Kirchentradition: Muster und Mechanismen von Kultübertragung

Dieser Artikel untersucht verschiedene Mechanismen und Muster der Kultübertragung, basierend auf fünf Kulten von Märtyrer der byzantinisch- griechischen Kirchentradition, die mit dem spätantiken Nordwestbalkan verbunden sind: Irenaeus von Sirmium, Demetrius von Thessalonike, Anastasia von Rom, Hermylus und Stratonicus von Singidunum, und Florus und Laurus von Ulpiana. Im Falle des Irenaeus von Sirmium haben wir die erfolgreiche Übertragung der ursprünglichen Legende des Kultes, dank der Übersetzung des Textes vom Lateinischen ins Griechische. Es scheint jedoch, dass kein anderes Element dieses Kultes - z.B. keine Reliquien - der byzantinischen Kirche

bekannt war. Ganz anders scheint es bei Demetrius und Hermylus und Stratonicus gewesen zu sein. Beide Kulte waren in Thessaloniki und Konstantinopel sehr aktiv und beliebt und konzentrierten sich auf die Verehrung von Reliquien, die vielleicht aus Sirmium gebracht worden waren, aber keiner dieser Kulte scheint eine direkte Erinnerung an die ursprünglichen Legenden von Sirmium bewahrt zu haben. Der Kult der Anastasia, mit seiner parallelen Entwicklungen in Rom und Konstantinopel, zeigt dass Reliquien ohne begleitenden Legenden, und Legenden ohne materiellen Paraphernalien übertragen werden konnten. Schließlich bietet der Kult von Florus und Laurus, der auch mit den vorchristlichen Traditionen der Limes-Provinzen bezogen war, ein Beispiel für eine bemerkenswert erfolgreiche Kultübertragung, bei der sowohl die Legende, als auch Bilder und Reliquien des ursprünglichen Kults zur neuen Heimat geliengen.

((List of Figures))
Fig. 1 Icon of Saints Florus and Laurus from Novgorod, late fifteenth century, now in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.
Fig. 2 Lead plaque of the Danubian Horsemen from Dacia discovered in the sand of the river Teslui (Romania).

((Bildnachweise))
Fig. 1: Lazarev 1976 (note 56) pl. 64.
Fig. 2: Tudor 1969 (note 58) no. 37.

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