Статьи   *Articles*

Sources and Tradition of Five Slavonic Medieval Texts against Nezhit on Lead Amulets and in Manuscripts*

Источники и традиция пяти славянских средневековых текстов против нежита на свинцовых амулетах и в рукописях

Yavor Miltenov

Institute for Bulgarian Language,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
Sofia, Bulgaria

Явор Милтенов

Институт болгарского языка
Болгарской Академии наук,
София, Болгария

Abstract

The paper aims at studying five medieval Slavonic *historiolae* concerning *nezhit* in comparison to ancient and Byzantine Greek texts. The author brings together evidence from both tablets and manuscripts. The study reveals several important textual, linguistic and cultural aspects concerning the significance of the Slavonic text versions.

Keywords

nezhit, prayers, medieval amulets, magic, Slavonic manuscrpts, lead lamellae

Резюме

Целью статьи является изучение пяти средневековых славянских текстов заклинаний против магии нежита в сопоставлении с аналогичными античными и византийскими греческими текстами. Автор рассматривает в комплексе данные текстов, сохранившихся как в надписях на защитных амулетах, так и в рукописных источниках. На основе сравнительного анализа выявлен ряд существенных текстологических, лингвистических и культурологических аспектов темы, показывающих значение славянского материала.

Ключевые слова

нежит, молитвы, средневековые амулеты, магия, славянские рукописи, свинцовые таблички

Preface

As previous research has shown, lead, a frequent medium used for curse tablets with harmful inscriptions (*defixionum tabellae*, *defixiones*), was seldom chosen for protective amulets (*phylacteria*), for which precious metals were preferred [Giannobile, Jordan 2006: 74–75]. There are about 1,600 *defixiones* known so far (about 600 of them in Latin), coming from the entire territory of the ancient world, ranging from the fifth century BCE up to the fifth century CE [Urbanová, Cuzzolin 2016: 314]. In comparison, the catalogue of Greek amulets of known provenance, inscribed on gold, silver, copper, and bronze lamellae [Kotansky 1994], lists only 68 items.[1] Moreover, most of the latter should be treated as Jewish or Jewish-influenced, as they belong to the Judaistic theological tradition, and there are few recognizably non-Jewish exceptions, no more than 8 or 9. In an appendix to a case study, S. Giannobile and D. R. Jordan list an overall of 15 Christian lead texts extant in Greek or Latin [Giannobile, Jordan 2006: 81–84]. Taken together, the authors state, their rarity suggests a common reluctance to employ lead for such positive rather than hostile aims.

Surprisingly, Slavonic Balkan tradition shows a significantly different picture. All published Slavonic texts on ca. 15 amulets are inscribed on lead, and there are ca. 65 more, which remain unpublished, written on lead, too.[2] Almost all of them were found in the territory of Bulgaria. All date from the 10th century on, which means some of them originate from the earliest period

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[1] See new material for example in: [Del Monaco 2013; Zellmann-Rohrer, Martínez-Chico 2021], cf. also: [Spier 1993] for amulets of other forms such as engraved gems and cameos, pendants, die-struck tokens, and rings.

[2] An edition of this corpus is being prepared by Kazimir Popkonstantinov. His contribution to research was presenting and analyzing several of these amulets, see: [Попконстантинов 2014: 288–289, footnote 3] for references to these single publications of lead texts. The most recent one is [Попконстантинов, Марков 2021] in which five Slavonic amulets against fever are discussed.

of literacy in Old Bulgarian. Despite numerous publications, these amulets and the texts inscribed on them remain relatively unknown and generally neglected by the scholars in the field of Greek and Byzantine studies.[3]

In this paper, I shall examine Slavonic protective amulets in comparison to ancient and Byzantine Greek ones by bringing together textual evidence from both tablets and manuscripts. I shall confine myself to studying five *historiolae* concerning *nezhit*, a disease commonly described, as we will see further, as an infection which affects brain, ears, eyes and bones.[4] Most of these texts were previously traced in Serbian and Romanian manuscripts[5] and examined *per se*, i.e. without thorough juxtaposition with Greek texts or with Slavonic lead amulets.[6] Thus, the aim of this paper is to fill this gap in research and, based on comparative analysis, to outline some aspects concerning the role and significance of the Slavonic text versions.

I.

During archeological excavations near the village of Odartsi, northeast Bulgaria, a lead plate was found in a dwelling from the period of 10th to 11th centuries. The plate measures 5.7 cm high and 4.5 cm wide, and has a hinge for hanging. The text inscribed on it speaks of a demon/disease *nezhit* who comes from the Red sea. In the text, he is met by Jesus, who, in the dialogue that follows, forbids the *nezhit* to harm the man, but tells him to go to a deserted mountain, and find a deer and a ram there, and enter their heads, and suck their brain, for they can endure any injury.

In terms of script and spelling, two features are particularly remarkable: the right-turned ц and the angular shape of ч (ᴜ): the former is unique, the latter very rare[7] and probably related to the shape of the *ch*-character in Glagolitic (Ⰰ). The digraph ꙑ is written with a hyphen between the two components (ꙑ), which is yet another early feature. There are two characters for the nasal vowels, and no iotated variants are attested. It is not very clear whether a iotated back *jus* is marked with a short line in the upper left corner of the

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[3] Probably because almost all previous studies are in Bulgarian and were published in journals and Festschrifts that are hard to obtain. There are, of course, some exceptions, e.g. Svetlana Tsonkova's dissertation [Tsonkova 2015].

[4] For the etymology and meaning of *nezhit* and on parallels in folklore of almost all Slavic countries, see: [Катић 1961: 121–126; Andrić 1993: 9–37; Kempgen, Schweier 1996: 184–196; Dukova 1997: 75–76; Раденковић 2007: 698; Агапкина 2010: 789–792; Timotin 2013: 239–241] and the literature cited there.

[5] See for example: [Раденковић 2007; Timotin 2013; Левшина 2016].

[6] A slightly different approach see in some of Kazimir Popkonstantinov's *editiones principes* of the lead amulets (e.g. [Попконстантинов 1997, 2009, 2014]), in which some of the Greek parallels and some of the manuscript witnesses are mentioned.

[7] Similar form see for example in the note in *Dobromir Gospel*, in which one of the scribes, Dobromir, is mentioned (f. 121r from the RNB ms. Q.п.I.55).

letter.[8] The front *jus* has a rare and archaic appearance (ꙙ[9]). Exceptions to the proper use of characters for nasal vowels in readings such as ѡбрашѥшн and ѥмꙋ need to be further examined *de visu*, however the clear съкрꙉꙝꙑⷠ, съ-крꙉꙝꙑⷩ and въсаⷦ instead of въсꙗⷦ can be considered as evidence that this is not an accidental feature but a reflection of actual pronunciation. We would expect such spelling from a Russian, rather than Bulgarian, text. The alternation between чловѣкꙋ and чловѣко is also interesting, as it is similar to article forms in modern dialects of the Bulgarian language. Instead of ꙕ, the author of the inscription was accustomed to writing a digraphic шꙇ (in some cases it can be interpreted as ꙕꙇ), which is an archaic feature, and, instead of ѹ, the ligature form ꙋ, which could be a later feature. Single-*jer* (ⷠ) spelling is used, and the *jers* are kept in a weak position. Supine is used consistently. This is one of the few amulets which was found by archaeologists in its original context and which can, on this basis, be reliably dated to 10th–11th centuries. Paleographic evidence confirms this hypothesis.

A text similar to the one on Odartsi amulet is preserved on a *lamella* from the Haskovo region. The script is a mixture of Cyrillic and Glagolitic letters.

The distribution of letters follows a specific pattern: the characters ꙋ, ѥ, в, д, ж, ъ, ь, ѣ, etc. are always Glagolitic, while н, к, л, м, н, о, р, т, etc. are constantly Cyrillic. There are two *jers* (ъ for back *jer* and for front *jer*) and a single back *jus* (ѧ). There is only one case in which we find ѥ where we would

8   Cf. the shape of this character in the mid-10th c. *Mostich inscription*.

9   Similar form with a "broken" middle line is attested in tsar Samuil's inscription from 993, tsar Ioan Vladislav's inscription from 1015–1016, *Dobromir Gospel*, and *Hilandar leaves*.
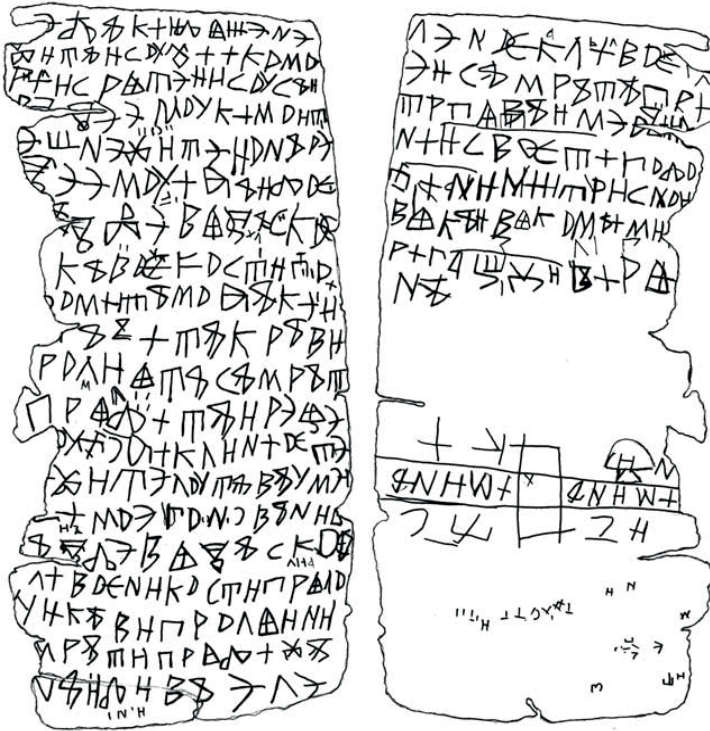
expect a front *jus* (ⱅⰵ, in the amulet's original orthography ⱅэ), but the reason may be partial damage to the Glagolitic letter ⰶⰵ. As concerns ⱏⰹ, there is only one example of its use, and it is rendered with two graphs, ⰺⰻ. The unusual diamond-shaped drawing of ⱆ in ⱄⱁⱆⰸⱈⰰⰽⱁ (!) is similar to a proto-Bulgarian runic sign, and it is hard to imagine that a scribe from the 11th century onward would have the knowledge to reproduce such. On the other hand, the appearance of ⱅ with two vertical lines on the left and right, lowered almost to the length of the middle stroke (ⰨⰨ) is normally found in later sources. One archaic feature is the use of the supine (as in the Odartsi amulet above), which, despite many other inaccuracies, is not avoided or replaced by an infinitive (as would be in later texts and manuscripts). Iotation of vowels is not attested. Instead of ⰳ the scribe opts for ⰽ (ⰵⰴⱏⰽⰰ, ⱄⱁⱆⰸⱈⰰⰽⱁ, ⰽⱐⰱⱔ, ⰽⰾⰰⰱⱔ), and ⱅ is attested once for ⰴ (ⰺⱅⰵⱎ). The form ⱂⱃⱑⰴⰰⰶⱏ (instead of ⱂⱃⱑⰴⰰⰶⰴⱏ) does not correspond to our notion of correct spelling. Based on the features of the script, K. Popkonstantinov [Popkonstantinov 2009: 345] dates the text inscribed on this amulet to the 10th century. The language and spelling features support this assumption to some extent; however, if we have to be more cautious, the 13th century should be a *terminus post quem non*.

This version of the *historiola* that includes a dialogue between *nezhit* and Christ is known from Slavonic manuscript sources, too. The earliest manuscript witness is found in a Serbian euchologium from the end of the 13th century, kept previously in the Slepche monastery in Northern Macedonia. Parts of it are currently housed in several libraries.[10] The text (entitled "prayer" as all texts in manuscripts under consideration) is found on ff. 16v–17r in the part, currently kept under nr. 35 in the V. I. Grigorovich collection of RGB.[11] Other early manuscript witnesses are found in two Serbian euchologia: on ff. 25v–26r in ms. Q.п.I.24 of RNB in Saint Petersburg (dating from the first half of the 14th century), and on f. 153r in ms. Q.I.1181 of RNB (from the last third of the 16th century). Copies have been traced in several other manuscript sources from the late Middle Ages, all with Serbian or Russian language features.[12]

For comparison purposes, the text has been transliterated in Cyrillic, divided into paragraphs and supplied with an English translation.

    A   Odartsi Amulet[13]
    B   Haskovo Amulet[14]
    C   RGB, f. 87, ms. 35 (Slepche Euchologium)
    D   RNB, Q.п.I.24
    E   RNB, Q.I.1181

0   **A**   гн꙼: ѿ хе н к одел꙼ѣ

       B

       C   м(л)нтва нежнтоу꙼. а̃.

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[10] These are ms. 35 from the collection of V. I. Grigorovich in RGB (f. 87), ms. 121 from the A.I. Hludov's collection in GIM, ms. О.п.I.14 from RNB, ms. 70 from the A. F. Gilferding's collection in RNB. They were identified as parts of same manuscript in [Афанасьева 2022].

[11] The text of this witness was printed for the first time by [Kačanovskij 1881: 153].

[12] According to the research of [Левшина 2016], the text is attested in Serbian and Russian manuscripts: ms. M.II-5/3822 from the Library of the Department of Philology at the University of Skopje, ms. 193 from the collection of A. S. Petrushevich in the Lviv National Scientific Library "V. Stefanik" at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, ms. 126 from the Church History and Archives Institute in Sofia, ms. 344 from the Patriarchal Library, Belgrade. See also the version in ms. 325 from the old collection of the National Library of Serbia and in Cod. D Slavo 25 from the Center for Slavic-Byzantine Studies "Ivan Dujchev" in Sofia. For the editions, manuscript witnesses, parallels in the folklore of different Slavic peoples, see: [Раденковић 2007: 700–702].

[13] I follow the publication of [Константинова 1997], in which numerous corrections have been made to the text published by [Popkonstantinov, Kronsteiner 1994: 116], and in turn, I suggest some minor corrections. For them, I use the images in [Попконстантинов 2009: 343–344], which I publish once again here.

[14] Published by [Попконстантинов, Петров 2006: 74–86]. Here, some corrections are introduced according to the facsimile in [Попконстантинов 2009: 345], which I publish once again here.

	D	м(л)тва ѿ нежита. Въ ние ѿца и сна и стго дха.
	E	м(л)твы ѿ нежита, м(л)тва а҃.
1	*A*	нежитъ идѣше отъ чръмънаго морѣ и сърѣте нсоу и рече ему
	B	едъка идѣше нежитъ и-соуѧхако(!) мора и срѣте и нсоусь и (..)че емоу
	C	Юг(д)а идѣше нежить ѿ соухаго мора срѣте юго iсь. и рече юмоу iсь
	D	юг(д) идѣше нежить ѿ соухаго морѣ. срѣте юго iсь и ре(ч) юмоу
	E	Егда идѣше нежить ѿ сѹхаго мора. стрѣте юго iс. и ре(ч) юмоу
2	*A*	камо иде(!)
	B	камо итеш(!) нежите
	C	г(д)ѣ идешь. нежите
	D	камо идеши нежите
	E	камо идеши нежите.
3	*A*	онъ же р(.)че
	B	и онь рече емоу.
	C	и рече юмоу нежить
	D	wн же ре(ч)
	E	wн же ре(ч)
4	*A*	иду въ чловѣкж мозга исрѣцатъ кръве пролнѧтъ кости съкрѫшитъ
	B	азь иду (...) члевѣчьскѫ(!) кьвж(!) кости пр(...)оминть мозъка и(...)ьцать кръви пролнѣть съмрьт(.) прѣдатъ
	C	идоу оу члвечю главоу кости прѣломити мозга срьцати крьве пролнѧти. челюсти прѣломити
	D	идоу вь главоу члчю. кости прѣломити. мозга извлачити. крьвь пролнѧти. и сьмрти прѣдати.
	E	г҃и азь идоу вь члвечю главоу кости юго прѣломити. мозгь исмрьцаты. крьвь и(х) пролiаты. и сьмрьть и(х) прѣдати.
5	*A*	и рече (...)
	B	и рече (...)оу а(/и)с
	C	wнь же рече (ю)моу
	D	
	E	wн же ре(ч)
6	*A*	заклинаж тѧ неж(...) идеши въ чловѣко(!)
	B	заклинаж те (...)жите лоутъ(!) въ и(?)мен(.)а моего не въниди (.)ь члевѣчъскѫ (.)лавѫ ни кости прѣломи крьви пролѣи ни (.)мрътн прѣдаж

C азь зак҃лннаю те нменемь г(д)мь. і҃с х҃стомь н вс҃мн ст҃ымн не ходн въ главоу чл҃вчю нн костн пр҃ломн нн мозьга нерьчн нн крьве прол҃бн нн смртн пр҃даж(д)ь.

D заклннаю те нежнте нменемь монмь. да не ндешн вь чл҃чю главоу. нн костн пр҃ломнтн нн мозга нзвлачнтн нн крьвь пролнгатн. нн сьмртн пр҃датн.

E заклннаю те. нежнте нмене(м) б҃жім да не вьні(д)ешї ст҃ымн. не(!) ходы вь швьновъ глв҃. нн пакостн юмѹ сьтворн нн сьмрьтн его пре(д)атїн

7 A нъ ндешн въ пѹ(...) бра/гаштешн (...) еле(...)нъ н въннд҃ёшн въ гла(.)ъı нхъ н т҃мъ мозгъ нерьчешн н костн сьꙗкрꙗшншн н жнлъı сьрꙑешн

B нь ндн въ елеленꙗ(!) клавꙗ (..)е

C нь ндн вь поустоую гороу н вьселн се вь юл҃ноу главоу

D ньь ндн в днвнꙗ горы. н внндн вь юленю главоу.

E ндн вь поустою горѹ н вьні(д)н вь юленѹю главоу. н тѹ пребı҃ваї.

8 A тн бо трꙗпатъ въсакъ азꙗ ндн н не обра(...) в҃къı до ѹготованаго дне сꙗд҃ънаго

B н сьмрьтъ прнтрꙗпѣвъ н ме(л?...)нан своꙗ та положн

C та бо юсть трꙗпѣлнва н смрть трꙗпнть

D та бо ю(с) трꙗпѣлнва. н бесьм҃ртна

E ты бо соу(т) зв҃рн многотрꙗп(е)лвıпѣлнвн(!) а поне ть м(г)ѹ(!) сь чл҃вкь трꙗпѣтн не могѹтъ.

9 A ѹбон сꙗ б҃а с҃даштаго на пр҃столѣ херѹвнмъсцѣ егоже трепешта внднма н невнднма тъı же паче ѹбон с(.) (.)ѕ҃а

B

C

D

E

10 A емꙗ же слава въ в҃къı (..)ннъ.

B ннна н прнсно н в҃кьн в҃комь амн(.) ра г҃а б҃а жнва р҃нъ(!) н҃с х҃с амннь амннь нн ка

C вь нме ѿц҃а.

D н҃нга н прн(с).

E

0 Prayer against *nezhit* (*var.* Lord Jesus Christ, be victorious!) *1 Nezhit* came from the dry (*var.* Red) Sea, and met Jesus, and he said to him, *2* "Where are you going?" *3* He said, *4* "I am going into a man to suck his brain, shed his blood, break his bones and hand him to death (*add.* smash his jaws)". *5* And he said to him, *6* "I curse you, (*add.* vicious) *nezhit*, (*add.* in my name, *var.* the name of God and all the saints) not to go to a man's head (*add.* nor break his bones, nor suck his brain, nor shed blood, nor hand to death), *7* but to go to a deserted mountain, and find there a deer and a ram, and enter their heads and suck their brain and break their bones and tear their tendons, *8* for they (*var.* the beasts) can endure any injury (*add.* and man cannot). (***A*** *only:* Go and never come back till the ordained day of Judgement. *9* Fear God sitting on the throne of the cherubim, of whom the visible and the invisible tremble, more so fear God)." *10* (Doxologies).

As will be shown futher (see II.) the prototype of this text is Greek.

II.

There is also yet another slightly different version of this exorcism against *nezhit*, found inscribed on lead amulets, as well as in manuscripts. Here, Jesus is said to come down from the seventh Heaven, and this version lists more damages that the demon/disease causes to the man. All other elements of the plot coincide with nr. I.

The most ancient witness is a lead lamella found on the Danube island of Păcuiul lui Soare.
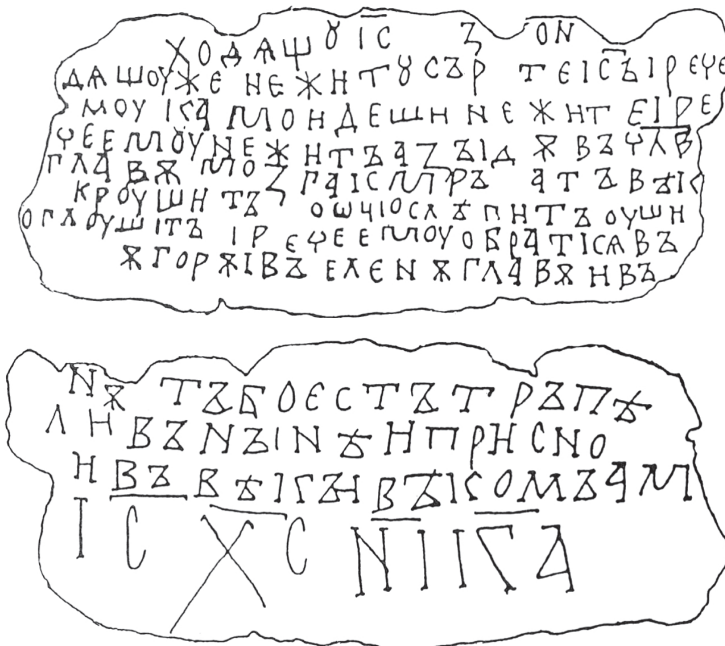
Here, we once again see a text with archaic features of script and spelling: supine forms occur intead of the infinitive, single-*jer* (Ⰻ) spelling is applied, *jers* are kept in weak position, nasal vowels are properly used in their etymological positions. According to K. Popkonstantinov, the features of the script are similar to the Enina Apostle, a 10th century Cyrillic manuscript, thus the amulet should be dated to the 10th century, too [Попконстантинов 2009: 345].

An extended version of this text, which has been published and analyzed several times, is inscribed on another lead plate found in the Kardzhali region. It measures 12cm in length and 7cm in width, and was folded into fourths instead of being rolled up. The text is written in Glagolitic and Cyrillic.

Most letters of both alphabets are present, but some are attested only in Cyrillic (e.g. � д, л, м, н, с, т), and others only in Glagolitic (e.g. ⰊⰋ, ⱃ, ⱈ, ⱌ, ⱍ, ⱓ, ⱔ).[15] Here, single-*jer* orthography is attested, weak *jers* keep their positions. *Jery* is denoted by the digraph ⱐⰋ, which testifies to a connection with the Glagolitic tradition. Back and front *jus* are rendered with ⱔⰵ and ⰵ respectively, there are no letters for iotated nasal vowels. Some features are not typical for the earliest (Old Bulgarian) period of the language development, e.g. ⰵ occurs instead of ⰰ and ⱆ/ⱓ instead of ⱘ. The former may be also interpreted as 'as a mistake occuring in place of the monograph ⰵ, and the latter readings are uncertain due to the similarity between the appearance of the Glagolitic letters ⰶ/ⰳ and ⱔⰵ and

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[15] Thus [Kempgen, Schweier 1996], but see also the analysis in: [Гарена, Илиев 2005]. Both disagree due to different reading of obscure letters.

have to be verified *de visu*. Ⱋ is denoted by the monograph ⱋ or ꙍ, оу—by ligature ꙋ and with ꙅ. Supine forms are used regularly. The obscure гєрмлъ нєро at the end may indicate the name of the bearer of the amulet, and if the second part is interpreted as *hieromonk* (German?), it would mean that it was commissioned by and intended for a clergyman. The amulet was dated differently by those who studied it: to the 12th–13th centuries [Kempgen, Schweier 1996: 180], to the 11th–12th centuries [Гарена, Илиев 2005: 155], to the 10th–11th centuries [Попконстантинов 2009: 345] The *lamella* was discovered by a treasure hunter, so its archaeological context remains unknown.

A lead plate excavated in a necropolis from the 12th–14th centuries, near the village of Kran, Kazanlak region, should probably be added to this group of finds. Unfortunately, it is only possible to decipher individual letters from its text [Стефанова-Георгиева 2005].

This version of the prayer against *nezhit* is preserved in Slavonic manuscripts too. The earliest witness is found in the *Slepche euchologium* again, on ff. 17r–18r.[16] A text with a similar beginning and content is copied on f. 160v in a Serbian euchologium from the end of the 15th or first quarter of the 16th century, ms. Q.I.1297 from RNB. Copies which bear similarity to this version are found in other late manuscripts with Serbian or Russian spelling features.[17]

The selected witnesses and their text may be presented as follows:

F	Păcuiul lui Soare Amulet[18]	
G	Kardzhali Amulet[19]	
H	RGB, f. 87, ms. 35 (Slepche Euchologium)	
I	RNB, Q.I.1279	

0	**F**	
	G	
	H	млитва .в. томоу(ж).
	I	

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[16] This witness was edited for the first time by [Буслаев 1861: 115] and by [Kačanovskij 1881: 153].

[17] According to the research of [Левшина 2016], the text is attested in the following Serbian and Russian manuscripts: ms. M.II-5/3822 from the Library of the Department of Philology at the University of Skopje, ms. 246 (Krushedol E V 35) from the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade, ms. Arh. Sin. 867 from the Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg, ms. 325 from the old collection of the National Library of Serbia, ms. 622 from NBKM (the latter published by [Цонев 1923: 133]). For information on editions, manuscript witnesses, parallels in the folklore of different Slavic peoples, see: [Раденковић 2007: 700–702].

[18] I follow here the edition of [Константинова 1997], where many corrections are introduced as compared to the text published by [Popkonstantinov, Kronsteiner 1994: 126]. See also: [Попконстантинов 1997].

[19] I follow the editions of [Kempgen, Schweier 1996; Гарена, Илиев 2005; Попконстантинов 2009: 344]. I introduce some minor corrections according to the photo taken by Kazimir Popkonstantinov, which, however, does not represent the amulet in full.

1   **F**   (..)ходꙗщꙋ і͞с (...) з͞(...)о н(...) (..)дꙗщоу же нежнтꙋ сър(.)те і͞сꙿ і рече (.)моу

     G   н(...)жд(.)ше нс͞ъ: отъ ж꙼го небсе (..)ꙿъ о(...) нс(.)ходꙗщю нежнтоу: отъ чрьмьнаго морѣ ат(..)е(...)в(.)го жнлнща своег: сърѣте нс͞ъ: н реч(.) емоу

     H   Сходещю нежнтоу ѿ соухаго мора нсходещоу і͞соу ѿ з͞ небсе н рече юмоу і͞сь.

     I   нсхо(д)щꙋ [іс]вн ѿ з͞го нб(с)е, н ѿ готоваго жн(л)ща своего. нсходецꙋ нежнтꙋ ѿ сꙋхаго мора. н стретоше емꙋ, н ре(ч) емꙋ

2   **F**   камо ндешн нежнте

     G   камо ндешн (..)жнте:

     H   камо ндешн нежнте

     I   камо н(д)ешн нежнте.

3   **F**   і рече емоу нежнтъ

     G   нрече нежнтъ:

     H   рече юмоу нежнть

     I   ѡнь же ре(ч)

4   **F**   азъ ідꙗ въ члв(.) главꙋ мозга ісмръ(.)атъ вѣк(...) (..)кроушнтъ ѡщі ослѣпнтъ оушн оглоушнтъ

     G   сѣмо ндꙗ въ чѣчꙗ главꙋ моз(...) нсмрьцатъ: вѣка нхъ соушнтъ: з(..)бъ нхъ обнтъ оу(...) н(.)ъ глоушнтъ очню нхъ слѣпнтъ: оустъ нхъ крнвнтъ носа нхъ гоугьнат н главън нхъ волѣзнъ: дънъ н нощъ:

     H   сѣмо ндꙋ г͞н вь члвчю главоу мозꙿга срьчатн челюстн прѣломнтн зоубы нхъ роннтн. шню нхъ крнвнтн н оуше нхъ глоушнтн ѡчн нхъ ѡслѣпнтн н носа гоугьнатн крьве нхь пролнꙗтн вѣка нхъ нсоушнтн оустьнь нхъ крнвнтн. н оудовь нхъ раслаблꙗтн жнль нхъ оумрьтвнтн тѣла нзьмьж(д)атн лѣпотоу нхъ нзмѣннтн бѣсомь моучнтн ю.

     I   азь ндꙋ вь члвчꙋ гл(в)оу. костн емꙋ прѣломнтн. мозга нзмрцатн крьвь пролнатн. зꙋбн нзроннтн, носъ ѡгꙋгннтн, ѡчн ѡслепнтн. ꙋшн ѡглꙋшнтн. н г͞лаве н(х) болезꙿнь д͞нь н нощь,

5   **F**   і рече емоу

     G   н рече емоу нс͞ъ:

     H   н рече юмоу і͞сь

	I	и ре(ч) ємȣ І͞с
6	*F*	
	G	
	H	
	I	запрѣщаю ти именє(м) мои(м). да не идеши вь чл͠вчȣ главȣ.
7	*F*	обрати са вь (...)ж горѫ і вь еленѫ главѫ и вь (...)нѫ
	G	обрати ес(...) (..)жите: иди вь горѫ и вълѣзи вь еленѫ главѫ и в (.)вънѫ:
	H	ѡбрати се неꙁите иди вь поустоую гороу и вь поустыною. ѡбрѣти тоу ѥлѣноу главоу и вьсели се вь ню.
	I	нь и(д)и вь пȣстȣю горȣ. и вълези вь еленȣ главȣ, и ѡвнȣю.
8	*F*	тъ бо єстъ тръпѣливъ
	G	та бо вьсе тръпите и прѣстрадаете тоу прѣвѫжди: и пожъди дондеже нбо и землѣ конъчает се
	H	ть бо все трьпить и все страж(д)еть ть бо врѣмена смѣтають вь рожишихь своихь. сирѣчь тебѣ неꙁите г(д)а спаде [..]ебесе. иди вь камение ть бо все трьпить зимоу и знои и всѣко плодьство ть бо ѿ вари жестокь ѥсть вь себѣ дрьжати те сильнь ѥсть неꙁить да тоу имѣи жилище доньдѣже небо и земла имиондеть и кончають се
	I	та бо є(с) трьпелива. и смр͠ть прѣтрьпети, тȣ пож(д)и. донⸯде(ж) н͠бо и зм͠ла скон꙯чаеть се.
9	*F*	
	G	оубои се ба͠: сѣдѧщаего на прѣстолѣ херовимъстѣ: дондеже придетъ г͠ь: сѫдитъ въселенѣи: и тебѣ бѣсовънаи неꙁите началъче(!) вьсѣкомоу недѫгоу: заклинаю(!) т(.) неꙁите отиди от ра бож гермлъ неро
	H	ѿиди(!) ѿ раба б͠жиа им(р)е. ни кь томоу не боуди тебе ни име ни твою (..)вьньмь ꙗко дасть г͠ь здравие рабоу своюмоу им(р)е.
	I	ȣбои се б͠а седещаго на прѣстоле херȣфи(м)сцеи. и тебѣ бесовни неꙁите начел꙯ниче в꙯сакомȣ недȣгу. заклинаю те б͠го(м) живи(м) зли неꙁите. ѿи(д) ѿ раба сего Ї͞м(р)
10	*F*	нъинѣ и присно и вь вѣкъі вѣком(ъ) ам(...)
	G	аминь (...)а и стаго д͠ха нъинѣ и при.
	H	ꙗко томоу подобають всака.
	I	вь име ѡц͠а и с͠на и ст͠го д͠ха н͠на и пр(с)нно и в веки вѣко(м).

(**H** *only: 0* Second prayer for the same). *1* As Jesus came down from the seventh heaven (*add.* his ready abode), [and] as *nezhit* came from the dry (*var.* Red) Sea, they met and Jesus said to him, *2* "Where are you going, *nezhit*?" *3* And *nezhit* said to him, *4* "I am going (*add.* here) into a man's head, to suck his brain, to crush his brows (*var.* jaws/bones), shed his blood, scatter his teeth, deafen his ears, blind his eyes (*add.* warp his neck/mouth, bulge his nose, [give] his head aches day and night, and easily paralyse their tendons, mortify their bodies, debilitate their graces to entice the demons to torment them)." *5* And Jesus said to him, (*I* only: *6* "I curse you in my name not to go to a man's head.) *7* Turn back, (*add.* nezhit), go to a deserted mountain (*add.* and a desert), and go into the head of deer and ram, *8* for they (*var.* it) endure everything (*add.* even death). (*add.* It jumbles together the times in its horns?, that is to say you, *nezhit*, when you fell from heaven. Go into stone, for it endures cold and heat and any accretion. Through the heat it is hard [enough] to keep you, it is strong, *nezhit.*) There (*add.* stay/have your abode) and wait until heaven and earth (*add.* pass away and) come to an end. *9* Fear God sitting on the throne of the cherubim (*add.* until the Lord comes to judge the universe), and you, demoniac *nezhit*, chief of every affliction, I curse you, (*add.* nezhit), go away from (*var.* for God will give health to) the servant of God NN." *10* (Doxologies).

Undoubtedly, the prayers discussed so far originate from common source text, where nr. I is the shorter and nr. II is the extended version. Apart from the same structure and content, there are clear lexical coincidences between them, too.

There is also no doubt that both versions have certain Greek parallels.

The famous amulet found in a stone sarcophagus in the Roman village of Carnuntum in the Altenburg-Petronel region of Austria, can be considered a precursor to Christian texts intended to expel / heal headache. It is written on a silver plate and dates to the 1st–2nd centuries or the 2nd–3rd centuries:[20] Πρὸς ἡμίκρανον. Ἀνταύρα ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης ἀνεβόησεν ὡς ἔλαφος ἀνέκραξεν ὡς βοῦς ὑπαντᾷ αὐτῇ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσ[ία] Ἀνταύρα πο[ῦ] ὑπάγις; ἰς τὸ ἡμίκρ[ανον]. [μ]ὴ οὐ[κ] ἰς τὰ ν... True, the demon / disease Antaura, according to this narrative from Late Antiquity, was banished by Artemis of Ephesus, but it is clearly connected with the later medieval manuscript tradition (Greek and Slavonic) by identical elements such as the demon's coming from the sea, and its meeting and conversation with the divine protagonist acting as both exorcist and healer. The indication at the beginning that the *historiola* written on the amulet from Carnuntum is intended πρὸς ἡμίκρανον suggests that it has as its prototype a text from a manuscript from which it was copied together with the rubric [Faraone 2018: 255].

Christian versions of this narrative are attested in several Greek manuscripts, if we count the previous editions, but a special study would undoubtedly identify a far greater number of witnesses than those published.

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[20] See edition and commentary in: [Kotansky 1994: 58–71].

The earliest manuscript is used by A. Dmitrievsky — Sin. gr. 973 from mid-12th century (1153), in which on f. 108v the following text is included [Дмитриевский 1901: 118–119]:[21] Ἐξήρχετο αὕτη ἡ ἄβρα ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης, ἀπήντησεν αὐτῇ ὁ πρωτοαρχάγγελος Μιχαὴλ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ. πόθεν ἔρχεις καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγεις, ἄβρα μελάνη μεμελανωμένη, τριχειλετρικέφαλε; Ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ἀνθρώπου ὀστέα φαγεῖν καὶ τὸ κρέας ἀφανῖσαι. Λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ πρωτοαρχάγγελος Μιχαήλ. Οὐκ ἔχεις, ἄβρα, ἐξουσίαν ἀνθρώπου ὀστέα φαγεῖν καὶ τὸ κρέας ἀφανῖσαι, ἀλλ' ἐπιβρέξει ἐπὶ σὲ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς πῦρ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ διασκορπήσει σε ἐπὶ τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν. Ἔξελθε καὶ ἀναχώρησον ἀπὸ τὸ μέλος καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα, κτλ. The prayer continues without literal similarities with the Slavonic texts. It is obvious that in this version it is supplemented and the narrative develops in a different direction. Such extended Greek variants were published by M. Sokolov and A. Almazov [Соколов 1894: 22–23, Алмазов 1901: 91–95, nr. 11–14].

In Par. gr. 2316, dating back to the 15th century, there is a *historiola* on ff. 319v–320r, which, like the one above, is a combination of several source texts. One of them obviously contains the narrative under consideration [Legrand 1881: 17–18]: Πρὸς ἡμίκρανον. Εἰς τὸ μέγα ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ παντοδυναμένου. ὡς ἐξήρχετο τὸ ἡμίκρανον, τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ ἡμικράνου, τὸ συνεργὸν τοῦ διαβόλου, ἀπὸ τὰ βάθη τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἠπήντησεν ἠπήντησέν [αὐ]το ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ ἐπερώτησεν αὐτο. ποῦ ὑπάγεις, τὸ ἡμικράνιον, τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ ἡμικράνου, καὶ ἀπεκρίθην καὶ εἶπεν κύριε, τί με ἐπερώτησας; ἐγὼ ὑπάγω εἰς τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ .οδ. εἰς τὴν κεφαλήν του νὰ τὸν ὀμυαλόν του νὰ χύσω τὰ ὀμμάτιά του νὰ κινήσω. καὶ ἀπεκρίθη ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς [καὶ] εἶπεν αὐτῷ. ὕπαγε εἰς τοῦ Ἀραρὰτ τὸ ὄρος, ὅπου σημαντηρίου φωνὴ οὐκ ἀκούεται. ἐκεῖ νὰ φᾶς, ἐκεῖ νὰ πῆς, ἐκεῖ τὸν θυμόν σου νὰ διαβάσης. Χριστὸς ἐγεννήθη ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, Χριστὸς ἐσταυρώθη ἐν τόπῳ κρανίου. φεῦγε, τὸ ἡμίκρανον, τὸ ἥμισον τοῦ ἡμικράνου, ἀπὸ τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ δεῖνα. Στῶμεν καλά, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου.

Another version is found in Marc. gr. app. II 163 (olim Nanianus 225), dating from the 16th century [Pradel 1907: 267–268]:[22] Εὐχὴ ἡμικράνη εἰς πονοκεφάλι. Ἡμίκρανον ἐξήρχετο ἀπὸ θάλασσαν κρουόμενον καὶ βρυχούμενον καὶ ὑπήντησε αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ. ποῦ ὑπάγεις κρανίον καὶ ἡμικρὰν καὶ πονοκεφάλι καὶ ὀφθαλμόπονον καὶ νεμοπύρωμα καὶ δάκρυα καὶ λεύκωμα καὶ κεφαλοσκότωσις; καὶ ἀπεκρίθη ὁ πονοκέφαλος πρὸς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. ὑπάγομεν, ἵνα καθίσωμεν εἰς τὴν κεφαλήν τοῦ δούλου ὁ δεῖνα. καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς λέγει πρὸς αὐτόν. βλέπε, μὴ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν δοῦλόν μου. ἀλλὰ φεύγετε καὶ

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[21] [Гранстрем 1981: 87] reports for a copy of such a text too.

[22] Same text (end is missing due to loss of folia) is found on ff. 145–145v in Vat. gr. 1538 from the 15th century. A similar version is published by [Vasil ev 1893: lxviii].

ὑπάγετε εἰς τὰ ἄγρια ὄρη καὶ ἀνέβητε εἰς ταύρου κεφαλήν, ἐκεῖ κρέας φάγε-
τε, ἐκεῖ αἷμα πίετε, ἐκεῖ ὀφθαλμοὺς διαφθείρετε, ἐκεῖ κεφαλὴν σκοτώσατε,
κυμαίνετε, διαστρέψατε. εἰ δὲ καὶ παρακούσατέ μου, ἐκεῖ σε ἀπολέσω εἰς τὸ
καύσιον ὄρος, ὅπου κύων οὐ ὑλακτεῖ ὅ τε ἀλέκτωρ οὐ φωνεῖ. ὁ πήξας ὅριον ἐν
τῇ θαλάσσῃ, στῆσον τὸ κράνιον καὶ ἡμίκρανον καὶ τὸν πόνον ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς
καὶ τοῦ μετώπου καὶ τῶν βρεφάρων μυελῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα.
στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου, ἀμήν. καὶ κατὰ τοῦ βαίνοντος εἰς τὸν ἄδην καὶ συντρίψα-
ντος τοὺς μοχλοὺς τῶν πυλῶν κατ' ἐκεῖνον γὰρ εἶσαι ὁρκίζω σε μὴ τρόμαξε,
μὴ φοβηθῇς, ἀλλὰ στάσον καὶ κάθησον εἰς τὸ ἴδιόν σου τόπον, μὴ ὑπερκακί-
σῃς, μὴ περιλακτίσῃς τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ.

In none of these Greek texts is the demon/disease banished to the head of
a deer, as it is in Slavic sources (in the prayer published by Pradel — ἀνέβητε
εἰς ταύρου κεφαλήν). However, this *topos* is found in a protective text against
epilepsy in a 15th-century ms. II.C.33 from the National Library "Vittorio
Emanuele III" in Naples, ff. 233v–234r. There is a clear conflation between
different texts in this witness, but the end reads as follows [Delatte 1927:
618–619, Vasil'ev 1893: lxviii]: ...καὶ ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ Μιχαὴλ καὶ Γαβριὴλ
καὶ εἶπασιν ποῦ ὑπάγετε, ἑβδομήκοντα δύο ἥμισυ γενεαί; καὶ εἶπον ἡμεῖς
ὑπαγαίνομεν εἰς τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα νὰ πίωμεν τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, νὰ
φάγωμεν τὸν μυελόν του, νὰ σκοτώσωμεν τὸ φῶς του, ἵνα μὴ τὸν κόσμον
ἀγάλλεται. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁρκίζω σε ἵνα μὴ
εἰσέλθῃς εἰς τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα, ἀλλ' ἵνα ὑπάγῃς ἄνω εἰς ὄρος ὅπου
ἔναι ἔλαφος δικέριος, ἑξακέριος, ἵνα σέβῃς εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. καὶ φάγε
καὶ πίε ἐκεῖ τὸν κόσμον ἀγάλλων. ὅτι ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ βαπτισμένος ἔναι καὶ
μυρωμένος καὶ οὐ δύναται κακὸν ὑπομένειν οὔτε ἡμέραν οὔτε νύκτα. στῶμεν
καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου θεοῦ, ἀμήν.

A similar dialogue between Archangel Michael and a demon (in this case,
Αβιζου) is attested on two lead amulets found in northern Cyprus. Both date
to the 7th century or later. In the first of them [Giannobile 2004: 727–750;
Giannobile, Jordan 2006: 83–84, nr. 12], the beginning of the text reads as fol-
lows, with the necessary reconstructions: [εὐχὴ] τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰωά[ν-
νου] τοῦ ἐλε[ουμένου], Κύριος ὁ θεός·κατερχόμενος Μιχαὴ[λ] ὁ ἀρχάγγελος
ἀ[πὸ τοῦ ὄ]ρους τοῦ Σινᾶ ηὗρε τὴν Αβιζου ἔχουσαν τὰ[ς] τρίχα[ς] αὐτῆς ἕως
τῶν πτερνῶν αὐτῆς καὶ τοὺς ὀφθ[αλμοὺς] αὐτῆς πεπυρωμένους σφόδρα· καὶ
λέγει αὐτῇ Μιχαὴ[λ] ὁ ἀρχάγγελος· ποῦ πορεύῃ; ἐγὼ ἀπέρχω [εἰσελ]θεῖν εἰς
τὸν οἶκον ὡς ὄφις καὶ ὡς δράκων καὶ ὡς τετράπ[οδον], κτλ. In the second one
[Giannobile, Jordan 2006: 84, nr. 13] there is the following passage: ...καὶ λέγει
αὐτῇ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος. ποῦ πορεύῃ; Ἀπεκρίθη τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ λέγει τω.
Ἀρχάγγελε, ἐγὼ ἀπέρχομαι εἰσελθεῖν, κτλ. This text, of course, represents its
own tradition; here, we are only interested in the fact that a part of a narrative
similar to the one under consideration is present on Greek amulets, too.

III.

According to yet another Slavonic *historiola*, a procession of angels and archangels tell Archangel Michael that they are going to stab the *nezhit* with knives and burn it with candles. A similar text is preserved on a lead *lamella* found in the village of Gradets, Vidin region. The *lamella* is 7.5 cm high, 4.5 cm wide, folded 7 times, and the text is inscribed in Glagolitic and Cyrillic.

Most of the characters are Cyrillic, however є, эє, э, ѹ are in Glagolitic only. The number *seven* is rendered with a Cyrillic letter ж, i.e. according to its numerical value in Glagolitic (ж does not have a numerical value in Cyrillic). Single-*jer* (ъ) spelling is applied. *Jery* is denoted by digraph ън, which testifies

to a connection with the Glagolitic tradition. All characters for nasal vowels (only the ones for iotated and non-iotated front *jus*, Ⱇ and ⱔ, are attested) are used in free variation. *Ouk* is rendered with ⱛ. According to [Попконстантинов 2014], the amulet should be dated to the 10th century.

The oldest manuscript witness, once again, is found in the *Slepche euchologium*, on ff. 19r–19v in the part, currently kept under nr. 35 in the V. I. Grigorovich collection of RGB[23]. The same narrative is also present in the following manuscripts: on ff. 156r–156v in RNB ms. Q.I.1181, on f. 26v in RNB ms. Q.п.I.24, on f. 134v-135r in NBKM ms. 622,[24] on f. 160v in RNB ms. Q.I.1297.

See below the text preserved in all these witnesses and its English translation.

	J	Gradets Amulet[25]
	K	RGB, f. 87, ms. 35 (Slepche Euchologium)
	L	RNB, Q.I.1181
	M	RNB, Q.п.I.24
	N	NBKM, ms. 622
	O	RNB, Q.I.1279
0	**J**	Въ има твое х͞е истинъи б͞е
	K	млнтва .д. томоу(ж)
	L	
	M	Помилоүи х͞се истины.
	N	
	O	
1	**J**	идешиа ж͠ анг͠ъ и ж͠ аръхагла ж͠ свѣщ(.) носаци(.) и ж͠ ножъ ос(.)раци(.)
	K	Понде .з͠. анг͠ль .з͠. архнг͠ль .з͠. свѣщь носеще .з͠. ножь wстреще
	L	Гредѣше .з͠. агг͠ль .з͠. архг͠гль .з͠. свѣщь носеще .з͠. (...) wстреще
	M	пондоше .з͠. агг͠ль. и .з͠. архг͠ль .з͠. ножевь носеще .з͠. свѣщь дрьжеще
	N	Пондоу .з͠. апл͠ь .з͠. архг͠ль .з͠. сеүневь wстреще и .з͠. свѣще носеще
	O	Єгда идѣхꙋ .з͠. агг͠ль. .з͠. архагг͠ль. и .з͠. мечевь wстреще и. .з͠. ножевь.
2	**J**	и сърѣте а ах͠(.)гъ михнлъ (!) и рече
	K	и срѣте ихь арханьгль гаврнль и рече нмь
	L	и стрѣте и(х) арх͠гль михаиль и ре(ч) нмь

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[23] Published for the first time by [Kačanovskij 1881: 154].

[24] Published by [Цонев 1923: 133–134].

[25] Edited and analyzed by [Попконстантинов 2014]. Here I render Glagolitic ⱔ with ⱝ, and Ⱇ with ⱑ.

M	срѣте н(х) арх(с)тнгъ мнханль н гавриль. въпроси мнханла н гаврила въпроси	
N	н срете нхь мнханль н гавриль н ре(ч) нмь.	
O	тог(д)а стрете мїханль гавриль. н ре(ч) нмь	

3 | *J* | камо нде(..) ж̃ агл̃ъ н архг̃гл̃ъ н ж̃ свѣщѣ н(...)ъ н ножъ острѧщъ |
K	камо ндете .з. ан̃гль .з. архн̃гль .з. свѣщь носеще .з. ножь ѡстреще
L	камо ндете .з̃. аг̃гль .з̃. архг̃гль .з̃. свѣще носеще .з̃. ножевь ѡстреще
M	камо ндете .з̃. аг̃гль. н .з̃. архг̃ль
N	где хощете понтн .з̃. агг̃ль
O	г(д)е нде(т) з̃ агг̃ль н .з̃. архагг̃ль. н з̃. мьче(в) носеще н. з̃мь ножевь.

4 | *J* | н рн(...) |
K	н рѣше юмоу
L	ѡнн же рѣше
M	н рѣше
N	рекоше
O	н рекоше емꙋ

5 | *J* | чнноначѧ(..)че ндемъ н(..)нта сѣщъ нежнта рѣзат н (..)ежщъ(!) |
K	ндемь нежнта ѡсѣщн н нзьгнатн
L	чнноначелннче ндемь нежнта рѣзаты н свѣщамн нждещн.
M	ндемь кь рабоу б̃жню нм(р) нежнта сьсѣщн рѣзатн н нж(д)ещн
N	ндемь нежнта нсѣщн н сь свѣщамн нждещн
O	мне смо пꙋщенн нежнта резатн.

6 | *J* | н кръвн нстрѣвнтн н(...) (...)вьн бж(..) рабѣ нвану(!) |
K	нь останн се раба б̃жнꙗ. нм(р)е.
L	н даты здравїе. рабоу б̃жню нм(р)е
M	крьвн ю(г) нзь ѡу̃ню нзематн
N	н крьвь нз ѡу̃ню нстревнтн рабоу бж̃ню нме(р)
O	н ре(ч) нмь мїханль гаврнль. ндете н прѣрежете емꙋ корень

7 | *J* | н нъннꙗ прнсно н въ вѣкн вѣкома(!) амннъ. |
K	вь нме ѿца н сна.
L	вь нме ѿца н сн̃а н ст̃го д̃ха нн.
M	нн̃ꙗ н пр(с)но.
N	всег(д)а н нн̃ꙗ н пр(с)но.
O	в(о)ь.

0 In your name, Christ, true God (*var.* Have mercy, true Christ). *1* [There] went seven angels and seven archangels, carrying seven candles, sharpening (*var.* holding) seven knives (*var.* swords). *2* And Archangel Michael (*var.* Gabriel/Michael Gabriel) met them, and said to them, *3* "Where are you going, seven angels and seven archangels, carrying seven candles, sharpening seven knives (*var.* swords)?" *4* And they answered, *5* "(*add.* Commander), we are going to stab (*add.* cut) the *nezhit* and to burn [it], *6* and to remove the blood from the eyes (*var.* leave/restore the health) of the servant of God NN." (*O* and Michael Gabriel said to them, Go and sever his root.) *7* (Doxologies).

Evidence that this text is also borrowed from Greek manuscript tradition can be found in an important study by M. Sokolov, in which the Russian scholar published the following fragment of the difficult-to-read and corrupted text [Соколов 1894: 21]: ...ὡς ἐξήρχοντο ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλοι ἑπτὰ ἀρχαγγέλοι ἑπτὰ μαχαίραι βαστάζοντες καὶ ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ἕνας καὶ εἶπεν ἀπέρχομεν εἰς κεφαλόπονον τοῦ δούλου τοῦ θεοῦ τόνδε καθαρίζομεν τὸ ἡμισίκρανον...

The same narrative is found in a 15th-century ms. 16 C II from the British Library, f. 68r:[26] εἰς ἡμικράνιον. εἰς ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. ἠνεῴχθησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ πύλαι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἐξέβησαν οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀρχάγγελοι μετὰ ἑπτὰ ξίφη τὰ κεκονημένα καὶ ἀπήντησεν αὐτοῖς ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ εἶπε ποῦ ὑπάγετε οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀρχάγγελοι μετὰ ἑπτὰ ξίφη τὰ κεκονημένα; καὶ εἶπον κύριε καλὸν τὸ ἐρώτημά σου. ἡμεῖς ὑπάγομεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν νὰ κόψωμεν πεῦκον κέδρον καὶ κυπάρισσον. καὶ εἶπε μὴ ὑπάγετε εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν, ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰς τὸν δοῦλον τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ δεῖνα καὶ κόψετε τὸ αἷμα τὸ ῥεῦμα τὸ ῥευματικὸν τὸ αἷμα τὸ ῥεῦμα τὸ σταλάζον τὸ κρανίον τὸ ἡμικράνιον τὸ ἥμισυ τοῦ ἡμικρανίου. στῶμεν καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου τοῦ ποιήσαντος τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. The following instruction is appended: τῇδε γράφεις τὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὄνομα. γράφε αὐτὸ ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἅς τὸ βαστάζῃ εἰς κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

IV.

Another popular text against *nezhit* was inscribed on an amulet found in Tsreshka fortress (Chreshche), near the town of Shtip in Northern Macedonia. The narrative speaks of *nezhit*, which was passed from Adam to Eve, from Eve to the lead, and so on until the sun dried it up and made it vanish. The lead plate, which was rolled up, measures 7.3 cm long and 2 cm wide when unfolded.

The spelling is single-*jer* (ь), nasal vowels are absent (but objectively they cannot be used due to the content of the text). The features of the script,

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[26] [Zellmann-Rohrer 2016: 343].

сл. 2 а
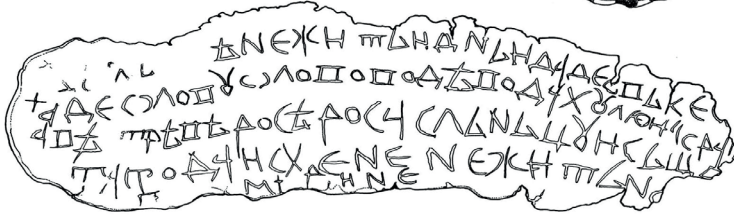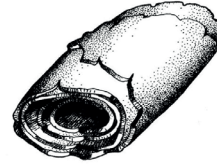
сл. 2 б

especially the form of в, ж, т suggest dating to a period later than the 13th century.

The narrative is very popular, so I will only dwell on several witnesses in which it is present. We find it on ff. 410–410v in Slavonic ms. 22 of LGP in Jerusalem (a Serbian horologion from 1497–1498), on f. 91v in ms. Q.I.1182 from RNB (a Serbian euchologium from the first quarter of the 17th century), and on f. 136v in ms. 622 of the NBKM in Sofia.[27] Other copies are present in manuscripts from the 16th–19th centuries.[28]

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[27] The latter is published by [Цонев 1923: 135].

[28] According to the research of [Левшина 2016], the text is found in ms. 422 of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade, mss. 273 and 646 of NBKM, mss. 47, 454 and 675 of the National Library of Serbia, ms. 344 of the Patriarchal Library in Belgrade, I.b.140 of the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, ms. 14 of the Museum of Podgorica, among others. Cf. also texts and scholarly literature in: [Катић 1961: 123; Раденковић 2007: 702].

P   Chreshche Amulet[29]

Q   LGP, Slav. 22

R   RNB, Q.I.1182

S   NBKM, ms. 622

0   **P**

     Q   молн(т)ва ѿ нежн(т). а.

     R

     S

1   **P**   (...)ѣ нежнть н днь н даде евьке

     Q   ада(м) нме нежнть н прададе(!) гw евьзе

     R   Ада(м) нмѣ нежнты. н прѣдаде юго юве.

     S   Адамь нмее нежнть. ндн адамь н дасть еве,

2   **P**   е(...) (.)аде wловȢ wлово водѣ вода хȢлю(!)

     Q   [е]вьга wловȢ морȢ морѣ вльна(м) вльнн пена(м) пенн кран

     R   н юва wловȢ. н wловw мороу. н море вльна(м). н в[л]ьнн пескоу. н песокь

           краю.

     S   ева wловȢ, wлово морȢ, море вльнамь, вльнн краевн,

3   **P**   н кра(.) (...)авѣ трѣвѣ росѣ роса сльньцȢ нсьш(...)

     Q   кран пескȢ песькь траве трава рȢсе вьснгавьшь слнце н Ȣсьшы

     R   н кран травѣ. трава сльнцоу(!) вьстав̾шȢ слнцȢ. нсьше роса.

     S   кран пескȢ, песокь траве, трава росе, роса слнцȢ. слнце вьстав̾шȢ нсьшероса.

4   **P**   та(.)о да нсхене нежнть н(...) мїрнне.

     Q   тако да нсьшеть нежнть. на раба бжнга нме(р).

     R   тако да нсьхнеть нежн(т). н дна. ѿ глава раба бжнюго їме(р).

     S   тако да нсьхнеть нежнть ѿ раба бжїа,

5   **P**

     Q   вь нме wца н сна н стаго дха. н нлга н прнсно (н) вь векн века амннь.

     R   вь нме wца н сна н стаго дха. н нлга н пр(с)но.

     S   вь нме оца н сна н стго дха н нлга н пр(с)но н вь вѣкы вѣко(м).

(*0 Ad hoc* title). *1* Adam had *nezhit* and gave it to Eve, *2* Eve to the lead, the lead to the sea, the sea to the waves, the waves to the foam, the foam to the shore, *3* the shore to the sand, the sand to the grass, the grass to the dew, the dew to the sun, rising, the sun dried it (*var.* the dew). *4* Thus may dry the *nezhit* (*add.* and gout) of the servant of God NN. *5* (Doxology).

V.

In 2006, N. Markov analyzed two amulets, probably found in western Bulgaria, which measure 6.5×2.8 cm, and 8.7×2.8 cm, correspondingly [Марков 2006]. At first glance, one can see a similarity in the script of the two inscribed texts, as well as a similarity in the size of the plates, i.e. the same width. A closer look at the two texts reveals that both plates form a single whole.
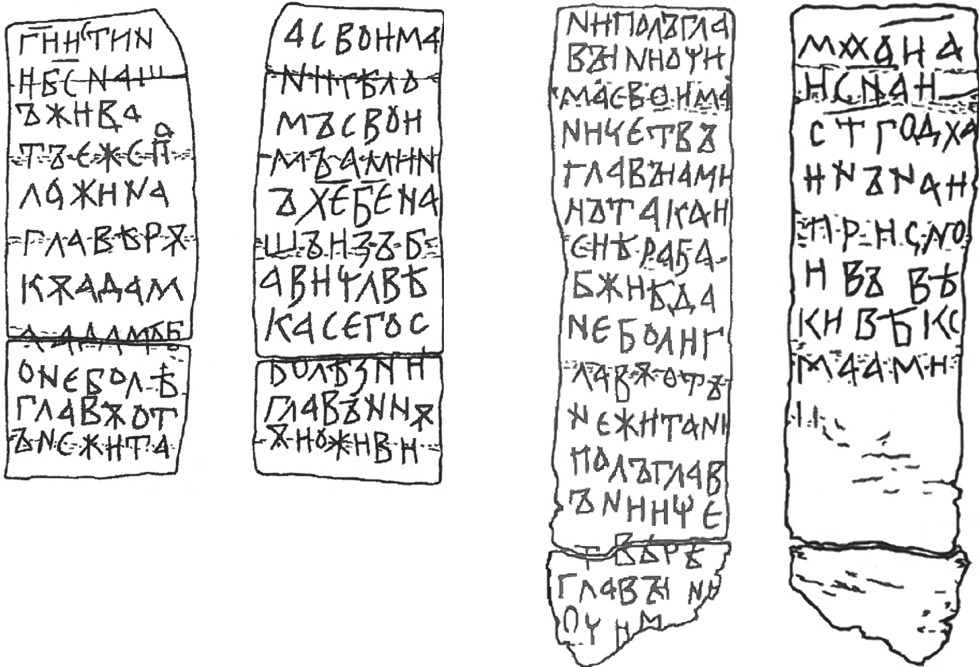
Some features of script and spelling seem of particular importance: ꙑ with a line connecting the two components (ꙑ), correct use of letters for nasal vowels (however, without iotation главъннѫѫ), archaic appearance of the front *jus* (ꙙ[30]) in ѡжнвн мꙙ, single-*jer* (ъ) spelling (the reading четвьръ is not certain due to the folding of the plate). The ч-character is cup-shaped (ѵ), with a vertical stroke often crossing the loop. The amulet was intended for a woman (снѣ раба вожнѣ). N. Markov dates the inscriptions of both plates to the period of late 10th–11th century.

This amulet contains a text that states that God laid his hand on Adam's head, and Adam never since had a pain in his head caused by *nezhit*.

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[30] On this character see here footnote 9.

The same narrative is found in a number of manuscripts dating from the 14th century onwards.[31] The earliest witness is included on ff. 26r–26v in ms. Q.п.I.24 of RNB in Saint Petersburg. It also occurs in another Serbian euchologium, ms. Q.I.1181, kept in the same library, on ff. 155v–156r. In ms. 622 from NBKM it is included among prayers against *nezhit* on f. 134v:[32]

    T Double Amulet from W–Bulgaria[33]
    U RNB, Q.п.I.24
    V RNB, Q.I.1181
    W NBKM, ms. 622

1   ***T*** г҃н н(с)тннн б҃е нашъ жнвотъ еже п(о)ложн на главѣ рѫкѫ адама

    U Помлоун х҃се нстнныи б҃же н҃шь. възложоу роукоу твою жнвотною на
        главоу адамою.

    V Х҃с нстнны б҃ь нашь. еже възложн роукоу свою на глав҃ѹ адамовоу.

    W Х҃с нстннн б҃ъ н҃шь възложн р҃ѹк҃ѹ на глав҃ѹ адамов҃ѹ.

2   ***T*** адамъ бо не болѣ главѫ отъ нежнта нн полъ главы нн очнма свонма
        нн четвръ(!) главы амннъ

    U адамь же не поболѣ главою нн поль главы. нн оушнма нн ѡчнма свонма
        нн всѣмн оуды тѣлесн своюго.

    V адамь боле главою. не ка(?) болѣ ѿ нежнта нн поль главою. нн д҃.та
        главою. нн ѡчнма нн оушнма свонма амннь.

    W адамь не боле главою нн нежнтомь нн поль нежнта нн четврьта честь
        нежнть.

3   ***T*** така(!) н сн҃ѣ раба божнѣ да не болн главѫ отъ нежнта нн полъ главъ
        нн н четвьрѣ главы нн очнма свонма нн тѣломъ свонмъ амннъ х҃е б҃е
        нашъ нзъбавн чл҃вѣка се с болѣзнн главъннѫ҂ н ожн

    U възложн роукоу твою жнвотворещоую на главоу рабоу твоюмоу. нм(р).
        да не болнть нн главою нн поль главы нн четврьтоу честь главы. нн
        оушнма. нн ѡчнма. нн всѣмн оуды тѣлесн своюго.

    V

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[31] According to the research of [Левшина 2016], the text is also found in ms. 312 from the F. F. Mazurin collecton in the Russian State Archives for Ancient Acts (op. 1, f. 196), mss. 85 and 331 from the collection of the Volokolamsk monastery in RGB (f. 113), ms. 1086/1195 from the collection of the Solovki monastery in RNB, ms. 193 from the collection of A. S. Petrushevich in the Lviv National Scientific Library "V. Stefanik" at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, among others.

[32] Published by [Цонев 1923: 133].

[33] I borrow both the text (with minor corrections) and images from the publication of [Марков 2006].

W тако и сєи рабь б͠жи им(р)є да нє болить нєжитомь ни поль нєжита

4 *T* в има о͠ца и с͠на и ст͠го д͠ха и нъина(!) и прискно и въ вѣки вѣкома амн(.).

U н͠ниꙗ и пр(с)но.

V аминь.

W вь имє ѿц͠а и с͠на.

1 (*add.* Have mercy,) Christ our true God, who laid your (*add.* life-giving) hand on Adam's head, *2* [and] Adam had no pain in his head from the *nezhit*, nor half his head, (*add.* nor his eyes or ears, nor all limbs of his body) nor a quarter of his head. (*add.* Amen) *3* So may this servant of God (*var.* Lay your life-giving hand on the head of your servant that) NN have no pain in his head, nor half his head, nor a quarter of his head (*add.* nor his eyes or ears, nor his body) from the *nezhit* (*add.* Amen. Christ our God, deliver this man from headache and make him live.) *4* (Doxology).

A partial parallel to the Slavonic text is found in Greek, in the prayer Εἰς πόνον κεφαλῆς [Алмазов 1901: 90], which begins as follows: Θεὸς ὁ ἀληθινὸς, Θεὸς ἡμῶν ὁ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπιθήσας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπόνεσεν, οὐδὲ τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτοῦ, οὔτε ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ἐπόνεσεν, οὕτως μήτε τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ δεῖνος ἀπὸ τὴν σήμερον ἡμέραν καὶ ὥραν μήτε πονέσῃ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ, μήτε τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτοῦ, κτλ.

Conclusion

Most of the archetypes of the texts analyzed date back to the earliest period of Old Bulgarian writing, i.e. the 10th–11th centuries. For nos. I, II, III, V, this conclusion is supported by features of different type:

- graphic features, such as the use of Glagolitic or traces of Glagolitic scribal habits;
- features of spelling, such as use of ъ only, the use of characters for nasal vowels in their etymologically correct places;
- features of script, such as the shapes of ꙑ, ч, шт/щ;
- grammatical archaisms, such as supine forms after *verba movendi* or athematic aorist forms;
- the archeological context of lead tablet finds.

Another interesting observation as concerns the texts nrs. I, II, III, V is that they survived on 10th–13th-century Bulgarian lead plates and in 13th–19th-century Serbian (as well as Romanian and Russian) manuscripts. No Bulgarian manuscripts dating prior to the 19th century remain, however, such surely existed. Parallels to Greek witnesses clearly show that prior to being inscribed on lead amulets, exorcisms against *nezhit* were included as

"prayers" in manuscripts. Such an interplay between manuscript and amulet texts is attested in Ancient and Byzantine Greek tradition as well.

Although manuscript witnesses date to a later period, they still contain some important data regarding the content and language of the Slavonic archetypes of the examined *historiolae*.[34] However, some copies (the earliest example being the 13th-century *Slepche euchologium*) show traces of secondary editing already. On the other hand, lead plates preserve archaic features of spelling and grammar, which are not found in manuscripts due to their provenance and later date. However, the texts inscribed on them show traces of abridgement and, sometimes, contain errors of different kinds. This means that *recentiores non deteriores*, so the history of these texts can be revealed only by bringing together evidence from all kind of Slavonic and Greek witnesses regardless of the material, origin and time of their creation.

In conclusion, Slavonic lead amulets seem to represent a "missing link" in the Ancient and Byzantine tradition of using protective amulets, and/or its continuation. The texts inscribed on them may be classified as a "missing link", too, since Greek parallels published so far are included in late manuscripts and subjected to many secondary additions, conflations and other changes, while the Slavonic ones, in most cases, keep the brevity of their archetype and introduce fewer new elements. This shows their importance as a source for studying the texts themselves, as well as studying the use of such "magical" practices, often banned by official church authorities in a Christian environment.[35]

Abbreviated Names of Libraries, Archives, and Depositories

GIM   State Historical Museum, Moscow
LGP   Library of the Greek Patriarchate, Jerusalem
NBKM   Sts. Cyrill and Methodius National Library, Sofia
RGB   Russian State Library, Moscow
RNB   Russian National Library, St. Petersburg

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[34] E.g. 1) archaisms as athematic aorist and verb грѧсти in III are not attested on amulets and 2) some unclear readings due to loss of letters inscribed on all lead tablets under consideration may be reliably reconstructed by comparing them to the manuscript copies.

[35] On the use of such practices in the 19 c. Bulgaria see [Николов 2022].

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Явор Милтенов, доцент доктор
Институт за български език, Българска академия на науките
бул. „Шипченски проход", № 52, бл. 17, София 1113
България / Bulgaria
yavor.miltenov@gmail.com