

Historiographical marginalia and colophons in Bulgarian literature of the 10th - 18th century

Denitsa Petrova

Abstract. Marginal notes are brief notes added by the author apart from the main text of a codex. They came into Bulgarian literature from Byzantine literature, adopting from the latter certain stable compositional patterns, invariable formulations and fixed expressions. They belong to the genres both of the historical record and the chronicle, which makes them equally interesting for historians and linguists. Since their first appearance at the time of the spread of Slavic literature in Bulgaria, and down to the waning of the literary schools in the 18th century, historiographical marginalia underwent various transformations as a genre. They gradually turned into extensive forewords and afterwords, some of which amounted to brief narratives, while others were sorts of chronicles. These modifications do not diminish the value of marginal notes as historical sources. When the other historical-chronicular genres in Bulgarian literature had already disappeared, marginalia continued to develop.

Keywords: marginalia, Old Bulgarian literature, historical sources

Marginal notes are a specific literary genre marked by openness to a variety of themes. Marginalia consist of author's brief notes added to the basic text of a codex and written purposely in keeping with specific norms (Stanchev 1985, 99-100). They are the only widespread commemorative genre in Old Bulgarian literature. They contain a variety of information regarding the destiny of the book, of the scribe who wrote it, but also about different events not directly related to the creation of the manuscript, some of which are not mentioned in any other sources (Miltenova (ed.) 2008, 31).

Marginalia passed into Bulgarian literature from Byzantine literature, borrowing from the latter certain stable compositional patterns, invariable forms and fixed expressions, as well as biblical *topoi*. The practice of following Byzantine models is evident especially in the writing of concluding texts and the use of stylistic devices borrowed from Byzantine literature. As this tradition in Old Bulgarian literature developed, marginalia became a specific literary genre. These additions to the main text are of two basic kinds: notes left by the scribe in his own hand, during the writing of the manuscript or soon after its comple-

tion, and secondary marginal notes added by other persons. The scribe's notes are divided into colophons and side notes. The colophons are of a more official kind and often contain information about the name of the scribe, the time and place of writing, the current rulers and high-ranking clergymen. The side notes were added by the writer at the time of writing and do not have a strictly fixed location in the manuscript. Some of them are commentaries directly related to the content of the text, while others reflect events contemporaneous to the scribe (Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 3-11).

The topic of the present study is scribes' notes with a chronicle character. The division into genres in Old Bulgarian literature is largely conventional; thus, chronicular marginalia are defined as a commemorative genre on the one hand, and a historiographical one on the other. This particularity makes them equally interesting for historians and linguists and makes it possible to study them through interdisciplinary methods. Although marginalia do not fit into the classical historiographical source models, the chronological order of their presentation of events, the information they give as to the basic political tendencies of the age, their indication of cause-and-effect relationships between events, make them classifiable under historical literature (Kaymakamova 1990, 25-26).

The beginnings of this historical genre were already set in the first stage of development of Bulgarian literature, under the rule of Tsar Simeon I (893-927). Many of the early marginal notes are preserved not in autographs but in later, Russian, copies, made word for word by the scribes. Such is the case of the earliest preserved historiographical note, from the year 907, written by Tudor Doxov and come down to us within a copy of the Discourses against the Arians by Athanasius of Alexandria, translated by Constantine of Preslav (Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 25, 89).

Each period in the development of Bulgarian historical writing has its particularities, which are respectively mirrored in the genre of historiographical marginalia.

In all, five scribe's notes are extant from the 10th century, only two of which are related to accounts of historical events. One is the note by Tudor Doxov, which gives information about the baptism and death of Knyaz Boris I (852-889) and mentions the names of Tsar Simeon I, Methodius, and Constantine of Preslav. The other, similarly preserved only in Russian copies, was written by Gregorius Mnah (the Monk) (Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 25, 89-90); in it, the author dates the writing of the collection to the reign of "the Bulgarian Knyaz Simeon, son of Boris". Both marginal notes are of the colophon type and, judging by the preserved copies, were located at the very end of the codices. In terms of structure, they differ from the typical colophons and do not contain the kinds of fixed expressions typical for later periods. The note by Tudor Doxov is larger and contains more historical information, while that of Gregorius Mnah is laconic but gives an assessment of the ruler, who is called "book-loving and God-loving".

Marginalia from the period of Byzantine rule, 11th - 12th century, are extant in nine manuscripts. All of them are of the type known as scribe's side notes; the largest number is contained in the Bitola Triodion, but none of them is historiographical.

There are 118 scribe's notes dating from the 13th - 14th century, of which 33 are historiographical. Most of them refer to the reign of Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331-1371). All but four of them are of the colophon type. They display certain differences to marginal notes of the preceding period. Those of the 13th - 14th century have a clear compositional pattern, contain fixed expressions and philosophical-theological reflections. They are notably more extensive. In most of them, the historical information is limited to the mention of the current ruler at the time of the writing of the book; the name of the Bulgarian patriarch is mentioned in some (Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 30-31, 93).

Such is the marginal note in the Bologna Psalter (Bologna, University Library, No. 2499, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 29, 91), written between 1230 and 1241, which refers to Tsar Asen, i.e., Ivan Asen II (1218-1241). In some notes, the creation of the manuscript is dated to the reign of foreign rulers. In Lobkov's Prophetologion (Moscow, State Historical Museum, Hlud. 142, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 37, 97-98), written between 1294 and 1320, the writer Nikola Brata mentions the period of co-rule of the Byzantine emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1281-1328) and his son Michael between 1294 and 1320, while in Lectionary Apostolos, written in Skopje (Mount Athos, Saint Panteleimon Monastery, No. 4, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 38, 98), the same author indicates the Serbian king Stefan Milutin (1281-1321). In a note added to Stanislav's Prologue dating from 1330 (Belgrade, SANU No. 53, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 39, 99), the writer Stanislav, working in the monastery at the village of Lesново near Kratovo, mentions the Serbian king Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321-1331), while in a note added to Oliver's Menaion, dating from 1342 (Belgrade, National Library of Serbia, No. 62, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 42-43, 101-102), the scribe provides information about the Serbian despotes Jovan Oliver. Stanislav's Prologue contains information about the death of Tsar Michael III Shishman in the battle near Velbazhd (present-day Kyustendil).

An interesting marginal note by John Dragovol in Nomocanon is also preserved only in later copies (Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 29-30, 92-93). The scribe's note is extensive, and to it is added the text of the letter despotes Jacob Svetoslav sent to the Russian metropolitan bishop Kirill III (1242-1281).

The Kuklen Psalter (Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, No. 2, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 39-41, 99-100) contains some scribe's notes, one of which is a eulogy to Tsar Ivan Alexander.

In the Vatican transcript of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses, dating from 1344-1345 (Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. slav. 2, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 43-44, 102), some side notes refer to the "Godless barbarians who want war" (БЕЗБОЖНЫѢ ВАРВАРЫ ХОТѢЩИ БРАНЕМЪ). The manuscript is assumed to have been written during the military campaign between Bulgarians and Ottomans during which Ivan Asen, son of Ivan Alexander, was killed. In Menaion (Mount Athos, Zograf Monastery, No. II.з.5, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 62, 116), the scribe Daniel prays that God might strengthen the Christian faith and save Tsar Ivan Alexander. In the Pentecostarion from the Slepče Monastery (location unknown, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 55, 110-111), written in 1398, a side note refers to the conquest by the "Godless Ishmaelites" (БЕЗБОЖНЫХЪ ИЗМАНАНТЬ).

A side note in Apostolos, written between 1365 and 1370 (Mount Athos, Monastery of Saint Paul, No. 3, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 50, 197), relates the siege of Bdin (present-day Vidin) by the Hungarians.

A marginal note added to the Svrlich Gospel from 1279 (Belgrade, SANU, No. 63, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 31, 93) dates the creation of the manuscript to “the days of Tsar Ivaylo” (ВЪ ДНѢ ЦРѢ НВАНАА). Some scholars equate this Ivaylo with the Bulgarian ruler designated in Byzantine sources as Lakhanas (1277-1279), but the name more probably refers to Tsar Ivan Asen III (1279-1280) (Gospodinov 2005, 172-173).

A marginal note well known to scholars is that by Isaija of Serres, dating from 1371 (Moscow, Russian State Library, Mus. No. 93, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 51-53, 108-110), which supplies valuable information about the battle of Ormenio of 1371. What distinguishes it from most marginalia is its length, which makes it a historical narrative rather than an addition to the text.

Eleven marginal notes are extant from the 15th century. Similar to those of the preceding century, the historical information they contain basically consists in the names of the current ruler and patriarch. The writing of the manuscript is dated according to the reign of the Ottoman sultan, as it was previously to that of the Bulgarian tsar, but the attitude to the ruler of a different religion is different. In the Bdin Apostolos (Zagreb, JAZU, No. III.β.16, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 70, 120), a fragmentary note by the writer Drayko, dating from 1428, mentions “tsar Murad” (ЦРЬ МУРАТЬ). A colophon in the Festal Menaion, dating from 1435 (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library No. 122, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 71, 121), indicates that the manuscript was created “in the kingdom of Murad, the impious Ishmaelite” (ВЪ ЦАРСТВО МѸРАТА НЕУТНВАДГО НЗМАНАТІАНННА), so-called perhaps because the writer did not consider him a legitimate ruler.

The attitude of scribes to Mehmed II (1451-1481), son of Murad II (1421-1451), was different. His name first appears in a note by Vladislav the Grammarian, all of whose marginalia were written after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Vladislav designates this ruler in a way reminiscent of the Byzantine and Bulgarian titular model: “the great and autocratic Muslim tsar” (ВЕАНКАДГО Н САМОДРЪЖАВНАГО ЦРЯ МУСРОМАНСАГО, МѸМѸ ВЕГА). In later marginalia, this expanded title is missing, but they emphasize that the sultans are Muslims.

Starting from the 15th century, a large number of marginalia designate the Ottoman rulers by two titles, “tsar” and “sultan”. In this synonymous usage, the domestic word is combined with an Ottoman loanword (Uzunova 2001, 245-246). Various explanations of this titling are given in scholarly literature: according to one author, the Bulgarians called the sultan a tsar by habit, in order to overcome the confusion between their idea of state organization and the foreign political ideology (Katsunov 1995, 50); according to another view, the use of the double title represented a recognition of the supreme power of the sultan and indicated a way of adapting to the foreign rule (Georgieva 1989, 126). Despite the similarities, the title of the Ottoman sultan did not overlap with that of the medieval Bulgarian rulers. The former was probably connected with the designation of the Ottoman capital Tsarigrad (City of the Tsar (Emperor)). Bulgarian writers continued to call Constantinople by that name even

after it was seized by the Muslims. After the fall of Byzantium under Ottoman rule, the Balkans were again under the domination of a large empire whose centre was Constantinople, and the title of tsar was transferred to the new ruler in Tsarigrad, despite the fact that he was not a Christian.

In the 15th century, more extensive historical information started to appear in scribe's colophons, related to important events during the sultans' reign. For instance, in the Andrianti Collection of 1473 (Rila, National Museum "Rila Monastery", No. 3/6, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 79-80, 129) and in the Rila Panegyric (Rila, National Museum "Rila Monastery", No. 4/8, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 80, 129-130), Vladislav the Grammarian relates the military victories of Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481), and in the Hexameron (Moscow, Russian State Library, f. 87, No. 1734, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 80-81, 130), Mardarius of Rila tells of the sultan's death and the coming to power of his son Bayezid II (1481-1512).

A marginal note in the Lovech Collection from the end of the 15th century (location unknown, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 86, 133-134) contains valuable information about Constantine of Kostenets and his teacher Dyak (grammarian) Andrey, as well as about the death of Patriarch Euthymius. There is mention of "the last tsar of the Bulgars" (ЦРЮ ПОСАЪДНЕМЪ БЪЛГАРЪМЪ), Tsar Ivan Shishman (1371-1393), who was deprived of his tsardom in 1393, and of Sultan Bayezid I (1389-1402), son of Murad, killed by Miloš Obilić at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. It is worth remarking that, although this marginal note is the scribe's colophon, it does not follow the established pattern: it lacks the stereotypical expressions and differs considerably from the official tone in this type of side additions to the text.

Salient among the marginalia of this century is the note by Dimitar of Kratovo in Nomocanon of 1466 (Moscow, Russian State Library, f. 87, No. 1707, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2003, 72-77, 122-128). This long note amounts to a narrative tracing the Ottoman expansion and the resistance of the Balkan rulers.

There are 16 scribe's historiographical notes dating from the 16th century. Unlike those of the previous centuries, most of these marginalia are side notes relating information about important events contemporaneous to the scribe. In several side notes, the author tells of the hardships undergone by Christians fallen under the rule of people of another faith. In the colophons, the specific structure and fixed expressions are retained, but the way of dating is made more complex by the addition of elements such as the solar and lunar cycles. Another novelty is that the writers increasingly indicate as a dating reference the names of high-ranking clergymen instead of the sultan's name. An indicative example of the changes taking place in historiographical notes is the colophon in the Tetraevangelion of 1573 (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, No. 58, Hristova, Karadzhova, Uzunova 2004, 20-21, 136), written by Priest Dimitar in Gorna Mitropoliya, which states, "at that time the great lord sultan Selim ruled all of Urumelia and the Pelagonian land, and the western regions. We pious Christians, reduced by their violence, live sometimes in need and sometimes in prosperity. And there was a great battle in the Sea. And at that time the Bulgarian land was ruled by the pious archbishop Arseniy in the capital

city of Tarnovo. This divine gospel was written near the city of Plevna, in the village called Gorna Mitropoliya, in the current year 7081 [1573], cycle of the sun 25, of the moon 14, summit 15, golden number 25, indict 1, month March, day 17” (и тоѣа обלאѡущѣ велнкѡ дмнѣ, сватѡ Селнмѣ, вѣсею Ѣрмеѡіею, и Пеѡгонскою страною и западнѣи странѡ. на же блгоутнвѣн хртіанѡ ѡтѣ смаленѡ ѡ наснѡіа тѣ преенвѡе овоѣа вѣ нѡжн овоѣа же вѣ блазе, и вѣ то врѣ бѣ брѡ велн вѣ Морн. и тоѣа обלאѡущѣ бѡлгарскою землою, блгоутнвомѣ архіепкопѣ к[вр Арс]енію, вѣ настолнн грѡ Трѣнѡ. снн бѣтвнн блговестнѣн сѣпнсѣ се банз грѡ Плевнѣ. вѣ село зовѡ Мірѡоліа Грѡ. Вѣ лѣ ЗПА [7081=1573], текѡщѣ тоѣа, грѡ. слнцѣ КЄ [25], лѣ ДІ [14], фѣ ЕІ [15], злѡо ҃нслѣ КЄ [25], нннкта Л [1], мѡца м ЗІ [17], днѣ.). This marginal note by Dimitar is the only extensive one extant from the 16th century.

Another particularity of marginalia in that century was the appearance of information about local history. In the mid-16th-century Tetraevangelion (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, No. 489, Hristova, Karadzova, Uzunova 2004, 30, 142), the writer Petar the Grammarian relates in a side note, “Oh, oh, oh, oh, o, woe is me, the miserable, brothers, in these hard times. As I was writing in this joyful place, news came that janissaries had come. And my children are still too young for janissaries, and the cursed informers slandered about them to the cursed Hagarenes. And they ran to me with friends of mine. And I was very saddened and I knew not what I was writing. The slanderers knew not themselves or their own children. Amen” (ѡ ѡ ѡ ѡ горѣ мнѣ вкѡаннѡѡ брѡтѣе на сѡа нѡжнѡа врѣна, еѣа сѣе пншѣѣ, на отраднѡ мѣсто а глѡ мн доде како додохѡ за ѡннѡаре, и мон дѣца ѡще непотрѣбнн за ѡннѡаре, а проклѣтн мѡзѡвнре наваднѡн на проклѣтн агарѣне, и добѣгнѡ до мене, и wskрѣбѣ се сѣло. и не знѡ цѡ пнсѡ, не знѡле мѡзѡвнре самн себѣ, и своѣ ѡедѡ амннѣ.). His account is an example of cases when well-to-do youths could be bought off and the children of poor families were led away in their place, or children whose parents were not in the village at that time (Georgieva 1987, 27-28).

Compared with the marginalia of the preceding centuries, those of the 17th - 18th centuries display noticeably greater interest in the historical past (Miltenova (ed.) 2008, 741-742). A particularity of side notes in this period is that every larger one included information about significant events, usually contemporaneous to the author.

There are fourteen extant historiographical marginal notes from the 17th century. As in the preceding century, the names of high-ranking clergyman are mentioned in many of the notes. Some marginalia provide information about military campaigns waged by the sultans. Some notes inform of current problems such as bad harvests and high prices of grain. An interesting example is the marginal note in the Trebnik (Prayer Book) dating from 1641 (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, No. 251, Hristova, Karadzova, Uzunova 2004, 53-54, 158) and written by Priest Bogdan in the village of Slavovitsa, Plevna district. He relates the following: “... the winter that year was harsh and hungry. A krina of pure flour [cost] 100, while [a krina of] millet flour was 80 aspers, while food for the livestock: a razteg of straw - 1,300 aspers, and of hay, likewise. And much livestock died, and sheep, and oxen, and horses, and people suffered from terrible hunger” (тоѣа бѣ знма зла и глѡно. кнна брѡно ҃н по .Р. [100] и пакы брѡно просѣно по .П. [80] ѡпрн. и пакы хрѡна за довнѣтѣкѣ растеѣ слѡма по .Л.

in 1789, and in the empty pages left at the end of the book, the copyist added 27 chronicular notes covering the time from 1773 to 1800. In them he marked various disasters, such as a locus attack in 1774, an earthquake in 1793, a plague in 1795, and a flood of the Danube in 1800. The notes contain information about deaths in the writer's family and of people from Shtraklevo he knew. Purely domestic problems have not been overlooked, such as rising prices of flour and the burning down of the house of the local artisan Dragani. Obreten Ganyuv mentions the "six-year" war between the Ottoman and Russian empires in 1768-1774 and the Austro-Turkish War of 1787-1791; he tells about the turmoil related to Burnusuz Ahmed, the ayan of Ruse, Ömer Aga and his brother Ismail Trasteniklioglu; he describes the campaign of the ayan of Vidin, Osman Pazvantoglu (1758-1807), against the city of Ruse in the fall of 1797.

Dating from the 18th century are historiographical notes of a more particular kind, which refer the reader's attention to Bible history. The first of these notes is by the writer Yosif the Bearded, from the town of Elena. His manuscript has not been preserved, but another writer, Yankul of Hrelyovo, used it as a source and copied word for word the note contained in the so-called Yankul's Collection dating from 1745 (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, 690, Hristova, Karadzova, Uzunova 2004, 74-75, 172). An extensive marginal note lists the name of 45 rulers who lived from the Birth of Christ to the reign of Constantine the Great (306-337).

Priest Todor of Vratsa (Theophanes of Rila) is the author of two groups of historiographical notes on historical matters. The first is contained in the collection called Margarit, dating from 1766 (Rila, National Museum "Rila Monastery", No. 3/9, Angelov 1984, 72). The text consists of six chronology notes in which the author indicates the "number of years" between important events, starting from the Creation of the world and ending with the death of Tsar Alexander, i.e., Alexander III of Macedon (336-323 BC). Priest Todor probably intended to continue the chronology, as suggested by the fact the notes were written on an unfinished sheet. The second group of marginalia are in the Collection of sermons and prayers, dating from the second half of the 18th century (Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, No. 324, Tsonev 1910, 308-311). The book consists of two separate manuscripts, between which Priest Todor copied historiographical notes upon seven unfoliated sheets. The two groups of notes enumerate the same events, but the indicated years coincide only in two of the notes. The writer was probably using different sources for the two texts.

From their first appearance, at the time of the entry of Slavic writing in Bulgaria, to the waning of literary schools in the 18th century, historiographical marginal notes underwent significant changes of genre. At their first stage of development, they were comparatively short and strictly official. Gradually, they became more extensive, and the historical information in them became more ample. In the period before the fall of the Bulgarian lands under Ottoman rule, there is a noticeable significant increase in the number of extant marginal notes. In the 15th century, unlike the times of Byzantine rule, the genre continued to develop. The fixed expressions and *topoi* remained, but the scribe's notes lost their official tone. Gradually, brief notes developed into extensive forewords

and afterwords, some of which grew into brief stories, while others were chronicles of sorts. The writers' interest shifted from mirroring the official ideology of the ruler, as in the 14th century, to reflection on the alien rule, clearly evident in the notes by Vladislav the Grammarian, to descriptions of the policies of the Ottoman rulers, and ultimately to interest in the problems of their own community. Instead of writing about tsars and sultans, the scribes gave accounts of their relatives and fellow villagers; the military campaigns of the sultans were replaced by information about the price of grain and by events of importance for the village in which the writer resided. These changes do not diminish the value of the marginalia as historical sources, because the brief notes show most clearly the attitude of the writers to the past and the present. When other historical-chronicular genres in Bulgarian literature had disappeared, marginal notes continued to develop and to come closer to the earlier genre forms. The need to preserve the past - "that it may be known" - impelled the writers to record significant events on the pages of manuscripts. Their words, faded and fragmented, but still visible on parchment or paper, enables us to glance into the past and understand the history of our ancestors.

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Chief Asst. Prof. Denitsa Petrova, PhD
Institute for Historical Studies
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
52 Shipchenski Prohod Str., Bl. 17
1113 Sofia, Bulgaria
Email: denitsa_kp@abv.bg