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Copies of Filip Stanislavov’s *Abagar* (Rome, 1651)

*Per Ambrosiani*

1. Introduction

The printed *Abagar* by Filip Stanislavov (c. 1608–1674), who served as the Catholic bishop in Nikopol in Bulgaria from 1648, includes the apocryphical tale of king Abgar V of Edessa and a collection of prayers, and was printed in Rome by the Propaganda Fide in 1651.¹ The *Abagar* is usually considered to be the earliest printed work containing clear neobulgarian linguistic traits, and thus has a special place in the history of the Bulgarian language (cf., e.g., Rajkov 1979: 20).

The topic of the present article, however, is not the linguistic or historical features of Stanislavov’s *Abagar*, but rather the copies of the edition:² how many copies are preserved, where are they located, and how the recent advances in digital cataloguing and description can shed new light on these questions. A thorough examination of the preserved copies is necessary if we want to solve questions of, for example, how the text was supposed to be used: in at least two copies the leaves have been cut and then glued together to form a scroll. This has been interpreted as an indication of the possibility that the respective copy was meant to be worn as an amulet.³

2. Reported copies of the Abagar

Several reports exist on the number of currently known copies of Stanislavov’s *Abagar*. The most comprehensive list is given by Rajkov (1979: 24f.), who lists fif-

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¹ Cf. Kirilova 2015: 32, no. 26. Some earlier catalogues do not indicate any year of publication (cf., for example, Catalogus 1793: 8 under the heading “BULGARI”: “Stanislarou [sic] Philippus Episcopus Nicopolitanus. Preces quaedam, sine anno, & in folio, ut aiunt, aperto”), whereas some descriptions give the year 1641 (cf. Salaville 1912a: 442; for a detailed discussion of the publication date see Rajkov 1979: 27).


³ Cf., for example, the discussion in Minčeva, Georgiev 2011.
teen known copies and their location (in uneven detail). The same number, fifteen, is repeated by Kirilova 2010 in The Oxford Companion to the Book, as well as in Mincheva, Georgiev 2011: 27 and Nešev 2002: 5. However, at least one of the extant copies, located at the Uppsala University library in Sweden, is not included in Rajkov’s list, and at least one copy mentioned by Rajkov seems to have been destroyed during the Second World War. Thus, further investigation into the number of extant copies and their location is clearly needed, and in the present article I will present some new information on this bibliographic problem.

In the following, I will present all Abagar copies that have, to the best of my knowledge, been reported until today (June 2015) in the scholarly literature. The list is organized after the location of the copies according to the respective sources, but it should be clear that in several cases this information needs further verification.

**Austria (two reported copies)**


AT2. Vienna, Universitätsbibliothek Wien, Fachbereichsbibliothek Osteuropäische Geschichte und Slawistik, 32B-15. According to Rajkov (1979: 24f, no. 9), who refers to Pundev (1926), this copy was presented to the Seminar for Slavic Philology at the University of Vienna in 1915 by Vatroslav Jagić. Cf. also Bogdanov 1963: 117.

**Belgium (one reported copy)**

For a certain period during the beginning of the twentieth century, one copy was located in Brussels (cf. Rajkov 1979: no. 7). Since 2003, this copy is preserved at the Bibliothèque Diderot in Lyon, cf. FR1, below.

**Bulgaria (two reported copies)**


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4 Rajkov 1979: 24 lists copies in Rome, Moscow, Leipzig, Berlin, Odessa, Paris, Brussels, Vienna (2 copies), Sofia, Leningrad (2 copies), Kazan, Copenhagen, and Bologna, and also refers to a possible copy in Plovdiv. This contrasts with, for example, Bogdanov 1963: 117, who only mentions seven of these (in Moscow, Odessa, Leipzig, Vienna [2 copies], Sofia, and Plovdiv).


6 Rajkov (1979: 24) reports the slightly different shelfmark “22.N.28”.

7 There is also a second, newer, call number “A Dr 11” referring to the same item. I am grateful to Elisabeth Nemetz at the Fachbereichsbibliothek Osteuropäische Geschichte und Slawistik for helping me to verify the current location of this copy.
A digital surrogate of this copy is available in the Digital Library of the Bulgarian National Library.\(^8\)


**Denmark (one reported copy)**


**France (three reported copies)**

FR1. Lyon, Bibliothèque Diderot, Fonds slave, fonds slave des Jésuites.\(^9\) This copy was for some time located in Brussels, cf. Rajkov 1979: no. 7, Salaville 1912b: 494: “la bibliothèque slave de Bruxelles, au collège Saint-Michel, 22, boulevard Saint-Michel, possède un sixième exemplaire de l’Abagar de Stanislavof en état de conservation parfaite.”


FR3. Paris, l’Institut Français d’Etudes Byzantines (IFEB), R III 1010 (cf. Rajkov 1979: 24, no. 6, the only Paris copy mentioned by Rajkov: “Парижки екземпляр, пазещ се във Френския институт за византийски проучавания под сигн. III, 1001.”).\(^11\) According to Rajkov, this is the copy that was described by Salaville (1912a: 446 “qui se trouve à la bibliothèque des Assomptionistes de Kadi-Keuï”, 448 “à la bibliothèque des *Echos d’Orient*, à Kadi-Keuï, Constantinople.”).

**Germany (two reported copies)**

DE1. Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (Rajkov 1979: no. 3; Leskien 1879; Salaville 1912a: 446; Bogdanov 1963: 117). The current location of this copy has not been possible to verify.\(^12\)

DE2. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, 2” Zq 11880 (Rajkov 1979: no. 4 “Берлински екземпляр, пазен в Берлинската библиотека”, with reference to Brückner 1896: 629; Seliščev 1928: 245). In the currently available on-line

\(^8\) Cf. http://www.nationallibrary.bg/cgi-bin/e-cms/vis/vis.pl?s=001&p=0038&n=&vis=. A digital surrogate of the Sofia copy is also available at Wikimedia Commons, see https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Abagar.

\(^9\) I am grateful to Anne Maître, responsible for the Slavic collections at the Bibliothèque Diderot, for helping me to locate this copy. On the history of the Slavic collections, see Maître 2010.


\(^11\) I am grateful to Marie-Dominique Le Gall at the Bibliothèque Jean Vernon – IFEB for helping me to verify the location of this copy.

\(^12\) I am grateful to Steffen Hoffmann at the Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig for this information. Possibly, the copy was destroyed during the Second World War.
catalogue, this copy is reported as “Kriegsverlust – keine Benutzung möglich”.

**Italy (two reported copies)**


IT2. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Stamp.Chig.II.1446.Riserva (see http://opac.vatlib.it/iguana/www.main.cls?sUrl=search#RecordId=1.10718223). This copy is not mentioned explicitly by Rajkov 1979: 24f–however, Rajkov reports a copy at the Library of the Propaganda Fide (cf. Rajkov 1979: 24, no. 1 “Римски екземпляр, съхраняван в библиотеката на „Пропаганда фиде“ в Рим”), which perhaps may be identical to the copy currently located in the Vatican Library.

**Russian Federation (five reported copies)**

RU1. Kazan, formerly in the private library of Memnon Petrovič Petrovskij (1833–1912) (cf. Petrovskij 1877; Seliščev 1928: 245; Rajkov 1979: no. 13, with reference to Seliščev 1928). This is probably the copy that is described by Petrovskij 1877, who, however, does not state explicitly which copy he is describing, but refers only to the Čertkov library copy (cf. below, RU2): “Судя по существующим описаниям старо-Славянских книг на Руси, труд Филиппа Станиславова находился только в Чертковской библиотеке […]” (Petrovskij 1877: 2).

RU2. Moscow, Rossijskaja gosudarstvennaja biblioteka (Rajkov 1979: no. 2; Bogdanov 1963: 117). According to Rajkov, this copy was earlier owned by P. Köppen, and later located at the Rumjancev Museum in Moscow.


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14 I am grateful to Patrizia Moscatelli at the University Library, Bologna, and Giuseppe Nencioni, Umeå University, for helping me to verify the location of this copy.
15 Cf. Salaville 1912a: 446: “Ce n’est que vers 1825 que le critique russe P. Keppen, qui avait sans doute vu l’exemplaire de la Propagande […]”.
16 Cf. Seliščev 1928: 245 “в библиотеке Петровских в Казани (в Софии имеются фотографические снимки с этого экземпляра)” – the reference is apparently to Memnon Petrovskij together with his son, Nestor Petrovskij (1875–1921); Rajkov 1979: 25 “Казански екземпляр в Библиотеката на Петровски в Казан според съобщението на Селишчев от 1928 г.”. After Nestor Petrovskij’s death, the collection was transferred to Moscow, and most of the books were later moved to St. Petersburg, cf. Gorjainov, Kiškin 1986: 83 (I am grateful to Elmira Amerchanova, head of the Department of manuscripts and rare books at the Lobačevskij Scientific Library at the Kazan Federal University, for drawing my attention to this publication). The current location of the Kazan copy has not been possible to verify.
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които още през 1906 г., по данни на К. Кузмински, не се е намирал вече между книгите от неговата библиотека”.


RU5. St. Petersburg, Rossijskaja natsionalnaja biblioteka, no location indicated (Seliščev 1928: 245; Rajkov 1979: no. 12).

Sweden (one reported copy)

SE1. Uppsala, Uppsala universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library), Ksl. 158 Rulle (Kjellberg 1951: no. 256; Damyanova 1980: 123f, no. 3; Rajkov 1979). This copy was first mentioned in 1706 in the printed description of J. G. Sparwenfeld’s donation of books to Uppsala University Library the year before (cf. Catalogus 1706: 71, nr VI: “Formulas precum quotidianarum, in usus peregrinantium, lingva Slaveno-Illyrica, Romæ, typis collegii de Prop. Fide.”). Possibly, this is the earliest mentioned copy of the Abagar, cf. Rajkov 1979: 7, who cites a record from 1738: “Всъщност първите печатни сведения за „Абагара“ датират още от XVIII в. и се съдържат в Каталога на Propaganda Fide, издаден в Рим през 1738 г.”. The Uppsala copy is preserved in the form of a scroll with the approximate size 568 x 8 cm.

Ukraine (one reported copy)

UA1. Odessa, Odes’ka natsional’nna naukova biblioteka im. M. Gor’kogo, Vid-dil ridkisnych vydan’ta rukopysiv, I 824 (Inv. no. 799165) (cf. Rajkov 1979: no. 5; Popruženko 1905; Bogdanov 1963: 117).


18 The Uppsala copy was included in the 1980 Swedish – Bulgarian exhibition Sverige – Bulgaria. Röster från sju sekel at the State Historical Museum in Stockholm, in connection with the 1300 years jubilee of the founding of Bulgaria, and a short description was published in the exhibition catalogue (see Damyanova 1980: 123f, no. 3, with reference to Kjellberg 1951, no. 256). The catalogue was published simultaneously in Swedish, Bulgarian (Швеция – България. Гласове от седем века), and English (Sweden – Bulgaria. Voices from Seven Centuries), but despite this, I have found no reference to the Uppsala copy of the Abagar in the international scholarly literature.

19 Lately, the Uppsala copy has also been described in the Cyrillic and Glagolitic Books and Manuscripts in Sweden database, cf. Ambrosiani 2014a: 18.

20 For details cf. Ambrosiani 2014b: 14f. The Uppsala copy was probably acquired by Sparwenfeld during his visit to Rome in the summer of 1692, cf. Jacobowsky 1932: 196–205.

21 I am grateful to Valentyna Mykolajivna Rajko, Head of the Department of rare editions and manuscripts at the Odessa National Scientific Library, for helping me to verify the location of this copy.
**United Kingdom (one reported copy)**

GB1. London, British Library, General Reference Collection, RB.31.c.597 (cf. http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=BLVU1&afterPDS=true&institution=BL&docId=BLL01014838360). This copy is attested neither in Rajkov 1979 nor in Cleminson et al. 2000, which makes it possible to assume that it was not registered at its current location before the turn of the twenty-first century.

In addition, in 1839, Kopitar describes an unidentified copy of *Abagar* (Kopitar 1839: 45f, no. 11).

3. Conclusions

As we have seen, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, approximately twenty copies of Filip Stanislavov’s *Abagar* have been reported to exist in various locations. Some of these copies have been preserved in the same repository for a considerable time (cf., for example, SE1, which has been included in the Uppsala University Library collections since 1705, and DK1, preserved at the Danish Royal Library probably since the end of the 18th century), whereas other copies seem to have appeared at their current location recently (cf. GB1, possibly acquired by the British Library after the year 2000). Some copies are known to have been moved between different repositories and countries (cf. FR1, FR3), and at least one copy is reported to have been lost completely (cf. DE2, marked as “Kriegsverlust” in the catalogue). In all, so far the current location of twelve copies (AT1–2, BG1, DK1, FR1–3, IT1–2, SE1, UA1, GB1) has been possible to verify, whereas the location of at least six copies (BG2, RU1–5) still needs verification. Of the twelve verified copies, two, FR2 and GB1 are, to the best of my knowledge, here mentioned for the first time in the scholarly literature. In addition, the Uppsala copy (SE1) appears to not have had attention drawn to it outside of Sweden before now. It is, together with the Bologna copy (IT1), the only copy known so far to be preserved in the form of a scroll.

Significantly, the two “new” additions to the corpus of extant copies of the

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23 Kopitar’s work is mentioned by Rajkov (1979: 7f), but the copy described by Kopitar is not explicitly identified as any of the copies listed by Rajkov (1979: 24f). Cf. Popruženko 1905: 230: “[…] какъ неизвѣстень и экземпляръ Абагара, бывшій въ рукахъ у Копитара, когда онъ давалъ о немъ свѣдѣнія въ своемъ трудѣ. – Hesychii […]”

24 DK1 was earlier owned by Christian Friedrich Temler (1717–1780). After his death, substantial parts of his book collection was acquired by the Royal Library (cf. Crone 1957: 65).

25 Not counting Ambrosiani 2014b: 15 (published in Swedish, and thus with limited international visibility).

26 Cf. Rajkov 1979: 25: “Това е единственият известен досега екземпляр, запазен под формата на свитък […]”.
Abagar have both been made visible for the international scholarly community through the recent introduction of on-line national and international library catalogues freely accessible through the Internet. The growing availability of such web resources will, without doubt, help to make an increasing number of Early Slavic prints known outside their current repositories, and thus better available for scholarly research on important aspects of the Slavic cultural heritage.

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Catalogus 1793: Catalogus librorum qui ex typographio Sacrae congregationis de Propaganda Fide, Romae MDCCXCIII.


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