

**ARCHIV FÜR MITTELALTERLICHE
PHILOSOPHIE UND KULTUR
АРХИВ ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА
ФИЛОСОФИЯ И КУЛТУРА**

**Sofia, 2024
София, 2024**

Издателски съвет

Янис Деметракопулос (Патра)
Ваутер Хорис (Бон)
Паскуале Поро (Торино)
Стефан Санджакоски (Струга)
Боголюб Шиякович (Белград)
Карлос Стил (Лувен)

Editorial Board

John Demetracopoulos (Patras)
Wouter Goris (Bonn)
Pasquale Porro (Torino)
Stefan Sanjakoski (Struga)
Bogolub Šijaković (Beograd)
Carlos Steel (Leuven)

Основатели

Цочо Бояджиев
и Георги Каприев (1994)

Bergünder

Tzotcho Boiadjiev
und Georgi Kapriev (1994)

Издатели

Цочо Бояджиев (1994-)
Олег Георгиев (1997, 2000)
Гергана Динева (2019–2024)
Георги Каприев (1994-)
Мартин Осиковски (2024-)
Андреас Шпеер (1996, 2000,
2002-)

Herausgeber

Tzotcho Boiadjiev (1994-)
Oleg Georgiev (1997, 2000)
Gergana Dineva (2019–2024)
Georgi Kapriev (1994-)
Martin Ossikovski (2024-)
Andreas Speer (1996, 2000,
2002-)

Всички права запазени. Нито една част от тази книга не може да бъде размножавана или предавана по какъвто и да било начин без изричното съгласие на „Изток-Запад“.

- © Tzotcho Boiadjiev, Georgi Kapriev, Martin Ossikovski,
Andreas Speer, Herausgeber, 2024
© „Изток-Запад“, 2024

ISBN 978-619-01-1521-2
ISSN 2603-5189

INSTITUT FÜR MITTELALTERLICHE PHILOSOPHIE UND KULTUR

**ARCHIV
FÜR MITTELALTERLICHE
PHILOSOPHIE
UND KULTUR
Heft XXX**

Herausgegeben von
Tzotcho Boiadjiev, Georgi Kapriev,
Martin Ossikovski und Andreas Speer

Институт ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА ФИЛОСОФИЯ И КУЛТУРА

**АРХИВ
ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА
ФИЛОСОФИЯ
И КУЛТУРА
СВИТЪК XXX**

Издаван от
Цочо Бояджиев, Георги Каприев,
Мартин Осиковски и Андреас Шпеер



Hinweise zum Zitieren

Указания за цитиране

Die Quellen- und Sekundärliteratur wird in den Fußnoten nach dem Originaltitel auf folgende Weise zitiert:

Източниците и интерпретаторската литература се цитират в бележките с оригиналните заглавия по следния начин:

Monographien:/Монографии:

Beispiel / пример: J. A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*, Leiden – New York – Köln, 1996, 21.

Aufsätze in Sammelbände:

Статии в сборници:

Beispiel / пример: T. Kobusch, „Gott und die Transzendentalien: Von der Erkenntnis des Impliziten, Impliziten, Konfusen und Unbewußten“, in: *Die Logik der Transzendentalien (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 30)*, ed. M. Píková, Berlin – New York, 2003, 427–429.

Aufsätze in Sammelbände eines Autors:

Статии в сборни томове от един автор:

Beispiel / пример: L. Benakis, „Die aristotelischen Begriffe Physis, Materie, Form nach Michael Psellos“, in: Id., *Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*, Athens, 2002, 38–41.

Aufsätze in Zeitschriften:/Статии в списания:

Beispiel / пример: M. Gorman, „Uses of the Person-Nature Distinction in Thomas's Christology“, in: *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 67/1 (2000), 58.

Texte von mehreren Autoren oder Herausgeber:/

Текстове от повече автори или издатели:

Beispiel / пример: L. Denkova/P. Yaneva/K. Ivanova, „The Reception of Pseudo-Dionysius in Medieval Bulgaria“, in: *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, edd. T. Boiadjiev/G. Kapriev/A. Speer, Turnhout, 2000, 102–103.

Bei zweiter und weiteren Erwähnungen eines Textes in den Fußnoten wird der Text durch Name des Autors, Kurztitel und Hinweis auf die Fußnote, wo er zum ersten Mal zitiert ist, angeführt:

При второ и по-нататъшни споменавания на един текст в бележките под черта, текстът се въвежда с името на автора, съкратено заглавие и указване на бележката под черта, където е цитиран за първи път:

Beispiele / примери: Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy* (cf. nt. 1), 58.

Benakis, „Die aristotelischen Begriffe“ (cf. nt. 3), 40.

Die Titel aller Werke, die man im Grundtext des Beitrages erwähnt, sind kursiviert und ohne Anführungszeichen zu zitieren:

Заглавията на всички произведения, споменати в основния текст на статията се цитират в курсив и без кавички:

Beispiel / пример: Die griechische Übersetzung der *Summa contra gentiles* erscheint im Dezember 1354. / Гръцкият превод на *Сума против езичниците* се появява през декември 1354 г.

Die Quellenliteratur wird nach den jeweils angenommenen Normen zitiert.

Изворовата литература се цитира по съответните общоприети норми.

Alle Autoren sind verpflichtet, ihre Beiträge mit einer kurzen Zusammenfassung (ca. 1000 Zeichen / 160 Worte) in englischer Sprache zu begleiten.

Всички автори се задължават да прилагат към статиите си кратко резюме на английски език (около 1000 знака / 160 думи).

Съдържание

ПРЕДГОВОР / VORWORT

GERASIM PETRINSKI (SOFIA)

Exorcism and Punishment in Byzantine Hagiography:
Social Status and Gender Roles9

ГЕОРГИ КАПРИЕВ (СОФИЯ)

Логоси и енергии.....32

ВАСИЛЕН ВАСИЛЕВ (СОФИЯ)

Ранносредновековната диалектика и Хегеловата
история на философията.....43

СЛАВА ЯНАКИЕВА (СОФИЯ)

Латинските средновековни игри за св. Николай.
Сценични стратегии в рамките на жанровата специфика.....84

FR. THOMAS JOSEPH WHITE, OP (ANGELICUM, ROME)

How can one say that God has become human? John of Damascus
and Thomas Aquinas on the Semantics of the Incarnation..... 102

МИЛАН ГЪОРГЕВИЧ (СКОПИЕ)

Въпросът за трансцендентността и иманентността на Бога
в мрежите на византийската философия 123

IVAN YOVICHEV (SOFIA)

The Church Autocephaly: Motivating Factors
and Constituting Elements 145

IRINI BALCOYIANNOPOULOU (PATRAS)

A new edition and translation of Manuel II Palaeologus' *Epistle
to Andreas Asanes* on Dreams: On the Fringes of the Late Byzantine
Reception of Aristotle's *De Divinatione per Somnum* 162

<i>JOHN A. DEMETRACOPOULOS (PATRAS / PARIS)</i>	
Yet Another Episode from the Late Byzantine Reception of Thomas Aquinas' <i>Summa Theologiae</i> , II ^A II ^{AE} : George Scholarios' Critical Reception of Demetrios Cydones' and Manuel II Palaiologos' Views of the Fallibility of Religious Beliefs.....	217
<i>СИМЕОН МЛАДЕНОВ (СОФИЯ)</i>	
Тома Аквино и Маймонида относно възможността за позитивно именуване на Бог.....	247
<i>ОЛЕГ ГЕОРГИЕВ</i>	
Рецензия за „Воля за мислене“ на Симеон Младенов.....	262
<i>IN MEMORIAM</i>	271
<i>ABSTRACTS IN ENGLISH</i>	273
<i>АРХИВ ЗА СРЕДНОВЕКОВНА ФИЛОСОФИЯ И КУЛТУРА</i>	
(СЪДЪРЖАНИЕ НА СВИТЪЦИ I–XXX).....	281

Архив за средновековна философия и култура завършва своята тридесетгодишнина. Дълъг път, по който не бихме могли да преминаем, ако бяхме сами, а не подкрепени от колегите си – от България и целия свят. Числата говорят: публикувани са общо 417 текста: 335 статии, 53 превода на текстове от средновековни автори и 16 рецензии, както, уви, и посмъртни думи за наши достойни колеги. Щастливи сме, че всички издатели на *Архива* продължават да работят и да допринасят за развитието на нашите научни полета. Трите десетилетия, отминали от началото, бяха време на гражданска и научна свобода, на интензивна комуникация и съвместна работа – добро условие за възможност. То нямаше обаче да премине в действителност, без мощния принос на нашите автори, на издателите и не на последно място на нашите компетентни читатели. Вече стана традиция по подобни поводи да повтаряме последното изречение от предговора в първия свитък: „Надяваме се, че слагаме едно добро начало, убедени сме, че то заслужава живот“. И заявяваното в годините до днес: от днешна гледна точка имаме още по-солидни основания да го повторим.

Издателите

Das Archiv für mittelalterliche Philosophie und Kultur feiert sein dreißigjähriges Bestehen. Ein langer Weg, den wir nicht hätten beschreiten können, wären wir allein gewesen, ohne die Unterstützung unserer Kolleginnen und Kollegen – aus Bulgarien und aus der ganzen Welt. Die Zahlen sprechen für sich: Insgesamt wurden 417 Texte veröffentlicht: 337 Artikel, 53 Übersetzungen mittelalterlicher Texte und 16 Rezensionen sowie, leider, Nachrufe auf würdige Kollegen. Wir sind glücklich, dass alle Herausgeber des Archivs weiterhin aktiv an der Entwicklung unserer wissenschaftlichen Bereiche mitarbeiten. Die drei Jahrzehnte seit der Gründung waren eine Zeit der bürgerlichen und wissenschaftlichen Freiheit, der intensiven Kommunikation und Mitarbeit – eine treffliche Möglichkeitsbedingung. Doch sie hätte sich nicht verwirklichen lassen ohne den kraftvollen Beitrag unserer Autorinnen und Autoren, der Herausgeber und nicht zuletzt unserer kompetenten Leserinnen und Leser. Es ist bereits zur Tradition geworden, bei ähnlichen Anlässen den letzten Satz aus dem Vorwort des ersten Heftes zu wiederholen: „Wir hoffen, dass wir einen guten Anfang machen; wir sind überzeugt, dass die Sache den vollen Einsatz des Lebens verdient“. Und wie über die Jahre hinweg immer wieder zu betonen: Aus heutiger Sicht haben wir noch stärkere Gründe, diesen Satz zu wiederholen.

Die Herausgeber

GERASIM PETRINSKI (SOFIA)

EXORCISM AND PUNISHMENT IN BYZANTINE HAGIOGRAPHY: SOCIAL STATUS AND GENDER ROLES

Introduction

Once upon a time, in the first half of the ninth century, in Bithynia of Asia Minor, there was a monastery called the Monastery of Agauros. The monks had an exceptionally strict and ascetic abbot named Eustratius, a future Saint. One day, the abbot sent his humble monk, Timothy, to harvest the grapes in the monastery vineyard. Timothy went, but suddenly, a swarm of wasp-like demons attacked him. After being stung multiple times, Timothy managed to escape and went crying to his abbot's cell, begging him to save him from the demonic influence. Concerned, Eustratius first asked him if the wasps had stung him inside his mouth (to see if he was at risk of choking from a swollen tongue). When he received a negative answer, he laid Timothy on the floor and gave him a few strong kicks. Then, he delivered an extensive sermon on the deceptions of demons and the nature of sin in general. After this exorcism, the monk could leave, free and unaffected.

In this story from the *Life* of St. Eustratios of Agauros, which seems quite strange by today's standards, evil's exorcism is closely linked to punishment. To the modern reader, Timothy appears to have suffered a painful demonic attack—the last thing we would expect is the harsh beating he received, a punishment that shocks us with its unexpectedness, all to save his soul. Yet, that is exactly what happened.

* * *

In the tale of the monk Timothy, exorcism and punishment are intricately linked, forming two facets of a complex ritual. The individual who has endured a demonic assault must be disciplined, as they have demonstrated susceptibility to evil and are therefore accountable for their suffering. Consequently, the expulsion of the demonic presence necessitated a painful beating to drive out the sin. The author of this account deliberately omits specifics about Timothy's transgression, perhaps insinuating that everyone harbors inner sins, even the most modest monk.

The question arises: Is this an isolated case where an extreme Byzantine "Puritan" decided to convey some abstract theological and moralistic ideas through the above narrative? Or does the author employ a widely accepted way mindset? The *Life of St. Eustratius* belongs to the "provincial" hagiography (according to the classification of A. Kazhdan). It is pretty different from the more philosophical writings of Theodore Studite and Patriarch Photios, who wrote around the same time. It is unlikely that such a text would contain complex subtleties that might be difficult for the audience to understand. A close study of hagiographical and theological sources suggests that, according to Christian theology, demons can influence humans with God's permission. When demons possess someone, it is often because of the person's susceptibility, their sins, or their inclination to sin. In fewer cases, the Devil and his servants may enter a person solely because of their power and envy. Therefore, exorcism is seen as a form of punishment that not only frees the possessed from the harm caused by demonic presence but also from their susceptibility to sin.

This study aims to examine these stories from Byzantine Saints' *Lives*, in which the relationship between punishment and exorcism is particularly evident. The first part will attempt a brief overview of the phenomenon in Antiquity, focusing primarily on Ancient Rome. The second section will analyze social status's role in treating sin and possession. The final part will address the issue of sexual and, in general, cross-gender relations under the influence of Satan's servants in Byzantine hagiography. Due to

the vast hagiographical material, the study will be limited to the period from the mid-seventh century to the late tenth century.

The relationship between punishment and exorcism is crucial and concerns Byzantine culture and Medieval and Early Modern Europe. The social contexts of these two societies, separated by 800–500 years, are entirely different, but drawing parallels can provide us with unique insights into the fundamental characteristics of broader European Christianity.

Exorcism and punishment in ancient Rome

The close connection between exorcism and punishment is by no means a Christian invention. Specific rules were in place to punish any actions that could anger the gods. However, what exactly constitutes these actions, and who has the authority to punish them? Who can commit such crimes? Who is liable to harsh punishments without mercy? How does the act of exorcising evil tie into the complex dynamics of legitimizing authority?

During most of the Republican period, the principle of *humanitas* stood¹, at least in principle, in the foundation of the punitive system, and there was no trend of subjecting citizens to torturous punishments² or commonly practicing human sacrifices in Rome. Instead, the death penalty was extensively regulated, and the so-called *iudicium populi* (a decision from the Assembly) was strictly required³; in addition, plebeians could also plead before a tribune to exercise his right to veto, and citizens had the right to appeal to the emperor during the Imperial period. Exe-

¹ On the principle of *humanitas*, opposed to the *saevitia*, see Bauman, Richard. *Crime and Punishment in Ancient Rome*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 5 sq.

² Various sources mentioned a few exclusions from this principle, e.g., Titus Livius, which concerned the Kingdom period, or in the XII Tables during the Early Republic. For example, the punishment for treason was beating to death, and arson was punished by burning alive (Bauman, *Crime and Punishment ...*, p. 7).

³ Bauman, *Crime and Punishment ...*, pp. 7 sq.

cutions were usually conducted without involving torture; Sulla and Caesar's laws even left some categories of convicts the right to go voluntarily to exile, replacing the actual and immediate execution with *aquae et ignis interdictio* (*interdiction of water and fire*)⁴. Treason⁵ and religious crimes were the only notable exceptions to the relatively "humane" penalties imposed on citizens in ancient Rome, requiring the so-called *summum supplicium* (*the ultimate punishment*) or execution through methods other than the standard decapitation⁶. For example, in the case of parricide, the convicted individual was sewn into a sack with snakes and scorpions and thrown into the Tiber River⁷. The penalties for a Vestal Virgin who voluntarily lost her virginity were similarly severe. In the most common punishment, the guilty party was flogged, then bound alive to a deathbed and buried with a grand funeral beneath the city walls in a special small chamber with only a tiny amount of bread and water⁸. However, Livy describes another custom. In 217 BCE, during the severe crisis following the defeat at the Battle of Cannae, two Vestal Virgins, Opimia and Floronia, were particularly reviled for breaking their vows of chastity. Livy recounts that one of them committed suicide

⁴ Bauman, *Crime and Punishment...*, p. 20. By rejecting them the formal right to shelter and thus to the security of law, these laws allowed every citizen to kill the convict without legal consequences. They left the culprit the exile as the only option for salvation.

⁵ In one of the standard punishments for this crime, which originated in the Early Republican Period, the perpetrator had to be bound to an infertile tree and beaten to death (Bauman, *Crime and Punishment...*, pp. 7 and 33).

⁶ Bauman, *Crime and Punishment...*, p. 10.

⁷ Dionysius Halicarnsaeus. *Antiquatum Romanarum quae supersunt*. Ed. Karl Jacoby, Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967, IV.62.4–5.

⁸ Dionysius Halicarnsaeus. *Antiquatum Romanarum...*, II.67.3–4; VIII.87.4–5; Plutarchus, "Numa", 10.3–7. In: *Plutarch's Lives*. Ed. Bernadotte Perrin, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967, vol. I, pp. 306–382; C. Plinius Caecilius Secundus. *Epistularum libri decem*. Ed. Roger Mynors, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966, IV.11.6.

while the other was burned at the stake near the Porta Collina, as it was forbidden to shed her blood⁹.

In all these cases, it is essential to note that the Roman justice system did not operate with the concept of personal subjective sin or the idea of spiritual redemption for the criminal. Its primary aim was to purify society and atone for the wrongs committed against deities, which could otherwise harm the entire city of Rome. Later, during the imperial era, this concept expanded to include *laesio majestatis*, the offense against the emperor's majesty as the divine representative of the entire Pax Romana.

Exorcism, punishment, and social status

With the rise of Christianity in the fourth century, the focus shifted from society or community as sacred to the person as sacred. However, this does not mean that torture and punishment were removed from the practice of exorcism. Instead, their goal became to save the individual rather than remove an undesirable member who threatened the community's standing with the divine.

Byzantine hagiography from the seventh to the tenth century is replete with stories of demon possession and exorcism—each of the numerous texts often includes at least one such account. We will not examine all of these in detail. Instead, we will focus specifically on those where punishment is a prominent element, such as in the *Life* of St. Eustratius of Agauros mentioned earlier. It is important to highlight from the start that there are significant differences between cases of demon possession involving individuals of low social status and those involving prominent members of society.

Beatings and lashings were standard methods for driving away unclean spirits in Early Christianity. This pattern is notably present in the *Lives* of the Saints. As early as the mid-sixth century,

⁹ Titus Livius. *Ab Urbe Condita*. Ed. Wilhelm Weissenborn, Leipzig: Teubner, 1887–1908, XXII.57.2–4.

the thirteen-year-old Theodore of Sykeon exorcised a possessed boy by striking him with a stick and shouting, *Leave, unclean demon, from this child in the name of my Lord*¹⁰. In the early seventh century, the inhabitants of the village of Bouzaioi in the Gordian region of Asia Minor decided to build a bridge. They dug into a nearby hill to find building materials. However, they also disturbed several old graves, from which many unclean spirits emerged. The demons spread diseases, and the locals called upon Theodore of Sykeon to perform an exorcism. The Saint conducted an excruciating ritual that included pulling the hair of the possessed and severe beatings¹¹. Between 842 and 846, Saint Ioannikios settled in Lydia of Asia Minor on Mount Lisos. Many locals, afflicted by spirits, came to him begging for exorcism from demonic influence. According to the *Saint's Life*, the exorcism involved mostly flogging¹². Shortly after he died in 901, Patriarch Anthony II Kauleas appeared in the dream of a woman suffering from leg pain, struck her, and the demon departed¹³.

We should also examine how secular courts viewed people of low social status who were accused of being “possessed” and making pacts with the devil. In most accounts of the saints’ *Lives*, there is a strong belief that demons have a real and harmful influence on humans. However, the official stance of authorities was similar to the Western *Canon Episcopii*¹⁴; they tended to see such

¹⁰ [George of Sykeon]. *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn*. Ed. André-Jean Festugière, vol. 1 [Subsidia hagiographica 48], Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1970, §18 (pp. 15 sq).

¹¹ [George of Sykeon]. *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn ...*, §43 (pp. 38 sq.).

¹² [Sabbas the Monk]. “Life and way of life and miracles of our holy father and thaumaturge Ioannikios, written by Sabbas the Monk,” §49 (p. 378B) [Greek: “βίος καὶ πολιτεία <καὶ θαύματα> τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν <καὶ θαυματουργοῦ> Ἰωαννικίου συγγραφεὶς παρὰ Σάββα μοναχοῦ”]. In: *Acta Sanctorum*, Novembris tomus II.1, Paris: Palmé, 1870, 332–83.

¹³ [Nikephoros the Philosopher]. “L’ ‘Encomium in patriarcham Antonium II Cauleam’ del filosofo e retore Niceforo”. Ed. Pietro Leone and François Leroy, §14 (pp. 423 sq.), *Orpheus* 10 (1989), 404–29.

¹⁴ *Regionis abbatis Prumiensis libri duo de synodalibus causis et disciplines ecclesiasticis*. Ed. Friedrich Wasserschleben, Lipsiae, 1840, p. 355.

cases as more likely being instances of madness rather than genuine demonic possession, which would require punishment and exorcism. For example, the *Ecloga*, issued by Emperor Leo III in 729 or 740, did not prescribe a penalty for practicing magic, even against the emperor, a severe crime under the Theodosian and Justinian Codes.

However, the absence of specific laws against these actions does not mean that there were no accusations of murder under demonic influence. Thus, the father of Patriarch Tarasios, an imperial judge in Constantinople, acquitted two mothers in the mid-eighth century who were accused of killing their newborns under the influence of the female evil spirit Gyló¹⁵, a figure deeply rooted in Byzantine literature and beliefs.

Gyló, or Gelló¹⁶, as it was also known, appears for the first time in Greek literature as early as the late seventh or early sixth century BCE, Sappho mentioned two vague words—*Γελλῶς παιδοφιλοτέρα* (*more child-loving than Gelló*)¹⁷. Six centuries later, the commentator Zenobius explained that it referred to a girl who had died prematurely and whose ghost haunted Lesbos, killing infants¹⁸. The demonic Gelló (alias Gylló, Gyló, Gyllou) appears infrequently but consistently in Byzantine literature, indicating it was a well-established part of popular beliefs. For example, in the eleventh century, Michael Psellus describes her as

¹⁵ Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* (BHG 1698) [Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs 4]. Ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis, New York: Routledge, 2016, §5.

¹⁶ On Gello, see Petrinski, Gerasim. *The Image of the Demon in Byzantium. Philosophical and Mythological Origins* [Studies in Historical Philosophy 9]. Hannover – Stuttgart: Ibidem Verlag, 2024, pp. 37–52, 471–487.

¹⁷ “Carminum Sapphycorum Fragmenta,” fr. 178. In: *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta*. Ed. Edgar Lobel and Dennis Page, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

¹⁸ Zenobius, “Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi,” p. 58. In: *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*. Ed. Friedrich Schneidewin and Ernst von Leutsch, vol. 1, Hildesheim: Olms, 1965.

a *power* (δύναμις τις)¹⁹ that possessed elderly women, gave them the ability to fly, and compelled them to go out at night to suck the blood of newborns.

* * *

For people of low or middle social status, their tendency to sin attracts the attention of the Devil and his followers. A painful ritual is required to perform an exorcism and save their soul and body. This significant religious practice, however, is never lethal, and the sinner is not subject to capital punishment. Burning heretics at the stake remained an isolated and rare occurrence in Byzantium.

The situation is different, however, when it comes to aristocrats, notably the emperor. In these cases, beliefs more closely resemble those of Early Modern Europe, even, sometimes, in terms of the forms of punishment. The sin of a prominent individual is rarely just a personal matter; it often manifests as black magic or heresy. People tended to see such offenses as stains on society, and if these stains were not removed through exorcism and severe punishment, the souls of all members of Christendom could be at risk, highlighting the collective responsibility and societal dynamics at play.

The punishment of prominent members of society could be inflicted directly by God and the angels. In such cases, while the individual might lose their life, repentance could still save their soul. Around 970, the revered Saint Nikon Metanoieite went to Sparta, where he found the city in a dire state due to an outbreak of disease, likely the plague. The first thing he did was to expel the local Jews, confining them to a ghetto outside the city walls²⁰.

¹⁹ Michael Psellus. [De Gillo], p. 164.12. In: *Michaelis Pselli philosophica minora*. Ed. D.J. O'Meara, vol. 2, Leipzig: Teubner, 1989.

²⁰ Anonymous. *The Life of Saint Nikon: Text, translation, and commentary*. Ed. Denis Sullivan [The Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources 14], Brooklin Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1987, § 33 (p. 112).

However, the Jews were an essential part of the local economy and had their supporters. One of these supporters, a wealthy landowner and businessman named John Aratos, brought a Jewish associate back into his home, supposedly under the influence of a demon, as described in St. Nikon's *Life*. The holy man began rebuking him and once again drove the Jew to the ghetto, chanting the 139th Psalm, a standard method in Byzantine literature for driving out evil spirits²¹. Despite this, Aratos continued to speak against the Saint, and his punishment came in the form of a vision: two giant eunuchs appeared in his dream and scolded him for his actions. The following day, the unfortunate defender of the Jews awoke with a severe fever. He sent his servants to tell Nikon he repented, and the Saint forgave him. Within a few days, Aratos died, losing his earthly life but saving his eternal soul²².

This story is a typical example of the attitude towards a possessed aristocrat in Byzantium. The severe punishment for Aratos's threat to Spartan society resulted in divine retribution, a testament to God's power and justice.

The most extreme form of demonic possession and sin is a motif that dates back to Late Antiquity—one that would later become the foundation of the Western European concept of the «Sabbath.» It involves a pact with the devil, where an ambitious person willingly becomes an *instrument* (ὄργανον), a *workshop* (ἐργαστήριον) of Satan.²³ However, this idea is rarely used in the political theory of the Middle Byzantine period.

One such rare story is found in the anonymous *Life* Bishop Leo of Catania. In the 770s, a local aristocrat named Heliodorus lived in Catania, Sicily. He was the most distinguished resident of the city, as his mother was a patrician. Heliodorus aspired to become a governor, but his lousy character stood in his way.

²¹ Anonymous. *The Life of Saint Nikon ...*, §35 (p. 120).

²² Anonymous. *The Life of Saint Nikon ...*, §35 (pp. 122–124).

²³ On the motif of the pact with the Devil and its tradition, see Petrin-ski, Gerasim. "Faustus Byzantinus: The Legend of Faust in Byzantine Literature and Its Neo-Platonic Roots," *Sofia Philosophical Review* 13/1 (2020), 48–76.

Suppressing his anger and envy, he began to seek other means to achieve his ambitions. He found a Jewish magician and invited him to his home to learn the art of magic. The magician taught him a few tricks and then gave him a scroll filled with strange incantations. He instructed Heliodorus to go to a cemetery and climb onto the tomb of a hero. There, he was to read the chants aloud and wait. Heliodorus acted as the Jew told him. When he finished reading, he saw the devil—the ruler of the air—approaching. He was enormous and riding a giant stag. Heliodorus, undaunted, explained why he had summoned him. The devil gave him one of his servants, Gaspar, and commanded him to assist Heliodorus in everything. Finally, Heliodorus fell to the ground, bowed to the devil, and kissed his hand. By doing so, the apostate renounced his Christian faith and eternal life²⁴.

After this, he and his friends began to cause all sorts of mischief. For example, they used illusions to turn stones into gold, deceiving merchants. They also made passing women believe that the road was flooded. The women would lift their clothes to avoid getting wet, allowing the mischievous men to see them nearly naked²⁵. Heliodorus could even fly on a phantom ship²⁶. Not even Emperor Constantine IV (668–685) could execute him—Heliodorus vanished into a glass of water²⁷. The only one who could save Catania and its people from the magician was Bishop Leo. Without any difficulty, he dragged Heliodorus to the place of public executions and ordered a stake to be built. Then he entered the flames along with the magician. Heliodorus desperately called out for Gaspar, but it was in vain—he burned quickly and unrepentant. The bishop emerged unharmed, while

²⁴ Anonymous. “Vita s. Leonis Catanensis,” §10–12 (p. 16). In: Latyshev, Vasilij, *Unpublished Greek Hagiographical Texts* [Russian: Латышев, Василий, *Неизданные греческие агиографические тексты*], St. Petersburg, 1914, 12–28.

²⁵ Anonymous. “Vita s. Leonis Catanensis”..., §14 (p. 17).

²⁶ Anonymous. “Vita s. Leonis Catanensis”..., §25 (pp. 21 sq.).

²⁷ Anonymous. “Vita s. Leonis Catanensis”..., §22 (pp. 20 sq.).

the proud and ambitious aristocrat, who had brought a stain upon his community, lost his eternal soul²⁸.

In the story of Ioannis Aratos mentioned earlier, we saw that, according to Byzantine beliefs, a person could lose their earthly life tortiously and, through this exorcism, save their soul. However, in cases of demonic possession involving emperors, even this option becomes extremely rare²⁹. In Byzantium, several rulers were accused of becoming instruments of the Devil through their actions. The most notable examples are the four most zealous iconoclasts: Leo III, Constantine V, Leo V, and Theophilos. However, the Iconoclasts charged only one emperor with making a pact with the Devil: Constantine V, also known as *Copronymos* or *Caballinos*, the fiercest persecutor of monks and iconophiles. According to the *Life of St. Stephen the Younger* (as well as accounts by George the Monk, the *Suda* Lexicon, and others), the Emperor made pacts with demons (τὰς πρὸς τοὺς δαίμονες συνθήκας ἐποιεῖτο) in the ruined church of Saint Maura, located outside the walls of Constantinople. The heretic ruler reportedly sealed these pacts with the ritual sacrifice of young boys³⁰.

It appears that the story of this “demonic” emperor was widely popular. Not only in the *Life* of St. Stephen but also in

²⁸ Anonymous. “Vita s. Leonis Catanensis”..., §34 (p. 25).

²⁹ Theophilos is the only iconoclast emperor whose soul was reportedly saved. However, this account comes from a highly biased source—the *Life of Empress Theodora*. According to this text, the emperor repented shortly before his death due to his wife’s influence. Theodora requested official recognition of his repentance at the council, where Orthodoxy was restored in 843 (see Anonymous. “Life of the Empress Theodora (BHG 1731)”. Ed. Athanasios Markopoulos [Greek: Μαρκόπουλος, Αθανάσιος, “Βίος της αυτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας (BHG 1731)”, §8 (pp. 264 sq.), *Byzantina Symmeikta* 5 (1983): 249–85, (257–71).

³⁰ Étienne le Diacre. “La Vie d’ Étienne le Jeune,” p. 165.14–21. In: Marie-France Auzépy. *La Vie d’ Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre* [Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman monographs 3], New York: Routledge, 2016, 87–177.

many other texts (such as those by George the Monk³¹, Constantine VII³², and the *Suda* Lexicon³³), there is mention of a young boy, the son of a man named Sulphamios, whose body was found there. The death of this child was linked to the hated emperor in much the same way that, in the late fifteenth century, the residents of Trent connected the murder of young Simon to the local Jewish community, using this alleged ritual crime as an excuse for their unrestrained and bloody persecutions³⁴.

Exorcism, punishment, and gender

In Byzantine hagiographical texts, a common theme that suggests a tendency toward sin, which invites demonic attack, is sexual desire. The Byzantines were relatively pragmatic when it came to their daily lives. Nowhere, up until the eleventh century, do we find instances of people engaging in sex with demons, unlike in Early Modern Europe, where witches of all sorts were

³¹ Georgius Monachus. "Chronicon Breve," p. 752. In: *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca*. Ed. Jacques Paul Migne, vol. 110, Paris, 1863, pp. 41–1260.

³² *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta: Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*. Ed. Antoon Roos, Theodor Büttner-Wobst, Ursul Boissevain, and Carl De Boor, vol. 2.1: *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*, Berlin: Weidmann, 1906, p. 155.

³³ *Suidae lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler [*Lexicographi Graeci*, vol. 1], Part 3: K-O (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967), s.v. K.2286.

³⁴ The bibliography on the notable case of Simon of Trent's, or Simon the Martyr's, supposed ritual murder, which triggered cruel persecutions against the local Jewish community in 1475, is vast. See, e.g. Kristeller, Paul Oscar. "The Alleged Ritual Murder of Simon of Trent (1475) and Its Literary Repercussions: A Bibliographical Study," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 59 (1993), 103–135 (with a detailed bibliographical list until 1993); Bowd, Stephen, and Donald Cullington. "On Everyone's Lips": *Humanists, Jews, and the Tale of Simon of Trent* [Arizona studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 36], Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012.

“known” to do so. Still, sexual desire alone was enough to prove that a person was vulnerable to the influence of *lustful* and *lecherous* demons³⁵. The motif of sexual desire instigated by a demon is not reserved for women only; men are equally prone to falling victim to it. In such stories, the man is usually portrayed as the demon’s victim, while the woman becomes the man’s victim. The active role of the man in these demonic erotic encounters is evident as far back as Late Antiquity. In various early *Lives* of saints and didactic writings, a man often seeks out the help of a magician or demon, and after many trials, he is severely punished for his actions³⁶.

In the second half of the ninth century, at the Monastery of Chrysobalanton in Constantinople, an abbess named Irene hired a young man named Nicholas to work as a vineyard keeper. However, Nicholas was *unable to control his impulses*, meaning he could not resist his sexual desires. He became possessed by a *demon of lust* and fell in love with a nun. The unclean spirit tormented him relentlessly and once caused him to imagine entering the nun’s cell through the monastery gate. He was about to jump into her bed when the vision vanished, and Nicholas collapsed in front of the gate, writhing on the ground and foaming at the mouth.

The gatekeeper reported the incident to Irene, who, concerned for his soul, ordered that the young man be chained in the church and given only a tiny amount of bread and water. After a few days, during another fit, Irene managed to free Nicholas after a fierce battle with the demon. She drew a circle around him, guarded by an invisible angel, preventing the demon from leaving until it answered some questions. Through this, Irene

³⁵ On them, see Petrinski, *The Image...*, pp. 253 and 414–418; Vakaloudi, Anastasia. *Magic as a Social Phenomenon in Early Byzantium (4th — 7th centuries)* [Greek: Βακαλούδη, Αναστασία. *Η μαγεία ως κοινωνικό φαινόμενο στο πρώιμο Βυζάντιο (4ος-7ος αι.)*], Athens: Enalios, 2001, p. 221.

³⁶ On this concept, see Petrinski, *The Image...*, pp. 152–180; Vakaloudi, Anastasia. *Magic as a Social Phenomenon...*, pp. 215–230.

learned that the demons' goal is *either to turn those who have reconciled away from God, to make those who have strayed into their instruments once again, or to take possession of those who are utterly devoid of any communion with the Good and make them their own*. The last point is the most significant: unclean spirits only possess those who have lost their connection with the Good and with God (which, in the Platonic terminology used here, are considered the same). Disgusted, Irene commanded the demon to leave, and it departed, violently throwing Nicholas to the ground and tormenting him one last time³⁷.

Rejecting carnal desire is often associated with both psychological and physical pain, as seen in the *Life* of St. Anthony the Younger³⁸. In his youth, Anthony was a high-ranking servant of Emperor Michael II (820–829) but had vowed never to be intimate with a woman. However, one day, he was attacked by a demon who tried to persuade him to marry, fiercely attempting to *tear apart his soul like a wild beast*. This sinful thought, which threatened to derail his path to sainthood, was dispelled by a letter from the elderly hermit John. Upon reading it, Anthony experienced a seizure with tears, convulsions, and unbearable pain. After his ordeal, he was free from demonic influence. The anonymous author alludes that the young man was, at least unconsciously, prone to leave his path to a saintly life and dedicate himself to marriage and a secular career.

While men are often portrayed as active participants in romantic matters, which allows demons to exploit them, the outward symptoms of demonic possession are generally more dramatic in women. There is also a “medical” explanation, as men

³⁷ Anonymous. *The life of St. Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton*. Ed. Jan Rosenqvist, Uppsala, 1986, §13 (pp. 58–74).

³⁸ Anonymous. “*Life and way of life of Holy Antony the Younger*. In: Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Athanasios, *Collection of Palestinian and Syriac hagiology* [Greek: Παπαδόπουλος-Κεραμέυς, Αθανάσιος, Συλλογή Παλαιστινῆς καὶ Συριακῆς ἀγιολογίας] [Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik 19.3], vol. 1, St. Petersburg, 1907, §21 (p. 201).

were considered much less likely to suffer from various forms of hysteria, at least according to ancient beliefs³⁹.

Witch trial records of Early Modern Europe and Byzantine hagiography present a stark contrast in their portrayal of female sexuality. The former provides detailed descriptions of sexual encounters during the “sabbath,” emphasizing unrestrained female sexuality as submissive to evil spirits and the Devil. In contrast, the norms of Byzantine hagiography dictate a more restrained approach, avoiding explicit details to prevent arousing sexual thoughts in the reader.

The avoidance of vivid depictions of female sexuality in the eighth and ninth centuries may be related to the almost complete exclusion of female demons from these texts⁴⁰. During the first period of Iconoclasm (726–787), especially under Emperor Constantine V (743–775), state propaganda relentlessly disparaged women, much like theologians and writers such as Kramer and Bodin did in Early Modern Europe. This denigration often targeted women through their chief divine protector, the Virgin Mary. Sources vividly describe how the emperor openly insulted her and insisted she be called “Christotokos” (“Mother of Christ”) rather than “Theotokos” (“Mother of God”)⁴¹.

³⁹ On ancient and medieval medical explanations of female hysteria, see, e.g., King, Helen. *Hippocrates' Woman. Reading the Female Body in Ancient Greece*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 205–247.

⁴⁰ Probably the only exclusion is Gello, who appears in the *Life of Patriarch Tarasios* by Ignatios Deacon (see above).

⁴¹ Theophanes. *Chronographia*. Ed. Carl de Boor, vol. 2, Hildesheim: Olms, 1963, pp. 415, 435, 442. On the iconodule movement and the role of women and the Virgin Mary, see Connor, Carolyn. *Women of Byzantium*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2004, 160–65; Nikolaou, Katerina. *Woman in the Middle Byzantine Period: Social Prototypes and Everyday Life in Hagiographical Texts* [Greek: Νικολάου, Κατερίνα. *Η Γυναίκα στη Μέση Βυζαντινή Εποχή. Κοινωνικά πρότυπα και καθημερινός βίος στα αγιολογικά κείμενα*], Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2005, 229–35; Jenkins, Romilly. *Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries, A.D. 610–1071*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966, 85sq.