



SOUTH-WEST  
UNIVERSITY  
·NEOFIT RILSKI·  
BLAGOEVGRAD, BULGARIA

VOLUME 10  
2012

# SCIENTIFIC Research

ISSN 1312-7535

ELECTRONIC  
ISSUE

# **Upbringing and Family Education in the Bulgarian Medieval Hagiography**

**Stoyan Dolapchiev**

**University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"**

## **Background**

In the present research the author try to trace the development of family education in the Middle Ages, according to data from the old Bulgarian hagiography literature by clarifying the goals, objectives, nature, educational ideals, content, principles, methods and means of upbringing and family training and education of the medieval personality.

Subject of research are hagiography works produced and distributed in the Bulgarian lands from IX to XVI century, and its object is to encompass educational views and ideas that are reflected in family education and reflected in the hagiography works during that period. This paper is based on thorough examination of the lives of Slavic saints, lives of women - saints, lives of public figures and church leaders and the lives of some Bulgarian martyrs. Based on hagiography works are drawn conclusions about family background and education received in the family.

## **Upbringing and Family Education in the Hagiography Works for the Slavic Educators**

### *Upbringing and Family Education of Constantine-Cyril*

In all hagiography works dedicated to Constantine-Cyril, is said his "homeland." This is the city of Thessaloniki<sup>1</sup> Constantine comes from a family belonging to the Byzantine aristocracy, which guarantees a very good material and spiritual development opportunities - for upbringing and family training and education. His father's name was Leo<sup>2</sup> and his mother's - Mary<sup>3</sup>. His parents were of noble family. They reared seven children, of which the smallest is Constantine. Brief Biography of Constantine adds: "His mother and him suckled and instructed him in piety and benignity."<sup>4</sup> Instruction is one of the methods in education and piety and the faith in God are some of the moral and religious virtues and qualities as a result of family education.

### *Upbringing and Family Education of Methodius*

Prologue hagiography work of Methodius states that he is from "city of Thessaloniki."<sup>5</sup> Probably born about 815 years and raised by "rich parents"<sup>6</sup> with good dignity. In Extensive Biography of Methodius is said: "from paternal and maternal side he sprang not from the simple, but from very good and decent family..."<sup>7</sup>, i.e. both parents are of

aristocratic origin. "He / Methodius / was wise in a conversation of adolescent youth..."<sup>8</sup>. "So the princes, who loved him since his childhood, led him worthy conversations."<sup>9</sup>

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Clement*

In an Extensive Biography of Clement, the writer Theophyklad of Ohrid wrote that Clement of "young and tender age was with Methodius"<sup>10</sup>. This gives rise to the E. Petkanova indicate Thessaloniki area as a geographical place of birth of Clement. Clement of infancy was baptized into Christianity, on dates from the Brief Biography of Clement. So his upbringing and family education were in the Christian spirit as it pointed: "Thus, from infancy was devoted on God law..."<sup>11</sup>.

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Naum*

In Second Biography of Naum we find the following information: "This great and reverend father nurtured in Moesia. And after he was brought up by his noble parents, he considers everything - the nobility and wealth - for weeds and join the Apostles Constantine the Philosopher and his brother Methodius..."<sup>12</sup>. We can assume that Naum was born in Bulgaria, which some contemporaries called "Moesia" has Bulgarian origin. As stated in the biography, Naum comes from noble parents, i.e. has an aristocratic origin. His parents are good material supplied. This does not prevent the mind to take the spiritual path.

### **Upbringing and Family Education in the Hagiography Works of the Hermits**

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Ivan Rilski*

The Prologue hagiography work of Ivan Rilski from the Draganov pass / XIII century / states his nationality - "Bulgarian-born," and his birthplace - "village called Skrino"<sup>13</sup>.

In the Prologue hagiography work from XIII century is given information to his parents. They are characterized as "too pious and wealthy parents of Bulgarian tribe"<sup>14</sup>.

Family background and family upbringing appears to have little impact on Ivan because he "loved the virtue from tender age".<sup>15</sup> Then he joined a monastery and became a monk. Confirmed and the data from the Prologue hagiography work of Ivan Rilski from the Draganov pass "he gave his father's share to the poor and weak people"<sup>16</sup>.

In the Middle Ages, especially after the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria one of the basic obligations of parents is to educate their children well. Obedience and respect towards parents of children were at the heart of family education in this era, according to the Christian religion. Here the relationship between children and parents must be as between Christian and Holy Trinity - Father, Son and God the Spirit.

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Prohor Pshinski / XI century /*

In the Prologue hagiography work of his birthplace indicates the area of "Varneyska Metropolis"<sup>17</sup> and the National Biography emphasizes on his Bulgarian identity. Prohor's parents belong to the Orthodox Christian tradition. The Biography notes their noble origin. Relatively good material condition allows them to give alms to the poor. But they haven't got a child longer. Further in this connection the hagiography work adds: "And God send his parents a gift and give them a babe."<sup>18</sup> For children and teenage years of Prohor is noted that "it simply with a virtue like a star..."<sup>19</sup>.

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Gabriel Lesnovski*

In Prologue hagiography work of Gabriel Lesnovski his parents are characterized as "noble and rich"<sup>20</sup>. National Biography indicates the birthplace of Gabriel Lesnovski - "the field Osechko field"<sup>21</sup>. It omitted to note that Gabriel has "... pious parents"<sup>22</sup>, i.e. Orthodox Christians, who at first had no child. "There was an unspoken joy. And they baptized infant. The offspring became strong through the Holy Spirit."<sup>23</sup>

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Joachim Osogovski - /late XI - early XII century/*

In an Extensive Biography of Joachim mentions that he "comes from the vicinity of desert Osogovo"<sup>24</sup> The saint is described as a compassionate person and who give assistance to the poor. Trained by "pious parents"<sup>25</sup>, i.e. religious, Orthodox, orthodox, devout, pious, God-fearing and virtuous people.

### **Upbringing and Family Education in the Hagiography Works of the Women – saints**

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Juliania / 286 - 21.11. 304 year /*

Juliania was born in 286 year in the eastern part of the Hellenistic Empire. Her parents are pedigreed origin and belonging to the Roman aristocracy. Initial education of Juliania was in commemoration of those public religious traditions that have been dominant in the Roman Empire. Adopted Christianity in secret from their parents, she refused the 18-year old to marry to a senior of Roman dignitary - a gentile named Nelevsii / Elesvey / for whom her parents have it become engaged earlier.

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Philotei Temnishka - /second half of IV - early V century /*

Patriarch Evtimiy outs in town Molivot for birthplace of Philotei.<sup>26</sup> Extensive Biography points it as Pamphylia region. Her parents John and Irina have had aristocratic origin. As a long-awaited child, they named her daughter Philotei, which in translation from Greek into Bulgarian means - God-loving. Extensive Biography of Philotei indicates what

care should be taken for the youngest child in this period - "breastfeeding, diapering, bathing, feeding, and countless works"<sup>27</sup>. From a theological perspective, this situation is related to the future of Philotei with divine predestination of her destiny to become a saint.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Epivatska Paraskeva - Petka Tarnovo / second half of the tenth century /*

In an Extensive Biography by Deacon Vasiliko<sup>28</sup> to her birthplace is indicated Epivat, village situated in Thrace. Her parents are characterized as pious people, i.e. Orthodox, noble and belonging to the Byzantine aristocracy. There is no doubt that the family is of Greek nationality.

According Patriarch Evtimiy in Extensive biography saint was "an outgrowth of godly parents who consistently respected all the commandments of God, adorned his life with charity and good deeds"<sup>29</sup> Which indicates that the parents of Paraskeva educated their child in the spirit of Orthodox Christianity.

### **Upbringing and Family Education in the Hagiography Works of the State and Church Leaders**

*Upbringing and Family Education of Michael Warrior*

Prologue hagiography work explicitly states that Michael is a native Bulgarian. With regard to social background is noted that he comes from "honorable and pious family"<sup>30</sup>. The hagiography work gives the following characterization of Michael Warrior: "Another young man, he lived from infancy to clean living, had before his eyes the fear of God, dwelt in alms and fasting, extended his hand to the poor, visiting the sick, was meek and humble and adorned with all virtues."<sup>31</sup>. From historical and pedagogical perspective this feature of character is the goal of moral and religious education, as an educational ideal of Bulgaria in XIII - XIV century.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Patriarch Joachim I - /end of XII century - on 01/18/1246/*

In Prologue hagiography work of Joachim wrote that he was "a native Bulgarian"<sup>32</sup>. What is the social and material status of the parents is not indicated. It is noted however, that "he was born of pious parents"<sup>33</sup>, i.e. people belonging to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. In this direction should be sought influence of family environment and upbringing of Joachim. It shows a further way of the saint.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Hilarion / October 1100g. - OK. 1164 /*

Hilarion was born about 1100 year and died about 1164. His birthplace is not known, but his life is linked to the southwestern Bulgarian lands. At that time /12th century/ Bulgaria

was under Byzantine rule. Ivanova supposes that the saint lived in the region of Ohrid.<sup>34</sup> Hilarion's parents, according to Evtimiy are of aristocratic origin. According to the extensive biography they are deeply religious Christians belonging to Eastern Orthodoxy. Hilarion's family education is determined by social status, physical features and the Christian identity of his parents. For a long time, they have no child. It seems they vowed to give it to a monastery. The direction of this upbringing, family education and Christian religion influences the further development of Hilarion.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Archbishop / Bishop / Peter / October 1255 - 1326 /*

Archbishop Peter was born about 1255 and as stated "in one place throughout Volyn land"<sup>35</sup>, which is part of the great Halytsian principality. Peter's parents, according to Cyprian, are "... reverent Christians"<sup>36</sup>, i.e. belonging to the Orthodox. Birth of Peter is associated with a vision of his mother<sup>37</sup>, related to its future. For the deep religiosity of his parents is the fact that 12 years of age he was sent to a monastery, which is related to moral and religious guidance of family upbringing.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Theodosius / October 1300 - 1363 /*

Theodosius is Bulgarian, born about 1300.

One of the researchers of hagiography working for Theodosius believes that Theodosius was born near Vidin. He originates from an aristocratic family and was a close relative of King Ivan Alexander /1331 - 1371/ by Vidin branch Shishmans<sup>38</sup>. In an extensive biography dedicated to him, Patriarch Kallistos writes: "It all means avoided discussions of their relatives ... Because he thought it better to hurt your parents and anyone else it was, than to give a little love from the front to God."<sup>39</sup> From the quoted text clearly feels hesychastic respect to the birthplace, family background and upbringing.

*Upbringing and Family Education of Rusco/Romul of Vidin / October 1310 - 1385 /*

Romil was born about 1310 in Vidin, then Bdin. Romil's parents are devout on God and God-fearing and belonging to the Orthodox Christian religion. Hagiographer remains that they show mercy as "give to the poor, as is customary among people who have Christian names." His father is Greek and his mother is Bulgarian. So little Romil lived on the border of two cultures, two traditions and absorbed two languages - Bulgarian and Greek. This has an important condition for his future development.

After the birth of the child, his parents decided to devote him to the Christian church and give him the name Rusco. Baptism is not only morally, religiously, but also instructive and

educational importance of strengthening the faith and ethnicity. Rusco was brought up in the spirit of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and the moral and religious virtues.

### **Upbringing and Family Education in the Hagiography Works of the Martyrs**

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of George New of Sofia /1497 - 1515/*

George was born in 1497 in Kratovo - a town in Macedonia. In the biography of his parents are defined as "devout"<sup>40</sup>. His father said Demetrius and his mother Sarah.<sup>41</sup> Although their nationality is not mentioned, there is no doubt that they are Bulgarians and Orthodox Christians. It seems they were on average wealthier, because they send their son to school, and then give it to learn a trade.

There is no specific information for the family upbringing of George. But his parents better understand the role of education and occupation. Qualities that George appeared as honesty, diligence and love to education are basically made in the family. Family environment is beneficial in creating some his moral and religious virtues as humility, patience, love of God and firmness in defending the faith and nationality.

#### *Upbringing and Family Education of Nicholas/Nicholas New from Sofia /October 1510 - 1555/*

Nicholas was born around 1510 in the Thessaly region in modern Greece. His father's name is Martin and his mother's name is Efrosina.<sup>42</sup> Their nationality is not mentioned, but there are some evidences from their life for Bulgarian origin. Nicholas's parents are Orthodox Christians. For his childhood years hagiographer writes: "A boy is advancing in understanding and wisdom and obeyed, as appropriate, to his parents. They emulate them in every good work, beaming with intelligence and chastity and kept him with great care, took care to preserve the true faith and to do works pleasing God."<sup>43</sup> His parents raised him with the fear of God into heartedness, love of God and good deeds.

### **Conclusion**

It seems that medieval Christian church relies heavily on the family. Family environment has a direct impact on education, upbringing and lifetime of the saints and martyrs. Most of the hagiography work emphasize on the aristocratic origin of parents, which provides very good material and spiritual development opportunities – for upbringing family training and education.

Children grow up in a "good family". Usually the saint was raised by "pious parents", i.e. religious, Orthodox, orthodox, devout, pious, God-fearing and virtuous people, and still in very early childhood the child is characterized by love of work, love of teaching and love of God. So we can legitimately say that there is hagiography scheme typical of the majority of

hagiography works in which parents are wealthy, the good people, pious and God-fearing Christians.

In the hagiography work often is repeated story of the saint whose parents have had no child for a long period of time, have acquired he/she hard and made a vow to give he/she a monastery, which determine the moral and religious upbringing of their child.

It is indicated that children are introduced at an early age in the Christian religion through baptism, which reinforces the importance of the Orthodox Christian tradition, which affects teenagers and is essential for their education.

In the lives of the saints, we find that children are given "to learn of the books" in the appropriate age. Grammar or grammatical art is included in the studied medieval seven liberal arts - trivium /grammar, rhetoric, dialectic/ and kvadrivium /arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music/. Students were prepared except in literal arts and languages and for various positions in churches and monasteries, as readers, deacons and priests. Saints get a good education and theological training and know the scriptures, psalms and prayers that are obligatory curriculum in schools at that time.

Besides visits to schools children get not only upbringing, family care, training and family education at home but self-education. Family environment is beneficial for the construction of some moral and religious virtues in children such as humility, patience, humility, love and firmness in defending the faith and nationality. In some hagiography works is indicated the specific children's games, practiced for educational purposes. In this way they grow up as creative and seeking personalities.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Extensive Biography of Constantine-Cyril. Q: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. Hagiography works ... S., 1986, page 37

<sup>2</sup> Extensive Biography of Constantine-Cyril, page 37

<sup>3</sup> Brief Biography of Constantine-Cyril, in: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. Hagiography works ..., pp. 64

<sup>4</sup> Brief Biography of Constantine-Cyril, pp. 64

<sup>5</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Methodius. Q: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. Hagiography works ... S., 1986, p 79.

<sup>6</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Methodius., Pp. 79.

<sup>7</sup> Extensive Biography of Archbishop Methodius. Cit. cit. , S.71.

<sup>8</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Methodius., Pp. 79.

<sup>9</sup> Extensive Biography of Archbishop Methodius. Cit. cit. , S.71.

<sup>10</sup> Extensive Biography by Teofiklat of Ohrid - Chrestomathy in the history of education and pedagogical thought in Bulgaria. Race. P. Petrov, V. Gyuzelev, S., 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



- 
- <sup>12</sup> Second Biography of Naum Ohridski - In: Old Bulgarian literature. Part 4 1986, pp. 81-82.
- <sup>13</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Ivan Rilski from the Draganov pass. In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 130.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Ivan Rilski from the Draganov pass. In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 130.
- <sup>17</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Prohor Pshinski In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 166.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Gabriel Lesnovski In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 171.
- <sup>21</sup> National Biography of Gabriel Lesnovski In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 172.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> National Biography of Gabriel Lesnovski In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 172.
- <sup>24</sup> Extensive Biography of Joachim Osogovski In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 178.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Extensive Biography of Philotei Temnishka by Patriarch Evtimiy In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 203.
- <sup>27</sup> Extensive Biography of Philotei Temnishka by Patriarch Evtimiy In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 205.
- <sup>28</sup> Extensive Biography of Petka Epivatska by Deacon Vasiliko In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 440-443.
- <sup>29</sup> Extensive Biography of Petka Tarnovska by Patriarch Evtimiy In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4., Hagiography works, pp. 192-193.
- <sup>30</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Mikhail Potuka - Michael Warrior, In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 219.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Prologue hagiography work of Patriarch Joachim Getting In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4., Hagiography works, pp. 87.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Ivanova, Cl. Notes: Extensive Life of Hilarion by Patriarch Evtimiy In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 531.
- <sup>35</sup> Extensive Biography of Bishop Peter by Metropolitan Cyprian, In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 109.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp. 109.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 109-110.
- <sup>38</sup> Ivanova, Cl. Notes: Extensive biography of Theodosius by Patriarch Kallistos, In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 648.
- <sup>39</sup> Extensive biography of Theodosius by Patriarch Kallistos, In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 445.
- <sup>40</sup> Torture of George the New from Sofia by Priest Peyo In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 295.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>42</sup> Torture of Nicolas the New from Sofia by Matthew Grammarian In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 311.

<sup>43</sup> Torture of Nicolas the New from Sofia by Matthew Grammarian In: Old Bulgarian literatura.t.4. , Hagiography works, pp. 312.