

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST
CYRIL-METHODIAN SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

Skopje, 23 May 2024


EDITED BY

Maja ANGELOVSKA - PANOVA



Skopje, 2025






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THE BERAT TRADITION OF THE HOLY SEVEN APOSTOLIC DISCIPLES

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Abstract

The cult of the Holy Seven Apostles developed as a local cult within the diocese of the Ohrid Archbishopric. Tracing its beginnings to the post-Byzantine period, the cult of the seven equal-to-the-apostles Slavic enlighteners found its expression in both the artistic and literary traditions of the archbishopric. Available and known facts indicate that the group of saints, consisting of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, gradually took on its seven-member composition toward the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century. However, at this stage, the group still lacked a specific name and distinct cult.

The situation changed towards the end of the 17th century when, in the southwestern regions of the Ohrid Archbishopric, the saints received the common name "ἑπτάρημοι," meaning "Seven-Numbered Ones," for which the earliest evidence can be found in the Short Vita of St. John Vladimir from 1690.¹ The aim of this research is to uncover and present the earliest traces of the shared cult of the Holy Seven-Numbered Ones, preserved in the southwestern areas of the Ohrid Archbishopric, specifically in the Berat Diocese.

Sources for this cult can be divided into artifacts, written records, and oral narratives. The Berat cult of the Seven-Numbered Ones represents an intersection or fusion of two primary traditions: the oral, existing as local folklore, and the written, based on the hymnographic works of the Ohrid archbishops Theophylact, Dimitrios Chomatianos, and Constantine Kavassilas, dedicated to Saints Clement and Naum.

¹ Сашо Цветковски, Виктор Недески, Александар Димоски. Свети Јован Владимир, хагиографија – химнографија – иконографија. Скопје: САС на МПЦ-ОА, 2016, 48.

Among the preserved artifacts, particular attention is drawn to the Berat reliquaries and the relics housed within them, which serve as the material foundation and source of the local cult (Figures 1–6). Metropolitan Anthimos Alexoudis was the first to mention the reliquary containing the relics of Saints Gorazd and Angelarius in 1868². The eighth chapter of his book begins with the words: “The Diocese of Velegrad, within its embrace, holds the relics of Saints Gorazd and Angelarius of the Seven-Numbered Ones, who peacefully passed away here...”³ For Metropolitan Anthimos, the Seven-Numbered Ones were new apostles who Christianized the lands of the diocese he governed.⁴ That is why he refers to them as “equal-to-the-apostles.”

Following him, the relics were also mentioned by Golubinsky⁵, Šafárik⁶, Jagić⁷, and Novaković⁸, while early researchers such as Balashev⁹, Tunicki¹⁰, and Snegarov¹¹ questioned their authenticity. Erich Trapp was the first to draw a parallel between the hymnographic tradition expressed in the Berat Liturgical Book, which will be discussed later, and the Berat reliquaries. Highlighting two paragraphs from the Liturgical Book, he concluded that: “Although it seems that the relics of the seven saints, venerated as the city’s patrons, have always been honored in Berat, it is more likely that this is a matter of propaganda and local-political fiction.”¹²

2 Ανθίμος Αλεξούδης, Σύντομος ιστορική περιγραφή τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Βελεγραδῶν καί τῆς ὑπὸ τὴν πνευματικὴν αὐτῆς δικαιοδοσίαν ὑπαγομένης χώρας. Νῦν πρῶτον συνταχθεῖσα καὶ ἰδίως ἀναλώμασιν ἐκδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Βελεγραδῶν Ἀνθίμου Δ. Ἀλεξούδη (Ἐν Κερκύρα, 1868), 112–113.

3 „Ἡ Ἐπαρχία Βελεγράδων κατέχουσα ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτῆς τὰ ἱερὰ λείψανα τῶν τε ἐν αὐτῇ κοιμηθέντων ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἁγίων Γοράσδωνος καὶ Ἀγγελαρίου ἐκ τῶν Ἑπταρίθμων“ Ἀλεξούδης, Σύντομος ιστορική περιγραφή, 112–113

4 Ἀλεξούδης, Σύντομος ιστορική περιγραφή, 119.

5 „Моши Горазда и Ангелария в Белграде албанском или Берате, в тамошней кафедральной митрополичьей церкви“ (Евгений Голубинский. Краткий очерк истории православных церквей Болгарской, Сербской и Румынской или Молдо-Валашской. Москва: Унив. тип., 1871, 659.

6 Pavel Jozef Šafárik. *Rozkvět slovanské literatury v Bulharsku. Sebrané spisy, díl 3.* Praha, 1865, 178–179.

7 Ватрослав Ягич. *История сербо-хорватской литературы.* Казань: Унив. тип., 1871, 52.

8 Стојан Новаковић. *Први основи словенске књижевности међу балканским словенима. Легенда о Владимиру и Косари.* Београд: Српска Краљевска академија, 1893, 41.

9 Георги Баласчев. „Българска литература. Кратко ръководство за средни и специални училища. Написано от А. Теодоров. Пловдив, 1896“. *Сборник за народни умотворения, наука и книжнина*, 15, 1898, 8.

10 Николай Л. Туницкий. *Св. Климент епископ словенский. Его жизнь и просветительная деятельность.* Сергиев Посад: Тип. Св.-Тр. Сергиевой Лавры, 1913, 146.

11 Иван Снегаров. „Българският първоучител св. Климент Охридски (Живот и дейност)“. *Годишник на СУ. Богословски факултет* 4, 1927, 250.

12 „Es sieht nun so aus, als wären in Berat Reliquien dieser Sieben verehrt worden, die ja als Schutzheilige der Stadt bezeichnet werden, doch ist es wahrscheinlicher, daß es sich hier bloß um eine propagandistische lokalpatriotische Fiktion handelt“ (Erich Trapp. „Die sieben Slavenapostel in der liturgischen Dichtung“. *Analecta Bollandiana* 100, 1982, 477.

Although the reliquary containing the relics has been described multiple times, the most significant and detailed description is provided by archaeologist Sotiris Kisas. Analyzing the inscriptions on it, he dates it to 1885, during the time of Metropolitan Anthimos Alexoudis. This description is particularly valuable since the reliquary has now disappeared, and the relics are kept in an ordinary wooden chest. Kisas writes: “Their remains rest in the Metropolitan Church of the ‘Dormition of the Virgin’ (1797), in a silver-plated reliquary. The inner side of its lid is decorated with relief figures of the Holy Seven Apostles. On the outer side of the lid, the following inscriptions are found:

- ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΕΥΟΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ / Κ. ΒΕΒΕΤΖΚΑ (left side)
- ΔΑΠΑΝΑΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΚΟΙΜΗΣΕΩΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ / ΒΕΡΑΤΙΟΥ ΕΠΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΑΤΕΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΒΕΛΕΓΡΑΔΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ / ΑΝΘΙΜΟΥ. ΕΤΟΣ 1885 Ν(Ο)Ε(Μ)ΒΡΙΟΥ 11. (center)
- ΔΙΑ ΧΕΙΡΟΣ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ / Δ. ΤΙΡΑΝΙΩΤΟΥ / 1885 ΝΟΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 11. (right side)»¹³

Father D. Kalev¹⁴ (Figures 2–4) mentions that the reliquary contains iron shoes with relics inside them, which, according to tradition, belonged to Saint Gorazd. Kalev provides a photograph of the relics, showing two metal shoes along with other relics. The two shoes are almost identical in size and shape. The lower part is made of wood, while the upper part is metal. They are decorated with symmetrical floral ornaments, and the central part is adorned with a cross. The ornaments attached to the cross symbolize tools associated with Christ’s martyrdom, such as a spear and a vinegar-soaked sponge.

Although both reliquaries are similar, differences exist in the decoration of the shoes. One shoe bears an inscription reading: “ΕΤΟΣ 1823 ΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΓΓΕ+ΛΑΡΙΟΣ ΑΦΙΕΡΟΜΑ¹²⁶ ΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ¹²⁷ (YEAR 1823 SAINT ANGE+LARIUS DEDICATED BY ECONOMOS) (Figure 5). This inscription contradicts the tradition that the shoes belonged to Saint Gorazd, as at least one of them is identified as belonging to Saint Angelarius.

13 „Their relics lie in the town’s metropolitan Church of the Dormition of the Virgin (1797) in a silver-coped wooden reliquary, the lid of which is decorated inside with the relief figures of the Holy Heptarithmoi. The exterior of the lid bears the following inscriptions: ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΕΥΟΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ / Κ. ΒΕΒΕΤΖΚΑ (on the left); ΔΑΠΑΝΑΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΥ ΝΑΟΥ ΚΟΙΜΗΣΕΩΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ / ΒΕΡΑΤΙΟΥ ΕΠΙ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΑΤΕΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΟΥ ΒΕΛΕΓΡΑΔΩΝ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ / ΑΝΘΙΜΟΥ. ΕΤΟΣ 1885 Ν(Ο)Ε(Μ)ΒΡΙΟΥ 11. (in the middle); ΔΙΑ ΧΕΙΡΟΣ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ / Δ. ΤΙΡΑΝΙΩΤΟΥ / 1885 ΝΟΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 11. (on the right)“ (Sotiris Kisas. „Representations of Greek and Slav Saints from the Central and Western Balkans from Ninth to the Eighteenth Century“. *Cyrrillomethodianum*, 11, 1987: 250.

14 Димитър Калев. *Св. Горазд – славянски просветител.* София: Синодално издателство, 1970, 46.

Kisas also provides a description of two icons associated with this reliquary. The first icon, painted by Jovan Chetiri, is dated by Ruseva to 1812–1814 and is located on the southern part of the iconostasis (Fig. 7). In the upper part of the icon, five of the Seven Apostles are depicted, while the lower part illustrates the Dormition of Saints Gorazd and Angelarius, portrayed as monks lying next to each other within a stylized depiction of the city of Berat.¹⁵ The second icon was painted by the iconographer Adam Christou of Samarina in 1873 and features the same composition (Fig. 8).

When discussing the iconographic heritage of the Seven Apostles in the territory of present-day Albania, it is important to mention the research of Ralitsa Ruseva.¹⁶ She conducted a significant review and concluded that the general iconographic scheme for this group of saints was established in the second half of the 18th century.¹⁷ Ruseva attributes the widespread presence of this composition in the iconographic programs of churches in the Muzakia region, which is part of the Berat Diocese, to the efforts of Berat Metropolitans Joasaph I (1752–1760) and Joasaph II (1765–1801).¹⁸

Although 19th- and early 20th-century researchers primarily debated the authenticity of the relics, what is of greater importance to us is the fact that the very presence of the relics in Berat served as the initial catalyst for the emergence of this cult and the motivation for composing the Berat Liturgical Book for the Holy Seven Apostles (Fig. 9).

15 „At the south end of this church's sanctuary screen there is an icon dating from 1812–1814 (see pl. 3), depicting five of the Holy Heptarithmoi above the Dormition of St Gorasdu and St Angelarius below, the latter represented as monks lying next to each other in a replica of town of Berat“ (Kissas, „Representations of Greek“, 250).

16 Ралица Русева, „Нови данни за изобразителния култ към св. Седмочисленици през XVIII–XIX в. на територията на съвременна Албания“. Проблеми на изкуството, 45 (2012): 25.

17 However, it should be taken into consideration that the oldest joint representation of the Seven Apostles is in the Slivnica Monastery from 1612. The entire southern wall in the narthex is dedicated to the scene of the Seven Apostles. Ruseva refuses to accept that this is a composition, since the figures are placed frontally and she believes they are not compositionally connected (Ралица Русева, „Композицията на светите Седмочисленици в паметниците от XVIII–XIX век на територията на съвременна Албания“, Онгъл, 6 (2014), 8: 83; Ралица Русева, „Образът на св. Климент Охридски в църковното изкуство на територията на съвременна Албания (XIV–XIX век)“. Песни за Климент. Служби за св. Климент Охридски, писани от X до XX век. София: Унив. изд-во, 2016, 498.

18 „Не би трябвало да се изключи и възможността това ‘масово’ присъствие на изображения на св. Седмочисленици в областта Музакия да се дължи на конкретната воля и политика на бератските митрополити, започвайки с Методий (1736–1751 – б.м., Е.З.), по чието време се създава първият им групов „портрет“ в църквата на манастира Арденица (от 1744 г. – б.м., Е.З.)“ (Русева, „Композицията на светите Седмочисленици“, 92) и „[...] индивидуалните изображения на св. Климент и св. Наум не стават популярни на територията на Албания извън Преспанско-Корчанския регион, но образите им са включени в общите композиции на св. Седмочисленици, които са най-многобройни в областта Музакия и Берат – места, твърде отдалечени от Охрид като център на техния култ“ (Русева, „Образът на св. Климент Охридски“, 498).

The Berat (Venetian) Liturgical Book is the earliest record of the formalization of the cult of the Holy Seven Apostles.¹⁹ This early printed liturgical work in Greek is titled: „Ἀκολουθία τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἰσαποστόλων Ἑπτὰ Φωστήρων τῆς Βουλγαρίας καὶ Δαλματίας, Κυρίλλου, Μεθοδίου, Κλήμεντος, Ναοῦμ, Γοράσδονος, Ἀγγελαρίου καὶ Σάββα“ (Liturgical Book of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Seven Luminaries of Bulgaria and Dalmatia: Cyril, Methodius, Clement, Naum, Gorazd, Angelarius, and Sava).

The Liturgical Book has been published three times. The first edition appeared in 1986 in the tenth volume of the Greek Association for Slavic Studies series *Cyrrillomethodianum*²⁰, while the second edition was published in 2013 by Konstantinos Nihoritis²¹. The Liturgical Book was most recently republished in Bulgaria by Evgeniy Zashev²². The date of the service was determined thanks to the Greek Byzantinist Manousos Manousakas, who suggested that the typographical features of the print indicate it was produced in Venice, where merchants from Moschopolis had settled in the early 18th century²³.

Today, scholars have rejected the opinion that this service was composed in the 9th century by Prince Boris-Michael²⁴. K. Nihoritis highlights that the unknown author of the liturgy used the works of the Ohrid Archbishops Theophylact, Dimitrios Chomatianos, and Constantine Kavassilas, written in honor of Saints Clement and Naum of Ohrid²⁵. Erich Trapp shares a similar view, noting that there are multiple textual correspondences with printed Menaia as well as with previously composed services for Saints Clement and Naum. The Austrian Byzantinist emphasizes that the second canon, whose acrostic is not preserved in the final troparia, should be considered an original part of the liturgical work²⁶.

19 For more basic information about this Liturgical Book, see: Константинос Нихоритис. Славистични и българистични проучвания. Велико Търново: Праксис, 2005, 32–34; Andrej Škoviera, *Sväti slovanskí sedmopočetníci* (Bratislava: Slovenský komitét slavistov Slavistický ústav Jána Stanislava SAV, 2010), 159–161; Κωνσταντίνος Νιχωρίτης, Οι ἅγιοι Κύριλλος καὶ Μεθόδιος. Ο πνευματικός βίος καὶ ο πολιτισμός των Σλάβων. Θεσσαλονίκη: Μπαρμπουνάκη, 2013, 272–289; Славия Бърлиева. *Cyrrillo-Methodiana et Varia Mediaevalia*. София: КМНЦ-БАН, 2019, 279–282.

20 Sotiris Kissas. „Acolouthia of Seven Saints, Venice c. 1720“, *Cyrrillomethodianum* 10, 1986, 319–351.

21 Νιχωρίτης. Οι ἅγιοι Κύριλλος καὶ Μεθόδιος, 503–567.

22 Евгени Зашев. Бератската памет за св. Седмочисленици. София: КМНЦ-БАН, 2024, 199–234.

23 Μανούσος Μανούσακας. „Προσθήκαι καὶ συμπληρώσεις εἰς τὴν ἐλληνικὴν Βιβλιογραφίαν τοῦ Ε. Legrand“. Ἐπετηρὶς Μεσαιωνικοῦ Ἀρχείου 7, 1957, 61.

24 The most zealous advocate of this thesis is Krstanov. See: Трендафил Кръстанов. „Похвала на гръцки език от Михаил монах от IX век“. Трудове на катедрите по история и богословие, Шуменски университет „Епископ Константин Преславски“ 4, 2001, 181; Трендафил Кръстанов. „Славянският палимпсест в Cod. Vat. gr. 2502. Парадокси на кирило-методиевската мисия, итало-българска следа и аксиома за езика“, ТРИΑΝΤΑΦΥΛΛΟ. Юбилеен сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. д.фил.н. Христо Трендафилов. Шумен, 2013, 226–227

25 Нихоритис, Славистични и българистични, 33.

26 „Ein Teil des Werkes freilich muß als selbständig angesehen werden, so vor allem ein Kanon mit der in den Schlußstrophen nicht eingehaltenen Akrostichie ΑΙΝΟΣ ΑΓΓΕΛΑΡΙΟΥ ΣΥΝ ΤΩ ΓΟΡΑΣΔΟΝΙ.“ (Trapp, „Die sieben Slavenapostel“, 478).

Following detailed analyses of the acrostic in the original canon and extensive discussions regarding the identity of the author, Michael M., whose name appears at the end of the acrostic, the author of the canon and compiler of the Berat Liturgical Book has been identified as Michael Ipsihiotes, [Bishop of?] Gora (ca. 1690–1780)²⁷. Thus, this work was composed around 1720, just before its printing in Venice. The structure of the work follows the Jerusalem Typikon and includes small and great vespers as well as matins. The matins service contains three canons: the first is Marian, composed in Tone I by Theodore Laskaris; the second is in Tone IV and is dedicated to Saints Gorazd and Angelarius; and the third, dedicated to the Holy Seven Apostles, is an adaptation of Chomatianos' canon for Saint Clement²⁸.

Textual analysis reveals that the Berat Liturgical Book is a compilation of reworked earlier hymnographic works and an original canon for Saints Gorazd and Angelarius.

During its composition, members of the esteemed Berat family Papas²⁹ likely contributed certain information, and the printing of this service book was financed at their expense. Notably, in the Berat service book, the date set for the celebration of the Seven Apostles is November 26, the day after the winter feast of Saint Clement of Ohrid. This differs from the later Moscopole service book for the Seven Apostles, which designates July 17 as their celebration date. It is important to highlight that these two traditions coexisted for nearly half a century before the former gave way to the latter. Another striking fact is that in the Moscopole service book for the Seven Apostles, printed in 1741, neither the relics nor the city of Berat are mentioned.

27 For more details of the authorship of the service and the identity of the author, see: Зашев, Бератската памет, 47 – 77.

28 Trap, „Die sieben Slavenapostel“, 478; Нихоритис, Славистични и българистични, 33; Νιχωρίτης, Οι άγιοι Κύριλλος και Μεθόδιος, 276; Венета Савова. „Хоматиановият канон за св. Климент на 1-и глас“. Годишник на Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“, Център за славяно-византийски проучвания „Иван Дуйчев“ 99/18, 2017, 513–517.

29 This is evident from the text added to the title Бератското последование [Berat Liturgical Book], printed in Venice, which reads as follows: „Νῦν πρῶτον τυπωθεῖσα, συνεργεία ἐπιμελεία καὶ δαπάνη τῶν Κυρίων, Ανδρέου Παπᾶ, Ἰωάννου Παπᾶ, καὶ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ Νικολάου, καὶ Αναστασίου, διὰ ψυχικὴν αὐτῶν σωτηρίαν. Ἀφιερωθεῖσα τῇ αὐτῶν πατρίδι ἐχούση ἀντιλήπτορας καὶ προστάτας τοὺς ῥηθέντας ἀγίους πατέρας, δι' ἅκραν αὐτῶν εὐλάβειαν. Διορθωθεῖσα δὲ ὡς ἐφικτόν, ἐξ ὧν πρότερον εἶχε σφαλμάτων, χειρογραφικῶν ὄντων τῶν πρωτοτύπων καὶ πεπαλαιωμένων.“ (“First printed edition with the collaboration, editing and expenses of Messrs. Andreas Pappas [son of] Joannis Pappas and his sons Nikolaos and Anastisos for the salvation of their souls. It is dedicated to their homeland whose representatives and patrons are the aforementioned holy fathers, known for their infinite piety. Previous errors have been corrected as much as possible since the originals were handwritten and old.”)

The primary principle in defining the seven-member composition of the group of saints is their enumeration and naming, which is evident in the text of the Berat Service Book.³⁰ When shaping the image of the Holy Seven Apostles, the author aims to define both the signified and the signifier through the linguistic sign Ἑπτάρηθμοι (“Heptarithmoi”). The group consists of three pairs of saints and one individual saint, arranged in a certain hierarchy. Leading the group are the first teachers, Saints Cyril and Methodius, followed by the Ohrid saints Clement and Naum, who have their own cults and feast days. Then come the “Berat” saints Gorazd and Angelarij, and finally, Saint Sava.

Particular attention is drawn to the Berat tradition related to Saints Gorazd and Angelarij, whose veneration forms the foundation of the cult of the Seven Saints in the region of the Berat Diocese. Saints Gorazd and Angelarij were direct disciples of the Slavic first teachers, Saints Cyril and Methodius, as confirmed by several sources. Unfortunately, the information in these sources is limited. In a 2010 study dedicated to the relics of Saint Gorazd in Berat, researcher D. Cheshmedžiev conducted a detailed analysis of the sources mentioning the saint³¹. These include:

- The Extensive Life of Saint Methodius from the late 9th century
- The Extensive Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid by Theophylact of Ohrid (late 11th – early 12th century)
- The Catalogue of Bulgarian Archbishops (12th century)
- The Short Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid by Demetrios Chomatianos (early 13th century)
- The Greek Service Book for Saint Clement of Ohrid by Demetrios Chomatianos (early 13th century)
- The Short Life of Saint Cyril (13th century)
- The Synodicon of Tsar Boril (1211)
- The Canon for Saint Naum by Saint Constantine Kavasilas (1355–1360)
- The Pochaev copy of *On the Letters* by Chernorizets Hrabar (16th century)

30 This topic is addressed by Trap and Nichorotis, and Zashv provides the most detailed analysis. See: Trap, „Die sieben Slavenapostel“, 475–479; Нихоритис, Славистични и българистични, 33–34; Νιχωρίτης, Οι άγιοι Κύριλλος και Μεθόδιος, 270–290; Зашев, Бератската памет, 78–91.

31 Димо Чешмеджиев, „Мощите на св. Горазд в Белград Албански (Берат)“, Slavica Slovaca 45/2, 2010, 136–139.

- The Tale of the Translation of the Sacred Scripture from the Hilandar Monastery (16th century)
- The depiction of the Seven Saints in the Church of the Holy Mother of God in the Slivnik Monastery (1612)
- The Third Prologue Life of Saint Cyril (17th century)

The list concludes with the Moscopole Service Book for the Seven Saints, published by Grigoris Konstantinidis in 1742. However, the earlier Berat (Venetian) Service Book for the Seven Saints from 1720 is omitted. Most of these sources also mention Saint Angelarij. The joint mention of Saints Gorazd and Angelarij in nine out of thirteen sources does not provide sufficient basis to link them as a pair with a common medieval cult. Additionally, the sources offer no historical connection between these saints and the city of Berat. The fate of Saint Gorazd after the captivity in Moravia remains unknown, while Saint Angelarij died in Pliska shortly after the arrival of Cyril and Methodius' disciples in the Balkans.

There is no evidence confirming the existence of a medieval cult dedicated to either of the two disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius. As D. Češmedžiev correctly notes, the chronology of the sources indicates that the memory of Gorazd "was maintained approximately until the mid-13th century and then disappeared, only to be revived in the 16th century," and this memory "was not cultic."³² The same applies to Angelarij. The association of Gorazd with Ohrid likely stems from the similarity in the sound of the names "Gorazd" and "Erasmus."³³ It is now considered proven that there is neither a church nor a monastery dedicated to Saint Gorazd near Berat or Ohrid. However, near Lake Ohrid, along the road from Ohrid to Struga, stands an ancient basilica dedicated to Saint Erasmus of Ohrid, who is locally known as "Saint Razmo."

³² Češmedžiev, „Моштите на св. Горазд“, 140.

³³ See: Иван Снегаров. „Жития на народни светии, писани на охридско наречие с гръцко писмо“. Македонски преглед 1, 1925, 29; Svetan Grozdanov. „La composition des sept saints slaves (седмочисленици επτάρημοι) dans la peinture de l'archevêché d'Ohrid“. Кирило-методиевски студии 13, 2000, 21–41. Also: Бойка Мирчева. „Някои бележки за култа към св. Еразъм Охридски (Формийски) и славянската му служба в ръкопис № 122 от Народната биб. лиотека „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“ в София“. Българска филологическа медиевистика. Сборник в чест на проф. д. ф. н. Иван Харалампиев по случай 60-годишния му юбилей, Велико Търново, 2006, 299–321; Бойка Мирчева. „Култът към св. Еразъм Охридски (Формийски) в източната и западната традиция“. Светци и свети места на Балканите. 2. История. Културна антропология. Изкуствознание. Материалиот Международната конференция, София, 14–16 юни 2012 г., София, 2013, 67–79.

Written sources and preserved artifacts lead to the conclusion that the cult of Saints Gorazd and Angelarij spread in Berat during the 18th and 19th centuries. This cult is undoubtedly post-biographical, with a mixed popular and literary origin, and is based on the aforementioned relics. These relics are associated with the tradition of discovering the remains of Saints Gorazd and Angelarij in the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Balshi (Glavinica) and their transfer to Berat. This event is linked to the monk Pimen, who is also depicted in iconographic tradition. The Albanian historian Father Theophan Popa was the first to document the legend of the relics' transfer.³⁴ He further states that, along with the relics, a 14th-century shroud, three large icons, and parchment liturgical books were also moved. According to Popa, these items were initially taken to the Monastery of Saint George in the village of Breshtan, near Berat. The reason for this relocation, according to legend, was the beginning of the Islamization of the region.³⁵ To support this oral tradition, T. Popa notes that a chapel dedicated to Saint George once existed in Breshtan, containing a cross with an inscription indicating that it belonged to the Monastery of Saint George in Breshtan and dated to 1766.³⁶ It is unclear how long the relics remained in the Monastery of Saint George in Breshtan, but by 1720 (the presumed year of the printing of the Berat Service Book), they were already in the city of Berat.

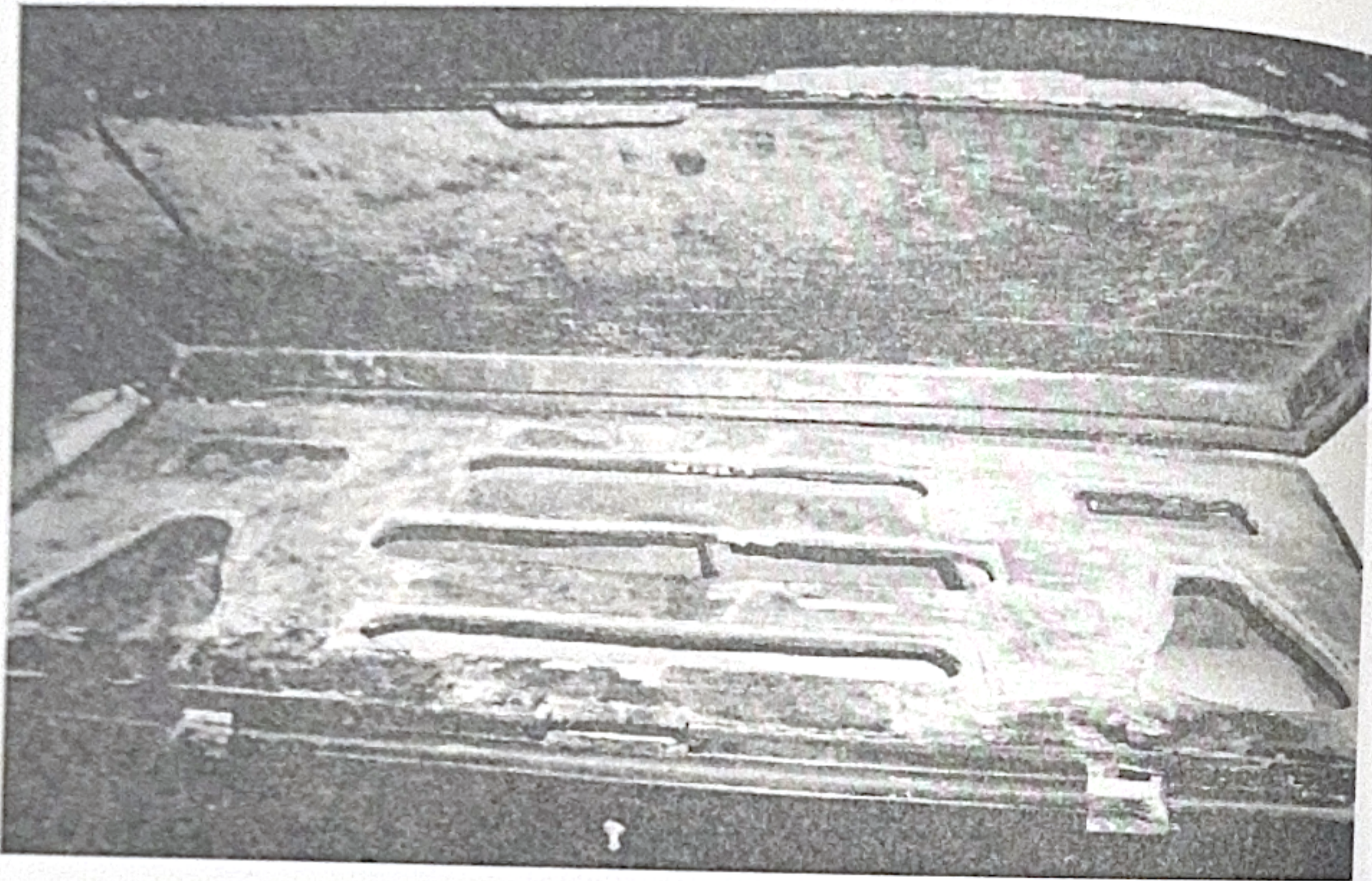
The Berat tradition of the Seven Saints is expressed through two narratives. The first is closer to folk tradition and includes the names Kenos and Theodoro instead of Saints Clement and Naum in the group. The second is based on literary sources used by the author of the Berat Service Book. This second narrative is reflected in "A Brief Historical Description of the Holy Great Metropolitan", published in 1868 by Bishop Antim Alexoudis. It is striking that the author, originating from Thracian Cherson and previously serving in Constantinople and Ephesus, despite being a foreigner to these lands, creates a Berat-centered story. According to this account, the disciples of Saints Cyril and Methodius - Clement, Naum, and Angelarij - arrived directly in Berat after their expulsion from Great Moravia, and their meeting with Prince Boris took place in neighboring Ohrid.

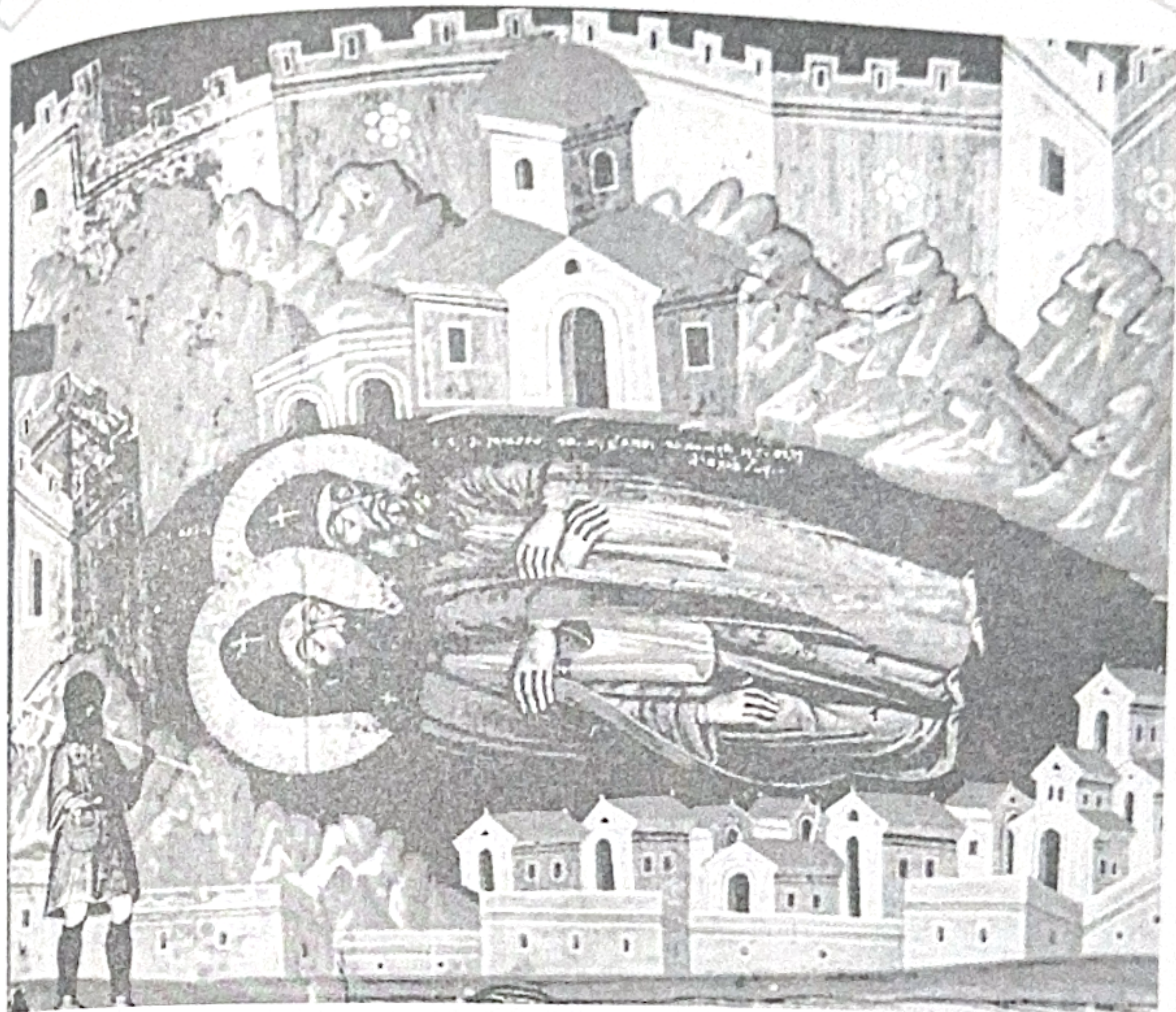
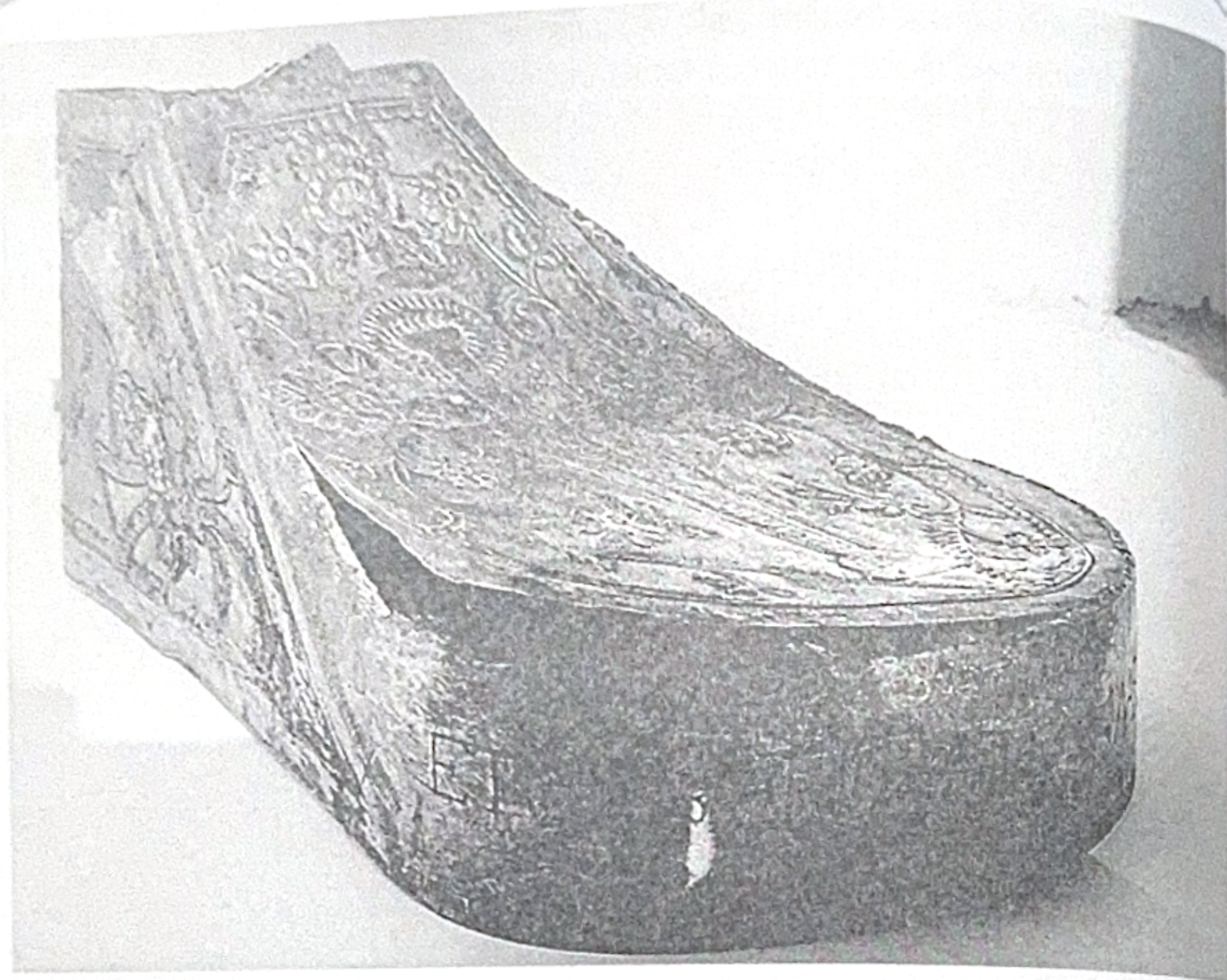
³⁴ „Pour ce qui est des reliques des saints Gorazde et Angelar, elles ont été transportées, toujours d'après la tradition orale, de la cathédrale de Balsh. Elles se trouvent toujours, comme nous venons de le dire plus haut, dans l'église de la Dormition de la Vierge du château fort de Berat.“ (Theofan Popa, „La glavenice medievale et le ballsh actuel“, *Studia Albanica*, 2 (1964): 125–126).

³⁵ According to the Albanian archeologist Melsi Labi, on November 4, 1751, the last Bishop of Balshi Nikiphoros Agavatis died, probably in the Monastery of St. Mother of God [Св. Богородица]. That was the time when the city was completely Islamized. For the inscription, which speaks of the death of Archbishop Nikiphoros Agavatis, and for its interpretation, see: Melsi Labi, „The Basilica of Ballsh where Boris, the Bulgarian Tsar, was Baptized“, *Anglisticum* 5/9, 2016, 59–60.

³⁶ Popa, „La glavenice medievale“, 125.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that regardless of questions about authenticity, the relics preserved in the Berat reliquary have become the primary foundation of the modern cult of the Seven Saints. Developing in the multiethnic environment of Berat at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century, this cult finds expression in the rich iconographic and hymnographic tradition naturally associated with this significant city under the jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric.





ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΑ

Τῶν Ἀγίων ἡ Ἰσαποστόλων ἐπιπέφωσμένων τῆς Βαλγα-
ρίας, ἡ Δαλματίας. Κυρίλλου, Μεθοδίου,
Κλήμεντος, Ναύμ, Γοράσδου,
Ἀγγελαρίου ἡ Σάββα.

Νυνὶ πρώτῃ τυπωθεῖσα, σωφρογεία ἐπιμελεία ἔδωκεν
τῶν Κυρίων, Ἀνδρέου Παπᾶ Γεωργίου Παπᾶ, ἔτ
ἡμερῶν αὐτῶν Νικολάου, καὶ Ἀμασίου, διὰ
ψυχικῶν αὐτῶν σωτηρίων.

Ἀφειρωθεῖσα τῇ αὐτῶν πατρῶν ἰσχίῃ ἀντιλείπτου ἔσται ἡ ἀποστολή
ἐκδομένη ἀπὸ τῆς πατρῶς, διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν εὐλάβειαν.

Ἀφειρωθεῖσα δὲ ὡς ἰσχυρῶς, ἔξ ὧν πρότερον εἶχε σφαλμάτων, χειρογρα-
φικῶν ὅπως ἦ πρωτοτύπων ἔπιταλαιωμένων.



ΜΗΝΙ ΓΟΥΛΙΩ 12^ο ΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΕΙΑ

ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΕΠΤΑΡΙΘΜΩΝ

Ποιηθεῖσα Παρὰ τοῦ ἐν Γερονίχοις Γρηγορίου Μεθοπολίτου.

Ἔν τῃ μικρῇ Βασιλειᾷ ἰσχυρῶς σιχ. δ' σιχηρὰ σεσημένα ἔχ' ἅ-
παντες οὗτοι Ἅγιοι.



Ἰπταρθεῖσαι ἰδοὺς ὑμᾶς, τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμοιωθεῖσαι,
τῷ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, ὁμοιωθεῖσαι Θεῷ, ἡ
χαρῶν ὁμοιωθεῖσαι, διὰ τὸ ἴδιον ἅπαντα, βουλῆσαν
πρὸς τὸν αἰεὶ μετῆχαι, ἡ τὸν ὀφεισθέντα,
δωρηθῆναι τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν, τὴν ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὸ
μῆνα ἔλαος.

Ἐπιπταρθεῖσαι σάλπιγγιν ἐπιπταρθεῖσαι, τὴν ἰσχυρῶς κα-
θαρῶς, ὡς σάλπιγγις ὑμῶν, ἐκ τῆς ἑσπέρης. Θεοῦτε σάλ-
πιγγας, τῷ κόσμῳ τῆς αἰρέσεως ἀλέσασθε, καὶ τὸν ὀφεισθέντα,
δωρηθῆναι τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν, τὴν ἐξουσίαν καὶ τὸ μῆνα ἔλαος.

Ἐπιπταρθεῖσαι σήμερον ὑμῶν ἡ φαεινὰ παρηγορία, καὶ ἡ σιχρῶς σιχ-
ρῶς ἡμῶν, ὡς τῆς χαρῆς ἡμῶν, τῆς Κίριλλου μῦθοι, Κίριλλου Μεθοδίου,
καὶ Κλήμου τοῦ Ναύμ Ἀγγελαρίου, Σάββα Μαυρίου, καὶ Γοράσδου
ἐκτείνασθε, τῷ Κῶ ὑμῶν τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

Ἐπιπταρθεῖσαι τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐκ βίβλου ὁμοιωθεῖσαι, ἔργον ἡ-
μετέρας τῆς ἁγίας Πνεύματος, καὶ τῆς αἰωνίου βασιλείας τῆς
δαπάνης ἡμετέρας, ἐξομῶντες τὴν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὴν εὐφροσύνην
διὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν
καὶ τὸ μῆνα ἔλαος. Καὶ τὸν εὐτοχίαν.

Ἐπιπταρθεῖσαι τὴν ἰσχυρῶς ἡμῶν. Οἷος τὸν ἁγίον ἅ-
παντα τῶν ἁγίων, βουλῆσαν καὶ δαλματίας, ἔτ μισῶν τῶν
πᾶσι, ἡμετέρας ἐκδομένης, ὡς τῆς πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν
ἡμῶν ἔσται, ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν, καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὴν
ἡμετέρας ἡμῶν, πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἡμῶν. Ἀποστολή