Christian Identity of the Crimean Goths

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Abstract

The newly found Gothic inscriptions from Crimea reopened the question of the Christian identity of the Crimean Goths in its interrelation with the Greek-Byzantine environment. The Mangup graffito I.1 and the Late Medieval inscription from Bakhchysarai both contain the acronymised formula '(Saviour) God Jesus' which we think was a purposeful declaration of the Gothic community's Orthodox Nicene allegiance. The expanded variant of Ps. 76:15 in the graffito of Mangup proves its liturgical character and the involvement of the Crimean Goths with Byzantine liturgical processes. The alternative counting of weekdays which from the 11th century onwards is epigraphically attested in the Gothic eparchy in Crimea may have its origin in the Gothic church calendar of the 4th–5th century and have influenced neighbouring peoples of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

Keywords

Byzantine epigraphy – Crimean Goths – Gothic calendar – Mangup graffiti – Medieval Crimea
1 Theology and Writing*

The recent discovery of five Gothic graffiti from the basilica of Mangup in Southwest Crimea (Vinogradov, Korobov 2015; Korobov, Vinogradov 2016, Vinogradov, Korobov 2018) written in Wulfila’s alphabet came as an absolute surprise for experts in the field of Gothic studies and of medieval Crimean epigraphy. One of many new insights it offered – and the most obvious one – was that Gothic literacy had once a far wider spread than previously thought. It now became clear that monuments of written Gothic were produced not only in western and central Europe, primarily Italy, but to the east of its locus natalis as well. While contributions of our colleagues (Quak 2016; Šalyga 2016; Nielsen 2017; Miller 2019) supported the principal correctness of our readings, they also inspired us to continue the search for further epigraphic evidence of Gothic in Crimea. As things stand now, we think we succeeded in locating one more written specimen of Gothic – a rock inscription from Bakhchysarai that despite its shortness provided another remarkable example of Greek-Gothic bilingualism once common among the literati in Crimean Gothia. Furthermore, this, and the previous finds from Mangup, permitted inferences to be made on important aspects of history of the Goths of the Black Sea, in particular on time and form of their Christianisation. Additional evidence in this regard could be obtained by critically approaching contemporary written sources in Greek and Latin, not least the Byzantine-era epigraphy of the Black Sea (including onomastics). Below we will present our results and summarise them as elements in a coherent picture of the Black Sea Gothic culture.

In 2016, in parallel to our work on the Gothic fragments from Mangup that are being kept in the museum preserve of Bakhchysarai, we were pointed at a group of two graffiti carved on a rock surface in the valley of Çürük-Suv. The graffito to the left is reminiscent of the Crimean Tatar trident-like emblem (the

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1 As is currently accepted, the Gothic alphabet was devised in the 4th century by bishop Wulfila specifically for the purpose of translating the Scriptures and liturgy into the language of his new converts among the Goths of the Lower Danube. For a brief bibliography, see Falluomini 2015: 18 (fn. 111).

2 Russian Чурук-Су /Čuruk-Su/. The rock lies on the northern side of an ancient road leading from the late medieval Dormition Monastery and the old Crimean Tatar capitals Qırq Yer (Čufut-Qale) and Salaçıq to the new (since the mid-16th century) residence of the khans in Bakhchysarai. For circumstances of the find see Vinogradov, Korobov 2019: 500.
so-called *taraq tamğa*, also known as ‘the trident of Girays’),\(^3\) the only noticeable difference being the lack of the typical serifs. To the right of it and a little lower is an inscription made in the same technique and consisting of three letters, each about twelve to fourteen centimetres in height. The letters are deep, made of round bores subsequently joined with thick lines, and despite being partly eroded could be provisionally identified as Greek sigma, theta and iota. The sigma is peculiar in that its shape is rather zigzag-like, with the outer hastae drawn at right angles. The theta has its circle disconnected both above and below; visually, it represents two round ‘brackets’ facing one another, with a short stroke or point between them. There is a slightly concave horizontal stroke over the final iota.

The shapes of sigma and theta as described look absolutely foreign to Byzantine script. In fact, they are never attested in Greek epigraphic material from medieval Crimea,\(^4\) yet they find striking parallels in Wulfila’s alphabet which, as the Gothic graffiti from Mangup testify, was in use in Crimea down to the end of the first millennium C.E. The variant of the Gothic alphabet which surfaces both in Mangup and now we think in Bakhchysarai differs from the better known variant of Codex Argenteus in that it retains a few archaic traits and is found as such also in several Gothic manuscripts (exhibiting a particular affinity to the script of Codex Ambrosianus B and its subgroup). Its distinctive features include the epsilon- or sigma-like /s/ – hence this variant is sometimes referred to as “Σ-type” (Braune/Heidermanns 2004: 19–21; Fallouomini 2015: 20) – and the ‘disjointed’ form of the letter /Ʃ/, which in Codex Argenteus and related manuscripts are mostly identical with majuscule Latin /s/ and Greek theta respectively. The Mangup graffiti, which observably were written by at least two different hands, exhibit two variant forms of /s/: one drawn with rounded strokes and a pronounced slant to the right thus coming closest to its form in the Σ-type manuscripts, and the other (found exclusively in graffito I.1), less sloping, with straight strokes and sharp angles, having more of a ‘zigzag’ appearance – not unlike what we see in the short inscription from Bakhchysarai. The same graffito gives us the only example of the letter /Ʃ/, the first letter in the text here. The upper part of the letter is weathered, but in its lower part we can clearly see an interruption of the circle, thereby obtaining

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3 This emblem is believed to have been introduced by Hacı İ Giray as a state symbol of the Crimean Khanate in the mid-15th century, but in fact it might be slightly older, as its earliest attestations in numismatics date from the beginning of that century (Goncharov 2016: 22–3).

4 For an overview of Byzantine-era Crimean Greek palaeography see http://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/corpora/byzantine/introduction.html#IV-2-.
one more parallel to the Σ-type variant of the alphabet as attested in manuscripts and the inscription of Bakhchysarai.

While many scholars agree that the shape of Gothic /ƕ/ derives from Greek theta (so does e.g. Magnús Snædal, 2015: 102–3), there is no consensus as to the reasons for this choice. There are several alternative opinions (Marchand 1973: 22; D’Alquen 1974: 45–6; Wagner 1986: 143–50; an overview of other suggestions in Raschellá 2008: 31–2 (fn. 78)), yet that the Σ-type is more conservative is universally agreed upon; therefore, the disjointed variant of /ƕ/ is to be credited with an older age, too, perhaps representing the original shape of the letter as designed by Wulfila. Incidentally, this accords nicely with Fausto Cercignani’s suggestion (1988: 177) that the shape of Wulfilian /ƕ/ derives from a Runic H-like symbol. But, whatever its origin, its association with Greek theta based on the obvious graphic similarity between them must have been increasing over time, hence the form of /ƕ/ with a full-drawn circle in the later variants of the alphabet. What we see in Mangup and Bakhchysarai inscriptions is likely a vestige of an earlier stage of this development, with an association already established, or pre-existing, between the Gothic and the Greek letter, yet before the complete graphic assimilation of /ƕ/ to theta.

Although the Bakhchysarai inscription cannot be precisely dated on palaeographic basis, its adjacency to the Crimean Tatar emblem, the same technique of carving in both, and the absence of any other graffiti on the rock might argue in favour of its late medieval provenance, moving it closer to the time of Busbecq’s account which stems from the middle of the 16th century. In this case it would represent the latest known monument of Gothic writing in Crimea, or elsewhere.

The enigmatic three-letter sequence cannot be explained as a word of either Greek or Gothic. Nor can it be taken as a meaningful number. We actually do see what looks like a superscript stroke over the final letter, but the resulting number just seems to make no sense. But, as we know, strokes like this additionally served to mark contracted nomina sacra, as is also the case in the Mangup graffiti with words g(u)þ and f(raft)ð (Korobov, Vinogradov 2016: 152) In this case we may correlate the inscription to an acrostic found in four initial lines of the Gothic graffito 1.1 from Mangup which we think contains the Greek formula Θ(εὸ)ς Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς – ‘God Jesus’ or ‘God is Jesus’ – written in Gothic

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5 A list of some eighty words and a song (cantilena) preserved in a letter by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq written in 1562 has been the only extant record of Gothic in Crimea until the discovery of the Mangup graffiti.

6 Both Greek and Wulfilian Gothic letters had numerical values and could be used as numbers, in which case they were provided with a superscript stroke and/or placed between two points in Gothic (Braune/Heidermanns 2004: 22 (Anm. 5)).
letters, with the letter /ƕ/ of the first line taking the role of Greek theta due to their graphic similarity (Korobov, Vinogradov 2016: 145–6, 148 (fn. 31)): see Table 1.

Incidentally, the short dash that we see over the initial /i/ of the third line could probably be an attempted contraction stroke where we would normally expect a diaeresis when reading the line horizontally. Perhaps it was left by the writer as a cue to reading the acrostic vertically, but of this in particular we cannot be sure. Howbeit, we are pretty sure that the acrostic was intended by the bilingual author of the graffito because the text is evidently divided into lines in complete disregard of its syntax.

Accordingly, the Bakhchysarai inscription can be interpreted as a similar Greek formula: Σωτὴρ Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς ‘Saviour God Jesus’, acronymised to its initial letters: Σ. Θ. Ι. Formulas like this, supposedly offshoots of the better known Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Ὑιὸς Σωτήρ, are indeed attested in early Byzantine epigraphy, e.g. Χριστέ, ὁ Θεὸς Σωτήρ in Beth-Shean, Israel (Fitzgerald 1939: 14), Χριστέ, ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Σωτήρ from Salamine on Cyprus (Pouilloux et al 1987: 238 (Nr. B)), [Ἰ(ησοῦς) Χ(ριστὸς)] Σ(ωτὴρ) Ἡ(μῶν) located near Anazarbos, Cilicia (Dagron, Feissel 1987: 194 (Nr. 114)), and even an almost identical one: ὁ Σ(ωτῆρ) Θ(εὸς) Ἰ(ησοῦς), a graffito on a Late Antiquity lamp from Corinth (Wiseman 1972: 31 (Nr. 23), for corrections see PHI7 Database, Hsp 41:31,23). Our conclusion so far is that the rock inscription of Bakhchysarai was left by a person who was literate both in Gothic written in the locally practised variant of Wulfila’s alphabet and in Greek, the bilingualism of the Crimean Goths being evidenced by Busbecq’s account and the graffiti of Mangup, to which the inscription of Bakhchysarai seems to be particularly close.

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7 It should perhaps be added that on several occasions in the corpus, the stroke was written where the diaeresis was due, and vice versa, thus causing confusion between ἰ and ἰ(ες) (Falluomini 2015: 45).

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**TABLE 1** The Mangup inscription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line no.</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ḨAṢG͞ÞMIKILS</td>
<td>Ḩvas g(u)þ mikils</td>
<td>who (is a) god (so) great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SWEG͞PUNSARPÛ</td>
<td>swe g(u)þ unsar þu</td>
<td>as god ours thou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ḨISG͞Waurkjands</td>
<td>is g(u)þ waurkjands</td>
<td>art (the) god working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SILDALEIKA (vacat)</td>
<td>sildaleika aïnns</td>
<td>wonders (the) one (god)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If that be true, we face a remarkable phenomenon: two similar Greek Christological formulas written down with corresponding letters of the Gothic alphabet, and that with a distance of about five hundred years between them. What follows is our attempt to explain this repeated occurrence by placing both finds in the appropriate historical context.

The acronymised formulas in Crimean inscriptions of Gothic provenance are explicit confessions of Christian faith. We may confidently date the Christianisation of the Crimean Goths to a time after the middle of the 5th century: Germanic cremation burials on Čёrnaja (Чёрная) river associated with the Goths are discontinued precisely around this time, and the earliest burials in the Mountainous Crimea containing Christian paraphernalia come from the first half of the 6th century (Ajzabin 2012: 75–6). Historians conclude that in Southwest Crimea as a whole, in contrast to East Crimea and the Asiatic Bosporus, Christianity was decisively established only in the 380’s, during the reign of Theodosius I, and probably still later so along the South Coast. The establishment of Christian church and its hierarchy in a pagan milieu was not unproblematic even in Chersonesus (Zuckermann 1991; Vinogradov 2017). Formulaic confessions could originate as expressions of the newly acquired religious identity sealing the success of the Christianisation of Southwest Crimea.

Moreover, the said formulas emphasizing the divinity of Jesus may also be viewed theologically. They could echo Nicene polemics aimed at Arian (Homoean)10 doctrine of the Son being subordinate to God the Father. It is true that the Gothic Homoeans would not outright negate Christ’s status as God, since this is explicitly stated in the New Testament (Zakharov 2020: 12–3).11 Nor did they avoid referring to him as God in their own scriptures.12 However,
formulas proclaiming precisely Jesus (not Christ or the Son) as God seem to be rather Nicene than Arian (Homoean). Nicaean vs Homoean disputes among the Black Sea Goths could be of current interest immediately after most of the Goths on the Lower Danube had converted to Arianism championed by Wulfila, while Theophilus, an earlier bishop of Ἐφραιμ (Ruggieri 1993: 342), was a signatory of the Acts of Nicaea.\(^\text{13}\) With their departure from Danubian areas to the West the space for polemics, though much decreased, did not disappear overnight: an Arian bishopric continued its existence in Constantinople until the early 6th century (Mathisen 1997: 675–7), and Theodoric, the Arian king of the Ostrogoths, is said to have maintained relations with their Crimean kinsmen (Wolfram 1990: 79, 279). In the Middle Byzantine period and down to the Late Middle Ages, when the dogmatic conflict had long lost its topicality (since there were no Arian Goths left), formulas like ‘God (is) Jesus’ or ‘Saviour God (is) Jesus’ could probably persist, by inertia, as markers of the Orthodox identity of the Crimean Goths.

But what exactly do the extant sources tell us about Gothic Christianity in Crimea? From the late 7th century onwards, we have several contemporary authors which all testify to the fact that the Goths inhabiting the mountainous part of the peninsula were Nicaeans and not Arians (Homoeans). The earliest piece of evidence are the Acts of the Quinisext Council (691/692 C.E.) signed by the Orthodox Bishop of ‘Cherson of Doras’ (Χερσῶνος τῆς Δόραντος) Georgios (Ohme 1990: 151 (Nr. 50)) whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction extended over Dory (Δόρυ) – the land of the Crimean Goths mentioned by Procopius (De aed. III. 7. 13). On the other part, we know next to nothing about their creed before that date. Historians are left with Procopius’ statement concerning the Goths of the Asiatic Bosporus:

> Now as to whether these Goths were once of the Arian belief, as the other Gothic nations are, or whether the faith as practised by them has shewn some other peculiarity, I am unable to say, for they themselves are entirely ignorant on this subject ...

**PROCOPIUS, De bell. VIII. 4. 11, transl. by H. B. Dewing**

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\(^{13}\) On Theophilus see Parvis 2014: 56–7; Schäferdiek 2014: 24 (who argues against his coming specifically from Crimean Gothia).
However, the near identity between the language of the graffiti and that of the Gothic Bible strongly suggests that the Psalm 76,14–15 inscribed on the fragment from Mangup is in fact a direct quotation of Wulfila’s text. Does it follow, then, that the Crimean Goths, being Nicaeans from the start, were simply adapting the Arian Bible translation of Wulfila to their needs,14 or is this a real vestige of Arianism once professed in Southwest Crimea?

The fact that the Crimean Goths did in a yet unknown way adopt Wulfila’s alphabet and Bible and kept them in use for a long period seems to speak for their close familiarity with cultural traditions of the Arian Goths. However, an Arian baptism of the Goths of Southwest Crimea in the 340’s–380’s may be ruled out by archaeological evidence already cited. We would rather think that the use of the Arian Bible translation and alphabet by Gothic Nicaeans might have its origin in John Chrysostom’s efforts at conversion of those Goths who stayed behind in the East, to Nicaeanism. For that purpose, he dispatched at least two missions: one to certain Scythian nomads encamped along the Danube, as we read in Theodoret’s Ecclesiastical History (Hist. Eccl. v. 31), though it should probably be mentioned that these νομάδες Σκύθαι might as well be referring to the Huns (Thompson 1946: 73–9). The second mission, headed by bishop Unila and his unnamed successor, was sent to the community of Γοτθία (Ep. ad Olymp. ix. 5). At the same time, according to Theodoret (Hist. Eccl. v. 30), Chrysostom “assigned a church” in Constantinople (St. Paul) to Nicene Gothic clerics where biblical excerpts and sermons were read out in Gothic (PG 63, 499), and where he did occasionally participate himself in liturgies and preaching, “using an interpreter who was skilled in both languages, and he got other good speakers to do the same” (Mathisen 1997: 674–5). In our opinion, it was the fruits of this project at ‘Nicaeanisation’ of the Gothic Bible and church service that were imported (rather than created from scratch) by the Crimean Goths either directly from Constantinople with its populous Gothic presence throughout the Early Byzantine period, or via some of their Nicene kinsmen: from the Lower Danube where the Orthodox church service in Gothic was practised down to the 9th century, as testified by Walahfrid Strabo (Libellus de exordiis vii. 32–41), or from the Asiatic Bosporus where an Orthodox Gothic bishopric is known to have existed before the mid-6th century.

The community that Unila and his successor were appointed to must have been located either on the Lower Danube (in the bishopric of Theophilus, Wulfila, and Selenas), given that Chrysostom’s Γοτθία and Γοτθία in the Acts of Nicaea were one and the same, or somewhere at Bosporus, in the vicinity

14 Currently, there is no general consensus as to whether Wulfila’s dogmatic stance left material traces in his Bible translation, see Wolfe 2014; Falluomini 2015: 15.
of Panticapaeum (which had already had a resident bishop back in 325). This would account for the Gothic missionaries’ twofold destination: Unila, εἷς τὸν Βόσπορον ‘into Gothia’, and his successor εἷς τὰ μέρη ἐκεῖνα ‘into those parts’ might even suggest that the Christian Goths of Bosporus were living outside the political borders of the Kingdom. However, a complete lack of Germanic cremation burials in both European and Asiatic Bosporus (Kazanski 2002; Ščukin et al 2006) may be indicative of an earlier Christianisation of the Goths dwelling within the Bosporan Kingdom and on its borders. It also seems to imply that the objective of the mission was not primary conversion of these Goths to Christianity, but rather and specifically their Nicaeanisation.

As additional evidence for this our hypothesis, we would like to draw attention to two Christian Greek epitaphs from Panticapaeum. One of them (IOSPE3 V 272), dated palaeographically to the 4th century, belonged to a burial vault on the northern slope of Mithridates Hill, with burials of Bosporan nobility and high-ranking dignitaries nearby (including persons with non-Greek names). The name of the deceased is written as Βανφαρηξ which we think might be Gothic, ending in -reiks which, as a common noun, corresponded to Greek ἄρχων ‘ruler’ and was a very popular second element in Germanic bipartite personal names. Alternatively, ῥήξ might be a title – either Gothic or Greek (Lampe 1961: 1216), see its use by Chrysostom (Ep. ad Olymp. IX. 5) with reference to a Black Sea Gothic ruler (τοῦ ῥηγὸς τῶν Γότθων). In which case Βανφα alone is comparable to Gothic personal name Wamba (Reichert 1987), which literally translates to ‘belly, womb’.

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15 Electronically published at http://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/5.272.html.
16 E.g. comes Sauagas (a Sarmatian/Alanic name) and his wife Phaeisparta (IOSPE3 V 305) buried in 491–492 C.E.
17 On Gothic reiks corresponding to and eventually synonymised with Greek ῥήξ and Latin rex in the Migration period see Wolfram 2005: 77–8, 141–2.
18 Among several bearers of the name was the Visigothic king Wamba (672–680), probably given it as a nickname (“Big Paunch”, see Wolfram 1993: 463 (n. 326)). Chronologically relevant examples of /β/ standing for anlaut pre-vocalic [w]-sound in non-Greek proper names and appellatives are found in building inscriptions from Cherson: IOSPE3 V 5 (392–393 C.E.) Φλ(αβίου) Βίτου; IOSPE3 V 6 (487–488 C.E.) βικαράτου. Writing /ν/ instead of /μ/ before labials both in foreign and native words is a pervasive scribal habit attested elsewhere in Greek (examples are many). The only formal problem is /φ/ in place of expected /β/ which in the 4th century Greek retained a plosive pronunciation after nasals (Horrocks 2010: 170). On the plosive character of Gothic post-consonantal /b/ see Braune/
The second epitaph (IOSPE$^3$ V 296), dated by palaeography between the 4th and the 6th centuries, records another non-Greek name, Αβίκα, which might equally be Gothic: *Abika, apparently a hypocoristic form of a bipartite name with its first part Gothic *aba ‘man, husband’ = Greek ἀνήρ. Now, if the names in the epitaphs are indeed Gothic, they would provide additional dating evidence for the early Christianisation of the Bosporan Goths.

Summing up the historical part, we suggest that the first Gothic Christians on the North shore of the Black Sea were the Goths of Bosporos. We do not know whether they were originally baptised into Arianism or only subject to Homoean influence, but it is highly likely that in the late 4th century John Chrysostom worked to include them in his campaign of Nicaeaisation. The Goths of the land of Dory, that is of South and Southwest Crimea, must have converted later, after the mid-5th century, and probably directly to Nicaeanism. But unlike their Bosporan kinsmen, the Crimean Goths were not given a bishop of their own and stayed subordinate to the powerful Church of Cherson until the early 8th century when the autonomous archbishopric of Gothia was established in Southwest Crimea, probably after the decimation of the city of Cherson by Justinian II in the year 711 (Albrecht 2018: 607–16).

2 Liturgy and Calendar

There are reasons to believe that the particular Christian identity of the Crimean Goths did in fact go beyond the use of Wulfila’s alphabet and the persistent demonstration of their Orthodox allegiance in epigraphy. We can find its traces also in liturgy.

Taking a closer look at the first part of graffito I.1 from Mangup, one will notice that the verses of Psalm 76:14–15 appear in an expanded form, with ainns ‘the one [god]’ added at its end. This variant which probably originated under the influence of Ps. 71:18 does find parallels in witnesses of the Greek Bible: Sa...
R’’ L̄pau’’-Sc 1219 (Septuaginta 1931: 211). Hence it is likely that the Gothic version of the Psalter was based on manuscripts of this tradition. That the expanded variant of Ps. 76:15 was known in Crimea is evidenced in The Miracle of St. Clement authored by bishop Ephrem of Cherson: the verse is exactly at its beginning (Die Pseudo-Klementinen 2008: 165; Vinogradov, Korolev, Kashtanov 2018).

The context of the Psalm’s use in the graffito is also noteworthy. What immediately follows it is an obviously unfinished Gothic text written by the same hand and consisting of four lines: see Table 2.

The piece as a whole has no known direct counterpart in Greek, although one could easily find phrasal parallels like ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν ‘he rose from the dead’ and εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην/τὸν κόσμον ‘to the universe/world’ in Byzantine hymnography. That the text was composed ad hoc is also supported by its use of elements of Germanic poetics (Korobov, Vinogradov 2016: 147, fn. 28), and the hardly accidental /u/-tautogram in the first three lines (what, if any, additional message was being conveyed here remains a topic for further research). For our present purposes, it is important that the graffito may thus be placed in a liturgical context. We know that Ps. 76:14–15 was used in Byzantine church service, as the Great Prokeimenon, during significant festivals (Easter, Christmas and others). And on some of them (e.g., Pentecost Eve), this verse appeared in the expanded form (with μόνος added after θαυμάσια).21

Particularly remarkable is its use in the service on the Feast of Orthodoxy which was introduced in 843 after the victory over iconoclasts (Gouillard 1967). The expanded verse is chanted as the Great Prokeimenon and repeated thrice at the end of the adoration of the holy icons. After it, a concluding hymn follows which is fairly reminiscent of the prayer in graffito I.1, and of which the latter might even be a brief paraphrase:

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<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>USSTOÞ</td>
<td>usstoph</td>
<td>[he] rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>UNDAIWINS</td>
<td>und aiwins</td>
<td>for ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>USDAUÞAIM</td>
<td>us dauþaim</td>
<td>from the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>JAHINMIDJUN</td>
<td>jah in midjun[gard-]</td>
<td>and in(to) the world ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Today salvation came to the world; let us sing to Him who is risen from tomb and to the Founder of our life, for He destroyed the death through His death and gave us the victory and great mercy.

In the Life of St. John of Gothia (Auzépy 2006) we read that the Gothic eparchy was a stronghold of iconolatry in Crimea, and that after 754 it did not accept an iconoclastic bishop sent there from Constantinople. Therefore, the triumph of iconodules in 843 which was celebrated afterwards as an overall triumph of Christianity must have been met in Gothia with special enthusiasm. Additionally, it was in the 840’s when the mountainous part of Crimea was transferred from the Khazars back to the Byzantine domain – an event which sparked off a large-scale restoration of Christian churches in the area, including the basilica of Mangup where the Gothic graffito I.1 was left on a wall in the mid-9th century (Korobov, Vinogradov 2016: 144). The expanded form of Ps. 76:14–15 in the graffito may illustrate the inclusion of the Crimean Goths in pan-Byzantine liturgical processes.

One more identity marker may be discovered in the liturgical calendar of the Gothic eparchy. Three inscriptions from the Mountainous Crimea dated between the mid-11th and the late 14th century bear witness of an ordering of weekdays different from that which was common in the Byzantinosphere including the Black Sea region, i.e. where Sunday is the first day of the week, Monday the second one (δευτέρα), etc.

The first inscription is the epitaph of Alexis, son of Belaï, found at Ay-Kostandi tract (called so after St. Constantine’s church) near the village of Şüri (modern Kudrino) in the valley of Qaçı (Kacha) river, not far from Töpe (Tepe) Kermen – one of the most significant cave cities of the Mountainous Crimea where building activity can be traced as far back as the 6th century (Vinogradov, Gaydukov 2004). Our inscription (IOSPE3 V 167)²² belongs to the Late Byzantine period – 1392 C.E., and runs as follows:

Fell asleep: a servant of God, Alexis, son of Belaï, on the 10th of January, on the 3rd day, in the year 6900.

The 10th of January 1392 fell on Wednesday, so “the 3rd day” of the inscription was Wednesday and not Tuesday (Byzantine Greek τρίτη, lit. ‘the third [day]’) as was normal in the Byzantine numbering of weekdays which continued the Hebrew week beginning on Sunday and ending with Saturday-Sabbath. This piece of evidence might have been dismissed as a scribal error (especially since no pictures of the epitaph have survived), except that one more example of the same phenomenon is apparently attested in another inscription (IOSPE²³ V 124) which comes from Kermençik (modern Vysokoe) in the interfluve of Qaçi and Belbek. This is a Late Byzantine epitaph commemorating several family members:

+ Ἐκοιμήθησαν τοῦ
Γεωρ(γίου) τὰ πεδία· ἡ δούλι τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ Ἀρχοτίσα
καὶ ὁ δούλος τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ Ἀρχοτίσα
Κόστας καὶ ὁ δούλος(ς)
tοῦ θ(εο)ῦ Μαυρίκις κ(αὶ)
ὁ δοῦλ(ος) τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ Σωμε-νίς καὶ ὁ δοῦλ(η) τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ
Ὑρύνυ ἐν μιν(ὴ) Ἀγόστου γ', ἡμέρας ζ', ἐπὶ ἐ-
tους ἡμέρας ἔκτης

Fell asleep, children of George: a servant of God, Archontissa, a servant of God, Kostas, a servant of God, Maurikis, a servant of God, Symeonis, and a servant of God, Irene, on the 3rd of August, on the 6th day, in the year 6895.

The 3rd of August 1387 was Saturday, therefore “the 6th day” (ἡμέρα ἔκτη) of the inscription should be Saturday rather than Friday. Although in the Byzantine system the sixth day is usually referred to as παρασκευή (whereas Saturday is σάββατον), ἡμέρα ἔκτη is not without precedents: as a name for Friday it is attested since the 6th century,²⁴ including Middle and Late Byzantine texts – a practice that may have its ultimate origin in Gen. 1:31.

²³ Electronically published at https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/5.124.html.
²⁴ Ioannes Malalas. Chronicon 18, 112: (Μηνὶ ίουλίῳ, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔκτη, ἰνδικτιώνιος ἕˇ ἐγένετο σεισμός; Chronicon Paschale 418,5–6: ἐσταυρώθη ὁ κύριος καὶ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἔκτη τῆς ἐβδομάδος;
It necessarily follows that in the late 14th century at minimum, the days of the week in the Mountainous Crimea were counted in a different order compared to the then-current Byzantine system, with the first day of the week being Monday and not Sunday. But this local counting might be even older if we consider the graffito (IOSPE³V 134)²⁵ carved on walls of a semi-cave church found near Ulaqlı (modern Gluboky Yar), not far from the valley of Alma and the northernmost cave city Baqla (Bakla). This is the principal and earliest graffito of the church which makes a reference to the person buried in it. It reads as follows:

+ Ἐτελεύτη-
  σεν ὁ παστήρ τοῦ
  Ἀστην ὁ καὶ Ἰωάννις, μινὴ
  δεκεμ[βρί]ο κδ′, εἰμέρα β′
  vac. γ’ ἡνδ(ικτιῶνος) ἔτ(ους) ,[τ]φμ[γ]’

Died: the pastēr of Astin (?) John, on the 24th of December, the 2nd day, in the 3rd indiction, year [6]54[3].

Whatever the meaning of παστήρ – a shepherd or a priest (pastor), the 24th of December 1035 (the final numeral, although blurred, is easily recovered after the year of the indiction) fell on Tuesday. Here again, the second day of the week is not Monday as it is in the Byzantine system (δευτέρη), but Tuesday.

In other inscriptions of the Mountainous Crimea, relevant data are lacking. But in the coastal part of the Gothic eparchy, in Partenit, an inscription from the year 1471 (IOSPE³V 242.1)²⁶ adheres to the traditional Byzantine counting of weekdays which is attested here already in the early 10th century (IOSPE³V 243).²⁷ Thus, the alternative counting is limited to the eparchy’s mountainous part, i.e. the territory which throughout the Middle and Late Byzantine periods was inhabited by the Goths.

As is known, the same alternative counting of weekdays was (and is) in use with a number of peoples of eastern Europe and the Caucasus – the Slavs, the

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²⁵ Electronically published at https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/5.134.html.
²⁶ Electronically published at https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/5.242.html.
²⁷ Electronically published at https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/5.243.html.
Abkhazians, and the Chechens. Its origin has been repeatedly discussed in literature, and several hypotheses have been advanced so far.

According to Michael S. Flier (1985), the pagan Slavs had a day off called *nedělja (cf. Old Church Slavonic нєдєлїа ‘Sunday’, lit. ‘no-work [day]’, which in fact might be an early calque of Greek ἄπρακτος ἡμέρα), and its shift to the final position in the order of the week occurred due to its identification with Jewish Sabbath after the Christianisation. This explanation was supported by Hans Peter Bruppacher (1948: 100–1) who pointed out proverbs like Apulian Lu lunedia ca capu è da semana; German Am Montag da fängt die Woche an.

Valentin Kiparsky (1934: 131–3), referring to the same counting also among Abkhazians and Chechens, hypothesized that the only thinkable source of borrowing was Greek.

Some searched for its origin in the Latin (Miklosich 1876: 19–20; Brückner 1927: 588; Enrietti 1994), and others in the Romance tradition (Melich 1908; Skok 1925, 1928; Kronsteiner 1982; Enrietti 1994). Their shared arguments include examples like Friulian prindi ‘Monday’ < Latin prima dies ‘the first day’, while proto-Slavic *sobota31 ‘Saturday’ and *nedělja were considered as dependent from Latin sabbatum (or Italian sabbato, sabato) and Latin feria, respectively.

Other scholars considered the Monday-first week to be an invention made during the Cyril-Methodius period (Stender-Petersen 1927; Matuszewski 1978; Moszyński 1985; Hannick 1988), or even a later ecclesiastic development (Uspenskij 1982; Moszyński 1985; Hannick 1988). Like Flier and Bruppacher, they explain the moving of *nedělja to the end of the week by its convergence with Jewish Sabbath. But since *nedělja ‘Sunday’ and *po-neděl-ьnikъ (-ъкъ) ‘Monday’ (OCS понєдєлъникъ, lit. ‘[the day] after no-work’), which names are structurally close to Greek πάσχα (Easter) and ἀντίπασχα (the first Sunday after Easter), were allegedly recognised by the Slavs as something closely associated and indivisible, days started to be counted from *ponedělъnikъ. Another Greek compound, σαββατοκυριακή (Saturday + Sunday) brought about the introduction of *serda ‘Wednesday’ (OCS спръда, lit. ‘[the day in] the middle’) as a designation of the week’s middle point.

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28 We are leaving out later traditions, e.g. the Lithuanian week beginning with pirmadienis ‘Monday’ (lit. ‘the first day’) which is dependent on Slavic.

29 ĖSSJa 24. 115–7. In some parts of Slavia, the word’s meaning was later extended to the whole of the week, cf. Russian неделя.

30 See e.g. Chechen шинара /šinara/ ‘Tuesday’ (шниа- ‘two-’), кхаара /qaara/ ‘Wednesday’ (кхаа- ‘three-’), etc.

31 This form co-existed with *sobota ‘id.’ < Byzantine Greek *σάμβατον < σάββατον.
Finally, Jadwiga Waniakowa (1998: 160–1), dismissing the parallel evidence of other languages, completely denies that the alternative counting of weekdays ever existed in Slavic, explaining e.g. *vstornikъ (-ъkъ) ‘Tuesday’ as the second day after Sunday, but not the second day of the week.

These hypotheses are either based on unprovable assumptions (the calendrical convergence of Sunday and Sabbath which was not known in Byzantium; the merger of Sunday and Monday – with no textual evidence to support it, the dependence of Wednesday on σαββάτοκυριακό which appears in the sources since no earlier than the 10th century32), or on debatable parallels (e.g., Friulian prindi can itself be dependent on the tradition of the neighbouring Slavs, and the age of the Apulian and German proverbs is unknown). In the meantime, simpler solutions may be offered for some of the facts. Slavic *serda, for example, may be a calque of Old High German mittawehha > Mittwoch (Skok 1928; Enrietti 1994), or of Late Latin media hebdomas (Melich 1908), whence Tuscan mezzedima, Vegliot missédma, Engadine, Surselvan mezianna, mezemna, mezzeimna, all coming from the traditional ordering of weekdays which starts from Sunday and where Wednesday is the actual middle point of the week.

Special attention should be paid to typological parallels to *ponedělъnikъ in Germanic. Those suggested by Matuszewski and Enrietti – Swabian Aftermontag ‘Tuesday’ and Bavarian Afterertag ‘Wednesday’ – do not look particularly convincing. The former word was allegedly invented by the bishop of Augsburg as a replacement of ‘pagan’ Dienstag. Yet what these examples demonstrate is that the model of *po-neděl-niks which is unique among the Slavic weekday names is absolutely normal for Germanic. Stender-Petersen pointed out another important structural parallel in Gothic afar-sabbate ‘Sunday’ corresponding to Greek μία τῶν σαββάτων in Mk 16:2 of Wulfila’s translation. Given the influence of Gothic on early Slavic cultural terms, the loan-translation of the word for Monday seems quite plausible.

But what if the Slavs borrowed not only the model of “after no-work” Monday, but the whole alternative counting of weekdays? Specimens of this counting that we discover in the mountainous part of the Gothic eparchy in Crimea may be viewed as a part of a geographic continuum stretching from Eastern Europe across the northern Black Sea region up to the north-western Caucasus. The missing link between the Abkhazians and the Chechens can be found in the Alanic glosses of the late 13th–14th century where the word for Monday (ἡ β’ = ἡ δευτέρη) is recorded as αὔτεσήρ33 which is an exact match of Digor Ossetian avdisœr, lit. ‘head of seven [days].’ Accordingly, the week

32 The Typicon of the Great church 181.
33 Lubotsky 19–22 erroneously αὔτεσῆρ.
beginning with Monday was borrowed into Nakh from the Alans who in their turn might have borrowed it from Abkhazia that had an important role in the Christianisation of Alania in the 10th century.

But how could the Goths be involved with the spreading of the alternative counting of weekdays – the counting that their descendants in the Mountainous Crimea kept in use down to the late 14th century? Very little is known about the Gothic calendar. Of the days of the week, only three ‘Sabbatical’ names are attested in Wulfila’s Bible: indeclinable *sabbato* or (rarely) *sabbate* with optional *dags*, and a few declinable forms of *sabbatus* mostly in the plural (dat. *sabbatim, sabbatum*) < Greek σάββατον. Its derivatives in Gothic were *fruma sabbato*, ‘[the day] before Sabbath’34 before Sabbath < Greek προσσάββατον equated with *paraskaiwe* < Greek παρασκευή ‘Friday’ in Mk 15:42, and the already mentioned *afarsabbate* for ‘Sunday’ in Mk 16:2.35 There is an old theory (Kluge 1909; Kranzmayer 1929; a critical survey in Feulner 2005) that several South German regional names of the days of the week ultimately of Greek origin came there via Gothic. These include Middle High German *Pfintztag* ‘Thursday’ < Greek πέμπτη, lit. ‘the fifth [day].’ Yet no definite proof of a Gothic mediation has been presented, and it is equally possible that the names of the weekdays entered High German directly from Middle Greek.36

On the other hand, the only extant fragment of the Gothic calendar (Achelis 1900) informs us that some of the holydays differed in date from their Greek counterparts. Of the seven church memorial days of October and November, three are unique and connected with the Gothic church’s history (Frideric and his men, the emperor Constantius II and the Gothic bishop Dorotheus of Constantinople), two find Greek parallels in a quite different part of the ecclesiastical year (*Wereka/* Ωὐρ(ι)κας, *Batwin(s)/ Βαθούσης, and the martyrs of Beroea), and the remaining two differ from Greek ones by a single day only. These are memorial days of two important saints, the apostles Philip and Andrew, and while Greek calendars unanimously celebrate their days on the

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34 The same model is recognisable in the Gothic name of November attested in the Calendar fragment: *fruma jULEIS*, i.e. the month preceding *juleis* ‘Yule-month’ (December), cf. Old Norse *ýlir*, a month approx. from late November to late December in pagan times, later equated with December, and Old English *æfterra ʒéola*, lit. ‘post-Yule[month]’ = January. Curiously, *frumin sabbato* (dat.) is used as a synonym of *afarsabbate* in Mk 16:9. This was apparently due to literal rendering of Greek πρώτη σαββάτου ‘the first [day] of (i.e. after) Sabbath’, being itself a calque of Aramaic ḥad b-šabb(ṣ)ā ‘the first [day] in the week’ = Sunday.

35 Cf. also German *Pfingsten* < Greek πεντηκοστή or Late Latin *pentecoste*. Gothic *paintekuste* (acc. *paintekusten, iCor 16:8*), too, has been considered as a possible intermediary, but see Kluge/Mitzka 1967: 544 s.v. (“nicht von den arian. Gothen, wohl von griech. Kaufleuten”).
14th and the 30th of November respectively, the Gothic calendar does it on the 15th and the 29th of November. Given the close link between the Gothic Arian calendar (with its commemorations of the emperor Constantius II and the bishop Dorotheus) and Constantinople, and the location of the apostle Andrew’s relics in the city’s Apostoleion (brought there by Constantius himself), this one-day divergence can hardly be incidental. Instead, we might probably suggest that the Arian Goths were deliberately moving the holydays in order to escape their falling on the same dates as the Nicene ones.

Against this background, a further suggestion does not seem improbable, namely that the Arian Goths were the authors of the alternative counting of the days of the week. This week’s crown is indeed Sunday, the most important day for the Christians. The new counting could have been introduced by Wulfila and then adopted by the Slavs along with other cultural terms. The ways it spread to the Caucasus (before the early 14th century, and independently of the Slavs) remain rather obscure. One should probably bear in mind that no later than the year 536, the metropolis of Bosphorus was established, covering the area where the local Goths dwelt and had a bishop of their own. This metropolis might have furnished the groundwork of the mysterious eparchy of Zikhi of the 7th century which included Crimea (archbishoprics of Cherson and Bosphorus) and the north-western Caucasus (archbishopric of Nicopsis, established in the 6th century probably with the help of the metropolitan of Bosphorus) (Vinogradov 2017, 180–1). It was the Bosphoran Goths who could have initiated the spreading of the alternative counting of weekdays to the Caucasus – the neighbours of the Zikhi on its Black Sea coast in the 6th century were the Eudusiani (Εὐδουσιανοί) living in an area from Εὐδουσία, immediately contiguous to the Tetraxite Goths.

They could have transmitted their week to the Zikhi and the Abkhazians who in their turn passed it on to the Alans. In the mountainous part of the Gothic eparchy this week survived down to the end of the 14th century, and in other regions until now. Its sustained use here next to the conventional Byzantine week makes it another identity marker of the Crimean Gothic Christians.

37 Likely identical with Ἑλυσία (Procopius, De Bell. VIII. 4. 7) immediately contiguous to the Tetraxite Goths.
38 Diller 1952: 111, 133; see also http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/fragmente-der-griechischen-historiker-v/anonymi-periplus-ponti-euxini-2037–a2037#JCVTEXT _2037_F_64. ‘Tauric’ here is Alanic, as we read elsewhere in the same text: τῇ Ἀλανικῇ ἄλητοι τῇ Ταυρικῇ διαλέκτῳ (Diller 1952: 133).
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