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SYMBOLS: DECIPHERING THEIR SEMANTIC AND LITERAL FUNCTION IN THE "LIFE OF THE SAINTS" BY EUTHYMIUS OF TYRNOVO

Dr. Polydoros Gkoranis

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece)

СЕМАНТИКА И ЛИТЕРАРНА ФУНКЦИЈА "СИМБОЛА" У ЖИТИЈАМА ЈЕВТИМИЈА ТРНОВСКОГ

Д-р Полидорос Горанис

(Атински университет, Гърция)

Abstract: Јевтимије Трновски је несумњиво имао знатан утицај у области књижевности свог времена, завештавши својим насдендицима једну ревизију литургијских текстова општег значаја, која се заснивала на један веома озбиљан језички процес. У овом саопштењу даје се фокус у хагиографским делима, а нарочито у Житијама Светих које је написао Јевтимије: Житије Јована рилског, Житије Хилариона Епископа Могленског, Житије свете Параскеве, Житије Филотеје Трновске. Главни методолошки циљ је анализирање семантике и функције књижевних «симбола», у Житијама Јевтимија, која ћемо поделити у следећим категоријама: Животијнски циклус: (дивљи сисари, кућни сисари, дивље птице, домаће птице, гмизавци, рибе, инсекти), Животијнски циклус – митолошки: (аждаја, звер), Биљни циклус: (дрвеће, биљке, цвет), Земаљски – природни циклус: Земља, небо, ваздух, сунце, облаци, киша, град, олуја, снег), Минерали: (злато, сребро, гвожђе, бисери). Следећи корак је статистички приступ података који показују учесталост употребе разних симбола који интегришу књижевну структуру житија Јевтимија Трновског. Осим тога, испитиваће се како и зашто се бирају одговарајући симболи и њихова суштина у формирању литерарне структуре житија.

Keywords: Symbols, literary function, Lives of Saints, semantic analysis, Hagiograpy.

Euthymius Patriarch of Tyrnovo, undoubtedly, played an important role in defining the nature of the literary production of his era, by passing on to his ancestors an overview of liturgical texts which underwent a careful and elaborate linguistic process (**Obolensky 1970**, 434–435).

The literary integrity and purity of the Biblical writings, which were indissolubly linked to Orthodoxy constituted fundamental principles of his. His contribution to the

literal production enumerates four records of the "Lives of Saints" and four panegyric speeches, which, according to Podskalsky, there was a claim that they somehow blended into a mingled narrative genre. A common feature of his hagiographic work is the fact that only few Saints had a direct connection with the capital, the city Tyrnovo¹.

The main methodological tools to achieve our goal are:

- ➤ The conduct of a semantic analysis.
- ➤ The exploration of the literal function of Symbols in the Lives of Saints by Euthymius of Tyrnovo.

The analysis of the symbols will be classified into the following categories and subcategories²:

- ➤ Zoomorphic cycle (wild mammals, domestic animals, wild birds, domestic birds, reptiles, fish, insects).
- ➤ Zoomorphic cycle mythological beings (dragon, beasts, demons).
- ➤ Earth natural cycle based on the theory of the four elements of nature: (air, fire, water, and earth).
- Minerals (gold, silver, iron, pearls).

The first group of symbols from the zoomorphic cycle, which will be studied, is that of wild mammals: the fox, the wolf, the bear, the lion and the leopard. After thorough reading of the texts, we reached to the conclusion that there is no reference to the fox, the bear and the leopard, while there are four references to the wolf in the Life of St. Hilarion of Moglena: Ντάσμα πε μπε ακόμπια εθαι Μαμκετακία ποφημί, ακώς κατημί φτεπ ωραγικώ τα κώξα (Kalužniacki 1971, 34) [...], Κωϊά πε φτωμικό πακό ψα μεβλώμο πο φατ μεγλώμο πο

¹ Regarding the Lives of Saints, according to various scholars, the most remarkable and distinct work was the Life of St. John of Rila and in particular the third (short) reviewing edition, which was closer to the original text of Euthymius, and functioned as a source for further editions, too. A screed writer of St. Hilarion of Moglena, who was a predecessor of his, because his relics were relocated to Tyrnovo before the enthronement of Tsar Kalogian (12th century). Correspondingly to the record of the life of Saint Paraskeva Ἐπιβατινή or New, it is attested that it was written during the rule of Tsar John Shishman (between 1376–1382) and it had already been printed in the first half of the 16th century. Finally, the initiative to record the life of Saint Philothea was taken by the monks of the titular Monastery of Saint Philothea of Temish. See Podskalsky 2010, 371–381; about biographical elements see also: Динеков 1980, 3–21; Иванова 1982; Не́вет 1992, 19–59; Кенанов 1977, 112–120; Кенанов 1978, 74–88; Кенанов 1992, 44–57; Иванова 1985, 145–161; Nikolova 1986, 253–266; Петрова 1996, 83–109.

² The specific categorization is based on certain studies in which the main methodological tool is the frequency of occurrence of the zoomorphic symbols in the Bible and other symbols in general. More specifically: **Houston 1993**; **Linzey, Yamamoto 1998**; **Gkoutzioudis 2013**. Concerning the meaning of symbols: **Roberts 1998**; **Biedermann 1992**; **Whittick 1960**; **Ferguson 1954**.

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скуннжа також сложбж песъ полань бывь, **от влъковь** сънъдењ бысть (Kalužniacki 1971, 51). [...], Нечьстіє же до коща отаб, $\dot{\mathfrak{G}}$ сн бо нже **от влъков** бывшен овца (Kalužniacki 1971, 54). [...]

In fact, all references to the wolf relate to Hilarion's controversies with heretics and the respective incidents, for instance, the talk to Manichaeans, the activity of the Armenian heretics, and the incident with Sergius dog. However, the lion appears in the Life of Saint Filothea: ઉદ ΕΟ 3ΑΘΑΤΑΛΗЫ ΕΡΑΊΑ ΙΑΚΟ ΔΕΙΑ ΡΟΙΚΑΑ ΧΌΗΤΑ (Kalužniacki 1971, 86) [...]. The latter concerns Filothea's night prayer and the events that followed. The wolf constitutes a symbolic motif in these works. It is an animal that encloses its own semantics, always characterized by a negative tinge, because it appears as a predator and a murderer. Its characteristics bound its existence with the notion of destruction (Γκουτζιούδης 2013, 196, 205). Lions, like all the other wild mammals mentioned above, are predatory and carnivorous and, generally, they have a negative semantic connotation. It was the norm for the theological writers, either Jewish and/or Christian, the wild animals to symbolize the power of evil (Γκουτζιούδης 2013, 52).

Domestic mammals, such as the horse, the ox, the donkey, the pig, the camel, the sheep, the lamb, the dog, the bull, the deer or a flock, constitute the second group of the zoomorphic cycle that is going to be analyzed. Along with this group, the symbolic meaning of the "shepherd" will be exemplified since it is of key importance in the texts of the Bible. His presence was inextricably linked to domestic animals and mainly to the sheep. Indeed, it is hard to think of a flock without its shepherd. In the Lives of Saints by Efthymius only references to sheep, flocks, shepherds and the deer can be found, while for the remaining of the domestic animals there are no reports. In particular, in the Life of John of Rila, the shepherd is mentioned three times: Пастыфи бо тода близь нъгде пасжщил какое иногда онъдь (Kalužniacki 1971, 13) [...], Пастыон обо В сата женжщен (Kalužniacki 1971, 13) [...], Началника илаще и пастый гръповнаю (Kalužniacki 1971, 20) [...], reference to a sheep is made once: и окцаль блатооорт (Kalužniacki 1971, 13) [...], to the lamb once: И въ съ нидь 🕏 постын какое атна незлюнво (Kalužniacki 1971, 10) [...] and finally once to a deer: И расдють снаж відітній распали са такює єлеть (Kalužniacki 1971, 8) [...]. In the Life of Hilarion of Moglena, the herd appears six times: Развращажще гржфляно и расьхыщажще стадо какфе дивїн (Kalužniacki 1971, 33)³ [...], the shepherd twice: Нлдійна глафа иже фщежитій настжинка, подь Моленънод тоо пови пастыб (Kalužniacki 1971, 31) [...], Нж дорын слю Феных Хюсто туль пастырь, Навнонь (Kalužniacki 1971, 33) [...], likewise the sheep: Бөїн же оттоникь мис ота незлюнес (Kalužniacki 1971, 42) [...], Нетьстїє же до

³ The other five references: Постжпиша къ събфићи фъкви и избраноф събташа са стаду [...], (Kalužniacki 1971, 42), Побавважщее Вса Бофилскжа ефсь сот стада отистити и поввъжщжа са отбо блаотьстта доматска отбано приемати и избраноф събтаати стаду [...] (Kalužniacki 1971, 42–43), вликы блаотьстта приемшж свяда боти вутефи видь, Вса събта къ прабланый стаду [...] (Kalužniacki 1971, 54) and мирь твль да и Вому стаду, блаженый оснж сънов [...] (Kalužniacki 1971, 55).

кюца φτα©, Ёсн бо нже ют влъкюв бывшен **ювца** (Kalužniacki 1971, 54) [...]. In the Life of Saint Paraskeva the flock appears once: Застфпн его с Фщеныци сн хюатанствы, оради стадо его (Kalužniacki 1971, 76) [...], while in Saint Filothea's Life the flock and shepherd was detected once: Вънцан б б б т в всъено стадо. Въ нецже вы потабы б оъ пастыра и ф тибла (Kalužniacki 1971, 91) [...].

Efthymius used the motifs of the sheep and the deer in order to emphasize the contrast between good and evil, while the figure of the "good shepherd" in the records of the Lives of Saints functioned as a personification of the good guide of the faithful. In particular, the symbolic meaning of the sheep is directly related to a living being, which has absolutely no negative and evil power, and is perceived as harmless. The sheep were used as a narrative motif by the representatives of both the first Christian Church and the later Christian literature and presented as the most elaborate metaphoric trope of the various narratives enclosing a teaching purpose (Γκοντζιούδης 2013, 325). The reference to the deer is also of particular interest due to its symbolic significance in the Life of John of Rila, because the deer is one of the animals in the Bible, which were known for their innocence, destined to get sacrificed (Γκοντζιούδης 2013, 81).

In the next section, the group of zoomorphic symbols from the mythological cycle will be delineated, including beings such as the dragon, the beast and the demon. In contrast to the other groups, the presence of the beast and the demons are conspicuous in all records of the Lives of Saints by Efthymius, while there is no reference to the dragon. In addition, all references to the beast and to the demons are illustrated in the battles of the Saints against the forces of evil. For example, in the Life of St. John of Rila, where the beast appears twice: Множнием бо, приобразочаще ©бе, бъси грихождаахж, **эктой** различных образы (Kalužniacki 1971, 9) [...] вже аще не, 🕏 ской шед, 🕏 здлеши, **srtiqu** тъ сладкаа бждеть сънтав (Kalužniacki 1971, 10) [...], whereas the demon only once: Сице обо тоо поонещо са, абе ексь изыде от набека (Kalužniacki 1971, 15) [...], both evil creatures are used in the description of John's attempt to confront their attacks during his stay in the mountain, while in the Life of Hilarion of Moglena they are met in the discussions and argumentations with Bogomiles and Manichaeans: Развращажще графолано и раскыщажще стадо такое дивїн нъцін **звъоје** (Kalužniacki 1971, 33) [...], Распыхаахж са сфацы и гакое дивїн **звъоје** скюжетаахж на нь зжбы (Kalužniacki 1971, 33) [...]. On the other hand, in the lives of Saint Paraskeva: Меттици же и гривьдънди диножицею же и вь различные зеко ©бе грътв Рак (Kalužniacki 1971, 64) [...] and Saint Filothea: Овода же 🕏 зъціа, вода же 🕏 звий вбе птртвака (Kalužniacki 1971, 86) [...], the narration transfers us to a mountainous scenery or to the desert, where we witness their efforts to fight the evil. According to the Judaic tradition, the concept of the beast is used with its metaphorical meaning, in order to place emphasis to the enemy's opposing force⁴. It is also significant to

⁴ Out of the 49 references to the term "beast" in the Bible, 39 of them are found in John's Revelation (**Gkoutzioudis 2013**, 191).

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stress that the notion of the "dragon" in the Biblical texts is associated with a beast of mythological origin which in most cases was a serpent (e.g. a snake) and not the common winged dragon known to the readership through the western medieval narratives (Γκουτζιούδης 2013, 69).

Birds, being distinguished into wild and domestic ones, are the next group that is used symbolically. The wild birds that are met in the texts are: the eagle, the crow and the tortoise. Respectively, the domestic ones involve: the rooster, the hen and the pigeon. As can be seen from the group of wild birds, the eagle is met once, in comparison with the pigeon which is prevailing since it is encountered five times in the Lives of Saints. The eagle in the respective literature was regarded as the king of all birds, and his flight caused a sensation of admiration. The appearance of the eagle in the majority of cases signified an attack and had a negative semantic background as opposed to the pigeon that appears frequently in the Bible as a narrative device, and in all cases, except for the baptism of Jesus, it was considered as a bird destined to get sacrificed for the sake of God (Γκουτζιούδης 2013, 197, 205). Thus, the eagle appears in the Life of St. Philothea: Аще бо и нашеж жизни враг разантить сквонно и нетисто pacta (Kalužniacki 1971, 50)⁵ [...] as the personification of the devil, who wishes to destroy the Orthodox faith. On the other hand, the pigeon appears in the Live of Hilarion of Moglena: Выдълъ достъ көйн, бе съходиць нако гожкъ (Kalužniacki 1971, 35) [...] as a personification of the Holy Spirit and the medium of divine conception. For instance, in the Life of Saint Paraskeva: H THCTOOK TOOKHUY XMCTOOK BE HOGHELYE HEAVYE (Kalužniacki 1971, 62) [...] and Saint Filothea it stands for the purity of the spirit.

The last group of zoomorphic symbols includes the categories of: reptiles (snake, viper), insects (bee, mosquito, grasshopper, worm, scorpion, spider), amphibians (frog), fish (horses, cetacean). From the subcategories, the snake is enumerated three times: Των δω μακο μακιμά παξιλ, βλιία κκηλ ωρωλ (Kalužniacki 1971, 12) [...], βι βλιώτ κβλλιίμαν ως βλιμία κυμά μιβλλιλιίμα (Kalužniacki 1971, 64) [...], διωλλ κε β βλιμία, ωωλλ κε β βκιτή ως βλιμία κυμά (Kalužniacki 1971, 86) [...]. Concerning the bee, there are two references. The serpent motif appears with a profoundly negative tinge in the Biblical texts as the personification of evil. The theoretical semantic gravity of the serpent, according to Goutzioudis, has a wider dimension, especially in the ancient world, and is also characterized by dual meaning. On the one hand, it symbolizes the good and, in particular, health, life, and recovery, and on the other hand, there are instances where it symbolizes death and a sense of broader evil. Generally in the literature, it has a negative hue because it always represents a major risk for man (Γκουτζιούδης 2013, 213, 296)⁶. From the subgroup which encompasses the insects, the bee bears a striking semantic background. Bees as insects are highly

⁵ In Live of Hilarion of Moglena we have one more reference for a pigeon: На нже доухъ сотыть 🔅 выдъ гольени сънще съ небесъ [...] (Kalužniacki 1971, 50).

⁶ See also **Farber 2007**, 21–22.

valued because they belong to a class of highly socialized beings which have special organizational abilities, while at the same time they can be dangerous for humans because of their sting. They produce honey, which is something that is extremely nutritious for humans. It is also noteworthy that St. John of Rila and St. Philothea are metaphorically linked to bees, a characterization that clearly carries a positive connotation: Сълагдам миює любю танаа пчела цедъвны (Kalužniacki 1971, 9) [...], И по баь, ыкое аюботанаа пчела вью гроттные цетты (Kalužniacki 1971, 65) [...]. The next group of symbols is the cycle of the four elements of nature. These are: the air, the water, the earth and the fire and their subcategories, meaning phenomena that relate to these elements. In the analysis of the Lives of Saints, we encounter references to symbols coming from all the subcategories of this cycle of the four basic constituents of nature. In particular, regarding the motif of the air element, the authors talk about clouds and storms. Similarly, for the motif of the earth, they provide descriptions of trees, forests, the desert, plants and the moon. Lastly, they connect the element of fire to the sun; there is no report of another geographical feature or formation, or natural phenomenon.

More specifically, within the category of air symbols, the cloud appears in the Lives of Saints by Efthymius, reaching a frequency of five references. More analytically, it is reported twice in the Life of John of Rila: И гитвини © ведаеть его © ваеть, тто не гаето (Kalužniacki 1971, 11) [...], такое воонець инода на Сінанска, фхонть ф невъхондын факь воонатьніа (Kalužniacki 1971, 16) [...], опсе in the Life of Hilarion of Moglena: о тюдо, награсно житница са жита и братіали належащіх печали отгила влакть (Kalužniacki 1971, 30) [...] and twice in the Life of Saint Paraskeva: сьбфь полочшающиль дочшаль и печален обелакть высь одобыть (Kalužniacki 1971, 60) [...], сттолії и печали ттх гриольнвалше влакь и ниткое от нуль (Kalužniacki 1971, 69) [...]. In all cases, it is linked to sorrow. On a pragmatic level, the cloud can be considered as an obstacle that prevents vision and creates a dark atmosphere. In addition to the previous, the celestial gods of Ancient Greece, Romans and Jews lived in the clouds, something that leads us to the conclusion that the clouds, in general, can trigger the sense of the unknown and the covert or the mysterious (Farber 2007, 44–45).

Of particular interest is the symbolic meaning of the tree and the forest, which pertain to the subcategory "earth". In Efthymius texts, different kinds of trees are presented, such as the Lebanese Cedar and the oak tree. In terms of instances, in the Life of John of Rila the tree is mentioned three times: мкое фто насаждено (Kalužniacki 1971, 8) [...], мкое нѣкын кей нже ф инке ф об и калифий протовов по калифий протовов по формация об ть (Kalužniacki 1971, 12) [...], while in the Life of Hilarion of Moglena three times: И въ мко цасанна пафонтаа ф доф боїн (Kalužniacki 1971, 29) [...], и еще же ф ф табъченіе хюстюю и ф живоворащее фто (Kalužniacki 1971, 32) [...] И въ почее мко фто сажденю при исходищих (Kalužniacki 1971, 53) [...] and in Saint Filothea once: они бо има бобътва ф твяь съфдоша, ф табъкы, о нечьстїа, и фра и каменіе (Kalužniacki 1971, 90) [...]. The

tree can be a personification of man, and it can also reveal traits of his personality in general. Apart from this personal level, the tree is connected to the notions of family and nation. In the Holy Bible, people are often presented as tree personifications in order to emphasize the distinction between the faithful and the infidel. The Lebanese cedar is really a large tree with equally large branches and in the Bible, it was used as a symbol of pride and arrogance at the same time (**Farber 2007**, 41). Conversely, the oak tree was considered to be the largest and loftiest tree, a depiction that awakens the respective semantic implications (**Farber 2007**, 143–145).

Concerning the subcategory of "water", the source where the water springs from plays a central role and this centrality is evident since a total of five instances is recorded in the Lives of Saints by Efthymius. It is remarkable that in all cases, the water has a positive effect. More specifically, in the Life of John of Rila two references are noted: мкое фбо, насаждено при **нсточнкох** вюдных (**Kalužniacki 1971**, 8) [...], Въ фдин полам, слъзным истъкаж **нстючнкы** и налам (**Kalužniacki 1971**, 13) [...], one in the Life of Hilarion of Moglena: И въ почее како фбо саждено при **нсходищих** (**Kalužniacki 1971**, 53) [...] анd, lastly, two in the Life of Saint Paraskeva: Кто бо ток иже тода сыповъсть съзныи **нсточнкь**, сёный же честам (**Kalužniacki 1971**, 63) [...], Почтинор и сущеные твое ракы нескордныи **нсточнкь**, не Факи чюдно бордеть ниже (**Kalužniacki 1971**, 75) [...]. Even back in the Classical period, the springs that spurt were considered both as sacred places and a source of literary inspiration (**Farber 2007**, 80–81).

The thematic of the four elements of nature and their interpretation is completed with the delineation of the subcategory "fire" and the relative features, namely, the symbolism of the sun. In the relevant texts, the sun is mentioned three times in the Life of Saint Paraskeva: мкое бо сатьнур, вы робтинке тасы лоче по вон ротобыму зедан (Kalužniacki 1971, 59) [...], Сатьну же свътатиний ръповные бодеть падеть Петкы (Kalužniacki 1971, 60) [...], Аще вытиние тъль, и спо силь выдиши окрашено, высодау мкое сатьнуе лоче испорщаеть (Kalužniacki 1971, 61) [...] and it is associated with the brightness of the Saint, which is claimed to be a prominent trait of her personality. The sun is a fundamental element with dynamic attributes for life on earth. Not only is the most conspicuous element in our universe, but it is also indispensable for our existence. All in all, it has a dual semantic gravity: it combines the light (life itself) and vision together (Farber 2007, 209–211).

The last group of symbols subject to analysis consists of substances extracted from the earth, that is, metals such as: gold, silver, pearls and iron. A significant point, here, is that all the instances of this category are found in the Life of St. John of Rila, and in particular, the diamond is mentioned twice: Такфе адациять не бывааше никакфець жетезфь (Kalužniacki 1971, 9) [...], Нж адациять доршеж, Ішань, никакфе ать бывааше тоо къзным (Kalužniacki 1971, 12) [...] and the pearl once: Радоти обо дингым испальн сам и இбайа дорхфнаго събетть събеща баль (Kalužniacki 1971, 23) [...] In general, the rocks in the texts are mainly used to highlight the distinct positive characteristics of

Saint John's personality. The diamond originates from the Greek word $\alpha\delta\delta\mu\alpha\varsigma$ which means invincible (**Montanari 2014**, 73) and Efthymius consciously uses this symbolic meaning to emphasize that John's character cannot in any way be engraved, comparing him to a diamond since the diamond has this unique property. In addition, the term gold plays an important role in the texts in terms of metaphoricity because it is used as an opposing motif between ascetic life and wealth (**Farber 2007**, 87). At the same time, diamonds are presented as a personification of the beauty of Efthymius rare personality. The diamonds motif was already well known in biblical texts, for example, in the parable of the diamonds' dealer in the Gospel of Matthew, especially because of its didactic nature (**Farber 2007**, 152–153).

Taking into account the aforementioned aspects of the recurrent motifs of symbols and their function in the Lives of Saints by Efthymius of Tyrnovo, certain conclusions can be drawn:

Depending on the frequency of occurrence in the Lives of Saints and the variety of motifs in all groups, the ranking is as follows:

Life of St. John Rila twenty-nine motifs (29),

Life of Hilarion of Moglena twenty-seven motifs (27),

Life of St.Paraskeva twenty-seven motifs (27),

Life of St. Philothea eleven motifs (11) (table 1).

The living beings that appear quite frequently in the Lives of Saints are the domestic mammals, which belong to the super ordinate group of zoomorphic cycle, such as the sheep and the lamb. However, the reader also comes across herds and shepherds. Next, the living beings of the zoomorphic mythological circle follow. Consequently, it can be said that the specific motifs due to their periodic occurrence are at the same time structural narrative motifs in the texts of Efthymius of Tyrnovo, while on a semantic level they are inextricably linked to the theological purpose that they serve (table 2).

The fact that the motifs of the symbols used from the Bible, to a great extent, confirms the preaching character of the narrative. The usage of these groups of symbols makes the narrative extremely imagistic and activates all the senses of the reader.

Moreover, the narrative focuses on the recurrent motifs of symbols where there is an intention to defend the orthodox ideas, for instance, such are two specific points where the motifs of the *demon* and the *beast* are employed in the Life of Hilarion of Moglena. The first takes place when Hilarion opposes to the heretics, and the second, when he wishes to outline the characteristics of the Saints, for example when he metaphorically compares St. John of Rila with a diamond that cannot be engraved.

Overall, adopting an interpretive approach and performing a detailed analysis of the function of the symbols in the overall work of Efthymius of Tyrnovo show why symbols constitute a structural and vital component of his writing activity.

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Table 1

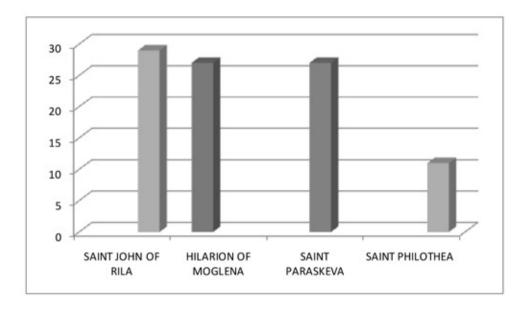


Table 2

