

## ТЕОРИЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ Theory of Literature

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### A MIXTURE OF PERFORMANCE AND NARRATIVITY, OR TRAVELOGUE AS A GENRE

**Abstract.** In the article, we trace some aspects of development of eventivity and narrativity in Medieval and early Modern Era travel literature. Dissecting episodes of *Sir Thomas Smithes voyage and entertainment in Rushia* (1605), *A Travel of Anonimous Citizen of Suzdal to The Council of Florence* (15<sup>th</sup> century), *Primary Chronicle* (12<sup>th</sup> century), and *The Tale of Peter and Fevronia* (1540s), we demonstrate a shift of anarrative elements such as show, performative, and declarative into narration by retelling and re-framing of initial 'history'. Due to the process, a travel report is substituted by a new work of literature where author's aesthetic vision dominates even though narration is quite weak and theatricality plays a significant role.

**Key words:** travel literature; fictionality; show; narrations; retelling; re-framing.

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### О перформативности и нарративности в травелогах в свете их жанровой природы

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена вопросам, связанным с развитием событийности и нарративности в травелогах Средневековья и раннего Нового времени. На примере «Путешествия и пребывания сэра Томаса Смита в России» (1605), «Хождения на Флорентийский Собор неизвестного суздальца» (XV в.), а также путевых эпизодов «Повести временных лет» (XII в.) и «Повести о Петре и Февронии» (1540-е гг.) мы демонстрируем, как анарративные элементы (показ, перформатив, декларатив) трансформируются при помощи пересказа и смены точек зрения в нарратив. На месте отчета о поездке развивается литературно-эстетическое произведение, в котором сохраняются архаичные схемы наррации и ярко выражена театральность.

**Ключевые слова:** травелог; фикциональность; показ; наррация; пересказ.

«От Киргиз до реки Абакана 6 дён ездю; а от Обакана до реки до Кимчика 9 дён ездю; а от Кимчика до большова озера, где Иван Петров сказывал, в коем озере самоцвет камень, 3 дни ездю; а кругом тово озера 12 дён ездю конем. Да в то ж озеро 4 реки впали: река с востуку, река с полуден, река з западу, река с сивера, а все 4 реки с Миюс реку, текут в озеро, а в

озере воды не прибывает, ни убывает. Да в то ж озеро река впаля промежу востуку и сивера, а имя той реке Кесь; а ходу по той реке от озера до вершины, где царя Алтына сошли с кочевьем, 15 дён, а дорога все итти по камению [From the land of Kyrgyzs to the river of Abakan there are six days on horseback; from the Abakan to the river of Kimchik there are nine days on horseback; there are three days on horseback from the Kimchik to a big lake where, according to Ivan Petrov, semi-precious stones are; there are twelve days on horseback around the lake. Four rivers flow into the lake: one from the east, one from the south, one from the west, and one from the north. All the rivers are as big as the river of Mius, all they flow into the lake but its water-level has no changes – no tides, no low tides. From the northeast another river, the Kes', flows into the lake, if one goes up along the river for fifteen days, they reach a peak where serfs of Altan Khan have their pasturage. All the way goes amidst rocks]”<sup>1</sup> – we read in the very beginning of the earliest Russian travelogue about China – *The Description of the Chinese State and the Lands of Mongols Composed by Tomsk Cossack Ivan Petlin*.

When we deal with medieval travel literature, it seems that such texts are far from any collisions, intrigues, plot, characters, maybe, even from aestheticism – i.e. from everything what is important in creation of a 'standard' work of fiction. It even does not keep a place for eventivity and thus for narration, because “событийность – это особый (нарративный) способ отношения человеческого сознания к бытию (альтернативный процессуальности и ритуальности), а событие – это нарративный статус некоторого отрезка жизни в нашем опыте. [Eventivity here is a special (narrative) way of linking of mind and being (an alternative to processuality and ritual) while an event is an interval of somebody's life which obtained a narrative status in somebody's life experience (my trans.)]”<sup>2</sup>, as Valeriy Tyupa claims. But, the nature of Medieval travelogues is not so simple and unambiguous if we take into account Olga Freidenberg's statement on the interconnection of travel literature, drama and early Greek novel we see that: “Переходную форму от древней к средней комедии показывает греческий роман. Здесь *действуют* боги, *претерпевают* герои. Но это – в общем сюжете романа. В заключительной же его части герой приходит в храм и перед лицом божества рассказывает обо всем, что он *соделал и претерпел*; затем свой рассказ он возлагает на алтарь и оставляет навсегда в храме. <...> Рассказ оказывается то жертвой, которую возлагают на алтарь. [The Greek novel is a transitional form which contains features of the old and the middle [Athenian] comedies. In this type of comedy Gods act, while heroes only suffer. But, the interpretation is true if we characterize the whole novel plot. In the final scene a protagonist comes into a sanctuary and speaks up in front of a deity his story of deeds and calamities; then, he lays his text on the altar and donates it to the sanctuary. <...> Thus, the speech turns into a sacrifice laid upon the altar (my trans.)]”<sup>3</sup>.

## Factual and Fictional in Travel Literature

It is a fact that, *prima facie*, such texts seem to be closer to a list filled with different sorts of travellers' activities and remarks, with anything but narration. Travel literature, as we know it today, derives from a document, from diplomatic discourse<sup>4</sup>. So, there is nothing strange that the texts tend to accurately describe details of the journey. Meanwhile, the link of documentary and creativeness in travel literature is more complicated.

If we turn back to the introductory quotation, we will encounter an example of obscurity. The text informs us that: a) "four rivers flow into the lake", b) "from the north-east another river, the Kes', flows into the lake". How many rivers are there – four or five? We do not have the exact answer, but we read that "...a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it parted, and became into four heads" [Gen. 2: 10, cited from KJV]. The anonymous lake, secluded in high mountains and somehow miraculous, resembles biblical Eden. The traveller goes simultaneously in two dimensions: in physical South Siberia and in 'biblical style' landscape of threshold to Paradise. Following the parallel, there is simply no place for the Kes' river that is why the river was omitted from the list. On the other hand, the river does exist; so, the documentary nature of the travelogue demands to name the river. As a result, the Kes' emerges in the text, but as something secondary, unaccounted.

There always is an area for what we call now fiction in medieval writings<sup>5</sup>. Due to the general medieval way of vision, what travelers actually saw did not exactly parallel with what they comprehended, and even less – with what they created.

Let us turn to another work of travel literature, *A Travel of Anonimous Citizen of Suzdal to The Council of Florence* – the text written by somebody from the circle of Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev who was a participant of the Council and supported its results as legitimate: "От Сени до града Брыни 15 миль, а путь лѣсомъ на горы; и в тѣх градѣх живут хавратяне, языкъ с руси, а вѣра латыньская. [From Senj to Brinje, there are 15 miles. The road goes across woodland and then uphill. In those towns, Croats live whose language originates from that of Rus', but their religion is that of Rome] (my trans.)"<sup>6</sup>.

As we see from this example, Croats (at least as the author saw them) emerge in the text as a syncretic case – the people who equally belong to both Pax Romana and Pax Slavia, i.e. in terms of the 'povest' to 'Rus. I use Pax Slavia here and Rus' interchangeably because medieval Russia strongly believed in its role of a true centre of all Slavonic peoples. Meanwhile, not only Croats, but a number of other Eastern European peoples, i.e. Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenians etc. were Slavic and Catholic. Why does our author name solely Croats and remains silent about, say, Poles? Why does he mention Croats only on his way from, but not to Rome? Here we encounter the creative side of the text. Croats are important to the author not only due the simple fact that he travelled through their lands, but because the 'Croatian syncretism' visually manifests the finalized character of reconciliation between East and West

which always stayed linked, and Croats are an embodiment of this hidden unity. Now, after the Council Agreement was signed, Croats came out of their wild woods and from their mountains to the forefront of history exactly as the reconciled Church becomes palpable: "И того же дни Сидоръ и Аврамий, владыка русский, благословилися у папы на Русь, и поиде из Флорензы на Русь месяца септября въ 6 [On the same day Isidore, Metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus', and Avraamy, [Bishop of Suzdal], obtained the blessing from the Pope to leave Florence for Rus' on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of September] (my trans.)"<sup>7</sup>.

So, facts from the journey of Isidore and Avraamy and creativeness of the *Travel* collide, thus forming the text.

The same mixture we can trace in other texts from Medieval Russia, for example, in the *Primary Chronicle* and in *The Tale of Peter and Fevronia*. The first contains the well-known story of legendary traveling of Andrew the Apostle to Kiev and Novgorod:

"Якоже ркоша, Андрѣю учащю в Синопии, пришедшю ему в Корсунь, увидѣ, яко ис Корьсуня близъ устье Днѣпрское, и въсхотѣ поити в Римъ, и приде въ устье Днепрское, и оттолѣ поиде по Днѣпру горѣ. [29] И по приключаяю приде и ста подъ горами на березѣ. И заутра, въставъ, рече к сущимъ с нимъ ученикомъ: «Видите горы сия? Яко на сихъ горахъ вссияеть благодать Божия: иматъ и городъ великъ быти и церкви многы иматъ Богъ въздвигнути». И въшедъ на горы сия, и благослови я, и постави крестъ, и помолився Богу, и слѣзе съ горы сея, идеже послѣже бысть Киевъ, и поиде по Днѣпру горѣ. И приде въ словены... [When Andrew the Apostle taught in Sinop and came to Chersonesus, he found out that not far from Chersonesus there is an estuary of the river of Dnepr. He wanted to leave for Rome, so, he sailed into the estuary and went up the Dnepr. After this it happened that he came and stood beneath some mountains on the river bank. On the morning, he wake up and told his pupils: "Have you seen the mountains? From the mountains the glory of God will arise; here a great city will be established and God will build a lot of churches here." So, he ascended the mountain, blessed them and erected a cross. He prayed to God and then descended from the mountain where some time after this events Kiev would be constructed and sailed further up the Dnepr, and came to the Slavs.] (my trans.)"<sup>8</sup>.

In Russian tradition, the episode became not just widespread; it became a milestone of Russian national myth. But, how do Sinop, Chersonesus and Rome get connected via the river of Dnepr which flows from the north? There are no geographical reasons for Apostle Andrew to make such a journey. What we encounter here is an obvious example of "imagined geography" (Edvard Said): if Rus' actually is the new Rome, rivers should connect all the 'Romes'. The fact that Andrew the Apostle indeed taught in Eastern provinces of Roman Empire collides with the fictional story of the travel to Rome through the lands of Slavs.

In a much more creative manner, we trace the same device in the second text – *The Tale of Peter and Fevronia*:

“По преставлении же ею хотѣста людие, яко да положен будет блаженный князь Петръ внутри града, у соборныя церкви пречистыя Богородицы, Феврония же внѣ града в женстем монастыри, у церкви Воздвижения честнаго и животворящаго креста, ркуще, яко во мнишестем образѣ неугодно есть положить святых въ едином гробѣ. И учредиша им гроби особны и вложиша телеса их в ня: святаго Петра, нареченнаго Давида, тѣло вложиша во особый гроб и поставиша внутри града в церкви святаго Богородицы до утриа, святаго же Февронии, нареченныя Еуфросинии, тѣло вложиша во особый гроб и поставиша внѣ града в церкви Воздвижения честнаго и животворящаго креста. Общый же гроб, егоже сами повелѣша истесати себѣ въ едином камени, оста тощ в том же храмѣ Пречистыя соборныя церкви, иже внутри града. На утрии же, вставше, людие обрѣтоша гроби их особныя тщи, в няже их вложиста. Святая же телеса их обретоста внутри града в соборней церкви пречистыя Богородицы въ едином гробѣ, егоже сами себѣ повелѣша сотворити. Людие же неразумнии <...> паки преложиша я во особныя гробы и паки разнесоша. И паки же на утрии обрѣтошася святии въ едином гробѣ. [After their death, people decided to bury the beneficiated duke Peter’s ashes inside the city, next to the Theotokos Cathedral, and the ashes of Fevronia – in a convent which is outside the city, next to the Church of the Holy Cross because the people thought that if the were lain together in one grave, then such a burial would contradict with Peter and Fevronia’s monastic oaths. <...> So, their shared coffin-which they, being yet alive, had ordered to hew out of a sole stone to them-stayed empty in the city, in the Theotokos Cathedral. But, on the other day in the morning, the people found empty the coffins where the ashes had been laid and searched their holy ashes in their shared coffin which they had ordered to hew out for them while being alive. The incipient people <...> tried to separate the ashes again and transported the bodies in the separate graves. But in the morning, they were together, again.] (my trans.)”<sup>9</sup>.

The story seemed to both readers and audience so creative that its genre was not named as a *zhitie*. But, the fact that Peter and Fevronia are the sole couple in Russian Orthodox tradition that was proclaimed saints due to their model life in marriage. On the one hand, the miracle of the bodies emphasizes the holiness of the protagonists, and on the other puts them into the perspective of The New Testament. Their empty graves echo the plot of the Resurrection. Again, we are inside a situation typologically closed to that where the myrophores appeared: an early morning, an unexpectedly empty coffin(s), narrow-minded people who at first fail to understand the miracle.

So, the medieval literature develops fictionality in crossing of ontological, axiological, religious, and social boundaries. What has once been a simple walk in geographic space becomes a reference to another, ‘higher’, reality. Unshakable customs and norms of conduct unexpectedly become questionable. Something routines unexpectedly opens its deeper meaning. At the same time, the fictionality emerges not solely due to the switch of angle. Travel situations lose their sameness: some situations begin to be perceived as more important than the others and as keys to the whole journey (remember the episode from the *Primary Chronicle* where Andrew the Apostle erects a cross in a place where

Kiev will be established). In other words, some situations of travelling turn into events, so the narrativity develops and a former report or diplomatic action switch into a travelogue.

### Reframing of History in Travel Literature

Travel literature emerges as a branch of medieval writing and has shared features with other genres of old literature, primarily, in interweaving factual and fictional, and even aesthetic elements. What is more important is that travel literature is built on a change of point of view and re-examination of what had once happened. Travel literature isolates some episodes of human life to reframe them as key events for the new plot. In other words, creation of a travelogue is possible due to re-framing, re-telling and re-evaluation of the initial narrative list of situations. A travelogue appears as a space where initial actions and performance turn into writing and narration which express a new vision and idea. Look at some episodes of *Syr Thomas Smiths Voyage into Rushia*:

“...then for all his followers: which ceremony or state performed, & all being horsed, he departed, wee riding orderlye forward, till we were met by three great Noblmen, seuered from the rest of the multitude, and the *Emperors Tolmache* or interpreter with them. Of which state the Ambassador it may seeme, had for-knowledge, (it being in this Countrey a custome vsed) but with more or lesse Noblemen, as is the Emperors fauour and grace.

Likewise vnderstanding of the strange Ceremony of first allighting from their horsed, (as who eyther hath read sir *Ierome Bowes* his formality and obseruance hereof, or sir *Richard Leaes* painefull standing vpon the priority herein) may thinke the Emperors command is very strait therunto, and as they thinke much honour is loste to dismount first: but they being within speach, thus began that Oration they could neuer well conclude: Which was, That from their Lorde and Maister the mighty Emperour of *Rushia*, &c. they had a message to deliuer his lordship. The Ambassador then thinking they would be tedious and troublesome with their vsuall Ceremonies; preuented their farther speeche with this (to them a *Spell*) *That it vvas vnfitting for subiects to hold discourse in that kinde of complement, of tvo such mighty and renowned Potentates on horsbacke*. They hereby not only put by their ceremonious saddle-sitting, but out of their paper instructions for the state thereof ashamed (as was proude Artexius, stepping aside in the daungerous fight with Zealmene) they allighted sodainly, as men fearing they were halfe vnhorsed, and the Ambassador presently after them, comming very courteously all three, saluting the Ambass. and the kings gentlemen, taking them by the hands...”<sup>10</sup>. [Further references to the same source].

What we see here is a kind of diplomatic ‘performance’ centred around honour, as all episodes of this drama are linked by the wish of the Ambassador not to dishonour both his King’s supremacy and himself. A strange custom prohibits Muscovites from alighting their horses before a foreigner does so. At the same time, it is a disgrace for an envoy who substitutes his monarch to

address equestrians while on foot. We are inside a quite complicated situation: to accomplish his mission, the envoy must be polite, but at the same time, he has to follow the protocol and tender for his king's honour. This long scene is a performance formed by the 'rivalry' of the people – the envoy and the servants of the Russian tzar.

The initial diplomatic actions with their clear aim to maintain the greatness and honour of England have been re-framed. The narrator puts the visual and dramatic scene of the collision of Thomas Smyte and Godunov's kingsmen into a speech and thus he re-frames the initial situation. To tender honour was important for biographical Thomas Smythe. Now, the episode glorifies the wisdom and wit of the ambassador and Englishmen, in general. It is like a 'verbal skirmish', where the envoy's knowledge of Russia helps him to turn Muscovite ridiculous mixture of fear and against themselves and ultimately obtain a victory: "...prevented their farther speeche with this (to them a Spell) That it vv as vnfitting for subiects to hold discourse in that kinde of complement, of tvvo such mighty and renommed Potentates on horsbacke. They hereby not only put by their ceremonious saddle-sitting, but out of their paper instructions..."

The episode, as it emerges here, is neither a purely diplomatic performance – pungent and full of drama – nor a report about the mission. In the first place, it is a narrated story on how knowledge, wit, trained rhetoric skills grant victory to their holders even at the edge of the earth in a barbaric country.

What is remarkable, a performative nature of the initial history continues to be palpable beyond the new narrative centre. But, coexisting, the history and the text, performativity and narrativity realise different functions. While performativity contains initial collisions of history, narrativity introduces some of them into the 'Great Time' (Bakhtin), transforms some of them into events of the new work of literature. The narrator is the one who discovers deeper and more actual levels of what had happened: "...but to them that loue the Sea, I wish helth, and my selfe euer to stande well on dry ground: to behold one of the 3. gallant spectacles in the world, A Ship vnder sayle, loming (as they tearme it) indeede like a Lyon pawing with his forfeet, heauing and setting, like a Musco Beare bayted with excellent English dogs".

The episodes give us a model where initial history is transformed into something new via re-framing: while the envoy and his crew struggled for survival in the North Sea, the narrator describes to us another struggle – a prospective and emblematic battle of England and Russia due to the ship in which sails only the envoy to Russia is – maybe has even always been – a pack of English hunting dogs that chase and bite the Russian Bear. Despite all its prospectic importance, the parallel is absolutely outside of the protagonists' minds. The only textual root for the re-framing "excess of vision" (Bakhtin) is the narrator. So, who sees, who acts, and who speaks lose the sameness even though like in the Greek novel<sup>11</sup>, the entanglement of the textual subjects continues, thus the narrator sometimes loses its personality either mixing with the subject of vision or deriving from him: "But for Sea accidentes, it is not my purpose to make perticular relation, beeing neither pertinent to my course, nor to any a matter of much

validity: but as if our Ambas. were againe in the Tovver of London, as he is in the ship: now tost, then becaulmed: in feare and hope within one moment, wher sometime God Neptune like a Prince, will haue his subiects know his force, and feele his rigor: where vvhen Fogges and mists appeare (like stratagemes and policies) to make men imprisoned tremble <...> but as God brought him out with much honor and praise, onely by the benefit of patience, clothed in Innocency, so shall I by the help of God, deliuer our selues safely at our Port".

Whose vision is here? Who speaks here? Thomas Smythe was detained in the Tower of London and was released after being found not guilty of the crimes charged with. So, the feelings of a sailor in the sea parallel those of a detained prisoner, who can well be Sir Smythe's. That is he who sails into Russia with a diplomatic mission and that is rather his hope to prolong the agreement with Russia on free-trade, to bring wealth and business opportunities to English merchants. The hopes are told by the third person narrator: "God... broght him ot ... with much honor and praise". So, the "he" should be Sir Smythe ("our Ambas. were againe in the Tovver of London, as he is in the ship") while the narrator has no portrait and personality being a textual function. Unexpectedly, we find in the episode a first person pronouns: "...but as God brought him out <...> so shall I by the help of God, deliuer our selues safely at our Port." Who is this "I" if Sir Smythe is "he"? The "I" has to be the narrator but we are in third person narration where narrator cannot use the pronoun 'I' for self-reference. Moreover, neither the narrator, nor even the author were in Russia, the envoy makes his voyage. The narrator puts himself in Sir Smythe's place and sometimes imitates him, thus narrativity seems inconsistent and theatricality substitutes the narration. However, even the inconsistent narrativity realises its textual function: to form "excess vision", accentuate events, differentiate travelogue from a pure list of actions. For example, in the just cited fragment the past and the future, the prison and the ship merge so that the whole Sir Smythe's pre-voyage life is showed as a preparation or even as a prefiguration of the journey. In fact, Sir Smythe returned in England and lived for more than twenty years after the voyage. As for the narrator, the Moscovia mission represents a 'summa' of Sir Smythe life. The excess of vision enlivens the history of Thomas Smythe re-framing it into somewhat aesthetic, into a travelogue.

### Retelling as a Narrative Centre of Medieval Travelogue

Dissecting the texts, we can trace one more remarkable common feature. The texts are created as retellings. What has once appeared in actions of protagonists turns into an object of narration for their authors.

The post-mortem miracle of Peter and Fevronia appeared in actions, in the movements of their bodies. The author simply transforms their performance, into a narrative and draws parallels between his story and the New Testament.

St. Andrew teaches, goes, ascends, has his vision, prays, erects a cross, descends etc. The author transforms that prophetic performance into his own narrative on Rus' as a new true Christian state.

Yet more concrete the combination of the protagonists' deeds and narrator's words is presented in *A Travel of Anonymous Citizen of Suzdal to The Council of Florence*. Here, the Croats simply live in their own area; Isidore of Kiev just travels to the Council of Florence, takes part in it and after the Council ends, he returns to Moscow. All these are actions based on some reasons, which were far from those, manifesting the author's intention – to show the reconciliation of Western and Eastern Churches as a concluded process.

In other words, all the texts are created on a verge of performance and narration, while retelling is a narrative device which boldly accentuates the transitional nature of a Medieval travelogue. Here and there the show brakes into a travelogue pushing narration on periphery. Narrator is quite weak to form a text as a system of frames and narration is rather a veil draped over initial actions but even here narrations already plays the significant functions: a) to re-frame situations into events, b) to express an obscure, symbolic sense which nobody comprehended 'in life' but which makes the perception of a situation deeper. Thus, due to the weakness of narration and narrator, theatricality becomes extremely visible: "Here, it pleased the English agent M. *John Mericke*, (truly a wise, honest and kinde Gent.) to inuite all the Gentlemen to their house to dinner: whether he would haue vvvillingly invited the Ambass. if hee might haue presumed thereupon, and of the fitness, considering that as yet letters were not secundarilie come from the *Emperor*; for the gent. farther proceeding: whereby he woulde happily haue made a question there of; as also for the *Ambass.* greatnes, (the towne then so ouercharged with many Nations) it could not be performed according to the respect ambassadors are vsed with there, nor perhaps would it be well agreeing to their more priuate fashion, who hold it greatest glory for greatest men, rather to be reported of, then seene".

Theatricality is not simply palpable it is experienced as an organic part of human existence. Even history – as we have seen earlier – is a sort of play and a person in history often shares a lot with an actor. His essential obligation is to live in accordance to his typecast. Consequently, the person gains his reward when the author describes his life and travels.

Sir Thomas Smyth never wrote the travelogue. Its hypothetical author – who collected information about the mission to Moscovia and edited it – is George Wilkins, Shakespeare's co-writer of *Pericles*. If the suggestion is true, the travelogue was written as a narrative, but by a dramatist. So, he keeps as much performativity as is possible – diplomacy as action, protocols as set of actions presented in writing, envoy's travels and resolution of problems etc. – turning into narration as a device to unite different textual elements.

We are in a deeply Shakespearean world where, quoting the lines of Jaques from *As You Like It*:

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances".

Our narrator builds his travelogue on the Shakespearean feeling. But whether there is something else beside the occasional genitive reason what links dra-

ma and travel literature more substantial. "They have their exits and their entrances" – all voyages have entrances and exits both in space and in time. They all consist of occasional situations which, once being retold, are transformed into a meaningful life experience. The constant device of narrative structure of travel literature is the performativity, which – after return – is, by retelling and reframing, transformed into something different.

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*Translated by the author.*

#### NOTES

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## ИМПЕРСКИЙ ДИСКУРС «ПОСЛЕ» ИМПЕРИИ: Pax romana и социокультурные вызовы на рубеже Античности и Средневековья

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается ментальный кризис, переживаемый латинским Западом в эпоху перехода от Античности к Средневековью, в процессе которого вырабатывалось новое осмысление политической и культурной реальности, сложившейся после падения Западной Римской империи. Эта новая реальность предстает не как данность, явившаяся результатом завоевания, но как вызов, поставленный перед современниками. Разные способы и формы ответа на этот вызов или, скорее, целый комплекс вызовов, присутствуют в той или иной форме во всей литературе эпохи, различаясь в зависимости от конкретных людей и обстоятельств. Взятые по отдельности, тексты Сидония Аполлинария, Авита Вьеннского, Эннодия, Кассиодора, Венанция Фортуната и Григория Великого являются отражением индивидуального опыта автора, но взятые в своей совокупности и последовательности они выражают, при всех различиях, единую цель служения западной *romanitas*. Безусловно, не случайно, что у каждого из них становление нового типа власти на Западе вызывало активное движение мысли. В этом видится проявление глубинной тенденции римского сознания и знак преемственности переходной позднеантичной культуры с предыдущими эпохами.

**Ключевые слова:** Поздняя Античность; латинская риторика; раннее Средневековье; Римская империя; романо-варварские королевства; «последние римляне».

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## The Imperial Discourse “after” the Empire: Pax Romana and Socio-cultural Challenges at the Turn of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages

**Abstract.** The paper examines the mental crisis experienced by the Latin West in the era of the transition from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages, during which a new understanding of the political and cultural reality that emerged after the fall of the Western Roman Empire was developed. This new reality does not appear as a reality, which was the result of the conquest, but as a challenge to the contemporaries. Different ways and forms of the response to this challenge, or rather a whole complex of challenges, are present in one form or another throughout the literature of the epoch, differing due to particular people and circumstances. Taken separately, the texts by Sidonius Apollinarius, Avitus of Vienne, Ennodius, Cassiodorus, Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory the Great are a reflection of the author's individual experience, but taken in their totality and consistency, they express, with all the differences, the single goal of serving the western